

**An investigation of tourism stakeholder networks
and cluster sustainability in Samui Island,
Thailand**

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on main challenges and opportunities in developing sustainable tourism in Samui Island, one of the well-known tourist destinations in Thailand. The island is rich in environmental and cultural resources as well as being a popular coastal tourism resort generating considerable revenues (approx. GBP 700 million in 2014). However, serious environmental impacts due to mass tourism threaten not only the island's tourism industry in, but also the ecology of the region and the long-term well-being of its residents. Thus, this research aims to analyse the interrelationships between tourism stakeholders and how their relational networks influence (un)sustainable practices and shape tourism clusters and sustainable tourism development. This work draws upon empirical data collected in two study regions - in Samui – sub-district Bo Phud situated in the north-east, and two sub-districts of Na Muang and Taling Ngam in the south-west.

The research used and applied key concepts inherent in stakeholder theory, social networks approach, and the notion of clusters, to examine the micro-dynamics underpinning (un)sustainable tourism practices in Samui Island. A qualitative approach was utilised for the research investigation through 60 semi-structured interviews and 4 focus groups. The interview participants were policy makers, such as government bodies, and public- tourism organisations, tourism businesses, tourism associations, non-profit organisation, and local communities.

Key findings show the significance of existing collaborative networks between public-private sectors and non-profit organisation which demonstrate both (in) formal networks as well as strong and weak relationships. Social networks enable innovative tourism products and activities,

as well as green projects. However, these collaborative networks were still limited in some particular groups such as upmarket hotels and resorts. Other groups of stakeholders were in peripheral positions in tourism networks, especially local communities which lacked connections and participations in the tourism development process. Key challenges in relation to networking included lack of trust towards government bodies, tension between outsiders (both Thai and foreigners) and insiders (Samui local people), and lack of time and commitment. Also key challenges towards sustainable tourism implementation arise due to the lack of financial resources, and social networks that are in some cases mobilised for unsustainable practices such as corruptions, and by the networks of businesses that are not licensed or are unregulated, as well as ‘dark networks’ such as sex workers, pimps and clusters of drugs dealers.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning	Page
ST	Sustainable Tourism	1
SIDS	Small Island Developing States	2
STD	Sustainable Tourism Development	5
STRI	Sustainable Tourism Rapid Indicators	5
ANI	Andaman and Nicobar Island of India	5
SD	Sustainable Development	6
TAT	Tourism Authority of Thailand	13
THA-SCEC	Thai Hotel Association - Southern Chapter East Coast	14
MOTS	Ministry of Tourism and Sport	14
LCMT	Low Carbon Model Town	14
TAKS	Tourism Association of Koh Samui	17
SENSA	Swedish Environment Secretariat for Asia	17
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development	35
UNWTO	United Nation World Tourism	36
TALC	Tourist Area Life Cycle	37
CAT	Circumstance Alternative Tourism	38
DAT	Deliberate Alternative Tourism	38
UMT	Unsustainable Mass Tourism	39
SMT	Sustainable Mass Tourism	39
CoaST	Cornwall Sustainable Tourism Project	44
MSIM	Multi-Stakeholder Involvement Management	44
DMOs	Destination Marketing/management Organisations	46
PDNP	Peak District National Park	48
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation	63
TDMP	Tourism Development Master Plan	77
IRT	Integrated Rural Tourism	78
EGN	European Geoparks Networks	81

Abbreviation	Meaning	Page
GGN	Global Geoparks Networks	81
GCATG	Gold Coast Adventure Travel Group	90
DEVCO	Cape Breton Development Corporation	94
CLS	Convention Local System	95
SPOTS	Suratthani Province Office of Tourism and Sports	152
KSTCC	Koh Samui Tourism Coordination Centre	152
SSA	Samui Spa Association	153
HR Club	Human Resource Club	153
GIFT	Green Island Foundation	155
TAC	Tourist Assistance Centre	204
TSF	Thai Spa Federation	207
HLTC	Health and Lifestyle Tourism clusters	294

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This research is motivated by an aim to investigate the impact of tourism stakeholders' social networks on the sustainability of practices and the formation of tourism clusters on Samui Island.

This chapter provides an overview of the research context, gaps in existing research, and research aims and objectives. It also briefly presents the conceptual framework used, research methodology, the thesis structure, and the contribution of this study.

1.1 Existing Research on Island Tourism

Previous Island tourism studies in the sustainable tourism (ST) context (see the review of ST studies in Appendix 4) note the economic importance of tourism for coastal and island destinations (Wilkinson, 1989). For example, many less developed countries and small island states promote tourism as an essential element for the local economy in terms of foreign exchange, employment, and development of transport and communication connectivity (Gössling, 2003).

However, previous island studies evidence that there are difficulties in implementing sustainable tourism which include lack of expertise, funds, and skills. Also, when facing political difficulties (e.g. corruption, instability) (Tosun, 2001), there is a lack of community participation in decision-making and planning process (Yasarata et al., 2010; Ioannides, 1995; Scheyvens, 2011).

Many small island developing states (SIDS) are also economically vulnerable and are exposed to foreign economic conditions and to natural disasters as well as having the disadvantages associated with small size, insularity, and remoteness (Briguglio, 1995).

Some authors rather focus on the challenges of tourism management and development than the disadvantages of the physical geography of the islands and their vulnerability to climate change. Baldacchino's (2002) paper for instance, presented the example of how small, locally-owned and export-oriented manufacturing firms based on small islands like Prince Edward Island (PEI), Canada, can overcome the issue of economic vulnerability. Baldacchino (2002) presented the case study evidence of the small-island success from the PEI where a province has achieved spectacular rates of economic growth through island-based businesses and manufacturing in small-scale operations, high-value product, and service-niching. The PEI PreserveCo is a locally-owned and locally based manufacturing operation, which uses local traditional skills such as the island's traditional fruit and vegetable canning, pickling and drying to produce a natural product. The PEI PreserveCo applied a marketing approach involving an appeal to the sense of sight (the decor of shops and restaurants), smell and taste (the products), touch (the products), and hearing (traditional music) which present a dedicated customer service, create marketing identity, and provide unique tourist experience.

Dodds and Kelman (2008) used Mediterranean island case studies based on Calvià, Mallorca, and Malta to examine how sustainable tourism policies do and do not work and should factor in climate change in order to reduce the vulnerabilities of the tourism sector. Data were collected from policy makers as well as tourism policy and planning documents from Malta's and Calvià's tourism industries. Tourism in both case studies has significant vulnerabilities to climate change,

but climate change was rarely addressed as being an important tourism issue. Instead, the policies include measures that contribute to climate change adaptation (e.g. excessive water consumption by tourists, and commercial jet flights that use fossil fuels intensively) and cover all aspects of tourism management which are integrated into wider sector, regional, and national policies that can be implemented strategically and realistically, involving short-term interests without compromising longer term objectives.

This is supported by Kelman's (2014) paper which used the case study of small island developing states (SIDS) affected by climate change to explore how focusing on climate change can depoliticise the challenges that they face. He argued that the focus should not be on the hazard of climate change, but rather should be on the reasons why SIDS peoples do not have the resources to resolve climate change and other development difficulties themselves, on their own terms (Kelman, 2014). He argued that climate change is not the fundamental hazard, but the fundamental problem lies in the political root causes of the vulnerabilities, which depoliticises longstanding and unresolved development challenges (e.g. poor resources access, inequity, exploitation and injustice) (Kelman, 2014).

However, a substantial volume of island studies are also concerned with the environmental impacts from tourism activities and development (De-Miguel-Molina et al., 2014; Ghina, 2003; Ioannides, 1995) as well as the climate change issues (Gössling et al., 2008; Hall, 2010). For example, tourism can produce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation costs (e.g. transport and aviation emissions) (Gössling et al., 2009). This analysis is supported by Hall (2010), who argued that tourism can contribute to biodiversity loss due to direct habitat changes and

human/tourism activities, as well as the unplanned introduction of exotic species and associated environmental change. In particular, a number of studies reveal a concern for island destinations in developing economies where mass tourism has been developed without control, leading to serious environmental and socio-cultural problems (Brohman, 1996; Ioannides, 1995; Logar, 2010; Scheyvens, 2011).

Wilkinson's (1989) paper for instance, based on the literature review, not only indicated the inevitability of island microstates developing tourism and facing its negative impacts (e.g. environmental, economic, and socio-cultural problems) but also suggested the need for national governments to formulate tourism policies that focus on local involvement and regulation in order to both minimise the environmental, economic, and sociocultural costs and to maximise the benefits to local residents. Wilkinson (1989) also suggested that the basic guidelines of tourism development which the destination areas should develop should reflect local history, lifestyles, and geographic settings. Moreover, the tourism planning should be based on the overall development goals and priorities determined by local residents.

A numbers of studies provide alternative approaches, models and frameworks in order to minimise the negative impacts on local natural environment and communities. For example, Briguglio's (1995) paper focused on the major economic vulnerabilities faced by SIDS. He proposed a method for constructing an index to measure economic vulnerability which it can inform about the issue of vulnerability of certain economies (Briguglio, 1995). He suggested that appropriate policies for SIDS should consist of both "niche-filling export strategy" and "flexible

specialisation”, if pursued both of these successfully, would cause ‘vulnerability’ to rise, rather than to fall (Briguglio, 1995, p. 1624).

Twining-Ward and Butler (2002) investigated the indicators that can be used to monitor sustainable tourism development (STD) in Samoa, South Pacific. The study explained the methodological considerations and processes involved in the development of STD indicators as well as highlighting the importance of formulating clear objectives and designing effective and flexible implementation frameworks for converting indicator results into management action. Similarly, Reddy (2008) analysed the ‘bottom-up’ sustainable tourism rapid indicators (STRI) framework, which is mainly based on local knowledge, in order to improve ways of moving tourism practices towards STD in the Andaman and Nicobar Island of India (ANI). The research described the process and stages of the ANI STRI development framework and argued that the indicators are useful in terms of providing context for the understanding of changes and their implication to policy priorities (Reddy, 2008).

Martín-Cejas and Sánchez (2010) analysed the road transport ecological footprint at Lanzarote, a Spanish Island. Logar (2010) focused on the policy instrument for measuring the impacts of tourism industry in Croatia. Sani and Mahasti (2012) applied regional identity for STD planning in Eslami Island, Iran. Sani and Mahasti’s (2012) study aimed to identify factors required to achieve social enrichment and conservation of the cultural and natural heritage by which local the community’s needs, and culture were included into tourism development planning. De-Miguel-Molina et al.’ (2014) applied luxury ST to detect patterns for sustainability behaviour in deluxe resorts, in the SIDS. Findings suggested that luxury can go hand in hand with the

sustainability objectives depending on the patterns of sustainability behaviour, sustainability management, and the willingness to improve environmental practices, and sacrifice some activities and services.

Studies on the topic argued in favour of the implementation of STD strategies and sustainable planning and control. For instance, Ioannides (1995) suggested alternative tourism as a means to achieve sustainable development (SD) in the Akamas Peninsula. Carlsen (1999) argued in favour of soft systems approaches to tourism destination planning and management by which each stage of methodology requires analysis of cultural, social, political and environmental impacts and issues that are associated with tourism development. Rodríguez et. al, (2008) focused on strategic management at the destination, as the means to analyse the products and appropriate strategies. Tao and Wall (2008) introduced sustainable livelihood concept as a practical strategy to implement STD. Gössling et al. (2008) developed carbon neutral tourism policies in the Seychelles Islands in order to analyse the current level of tourism's energy use and emissions and to explore ways to reduce them.

Yasarata et al. (2010) focused on ST policy development, planning and implementation in North Cyprus and drew attention to the influence of public-sector based tourism stakeholders on policy making and planning with an ability to pull different factions together. Similarly, Erkuş-öztürk and Eraydın (2010) also focused on the role of tourism stakeholders, and their environmental networks in implementing STD, in Antalya, Turkey.

This review, considers a number of empirical studies that focus on the tourism stakeholders' perspective and their relationships which significantly influence the overall economic practices at the destinations (e.g. establishing and implementing tourism policies and planning). Moreover, in the context of island tourism (especially in developing economies), there is a dearth of studies focusing on the roles of tourism stakeholders and their networks, and how they impact upon the formation of sustainable tourism clusters.

1.1.1 Key gaps in the literature

To date, there is no study that applies the three theories together; stakeholders, social networks, and clusters to investigate tourism cluster formation in implementing sustainability objectives, particularly in the island context. Also, empirical case studies do not adequately explain and address the interrelationships between tourism stakeholders underpinning the formation and development of tourism clusters in island destinations. Nor do they fully consider their (un)sustainability or provide a clear understanding of tourism clusters in terms of sustainability in the island context. Thus, this research aims to fill these gaps by focusing on the role of tourism stakeholders and their interrelationships influencing the (un) sustainability of tourism clusters, as well as the evolution of tourism clusters in the Samui Island context, which remains under-investigated.

1.2 Research Context

This research focuses on Samui Island which is a well-known tourism destination which generated GBP 650 million¹ in year 2014 (Department of Tourism, Thailand, 2014). Despite its sensitive eco-system, tourism in Samui has rapidly grown in the last ten years, seeing an increase in the number of accommodation units and other associated businesses that have proliferated without proper development and control. Also, the region's tourism industry has attracted an influx of outsiders (both Thais and foreigners) who have moved to Samui to work and permanently live on the island, resulting in serious negative impacts upon the local natural environment and local communities (e.g. socio-cultural, economical, and environmental issues). At a personal level, this research stems from the author's concerns about the unsustainable practices and development on Samui which is the author's native region. The author has been observing the tourism industry slowly evolve since the author's childhood. Further, the author works as a lecturer at the International School of Tourism, Surratthani Rajabhat University which is located on Samui and this facilitated access to relevant research and local knowledge about the island.

Samui is rich in environmental and cultural resources². The island is urbanised and is famous as a coastal tourism destination and is gradually becoming popular with mass tourists. Tourism is at the heart of Samui Island as it creates many job opportunities and is the main activity for local people to engage for their living (City council of Koh Samui, 2007 cited in Soontayatron, 2010).

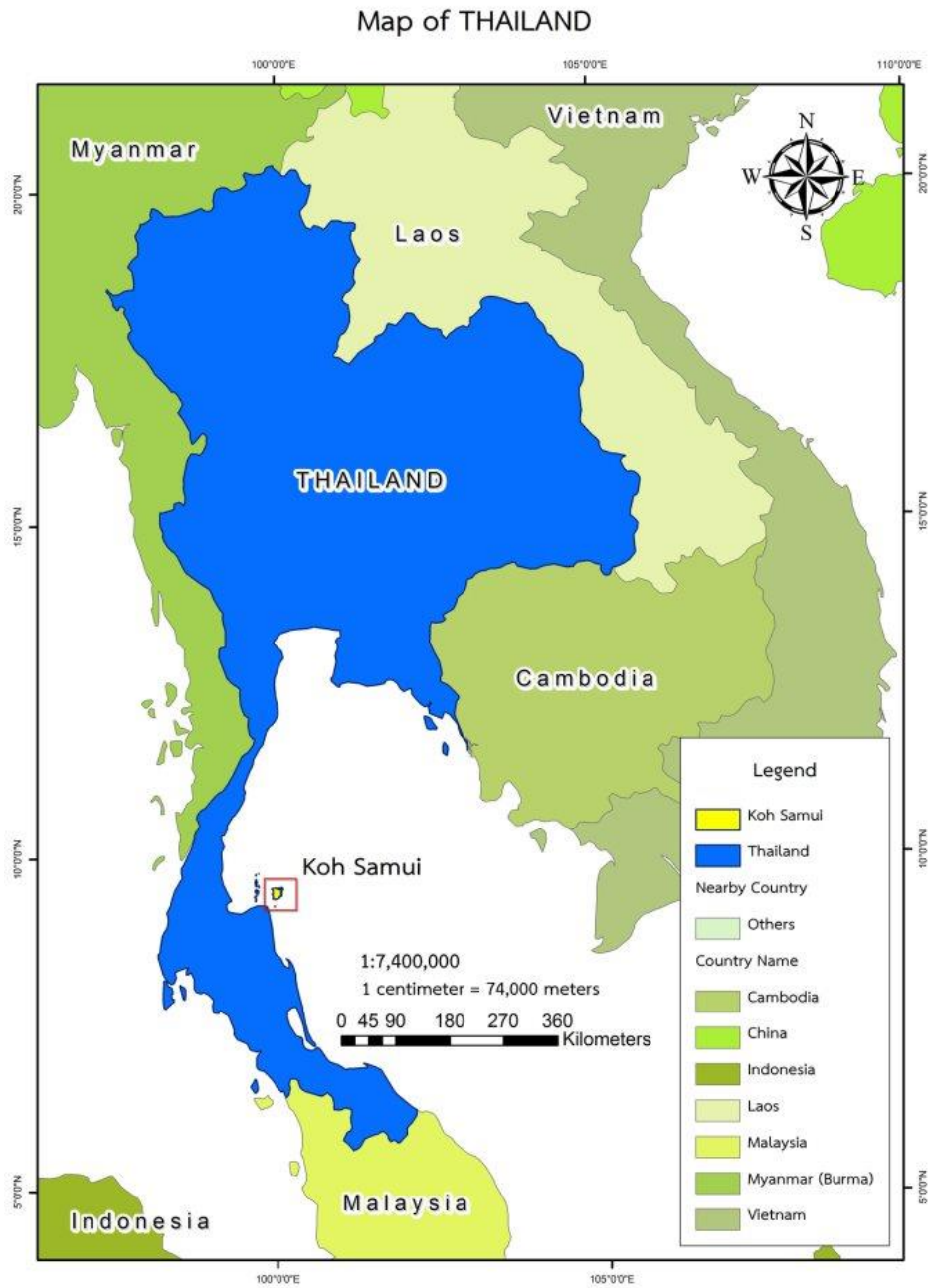
¹ 55.15 Bath/1 GBP, foreign exchange rates as of 15th December 2015 (Bank of Thailand, 2015).

² It was ranked at 6th of Reader's travel Awards 2008, Conds Nast Traveller magazine, UK and was voted as 3rd place as the place must visit of New York Times magazine, 2011. (The New York Times, 2012).

Samui Island is situated in the Gulf of Thailand, 84 kilometres northeast from Suratthani province. The island occupies an area of 227 square kilometres, which places it as the third largest island in the country after Phuket and Chang islands (Koh Samui Municipality, 2012). Topographically, more than half (54%) of the island is composed of mountains and hills. About one third (33%) of the island, or about 73 square kilometres, is composed of plains, including both an area of plains and beaches. In the past, the island was rich in tropical forest mountains but these are now much reduced and have been replaced by coconut, rubber and fruit plantations or used for tourism related businesses. Both the coconut tree and tourism are regarded as symbols of the island. Administratively, Samui district is one of Suratthani province's districts and occupies an area of 252 square kilometres; this includes Samui Island and another 52 nearby islands. Samui is divided into 7 sub-districts; Ang Thong, Bo Phud, Lipa Noi, Meanum, Taling Ngam, Mared and Na Muang (Koh Samui Municipality, 2012).

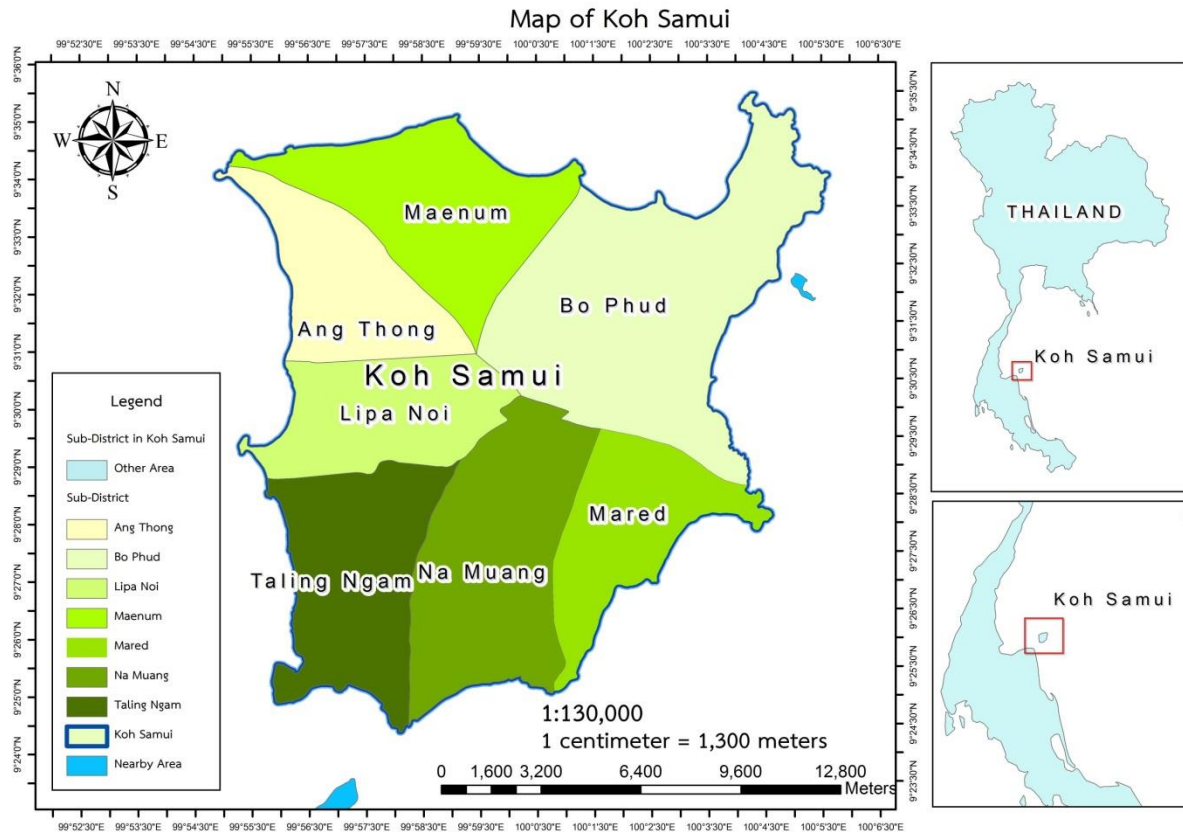
See Figure 1.1 for the map of Thailand, and Figure 1.2 for the map of Samui Island.

Figure 1.1: Map of Thailand



Source: Department of Geography, Faculty of Arts, Silpakorn University

Figure 1.2: Map of Samui Island



Source: Department of Geography, Faculty of Arts, Silpakorn University

According to the 2011 population census, there are 54,979 registered residents; 26,727 males and 28,252 females. There are 300,000 nonregistered residents³ and about 3,000 tourists per day that come to Samui. (Koh Samui Municipality, 2012) The density of population is 242.19 residents per square kilometre. The majority of the population on the island is Buddhist (98%) and there are some Muslims and Christians. The official language is Thai but the English language is widely understood. Samui residents are variously engaged in tourism-related, fishing and fruit and rubber growing enterprises. (Koh Samui Municipality, 2012).The climate of Samui is

³ Nonregistered residents are residents who are not registered of Samui district's residence registration but they are registered of other districts' or provinces' residence registration and they come to Samui to work, study, or for business purposes.

tropical and experiences heavy rainfall all year round. There are three seasons: dry (December – February), hot (March – August), and rainy or monsoon season (September – November). The number of tourists is particularly high during January –April (Koh Samui Municipality, 2012).

1.2.1 An Overview of the Tourism Industry in Samui Island

Samui Island was a self-sufficient, and rather isolated, community until the 1940s (Koh Samui history-Thailand, 2008). The development and improvement of tourism in the island started in 1970 and tourism became a source of revenue but not a “monster” industry until the late 1980’s and early 1990’s (Koh Samui history-Thailand, 2008) after support and promotion from the government.

Since the 1980’s, the tourism industry in Samui has expanded extensively without appropriate planning and management. Thus there are a number of tourism related businesses such as hotels, resorts, restaurants, shops, and bars that have been indiscriminately constructed on the shore, along the coastline and on the mountains. Needless to say, the dramatic rise in the number of tourists and tourism related businesses is beginning to create significant negative impacts on the environment and natural resources. For instance, the construction work is threatening groves of coconut trees resulting in their degradation (Pakakrong, 2011). Local attractions such as beaches, mountains, and waterfalls are beginning to suffer through the air pollution due to chemical poisoning and water pollution that is damaging coral reefs. The accumulation of rubbish⁴,

⁴ Due to the fast growth of tourism, Samui Island faces a serious problem rubbish accumulation as some 120 tons/day. In 2009, there were 15,000 tons of rubbish left out and waiting to be disposed (Manager online, 2009). In addition, there are waste water and water scarcity problems; as 18,000-22,000 cubic meters of water are daily used while the waste water treatment can only treat 5,754 cubic meters of water per day while the rest is released into rivers and canals (Green Island Project Koh Samui cited in Eco issue, 2011).

encroachment onto protected areas, and the degradation of forests from building hotels and resorts on the mountains are causing an increase in landslides and serious flooding (Pongponrat, 2011).

The environmental and natural resources of Samui have been suffering for a long time from the negative impacts of tourism and unsustainable practices of tourism stakeholders. This is manifest in the encroachment of the accommodation sector (e.g. hotels, resorts, and the real estate) on forested mountains and beaches as a result of which the accumulation of rubbish, polluted water (and the associated risk of landslides) are damaging the coral reefs. It is not just the environment that is suffering negatively from tourism, but also the socio-cultural aspects of island life. For example, local people have limited access to the beach as a result of the proliferation of hotels and luxury resorts. Many locals have sold their lands to foreigners and moved out of the island. Thus, the island has become a place for foreigners who own most of the businesses. As a result of immigrants and non-residents on Samui, the price of land has escalated, resulting in a further inequality of benefit distributions.

On the positive side, the tourism boom has created enormous job opportunities for people from other provinces and countries as well, such as people from the north-eastern region of Thailand, Burmese, Europeans and Scandinavians who come and work in the tourism industry. For instance, there are about 300,000 immigrants working in tourism industry and living in Samui (Koh Samui Municipality, 2012). Moreover, the idea of sustainable tourism development is gradually gaining ground in Thailand. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) a national tourism organization, is promoting campaigns and projects aimed at raising awareness about

climate change and environmental preservation among public and private providers and travelers. TAT's recent project "Seven Greens Concept"⁵ aims to promote an understanding of sustainable tourism by implementing a number of ideas (See also Appendix 1). This project especially targets Thai families and youth in a bid to enhance their awareness of the gradual, but steady, growth of consumers in this segment (TAT News, 2012).

The local business associations in Samui have also initiated the idea of making Samui, "a green island". With the support of business associations such as the Thai Hotels Association - Southern Chapter East Coast (THA-SCEC) (established in 1963), the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS) and TAT jointly planned and launched the "Green Island Project"⁶ in 2008 (Green Island Project-Koh Samui, 2009) to promote the Samui region as a "green island". In addition, Samui was recently selected to implement a "Low Carbon Model Town (LCMT)" project⁷ to reduce carbon dioxide emission, reduce and reuse solid waste, and treat water for non-sanitary purpose (The Energy Smart Communities Initiative, 2012). However, there are only a few organisations and sectors that are seriously committed to sustainable practices. This is challenging as Samui requires a high level of commitment and collaboration from all tourism stakeholders in order to achieve the goal of making Samui Island a "green island". The lack of clear guidelines and effective strategies for STD, and an extensive increase in the number of

⁵ The main principles underlying the 'Seven Greens Concept' are (1) Green heart, (2) Green activity, (3) Green logistics, (4) Green community, (5) Green Service, (6) Green attraction, (7) Green plus.

⁶ It is the collaboration among the government, private sector, public service organizations, media, community and general public. This project will be 10 years project, which started from 2008 to 2017 (Green Island Project -Koh Samui, 2009).

⁷ The Low Carbon Model Town (LCMT) project was launched in 2010 and is part of the 'Green Growth' initiative for APEC 2011, which promotes climate-friendly, low-carbon and energy efficient technologies (APEC Launches test-case for Low Carbon Model Town, 2011) Samui Island was chosen among several cities in several countries, who also proposed, in the region as a Model Town test-case. The project started in 2011 and the "Feasibility Study" was completed scheduled to be completed by the end of 2012 (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, 2011).

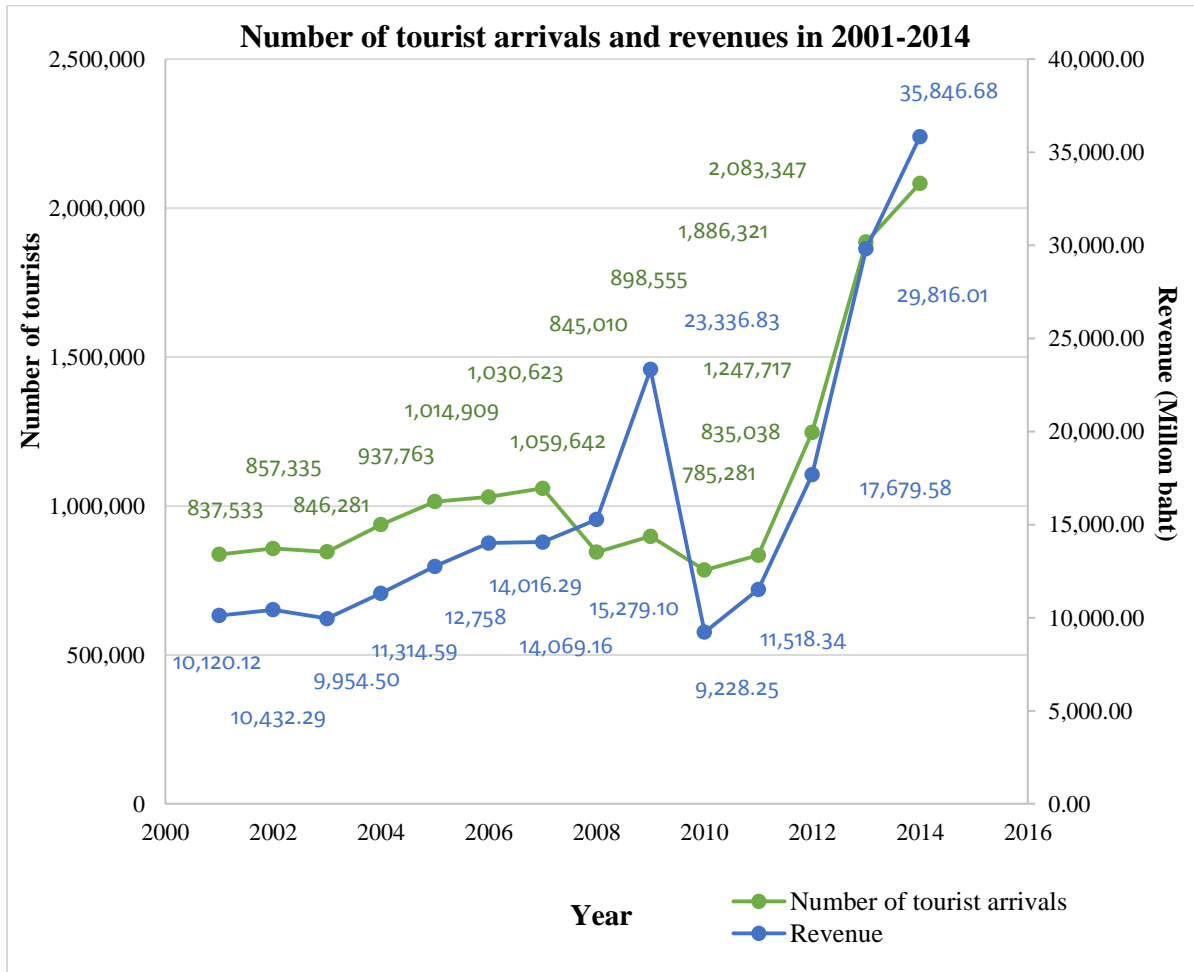
accommodation businesses means that ST has been adopted more in theory than practice (Pongponrat, 2011).

Samui attracted over one million tourists and generated 35, 846.68 million bahts⁸ for the country in 2014 (see Figure 1.3). The accommodation sector has witnessed the most growth; in year 2006, there were 360 accommodation businesses and 13,290 rooms. A year later there were 403 accommodation businesses and 14,405 rooms (Koh Samui Tourism Coordination Centre, 2007) then in 2011, there were about 479 accommodation businesses and 18,252 rooms to accommodate tourists (Pakakrong, 2011). In 2013, there were 540 accommodation businesses and 20,951 rooms (Koh Samui Tourism Coordination Centre, 2013) In addition, there has been growth in other tourism related businesses such as retail shops, restaurants, pubs, bars and other service providers concentrated on the attractions and communities. Moreover, there are 390 tour operators, 2 golf courses , 95 standard spas, 41 banks, 4 international hospitals, 5 department stores, 59 convenience shops, 11 petrol stations, 2 boat and 2 ferry companies, and other transportation modes such as 400 taxies, 450 vans, and 187 public minibuses which cater mainly for tourists' needs (Koh Samui Tourism Coordination Centre, 2011).

See Figure 1.3 for tourist arrivals to Samui and the revenue in 2001-2014 (also see Appendix 2 and Appendix 3).

⁸ The foreign exchange rate as of 15th December 2015, was 55.15 bahts equivalent to one GBP (Bank of Thailand, 2015).

Figure 1.3: The number of tourist arrivals and the revenue of Samui Island, 2001-2014



Source: Department of Tourism, Thailand.

Note: the foreign exchange rate as of 15th December 2015, was 55.15 bahts equivalent to one GBP (Bank of Thailand, 2015).

Figure 1.3 shows that the numbers of tourist arrivals to Samui Island has been increasing continuously except in 2003, when tourist number dropped due to SARS which affected some 37 countries globally. 9/11 in 2001 and the Bali bombing in, October 2002 also had negative impacts on tourism (Crespo and Suddaby, 2002).

In 2007, the number of arrivals increased, due both to an increase in direct flights from Singapore and Hong Kong to Samui Island, and *Fire*, a low cost Malaysian airline which

opened new routes from Pe Nang to Samui Island. Moreover, Samui Island has been continuously promoting as a “Sun Sand Sea” mass tourism destination. Also, the Thai political crisis started at this time and has continued until the present. Due to the political instability and terrible flooding in Samui (BBC News, 2010) there was a decrease in the number of tourists in 2010. However, TAT and the private sector in Samui Island tried to promote tourism, and expanded to new markets in Asia, which led to an increase in tourism number in the following years (i.e. 2011-2014).

However, the increase in the number of tourists and tourism related businesses has impacted on the environment and natural resources of the island. Samui has been experiencing environmental problems due to mass tourism and unsustainable practices of key stakeholders. Given this scenario, tourism stakeholders such as the TAT, Koh Samui municipality, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources and MOTS have come together with private sector and a range of organizations including both non-profit and international ones. This has included the Tourism Association of Koh Samui (TAKS), the Green Leaf Foundation, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and Mangroves For the Future in order to work on sustainability projects and promote sustainable practices throughout the island. The aim is to both generate economic growth and concern for social issues and environmental protection. For example, “REEART Project: Koh Samui International Ecofestival” is a music festival for spreading awareness of environmental protection. The REEART Project involves a wide range of actors including the collaboration of a group of friends in the music, media, travel industry and the local community. It also involves *Nöjesguiden* (a Swedish newspaper), TAT, and the Swedish Environment Secretariat for Asia (SENSA), Thai International Hospital as well as MTV

ASIA Music Television so involving individuals in the music, media, and travel industries which volunteer on local environment projects (REEART, 2012). Even though there are many projects for promoting the awareness of key stakeholders, there are only a few that can be called really sustainable. From a theoretical perspective, little exists that explores the issues of sustainable development in the context of Samui.

1.3 Research aim and objectives

This research's overall aim is to investigate tourism, stakeholder networks and cluster sustainability on Samui Island, Thailand.

To address this aim, the following research objectives and key questions have been addressed:

1. Investigate the content and nature of relationships between tourism stakeholders, as well as their business routines and behaviours.

Research questions;

1.1 What factors define the profile of inter-relationships between tourism stakeholders?

1.2 How do business routines and socio-economic dynamics impact upon behaviour, motivations and expectations of stakeholders?

2. Investigate the influence of the social networks between tourism stakeholders in relation to tourism cluster formations.

Research questions;

2.1 What are the characteristics and properties of networks (e.g. who are the members, numbers of members, when was it established) of tourism stakeholders in Samui?

2.2 What key activities and roles define the profile of tourism networks and their influence / impact on the local community?

2.3 How do stakeholders' world views influence the dynamics shaping (in)formal networking between tourism stakeholders and the profile of tourism cluster as a whole?

3. Identify and explain key factors obstructing relationships building and the implementation of sustainable practices.

Research questions;

3.1 What are the key factors inherent in tourism stakeholders' profiles and capacities (e.g. knowledge, experience, time, commitment, and financial resource) that contribute to relationship- building and the implementation of sustainable practices?

3.2 Does the physical proximity of tourism businesses and other tourism stakeholders negatively influence relationship- building?

4. Establish key factors facilitating the formation of sustainable tourism clusters.

Research questions;

4.1 What type of relationships and (in)formal networks that facilitate the formation of sustainable tourism clusters?

4.2 What are the crucial properties of tourism stakeholders and their social networks that facilitate the formation of sustainable tourism clusters?

1.4 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this study is guided by the relational approach or 'relational turn' (Boggs & Rantisi, 2003) in economic geography, which facilitates a focus on micro / macro practices, socio-spatial relations between actors, and the profile of tourism clusters.

Stakeholder theory is used to identify tourism stakeholders and examine their profiles in depth. This enables an understanding of their attitudes, interests, problems, and their comprehension of sustainability issues.

The Social network approach helps in identifying more relevant tourism stakeholders and understanding the tourism stakeholders' interrelationships in terms of how they influence the attitudes and behaviour of tourism stakeholders, as well as the economic practices as a whole which shape the tourism clusters.

The cluster concept helps in providing the geographical dimension that provides the opportunities and constrains to economic practices. It provides the dimension of a life cycle since tourism clusters change and evolve over time, significantly through the dynamic interactions and relations of economic practices. However, the factors that influence the actions and decisions are variable and relate to contextuality, interactions, interpretations, and random events. The cluster concept also provides a context for sharing an understanding of business practices, collective vision, the wide involvement of cluster participation, cooperative competition, and interdependence of firms (Jackson and Murphy, 2002).

The significance of the conceptual approach adopted in this study is that **it** enables an analysis of the tourism system at the destination that is complex and dynamic. The conceptual framework provides the analytical tool that looks into the interaction process between tourism stakeholders at local level (tourism stakeholders), regional level (tourism associations, non-profit organisations), and national level (government bodies and policy makers) in contributing to

tourism activities and development. It also allows for insight explanations of the consequences of tourism stakeholders' practices and tourism cluster development.

1.5 Research methodology

To achieve the research aim and objectives, and address key questions, this research is guided by a qualitative approach that has been successfully used by previous studies focusing on sustainable tourism (Dredge, 2006; Kimbu and Ngoasong, 2013; Pavlovich, 2003; Saxena, 2006).

The research philosophy guiding this work is the constructivist approach, because this approach emphasises how the situational and cultural variations shape reality (Marvesti, 2004). This research seeks to analyse the relationships among tourism stakeholders, as well as the content and meaning of the relationships interpreted by those tourism stakeholders. It also seeks to understand how various world views (meaningfully interpreted), experiences, performances/roles, and behaviour of several tourism stakeholders shape tourism (Pernecky, 2012). Thus, the constructivist approach is appropriate for this research because it posits that the characteristics and structure of relationships evolve over time, they mutate and are changeable depending on the specific context (e.g. cultural, political, and economic), which affect individuals' world views and interpretation of reality, and subsequently their actions.

Tourism stakeholders were initially identified from a review of previous literature on sustainable tourism. As field work commenced, use was made of secondary data (i.e. websites, brochures, and booklets) in identifying local, regional and national stakeholders. The snowballing technique

was also applied in identifying additional relevant tourism stakeholders from interviewee referrals. In general, this study included government bodies, policy makers, tourism-related businesses, local communities (i.e. those who are originally from Samui, and indirectly involved in tourism such as farmers, fishermen, and teachers), media, support organisations, and non-profit organisations. Tourists were excluded due to the research's aims and focus mainly on providers and their inter-relationships, which contribute to sustainable tourism development.

Data was collected over a period of four months (August-November, 2013) through sixty semi-structure interviews, four focus groups, and personal observation techniques. The interviews were conducted in the Thai language. The interview schedule was first developed in English, then the interview schedule was translated into the Thai language by the researcher. All interviews were tape recorded.

The data was then analysed, and categorised to create themes. The NVivo 10 software was only used to facilitate the process of data analysis in this research. This qualitative data analysis software enabled this researcher to manage and organise the data more efficiently (Welsh, 2002). It provided the features for facilitating the data coding process and allowed the research to store and explores the data more systematically (Welsh, 2002). This helped the researcher avoid risks of human errors in data coding and information searching on the whole data set, since the software helped keep the text/data in an organised database (Denizin and Lincoln, 2000; Welsh, 2002). Thus, the NVivo 10 software can enhance the quality, rigour and trustworthiness of the research (Denizin and Lincoln, 2000; Welsh, 2002).

1.6 Thesis structure

Overall, this thesis consists of six chapters in addition to this chapter;

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 2 critically reviews the sustainable tourism literature, and the relevance of stakeholder, social networks, and cluster theories. It presents a rationale for the use of these three theories to analyse linkages between tourism stakeholders and it focuses on the nature and patterns of their networks. To investigate and provide an understanding of the contribution of their social networks to tourism cluster formation and development in the two regions; (1) the north-eastern region (sub district Bo Phud) and (2) south/south-western region (sub district Na Muang and Taling Ngam) of Samui Island.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In Chapter 3 the research philosophy and a rationale for the choice of research methodology approach are explained. This research is guided by the constructivist approach which emphasises how situational and cultural variations shape reality (Marvesti, 2004). This research seeks to understand how various interests and world views of diverse tourism stakeholders shape the destination and destination development, as tourism destination is an interdependent network of multiple tourism stakeholders which is dynamic and change over time depending on the meaning interpreted as well as political and socio-cultural context (Pavlovich, 2003). This research also provides an overview of the selected study area. It explains the rationale for the selection of particular instruments for data collection, and describes the actual data collection process and data analysis.

Chapter 4: Profile of Key tourism stakeholders and their networking patterns in Samui

Chapter 4 provides an insight into the profile of the key tourism stakeholders and outlines the role they play in sustaining the tourism industry in Samui. It analyses their interrelationships and networking patterns that facilitate and influence (un)sustainable tourism cluster development on Samui Island. It focuses on tourism stakeholders' values, attitudes, interests, motivations, and expectations, as well as their networking patterns which underpin the opportunities and constraints inherent in the collaborative framework.

Chapter 5: Tourism cluster formation on Samui: A critical review of patterns and processes

Chapter 5 emphasises the key processes underlying tourism clusters' formation on Samui that are influenced by stakeholders' profile and their networking patterns (as discussed in Chapter 4). It also addresses the key challenges underpinning tourism clusters on Samui, namely (1) the lack of capacities and resources available to the '*chao bann*' (the uneducated), (2) limited collaboration amongst local communities and (3) the lack of law enforcement and control of unsustainable tourism activities and development by the local government. It also demonstrates opportunities for future growth and development towards sustainable tourism. Due to a growing understanding of sustainable tourism and the distinctiveness, it offers the potential to increase in collaborative networks and exchanges between public and private sectors, and enhanced awareness / adoption of sustainable practices.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Chapter 6 summarises the key findings in the context of the research aims and objectives. It discusses the theoretical contributions to knowledge, and the practical implications of the research. It also addresses research limitations and identifies areas for further research.

1.7 Contributions of this research

This research advances the knowledge on sustainable tourism development in an island context by utilising stakeholder theory, the social network approach, and the cluster concept to investigate the formation and clustering process of tourism clusters. The combination of these three theories allows for a deeper understanding on how tourism stakeholders' networks facilitate or limit opportunities in developing sustainable tourism clusters.

Stakeholder theory helps to identify tourism stakeholders and understand their profiles. It also helps to identify stakeholders' interests and concerns, attitudes and values towards networking and (sustainable) tourism development. Social networks enable the researcher to uncover the workings and nature of networks, and allow for a deeper understanding of how such social networks shape the tourism clusters' profiles and development. The cluster concept helps to capture the geographical dimension and spatial agglomeration, where the concentrations of firms situated in geographic co-location come together in performing social and economic exchanges with a view to achieving collective goal (i.e. sustainable tourism), innovation, and competitive advantages.

Previous studies on tourism cluster and in the field of sustainable tourism are still scarce (Cunha and Cunha, 2005; Hawkins, 2004), and there is still a lack of discussion of the crucial properties of key tourism stakeholders and their interrelationships, that can successfully facilitate the formation of sustainable tourism clusters, especially in the island context, and in developing countries (see Table 6.1 and its discussion, in Chapter 6).

Empirically, to date, no study has attempted to identify the inter-relationships and networking patterns existing amongst tourism stakeholders on Samui, and how they contribute to cluster formation. Also, the use of focus groups that bring together key tourism stakeholders is also scarce as policy making and tourism development in the region is quite top-down. For example, the government and policy makers permit the over- development of building (e.g. accommodation businesses, and big department stores) and its location in inappropriate areas (e.g. protected forests on the mountains, and in local community areas) without shared decision-making with local communities. Decisions are often made at the top, and unsustainable practices given a go-ahead due to either the political / financial clout of firms / persons concerned or because the environmental monitoring on Samui is still in its infancy.

Practically, this research will be of use to policy makers, tourism managers and other stakeholders such as non-profit making bodies and local communities in improving relationships, developing effective collaboration among tourism stakeholders, and successfully creating sustainable tourism clusters.

This research also demonstrates the significance of effective networking among different tourism stakeholders groups, especially the local communities. This is because this provides the opportunity to develop unique tourism products, improve local destination development, and to create more equitable sharing of the benefits from tourism. This research also enables policy makers, tourism managers, and other stakeholders to recognise and understand the significance of clustering, which is a new philosophy for them to apply in strategic implementation leading to sustainable tourism development. Clustering suggests the significant development of a shared

value and a collective goal among diverse tourism stakeholders, broad participation in decision making, and the specialisation of tourism clusters. Clustering has implications for the significance of synergy and co-operation among tourism firms and other tourism stakeholders that are involved and linked in a value chain in tourism clusters (Michael, 2007; Nordin, 2003).

Thus, this research provides a new way of approaching and implementing sustainable tourism development for Samui Island.

1.8 Summary

There are a number of studies on sustainable tourism development which suggest that the collaboration and involvement of diverse tourism stakeholders is key in achieving sustainable tourism (Aas et al., 2005; Currie et al., 2009; Hawkins, 2004; Pavlovich, 2001; Prats and Guisa, 2008; Presenza and Sheeran, 2013; Scheyvens, 2011; Timur and Getz, 2009; Tomljenović et al., 2013; Waligo et al., 2013). However, few studies have examined island tourism destinations from the providers' perspective. Thus, this research makes a significant contribution to research by utilising stakeholder theory, a social networks approach and cluster concepts in analysing the tourism stakeholders' interrelationships and social networks, and their influence on tourism cluster formation and development,. It provides a framework to identify the nature and profile of stakeholders, their networking patterns, and identifies how these facilitate sustainable tourism cluster formation. The next chapter will consider research on stakeholder theory, social networks approach, and cluster concepts in greater depth, with a view to presenting the conceptual framework of this research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at three theoretical approaches: stakeholder theory, the social networks approach, and clusters concept, to analyse and examine links between tourism stakeholders, the quality and count of their networking and how this contributes to successful, sustainable tourism clusters' formation in the two regions; (1) the north-eastern region (sub-district Bo Phud) and (2) south-western region (sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam) of Samui Island.

As actors' profile and their inter-relationships are the central focus of this research, theoretically this study ties in with what Boggs & Rantisi (2003) term 'the relational turn'. This concept helps to capture the micro / macro practices, socio-spatial relations between actors, and the profile of tourism clusters (Boggs & Rantisi, 2003). From this perspective, 'space' is viewed as a platform to analyse socio- economic interactions between actors within a specific context, which in turn influences intended and unplanned spatial results (Bathelt, 2006; Boggs & Rantisi, 2003). Thus socio-economic processes are viewed as dynamic, evolving over time through continuous interactions and interpretations of stakeholders and their past interface, practices and decisions which impact on current transactions (Bathelt and Glückler, 2003; Bathelt and Glückler, 2005; Ettliger, 2003). Since the focus of this work is on micro processes, the emphasis is on understanding how stakeholder practices, their resources and the social capital inherent in their networks impact upon the formation of tourism clusters.

From a relational perspective, a tourism cluster can be viewed as a network of social relations that are being constructed and reconstructed in the context of a particular place through ongoing interactions and communication involving economic actors, joint decisions, marketing alliances, resource sharing and transferring, and solving problems (Bathelt and Glückler, 2005). Some particular process and communications help to stabilise interaction between the actors and firms as they share the common interests, same problems, have similar day-to-day experiences, and develop a mutual understanding (Bathelt and Glückler, 2005). Thus, it is crucial to understand the interrelationships and networks existing between tourism stakeholders, which enable opportunities for creating clusters that embody a place's identity, its socio-economic performance and the relationship between actors, activities and resources (Anderson et al., 1994).

Stakeholder theory was used as an analytical tool to identify key tourism stakeholders and to understand stakeholders' profiles in-depth. It helped this researcher to gain knowledge and information about stakeholders including their interests, their roles and importance, their influences, and their resources (Stanghellini, 2010). As Freeman (1984, p. 46) defined stakeholder as "any group or individual who can affect or who is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives". This broad sense of stakeholder theory allows the broader lists of tourism stakeholders and enables an understanding of the complex system of the tourism industry that consists of humans, physical environments, infrastructures, wide ranges of tourism products and services. These tourism stakeholders are economic actors who are involved directly in tourism activities such as tourism organisations, government bodies, the accommodation sector, restaurants, tour agencies, tour operators, spas, the transportation sector and shops. Stakeholders who are indirectly involves in tourism activities includes media, local people (e.g.

fishermen, farmers, teachers), non-profit organisations, and some local government officials. It is important not to exclude these indirect tourism stakeholders because they are also an important part of tourism delivery through being part of creating and providing the tourism experience to tourists (see Pavlovich, 2001; Prats and Guisa, 2008; Presenza et al., 2013; Tomljenović et al., 2013; Yüksel et al., 2005). However, stakeholder theory cannot provide insights into the interrelationships between tourism stakeholders and how those interrelationships influence the formation and evolution of tourism clusters.

Consequently, the social networks approach was used to examine the interrelationship between tourism stakeholders focusing on the relational content (e.g. motivations, drives, interests, meaning, norms and expectations) that support those relationships (Lynch & Morrison, 2007), network relations (e.g. strong/weak ties, formal/informal networks, trust, exchange, and reciprocity) and business routines and practices. The social networks approach helped this researcher to capture the dynamic interactions of economic actors and how tourism clusters have emerged and evolved over time, as the outcomes of their relational networks is one of the crucial influences. It gave insights into understanding individuals and collections of economic practices through the relational networks of the different actors (e.g. regional level, and cluster level) who are interdependent by virtue of their exchanges and support for one another in order to gain benefits such as financial support and transferring and sharing resources. Thus, understanding these dynamic interactions of various actors enables us to uncover how the life cycle of tourism clusters are impacted upon and influenced by the outcomes of their relational networks. However, stakeholder theory and social networks approach cannot provide the geographical dimension which provides opportunities and pose constrains to economic practices and networking, and

influence the profile of tourism clusters. Also, they cannot provide the framework to examine the cluster life cycle. Thus, the conceptual approach of this work considers all three theoretical approaches - stakeholder theory, social networks approach, and clusters concept - in conjunction with each other to provide fresh insights into the notion and practice of sustainable tourism.

Porter's (1998) cluster concept can be defined to mean clusters as "...geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a particular field, linked by commonalities and complementarities..." (p.78). It helps to capture the geographical dimension of firms where firms are situated in geographic co-locations that come together performing both social and economic exchanges with a view to achieving innovation, productivity, competitive advantages, and tourism sustainability. From this perspective,, location is a crucial factor in competition (see Crouch and Ritchie, 1999), since the proximity of companies in a limited geographical area can enhance competitive advantages through collaborative networking among different tourism sectors, by which they can share and exchange information, knowledge and resources (Capello and Faggian, 2005; Gertler, 2003; Porter, 1990; Severson et al., 2005). The cluster concept provides a sense of collective working system among various actors, since it can create added value for the tourism destination as a whole (Grimstad and Burgess, 2014; Michael, 2003; Nordin, 2003; Pavlovich, 2003). As Porter (1998, p. 77) notes, "...a host of linkages among cluster members result in a whole greater than it sum of its parts. In a typical tourism cluster, for example, the quality of a visitor's experience depends not only on the appeal of the primary attraction but also on the quality and efficiency of complementary businesses such as hotels, restaurants, shopping outlets, and transportation facilities. Because members of the cluster are mutually dependent, good performance by one can boost the success of the others".

Thus, collectively these three theories are key to this research since they allow an in-depth understanding of the tourism industry on Samui Island. These three theories allow a researcher to understand the profiles of key tourism stakeholders and their inter-relationships, and so help to capture the micro / macro practices and socio-spatial relations between tourism stakeholders who collaborate and cooperate in order to provide tourism products and service that form tourism clusters on Samui Island.

The next section discusses the concept of relational approach or ‘relational turn’ in economic geography.

2.2 ‘Relational turn’ in economic geography

The relational approach or ‘relational turn’ in economic geography (Boggs & Rantisi, 2003) was developed during the 1990s. It emerged partly in response to the work of economists who claimed to have developed a ‘new economic geography’ such as Krugman (1991) and Fujita et al., (1999), whose works focused primarily on the field of mainstream economics and mainly rely on quantifiable factors (Bathelt, 2001; Martin and Sunley, 1996). This ‘new economic geography’ focuses on spatial distribution and equilibrium, based on an analysis of increasing returns, transportation costs, and other trade interdependencies (Martin and Sunley, 1996; Bathelt, 2001). This approach centres on spatial characteristics and identification of their economic attributes (e.g. indicators of the regional infrastructure, labour force, wage levels, and cost factors), believing that those spatial attributes are the main factors influencing regional growth and economic development (Bathelt and Glückler, 2003).

However, this traditional approach has been criticised as it fails to focus on the real economic actors, which are socially constructed entities dependent in particular context settings (economic, social, cultural and political), and the complex social interactions among economic actors that create their own spatial attributes (Bathelt, 2001; Martin and Sunley, 1996; Maskell, 2001; Scott, 1998, 2004). Martin (1999, p. 77) criticised geographical economics for its neglect of “real communities in real historical, social and cultural setting”. Amin and Thrift (2000) also criticised traditional economic geography as “it fails to fire the imagination, yet alone connects with the historical concerns of political economy such as growth, development, inequality and power” (p.4-5). Thus, this traditional approach in economic geography has not been able to provide an explanation about the dynamic process of economic practices generated by the relations and interactions of economic actors at the micro-level, and neglects the socio-political factor, which influences the different outcomes and the economic forces (Boggs and Rantisi, 2003).

Due to the limitations in the traditional approaches, the concept of relational economic geography was developed within economic sociology with the Granovetter (1985)’s notion of embeddedness, Coleman (1988)’s social capital, and the work of institutional economists such as Hodgson (1988) and Lundvall (1988) who integrated the ‘social’ into economic analysis (Boggs and Rantisi, 2003, p.109). The relational approach or ‘relational turn’ in economic geography centres on the economic actors, their relationships, and consequent practices in those social and economic processes, since it believes that those dynamic processes of change and development are generated by the relationships and interactions of the economic actors (Boggs and Rantisi, 2003). From this perspective, the economic action is viewed as being embedded in the network of social (and economic) relationships and it is conceptualised as a context-specific process

(Bathelt and Glückler, 2003; Sunley, 2008). This approach enables an understanding of the localised economic processes such as the institutional learning process, economic innovation, and inter-organisational communication. Through these processes firms are able to acquire sets of competencies and respond to the market uncertainty (Bathelt and Glückler, 2003; Boggs and Rantisi, 2003). Bathelt and Glückler, (2003) conceptualised the relational approach by focusing on the nature of economic processes that are contextually , and path-dependent, as well as contingent in the sense that economic decisions and actions of the economic actors are predetermine. Economic actors are situated in particular contexts of social relations and operate within specific institutional and cultural conditions, which define their choices and relationships. Economic processes are path-dependent in the sense that decisions made in the past affect today's decision. In addition, this relational perspective in economic geography views the space as a perspective or geographical lens for investigating social relationships instead of the object of analysis (Bathelt and Glückler, 2003).

This spatial perspective acknowledges that economic action and interaction are always grounded in particular places and the relationship with them. As a consequence, fundamental interdependencies between economic, social and cultural processes within and between different places, regions or nation states are created. Economic activities necessarily interact with other economic and social processes which take place in the same places. Proximity is important because it provides opportunities for face-to-face contacts (Storper and Venable, 2004) which can be used to develop relational capital (Capello and Faggian, 2005) and stimulate collective learning (Gertler, 2004).

Local proximity enables the pooling of resources, generating cost-saving through capacity sharing, optimal capacity utilisation, and reduced cost. This proximity also increase the chance of knowledge spillovers and enables the formation of local conventions and institutions which further reduce the costs of information and enhancing trust (Boggs and Rantisi, 2003).

2.3 A critical review of research on sustainable tourism

In order to overcome threats which unmanaged tourism can create (Lane, 2005) ST has been developed from the concept of SD in the tourism industry,. This is because the nature of tourism is such that it often relies on the high quality of the destinations' environment, such as natural resources, and cultural attributes (Hunter, 1997). Therefore, many tourism academics, business people and tourism organisations have seen the concept of SD as appropriate for tourism destinations given the tourism sector's great potential to create costs and benefits (economic, environmental and social) (Weaver, 2006). The concept of SD was identified by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) as the '...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED, 1987, P.43). It supports the possibility of continued economic development, but without exploitation environmental, socio-cultural or economic carrying capacities. Thus, the SD concept was adopted for tourism as the management method and policy framework for tourism development so that a destination's environmental resource base - which includes natural, built and cultural features - can be conserved for future development (Lane, 1994).

In 1996, the United Nation World Tourism (UNWTO) agency defined ST as “...tourism which leads to management of all areas, in such a way, that the economic, social and environmental needs are being fulfilled with the cultural integration, ecological processes, biodiversity and supporting the development of societies...” (Janusz and Bajdor, 2013, p.524). Importantly, ST involves minimisation of costs (i.e. environmental and cultural damage) and maximisation of benefits (i.e. long-term economic growth). Later, UNWTO (2004) provided a comprehensive definition of STD in stating that STD “...meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, and biological diversity, and life support systems”. Thus, ST can be regarded as a development that meets the needs of tourists, stimulates economic growth for the local residents (i.e. promotes employment, and uses local material and products), improves the residents’ quality of life, and protects the current physical locations. This is in addition to preserving, and wisely using, natural resources in order to maintain and extend the destination’s tourism resource base for future generations (Angelevska-Najdeska and Rakicevik, 2012; Eagles et al., 2002; Eber, 1992). There are a number of studies in ST literature which have provided different approaches for policy makers to implement STD at destinations.

From the review of ST literature, it is clear that authors have applied different approaches and models to understand sustainable tourism development. The early 1990s saw the early stage of the application of sustainable tourism theory, in which researches gave attention to environmental issues in different case studies areas and in which some authors developed the

framework for sustainable policy, planning and control (Klem, 1992; Owen et al., 1992). In the 2000s, studies introduced novel concepts to evaluate ST. These included concepts such as, carrying capacity (Navarro Jurado et al., 2012; Simón et.al., 2004), environmental footprint (Martín-Cejas and Sánchez, 2010; Dolnicar and Leisch, 2008), ecotourism (Almeyda et. al, 2010; Björk, 2000; Cater, 1993; Chernela, 2011; Gurung&Seeland, 2011; Nepal, 2000; Buultjens et al., 2005); pro-poor tourism (Neto, 2004; Butler et. al, 2012) and integrated rural tourism (Saxena et al., 2007).

2.3.1 TALC and Sustainable Tourism

Butler (1980)'s Tourist Area Life Cycle (TALC) has been examined in many destinations such as resort destinations (Strapp, 1988; Getz, 1992; Agarwal, 1997), coastal destinations (Weaver, 2000), and island destinations (Cooper and Jackson, 1989; Oreja Rodríguez et al, 2008). These studies have suggested that TALC provides a conceptual framework/ a descriptive tool for analysing and understanding the development of destinations and the evolution of their markets. In order to overcome and avoid undesired outcomes such as the decline stage of the cycle, such studies can be utilised by planners and policy makers in highlighting and emphasising tourism planning and management and control such as the strategies for land use, environmental protection, economic development, and marketing. For example, Getz (1992) viewed the concept of a destination life cycle as a useful conceptual framework for tourism planning which can be used to forecast long-term changes and to identify strategies that improve management and control. His empirical work observed the development trends of the Niagara Falls by employing both historical analysis and an expert survey. The historical analysis reveals specific problems in

differentiating the hypothetical life cycle stages of the model. The findings suggest that this resort has evolved into a permanent state of ‘maturity’ in which aspects of consolidation, stagnation, decline, and rejuvenation coexist and are constant. This can be found at destinations that have truly unique characteristics.

However, there have been some criticisms of TALC, such as unit of analysis (e.g. number of tourist arrivals, tourists’ expenditure, business profitability), relevant market (e.g. consideration by market type, distribution method, and market segment, which may show different growth and decline curves), pattern and stages of the cycle (there are possibilities of alternative evolution curves that do not follow in the traditional stages and are s-shaped). Consequently, it is difficult to identify stages and turning points, to determine unit of measurement (number of tourists, tourist expenditure, business profitability), and to determine of the relevant time unit (the major problem is lack of empirical data over a long period of time) (Haywood, 1986).

Some researchers argued that the TALC model has limitations. For example, it neither provides an explanation for changes nor either the options available or the strategies required to avoid or overcome difficult situations (Weaver, 2000). In addition, it has some limitations in explaining the movement towards sustainability (Rodríguez et al., 2008).

Weaver (2000) proposed a broad context model of destination development scenarios to complement TALC, in which Butler’s model has only one possible scenario in his framework. This model consists of four inclusive tourism development states, namely circumstance alternative tourism or CAT, deliberate alternative tourism or DAT, unsustainable mass tourism

or UMT, and sustainable mass tourism or SMT. There are also eight possible scenarios of transition from one state to another, which highlight resource regulations in order to manage the flow of tourists. The model is applied to the Gold Coast of Australia, which integrated the concept of sustainability in order to consolidate to the evolution of coastal destinations. It is argued that a destination could adopt DAT related to two possibilities of 'mass tourism'. The first is an UMT, and that, as predicted by Butler (1980), is the logical result of continued development of tourism which, in the absence of restricted regulation, exceeds the carrying capacity and environmental and socio-cultural limits of acceptable change. The second are SMT destinations where, in theory, there is high intensity, large scale of tourism sectors with high level of regulations and limitation of carrying capacity. It is argued that an integrated DAT/SMT product should be the outcome of a destination management strategy in which there is a high level of regulations and controls.

This is also supported by Rodríguez et. al.'s (2008) study, in which it is argued that, in order to adopt the sustainability strategies and practices, there is a need to include the evaluation of conservation and protection of the environment, as well as planning for land use.

Rodríguez et al. (2008) proposed a teleological model as a complementary tool to Butler's life cycle model in order to explain the movement towards sustainability of an island destination, namely Tenerife (Canary Island, Spain). The TALC model was employed as the descriptive model and the teleological approach considers that the evolution of the destination is conditioned by a range of variables including institutional decision making, objectives, strategic planning and social construction (p.55). The sustainability concept is integrated into an appropriated

framework in order to develop a comprehensible approach to the island destination. The secondary data (e.g. the statistic of the number of tourist arrivals and the number of hotel and non-hotel tourist beds) is employed to help in identifying stage of life cycle. The study revealed that Tenerife is at the stagnation stage in which it has reviewed the problems related to strategic operations on the island concerned with tourist activity, excess of supply, imbalances in demand, lack of consensus in environmental matters and problems of security.

The studies by Weaver (2000) and Rodríguez et al. (2008) indicate that the TALC model is inadequate in explaining how the destination can achieve sustainability. The changes and evolution of the destinations are dynamic, complex process that is significantly influenced by the actions and interrelations of various economic actors. These particular context dimensions include social, cultural, economic, political, resource-availability, and geographic issues which can influence and delimit economic actors' behaviours and decision-making such as proposed strategies, and regulations (Russell, 2006). This is also supported by Cooper and Jackson's (1989) empirical study which highlighted the crucial role of managers' actions in influencing the demands that the TALC depends upon, as well as the destination's social, cultural, economic, and competitive setting.

Debbage's (1990)'s empirical study of the Paradise Island (Bahamas) showed that the increase in the number of tourist arrivals is stimulated by a small number of foreign –owned suppliers. This implies that the destination's stagnation and decline relies on these international resort operators and their decision-making which can, for example, create overdevelopment of the destination.

However, these studies did not provide an insight into the interrelationships between tourism stakeholders who carry out economic practices such as setting tourism strategies, policies and plans which significantly affect to the tourism cluster life cycle. It is notable that there are also other factors such as random events.

This research applied the relational approach in economic geography, or ‘relational turn’, in which the focus of research is on the micro practices of economic processes. Economic actors, their actions and interactions, as well as their consequences, are the main object of study. Thus, it is important to capture and understand the dynamics of change at the destination in order to have the opportunity to achieve sustainability. Hence, in this research, the author has used stakeholder theory, the social networks approach and the cluster concept as a relational framework within which to understand and explain the micro-dynamic of the changes and evolution of Samui Island. The emphasis is on the tourism stakeholders’ beliefs and attitudes, their economic practices, and the interrelationships between tourism stakeholders that influence the changes and the life cycle stages at the destination.

2.3.2 Stakeholders and sustainable tourism development

Essentially, sustainable tourism literature has highlighted the key elements required to achieve STD, by which all destinations need to have effective collaboration and participation among stakeholders at the local level in the decision making-process, tourism policy formulation and implementation (Azam and Sarker, 2011; Byrd et al., 2008; Kimbu and Ngoasong, 2013; Nepal, 2000; Park and Yoon, 2011; Shunnaq et.al, 2008). Moreover, networks of local collaboration are crucial for environmental sustainability (Erkuş-öztürk and Eraydın, 2010). According to a

review of sustainable tourism literature, similar issues are being referred to in developing countries. These include imbalances of power and benefits distribution among stakeholders (e.g. government, elite groups, local residents, business owners) where conflicts emerge among them (see Appendix 4). These conflicts discourage stakeholder participation and collaboration and constrain the achievement of sustainable tourism development. Thus, these studies imply that exploring and understanding tourism stakeholders, and their interrelationships, is crucial in order to reduce the conflicts and enhance the collaborations among them. Tourism destinations can be viewed as the interwoven relationships of various tourism stakeholders who provide different tourism products and services (economic performances and practices) over the geographical space as a single tourism product for tourists. Consequently, sustainable practices and products can only be created through the effective relational networks of tourism stakeholders at the destinations as the ST product is “territorially embedded in ongoing social networks and relationships” (Saxena, 2005, p.277).

Consequently, these alternative concepts proposed in previous studies have helped in advancing the idea of ST though providing alternative analytical tools to study and understand the context of the destinations. This help to explain the context of the destinations, and to address opportunities and challenges at the destinations which allow the improvement and development of tourism policy and management. Many of these studies provided the means and frameworks for tourism management in an effort to provide an effective means of solving problems and implementing sustainability objectives. In these empirical case studies, some provided practical, optimal practices in their case studies’ contexts while some addressed the challenges which allow space for adjustment and improvement of means and frameworks for implementation.

Previous studies centred on the roles of tourism stakeholders, and their interrelationships, which influence and shape sustainable tourism development. These used stakeholder theory (Byrd, 2007), and the networks approach (Erkuş-öztürk, 2009; Erkuş-öztürk & Eraydın, 2010; Fadeeva 2005; Pavlovich, 2001; Saxena, 2005; Timur & Getz, 2008) as useful analytical tools.

Stakeholder theory has been significantly applied in tourism planning and management as an analytical tool for identifying key stakeholders and exploring the stakeholders' attributes, interests, perceptions and attitudes, as well as investigating the stakeholders' involvement and participation in order to have effective tourism planning and management at the destinations. A number of empirical studies have indicated that, once they have an awareness and understandings of ST as well as the reasons behind tourism's development in their community and areas, tourism stakeholders' attitudes significantly influence the effective involvement of stakeholders in ST initiatives,.

For example, Byrd et al. (2008) examined the stakeholder's perceptions and understanding of STD in Johnson and Martin counties, North Carolina. They argued that stakeholders' understanding of sustainable tourism development is essential for successful tourism planning because they have better awareness and make appropriate decision about tourism development in their community (Byrd et al., 2008). This is supported by the empirical study of Timur and Getz (2009), who examined stakeholders' perceptions towards, and understanding of, the concept of STD in urban destinations in Calgary, Victoria and San Francisco. The findings indicated that different understandings of tourism stakeholders towards the sustainable urban tourism concept make it difficult to create collective actions and decision-making. Waligo et al. (2013) also

argued that stakeholders would involve in ST initiatives only when they have awareness and understanding of ST's significant.

Empirically, Waligo et al. (2013) applied the stakeholder concept to the implementation of ST, in the case study of Cornwall Sustainable Tourism Project (CoaST), UK. They presented the multi-stakeholder involvement management (MSIM) framework as a process to achieve a more effective stakeholder involvement in ST. The results showed key factors influencing stakeholder involvement in ST. These include; leadership quality, information quality and accessibility, stakeholder mind-sets, stakeholder involvement capacity, stakeholder relationships and implementation priorities. It was argued that stakeholder identification and analysis are significant in developing effective involvement and partnerships, since stakeholders' perceptions and actions have an overall effect on sustainability initiatives (Waligo et al., 2013).

However, these studies did not provide an answer to several questions about the various tourism stakeholders' interrelationships. These included questions such as: *Who are the key players? What make them the key players? What are the roles of the different tourism stakeholders at the destination? What are the attitudes of different tourism stakeholders towards to one another? How do the different tourism stakeholders interact with one another? How do their relational networks influence their attitudes and economic practices? What are characteristics of those relational networks? And How do they influence the overall economic practices at the destination?*

Thus, the concept of social networks applied in the context of sustainable tourism helped to capture the interface between the actors' (Pavlovich, 2001; Saxena and Ilbery, 2008; Taplin, 2011; Tinsley and Lynch, 2008; Ziakas and Costa, 2010).

2.3.3 Networks approach and Sustainable Tourism Development

A number of empirical studies investigated the relationships between actors by employing the network approach as an analytical tool to examine sustainable tourism development (Fadeeva, 2004; Halme, 2001; Kadushin, 2004; Pavlovich, 2001, 2003; Sexena, 2005).

For example, Erkuş-öztürk and Eraydın's (2010) empirical study of governance networks focused on the role of organisational networking for environmentally STD in Antalya. Based on 314 surveys of different public and private sectors, it revealed the high level of strength of ties by which these relationship structures enhanced local collaboration and self-help networking amongst public institutions and tourism associations that had been playing an important role in environmental networks. The role of tourism associations (more institutionalised) was especially, significant in providing a bridge between public and private organisations to participate in the networks.

Similarly, Timur and Getz's (2008) empirical stud, examined the interrelationships of tourism stakeholders (government, the community, and the hospitality and tourism industry) in three urban tourism destinations; Calgary (Canada), Victoria (Canada), and San Francisco (USA), focused on the centrality structure of powerful destination stakeholders. Data based on 38 interviews, and 578 self-completion, mail-back questionnaires in the three cities, indicated the

structure of relationships and the positions of the stakeholders (central, isolated or bridging). Findings showed that the local destination marketing/management organisations (DMOs) were the most powerful stakeholders since they hold the highest centrality in urban destinations due to stakeholders' dependency on DMOs for skills and resources such as information, expertise and clientele. Findings suggested that DMOs play the most crucial roles in implementing collaboration among diverse stakeholders for developing shared sustainability and tourism policies due to the trust and dependency stakeholders place on them.

Instead of studying the structure of the network, some researchers focus on the networking process between the various sectors and institutional fields through which the exchange and transfer of knowledge and skills occur which can generate new knowledge and innovations. As Halme (2001) argued "...the process of cooperation appears more important vis-à-vis achievements regarding ST than the structure of networks..." (p.100).

Pavlovich (2001) empirically investigated informal coordination process amongst interdependent stakeholders (i.e. community members, tourism operators, government bodies) in implementing sustainability objectives at the Waitomo Caves village in New Zealand. Her study focused on the structure and nature of ties between organisations in order to understand how these ties influenced the managerial processes and coordination (Pavlovich, 2001). Based on four-years ethnographic research involving 12 firms located within the destination site, her study revealed a 'best practice' example of the Waitomo Landcare group⁹ in which the strong and weak ties are

⁹ It consists of farming community, local iwi, tourism, the District and Regional Council, the Department of Conservation, The Queen Elizabeth II National Trust, and the New Zealand Speleological Society. Its goal was 'to protect the Waitomo Caves system from sedimentation and enhance them through appropriate and sustainable land management practices' (p. 498).

balanced. The weak ties with external partners can bring new sources of information into the network, while strong ties can assist the internal support systems. This structure enables strategic problem solving to occur, resulting in the integration of skills and complementary resources from different stakeholders. It also highlighted the key dynamics for network success, including cooperation, complementary, reciprocity and mutual benefits of diverse stakeholders-particularly, the local community. In this case study, there was a balance between economic, environmental, and social motivation based upon shared values and the mutual benefit of various stakeholder groups through whose collaboration complementary and reciprocity exchange processes can be achieved. It was argued that these "...constructing actions have brought advantages to all network members and have contributed to more durable conservation and sustainable management practices of the localised catchment resource..." (Pavlovich, 2001, p.500).

Halme (2001) also argued that understanding the process of cooperation of different public and private sectors is crucial in developing sustainability, since the networking process can produce exchange-type transactional outcomes or create completely new knowledge about sustainable tourism development. Halme's (2001) study was conducted through interviews with six tourism networks in four European countries in order to understand the inter-organisational learning process for STD. The results show the important role of 'hub' actors; these are often public actors who perform the information dissemination function and arrange training - such as environmental training for members who are entrepreneurs. Findings suggested the need for various types of partnerships or networks between public-private sectors because the different types of member will increase the opportunity for learning through different experiences (Halme, 2001).

This is echoed by empirical evidence from Saxena's (2005) study, which illustrated that the networking process generates knowledge transfer and enhances the opportunity for a learning context. Her study focused on the nature of exchange structures in the relational networks of three case study areas - Castleton, Bakewell and Tideswell in the Peak District National Park (PDNP) - which attempted to achieve sustainable goals (Saxena, 2005). Based upon 45 semi-structured interviews with business owners, local authorities, PDNP authorities, and voluntary sector, the study revealed the active interactions amongst diverse actors and the nature of linkages characterised by resources transactions (e.g. information, knowledge and skills). This benefitted members in terms of reinforcing the collective learning process and innovations. It also showed the crucial role of informal exchanges amongst actors which may be an important process for supporting local entrepreneurial activity and the creation of new resources (Saxena, 2005).

Similarly, Fadeeva (2004) applied translation theory¹⁰ to analyse the critical factors that affect the cross-sectoral networking process in five European countries involving eight public-private networks¹¹ that work towards sustainable tourism networks. The study focused on the process of change within the network and its influences on selecting and implementing SD ideas (Fadeeva, 2004, p.175). 'Change' is viewed as the translation process; the process of movement of ideas (p.177). Empirical findings showed that the powerful actors (determined by the actors' expertise, resources, and legitimacy) have a higher chance to decide which ideas are selected and how they

¹⁰ This gives an insight into the factors influencing change by focusing on the process of change as the result of the networking process. The process of re-interpretation (translation) occurs when "...the ideas receive new meanings through the process of local sense-making..." (Fadeeva, 2004, p.177).

¹¹ Sä len network (Sweden), YSMEK network (Finland), The Finland Natürlich network (Finland), The Calviá network (Spain), The Alc ùdia network (Spain), The Kinsale network (Ireland), The Molyvos network (Greece).

are implemented. The structure and characteristic of the networks also affect the process of SD implementation; the interactive structure (informal structure) allows adjustments of the ideas and practices in a continuous translation process. On the other hand, a strong administrative structure (formal structure with defined roles and rules of responsibilities) allows minimal adjustments of ideas. He argued that there is a higher chance of significant changes of sustainability through network activities than outside the networks - the networks create a space placed outside of different institutional fields that can potentially allow opportunities to develop changes and innovations within the cross-sectoral networks, and enhance the development of each institutional field due to the transfers of those innovations and practices (Fadeeva, 2004).

According to the review, these studies provide empirical findings to support the important of understanding both the structure of networks and the networking process. The structure of networks can provide an explanation of how these structure of networks influence the actors' behaviours and the practices or outcomes of the networks as a whole, while the networking process can provide more insightful explanations in terms of identifying the nature of the flow or connection (Kadushin, 2004), and the network's properties (Denicolai et al., 2010).

Explanations of networking's role and STD in the island context are not well supported by empirical studies. They do not provide clear explanations about how such networks of various tourism stakeholders can influence tourism clusters in terms of sustainability in the small island context such as Samui Island.

2.3.4 Clusters concept and Sustainable Tourism Development

Only a few studies have applied cluster concepts in sustainable tourism research, and there is still a lack of empirical studies to provide data to support our understanding of tourism clusters and their life cycle in terms of sustainability, especially in the island context.

Conceptually, Hawkins (2004) applied the competitive cluster approach¹² as a tool to examine and support a set of strategic relationships between private and public sector in developing competitive clusters of sustainable tourism at the World Heritage sites in Indonesia. The study examined the small tourism supply chain businesses, and suggested that these small tourism supply chain businesses can be organised into competitive clusters by developing their networks and partnerships to provide supporting goods and services for the heritage cluster representing their unique cultural or natural attractions (Hawkins, 2004). The study was conducted through a three-day intervention workshop that included participants such as the managers of World Heritage sites, government officials from Asia, hoteliers, ground transport operators, and tour operators. Findings showed that the intervention workshop was a useful networking initiative through which participants have the opportunity to discuss World Heritage site network strategies, the creation of a tour, promotional/marketing materials, shared management activities, and creating an action plan for piloting and testing a network of World Heritage sites. Hawkins' (2004) study suggested that competitive clusters can enhance the formulation of a sustainability strategy for World Heritage sites in terms of linking heritage preservation and biodiversity conservation through the tourism development of local enterprises. The study also highlighted

¹² "Competitive cluster concept is a strategic set of activities and services organised as an effective sustainable tourism supply chain" (Hawkins, 2004, p.298).

the importance of clustering among small tourism supply chain businesses at the local level, which can lead to the development of sustainable, competitive clusters (Hawkins, 2004).

The importance of networks and collaboration among tourism stakeholders is also echoed by Braun (2005)'s empirical study of tourism clusters. This focused particularly on the SMEs clusters and value chains that allow firms to share knowledge, access specialised resources and information through collaboration, and develop core competencies, unique products and brands of the destination. The study suggested that a successful destination cluster can be created by developing and improving SMEs performance through measures such as providing capital, meeting infrastructure needs, and promoting leadership – the latter because the cluster processes require t member to have specific skills sets to contribute unique competencies (Braun, 2005).

However, Braun's (2005) research focused only on the SMEs interrelationships and excludes other stakeholders such as the government sector, which has a crucial role in tourism development in terms of rules and regulations enforcement by which it can also influence the growth and sustainability of tourism clusters. The local community (who are indirectly involved in the tourism industry) are also crucial part of the tourism in terms of reflecting their culture through their local lifestyles, their traditions and local architecture, and through these contributing to creating a unique product at the destination. The local communities' negative attitudes to tourism, or their opposition, can negatively impact on the travel experience and so affect the tourism experience as a whole. Thus, local participation and collaboration can both enhance growth and sustain tourism clusters. In addition, in the study did not provide the detail

of the type of the relationships of SMEs that support for the successful tourism clustering (Braun, 2005).

Overall, from the review, it is apparent that the clusters concept has not been examined in sufficient depth to understand the sustainable tourism development processes and capture micro / macro practices, socio-spatial relations between actors, and the profile of tourism clusters. Thus, by focusing on stakeholders' profile and their networks, and how they help shape the development of tourism clusters in the Samui Island context, this research seeks to fill a key gap in the literature. By applying the three theories together in understanding sustainable tourism development, the emphasis is on a relational approach that allows a holistic perspective in understanding sustainable tourism (also see Appendix 4).

2.3.5 Sustainable tourism development issues in the island context

Previous sustainable tourism literature (also see Appendix 4) revealed many issues and difficulties regarding the implementation of sustainable tourism, especially in an island context in developing countries. These difficulties include lack of expertise, funds, and skills (Buultjens et al., 2005; Cater, 1993; Ghina, 2003; Tosun, 2001), facing political difficulties (e.g. corruption, instability) (Azam and Sarker, 2011; Shunnaq et.al, 2008; Tosun, 2001), lack of community participation in decision-making and planning process (Yasarata et al., 2010; Ioannides, 1995; Scheyvens, 2011), uncontrolled development of mass tourism leading to serious environmental and socio-cultural problem (Ioannides, 1995; Scheyvens, 2011; Logar, 2010; Brohman, 1996; Nguyen and Bosch, 2012), distrust and conflicts between local government and communities

(Ioannides, 1995), and inequality related to tourism development and benefit distributions (Scheyvens, 2011; Cater, 1993; Brohman, 1996).

Many island destinations are facing the uncontrolled development of mass tourism in which the number of tourism structures and facilities (e.g. hotels, resorts, and entertainment venues), tourist activities, and the proportion of the population participating in tourism face no limits (Burkart and Medlik, 1974). This can create serious socio-cultural and environmental issues at the destinations. In addition, the islands are isolated and peripheral and so have limited resources (e.g. land, water, electricity, and infrastructures), are environmentally fragile, and have limited economic activities and so are vulnerable to external pressures and influences (Bramwell, 2004; Butler, 1996; Lim and Cooper, 2009). Thus, islands are challenged by managing and balancing the economic benefits from mass tourism and the costs of environmental and social problems. Islands are also politically and economically subordinated to the mainland, which results in islands having limited political authority and financial support and islanders having less control over the type and scale of tourism development (Butler, 1996; Wilkinson, 1987). These can affect the ability of island destinations to develop sustainable tourism. According to the concept of ST, tourism should be developed and maintained with the practice of management and control in which the type and scale of tourism are critical in considering tourism's development (Butler, 1996).

2.4 Stakeholder theory

2.4.1 The history of stakeholder theory

The 'stakeholder approach' and the actual use of the term "stakeholder" were first introduced and defined by the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) in the 1960s (Wentges and Gossy, 2008). SRI has defined the term "Stakeholder" as "...those groups without whose support the organisation would cease to exist..." (Freeman and Reed, 1983, p. 89). This includes shareowners, employees, customers, suppliers, lenders, and society. By this definition, stakeholder analysis has been provided with an important tool for the SRI corporate planning process (Freeman and Reed, 1983, p. 89). Stakeholder theory was first developed in business management by Freeman (1984). Its concept was developed by a number of scholars who worked in some of normative disciplines of business (e.g. business ethics and social issues in management) (Freeman et al, 2010), and drew from many theories including strategic management (Ansoff, 1965; Freeman and Reeds, 1983), systems theory (Ackoff, 1974), and organisational theory (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978).

The strategic planning literature has crucially contributed to the development of the stakeholder concept. For example, Dill (1975) determined stakeholder relationships in terms of both influence and responsibilities, which focuses on the various types of relationships between a stakeholder and a firm. In the organisational theory literature, writers such as Rhenman (1968) utilised the term stakeholders explicitly to designate the individuals or groups that depend on the company for the realisation of their personal goals, and on whom the company is dependant (Freeman, 1983, p.45). In systems theory the literature also has contributed to the development of stakeholder concept. Ackoff (1974) developed a methodology for stakeholder analysis. Both

individuals, and organisations are viewed as if they are parts of larger systems in which stakeholders' interactions, participation, and support are crucial in terms of both system design and solving many social problems through reducing stakeholders' conflicts between levels; namely sub system (individuals), system (organisations), and suprasystem (i.e. community, society, and environment). Ackoff (1974, p.362) believed that '...an organisation should serve its parts (individuals) and the wholes of which it is part (environment, and society) as benefit the organisation...'.

By the late 1970s, the need to include non-traditional business problems in the strategic management process had become crucial. Non-traditional business problems are those such as governments, special interest groups, trade associations, foreign competitors, and complex issues such as employee rights, environmental pollution, consumer rights, tariffs, and government regulation (Freeman and Reed, 1983, p.90).

Thus, it is fair to say that stakeholder theory introduced a new way of seeing inter-actor relationships between groups who have a stake in an issue (Freeman and Reed, 1983).

2.4.2 The stakeholder concept

Stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) has been used as a managerial framework to gain a better understanding of the macro and micro contexts in which a business operates and addresses the problems therein. Its assumption is that a business can create value for its activities through the support of its stakeholders. It is crucial for the firm and manager to recognise their stakeholders' interests or stakes and power to influence, since those stakeholders have the power to be either a

threat or benefit to the firm's effectiveness (Freeman and Reed, 1993; Gibson, 2000). Thus, the organisations that pays attention to "...all and only those relationships that can affect or be affected by the achievement of the organisations' purposes..." will be effective (Freeman, 1999, p.234). According to Carroll and Näsi (1997), stakeholder approach offers by managers and directors to integrate an ethical dimension into their business practices by considering their interests and needs as both stakeholders within the organisation and "...out there in society..." (p.47). Stakeholder theory has been used to identify different types of stakeholders, and to manage stakeholders' interests and responsibilities.

According to Donaldson and Preston (1995), stakeholder theory can be classified into three approaches; descriptive, instrumental, and normative. The descriptive stakeholder theory describes the actual behaviour of managers, firms, and stakeholders. The instrumental stakeholder theory is concerned with the impact that stakeholders may have on the firm's effectiveness, and focuses on how relationships with stakeholder groups can be managed. The normative stakeholder theory suggests moral obligations on the part of managers with regard to their stakeholders, with the result that stakeholders' interests should be determined even in the absence of any apparent benefit. Roberts (1992)'s empirical study provides an example of the use of the different approaches. Roberts presented the three approaches (descriptive, instrumental and normative) to which he applied stakeholder theory to develop a social disclosure model to predict and explain one specific, corporate social responsibility activity. The model was used to analyse stakeholders' power, and explain that a firm will be responsive to the intensity of the firm's stakeholder demands (Roberts, 1992). Also, it was used to analyse the firm's strategic posture that describes response of a firm's key decision makers concerning social

demands, and then analyse the firm's economic performance. It was argued that "...given certain levels of stakeholder power and strategic posture, the better the economic performance of a firm, the greater its social responsibility activity and disclosures..." (Roberts, 1992, p.599).

In strategic management, a 'stakeholder' is defined by Freeman (1984) as "...any group or individual who can affect or who is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives..." (p. 25). Freeman listed the organisation's stakeholders including owners, customers, competitors, employees, suppliers, governments, local community organisations, special interest groups, environmentalists, consumer advocates, media, unions, trade associations, the financial community and political group. Others also defined "stakeholder" as "An individual or group who can affect or is affected by the actions, decisions, policies, practices or goals of the organization" (Carroll, 1993, p. 60). Stakeholders are "Persons or groups with legitimate interests in procedural and/or substantive aspects of corporate activity..." (Donaldson and Preston, 1993). However, there has not been a universally accepted definition of stakeholder (Carroll, 1993) and the most cited stakeholder definition by Freeman (1984) has been criticised as being too broad to identify who, or what, is really a stakeholder (Agle and Mitchell, 1999).

Starik (1995) introduced a new definition of the concept stakeholder by integrating the non-human natural environment into the stakeholder concept. It was argued that the natural environment, its systems, and living and non-living components, need to be considered as one or more stakeholders of enterprises because non-human nature is a business environment such as oil drilling, mining, fishing and forestry. Such enterprises need to be acknowledged in relation to natural resource supplies and costs. The non-human natural environment is also a political-

economic entity since nature has had, and will continue to have, an economic value to all enterprises. Starik suggested that enterprises needed to include the natural environment in the process of stakeholder identification, plan formulation, plan implementation, and plan evaluation (Starik, 1995).

Many authors proposed alternative stakeholder categorisation frameworks. For example, Goodpaster (1991) divided stakeholders into fiduciary/non-fiduciary, which determined the differences in the type of ethical relationships between management and stockholders, and management and other parties such as employees, customers and suppliers. Jones (1995) categorised stakeholders into internal/external stakeholders of the organisation. Clarkson (1995) applied the stakeholder framework to analyse and evaluate corporate social performance. 'Stakeholders' are categorised into primary and secondary stakeholders. A primary stakeholder group is one which is essential to the firm's survival, and includes shareholders or owners, employees, customers and suppliers. Secondary stakeholder groups are those which are not essential to the firm's survival, but they influence or affect, or are influenced and affected, by the firm. Media and interest groups, for example, can be a threat or a benefit to the firm (Clarkson, 1995, p.107). Given that the continued participation of primary stakeholders is crucial for the corporations' survival it was argued that corporations need to be fair and balanced in distributing to their primary stakeholders, as well as treating them adequately by recognising their interests, claims, and legitimacy (Clarkson, 1995),

Mitchell et al. (1997) applied the concept of legitimacy, power and urgency as keys for stakeholder identification. It was argued that stakeholder salience is positively related to the

number of these three attributes that manager perceived the stakeholder to have (Mitchell et al., 1997). Using these criteria, the most salient stakeholders would have an urgent (time sensitive) claimed against the firm, the power to impose their decision on the firm, and be perceived as legitimate in exercising their power. Friedman and Miles (2002) proposed a model, based on a realist theory of social change and differentiation, to identify stakeholders based on the analysis of organisation/stakeholder relationships. In the study, 'stakeholders' were categorised into necessary/contingent and compatible/incompatible (Mitchell et al., 1997).

However, many of these studies and models present stakeholder analysis from a business operations and profitability perspective, and concern those stakeholders who have power or directly affect the firm operations (Clarkson, 1995; Friedman and Miles, 2002; Goodpaster, 1991; Mitchell et al., 1997; Sheehan and Ritchie, 2005). This may result in overlooking some other stakeholder groups that have less power, or do not directly affect the firm operation. For example, Mitchell et al., (1997) strongly argued that the management's perspectives dictate stakeholder salience. From a purely managerial perspective, the priority given to one stakeholder over another could create some bias towards the context of social and environmental concerns. These are most likely to be overlooked by managers since they have less salience (i.e. power and urgency with no legitimacy) compared with other economic stakeholders (Currie et al, 2009).

2.4.3 Application of Stakeholder Theory in Tourism

Stakeholder approach has become a useful tool for tourism management, especially in tourism policy and planning (Sautter and Leisen, 1999). Due to the fragmented nature of the tourism industry, collaboration and coordination in planning is needed (Hall, 2000). Stakeholder

identification and involvement is crucial for achieving stakeholder collaboration and partnership in tourism development (Jamal and Getz, 2000; Sautter and Leisen, 1999). Thus, the support and involvement of stakeholders within the community is the key to success in implementing a (sustainable) tourism development plan (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999; Byrd et al., 2008; Gunn, 1994). Moreover, it could be stated that “stakeholder theory has implicitly been a core component in the development of the sustainable tourism philosophy” (Getz & Timur, 2005, p. 230).

This is supported by Robson’s and Robson’s (1996) conceptual study on stakeholder theory in which they argued all stakeholders should participate in the decision-making process and their interests, concerns and goals should be included in tourism business strategy (Robson and Robson, 1996). Based upon empirical evidence concerning tourism planning, the research provided a perspective on both stakeholder relationship management in relation to business ethics and moral practices towards tourism development that seek to balance tourism activity and environmental and social concerns (Robson and Robson, 1996).

Sheehan and Richie (2005) applied stakeholder analysis to identify key stakeholders and determine their relative salience to the DMOs, and their perceived potential to cooperate with and, or, threaten the destination’s management organisations. The empirical findings showed the primary stakeholders (i.e. hotel, city government, regional government, board of directors and attractions) are considered to pose a high potential to threaten the DMOs, but the secondary stakeholders are considered to have moderate potential. The findings also highlighted that poor communication, considering only one or a few of the stakeholder’s interests, and excluding some

from decision-making, would lead to failed strategies. The study showed that stakeholder analysis enables DMOs to build stakeholder relationships and appropriately determine management strategies for each stakeholder, as well as allowing DMOs to properly engage with them in order to maximise their cooperation and minimise potential threats to the organisation (Sheehan and Richie, 2005).

In addition, the perception and understanding of stakeholders is considered as a powerful influence on tourism development, because differences in perceptions and interests of tourism and tourism development can create conflict between tourism stakeholder groups (Byrd et al., 2009). This conflict is based on differences in perceptions and interests of individuals in terms of overall costs and benefits of tourism development (Ioannides, 1995). This is supported by the empirical study of Yuksel et al. (1999) which analysed stakeholders' views on tourism and environmental conservation planning at Pamukkale, a World Heritage Site in Turkey. The study was conducted through semi-structured interviews with 34 stakeholders representing interests affected by tourism. Stakeholder concept was drawn widely to include both those with the power and key involvement in tourism to enable them to influence the implementation of tourism plans (i.e. government, owners and managers of accommodation business, and tourism associations), and those with the little power but were involve in tourism in terms of employment (e.g. nearby residents) such as selling crafts and souvenirs. It concluded that incorporating tourism stakeholders' views in tourism planning can reduce conflict in the long term by "...drawing on the knowledge and insights of stakeholders..." (Yuksel et al., 1999, p.395). This is supported by Presenza's and Sheehan's (2013) empirical study in Pescara, Italy which explored residents' attitudes to tourism development. This found that attitudes are strongly related to residents'

perceptions of their degree of involvement and support in the sustainable tourism planning and development.

Loi and Pearce's study (2012) in Macao showed that the perceptions of key stakeholders strongly influence the future form of tourism's development. This is supported by Cheng et al.'s study (2012) which examined stakeholders' view of tea tourism's development in Xinyang, China. The findings showed that the stakeholders' views (e.g. visitors, business owners, service providers, and local residents) are crucial for adopting marketing campaigns, products and service development, visitors' satisfaction, and destination management. These researchers suggested that all tourism stakeholders should participate in tourism development campaigns (Cheng et al., 2012).

Byrd et al., (2009) examined the differences in perceptions of stakeholder groups towards tourism's impacts on a rural community in North Carolina through 545 surveys which included residents, government officials, and tourists. The study revealed that all groups of stakeholders need to be included in discussions about tourism development so that tourism stakeholders, especially the local community, can understand tourism's impact and that this understanding can lead to a stronger tourism product development (Byrd et al., 2009).

Wan and Li (2013) applied the stakeholder approach to examine the economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism, visitor satisfaction and level of community involvement in local tourism planning in Macao. The research was conducted through interviews with key stakeholders who include local residents, tourists, casinos, hotels, and government. It was

concluded that applying the stakeholder approach to examine tourism's impact can reveal the problems and conflicts among key stakeholders.

A number of empirical studies suggest that the attitudes and interests of tourism stakeholders are crucial driving forces in implementing sustainable practices and STD. For example, Sautter and Leisen (1999) suggested tourism planners should seek agreement across stakeholder interests in tourism planning process so that they can better promote collaborative and sustainable tourism projects. This is also supported by Chen's (2015) study, which explored tourism stakeholders' attitudes toward sustainable practices in the Scandinavian Arctic region. The study was conducted using mixed methods; 593 questionnaires, and interviews with tourism stakeholders (residents, tourists, and tourism operators). The findings showed that tourists have the most positive attitude towards sustainable practices, which means that tourists are willing to follow and accepted the restrictions or policies that are friendly to the environment and local cultural. Positive attitudes toward environmental protection and cultural preservation are considered as the driving forces in promoting sustainable operations among tourism stakeholders, and sustainable tourism development (Chen, 2015).

Moreover, stakeholder theory is used indirectly in tourism research considering the collaborative approach. For example, Aas et al. (2005) applied the collaborative approach to examine the stakeholder collaboration in UNESCO. The study also focused on the community's participation and the stakeholder groups in the Luang Prabang, Laos World Heritage site. The findings showed that participation works differently in varying cultural and political contexts. For example, developing countries like Laos face a number of issues in adapting collaborative

practices. These include the lack of formal channels of communication and understanding between tourism and the heritage sector, local communities lacking knowledge of either tourism development or the concept of heritage conservation, lack of funds, lack of community participation in decision-making, and the centralised authority of the government and political system (Aas et al., 2005).

Stakeholder theory has been applied in different contexts. For example, Currie et al. (2009) applied stakeholder identification and salience in the context of a feasibility analysis of a natural resource attraction on the Northwest Coast of British Columbia, Canada. The study focused on the identification of potential stakeholders by using Mitchell et al (1997)'s stakeholder salience concept (power, legitimacy, and urgency), and various other methods such as the key information approach, snowballing, and content analysis to form a list of potential stakeholders representing the various positions. The findings showed stakeholder groups representing the local communities and environment which broadened Mitchell et al.'s (1997) managerial perspective of stakeholder salience concept into a social and environmental perspective. This provides "...a wider more comprehensive list of stakeholders and less biased assessment of salience..." (Currie et al., 2009, p.56) and provides more appropriate typology in the context of sustainable tourism (Currie et al., 2009).

Larsen et al. (2011) used a 'system-actor relation' approach and conceptualised stakeholder agencies in a social-ecological system to understand stakeholder involvement in the post-disaster recovery and disaster risk reduction process following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. The study was conducted through a comparative vulnerability assessment in three case study

destinations; Khao Lak (Phang Nga province, Patong (Phuket province), and Phi Phi Don (Krabi province). It focused on four groups of key stakeholders: a) tourism entrepreneurs (e.g. tourism service providers), b) support organisations (e.g. Tourism authority of Thailand), c) government departments (local government bodies), and d) non-governmental (i.e. UN-WTO representative). The data was initially collected from literature reviews and document analysis followed by 278 open-ended interviews, 31 case histories, 23 focus group discussions and field observations. The findings showed the private sector and their social networks played an effective and crucial role in mobilising and facilitating the recovery responses and development of disaster risk reduction measures (Larsen et al., 2011).

While, many apply stakeholder theory with relational approach (such as Borgatti & Foster, 2003; Timur & Getz, 2008, Arnaboldi and Spiller, 2011, Kimbu & Ngoasong, 2013). Nogueira and Pinho (2014) employed a relational approach by integrating stakeholder and social network theory to identify critical stakeholders and examine the relationships between them and other members within the network implementing activities for rural tourism in a Portuguese National Park. The study applied Mitchell et al. (1997)'s stakeholder resilience model, which looked at three main attributes- power, legitimacy and urgency- to identify key stakeholders, as well as investigating the type of stakeholders involved, their interests and goals, and the nature of their relationships including marketing information, administrative and human resources, training and financial resources. The results showed a positive correlation between the nature of, and type of, flows and the factors chosen by stakeholders such as personal affinities and contacts, and geographical proximity. The study showed an understanding of the critical stakeholders who operate tourism activities, and the nature of their relationships, can enhance cooperation, the

development of effective communications, and knowledge and innovation (Nogueira and Pinho, 2014).

The review of previous studies that apply stakeholder theory demonstrated not only how powerful is the influence of stakeholders to the organisations/tourism destinations but how factors such as their identifications, attitudes and relationships can support or threaten the organisation/tourism destinations in achieving goals. It also demonstrated that stakeholder theory is a very useful concept for stakeholder relationship management. Thus, in order to achieve long-term benefits, both stakeholders and their attributes, attitudes and interests should be identified, analysed, and incorporated into tourism management and development' goals, objectives and strategies,. Moreover, the stakeholder approach is also a useful concept in tourism studies since it enhances the collaboration and participation among stakeholders which is the key to successful STD.

However, the application of stakeholder approach alone cannot fully answer the research aim; it cannot give a full understanding of the stakeholder participation process and the interrelationships between them (since implementing sustainable tourism requires collaboration among multiple stakeholders from different sectors). It cannot answer, for example, questions such as why and how these stakeholders come together, the nature, roles and functions of their linkages, and how diversity in stakeholder roles influences their networks of relationships (e.g. power distribution). Thus, the application of social networks approach can be used to reveal the nature of relationships, causes and consequences of alternative interaction patterns (Pearce and David, 1983, p.437).

2.5 Social networks approach to the study of tourism clusters

2.5.1 The history of social networks

Originally, the development of social networks analysis was significantly influenced by three social science disciplines (e.g. psychology, sociology, and social anthropology). In the 1930s, Jacob Moreno, a psychiatrist from Vienna, developed the 'sociometry' construct, which is a quantitative method for studying the relationship structures of small groups created through friendship patterns and informal interactions (Scott, 1988, p.110). This concept emphasises how those relationship structures affect beliefs or behaviours (Scott, 1988; Scott, 2000). Relationships are represented with the help of 'sociograms', where individuals are represented as points and relationships linking individuals together are represented as lines. However, the concept of sociometry has been criticised because it was difficult to reveal meaningful patterns once the network exceeded a certain size (Prell, 2012). A mathematical approach to social relations, based on graph theory and matrix algebra to explore social structures, and patterns (Scott, 2000), was developed by a group of Harvard sociologists of the 1930s. This graph theory not only allows researchers to represent patterns and structures of social relationships, but it also allows researchers to understand larger and more complex networks (Kadushin, 2012). However, graph theory is criticised as it limited to two-dimensional representations of multidimensional social networks (Scott, 1988, p.119).

Importantly, the British anthropologist Radcliffe-Brown's study of social structure has been the most influential in studying social networks, since he described social structure as the network of concrete relations among individuals. He also argued that anthropologists should not study 'culture', but use the priori concept such as culture and class, since they are abstractions

(Radcliffe-Brown, 1940). Instead, anthropologists should draw abstractions after, and from, the 'concrete data' which they must acquire from direct observation of social relations (Radcliffe-Brown, 1940). Thus, social network analysis examines the existing relationships between individuals before categorising or labelling them as a group, since "groups emerge by being densely connected regions of the network" (Monge, 1987, p.242). This has changed the traditional anthropology study, in which traditional anthropologists emphasised the cultural study rather than the study of social relations and interactions.

The work of Radcliffe-Brown had a significant influence on anthropologists at the University of Manchester, for example, John Barnes, Clyde Mitchell and Elizabeth Bott. Manchester anthropologists studied relations and structures of family and community in tribal and village societies. They particularly emphasised interpersonal relations in order to understand how these relations could create the patterns and structures that could create social norms and institutions. Bott (1957) conducted a classic ethnographic study on the British family (married couples) and kinship, in order to reveal the structure of personal networks of husbands and wives, in relation to the conjugal roles of married couples. Based on the findings, it was concluded that conjugal role relationships varied in relation to the form of the family's informal social network, '...that is, to the patterns of social relationships with and among friends, neighbours and relatives...' (Bott, 1957, p. 3). The study demonstrated that '...the degree of segregation in the role-relationships of husband and wife varies directly with the connectedness of the family's social network...' (Bott, 1957, p.60). The study also showed the segregated conjugal relationships occurred where both husbands and wives had 'close-knit' networks which were embedded in dense networks of kinship and friendship (Bott, 1957). By comparison, couples who had 'loose knit' networks

would have a greater mutual reliance on husband and wife (Bott, 1957). Later, Barnes (1969) formalised the topological notions of ‘connectivity’ and the ‘connectedness’ to describe the structural properties of the networks; the distance between persons and the number of paths between them (p.215).

In addition, the strength of weak ties concept developed by Granovetter (1973) is another key contribution to social network analysis. The study focused on interpersonal networks, and explored how the strength of ties impacts on information diffusion and mobility opportunities for individuals to find new jobs (Granovetter, 1973). Findings showed that the information which passed through strong ties (e.g. close contact) tended to be redundant and limited. By contrast, people who are weakly tied (e.g. not much contact) to their own circles tend to have other contacts with other, different circles, which gives them the opportunity to acquire new information. He also concluded that the information can reach a greater number of people and travel a longer social distance through weak ties (Granovetter, 1973).

In the 1990s, the network approach was studied in broadly interdisciplinary terms including mathematics, physics, sociology, biology, social psychology, anthropology, computer and information science, economics, political science and communications (Katz et. al., 2004; Newman, 2010).

2.5.2 The social network concept

The social networks approach is applied in studying social structures through an understanding of social relationships. It advocates that individuals are connected to one another, and tied by

invisible bonds (Scott, 1988) (such as family, kinship, friendship, neighbourhood, and colleagues), which create a complex interweave of individuals' relationships and those relationships can affect their beliefs and behaviours. Thus, the social networks approach seeks to reveal the structures of social relations and the influences of those relations and structures on social attitudes, beliefs and behaviours (Prell, 2012). A social network can be defined as "...a set of social relations, characterised by nodes (persons) linked by social interactional functions (connections) which could be graphed out as a conceptual structure..." (Pattison, 1981, p.242).

In the literature, networks can be identified within three concepts. Firstly, 'network is' used as an empirical tool to describe the social structure that is defined by communicative relations in a horizontal and decentralised pattern of actors' positions that are opposed to hierarchical patterns (Raab and Milward, 2003). Secondly, 'network' is used as a label for a specific type of social structure that can disseminate information quickly, support innovation, and enhance competitiveness (Powell, 1990). Thirdly, 'network' is used to describe and analyse forms of governance that result from the multiple organisations which are interdependent and tied by different kinds of relationships, based on common interests and goals -such as authority bonds, and exchange relations- all within a single multiunit structure (O'Toole, 1997, p.45).

Indeed, the social networks approach centres on patterns and structures of relationships between individuals or actors and their influence on behaviour and that behaviour's influence on social networks (Kjos et al., 2013). Scott (1988) perceived social structures as "...product of chains of actions and their unintended consequences..." (p.109). Knoke and Kuklinski (1983) defined a network as "...a specific type of relation linking a set of persons, objects or events..." (p.12).

Mahon (2004) described a network as "...a web of dependency relationships constituting from the patterned resource exchange between the actors (nodes) and the behaviour by any given node is interpreted as a function of the way its ties create access to resources exchanges in the network as a whole..."(p.174).

Thus, social networks are composed of a set of actors (nodes) that are linked by relationships (ties or edges) (Mahon et al, 2004). 'Nodes' or 'actors' can be individuals, groups, organisations or societies (Katz et. al., 2004, p. 308). 'Ties or links' are relationships of any kind between actors (Timur and Getz, 2008), which can be directed and undirected (as in being physically proximate) such as communications, money transfer, family, friendships, exchange of resources (e.g. information), or overlapping memberships (Tichy et al., 1979; Borgati and Foster, 2003).

Analytically, social networks enable researchers to uncover and understand complex social relationships in terms of their relational networks' characteristics and properties at different level (i.e. individual actors, dyads, triads, groups, organisations, and societies). It seeks to understand, for example, what types of relationship they have, what brings individuals or actors together or ties them together, and what resources they have and exchange with one another (Scott, 1991; Wasserman and Faust, 1994). Thus, social network analysis can be divided into two perspectives; structural perspective and content perspective. The network's content analysis are any types of relationships and linkages that link actors together; these can be direct/indirect, and tangible/intangible.

The important structural analysis of networks includes centrality, density and ties. The structural position in the network determines the actor's status or influence in the system (Wasserman and Faust, 1994). The centrality of the position is determined by the number of ties to others, which refers to the power of the actor. This is obtained through the network structure due to the others' interdependent access to their information. Such as high centrality of actors allows a high access to information, though which they can manage the information flow and influence others (Pavlovich, 2001; Wasserman and Faust, 1994). Density of relationships is determined by the number of ties or connections between actors within the network. Highly dense networks determine stronger information exchanges and tighter communication systems, which allow for a more effective management system (Pavlovich, 2003). Less dense networks result in less information exchange and limited access to resources (Rowley, 1997). In the qualitative research approach, Tinsley and Lynch (2008) applied network density to refer to "...a measure of the extent to which business owners are connected to their environment and can be described as loose or tight knit..." (p.162).

Another important element of social network analysis is the tie-strength. The strength of interpersonal ties defines the strength and quality of relationships which is determined by the degrees of emotional intensity, intimacy (mutual confiding), and frequency of contacts (Granovetter, 1973, p.1361). There are two types of ties; weak ties and strong ties. Strong ties are those cohesive ties formed within the network, and they consist of strong relationships of people who act to encourage acceptable action and inclusion in the social set, and each person knows what the other knows (Pavlovich, 2003, p.205; Pavlovich, 2001). These strong ties consist of more frequency of contacts compared to the weak ties. Weak ties are those that are less socially

involved with one another (acquaintance) (Granovetter, 1983, p.201). However, those weak ties (acquaintances) also have their own groups or networks of close friends (close knit and strong relationship), so they can act as a bridge between groups or networks (Granovetter, 1983). Weak ties occur beyond the networks structure which allow for novel information flow from outside the networks, bringing information into their own networks through boundary spanning activities (Granovetter, 1973; Pavlovich, 2001). Thus, weak ties play significant roles of transmitting novel information across otherwise largely disconnected segments of social networks (Granovetter, 2005, p.35)

Early network studies tended to utilise the quantitative research approach which focuses only on the structure of the networks, while later studies suggested for more concern with understanding the cultural dimension of the network relations, which focuses on the content of the network. The structure analysis focuses on the size (the number of the actors included in the networks), the position (centrality), and the density (the interconnectedness of the actors in the network). However, the structural perspective only provides a static explanation, but the interactions and relations among actors are fluid and change over time (Pavlovich, 2001).

Curran et al.(1993) argued that "...network are best seen as primarily cultural phenomena; that is, as sets of meanings, norms and expectations usually linked with behavioural correlates of various kinds..." (p.13). Furthermore, they criticised "...the notion of 'network...' and '...networking...' as conceptually, and methodologically poorly realised. In particular, earlier studies tended to be over-reliant upon quantitative research approaches" (Curran et al., 1993, p.13). This resulted in considerable information in terms of frequency of contact within the network, but very little in

terms of the relational content and explanations of causes of those actions and networking. These very much relate to the socio-cultural, political, and historical contexts of tourism stakeholders within a particular destination.

Shaw (1997) also argued that networks exist "...socially, not structurally, as the network of relationships which stands, conceptually, between individuals, families, groups and organisations and the total environment..." (p.9). The network approach can be applied in different contexts and level of aggregation, namely individual actors, dyads, triads, subgroups or groups (Wasserman and Faust, 1994).

Thus, this research used the qualitative research approach, and focused on the socio-cultural perspective, which enabled researchers to focus on the attitude, values, and beliefs that determine tourism stakeholders' behaviours and practices (Tinsley and Lynch, 2001), though the significance influence of the network patterns were not ignored.

A number of studies show the fruitful information and knowledge obtained by using the qualitative approach to network studies. For example, the empirical evidence provided by Corte and Aria's (2014)'s study of inter-firm collaboration in Naples, Italy reveals that personal attitudes and previous experience of individuals in inter-firm networking are crucial factors in successful inter-firm collaboration. Saxena (2005) examined different attitudes of tourism stakeholders towards partnership building, and their perceptions of cross-sector networks, at the PDNP. This empirically evidenced that trust and commitment can enhance the social relationships between businesses through ongoing business interactions and information

exchange based on open communication, and mutual benefits (Saxena, 2005). Novelli et. al.'s (2006) empirical study of the Healthy Lifestyle Cluster in the United Kingdom, showed collaborative networks among tourism stakeholders can facilitates knowledge transfer, co-creation of marketing activities, and improvement of tourism products and services.

Thus, these qualitative approaches to networking study can significantly reveal the content and properties of relationships, and the tourism stakeholders' attitudes, values, and beliefs towards networking. This allows the tourism policy makers opportunities to create the strategies and activities to improve the relationships among diverse tourism stakeholders.

In the light of the qualitative perspective, Mitchell (1973) provided a foundation for networking by which he identified three different ways in which the social network content may be perceived; exchange, communication, and social:

Exchange content, "...individuals are related to each other by sets of transactions which have implications for the actor wider than the simple act of exchange itself. A number of actors are involved in a number of transactions which bind them to one another in a series of expectations and obligations..." (25);

Communication content, "...the passage of information of some kind from one person to another. The sort of information will differ from one observer to another and will be relevant presumably to the sort of proposition that the observer wishes to establish" (23);

and

Normative (social) content, "...the expectation each (two individuals) may have of the other because of some social characteristic or social attribute the other may possess..." (26). These attributes come from a shared set of beliefs, values and ideas.

However, this research mainly focused on "...the social networks from socio-cultural perspective and consider the implications for business behaviour and destination development..." (Tinley and Lynch, 2008, p.162), in which the authors argued that this socio-cultural perspective or social networks are important driving force for tourism stakeholders exchanging and sharing information with one another.

2.5.3 The application of Social Network approach in Tourism

The use of network analysis has also grown significantly in tourism research on policy, development and management (Denicolai et al., 2010; Pavlovich, 2003; Shih, 2006, Mackella, 2006; Kimbu and Ngoasong, 2013; Dredge, 2006; Pforr, 2006). Moreover, networks approach is also applied in sustainable tourism studies (Pavlovich, 2001; Erkuş-öztürk and Eraydın, 2010; Erkuş-öztürk, 2009; Timur and Getz, 2008; Saxena, 2005; Fadeeva 2004), in order to investigate the relationships among actors and the structure and the system of network as a whole.

Previous studies employed social network approach to analyse the patterns and structures of relationships, to understand the nature of interactions and linkages among actors, and the network process (see Pavlovich 2009, 2001). Ziakas and Costa (2010) examined how inter-organisational relationships affected an event's planning and implementation by focusing on trust and reciprocity. The results demonstrated that high levels of trust and reciprocity would

enhance the synergies and encourage information sharing and knowledge transfer among the agencies. It was concluded that analysing and understanding the relationship among agencies within the network would help to describe the process of implementing coordinated strategies, which enhance effective collaboration (Ziakas and Costa, 2010).

Pavlovich and Kearins (2004) applied the network approach to investigate structural embeddedness as an ongoing function. It is argued that the network approach enables a far better understanding on how resources and information flow (Pavlovich and Kearins, 2004). Pforr (2006) applied the policy network approach to describe, analyse, and explain the dynamics of policymaking process in the Northern Territory of Australia. The study focused on stakeholders' relationships and their overall network structures including, a) reputational ties, b) cooperation and c) information exchange, in order to identify the core actors in the Tourism Development Master Plan (TDMP) process. The result demonstrated the centrality of the political and business actors in various network structures, due to their high level of involvement in information exchange activities enabling them to dominate and use control over the process of policy formulation (Pforr, 2006).

Taplin (2011) also investigated the nature of interactions among actors in the network and examined changes in the structure of network activities. The work showed that the application of the social networks approach enabled and understanding of the communication process and how knowledge is shared (Taplin, 2011).

Ghazali (2005) examined the network features and networking activities of owner-managers in small tourism and hospitality businesses on an island destination in Malaysia. The research was conducted through 37 interviews with small chalet owner-managers. The findings showed the ties of relationships between small firms were mostly informal, with strong relationships based on family, friends, and acquaintances. Also, "...trust was primary factor and it binds the networks..." Ghazali, 2005, p.50). It was concluded that informal networks benefit small accommodation firms in terms of knowledge sharing, and enabling the exchange of ideas, advice, and help (Ghazali, 2005).

Saxena and Ilbery (2008) investigated the characteristics of rural networks operating among small businesses and resource controllers on the English-Welsh borders. The study focused on different characteristics of networks such as formal/informal, soft/hard (Rosenfeld, 2001; Saxena and Ilbery, 2008), embedded/disembodied (Saxena and Ilbery, 2008), open/closed (Saxena and Ilbery, 2008). Saxena and Ilbery (2008) proposed the concept of Integrated Rural Tourism (IRT)¹³ as a means of critically thinking about the ways to bring various actors and resources together more successfully into the networks of cooperation and collaboration. Based upon semi-structured interviews conducted with 51 business owners/managers, and 20 resource controllers in the three sub regions, the work indicated that the networks contributing to IRT development should embed economic action within local social and political practices, and at the same time disembodied local products and services in order to reach markets beyond their regions or global market (Saxena and Ilbery, 2008).

¹³ IRT is defined as tourism that is mainly sustained by social networks that explicitly link local actors for the purpose of jointly promoting and maintaining the economic, social, cultural, natural, and human resources of the localities in which they occur (p.234).

Saxena (2006) explored the significance of the personal bonding process in promoting sustainable resource-use and equitable tourism development by focusing on small rural tourism businesses in the PDNP. The research was conducted through 29 semi-structure interviews to uncover the different reasons underlying the personal and social bonding process, and 300 questionnaires designed to consolidate the findings from the interviews. The findings showed that informal ties and social norms were perceived to provide crucial safety nets and to enable businesses to obtain additional resources and develop unique tourism products. Saxena concluded that personal and social bonds based on the exchange of shared values, beliefs, knowledge, skills, local resources and practices, can enhance local businesses' capacity to participate in, negotiate with, and influence development ideas and practices (Saxena, 2006).

Tinsley and Lynch (2008) applied the social network approach, together with the concept of differentiation, to investigate the nature of networking and the network's contribution to the overall tourism destination by focusing on the social relationships between small tourism businesses, and the wider community, on the West Coast of Scotland. The study was conducted through the in-depth interview technique. The results showed that differentiation in social network norms at individual, business and wider community levels, has implications for the destination's development. For example, incomers who want to be accepted by the locals and successful in business have to conform to the community's norm. Due to the strong social networks of the local businesses, they are able to enforce the entire business community's norms such as the norm of market differentiation; this is more cooperative in nature, rather than creating an extremely competitive market (Tinsley and Lynch, 2008).

Denicolai et al. (2010) investigated the relationship between the network activity of tourism firms and the tourism core-competencies in Pavia, Italy. The study focused on the network properties; trust, knowledge sharing, formal agreement and degree of integration of services, and how these network properties influence performance. The findings showed that knowledge sharing (e.g. tactics transfer, enhancing innovation process) is the main factor in enabling good performance. Thus, it was argued that inter-firm networking enhances the learning process and the tourism core-competencies within the tourism destination (Denicolai et al., 2010). This is supported by Pavlovich's 2003, study which suggested that networking can enhance self-governance and assist the destination in tactical knowledge building.

Pavlovich's (2003) study focused on the dynamic process of tourism destination evolution and transformation of the Waitomo Caves, New Zealand. She examined the network structure (density and centrality) and network ties (weak/strong ties) by applying the network mapping method to illustrate the structural connectivity and patterns of relationships in each historic time frame in a visual diagram. Based on an ethnographic study, the results showed the need for tourism organisations to develop network-oriented relationships (strong supportive ties) among both other actors at the destination, and external partnerships, to provide opportunities for sourcing new and current information (Pavlovich, 2003). This also showed that the network approach provided a causal explanation of organising through the study of relationships' structures and patterns (Pavlovich, 2003).

Many other studies support the findings on the significant role of networks. For example, Liu and Yang (2013) argued that the network platform plays an important role as a channel for

information dissemination and access, which can improve the tourism product's transaction efficiency and promote its rapid growth. Networks also help to break through the geographical limitation, save the costs of divergent, stimulate even enhance the innovative capability of enterprises, and strengthen division of labour, collaboration and competition between enterprises (Liu and Yang, 2013).

Kimbu and Ngoasong (2013) explored the nature of destination stakeholders' relationships in formulating and implementing tourism policy in Cameroon. They argued that it is essential for tourism development to have a mobilised network of tourism stakeholders involved, because their social capitals (skills, knowledge, and trust), resources and supports would facilitate the effective coordination and participation among stakeholders (Kimbu and Ngoasong, 2013). Farsani et al. (2014) utilised social network analysis to examine the network activities between European Geoparks networks (EGN) and Global Geoparks network (GGN). The quantitative method was used to examine the connectivity rate, in order to understand the concentrated areas of network activities between these networks. The result showed that the EGN and GGN concentrated their network activities in the areas of meeting, conferences, and exchange of knowledge. It was argued that, by joining the network, the local communities and private sectors can gain the benefits it provides such as opportunities to exchange knowledge between the locals and national networks, the benefits of marketing and branding 'Geopark', and the opportunity for rural SMEs to develop innovations and become stronger and more profitable (Farsani et al., 2014).

Ilbery and Saxena (2009) used social networks approach in their empirical research, to examine 'best practice' for the development of IRT. The study concentrated on tourism-focused networks of the England-Wales border region in order to understand the processes that generate the sharing, exchange and transfer of knowledge and skills among individual actors through which local resources were shaped into tourism products. This investigation utilised three types of network; friend, kite, and cloud to understand cross-functional, spatial, formal, and informal ties, in which there are differences in structural attributes such as size, density, proximity, and homogeneity. The study was conducted through qualitative semi-structured interviews with 241 actors with different interests and goals (e.g. tourists, gatekeepers, businesses, agencies, resource controllers, host community members). The empirical findings showed that 'best practice' may contain 'elements' from each of the three different types of networks, rather than only one type such as within the cloud networks. There was a substantial use of closed personal ties (friend-focused network) by which influenced the willingness of members to provide help. It was also argued that networks can facilitate tacit and embedded knowledge exchange, as well as enhancing collaborative governance through developing a culture of negotiation, consultation and bargaining (Ilbery and Saxena, 2009).

The literature review demonstrates the value of the application of network analysis for tourism studies. The social network approach enables a researcher to study the nature of linkages and characteristics of networks formed by interactions and actions of diverse actors across space and time, within their particular contexts. Network analysis provides an alternative perspective for tourism studies in terms of investigating and understanding the complex webs of independent

relations among diverse actors, and how they influence and shape collective practices and tourism development.

Significantly, social networks both help to capture the dynamic interactions of actors performing economic practices and reveal how tourism clusters have emerged, and evolved, over time as the outcome of the dynamic interaction of actors possessing crucial influences. They provide an insight and understanding of individual and joint economic practices through the relational networks (i.e. regional and cluster levels) of the various interdependent actors and how they exchange information and support to one another in order to gain benefits such as obtaining financial support and transferring and sharing resources. Thus, understanding these dynamic interactions of various actors reveals how tourism clusters' profiles are impacted upon, and influenced by, their relational networks.

However, stakeholder theory and social networks approaches cannot provide an in-depth understanding of the complexity of the tourism industry in Samui. Consequently, the cluster concept has been incorporated to understand the intermesh between interconnected specialised tourism firms, associated institutions, and individual communities.

In this thesis, the cluster approach is crucial in providing a better understanding of the social networks in terms of analysing tourism clusters. Firstly, the cluster approach provides the geographical dimension in the analysis because clusters usually refer to a concentration of firms in a limited geographical area, while networks can occur among firms located anywhere. Secondly, clusters require both cooperation and competition, while networks are based on

cooperation (Rosenfeld, 2001). Thirdly, networks tend to have common goals (i.e. business) but clusters have collective visions (Rosenfeld, 2001), which is an important element for developing tourism clusters. Fourthly, clusters provide the dimension of life cycle - clusters have a life cycle, while social networks do not provide the dimension of a life cycle of tourism clusters (Rosenfeld, 2002). Importantly, cluster development concentrates on locally resources in creating and producing tourism products and services. Thus, a well-developed cluster can significantly enhance collaboration and participation among diverse, local stakeholders from different sectors and institutions in order to establish unique tourism products and services. This can enhance the stimulation of income and jobs for more local residents who are normally excluded from tourism planning and management. Moreover, it allows opportunities for those local residents to participate in the decision-making process and to create the desired tourism products and service in their areas.

2.6 Clusters concept

2.6.1 The history of cluster concept

The initial idea of the cluster concept developed from the growing interest in the important role of location in the global economy (Martin & Sunley, 2003); globalisation and global economic integration increase the important of location since it leads to regional and local economic development and competitiveness. Reductions in transport costs and trade barriers enable firms to agglomerate with other, similar firms in order to gain local, external economies of scale (Fujita et al., 2000).

The principle of cluster theory was originally developed from traditional location theories that were constituted over 40 years ago (Michael, 2007), and were developed by scholars from economics and geography disciplines. The traditional location theory focuses on minimising costs of operation by considering alternative areas of location (Morgan, 2004). Weber (1909) suggested an analysis of the location decision-making of the firm, focusing on the transportation costs considering on distance relative to the production and distribution processes. Weber (1909) argued that the optimum location for the firm would consider the minimisation of transportation costs, where the firm minimises the combined costs of production and distribution process. However, Weber's (1909) location theory has been criticised since it assumed that there can be only one production site (Krungman, 1998) and produce only a single product, which is an unrealistic assumption (Mabuza, 2006). This criticism gave rise to the development of agglomeration concept, which is important for the development of cluster theory. Agglomeration economies focus on the advantage that firms benefit through lower production costs when operating in close proximity to other firms that are in the same, or linked, industries (Malecki, 1991). Following the competitive advantage of the location theory and agglomeration economies, Porter (1998) developed the cluster theory and introduced the notion of "clusters" as an analytical concept and effective tool for policy-makers to promote national, regional and local economic growth, innovation and competitiveness. Porter (2000) defined clusters as "Geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialised suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions in particular fields that compete but also co-operate" (p.15). Thus, clusters consist of interconnected firms and institutions that have similar production process or common markets, within geographic co-location to each other. Clusters can be viewed as a dynamic phenomenon in which there are interactions and functional relationships

between firms and associated institutions caused by skills, innovation, technology, the supply chain, markets, and so on (Mabuzu, 2006, p.63).

2.6.2 The cluster concept

The notion of cluster can be defined as different things, in different discourses, that provide its context and its meaning -such as in economics, policy, business and management (Borrás & Tsagdis, 2008, p.5). The term can be different even within the same discourse, so some authors have defined clusters as constituted merely by firms, while others include associated institutions (Karlsson et al., 2005 cited in Borrás & Tsagdis, 2008, p.5). In addition, “The geographic scope of cluster can range from a single city or state to a country or even a group of neighbouring countries” (Porter, 2000, p. 254). Cluster development must seek competitive advantage and specialisation of products, which are created from local differences and uniqueness and then developed into strengths (Porter, 1998, p.247). ‘Proximity’ is one key element of clusters, and refers to “... the degree of interconnectedness as the nexus among members of agglomeration and a wide assortment of actors or participants...” (Prats et al., 2008, p.180). Proximity facilitates frequent, and close, personal face-to-face interactions among tourism actors, which proves opportunities to enhance cooperative exchanges, information and tacit knowledge sharing (Prats et al., 2008).

Moreover, clusters can be understood as social and economic processes, influenced by their institutional and cultural context, which is shaped by the behaviour and motivation of individual actors, who are in socially embedded processes (Storper, 1997 cited in Whitehurst, 2006). Storper (1997) concluded that clusters might be viewed as “...stocks of relational assets arising

from untraded interdependencies within cluster...” (Whitehurst, 2006, p.11). This social dimension in clustering process is also recognised by Porter. He stated that “...social glue binds clusters together, contributing to the value creation process...” (Porter, 1998, p.225). Similarly, Bathelt and Glückler (2003) applied a relational approach to analyse economic actions and social relations through a geographical lens. They argued that space should not be analysed as a separate object research, but should be analysed in relation to economic and social structures and relations (Bathelt and Glückler, 2003). The relational approach assumes that “...economic action transforms the localised material and institutional conditions of future economic action...” (Bathelt and Glückler, 2003, p.123). In other words, economic actors that perform economic actions themselves create their own ‘regional environments’ (Stoper and walker, 1989 cited in Bathelt and Glückler, 2003, p.123). Thus, economic actors, and their actions and interactions, should be the central focus of analysis in economic geography (Bathelt and Glückler, 2003). However, space still plays a role in defining the field of opportunities and constraints (Boggs and Rantisi, 2003, p. 114) in for example, reducing costs of information, and marketing, generating information spill overs, and generating communication efficiencies (Scott, 1998). Thus, relational economic geography enhances the understanding of economic action by allowing for an explanation of human action in a localised economic process.

The coordination system among individuals is crucial for forming clusters through a shared understanding of acceptable business practice (Press, 2006, p.63). By working together, it enhances synergies and can benefit all participants through developments such as increasing collective markets and capacities, creating new products and services, and enhancing innovation and competitive advantages (Press, 2006).

Clustering occurs when these similar firms realise their advantages of common location, and form networks of synergies with value-creating benefits such as sharing information, pooling resources, labour skills and distribution systems, which lower costs and create competitive advantages (Michael, 2007, p. 24). The forms of clustering can be defined as vertical, horizontal and diagonal clustering. Vertical clustering consists of the linkages between firms in geographic co-location, operating at different stages in supply chain. Horizontal clustering consists of the linkages between firms from the same industry which are also geographically co-located to each other. Diagonal clustering is "...the concentration of complementary (or symbiotic) firms where each firm adds value to the activities of others..." (Michael, 2007, p. 26). These firms may sell quite distinct products and services that form part of other industry's classifications. Diagonal clustering occurs when these firms cooperate and construct a bundle of separate products and services as a single item for consumers to purchase. Thus, diagonal clustering can be found in many tourism destinations, where many different firms, with different production processes, come together and provide accommodation, transportation, hospitality and activities that provide value added for the tourism experience. By contrast, the absence of key products and services may constrain the growth of other existing firms (Michael, 2007, p.26).

In the tourism context, a cluster can be classified as a 'thematic cluster' (Nordin, 2003). This involves strategic segments that focus on functional rather than spatial phenomenon, even though they may be found in a rather limited geographical area. This type of cluster is based upon themes such as heritage, special interest, and adventure or sport tourism, through which it can cross geographical and political boundaries.

The cluster concept has been widely applied in business and management research. For example, Oprime et al., (2009) applied the industrial cluster concept to analyse and characterise enterprises based on characteristics of a company's competitive strategy in order to gain a deeper understanding of an enterprise's characteristics. Zelbst et al. (2010) expanded existing cluster typologies based upon geographic and economic characteristics, and developed a cluster concentration typology based upon effectiveness-seeking and efficiency-seeking characteristics (p.887) for location decision making. Lawrence and Sun (2010) applied an industrial cluster concept to develop cluster collaboration between China and the United States of America (e.g. economic development strategies, enhanced communications and planning initiatives). Danson (2009) applied agglomeration economies concept to analyse the role of territorial regions and regionalisation through business clusters. The application of the concept can help to reveal the problems of distance from the core in cluster strategies, and the impact of the development of city-regions that have negative spatial impacts on the peripheries which cannot establish "core cluster" due to their lack of capacity to promote investment activities within their areas (Danson, 2009).

2.6.3 Application of Clusters approach in Tourism

The concept of cluster has been applied in tourism research as a tool for stimulating economic growth and regional development; this due to the specialised agglomeration in which firms and associated institutions mutually support interaction (Mabuzu, 2006). Beni (2003) stated that the tourism cluster is "...a group of highlighted tourism attractions within a limited geographic space provided with quality equipment and services, social and political cohesion, linkage between productive chain and associative culture, and excellent management in company nets that bring

about comparative and competitive strategic advantages.’ (Beni, 2003, p.74). For example, Jackson and Murphy (2002) utilised Porter’ cluster model to analyse tourism destinations. The characteristics¹⁴ of clusters were used to analyse tourism destinations in Canada and Australia in order to promote their destinations. It was concluded that the cluster model can be used as an analytical framework for measuring the success of tourism destinations (Jackson and Murphy, 2002).

Gardiner and Scott (2014) investigated the characteristics of key individuals (cluster leaders) who created a successful tourism cluster in the Gold Coast Adventure Travel Group (GCATG) of Australia. Findings showed the characteristics of key individuals are crucial elements for a successful tourism cluster, since individuals bring personal beliefs, experience and skills into the cluster. In-depth interviews with 14 past and present GCATG management committee members, revealed the attitudes, beliefs, values and personal characteristics of the management committee’s members that support a successful tourism cluster. These include passion for the destination, a strong sense of place attachment, commitment, positive norms, leaderships, trust between the core committee members, and friendship among members that enhance the support and involvement, as well as trustworthiness (Gardiner and Scott, 2014).

Many authors applied cluster concept as analytical tool for segmentation. For example, Lieux et al. (1994) applied cluster analysis to segment senior tourism in America based on their reasons

¹⁴ Interdependence of firms, flexible firm boundaries, cooperative competition, trust in sustained collaboration, community culture and supportive public policies, shared understanding of competitive business ethic, private sector leadership, wide involvement of cluster participants, appropriate cluster boundaries, institutionalisation of relationships, social structure and attention to personal relationships, and life cycles.

for choosing a pleasure destination and lodging preferences. From the result of mail questionnaires, three groups of senior tourists were developed; novelty seeker, active enthusiasts, and reluctant. Significant differences in gender, household income, length of trips and lodging preference were revealed. The results showed there were distinct psychographic segments within the senior market, which it is important for marketing strategy (Lieux et al., 1994).

Inbakaran and Jackson (2005) applied the cluster concept to develop tourist segmentation based upon resort visitors' views on resort selection, satisfaction, opinion and preferences. Trunfio et al. (2006) applied the cluster concept to analyse the role of tourist operators in developing and marketing new typologies of tourism. It was argued that the application of the cluster concept helps to develop new typologies of tourism and tourism clusters characterised by specific tourists' travel motivations (Trunfio et al., 2006).

Kibicho (2008) applied hierarchical cluster analysis to investigate factors critical to developing successful community-based tourism in Kenya. Hierarchical cluster analysis (based upon a survey of tourist/ host/ community opinions) enabled him to identify and understand the characteristics of the local community in participating in the projects' activities, as well as segments of local residents into three different segments; (1) 'operatives' are interested in participation in the projects' activities, (2) 'opinion leaders' are concerned with the communities' benefits from the project, and (3) 'official leaders' value the success of the project (Kibicho, p.211).

Park and Yoon (2009) applied cluster analysis to segment rural tourists' motivations in Korea. From the survey, six dimensions of motivation were identified; relaxation, socialisation, learning, family togetherness, novelty and excitement. The findings showed that cluster analysis is a valuable means for segmenting markets (Park and Yoon, 2009).

However, a tourism cluster can be seen as "...an array of linked industries and other entities in competition, which provide complementary tourism products and services as a holistic tourism experience to travellers..." (Wang and Fesenmaier, 2007, p.869) such as accommodation, attractions, and retail outlets. Similarly, Erku-Öztürk (2009) referred to a cluster as "...a localised network of specialised organisations, which includes close local links between firms from different levels in the industrial chain..." (p.590). Braun (2005, P.3) stated that "...clusters and networks are interdependent, whereby small business network structures underpin the growth and sustainability of clusters...".

Thus, a tourism cluster should be seen as dynamic, rather than static entity, created through the cooperative networking and partnerships of tourism firms, associated organisations, and research institutions.

This is supported by a number of studies of tourism clusters, which have applied a relational approach to investigate cluster formations and their development (Bernini, 2009; Grimstad and Burgess, 2014; McRae-Williams, 2004; Michael, 2003; Taylor et al., 2007). For example, Michael (2003) applied the clustering concept a small regional environment to examine the tourism industry's regional, economic growth in Australia's rural towns. The study revealed

visits based on 'diagonal' clustering, where the co-located industries and local communities collectively provide a bundle of tourism activities and services as a single experience. Findings showed that diagonal clustering can increase the demand for a host of complementary activities that service visitors' needs (Michael, 2003). This diagonal clustering focuses on the economies of scope and synergies rather than economies of scale, by which the 'diagonal' clustering can enhance the synergies and cooperation between firms and host communities to gain a competitive advantage through firms' abilities to complement to each other, as well as the opportunities for local communities to deliver their own specialised and unique products. The diagonal clustering can also enhance the rate of regional growth, by which small communities can gain economic and social benefits through the development of tourism clusters of complementary firms and activities (Michael, 2003).

Svensson et al. (2005) employed partnership, cluster, and innovation system models to examine the role of government in regional development in Sweden. Empirical observations at the Swedish ski resort of Åre revealed effective public-private collaboration, which is important for cluster development in that it allows multi-players to create added value for the destination and tourists as part of the overall tourism experience. Åre demonstrates characteristics of regional tourism clusters in which there is a close proximity of complementary firms in a limited geographical area; examples include outdoor equipment, design, ski, and outdoor magazines that share resources and knowledge (p.34). The study suggested that government needs to support and promote cluster formation in the early phases through measures such as providing cluster management (improve policies) and infrastructure, implementing appropriate training and education, offering financial support, and supporting the growth of cluster and network building

to exchange the latest information and knowledge. Also, the destination's development needs the partnership between public and private sectors to mutually benefit from combining competencies and resources, as well as joint problem solving and policy making. It was evidenced that the cluster model is useful for destination development in terms of achieving competitive advantages (Svensson et al., 2005).

This is supported by Novelli et al. (2006)'s empirical study in which the network approach and cluster concept were utilised as a framework for SMEs with innovative opportunities to develop competitive advantages in the East Sussex region of the UK. The study focused on a tourism development project in the region themed 'Healthy Lifestyle', which adopted diagonal integration (clustering) between sectors such as accommodation, restaurants, urban/rural/coastal indoor and outdoor activities provision, attractions, transportation, organic and traditional food producers, and local authorities. The findings demonstrated that tourism development can be implemented through clustering (integration of tourism activities) of local authorities, supporting bodies, education and research institutions, and local SMEs. It was argued that networking and clustering can help in the innovation process of tourism SMEs, where the agglomeration economies facilitate knowledge-transfer and enhance business synergies and complementary products and services which could create a significant, regional, competitive advantage (Novelli et al., 2006).

Brown (2007) applied Porter's cluster theory to examine the growth of tourism clusters in Cape Breton Island, Canada. The government sector, Cape Breton Development Corporation (DEVCO) implemented Porter's clustering theories to diversify the Cape Breton economy. The findings

demonstrated that direct government intervention was crucial in developing tourism clusters at the initial stage though subsequently the private sector took the lead. Initially, the DEVCO provided local businesses with support such as loan and training programmes and infrastructure, development, as well as tourism development policies encouraging private sector participation in the growth of its sector. The DEVCO also encouraged and supported private sector-based and community-based tourism by focusing on local culture and heritage such as local festivals and traditional music which created a global competitive advantage. It was evidenced that clusters created competitive advantage in relation to aspects of innovative and knowledge-based economies where information, resources, and knowledge flow within networks of geographically proximate firms. Thus, clusters are intrinsically local (e.g. possessing physical beauty, friendly people and a vibrant culture) and must be globally competitive to grow in order to maximise economic benefits for their regions (Brown, 2007).

Bernini (2009) applied diagonal cluster theory to evaluate the geographical characteristics of the Italian convention industry and analyse its relationship with local tourism. Cluster analysis and the quantitative approach were applied to identify different types of Convention Local System (CLS) and evaluate the CLSs' characteristics in different stage of their convention production life cycle. Seven clusters of CLS were identified from this analysis, based on similarity of characteristics regarding tourism, convention supply and local resources. Each CLS represents a destination cluster in different stages of development (emerging, growing and mature), each of which requires different levels of support. The findings indicated that the success of CLSs depended on the competitive advantages presented through the concentration of local resources related to tourism and convention industries. This included the potential role of complementary

firms such as specialised convention firms, service and recreational companies, university and associative agencies in coming together and creating value experience as one specialised convention product (Bernini, 2009).

Grimstad and Burgess (2014) examined the competitive advantage of environmental behaviour at both the firm and micro-cluster level through the case study of the Lovedale wine cluster in Australia. The study focused on the drivers and obstacles to environmental action, and demonstrates the importance of clustering in progressing a sustainability programme. The findings showed that environmental actions arise primarily from personal values and cost-reduction of local community and business associate. Key obstacles include a lack of external and wider stakeholder participation, financial resources, time and knowledge, as well as other priorities being considered more important (Grimstad and Burgess, 2014).

McRae-Williams (2004)'s empirical study focused on a clustering process, which measured the level of complementary between the wine and tourism industries. Types of clusters identified included; 'wannabe', politically driven, potential, latent, and working clusters. The findings showed that, in this region, geographic, economic and social elements (e.g. social culture, and networking) were important in the Ballarat tourism cluster. In particular, location, localisation, the existence of key player and infrastructure were identified as important geographic dimensions. Complementary was more likely to occur when the clustering process were active and dynamic, while limited interaction and information flows resulted in restricted some cluster benefits (McRae-Williams, 2004).

Weidenfeld et al., (2010), examined how spatial and thematic clustering is related to tourist movements between visitor attractions. The study was conducted in Cornwall, England, and was based on in-depth interviews with tourist attraction managers and key informants, complemented by a survey of 435 tourists. The thematic clustering provides insights into the relationship between the nature of the tourism product, spatial clustering and tourism behaviour. The findings showed that, at the regional scale, spatial clustering is positively related to regional compatibility between attractions, since tourists were drawn to visit more attractions such as the higher density Newquay cluster, than in the lower density Lizard cluster (Weidenfeld et al., 2010).

The literature review reveals how Porter's cluster theory has been used to examine the growth of tourism destination by focusing on the relative innovation and competitive advantages of tourism destinations. By comparison, the diagonal clustering concept (Michael, 2003) has been utilised by many authors to investigate at a micro-level, where there is cooperation and partnerships between different tourism stakeholders providing specialised and unique complementary products and services as a bundle of travel experience for tourists.

However, the cluster concept alone cannot provide the explanation for the interaction between individual actors, as well as the types and patterns of relationships that shape tourism clusters. Consequently, stakeholder theory can help in identifying tourism stakeholders and understanding their profiles, while social networks help to reveal how tourism clusters are formed as the result of interrelationships between actors. It gives an insight into, and understanding of, a range of both individual and joint practices including the economic practices. Thus, cluster evolution and

development are shaped by the social networks which constitute the dynamic interaction of tourism stakeholders.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

This research employed stakeholder theory, the social network approach, and the cluster concept as a conceptual framework to examine stakeholders' profiles, their roles and interrelationships which influence both (un) sustainable practices and the spatial formation and evolution of tourism clusters. It provided a holistic scenario of (un) sustainable tourism practices on Samui Island context by applying these three theoretical perspectives together. This helped to address the type of stakeholders' interrelationships and the crucial properties of tourism stakeholders and their social networks in underpinning the successful development of sustainable tourism clusters in the Samui Island context. This is why the application of the three theories enables this author to gain a better perspective on how small island destinations can optimise its opportunities and address the challenges it faces.

2.7.1 Stakeholder theory

The application of stakeholder theory allows a wider range of tourism stakeholders to be considered and included into the tourism planning and development, which it is significant for implementing and achieving sustainability objectives in terms of participation and collaboration. Stakeholder framework helps to identify tourism stakeholders and understand their profiles. Freeman (1984) defined stakeholder as "...any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives..." (p. 46). Thus, tourism stakeholders can

be the host community (individuals and groups), governmental bodies, the tourism industry, experts, the voluntary sector and media and pressure groups who can affect, or be affected, by tourism.

The 'normative' core of stakeholder theory centres on the moral obligations for the operation and management of corporations (Donaldson and Preston, 1995). It suggests that all stakeholders' interests have intrinsic value and assumes that "...all stakeholders have the right to be treated as an end and not as a means to an end..." (Byrd, 2007, p. 7). Thus, all (as diverse as possible) tourism stakeholders' interests and values need to be accounted for in tourism development plans. It does not need all stakeholder to be equally involved in the decision-making process, but all interests need to be identified and understood (Donaldson and Preston, 1995).

A number of tourism studies indicate the important of stakeholder identification and analysis due to their significant influence on tourism development (i.e. Aas et al., 2005; Byrd, 2007; Currie et al, 2009; Sheehan and Richie, 2005). Tourism stakeholders can be categorised into six broad categories; government bodies, the tourism industry, tourists, the local community, special interest groups, support organisations and institutions such as those involved in education (Aas et al., 2005; Byrd, 2007; Getz and Timur, 2005; Larsen et al, 2011; Sheehan and Richie, 2005; Waligo et al., 2013; Wan and Li, 2013), which are involved with providing tourism products and services, regulation, tourism strategies, and the use resources (e.g. environmental resources). Thus, the recognition of different perspectives amongst diverse stakeholders is crucial for sustainable tourism management, because, if it is not managed well, tourism development can

result in the excessive exploitation of a locality's resources by developers, tourists and other users (Heywood, 2006).

Previous studies suggested that collaboration and participation among diverse tourism stakeholders is crucial for implementing sustainable tourism development (Timur and Getz, 2008). Those diverse tourism stakeholders have different attributes (jobs, knowledge, skills, and experience), interests, attitudes, and values which can influence the establishment of collaboration. Thus, it is crucial to understand these tourism stakeholders' profiles, interests, and values in order to reduce conflicts of interests, allow stakeholders who are normally excluded from the decision-making process to be involve in the tourism development process, and enable effective collaboration and partnership among them. Moreover, the understanding and awareness of stakeholders towards current topics and issues such as ST, as well as their consequent actions, have an overall influence on sustainability initiatives which are crucial for developing ST (Waligo et al., 2013). Thus, the stakeholder concept provides an analytical tool to identify stakeholders, and an analytical lens through which to explore stakeholder issues, and competition and conflicts of interests. To date, empirical studies on issues involving stakeholders in the tourism context is still scant (Dodd, 2007; Hall, 2007; Wailigo et al., 2013), and many studies in the ST context have indicated a lack of 'stakeholder perspectives' in considering tourism development (Currie et al., 2009; Ioannides, 1995; Yasarata et al., 2010; Scheyvens, 2011).

According to the normative core of stakeholder theory, the application of stakeholder identification at tourism destinations can include individuals, groups, society, and future generations (Currie et al., 2009). Thus, by considering specific locations in two regions of Samui

Island, this study identified a wide range of tourism stakeholders. This included both direct and indirect tourism stakeholders, based upon their involvement with tourism. Direct tourism stakeholders are those who are mainly involved in the tourism industry and include government bodies, tourism organisations, and tourism industry providers such as accommodation, restaurants, tour operators, tour agencies, and transportation. Indirect tourism stakeholders are those who are less involved in tourism activities, such as local residents who are farmers, fishermen, and teachers. These indirect tourism stakeholders are also affected by, and affect, tourism development.

Due to the important of stakeholder collaboration, participation and involvement in STD, further studies have been suggested to increase understanding of the opportunities and challenges of stakeholder involvement and participation (Byrd, 2007; Wailigo et al., 2013). The issues involved concern stakeholder involvement and participation (including distrust of government policy), poor administration (Jamal and Get, 1995; Sautter and Leisen, 1999), distrust and conflicts between local government and communities (Ioannides, 1995), and lack of community participation in decision-making and the planning process (Yasarata et al., 2010; Ioannides, 1995; Scheyvens, 2011). The opportunities for better involvement and collaboration among tourism stakeholders includes greater understanding and awareness of issues (e.g. sustainable tourism), availability of time and resources, leadership and empowerment (Byrd, 2007).

Though stakeholder theory helps in identifying stakeholders' interests and issues, attitudes and values, it neither provides an explanation of the factors that can influence those attitudes and values, nor decision relating to participation and involvement. In addition, stakeholder theory

does not provide an explanation of the complex interrelationships between diverse tourism stakeholders which, as this research suggests, is a significant factor that can influence the development of effective collaboration and involvement. Moreover, collaboration (in a form of relational networks) is built upon common interests, share values, mutual benefits resulting from reciprocal and complementary exchange relationships among the actors, and the amount and type of interdependence, trust, and power that exist among them (Pavlovich, 2001; Robertson, 2011). Thus, it is essential to understand the nature of stakeholders' interrelationships since it can significantly influence the opportunities, and barriers to development in such collaboration.

In the light of the above reasons, the social network approach is appropriate for analysing these complex interrelationships among diverse tourism stakeholders at the destination which can uncover both the nature of their relational networks and the content of linkages, as well as the opportunities, and barriers, inherent in building relational networks among them.

2.7.2 Social network approach

A destination is a system consisting a number of components such as accommodation, attractions, transportation, and infrastructures. These tourism-based products and services are provided and performed through the dynamic interactions and relations of various tourism stakeholders, assuming that these relations are likely to influence stakeholders' behaviours, attitudes, values, opportunities and constraints (Timur and Getz, 2008). Rowley (1997) argues that "...relationships do not occur within a vacuum of dyadic ties, but rather in a network of influences, where a firm's stakeholders are likely to have direct relationships with one another..." (p.890). Granovetter (1985) argues that economic actions occur within a broader web of social

relationships that have developed over time. Thus, it can be assumed that the relational networks can influence the economic practices of the individuals and the overall economic practices of the networks and the destinations as a whole. Moreover, relational networks are built upon shared values, common interests, and mutual benefits resulting in reciprocal and complementary exchange relationships among the actors (Pavlovich, 2001); for example, the dynamic social relationships which tourism stakeholders form in order to achieve tourism related-goals (Saxena, 2008, p.236).

Analytically, the social network approach is applied to uncover the operations and the nature of networks which enable a deep understanding of the relational networks of various tourism stakeholders, and their contributions to the tourism clusters. Social networks help provide an understanding of the interdependent relationship among tourism stakeholders, which itself reveals the content and the nature of those relationships (Tinsley and Lynch, 2001). The type and pattern of networks makes it possible to explore the existing opportunities through the sharing of high quality information, tacit knowledge, and cooperative exchanges (see Prats et al., 2008; Rowley et al., 2000), which are crucial for creating competitive advantages through innovative tourism products and services, and so successfully developing tourism clusters.

Consequently, this research focuses on the characteristic of the networks (formal/informal networks), the strength of ties (strong/weak ties), and explores the content and properties of the linkages (i.e. information sharing, resource exchanging and sharing, knowledge transfer, shared common goals, trust, commitment, support, mutual benefits and reciprocity).

Lynch and Morrison (2007) referred to a formal network as "...a formalised set of actors who interact in the context of identified aims and social interactions are subordinated to the formalised aims..." (p. 50). It has clearly identified rules and roles of actions, including responsibilities for the actors to follow such as the form of bureaucratic system, required by legal management, and formal institutional arrangements (Fadeeva, 2005; Larson et al., 2013).

An informal network is "...a set of actors who meet mainly for social purposes but also exchange information which has business value..." (Lynch & Morrison, 2007, p.49-50). Informal networks are based on personal contacts or informal arrangements (Larson et al., 2013) and "...does not necessarily correspond to the prescribed lines of formal structure..." (Fadeeva, 2005, p. 183).

Previous empirical studies indicated the valuable contributions of informal networks. For example, they provide space for learning (Ilbery and Saxena, 2009), knowledge transfer and best practice sharing, which can produce changes and innovation through the process of reinterpreting the ideas, and transferring knowledge, among diverse members within the networks (Pavlovich, 2001; Taplin, 2011). This allows the modification of ideas and practices by, for example, creating solutions for solving problems in specific contexts and achieving sustainability objectives (Fadeeva, 2005; Ilbery and Saxena, 2009). Informal networks also provide opportunities for small tourism businesses to overcome shortages of resources such as knowledge and finance, and enable them to participate in environmental programmes (Grimstad and Burgeess, 2014). However, formal relationships, which are mobilised through government policies, rules and regulations as well as business support, are also crucial for effective tourism

management and development. This is because government policies shape overall tourism development. Rules and regulations are also important in terms of controlling business and tourism activities, which promote certain types of practices and restricts others (Parboteeah et al., 2008). Business support here refers to different forms of assistance or supportive programs offered by the government to the businesses (Busenitz et al., 2000). This includes, for example, training programmes for tourism businesses and staff in order to improve their knowledge and skills, and improving both business performances and the quality of tourism products and services. Government can also support tourism projects and activities by providing financial resources. These business supports require formal proposals and documented agreements, through the bureaucratic system, between government and private tourism businesses (Busenitz et al., 2000).

In addition, the characteristics of relationships among actors can influence the kind of support. This is supported by Wellman and Wortley's (1990), empirical study which indicated that community ties with friends and relatives, determined by strong ties and close-knit relationships, provide social support that surpass narrow reciprocity. Strong ties are with those family members, kin, friends, neighbours, and business associates sharing similar demographic characteristics (Torkelsson, 2007). Pavovich (2001) and Pavovich (2003) argued that strong ties support mutual aid and reciprocity between tourism stakeholders (e.g. tourism businesses, community members, and public organisations), enhance the cohesion among actors at the destination, enable the integration of complementary resources and skills, and result in shared problem solving. Carson et al., (2004) also argued that stronger ties create higher levels of trust, commitment and cooperation and vice versa. However, very strong closeness of relationships can create social

exclusivity at the local level, create an attitude of “them versus us” (Saxena and Ilbery 2008), and limit norm-breaking, and creativity (Johanisson and Mønsted, 1997). On the other hand, “Weak ties are made through highly formalised, short-term relationships...” that enable connections to other networks (Saxena et al., p.354). According to Granovetter (1973), networks should have both strong and weak ties because the structure of these ties influences the nature and operation of networks. Strong ties provide internal support and cohesion, while weak ties provide opportunities to access and import novel information. Pavlovich (2003) also argued that organisations need to have both strong supportive ties, and external partnerships, as sources of new information.

Moreover, trust is suggested by many earlier empirical studies as a crucial factor in facilitating networking, sustaining long-term relationships, fostering information sharing and resource exchanges, and enhancing collaboration among tourism stakeholders (Carson et al., 2004; Kimbu and Ngoasong, 2013; Presenza and Cipollina, 2010; Saxena, 2005, 2006; Taylor et al., 2007). Trust is defined as “...a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence...” (Moorman et al., 1993, p.82). Trust is characterised by commitment, by sharing information and expertise, and by consolidating relationships between the actors (Presenza and Cipollina, 2010).

Thus, it is argued that social networks enable this author to understand the nature of the interrelationships between tourism stakeholders, and the roles and influences of their relational networks to the formation and evolution of tourism clusters in relation to sustainability objectives. This is because a tourism cluster can be viewed as a form of collaborative network,

which consists of dynamic interactions among the proximity of interrelated firms and institutions within a geographical location (Rosenfeld, 2001). This provides the opportunity for firms to gain a ‘collaborative advantages’ (Robertson, 2011) through complementary products and services which add value to one another’s products and enable firms to provide a holistic travel experience for tourists. It is argued that networks are essential features of tourism clusters and clusters are mostly defined by the local networks. Thus, it is essential to understand the operation (networking), and the pattern nature of the networks due to the networks’ significant influence on the formation and evolution of tourism clusters. For example, relational networks of various stakeholders can enhance the collaboration and participation among stakeholders through their continuous interactions such as communications, resource exchange and sharing (i.e. information, knowledge, and ideas), assisting and helping one another, and solving problems. Networks enable cooperative actions for mutual benefit, the co-creation of marketing activities and development of a collective vision, and the development of new ideas and innovation providing unique tourism products and services (Fadeeva, 2005; Novelli et al., 2006; Saxena e al. (2007).

However, the application of the social networks approach cannot provide a full understanding of the formation and evolution of tourism clusters where the concentration of local complementary tourism products and services in specific locations provide such a ‘collaborative advantage’ (Robertson, 2011) involving unique tourism products and services which provide a holistic, travel experience to tourists.

In this thesis, the cluster approach is crucial in providing a better understanding of social networks in terms of analysing the formation and evolution of tourism clusters. Firstly, the

cluster approach provides the geographical dimension in the analysis because clusters usually refer to a concentration of firms in a limited geographical area, while networks can occur among firms located anywhere. Secondly, clusters require both cooperation and competition, while networks are based on cooperation (Rosenfeld, 2001). Thirdly, networks tend to have common goals (i.e. business) but clusters require collective visions (Rosenfeld, 2001) to develop tourism. Fourthly, clusters provide the dimension of a life cycle since clusters have a life cycle. By contrast, social networks do not provide the same dimension of life cycle as tourism clusters (Rosenfeld, 2002).

2.7.3 Cluster concept

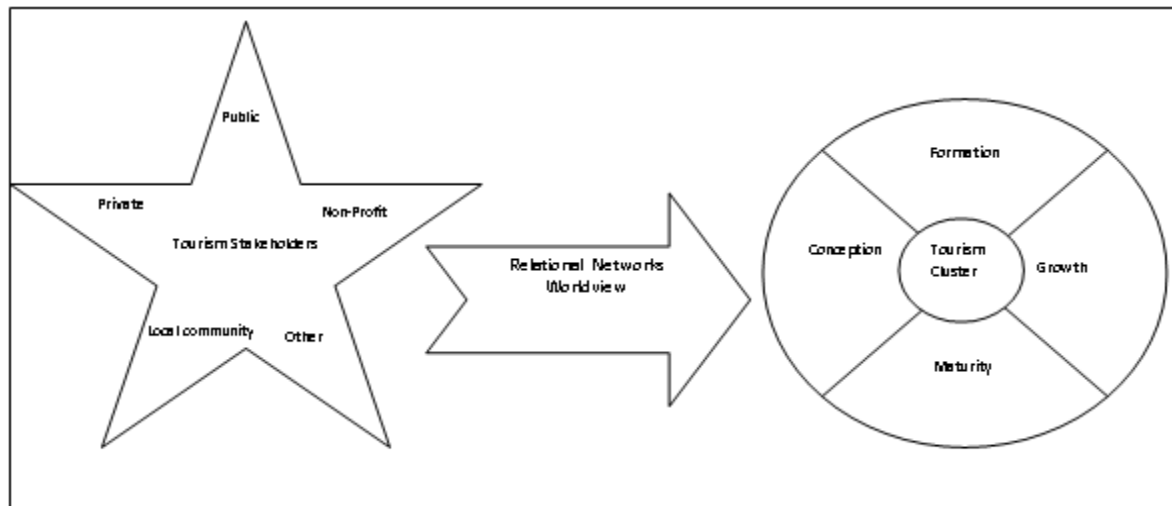
This research investigates the interrelationship of tourism stakeholders at the regional, national, and local level within the perspective of clustering, where the relational networking of tourism stakeholders is crucial for forming tourism clusters. (Porter, 1998, p. 77) states that "...a host of linkages among cluster members result in a whole greater than the sum of its parts. In a typical tourism cluster, for example, the quality of a visitor's experience depend not only on the appeal of the primary attraction but also on the quality and efficiency of complementary businesses such as hotels, restaurant, shopping outlets, and transportation facilities. Because members of cluster are mutually dependent, good performance by one can boost the success of the others...". Thus, this research focuses on the clustering process in which small firms are enabled to overcome knowledge and resource shortages (Grimstad and Burgess, 2014), increase SMEs competencies (Van Laere and Heene, 2003), and achieve competitive advantages through economies of scope such as expanding the market size and attracting new type of tourists (Michael, 2007).

The cluster concept helps to capture the geographical dimension and spatial agglomeration, where the concentrations of firms situated in geographic co-location come together to perform economic exchanges with a view to achieving innovation, productivity and competitive advantages. Clusters are the “...geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialised suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions (e.g. universities, standards agencies, trade associations) in a particular field that compete but also cooperate...” (Porter, 2000, p.15). Cunha and Cunha (2005) defined the potential tourism activities that are important characteristics of tourism clusters, among which are the interdependence and complementary between parts of a tourism agglomeration which occur through the interaction and organisation of the local actors.

Cluster definitions are based on the agglomeration, classification of specialisation, and the relational dimensions (Erkuş-Öztürk, 2009). Agglomeration is used to define the level of networking in cluster, by which “...agglomerated clustered infer a high number of firms existing in a clusters...”, while “...non-agglomerated infer lower numbers of firms in a cluster.”(Erkuş-Öztürk, 2009, p. 594). Specialisation refers to “...a concentration of the same type of tourism firms in a cluster...” (Erkuş-Öztürk, 2009, p. 594), and is used to describe the specialisation of different tourism clusters.

See Figure 2.1 for the conceptual framework.

Figure 2.1: Tourism cluster formation

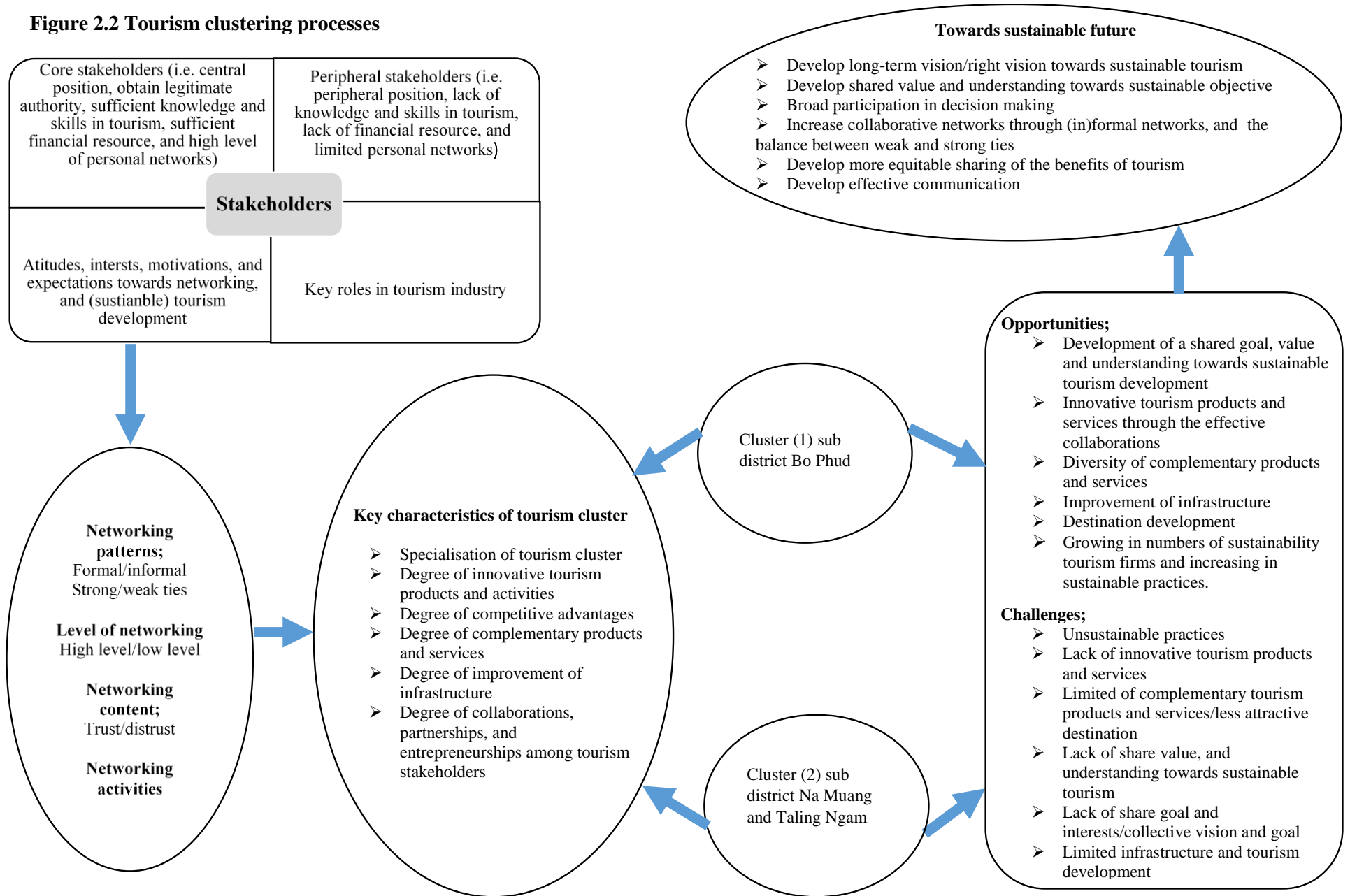


Source: Saxena et al. (2015)

This Conceptual framework (see Figure 2.1) is guided by the three theories; stakeholder theory, social networks approach, and cluster concept. The first diagram (star) focuses on key tourism stakeholders including the public and private sectors, non-profit makers and the local community. It then analyses tourism stakeholders' profiles and world views towards networking and (sustainable) tourism development, as well as their social networks (arrow picture), in order to understand their networking processes and activities. This in turn generates cluster formation evolving over period of time from the conception stage through formation, growth, and maturity stages (circle picture).

The next Conceptual framework (see Figure 2.2) presents the clustering processes created by the active networks of different tourism stakeholders who play different roles in providing complementary products and services at the destination.

Figure 2.2 Tourism clustering processes



This Conceptual Framework (see Figure 2.2) focuses on the tourism clustering processes, starting by identifying tourism **Stakeholders**: (1) *Core stakeholders* determined by their central position in tourism networks and their capacities in terms of resources (i.e. knowledge and skills, financial resources, technology, information) and their social networks. (2) *Peripheral stakeholders* determined by their peripheral position in tourism networks and their lack of capacities.

It then analyses tourism stakeholders' profiles and roles in tourism and their attitudes, interests, motivation and expectations towards networking and (sustainable) tourism development. These influence tourism stakeholders' behaviours and (un) sustainable practices, as well as their relationships with others.

The subsequent focus is on tourism stakeholders' networks by looking at the existing networking level, the networking patterns, networking content and networking activities. The level, patterns, and networking activities influence tourism stakeholders' behaviour and (un)sustainable practices, as well as the characteristics and the development of tourism clusters in the two case study areas; (1) sub district Bo Phud and (2) sub districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam. In addition, these networking patterns and processes also provide opportunities and constraints for the (sustainable) tourism clusters' development in the two case study areas.

Finally, the framework offers possibilities for implementing developments and improving relationship building and networking, as well as achieving sustainable tourism development.

2.8 Key gaps in Literature

To date, there is no study that applies the three theories of stakeholder, social networks, and cluster together in order to investigate tourism clusters in implementing sustainability objectives; this particularly in an island context. There has been a sufficiency of empirical case studies and clear understanding of tourism clusters in terms of sustainability in the island context, which has resulted in a failure to explain and address the interrelationships of tourism stakeholders underpinning the sustainability of tourism clusters in island destinations. This research aims to fill these gaps by focusing on the role of tourism stakeholders and their interrelationships influencing the (un) sustainability of tourism clusters, as well as the evolution of tourism clusters in the Samui Island context, which has not been studied.

It is argued that the application of the three theories enables a better understanding of how tourism clusters are formed, operate and evolve, by looking at the economic processes at micro level. This researcher considers that, to achieve sustainability objectives, there is a need to understand the actors who perform economic practices, and their relationships, which influence economic practice as a whole. The conceptual framework of this study is based on the relational approach or 'relational turn' (Boggs & Rantisi, 2003) in economic geography, which enables the 'capture' of micro / macro practices, socio-spatial relations between actors, and the profile of tourism clusters (Boggs & Rantisi, 2003). Stakeholder theory is used to identify tourism stakeholders and examine their profiles in depth. This enables an understanding of their attitudes, interests, problems, and their understanding of sustainability issues. The social network approach helps in identifying other relevant tourism stakeholders and understanding tourism stakeholders' interrelationships in terms of how they influence the attitudes and behaviour of tourism stakeholders, as well as the economic practices as a whole which shape the tourism clusters. The cluster concept helps in providing the geographical

dimension that offers the opportunities and constraints to economic practices. It provides the dimension of a life cycle, since tourism clusters change and evolve over time, significantly through the dynamic interactions and relations of economic practices. However, the factors that influence the actions and decisions vary according to context, interactions, interpretations, and random events. The cluster concept also provides the dimension of shared understanding of business practices, collective vision, wide involvement of cluster participants, collaborative competition and interdependence of firms (Jackson and Murphy, 2002).

Thus, understanding the economic actors, their actions and interrelations, as well as their consequences, enables an identification of the tourism clusters' opportunities and challenges in implementing sustainability objectives. This enables the development and improvement of economic practices and activities that enhance effective collaboration among tourism stakeholders, as well as developing more active tourism clusters orientated towards sustainability.

2.9 Summary

To conclude, this chapter has highlighted how a combination of stakeholder theory, social networks theory and the cluster concept can be used jointly in analysing the interrelationships between tourism stakeholders at: (1) the national level such as government bodies, (2) the regional level such as local government bodies, tourism organisations/associations and media, and (3) the local/cluster level such as government bodies, the tourism industry, the host community, tourism organisations and associations, higher educational institutions, the voluntary sector, and media. All of these can affect, or are affected by, the tourism industry, and the influences of their relational networks on (un)sustainable practices and tourism

clusters development, in the north-eastern and south/south-western regions of Samui Island. This research focuses on the interrelationships between tourism stakeholders and the business routines/behaviour among actors, and will investigate the content and nature of their relationships (Tinsley & Lynch, 2001). This includes the characteristic of the networks (formal/informal networks), the strength of ties (strong/weak ties), and explores the content and properties of the linkages (e.g. information sharing, resource exchanging and sharing, knowledge transfer, shared common goals, trust, commitment, support, mutual benefits and reciprocity).

The application of these three theories provides a holistic perspective in understanding the tourism industry of Samui Island. This perspective seeks to understand micro / macro practices, socio-spatial relations between actors, and the structures and processes underpinning the evolution and the profile of tourism clusters on Samui Island (Boggs & Rantisi, 2003). Applying the three theories -stakeholder, social networks, and cluster- will provide a relational framework allowing a better understanding of the complex relationships among tourism stakeholders, and the role of their relational networks in shaping the formation and evolution of tourism clusters towards sustainable objectives. The next chapter (chapter 3), considers the rationale for the selection of the methodological/philosophical approach, the criteria for the choice of case study areas and data collection tools employed..

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study has been to investigate the interrelationship between tourism stakeholders and the role their social networks play in influencing tourism cluster formations on Samui Island. Constructivist philosophical assumption underpinned this study (see section 3.2.1). Overall, this chapter describes the research's methodological approach, and provides both the rationale for the research philosophy and an overview of the selected study areas. It provides an explanation for the selection of particular instruments for data collection, describes the actual data collection process, and the data analysis undertaken in order to meet the research aims and objectives.

3.2 The research process

This section explains the research process that guided this study. The philosophical assumptions are discussed, followed by explanations for the research design's rationale, and the methods.

This research focuses primarily on relationships among tourism stakeholders, as well as the content and meaning of the relationships as interpreted by those tourism stakeholders. It seeks to understand the unique characteristics of tourism stakeholders' inter-relationships which are formed by continuous interactions, shared experiences and dialogues. It also seeks to understand how various world views (meaningfully interpreted), experiences, performances/roles, and behaviour of several tourism stakeholders shape tourism (Pernecky,

2012). Thus, the constructivist approach was deemed to be best suited to address the research aim. The constructivist approach seeks to understand how the situational and cultural variations shape reality (Marvesti, 2004). The premise is that, since the characteristics and structure of relationships evolve over time, they mutate and are changeable depending on the specific context (e.g. cultural, political, and economic), which affect individuals' world views, interpretation of reality and –subsequently- their actions.

Thus, from this perspective, ontological assumption that can be made is that realities are multiple and socially constructed and based on individual or group experiences in specific local contexts (Guba and Lincoln, 2004). It is argued that social realities are products of human understandings and mentalities which may change over time as actors' understandings of a given phenomenon deepen and become more informed and sophisticated (Guba and Lincoln, 2004). Consequently, the methodological / philosophical stance adopted in this inquiry helps in understanding social realities and the meanings that individuals and groups (including the researcher and the persons being studied) hold with regards to sustainable tourism. Epistemologically, from the constructivist perspective, the assumption is that the data generated are the result of the interaction between the researcher and the subject being researched (Guba and Lincoln, 2004). Constructivists believe that the interactions between the researcher and participants are crucial in terms of creating knowledge. Thus, methodologically, constructivism assumes that individual perspectives can be constructed primarily through interaction between, and among, the researcher and the participants being researched.

Other studies of tourism using constructivist perspective involve microanalysis to reveal multiple world views, and understandings of several actors (Yüksel and Bramwell, 2005).

This is because researchers believe that individual interests, beliefs, and actions create, sustain or modify tourism governance networks (Yüksel and Bramwell, 2005). Pavlovich (2003) utilised the constructivist approach to contextualise insights, and reveal the process of destination evolution and transformation, arising from tourism stakeholders' interrelationships, at the Waitomo Caves, New Zealand. She investigated these community relationships through her personal observation of business routines, routine conversations, and oral histories in order to understand social practices and meanings. Pavlovich (2003) viewed tourism destination as an interdependent networks of multiple tourism stakeholders, which are dynamic and can change over time depending on the interpreted meaning, as well as the political and socio-cultural context. In addition, Timur and Getz (2009) applied the constructivist approach to understand the various interests and understandings of diverse tourism stakeholders of sustainable tourism development. Moreover, Larsen et al. (2011) employed the constructivist approach to understand how diverse organisations seek to implement policy in their specific operational context by focusing on tourism stakeholders' social-ecological networks.

Qualitative research is the best approach to use in investigating the interrelationships between tourism stakeholders in their natural setting and context (e.g. political and socio-cultural aspects) that shape those tourism stakeholders' conscious minds, world views, and behaviours (Riley and Love, 2000). This permits a deeper understanding of tourism stakeholders' world views, and interests, and their understanding of networking and (sustainable) tourism development in a particular context such as Samui Island.

3.3 Research design

The research design was developed based upon the research aim and objectives,. The research design provides the guidelines and processes for data collection and analysis. Within the constructivist framework, the use of qualitative approach was considered as most appropriate to achieve the goal of this research.

3.3.1 Qualitative research

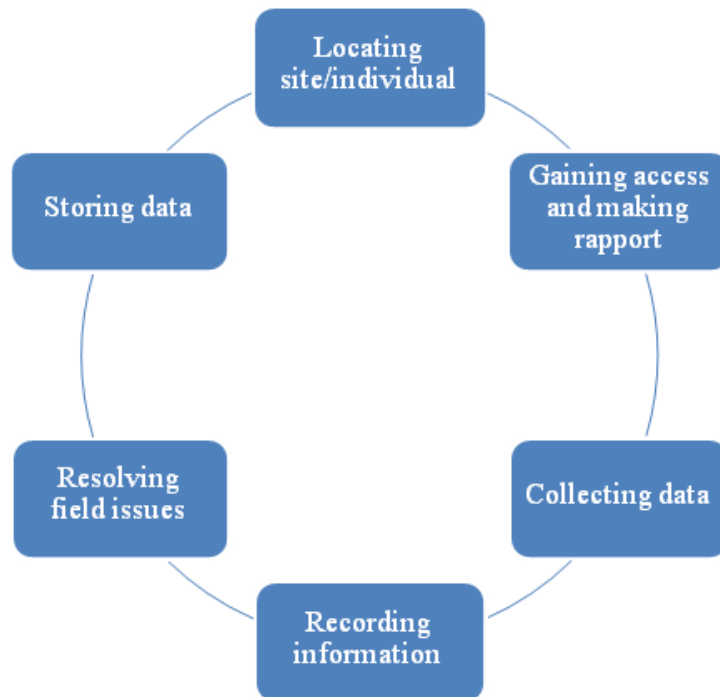
Qualitative research is the study of social phenomenon from the viewpoint of the participant/person under study (Williams, 2007), and places considerable emphasis on the participant's subjective meanings and perceptions (Schmid, 1981 cited in Krefting, 1990). Qualitative research also allows this author to gain detailed information from the actual experience that the researcher observes and be involved in that particular social phenomenon.

Thus, a qualitative approach was applied in this research in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the interrelationships between tourism stakeholders and the micro-process that define an individual participant's role in a particular network. This includes the influence on the characteristics and structure of networks, and how those networks influence (un)sustainable practices and tourism cluster formations in sub-district Bo Phud and sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam,. The aim was to collect and analyse rich information from diverse groups of tourism stakeholders, focusing in particular on their socio-cultural values that determine the meaning and content of their daily routines and practices. (see Hesse-biber & Leavy, 2004).

3.3.2 Data collection

Data collection from tourism stakeholders (including participants from the business community, community members, policy makers and those responsible for promoting Samui both nationally and internationally) was undertaken in two different case study areas; in the north-east region (sub-district Bo Phud) and south-west region (sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam) of Samui Island (see Figure 3.2). The rationale behind the selection lay in examining unique characteristics of these island destinations. Broadly, they are characterised by tourism clusters comprising of a variety of physical-natural features, and different tourism activities and products linked also to socio-cultural attributes. However, the tourism practices of stakeholders are not always sustainable. This necessitates a focus on distinct profiles and practices of tourism stakeholders and unique features that characterise their relationship building and networking that also contribute towards sustainable tourism practices. Hence, the data collection activities of this research (see Figure 3.1) followed different phases of data collection activities as discussed by Creswell (2013).

Figure 3.1: Data collection activities



Source: Creswell, 2013

The data collection process involved the identification of the case study areas and potential participants who could provide rich information, and were deemed as the best candidates for investigative practices and issues central to the research topic. The initial mapping of participants was undertaken through a review of business and tourism directories, and through interviews with policy makers who identified key stakeholders from the business community and residents. Additionally, in order to ensure fair representation from different strata of the sample population, this researcher spent a considerable amount of time in the study region and used her common ethnic and lingual affinity with communities to garner participation from women and less vocal members of the community and owners of small businesses. Thus, before the data collection phase actually commenced, the emphasis was placed on observing business practices, reading through newspaper stories, web sites, and

brochures. Examples include websites such as ‘The Green Island Foundation’¹⁵ and Nathon city¹⁶, pocket books and magazines such as ‘Green Book Samui’, and Koh Samui Suratthani Province and news items such as ‘Urgent wake-up call for Koh Samui’, 2012¹⁷ and ‘Re Earth Eco Music Festival, 2012’.¹⁸ This allowed the researcher to develop a greater understanding of the study context and to establish a rapport with key participants in order to create trust, as well as to access information-rich cases (Creswell, 2013). Thus, the data collection phase consisted of collecting both primary and secondary data that provided valuable information on Samui Island, such as statistics, campaigns and projects related to tourism and environmental issues, maps and information about key tourism stakeholders’ profiles.

The research plan was designed to collect primary data, and focused on sourcing it from semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and participant observation methods that are widely used in accessing rich information and in-depth explanations of the social phenomenon in two case study areas (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004). The interviews concentrated on tourism stakeholders who had been identified based on Freeman’s (1984) stakeholder concept and a preliminary review of government bodies, the tourism industry, the host community, the voluntary sector, experts, and pressure groups comprising the tourism industry on Samui Island. The data were transcribed and coded following Lincoln and Guba (1985), which allows rich information to be described and explained in detail. This analysis helped in gaining an in-depth understanding of participants/stakeholders’ interests, attitudes and

¹⁵ Directly cited from website <http://www.greenislandfoundation.com/> (Accessed 10 January 2013).

¹⁶ It is the local (Samui) website aims to share the news and information about the local events (including local festivals) and activities (including tourism activities) (Directly cited from website <http://www.nathoncity.com/paper/5650>. Accessed 10 January 2013).

¹⁷ The Nation online news. From <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/national/Urgent-wake-up-call-for-Koh-Samui-30196561.html> (Accessed 10 January 2013).

¹⁸ Online news from the government public relation department, Samui (Directly cited from website http://radio.prd.go.th/samui/main.php?filename=030255_1. Accessed 15 January 2013).

viewpoints towards relationship building and networks participation, particularly their (un)sustainable practices, as well as the type of relationships and how these influenced participants/stakeholders' practices.

3.3.3 Study areas

The emphasis of the research was on exploring and comparing the interrelationships between actors, their business routines/behaviours and their social networks' influence. This research also revealed the individual's practices, as well as complementary practices in different tourism clusters that have different level of spatial agglomerations (high versus low levels of clustering) and different theme-based products such as spas, environmental tours, beaches, and nature-based activities. Two areas were selected on the basis of the different forms of tourism they offered, and the multitude of stakeholders whose practices contribute to (un)sustainable tourism development in Samui. Besides, the clusters concept (see Chapter 5 for details) also helped in identifying study areas based on physical geography/location, natural and social attributes, specialised products and concentration of (dis)similar firms who specialise in complementary tourism products and services such as accommodation, tour operators, tourism activities, catering, and transport.

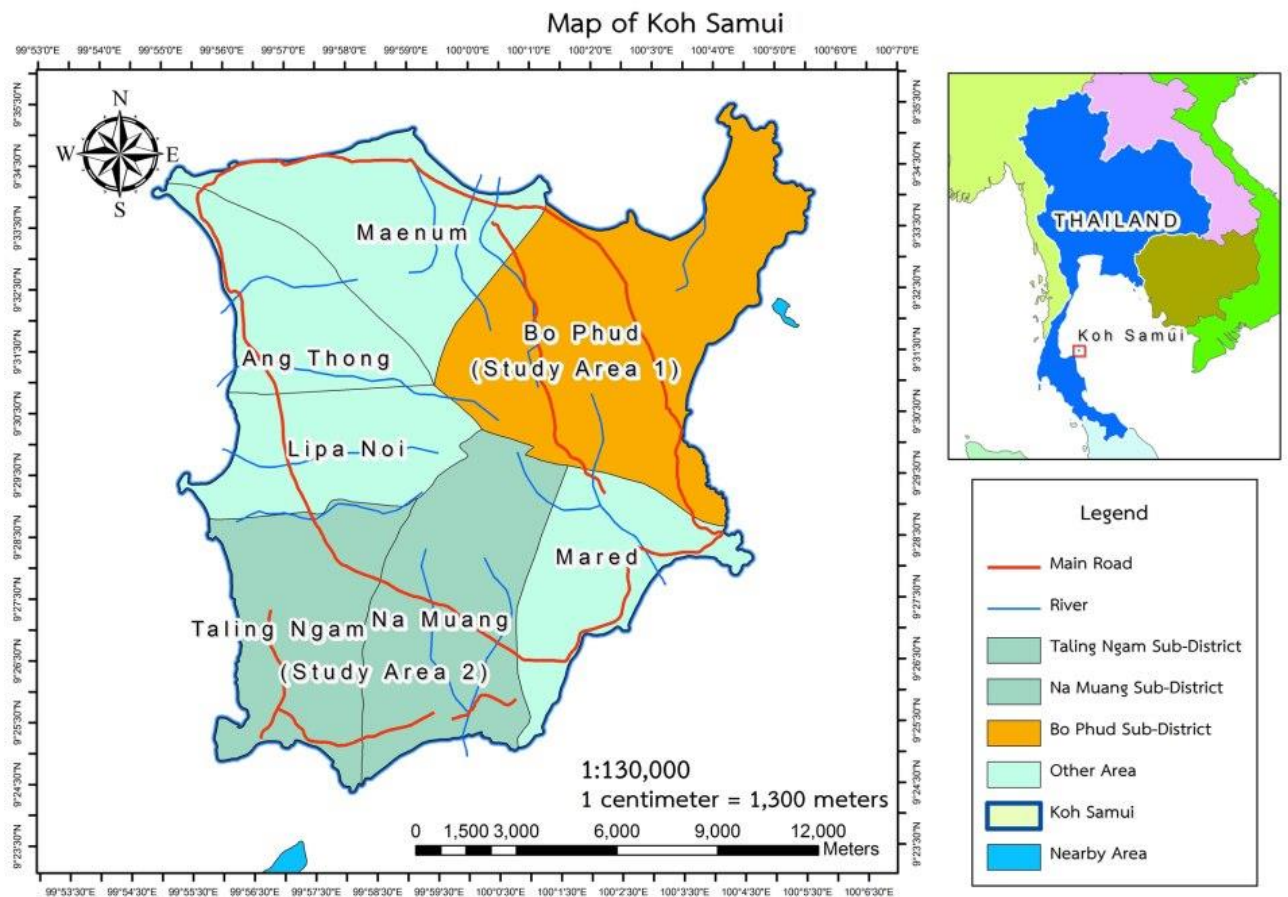
An example is the case study of the Bo Phud sub-district area in north-east region, which has the highest level of firm concentration and spatial agglomerations (see Table 3.3). It provides a full range of tourism products and services such as tour agencies, an international airport, numerous luxurious, international chain hotels and resorts, diverse types of restaurants, shops and bars, spas, golf courts, department stores, and international hospitals (see table 3.2). This area is renowned for its beautiful beaches (in particular Chaweng beach,) which is not only famed for its beauty, but also for its shopping and nightlife. Thus, this region comprises the

interactions and relations of diverse sectors and multiple groups of tourism actors cooperating or competing with one another. However, the natural environment in this region has been most negatively impacted from tourism activities, such as encroachment on public area (beaches), accumulated rubbish, and polluted water (see chapter 5 for details). It therefore proved quite interesting to investigate the inter-relationships between diverse groups of /tourism stakeholders (e.g. government, host community, voluntary sector, tourism industry and pressure groups) who demonstrated different attributes (e.g. knowledge, skills, power, legitimacy, interests, and viewpoints) with regards to sustainable tourism development.

The case study areas situated in the south-west region (comprising the sub-districts of Na Muang and Taling Ngam) were jointly selected because they have very similar tourism characteristics and offer similar activities such as elephant trekking, safari, mountains, waterfalls and wildlife. Also, spatially, consideration the two sub-districts in combination gave them comparable size to the first case study area. However, in contrast to Bo Phud, this study area has low levels of firm concentrations and spatial agglomerations (see Table 3.1). It has very different tourism characteristics and activities from the first case study since these regions have less beach area and are mainly mountainous. These are also less crowded and less urbanised, and provides limited tourism services unlike the first case study area. However, the natural environment in this area has also been seriously impacted by tourism activities including the degradation of forests and wildlife disturbance. The coral reefs have also been damaged as a result of the construction of hotels and resorts on the mountains, which can cause landslides with soil sliding into the sea. A recent example of forest encroachment is the Conrad hotel and resort, a luxury hotel belonging to the Hilton chain that acquired almost the whole mountain to construct a hotel in Taling Ngam sub-district (see appendix 5). According to the news, there was controversy among stakeholders while this

hotel was being constructed. Local people, the general public, environmental experts, scholars, and the media questioned the negative environmental impacts from constructing this hotel, including the degradation of forest, landslides, damage to coral reefs and water pollution (MThai News, 2013).

Figure 3.2: Map of Samui Island



Source: Department of Geography, Faculty of Arts, Silpakorn University

Table 3.1: Information about case study areas

	Case study area 1 North-eastern region (sub district Bo phud)	Case study area 2 South/South-western region (sub district Taling Ngam and Na Muang)
Area	59.79 km ²	60.10 km ²
Population	14,274	9,834

Source: Koh Samui Municipality, 2009

Table 3.2: Tourism cluster in the north-eastern south-western regions of the Island

Resources	Actors/stakeholders					
	Government	Business owners	Local people	Service providers/employees	Tourists	Pressure groups
Physical-natural	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2
Social culture	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2
▪ Night life	1	1	1	1	1	1
▪ Shopping	1	1	1	1	1	1
Supra-structure; (e.g. accommodation, restaurants, transport)	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2
▪ Airport	1	1	1	1	1	1

Note: 1 refer to the north-eastern region (sub district Bo phud), and 2 to the south/south-western regions (sub districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam)

Table 3.3: Tourism businesses in two case study areas

Businesses	Cluster 1	Cluster 2
	Sub district Bo Phud	Sub districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam
Accommodation	284 (12,791 rooms)	19 (610 rooms)
Restaurant	323	38
Travel agency and tour operator	189	10

Source: (Koh Samui Tourism Coordination Centre/(TAT), 2013).

The researcher rejected other areas because they do not have characteristics of interests to the research. In the north region (sub-district Meanum), there are some beach attractions, and

accommodation businesses (hotels and resorts) along the beach, but this area is mostly comprised of local commercial businesses and residential areas. The north-western region (sub-district Ang Thong) is mainly comprised of local commercial businesses, restaurants, local government offices and residential areas. Importantly, it contains the main ferry pier for transporting tourists from the mainland to Samui Island. The western area (sub-district Lipa Noi), is less urbanised and contains very limited tourism products and services. There are a few accommodation businesses (bungalows, lodges) and there is also a ferry pier. This area is not attractive for tourism activities due to its natural physical and social characteristics. Sub-district Mared, in the south-western region, is the second most popular for beach attractions, local commercial businesses, accommodation businesses (hotels and resorts), restaurants and bars. This part has very similar tourism characteristics and activities to the north-eastern region, although it is less urbanised and crowded than the north-eastern region (sub-district Bo Phud). Selecting between this region and the north-eastern region (sub-district Bo Phud), this researcher decided to study only the north-eastern part (sub-district Bo Phud), which is the most outstanding region in terms of varieties and concentrations of tourism firms and activities, contains high level of collaborative networks between tourism stakeholders, and has experienced serious negative impacts from tourism (in terms of the natural environment, and socio-cultural issues).

3.3.4 Selection of participants

This research applied “purposeful” sampling to select participants. Purposeful sampling is designed to yield an in-depth understanding of selected individuals or group’s experience(s) rather than empirical generalisation (Patton, 2002). It helped to select “...information rich cases, that is individuals, groups, organization, or behaviours that provide the greatest insight

into the research question...” (Devers et al., 2000, p. 264). The purposeful sampling strategies used are:

- ‘Intensity sampling’ which involves selecting ‘...excellent or rich examples of the phenomenon of interest, but not highly unusual cases...cases that manifest sufficient intensity to illuminate the nature of success or failure, but not at the extreme...’ (Patton, 2002, p. 234)
- ‘Snowball or chain sampling’ which involves exploring information from the key informants about details of other ‘information-rich cases’ in the field (Suri, 2011, p.69). ‘The chain of recommended informants would typically diverge initially as many possible sources are recommended, then coverage as a few key names get mentioned over and over...’ (Patton, 2002, p. 237).
- ‘Criterion sampling’ which involves ensuring ‘...all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance...’ (Patton, 2002, p. 238), which is concerned with tourism stakeholders who are involved, both directly and indirectly, in tourism activities and tourism cluster formation.

Tourists were not included due to the research’s focus on tourism stakeholders (mainly providers) and its examination of the collaborative networks between them that define the profile of tourism clusters in each case study area. The criteria for exclusion were mainly based on the number of years tourism businesses had operated in the area. Thus, those businesses which had been in operation for more than three years, and tourism stakeholders who had been living in Samui more than three years, were included in the sample. This ensured that participants had spent enough time to engage in and understand tourism issues affecting Samui, and had adequate time to develop their relationships with each other.

This research defines tourism stakeholders as “...those groups or individuals who are associated with tourism development initiatives and therefore can affect or are affected by the decisions and activities concerning those initiatives...” (Waligo et al., 2013, p.343). Thus according to purposeful sampling, tourism stakeholders, who are assumed to be crucial sources for rich information, were identified as participants. This included, for example, the participants who were the representatives of organisations and sectors involved in tourism development on Samui Island. This included government bodies, policy makers, tourism-related businesses, local communities (i.e. individuals who are originally from Samui and are indirectly involve in tourism, such as farmers, fishermen, and teachers), media, support organisations, and non-profit organisations. This is also supported by previous literature on sustainable tourism which suggests that, in order to achieve sustainability, multiple or all tourism stakeholders must be included (Aas et al., 2005; Currie et al., 2009; Hawkins, 2004; Pavlovich, 2001; Prats and Guisa, 2008; Presenza and Sheeran, 2013; Scheyvens, 2011; Timur and Getz, 2009; Tomljenović et al., 2013; Waligo et al., 2013). Thus, this research attempted to include diverse groups of tourism stakeholders who have different experiences, and world views according to the research objectives, which focus on tourism stakeholders’ social networks, sampling involved a combination of purposive sampling and snowballing (Tolkach and King, 2015).

There were two stages in tourism stakeholder identification. *Stage one*: a list of key tourism stakeholders involves in Samui tourism activities was identified and developed based on a literature review of tourism and sustainable tourism studies (see Table 3.4), and secondary data such as websites, brochures, and books. This preliminary analysis allowed the researcher to create an initial list of relevant stakeholders (Nogueira and Pinho (2014).

Table 3.4: Lists of key tourism stakeholders from previous tourism studies

Key tourism stakeholders	Author (s)
Government, local authorities, policy makers	Bernini, 2009; Brown and Geddes, 2007; Dredge, 2006; Hawkins, 2004; Kimbu and Ngoasong, 2013; Larsen et al., 2011; Novelli et al., 2006; Pavlovich, 2001; Svensson et al., 2005; Timur and Getz, 2008; Tinsley and Lynch, 2008; Tomljenović et al., 2013; Tosun, 1998; Yüksel and Bramwell, 2005; Yüksel et al., 1999
Tourism firms	Braun, 2005; Dredge, 2006; Hawkins, 2004; Kimbu and Ngoasong, 2013; Larsen et al., 2011; Novelli et al., 2006; Pavlovich, 2001; Prats and Guisa, 2008; Svensson et al., 2005; Timur and Getz, 2008; Tinsley and Lynch, 2008; Tosun, 1998; Yüksel and Bramwell, 2005; Yüksel et al., 1999
Tourism bureaux, tourism associations, event, and tourism organisations	Dredge, 2006; Hawkins, 2004; Larsen et al., 2011; Novelli et al., 2006; Pavlovich, 2001; Svensson et al., 2005; Timur and Getz, 2008; Tinsley and Lynch, 2008; Tomljenović et al., 2013; Tosun, 1998; Yüksel and Bramwell, 2005; Yüksel et al., 1999
Education and Research agencies	Novelli et al., 2006; Prats and Guisa, 2008; Timur and Getz, 2008; Yüksel and Bramwell, 2005
Local community (i.e. villagers, teachers, farmers, fishermen, residents)	Grimstad and Burgess, 2014; Larsen et al., 2011; Pavlovich, 2001; Prats and Guisa, 2008; Presenza and Sheehan, 2013; Scheyven, 2011; Timur and Getz, 2008; Tinsley and Lynch, 2008; Tomljenović et al., 2013; Yüksel and Bramwell, 2005; Yüksel et al., 1999

Stage two: a list of key tourism stakeholders was identified based on the interviews, which helped to confirm and validate the list of key tourism stakeholders. This stage facilitated the researcher to identify the networks, and reveal relationships within and between the networks of tourism stakeholders involved in tourism activities (Nogueira and Pinho (2014). In this stage, the snowballing technique was also used in order to identify additional relevant actors/tourism stakeholders from interviewee referrals, since it helped to reveal any hidden relevant actors, and reveal the network of relationships as well (Lopes et al., 1996). During the interviews, utilising the basic strategy of snowballing, participants were asked to identify other stakeholders who were considered to have relevant characteristics and valuable information regarding the purposes of the study (Timur and Getz, 2009). Snowball sampling helped in identifying a more complete web of legitimate stakeholders. The

respondents included not only initial key stakeholders, but also their referrals (Timur and Getz, 2009).

3.3.5 Semi-structured interviews

In this research, semi-structured interviews were used to gain in-depth understanding of participant/stakeholder's relationships with other tourism stakeholders, type of relationships, experiences, interests, and perceptions towards networks participation (sustainable practices networks), as well as how these relationships influence participant/stakeholder's practices. The main purpose of all interviews was to get to know, and understand, stakeholders' individual positions better and how that impacts on their inter-relationships and contributes to (un)sustainable practices. The semi-structured interview is a useful technique that a researcher can use to investigate the participant's viewpoint, attitudes and explanation of their position in greater depth in response to research questions (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004). Thus, during the semi-structured interviewing process, the emphasis was on trust building and co-operation between researcher and participant in order to construct an accurate picture of social realities. Moreover, the semi-structured interviews provided both opportunities to acknowledge other relevant key stakeholders, that were not initially identified, and to recruit additional participants through contacts provided by the initial participants.

In order to accomplish the research goal, and consider all the relevant actors who could provide rich data for research question, the interviews were designed to access rich data from many different groups of tourism actors from different tourism sectors. The participants were selected based on their professional profiles, business profile, and membership of networks. Thus, there were sixty participants for the semi-structured interview in total (see details in Appendix 6); there were 10 government bodies at the national level and 10 tourism

stakeholders at the regional level. In case study1: north-eastern region (sub-district Bo Phud) 25 participants were selected, since there are 2,798 registered businesses. In case study area 2: south/south-western regions (Sub district Na Muang and Taling Ngam) 15 participants were selected, since there are 276 registered businesses. Each interview took 1 to 1 hour 30 minutes in order to give time for participants to describe their experiences and express their opinions, as well as to provide some detail (also see interview schedule in Appendix 7). In qualitative research, "...improve understanding of complex human issues, is more important than generalisation of the results..." (Marshall, 1996, p.524). Thus, the small number of participants is appropriate for qualitative research (Marshall, 1996).

3.3.5.1 Interview design

1. The overall structure

This research applied grand tour questions (Spradley, 1979), starting from questions that asked participants to talk about something that they knew well; for example, they were asked to talk about themselves or to describe their job responsibilities or businesses. They were then asked specific grand tour questions about, for example, their attitudes towards relationships and networking (Saxena, 2002). Participants were then asked to tell about their social networks, and to describe their network activities. 'The interview questions aimed to address the key theoretical concepts, and to understand the historical, political, social, and personal contexts of the participants...' (Saxena, 2002). Thus, the interview questions are divided into four main sections as follows (see details in Appendix 7):

- The first section contained questions about tourism stakeholders' profiles. This section asked participants about their personal and business profiles, their experience, and their historical involvement in local tourism (Dredge, 2006)

- The second section contained questions about participants' social networks. This section asked about network profile, and activities. Interviewees were asked about their perceptions, expectations, and benefits in relation to relationships and networking.

The third section contained questions about participants' knowledge and perceptions about tourism development, and tourism issues

- Negative impacts from tourism), and sustainable tourism/Green Island projects. The researcher also asked participants about how they respond to sustainable tourism objectives and the Green Island project.
- The fourth section asked participants to make suggestions about tourism development.

2. Interview themes

Dyadic relationships and inter-personal networks can be investigated in different ways to describe the interactional dimensions. These include the content, intensity, frequency, durability, and direction of the relationships (Mitchell, 1969). Consequently, the interview themes were created within these parameters to ensure that theoretical concepts in social networks were addressed. However, the issues relating to sustainable tourism development were also the centre of interview themes since it is the collaborative networks among various tourism stakeholders which underpin the Green Island projects and green initiatives on Samui Island.

3. Conduct of interviews

Interviews were conducted over a period of four months (August-November, 2013). This period was the low season when the businesses were not busy, and business owners and managers were available for interviews and focus groups.

The participants were contacted first through telephone, introducing myself by referring to Suratthani Rajabhat University, where the author works as a lecturer. This can successfully engage participants since it creates credibility and encourages participants to collaborate. The researcher explained the research aims and asked for positive collaboration and acceptance of the invitation to interviews. Then, formal letters explaining the research's aim were sent to those participants who agreed to be interviewed (see Appendix 8). The letters were sent via e-mail, fax, and handed personally depending on the best options available and the preferences of the participants. Some participants asked for the interview schedule as well, which allowed them to look through the questions beforehand and better understand the interview themes.

The interviews were conducted in the Thai language. The interview schedule was first developed in English, guided by stakeholder theory, the social network approach and the cluster concept. Then the interview schedules were translated into the Thai language by the researcher, and carefully worded in simple and easily understood language. All interviews were tape recorded.

3.3.6 Focus groups

Focus groups were used in interviewing participants from both the same and different sectors. Participants were selected based on their 'localness' (the amount of time they had spent in the area) and those who were professionals and owned businesses. Focus groups can enhance lively discussion and contribute rich information as participants express their views, share

information, and debate (Barbour, 2007). In this study, focus groups were used in exploring specific experiences and opinions, collective cultural understandings and examining actors' main concerns concerning environmental issues, tourism development, and the challenges and opportunities available within clusters of actors, activities and resources.

Two focus groups with a similar composition of group members were set up in each of two study areas, enabling this researcher to gather clear, substantiated evidence about the situation (Barbour, 2007). Typically, a focus group consists of 6 to 10 people who are unknown to each other (Greenbaum, 1988), so this research set up focus groups that consisted of 7-8 participants (see details in Appendix 9). Some participants did not normally interface with each other, but some participants knew each other well. They were drawn from local tourism organisations, administrative government, and from different sectors such as retail, hospitality, host community members, pressure groups and non-profit making bodies. There were 5 participants who also participated in semi-structure interviews, and were also asked to participate in focus groups as they were key informants, and active tourism stakeholders involved in tourism activities, social networks, and sustainable practices. Smaller groups are appropriate for this research since it seeks to explore in-depth information from each participant and analyse their points of view and experiences of related topics. It also requires a high level of involvement by each participant (Morgan, 1992a). Each focus group meeting last for approximately two hours.

There were different methods to contact different participants, including e-mails, letters, fax, telephone calls and personal visits to give potential interviewees their letters and invite them for group interviews. This is because of the different natures of different tourism stakeholders.

In general, the author made telephone calls¹⁹ first in order to inform them in general terms about the research and to invite them to participate in the group interview. If agreed to give the interview, then the author either went to visit them in person to give the letter and explain details about the research, or e-mailed, or faxed the letter explaining the research objectives, the venue, and the time of the focus group sessions. It is convenient to travel around Koh Samui so it was not difficult to visit in person. This is the best method for contacting and inviting people in some groups of tourism stakeholders such as local communities, local restaurants, and small and medium size hotels and resorts. This method allowed the researcher to introduce the research personally to them and to make a first impression by showing them respect and friendliness,. They were asked for their kind collaborations in order to contribute to the knowledge to Koh Samui. Meeting face to face is very important to make them trusting (especially Samui local people) and willing to participate in the focus groups. Otherwise, it would be very difficult to get them agree to participate. The key people who gave the researcher referrals were also important in giving the researcher support and credibility which encouraged others to participate in the interviews. This is because Samui local people know each other well and they '*Greng Jai*' (Thai word means to consider, to respect) those key people (i.e. respectful people, friends, and relatives).

The focus group sessions in sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam were held at a local restaurant where the owner provided the quietest area by the beach for group sessions. This, was a comfortable place and characterised by a friendly atmosphere. The sessions in sub-district Bo Phud were held in a meeting room in local hotel. Each session was held in the morning between 10.00 and 11.30. The coffees, teas, drinks and deserts were served before

¹⁹ The telephone numbers were available on websites (e.g.. hotels, restaurants, public organisations), books, and from the referrals.

the session started. After the session finished, lunch was also provided to the participants. The researcher had secured funding for this from her sponsor.

During each session, the researcher minimised her interjections and encouraged participants to discuss, and share their opinions. The researcher tried to encourage every participant to speak and share their views by asking them question like ‘How about (name of participants), what do you think? Do you agree with this? Do you have any suggestions about this? What will you suggest?’ (see the focus group interview schedule in Appendix 10). However, there were still different degrees of communication prevalent among participants, as some were quiet and others more vocal. This is the social norm of Samui people which prefers to compromise and not to strongly disagree with others.

However, focus groups allowed the researcher to see how different tourism stakeholders interacted with one another, to observe their social norms and how they shared their ideas with other people in different sectors. The focus groups generated deeper and richer information than the one-to-one interviews (Rabiee, 2004). The information generated from focus groups was also used to confirm the information received from one-to-one interviews.

3.3.7 Participant observation

This research also applied the participant observation technique in order gain a deeper understanding of key tourism stakeholders’ roles involving the implementation of tourism activities, and the relationships among them. “Observation is the technique of gathering data through direct contact with an object-usually another human being. The researcher watches the behaviour and documents the properties of the objects...” (Porter, 1996, p. 98). This technique allowed the researcher to have direct experience and produce genuine

interpretation (Rock, 1999). Key tourism stakeholders were approached and observed in their natural settings such as at their work places, and at the formal and informal meetings of different networks. The researcher also participated in some meetings, and some green activities organised by the public and private sectors in order to observe the type of relationships among tourism stakeholders, and to establish good relationships with them. The researcher took pictures of the case study areas, pictures of participants while they were at meetings and participated in green activities, pictures of the negative impacts from tourism on local the environment, and pictures of the local communities.

3.3.8 Validity

“Qualitative paradigm assumes that reality is socially constructed and it is what participants perceive it to be...” (Creswell and Miller, 2000, p.125). Thus, it perceives realities as multiple, interpretative, open-ended and contextualised. The validity procedures are reflected in trustworthiness and authenticity (Creswell and Miller, 2000, p.126). The techniques used for enhancing credibility of this research are triangulation and member- checking techniques.

The triangulation technique can enhance the quality and credibility of the research by cross-checking data and interpretation from multiple sources through multiple methods such as documents, interview and observation, in order to confirm certain aspects of the study or to complete the understanding from different time and space of observation and interviewing (Krefting, 1990, p.219).

Member checking is another crucial procedure for establishing research credibility. This procedure allows participants to confirm the credibility of data and interpretations accounts, ensuring that the researcher has accurately translated the participants’ viewpoints and

reflected experiences in the data for the final presentation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 cited in Krefting, 1990).

3.4 Limitations of Methodology

3.4.1 Limitations of focus groups

Focus groups techniques may have some limitations in terms of gaining rich information; for example, participants in the groups may influence each other and some participants may feel too uncomfortable to truly express their opinions to the groups (Hesse-biber and Leavy, 2004). In addition, there may be some participants are more active than others, and there may be some participants who participate less in discussion. Moreover, the technique also depends highly on the skills of the interviewer/moderator to stimulate the groups' participation. Thus, the researcher needs to be careful in their approach concerning the questions asked and avoid very sensitive questions. The researcher needed to be well trained as an interviewer/moderator before initiating the focus groups.

3.4.2 Limitations of semi-structured interview

A semi-structured interview faces some limitations, such as the participants' refusal to give rich and in-depth information or to allow their interview to be used in the research. Within the limited time, participants may not be able to give all the information in detail. Thus, it is crucial to create a rapport with key participants, and to prepare the questions and interview techniques well.

3.5 Data analysis

The interviews were transcribed and the data analysed and categorised to create themes such as: social network relationships, benefit from networks, network activities, networking motivation, sustainable practices, unsustainable practices, positive/negative attitudes towards networking, positive/negative attitudes towards tourism development, trust, distrust, corruption, and negative impacts from tourism.

The analysed data was translated into English by the researcher. Only relevant and useful data was translated into English for the analysis chapters of the thesis. There are reasons why the researcher did not translate all the data into English in the first place. Firstly, analysing data in the Thai language enables a correct interpretation and does not lose either the richness or meaningfulness of data. The Thai language and dialogue contains Thai values and culture which is quite different from the English language. Secondly, it is time wasting and time consuming to process irrelevant information and to translate all the data (that was not useful) of every interviewee. To do so would also have exceeded the limited time frame of the study programme. Consequently, the researcher believed it to be most appropriate to analyse the data which was initially in Thai and then to translate relevant and useful information into the English language.

Due to the large amount of rich information to be analysed, this research utilised NVivo10 software to help in the data analysis process. The NVivo10 software was only used to facilitate the process of data analysis in this research because there are some limitations of the NVivo software in terms of data analysis and data searching. For example, searching for particular terms/key words and “autocoding” them may cause the researcher to fail in checking on “...what passages were actually coded in the autocoding process...” (Denzin and

Lincoln, 2000, p. 808), and to use the researcher's own intelligence to analyse whether the codes and the passages fit (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 808). In addition, relying only on NVivo can lead to the risk of losing the actual context in the data.

Thus, NVivo10 software was only used in managing and analysing data in terms of coding and categorising into various theme folders. The software provided features that help the researcher to arrange, sort and store data into categories more systematically and efficiently. The software enabled the researcher to import documents (e.g. text) and code these documents easily on screen by tagging chunks of texts with different codes that indicate the conceptual categories the researcher desire to categorise them into (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Welsh, 2002). NVivo also provided features that enable quicker and more accurate processing to search for information in the whole data set (Welsh, 2002). Thus, the used of NVivo software can enhance the quality, rigour and trustworthiness of the research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Welsh, 2002).

The procedures for using Nvivo10 software:

- 1) Create the folders for restoring different type of data. This helped the researcher to manage the data such as Folders of semi-structured interviews, focus groups in sub-district Bo Phud, Focus groups in sub-districts Na Muange and Taling Ngam. Then text files were put into different folders (see Figure 3.3).
- 2) Created nodes for the research themes (see Figure 3.4).
- 3) The interview data were in the text files and were manually analysed since data were in Thai.
- 4) Manually coded data in text files from each individual interview. Nvivo10 software facilitated in this coding stage by tagging chunks of texts which made it easier for the researcher to code. The researcher just highlighted the required quote and coded it.

Those coded quotes were stored automatically in the nodes of research themes that the researcher had created earlier (see Figure 3.3).

- 5) Nvivo software helped in categorising the data and reported the data automatically for the researcher. For example, it enabled the researcher to easily see which interviewees had mentioned sustainable practices, tourism development, social networks (formal and informal, weak/ strong ties), negative/positive attitudes towards tourism development, and tourism clusters.

Also see Appendix 11 for Data coding documents.

Figure 3.3: Data coding

The screenshot displays the NVivo software interface for a project named 'Samui Island.nvp'. The 'Sources' pane on the left shows a hierarchical tree of data sources, including 'Internals', 'Focus groups Bo Phud', and 'Interviews'. The main workspace is titled 'Bo Phud' and contains a table of nodes with the following data:

Name	Nodes	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
Fair House	35	128	16/06/2014 13:59	NT	17/06/2014 14:06	NT
Khun Big	27	82	17/06/2014 14:18	NT	18/06/2014 17:43	NT
Khun Cherry Daeng Fishing and Tour	20	69	16/06/2014 13:59	NT	16/06/2014 14:05	NT
Khun Eak Samthong	27	62	16/06/2014 13:59	NT	19/06/2014 13:49	NT
Khun Kratae Samui Chanel	19	43	16/06/2014 13:59	NT	19/06/2014 17:14	NT
Khun Nu Carcare and Samui Cable	21	39	16/06/2014 13:59	NT	23/06/2014 11:07	NT
Khun Pongsak Pethub	26	97	16/06/2014 13:59	NT	18/06/2014 19:05	NT
Khun อัง Eranda Herbal Spa	30	85	02/10/2014 16:20	NT	04/10/2014 13:09	NT
Khun อากิณ	36	133	02/10/2014 16:20	NT	06/10/2014 23:06	NT
Mr. Pho Phetkaew	11	23	20/06/2014 13:05	NT	20/06/2014 13:50	NT
เสด็จพล	14	21	23/06/2014 15:28	NT	23/06/2014 15:49	NT
คุณเอ็มเม่ สุกฤษิณ	17	52	16/06/2014 13:59	NT	23/06/2014 14:28	NT

The main workspace shows a text document with Thai text and a coding scheme on the right. The coding scheme includes categories such as 'Economic issues', 'Tourists', 'Trust', 'Organisation strategies', 'Positive', 'Negative', 'Central actors or strong actors', 'Social networks', 'Network', and 'Independence relationship'. The text in the workspace is partially highlighted in yellow, indicating coded segments.

Source: the author

Figure 3.4: Different codes/ “Nodes”

The screenshot shows the NVivo software interface with a list of nodes. The nodes are organized into a table with the following columns: Name, Sources, References, Created On, Created By, Modified On, and Modified By. The nodes listed include various categories such as Friendship, Government support, Green economy, Green hotel, Green Island Project and Green Island Foundation, growing company base, Hard networks, Human resource group, Human resource issue, Informal relationship, Innovation and technology, Interdependence relationship, Kinship, Knowledge and awareness, Knowledge and skill issues, Leadership issue, Limit the number of hotels, Local resources, Low Carbon Model Town Project, Monitoring issue, Motivation in having sustainable practices, Motivation in participating TAKS, Motivation towards community participation, Mutual exchange, Network activities of Green Island Project, Network activities of HR group, Network activities of municipality supporting Green Island Project, Network activities of Sap Association, Network activities of Sustained Chaweng group, Network activities of Thai Hotel Association, network activities of Tourism Association Koh Samui, Network activities of Tourism Authority of Thailand, networking, Open network, Physical geography, Physical infrastructure, Political issues, Pre-existing knowledge, Rak Chaweng group, Resource sharing and transferring, and Right vision.

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
Friendship	10	14	17/06/2014 11:55	NT	11/10/2014 14:40	NT
Government support	2	3	09/10/2014 12:22	NT	10/10/2014 03:28	NT
Green economy	1	1	19/06/2014 15:52	NT	22/06/2014 16:23	NT
Green hotel	1	1	08/10/2014 13:44	NT	09/10/2014 12:53	NT
Green Island Project and Green Island Foundation	6	17	16/06/2014 17:02	NT	10/10/2014 02:56	NT
growing company base	1	1	06/10/2014 22:36	NT	06/10/2014 22:36	NT
Hard networks	1	1	06/10/2014 10:46	NT	06/10/2014 10:46	NT
Human resource group	2	11	25/06/2014 11:46	NT	10/10/2014 04:08	NT
Human resource issue	6	7	06/10/2014 13:56	NT	10/10/2014 04:23	NT
Informal relationship	8	11	17/06/2014 11:54	NT	11/10/2014 14:22	NT
Innovation and technology	4	8	07/10/2014 13:54	NT	09/10/2014 15:09	NT
Interdependence relationship	5	10	17/06/2014 11:08	NT	09/10/2014 13:43	NT
Kinship	6	8	23/06/2014 14:20	NT	11/10/2014 14:11	NT
Knowledge and awareness	1	2	08/10/2014 14:21	NT	09/10/2014 12:53	NT
Knowledge and skill issues	3	4	07/10/2014 13:55	NT	10/10/2014 04:24	NT
Leadership issue	5	10	06/10/2014 22:39	NT	11/10/2014 14:47	NT
Limit the number of hotels	5	6	06/10/2014 14:06	NT	10/10/2014 04:18	NT
Local resources	2	3	08/10/2014 02:56	NT	10/10/2014 02:48	NT
Low Carbon Model Town Project	3	4	23/06/2014 15:41	NT	09/10/2014 11:55	NT
Monitoring issue	1	2	08/10/2014 14:30	NT	09/10/2014 12:53	NT
Motivation in having sustainable practices	0	0	17/06/2014 11:42	NT	18/06/2014 17:23	NT
Motivation in participating TAKS	1	2	24/06/2014 14:37	NT	24/06/2014 14:38	NT
Motivation towards community participation	3	3	08/10/2014 03:40	NT	11/10/2014 15:14	NT
Mutual exchange	12	18	20/06/2014 17:27	NT	10/10/2014 03:58	NT
Network activities of Green Island Project	7	13	16/06/2014 17:10	NT	10/10/2014 03:04	NT
Network activities of HR group	1	4	10/10/2014 03:46	NT	10/10/2014 03:54	NT
Network activities of municipality supporting Green Island Project	1	1	08/10/2014 14:01	NT	09/10/2014 12:53	NT
Network activities of Sap Association	1	7	06/10/2014 10:53	NT	06/10/2014 13:18	NT
Network activities of Sustained Chaweng group	1	1	19/06/2014 12:30	NT	19/06/2014 12:30	NT
Network activities of Thai Hotel Association	4	21	17/06/2014 10:45	NT	08/10/2014 14:18	NT
network activities of Tourism Association Koh Samui	11	28	17/06/2014 18:19	NT	09/10/2014 13:04	NT
Network activities of Tourism Authority of Thailand	1	2	22/06/2014 15:06	NT	22/06/2014 15:31	NT
networking	5	14	08/10/2014 02:16	NT	11/10/2014 14:42	NT
Open network	1	1	09/10/2014 15:06	NT	09/10/2014 15:06	NT
Physical geography	1	1	10/10/2014 02:37	NT	10/10/2014 02:37	NT
Physical infrastructure	4	4	08/10/2014 03:00	NT	10/10/2014 04:26	NT
Political issues	9	14	18/06/2014 18:58	NT	11/10/2014 14:59	NT
Pre-existing knowledge	1	1	09/10/2014 14:00	NT	09/10/2014 14:00	NT
Rak Chaweng group	1	2	11/10/2014 14:07	NT	11/10/2014 14:08	NT
Resource sharing and transferring	13	27	17/06/2014 14:40	NT	10/10/2014 03:53	NT
Right vision	7	20	06/10/2014 22:47	NT	14/10/2014 15:07	NT

Source: the author

3.6 Summary

This chapter has provided a discussion of the methodological approach and specific methods used, guided by constructivist philosophical assumptions and research inquiry. It applied a qualitative approach and methods for data collections, which included semi-structured interviews, focus groups and observations in order to gain an in-depth understanding of inter-relationships among key stakeholders. The qualitative methods used are both appropriate and crucial for research that seeks rich information and explanations from the participants'/stakeholders' perspective towards relationship building and networking (networks of sustainable practices).

Using these methodological tools, the discussion in the next chapter (Chapter 4), focuses on the nature of tourism stakeholders' interrelationships, and their networking patterns that facilitate and influence (un) sustainable tourism cluster development on Samui Island.

CHAPTER 4: THE PROFILE OF KEY TOURISM STAKHOLDERS AND THEIR NETWORKING PATTERNS IN SAMUI

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an insight into the profile of key tourism stakeholders and outlines the role they play in sustaining the tourism industry in Samui. It also analyses their interrelationships and networking patterns that facilitate and influence (un)sustainable tourism cluster development on Samui Island. In particular, the focus is on values, attitudes, interests, motivations, and expectations of the key tourism stakeholders, as well as their networking patterns that underpin the opportunities and constraints inherent in the collaborative framework.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and focus groups (as discussed in Chapter 3) as the emphasis of this work is on uncovering actors' interface at the micro-level and their influence on tourism initiatives and strategies, planning and development, as well as (un)sustainable practices. The data were analysed by focusing on the participants' direct quotes or paraphrasing common ideas (e.g. from focus groups interviews) in order to understand the patterns of experience, living and/or behaviour as well as to identify themes (Aronson, 1994). 'Themes' are derived from patterns such as "...conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings, feelings, or folk sayings and proverbs..." (Taylor and Bogdan, 1989, p. 131 cited in Aronson, 1994). The researcher then read the related literature in order to build a valid argument for choosing themes.

The discussion also focuses on challenges (e.g. related to the limited resources and capacities, distrust, and constraint ties) and opportunities stakeholders face (e.g. shared values and interests towards sustainable tourism, and high level of collaborative networks among businesses, and between key public - private sectors based upon mutual exchange and support).

4.2 The evolution of the tourism industry in Samui

The tourism industry on Samui has grown gradually. For instance, before the mid-1970s tourism development was minimal and at the *exploration stage* (Butler, 1980) implying low volume of tourists²⁰, to Koh²¹ Samui and a lack of tourist facilities. At that time, local people had no knowledge and awareness about tourism. This researcher was informed by the Tourism Official at the Municipality that it often happened that visitors (mainly backpackers) were welcomed and offered accommodation and food without any charge by 'poo a wut so' (the village headman). However, some of the backpackers offered a bit of money to the host as a goodwill gesture to cover the costs for the accommodation and food.

"As the backpacker numbers grew, 'poo a wut so' could not accommodate all of them anymore. This is when 'kra top' (Thai word for a hut or a cottage) started to crop up. These were pretty basic, built mainly of mad and dried nipa palm leaves, nothing else no electricity, nothing, only that which was supplied via generator and that too for only two hours) at night." (Tourism development officer of Koh Samui municipality, male in his 50s)

²⁰ There are no statistics on tourist numbers visiting Samui Island in the early stage of tourism development, until 1990 (see Appendix 12). But there were approximately less than 10,000 tourists a year due to the difficulty of accessing the island because there were no ferries or planes, but just only the night boat, which took about two days to get to the island.

²¹ 'Koh' is a Thai word means island.

The first bungalows to be built in Samui were in the early 1970s and located on Chaweng beach. These were run as family businesses and mostly catered to the backpacker market (Chen, 1980; Wongkerd, 2003). Since the scale of tourism development was limited there was a lack of adequate infrastructure and public utilities in the 1970s. As outlined earlier, most locals lacked professional knowledge of operating tourism businesses, and had very little awareness of the benefits from tourism or skills to augment them (Chatkaewnapanon, 2011). However, greater local ownership and stake in tourism development meant that locals (*Kon tong tin*) were able to operate small beachfront bungalows and restaurants as a source of additional income to their main source of livelihood, namely coconut plantations (Cohen, 1982). The amateur nature of the tourism industry is evident from the interview this researcher conducted with this business owner:

“...in 1979, when I was starting the bungalow businesses, there was no concrete road. ... For ‘chao bann’ (Thai word for a villager) like us, it was a great moment when we had our first concrete road built for us in early 1980s. We were so excited about it as we had never seen one before in our community. We cooked rice with ‘tann’(Thai word for charcoal²²) to celebrate the occasion and lit lanterns” (female in her 50s).

It is to be noted that, whilst tourism industry in Samui has grown, such simplicity still characterises Thai hospitality. This interviewee added that in those days, each bungalow owner would also provide food to tourists at a minimal cost and forged warm, family-like ties with them. This finding corresponds with other studies that suggest that hospitality is a social phenomenon and transcends the narrow commercial lens through which the host–guest

²² In that time, there was no electricity in the island, very few houses had electrical generator generating electric at night time. Most local people used lanterns at night time, and used ‘tann’ for cooking. This shows how Samui was still underdeveloped because there was a lack of basic infrastructures and facilities on the island.

relationship is often viewed (Causevic and Lynch, 2009; Smith and Brent, 2001; Stephenson, 2002). In return, tourists would pay with gifts and cash. Thus both locals and tourists benefited from the experience. This business owner also underlined how in the past (during the late 1970s and early 1980s) Samui was a different place to live in as there were no hotels just only a few 'katop' (Thai word for a hut or a cottage), not many cars, and there was fresh air and few problems of litter and overcrowding. She complained:

“... It is all gone! It is a pity that the beaches have changed. ...the place looks like a slum!”

However, she did report positive benefits from tourism, mainly in terms of the development of local infrastructure and better transportation facilities. This view was supported by another interviewee who owns a bungalow business as well. He started his 20 bungalows- business in 1978 and still operates it. He is happy with tourism because it has become a new source of income for him and others, adding to their ability to send their children to study outside the island, such as on the mainland (Suratthani), in Bangkok, and even study abroad for higher education as most locals stay on Samui.

“If there was no tourism in Samui, and 'kon Samui' (Thai words for Samui locals) would still rely on coconut plantations, have little opportunities and still be in the dark ages! We can benefit from tourism both directly and indirectly through an improved quality of living and image of our community.” (Male, 60s)

Slowly, the tourism industry from late 1970s and early 1980s gradually started the transition towards the *involvement stage* (Butler, 1980) implying locals' increased involvement in the tourism industry as a result of a spurt in tourist numbers.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, Koh Samui reached the development stage and acquired the status of a significant tourist destination in Thailand (Chatkaewnapanon, 2011). This is when the role of the government as a key stakeholder starts to become key role in tourism development promotion, and marketing (e.g. through provision of infrastructure, facilities, and public utilities). In fact, the Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1982-1986) focused on expanding tourism development throughout the tourist destinations. The government intensified the promotion and marketing of the region by supporting the public and private sectors' investments in developing the tourist potential of local resources and improving the proficiency of service firms (Chatkaewnapanon, 2011). Following the National Development Plan, TAT launched the Master Plan for Tourism Development of Koh Samui/Surathani (1985) which suggested a slowdown in the growth of the accommodation sector but emphasised the upgrading of its standard - quality of services and amenities offered - with the aim of targeting upmarket foreign tourists (TAT, 1985 cited in Chatkaewnapanon, 2011, p.109). Given the extensive support and promotion from the government, as well as the development of the international airport in 1989 by the private-sector (Bangkok airways), there was rapid growth in the private sector that is dominated mainly by external investors (who are either foreigners or Thai, but not local to Samui). For instance, in the hospitality industry -including the hotel sector- and other tourism related businesses (e.g. restaurants, spas, pubs, bars, and retail shops) mainly around the beach area (e.g. Chaweng in Bo Phud) the local presence is negligible (Green, 2005). Thus the tourism industry in Samui attained the development stage in the nineties, and is currently at the

consolidation stage where tourism is the main economic sector supporting other ancillary sectors such as retailing and transport. There is also extensive tourism promotion and marketing globally in order to broaden the tourist season and market (Butler, 1980) as is shown in Appendix 11 for tourist arrivals from 1990-2014. Currently, the island is witnessing an increase in the number of tourists, and the main market is still European countries (Germany, United Kingdom and France), but there is extensive growth in the number of tourists from new markets such as China, Russia, Israel, and Eastern Europe (see Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 for details).

There are a large number of tourism facilities and services provided, and the number of tourism related businesses - for example in the accommodation sector- is still increasing. . However, there are negative impacts on the local environment and local communities who are either directly or indirectly involved in tourism in the form, for example, of polluted water, floods, accumulated rubbish, the extinction or education in land-based and aquatic wildlife (e.g.. fish, sea turtles, reefs, etc.), and the degradation of forests and mountains. At present, Samui tourism is dominated by the private sector which specialises in, for example, upscaling luxury hotels and resorts, spa treatment, creating wedding and honeymoon packages and nature-based tourism. Thus it is private sector stakeholders who are steering the development of tourism in the region. Whilst on one hand they have initiated green projects, they are also responsible for the proliferation of unsustainable tourism practices such as illegal activities like drugs and prostitution, mafia-like practices, water pollution, and encroaching on public areas such as roads, canals and beaches.

4.3 Profile of key tourism stakeholders on Samui

Tourism clusters can achieve value-added and competitive advantages through collaboration and partnerships among diverse tourism stakeholders playing different roles in order to create a total travel experience for tourists. These roles are performed through different tourism providers, sales, supporting government, education and research institutions, support organisations, and non-profit organisations (Grimstad and Burgess, 2014).

Overall, in the two sub-regions, sub-district Bo Phud in the North-east, and sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam in the South-West, key tourism stakeholders from public, private and non-profit making sectors play an important role in influencing the strategic development of the tourism industry and its marketing. Key public-sector actors are government bodies responsible for policy making including the Suratthani Province Office of Tourism and Sports (SPOTS)²³, Koh Samui municipality and Koh Samui Tourism Coordination Centre (KSTCC)²⁴/TAT²⁵. These public-sector stakeholders have power and legitimate authority to manage and control tourism development through planning, policies (e.g. protection of the environment, and city planning) and tourism promotion (Churugsa et al., 2007). They also control the budget and manage personnel engaged in tourism promotion, planning and development. Further, they are engaged in information provision, infrastructure improvement, and steering the development of the community. However, the limited capacity and resources of the Koh Samui municipality constrain its ability in influencing the development of

²³ SPOTS is a representative of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports.

²⁴ KSTCC is one of regional offices of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).

²⁵ TAT is a state-owned enterprise under the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, which is mainly responsible for the marketing and promotion of tourism destinations in Thailand. TAT has 35 regional offices in Thailand and 15 overseas offices spread throughout Europe, Asia, North America, and Australia (Directly cited from website <http://thai.tourismthailand.org>. Accessed 15th January 2015).

sustainable tourism. The Samui District Officer explained the difficult position in which the body finds itself:

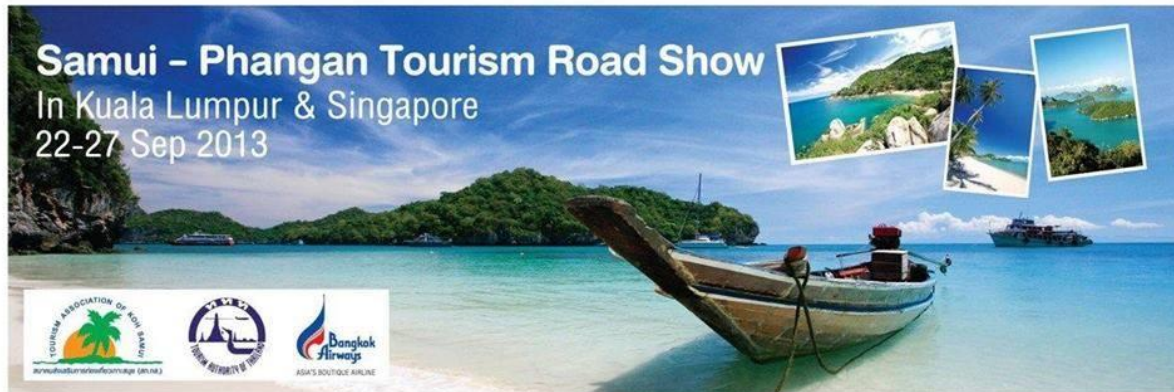
“There is a lack of budget here. Our hands are tied. We get a very small budget (at the local government level) compared to the significant amount of revenue that we generate for the central government. The money goes in their pockets which means that it is next to impossible for the municipality to solve pertinent problems like the such as waste water treatment issue. We only have three waste water treatments, which it is not enough. ... We have no option but to let polluted and untreated water in our rivers and canals. I cannot see an easy solution to the polluted water issue without the money” (Samui District Officer, interview was conducted in August 2013).

On the other hand, key private-sector stakeholders including TAKS, THA-SCEC²⁶, Samui Spa Association (SSA), and Human resource club (HR club) have more capacity and resources in terms of knowledge and skills in tourism related issues. For example, they collect information on the performance of the market in general and the tourism industry in particular, the profile of tourists, and possess the know-how required in addressing consumer needs. Further, their extensive networks with other larger stakeholders (e.g. Bangkok Airways, accommodation businesses, and media), and key public-sector stakeholders such as TAT, and the Provincial Administrative Organisation of Suratthani Office, enable them to mobilise tourism activities such as marketing and promotion, as well as green activities, and thereby influence tourism strategies and the development of the industry (See Figures 4.1,

²⁶ The THA-SCEC is a sub-chapter of Thai Hotel Association, located in Bangkok, Thailand. THA was established in 1963 by a group of hotel executives and owners with the name of Hotel Association for Tourist of Thailand (Directly cited from website <https://www.facebook.com/Tourism-Association-of-Koh-Samui-128644493861574/>. Accessed 10th January 2015.

and 4.2 for their brochure and poster). See also Table 4.1 for an overview of key tourism stakeholders' profiles and the roles they play in the tourism industry.

Figure 4.1: the poster for international Tourism Road Show



Source: Facebook of TAKS, 2013

A good example of collaboration between key private sector stakeholders is the alliance between TAKS and Bangkok Airways that is aimed at sharing funding for joint promotion and marketing of Thailand in international markets. They also share strong ties with the key public sector TAT. Every year TAKS and its partners attend international trade shows and road shows to promote Samui Island (see Figure 4.1). Further, there is growing awareness of green issues as is manifest from events like the Car Free week (see Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: Samui' Car free Week: Brochure



Source: Green Island Foundation, 2013

Samui Car Free Week is organised by Green Island Foundation (GIFT) on an annual basis in collaboration with other tourism stakeholders such as TAKS, TAT, Koh Samui municipality, THA-SCEC, community groups like Koh Samui Cycling Club, and the media. Regularly, bicycle rallies are organised to raise awareness of climate change and urge individuals to undertake reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in their personal capacity.

Thus, both public and private sector stakeholders try to promote and achieve sustainable tourism development initiatives where TAKS / THA-SCEC take the lead and, with support from public sector stakeholders such as Koh Samui municipality and TAT, are at the forefront of creating Green Island Tourism Projects. GIFT is a significant body and a tourism stakeholder that is taking a lead in raising awareness and promoting sustainable practices amongst a range of stakeholders in Samui who seek to benefit from the tourism industry. GIFT is a non-profit organisation managed by nine board committees, and comprises networks among different groups of tourism stakeholders such as the public and private

sectors, local communities (e.g.. students, and farmers), volunteers (including both Thai and foreign) and the media.. The foundation raise money among tourism stakeholders who want to support green projects and activities; for example, they have donation boxes placed at different retail outlets, and airports. They also sell GIFT T-shirts and get support from the public sector such local government. GIFT's networks work under the Green Island Project (master/umbrella project), through which the private and public sectors collaborate for many green activities and campaigns. For example, TAT collaborates with the municipality, and TAKS established 7Greens concept²⁷ by which it provides knowledge about green concepts to local businesses and communities. THA-SCEC collaborates with the municipality establishing 'Low Carbon Schools' project, and green hotel networks in order to promote businesses and local communities to save energy and reduce/reuse and recycle. Their emphasis on working with communities is paying dividends in terms of engendering tangible results on the ground. For instance, TAT's collaboration with the municipality and local communities resulted in the successful establishment of 'the bicycle route' in 2012 that can be regarded as an ecotourism product. GIFT collaborates with THA-SCEC promoting 'green fingers' networks amongst businesses, persuading them to use non-chemical organic, and local products.

Moreover, indirect tourism stakeholders (e.g. Suratthani Rajabhat University) also provide some supports to the tourism industry. This includes facilitating and providing the necessary training (for the hotel staff) and disseminating knowledge about market trends and relevant research (e.g. profitability of cultural tourism development as opposed to mass tourism that negatively impacts upon the fragility of Samui's ecosystem). However, it seems to the

²⁷ Green Heart, Green logistics, Green Attractions, Green Community, Green Activity, Green Service, and Green Plus (see details in Appendix 1).

tourism industry that the university still inadequately supports the industry. Many participants were disappointed in the weak role of the university. They expected a lot from the university to support the industry, such as providing human resources and greater support in terms of research that can also improve the tourism industry in local communities.

“...Suratthani Rajabhat University should be one of the strong actors besides the collaborations among public-private sectors. The university should facilitates the improvement of Samui tourism development by providing useful researches. We have International School of Tourism...it should create the curriculum for students to establish the research about Samui tourism.

...Suratthani Rajabhat University should be the leader since they have knowledge. It should be open for local communities to go and ask for advisement and support, for example the advice about the agricultural issues.” (Summary of discussion Focus group 1 in sub district Bo Phud. The interview was conducted 15th November 2013)

Mostly, they (Koh Samui municipality and TAT) hired other universities such as Chulalongkorn University, Prince of Songkla University, and Walailak University located in other provinces to conduct the research for them. This may not be the most effective way of conducting research, since those researchers are not living on Samui, so they may not be very familiar about tourism issues in the Samui Island context. Many participants complained about the external researchers (researchers from outside the Island), who the local communities perceived just came and went and were not really concerned about Samui.

“We hope for the ‘green island’! and there were many projects/researches conducted by many institutions about the green island but they have never told us the outcomes or what

we (local communities) benefit from those projects and researches. ...We felt like Samui is a 'tang pan' (Thai words means source of income) for those researchers to gain benefits from those projects' budgets." (Summary of discussion Focus group 2 in sub district Bo Phud. The interview was conduct 16th November 2013)

On the other hand, public-sector stakeholders play crucial roles in terms of the provision of financial resources, facilitating and coordinating the activities of stakeholders (in particular the extent to which they impact on the sustainability of the region) and communicate their agenda to the local communities. These are important stakeholders, but often their concerns are sidelined. Currently, Samui cannot be termed a 'Green Island' but both public and private sector stakeholders are ensuring (albeit in a miniscule manner) that the region progresses in the direction of sustainable tourism. Their slogan 'Samui going green' is aimed at tourists and showing how their sustainable practices can help the island achieve its sustainability goals.

See Table 4.1 for an overview of key tourism stakeholders' profiles.

Table 4.1: An overview of key tourism stakeholders' profiles

Tourism stakeholders		Role in the Tourism Industry
Public	Suratthani Province Office of Tourism and Sports (SPOTS)	Responsible for: 1) co-ordinating, facilitating and supporting the tourism industry and sports in Suratthani province, 2) tourism and sports planning, strategies, and monitoring, 3) problem-solving about tourism and sport issues, 4) providing knowledge for local organisations, local government, and local people who want to participate in tourism and sports, and 5) researching, collecting, and analysing data about the tourism industry. SPOTS is responsible for developing tourism policies at the provincial level, but not for the local level specifically, such as Koh Samui.
	Koh Samui Municipality (or 'Thesaban' in Thai)	Is a local administrative body that reports to central and provincial authorities, and is responsible for the overall management and development of Samui Island, public welfare and benefits, for example, public health, providing basic facilities and infrastructure, waste and sewage water management, improvement and development of public areas, and natural resource management (e.g. concerning the use of natural resources such as forests, lands).
	Koh Samui Tourism Coordination Centre ²⁸ (KSTCC)/TAT	Established in 1998. It plays a crucial role in developing marketing plans and strategies, seeking new markets, and tourism promotion. It also provides up-to-date tourism information to both tourists and investors (such as statistics on tourist arrivals, the number of rooms available, and trends in global markets).
Private	Tourism Association Koh Samui (TAKS)	Established in 1987. It assists tourism SMEs and promotes Samui Island globally. It coordinates and collaborates with different public and private sectors in order to mobilise tourism events and activities, doing green activities, and shared marketing, and problem-solving.
	Thai Hotel Association – Southern Chapter East Coast (THA-SCEC)	THA- SCEC was established in 1963 mainly helps to improve the hotel services and fosters cohesiveness and collaboration among hotel businesses. It also collaborates with other tourism stakeholders such as the government body TAKS in order to launch innovative green tourism activities with the support of local communities.
	Samui Spa Association (SSA)	SSA was established in 2003. It effectively and successfully promotes Samui as a well-known tourist destination for spa and wellness in the world through the uniqueness and the world-class quality of spa services.
	Human Resource Club (HR club)	HR Club was established in 1997. It helps to improve knowledge and skills of hotel staff and provides support through the supply of skilled manpower, food and beverage, venue and equipment for tourism events and activities.
Non-profit	Green Island Foundation (GIFT)	Established in 2008. It consists of nine board committees, and the collaborative networks between other public and private sectors, and local communities. It raises awareness among tourism stakeholders to preserve the environment and having sustainable practices through the 'green island projects and activities' collaborated by different public and private organisations and institutions.

Source: the author

²⁸ It is one of the regional offices of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) since TAT has 35 offices in different regions (i.e. north, north-eastern, east, central, and southern regions) in Thailand, which are situated in tourist destinations in different provinces. For example, Suratthani province has two TAT offices (i.e. district Muang and district Koh Samui) because Koh Samui is a famous tourist destination.

From a brief overview of the role of key public and private sector stakeholders (see Table 4.1), it is clear that the public sector has a crucial influence in terms of establishing tourism plans and strategies, managing and controlling tourism activities through law enforcement, and in developing the infrastructures. Private sector stakeholders play a key role in terms of provision of specialised skills in developing tourism products and services, mobilising tourism activities, promotion and marketing, creating destination brand and reputation, and implementing green projects.

The next section will explore the type and patterns of key tourism stakeholders' interrelationships.

4.4 Profile of Networking Patterns amongst Tourism Stakeholders

As discussed in the previous section, the central tourism stakeholders in Samui are the ones operating in the private sector, which is itself dominated by the hotel sector represented by the networks of TAKS and THA-SCEC. Secondly, the government sector; Koh Samui municipality, and TAT occupy a significant position because of their attributes and capacities that including knowledge and skills/expertise, experience, commitment, time, financial resources, legitimate authority, and personal connections and networks (Churugsa et al., 2007; Dredge, 2006; Waligo et al., 2013).

TAKS is a representative of tourism in Samui and acts as an information hub for outsiders and local businesses. TAKS also acts as a coordinator for both public and private sectors which means that it can monitor other actors in tourism networks through its regular contact

with them. Local government and authorities have power in terms of law and regulation enforcement to manage and control tourism activities. However, their ineffective management and lack of serious law enforcement has resulted in unsustainable tourism development. Further, being the source of financial support to both the private sector and the local communities as well as a key provider of physical infrastructures and facilities. TAKS has greater access to the information on a number of tourist stakeholders' actors' activities and thus wields power and legitimacy. Further, through its influence in networks of public / private sector stakeholders and their collective role in creating tourism strategies and activities, it is able to influence stakeholders' attitudes, motivation, and expectations towards relationship building and networking. TAKS' co-ordinated networks reveal varied positions of different actors in the networks, both their strong and weak ties, and how they influence individual actors' ability to obtain and access information and resources for their businesses (O'Donnell, 2014).

Some of the key trends are discussed in the following sections (also see Table 4.2).

4.4.1 Horizontal linkages among local businesses

The findings show high levels of informal and horizontal linkages between local businesses, especially small and medium-sized businesses including accommodation units, restaurants, tour operators and travel agencies. These are also engaged in (in)formal networks with bodies like TAKS, THA-SCEC, SSA, and the HR club. By and large, these relationships are based on mutual benefits, resource exchange, friendships, and common interests (e.g. marketing and promotion, and improving / developing tourism products and services) and enhancing synergies amongst them. The small and medium-sized businesses are able to overcome the issues of limited resources and capacities, and obtain resources (e.g. financial and human

resources, suppliers, technologies, etc.), and information and knowledge through their interconnectedness and networking (Atterton, 2007). In addition, social networks allow tourism stakeholders to share-marketing information, undertake joint problem solving, improve the quality of their products and services, create new tourism products, and help to achieve economies of scale (e.g. accessing distant markets like the global market at reasonable costs due to joint pooling of resources). For example, TAT has regular meeting with the TAKS, THA-SCEC, and the municipality in order to share marketing information. The HR club enables knowledge transfer through regular meetings and training of hotel staff on Samui, which can improve the quality of service in the hotel sector.

In fact, formal networks such as TAKS, SSA, and THA-SCEC enable businesses to increase their credibility and trust with other organisations both within and outside the island, and so to increase their negotiating power and legitimacy. This enables them to acquire information and resources from both the public sector and external sources. These local tourism associations are the representatives of businesses, which can voice businesses' ideas, opinions, and requirements in relation to tourism issues and development.

Thus, social networks among businesses constitute a crucial element that can influence the destination cluster through networking which can foster synergies among businesses, facilitate technology, and knowledge transfer that can improve the skill of staff and businesses performance (Novelli et al., 2006; Waligo et al., 2013; Taplin, 2011). Networking also enhances innovations, allows collaboration to create tourism activities, and fosters businesses specialisations (e.g. wedding ceremony services for the honeymoon market, upmarket/luxury hotels and resorts, and world-class spas for health and wellness) (Braun,

2005). There are important existing networks of private-sector stakeholders on Samui that have a high degree of influence in mobilising tourism strategies and activities.

Table 4.2: Overview of networking among local businesses

Tourism-related associations /club	Association/network members	Number of participating businesses	Membership requirements	Priority area for network's actions	Networking resources	Personal relationships among members
TAKS	Majority are the business owners, and a few business managers (e.g. hotels and resorts, spas, restaurants, tour operators, travel agencies, and others)	200	Yes	Marketing and promotion of Samui Island	Trust, support, innovations of tourism events and activities, innovative thinking about 'green island' project, information, knowledge, and budget.	Strong ties amongst active members based on friendship, trust, reciprocity, regular meetings (i.e. overlapping between business and social contacts), information exchange, resource sharing and exchanging, joint marketing, joint problem solving, shared common interests (e.g. sustainable tourism) and marketing goal. Weak ties among non-active members based on a lack of both personal contacts and formal meetings.
THA-SCEC	Owners, and managers of four and five-star hotel businesses. Most of them are foreigners	100	Yes	To foster the spirit of unity among members and support each other in the hotel industry.	Trust, support, information sharing, knowledge, process and product innovations	Relatively strong ties amongst active members based on regular formal meeting, comfort level, friendship, information exchange, resource sharing and exchanging, joint problem solving, share common interests and marketing goal. Weak ties among non-active members based on a lack of contacts and meetings.
SSA	Owners and managers of spa businesses, and accommodation businesses (the resort and spas)	50	Yes	Improve the quality of spa businesses, and promote spa business.	Information and knowledge transfer, new skills, trust, support, innovation of spa products and services, gaining global reputation	Strong ties among members based on trust, mutual benefits, friendships, regular contacts, share information and resources, share common interests and marketing goals, joint problem solving.
HR Club	Owners, managers, and staffs of hotel businesses	120	Yes	Improve on the knowledge and skills of hotel staffs	Trust, support, knowledge transfer, innovation (e.g. new skills for operations and services), cost reductions for staff training courses	Strong ties among members based on mutual benefits, trust, regular formal meetings, friendliness, share information and resources, share common interests and development of human resource goals, joint problem solving.

Source: author

1) TAKS network

TAKS is driven by (in)formal relationships with various tourism stakeholders with whom it shares common interests and goals (e.g. marketing). It co-ordinates the pooling and sharing of resources amongst small-sized firms that they can utilise to update knowledge and skills, and undertake joint marketing which they cannot do on their own. Thus, TAKS's role is pivotal in enabling SMEs to enter international markets more professionally and effectively. For example, one interviewee reported that;

“The association supports and allows the SMEs to have opportunities which were non-existent before for participating in international ‘Road shows’. Small businesses are given financial support without which they never would have the means to raise their profile . . .”

(Deputy Managing Director of upmarket resort. Male in his 20s)

Also, as a result of an ongoing interface, active network members – those who regularly share information, attend meetings, are committee members of marketing associations and help each other on both formal and an informal basis – share a high level of trust, which facilitates a greater degree of information sharing and resource transfers. Further, the vice president of TAKS, who has been working as a committee member in the TAKS network for 6 years with others who mostly are originally from Samui, reported that network members share the same level of warmth they have for *‘puen, pee nong’* (Thai words mean friends, and sisters/brothers). She elaborated how network members contribute their voluntary labour willingly:

“...It is not a big group for a group of people who are doing volunteer jobs and we must have strong relations, otherwise we cannot accomplish the tasks. ...Mostly, they are the same group of people who have been working together for a long time...so we know one another very well.” (Vice president of TAKS. The interview was conducted in July, 2013)

This is supported by Saxena’s empirical study (2005) which investigated the interactions/cross sector networks amongst tourism actors in Castleton, Bakewell, and Tideswell in the Peak District National Park. Her findings showed that trust and commitment strengthen social relationships developed as a result of ongoing business interactions, and information exchange based on honesty and open communication, exchange knowledge and information, and mutual fulfilment of promises (Saxena, 2005, p.288). Moreover, Saxena (2005) argued that social networks facilitate information exchanges and collective learning amongst tourism stakeholders, which may be crucial mechanisms for creating local entrepreneurial activities and the establishment of new resources that become embedded in local market (p.287). Something similar is evident on Samui. For example, SSA shares updated information about training programmes, market trends, and human resources among members. SSA allows opportunities for the members to continually and regularly improve their skills and knowledge about different massage techniques, and new spa products, as well as to improve the quality of spa services to world-class standard. SSA fosters new specialised tourism product (e.g. spa and wellness), attracts more specialised firms (e.g. spa businesses), and can expand the markets (i.e. tourists who are interested in wellness and health) on Samui Island.

In addition, TAKS, as a significant tourism stakeholder on Samui, is well liked. A respondent who operates a 'car-care' business reported that joining TAKS was one of the best decisions he had made, as TAKS has helped him to create a good reputation on Samui. When he moved from Bangkok to do business on the island, he knew no one and had no idea about local social norms. Since it is important to know local people in order to operate successfully, without TAKS's help his business would have failed long ago. He reported that TAKS enabled him to settle into his business by putting him in touch with other complementary businesses locally, especially powerful players on Samui who shared valuable insights into local market trends and visitor tastes.

"I cannot 'kob kun' (Thai word means thank) TAKS enough. What little I know about the tourism industry in Samui, it is because of TAKS that has shared with me up to date information on tourism and social issues " (Car care business owner, male, 40s)

Tourism stakeholders like him can be termed active *network members* who keep their ears on the ground and are the first to know of any new development in the area. Less active network members, who do not belong to any committees, meet formally once a year. The main communication channel for these members is e-mail. Needless to say, due to their very weak relationships with the majority of tourism stakeholders, they are less willing to make policy decisions and have fewer opportunities for accessing information and resources. One of the main reasons for their non-participation is their dissatisfaction with TAKS. As one of the respondents reported:

“I have got nothing from the association, not even any information. The only one thing that benefits me from being a member is the document accrediting me (as a member of TAKS) which certifies that business is registered with them but in terms of actual benefits, nothing has happened” (Owner of a travel agency. Male, in his 30s.)

This shows that the interviewee decided to join TAKS because of the association’s reputation and credibility, but feels that there are very few practical benefits from being a part of TAKS. Another respondent, a non-member, perceived that the association was an ineffective body and only focused on the interests of particular groups (e.g. up-market hotels).

“I feel that the main weakness TAKS has that it looks after the interests of particular groups (namely their own) or in the other words up-market hotels but small bungalow business like us are ignored and excluded. I used to be a member, paid a thousand baht for the membership fees but never got anything, even one letter from them. So, I decided to quit.” (Owner of a bungalow business. Male, in his 60s.)

This finding is supported by other studies that highlight how smaller businesses often tend to be marginalised by powerful tourism stakeholders. For example, Saxena and Ilbery (2008) explored the characteristics of rural networks operating among small businesses and resource controllers on the English-Welsh border. Their findings showed that small businesses’ needs and concerns are often ignored by stakeholders with more influence (e.g. institutions) responsible for formulating tourism strategies, and undertaking specific initiatives where the interests of small tourism businesses are sidelined (Saxena and Ilbery, 2008). However, larger stakeholders (e.g.

public sector bodies) are insufficiently embedded into localities, and often overlook local specifics and unique attributes of a destination that should be promoted and have sustainable development potential. This is supported by Scheyvens' study (2011), which illustrated the lack of local communities' involvement in the tourism development process in the Maldives. The tourism was developed according to local government, local elites, and foreign investors' interests, resulting in unevenly spread tourism development and benefits to local communities. Scheyvens (2011) argued that local communities should be able to control the development occurring in their local areas in order to develop the social sustainability in Maldives. Also, this process of systemic exclusion of locals and smaller stakeholders can create undesirable and unsustainable tourism strategies that not in keeping with their aspirations and are even determinate to their growth (Prats and Guisa, 2008; Tosun, 2001). Whilst there is a power imbalance manifest in TAKS network, on the surface, the THA-SCEC network appears to enhance collaboration amongst businesses and seeks their input in creating tourism activities.

2) The THA-SCEC network

Networking within THA-SCEC comprises informal relationships and strong ties amongst its active members, who mainly own hotels. Formal meetings to discuss hotel rates and occupancy figures, plus innovations in hotel offerings, are held on a monthly basis and each member takes turns in hosting them. However, real business is cemented in informal meetings (e.g. socialising during lunch time). For example, an interviewee reported that:

"I think, hotels in Samui are more cooperative. We know each other because we make the effort - , undertake joint problem solving, give suggestions about suppliers and human resources

and get to know people on a personal level. We do some activities together, like throw a ‘Kob kun’ (Thank you) party to exchange gifts and goodwill.”(Room Manager, small-size upmarket resort and spa. Female, in her 30s.)

However, there are usually always the same people who come to the meetings. This shows weak relationships among other non-active members, who have less contact. Partly, their non-participation can be attributed to the time and money required to participate in meetings, as the charge is up to 500 bahts (approximately 10 pounds) every time one attends a meeting, so this acts as a deterrent. An interviewee, who is a Resident Manager, showed concern about little benefits for a lot of time needed, but perceived that every stakeholder has a social obligation towards the development and promotion of sustainable tourism.

Thus, despite the coherent nature of its structure, THA-SCEC network does not necessarily induce collaboration irrespective of the scale of businesses.

3) SSA network

By contrast, the SSA network is characterised by informal and strong relationships amongst members who also maintain regular contact through social media (e.g. Facebook), and social application (e.g. ‘Line’ application on mobile), and e-mails. In fact, the online interface has added an interesting dimension to networking amongst Samui’s tourism stakeholders. SSA shares the information about the activities inviting members to participate (e.g.. World record for the Thai massage 2011, Spa Fair, and spa competitions), the application forms for training

programmes and activity participations, calendars of training programmes, and the pictures of activities participated by members (including the activities for socially purpose among members).

Strong and informal relationships engender a spirit of cooperation as businesses take care to avoid aggressive competition and cannibalism. Instead, there is a will to help and support one another. This is especially noticeable amongst Spa business owners. For example, this interviewee reported that:

“I can say that spa business here in Samui are the only ones who do not compete. Rather than cutting down prices to attract custom and steal others’ clients, therapists or managers we rather focus on the quality of our own services. ... We never forget that we are one strong group of spa businesses, we will never destroy (‘tum lye’, a Thai word means destroy) those who are our friends’ (‘peun’, a Thai word means friend) first and foremost. . . . For example, I have 27 therapists and when anyone needs one I help them with my own therapists. Similarly, if my friends cannot accommodate more guests, they either send them to me or other members” (Spa owner; Female in her 30s.)

SSA plays an important role in improving the quality of spa businesses through the effective training programmes that foster knowledge transfers. These knowledge and training programmes are including the new techniques of healing massage (i.e. office-syndrome massage), knowledge about marketing (i.e. online marketing), training about ‘Green Leaf and Green Spa’, Korean culture and language, and English language. The members are gaining benefits in terms of accessing information and resources, reduced costs or no cost training programmes, and

opportunities for reaching wider markets and attracting more tourists. SSA can also foster specialised tourism products and increase the specialised firms into the cluster.

Moreover, there is another strong network amongst hotel staff. HR plays a crucial role in terms of providing and transferring knowledge to hotel staff, as well as offering support to other public and private sectors in organising tourism, and green activities.

4) HR club network

HR club is a strong network of human resource departments in hotel businesses which regularly meets (once, sometimes twice a month) with training programmes²⁹ as its main purpose. These hotel members can gain mutual benefits as they continually improve the knowledge and skills of their staff, which enhances the service quality of their hotels. This network enables the hotel members to have sophisticated training programs with less efforts and smaller budgets than implementing training programmes and courses on their own. For example, the President of the HR club reported that:

“We help one another in terms of improving the knowledge and skills of hotel staff through the ‘Human resource ’ network by informally providing effective ‘in house training and raise awareness amongst locals on how to address customer needs and everyone, even hotels with less ability, get to benefit.” (President of the HR club. Male in his 40s. The interview was conducted in August, 2013)

²⁹ For example, training programmes about hotel operations in different departments, and knowledge transfer about the law relating to labour and labour welfare.

This network not only allows members to share and transfer knowledge and skills, but also develops stronger relationships among hotel members that lead to collaboration. As one of the members reported:

“Human resource group allow for the stronger relationships among hotel staffs in Samui. It benefits to all hotel staffs that participating in the networks by which it provides the training programmes and sharing the information and knowledge that can improve the knowledge and skills of hotel staffs.” (Human Resource Manager. Female, in her 30s.)

These findings highlighted that it is strong ties among different business networks which underpin business activities and collaborative framework on Samui. Strong ties are characterised by trust and reciprocity that lead to a high level of exchange of information and support for one another (Jack, 2005). For instance, strong ties facilitate a high degree of knowledge and information transfer, allowing businesses to gain both individual and collective benefits through exchanges of information about markets, employees, suppliers, training programmes, and technology. This enables them to save time and money for training and marketing, and to access mutually available financial resources to foster innovation of products and services and acquire new ways of operating businesses which in turn facilitates destination image building. Importantly, strong informal networks amongst businesses and their formal networks (e.g. local tourism associations) enable them to acquire external information, resources, and skills with relative ease that they could not have found otherwise on the island. This is supported by Jack’s (2005) study, which argued that strong ties amongst entrepreneurs in rural area of the Scottish

Highlands provided them (entrepreneurs) with support, information, and resources (e.g. knowledge, financial resource).

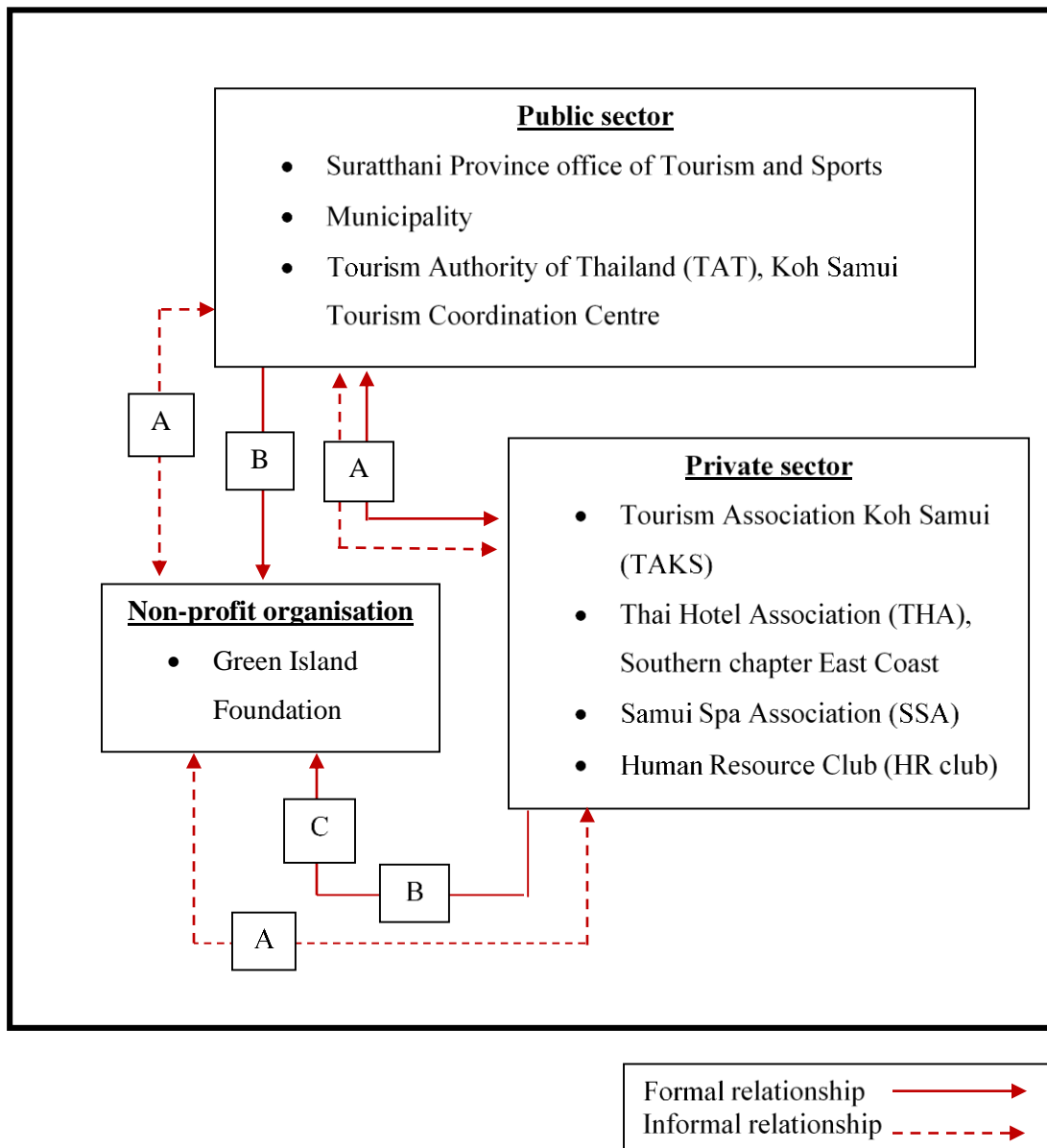
However, there are also weak ties amongst the majority of the members of networks such as TAKS and THA-SCEC. Whilst peripheral members share low levels of trust with other members, they still received -but less so- benefits from networks through formal exchange of information and resources needed to support their businesses. The consequence is that weak ties can result in less information and resource accessibility for those peripheral network members. This can constrain the opportunities to develop effective communication and to share understanding and common goal among members in relation to sustainable tourism development. This finding resonates with Waligo et al.(2013)'s investigation in Cornwall, which notes that information quality and accessibility through strong ties are crucial for developing effective communication that can enhance stakeholders' capacity (e.g. financial resources, time, commitment, knowledge and understanding) to implement sustainable tourism practices. Nevertheless, it cannot be overlooked that limited multi-level interactive networking amongst tourism stakeholders can constrain their capacity to jointly pursue goals of sustainable tourism development.

4.4.2 The Interface between different groups and tourism sectors in Samui

Overall, empirical findings demonstrate that there are both formal and informal relationships between public and private sector stakeholders. Informal relationships between diverse tourism stakeholders on Samui are defined by exchange of gifts, personal contacts and useful information (Larson et al., 2013). These play a crucial role in sustaining tourism businesses and are influenced by the physical geography of the island itself that brings different tourism

stakeholders in close contact with each other and enhances the ability of smaller businesses to easily obtain crucial resources. Thus, by pooling their resources, tourism stakeholders on Samui are able to successfully drive tourism activities and development (see Figure 4.3 for relationships between key public and private sector stakeholders).

Figure 4.3: Types of relationships between key public and private sectors



Source: The author

*Note: the arrow shows the types of relationships between tourism stakeholders, by which the **bold arrow** represents formal relationships, and the **dotted arrow** represents informal relationship. **A**, cooperation for (funding, promotion, marketing, training, green activities, joint problem- solving, and tourism planning and tourism strategies); **B**, creation of/support to; **C**, membership of.*

Formal relationships (see also Chapter 2, Section 2.7.2) are characterised by hierarchical arrangements which allow the government bodies to enforce regulations. Through participation in them local business are able to obtain external resources such as technology, information, knowledge, human and financial resources to support their tourism and green activities, and projects. On the other hand, informal relationships based upon trust contribute to tacit knowledge exchange and shared mutuality amongst local tourism stakeholders. This enables them to gather information on the ground and act quickly upon it. Thus, local businesses can be perceived as “...a self-regulating process, generating its own targets and realising its own goals...” (Saxena, 2005, p.283) or “...informal self-help networks that are focusing on the product rather than on the businesses individually...” (Saxena and Ilbery, 2008, p. 246). This is supported by Pavlovich’s study (2001), which examined formal and informal coordination amongst interdependent tourism stakeholders at the Waitomo Caves village in New Zealand. The findings illustrated that the informal coordination mechanism, based upon trustworthiness and shared value among diverse tourism stakeholders, can foster new knowledge regarding sustainable practices, and create collective sanctions to on those who are not working in the best interests of the broader group by restricting their access to novel information.

The findings showed that formal relationships exist mainly amongst government bodies, and between public, private sector organisations, and also relationships they share with the Green Island Foundation. Since the public sector in Thailand, like many developing economies, is quite

bureaucratic, its networking patterns are organised by legal and formal institutional arrangements which are typically hierarchical in structure (Larson et al., 2013). THA-SCEC, for example, whilst proposing tourism projects and activities to the government in order to obtain financial support, has to work within formal arrangements that require extensive paperwork (pertaining to the request and the receipt of budgets from the government, as well an obligation to report the use of funding in a transparent fashion) and engage in lengthy meetings. For example, an interviewee from TAKS reported that:

“We seek the budgets for our members by writing extensive proposals to the government, and making important contacts as we go along as they are key in getting the funding because the extensive paperwork required can delay things if you don’t know how to work the system.” (Vice president of TAKS. The interview was conducted in June, 2013)

However, local level, public sector bodies like the Koh Samui municipality are more flexible and work on both a formal and informal basis with other tourism stakeholders on Samui.

“The municipality³⁰ has a tiny section that is responsible for tourism development. ...with the limited capability, we try to work with TAKS, TAT and other private- sector organisations in order to mobilise tourism activities and promote Samui Island.” (Deputy Mayor. Female in her 40s.)

The findings also showed a high level of personal trust-based, close relationships between officials of Koh Samui and other private sector stakeholders, as is evident in this quote:

³⁰ The typical administrative structure of a municipality does not have a department for tourism.

“The municipality provides financial support to the TAKS to do the marketing. I am in regular contact with TAKS since I personally know the president of TAKS, sometimes he just calls me...said “where are you, can you come to see me? Then we just chat and share opinions about tourism matters”. (Tourism development officer of the municipality. Male, in his 50s.).

Needless to say, informal relationships (also see Chapter 2, Section 2.7.2 describing formal informal networks) facilitate high degree of information exchange, joint-problem solving and mutual support. For example, THA-SCEC has regular meetings with the municipality (at least once a month) to regularly share the information and problems facing the island’s tourism industry and often brings issues directly to the attention of the municipality without much protocol. For example, this interviewee, who is a manager of a hotel reported that:

“...the mayor attends the meeting every time so if we have any problems or any requests then we can bring it directly to the attention of the mayor. And if the municipality needs some support from us then the mayor informs us at the meeting too because there are many Hotel Managers attending the meeting.” (Room Manager of a small-size upmarket resort and spa. Female, in her 30s.)

This ‘give and take’ arrangement works quite effectively when it comes to tourism marketing and promotion. For example, the TAKS interviewee reported that:

“The association has many connections and collaborations with the tourism organisations, private and government sectors. For example, we take our members to participate

the tourism exhibitions both domestic and international markets by which we cooperate with TAT, Bangkok Airways, Municipality, and Department of Tourism and Sport to support for the marketing, financial supports and cost reductions. (President of TAKS. The interview was conducted in August, 2013)

Similarly, informal networks exist between the private sector and support organisations that can be classified as indirect tourism stakeholders (e.g. Suratthani Rajabhat University), and these enable businesses to seek the help of academic institutions in improving improve the knowledge and skills of their employees, as well as obtain training on improving service quality.

“We also ask for the financial supports from the Municipality, and SPOTS, in order to have the training for tourism business management for our members. We collaborate with the ‘Human resource Group’ and Suratthani Rajabhat University for having the training in hotel operations such as engineer, human resources, and food and beverages, in order to improve the service quality for the tourists.” (President of TAKS. The interview was conducted in October, 2013)

Data also revealed that the important of weak ties among different sectors, by which they are linked by mutual exchanges and benefits as well as common goals (e.g. marketing and promotion, and collective benefits) that enable the formation of a collaborative framework. For example, an interviewee, who is the president of HR club, reported that the HR club has contact with TAKS, and other public-sector organisations only when collaboration and support is needed.

“We have connections with the TAKS, TAKS can support us the budget for training programmes. We also give TAKS support in terms of collaborations in creating tourism events such as Samui Triathlon, which we support with man power.” (President of HR Club. The interview was conducted in October, 2013)

Another example of collaborative networks formed by mutual benefits, and shared common interests (e.g. marketing goals) which lead to support between different sectors is evident in this quote.

“Airline business and hotel business can support us a lot. For example, for the accommodation business, they discount us like from 7,000 bahts to 2,000-2,500 bahts or even give us as complimentary rooms. But actually, this benefits their businesses because “we invite agents to stay at your hotels so it is like “they will sell for you, and promote for you.

...TAT will give the information about the road shows that are going to be held throughout the year (more than 30 road shows around the world), and support the budget for the local businesses, which they can go with us.” (Director of KSTCC. The interview was conducted in September, 2013)

Thus, it is informal relationships among businesses, and between public – private sectors that enable effective collaboration in tourism activities. Informal networks and horizontal linkages allow small businesses to save time and money in accessing information (Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986). Informal networks also provide a platform on which both public and private-sector actors

share and exchange resources in order to share tourism marketing and promotion, improve the quality of tourism human resources, and innovate tourism activities.

4.5 Key Challenges facing Samui's tourism stakeholders

Despite extensive networking links, and the existence of both weak and strong ties and (in)formal relationships, there are key challenges facing tourism stakeholders on Samui. These are namely: (1) The lack of capacities and resources available to the local government, (2) Corruption among local authorities, and (3) Tension among different groups of tourism stakeholders.

4.5.1 Insufficient capacity and inadequate governance structure of local government

One of the biggest challenges Samui faces is that Koh Samui municipality is by and large an ineffective body. Its administrative capacity and legitimate authority is severely limited as it lacks decision-making powers over resources including budgets and recruitment of staff. It is powerless to impact upon the work of other government agencies, such as the Department of Land Transportation, which is responsible for managing and controlling public transportation and taxis, or the Harbour Department which is responsible for sea-safety. Forest and mountain issues are addressed by the Forestry Department, which again works in isolation (Prachachart, 2014). Due to a lack of central command, there are many different institutions, with many layers of bureaucracy, which can slow down the process of decision-making and development.

Many business owners are also frustrated with the limitations of the present city status³¹, which is based on the size of population instead of its economic growth. Economically, Koh Samui generates revenue of approximately 20 billion bahts³² a year for the country (Prachachat, 2014), which show the potential of Koh Samui's economy. The local municipality and private-sector actors have proposed to the national assembly for Koh Samui to be upgraded to the status of a 'special local government'³³ like Bangkok, Pataya, and Chiang Mai. This would allow for a larger budget, and legitimate authority in managing and controlling the city. However, the unstable political state of the country has constrained progress in determining the status of Samui. The mayor, reported to the Prachachat news that "...we have been proposing for 'a special local government for 10 years but now we still have a status as a 'city municipality...' (or '*Thesaban nakorn*' in Thai)" (Prachachat, 2014). The 'special local government' will allow for legitimate authority in managing and controlling tourism activities, which other local government tiers (i.e. the municipality, city municipality, and Sub district municipality)³⁴ do not have.

The current President of the TAKS, also commented that "If Samui can change into a special governing system, Samui will get more budgets, can become faster to respond in terms of management and development since it has its own a central local authority, and reducing the layers of bureaucracy. He thinks, that it is better to decentralise and allow local government to

³¹ Koh Samui has enjoyed that status of the 'city municipality' (or '*Thesaban nakorn*' in Thai) since 2012, due to a population size of at least 50,000 and sufficient income to carry out the tasks required of a city-based body.

³² The currency exchange rate is approximately 50 bahts per one pound (Bank of Thailand, 2015).

³³ To qualify as a 'special local government', the city must have special characteristics such as tourist destination like Pataya, and Koh Samui. The city must have potential in sufficient income to cover the tasks of a town.

³⁴ These are local government units; the sub district municipality is the smallest local government unit, then the city municipality (bigger local government unit), and municipality (bigger local government unit) in that order.

manage and develop Samui by themselves because they are the ones who are living in Samui and understand better the problems and issues in the island ” (Prachachat, 2014)³⁵.

The local private sector thinks that changing the city status to that of the ‘special local government’ is the only way that can solve many of Samui’s problems, especially unsustainable tourism development. For example, the president of the HR club, reported to the Manager 360° Weekly news³⁶.that the migrant and the budget issues, which it was insufficient because now a day we have a budget for 50,000 people, but in reality the number of population that resident here are more than 300,000 people, which most of them are not registered as Samui resident. This creates problems in terms of scarcity in resources such as water, electricity, which implies that Samui cannot accommodate a large number of people (Manager 360° weekly, 2014).

In addition, a lack of resources such as the budget lead, significantly, to the ineffective management and development of Samui’s tourism because the development of infrastructure and facilities cannot keep pace with the dramatic growth in the tourism industry, now with issues of resource scarcity such as electricity and water. Samui’s mayor expressed his frustration with these limitations, as they obstruct the ability of the municipality to manage and develop tourism effectively.

“It is very difficult to get budgets for the development of attractions and infrastructures. There are many environmental and social issues, as well as the problem of polluted water and accumulation of rubbish on an unprecedented scale. This is because of the imbalance between

³⁵ To note that, corruption issue has always been the big problem of Samui Island, as well as Thailand.

³⁶ This is an online news in Thailand (<http://manager.co.th/home/>).

the rapid growth of tourism as a result of the private and public sector investment and the development of infrastructure and facilities by the government that have lagged far behind. ...look at the road! It is still bad. The government (central government) only look at the numbers (revenues) but they never care for the real investment and development in infrastructure and facilities such as the road, electricity, and waste and sewage water management. Due to the small budget we have, the amount of development and management initiatives we can undertake are limited and what we do is slow and inconsistent.” (Mayor of Koh Samui. The interview was conducted in October, 2013)

This is also supported by the deputy mayor, as she reported that the budget is only enough for regular payments and management, but not much budget is left for development.

“We get very small amount of the budget for each year. ...there are regular expenses such as the salary for the officers, which is very high now, and the expenses for other regular managerial projects so there is only a very small amount of money left in the budget for other development projects. ...now, we have the serious problems for waste management since our incinerator is broken, and we do not have the budget to replace it with a new one. The old incinerator which we have got has the capacity only for 30-40 tons of rubbish. It was usable in the past when the amount of the waste was low but now we have 140 tons a day! (A deputy mayor. Female, in her 40s.)

Currently, Samui is allowed to have a very small unit of tourism department that is responsible for sustainable tourism due to the special characteristics of Samui, However, it is insufficient for

tourism development because there are very limited resources such as the budget, and human resources. The two municipality officers, working in the position of ‘tourism developer’ coordinate the activities of local public and private-sector stakeholders in seeking and providing the budget for marketing and promoting tourism.

The limited capacities and resources include a lack of sufficient knowledge and skills in tourism management and development, budgets, and human resources of the local government, have been significant obstacles to the development of Koh Samui’s sustainable tourism. For example, it affects the provision of adequate infrastructure and unplanned and uncontrolled tourism development. One municipality officer, a native of Samui who has been working as a ‘tourism development officer’ at the municipality since 2003, reported that:

“In the past, we did not do anything... just ‘ploiy pai tam yatagum’³⁷. ... There were no tourism plans... we never implemented any planning. ...We only started to have the tourism plans since 2550³⁸” (Tourism development officer. Male, in his 50s.)

This is supported by the empirical study of Churugsa et al. (2007) which examined the specific capacity and experiences of the local government Tambon³⁹ Administrative Authority (TAA)⁴⁰,

³⁷ ‘Ploiy pai tam **yatagum**’ in Thai means ‘let it be’ or ‘follow the **mercy of fate**’.

³⁸ It is in (‘the Buddhist Era’) BE 2550, which is equivalent to BC 2007.

³⁹ Tambon is a Thai word for subdistrict.

⁴⁰ The smallest unit of local government in Thailand (Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Authority Act (TCTAAA), 1994 cited in Churugsa et al., 2007)

in sub-district Koh Tao⁴¹, and its response to sustainable tourism development. They concluded that TAA has limited resources, including a lack of understanding and knowledge of tourism issues, budget and staffing, which limit the ability to achieve sustainable tourism development.

4.5.2 Corruption among local authorities

Most interviewees perceived that ineffective tourism management and lack of control of unsustainable practices result from inherent corruption within government bodies and both a lack of political will to enforce law and regulations or a commitment to implementing sustainable tourism and development goals. For example, in one of the focus groups this researcher conducted, the overwhelming feeling was that:

“In order to have effective management and development, the government has to enforce the law strictly and not to be afraid of losing votes!” (Male, in his 50s. Focus group 1, Bo phud, conducted on 13th November 2013)

Many interviewees perceived that corruption generated other issues, like illegal activities and organised crime, as is evident in this quote:

“...there are Russian mafias operating without fear in Thailand. I tell you without the backup of the local authorities, they cannot carry on with their illegal activities like drugs, demand protection fees from their people, and keep their businesses open past the closing times

⁴¹ Koh Tao are Thai words; ‘Koh’ means Island, and ‘Tao’ means turtle. It is a sub district of Koh Pa Ngan District of Suratthani province, Thailand. It is Samui’s neighbouring island and is about 74 kilometres from Samui Island.

dictated by the regulations⁴². These mafias regularly pay government/authorities who support them. In the long run, it is going to permanently damage the tourism industry of Koh Samui.”

(Vice president TAKS. The interview was conducted in August, 2013)

Moreover, a lack of law enforcement and control by the government influences unsustainable development such as the over-construction on the mountains, and foreign land and property ownership. This can also negatively affect local tourism businesses and local communities because there are many foreigners such as Russians and Koreans who come to Samui and buy houses, hotels, and flats to operate tour programmes by themselves in order to attract tourists that are from their home countries. Another interviewee perceived that the government use its legitimate authority and power to benefit itself:

“... at the root of most problems is the local ‘Nak Garn Muang’ (Thai word for politicians/government). They are the most powerful people, and important actors to influence the development of Samui tourism because local ‘Nak Garn Muang’ are people who buy lands, develop the lands, and sell them. Now, all of the lands belong to ‘Nak Garn Muang’, do not belong to the locals anymore! ...They (‘Nak Garn Muang’) want to make a lot of profits, so they buy lands and sell to foreigners. The government allows foreigners to buy condominiums, lands (for 30 years and it can be extended to the next 30 years), and buildings (as the registered company/business). ...and now, there are houses all over the mountains!” (Resident Manager.

Male, in his 50s.)

⁴² For example, the bars, and pubs are legitimately allowed to open until midnight, but these people stay open until three or five o'clock in the morning.

This is supported by news stories that highlight (ASTV manager online, 2010) how Samui is a haven for money laundering undertaken by politicians who use ‘black money’ to buy premium land on Samui, including beachfront locations and mountain sites. In recent years, incidents of illegal ownership and development have increased. It so happens that many politicians and investors develop the properties and then sell them or build luxury houses for sale to foreign millionaires. In example is the famous football player David Beckham who owns a (A 200 million baths (approximately 40 million pounds) luxury beach house that he bought in 2007 with an area of 7.9 acres on a hill overlooking a private beach (see Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4: David Beckham’s holiday house



Source: The Hollywood gossip, 2009

Thus the rapid expansion of the real estate sector on Samui Island, in the form of luxury holiday houses, and hotels built on the mountains around the island (e.g. sub-districts Bo Phud and Taling Ngam), has been causing serious environmental degradation. Moreover, it is believed

that more than half of the documented land⁴³ on Samui Island is owned by foreigners through Thai nominees and long-term (30 years) leasing schemes.

A resident manager of an upmarket resort in sub-district Bo Phud, also vented his frustration towards the government, which he perceived to be weak in terms of controlling tourism activities and businesses. He talked about the pubs and bars that have been grown excessively in the Chaweng area of his sub district, and which remain open illegally until the early morning⁴⁴ and create a lot of noise. He thinks this is not a good image for Samui if these types of businesses are not properly managed and controlled.

“There are some over supplies and unnecessary products such as pubs and bars. This is like foreigners come and have Thai wives. Then they just do the businesses in order to be able to stay in Thailand. This business is not from what the tourists want so now there are too many bars, three or four o’clock in the morning, they overwhelm the place with ‘yel yel’⁴⁵! (Resident Manager. Male in his 50s.)

This negative perception also implies a lack of trust of other tourism stakeholders, such as the private sector and local communities, towards the government body. Since they perceive that there is a lack of serious commitment by the government towards sustainability, there is a reduction in the desire and motivation of private sector and local communities to participate in, and support, sustainable and green practices. .

⁴³ It is legally documented lands for people to own.

⁴⁴ They are legally open until midnight.

⁴⁵ ‘yel yel’ is a Thai word to imitate the sound/noise of people, who are partying.

“It is funny! The municipality has the campaign for rubbish separation but all they do is just throw everything together in one rubbish truck. So why do we need to separate!” (Hotel director. Male, in his 20s.)

Many interviewees perceived that the government does not have a serious commitment towards sustainability goals, and considered it just for publicity and not enough for long-term solving of problems. For example, one interviewee commented that:

“It is a good idea for having ‘green island project’ to raise more awareness among tourism stakeholders but from my point of view; I do not see any concrete contributions or real actions that really can solve the environmental problems. I think, it is more likely to be just for the publicity.” (Hotel owner. Male, in his 30s.)

In fact, there are different local government departments that have different, legitimate authority over tourism business activities. There is no central command at the local government level, and the Koh Samui municipality has limited legitimate authority which means it cannot interfere with other government agencies. Consequently, it may be difficult to control the tourism development since many government agencies are involved. However, it shows that government corruption is a big issue on Samui, like in any other developing country, and this seriously constrains effective tourism development (also see Kimbu and Ngoasong, 2013). Unlike developed countries, where the government plays an effective role in tourism marketing and development due to transparency and sufficient capacity and resources, destinations in developing countries like Koh Samui are suffering as a result of woeful political neglect (Brown and Geddes, 2007).

4.5.3 Tensions among different groups of tourism stakeholders

Whilst there are both strong and weak ties among tourism stakeholder groups enabling collaboration in marketing and promotions, as well as green projects, a further issue is that, strong relationships between particular groups can exclude certain stakeholders. This particularly includes stakeholders who share dissimilar interests in terms of business, professionalism, ethnicity, and insider /outsider status. This is because people tend to avoid interacting and communicating with those they do not know well (Newman and Dale, 2005) preferring those with whom they share common interests, practices, and values.

Thus findings showed some constraints and the presence of imbalances in relational ties among tourism stakeholders on Samui - for example, insiders versus outsiders, foreigners versus Thai (e.g. THA), industry versus local communities, and a general lack of compatibility in tourism goals across different sectors. These factors reduce the diversity of tourism stakeholders sharing and exchanging information, resources, interests and ideas for tourism development; and consequently reduce opportunities to develop sustainable tourism successfully. This is supported by previous STD studies (e.g. Aas et al., 2005; Pavlovich, 2001; Waligo et al., 2013) that suggested that diverse stakeholder collaboration, participation and involvement is crucial for STD since they can share knowledge and skills, experiences, and resources in order to solve problems and facilitate innovations and changes - but collective action is not always easy to achieve. Thus, improving relationships among different groups of tourism stakeholders is crucial in creating synergies and sustaining collaboration.

For example, many interviewees raised the issue that the majority of the THA-SCEC members are foreign General Managers and they conduct meetings in the English language. Consequently, language appears to be a factor constraining the ability to create a close relationship with other groups. For example, one interviewee reported that:

“Another group that seems to be less connected; is THA, which the members are foreigners mostly. I also participate in THA just to get the information and to know what they are doing but I do not have close relationships among members like I have with people in TAKS. In fact, THA also wants to help the TAKS but may be because of the language that makes them to be less connected to other groups. (Vice president of TAKS. The interview was conducted in July, 2013)

Some interviewees perceived THA-SCEC members, who are foreigners and as outsiders, as having no real concern for Samui’s problems. They just come to Samui to work for a certain period of time, make money and leave. For example, an interviewee commented that:

“We have the connection with THA but not very close because the majority of their members are foreigners and they have their own objectives and activities. So, I do not expect them to connect closely with us and do something that gets them into the risky positions and situations like solving any of Samui’s problems because they are foreigners.” (Consultant of TAKS and vice chairman of Green Island Foundation. The interview was conducted in August, 2013).

Thus, strong negative attitudes towards ‘outsiders’ (both Thai and foreigners) lead to their exclusion from local networks. This results in non-local businesses seeking to acquire new information, knowledge and resources (e.g. financial resource), as well as the opportunities to innovate tourism products and encourage them to participate in green activities.

In addition, many interviewees who are in ‘budget type’ accommodation businesses, and other small-sized business sectors, addressed their dissatisfaction towards the strong ties among those upmarket, medium-sized accommodation businesses in the TAKS. They perceived that TAKS was only concerned with benefiting the upmarket accommodation businesses, deliberating leaving out the interests of small-sized/ budget type of accommodation businesses, as well as other secondary sectors of tourism- related businesses that were not perceived to be of significance (e.g. those involved in providing interpretation, guided tours, arts and craft related businesses).

For example, a printing business owner, who has been participating in the TAKS network for more than ten years, reported that being a member of the association benefited his business as it enabled him to have connections with hotels, restaurants, and tour operators. As his business is about printing, tourism businesses place orders for brochures, leaflets, and documentary forms. Thus, like any other tourism business, he has more income when there is a high demand (or high number of tourists) and less work when tourist numbers drop. So, TAKS’ activities towards tourism promotion, and the marketing of Samui in the global market, are crucial for the tourism businesses as a whole since those promotions can bring more tourists to Samui. However, he stated that the association failed to appreciate the vital role he was playing in the tourism

industry as their main focus seemed to be on protecting the interests of the accommodation sector.

“TAKS’s main concern is about the benefits for the hotel businesses since the majority of the members are in hotel sector. ...this is because of the hotel businesses founded the association and they have been the leading businesses since the early period. ...They have power in the society because they have money so they can do any things. People like me are ignored”
(Printing business owner. Male, in his 60s)

Similarly, another interviewee, who is a local medium-sized resort owner, also felt sidelined as he perceived that the main focus of actors such as TAKS, and THA-SCEC seemed to be on upmarket hotel and resorts for tourism marketing purposes and its development and there was no real concern about businesses like his or the local community.

“We have tourism associations that are quite active for mobilising tourism activities but there is no single association that think about tourism for the local community and for the whole big picture. They focus direction of tourism for only those upmarket hotels and resorts.” (Resort owner. Male, in his 50s.)

These views are supported by local farmers. These are frustrated with the negative impacts of over-development and poorly or unmanaged and unplanned tourism development resulting in the degradation of the natural environment, and socio-cultural changes impacting on local communities which benefit little from tourism. For example, their fruit gardens are disturbed and

visited by tourist when on safari tours on the mountain, and this kind of tour operation can create noise and accumulate rubbish. The farmers also have to face the high cost of living. They perceive that TAKS should be more concerned about local communities who are directly or indirectly involved in tourism, even if they want it or not. Since farms constitute an interest for tourists, they should benefit from the industry and their voices should be heard in tourism associations.

“...They do not care about us because the TAKS concerns only hotel businesses but they never thought that the crucial part of tourism is the local communities! ... Suppose if ‘kon Samui’ (Samui people) are opposed and resisted tourism... ‘ya ma keun suan goo!’ (do not visit my plantations)... ‘tui num lai sai’ (spit on) ... ‘goo gun suan’ (I hedge my plantations)... ‘goo mai hai duen’ (I do not allow to walk through my plantations). So, tourism is not just stay at the hotels. Tourists need to see something else...not just come and stay at the hotel...it is not tourism! Hotels are just the accommodation! ...the farmers need to benefits from tourism too. ... You never care for ecotourism or cultural tourism development at all. ...but there are tourists that drive up on the mountain to see ‘kong chao bann’ (the farmers’ plantations) for free!” (Farmer. Male, in his 60s.)

Even though it is undeniable that tourism benefits local communities in some ways (e.g. they can sell their products), these do not feel that it is enough for them as local people. They consider they should be included in the tourism development process because there are many negative impacts from tourism and undesired tourism development. They want to share their interests, opinions, ideas, and concerns concerning tourism development.

This shows that from local communities, and other business sectors, want the tourism associations to be strong actors in tourism development and ensure that benefits are spread evenly. However, it also shows the lack of local community involvement in the decision-making process, and in tourism development. Consequently, the strong ties, and close-knit relationships amongst particular groups of businesses (e.g... upmarket hotel and resort businesses) limit the integrated interrelationships of all tourism stakeholder-actors in the decision-making process, and tourism development, which creates negative perceptions towards the tourism associations. These limited interactions and connections amongst tourism actors constrain the information flows and resource accessibility among other small-sized accommodation businesses, and other businesses sectors which are in peripheral positions in the networks. Cluster members in peripheral position in the networks; have limited access to novel information and resources. This restricts some cluster benefits, including, for example, knowledge and skills transfer, exchange of resources and best practices, improvements in competitiveness, utilisation of economies of scope and financial support (McRae-Willaims, 2004; Porter, 1990).

4.6 Opportunities for Sustainable Tourism Development

Nevertheless, findings showed a shared interest and common goals towards sustainable tourism amongst many tourism stakeholders. Most of the interviewees, who are in different sectors and groups, showed a concern about the quality of local environment and sustainable tourism development. They realised the importance and the value of environmental conservation, which effect their quality of life and both current and future businesses. Thus, key public and private-

sector actors initiated the ‘Green Island’ project, and the ‘Green Island Foundation’⁴⁶ to raise awareness among tourism stakeholders to achieve sustainable practices. The Green Island Foundation’s website defined ‘Green’ as:

“*Green* is the color of unspoiled nature, filled with luxurious vegetation that provides Koh Samui with much of its beauty and fresh, clean air. *Green* means harmony between constructed and natural environments. In this way both work towards a common, beneficial outcome for society. *Green* refers to a state of awareness that allows local people, tourists, and government offices to cooperate to fulfill their duties related to Koh Samui and its society with good intentions and a sense of responsibility.” **Source:** Directly cited from Green Island Foundation website (<http://www.greenislandfoundation.com/>)

Thus, GIFT has slowly created awareness in tourism stakeholders ‘...minds about the ‘Green Island project...’ and sustainable tourism objectives. It is noteworthy that a shared common goal among a few businesses, which care for preservation and improvement of local environment, is the starting point for the ‘Samui Green Island’ initiative.

⁴⁶ “On 18th June, 2008, Green Island Foundation, the stakeholders and the Minister of Tourism and Sport signed Memorandum of Understanding to enhance cooperation and encourage everyone on the island to make a contribution to reduce, recycle, reuse and become more aware of what a green jewel Samui still is” (Green Island Foundation, 2013).

4.6.1 The ‘Samui Green Island’ initiative: A shared common goal

The ‘Samui Green Island’ initiative illustrates how shared values and interest towards sustainable tourism can have a positive influence on the practices and world views of key leaders of public and private organisations/institutions. Initially, the ‘Green Island’ idea was developed by local private sector-actors as they were concerned about the negative impact of tourism on the natural environment. At the same time, this idea was echoed by government agencies such as TAT and Koh Samui municipality. The municipality develops the environmental protection policy which aims to support sustainable tourism development (The tourism planning of municipality of Koh Samui 2012-2014). Thus, the municipality is a key tourism actor which supports and fosters sustainable practices through which it tries to raise awareness among tourism stakeholders to be more environmental friendly, save energy and reduce the amount of waste. Moreover, key private-sector actors, who initiated the idea of having sustainable practices and sustainable tourism development through the ‘Green Island’ project, are the leaders (e.g. TAKS, THA-SCEC, SSA). Then they joined with the MOTS and TAT in order to launch the “Green Island Project”⁴⁷ in 2008 (Green Island Project-Koh Samui, 2009) to promote the Samui region as “green island”. They also established the formal non-profit organisation ‘GIFT’ to promote sustainable practices amongst all tourism stakeholders, through which they coordinate and collaborate with local government, businesses networks, and local communities to implement green activities. For example, they initiated Green Finger⁴⁸ and Green hotel networks amongst hotel businesses, local government, and local communities (e.g. local schools) that aim to recycle by reducing and reusing rubbish.

⁴⁷ This is a collaborative project involving among the government, private sector, public service organizations, media, community and general public. This project started in 2008 and runs for eleven years to 2017 (Green Island Project –Koh Samui, 2009).

⁴⁸ There are more than 200 hotels participating in the Green Finger networks (Green Island Foundation, 2013).

A local government leader, the current Koh Samui mayor who has been elected for a second term, also plays an important role in tourism development in terms of advancing sustainable policies, and planning and providing infrastructure and budgets for green activities. He also has a resort business, and personal relationships with many business actors. For example, his brother is a president of THA-SCEC and he has friends in TAKS. Due to his high stake in the industry, he and his brother are influencing THA-SCEC's greater motivation in providing sustainable tourism development and undertaking environmental conservation. The emphasis on sustainability is growing because there is a realisation amongst key stakeholders of their reliance on Samui's rich natural resources, and how their activities create serious negative impacts on the environment. Thus the emphasis is on making Samui a '*Koh see kew tee na yoo*' (Lovely Green Island) that is "*Clean, green, and safe*". Thus, the mayor is encouraging private-sector stakeholders, and the local community, to separate and reduce their rubbish. In this researcher's interview with him; he reported:

"We have the policy, which aim to preserve and sustain the environment. We have a goal to develop Samui to be 'Green Island'. We try to reduce the amount of rubbish by encouraging the hotels to participate in a 'zero waste' program and now there are more hotels that follow this practice. The hotels can reduce their waste from their hotels and now they cooperate with local schools to teach students how to separate the rubbish."

Certainly, a tangible and positive change in stakeholders' attitudes is evident in their practice of separating wet and dry rubbish, and reducing waste by recycling as much as possible. Further, the THA-SCEC has played an active role in initiating the 'green island project' and green

activities and has a strong stake in sustainable tourism development. In my interview with the President of THA-SCEC, this author recognised his concern about the accelerated growth in the construction industry and proliferation of hotel businesses, as well as unplanned tourism development, which negatively impacts on the natural environment. He said:

“I am very concerned about Samui tourism. I am afraid that there will be nothing left (e.g. tourism, natural resources) for ‘look lan’ (Thai words means our next generation). ...It is difficult to control, and it is over grown now. ..We sell natural environment so we need to sustain it. ...Koh Samui needs ‘quality’ not ‘quantity’. If we do as ‘ching chub tour’ (Thai slang for a cheap/mass tourism) Samui will be ‘lae’ (Thai word means messed up)! (President of THA-SCEC. The interview was conducted in October 2013.)

Similarly, the president of TAKS realises both that market trends show more tourists are concerned about environmental protection and green practices, and that the beauty of Samui’s natural environment is the main attraction for the tourists to come. In this researcher’s interview with him, he said that:

“Samui Green Island” has been the main objective that we wanted to accomplish for the last ten years. It is a trend of many sectors that want to promote it as a marketing tool; for example, the TAT also promotes Samui as a Green Island, so now it enhances awareness among private sectors and the wider group of people.” (President of TAKS. The interview was conducted in October, 2013.)

Moreover, there are many hotels and resorts, as well as spa businesses that participate in the ‘green leaf’ programme (under the Green Leaf Foundation⁴⁹), but currently this is less than 50% of the whole number of hotel and resorts. The businesses that join the ‘Green Leaf Programme’ will be trained and educated about environmental standards and energy efficiency. Many interviewees who participate in the Green Leaf Programme reported that participating in the programme made them know more about how to be more environmental friendly (e.g. design of the building, plants, product used, etc.) and about energy conservation which can reduce costs as well.

Thus, if the municipality and the private- sector actors have strong commitments and continuity towards sustainable practices, soon Samui will become a ‘Green Island’. Unfortunately, the sustainable objective is not the first priority objective, but instead they pay more attention to the marketing objectives. Also, this blasé attitude towards environment and sustainability influences the profile of two clusters in Samui – sub-districts Bo Phud and Na Muang / Taling Ngam.

The next section will discuss the crucial role of networking between key public and private sector stakeholders in influencing tourism development in terms of tourism strategies, targeting markets, promotion and marketing, and innovation of tourism products and services.

⁴⁹ **Greenleaf Foundation** was jointly established by the 6 organizations with the same determination and responsibility, with support fund sponsorship from various local and international organizations. They have organized several training seminars on environmental educational, environmental standards, and energy efficiency since 1999 (Green Leaf Foundation, 2013).

4.7 The role of tourism stakeholders in tourism clusters' formation

Tourism destinations can be defined as 'territorial agglomerations' where geographically co-location of diverse similar firms and local institutions in particular fields are linked by commonalities and complementarities such as accommodation businesses, transportations, entertainments, tour operators, and restaurants (Prats et al., 2008, p.179). Based on Porter's clusters concept (1998), tourism clusters can occur at tourism destinations where geographic co-location of firms are interconnected for innovations such as providing niche products (e.g. local cultures; foods, craft, art) in order to achieve higher productivity and competitive advantages. In fact, a tourism cluster can be seen to be formed by the concentration of complementary firms, or small tourism network structures, at a destination, which provide complementary products adding value to the other firms' activities such as accommodation, food and transport in order to create a comprehensive tourist experience (Michaels, 2003). Thus, the linkages and cooperative networks amongst small tourism businesses and tourism stakeholders are crucial influences for the growth and sustainability of a tourism cluster (Braun, 2005).

Findings showed the existence of interdependent relationships between key public and private-sector actors that lead to the formation of tourism clusters. However, different actors have different roles and degree of input in mobilising tourism activities and influencing cluster formation and development. For example, the private sector is more active and has a leading role, and the public sector plays mainly supporting and facilitating roles.

For instance, the President of THA-SCEC reported: *"We work with the government mainly to obtain financial support to attend tourism exhibitions in Germany, China, Malaysia, and*

Singapore so we can promote Samui Island.” (The interview was conducted in October, 2013)

SPOTS has an important role in tourism development on Samui in terms of providing the budget, coordinating with, and facilitating other public and private-sector actors in implementing tourism activities and developments. For example, the director of SPOTS reported that:

“...we do tourism planning according to the needs and wants of private sector, and the local community. ...there are representatives from private sectors; the presidents of TAKS, and THA. ...they tell us about the tourism related problems and issues in Samui such as the taxi issue or the human resource issue. ...we provide the budget for them to implement the training programs in order to improve the quality of human resource in tourism and hospitality industries.” (Director of SPOTS. The interview was conducted in July, 2013)

The director of SPOTS trusted the local private-sector’s capacity to potentially mobilise sustainable tourism development.

“The island destinations and beaches always and will always have tourists to come and visit, For example, Samui Island has got over a million tourists a year. We need to promote more for other destinations in Suratthani, which can distribute the number of tourists for other destination as well.

...there are strong tourism associations that create tourism events and do the marketing for Samui Island, such as the Samui International Triathlon tourism event. We mostly support

them and provide them the budgets for tourism events and projects that they propose to us.”

(Director of SPOTS. The interview was conducted in July, 2013)

In addition, SPOTS has occasional, formal meetings with the relevant public and local private-sector actors to share information and discuss tourism strategies, events and issues. This allows the local tourism stakeholders to participate in shared decision-making, share their opinions and ideas towards tourism strategies, events and development, and share problem-solving. For example, they supported the establishment of the Tourist Assistance Centre (TAC) in order to assist and help tourists in every respect, such as giving out tourist information and assisting tourists that have been victims of frauds.

“This centre has been operating since last year because there are many cases of tourist fraud. In the past, most of tourists would agree to make a settlement easily by accepting for any payments since they do not want to have problems outside their home countries. They have limited time and they do not want to postpone their plane tickets but when they go back to their countries, they inform these issues to their embassies, which gives negative reputation for Samui tourism. Now, when we have this centre, we can assist tourists and help them in case of fraud. We can help tourists in negotiating with those actors who they have issues with, in order to give them fairness and satisfaction.” (Director of TAC. The interview was conducted in September, 2013)

This shows how SPOTS has supported Samui tourism, and shared problem-solving with the local private sector in order to improve the quality of tourism. It also shows the significant, supporting

role of SPOTS towards tourism development in Koh Samui, by which SPOTS seeks and provides the budgets only when the local private-sector actors propose the projects and ask for financial supports. Examples are the Green Island project, Samui Triathlon, and the Spa Fair projects.

Another key public organisation, KSTCC⁵⁰/TAT, is not just concerned with marketing but also has an important role influencing the tourism cluster development through its marketing tools, and image/brand positioning. KSTCC/TAT carefully studies and analyses local tourism products, tourist profiles, and the tourist markets and then develops marketing plans, strategies and brand positioning. The chief of KSTCC, reported that currently Samui is promoted as a ‘romantic destination’, since there are more than 80 upmarket and luxury hotels, and resorts providing wedding packages, as well as the increasing trends towards this market segment.

She also stated that TAT also uses marketing to guide the direction of tourism development. Based on the analysis of local products, TAT identifies the potential of the private sector and who can provide the products and services to the high-end market segment. Because there are many upmarket and luxury resorts, TAT develops marketing strategies to develop new ‘niche markets’ in order to attract more quality tourists. It tries to guide the focus of Samui tourism onto ‘quality tourism’, which focuses more on quality rather than quantity. “The concept of quality in tourism means successful development of the marketing aspect, but also benefits the local population and the environment” (Angelevska-Najdeska and Rakicevik, 2012, p.210). High quality tourism can refer to good value (the quality of tourism products and services such as the quality of the local environment) for money perceived by tourists, and potential tourists are more

⁵⁰ KSTCC is the representative office of TAT.

interested in travelling to attractive and clean destinations (Angelevska-Najdeska and Rakicevik, 2012). Thus, it is the responsibility of both public and private sectors to ensure the high quality of local resources (e.g. natural environment, and local culture) as they are valuable tourism resources.

In this way, to some degree TAT can influence the direction for the private sector in relation to how they will develop their products. This included the designs of the hotel and resorts, and the quality of their products and services which need to be of a high standard as it attracts high-end markets. It is evidenced that currently Samui Island has earned the fame and reputation of one of the most luxurious, romantic destinations in the world. In addition, TAT always works together with, and communicates with, private-sector actors such as TAKS and THA about the direction of tourism marketing and strategies. Thus, TAT has some degree of influence on the direction of tourism development since the private-sector will try to develop the products and services according to how Samui is promoted. This is because there are TAT branches in other countries, and they have the potential to seek new markets and bring more tourists to Koh Samui. They have the expertise in tourism marketing, and know tourists' profiles and markets very well. The chief of KSTCC is of the view that this strategy can lead to the preservation of the local environment, since the beauty and richness of the natural environment is a crucial component of tourism of Koh Samui. As she stated;

“We have to build the image and position Koh Samui at where we want to be achieved and what we want Samui to be. ...We want Samui to be a dream destination, a quality tourism,

and the sustainable tourism so we try to lead the private sector into that direction through the marketing strategies.” (The chief of KSTCC. The interview was conducted in September, 2013)

This indicates that TAT puts a great effort into raising awareness about environmental preservation among tourism stakeholders through coordinating with other public and private-sector organisations, and local communities in order to create the ‘Re Earth Eco Music Festival’ increase awareness and promote a better understanding among tourists and businesses about environmental conservation⁵¹. This festival can promote Samui tourism and also raise awareness about environmental conservation at the same time (Jatuporn, 2012).

4.7.1 The role of business networks towards product innovation

SSA plays a crucial role in promoting Samui Spa through its uniqueness of ‘Thai traditional massage knowledge’⁵² (*Poom punya tong tin*) which focuses on health (healing) and wellness. The president of the Thai Spa Federation (TSF) believes that Samui has a lot of potential to be developed as a spa destination, attracting tourists who are interested in health and wellness due to the rich natural environment of Samui, which is best for relaxation and body healing. Moreover, there are many spa services with high quality standards which are guaranteed by both national and international awards.

“...more than 50% of the tourists come to Samui for spa in particular. We hope that Samui can be a motel for ‘health tourism’ destination through the spa services.” (President of TSF. The interview was conducted in September, 2013)

⁵¹ The main activities are the music performances of famous musicians and DJs from Sweden, and participating in green projects such as building weirs, and planting *tSaccharm spontaneum* to prevent land slides in the mountain area (Jatuporn, 2012).

⁵² Massage for healing and cure, incorporating Thai herbs.

The association's members have received the highest number of awards in Thailand, and also many world-class awards. For example, the Anantara Bo Phut Resort and Spa, and the Four Seasons Resort were ranked as 4th and 7th in the top 25 spas in the world, as well as being rated best hotel spa in Asia and the Indian subcontinent by Condé Nast Traveller 2010. The Six Senses Samui was awarded the winner-spas in overseas hotels by Condé Nast Traveller-UK Readers' Travel Awards 2011, Anantara Bo Phud Koh Samui Resort & Spa received the World Luxury Spa Awards in 2013, and Kamalaya Koh Samui received the World Spa Awards 2014; destination spa of the year-Asia & Australasia. In addition, the SSA collaborates with TAT in spa promotion by which the members who receive the national awards of quality standard, such as Thailand Tourism Award⁵³, will be invited to participate in international tourism trade fairs such as the ITB Berlin⁵⁴, and roadshows in the United Kingdom, Japan and Singapore.

Thus, the SSA plays a crucial role in creating a 'niche tourism product' for a 'niche tourism market' because it develops a unique spa product. This involves a technique that incorporates traditional massage knowledge (*poom punya tong tin*) to attract tourists who are interested in health and wellness. It also fosters the development of Samui spa products and services to meet a world-class standard, and to develop a reputation as the 'best spa destination' in the world.

⁵³ The Thailand Tourism Award was first established in 1996, by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), and has since been organised every two years. This award aims to promote tourism in Thailand with a world-class quality of tourism products and services, guaranteed by TAT.

⁵⁴ ITB Berlin is the world's largest tourism trade fair.

4.7.2 Public–private networking towards promotion and marketing

The findings showed existing, effective networks and collaboration between key public and private sectors based upon resource dependencies, common interests, mutual benefits and exchanges, and reciprocity in order to mobilise tourism activities, tourism marketing and promotions, and mobilise green activities. Thus it was evidenced that tourism stakeholders are more likely to cooperate and collaborate than compete when shared interests are at stake. The collaborative networks and exchanges facilitate knowledge transfer through their information and resources sharing and exchanging, which itself enhances improvements in businesses' performances and the quality of tourism product and services. It also enhances the innovations of tourism products and services (such as unique spa products and services, specialised in up-market and luxury hotels and resorts in terms of design and services), as well as the innovation process and strategies of STD.

The data revealed instances of public-private sector networking that is undoubtedly resulting in shared decision making and consensus on the development of tourism strategies and plans. For example, the chief of KSTCC indicated that TAT will have meetings and focus groups with the local public and private-sector actors before establishing five-year and one-year tourism plans.

“Soon Samui (meaning the Koh Samui Tourism Coordination Centre) will be responsible for tourism planning of Koh Samui, Koh Pa Ngan, and Koh Toa. TAT will have meetings with the local public and private sectors; the Suratthani Province Office of Tourism and Sports (SPOTS), the Tourism Association Koh Samui (TAKS), and the Thai Hotel Association (THA) in

order to establish the tourism plan.” (Chief of KSTCC. The interview was conducted in September, 2013)

One of the defining features of tourism clusters in Samui relates to tourism events and activities that are staged in global markets and used as a platform in promoting Samui.

“We create the events all year round as an “Event Calendar”, TAKS is the main group that creates the events by sometimes cooperating with TAT, and sometimes cooperating with THA to promote for the Island.” (General Manager of Resort and Spa. Male, in his 40s.)

For example, TAKS collaborates with other public and private-sector organisations such as Regatta Asia, SPOTS, TAT, Koh Samui Municipality, the Tourism Association of Thailand, the International Sailing Federation, and the Yacht Racing Association of Thailand in order to organise ‘the Koh Samui Regatta⁵⁵’, the annual international sailing event (Samui Regatta, 2015). This international event aims to promote Samui Island through water-sports such as sailing, which are promoted as a new tourism activity attracting ‘niche tourist market’ to Koh Samui. This international event has grown every year, with approximately 500 competitors participating annually from over 22 different countries, and generates over 18 million bahts annually to the local economy (Samui Regatta, 2015). A CNN reporter who participated in the event in 2010 reported that; *“Partying aside, the sailing action at the Samui Regata was exciting in itself. Just don’t ask us who won. We don’t remember. ...of course there’s Samui itself, with its stunning scenery, spas and relentless nightlife. Somewhere, somehow, we found time for sailing.”*

⁵⁵ It was first started in 2002 (Samui Regatta, 2015).

The event's success can be attributed to effective coordination amongst private-sector stakeholders, whose creative initiative underlines tourism cluster development on the island (see Chapter 5).

Moreover, collaborative networks also enable local businesses to reach global markets (TAKS, THA-SCEC and SSA help to promote unique tourism products, and Samui Island). These collaborative networks and its exchanges can benefit the members of tourism clusters, as well as the tourism clusters as a whole. Through, for example, collective positive images and reputation of Samui Island (e.g. 'Green Island', 'dream destination 'or 'Paradise Island' for honeymooners, and the 'quality tourism'). This is supported by Taplin's empirical study (2011) which investigated the interactions among specialised businesses in the California wine cluster of Napa Valley. Taplin (2011) argued that cooperative networks and exchange was crucial for the development of a collective identity, especially the identity that was focus on quality rather than cost based competitive strategies, which can led to economic efficiency.

4.7.3 Green Networks

Findings showed the slow, but definite, emergence of green networks, which indicate positive progress towards the development of sustainable tourism. There are many green activities and campaigns established through the collaborations amongst public, private, and non-profit sectors.

The GIFT and Koh Samui municipality collaborated with local communities and the green hotel networks to implement a 'low carbon school' project. As an interviewee, who was a former manager in an environmental department. The resort reported:

“I work closely with the municipality (environmental department) in order to build the green hotel networks, seeking more alliances. Now, we have 40 hotels⁵⁶ participating in our green hotel networks. We have the project called “Low carbon school” that work with the local communities by which our green hotel members will take part in coaching and training students in schools about how to save energy and be more environmental friendly.” (Former manager of up-market resort. Female, in her 40s.)

A resort and spa General Manager, also reported that the resort also participates in the green hotel networks, and is a model hotel for other hotels to come and learn how to manage waste and save energy. For example, the structure of the resort buildings are built for energy saving purposes so “...we do not have to use air conditioning at all in many areas such as in the lobby and restaurant area, we use energy saving light bulbs, we separate the rubbish, and reduce the waste. The resort is being a trainer for local schools in Samui by which we train students and teachers on how to separate the rubbish and recycling”.

“We help them to set up the “Rubbish Bank” by which students can bring the rubbish that already separated such as cans and plastic bottles, to the bank then they can collect the points and exchange for gifts or other things (we use the money from selling the rubbish to buy those gifts). We provide manpower for helping the schools to set up and build things such as the engineer to build up the place for separating the rubbish. We provide experts to provide knowledge to students and teachers for example, the knowledge of how to make the enzyme lonic

⁵⁶ This hotel networks are across the island. However, there are 469 hotels and resorts on the island (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2013).

plasma from wet rubbish. The municipality also provides the budget of 50,000 bahts for the first time to set up the project (building and equipment).”(Hotel General Manager. Male in his 40s.)

KSTCC/TAT is also a key player that supports the ‘green Island project’ by which they promote the ‘seven greens concept’ to encourage tourism stakeholders to participate in green practices. For example, an interviewee reported:

“TAT tries to encourage tourism businesses to have green practices, for example, we know who has participates in the ‘zero waste’ program such as the Fair House Hotel, Tog Sai Bay, Six Senses, Nora Buri, Centara, Amari, and Kamalaya then we promote them.

...We work with the bicycle communities/clubs; we do the environmental campaigns together such as having “a car free week” then after that there are networks of social networks like Facebook about the bicycle communities, and the networks are expanding to other communities like Bang Rak community (located in sub district Bo Phud), Na Muang community, Chaweng community (located in sub district Bo Phud) and Mae Num community (located in sub district Mae Num). (Chief of KSTCC. The interview was conducted in September, 2013)

This shows the important role of KSTCC/TAT relating to the tourism development of Koh Samui, by which it coordinate with different tourism stakeholders in order to develop tourism products, mobilise tourism activities, and raise awareness about sustainable practices among tourism stakeholders.

Moreover, there is collaboration among various public and private actors that participate in ‘green networks’, through which they create ‘green activities, green products and services’ in order to support sustainable practices, and the ‘green island’ project. For example, an interviewee who is local media owner reported that:

“I am a committee member of the Green Island Foundation. As I am a media representative, I help the foundation in terms of communication and promotion of the green projects and activities to raise awareness, such as promote Samui as ‘bicycle city’, through the media. In fact, it is the project of TAT that wants to create the ‘bicycle path’ supporting the green island project. But they have only three staff members, seriously, what can they do about it? So my green partners, who are in private sectors and I help them in promoting the project. I even help them to think and create the green activities such as ‘Samui car free day’. I give support by providing my own staffs as volunteers to work for the activities.” (Samui Chanel owner. Female in her, 30s.)

She reported that the reason why she helps and supports both public and private sector local organisations is because she sees the good intention, and desire to achieve collective sustainable tourism goals, in these tourism actors. It is also because she is very interested and concerned about the quality of the local environment.

This shows how different actors help and support one another between different sectors by, for example, sharing the resources to create ‘green activities’ and in order to raise awareness among tourism stakeholders.

The municipality has regular green activities (e.g. it grows coconut trees, and increases the number of sea creatures such as fish, prawns, spiny shells, sea-turtles) that allow different groups of tourism stakeholder to participate together. For example, an interviewee reported:

“We have connection with the HR club and when we want people to participate in green activities we can contact with the HR club to send hotel staff to participate in the activities. We also work with THA, the municipality, and local communities in doing green activities such as grow mangroves and collect rubbish on the beaches. (Human resource manager. Female, in her 40s.)

The Green hotel networks that are characterised by collaboration amongst different sectors (i.e. public and private organisations, and the local communities). They pool together resources such as manpower, budget, knowledge and skills and equipment in order to share and transfer not only knowledge and skills but resources amongst local communities. This enhances the awareness about sustainable practices among different actors, and fosters relationships between the private sector and its local communities.

There are many supporting green networks, and activities implemented by different sectors aiming to raise awareness among tourism stakeholders. Three examples are: The ‘Green finger’ network which promotes non-chemical products use in the hotel, and reduces the amount of wastes, the ‘Green spa’ service initiated by the Spa Association Koh Samui which promotes the ‘green spa’ concept among the members by being environmental friendly, saving energy and

using local and organic products. The final example is the ‘Green hotel networks’ which aims to reduce waste, save energy, and preserve the local environment. As one of the member stated:

“Our hotel also participates in the green activities by which we take care of the community that we are in, for example, we clean the beach and collect the rubbish in the sea.”

(Hotel manager. Female, in her 30s.)

TAT also encourages green practices among taxi drivers as a result of which the ‘taxi green service’ services is promoted by TAT and used by the hotel network (e.g. THA). A taxi driver reported that this network improves the standard quality of taxi services, and fosters cohesiveness among taxi drivers. For example, they have the same uniform and meet regularly for information updating and training purposes. Taxis who join the network are accredited by TAT and are awarded a ‘taxi green service’ sign in front of their cars, showing that they are well trained, charge the standard rate, and have a standard of service quality which guarantees tourists’ safety (see Figure 4.5 for Samui Taxi Green Service). He also expressed pride at being a member of ‘taxi green service’ network because it provides the right brand for his business as credible and reliable for tourists. He reported that:

“I think, a taxi with a sign (Taxi green service) is not only ‘na cheu thu’ (Thai word means credible/reliable) for tourists, but given rise in tourists’ positive perception of Samui and Thai people in general implying that our guests believe that They do not have to worry about their property when in Samui ...even when they forget wallets or bags in taxies, they will get them back! ... They are not wrong as it is very easy and convenient because we can check among our members quickly for any property missing and return it to the rightful owner. We all have

names, and numbers and that enables us to reach each other very easily. (Taxi driver. Male, in his 60s.)

This collaboration can lead to quality improvements in taxi services, ensure tourists' satisfactions, create a positive image for the destination (e.g. safety, and high standard of taxi services), and enhance sustainable practices among taxi drivers.

Figure 4.5: Taxi Green Service



Source: Facebook of Samui Taxi Green Service, 2012

Thus, key public and private sectors, as well as their collaborative networks, play crucial roles in terms of mobilising tourism activities and promotions, creating unique tourism products and services and improving the quality of tourism product and service (e.g. through knowledge transfer and training programmes), as well as promoting and implementing sustainable practices in the effort to achieve the goal of sustainable tourism.

The local government body (e.g. the Samui municipality, and district government) collaborate regularly with local tourism associations (e.g. TAKS, HR club, and Samui Association), local businesses and local communities to participate in green activities (see Figure 4.6-4.8) in order to raise awareness among tourism stakeholders to preserve the natural environment and eco-system. This includes, for example, planting coconut trees (the symbol of the island), and putting young fish in the sea.

Figure 4.6: Increase the number of fish in the sea



Source: author

Koh Samui municipality regularly collaborates with other public and private organisations, and local communities to put young fish (e.g. shrimps, sea turtles, sea slugs, and giant clams) in the sea aiming to increase their number so that they can later be sustainably farmed and sold on the market.

Figure 4.7: Planting coconut trees



Source: author

The construction of accommodation businesses and other tourism businesses has reduced the number of coconut trees, which are symbolic of Samui's identity. In a bid to preserve the environmental balance on the island, public and private sector stakeholders are initiating environmental projects that involve regular planting of coconut trees.

An innovative example of green activity aimed at restoring the ecosystem was promoted by local people and is evidence of the use of unrelated objects for environmental preservation (see Figure 4.8). In 2013, the remains of an airplane were used as an artificial reef aimed to increase the number of fish. It was promoted to/by? the locals, and allowed them to participate in fun-filled activities such as taking photos, buying t-shirt as souvenirs and inviting local artists, students and youths to paint the remains of this airplane (artificial reef) (see Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8: Artificial reef (remain of air-plane)



It needs to be noted that clear, long-term strategies and plans for achieving sustainable tourism must be developed (for example, goals, procedures, monitoring and evaluation systems), in order to give a clear direction for tourism stakeholders, and for long-term tourism.

4.8 Summary

Overall, the data revealed internal networking amongst key public and private-sector actors which is relatively high (e.g. TAKS, THA-SCEC, Samui municipality, and TAT) but limited within particular groups of people from the business sector., such as upmarket hotel-sector businesses which possess sufficient capacities and resources and close personal relationships between them. These particular business groups and networks (e.g. TAKS, and THA-SCEC) have informal and close relationships with one another based on common interests, mutual

benefits and exchange, reciprocity, trust, and friendships. These businesses also have informal relationships with other key public-sector actors based on mutual benefits, and interdependency. The informal relationships and collaborative networks between key public and private sectors play crucial roles in overcoming limited capacity and resources among tourism stakeholders. In addition, their social networks permit innovation and effective collaboration in relation to tourism activities and development, marketing and promotion, as well as sustainable objectives.

This shows a positive sign in relation to sustainable tourism development through the efforts and collaboration of well-connected public and private-sector actors, who share the same values and interests regarding economic well-being and environmental conservation.

However, the lack of interface between big and small stakeholders constitutes a disadvantage for the development of 'sustainable tourism' networks that are inclusive and reflect a diversity of views. The voluntary nature of green networks focusing on environmental issues also makes them less attractive for businesses since, ironically, the environment does not figure as their first priority. This is most evident in tourism clusters in the study region (discussed in Chapter 5) where the focus is on money-making and sharing and supporting similar businesses rather than undertaking a co-ordinated approach to tackle environmental issues.

In the next chapter (Chapter 5), the focus of the discussion will be on tourism cluster formations and their patterns and processes in the two case study areas; (1) north-eastern region , and south-western region, sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam. These clusters are formed by the concentrations of dissimilar and complementary firms which each add value to the activities of

other firms as a comprehensive tourism experience (Bernini, 2009). These are in specific locations providing the unique characteristics of physical geographic and natural attributes that also influence tourism themes and activities within those locations.

CHAPTER 5: TOURISM CLUSTER FORMATION IN SAMUI: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF PATTERNS AND PROCESSES

5.1 Introduction

This chapter looks into the key processes underlying tourism clusters' formation in Samui that are influenced by stakeholders' profile and their networking patterns (as discussed in Chapter 4). It illustrates that the unique characteristics of physical geography on Samui Island and the richness of historical, natural and cultural resources are making Samui the unique global tourist destination. It also shows that the collaborative networks among key tourism stakeholders have significantly influenced tourism cluster formation.

The chapter also identifies the key challenges underpinning tourism clusters in Samui, namely, (1) the lack of capacities and resources available to '*chao bann*' (the uneducated), (2) limited collaboration amongst local communities, and (3) the lack of law enforcement and control of unsustainable tourism activities and development by the local government. However, despite these difficulties, the findings demonstrate opportunities for future growth and development towards sustainable tourism due to a growing understanding of sustainable tourism and its distinctiveness. This offers a potential increase in collaborative networks and exchange between public and private sectors, and enhanced awareness / adoption of sustainable practices.

5.2 The formation of tourism clusters

Tourism clusters on Samui Island (i.e. agglomeration of firms providing a range of specialist products and activities, see Grimstad and Burgess, 2014; McRae-Williams, 2004; Nordin, 2003) are characterised by their dependence on physical geography and natural resources, and the relational dynamics generated between firms that lead to their economic success (Michael, 2003). There are interdependent relationships amongst co-located firms that provide complementary products and activities that each adds value to the overall tourism experience (Michael, 2003). Samui acquires its global competitiveness from its unique characteristics which are not just the beautiful beaches, but because ‘*Koh Samui's beaches, bays, tourist strips and villages each have their own distinct personalities.*’ (Hsiao and Kay, 2012). In fact, it is described as a ‘*version of paradise*’ (the CNN Insider Guide, 2012).

Indeed, Samui does provide a range of complementary products and activities including luxury hotel chains, fine dining, spa resorts, golf facilities and water sports related activities, shopping and entertainment arcades plus nature-based tours (e.g. wild life, safari, butterfly garden, elephant trekking) and trips designed for visitors to experience local culture such as Thai cooking classes, ‘*rum Thai*’ (Thai traditional dancing), ‘*Muay Thai*’ (Thai boxing), ‘*ling kep ma praw*’ (to see monkeys collect coconuts), how to make coconut oil, local fruit farming and temple visits. Overall, the predominance of the private sector in Samui is undeniable. For instance, the air accessibility to the location is provided by a privately owned international airport. Further, to capitalise upon Samui’s unique characteristics, the local tourism industry is consciously targeting high-end markets. Small resorts (offering about 30-40 rooms) that are traditionally designed and

provide quality accommodation, facilities and services, have proliferated, and mainly cater for higher paying segments.

In fact, *'post-tourists'*, those Westerners who are open to local culture and interested in learning local practices (e.g. experienced, and sophisticated tourists) are the main segments visiting Samui (Cohen, 2003). Since post-tourists seek to obtain a personal experience of local culture, and prefer to participate in local activities and practices rather than just observe them (Cohen, 2003), Samui's tourism industry is slowly adapting itself to their needs. There are many hotels and tour operators that offer activities for tourists to learn about local culture such as Thai cooking classes, participate in activities of rice production, and practicing *'Muay Thai'* (Thai boxing).

However, there is also *'seasoned contemporary Western mass tourists'*, the less experienced tourists such as young backpackers who are enthusiastic about exploring the routes and sites of 'alternative' tourism (Cohen, 2002 cited in Cohen, 2003). These tourists like to rent motorcycles and ride around the island visiting beyond the famous tourist sites in the rural areas and visiting local villages and communities to see local life.

Moreover, there are also increasing numbers of less experienced tourists from non-Western countries such as China, Korea, and Russia who are sold package holidays by tour guides and operators. These tourists maintain no direct contact with locals, as all their activities are pre-planned by the guides appointed by travel and tour companies and designed in a manner that serves the guides' and the companies interests (Cohen, 2003). This can limit the opportunities for

the tourists and the locals to meet and the opportunities for tourists to explore and experience local culture. For example, tour guides may take them to the places where they can benefit (e.g. they can earn some money from the jewellery and gem shops by taking tourists to buy those products) and most foreign tour guides will rather take the tourists to consume only tourism products and services operated by their own nationalities (e.g. Koreans, Chinese, Russians).

In fact, due to Samui's growing popularity as a 'romantic destination'⁵⁷ and an increasing trend for couples to come to Samui for their wedding or and honeymoon, the emphasis is on providing quality experiences and service. In addition to local wedding organisers, there are also many upmarket and luxury hotels/resorts offering wedding packages for tourists who want to have romantic wedding ceremonies by the beach. In particular, tourists can also have their wedding ceremony planned in traditional Thai style. The chief of KSCC (TAT) reported that the wedding market has showed an unprecedented growth on Samui since 2012, influenced by specialist enterprises in wedding business such as wedding organisers⁵⁸ and local upmarket hotels and resorts which promote wedding activities and packages associated with tourism.

TAT is actively collaborating with the local private sector to promote the destination for honeymoon couples and for the wedding market.

⁵⁷ There is no data collected of honeymooners or wedding ceremonies. However, TAT will look into the numbers and see the trends from time to time based on information from the wedding organisers, tour agencies, and receive information from the hotels and resorts that provide wedding ceremonies for tourists.

⁵⁸ Currently, there are 8 local wedding organisers (Chief of KSCC).

“Those wedding organisers, and hotels and resorts often help TAT to promote and create brand image for Samui as ‘Romantic Island’ at many wedding trade shows such as, in Spain, Australia, and England.” (Chief of KSCC. The interview was conducted in September, 2013)

The General Manager of an upmarket resort in sub-district Bo Phud reported that in 2014 (the most recent year for data) approximately 12 foreign couples a month came to the resort, and had wedding ceremonies. He also reported that tourists love private beaches and personalised service. Thus, whilst international chain hotels/resorts are well equipped to host wedding ceremonies (organising about 30-50 a year), the maximum number (approximately 120 couples per year) are organised by small-sized, local wedding organisers.

This finding corresponds with Kim and Agrusa’s study (2005) which examined and ranked the competitiveness of seven overseas honeymoon destinations among potential Korean tourists. This work highlighted that tourists prefer local a flavour and a personalised feel in their ceremonies. Thailand was perceived as a destination that was rich in historical and cultural resources, was well-priced and offered ideal beaches like Phuket and Pattaya that provided a ‘once-in-a-lifetime experience’ (Kim and Agrusa, 2005).

As Samui was rated as one of the top ten ‘romantic destination’ in the world in 2015 by a popular travel website VeryFirstTo.com, it is well known among the wealthy and those tourists who are looking for: *“...friendly island atmosphere, unique culture and fine dining...”* (TAT news, 2015). Samui is also a well-known as one of the best spa destination in the world since it offers a unique spa treatment that is world-class. For example, the Anantara Bo Phud Koh

Samui Resort & Spa secured World luxury Spa Award in 2013, and Kamalaya Koh Samui received World Spa Awards in 2014; destination spa of the year-Asia & Australasia. These awards and accolades not only reflect the businesses' quality services, but aggressive marketing and collaborative interaction; being part of local associations like SSA, they share best practice on a regular basis. Thus, Samui is a good example of how a competitive cluster is created by dynamic interrelationships amongst tourism-related businesses which provide complementary products and activities supporting the high-end luxury market that has successfully established a competitive identity globally. It also attracts many experts, both Thais and foreign, in the world-class service industry to come and work in Samui. These include hotel managers and directors, and international chefs.

Moreover, local businesses can enjoy the benefits in shape increasing number of tourists, and achieving a high rate of revenue consistently. For example, the vice president of TAKS, who is also the owner of an upmarket luxury hotel and resorts, reported that:

“Right now, Samui has the highest ADR (Average Daily Rate, and the highest RevPar (Revenue Per Available) in Thailand!”. (Vice president of TAKS. The interview was conducted in September, 2013.)

Moreover, most interviewees acknowledged that the natural environment (such as beaches), local culture, and the complementary products and activities are Samui Island's competitive advantages. For example, a local interviewee proudly reported that:

“We have everything here in Samui; beaches, waterfalls, mountains, unique local culture, and choices of transportations including by ferry, and by air plane.” (Human resource manager of an upmarket resort. Male, in his 50s.)

Another interviewee addressed the issues that a wide range of accommodation types provided for different tourist segments.

“We have choices of accommodations for different tourist segments, which we can accommodated them all! We offer from cheap hotels to the most expensive ones – We have small hotels, budget hotels, and luxury hotels provided.” (Middle market resort manager. Male, in his 50s)

Similarly, another interviewee, who is a General Manager of mid-market of resort in Chaweng, Bo Phud, also reported about the attractiveness of beaches which has global reputation:

“As I work in the hotel, I often asked ‘farang’ (refer to westerners) about the reasons of traveling to Samui, and what do they like most about Samui. Mostly, they replied that they want to visit the beautiful beaches, which Samui – we have ‘Had⁵⁹ Chaweng’ (means Chaweng beach) that is the most well-known by tourists. ‘Had Chaweng’ is one of the top beaches in the world! ‘farang’ said it is a white sand beach, and clean.” (Assistant General Manager of a mid-market resort. Male, in his 40s.)

⁵⁹ ‘Had’ is a Thai word means beach.

This is supported by another interviewee who also addresses the positive reputation of Samui, which attracts tourist to come.

“I think, the reason for tourist traveling to Samui may be because of the ‘brand’! Samui has already its reputation and brand, which it makes tourists want to come, and to know what exactly the island is like. Some tourists may have heard about the island from their friends or somewhere so they just want to come and experience it in a-once-in a life time.” (Budget hotel owner. Male, in his 30s.)

This shows that the positive reputation and brand of Samui acts as an important ‘pull factor’, which motivates tourists to come.

Besides the rich natural environment, and the beauty of the island’s scenery, it is the quality of complementary tourism products and activities provided by diverse, small tourism enterprises, that tourist are looking for. This is supported by Bernini’s study (2009) which examined the successful factors for cluster development emphasising Convention Local System (CLS) development in Italy. The findings show that successful CLSs result from the concentration of specialised convention enterprises, and local resources, including quality of complementary products, services and activities necessary for convention business such as convention products and services, transport, telecommunication, infrastructure, and a skilled and specialised labour force. The findings also highlighted the importance of the presence of complementary firms who provide post-conference activities (i.e. nightlife, food and restaurants facilities, entertainment,

and shopping) which are fundamental to the well-being of the conference attendees. These post-conference activities can add significant value to the convention destination.

5.3 The influences of the outsider investors on tourism clusters in Samui.

During late eighties and early nineties, both domestic and international investors started to buy land from local people. The majority of local people enthusiastically sold or rented out their lands to the non-local investors (*nai tun*) and *farang* (Thai word for Westerners), especially in the beachfront areas, because it is the poorest lands for coconut production, and they could earn a large amount of money. The result was that the price of land suddenly increased (Soontatraton, 2010). When tourism development boomed, the beachfront lands had already been in the possession of the outsiders or non-local investors (Soontatraton, 2010). Since then, the tourism clusters have been rapidly developed and dominated by the private-sector actors, who are both Thais and ‘*Farangs*’ outsiders owning the accommodation businesses, restaurants, pubs and bars (Green, 2005). The large-scale investment by outsiders and substantial growth of tourism in the nineties resulted in the rapidly change of the island into an example of ‘a tourism modernisation’ (Chatkaewnapanon, 2011, p.111). Samui now attracts outsider investments and all kinds of specialised businesses, as well as people/staff including world luxury hotel chains (e.g. Six Senses, Four Seasons, W Retreat, Conrad, Intercontinental, and Banyan Tree), world-class spa treatment and wellness centres, and international chefs and restaurants.

The rapid investment and growth of tourism businesses by outsider investors, including the emergence of world luxury hotel chains, required a further development and upgrade in the quality of local infrastructures, facilities, and services in order to keep up with the upmarket and luxury markets. It brought new technologies and innovations onto the island, for example, the new system of hotel reservations (i.e. Computerised Reservation System), new way of running business, and new way of marketing (e.g. global marketing). Importantly, it influenced the local accommodation businesses to improve the quality of their accommodations' facilities and services. It also influenced the tourist markets to develop from the backpacker tourist market into upmarket and high-class businesses. For example, a resort owner in sub-district Bo Phud, who has been operating his accommodation business for 18 years, reported that after the establishment of Bangkok airways (international airport), the tourists' profiles started to change from hippies and 'Farang kee nok' (low class, or low budget spending) to 'Farang high-class' (high-class tourists or high spending power). He said that the airline brings more high-class tourists to the island, so he needed to develop and upgrade his bungalow business to provide upmarket bungalows, with better facilities and services which it enable him now to charge a much higher rate .

"In the past, there were only low-class 'Farangs', Germans, and Hippies. ...the rental rate was cheap, 250-500 bahts (approximately 5-10 pounds with the present currency), no air-conditioning ...they were just wooden bungalows. After that there was changes of 'Farang', there were more high-class 'Farangs'... Bangkok airways brought more high-class 'Farangs' come to the island. So, we upgraded our bungalows to be upmarket bungalows with a pool in order to serve the upmarket market. We provide different types of bungalows with many rates

from 2000 bahts-25,000 bahts (approximately 40 – 500 pounds with the present currency).

(Owner of upmarket resort. Male, in his 60s.)

Another interviewee perceived some positive impact from the privately owned international airport, which he believed partly helps to limit numbers and screen tourists because it charges a high rate of air fare (approximate 100 pounds per one way from Bangkok to Samui) so the tourists who fly here, are the upper class.

“Bangkok Airway has a very high rate of air fare! But deep down I kind of like it because it helps to screen the tourists for us. ...can you imagine, if we have a lot of low- cost airlines to Samui, what is going to happen! ...there is not enough water, and electricity!” (Vice president of TAKS. The interview was conducted in August, 2013)

Thus, investors who are outsiders play crucial roles in creating and attracting the complementary products and services that add value to the tourism experience (Michael, 2003). They also foster and attract specialised businesses, and the skilled labour force onto the Island, which leads to the island's competitiveness and the local economic growth. Moreover, the private sector has significant influence on the tourists' and the markets' profiles, as well as the development of tourism clusters.

However, many interviewees reported the negative influences of the outsiders (both Thais and foreigners) who are living and doing businesses in Samui. They are involved with illegal businesses, and unsustainable practices (e.g. are mostly non-registered and operate as mafias).

This is supported by Namakorn's study (2012) which investigated the economic and social impact of transnational crime in Pattaya city, Thailand. The findings show different types of misconduct by transnational criminals, such as Russians who own travel and entertainment businesses and are also involved with prostitution. Scandinavian owned entertainment and import/export businesses, are also involved with drug smuggling. These transnational crimes negatively impact on the local economy and socio-culture, such as increasing illegal businesses, increasing the involvement of young people in Pattaya City in drug dealing and stealing, and young Thai women in prostitution – considering it normal, lucrative fun, and an effective way to find a foreign husband (Namakorn, 2012).

These trends are not only creating negative impacts on local communities and the tourism industry as a whole, but have led to a growth in dark tourism clusters (e.g. sex tourism, drugs circuits), which can create serious negative images and bad impressions of Samui, especially amongst those tourists who never come to the destination. This is because most tourists are concerned with safety and the values, quality, products, and the positive reputation of the destination in order to make decisions on destinations for their holidays (Nuttavuthisit, 2007). Thus, a negative image can significantly affect tourists' holiday choices since destination image is a crucial factor in holiday purchase (Chen and Hsu, 2000). This is supported by the study of Nuttavuthisit (2007) which examines the problem of the negative image of Thailand associated with sex tourism among international customers (USA and the other 30 countries) both current and future tourists. Findings show that Thailand's negative association with sex tourism has earned it a reputation as '... a haven for sexual adventure...' (p.25). It also highlights negative image of corrupt law enforcement that allows commercial sex services to develop in the country,

pushing away some tourist segments, and attracting other segments of a less or undesirable nature that pose a serious threat to community well-being, and increase in crime (Prideaux et al., 2004).

Needless to say, locals are quite concerned with this development, as is evident here:

“...there are Korean community, more than hundred ‘lung ka reun’ (Thai word means family) ...can come and do businesses! ...operate tour programme by themselves. ...also the Russians...now they come, buy houses, buy condominiums, buy hotels then attract Russian tourists, operate their own tour programmes. ...local businesses get nothing! ...their hotels have ‘party ya’ (Thai words mean drugs party), which we are not happy about it at all! ...the bar named ‘galaxy’ in Chaweng is the bar that can ‘off’ (Thai slang means take out) Russian women (prostitutes). ...everybody knows about it! But why the government (police, and public authorities) does not know about it I fail to understand!” (Owner of upmarket resort. Female, in her 60s.)

Similarly, another respondent who is a chief of the TAC unhappily reported that she has load of work assisting tourists concerning drugs issues due to an increasing popularity of ‘beach parties’, which invariably involve drugs. She reported that there are many tourists that came back from beach parties like ‘full moon party’ and could not remember anything about the party and some had lost all of their belonging (e.g.. wallets, and passports). She reported.

‘This is scary!’ because tourists do not know what exactly - ‘the thing’ as they call it – was put into their drinks! “Right now Samui have ‘Cha Cha Moon’⁶⁰ competing with the ‘full moon party’, I do not know why they have to have this kind of party! Like I do not have enough work already! (It creates problems with the tourists). And who are the organisers...those ‘poo mee it ti pon’! (Thai words mean mafias).”

She pointed out that this is because of the corruption prevalent amongst public sector stakeholders, who she felt were only concerned about maximizing their profits and less worried about the serious negative impacts of their malpractices on local communities and the environment.

Thus, a large-scale of investment in tourism businesses by outsiders can foster the development of local infrastructures and facilities as well as stimulating the local economy. However, uncontrolled tourism businesses and development, as well as the lack of law enforcement by the government sector, can cause many negative impacts on local businesses and local communities, which makes it difficult to be able to achieve sustainable tourism development.

The next section provides an insight into the profile and clustering processes evident in cluster (1) sub district Bo Phud which can be described as ‘the beach cluster’.

⁶⁰ Cha Cha Moon Party is the half-moon party imitating the famous ‘full moon’ party, a beach party, at Koh Phangan (it is a part of Samui’ s Archipelago, in Suratthani province). Full moon party is once a month, but Cha Cha Moon is twice a month.

5.4 Cluster (1) ‘the beach cluster’ – Sub-district Bo Phud

5.4.1 Profile of the tourism cluster

Sub-district Bo Phud is located in the North-eastern region of Samui Island. This region of the island is the coastal area, and it is famous for its beautiful beaches. Thus, it is promoted as the coastal tourism cluster and is geographically dependent on natural resources. In fact, sub-district Bo Phud has the highest concentration of firms that differ in scale and range, and offer different products and services. These tourism related businesses are linked by commonalities and complementarities as they come together to provide value added tourism products and services to one another in order to create a holistic tourism experience (Michael, 2003; Wang and Fesenmaier, 2007). For example, sub-district Bo Phud provides a full range of tourism facilities and services including a variety of hotels and resorts, restaurants, tour operators, an international airport, and five international hospitals. Its key appeal lies in the interface it provides with local culture and traditions. Tourists are drawn to retail units that offer local products made, for example, from coconuts (e.g. coconut oil, skin products, spa products), ‘kala’ (coconut shell), and products made from sea shells (e.g. hangings and pendants for decorations) (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Local products made from coconuts and sea shells



Source: the author

‘Kala’ (coconut shell) and coconut wood-carving products are locally crafted in Samui. Since coconuts can be acquired at very low price (approximately 1 baht a coconut), local communities have transformed coconuts into varieties of products and sell them as tourist attractions for a small profits.

Equally, opportunities that provide an insight into local way of life like ‘*Muay Thai*’ – (Thai boxing matches), traditional Thai dance performances (e.g. Khon⁶¹, Manora⁶², and Nang Talung⁶³), cabaret shows, and spa treatment are popular. Tourists also take a detour and visit temples such as ‘Wat Pra Yai’ (big Buddha temple), and ‘Wat Plai Laem’ (Plai Laem temple).

⁶¹ Khon is “a formal masked dance-drama depicting scenes from the Ramakian and originally performed only for the royal court” (Sightseeing Bangkok, n/a).

⁶² Manora is a traditional Thai dance popularly among Southern locals and is a part of their cultural identity. The folk beliefs of Manora dance are a combination between Buddhism-Bhraminism and animism, while the traditional performance is considered as genuine cultural and entertainment. It also serves locals' social needs in terms of ancestor worship and by acting as spiritual refuge, helping solve physical and spiritual obstacles faced by individuals” (Pattaya Mail, 2011).

⁶³ Nang Talung is a form of shadow plays from the southern part of Thailand. Nang Talung puppets are made of translucent hide, painted in bright colours, and shown in full-face, as opposed to profile.

Yet, the main staple remains the medium-sized upmarket resorts, pubs, bars, and restaurants beaches, and the vibrant nightlife they offer.

Chaweng Beach is the most popular beach in sub-district Bo Phud, where there is a high concentration of tourism products/services, and activities supporting the vibrant night life, fun and entertaining atmosphere. It shows the synergies of different types of businesses, which each adds value to the activities of other firms (Bernini, 2009), drawing a higher number of tourists compared to other sub-districts such as Na Muang and Taling Ngam where there is a low density of tourism firms, and fewer tourism products/services and activities are provided. This is supported by Weifdenfeld et al.'s empirical study (2010) which examined the spatial and thematic clustering in relation to tourist movements between visitor attractions in Cornwall, England. The findings show that tourists were drawn to visit more attractions in the higher density cluster (Newquay), which provides more attractions, accommodation, and service facilities than in the Lizard (a lower density cluster).

Moreover, businesses are key players which underpin tourism cluster development through their informal relationships with other businesses, and key public-sector actors in order to, for example, promote common interests of different sectors (e.g. marketing and promotion), creating integrated tourism packages, promote innovation and knowledge transfer in common sectors, protect the environment, create particular quality assurance specifications and brand identity (Lagos and Curtis, 2008). However, local community members who are not in the (upmarket) hotel sector, and who are indirectly involved in tourism, have less involvement and participation in the tourism cluster development process; for example, in decision-making and planning. Many

of them are frustrated and dissatisfied with the way the tourism cluster has developed, and also negatively impacts on the tourism industry. They feel that they are more disadvantaged by the tourism industry than benefiting from it.

“...Samui is perceived as ‘toi ngeun toi tong’ (refer as Treasure Island) where they (refer to the investors) can make benefit out of it! ... they can make a lot of profit from this Island but they never though what they have left for local people here! ...they use up the island’s spaces and resources! Many of us (local communities) ‘mai mee gum lung’ (means have no ability) to participate in tourism but we have to sacrifice many things for tourism, for example, the limitations to access to beaches, and we share all the costs from tourism (e.g. pollutions, damage of local environment, crowded, crimes, and drugs). There are positive things about tourism but it also effects to ‘choa bann tum ma da’ (ordinary villagers) who are not capable of doing tourism businesses and do not earn any income from tourism. ...we earn the same amount of income but there is increasing in prices of everything.” (Farmer. Male in his 50s.)

These local communities want the government to be concerned about their livings too, not only about tourism.

“I want them to include us, ‘pra sha shon’ (local community) in tourism development process so we can share our opinions, and be a part of decision-making process. Not only talk with those who have money, or those five and six-star (refer to upmarket hotels) hotel owners. ...We are less happy now, and Samui local culture and lifestyle are disappearing because of there are many immigrants (both Thai and foreigners) living here effecting in the

changes in local lifestyle, as well as local environment is being destroyed.” (Farmers. Male in his 60s.)

For example, many local interviewees reported that in the past local Samui people were much closer to each other, as everybody knew each other and helped one another like a family.

“When I was young, I went to play around, and I just can go eat at every houses” one of interviewee recalled (local hotel owner, male, 30s). Another interviewee supported this view;

“We did not even have to lock our houses’ doors, and it was totally fine. We felt so much safe.” (Local farmer. Male in his 50s.).

It was lamented that, currently, people are more concerned about how to make a living, and are no longer so close. There is also an influx of strangers and immigrants who bring unsustainable practices with them to the local communities, such as drugs, crimes, unsanitary habits (e.g. careless disposal of waste) that eventually end up destroying the local environment. For example, one interviewee reported about the unsanitary habits of the Myanmar community who live next to his accommodation:

“There is a Myanmar community live next by my house, and operating restaurant business. They left a mountain of rubbish in front and in the back of their houses, which ‘nao mak’ (means it is very smelly, disgusting, unclean and unsanitary). It creates a lot of bad smell! Even though, I went to tell them to manage it properly and they promised me to manage it but up until now they still do nothing! I think, this can also negatively effects to Samui image as a

clean/green destination, and also effect to local communities' hygiene." (Media. Male, in his 30s.)

Some local interviewees reported that they feel like they are second-class people, they feel like aliens, and are separated from the tourism industry as it is increasingly becoming dominated by foreign investors and bigger stakeholders. However, most of participants want the industry and the government to develop and promote local culture as tourism products so that the local culture can be sustained for the next generations and local communities can be more involved with tourism activities and benefit from it.

"There is a lack of development and promotion of local culture as tourism products. There are local festivals, religious sites, heritages, and lifestyle of local communities that can be developed and promoted. Each local communities have different characters, for example, we have Muslim fishing village of 'Hua Thanon' (it is the name of this community), and we also have Chinese-influenced culture, which are presented through, for example, the styles of the architectures and people lifestyles. We only have been promoting and selling natural environment for thirty years as tourism product! But there are no new tourism product development involving local communities and culture." (Mid-market resort owner. Male, in his 50s.)

This account clearly shows the desires and expectations of local communities to participate in the tourism development process in order to be able to sustain their local culture, natural

environment, and resources for *'look lann'* (meaning 'next generation'), hoping that their *'look lann'* can benefit from tourism and earn a living on the Island.

The next section presents how the involvement of the local community enables the creation of attractive tourism attractions through collaborative networks.

5.4.2 Local communities' involvement in the tourism industry

The majority of , local people (originally from Samui) participate in the tourism industry through their ownership of, mostly small and medium-sized, tourism related businesses, such as accommodation, restaurants, retail shops, tour operators and agencies. This is because they have limited financial resources, and knowledge and skills in business management compared to outsider investors who have large budgets and are specialised in tourism and hospitality. Many locals who directly participate in the tourism industry enjoy the benefits of being a member of the tourism cluster where they can earn extra income and have a better quality of life.

There is an example of a successful collaborative network of the local fishing community that has been transforming itself into *'the fisherman community'* and refashioning its identity as *'the walking street market'* which it offers.

In fact, most members long ago quit being full-time fishermen because of high fuel costs and insufficient income. Currently, most of them are involved in tourism activities such as renting out houses or working for tour operators, restaurants, and hotels. Initially, local people who lived in the fishermen's' village area proposed the idea of the 'walking street' to the *'shoom shon Bo*

Phud' (Bo Phud community's committees⁶⁴ which then came together and had meetings in order to share ideas and opinions about transforming the village to the 'Fisherman Village' Bo Phud, a walking street, as a new attraction for tourists so that the place could be developed and the local community earn extra income. They took about a year to settle the idea and the management details. In fact, the Fisherman's Village consists of variety of small businesses such as shops, restaurants, hotels, and travel agencies. The village has unique characteristics including its location by the beach and the atmosphere of a local village with its traditional wooden houses. The 'walking street market' is the special event every Friday evening between 17.00 and 23.00 to attract more tourists to visit, and to offer tourists the experience of the local market which provides a variety of local foods and products at reasonable prices. Thus, every Friday, this Fisherman's Village will be very crowded by tourists and local residents. This walking street activity allows the local community to earn extra income from selling items such as foods and drinks, local products, handicrafts, beach clothes, T-shirts, and other products.

The chairman of Bo Phud community and Fisherman's Village, who lives next to the Fisherman's Village, reported that the purpose of having the 'walking street' at this fisherman village was because both he and the local community want this village to preserve the traditional structure of the local houses, and do not want any changes in this area such as having any high buildings or modern constructions. So, they decided to promote this village as another unique local attraction with tourism activities involving the locals.

⁶⁴ There are eleven committees in Bo Phud community.

In addition, the chairman reported that he regularly communicates and collaborates with the municipality for the authorisation to close the street to vehicles for the market, the financial support in order to create the events, and for infrastructure and facilities support.

“We are the representatives of the community coordinate with the municipality so that we can report the municipality about the community, propose about what the locals needs, and about the improvement of the infrastructure and facilities.” (Chairman of Bo Phud community)

Moreover, the chairman also attends meetings with TAKS and TAT in order to share information and ask for financial support to create events promoting the village. This shows the important of leadership in order to coordinate with other key tourism stakeholders. These leaders must have social networks and good relationships with other tourism stakeholder groups so that the community can access financial resources and help and support from both the government and tourism associations.

However, this ‘walking street market’ is also open for non-fisherman village people who want to participate in the ‘walking street’. To do this they have to ask for permission from the chairman of Bo Phud community because the number of stalls, the kinds of products sold and their price needs to be controlled. All participants who want to sell products in the market have to pay 100 bahts a night to the Fisherman’s Village community, as another source of community income. Currently, there are about 300 stalls selling products and foods in the Fisherman’s Village, walking street market (see Figures 5.2-5.5).

Figure 5.2: The entrance of the Fisherman Village



Source: author

In this picture cars were going through the village. This is because of the picture was taken before the time the *walking street* starts but when it starts the street will be closed for the walking street market only.

Figure 5.3: Thai traditional music performance by local students



Source: author

There were local students performing Thai traditional music instruments in order to show local culture. This can encourage local youths to have a positive attitude towards tourism and sustain local culture since they can be proud of themselves and their local culture because of the appreciations of tourists.

Figure 5.4: The walking street atmosphere, with different stalls of products



Source: author

This shows the local unique walking street atmosphere where tourists can enjoy the local village, which located on the beach.

Figure 5.5: Handmade products, and T-shirts made by the locals



Source: author

This tourism activity can encourage locals to produce local, hand- made products such as small gifts or souvenirs from Samui like T-shirts, doll- key rings, earrings, doll-pencils etc. These stalls with varieties of products can add valued experience to the location.

One example comes from an interviewee who is originally from this Fisherman Village and operates the travel agency. She also sells seafood barbecue in front of her house for the tourists every Friday. She really enjoys this local community network because she can earn extra money, and feel proud of herself by being a part of this charming village. As she reported:

“It really benefits to local people that we can earn extra incomes. We have the community group in this area, called “Fisherman’s Village”, which we come together and create the walking street as the new attraction for tourists. Local community here can sell the local products and foods. It can attract many tourists to come since it has unique characteristic;

traditional local houses of former fisherman local community. I really love this village.” (Owner of tour agency. Female, in her 20s.)

In Figure 5.6, the interviewee (on the right) was selling grilled seafood (e.g. oysters, squids, and lobsters) in Fisherman’s Village, walking street market with her mother.

Figure 5.6: An interviewee selling fresh seafood barbecues in front of her house



Source: an interviewee

This is one example of the successful local community collaboration, which brings benefits to the local members including an enhancement of the cohesiveness of the community by providing opportunities for local community to earn extra income, and improve supporting infrastructures and facilities. This local collaboration creates a well-known brand name for the Fisherman’s Village, Bo Phud, as a new, unique tourist attraction which attracts many tourists.

Similarly, Pavlovich's (2003) empirical study provided an example of the successful tourism destination development through 'self-governing' networks of a local community at Waitomo Cave, New Zealand. The findings show the crucial role of strong and weak ties for the network structure, where strong relationships among local community facilitate collaboration and tacit knowledge formation underpinning the competitive advantages of the destination (e.g. innovation of tourism products and activities involving local culture and practices). Weak-ties enable the locals to obtain external information and resources. Importantly, 'self-governing' networks empowered the local community to develop the Glowworm Cave, New Zealand, according to their wishes so that it could ensure the beneficial maximisation of the local community including economic, socio-cultural, and environmental perspectives because it can operate and manage its own tourism activities.

The following section considers negative impacts from tourism and unsustainable practices of tourism stakeholders.

5.4.3 Negative impacts from tourism perceived by the local communities in tourism cluster in sub-district Bo Phud

On the whole, the benefits from the tourism industry that is dependent upon the physical geography of sub-district Bo Phud (e.g. beaches and coastal areas) have been enormous, encouraging most businesses - especially tourism-related- to locate and operate in this region. However, the tourism cluster in sub- district Bo Phud is by and large growing without proper control, resulting in negative impacts on the locals.

Interviewees are concerned with the number of accommodation businesses that keep increasing without any control and effective management, causing both a scarcity of water and electricity as well as the degradation of the natural environment. For example, an interviewee, who is an owner of a tour company reported that she is very unhappy with the unsustainable practices of the tourism businesses, especially the private villas on the mountains (see Appendix 13) that seriously damage the environment and create landslides.

“How can we call Samui as a green Island? Look at those ‘poo khoa hua lan’! (‘bald’ mountains⁶⁵) There are buildings and private villas everywhere, even on the mountains!”
(Owner of tour company. Female, in her 50s.)

Mainly, local people perceived tourism negatively because they suffer from its negative impacts. In particular, they are indirectly involved with, but have fewer benefits from, tourism, so they feel that their lives are rather being interfered with rather than having the benefits. For example, an interviewee reported:

“I think, the government concerns only about the hotel businesses, and the investors but tourism has negative impact to the Samui local people’ life style, for example, they have no area for fishing because before they can leave their boats by the beach and go fishing but now those areas are occupied by the hotels and resorts.”(Former teacher. Male, in his 60s.)

⁶⁵ The interviewee compared the mountain with the head. Bald mountain means there are no trees left on the mountains- like a bald head.

Some negative impacts from the tourism industry, change the locals' traditional life style because in this sub-district because it is focusing on the hotel and resort businesses. Consequently, local activities that might interrupt or disturb those businesses, such as smells and noise from local activities in proximity to those businesses are prohibited. This is reported by an interviewee, a farmer, who reported that:

“We are forced by the rules and regulations of zoning so it limits the local communities to do their small businesses. For example, we cannot raise ‘moo’ (pig) or ‘gai’(chicken) in this area because it is going to disturb tourists and effect the hotels nearby. If the chickens ‘kun’ (Thai word means crow) then we have to pay for the fine. Or we want to grill the coconuts (for local small business purpose), which crate smoke that is prohibited too.” (Local farmer. Male, in his 60s.)

This shows the difficulties that local communities, are facing with the fast growth of the tourism industry in sub-district Bo Phud. Local communities are excluded from tourism development, and have no control or influence over the direction of tourism development of their areas.

Moreover, interviewees commonly viewed businesses like pubs and bars as undesirable, and underlined that they did not want these kinds of businesses to grow too much because of their serious negative impact on local society in the form of loud noise, and drug-related issues. Instead they want to promote products that feed off local wisdom and culture. For example, one of the key findings emerging from the focus groups this researcher conducted was:

“We do not want to have or promote the tourism products like ‘poo ying’ (Thai word means women in this sentence it refers to prostitutes), pubs/bars, and drugs.

...We need to promote more about local wisdoms as part of local culture to be tourism products so the local culture can be sustained as well.” (Summary of discussion Focus group 1 in sub-district Bo Phud, the interviewed was conducted in 15th November 2013)

The focus group participations expressed their frustration about inappropriate management, and control of tourism activities and businesses by the government sector, which affects their life style (see Appendix 14 for the picture of ‘Business encroachment on the beach’).

“There are complaints from local people but the problem of noise from pubs and bars have never been solved. I do not know why these businesses can be built so close to local communities like schools and temples, which I think it is not proper at all.” (Summary of discussion from Focus group 2 interviews conducted on 16th November 2013).

(Also, see Figure 5.7 on the business encroachment at the Chaweng beach)

Figure 5.7: Business encroachment on the beach



Source: author

This is the bar that occupies an extensive space on the beach and where, at night, there are beach parties. There are many tourists who love partying, and the bar plays loud music all the time, which create a lot of noises.

Interviewees commonly reported about the drugs provision for the tourists at bars and beach parties. This shows unsustainable practices by government bodies who do not enforce the law and control the illegal activities. It seems that local people are afraid to say it out loud or get involved with this issue because they are afraid of *'poo mee it ti pon'* (means people who have power but in a negative sense because they use their power in illegal activities), and they are afraid of negative consequences on their livelihoods as a result of speaking out.

Moreover, in Chaweng, sub-district Bo Phud (see Figure 5.8), for example, the lack of proper management and development has resulted in some serious impacts on the area. It is clear from Figure 5.8 those ill-planned shops and hotels have not only blocked the way to the beach, but also the whole development looks like an eyesore. Moreover, due to unplanned amenity development, pollution and lack of waste management, there are issues of prostitution, and changes in the local ecosystem and natives' quality of life (e.g. locals can no longer engage in fishing and socialising as they once did). This is supported by Green's (2005) empirical study that mentioned that a lack of effective government control on tourism development can create significant negative environmental and socio-cultural impacts.

Figure 5.8: Unplanned Development in Chaweng beach, Bo Phud



Source: author

Figure 5.8 shows improper design of infrastructure (e.g. too narrow street, and electricity cables and poles). The buildings were also built without any plans, so they were built next to the beach,

and occupied all the beachfront areas. It was reported in 'The Nation news that 'many of those beachfront hotels and resorts do not build sewers or drains on their properties, so it causes serious floods because the drain-free roads block the rainwater from flowing into the sea' (The Nation News, 2012).

Thus, tourism cluster in sub-district Bo Phud is growing gradually without effective management and control by the government. As a result, negative impacts on local communities, especially the natural environment and the tourism cluster as a whole, are growing.

However, there are also positive trends toward cluster formation through the collaborative networks among different tourism stakeholder groups, which lead to innovative tourism activities and green projects.

5.4.4 Positive trends: Collaborations amongst public and private- sector actors

Diagonal business cluster

The tourism cluster in sub-district Bo Phud is characterised by businesses that support each other and public sector agencies that acknowledge their interdependence and are supportive of events and collaborate in marketing and training programmes. There are local lifestyle, cooperative networks, and active industry associations, joint activities, entrepreneurs, and skill and knowledge transfer as the key social dimensions (McRae-Williams, 2004, p. 241).

As an agglomerate cluster (high number of tourism firms existing in the cluster), there is a high degree of network structure which fosters entrepreneurship and co-operation amongst public and private-sector actors. The most effective network of collaborations among tourism- related

businesses in sub-district Bo Phud is the network of the upmarket, medium-sized accommodation businesses, who are the most powerful actors. They founded TAKS, which aims to foster tourism businesses in Samui and to promote Samui Island. This network comprises of different small and medium-sized tourism-related businesses, which are mostly owned by local people,⁶⁶so it enables some degrees of collaborations for tourism activities between them. This network plays an important role in terms of fostering and associating different tourism actors (e.g. THA-SCEC, TAT, municipality, media, airlines, and etc.) to collaborate in establishing tourism events and activities, creating tourism promotion and marketing, and promoting sustainable practices. This association also enables external links or global connections, which allow Samui Island to reach the global market through for example, international roadshows and international events (e.g. hosting the International Samui Island Triathlon⁶⁷).

In addition, there is collaboration between businesses and local communities including fishermen and farmers, who are indirect tourism stakeholders. The relationships are based upon the mutual benefits between the private sector and local people, where the private sector can create and operate tourism activities and programmes for the tourists, and local communities can earn additional income. This is supported by Pavlovich's empirical study (2001) which investigated the informal coordination process amongst interdependent stakeholders (e.g. community members, tourism operators, government bodies) in implementing the sustainability objectives, at the Waitomo Caves village in New Zealand. The study highlights key dynamics for network

⁶⁶ Originally from Samui.

⁶⁷ This is an annual international event, and the first one took place on April 22nd, 2012. 28 countries participate in running, bicycling and swimming competitions in Samui Island (Directly cited from website <http://triathlonsamui.com>. Accessed 12th January 2015).

success, which includes cooperation, complementary reciprocity and mutual exchange of benefits (Pavlovich, 2001). For example, a travel agency reported that;

“We often collaborate with local fishermen for private tour and private boat, especially in high season, for example, we co-operate for the fishing tour.” (Owner of travel agency. Male, in his 30s.)

A local medium-sized/budget hotel owner also collaborates with the local farmers in order to create tour package for the cultural tour programme for tourists who are interested in the traditional life style of Samui people.

“I am doing the cultural tour because I want local community to participate in tourism activities and earn money. I collaborate with local communities who are farmers and group of housewives to participate in tourism activities by which the tourists can learn about local life style.” (Mid-market Hotel owner. Male, in his 30s.)

There are variety of local activities for tourists to see and participate in, such as the monkey show (see Figure 5.9), buffalo farm (see Figure 5.10), and the paddy field (see Figure 5.11)

Figure 5.9: The monkey show



Source: the interviewee

This monkey show allows the tourists to see how the locals train monkeys to help them bring down coconuts from the coconut trees, which is a traditional local activity involving working with the monkeys.

Figure 5.10: Buffalo farm



Source: the interviewee

This tour programme shows the traditional local lifestyle that uses buffalos for working in the rice fields. Buffalos are also famous for ‘buffalo fighting’ and today the buffalos are also used as the ‘Buffalo fighting’ shows associated with tourism activities.

Figure 5.11: The paddy field



Source: the interviewee

This programme demonstrates to the tourists the process of rice production (e.g. planting, and harvesting) and they are also able to actively participate. This sort of tourism has a minimal impact on the local environment and also educates tourists, which is one of the main priorities of local agencies and businesses.

There is also vertical and horizontal integration and active networking among tourism businesses and local communities that cut across boundaries. These enable the innovation of unique tourism product and service, such as spa businesses on Samui Island. The spa businesses promote local resource such as ‘coconuts’ to produce unique spa products and to promote the image of the spa on Samui. For example, a president of Thai Spa Association reported that:

“We have a very clear image of spa in Samui, since Samui is well known as ‘ma prao’ (Coconut) Island’, so we promote ‘ma prao’ (coconut) as our spa image. We support the local resource, by which we buy coconuts from local people here and produce the coconut oil and treatments for spa business. We distribute to all spas that use our coconut oil and treatments, here in Samui. Our coconut oil is high quality guaranteed by the national award for the product innovation.” (President of Thai Spa Federation. Female, in her 60s.)

This is an example of successful collaborative networks of local businesses and local communities that can establish a specialisation, in this case the spa business at the destination, creating a well-known reputation of spa treatment, and exporting the local spa product to global markets. It is the medium-size businesses that play a leading role in developing network relations, not only at a local level, but also at the international or global level.

Thus, there are positive trends of coordination and collaboration among businesses, and between businesses and local communities, in order both to generate better use of skills and resources and to inspire innovative business and tourism activities that can enhance the attractiveness and improvement of the destination (Bernini, 2009). It also shows the dependency between businesses and local communities in terms of supplying local products and resources such as local cultures (e.g. through local life style, and local houses), raw materials (e.g. coconuts), and local skills (e.g. producing coconut oil) in order to add value to the activities of businesses.

Importantly, there is an increasingly positive trend of collaborative networks among tourism stakeholders toward sustainability goals.

5.4.5 Emergence of the Green Cluster ‘Samui Green Island’

There is an example of effective collaboration towards sustainable practices among different tourism stakeholders groups and sectors such as local community, tourism businesses, and the government sector. This is the group called ‘Rak Chaweng’ (means preserve Chaweng), which is a small voluntary group initiated by the local businesses in Chaweng area who are concerned about environmental issues in Chaweng community. They aim to preserve the environment in their community, especially by improving the water quality of a canal in Chaweng area that is polluted by the businesses. An owner of a local, small-size accommodation business reported that there are many environmental issues affected by the tourism-related businesses. For example, many businesses discharge polluted water into the canals and into the sea. Many interviewees perceived that this is because there are many businesses owned by those who do not care about the local environment, and if they are of a foreign origin they can leave the island any time if their businesses do not work. One of the ‘Rak Chaweng’s leader reported that most of the volunteers who support, and participate in, the group are the local businesses because they are more concerned about Samui’s environment. They are passionate about the destination (e.g. they have a desire for good conditions and the quality of the environment, as well as preserving natural environment at the destination) and a strong sense of attachment to the place (Gardiner and Scott, 2014).

“There are the collaborations among hotel businesses, local community (e.g. schools), and municipality that participate in dredge activity. ...mostly they are medium- sized, and local

hotel businesses that participate the activity. ...we shared the budgets among businesses⁶⁸ to dredge the Chaweng canal, which was about 300-400 thousand bahts. If the municipality does the project, they would have to spend the budget about two millions bahts but this we can achieved with much lower costs!” (Mid-market hotel and restaurant owner. Male, in his 30s.)

This shows how informal relationships have created a “culture of self-help” among the businesses and local community. This is supported by Erkuş-öztürk and Eraydın’s empirical study (2010) which focuses on the role of organisational networking for environmentally sustainable tourism development in Antalya. Based upon the 314 surveys of different public and private sectors, it reveals that local collaborations and self-help networking amongst public institutions and tourism associations has played an important role in the development of environmental networks.

Importantly, the private sector plays the lead role in promoting ‘green practices’ through collaboration and coordination with other public and private-sector actors, such as the municipality, THA-SCEC, KSTCC (TAT), SSA, and the GIFT, to participate in ‘green projects’ and ‘green activities’. For example, a hotel resident reported that there is collaboration among hotel networks THA-SCEC which an interviewee described as:

⁶⁸ It should be noted that businesses owned by foreigners often do not share in this cost. In fact, local-foreigner tension is an important theme that runs through several interviews and highlights the sense of local disaffection at being pushed aside by those with more skills, resources and an ability to forge networks with key stakeholders.

“I am a member of THA, which THA try to raise awareness among tourism stakeholders to have green practices, for example, we have the bicycle week. ...we are doing the ‘zero waste’, by which we do not create waste. ...we control the suppliers not to use the chemical with the products such as formalin.” (Residence manager. Male, in his 50s.)

Non-profit organisations like GIFT also facilitate and support other public and private-sector actors to organise green activities and projects by supporting funding and coordinating with other tourism sectors. The funding is raised among tourism businesses, as well as the local public sector. The crucial role of this foundation is networking with different tourism sectors/actors in order to carry the green island projects and campaign such as Samui car free day, which result from the collaboration of diverse tourism stakeholders (THA-SCEC, TAKS, municipality, media, other local businesses, and TAT).

The reason why this foundation is not the leader in organising projects, but rather facilitates and supports, is because there are only 9 committee members which represent different groups of tourism stakeholders, most of which are from the private sector (e.g. hotel business, spa business, printing business, and media business). Thus, there is a lack of manpower in establishing and mobilising activities and projects alone.

“The Green Island Project acts as the big umbrella for other tourism sectors and local communities to be more concerned and aware of green practices, like preserve local natural and cultural resources. So that Samui can be sustained as the attractive tourist destination.” (Media business owner who is also a committee member of GIFT. Female, in her 30s.)

This reveals a crucial role of collaborative networks between public, private, and non-profit sectors that shares resources in order to promote ‘green activities’ and environmental preservation. However, it should be noted that these efforts are sporadic, not systemic and the concerns of smaller businesses often remained sidelined.

The thematic cluster is creating, through the collaboration of the value chain, tourism businesses that create added value and provide an inclusive experience for the market segment (Nordin, 2003). For example, in ‘the nature-based and cultural cluster’ (sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam), there is a concentration of specialised tourism firms providing nature-based activities. Also, the social dimension presented through rich, local life style and culture (e.g.. traditional houses, local schools, temples) seems to be another unique tourism experience for tourists.

The next section describes the profile and clustering process of cluster (2) sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam or ‘nature-based and cultural cluster’.

5. 5 Cluster (2) ‘the nature-based and cultural cluster’- Sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam

5.5.1 Profile of the tourism cluster

Sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam are located in the south-western parts of the island. These regions have fewer beach areas and are mainly mountainous. The main appeal of these

regions is their rural character, which is rich in natural resources (e.g. mountains, jungles, coconut trees, and water falls), and the rich local culture presenting local life styles, traditional houses, and heritage (e.g. temples). Thus, these regions provide opportunities for tourists who are interested in nature and culture-based tourism products and activities.

Sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam are non-agglomerated clusters (low number of existing firms in a cluster) (Erkuş-Öztürk, 2009). These sub-districts provide limited tourism products and services, as well as the limited development of infrastructures and facilities. The small-size businesses belong to the local people such as budget accommodation, restaurants, and retail shops. These areas are mainly for the local residents and farming areas, because most of local people are farmers who have local fruit plantations⁶⁹. Thus, this cluster has: (1) nature-based activities, such as safaris, elephant trekking, wildlife, animal shows (e.g. snake, tiger and crocodile shows) and health and wellness, and (2) rich local culture at competitive products.

These regions specialise in agriculture, natural and cultural tourism-based products. Besides the rich natural resources and local culture, the medium-size of tourism-related businesses (mostly owned by outside investors, both Thais and foreign) play the leading role in providing tourism products and services, such as the nature-based tour operators, which attracts tourists to the areas. In fact, these areas are zoned by the government as residential areas for the locals and for agricultural use as fruit plantations (see Figure 5.12, 5.13) which can also develop tourism activities in the area but have to be concerned with, and preserve, the local environment.

⁶⁹ Local fruits are coconut, durian, lansad, and mangosteen.

Figure 5.12: The scenery along the roads in sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam



Source: the author

This shows some coconut plantations and rural characteristics in these regions where the tourists can enjoy unspoiled nature free from over-crowded tourism businesses and buildings.

It also shows the lower level of development of these regions for tourism. The area is comprised mostly of local houses (see Figure 5.13).

Figure 5.13: The local traditional houses along the road



Source: the author

These local houses built in typical Samui architectural style offer an insight into the unique local culture, enhancing the tourists' travel experience. In fact, the local primary schools are also appreciated by tourists who drop by (see Figure 5.14).

Figure 5.14: The picture of local public elementary school, which also attracts tourist to visit



Source: the author

The director of this school reported that it has become a sort of local tourist attraction, quite popular with motorcyclists who stop by to have a chat with pupils and take pictures of the school as it provides a unique glimpse into the daily routine of the local community. However, the interactions between tourists and local students may lead to some socio-cultural changes, such as perceptions towards dress. Local students may, for example, perceive that it is acceptable to wear just swimming suits or bikinis and travel around the island. However, this is considered as inappropriate in local culture because it is *'mai reab roi'* (in Thai means impolite, and indecent), especially as it is unacceptable to dress in shorts, singlets or short skirts when visiting temples.

Similarly, temples are a main source of attraction for the beach goers who are intrigued by these repositories of local culture (see Figure 5.15).

Figure 5.15: Local temple



Source: the author

There are many temples located around Samui Island, showing that Buddhism is important to local people. It shows that the local life style is very much related to Buddhism (e.g. religious events and activities). Temples were built from the share spiritual beliefs and values of local people who have faith in Buddhism, so they pool their resources (e.g. money, skills, and labour force) to build temples in their communities. Today, temple are not just for religious purposes but are also related to tourism activities since there are tourists visiting temples as one of the attractions.

Actually, while the tourism clusters in these regions are mainly developed by the private sector , offering souvenirs and products which are of religious or spiritual significance but appealing

both to tourists and residents (albeit for different reasons), this helps local vendors with limited access to income generating activities (see Figure 5.16).

Figure 5.16: ‘Wat Kiri Wong Garam’ (Kiri Wong Garam temple)



Source: JFK Tour, 2012

This temple accommodates the mummified body of the Buddhist monk called ‘Loung Por Ruam’, which can be viewed in a glass case. The monk was placed in a glass case upon his death 25 years ago, and his body is still in an exceptionally good condition (Sawadee, 2015). As this temple is located in a remote area, it is less frequented by tourists/tour operators and still has a peaceful atmosphere compared with many other temples that are widely advertised and promoted in other areas. However, this temple will be explored by those individual tourists who may ride motorcycles around the island seeking the hidden uniqueness of local culture, which can offer the ‘adventure tourism’ experience.

Samui's tourism industry is also geographically dependent on rich natural resources, and the government has introduced zoning regulations (e.g. rural, and agriculture zones) where many tour operators are concentrated around natural resources such as waterfalls and mountains. This has been done in order to provide nature-based tourism products and activities. These regions have a relatively strong social dimension in terms of local life style, and rich local culture. However, they have a relatively low degree of vertical and horizontal integration and active networking among tourism stakeholders and both a substantial lack of active involvement with local communities and a low degree of innovative capacity. Consequently, these regions have limited complementarity because of the low level of networking and weak relationships among diverse tourism stakeholders. As the network exchanges among diverse tourism stakeholders are limited, this results in limited tourism product development and growth in these regions. It also limits the opportunities to influence local uniqueness and quality in tourism product innovation which encourages tourists to experience and encounter local suppliers differentiating from standardised, mainstream packages (see Pavlovich, 2003).

The next section considers how local communities are involved in the tourism industry in these regions.

5.5.2 Local communities' involvement in tourism industry

Overall, the local community members who are directly and indirectly involved in tourism-related businesses have low level of networks and collaboration with bigger business, public sector stakeholders and other outsiders who have invested in the region. They are independently operating businesses and are mostly small-sized businesses such as restaurants, tour operators or

renting bungalows. Also there are many small food and retail shops, and stalls selling local products such as fruits (see figure 5.17 and 5.18). This low level of networking and collaboration by the local communities limits their opportunities to access their information and resources such as know-how concerning tourism business operations and issues, technology, financial resources, training programmes, and participation in the tourism development process (Wilkinson, 2008). This restrains their opportunities for the destination's development and growth due to the low level of complementary of tourism products and activities. Thus, these regions are represented as a less attractive tourist destination compared to cluster (1) sub-district Bo Phud or the beach cluster where there are various complementary products and services. This is supported by Bernini's empirical study (2009) which suggested that destinations should encourage the emergence of tourism networks in order to be able to compete and position themselves in the worldwide market. This is because the networks can create a better use of skills and resources, and enhance innovative business and tourism activities which improve the destination's development. It also shows that the higher concentration of complementary tourism products and services can added value and create more attractiveness for the destination, as well as attracting more tourists into the area (Bernini, 2009).

Figure 5.17: Local involvement in tourism



Source: the author

Local people sell products such as local fruits (e.g. bananas, lansat, and durians), and snacks made from local fruits such as fried durians and preserved durians at the Na Muang waterfall 1 area (see Figure 5.17). Na Muang Waterfall 1 was a very famous attraction in sub district Na Muang before the Na Muang Waterfall 2 was developed by the private sector. Na Muang Waterfall 1 has no proper infrastructure or facilities developed for tourists. There are only small local shops and stalls selling some handicraft products, clothes, and food around the area that add a small amount of value to the place.

An interviewee, who is a food shop owner in that area, reported that this area has never been improved and developed since the first development by the government; which was around the time that he started his business, 20 years ago. The government developed the infrastructure for local people to rent and run their businesses. He also rents the space to run his food shop business, but now the infrastructure is in a bad condition since it has never been renovated. He

also said that there had been a lot more tourists visiting this area before the development of tourism activities such as safaris, elephant trekking, and crocodile farms by the private sector (owned mainly by outsiders). “...in the past, ‘kai dee mak’ (means can make a lot of money), many ‘farang’ (refer to the westerners) came. He also reported that “ ... in the past, there were many Thai tourists, and single foreign tourists who come with Thai women.”

Figure 5.18: Small local shops at the Na Muang water fall1 area



Source: the author

At present, visitors to this place are mostly couples and families. It is a peaceful and quiet place which is much less crowded than the new attraction developed by the private sector, Na Muang Waterfall 2. However, an interviewee reported that there will be more tourists in the high season, which is between October and April. The owners of shops here are mostly local middle-aged and senior people who have been selling the same kind of products such as clothes, souvenirs, local crafted products (e.g. bags, wooden carved products, and carving soaps) from the northern and

central part of Thailand (see Figure 5.18) since the early tourism developed in this location. The shop owners are complaining about the lack of concerns of, and supports from, the public sector in developing this place in terms of proper infrastructures and facilities provision, which would make it more attractive to tourists. They reported that they have neither the capacity nor and resources (e.g. knowledge, and money) to be able to compete with the private sector which can develop tourism products and activities more effectively, and also attract all the tourists to visit their sites while , local people - like them - can do nothing.

In fact, there is a lack of community participation in the tourism development process, but many local want to participate in tourism activities and the decision-making processes of tourism development in their areas. However, the way tourism development is progressing means that local interests are increasingly on the margins, as is evident here:

“...last ten years ago, there was a lot more water (waterfall) at this waterfall. There was no ‘num tok Na Muang 2’ (Na Muang waterfall 2) that developed by the private sector, just only this waterfall in that time so all tourists come to this waterfall. Now, the private sector developed crocodile farm, elephant farm...up there (on the mountain where the waterfalls come from)...stealing a lot of customers. ...they have brochures ..they have everything... ‘krop wong gorn’ (provide full range of tourism activities). We have nothing.” (Owner of food shop. Male, in his 60s, sub district Na Muang)

This shows the difficulties that local people face since they lack resources including knowledge ,skills and the budget to operate and develop tourism businesses or to do the marketing to

promote the area. This is supported by Scheyvens and Momsen's study (2008) which found that island peoples (i.e. small island states) are unskilled and lacking in resources. This prevents their developing initiatives and reduces their ability to act independently to determine and achieve their own development goal.

As a result, it constrains their abilities to participate in tourism. For example, an interviewee reported that:

"We want to have some experts in tourism to come and give us some knowledge about tourism businesses." (Summary of discussion from Focus group 2 session conducted on 14th November 2013)

This also reveals one aspect of local culture and norm in terms of waiting and expecting the government to primarily help and support them. Interviewees perceived that the government is the main actor with responsibility for their well-being in terms of taking care of basic infrastructure, managing and developing the destination and also supporting them in tourism development. For example, an interviewee who was frustrated with her lack of opportunity in starting a tourism business, because she did not know where to start, reported that;

"We have a group of local community that want to participate in the tourism industry and we are ready to provide travel experience for tourist who want to visit local community's orchards and to learn about local life style but we do not know how to start and who we should talk to. I really have no idea."

In addition, they were unhappy with the lack of connections and support from government bodies in terms of tourism- related product development and promotions. Many interviewees, who have small-sized businesses such as restaurants, budget bungalows and gift shops, reported that there are fewer tourists visiting these regions compared to sub-district Bo Phud as a result of lack in government investment. This is evident in this quote.:

“They (the government) want these areas to be ‘green area’ but they never help us (farmers) at all. They never support or develop these areas, “look at the road in this side of the island” (Summary of discussion from Focus group 1. The session was conducted on 13th November 2013).

Thus, they want the government to promote the region so that:

“...more tourists come to these areas and we all can benefit from the money they have”
(Restaurant owner in their 50s).

Thus, despite the opportunities that many interviewees in the region noted, they perceived them to be slipping away due to a lack of support from the government which is also constraining cluster development there.

This is supported by a story told by a local man (see Figure 5.19), who has been selling local foods such as ‘gai yang’ (grilled chicken) and ‘som tum’ (papaya salad) at Na Muang Waterfall¹ for 20 years. He reported how sub district Na Mung has lacked proper management and development from the government in terms of infrastructure and facilities.

Figure 5.19: The picture of an interviewee, selling coconut juice



Source: the author

Figure 5.20: The picture of an interviewee's food shop



Source: the author

This shows a very old building (indicated by the red arrow) that was built by the government 20 years ago and has never been improved since then. This building has been rented and used by an interviewee to operate as a food stall. The decline in the condition of this establishment is a potent example of neglect making it less attractive to tourists.

Thus, the low level of clustering and networking among diverse tourism sectors and organisations, as well local communities, restrains the opportunities for the development of innovative, complementary tourism products and activities in these regions.

As became apparent in the focus group author conducted with them, locals do not want too much development and are in favour of greener forms of tourism that are in harmony with the region's attributes despite their own adverse circumstances:

“We want these areas to promote local culture and local products as unique tourism products. We also want to promote ecotourism in these areas, as well as promote the product about health and wellness, which can connect with the local communities who grow herbs. We do not want this area to be developed like the Bo Phud area. We just want to support local communities' products and services.” (Summary of discussion from Focus group 2. The session was conducted on 14th November 2013)

This shows how local communities are passionate about their area, with a strong sense of place attachment through which they desire tourism development that promotes their local cultures and products. These local communities have emotional ties or bonds with their birth place, with which they have a sense of belonging and have their identities attached (Sampson and Goodrich, 2009).

For example, local people want to preserve their culture like fruit plantations, and fishing. They also want to preserve their natural environment through the development of tourism products that are natural and environmental friendly.

“Sub district Na Muang and Taling Ngam are rural areas and there are local communities that grow local fruits and fisherman villages. We want to promote local life style and local products such as visiting local orchards, which tourists can buy local fruits from the farmers. Tourist can also visit fisherman villages and can have fresh seafood from there.”

(Summary of Discussion from Focus group 1. The session was conducted on 13th November, 2013)

There are potential opportunities to improve and develop cultural and eco-tourism as unique tourism products in these regions, through which such tourism activities are initiated and operated by local communities to gain more benefits.

This is supported by previous studies suggesting that tourism clusters that build around local communities' values, unique collective identity, and resources can enhance their competitive advantages (Fernando and Long, 2012; Gardiner and Scott, 2014; Grimstad and Burgess, 2014). For example, Grimstad and Burgess's 2014 study showed the Lovedale wine cluster in Australia achieved competitive advantages of environmental behaviour through the collaborative networks between local businesses and communities which have personal values concerning environmental and climate change and loss of biodiversity. These personal values are shaping

local businesses and communities to adopt sustainable practices such as water saving, recycling, and reducing the use of pesticides.

The findings also show the lack of connection between local communities and key business sectors like hotels and resorts. Many of the interviewees also addressed their desire for collaboration with accommodation businesses in order to have vertical and horizontal relationships with them such as providing raw materials such as agricultural products. For example, the interviewees from focus groups reported that;

“There is no link between local communities and big hotels around here. They have their customers since they are big chain hotels. We want them to link with local communities so that they can help local communities to benefit more from tourism.

...The hotels should develop their relationship with their local community in terms of raw material provision, for example, local communities can grow and provide the required vegetables for hotels. So, local communities can sell agricultural products to the hotels.”

(Summary of discussion from Focus group 1. The session was conducted on 13th November, 2013).

This also implies that the locals expect leaders who can coordinate with other public and private-sector actors. A lack of effective leadership skills in these regions constrains the local communities’ opportunities in bridging with other key tourism stakeholders and obtaining opportunities to access valuable information and resources.

Many empirical findings from studies in developing economies (e.g. Nepal, 2000; Nyaupane et al., 2006; Tosun, 2001) show the lack of local community participation in the decision-making process and tourism development. For example, Aas et al.'s empirical study (2005) examined stakeholder collaboration and management roles as well as the interdependence of heritage conservation and tourism development in Luang Prabang, Laos. The findings show a lack of local community involvement and participation in the process of decision-making, tourism development and heritage conservation. This results from their being perceived by professionals, like tour operators, as lacking knowledge about tourism development and heritage conservation. Tourism development and decision-making process were highly centralised at a high government level, with no investment incentives provided for entrepreneurs, or financial support for the local communities.

A lack of connections and supports between local government and local communities, and between businesses and the local communities, is evident. This restrains the opportunities to improve and develop tourism products and services initiated by local communities, as well as to improve and develop local products and services in these regions as a whole.

5.5.3 Negative impacts from tourism perceived by the local communities in tourism cluster in sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam

The most serious negative impacts from tourism perceived by local communities are accumulated waste and encroachment on the mountains (see Figure 5.21-5.22) by hotels and resorts. Interviewees noted that the accumulated waste creates unpleasant smells, toxicity, and poor sanitation. Even though the incinerator is located in sub-district Ma Red, all the wastes

around the island are collected by the municipality and put in sub-district Ma Red,. This affects the whole island, though especially the locals who live near to the incinerator area. For example, a local reported that:

“...I live in the same area where the incinerator located, it affects to the whole community who lives in ‘tumbon’ (sub-district) Ma Red. ...that incinerator is overflowed! ... ‘num’ (liquid) from that incinerator goes into Ma Red canal, and villages’ wells so we cannot use the water from that canal anymore.” (Local farmer, female in her 50s.)

Many interviewees blamed the municipality for ineffectively manages waste, because there are 15,000 tons of unmanaged wastes left unattended in an area that is environmentally significant and in close proximity to communities like Ma Red (see Figure 5.21).

Figure 5.21: Accumulated and unmanaged waste left on the ground



Source: author

Apart from the visual pollution, the unmanaged waste impacts upon the air quality as this researcher could smell it even in an air-conditioned car.

However, a few interviewees stated that it is everybody responsibilities to reduce waste first from their homes, and hotels. These were the local owners of small and medium-sized hotel businesses (mostly upmarket types of hotel business), as well as hotel managers (both locals and non-locals) and tour operators.. Thus there is a lot of ‘passing the buck’ culture and a lack of collective ownership to remedy the situation.

In addition, the mountainside encroachment (unauthorised in a few cases) by accommodation businesses (e.g. hotels and resorts, and villas) is another issue that was reported by many interviewees as a source of concern. They also blamed the government sector (hinting at corrupt practices) that granted the permission to build hotels and resorts on mountains, where these constructions have significantly destroyed the natural habitat of island species. For example, (1) Wildlife like barking deer, armadillos, and chevrotains, (2) Species that live in swamps and birds like teals, stork, bitterns, hawks, and sea gulls, (3) Species that live in mangrove forests like mudskippers and (4) sea livings species like clams, squids, crabs, mackerels, blowfishes, starfishes, and sea turtles (see Figure 5.22). The reduction of those sea species has significantly impacted on local fishermen and forced many to quit their jobs.

Figure 5.22: Encroachment on the mountain in sub district Taling Ngam



Source: author

This is the Conrad Koh Samui Resort and Spa, which provides a luxury travel experience for tourists with private villas and swimming pools overlooking the ocean. When this resort was built, and acquired the whole mountain, it was opposed by many specialists and local people concerned about its negative impact on the natural environment. Yet it went ahead (Saxena et al., 2014). Many specialists pointed out that the construction causes the degradation of natural environment such as landslides, polluted water, and damage coral reefs (Sky Report Krobkruakao 3, 2012).

This is supported by the work of Ioannides and Holcomb (2003) which is based on the evidence from Mediterranean and Caribbean island destinations where up-market tourism initiatives have been adopted. Evidence indicated that “...per capita water and energy demands of tourists in up-

market luxury facilities exceed those of mass tourists, domestic visitors and local residents...’ (p.43). In addition, luxury resorts and facilities usually require more land and are located in, or near, sites of exceptional natural beauty, which may be ecologically sensitive.

Thus, the tourism cluster in sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam is shaped by the physical geography and natural environment, but inefficient zoning policy by the local government (the municipality).

5.5.4 Positive trends: collaborations among public and private-sector actors

As a non-agglomerated cluster, it has very low degree of business concentration and limited opportunities for networking and collaboration between tourism-related businesses. As a result, many interviewees reported that they did not know much about TAKS, and very few of them were members of TAKS and THA-SCEC networks or any other networks. Those who were member of TAKS and THA-SCEC networks were tour operators and upmarket hotels and resorts.

However, there are some networks and collaboration among businesses that are co-located to one another. For example, there is collaboration between small-sized businesses which combine their tourism activities to create a bundle of tourism products. Initiatives like these certainly enhance the tourists’ travel experiences and satisfaction. For example, a budget-level, small-size resort owner reported that this area is quiet and has the most beautiful views of the sunset. This is very appealing for tourists who want to relax and are interested in health and wellness because these regions are rich in natural environment which offers a wonderful atmosphere for peace and healing. This budget-level resort owner has collaborative networks with other small-sized

businesses, which offer and add value to each other's business by creating a travel package for tourists. This collaboration has enhanced the revenue generating potential of their businesses through the expansion of their markets.

“In this area, we have collaborations among small-sized accommodation businesses, yoga schools, and ‘Muay Thai’ (Thai boxing) schools in order to create the tourism package for tourists who interested in health and sports such as a course of Thai boxing or yoga for seven days.” (Budget, small- size resort owner. Male, in his 30s.)

There are also business alliances with similar product themes, such as wildlife, in order to add value to the small-sized tour operators' products. For example, they provide additional activities which enable them to create a holistic travel experience for tourists.

“We have joint venture with other small businesses, whose have similar themes of our products but they have fewer activities so they combine our activities to be part of their tour package for tourists.” (General Manager of tour operator. Male, in his 50s.)

Moreover, the luxury hotels and resorts are mainly independent; they specialise in providing high quality services and have their own marketing strategy. They have the ability to do their own marketing and global networking, so they have fewer connections or partnerships at the local level. However, there are networks among medium-sized accommodation businesses, based on informal and collaborative relationships, which go across boundaries. They are members of

THA-SCEC and the HR Club, which enables them to share information, join decision-making and problem solving and to participate in tourism and green activities.

The next section considers collaboration established on green activities and projects in these regions.

5.5.5 Collaborative move towards sustainable goal: Samui Green Island

There are a limited number of collaborative networks towards sustainable goal in these regions, due to the low level of concentration of tourism firms. These areas are comprised mostly of local houses, fruit plantations, and local businesses (indirectly related to tourism such as retail shops, printing shops, security companies, garages, construction companies, and furniture shops). The most important networks are between public and private sectors; the municipality, THA-SCEC and TAKS. These play active roles in mobilising and organising green activities and projects, such as collect rubbish on the beaches and in the sea, organising ‘low carbon school’ projects and participating in green hotel networks and the ‘green leaf’ programme. For example, an interviewee, who is human resource manager at the Intercontinental hotel (a luxury chain hotel) and is also a member of THA-SCEC, reported that:

“We regularly organising activities together among THA members such as restoring mangrove forest project, which we do every year.” (Human resource manager. Female, in her 30s.)

However, interviewees showed their concerns about the seriousness of commitment in establishing green projects, since there is a lack of monitoring and evaluating of the projects. Consequently, they may not be particularly productive and effective.

5.6 A Summary of key challenges underpinning Tourism Clusters in Samui

There are key challenges underpinning tourism clusters in Samui, which are the lack of capacities and resources of '*chao bann*' (uneducated) local, limited collaboration amongst local communities, and the lack of law enforcement and control by the local government in relation to tourism activities and development.

5.6.1 The lack of capacities and resources of '*chao bann*' (uneducated)

The findings reveal that many '*chao bann*' (uneducated) people were facing difficulties in operating tourism businesses because of their lack of knowledge and skills, lack of financial resources, and lack of networks with other public and private-sector actors.

A key negative impact was that the locals have started to lose their share of benefits from the tourism industry and an ability to manage and develop their areas in keeping with their, and the environment's, needs. This is due to the commercialisation of the tourism industry, the influx of 'outsiders' -both *farang* (Thai word for the Westerners) and Thais- who are investors (*nai tun*), and natives' lack of the understanding of new dynamics and the way the tourism industry has

started operating. For example, a local fruit farmer, who used to have a small bungalow business (15 rooms) during 1979-2006, reported that:

“I had bungalow business since there was still soiled road here. ...there was a lot of effects when many investors started to come because they had bigger and better bungalows. It was acceptable for me but there was a change in tourist too, for example, Mr. K used to stay with us before but when he came back again, he came back with his family and he could not stay with us anymore since he needed a better accommodation with better facilities which was available now just round the corner . . . but I had no ability to build a hotel or a resort because of the money involved ...I could not compete with those big investors. ...moreover, around year 2004-2005 when the computer come...I just went blank! Now, there were not just the big hotels, but the tourists booked the hotels through the e-mail. I still do not know much about e-mails. It is difficult as I am a ‘chao bann’ (Thai word for uneducated) who has only finished ‘pratom 4⁷⁰’.” The tourists also changed, they required internet, and Wi-Fi but we could not provide them because we really had no idea about it! Many tourists just told us that they would not stay with us because we do not have the internet.” (Local farmer. Female, in her 50s.)

This interviewee has a daughter who has just graduated from Bangkok at that time and wanted to operate the family’s bungalow business. She let her daughter run the business, but her daughter had no experience or knowledge in operating a tourism business, as well as ‘mai me jai rak’ (means have no heart for it/ no real commitment to it) so she could no longer run the business. Finally, they had to abandon the business and rent out the land to a Thai outsider. At the time of

⁷⁰ ‘Pratom’ is the Thai word for the educational level, which is comparable to a primary school qualification. Pratom 4 is comparable to grade 4.

the interview, this respondent was a fruit farmer because of her inability to cope with the technology, know-how and financial resources. It is an illustrative example of how local people have been gradually pushed out of the tourism industry due to a lack of skills, capacities and resources.

Another example of a 'Chao bann' (uneducated) person is a fisherman who used to participate in tourism activities as a means of earning additional income. He had what is locally called a *long-tailed* boat to take tourists to visit a nearby island and to go fishing. Currently, he is a fisherman, but he does not want to do the boat tour anymore because his fishing boat cannot be used for a business purpose. It is now illegal, and therefore risky, to continue doing the tour unless he registers his boat legally to be used as a business purpose, but he then has to pay a lot of tax. He is not confident how much he will be able to earn per month, or whether it is going to be enough for paying the tax. He does not think that he is going to survive in the tour business since he has no budget, no experience, and no knowledge of how to run the tour business and compete with other professional tour operators.

"..It is difficult! ...you must have a lot of budget! (to run the tour business) If I register my boat to be used for a business purpose, I will have to pay more than 10,000 baths (approximately 2,000 pounds) a month for a tax and there are other expenses such as for the fuel, the drivers, and the insurance. ...it also requires a lot of responsibility, such as the safety of the tourists. It is not 'koom' (it is not profitable or it is not worth it) because we definitely cannot compete with those tour operators. It is high competition out there! They have better boats, bigger boats, and better management. ...We are just 'chao bann' (uneducated) with no budget,

no knowledge, and no experience. We can only do 'rai gan geb tok' (act as a supporting boat when tour operators need extra boats especially when it is high-season)" (Local fisherman, Male, in his 50s.)

This shows that the lack of capacities and resources of '*chao bann*' (uneducated) which makes it difficult for them to operate tourism businesses successfully, and to participate in tourism development process as is revealed in both tourism clusters; 1) sub-district Bo Phud, and 2) sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam. This result in constraints on the opportunities for local people to develop SMEs, and it may restrict the improvement and growth of the tourism clusters resulting, for example, from a failure to develop innovative tourism products based on the unique, local culture.

5.6.2 Limited collaboration of local communities

In general, the findings reveal the majority of local communities have low level of networks and collaborations with other key tourism stakeholders, so they have fewer opportunities to receive valuable information and access to resources. This can constrain the opportunities for local communities to be a part of tourism cluster development. For example, it constrains the opportunities for the local communities to improve their knowledge and skills in tourism or to enhance their ability to develop local tourism products and services and to share and exchange resources.

Moreover, the lack of connections with agencies and foreign-owned enterprises can create dissatisfactions amongst local communities who have no benefit from tourism. Yet, they have to put up with the more negative impacts of tourism on their quality of life in terms of socio-

cultural (e.g. increasing rate of crimes, and drugs), economical (e.g. high costs of living), and environmental issues costs (e.g. environmental degradation and pollution) as discussed earlier in the chapter. For example, many interviewees reported that:

“The government has very little concern about the quality of life of the local people and they are more concerned in tourism” (Focus group 1 in sub districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam. The session was conducted on 13th November 2013).

Most of the interviewees expressed their frustration with the lack of participation opportunities in the tourism development process. Members of the focus groups reported that they had never participated in any meetings, or been asked about how they wanted to develop their areas, or their real needs. They just feel ignored by the government.

“We have no power to argue against any decision-makings of the government. Even though, we dispute them but it is going to be according to the government decisions, not ours” (Summary of discussion Focus group 1 in sub districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam. The session was conducted on 13th November 2013).

This finding is supported by Braun’s study (2005) which reported that lack of leadership, and low levels of collaboration, constrain effective cluster development.

However, there is an example of a local community, Fisherman’s Village in sub-district Bo Phud, which boasts effective collaboration among local community members. This is because of the

community leaders (community committees) who have effective leadership skills, and who coordinate successfully with other key public and private-sector actors in order to access the information and resources needed. Thus, ventures like the Fisherman's village, are enhancing the infrastructure and creating business synergies and complementary products.

Effective leaders and networking allow opportunities for local communities to both access information and resources and participate in tourism activities. This is because they can improve the knowledge and skills of tourism businesses, and foster collaboration, which enhances the opportunities for them to develop tourism products and service. Novelli et al.'s (2006) empirical study examined the formation of Health and Lifestyle Tourism clusters (HLTC), and argued that business networking of HLTC facilitates knowledge transfer because members have opportunities to meet and share success stories and common problems, as well as to be aware of the opportunities in their locality.

Prats and Guisa (2008) also suggested that local community should be included in the innovative tourism network in order to generate innovation. This is because local the community knows their area well, and they are concerned about the impact of tourism activities on environmental and cultural resources.

5.6.3 The lack of law enforcement and control by the local government towards tourism activities and development

In general, in Samui, unsustainable practices by local government bodies consisted of their lack of capacity to enforce the law, undertake effective monitoring, and control unwarranted tourism

activities and development. The unsustainable practices of the government body also provide opportunities for tourism businesses to engage in unsustainable practices, such as operate illegal enterprises (e.g. drugs, mafias, prostitution rackets), constructing buildings that are not in keeping with the local environment. Buildings are also constructed in inappropriate localities (e.g. tall buildings, and those constructed on the mountain cliffs) causing serious damage to the local environment and resulting in water pollution. Further, due to a lack of government regulation, there has been an increased number of foreign tour agencies that operate illegally (not officially registered businesses, and websites). Many are owned through Thai nominees, as this respondent reported:

“...many foreigners can easily come and do the businesses here! Many are illegals and many are owned through Thai nominees” (Owner of travel agency. Female, in her 20s.).

Due to a lack of local tour guides and agencies who can communicate in the Chinese, Korean, and Russian languages, the communities suffer as the locals are at disadvantages when it comes to communicating with tourists who are from these countries.

Mostly, these tourists cannot communicate well in English either, or cannot communicate in English at all, and they prefer to come with tour agencies that are operated by their nationalities rather than going with the local agencies. Local tour agencies are very frustrated with these illegal tour agencies and they want the government and tourism associations do something to solve this problem. They feel that the government organisations must not only strictly monitor business practices, but also ensure that locals are trained so that they are able to counter unsustainable practices by illegal businesses and those that are owned and operate by foreigners.

The next section presents the opportunities for future growth and development of Samui tourism.

5.7 Opportunities for future growth and development

There is a great potential for sustainable tourism development on Samui Island, because there is shared interests and value towards sustainable tourism development, and there is increasing collaboration among different groups of tourism stakeholders.

5.7.1 The shared value and understanding of the sustainable tourism

competitiveness: ‘Samui Green Island’

Findings showed the shared value of tourism stakeholders, by which they want to preserve the local culture and environment, and promote them as unique tourism products. There is also a shared understanding of sustainable tourism competitiveness among tourism stakeholders by which, as well as recognising the benefits, and competitive advantages, gained through the innovation of products and services rather than price cutting (Porter, 1998). Most of the interviewees acknowledged the importance of local cultural and natural resources as main tourism products. For example one interviewee reported that:

“I think, the uniqueness of Samui is the physical environment and the local culture, which we should promote the local culture as tourism product. It is a good way to preserve the local traditions and culture”. (Human resource manager of upmarket resort. Male, aged 53 who participated in Focus group 1, sub district Bo Phud. The interview was conducted on 15th November 2013).

They also recognised that the local cultural and natural environment can serve in providing the destination competitiveness. As one interviewee observed:

“I agree on the idea of having “Green Island” strategy because it is global trend right now. And the important things are the understanding and participation of the local people.”

(Deputy of municipality of Koh Samui, male aged 52 who participated in Focus group 1, sub district Bo Phud. The interview was conducted on 15th November 2013).

Moreover, most of the interviewees addressed the important of tourism planning and control, as well as effective management and development, in order to achieve sustainable tourism development. As they observed:

“We want some development in these areas but it has to be well plan and managed, not just allow tourism businesses sprung up everywhere without directions and controls.” (Summary of discussion Focus group 2 in sub district Na Muang and Taling Ngam. The session was conducted on 14th November 2013).

Thus, Samui has the potential to, and demonstrates positive trends in relation to, developing and achieving tourism sustainability based upon shared values and an understanding of sustainable tourism competitiveness. This requires effective collaboration among local tourism stakeholders to preserve and develop the local culture and environment as main tourism products and as a factor in destination competitiveness. This involves an awareness of effective tourism planning and control, and management and development.

5.7.2 Innovative tourism products and activities toward sustainability goal

SSA promotes the ‘green spa’ concept, by which spa businesses operate environmental friendly practices. Examples include the design of environmental friendly buildings, energy conservation, the use of local resources (e.g. coconuts) and organic spa products and treatments. A president of TSF, who is also a founder of SSA stated that:

“We have a very clear image of spa in Samui, since Samui is well known as ‘Coconut Island’, so we promote ‘coconut’ as our spa image. ...Here we are the model for the ‘destination spa’ that focuses on health and wellness; for example, we have the programmes of detoxication for tourists. Here, we have a very clear vision and image of being the ‘green spa’, which is environmental friendly. We are doing and promoting the ‘green spa’ concept, which supports the green project.” (President of TSF. The interview was conducted in October, 2013).

Many spa members received ‘Green Leaves’⁷¹ awards, accrediting them for the achievement of higher environmental standards and practices. For example, the Tamarind Springs Forest Spa was accredited with 5 ‘Green leaves’ (Tamarind Springs Awards, 2012) and Natural Wing Health Spa and Resort accredited with 3 ‘green leaves’. A hotel director of Fair House Villas and Spa, a Spa Association’s member, reported that his resort provides a unique organic spa by applying a traditional Thai touch and using local ingredients for spa treatments. The resort is a model for green hotels (it was accredited with 3 ‘green leaves’) that have effective environmental management. The director also believes that the Spa Association of Koh Samui is a key actor in

⁷¹ Green Leaf certificate is given by the Green leaf Foundation. “The foundation, a joint initiative by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the United Nations Environment Program, and others, promotes environmental standards for the tourism industry through environmental assessment and audit programs” (Tamarind Springs Awards, 2012).

developing and improving the quality of spa products and service, as well as promoting the spa as a unique tourism product of Koh Samui. He stated that:

“Spa Association Samui has an important role in promoting spa in Samui as one among the best spa destinations in the world. Samui is well-known for providing the unique health and wellness products.” (Deputy Managing Director of upmarket resort. Male, in his 20s.)

This shows a shared vision and common goal of spa networks towards sustainable tourism cluster development. The spa network is one of strong actors in Samui’s tourism cluster and promotes the sustainable tourism vision among spa businesses. It also facilitates the improvement of spa business quality and performance, supports local communities by using local resources, develops specialised tourism products and creates brand image for Samui Island.

In fact, there is an increase in interest among tourism stakeholders to develop tourism products and activities, which are environmental and cultural friendly. TAT is another strong actor in terms of promoting the sustainable tourism vision. TAT promotes this shared vision through regularly coordination with different tourism stakeholder groups, in order to establish green tourism activities that promote the local environment and culture. For example, TAT coordinated with public –private sectors, and local communities to establish the ‘bicycle route’.

“This year, we also have the activity together with local communities, which is presenting the new bicycle routes as the new attractions. We will present the local lifestyle along the routes, and we will follow the routes of “sacred belief” of Samui local people. Today, I think,

the sacred places in Samui are ignored and destroyed. Even, the new generations of Samui people, they do not know about the sacred places in Samui; they do not know about the history, stories and beliefs of those sacred places, which they are different in different areas.” (Chief of KSTCC. The interview was conducted in September, 2013).

This illustrates a significant potential for Samui to develop sustainable tourism clusters based on rich natural resources, the wide involvement of tourism stakeholders (local communities in particular), shared values and common a goal, mutual benefits and support from public sector (e.g. financial resources and infrastructure).

This also shows the important role of the leader (e.g. the. chief of KSTCC), who is passionate about the destination (Samui) and has a strong sense of place attachment. This is supported by Gardiner and Scott’s study (2014) which suggest that the characteristics⁷² of key individuals (cluster leaders/key stakeholders) are crucial elements for successful tourism clusters because individuals bring personal beliefs, experience and skills into a cluster.

5.8 Summary

Overall, the findings revealed that local stakeholders (namely community members and small businesses) have very few formal connections with agencies responsible for providing funding and structuring industry regulations. It is mainly larger local businesses that work in cooperation with other key public and private-sector stakeholders. On one hand, this limits opportunities for

⁷² The passionate about the destination, strong sense of place attachment, commitment, positive norms, leaderships, trust between the core committee members, and friendship among members.

local stakeholders to access information and resources needed to improve their knowledge and skills. On the other hand, due to the dominance of a few stakeholders, especially upmarket accommodation businesses, marketing, tourism promotion products and services development is taking according to their vested interest with little concern for other local businesses and communities' needs. This restrains the opportunities to achieve sustainable tourism development due to the lack of involvement of diverse tourism stakeholders (Scheyvens, 2011), whilst there is a need for government support in terms of provision of skills, information and resources, as well as achieving coordination between public, private and non-profit making. Though they are miniscule, collaborative networks among public and private sectors towards tourism promotion and development, and the achievement of sustainable tourism objectives, are active (e.g. THA-SCEC, TAKS, TAT, Koh Samui municipality, and SSA).

In particular, the tourism clusters in Samui are characterised by the beautiful natural attributes, unique local culture, and the clusters of specialised tourism enterprises which provide complementary tourism products and activities. The evidence suggests that effective collaboration among tourism stakeholders can enhance the improvement of tourism businesses' performances by means of mutual monitoring and complementing tourism products and services on offer. However, these networks and collaboration are still limited to particular groups of tourism stakeholders and business sectors such as upmarket accommodation businesses. Consequently, there is a limited reach of local networks and unwillingness by tourism stakeholders to shoulder responsibility for regulation and evaluation which continues to constrain the move towards sustainable tourism cluster development (Braun, 2005).

In fact, the rise of dark networks of sex workers and pimps, in addition to drug-dealer clusters, pose a serious threat to the continuity of sustainable tourism development. This is supported by Trumbull's study (2001) which showed the extensive prostitution businesses has create the global image of sex tourism for Cuba. The Cuban government allows (unofficially) prostitution businesses to operate widely within the country because of significant revenues from sex tourism. However, it creates serious social problem such as increasing HIV cases, creating demoralised society, and the culture of capitalisation through sexuality.

The findings revealed that physical geography and natural resources have a great influence on the concentration of tourism firms. For example, the beaches (sub-district Bo Phud) are more appealing for tourists and tourism firms than the mountains (sub-districts Namuang and Taling Ngam). This allows more opportunities for cluster (1) (sub-district Bo Phud) to attract various specialised firms, and provide a wide range of complementary products and services. The physical geography and natural resources also influence the types of tourism firms and tourism activities. For example, in cluster (2) the nature-based and cultural cluster (sub-districts Na Muange and Taling Ngam) attract tourism firms that provide nature-based activities such as safaris, adventure and wildlife excursions.

The high number, and proximity, of tourism firms within sub-district Bo Phud allow more opportunities for collaborative networks among businesses compared to cluster (2) (sub-districts Namuang and Taling Ngam) which have low numbers of tourism firms (Prats and Guisa, 2008). The findings showed the higher level and more active nature of collaborative networks in the 'beach cluster' than 'the nature-based and cultural cluster', which allow more opportunities for

tourism stakeholders to share information, share and exchange resources, transfer knowledge, and build up trust and other shared values (Novelli et al., 2006; Prats and Guisa, 2008). As the result, beach cluster (sub district Bo Phud) has better infrastructure development, more innovative tourism activities, and more opportunities to improve its competitive advantages (Bernini, 2009; Dragusin et al., 2010; McRae-Williams, 2004).

In the next chapter (Chapter 6), the contributions of the study are discussed, and the practical implications are indicated.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

This research investigated the role of key tourism stakeholders and their social networks influencing (un) sustainable practices, and tourism cluster formations in two sub-districts; (1) in the north-eastern region (sub-district Bo Phud), and (2) in the south-western regions (sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam) of Samui Island. In addition, this research empirically identified key tourism stakeholders' profiles (including their interests, world views, resources, importance, and influence), and their networking patterns and properties that influence tourism clusters and sustainable tourism development. In this context, this research has presented a case-specific demonstration of these relational dynamics, applying qualitative techniques in a region of Samui which, despite its touristic significance, is relatively under-studied.

Further, previous studies on tourism clusters in the field of sustainable tourism are still scarce, and there has been a lack of clarity concerning the properties of key tourism stakeholders and the type of their interrelationships that can facilitate the formation of sustainable tourism clusters successfully; this especially in an island context, and in developing countries. Thus, this research fills a significant gap in the literature and provides fresh conceptual and empirical insights into this under- investigated area that will be of both practical and academic use.

Broadly, in this chapter, key findings are summarised in the context of research aims and objectives. The theoretical contributions to knowledge, and the practical implications of the research, are then discussed and research limitations and areas for further research identified.

6.2 Value of conceptual framework in addressing the research aim

In general, this work focused upon relational networks between key tourism stakeholders influencing the formation of tourism clusters. In particular, the emphasis was on identifying the profile and multiple roles that key tourism stakeholders play, and their networking patterns and properties that influence (un) sustainable practices and tourism cluster formations. The study was conceptually informed by research on social networks, clusters, tourism clusters, stakeholders and sustainable tourism.

Stakeholder theory helped in identifying key tourism stakeholders, and their profiles, as well as understanding their interests, attitudes, and concerns towards other tourism stakeholders and the tourism industry. This enables researchers to understand different interests and world views which enable opportunities, or constraint networking and the implementation of sustainable practices. A social networks approach is used as a tool for investigating tourism stakeholders' interrelationships, and uncovering the types, and patterns, of their social networks that either facilitate or constrain information flows, the ability to transfer knowledge, to innovate and offer the opportunity to develop collective actions towards sustainability goals (McLennan et al., 2015; Newman and Dale, 2004).

Thus, the approach enables an in-depth understanding of key influence of networking patterns existing between different tourism stakeholders in determining tourism clusters' profiles and development.

In addition, the three conceptual tools of stakeholder theory, the social network approach, and the concept of clusters helped in gauging the collaboration and partnerships existing between co-located, complementary tourism firms, universities and research institutions, local authorities and policy makers who provide specialised tourism products and services, and offer research, knowledge and skills. The emphasis of this work on using them in conjunction with each other, enabled the development of a holistic framework of tourism stakeholders' profiles, activities, networking patterns and how they contribute to the formation of clusters.

Overall, this research was guided by the following four objectives to:.

1. Investigate the content and nature of relationships between tourism stakeholders, as well as their business routines and behaviours.

As stated above (for details see chapter 2) a critical review of the literature on stakeholder theory, and how it has been applied in tourism contexts, was undertaken. This helped in identifying actors who have a significant stake in the tourism industry and gauging their profiles and networking patterns.

2. Investigate the influence of the social networks between tourism stakeholders in relation to tourism cluster formations.

As stated above (for details see chapter 2) a critical review of the literature on social network theory, and how it has been applied in tourism contexts, was undertaken. This help to gain a deeper understanding of the interactions among tourism stakeholders by investigating the formal and informal connections (Viren et al., 2015) and revealed the networks' contents and properties that enable opportunities, or constrains, tourism

stakeholders to develop sustainable tourism clusters (McLennan et al., 2015; Pavlovich, 2001; Pavlovich, 2003).

3. Identify and explain key factors obstructing relationships building and the implementation of sustainable practices.

Like Samui, other destinations in developing countries are facing the issue of unsustainable tourism in the form for example, of environmental degradation, polluted air and water, inequalities related to tourism development, poor spread of the benefits from tourism, erosion of beach areas, corruption, overloaded waste-management systems and loss of marine species (Brohman, 1996; Chernela, 2011; Malik and Bhat, 2015; Nguyen and Bosh, 2012; Scheyvens, 2011; Sinclair-Maragh and Gursoy, 2015). These studies informed the theoretical understanding of the challenges facing fragile destinations and empirical evidence provided further evidence (see Chapter 4 and chapter 5 for details)

4. Establish key factors facilitating the formation of sustainable tourism clusters.

As stated above (see section 6.3.5 for details), research has provided suggestions to improve relationship building and networking because high level of collaboration allow opportunities for effective cluster formation and development (Braun, 2005). A successful cluster development requires the wide involvement of cluster members and associated institutions (Jackson and Murphy, 2002; Porter, 1998) (i.e. co-located tourism complementary firms, local government/authorities, universities/higher education institutions, and support organisations) in order to share resources, and collaborate for mutual benefit which may enhance market growth through innovative tourism products and activities (Michael, 2007). Thus, it is essential to improve personal relationships among diverse tourism stakeholders (who have different interests, goals, world views,

and capacities) in order to sustain the collaborations in implementing collective actions towards sustainable goal.

A summary of findings related to research objectives are provided in the following subsections.

6.3 Summary of Research Findings

6.3.1 A critical review of key tourism stakeholders and their social networks in Samui

In general, key tourism stakeholders contributing to tourism clusters' formation in Samui are the policy makers/government bodies, private tourism firms, and support organisations such as tourism associations, and non-profit making bodies. This is different from Tavassoli and Tsagdis's study (2014) which identified that strong actors, or key actors, in the Linköping (information and communication technology) ICT cluster in Sweden also include higher education and financial institutions. Conversely, the higher education institution on Samui only provides support and act like facilitators and coordinators for other public and private-sector stakeholders (see discussion in detail in chapter 4). Also, financial institutions have no strong, active role in facilitating local communities to be able to start up their businesses. Local communities face difficulties to establish themselves in, and stay in, tourism businesses.

The findings revealed crucial properties of key tourism stakeholders and their social networks, which both advance and constrain the formation of tourism clusters. These are outlined in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: A summary of key weaknesses and opportunities for establishing a successful sustainable tourism cluster formation based on key tourism stakeholders' crucial properties and their social networks.

Key tourism stakeholders	Crucial properties	
	Weaknesses	Opportunities
Policy makers (e.g. government agencies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Limited <i>Financial</i> resource, -Lack of <i>Transparency</i>, -Insufficient <i>knowledge</i> -Lack of <i>Law enforcement</i> -Lack of <i>Strong commitment</i> towards sustainable tourism goal -Lack of <i>continuity support</i> -Lack of effective <i>monitoring systems</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Policy makers are <i>strong actors</i> in influencing and shaping sustainable tourism development through the <i>Right vision</i> towards sustainability goal WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY 'Right vision'? Do you mean 'positive'? 'constructive'? POSITIVE
Firms (tourism businesses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Distrust</i> towards government bodies and outsiders (e.g. both Thai and foreigners) which affects effective <i>networking</i> constraining <i>innovation</i>. -Limited <i>networking</i> constrains opportunities to establish successfully sustainable tourism development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>Right vision</i> (but limited in numbers of firms strongly committed to the sustainable goal and practices) -<i>Proximity</i> encourages collaborative networks and networking. -Collaborative networks and <i>networking</i> foster <i>innovation</i> that can enhance tourism competitive advantages and new ways to implement sustainable tourism development as well as <i>staff attraction</i>. -Private tourism businesses are <i>Strong actors</i> who has sufficient <i>financial resources, knowledge and skills</i>, and initiate sustainable tourism development.
Support organisation (e.g. tourism associations, and non-profit making bodies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Limited networking and entrepreneurship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Tourism associations and non-profit organisation are <i>strong actors</i> in driving (sustainable) tourism development. -Collaborative networks enable <i>lock-in to be addressed</i>, and foster <i>innovation</i>. <i>Have you mentioned lock-in before?</i>
Local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of <i>knowledge and skills</i> in tourism operation and tourism issues -Limited social networks and <i>Entrepreneurships</i> constraining opportunities to develop innovative tourism products and the opportunities to achieve a successful sustainable tourism development. 	

Source: Author

The findings showed existing local tourism associations like TAKS, THA-SCEC, and SSA are *strong actors*, and the main power forces in the tourism private sector, consisting of tourism firms. They play crucial roles in terms of providing specialised and complementary tourism products and activities through collaboration and *networking* with other key public and private sectors, which can significantly influence the growth and development of tourism clusters. They mobilised their considerable social networks in accessing relevant knowledge and resources outside the island (i.e. financial resources, experts/professionals, scholars/researchers, human resources/skilled labour force, information, technologies, and knowledge) and reaching global markets through shared tourism marketing and promotions. Thus, the collaboration and networking between businesses plays a crucial role in terms of *addressing lock-in*, creating clusters' image/brand, and attracting staff. They are also the leaders who initiate and implement green projects and promote green practices on the island. They have a *right vision* towards sustainable tourism goal, which they utilise in their strategy for making Samui a 'Green Island', and they have *strong commitment* towards sustainable tourism goals. Consequently, they implement many green projects and campaigns through collaboration and *networking* with other key public and private sectors, non-profit organisations and local communities. Examples include the green taxi service, the green spa service and the promotion of green practices among tourism stakeholders.

However, there are still a small number of existing firms that have clear and *right vision* towards sustainable goal. These firms are mostly in the hotel and resort sector and have a *strong commitment* towards implementing green practices, for example, participating in the green leaf program, saving energy, recycling, reducing waste, reducing the use of chemical products, using

organic and local products (e.g. for spa products) and treating water before its discharge. Thus, the collaboration and *networking* between public-private sectors enable innovations in tourism products and activities, and green projects.

Other key players are the policy makers/local government who have important roles in facilitating the development of tourism clusters. These include, for example, supporting and implementing cluster management, establishing policies that affect tourism stakeholders and tourism activities, providing appropriate infrastructure that supports and improves the tourism environment, offering financial resource to support cluster development and coordinating with other key public and private sectors for networking and exchange of information and knowledge (Svensson et al., 2005). Thus, local government must have sufficient *knowledge* and understanding of tourism issues and sustainable tourism in order to establish a clear and *right vision* towards sustainable tourism development, which can be promoted through tourism plans and strategies.

The findings showed that the local government has the goal of achieving sustainable tourism, but lacks long term/clear guidelines and plans for implementing its development. There are mostly short-term campaigns and projects for promoting green practices, which can only raise awareness among tourism stakeholders but are not effective enough for sustainable tourism development. The policy makers and government need to have a *strong commitment* towards sustainable goal through short-term/long-term plans and strategies, as well as effective monitoring systems (Pavlovich, 2001). The green projects should be supported and followed-up as part of continuity, so that they can be more effective and not just for publicity and promotion

over a short period of time. *Strong commitment* can also be seen through serious *law enforcement* and *transparency* of the government in terms of controlling tourism activities to operate in a sustainable manner. This can build *trust* among tourism stakeholders and encourage them to implement sustainable practices when they see the government is being sincere in implementing sustainable objectives.

However, the findings showed a lack of *strong commitment*, *law enforcement*, and *transparency* by government bodies, which contradicted the goals and policy of promoting Green Island and sustainable tourism development. This creates distrust among tourism stakeholders towards government bodies, and discourages them from implementing sustainable practices. Moreover, *finance* is crucial for infrastructures and facilities development, effective management (e.g. waste management), supporting human resource training programmes and tourism marketing and promotion (Brown and Geddes, 2007). However, the findings showed that local government has insufficient budget for effective tourism management and development, which creates poor conditions (e.g.. poor infrastructure and ineffective waste management) for tourism clusters. This can negatively affect tourists' travel experiences and the destination's appeal and image, as well as effective, sustainable tourism development.

The findings showed that *Geographical proximity* can encourage tourism stakeholders in networking, collaborating and creating alliances since proximity benefits the intensity of contacts between tourism stakeholders in the clusters (Prats and Guisa, 2007). However, the findings showed the lack of proximity of universities/higher education institutions which provide research and studies about tourism development, which may restrict the opportunity for effective cluster development. Due to the lack of involvement and insufficient knowledge and skills of local universities, there

was a lack of encouragement for the industry in seeking higher education institutions in order to implement studies and research. As a result, many studies were not applicable for implementation because the external researchers and experts do not live in the area. Consequently, do not fully understand the local environment and context (e.g. social, political, and cultural issues) within the area.

Trust between tourism stakeholders in the clusters is important because trust facilitates information sharing and knowledge transfer, and enable cooperation and reciprocation (Prats and Guisa, 2007; Taylor et al., 2007). The findings show there were some distrust between different groups of tourism stakeholders, which limited the intensity and quality of knowledge flow, collaboration, and support. This restricts the opportunity for the improvement of cluster efficiency and effectiveness, either through spill overs or innovation stimulation (McKinsey and Co, 2000).

Findings showed existing *entrepreneurship* at the individual level, for example between businesses, and between business and local communities in order to create travel packages. This entrepreneurship enables businesses and local communities to have more opportunities for them to earn more income by attracting more tourists, and reaching broader tourist markets through new tourism products, services, and activities (Fillis, 2009). However, there are still limited in the number of entrepreneurial activities between businesses and local communities, and between local communities, which limits the opportunities for tourism clusters to create innovative tourism products and services developed from local communities and their resources. It also limits the opportunities for local communities to benefit from tourism due to their lack of *knowledge and skills*, social networks, and *financial* resources which makes it difficult for them to participate in tourism business or successfully operate tourism businesses. There are also

existing entrepreneurial relationships at organisational level, for example in partnerships between different public and private sectors/organisations in order to organise tourism events, festivals, and activities. These partnerships allow opportunities for cluster actors to make a destination more interesting through the innovation of tourism products and activities, and to attract more tourists (Ateljevic and Li, 2009).

6.3.2 The type, pattern and content of networks between tourism stakeholders

Prevalent research looking at social networks focuses on the patterns such as size, density proximity and homogeneity (Ilbery and Saxena, 2009) and types of relationships (e.g. formal and informal relationships) that link actors together (Kimbu and Ngoasong, 2013). Also, it identifies the network properties (e.g. trust, reciprocity, and knowledge sharing and transfer of resources and information (Denicolai et al., 2010; Pavlovich and Kearins, 2004; Ziakas and Osta, 2010)), and the strength of interpersonal ties determined by the degrees of emotional intensity and frequency of contacts (Granovetter, 1973). However, previous studies overlooked the impact of networks, and the role of stakeholders, in bringing about the formation of tourism clusters. Thus the use of the three theoretical approaches in conjunction with each other provides a much more comprehensive perspective on sustainable tourism development and the underlying reasons for unsustainable practices.

The key findings revealed that tourism clusters in the two sub-regions are comprised of local networks of heterogeneous tourism businesses and professionals, clusters of luxury hotels, resorts and spa businesses (who are members of SSA) THA-SCEC that mostly belong to outsiders. In fact, TAKS is the biggest private sector network and consists of heterogeneous

group of tourism businesses. However, the majority of TAKS network members are small and medium-size tourism businesses that belong to local Samui people. This also shows the preference of local Samui people, who prefer to work with people who have the same ethnic origin as themselves. This is because Samui people know one another well since they are connected through families, relatives and friends.

It is the informal relationships that facilitate networking amongst businesses, and between the private and public sectors, to mobilise tourism activities, tourism marketing and promotions, and green activities on Samui Island. Tourism stakeholders are linked together (e.g. between businesses, inter-organisation, and inter-sector) with different types of relationships including friendships, kinships, a shared common goal, common interests, mutual benefits and interdependence. Informal networks, which are based on trust, and reciprocal and complementary exchange relationships, allow businesses to share and exchange information and resources (e.g. equipment, staffs, and financial resources) and to transfer knowledge (Farsani et al., 2014; Ilbery and Saxena, 2009).

However, the findings showed the limited relational ties and those direct connections only exist amongst tourism businesses such as upmarket hotels and resorts, tour operators, travel agencies whilst local communities, or locally owned establishments, often find themselves working in isolation or their problems are largely ignored by the tourism industry. The limited relational ties, and the imbalance that exists, contributes to limited sharing of information and resource flows (e.g. funding, and knowledge) as confirmed by previous research (see Dredge, 2006; Pavlovich, 2003). This can obstruct the opportunities to achieve sustainable objectives because collaboration

and partnerships among diverse tourism stakeholders is required at the destination to share common goals and values in order to implement sustainable practices.

However, the increasing number of relational ties, even though they are not ideal, allow opportunities for wider stakeholder participation and new actors -for example, the green hotel and TAKS networks- are increasingly pulled into (in)formal networks. Thus, there is the scope that, if the relationship quality improves as a result of greater transparency and trust, it can encourage tourism stakeholders to help and support one another in terms of knowledge transfer. This can improve the knowledge and understandings of new members about the significance of implementing sustainable practices.

Moreover, the findings showed that both strong and weak ties among tourism stakeholders are crucial in terms of implementing tourism and green activities, since there is a need for collaborative networks among diverse groups (i.e. private and public sectors, non-profit organisations, and local communities). Thus, collaborative activities are built upon both strong ties that foster the exchange mechanism between tourism stakeholders, and weak ties that allow opportunities to access new information and provide a critical diversity of professionals and specialties (Newman and Dale, 2005; Pavlovich, 2003).

However, it is the strong ties that are the crucial driving force for business and tourism activities, since strong relationships enable a high level of information exchange and sharing, mutual reciprocity and support and enhanced knowledge transfer amongst businesses (Ziakas and Costa, 2010). These strong ties are linked by families, relatives and long standing friendships, which

contain a high degree of trust, commitment and cooperation between tourism stakeholders (Atterton, 2007; Carson et al., 2004). These networks' members have regular meetings to, for example, share and exchange ideas and information about marketing and promotion, exchange information about technology and machines, share and transfer knowledge and skills, and to discuss problems related to tourism and environmental issues, suppliers, and employees (Jack, 2005).

It is evidenced that strong ties can benefit the network's members through developments such as improving business performance through support and knowledge transfer and information sharing. Businesses can access more resources, and reduce the cost of training programmes and promotions and joint problem- solving. This can also benefit tourism clusters as a whole, since it facilitates the improvement of the quality of tourism products and services, and also can improve the experience for tourists (Novelli et al., 2006). Strong ties also enhance cooperation and collaborations among tourism stakeholders to implement tourism activities, green projects, and effective tourism promotions. Clearly, there were close-knit relationships only between people in particular groups, such as the upmarket hotel networks, and the group of their '*pak pouk*' (Thai words means his/her own groups) which exclude and block some other groups of people from being members of networks (Chell and Baines, 2000). This limits the information flow and diversity of knowledge and ideas, prevents change and innovation, and results in a reduced ability to solve complex social problems (Newman and Dale, 2005). As a result, it restricts the opportunities to develop effective collaborative networks to solve environmental issues and to achieve sustainable tourism.

On the other hand, weak ties bridge different sectors and groups of tourism stakeholders, which allow for critical diversity and for new information to be brought into the network (Newman and Dale, 2005). Weak ties also allow for new ideas and innovation for sustainable tourism development, tourism marketing and promotions, problem solving, and opportunities to obtain scarce resources and to reach global markets (Pavlovich, 2003). Thus, both strong and weak ties are crucial for tourism cluster development since they facilitate coordination and collaboration among tourism stakeholders and also create the foundations of knowledge-based capacities for the destination (Pavlovich, 2003), which is the source of innovations for tourism products and sustainable tourism development.

6.3.3 The influences of social networks on tourism cluster formations

This case research reveals the crucial roles of social networks existing amongst different groups and sectors of tourism stakeholders, which influence tourism cluster formations. The limited capacity of local government and public organisation in terms of resources, including sufficient knowledge in tourism issues, a skilled labour force, budget, and wide connections with different potential tourism stakeholders (Churugsa et al., 2007), has encouraged the public sector to seek collaboration with the private sector which has more capacity and ability to implement effective tourism activities and promotions.

On the other hand, the private sector has no legitimate authority in terms of law enforcement and the establishment of tourism policy. As a result, the private sector also makes good relationships with the public sector so that they can ask for support and negotiate for their collective interests in (Dragusin et. Al 2010) for example, improving infrastructure and facilities, share-decision-

making in relation to tourism strategies and development, preserving the local environment and achieving sustainability goals. Thus, these collaborative networks between the key public and private sectors allow for mutual benefits and the improvement of local tourism development (Bernini, 2009) because the networks can facilitate better use of skills and resources, foster innovate tourism activities and green projects and allow a faster decision-making process than the traditional bureaucratic system of the public-sector. The latter can respond more rapidly to the needs of businesses and the problems of tourism (Svensson et al., 2005).

In fact, local government weaknesses have encouraged local businesses to informally come together, in terms of tourism promotion and development, as 'self-help networks' in an attempt to develop Samui as the 'green island', and to achieve sustainable tourism goals. Key local business networks include TAKS, THA-SCEC, SSA, HR Club and environmentally focused groups like the Green Island Project and GIFT. These key local business networks play active roles in an attempt to promote Samui Island in global markets, innovate tourism events and activities, improve the quality of tourism products and services and solve the problems of the local environment. These 'self-organised stakeholder agencies' (Larsen et al., 2011) enable a business, or group of businesses, to increase opportunities to access more critical resources and information, to overcome obstacles and to solve problems (Newman and Dale, 2005). For example, TAKS is the biggest network of tourism businesses, and has considerable power representing the private tourism sector in Samui Island. TAKS employs its considerable connections and personal social networks with other key private and public sector actors (at local, provincial and national levels), with non-profit organisations, local communities (such as Samui municipality, TAT, SPOTS, the Provincial Administrative Organisation of Suratthani Office and

SSA, THA-SCEC, and Bangkok Airways to facilitate its access to financial resources, source more experts and professionals and to seek support and collaboration.

Importantly, these key social networks are mobilised to promote common collective interests (e.g. local environment preservations, focus on quality of product and services, targeting upmarket-to luxury markets, and targeting the honeymoon couples market), which can shape how the tourism clusters are developed. Thus, social networking underpins tourism cluster formations, which are formed to promote these common interests of different sectors, to create integrated packages of tourism products and services, to protect the local environment, to improve and innovate tourism product and services, to create destination image and collective identities, to create and attract specialisations and to transfer knowledge in common sectors (Lagos and Courtis, 2008; Taplin, 2011).

In addition, the findings showed that there are some alliances between businesses and local communities, but these are by and large limited. However, it points to the possibility that, with agency support and greater collaboration between tourism stakeholders, there is an opportunity for businesses to form alliances with local communities in order to create tourism recreations such as visiting local fruit plantations, and visiting local fishermen's village so that local communities can provide activities and sell their products (e.g. fresh, local fruit, and fresh seafood). Collaborative networks also enhance the synergies between different sectors, where businesses can share and exchange resources (e.g. budget, knowledge, information), which allow opportunities for businesses to improve the quality of products and services within tourism clusters.

Moreover, social networks are mobilised to seek collaboration and support for promoting green practices (e.g. being as environmental friendly in operating tourism services and providing tourism products, reducing waste and saving energy) among tourism stakeholders. Social networks are mobilised to encourage businesses to implement the environmental classification programme (i.e. Green Leaf programme) and implementing green projects. Examples include establishing 7 Greens concept, the green hotel networks, the green finger networks, car free week campaign, the green spa service, the green taxi service and the 'Low Carbon School Projects'. Through collaboration and partnerships, this common interest is also promoted through marketing programmes, in-flight announcements of Samui-going-green efforts, tourism magazines, websites, and booklets about 'Samui Green Island'. An example is the in-flight announcements of Bangkok Airways, the main airline of Samui Island;

"Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of Bangkok Airways, all crew and Samui residences, we would like to thank you for joining us on this journey and please be kindly help look after our Samui natural beauty. We are now joining hand in hand working together to make Samui greener and more beautiful for all of us, thank you."

Importantly, social networks enable small firms, and local communities (e.g. local schools) to participate in green activities (e.g. means to reduce wastes and save energy) by which they obtain support in terms of budget and expert knowledge (Grimstad and Burgess, 2014; McLennan et al, 2015). Thus, social networking among different groups and sectors of tourism stakeholders is crucial for achieving sustainable tourism.

In fact, these key tourism associations also play a crucial role in coordinating and bridging between public and private sectors to work together towards sustainable tourism development. These networks cut across sub districts, but there are higher level, of collaborative networks in sub district Bo Phud where there are high concentration of businesses, rather than in sub districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam where there is a low concentration of businesses (see table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Profile of tourism clusters in the two case study areas

Tourism cluster	Cluster 1 ‘Beach cluster’ (Sub district Bo Phud)	Cluster 2 ‘Nature-based and cultural cluster’ (Sub districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam)
Agglomeration	High number of firms	Low number of firms
Networking	High degree of collaborative networking	Low degree of collaborative networking
Network ties (between different stakeholder groups)	Strong and weak ties	Weak ties
Network type (between different stakeholder groups)	Formal and informal (informal networks are the main driving force in seeking support and collaboration)	Formal
Complementarity of products	Dissimilar attractions, and diversity	Similar attractions, and limited
Main appeal	Urbanised, beaches, water-base recreation, world-class fine dining, nightlife, spa, shopping, and cultural attractions	Rural, mountainous, nature-base recreations (e.g. wildlife, safari, butterfly gardens, aquarium), local culture and lifestyle (e.g. local houses, temples, fruit plantation)
Specialisation	Upmarket hotel and resort, fine dining, spa treatment	Nature-based recreation, agriculture and local culture

Source: author

A high concentration and close proximity of tourism firms in sub district Bo Phud (see Table 6.2) foster a higher level of networking between various tourism stakeholders, and encourages them to have more frequency of contacts, meetings, and collaboration, which permits a better flow of

knowledge, information and human capital (Svensson et al., 2005) compared to sub districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam. As the result, sub districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam have limited complementary tourism products and services, and limited tourism development in the form, for example, of infrastructure and facilities. This is because of low level of networking between various tourism stakeholders which restricts the opportunities for tourism stakeholders to share and exchange ideas, common problems, information and resources. For example, local communities in these areas have no connections with government and businesses, which restricts their access for information, resources and support in order to develop tourism products. They are excluded from the decision-making, and planning processes. In these areas, local communities need a lot of support from the government in terms of finance and know-how transfers. Thus, low level of networking between various tourism stakeholders can limit opportunities for innovative tourism products and services that are uniquely created from the grass root like local communities. This limits opportunities for sustainable tourism development within the areas, since the benefits were not truly transmitted to the local communities (Pavlovich, 2003). It is crucial to include local communities in the tourism development process because they live in the area and are concerned about the impact of tourism activities on the areas and their livings (Prats and Guisa, 2007). For example, they want to develop and promote local cultures and local products as key tourism activities in their areas, they want to develop and promote eco-tourism, and they want to preserve local culture and environment.

6.3.4 The challenges facing sustainable tourism development in Samui

Overall, despite opportunities inherent in two clusters, findings also show key factors that obstruct relationship-building towards the achievement of sustainable tourism objectives. These

are include lack of trust, time and commitment towards sustainable tourism development. Key challenges towards sustainable tourism implementation also arise due to the lack of financial resource, and social networks that are in some cases mobilised for unsustainable practices such as corruption, and by the networks of businesses that are not licensed or are unregulated, as well as ‘dark networks’ of sex workers and pimps, and drug dealers’ clusters. These networks usually exist between businesses and ‘*poo mee it ti pon*’ (Thai words mean powerful person such as local politicians, and local authorities), and are mobilised to facilitate unsustainable practices like drugs and prostitutes, encroaching upon public areas like beaches, road, and mountains, and operating bar business longer than the legally permitted time. Social networks are also mobilised to compensate for some unsustainable practices because they involve families, friends, relatives (i.e. between people who have legitimate authority and the businesses), and ‘*pak pouk*’ (Thai words means his/her own groups).

In fact, the pressures for environmental preservation and action are undertaken mainly because of personal values (see Grimstad and Burgess, 2014) and primarily by local business which are concerned about the negative impacts of tourism on the local environment, such as accumulated rubbish, polluted water, loss of biodiversity, degradations of forests, and encroachment on mountains and beaches. However, there are still small number of active tourism stakeholders (most are local hotel/resort owners), who are always actively involved in taking forward green projects and activities. There were fewer committed members and tourism stakeholders who participate in green projects because the environmental objective is not their priority compared to marketing objectives.

“Participating and implementing green practices requires a lot of efforts” that is what many participants said. It must come from personal interest and values about green practices (e.g., saving energy, reducing waste and not using chemical products), which take time to develop in people who do not initially have it. It requires strong commitment, time, budget and energy. For example, many managers of hotel/resort businesses pointed out that it is their job to make profits, and not participate in green activities, except when the owners are supporting or there is a corporate event that involves projecting the right image of the establishment. Also, they were quite frank in expressing their unwillingness to spend time on those green activities and meetings, since they have a lot of work to do covering their day-to-day work. These factors obstruct them for being network members or undertaking green activities.

Many tourism stakeholders, including small-size businesses who are not members of any key tourism networks, have heard about the ‘green island project’ but they are not involved in any green projects because many of them are not connected to the networks so they do not receive any information about the projects. They agreed that green projects and sustainable practices are good, but they are not actively taking action and participating in the networks. This shows the ‘laid-back or unnecessary’ attitude towards environmental issues, and less concerned about how they can help to improve and preserve the local environment. This is mainly because they do not see the significance, and benefits, of participating in the networks and implementing green practices for both themselves and the tourism cluster as a whole.

Another important factor that de-motivated tourism stakeholders from participating in green networks is distrust among tourism stakeholders, - especially distrust towards local government and local tourism associations. Many tourism stakeholders think that both local government and

tourism associations have no strong commitment towards sustainable tourism's implementation. For example, they (i.e. local government and tourism associations) were perceived as mainly not acting accordingly to what they have promised, or they usually do different things from what they have promoted or promised to the public. Most green projects and campaigns were perceived as existing for short-term benefits and publicity, the projects unable to solve the fundamental problems and not providing long-term benefits.

Moreover, local government's lack of serious law enforcement and control over tourism activities create serious negative impacts on the local environment. This can demotivate many tourism stakeholders from participating in green networks because they feel that it is useless for them to put a lot of effort into implementing green practices while the government still allows major, unsustainable practices to occur.

6.3.5 Suggestions for improving relationships and developing sustainable tourism clusters: Insights from the case study

Key factors that facilitate relationships building among tourism stakeholders include trust, shared values and mutual benefits, awareness, and understanding toward issues (e.g. sustainable tourism) (Braun, 2005; Jackson and Murphy, 2002; Ryan, 2002; Saxena, 2005; Taylor et al., 2007).

The findings showed that trust is a crucial element for tourism stakeholders to consider for their collaboration. They would rather connect and work with those who they trust, including their friends, people who share the same values and people who have been worked with for a long

time. Trust enables network members to gain benefits in terms of information sharing and knowledge transfers, mutual support and reciprocity (Jackson and Murphy, 2002; Prats and Guisa, 2007; Taylor et al., 2007). Trust is an important factor for sustaining relationships and strengthen relationship development since a higher level of trust encourages a stronger relationship, higher quality of knowledge flows, and a higher level of support and reciprocity (Braun, 2005; Prats and Guisa, 2007; Saxena, 2005; Ziakas and Costa, 2010). It also enhances synergies and collaboration among tourism stakeholders in order to implement tourism activities, green projects, shared marketing and shared problem solving (Taylor et al., 2007). Thus, it is crucial for local government to be transparent, and to show sincerity in implementing sustainable practices. Government must have a strong commitment and be able to take action according to what they promised. Government must include tourism stakeholders in different sectors (i.e. private sector, local communities, higher education institutions, and activists) in the tourism development process through regular meetings or workshops, which allow different tourism stakeholders to share attitudes, interests, and opinions towards tourism planning and development.

In addition, the findings showed that shared values and mutual benefits (e.g. economic, social and environmental goals) among tourism stakeholders are crucial factors influencing relationship-building and sustaining the networks (Pavlovich, 2001; Ryan, 2002; Taylor et al., 2007). Yet, it is important to identify diverse tourism stakeholders' values, interests, goals, and capacities (Waligo et al., 2013) so that we can develop an understanding of their shared values and benefits. Thus, networking should benefit to all members, so that the relationships can be sustained. For example, government and policy makers can set up incentive programmes giving

out benefits to those who participate in green projects and implement sustainable practices (Waligo et al., 2013).

Moreover, policy makers should improve and develop effective communication and information sharing systems in order to develop a better understanding of tourism issues and sustainable tourism. This can enhance shared values and create a common goal towards STD. Policy makers should also increase the networking levels among different groups of tourism stakeholders since networks can encourage tourism stakeholders (members) to implement green practices and projects. For example, the THA-SCEC network has THA-Green groups as members who are promoting and implementing green projects throughout hotel members and local communities. The Samui Spa Association encourages members to do green spa services and participate in Green Leaf programme. TAKS promotes green island projects through collaboration with different public and private sectors. Networking allows opportunities for members to communicate, share information and ideas and transfer knowledge which can facilitates problem solving and lead to innovations for sustainable tourism development. Importantly, networking can raise awareness, and enhance the understanding, of green practices, their significance and benefits among members. So that they become more concerned and active about environmental issues. They can save costs, be more environmental friendly, and preserve the local environment which is what tourism clusters are heavily reliant upon. This shows that stakeholders can be encouraged to participate in green networks and implement green practices once they have an awareness and understanding of the ST concept and its benefits for themselves and tourism clusters as a whole. Thus, networking and communicating among tourism stakeholders can increase the awareness and understandings of sustainable tourism as both a philosophy and its

significance. This can motivate tourism stakeholders to participate in green networks and implement sustainable practices.

Significantly, this research has contributed knowledge about tourism clusters and sustainable tourism literatures in terms of providing a discussion about the influences of tourism stakeholders' social networks upon tourism clusters' formation and development. It presents insights into the clustering processes, as well as facilitating discussion about the types of relationships and the crucial properties of tourism stakeholders and their networks that can facilitate successful, sustainable tourism cluster formation in the context of islands and developing economy.

6.4 Theoretical contributions to knowledge

There is still lack of empirical studies on tourism clusters and in the field of sustainable tourism (Cunha and Cunha, 2005; Hawkins, 2004). In particular, the discussion about the role of tourism networks that influence the formation and (sustainable) development of tourism clusters is insufficiently developed.

Generally, a cluster can be seen as a form of business network which has strong business objective aiming to generate benefits and sales improvement through innovations and competitive advantages (Porter 1998; Michael, 2007). This research has advanced the knowledge in the field of sustainable tourism cluster. It focuses not only on business objectives and business networks, but also emphasises sustainability objectives and tourism (social) networks that

comprise different groups of tourism stakeholders who are both directly and indirectly involved in the tourism industry.

Earlier, sustainable tourism literature strongly suggests the need for all tourism stakeholders to be involved in order to achieve sustainable tourism development (Aas et al., 2005; Currie et al., 2009; Hawkins, 2004; Pavlovich, 2001; Prats and Guisa, 2008; Presenza and Sheeran, 2013; Scheyvens, 2011; Timur and Getz, 2009; Tomljenović et al., 2013; Waligo et al., 2013). The normative core of stakeholder theory has helped to identify, and include, other '*peripheral tourism stakeholders*', who are powerless and obtain fewer resources because of their peripheral position in tourism networks. They are normally excluded from decision-making and the tourism development process. These following 'peripheral tourism stakeholders' are include: local communities, local farmers, fishermen, teachers and small, local businesses. The social networks approach enables an in-depth understanding on how tourism stakeholders' networks facilitate or limit opportunities in developing sustainable tourism clusters.

This research also offers a different approach to tourism development policies which, in this case, can be developed from a bottom-up perspective because tourism development policies come from the actual needs and requirements of the local communities as well as other peripheral tourism stakeholders. This can facilitate the improvement of local communities' economies (e.g. job creations) and livelihood, as well as the conservation of the local culture and environment.

The findings showed the lack of networking among local communities (e.g. farmers, fishermen) and other small local businesses (e.g. tour operators, tour agencies, restaurants and budget accommodation businesses) with other key, tourism stakeholders. In particular, there were many

local people who wanted to participate in tourism activities, had ideas and wanted to develop environmental-friendly tourism activities based on local culture and resources. However, they did not know how to start, due to their lack of knowledge and resources. They wanted government support in terms of financial resources and physical infrastructure development, as well as training programmes about the tourism business. The locals feel that they are ignored, and powerless, because they are excluded from the decision-making and planning processes. Also, they have no control over the growth and development of their areas. They perceived that it is inevitable for them to face serious negative impacts from the tourism industry and have fewer benefits from it.

The result is a limitation of the opportunities to improve local communities' capacities, as well as the destinations' capacities. For example, in sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam there was limited networking among tourism stakeholders, especially local communities and small tourism businesses. This also constrained opportunities to improve local SMEs' performance, which is crucial for successful tourism cluster formation (Braun, 2005) as well as for the development of innovative, sustainable tourism activities and products (e.g. local culture, and environmental friendly behaviour). Thus, this research suggests that it is crucial to consider peripheral tourism stakeholders as members of tourism clusters in order to move sustainability objectives forward.

However, the key challenges also involve government bodies who have legitimate authority and responsibility to establish tourism development policies and manage and control tourism activities. They must enforce the law strictly and develop, for example, transparent, corruption-free practices, as well as preventing networks mobilised for unsustainable practices.

Thus, this research provides an insight into, and understanding of, tourism stakeholders' attitudes, interests, values, and expectations that influence networking and (un)sustainable practices. It also enables an understanding of their roles and networking patterns that influence (un) sustainable practices as well as cluster formation and development. It discusses and explains networking between tourism stakeholders and addresses opportunities and challenges in relation to networking and implementing sustainable practices. It also addresses the crucial properties of key tourism stakeholders and their networking, which should be improved in order to facilitate the formation of successful, sustainable tourism clusters, especially in the island context and in developing economies.

6.5 Practical implications of the research

This research provides an analytical framework for tourism policy makers to gain a better understanding of the important roles and practices of key tourism stakeholders, and their social networks, which contribute to the formation and development of tourism clusters (see Figure 2.2 in Chapter 2). It provides an insightful understanding into tourism stakeholder groups, such as their values, interests, expectations, and concerns towards networking and tourism development.

This study also indicates the importance of understanding the nature of tourism stakeholders' interactions (e.g. negotiating about tourism plans and policies, market information, technology information, shared marketing, shared problem-solving, voluntary environmental projects, human resources, training and financial resources), and the structure of their social networks (formal/informal networks, and strong/weak ties). This allows policy makers and local

government to develop strategies for their management of networking and relationship building, because networking can facilitate best practices, knowledge transfer, and the latest innovations in sustainability (Pavlovich, 2003). Effective collaboration among diverse tourism groups is essential for implementing sustainable practices, improving local communities' livelihood (e.g., minimising negative impacts from tourism activities, development of basic facilities and infrastructure, and increased levels of participation in the tourism industry), as well as improving innovative tourism products and activities based on local resources and cultures.

The analysis of stakeholders' interrelationships enable policy makers and local government, to create new ways of working, to develop activities or programmes that encourage dynamic partnerships and collaborations, to improve relationships between tourism stakeholders, and to develop an efficient communication system (Cooper et al., 2009; Novelli et al., 2006; Robertson, 2011). For example, this research suggests the bottom-up approach for tourism planning and development which requires the involvement of diverse groups of tourism stakeholders, particularly non-profit making actors and local communities in the tourism development process.

The application of stakeholder and social network analysis enables the identification of key tourism stakeholders who are strong actors (e.g. private sectors represented by tourism associations, and local government) in establishing tourism planning and strategies, mobilising tourism activities, and initiating green projects. These strong actors, who possess critical resources, were perceived as having greater legitimacy and power than other others because of their attributes; knowledge and skills, expertise, and resources such as information, and finance . Strong actors, such as tourism associations, and local government, should be leaders in

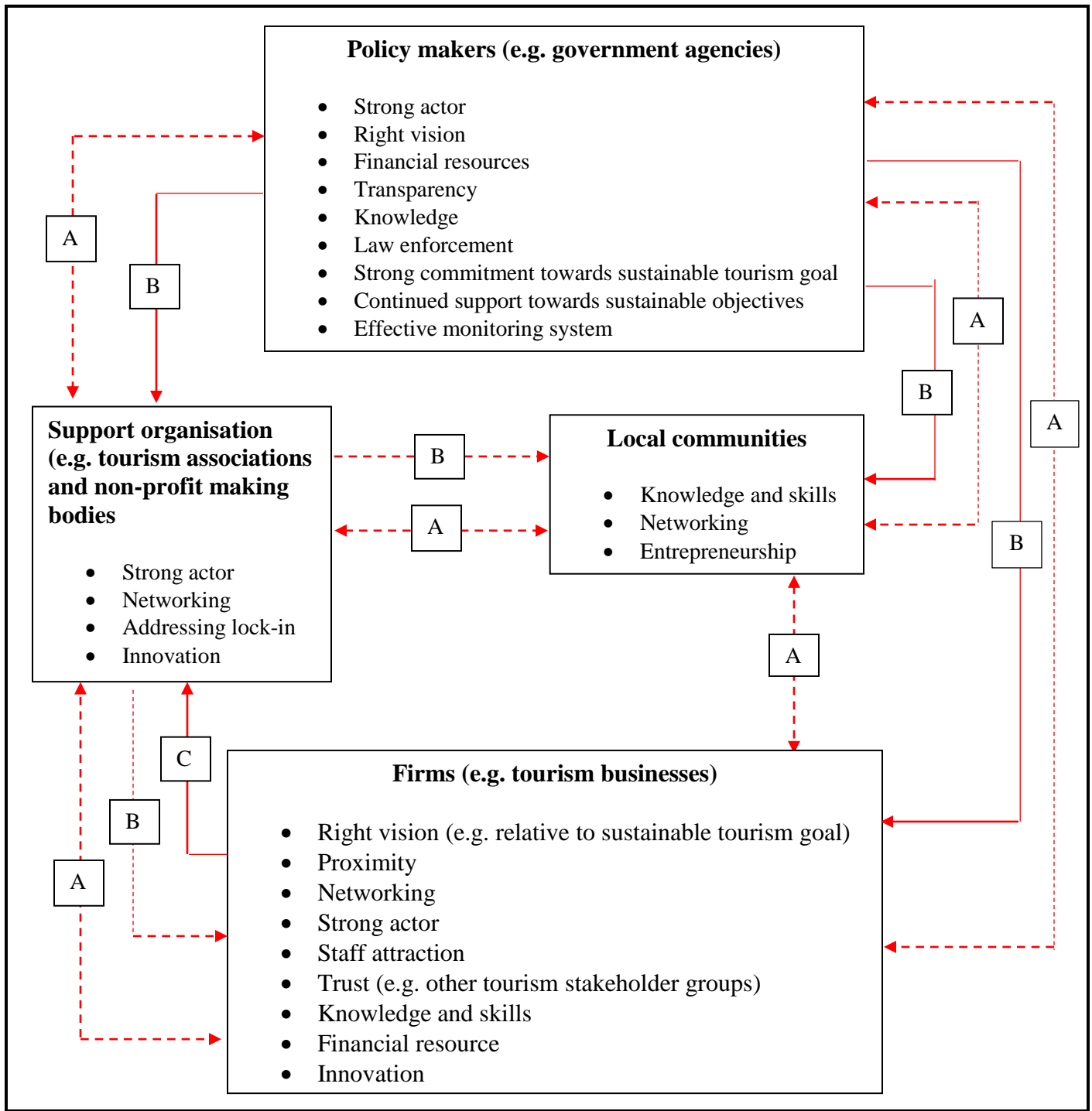
coordinating multiple stakeholders to meet, communicate and to share opinions and ideas relating to tourism development and sustainable development. In particular, government should facilitate knowledge exchange (Granek and Hassanali, 2006), and support education and training programmes because the involvement of local government in cluster programs also provides an indication to businesses that those programmes are credible and necessary (McLennan et al., 2015). Government should also promote institutions and practices that create stronger links between industry, education providers and public sector researchers (Hall, 2009).

Moreover, there is a need for strong local and regional planning and development control by the authorities (Hunter, 1997) so that the local resources will be used more efficiently and effectively, and negative impacts from tourism development on local communities and the natural environment can be minimised. However, the local communities should be involved in the tourism planning process to some degree, and stakeholders (including local communities) should be empowered to make decision throughout the process and understand that their voice will be heard, and their participation has the potential to influence decisions (Byrd, 2007). Thus, stakeholders can be encouraged to be involved in sustainable tourism networks, and implement sustainable practices. In this way, all tourism stakeholders can benefit from tourism including, for example, local farming communities which may want to develop tourism-related agricultural activities, and/or alternative styles of development (Yasarata et al., 2010).

Thus, this research can be used in studying networking patterns in small, niche communities, key characteristics and structures that allow opportunities for tourism stakeholders to improve and develop their relationships in order to foster synergies, collaboration and innovations towards

sustainable tourism objectives (see Figure 6.1). This study also suggests how a focus on tourism stakeholders and their networking patterns can be used in studying tourism clusters' formation and uncovering the underlying micro-processes therein.

Figure 6.1: The Samui Island framework for stakeholder collaboration



Source: Author



Note: the arrow shows the types of relationships between tourism stakeholders, by which the **bold arrow** represents the formal relationships, and the **dotted arrow** represents informal relationships. **A**, trust and cooperation for (funding, promotion, marketing, innovative tourism activities, training, green activities, joint problem-solving, tourism planning, and tourism strategies). **B**, creation of/support to; **C**, membership of. **Bullet points** in each tourism stakeholder's box are the crucial properties of tourism stakeholders that facilitate the formation and development of sustainable tourism clusters.

6.5.1 Policy recommendation

This research can be useful for policy implementation by utilising the relational approach to understand the social process which can reveal insights into the policy implementation process (Krutwayscho and Bramwell, 2010). This can help government understand, and be able to identify, the issues and factors that obstruct effective policy implementation, as well as to enable the government to identify positive trends and opportunities to develop means for more effective policy implementation. In addition to the strategic role, and established policies, of the government at national level, policy implementation is also influenced by the socio-economic, cultural and political relations in society that involve communications, negotiations and interactions between social actors at the destination (Bramwell and Meyer, 2007; Stevenson et al., 2008; Yeung, 2005).

According to Thailand's National Tourism Development Plan (2012-2016), "Thailand has a vision to become a quality tourism destination with tourism competitiveness at the international level, thus enabling the country to generate more income and distribute wealth on a sustainable basis" (UNWTO, 2012)⁷³. To achieve the aim, the national tourism policy has established the following tourism strategies:

- 1) Development of tourism infrastructures and facilities

This aims, for example, to support the local administration to develop a tourism-supportive infrastructure and to improve the standard of facilities, safety and hygiene, with consideration given to accessibility to tourist destinations for the disabled and the elderly.

⁷³ The PowerPoint presentation at the 6th UNWTO Executive Training Programme, Bhutan, 25th -28th June, 2012. Available online from http://asiapacific.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/thailand_2.pdf. [Accessed: 21st January 2016].

2) Rehabilitation and sustainable development of tourism sites

- Develop, restore, and conserve the existing natural, historical, and cultural tourist destinations.
- Promote quality tourism and the market for quality tourists through the development of new destinations in areas with potential for connecting with nature, culture and local lifestyles, in accordance with the tourism development plan, which sets the framework for the development of tourism.
- The destinations should be developed with plans which give consideration to the destination's carrying capacity and avoid both over- development and damage to the local, natural environment, culture and uniqueness.
- Revise laws and regulations, and improve the effectiveness of law enforcement, to facilitate tourism: ensure safety; prevent the exploitation of tourists; resolve environmental problems; and develop a sustainable tourism industry (UNWTO, 2012).
- Improve the quality and standard of waste management systems, and water treatment systems at tourist destinations.
- Promote the use of clean energy, and reduce energy consumption in the private sector.
- Solve the issue of Thailand's negative images such as lack of safety, tourist fraud, and sex tourism (e.g. prostitution, AIDS, and human trafficking).

3) Development of tourism products and services

- Raise and maintain the standard for tourism services to meet international standards; improve the standards of personnel in the tourism sector; and, improve public services in order to attract, and be able to efficiently service, the market for quality tourists (UNWTO, 2012).

- Create new tourism activities responding to specific groups of tourists (e.g. families and honeymooners) who are interested in activities such as health, adventure, spiritual, sport and agritourism, and MICE.
- Promote investment by, and participation of, the private sector in tourism development.
- Support local businesses and SMEs in terms of financial resources, knowledge and advice for start-up businesses.
- Develop the standards of tourist safety which cover all tourism activities and improve effective law enforcement in relation to safety issues.
- Support the tourism police, public organisations and local communities to improve language skills (e.g. English, French, Chinese) in order to be able to assist tourists.
- Improve the knowledge and skill of human resources in tourism, for example, tour guides should improve their language skills and the knowledge about the local history, culture and tourist destinations.
- Promote public-private collaboration for establish training programmes for human resource in the tourism, hospitality and service industries.
- Develop training courses for SMEs

4) Improvement on tourism confidence and tourism promotion

- Promote a positive image and understanding of Thai tourism to the tourists.
- Harmonise the value of ‘Thainess’ to Thailand tourism.
- Improve the quality of marketing and increase marketing channels.
- Collaborate with the private sector for special tourism packages, special offers, and promotions.

- Support the trade +consumer Fair and Road Show.
- 5) Encouragement of participation from government sectors, civil societies and local administration in tourism management.
- Develop public-private collaboration to reduce bureaucratic processes, pool resources (e.g. financial), marketing and promotions.

At the local level, Samui Island has established policies (e.g. social, environmental and tourism) that focus on the improvement of the local economy, local communities' quality of life (e.g. standard of living, safety, hygiene, public health and education), the improvement of waste management and water treatment systems, the conservation of the natural environment and sustainable tourism development. These policies include:

- Development of the city plans and zoning as well as the clear direction of development with consideration given to the carrying capacity of Samui Island.
- Develop protected areas for environmental conservation and protection.
- Develop effective waste management system (e.g. collect, separate and dispose of rubbish) and reduce the amount of waste.
- Improve the effectiveness of water treatment systems.
- Improve the quality and standard of infrastructures and facilities (e.g. roads, footpaths, light poles, electric wires).
- Improve the effective management system of public utilities (e.g. water and electricity).
- Promote the 'Samui Green Island Project' and increase the green area.
- Develop historical and cultural tourism and promote Samui's heritage (e.g. ancient remains and buildings, and antiques).

- Support and promote ‘Samui spa’ in global markets.
- Promote local culture and traditions as tourism events and activities.
- Promote sport activities as to enhance tourism.

Both national and local policies were well established in order to implement sustainable tourism development. However, the current policy frameworks were established from a top-down perspective and involved only a few tourism stakeholders. For example, it involved the government at the national level, and the government and the large hotel and resort businesses at the local level. Other small-sized businesses, and particularly local communities, were excluded from the tourism planning and development process. Local communities were not supported in terms of financial resources, information, and knowledge in tourism and tourism-related business operation. This has limited the capacity of local communities, who want to participate in tourism, to start-up their own businesses (SMEs) and entrepreneurships. As the result, there have been limitations in developing innovative and unique tourism products and activities at the destination. In addition, the current policy frameworks did not focus on different interests and concerns among various tourism stakeholders, which creates conflicts of interests and can constrain effective relationship building and collaborative networks among tourism stakeholders. Moreover, the current policy frameworks failed to focus on the value of relationship building and networking among different groups of tourism stakeholders, as well as the crucial properties of tourism stakeholders that facilitate the successful formation and development of sustainable tourism clusters (see Figure 6.1).

This research also reveals the conflicts between established policies and the actual policy implementation. These include;

- Ineffective management of accumulated rubbish and the increasing amount of waste produced on the island. The polluted water issue. This has led to hygiene, social and environmental issues. It also creates a negative image for tourism since tourists seek beautiful, clean place to visit.
- Encroachment on forests, mountains and public areas (e.g. beaches).
- Uncontrolled, tourism-related construction and lack of positive management of carrying capacity.
- Negative tourism images involving illegal activities such as prostitution, drugs, and tourist fraud. This had also lead to social problem since local youths can be easily influenced and become involved with these bad influences.
- Inequality of tourism development. In the rural areas, sub-districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam, there were less tourism development and poor conditions for tourists in terms of infrastructure and facilities that support tourism.
- Less support for local communities in terms of job creation and resource and information accessibility. Less opportunity for local communities to participate in tourism development and the decision-making process.
- Ineffective management and control of immigrants (both legal and illegal). This creates serious negative impacts (socially and economically) on local communities.

These contradictions of policy implementation occur because of many factors which are summarised in Table 6.3 in terms of the challenges they pose as well as suggestions for policy implementation

Consequently, this research suggests a tourism policy framework which utilises a bottom-up perspective. It takes different tourism stakeholders' profiles into account and focuses on the values of the collaborative networks among various tourism stakeholders in order to achieve sustainable tourism. Such high levels of networking between small tourism businesses and other different tourism stakeholders can enhance sustainable tourism development, and the growth of tourism clusters (Braun, 2005). This is because networking enables firms to share knowledge and access information and resources which enhance innovative tourism products and competitive advantages (Braun, 2005). This work also reveals the need for a policy framework that focuses on the development of tourism stakeholders' crucial properties, since those key properties can successfully facilitate the formation and development of sustainable tourism clusters (see Figure 6.1). Importantly, the research indicated that a policy framework which conceptualises tourist regions as clusters has a value which can better facilitate the development of sustainable tourism than the current tourism policy framework. Tourism clusters focus on the improvement of SMEs' performance in developing specific skills sets and focusing on value creation. This encourages the government and policy makers to focus more on the development and improvement of the locals' capacities which enables local communities to improve their knowledge and skills and be able to start-up their own businesses as well as create innovative tourism products for their regions. Tourism cluster requires shared values and a collective goal, and the networking among various tourism stakeholders such as the government, tourism firms,

associate organisations, and higher education institutions. Thus, the shared values, and a collective goal of sustainable tourism development, can be developed among tourism stakeholders with a consequent promotion of tourism policies, tourism regulations, law enforcement and business practices, as well as tourism products and activities.

This research used a relational approach which enabled an understanding of the policy implementation process because it recognises the specific characteristics and environment of operational contexts, and the interactions of tourism stakeholders that affect tourism policy implementation (Krutwaysho and Bramwell, 2010). It provided the understanding of how the tourism clusters in the two case study areas; sub-district Bo Phud and Sub-disripts Na Muang and Taling Ngam were formed, operated, and evolved. A relational approach allows researcher to understand the clustering processes of tourism clusters and be able to explain the consequences of tourism clusters which are influenced and shaped by the social interactions and networking of different tourism stakeholders.

Importantly, based on the findings of this research, it is crucial for the local government and policy makers to improve relationships and develop effective collaborative networks among different groups of tourism stakeholders in order to achieve sustainable tourism development. This research has suggested ways to improve trust, relationship building and networking among different groups of tourism stakeholders which the collaborative networks can use to improve the knowledge of local communities through transferring and sharing information and knowledge. Collaborative networks also enhance mutual supports and exchanges such as financial resources, technology, equipment, advice, training programmes and skilled staffs). Collaborative networks

can be mobilised as stakeholder agencies where the networks of tourism stakeholder groups (e.g. TAKS, THA) can obtain more power to negotiate with government bodies on tourism planning and policies which benefit both private businesses and the tourism industry as a whole. Social networks among different sectors and organisations can be mobilised as a powerful driver for effective implementation of tourism issues such as tourism events, marketing, problem solving, green projects and activities, and the improvement of human resources and tourism products and services.

Table 6.3: A summary of challenges and suggestions for policy making and implementation

Challenges	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insufficient finances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop collaborative networks with different tourism stakeholder groups, both within and outside Samui. This allows for resource pooling and a better use of resources between public-private sectors.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of trust ▪ Limited exist collaborative networks towards sustainable implementation ▪ Lack of law enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local government should have strong commitment towards sustainable objectives through having clear guidelines and strategies on how to implement STD. ▪ Take action and implement STD orientated policies. ▪ Develop effective monitoring system towards sustainable objectives. ▪ Improve relationships and develop collaborative networks with different tourism stakeholder groups. ▪ Enforce laws strictly. ▪ Promote sustainable practices and a shared goal towards sustainable tourism development through the development of effective communication systems, incentive programmes and recognition for tourism stakeholders, especially private sector who implement sustainable practices and participate in green networks. ▪ Support and promote green tourism products and activities. ▪ Include diverse groups of tourism stakeholders in the tourism planning and development process, especially local communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tensions between insiders and outsiders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitates collaborative networks through meetings and workshops on, for example, tourism development, events, marketing and promotion, and shared problem solving. Stimulate involvement and participation among different groups of stakeholders, including between private businesses insiders and outsider. ▪ Encourage and promote social responsibility activities and projects.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of local community participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support local communities (e.g. financial resources, infrastructure, training programme, knowledge and skills) in order to help them to start businesses and develop entrepreneurship as well as improve their quality of life. ▪ Allow local communities to participate in tourism activities and development. ▪ Provide opportunities for local communities to access information and resources.

Apart of the outcome statement of the SIDS conference was the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (SIDS, 2014, p.7-8), which focuses on the challenges of governments in Pacific countries facing climate change and natural disasters. These issues threaten to the livelihoods, security and well-being of people of Pacific. It is concerned about the improvement of local communities' capacities and livelihoods, and also suggests means to implement STD by:

- Establishing national regulatory and policy frameworks, which enable businesses and industry to advance sustainable development initiatives, taking into account the importance of transparency, accountability and corporate social responsibility.
- Developing and implementing policies that promote responsive, responsible, resilient and sustainable tourism, inclusive of all people.
- Transforming sustainable tourism through products and services, with positive economic, social and environmental impacts and the development of ecotourism, agritourism and cultural tourism.
- Promoting policies that allow local communities to gain optimum benefits from tourism, while allowing them to determine the extent and nature of their participation.
- Create social protection and creation of work for all, as well as increasing investment in the educational and training programme for local people in order to achieve inclusive and equitable economic growth.
- Fostering entrepreneurship and innovation, as well as encouraging inclusive and sustainable industrial development with the participation of all people.
- Creating local decent jobs through private and public projects, and encouraging entrepreneurs to start up environmentally sound businesses through adequate and appropriate incentives.

- Establishing and maintaining governance and management structures for sustainable tourism, and human settlements that bring together responsibilities and expertise in the areas of tourism, environment, health, disaster- risk- reduction, culture, land and housing, transportation, security and immigration, planning and development, and enabling a meaningful partnership approach among the public and private sectors and local communities.

To conclude, it is human action and interaction that involves communication, negotiation and collaboration in policy development and implementation (Krutwayshe and Bramwell, 2010; Stevenson et al., 2008). Thus, it is important to understand the profiles of different tourism stakeholders, including those who are in peripheral positions in tourism networks, as well as to understand their interrelationships and the roles of their networks in order to develop a shared vision of sustainable tourism, and to develop collaborative networks for the effective implementation of sustainable tourism development.

6.6 Research limitations and further research directions

This research revealed powerful influences and the contributions of tourism stakeholder networks to tourism cluster profiles. In particular, the networking patterns embody both opportunities and constraints in implementing sustainable tourism. Thus, case specific environment shaped by local history, culture and political and economic conditions, can exert a powerful influence on tourism stakeholders' behaviours, and the overall tourism cluster development process (Tosun, 2000). Thus, it is suggested that longitudinal research is required

that extends over a longer period to fully grasp constraints and opportunities, and to examine tourism stakeholders' interrelationships and how they evolve over time. A key aspect that is missing from this work is an investigation into the life-cycle of (in)formal networks and the role of one-to-one friendships in defining unique attributes and dynamic of clusters. In particular, in small communities like Samui that are fast-losing their character as a result of tourism, it is imperative that micro-processes are acknowledged in policy making. Perhaps, this work is a small step in providing insights into locals' world views, but the substantial and potentially challenging task lies in addressing the different investments stakeholders have in the tourism industry. Moreover, tourists -as a key stakeholder group- are missing from this work, as the focus was solely on providers. Perhaps, future research can consider their role, from a co-creation perspective, in bringing about sustainable tourism on an island destination like Samui.

6.7 Summary

Overall, the development of tourism clusters can be seen as a very complex process linked to collaboration, (in)formal networks, and stakeholders' values / world views that underpin the growth and sustainability of clusters (Braun, 2005, p.3). This work clearly establishes the role of multiple stakeholders (local tourism firms, local government, support organisations, and education/research institutions) and their networking patterns and cooperative exchanges. As noted in earlier research (see Novelli et al., 2006; Taplin, 2011), these not only establish the distinctive local identity of a destination, but are responsible for fostering innovative tourism products and activities and generating new knowledge regarding the implementation of sustainable tourism initiatives). Also, the data demonstrated that network interactions can both

impede or enhance cooperative cultures involving tourism firms and other key tourism stakeholders, and thus an in-depth engagement and motivation of tourism stakeholders is required so that clustering processes foster social cohesion leading to economic efficiency (Taplin, 2011) and the implementation of effective, sustainable tourism. Thus, developing and improving tourism stakeholders' relationships are crucial in order to achieve effective, sustainable tourism development. Importantly, the crucial properties of key tourism stakeholders, and their networks, should be determined and developed in order to successfully enable the development of sustainable tourism clusters.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:

Seven Green Concepts;

“Green Heart - to urge tourists to be socially responsible and environmentally aware. Also to help preserve the environment at all tourist attractions.

Green Logistics - to encourage more environmentally-friendly modes of transport to minimise direct and indirect environmental impact.

Green Destinations - to promote responsibly managed tourist sites that respect the environment.

Green Communities - to support community-based tourism in both urban and rural areas that place greater importance on responsible tourism management towards conservation of the environment, local traditions and way of life.

Green Activities - to promote tourism activities that suit local communities well. These provide visitors with engaging and culturally-enriching experiences without compromising the integrity of the environment.

Green Service - to urge all tourism-related service providers to create positive first impressions for visitors, and to win hearts and minds by attaining higher quality assurance standards while demonstrating respect, care and concern for the environment.

Green Plus - to encourage Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) among operators by encouraging them to support communities in which they operate. Businesses should also look at energy-saving initiatives or develop renewable energy sources and environmentally friendly products.”

Source: Directly cited from <http://www.gaiadiscovery.com/latest-places/thai-tourism-seven-green-concepts-green-direction-by-tourism.html>. (Accessed 7th September 2015).

APPENDIX 2: The international guest arrivals at accommodation establishments, in Samui Island 2001-2014

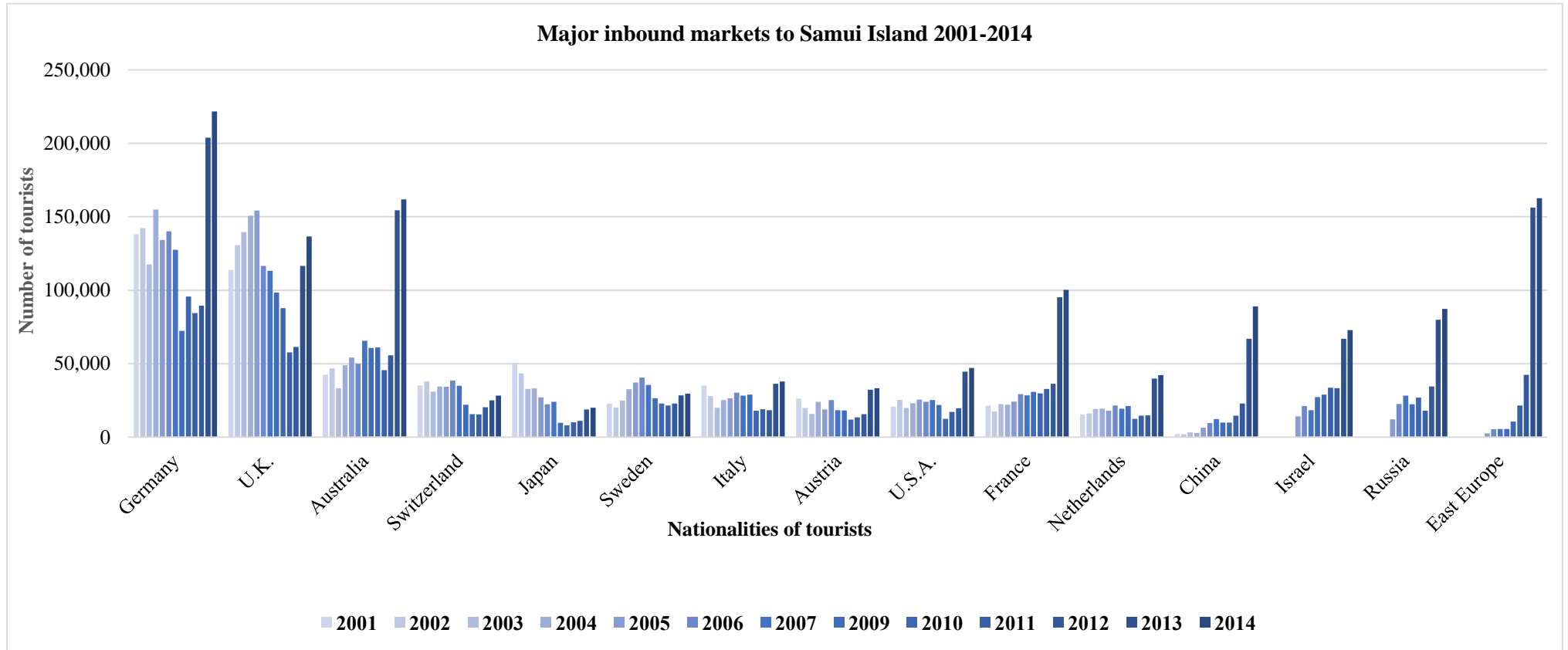
Nationality	The international guest arrivals at accommodation establishments													
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2008	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Germany	138,091	142,371	117,596	154,936	134,208	140,071	n/a	127,479	72,408	95,795	84,417	89,569	203,827	221,696
U.K.	113,856	130,726	139,608	150,747	154,206	116,599	n/a	113,282	98,471	87,811	57,730	61,336	116,529	136,649
Australia	42,527	46,798	33,360	48,920	54,145	50,055	n/a	65,532	60,666	61,103	45,587	55,632	154,453	161,797
Switzerland	35,128	37,872	31,022	34,499	34,338	38,480	n/a	35,077	22,046	15,628	15,441	20,316	25,136	28,290
Japan	50,424	43,414	32,900	33,230	27,051	22,327	n/a	24,002	9,746	8,052	10,125	11,193	18,870	20,123
Sweden	22,715	20,152	24,837	32,701	37,262	40,505	n/a	35,545	26,477	22,837	21,505	22,895	28,417	29,563
Italy	34,986	27,966	20,117	25,282	26,468	30,365	n/a	28,288	29,005	17,997	18,954	18,333	36,418	37,938
Austria	26,310	19,904	15,913	24,020	18,810	25,193	n/a	18,335	18,174	12,029	13,535	15,701	32,309	33,338
U.S.A.	20,658	25,344	19,911	23,108	25,610	24,104	n/a	25,281	21,880	12,440	17,204	19,678	44,574	47,098
France	21,393	17,559	22,515	22,054	24,217	29,245	n/a	28,531	30,733	29,749	32,873	36,311	95,253	100,206
Netherlands	15,558	16,159	19,141	19,373	17,986	21,543	n/a	19,376	21,298	12,553	14,708	14,769	39,911	42,192
Denmark	10,492	8,068	12,588	14,111	18,569	19,222	n/a	17,776	13,243	13,612	7,674	12,800	28,331	29,105
New Zealand	4,991	5,053	6,107	7,579	8,568	8,167	n/a	10,320	8,405	6,819	5,816	6,578	13,591	14,640
Canada	7,085	6,612	6,110	7,190	9,789	9,406	n/a	8,913	7,793	6,470	5,132	6,991	19,708	21,402
Middle East	6,997	7,253	5,873	6,178	3,457	3,508	n/a	3,667	6,039	7,497	10,500	15,218	18,067	19,904
Belgium	10,145	4,988	5,280	5,714	6,240	4,861	n/a	4,967	6,177	3,590	2,319	2,980	6,514	7,138
Singapore	16,733	11,170	6,573	4,732	7,480	5,318	n/a	7,860	5,761	4,851	4,294	3,751	15,087	15,195
Malaysia	6,899	7,576	6,289	4,209	3,855	4,036	n/a	6,881	7,970	5,978	6,885	7,653	11,927	12,248
China	2,208	2,091	3,155	2,905	6,345	9,649	n/a	12,322	9,885	9,966	14,667	22,815	67,000	88,988
Korea	4,382	4,101	2,222	2,643	5,517	6,146	n/a	13,746	4,476	4,845	5,858	7,241	11,391	13,130
Taiwan	2,684	2,429	2,572	2,478	2,139	2,163	n/a	4,068	1,770	1,671	1,947	2,204	4,525	4,649
India	1,311	1,775	1,814	2,180	2,809	4,474	n/a	4,829	10,917	6,189	5,321	5,735	9,763	10,530
Hong Kong	2,532	2,353	1,937	2,023	4,808	6,898	n/a	8,038	7,620	3,341	2,565	2,704	5,900	6,524
Israel					14,195	21,198	n/a	18,277	27,255	28,872	33,614	33,353	66,933	72,831
Russia					12,080	22,567	n/a	28,352	22,438	26,865	18,032	34,560	79,859	87,327
Norway					6,474	13,563	n/a	13,012	10,140	9,656	7,041	8,912	21,606	23,834
Finland					4,437	6,787	n/a	8,577	6,839	6,147	3,607	3,644	13,829	14,482
Spain					3,488	4,605	n/a	6,997	5,493	2,749	4,964	6,997	15,216	16,466
East Europe					2,533	5,484	n/a	5,654	5,563	10,616	21,492	42,387	156,259	162,645
Africa					1,784	3,766	n/a	4,135	3,169	7,546	4,242	4,449	7,741	7,938
Philippines					327	379	n/a	493	987	498	369	288	564	544
Indonesia					290	295	n/a	348	809	598	434	709	988	965
Others	69,314	92,733	97,408	87,797	70,969	54,757	n/a	65,427	22,861	28,154	35,108	58,474	194,597	203,040
Total	667,419	684,467	634,848	718,609	750,454	755,736	n/a	775,387	606,515	572,525	533,960	656,176	1,565,093	1,692,415

Source: Department of tourism, Thailand

Existing- primarily tourist markets

Growing- new tourist markets

APPENDIX 3: The major inbound markets to Samui Island 2001-2014



Source: Department of Tourism, Thailand

APPENDIX 4:
Review of sustainable tourism studies

	Sustainable tourism development in developed countries		Sustainable tourism development in developing countries	
	Island	Mainland	Island	Mainland
Conceptual Frameworks Used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage tourism and Conservation. Channel Islands, Northern France (Romeril, 1985) • Cultural rural tourism development and community-based partnerships. Evangeline Region of Prince Edward Island, Canada (MacDonald & Lee, 2003) • Attitudes towards sustainable tourism, focusing on strategic land-used planning and community involvement. UK (Godfrey, 1998); Perception towards sustainable tourism development. East Sussex, UK (Berry & Ladkin, 1997) • Road transport ecological footprint analysis. Lanzarote (Martín-Cejas & Sánchez, 2010) • A tourism area cycle of evolution; tourism area life cycle and teleological perspectives. Canary Island (Rodríguez et al., 2008) • Sustainable tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable tourism development. France (Klem, 1992) • The limits of acceptable change (LAC) framework. Texas, US (Ahn et al., 2002) • Selective marketing Technique. Australia (Dolnicar & Leisch, 2008) • Pro-environmental behavior. Australia (Dolnicar & Leisch, 2008) • Environmental footprint. Australia (Dolnicar & Leisch, 2008) • Translation theory. SE, ES, IE, FI, GR (Fadeeva, 2004) • Network approach; Cross-sectoral networks. SE, ES, IE, FI, GR (Fadeeva, 2004); Inter-organizational learning networks. European countries (Halme, 2001) • Attitudes toward the adoption of sustainable tourism practices. Denmark (Bramwell & Alletop, 2001) • Ecotourism. Finland (Björk, 2000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political obstacles of sustainable tourism development in small island developing states (SIDS). North Cyprus (Yasarata et al., 2010) • Alternative tourism. Akamas Peninsula (Ioannides, 1995); Third world (Brohman, 1996) • ‘Vulnerability’ of small island developing states (SIDS). Maldives (Ghina, 2003) • The Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) framework for implementing SD in small island developing states (SIDS). Maldives (Ghina, 2003) • Sustainable livelihoods concept. Taiwan (Tao & Wall, 2009) • Social and political dimensions of sustainability. Maldives (Scheyvens, 2011) • An assessment of policy instruments (on the negative impacts of tourism based on criteria of the effectiveness, acceptability and feasibility.) Croatia (Logar, 2010) • Tourism-product development. Malaysia (Jarrfar & Maideen, 2011) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism routes as rural tourism development. South Africa (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004) • Park-based tourism. Tortuguero, Costa Rica (Place, 1991) • Sustainable tourism Development. Turkey (Tosun, 2001); China (Yan, 2011) • Protected areas-based tourism. Himalayas, Nepal (Nepal, 2000); Yala national park, Sri Lanka (Buultjens et al., 2005) • Sustainable tourism indicators and Sustainable Tourism Benchmarking Tool (STBT) (as methodological framework, it is cross-country analyses). Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand (Cernat & Gourdon, 2012) • Green tourism. South Asian region (Azam & Starker, 2011) • Community involvement. Mountain destinations in Nepal & China (Nyaupane et al., 2006)

	Sustainable tourism development in developed countries		Sustainable tourism development in developing countries	
	Island	Mainland	Island	Mainland
	<p>Development. Wales(Owen et al, 1992)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro-environment behaviour change. UK(Miller et al., 2010) • An integrated environmental management framework. New Zealand (Hughey et al., 2004) • Asset classification framework and pressure-state-response-model. New Zealand (Hughey et al., 2004) • Systems approaches system thinking and soft system methodology. Greece(Carlsen, 1999) • Community-based rural tourism development indicators. Korea(Park&Yoon, 2011) • Pro-poor tourism. Glasgow Govan(Butler et. al, 2012) • Network theory. New Zealand(Pavlovich, 2010); Relationship marketing and network approach. (Saxena, 2005) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core-periphery(CP) model/concept. U.S.A.(Chancellor et. Al, 2011) • Rural tourism. Spain(Barke, 2004) • Collaborative approach. Britain(Vernon et. al, 2005);Theory of collaboration. No case study areas(Jamal&Getz, 1995) • Stakeholder and network perspectives. Alberta&British Columbia,Canada&California, USA(Timur&Getz, 2008) • Stakeholder concept. Canada & USA (Timur&Getz, 2009) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network relations. Antalya, Turkey (Erkuş-öztürk, 2009); Governance networks. Antalya, Turkey (Erkuş-öztürk& Eraydın, 2010) • Community-base tourism; community attachment and community involvement. Taiwan (Lee, 2013) • Ecotourism. Third world(Cater, 1993); Kuna,Panama(Chernela, 2011) • Attitudes towards ecotourism participation. Taiwan(Zhang & Lei, 2011) • Systems thinking approach and systems archetypes model. Cat Ba Island, Vietnam(Nguyen and Bosch, 2012) • Indigenous eco-tourism and the concept of ‘isamiento’ (isolation) Kuna,Panama(Chernela, 2011) • Heritage-scape. Salt Spring Island, British Columbia (Halpern&Mitchell, 2011) • Community Empowerment. Bali, Indonesia (Sutawa, 2012) • Regional identity and sustainable tourism development plan. Eslami Island, Iran (Sani & Mahasti, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro-poor tourism approach. Developing countries (Neto, 2004) • The concept of biosphere reserve. Mexico(Brenner&Job, 2011) • Actor-oriented and political ecology approach. Mexico(Brenner&Job, 2011) • Community-based development. Jordan(Shunnaq et.al, 2008) • Niche tourism. Jordan(Shunnaq et.al, 2008) • Rural tourism and ‘Nong jia le’ tourism concept (Happy Farmer Home). China(Su, 2012); Rural tourism and Carrying Capacity Value Stretch(CCVS) model. Isreal(Mansfeld&Jonas, 2005) • Urban sustainability. Barcelona(McDonogh, 2011) • Responsible tourism. China(Hu&Wall, 2005) • Ecotourism. Bhutan(Gurung&Seeland, 2011); Costa Rica(Almeyda et. Al, 2010) • A factor- cluster segmentation approach and hierarchical cluster analysis.

	Sustainable tourism development in developed countries		Sustainable tourism development in developing countries	
	Island	Mainland	Island	Mainland
			2012) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Luxury susitanble tourism. Samal Island Developing States (SIDS) (De-Miguel-Molina et al., 2014) 	Kenya(Kibicho, 2008) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder collaboration and complexity concept. Bolovia(Jamal & Stronza, 2009)
Key findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mass tourism creates negative impact on environment. Channel Islands, Northern France (Romeril, 1985); Canary Island (Rodríguez et. Al, 2008) There are strong links between conservation and tourism relate to the popularity of ancient monuments and historic buildings as tourist attractions. Channel Islands, Northern France (Romeril, 1985) Community partnerships is crucial for rural tourism development; community need to control and ownership of its offerings, the economic goals need to be harmonized with community's culture and value. Evangeline Region of Prince Edward Island, Canada (MacDonald & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A framework of public sector planning and control can help to balance sustainable tourism and economic development. France(Klem, 1992) Environmental auditing can make development and environmental protection compatible. France(Klem, 1992) Environmental impacts from tourism; waste disposal, environmental degradation, pollution, loss of wildlife and fish habitats. France(Klem, 1992) The limits of acceptable change (LAC) planning process provides a technical planning system that address problems and a public involvement process. Texas, US(Ahn et al.,2002) Segments of tourist are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political issues; corruptions and systematically favour certain interests over others. North Cyprus (Yasarata et al., 2010); the control of elites over the tourism industry, lack of democracy and political freedom. Maldives (Scheyvens, 2011); policy development is a product of political influence; the use of public resources as an instrument for political power. North Cyprus (Yasarata et al., 2010) Lack of local community participation in policy development, planning process, North Cyprus (Yasarata et al., 2010); Akamas Penisula (Ioannides, 1995); Maldives (Scheyvens, 2011) No visible attempt to integrate the regional goals for sustainable tourism development within the overall national tourism policy. Akamas Penisula (Ioannides, 1995) Distrust and conflicts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of rural tourism routes stimulates co-operation and partnerships between local area. South Africa (Briedenhann& Wickens, 2004) Community participation and public sector support enhancing the development of tourism project in less developed areas. South Africa (Briedenhann& Wickens, 2004); partnership at the local level is important for sustainable tourism. Himalayas, Nepal(Nepal, 2000); need for local people participation in tourism development; the government should concern for their interests, problems and feeling. Turkey(Tosun, 2001); community participation in decision- making process and direct involvement is the key issue to achieve sustainability.

	Sustainable tourism development in developed countries		Sustainable tourism development in developing countries	
	Island	Mainland	Island	Mainland
	<p>Lee, 2003); involving local residents in decision-making and planning is crucial for tourism development. Korea(Park&Yoon, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local involvement increases the commitment to preserve their traditions and it enhances the tourist experience. Evangeline Region of Prince Edward Island, Canada (MacDonald & Lee, 2003) Majority of local tourism officers support for the greater co-ordination and integration of tourism planning at local level. UK (Godfrey, 1998) Local tourism officers tend to favor more supporting a continuous dialogue between public, private and community interests to local tourism management. UK (Godfrey, 1998) Obstacle to sustainable practices lies in priority and methods placed on creating a more inclusive approach to local tourism management. UK (Godfrey, 1998) 	<p>defined by having different personal characteristics, travel-related sociodemographics, media behaviour and levels of pro-environmental behaviour at the tourist destination. Australia(Dolnicar& Leisch, 2008)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selective marketing approach can be used to attract Small Environmental Footprint tourists. Australia(Dolnicar& Leisch, 2008) The translation theory helps to understand the dynamics of network ideas which focuses on the process of movement of ideas and active modification of the initial idea by actors. SE, ES, IE, FI, GR(Fadeeva, 2004) Networks produce changes and create innovations for new sustainability practices. SE, ES, IE, FI, GR(Fadeeva, 2004) The practices of promoting sustainable tourism are commercially advantageous. Denmark(Bramwell& Alletop, 2001) Senior industry decision-maker did not favor more 	<p>between the government and local communities; the communities want tourism development and growth but the government want to conserve the environment. Akamas Peninsula (Ioannides, 1995)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncontrolled development of mass tourism leads to serious environmental and socio-cultural problems. Akamas Peninsula (Ioannides, 1995); overloaded with liquid and solid wastes, loss of marine species diversity, gender imbalance when men has to leave their homes to work in tourism industry. Maldives (Scheyvens, 2011); landscape degradation, loss of natural habitats, soil sealing, fragmentation of coastal space, waste water, visual pollution, loss of fishing tradition, changes in the social structure of the town, higher fresh water consumption. Croatia (Logar, 2010)]; loss of cultural identity and social control to outsiders, increasing crimes, overcrowding, pollution, scarce resources, and overloaded infrastructures. Third world (Brohman, 1996); lack of fresh water. Cat Ba Island, Vietnam(Nguyen and Bosch, 2012) 	<p>South Asian Region (Azam&Starker, 2011); community participation is essential for environmental and cultural sustainability. China(Yan, 2011); local community involvement is vital for sustainable development. Jordan(Shunnaq et.al, 2008); Bolovia(Jamal & Stronza, 2009)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a close relationship between environmental health and sustainable development. Tortuguero, Costa Rica(Place, 1991) Promoting park-based tourism as alternative economy replacing economy based on resource extraction to local people can enhance the park-based conservation programmes. Tortuguero, Costa Rica(Place, 1991) Having macroeconomic problems. Turkey(Tosun, 2001); economic uncertainty and stagnant economy; high unemployment. Jordan(Shunnaq et.al, 2008) Long-term investment but short-term benefits for

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	Island	Mainland	Island	Mainland
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological footprint is a tool estimating on tourism's environmental impact. Lanzarote (Martín-Cejas & Sánchez, 2010) • Ecological footprint promotes transport alternative. Lanzarote (Martín-Cejas & Sánchez, 2010) Canary Island (Rodríguez et. Al, 2008) • The teleological model can help to overcome some limitations of life cycle model such as explaining the movement towards sustainability. Canary Island (Rodríguez et. Al, 2008) • The combination of life cycle model that focus on product and Teleological model that focus on strategy, can help to develop a strategic response to potential stagnation. Canary Island (Rodríguez et. Al, 2008) • Difficult to specify the measurement of the carrying capacity. Canary Island (Rodríguez et. Al, 2008) • Model and regulation alone are not capable of 	<p>government regulations to encourage sustainable tourism. Denmark(Bramwell& Alletop, 2001)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior managers saw the prime responsibility for initiating sustainable tourism as lying with both industry and government. Denmark(Bramwell& Alletop, 2001) • Almost all hotels are introducing green management policies but tour operators are more passive because they are waiting for more tourists to demand sustainable alternatives. Finland(Björk, 2000) • Ecotourism cannot be developed and managed to support a sustainable development until it also focuses on tourists and their behaviours. Finland(Björk, 2000) • Ecotourism is demanding and expensive, and risk of unsatisfied tourists is owing to the diverse interpretation of what ecotourism stand for. Finland(Björk, 2000) • Understanding tourism's role from the residents' perspective can aid in policy and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host community must be fully involved in all stages of tourism development. Akamas Peninsula (Ioannides, 1995)]; local population should be involved in the management of their tourism resources and benefits directly from the utilization of these resources. Third world(Cater, 1993); need for community participation in tourism planning in order to spread its costs and benefits more equitably and be more sensitive to its social and cultural impacts. Third world (Brohman, 1996) • Natural resource management must be economically justified to the host society. Akamas Peninsula (Ioannides, 1995) • Education for local community (i.e. tourism development and its positive and negative impacts) is effective for sustainable tourism development. Akamas Peninsula (Ioannides, 1995) • Independency between environmental and socio-economy. Maldives(Guina,2003); Islands; Maldives (Scheyvens, 2011); Malaysia (Jarrfar&Maideen, 2011); Third world(Brohman, 1996) • Lack of money and 	<p>tourism development due to the need for foreign exchange earnings. Turkey(Tosun, 2001)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of the financial resource, effort and expertise to develop planning models for sustainable tourism development. Turkey(Tosun, 2001); lack of funding to increase institutional capacity and improve management of tourism. Sri Lanka (Buultjens et al., 2005) • Having political issues; government concerns only with business owners' interests and decision making, and political instability. Turkey(Tosun, 2001); South Asian region (Azam&Starker, 2011); political instability. Jordan(Shunnaq et.al, 2008) • Lack of control over tourism development due to the high dependency of international tour operators and international tourism system. Turkey(Tosun, 2001); tourism is control by government and outsiders. Mountain destinations in Nepal & China (Nyaupane et. Al, 2006)] • Lack of local

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	Island	Mainland	Island	Mainland
	<p>sustainability. Canary Island (Rodríguez et. Al, 2008)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of consensus in environmental matters. Canary Island (Rodríguez et. Al, 2008) • Small businesses perceive 'sustainable' concept as a lack practical definition. East Sussex, UK (Berry&Ladkin, 1997) • Small businesses report inefficient public sector management of policies and implementation of sustainable tourism. East Sussex, UK (Berry&Ladkin, 1997) • A lack of communication and little support and advice at the local level make it difficult to implement sustainable practices. East Sussex, UK (Berry&Ladkin, 1997) • Trust, co-operation and co-ordination between the public and private sectors are crucial for implementation of sustainable practices. East Sussex, UK (Berry&Ladkin, 1997) • Decision-making and implementation must have a 	<p>decision-making. U.S.A.(Chancellor et. Al, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core-periphery approach help to detect and understand the diversity of residents' perceptions of their quality of life. U.S.A.(Chancellor et. Al, 2011) • Different types of member in the network increases opportunity for learning through combination of different experiences and re-interpretation of already existing knowledge. European countries(Halme, 2001) • Network learning process is more important vis-a vis the outcomes than the network design(structure). European countries(Halme, 2001) • The learning process may produce exchange-types transactional outcomes or create new knowledge. European countries(Halme, 2001) • The actors of a network need to be able to create a certain amount of common ground in order to act. European countries(Halme, 2001) • Problem of defining rural 	<p>expertise to implement environmental sustainability. Maldives(Ghina,2003)]; lack of money for measurement environmental protection. Third world(Cater, 1993)]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental vulnerability; climate change and sea-level rise threat to biodiversity, fresh water resources, degradation of coastal environment, pollution, energy, tourism and sustainable development. Maldives(Ghina,2003); North Cyprus (Yasarata et al., 2010); Maldives (Scheyvens, 2011) • Inequalities related to tourism development and benefit distributions such as barriers to local ownership of tourism products and services, employment, and population has poor living conditions. Maldives (Scheyvens, 2011); little benefit to local people. Third world(Cater, 1993); weak local multiplier effects. Third world(Brohman, 1996) • Tourism should be inserted as one more set of activities into an existing economy and culture, especially in marginal communities and economies for supplementing incomes derived and help to disperse 	<p>community participation in decision making. Turkey(Tosun, 2001); Himalayas, Nepal(Nepal, 2000); Mountain destinations in Nepal & China (Nyaupane et. Al, 2006); less emphasis on the local level. Jordan(Shunnaq et.al, 2008)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intense competition between identical tourist destinations in terms of price rather than product differentiation and quality. Turkey(Tosun, 2001) • Policies are dictated by foreign exchange earnings, not its resources sustainability. Himalayas, Nepal(Nepal, 2000) • No attempt at local level to link tourism with the wider economic base; agriculture. Himalayas, Nepal(Nepal, 2000) • Environmental impacts from tourism; waste disposal, deforestation and alter wildlife habitats. Himalayas, Nepal(Nepal, 2000); waste and noise pollution. Sri Lanka (Buultjens et al., 2005); Mountain destinations in Nepal & China (Nyaupane et. Al,

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	<p>strong regional and local focus in order to turn sustainable principle into workable practices. East Sussex, UK (Berry&Ladkin, 1997)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a sustainable policy framework and implementing through effective partnerships and practices can achieve sustainable tourism development. Wales(Owen et al, 1992) keys success in achieving sustainable tourism development; generating the economy over long term, improving and protecting environment, enhancing the quality of life for host population, local participation in decision making, providing employment for local people, work closely with other organisations and offering the visitor and resident a quality experience of local's heritage and culture. Wales(Owen et al, 1992) Lack of awareness of tourism's impact relative to day-to-day behaviour. 	<p>tourism(i.e. oversupply of all forms of accommodation.). Spain(Barke, 2004)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative bureaucracy against the achievement of bottom up, 'grass roots', rural development. Spain(Barke, 2004) Local residents may not benefited from rural tourism development(i.e. foreigners' owned businesses). Spain(Barke, 2004) Overdevelopment of rural sphere and excessive number of visitors create environmental degradation. Spain(Barke, 2004) A large proportion of business is unwilling to share responsibility towards environmental sustainability Britain(Vernon et. al, 2005) Limited of understanding of sustainable tourism and its relevance to business. Britain(Vernon et. al, 2005) High dependency on the public sector for leadership of sustainable practices; i.e. financial support and the provision of recycling infrastructure. Britain(Vernon et. 	<p>the risk. Taiwan (Tao&Wall, 2009)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable livelihood approach encourages the adoption of a broad perspective examining the consequences of tourism. Taiwan(Tao&Wall, 2009) Low quality of tourism products brings low quality of tourism and low profit. Croatia (Logar, 2010); insufficient infrastructure and poor service quality. Cat Ba Island, Vietnam(Nguyen and Bosch, 2012) High seasonality of demand. Croatia (Logar, 2010); Third world (Brohman, 1996) Lack of an adequately trained workforce. Croatia (Logar, 2010); unskilled labours for tourism industry. Cat Ba Island, Vietnam(Nguyen and Bosch, 2012) Developing indicators is useful for monitoring impacts over time. Croatia (Logar, 2010) There is not every policy instruments in tourism management that satisfies all three criteria; effectiveness, acceptability and feasibility. Croatia (Logar, 2010) Small and medium island chalets' (SMICs)product and activity development are highly correlated 	<p>2006); China(Yan, 2011); Developing countries(Neto, 2004); exacerbate ecological and biological degradation. China(Su, 2012)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socio-cultural impacts from tourism; change in social and cultural practices in host community. Himalayas, Nepal(Nepal, 2000); prostitution, parents encourage children to participate in the tourist trade instead of study. Mountain destinations in Nepal & China (Nyaupane et. Al, 2006); build modern architectures that is not harmonious with its culture. China(Yan, 2011) Local benefits from tourism are minimal. Himalayas, Nepal(Nepal, 2000); Mountain destinations in Nepal & China (Nyaupane et. Al, 2006); Jordan(Shunnaq et.al, 2008) Need to promote an understanding and knowledge about environmental value, appropriate practices and socio-economic system. Himalayas, Nepal (Nepal,2000); Sri Lanka (Buultjens et al., 2005); Jamaica(Kennett-Hensel, Sneath

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	<p>UK(Miller et al., 2010)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling of disempowerment and unwillingness to make significant changes to current tourism behaviour. UK(Miller et al., 2010) • Resistant to change behavior unless other people changed towards sustainable practices. UK(Miller et al., 2010) • Perceiving that government has greater responsibility to address the problem about impact of tourism than any other group. UK(Miller et al., 2010) • Pro-environmental behaviour can be achieved by improving awareness of problem. UK(Miller et al., 2010) • Local councils are facing with the difficulties toward national policies because of dichotomous position (sustainable tourism and economy development). New Zealand(Connell et al., 2009) • Local authorities have 	<p>al, 2005)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing equal levels of input and participation in collaborations is difficult; i.e. unequal power relations. Britain(Vernon et. al, 2005) • Limited time for the policy formulation and implementation stage(extra duty within busy schedule for members.). Britain(Vernon et. al, 2005) • Limited funding support(sustainable development is one of ‘cross cutting’ themes.). Britain(Vernon et. al, 2005) • Collaboration may provide an effective mechanism for community involvement, and coordination at regional-level in tourism planning. No case study areas(Jamal&Getz, 1995) • Local government’s involvement in destination development is appropriate since they are among the most powerful stakeholders. Alberta & British Columbia, Canada & California,USA(Timur&Getz, 2008) • The hotel stakeholder group was perceived to be 	<p>with environmental attractions, thus positively contributing to the economic sustainability of SMICs Malaysia (Jarrfar&Maideen, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most appropriate business model for small and medium island chalets would be that of a small local business community operating in the island. Malaysia (Jarrfar&Maideen, 2011) • The size of a firm has an effect on the level of networking; large firms are more active in developing global networks rather than small and medium firms because they aware of the potential benefits of attracting more tourists. Antalya, Turkey (Erkuş-öztürk, 2009) • Small firms lack of knowledge of potential benefits of networking, and they can easily adapt the crisis conditions. Antalya, Turkey (Erkuş-öztürk, 2009) • The main motivation of networking is to raise economic efficiency over environmental issues. Antalya, Turkey (Erkuş-öztürk& Eraydın, 2010) • Large and highly-qualified companies and tourism associations have deeper concerns on 	<p>and Hensel, 2010); China(Yan, 2011); Taiwan(Zhang & Lei, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilgrims cause more problem than wildlife tourists due to their behaviors and the number of them. Sri Lanka (Buultjens et al., 2005) • Lack of knowledge of pilgrims’ behavior and impacts within the Park. Sri Lanka (Buultjens et al., 2005) • As the religious country, there is a belief that citizens pursuing their religious needs should not be constrained. Sri Lanka (Buultjens et al., 2005) • Unstable and ineffective management structure due to high turnover of the head government and the lack of good understanding in management of protected areas. Sri Lanka (Buultjens et al., 2005) • Sustainable Tourism Benchmarking Tool methodology is useful to detect the main problems of each country in their tourism activity. Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand (Cernat & Gourdon, 2012) • Sustainable Tourism

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	<p>limited budget due to limited ability to raise revenue through rates (i.e. small population base) and inadequate budget from central government. New Zealand(Connell et al., 2009)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability lies at a national, strategic level but remains as philosophical stance. New Zealand(Connell et al., 2009) • Absence of truly commitment to sustainable tourism and a way to manage the community of the effects of tourism operations of national sustainable business accreditation scheme. New Zealand(Connell et al., 2009) • Having problems of geographic concentrations of tourism activity. New Zealand(Connell et al., 2009) • A policy at national level should manage volumes and distribution of visitors in a more systematic manner in order to have more proactive tourism planning. New Zealand(Connell et al., 2009) • The classification of natural asset based on type and 	<p>powerful player in destination development. Alberta & British Columbia,Canada & California,USA(Timur&Getz, 2008)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism organisations emphasis on destination marketing rather than destination development. Alberta & British Columbia,Canada & California,USA(Timur&Getz, 2008) • Sustainable destination development are unique as their historical patterns of development, the nature of their industry, and government and institutional culture. Alberta & British Columbia, Canada & California,USA(Timur&Getz, 2008) • Local destination marketing/management organisations (DMOs) are perceived to hold the greatest legitimacy and have power over others regarding destination development. Alberta & British Columbia, Canada & California, USA(Timur&Getz, 2008) • Local destination marketing/management 	<p>environmental issues because they need higher service quality, a carefully coordinated marketing strategy and superior environmental qualities to be more competitive in the global market. Antalya, Turkey (Erkuş-öztürk& Eraydın, 2010)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs, tourism association play crucial role in building a broader awareness of environmental issues by enhancing partnerships with hotels. Antalya, Turkey (Erkuş-öztürk& Eraydın, 2010) • Local collaboration and networks are crucial for environmental sustainability. Antalya, Turkey (Erkuş-öztürk& Eraydın, 2010) • Small businesses are reluctant to develop environmental networks due to lack of money, manpower and time. [Antalya, Turkey (Erkuş-öztürk& Eraydın, 2010) • The benefits perceived by host residents affect the relationship between community attachment and support for sustainable tourism development and between community involvement and support for sustainable tourism development. Taiwan (Lee, 2013) 	<p>Benchmarking Tool methodological framework would allow the sustainability of tourism activities in various countries can be assessed. Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand (Cernat & Gourdon, 2012)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak institutional framework. South Asian region(Azam&Starker, 2011) • Climate change. South Asian region(Azam&Starker, 2011) • Lack of strong policy initiatives for sustainable tourism development. South Asian region(Azam&Starker, 2011) • Inadequate citizen understanding of environmental concern. South Asian region (Azam&Starker, 2011) • Level of community involvement and the number/type of tourists influence the way tourism impacts host communities. Mountain destinations in Nepal & China (Nyaupane et. Al, 2006) • Alienation of host communities to control tourism

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	<p>class is important for management of visitor impacts on natural assets. New Zealand (Hughey et al., 2004)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The classification of natural asset can be used for determining the specific types of monitoring and management that should be applied to help manage an asset in a sustainable way. New Zealand (Hughey et al., 2004) Systems approach help to understand the complex interrelationships between demand for tourism and the ability of the host population and environment to meet those needs. Greece(Carlsen, 1999) Systems model helps to provide more appropriate intervention strategies. Greece(Carlsen, 1999). Systems approach allows the most appropriate actions in response to a problem to be tested before implementation. Greece(Carlsen, 1999) Soft system methodology can be used to determine the feasible and 	<p>organisations (DMOs) hold a high central position within the destination network due to the dependency of other stakeholders on DMOs' resources; expertise, information, and clientele. Alberta & British Columbia, Canada & California, USA (Timur&Getz, 2008)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local destination marketing/management organisations (DMOs) have the most crucial roles in achieving inter-stakheolder collaboration for developing a shared tourism policy because many industry actors trust or depend on them. Alberta & British Columbia, Canada & California, USA (Timur&Getz, 2008) Key stakeholders that have advantageous positions in the structure of destination networks also have crucial roles in decision-making. Alberta & British Columbia, Canada & California, USA(Timur&Getz, 2008) The interconnectedness of diverse stakeholders; government, business firms, persons or other entities on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High degree of foreign investment and excessive foreign dependency. Third world(Cater, 1993); Third world(Brohman, 1996); Cat Ba Island, Vietnam(Nguyen and Bosch, 2012) Inflationary pressure on land prices due to the high degree of foreign investment. Third world(Cater, 1993) Vulnerable and undeveloped areas become ecotourism destination due to theirs rich and untouched natural and environmental resources, which sensitive to environmental degradation and socio-cultural disruption. Third world(Cater, 1993) Unqualified support of tourism industry on environmental sustainability. Third world(Cater, 1993) Excessive foreign exchange leakages due to large scale of foreign-owned tourism related businesses. Third world(Brohman, 1996) The environmental knowledge strongly influences residents' attitudes towards ecotourism, in turn affecting their intention to participate in ecotourism. Taiwan(Zhang & Lei, 2011) 	<p>industry. Mountain destinations in Nepal & China (Nyaupane et. Al, 2006)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggest for carrying strong support policies, applying hi-tech technologies and increasing public awareness to achieve sustainable tourism. China(Yan, 2011) Developing countries should not only seek to minimize environmental impact but also give greater priority to community participation and poverty alleviation. Developing countries(Neto, 2004) Power resources and scope of action are unequal which create severe conflicts amongst government agencies. Mexico(Brenner&Job, 2011) Poor policy co-ordination and inefficient regional planning is major obstacle to nature conservation. Mexico(Brenner&Job, 2011) Lack of tourism infrastructure and tourism readiness. Jordan(Shunnaq et.al, 2008) Niche tourism development(i.e. religious

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	<p>desirable of proposed solution. Greece(Carlsen, 1999)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft system methodology allows for a clearer understanding of implications of policy and planning decisions and actions. Greece(Carlsen, 1999) • Major failures in implementing sustainable rural tourism development indicators at local level because they are lack of awareness and participation among stakeholders. Korea(Park&Yoon, 2011) • Honouring the name of rural tourism destinations on the surface but providing a low level of facilities and in reality, degrading the environment. Korea(Park&Yoon, 2011) • Limited practical applications in the area of management, planning, and monitoring system for sustainable rural tourism at local community level. Korea(Park&Yoon, 2011) • The government plays crucial role in establishing of regulatory and policy 	<p>sustainability dimension can improve the process of sustainable destination development. Alberta & British Columbia, Canada & California, USA (Timur&Getz, 2008)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interconnectedness of diverse stakeholders on sustainability dimensions can improve the process of STD in urban destination. Canada & USA (Timur&Getz, 2009) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape likeability intervenes between ecotourism attitudes and participation intention as a mediator. Taiwan(Zhang & Lei, 2011) • Systems model helps to identify root cases and leverage points of complex problems. Cat Ba Island, Vietnam(Nguyen and Bosch, 2012) • System model helps stakeholders to prioritize actions and understand the importance of addressing core issues. Cat Ba Island, Vietnam(Nguyen and Bosch, 2012) • Uncontrolled tourism development. Cat Ba Island, Vietnam(Nguyen and Bosch, 2012) • Local people have little knowledge about sustainability and do not want to participate in sustainability programmes. Cat Ba Island, Vietnam(Nguyen and Bosch, 2012) • Involve maximum participation by local people in tourism management, focusing on local people' goals and interests. Kuna,Panama(Chernela, 2011) • Political autonomy. Kuna,Panama(Chernela, 2011) 	<p>tourism) can serve as a sustainable strategy (i.e. low-volume but high- income yield per tourist.). Jordan(Shunnaq et.al, 2008)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National government should mediate risk at the local level and provide capital for attracting local people to participate in tourism activities. Jordan(Shunnaq et.al, 2008) • The government plays a pivotal role in developing rural tourism(RT); protect traditional architecture buildings and improve through restoration projects, introducing RT to farmers with support and help. China(Su, 2012) • Most of operators or owners of small rural businesses are lacking of the managerial and marketing skills; little education and technical knowledge, unskilled for customer service. China(Su, 2012) • Rural tourism is potential tool for regenerating the socio-economic development of rural areas. China(Su, 2012); Isreal(Mansfeld&Jonas, 2055) • Regional/national

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	<p>frameworks. Korea(Park&Yoon, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability indicators need to allow for adaptive learning processes within the local community or tourism destinations. <p>Korea(Park&Yoon, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The indicators (i.e. based on four aspects; service quality, facilities, management system and outcome) could help to regularly monitor the interaction among stakeholders and avoid poor decision. <p>Korea(Park&Yoon, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction, business income, accessibility and accommodation are the most important factors in ensuring the sustainability of tourism development. <p>Korea(Park&Yoon, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem of poverty, unemployment and crime. <p>Glasgow Govan(Butler et. al, 2012)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public sector is crucial for regenerating and establishing pro-poor tourism (i.e. funding and regulatory). <p>Glasgow Govan(Butler et. al,</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving ecotourism and sustainability by limiting the size of the industry and prohibit investment by non-resident; control the inflow of visitors, limit number of hotels, capacity per hotel, number of licences granted to operate facilities. <p>Kuna,Panama(Chernela, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having legislation at the state level to protect indigenous rights to their land and cultural autonomy. <p>Kuna,Panama(Chernela, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional discourse effects the Regional's goals and policies (i.e. discourse of preservation; no large-scale developments, no rapid increase in visitor number). Salt Spring Island, British Columbia (Halpern&Mitchell, 2011) • Regional discourse reflects the desire to promote tourism but not to the extent that it will compromise the existing heritage. Salt Spring Island, British Columbia (Halpern&Mitchell, 2011) • Empowerment and involvement of community enable to achieve sustainable tourism development. • Tourism design that reflects local culture and identity would increase the number of users and 	<p>authorities generalise solutions for sustainability at the infra-local level without focusing on the links of place, education and social process.</p> <p>Barcelona(McDonogh, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not have serious commitment for sustainability practice from regional/national authorities (i.e. using 'open to the new economy' model to increase individual and collective consumption.) <p>Barcelona(McDonogh, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nanshan Cultural Tourism Zone successfully brings commercial advantages, raise environmental awareness and facilitates efforts to develop environmentally responsible tourism among tourism operators/developers. <p>China(Hu&Wall, 2005)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound environmental principles can be implemented in private-sector tourism attractions, with artful guidance and strict supervision from government (i.e. giving awards for noticing and encouraging the active environmental attitudes.). <p>China(Hu&Wall, 2005)</p>

	Sustainable tourism development in developed countries		Sustainable tourism development in developing countries	
	Island	Mainland	Island	Mainland
	<p>2012)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro-poor tourism has positive impact; provide jobs, training, essential work skills for local people and promoting and preserve Scottish heritage. Glasgow Govan(Butler et. al, 2012) • The network approach offers an alternative perspective to understanding how tourism destination networks are coordinated and managed. New Zealand(Pavlovich, 2010) • Understanding the network structures can offer tourism destination managers a broader appreciation of the consequences of organisational actions. New Zealand (Pavlovich, 2010) • The aggregated patterns that form within the networked group can offer insights into why certain actions succeed and why others fail. New Zealand(Pavlovich, 2010) • Sustainable tourism product is ‘territorially embedded’ in ongoing social 		<p>visitors intensely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possessing eco-labels and standards are good reason to call tourism sustainable. Samal Island Developing States (SIDS) (De-Miguel-Molina et al., 2014). • Luxury can go hand in hand with sustainability depends on their patterns of sustainability behaviours, how resort manage sustainability, and their willingness to improve environmental practices, and even sacrifice some activities and services. Samal Island Developing States (SIDS) (De-Miguel-Molina et al., 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic viability and environmental sustainability can be used to reinforce the other in a symbiotic relationship. China(Hu&Wall, 2005) • Ecotourism could provide supplementary income and prevent intensive agricultural practices that are hazardous to fragile mountain ecosystem. Bhutan(Gurung&Seeland, 2011) • Ecotourism could provide a reliable and sustainable livelihood alternative. Bhutan(Gurung&Seeland, 2011); Costa Rica(Almeyda et. Al, 2010) • Inequality of benefits distribution. Bhutan(Gurung&Seeland, 2011) • Little motivation from local people to participate in tourism development due to the resource poor people that are unable to initiate any tourism venture on their own. Bhutan(Gurung&Seeland, 2011) • Ecotourism has small footprint, foster environmental conservation and benefits and empowers local communities. Costa Rica(Almeyda et. Al,

	Sustainable tourism development in developed countries		Sustainable tourism development in developing countries	
	Island	Mainland	Island	Mainland
	<p>networks and relationships. (Saxena, 2005)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning regions can be seen as a milieu for 'collective learning', achieved through intense interaction between actors who respond to networks by reworking them to suit their goals. (Saxena, 2005) • The study of network and relationships can help to uncover some significant variables, conducive to collective learning and information exchange. (Saxena, 2005) 			<p>2010)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punta Islita(PI) eco-lodge contributes environmental conservation and local economic incomes. Costa Rica(Almeyda et. Al, 2010) • Punta Islita(PI) eco-lodge has positive social, cultural and economic impacts. Costa Rica(Almeyda et. Al, 2010) • Socio-cultural carrying capacities of rural communities can help for detection of their perceived tourism impacts and evaluate to what extent factors that trade-off between positive and negative impacts. Isreal(Mansfeld&Jonas, 2005) • Hierarchical cluster analysis enable to segment three different segments of local residents; 'operatives' are interested in participation in the project's activities, 'opinion leaders' are concerned with the communitjr's benefits from the project while 'official leaders' value the success of the project. Kenya(Kibicho, 2008) • Conflicting public/private sector interests and activities can impact economic, ecological and

	Sustainable tourism development in developed countries		Sustainable tourism development in developing countries	
	Island	Mainland	Island	Mainland
				socio-cultural well being. Bolovia(Jamal & Stronza, 2009)
Key Limitations			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The emerging discussions on networking related to tourism activities, are mainly theoretical, and case studies that define them are limited. Antalya, Turkey (Erkuş-öztürk& Eraydın, 2010) It is not well support by empirical studies and fully explore and understand the role of network and its contribution to the sustainable development. Turkey (Erkuş-öztürk& Eraydın, 2010) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The discussions on the levels of connection between firms and clusters are mainly theoretical, and the empirical studies that define them are limited. (Erkuş-öztürk& Eraydın, 2011) Previous literature of clusters has focused largely on manufacturing and technology-based industries, while tourism sector has been largely ignored. (Erkuş-öztürk& Eraydın, 2011) Previous literature of clusters in tourism studies are mainly used as an analytical tool for segmentation and classification. There are limited empirical studies on tourism clusters in relation to relational networks of tourism stakeholders and their effects to the practices of tourism clusters and tourism clusters development, particularly in sustainable tourism context.
Areas of Future research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research on the acceptance and implementation of sustainable tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of theory on collaboration, which might be tested in future research on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for more critical research on sustainable development options in Asia and the Pacific 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for more scientific research and forging a partnership between local people,

	Sustainable tourism development in developed countries		Sustainable tourism development in developing countries	
	Island	Mainland	Island	Mainland
	<p>principles and exploring the opinions of local land-use planners and private sector interests. UK (Godfrey, 1998)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimates of the Ecological footprint of different tourism products. Lanzarote (Martín-Cejas & Sánchez, 2010) 	<p>projects in other parts of the world. Britain(Vernon et. al, 2005)</p>	<p>focusing on social and political issues. Maldives (Scheyvens, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for more studies of environmental networks and need for a comparative analysis of different types and levels of networking, and organisation building under different conditions. Antalya, Turkey (Erkuş-öztürk& Eraydın, 2010) 	<p>the service industry, and tourism professionals. Himalayas, Nepal(Nepal, 2000)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How inter-relationship between tourism stakeholders influence in the practice of tourism clusters, as well as (un) sustainable practices?

APPENDIX 5:
Forest encroachment by a luxury hotel, Conrad Koh Samui.



Source: author

APPENDIX 6: List of participants for semi-structured interviews

Level	Participant #	Participants' profiles	Network members/ Businesses' profiles	
National (Government body)	1	Director of Surathani Province Office of Tourism and Sports. Male, 56.	Government officer	
	2	Koh Samui District chief officer. Male, 59	Government officer	
	3	Chief of Koh Samui Tourism Coordination Center. Female, 58.	Government officer	
	4	Mayor of Koh Samui, Male 54.	Government officer	
	5	Marketing officer, Koh Samui Tourism Coordination Center. Female, 42.	Government officer	
	6	Chief of Tourist Assistance Centre, Koh Samui. Female 52.	Government officer	
	7	Tourism development officer. Male 54.	Government officer	
	8	Vice mayor, Public health and environmental department. Female, 42.	Government officer	
	9	District officer, Forest department. Male 45.	Government officer	
	10	Municipality officer, Environmental department. Male 42.	Government officer	
Regional (Tourism associations and non-profit organisations)	11	President of Tourism Association Koh Samui. Male 52.	TAKS	
	12	Vice president of Tourism Association, Marketing Team. Female 60.	TAKS	
	13	Vice President of Tourism Association, Environment Team. Male 63.	TAKS	
	14	President of Thai Hotel Association, Southern chapter-East coast. Male 62.	THA -SCEC	
	15	Vice president of Thai Hotel Association, and Head of 'THA Green'. Male 62.	THA-SCEC	
	16	Committee of 'THA Green'. Female 45.	THA-SCEC	
	17	President of Human Resource Club. Male 42.	HR Club	
	18	President of Thai Sap Federation and Head of Advisors of Samui Spa Association. Female 62.	SSA	
	19	President of Samui Spa Association. Female 37.	SSA	
	20	Committee of Green Island Foundation. Male 62.	GIFT	
Local (Tourism businesses; business owners, business managers, business employees, local communities)	Sub district Bo Phud	21	General manager of upmarket resort. Male 48.	THA-SCEC, HR Club, SSA
		22	Chairman of Bo Phud community, Owner of gift shop. Male 36.	
		23	Local Famer. Male 64.	
		24	Community committee, Owner of two 3-star resorts. Male 55.	Small (30 rooms) and medium (43 rooms)-sized resorts. 20 years in business
		25	Owner of the mid-market hotel, restaurant, and tour operator. Male 36.	65 rooms. 5 years in business.
		26	General manager of upmarket resort and spa. Male 45.	TAKS
		27	Owner of Tour agency. Female 27.	Family business, more than ten years.
		28	Taxi driver. Male 66.	
		29	Resident Manager of upmarket resort. Male 53.	168 rooms. THA-SCEC, SSA
		30	Media Owner. Female 34.	10 years in business
		31	Owner of economy-hotel and service apartment. Male 34.	80 rooms. 4 years in business. TAKS
		32	Owner of economy-hotel. Male 62.	75 rooms. More than ten years in business.
		33	Owner of economy-hotel. Male 35.	TAKS

Level	Participant #	Participants' profiles	Network members/ Businesses' profiles
Sub districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam	34	Owner of travel agency. Male 37.	6 years in business. TAKS.
	35	Local farmer. Female 57.	
	36	Former teacher. Male 65.	
	37	Deputy Managing Director of 3-star resorts, and committee of Green Island Foundation. Male 28.	172 rooms. SSA, TAKS, GIFT
	38	Tour guide. Male 36.	
	39	Local fisherman. Male 51.	
	40	Owner of upmarket resort, male 65.	In business since 1990. TAKS
	41	Former teacher and Owner of budget bungalows, male 64.	20 rooms. 37 years in business
	42	Former hotel staff, Owner of gift shop and Thai cooking class. Female 43.	THA green
	43	Head office of dean, International School of Tourism, Samui. Male 50.	TAKS
	44	Farmer, Owner of 'sufficient economy' Learning Centre. Male 43.	
	45	Owner of car care business. Male 52.	5 years in business. TAKS
	46	Owner of restaurant, budget bungalow, and gift shop. Male 63.	More than ten years in business.
	47	General Manager of Safari. Male 47.	14 years in business
	48	Manager of butterfly park. Male 39.	3 years in business
	49	Human resource manager of Luxury hotel chain. Female 36.	HR Club
	50	Manager of Tour operator. Female 30.	TAKS
	51	Local journalist. Male 50.	23 years living in Samui
	52	Food shop. Male 66.	20 years in business
	53	Owner of restaurant. Female 35.	9 years in business
	54	Resort manager of upmarket resort. Female 36.	THA-SCEC, HR Club
	55	Owner of budget resort. Male 40.	24 rooms. 7 years in business
	56	Former local teacher. Female 62.	
	57	Owner of bird garden. Male 34.	3 years in business
	58	Local farmer. Female 40.	
	59	General manager of luxury spa resort. Male 52.	THA-SCEC
	60	Director of human resource of spa resort. Female 36.	HR club

APPENDIX 7:

Semi-structured question schedule / 1-1.30 hours

1. Interviewee profile and views on sustainable tourism

- 1.1 Age
- 1.2 Gender
- 1.3 Manager / owner

2. Profile of the business

- 2.1 Name of the business
- 2.2 How long have you owned / managed your business in Samui?
- 2.3 How would you describe your business?
- 2.4 Would you call it sustainable? If so, why? Give examples
- 2.5 How would you define sustainable tourism?

3. Interviewee's social networks

- 3.1 Can you tell me about your connections that are important to your work/ business?
Who are they? (within the same sector and/or different sectors)
- 3.2 Do you participate in any joint marketing or tourism activity with other businesses?
- 3.3 How do you know about this/these network(s)?
- 3.4 Within the network(s), can you give me lists of who you would call a friend, acquaintance, and / or a colleague? Why? Give reasons.
- 3.5 How long have you known them? What is your role in partnership frameworks that you are a part of?
- 3.6 Who do you think, is/are the most influential businesses in partnership frameworks you are a part of? Why?
- 3.7 What are the benefits of participating or joining in network(s)?
- 3.8 What do you expect from participating in the network(s)?

4. Network profile

- 4.1 Can you briefly explain about network(s) you belong? (i.e. purpose, how long it has been established, its role, how did it form)
- 4.2 Do you participate or involve in any environmental network(s)?

5. Network activities

- 5.1 How often do you meet?
- 5.2 Can you explain briefly about the activities of the meeting (i.e. formal/informal type of meeting, the role of each member) and the network(s)?
- 5.3 How long do you spend in each meeting?

6. Samui "Green Island" label

- 6.1 Do you know anything about Samui "Green Island" campaign? Explain more about it?
- 6.2 What is your opinion towards this campaign?
- 6.3 In your opinion, how well this campaign is communicated to communities?

6.4 Are you participating or involving in any Green Island projects? If not, would you like to participate? If not, why?

6.5 What would you like to suggest towards this campaign?

7. Interviewee's point of view towards tourism development

7.1 Can you think back and describe the tourism of Samui in the past, and how it changed over time?

7.2 Can you think of any important events that have influenced the development of tourism in Samui?

7.3 In your opinion, what do you think about tourism development in Samui? (in terms of effective, efficiency, strategy, plan, involvement and participation of tourism stakeholders?)

7.4 Are you involved in any tourism development process? (i.e. decision-making process, and planning process)

7.5 Who do you think that they should be responsible for tourism development?

7.6 Are there any issues do you want to address toward tourism development? Can you explain more? (why? and How? it appended that way?)

7.7 What do you think about the role of government bodies towards tourism development?

7.8 In which way or how do you want Samui tourism to develop

7.9 In your opinion, what do you think that need to be improved towards tourism development? (in terms of strategy, plan, involvement and participation of tourism stakeholders?) Can you explain more (how?)

Any other comments?

APPENDIX 8 :
Participant information letter

Participant information letter for

An investigation of tourism stakeholders' interrelationships affecting sustainability of tourism clusters in Samui Island

Researcher: Nisarath Thaitong, PhD candidate, Hull University Business School,
University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX

I am a PhD candidate at Hull University Business School, University of Hull. As part of the degree, I am undertaking a research project on the tourism stakeholders' interrelationships affecting sustainability of tourism clusters in Samui Island.

This research will aim to analyse the interrelationships between key tourism stakeholders, examine their (un)sustainable practices and how their relational networks influence the evolution and profile of tourism clusters in the north-eastern region (sub-district Bo Phud) and south/south-western regions (sub-district Na Muang and Taling Ngam) in Samui Island.

The participants will be tourism stakeholders such as government bodies, host community, voluntary sector, tourism industry and pressure group as the source of data and information. The participants will be asked about the attitudes, opinions, and point of views towards sustainable tourism and practices in Samui Island, as well as the networks building. In addition, the participants will be asked about their social networks, business routines and practices. Moreover, the participants will be observed in their natural setting such as at the participants' working place, at their meeting activities, and at their business routines. Thus, this might effect on their personal privacies. However, the participants will be informed and explained clearly about the research aim and processes before interview and observations, as well as ask for their consents for the research interview and participant observation.

The interviews will be recorded by note taking and tape recording. Participants' activities will be observed and recorded through note taking, tape recording, and photo taking with the permission from participants.

Participants are assured of confidentiality. The results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals. Individual results will not be released to any person except at participants' request and on participants' authorisation. Participant is free to withdraw his/her consent at any time during the study and without adverse consequences, in which event his/her participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained from him/her will not be used.

For further enquiries on this research project, please contact;
Researcher; Nisarath Thaitong,
University of Hull
Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX.
Email: N.Thaitong@2011.hull.ac.uk

Supervised by Dr. Gunjan Saxena
University of Hull
Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX.
Email: G.Saxena@hull.ac.uk

The contact details of the secretary to the HUBS Research Ethics Committee are Amy Cowling, Hull University Business School, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX. Email: a.cowling@hull.ac.uk tel. 01482-463410.

APPENDIX 9:

List of focus groups' participants in Sub district Bo Phud and Sub districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam

Sub districts	Participants	Group #	Date
Bo Phud	1) Local farmer, male 64	1	15 November 2013
	2) Deputy of municipality of Koh Samui, male 52	1	
	3) Head of servicing unit, municipality of Koh Samui, male 54	1	
	4) Human resource manager of upmarket resort, male 53	1	
	5) Manager of night club, male 35.	1	
	6) Manager of security business, female 56	1	
	7) Local farmer, male 43	1	
	8) Former teacher, male 64	1	
	1) Owner of retail shop, Chairman of local community, male, 56	2	16 November 2013
	2) Owner of budget hotel, male 35	2	
	3) Owner of 3-star resorts, male 55	2	
	4) Owner of economy hotel, male 62	2	
	5) Owner of travel agency, male 49	2	
	6) Media, male 39	2	
7) Assistant general manager of 3-star hotel, male 45	2		
Na Muang and Taling Ngam	1) Local farmer, female 53	1	13 November 2013
	2) Owner of restaurant, female 63	1	
	3) Local farmer, female 70	1	
	4) Former teacher, male 75	1	
	5) Local farmer, male 75	1	
	6) Local farmer, female 53	1	
	7) Owner of Bungalow business, male 63	1	
	8) Local farmer, female 59	1	
	1) Local farmer, male, 55	2	14 November 2013
	2) Director of primary school, male 51	2	
	3) Tourism development officer, municipality of Koh Samui, male 54	2	
	4) Former teacher, male 65	2	
	5) Owner of restaurant, female 50	2	
	6) Owner of restaurant, male 49	2	
	7) Local farmer, female 28	2	
	8) Owner of retail shop, 41	2	

APPENDIX 10:

Focus groups question schedule/ 2 hours

Each focus group will last for a couple of hours where the purpose of the research and the aim will be introduced first. The format that the focus group will assume will be:

1. Opening

Ask everybody in the group to introduce themselves. (e.g. name, organisation, position, years of experience)

2. Social networks

- 2.1 In this group, how many of you know each other or have connection to each other? Can you explain your relationships? How long have you known each other? In what capacity?
- 2.2 Can you talk about your business connections? Who are they? What purposes, benefits, expectations of connections?
- 2.3 Do you participate in any network(s) that are related to tourism development in Samui?

3. Tourism profile

- 3.1 Can you think back and describe how tourism in Samui has changed over time? What are the factors do you think it influence those changes?
- 3.2 Can you think of any important situations that you think, may influence the tourism development?

4. Samui “Green Island” label

- 4.1 What do you think about this campaign? (in terms of idea, practice, implementation, communication, issues)
- 4.2 Are you involved in any network(s) relating or supporting this campaign? (i.e. environmental networks, sustainable practices networks) if yes, can you explain more? If no, why? Are there any difficulties or barriers for you to participate? Do you want to participate? Why?
- 4.3 What do you think about tourism impacts to environment? Are there any serious issues that you want to address?
- 4.4 What will you suggest for this campaign? (i.e. ways for improvement, and for more effective way of implementing it)
- 4.5 Are there any weaknesses in this campaign? If yes? What are they? How can they be addressed?

5. Tourism development

- 5.1 Who (persons, groups, organizations) do you think is powerful and influential in the tourism development in Samui? Why?
- 5.2 Who (persons, groups, organizations) do you think should be responsible for tourism development process (i.e. decision-making and planning process)? Why?

5.3 What do think about tourism development in Samui? (i.e. strategies, plans, land-used management, number of businesses, infrastructure, facilities) Are there any issues or difficulties that you want to address regarding tourism development? Why?

5.4 What issues concern you most regarding tourism development in Samui?

5.5 What will you suggest for better development of tourism in future in Samui? (i.e. strategies, plans, land-used management, number of businesses, infrastructure, facilities, brand positioning, tourism products and services)

Anything else do you want to add?

APPENDIX 11:
Data coding

สัมภาษณ์คุณจุลชามาศ

คุณไอดี : ตอนนี้อยู่ทำอะไร ตอนนี้อยู่กำลังจะเปิด

คุณจุลชามาศ : ตอนนี้ก็หลังจากลาออกจากโรงแรมนะคะ เมื่อสิ้นเดือนที่ผ่านมา ก็จะมาทำธุรกิจส่วนตัว เปิดเป็นร้านขายซูวีเนียร์ ขายสมุนไพร แล้วก็ผลิตภัณฑ์แชนด์เมดของไทยๆ ก็อยากจะโชว์ความเป็นไทยสมุนไพรให้นักท่องเที่ยวได้รู้ว่า ถ้าคุณสนใจ thai cooking class เนี่ย เราสามารถพาคุณเยี่ยมชมสมุนไพรได้ แล้วก็ให้คุณได้เรียนรู้วิธีการทำ

คุณไอดี : แล้วก่อนหน้านั้นคือทำงานโรงแรมมาตลอด

คุณจุลชามาศ : ใช่

คุณไอดี : ก็ปีได้แล้วคะ

คุณจุลชามาศ : 13 ปีค่ะ

คุณไอดี : โรงแรมเดิขเลข

คุณจุลชามาศ : โรงแรมเดิขคะ ก็เป็นผู้จัดการด้านสิ่งแวดล้อม แล้วก็นอกจากทำในโรงแรมป็นที่เราก็เป็นเครือข่ายให้กับเทศบาล แล้วก็กับสมาคมโรงแรมไทยภาคใต้ฝั่งตะวันออกเนี่ยเราพยายามที่จะหาเครือข่ายโรงแรมสีเขียวมาทำงานร่วมกัน

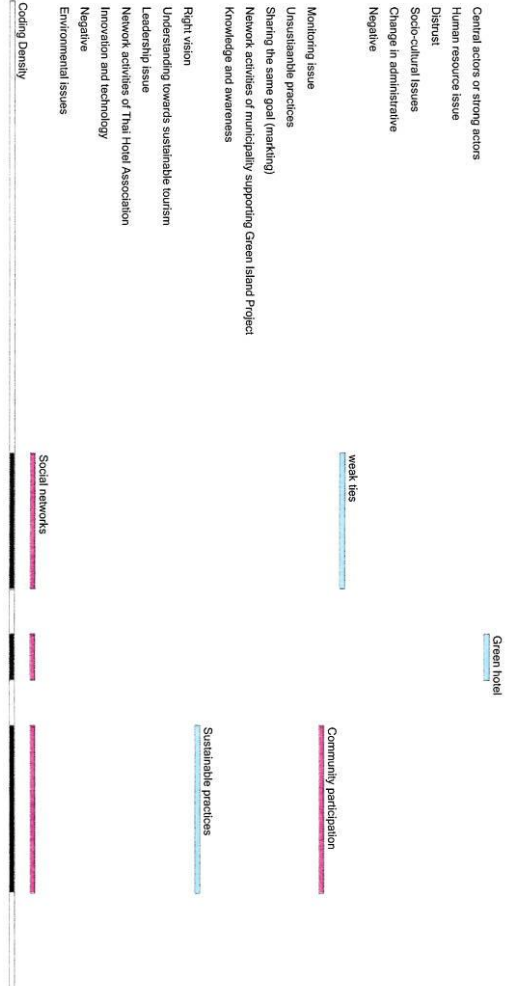
คุณไอดี : แล้วเป็นใจคะ เยอะไหม

คุณจุลชามาศ : ก็ได้ประมาณสักสี่สิบโรงที่เป็นเครือข่าย

คุณไอดี : 40 โรงจากทั้งหมด หาร้อย สี่ร้อยกว่าโรง แต่ได้ 40 โรง

คุณจุลชามาศ : ใช่ 40 โรงที่เป็นเครือข่ายเรา แล้วก็ออกจากรันแรกก็พยายามที่หาเครือข่ายรองก็คือเราทำโครงการ โรงเรียนรักษ์สมุย ผ่าน low carbon school ก็เป็นโครงการที่โรงแรมเนี่ยเข้าไปเทคโนโลยีโรงเรียน ซึ่งก็เราจะมีที่เล็องหลักๆ นะ 40 โรงแรมที่เล็องหลักเนี่ยเข้าไป แล้วก็จะมีที่เล็องรองของโรงแรม ที่แบบ เล็องเล็กๆ เล็องน้อยๆ ก็ไปประกบคู่กันแล้วก็ไปดูแลตรงนี้ นี่เป็นโครงการที่เราทำกับชุมชน

คุณไอดี : แล้วโครงการนี้ถือว่าประสบความสำเร็จมากน้อยแค่ไหน



เราจะอยู่ในที่ตั้งของเรา ใครมีอะไรก็ แต่ส่วนใหญ่ก็ทำงานกับภาครัฐนะค่ะ ภาครัฐมีอะไรให้ช่วย
เราก็ยินดีที่จะช่วยทำให้

คุณ ไอ้ดี : แล้วคุณกฤษณา...คนที่อยู่ในสมาคมนี้ค่ะ แต่ว่าเป็นลักษณะ ความสัมพันธ์ใกล้ชิดใหม่คะ
แบบเป็นเพื่อนกัน หรืออะไรอย่างนี้

พี่จิม : ก็ทำงานด้วยกันมานาน ที่อยู่ในสมาคมมาหกปี เป็นคณะกรรมการต่อเนื่องกันนะหกปี

คุณ ไอ้ดี : เวลาเจอกันนี่แบบ เจอกันนอกเหนือจากการประชุมบ้างใหม่คะ เวลาค่อยๆคุยกันแบบว่า ชรามคา

พี่จิม : ก็คุยกัน ชรามคามิ ไปเที่ยวบ้างอะไรอย่างนี้

บางทีก็ไปต่างประเทศโดยที่ไม่ได้ไปในเรื่องของงานอะไรอย่างนี้ เข้าไปตลาดใหม่ๆ ที่เราสนใจ
เข้าไปกันเรื่องของส่วนตัว เพราะว่าเราก็ทำงานหลายๆ ด้าน นี่ก็มีการประชุม APEC ท่องเที่ยว
เราก็ช่วยเป็นผู้ประสานงานในเรื่องของสถานที่ เรื่องอาหาร เหมือนประชุมชมรม.สัญจรอย่างนี้
สมาคมก็มีหน้าที่รับผิดชอบในเรื่องของจัดเลี้ยงอาหาร ทั้งครบ. ทั้งคณะ ทั้งผู้ติดตามอะไรอย่างนี้
ก็ส่วนมากเราจะเป็นงานร่วมมือกับภาครัฐ ภาคเอกชนในการจัดงาน
เหมือนกับจัดงานอะไรสักอย่างที่ไม่มีคน หรือเค้าไม่มีความสามารถในการ...สมมุติไม่มีพิธีกร
หรือไม่มีคนพูดภาษาอังกฤษได้ หรืออะไรอย่างนี้ เราก็จะเป็นตัวที่จะเข้าไปช่วย

คุณ ไอ้ดี : แล้วคุณกฤษณา อย่างเช่น ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างภาครัฐนะค่ะ ใกล้ชิดใหม่คะหรือว่า

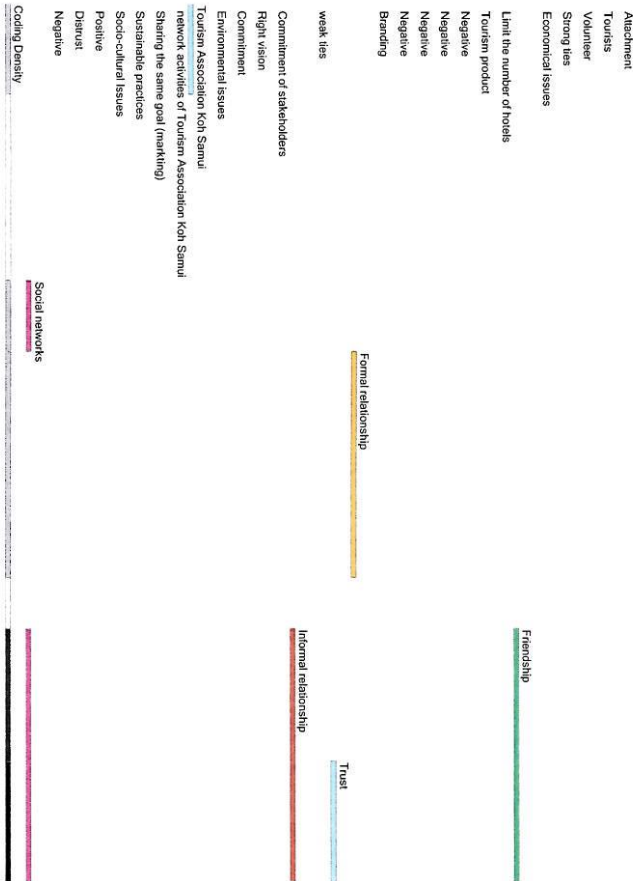
พี่จิม : ใกล้ชิดคะ สมาคมกับรัฐก็ทำงานไปด้วยกันอยู่

คุณ ไอ้ดี : เป็นลักษณะแบบว่า รู้จักเป็นเพื่อนฝูง อะไรอย่างนี้ใหม่คะ เป็นอย่างนั้นใหม่
เรียกได้ว่าเพื่อนใหม่คะ หรือว่าเป็นแค่เพื่อนร่วมงาน

พี่จิม : ก็เป็นเพื่อนนะคะ ก็คือทำงานด้วยกันมานาน เหมือนนายกเทศบาลนี่นะคะ คุณรามเนตร เมื่อ
คุณรามเนตร เป็นนายกฯมาสองสมัย ก็ทำงานกันมาตลอด ก็คือเหมือนเพื่อนเหมือนพี่น้องมีอะไรก็คุยกันได้
กับนายกฯอาบ หรือกับผู้ว่า....

คุณ ไอ้ดี : เจอกันบ่อยใหม่คะ

พี่จิม : ก็สมมุติ มันเป็นเมืองแคบนะ มีงานก็เจอกันอยู่บ่อยๆ



therapist ช่วยกันได้ อย่างอ้อมๆ สบายอ้อมๆ แยกกันแล้ว therapist อ้อมไม่พอ รับแขกมาสิบคน ขาด therapist ไปห้าคน อ้อมก็สามารถเรียก โลกสถาปนา บันยันทวี จิกซ์เซนต์ แลวนี่ มาช่วยเราได้ เราไปช่วยเค้าได้ เค้าช่วยเรา ก็ช่วยเหลือกันแบบนี้คือ เราไม่ได้ไปเอา เราก็คือเอามือที่ระดับเดียวกันเนี่ยมาช่วยกัน แล้วเราก็จะ คือสมมุติ้ออบอกได้เลขนะ เป็นที่เดียว เป็นสมาคมเดียวที่เค้าบอกว่า ไม่ว่าจะธุรกิจสปา หรือโรงแรม ที่นี้ไม่ได้แข่งกันที่ แข่งกันลีสนะ แข่งกันรอย แข่งกันที่แพ็คเกจสุขภาพหรือลีสนะ ไม่ได้แข่งกันที่คิมพ์ ราคา หรือว่าครคราคากันนะ สมมุติเป็นอย่างนี้ คือเค้าอยู่กันแบบ คืออะ คุณขายนวยออลซ์หนึ่งพันบาทฉันขายแปดร้อย agency มันหลังไหลไปทางนั้นแล้ว

อ.ไอศ : มีการคุยกันใหม่เรื่องราคานี้

คุณอ้อ : เนี่ย คุยกัน

อ.ไอศ : อ้อ member ใช่มั้ย

คุณอ้อ : ใช่

อ.ไอศ : คือจะต้องเซตว่าราคาหลักคือ

คุณอ้อ : เค้านี่ agency มันร้ายกาจมาก ที่อื่นนะจะ อย่างเพื่อนอ้อมเนี่ย เป็นประธานชมรมสปา อ้อจะไปพ่วงนี้ จะจัดงานสปาแฟร์ เค้าก็บอกว่า agent เนี่ย มาทำ contact กับเรานวดไทย สมมุติว่าหนึ่งพันบาท สองชั่วโมง คือทำ contact ก็ราคาก็ถูกอยู่แล้ว มันเอา contact เดียวกัน ไปเปิดให้อีกสปาหนึ่งดู เค้าบอกว่าเชลลให้อีกห้าสิบบาท ฉันจะเอาลูกค้ามาหาเธอเลย ฉันมีลูกค้าวันหนึ่งร้อยคนอย่างนี้ มันไปเซ็นสัญญา ไอศคนนั้นมันย้ายจากshop ครงนี้ไปทำ สปาครั้งนี้ไปทำครั้งนี้เลยละอะ จนเค้าบอกว่า เปิดธุรกิจที่พัฒนาเนี่ย ถ้าไม่ฟังagency ไม่มีทางอยู่ได้ แต่สมมุติไม่ใช่ สมมุติไม่ใช่ หอจมาก

อ.ไอศ : เพราะว่าร่วมตัวกันแล้วนะ

คุณอ้อ : อะ รวมตัวกันแล้ว แล้วอย่างหนึ่ง คือเค้าไม่ได้แข่งกันที่คิมพ์ราคาเลยอะ คือแข่งกันใครดี ใครได้ ใครเลิศ ใครสวย ใครบริการดี อย่างนั้นคิดว่า แล้วถ้าเราแยกอะเราส่งให้เพื่อน เพื่อนอะส่งให้เรา เอาค่าคอมไปอย่างนี้ เรื่องอย่างนี้ มันทำงานแล้วมันช่วยเหลือกัน เรารู้จักกัน พอรู้จักกันก็ไม่มีใครทำร้ายกันแล้วแต่พอถ้าคุณไม่รู้จิก มันมี business เข้ามาเกี่ยวแล้ว แล้วที่นี้ก็จะมีการแข่ง therapist กัน แข่ง manager กัน มีการซื้อตัวกัน มีการทำอะไรแบบ เฮ้ย เราคิดว่าเราทำไม่ได้อยู่อย่างนี้ เราลงทุนมาเยอะๆ เราหนึ่ง ต้องไปทะเลาะกับเพื่อนบ้าน แล้วเราก็ต้องมาแบบ

อ.ไอศ : เครีชคนอะ

network activities of Tourism Association Koh Samui	
Socio-cultural issues	
Hard networks	
Political issues	
Positive	
Communication issue	
Limit the number of hotels	
Spa	
Positive	
Understanding towards sustainable tourism	
Sharing information	
Human resource issue	
Support	
Supplier issues	
Community participation	
Positive	
Tourists	
Friendship	
Sustainable practices	
Resource sharing and transferring	
Branding	
Training	
External connection	
Mutual exchange	
Spa Association Koh Samui	
Soft network	
Network activities of Sap Association	
Coffee Meeting called Sapu Kae by district government	
Social networks	
Coding Density	
Strong ties	



คุณอ้อ : ทุกเดือน มีทุกเดือน ทุกเดือนต้องมีอบรม จันทร์ห้านี้ก็จะมามีเรื่องของ 16.55 ได้งบจากท่องเที่ยวก็จะเป็นเรื่องอบรมหัวหน้างาน UAC อย่างนี้ค่ะ พี่อ้อ ได้งบมา อ้อก็จัดการจัดสรรทำอะไรก็ เปิดรับสมัคร โครมาสมัครก็เปิดอบรม เปิดการเรียนการสอน อบรม อย่างนี้ค่ะ

อ.ไอ้ดี : สมาชิกก็จะได้ตรงนั้นแหละ แล้วก็จะได้ตรงอื่นอีกไหมคะ ข่าวสาร โอเค แล้วก็แก้ไขปัญหาอย่างนี้ด้วยไหมคะ

คุณอ้อ : มี เราก็จะแชร์ปัญหากัน อย่างสมาคมเองเราก็มีกลุ่มไลน์มา สำหรับเจ้าของ spa manager เราก็จะมีกลุ่มสมาชิกของเรา สถาปต้องเข้าร่วมของเรา เพราะฉะนั้นเรามีข่าวสารที่ไหนดมา ไปทำอะไรที่ไหนดมากก็จะส่งให้เพื่อนรู้ ทราบ คิดคือ อะ ใช้อย่างนี้

อ.ไอ้ดี : แสดงว่าสมาคมนี้คุณอ้อ ในฐานะที่เป็นนายกสมาคมสปาเนี่ย ก็คือต้องไปคอนแทกกับสมาคมอื่นๆ องค์กรอื่นๆ แล้วกันนี้ใช่ไหมคะ

คุณอ้อ : ใช่ๆ

อ.ไอ้ดี : มีองค์กรไหนบ้างคะ สมาคมนอก

คุณอ้อ : เยอะเลยคะ อย่าง ไล่ไปเป็นเดือนละ บอกมันเยอะ เอาเล่าให้เป็นเดือนเนี่ยอะ ถ้าเป็นเดือนเนี่ย เดือนม.ค.เนี่ย เราก็จะมี ส่วนมากจะประสานงานกับทางอำเภอบ่อขอม กรมวัฒนธรรมจะจัดงานบ่อย ก็จะมีจัดงานหน้าทอนละ จัดงานวันเด็กอย่างนี้ค่ะ มันเป็นเทศกาลวันเด็กใช่ไหมคะ เราก็รวบรวมสมาชิกเราจัดกิจกรรมร่วมกัน ไปแจกของขวัญเด็ก

อ.ไอ้ดี : อันนี้คือเหมือนกับว่า ช่วยสังคม

คุณอ้อ : ใช่ ช่วยสังคม

อ.ไอ้ดี : หรือว่า ออกบูชสปา อย่างนี้ปะคะ

คุณอ้อ : ออกบูชเพื่อแจกของนะค่ะ โปรโมทสมาคม เหมือนช่วยเด็ก เด็กจากโรงเรียนที่มารับของจากผู้ใหญ่อย่างนี้ค่ะ ปีก่อนก็ร่วมกับทหารอากาศ แล้วแต่มันก็จะสลับกันไปแต่ละปี อย่างก.พ.เนี่ย เป็นเดือนที่เรากฎ เลข ว่าเราจะต้องไปมอบของขวัญให้ผู้ป่วย มอบความรัก มันป็นวันวาเลนไทน์ มอบให้ผู้ป่วยที่รพ.เกาะสมุย เราก็จะรวบรวมสมาชิกของเราเนี่ย ใครก็ได้ ใครมีโปรดักส์ ใครมีอะไร ก็เอามา

อ.ไอ้ดี : เหมือนคล้ายๆ กับเราก็ช่วยเหลือ ในอำเภอใช่ไหมคะ คือภาครัฐ เพื่อที่จะภาครัฐเค้าจะได้แบบว่าช่วยเหลือเราง่ายขึ้น สนับสนุนอย่างนี้หรือคะ หรือว่า

คุณจุลฑามาศ : ไม่ได้ไป กิจกรรมอะไรละ

คุณไอ้ด : ไปอนุรักษ์สิ่งแวดล้อม อะไรนี่เหมือนกัน
แต่ก็คือแบบว่าไปปลูกต้นไม้ที่เกาะแคว้นแล้วที่ปล่อยสัตว์ทะเลอะไรอย่างนี้ละ

คุณจุลฑามาศ : อ้อ เราก็เคยไปเก็บขยะเกาะแคว้น กับเทศบาล กับกลุ่ม the green กับชาวบ้าน
ไปปลูกป่าชายเลน

คุณไอ้ด : แล้วที่คิดว่าการทำงานอะไรต่างๆ เนี่ย มันเป็นอย่างไง ถ้าให้ประเมินเนี่ย

คุณจุลฑามาศ : ทำเสร็จปั๊บ มันต้องมีการติดตามอย่างต่อเนื่อง คือสมมุติโอเค เราระดมคนไปทำได้
แต่คนที่ติดตามต่อไป คือใคร เทศบาลถ้ากำลังคน ไม่มีปั๊บก็ต้องจัดเป็นแบบเฟสสอง

คุณไอ้ด : ส่วนใหญ่ก็คือ ไม่มีเฟสสอง มีเฟสแรก

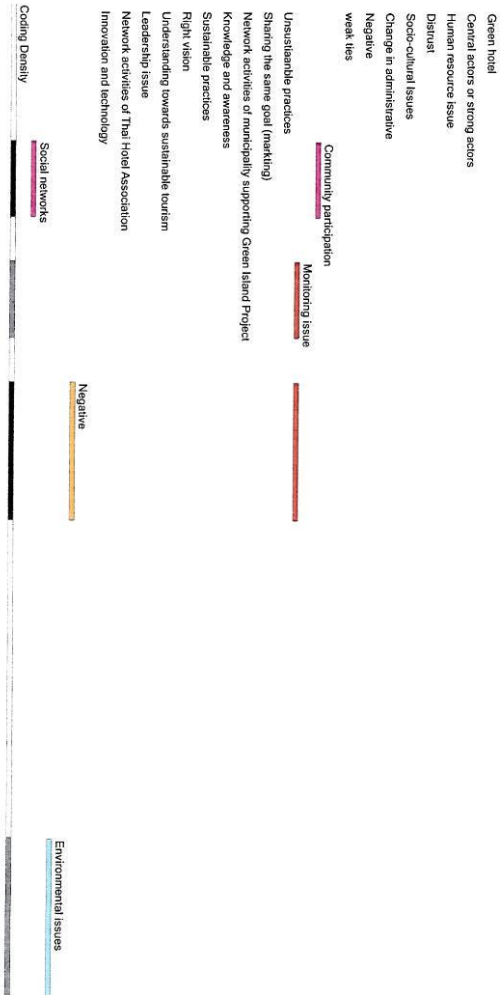
คุณจุลฑามาศ : เฟสสองก็คือ สมมุติเฟสแรกปลูกไปปั๊บ พอเฟสสองต้องติดตามทั้งสี่ ห้าเดือน ติดตาม
ก็อาจจะมีคนไปเซอร์เวย์ก่อนว่าโอเค โครงการเนี่ย เราต้องกลับเข้ามาปลูกใหม่อีกครั้งหนึ่ง
หรือมาเก็บขยะอีกครึ่งหนึ่งอะไรอย่างนี้ เราก็จะได้ระดมกลุ่มโรงแรมอะไรต่างๆ เข้ามาเป็นเฟสสอง
ก็มันต้องต่อเนื่อง มันไม่ใช่ว่าทำครั้งเดียวแล้วจบ เพื่อ PR อะไรเนี่ยมันไม่ใช่

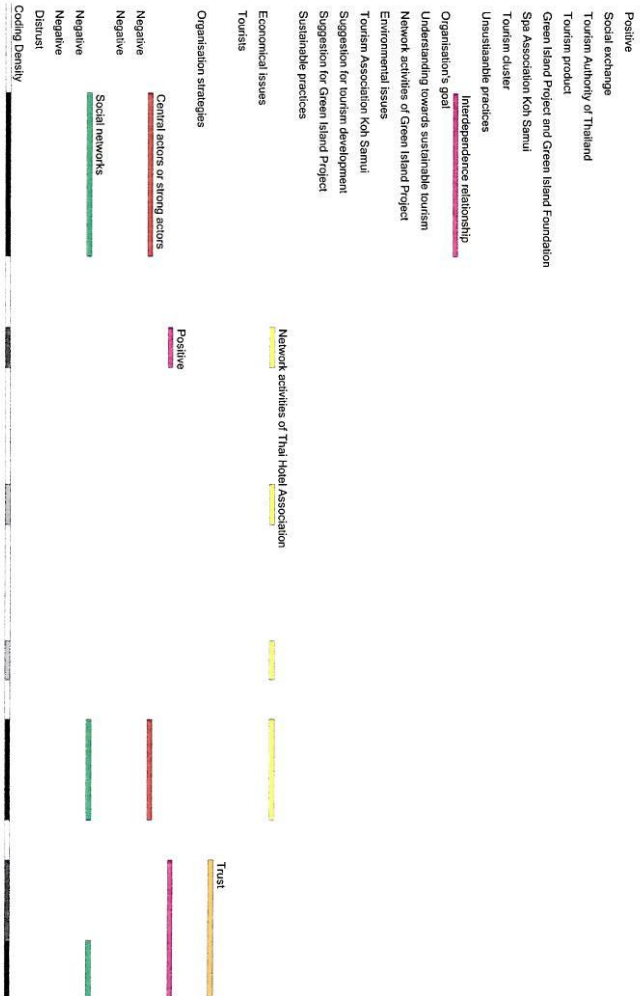
คุณไอ้ด : แล้วส่วนใหญ่เป็นอย่างนั้นหรือคะ

คุณจุลฑามาศ : ส่วนหนึ่งนะ ที่ถึงบอกว่า
ที่ถึงคุยกับเทศบาลว่าเราต้องทำโครงการที่ติดตามอย่างต่อเนื่อง ใกล้เคียงกับสร้างฝายก็เหมือนกันนะ
พอสร้างเสร็จปั๊บ พอน้ำเปลี่ยนทางปั๊บ ตะกอนอัดแน่นเต็มฝายปั๊บ ฝายนั้นก็ทำประสิทธิภาพไม่ได้
ปีต่อไปก็ต้องเอาฝายเดิมมาขุดลอกทรายที่อยู่ตรงนั้น ที่เต็มหนานั่นออก นี่คือการทำอย่างต่อเนื่องอย่างนี้
คือสมมุติต้องมีคนสำรวจ เสร็จแล้วเราก็ส่งข้อมูล ไปให้หน่วยงานที่สามารถระดมคนเข้ามาทำได้
มันต้องทำงานแบบอย่างนี้ไปด้วยกัน

คุณไอ้ด : ก็ถึงนะคะ แล้วที่คิดว่าปัญหาเนี่ย มันมีไหมคะในสมมุติเนี่ย ปัญหาสิ่งแวดล้อมใหญ่
โอเคเรื่องขยะได้แล้ว

คุณจุลฑามาศ : น้ำเสีย น้ำเสียส่วนหนึ่งก็เกี่ยวข้องกับภารกิจขยะเนี่ย ใช้น้ำเยอะ แล้วก็ทิ้งสารอินทรีย์ลงไป
เศษอาหาร แอบปล่อยน้ำจากธุรกิจ ร้านอาหาร ธุรกิจโรงแรม ไม่มีถังบำบัด เรื่องตรงนี้ส่วนหนึ่งก็คือ
มันต้องรณรงค์ตั้งแต่ต้นทางเหมือนกัน คือ โอเคชาวบ้าน อาจจะไม่สามารถทำน้ำหมัก
คือถ้าทำน้ำหมักได้เสร็จปั๊บเทลงไปที่จังหวัด ที่สวมเสร็จปั๊บ โอเค มันก็เป็นการทริทก่อน
ก่อนที่มันจะไหลลงไปในไหนก็แล้วแต่ แต่ล่าสุดเทศบาลกำลังรวบรวมทำระบบรวมน้ำทิ้งเพื่อ





คุณแฟร์- ททท. ก็มี ส่วน

คุณไอ้ด- หมายถึงว่า ททท. กับสมาคมเนี่ย

คุณแฟร์- ก็ ททท. ได้ตอบรับความต้องการของสมาคมพอสมควร
 ก็คือว่ามีการส่งเสริมให้ผู้ประกอบการในระดับ SME ระดับกลางถึงล่างเนี่ย ได้เปิดหูเปิดตา ก็คือว่าได้ไปงาน road show ที่จีน ที่อะไรอย่างนี้มากขึ้น โดยการที่ประชาสัมพันธ์ผ่านสมาคมเนี่ยแหละ
 แล้วสมาคมเค้าก็พยายามจะช่วยเหลือ budget บางส่วน
 ในการที่ทำให้กลุ่มนี้ซึ่งบางทีไม่มีทุนทรัพย์ที่จะไปเองเนี่ยได้ไปแชร์กับคนอื่น

คุณไอ้ด- แล้วจากการเป็นสมาชิกนี่เค้าประชุมกันบ่อยไหม ถ้าเป็นสมาชิกนะไม่ใช่กรรมการ
 สมาคมส่งเสริมเนาะ

คุณแฟร์- สมาคมนี่สองอาทิตย์ครั้งเลยครับ สมาคมนี่ค่อนข้างโอเค

คุณไอ้ด- สมาชิกเนาะ

คุณแฟร์- ใจ๋

คุณไอ้ด- ไม่ใช้กรรมการนะ

คุณแฟร์- กรรมการนี่ผลออๆ ทุกๆ สัปดาห์วัน สมาชิกก็ประมาณเดือนละครั้ง ประชุมวิสามัญ

คุณไอ้ด- แล้วเดือนนี้มีประชุมไปหรือยังคะ เดือนนี้จะมีประชุมอีกไหม

คุณแฟร์- คุลา ยังครับ

คุณไอ้ด- แล้วเวลาประชุมเนี่ย มีสมาชิกไปกันเยอะไหมคะ ประมาณกี่คนอะไรยังใจ

คุณแฟร์- ไม่ต่ำกว่าสามสิบ ผมไม่เคยไปประชุมโดยที่สมาชิกคำว่าสามสิบได้

คุณไอ้ด- แล้วเวลาประชุมเนี่ยจะพูดกันถึงเรื่องอะไรเป็นหลัก มี agenda อะไรเรียบร้อยไหมคะ

คุณแฟร์- ก็มีแค่ minute การประชุมแล้วก็เรื่องที่ pending จากครั้งที่แล้ว
 ทั่วไปแล้วก็มีเรื่องฝากประชาสัมพันธ์ เป็นเรื่องของนักท่องเที่ยวมีปัญหาอะไรอย่างนี้ แล้วก็ปัญหาที่พบ
 ถนน หนทางอะไรอย่างนี้ กลุ่มสมาคมนี้ก็สามาร voice ไปที่เทศบาล หรือ ททท. ได้

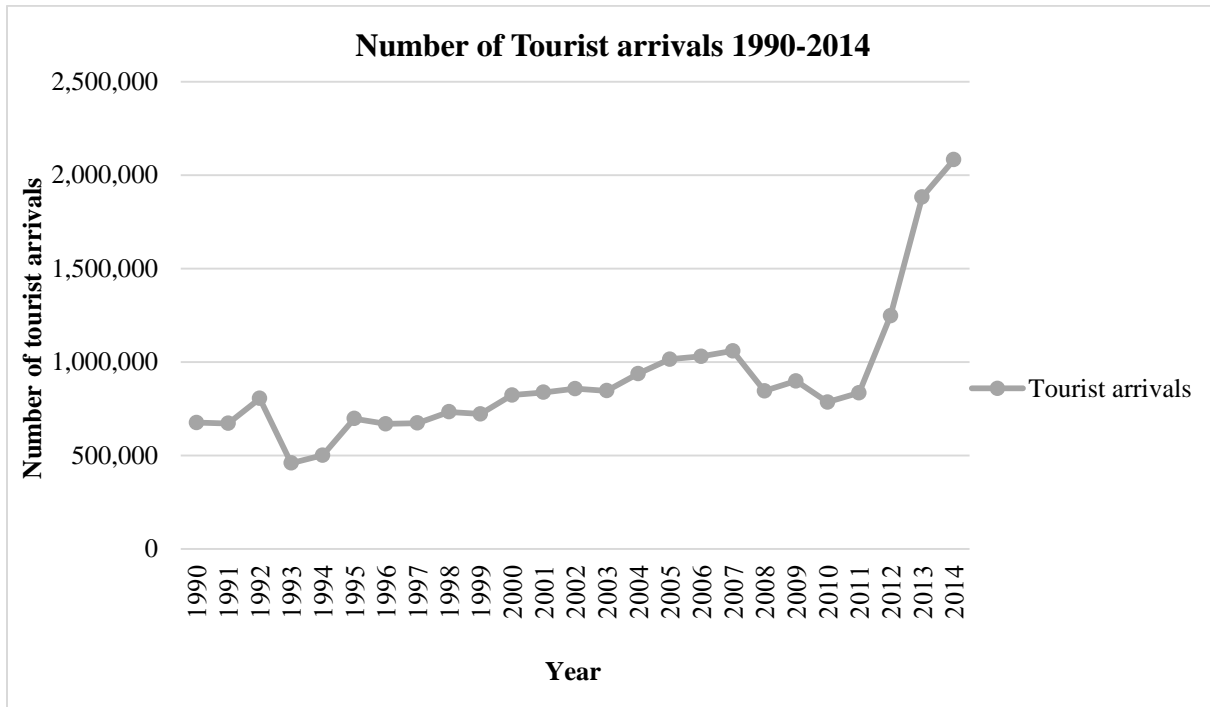
คุณไอ้ด- ค่อนข้างจะมีทาวเวอร์ในการขอความช่วยเหลือ ความร่วมมือ

คุณแฟร์- คุยได้สินะครับ คือเป็นสมาคมที่เข้มแข็งพอสมควร

คุณไอ้ด- ได้รับความช่วยเหลือที่ดี

คุณแฟร์- ได้รับความช่วยเหลือที่ดีพอสมควร อีกสมาคมหนึ่งก็สมาคมสปาสมุทร

APPENDIX 12:
The number of tourist arrivals in 1990-2014



Source: Chatkaewnapanon (2011); Department of Tourism, Thailand.

APPENDIX 13:
The encroachment on the mountains in Sub district Bo Phud



Source: author

Uncontrolled development allow many constructions built on the mountain with improper design and height, which destroy vastly natural environment and create eye pollution to the area.

APPENDIX 14: Business encroachment on the beach



Source: author

This shows the most famous beach in Samui, Chaweng beach. All of the beach area is occupied by the businesses, such as the resorts, and massages businesses.

APPENDIX 15:
Ethics form

**A PROFORMA FOR
STAFF AND STUDENTS BEGINNING A RESEARCH PROJECT**

This proforma should be completed by all staff and research students undertaking any research project and by taught students undertaking a research project as part of a taught module.

Part A (compulsory)

Research Proposer(s): Nisarath Thaitong

Student number (if applicable): XXXXX

University of Hull email address: XXX

Programme of Study: PhD Management

Research (Working Dissertation/Thesis) Title: An investigation of tourism stakeholders' interrelationships affecting sustainability of tourism clusters in Samui Island.

Research (brief):

This study will investigate the interrelationships between tourism stakeholders and the influence of their networks on (un)sustainable practices and the evolution of tourism clusters in Two case study areas in Samui Island; (1) north eastern region (sub district Bo Phud), (2) south/south western regions (sub districts Na Muang and Taling Ngam). This study will employ qualitative methodological approach by using the semi-structured interview, focus groups and observation methods that will involve human participants as well as their privacy and confidentiality. The participants will be tourism stakeholders in Samui tourism industry such as government bodies, tourism organisations, business owners/managers, volunteers, and host community. Thus, the consent form is attached and the research will be conducted once the ethical approval is being granted.

Proforma Completion Date: 25th January 2014

Tick and sign by one of the following statements:

1) I confirm that *human participants are not involved in my research and in addition no other ethical considerations are envisaged.*

Signature of researcher.....

2) Human participants are involved in my research and/or there are other ethical considerations in my research.

Signature of researcher.....

If statement 1 is ticked and signed, there is no need to proceed further with this proforma, and research may proceed now.

If statement 2 is ticked and signed the researcher should complete part B of this proforma.

Part B

*This proforma should be read in conjunction with the Ethical Principles for Researchers and the HUBS flow chart of **research** ethics procedures. It should be completed by the researchers. It should be sent on completion, together with a brief (maximum one page) summary of the issues/problems in the research (and how they are proposed to be dealt with), for approval to the Chair of the HUBS Research Ethics Committee (or nominated Committee member) or in the case of research being completed as part of a taught module to the student's supervisor or module leader prior to the beginning of any research.*

NOTE

If this research has a research population of those under 18 years of age it requires specific authorisation, including that from authorities outside the University. It should not proceed until such authorisation has been obtained in writing.

1. Will you obtain written informed consent from the participants? YES

If yes, please include a copy of the information letter requesting consent. In the case of electronic surveys it is acceptable to advise participants that completion of the survey constitutes consent. Please provide a printout of the survey template.

If no, the research should not proceed unless you can specifically satisfy the Research Ethics Committee with the measures you will take to deal with this matter.

2. Has there been any withholding of disclosure of information regarding the research/teaching to the participants? NO

If yes, please describe the measures you have taken to deal with this.

3. Issues for participants. Please answer the following and state how you will manage perceived risks if any answer is YES:

- | | | |
|----|--|-----|
| a) | Do any aspects of the study pose a possible risk to participants' physical well-being (e.g. use of substances such as alcohol or extreme situations such as sleep deprivation)? | NO |
| b) | Are there any aspects of the study that participants might find humiliating, embarrassing, ego-threatening, in conflict with their values, or be otherwise emotionally upsetting?* | NO |
| c) | Are there any aspects of the study that might threaten participants' privacy (e.g. questions of a very personal nature; observation of individuals in situations which are not obviously 'public')?* | YES |
| d) | Does the study require access to confidential sources of information (e.g. medical records)? | NO |
| e) | Could the intended participants for the study be expected to be more than usually emotionally vulnerable (e.g. medical patients, bereaved individuals)? | NO |
| f) | Will the study take place in a setting other than the University campus or residential buildings? | YES |
| g) | Will the intended participants of the study be individuals who are not members of the University community? | YES |

*Note: if the intended participants are of a different social, racial, cultural, age or sex group to the researcher(s) and there is **any** doubt about the possible impact of the planned procedures, then opinion should be sought from members of the relevant group.

4.

Might conducting the study expose the researcher to any risks (e.g. collecting data in potentially dangerous environments)? Explain your method of dealing with this.	NO
--	----

5. Is the research being conducted on a group culturally different from the researcher/student/supervisors? <i>If yes, are sensitivities and problems likely to arise?</i> <i>If yes, please describe how you have addressed/will address them.</i>	NO Y/N?
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6. Does the research conflict with any of the HUBS's research ethics principles? NO
If YES do not proceed Describe for the Research Ethics Committee what action you have taken to address this?
7. If the research requires the consent of any organisation, have you obtained it? YES
If NO do not proceed Describe for the Research Ethics Committee what action you have taken to overcome this problem.
8. Did you have to discuss the likelihood of ethical problems with this research with an informed colleague? NO
If yes, please name the colleague and provide the date and results of the discussion.

Thank you for completing this proforma. If you are a research student/member of staff this form must be signed by you, your supervisor/colleague and the HUBS Research Ethics Committee representative for your area. In the case of students undertaking research as part of a taught module, it must be signed by you and your supervisor or module leader. Once signed, staff and research students should send copies of this form, and the proposal must be sent to the Secretary of the Research Ethics Committee, Hull University Business School (see flow chart), including where possible examples of letters describing the purposes and implications of the research, and any Consent Forms (see appendices).

APPENDIX 16:
Consent form

**RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSENT FORM: Interview**

I, _____ of _____

Hereby agree to be a participant in this study to be undertaken
By Nisarathai Thong, PhD student

and I understand that the purpose of the research is to analyse the interrelationships between tourism stakeholders, examine their (un)sustainable practices and how their relational networks influence the evolution and profile of tourism clusters in the north-eastern region (sub-district Bo Phud) and south/south-western regions (sub-district Na Muang and Taling Ngam) in Samui Island.

I understand that

1. The aims, methods, and anticipated benefits of the research study, have been explained to me.
2. I voluntarily and freely give my consent to my participation in such research study.
3. I understand that aggregated results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.
4. Individual results will not be released to any person except at my request and on my authorisation.
5. I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study, in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained from me will not be used.

Signature:

Date:

The contact details of the researcher are:

Nisarathai Thong, PhD student
University of Hull
Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX.
Email: N.Thaihong@2011.hull.ac.uk

Supervised by Dr. Gunjan Saxena
University of Hull
Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX.
Email: G.Saxena@hull.ac.uk

The contact details of the secretary to the HUBS Research Ethics Committee are Amy Cowling, Hull University Business School, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX.
Email: a.cowling@hull.ac.uk tel. 01482-463410.
