

**Rural tourism development
a network perspective**

CENTRALE LANDBOUWCATALOGUS



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Rural tourism development a network perspective

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Stellingen bij het proefschrift "Rural tourism development: a network perspective"

Janine Caalders

Wageningen Universiteit, 20 december 2002

1. Inhoudelijke vragen krijgen steeds vaker een procesmatig antwoord. Vaak wordt echter over het hoofd gezien dat de keuze voor een procesaanpak zeer sturend is voor de (inhoudelijke) uitkomst (dit proefschrift).
2. De marginale positie van toeristische actoren in rurale (beleids-) netwerken is zowel oorzaak als gevolg van het gebrek aan serieuze beleidsaandacht voor dit thema (dit proefschrift).
3. Het gebrek aan aandacht voor toeristische innovaties in plattelandsvernieuwingsprocessen vormt een bedreiging voor de toekomst van de sector, maar ook voor de toekomst van het platteland (dit proefschrift).
4. Toeristische ondernemers zouden massaal lid moeten zijn van organisaties voor landschapsbehoud, natuur en cultuurhistorie (dit proefschrift).
5. Toerist, dat ben je zelf.
6. Wetenschap, hoe toegepast ook, heeft altijd iets vrijblijvends.
7. Wie vanwege zijn positie meer invloed heeft op het formuleren van regels, moet ook harder worden gestraft bij overtreding ervan.
8. Als kranten meer goed nieuws zouden brengen zou het vertrouwen in de samenleving met sprongen toenemen.

Preface

While carrying out my PhD research, I often felt a pioneer. This was both inspiring and frustrating: inspiring as it gave me the feeling of exploring a new subject; frustrating because exploring is not similar to efficiently working towards a previously defined goal. By finishing this book I have left the frustration behind me - but I am still astonished that a subject as topical, interesting and strategically important as tourism development in rural areas is left to pioneers. Tourism in general receives very little academic and policy attention: in the Netherlands there is about one academic researcher for each billion Euros turnover. One of the reasons behind the lack of attention for tourism is that leisure is considered subordinate to work. While working on the last bits of this book, many people in my environment must have thought that this was the case for me as well.

A number of people have been invaluable in creating the circumstances to make it possible to write this book. Before all, I would like to thank Hans, whose attitude towards my PhD research has always been that of a concerned and interested outsider. He provided me with food for thought, and never omitted to stress that finishing my thesis was important, but not if that would be at the cost of more important things. Our son Willem has probably been the best stimulus to finally finish this book. His presence is the best reminder that there are better ways to spend my weekends.

I am grateful to my colleagues at BUITEN, and especially to my business partner Joost Hagens. They have created the atmosphere and circumstances which made it possible to combine my consultancy work and my thesis and still have time left for a private life.

Throughout the period that I worked on my thesis, my promotores always kept confidence in my approach. I have experienced the joint supervision of my work by two men with quite different perspectives and working methods as both invaluable and inspiring. Adri Dietvorst - who combines vision and a keen nose for innovative ideas, with a practical view and a healthy dose of pragmatism - put me back on the right track whenever I lost my focus. Hans Hetsen kept an eye on the research design and crucial details. Through his job at the Innovation Network he also provided a link with policy practice.

Due to my colleagues at the Centre for Recreation and Tourism Studies – a much better name than the current one - and the fellow AIOs in 'De Hucht', I have experienced my time in Wageningen as a very pleasant one. In the course of time many people left and sometimes others came in their place. One permanent factor were the 'women under 35': Birgit, Femke and Lianne. My colleagues offered not only pleasure, we also had plenty discussions and with some people I closely cooperated. With Birgit Elands, Renze Brouwer, Jan Philipsen and Wim van der Knaap I discussed the in's and out's of Lefebvres 'Production of Space'. The article with Jan Philipsen contributed significantly to the theoretical part of this thesis. Cooperation with Geoffrey Hagelaar was momentary, but sharpened my thoughts on interactive policy-making. The person in Wageningen I cooperated with the most is René van der Duim. I have learned a lot from the projects we jointly work(ed) on and have enjoyed our trips to Costa Rica. Han's coffee - violently - helped to wake me up on many a morning when the canteen was closed. Special thanks to Tom 'Pim' Slijkerman for the analysis of the data with all

possible means: SPSS, UCINET and coloured pencils. And also for his free advice on how to use wallpaper glue to improve the substance of shampoo.

Since I left Wageningen, my appreciation has only increased for the way in which the Socio-spatial Analysis Group manages to deliver a good product within the university system.

During my stay in France, I was a guest at the ENITA in Clermont-Ferrand. I want to thank all the fellow-workers at the institute for making my stay a pleasant one. I owe special thanks to Nathalie Dizez who introduced me to the institute, to prof. J-F. Mamdy for making my stay possible, and to my 'roommate' Armelle Maumelat.

This research would not have been possible without all the people that were willing to answer my questions, to show me around in the research areas, help me out on practical matters or fill in my questionnaires. I want to thank them for their help. I would like to thank Adri van 't Veer for making the maps and figures. The librarians Gerard van der Moolen and Wieske Meijers were always willing to extend the loan of my books for yet another period. Jeremy Rayner has corrected the English.

To my 'extended' family and to my friends, who kept informing when the party would be, I'm glad I can finally say: HET IS AF! I will see you tonight. Pap, mam, this book is dedicated to you, as a symbolic return for your support.

Finally, to you, the reader. I know for some of you the preface is the most appealing part of the book. It is certainly the part of any thesis that I never skip. But if you decide to try the rest: I hope you enjoy it and let me know what you think of it.

voor mijn ouders

[This strategy] would seek to carry the whole territory and the whole population forward together in a process which would not separate growth from development. The inevitable urbanization of society would not take place at the expense of whole sectors, nor would it exacerbate unevenness in growth or development; it would successfully transcend the opposition between town and country instead of degrading both by turning them in to an undifferentiated mass.

Lefebvre, H. (1991, orig. 1974). *The production of space*. p.p.55

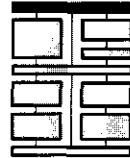
Content

Preface

Content

1	Introduction	11
1.1	The countryside: in search for renewal without loss of identity	11
1.2	Standardisation and conservation in tourism development	15
1.3	Rural tourism: an interdisciplinary approach	22
2	Rural space and rural qualities	27
2.1	The European countryside: a heterogeneous space	27
2.2	Conceptualisation of rural space	31
2.3	Rural qualities	36
2.4	Network as an analytical concept	41
2.5	Evaluation	45
3	Rural development: the role of place and the rise of interactive approaches	47
3.1	The early days: exogenous top-down approaches	47
3.2	From endogenous development to networks and interaction	52
3.3	The position of rural areas	57
3.4	Conclusion	60
4	Networks, innovation and planning	61
4.1	Networks as a means for innovation	61
4.2	Networks as an instrument for governance: characterising interactive approaches	68
4.3	Networks and rural tourism development	73
5	A network approach to rural tourism development	77
5.1	Issues addressed in the case studies	77
5.2	A contextualised analysis of networks	79
5.3	Case studies: an explorative approach	87
6	Exploring the context for rural tourism networks in the Auvergne	93
6.1	Conceptualisation of rural issues in France	95
6.2	Changing administrative relations: the impact of decentralisation	99
6.3	Actors in rural tourism in the Auvergne	105
6.4	Tourism networks in the Auvergne: finding bridge actors and configurations	112

7	Rural tourism development in the Auvergne: Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne and Parc Livradois-Forez	135
7.1	PNR: two regional parks in the Auvergne	135
7.2	Tourism development: Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne	143
7.3	Tourism development: Parc Livradois-Forez	149
7.4	Evaluation of the functioning of both PNRs	154
8	The context for rural tourism networks in the Netherlands	163
8.1	Policy for rural areas and recreation and tourism up to the 1990s	163
8.2	Deregulation, decentralisation and restructuring of the tourist-recreative field	171
8.3	Rural renewal	175
8.4	Integration of economic and ecological goals	178
8.5	Consequences in terms of discourses and networks	180
9	Rural tourism development in WCL areas in the Netherlands: Zuidwest Friesland and Midden-Limburg	185
9.1	WCL policy and WCL areas of Friesland and Limburg	185
9.2	WCL policy in Midden-Limburg	192
9.3	WCL Zuidwest Friesland	203
9.4	WCL policy and innovation in tourism: Zuidwest Friesland	213
9.5	WCL policy: conclusions and evaluation	224
10	Rural tourism networks in theory and practice: summary and conclusions	231
10.1	Theory: rural qualities and innovation through networks	231
10.2	Methodology: an explorative approach	234
10.3	Case study findings	235
10.4	A network perspective on rural tourism: evaluation of research methods	242
10.5	Policy-making: improving the contribution of networks to innovation and quality	244
References		249
Appendix 1 Survey on tourism development Auvergne		261
Appendix 2 Survey on innovation Zuidwest Friesland		275
Samenvatting		285



1 Introduction

The countryside is becoming a place for living, not for making a living¹

The decline in agriculture is bringing about fundamental changes in European rural areas. It not only creates economic problems, but also undermines rural identity, which used to be closely bound to agriculture. There is a search for new functions within the countryside, able to compensate for the loss in agriculture. In this respect, the development of tourism is a popular strategy. Tourism is 'the fastest growing industry world-wide' and many rural areas have a potential to attract tourists. Apart from such economic opportunities, tourism also tends to be regarded as a means to conserve rural identity, because identity 'sells'.

The changes taking place not only involve new functions and new 'players' entering rural areas, but also endanger interests and fundamental values. Tourism is not the only opportunity for rural development. Various opinions also exist with respect to the type of tourism to be developed and how to proceed. The balance of power is changing as rural areas undergo transformation from being places predominantly for agricultural production, to becoming agreeable places for living, retiring and spending leisure time. Rural areas are changing from places of 'production' into places of 'consumption'.

In this introduction, I want to sketch some of these changes in rural areas. From this, some challenges for rural tourism development arise and I will indicate how scientific research deals with these challenges. Consequently, the central issue for this book is formulated.

1.1 The countryside: in search for renewal without loss of identity

In line with changes in rural areas sketched above, rural policy has shifted from an almost exclusive focus on agriculture, to a more diversified view on rural functions. In addition, there have been changes in ideas about what the countryside is. This change is related to rural and to more general societal developments and has altered the formulation of goals and challenges for rural policy.

From agricultural policy to rural policy

In the past, rural policy was equated more or less with agricultural policy. During the course of the twentieth century, however, the agricultural sector lost its dominant position in most parts of the European countryside. While in 1961 one fifth of the workforce was employed in agriculture, today the sector comprises merely a few percent

¹ Lowenthal, 1994: 6

of overall employment and of the national product of north-western European countries. In terms of land use, the decline is much less pronounced, with a decline of 14% between 1960 and 1997². Agriculture still accounts for approximately 56% of land use in the EU-12³. According to scenario studies, however, this percentage is likely to decrease significantly in the coming decades. A study by the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy mentions figures of anywhere between a 22 and a 73 percent decline in agricultural land use between 1990 and 2015⁴.

At the same time, agricultural productivity – measured in terms of total production, production per hectare and production per worker – has risen steeply. Although this rise is foremost a result of technological shifts in farming practice, agricultural policy – both national and European – has done much to enhance this trend⁵. In the Treaty of Rome (1958), the first goal mentioned for a common agricultural policy is to increase the productivity of agriculture by stimulating technological progress⁶. From the start, European agricultural policy has consisted mainly of price- and market regulation. This eventually led to a large overproduction of, for example, butter and wine. Europe was ‘... confronted with the negative impacts of its own successful agricultural policy’⁷.

The first policy reaction to overproduction was to make a shift away from price- and market regulation towards direct income support for farmers. Gradually, however, public support for subsidising agriculture to such a great extent is disappearing. As the image of large-scale and industrialised farms is deteriorating and the influence of the farm lobby in the political circuit is decreasing, the EU attitude towards agriculture and rural areas is changing as well. Measured in terms of the size of the financial budget, income and price subsidisation for farmers remains the principal type of EU policy⁸. But the balance is changing in favour of more structural support for farmers and of policies aimed at other rural functions⁹. This means that agricultural policy, as such, is more focused on the environmental effects of production, the quality of the products, and the well-being of animals. It also means that there is greater attention to non-agricultural rural issues.

Changing function of European rural areas

The changing attitude towards rural development stems only partly from a ‘push’ from developments in agriculture, that creates a need for rural areas to search alternative economic functions. In addition, many rural areas are confronted with increasing pressure on land use brought about by claims by, for example, housing, nature, industry and recreation.

Rural areas have been confronted with a loss of population since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. After the Second World War, this trend became reversed in some rural areas. In regions situated close to metropolitan areas, as well as in rural towns, population numbers increased. In Britain, for example, population numbers in rural areas grew by 12.5 percent between 1951 and 1971¹⁰. However, more remote rural areas continued to lose population during this period. This situation changed during the

² FAO, 2002

³ FAO, 2002

⁴ WRR, 1992

⁵ Hoggart et al., 1995

⁶ Van der Stelt-Scheele, 1994

⁷ Albrechts, 1996: 23

⁸ Buckwell, 1997

⁹ Rogers, 1997; Buckwell, 1997

¹⁰ Pacione, 1984: 128

1970s with the so-called population turnaround, when those remote areas began experiencing population growth at the cost of urban centres¹¹. The causes for this turnaround were manifold¹², including both rural pull- and urban push factors.

One of the pull factors was the increase in non-agricultural jobs available in rural areas. Peripheral areas became more popular as locations for different types of industries, and by the 1980s rural areas showed better figures in terms of growth of manufacturing employment than cities¹³. This growth was based in part on the relocation of branches of large multinational corporations. It was also achieved by small-scale, locally based industries. It became clear that peripheral rural areas possess qualities of their own that can serve as a base for economic development. This is especially noticeable with respect to the increasing importance of tourism as a rural employer.

The pressure is not evenly distributed among different rural areas, however¹⁴. A growing difference between amenity-rich areas and regions within urban fields on the one hand and marginalised, remote rural areas is emerging. Rural areas which showed the highest growth in employment opportunities during the 1980s were those characterised by an attractive natural environment, such as certain coastal, mountain or wooded areas. Rural regions adjacent to metropolitan areas also did well¹⁵. In other areas, problems characteristic of the periphery remained. One aim of rural development is to establish a diversification of the economy within these types of areas as well.

Policy goals for rural areas

In tandem with changes in the function of rural areas, ideas on rural development are also changing. By definition, 'rural' no longer means peripheral. Development is not so much imposed upon areas from the outside as based on the regions' own strengths. Rural policy is thus becoming increasingly region-specific as opposed to generic for the countryside as a whole. The EU's LEADER programme is a good example of such a strategy. Increasingly, the local population is regarded as a crucial asset of rural areas, as well as a crucial factor for rural development.

Another trend is the growing concern for sustainable development¹⁶. Most policies for rural areas now include sustainable development goals. This means a growing emphasis on the preservation of biodiversity, nature and landscapes, as well as concern for culture and rural traditions. Economic development often is also regarded as part of a sustainable development strategy. The first point of the Declaration of Cork (1996), for example, states that:

Sustainable rural development must be put at the top of the agenda of the European Union, and become the fundamental principle which underpins all rural policy in the immediate future (...). The need to preserve and improve the quality of the rural environment must be integrated into all Community policies that relate to rural development (...)¹⁷.

¹¹ This has also been named 'counterurbanization' and 'rural renaissance' in the literature (e.g. Pacione, 1984).

¹² See e.g. Pacione, 1984: 144-145

¹³ Hoggart et al., 1995

¹⁴ E.g. van de Klundert et al., 1994; Driessen et al. 1995

¹⁵ Rijksplanologische Dienst, 1997; Europese Commissie, 1994

¹⁶ The report of the Club of Rome (1972) made the world realise that resources were not infinite. Since the Brundtland report (1987), the need to strive for sustainable development has become commonly accepted (though this by no means indicates that consensus on any practical implications exists).

¹⁷ The European Conference on Rural Development, http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg06/rur/cork_en.htm

In addition to this emphasis on sustainable development, the Declaration includes a number of other interesting statements, indicative of the changes in rural policy. It is clearly stated, for example, that rural policy is more than agricultural policy alone. The role of the local population is also emphasised. Rogers¹⁸ considers the Cork conference to be a symbolic turning point for rural development policy.

The goals laid down in the Declaration of Cork have been worked out in various policy documents. Increasingly, rural development policy focuses on diversification of the economy, involvement of the local population, a region-specific approach as opposed to a generic one, care for nature and environment, sustainable development and the conservation of rural qualities and rural identity. The Committee of the Regions, for example, states in its 'opinion on a rural development policy':

All rural areas have specific strengths and weaknesses and intrinsic development potential. (...) Every rural area has its own profile and the plans for developing a particular area must always be based on its profile. The EU structural policy for strengthening rural economies and enhancing the quality of life in rural areas must include measures to help not only agriculture but also trade and industry, crafts, the service sector, education and further education, leisure and tourism, the preservation of the cultural heritage and environmental protection. (...) The future of rural areas depends on all their assets. Rural areas possess an intrinsic value that not only supplements the values that have been lost in urban, industrialized areas but also compensates for these lost values. Rural development must protect, strengthen and, where necessary, restore this intrinsic value. (...) The overall quality of the countryside is therefore of crucial importance. It is this which can offer genuine opportunities for the development of a highly diversified economy, be it in agriculture, crafts, industrial SMEs, leisure and tourism or the ability to attract inhabitants and be a source of ecological resources¹⁹.

Various national policies for rural areas show a similar shift in emphasis. In Great Britain a circular issued by the Department of the Environment (1987) mentioned how important it is to 'protect the countryside for its own sake...' ²⁰. In the 1990s in particular, white papers on rural development for England, Scotland and Wales confirm the need to search for alternative rural development paths and the importance of the role of the local population²¹. In the Netherlands, improving spatial quality is an explicit policy goal of the *Vierde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening* (Fourth Memorandum on Spatial Planning, 1988) and the review of this memorandum in 1990 (*VINEY*). This line is continued in the draft of the Fifth Memorandum. The *Raad voor het Landelijk Gebied* (Council for the Rural Area) emphasises the need to stimulate for heterogeneity and to conserve the identity of rural areas²².

While the general policy direction has changed, it is not a strictly linear process. In a joint statement, the Countryside Council for Wales and the *Raad voor het Landelijk Gebied* proclaim that European policy for rural areas should be directed more towards preservation of identity and landscape values and that more attention should be paid to the quality of the environment and sustainable development:

Agenda 2000 is a step towards an integration of environmental goals into agricultural production and towards a broader rural development policy for the countryside as a whole. However, the present Agenda 2000 proposals are far from being oriented towards securing the aims (of rural development). ... The current Agenda 2000 proposals are too much of a hybrid set: partly a continuation of the

¹⁸ Rogers, 1997

¹⁹ Committee of the Regions 1997

²⁰ Marsden et al., 1993: 115

²¹ Marsden et al., 1998

²² RLG, 1999

present CAP with its devastating effects on the European countryside and partly steps in the right direction²³.

Rogers, while being very positive about the Cork Declaration, considers the formulation of Agenda 2000 as a step backwards with respect to the transformation of rural policy: ‘... many protagonists of the move towards a rural as opposed to an agricultural policy framework have been dismayed to see the lack of radical change in the desired direction’. Overall, however, he indicates that ‘[t]here is nonetheless much evidence both of recent initiatives and of mounting arguments for change to justify an assessment both of progress so far and of possible new directions’²⁴. Generally speaking, such new directions aim at combining goals of preservation of nature, of culture and traditions, of landscapes and of rural characteristics, with those of economic development.

1.2 Standardisation and conservation in tourism development

Tourism development is a popular strategy for rural areas. Tourism seems to have great potential to combine economic development and conservation of rural qualities. Evidence shows, however, that in many cases tourism does not live up to these expectations. It is, therefore, relevant to search for ways in which tourism can improve its position in this respect.

Tourism as a means for rural development

This ‘rediscovery’ of Europe’s rural areas is extremely timely, coming, as it does, at a time when rural life is under threat of extinction. ... Tourism may have arrived just in time to save great expanses of the European countryside from being finally abandoned by their inhabitants²⁵.

The logic of linking rural tourism with sustainable development may contain a large element of wishful thinking. [...] tourism has never distinguished itself as being either sustainable or taking a long-term view of development²⁶.

Tourism is regarded as a major development option, even for remoter rural areas²⁷. According to the Committee of the Regions of the European Union, rural tourism is ‘a fundamental element of a true rural policy’²⁸. In Spain, almost 70% of the projects proposed under the LEADER I programme include tourism²⁹. Also, after a period of reservation and scepticism, the agricultural sector now seems to have accepted tourism as a suitable strategy for diversification of farm incomes in some regions. This is greatly enhanced by subsidisation and other favourable schemes for farmers that wish to diversify their enterprise. Because of this popularity of tourism as a development strategy

²³ RLG and CCW, 1998

²⁴ Rogers, 1997: 167

²⁵ Davidson, 1992: 158

²⁶ Butler, 1998: 226

²⁷ E.g. Hoggart et al., 1995: 179

²⁸ Committee of the Regions/Subcommission 2, 1995

²⁹ Barke and Newton, 1994, cited in Hoggart et al., 1995

for rural areas, Brouwer has called it '... the Viagra of many economically lagging regions'³⁰.

This attention to tourism as a mechanism for economic development is a fairly recent phenomenon. Development of rural tourism became a EU policy issue in the 1980s. Apart from LEADER I, it was included in the CAP (development of agritourism) and the Structural and Regional Development Funds (promotion, vocational training, creation of facilities)³¹. This mirrors policies in individual European countries, where the former negative attitude towards rural tourism development was abandoned in the mid-1980s³². Rural tourism development was not cited in broad EU framework legislation until the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992³³.

Its current popularity seems easily explainable from the fact it fits in well with general rural development goals. The Committee of the Regions states about rural tourism:

Being based on other factors, it helps to offset the problems of disadvantaged regions, and correct distortions and inequalities. To this end a proper 're-balancing' policy could be followed, by reanimating areas which have suffered at any rate a partial economic decline, for example as a result of the new deal on agricultural policy. This integrated action can serve as a cornerstone for local recovery, not merely by establishing a new economy based on services (both public and private), but also by re-using the particularly large stock of traditional buildings which reflect the history of the cultures which have fashioned Europe³⁴.

Tourism is a relatively clean 'industry' requiring relatively low levels of investment compared to many other sectors. It often builds on unique natural or cultural regional characteristics. It has one of the highest growth rates of all economic sectors world-wide. It already has proven its potential in a number of rural areas. In Ireland, for example, 75% of all new jobs in the period 1989-1992 were tourism related³⁵. Another reason for its popularity might be that developing tourism or setting up a tourist business appears to require few skills. As everyone is a tourist, apparently everyone is a tourism expert.

At the same time, however, the economic benefits of tourism development are disputed. Jobs in the tourist sector are mainly seasonal and low-skilled, and tourism is highly dependent on the economic and political climate. This makes it difficult to control tourism development, a characteristic that is aggravated by the unpredictability of tourism trends. Such characteristics make the economic benefits uncertain. Contrasting with its potential to conserve rural identity are the detrimental effects on nature through trampling, disturbance and environmental pollution. Furthermore, tourism development can lead to a transformation of local culture and landscapes. 'Successful' rural tourism development often results in the destruction of the rural qualities of the area.

As leisure and tourism pursuits become increasingly individualised and diversified, so their impacts extend beyond specific 'sites', to the countryside as a whole through an increasingly diverse range of initiatives, large and small. As tastes change with increasing rapidity, the argument for planning authorities to sanction more such developments appear compelling. Yet when developed, sites are rarely permitted to revert to their original states, even where this is possible. So there is now a

³⁰ Brouwer, 1999; proposition number 6. Lit.: 'Toerisme is de Viagra voor veel economische achterstandgebieden'.

³¹ Davidson, 1992

³² Blunden and Curry, 1988, cited in Gilbert, 1993

³³ Jenkins et al., 1998: 59

³⁴ Committee of the Regions/Subcommission 2, 1995

³⁵ Hoggart et al., 1995

prospect of increasing piecemeal erosion of countryside, as a response to increasingly volatile trends³⁶

Such negative impacts of tourism development are, of course, recognised by policy makers. But optimism seems to reign. As the Committee states in its opinion on rural tourism quoted before:

The aim of these ... proposals by the Committee of the Regions is to turn an ad hoc economic activity characterized by fragmented individual products into logical, integrated and heritage-conscious exploitation of the tourist assets which can open up new horizons for many of our rural areas³⁷.

Such optimism might be partly due to the lack of alternative development opportunities:

Caution needs to be exercised against over-interpreting the apparently beneficial effects on rural economic and social viability of the growth of tourism. (...) whether or not the apparent governmental emphasis on tourism runs the risk of stretching the market for especially rural tourism beyond its capacity has yet to be seen. Even so, for many remoter areas tourism still seems to be the main option for increasing local incomes³⁸.

Tourism can be an interesting development option for rural areas. However, it is necessary to carefully consider the possible benefits of tourism. Observations about general trends in tourism particularly emphasise this need with respect to the opportunities for conserving rural qualities.

Standardisation and preservation

Focussing on transformations resulting from tourism development, Dietvorst³⁹ argues that innovations in tourism often lead to a standardisation of tourist places⁴⁰. 'New' products are often based on ideas and concepts that have proven to be economically successful elsewhere, such as amusement parks, tropical pools and shopping malls. This strategy involves less risk for investors than developing new formulas does. Standardisation can have a number of advantages for tourists such as security and convenience. At the same time, many experts hold the opinion that standardisation poses threats to local identity⁴¹, to the diversity of tourist experiences⁴² and to the economic profitability of tourist products.

Standardisation is not necessarily a deliberate process. It can also be a result of the tendency to focus on unique place characteristics for attracting tourists:

... when presenting a unique or special environment as a tourist attraction, this environment loses at the same time part or sometimes all of its special character or uniqueness. Standardisation starts with the drawing up of tourist brochures, in which clichés and stereotypical sketches often prevail. Constructing tourist experiences based on uniform formulas reduces the variety of an environment⁴³.

³⁶ Clark et al., 1994: 58

³⁷ Committee of the Regions/Subcommission 2 (1995) Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on a policy for the development of rural tourism in the regions of the European Union.
http://www.cor.eu.int/coratwork/comm2/english/19-1995_en.html

³⁸ Hoggart et al., 1995: 181

³⁹ Dietvorst, 1997

⁴⁰ The same observation is made by other authors; see for example Jansen-Verbeke, 1992

⁴¹ Brouwer, 1999

⁴² Maccannell, 1976; Lengkeek, 1994

⁴³ Brouwer, 1999: 39. Lit: "...bij het aanwenden van een unieke of bijzondere omgeving voor attractievorming, verliest deze omgeving tegelijkertijd een deel of soms het geheel van die bijzonderheid of uniciteit. Deze standaardisatie begint al bij het opstellen van toeristische brochures,

Through marketing of places, non-material matters become endowed with economic value: local environments, nature and culture are sold as tourist attractions, as interesting investment opportunities or as ideal shopping environments. In this way, places are no longer just the locus of consumption: they are themselves being consumed⁴⁴ – and this is happening at an increasingly rapid pace.

This *commodification* can lead to a 'narrowing-down of meaning'⁴⁵. The paradox of this development is that the increased focus on identity and the growing importance of a distinct image leads to increased standardisation:

The active promotion of places with special qualities becomes an important stake in spatial competition between localities, cities, regions, and nations. ... Heightened inter-place competition should lead to the production of more variegated spaces within the increasing homogeneity of international exchange. But to the degree that this competition opens up cities to systems of accumulation, it ends up producing ... a 'recursive' and 'serial' monotony, 'producing from already known patterns or molds places almost identical in ambience from city to city: New York's South Street Seaport, Boston's Quincy Market, Baltimore's Harbor Place⁴⁶'.

Places thus become more uniform not only in a physical sense, but also in terms of meaning⁴⁷.

Attempts to preserve local identity can have detrimental effects in another way as well. Mommaas⁴⁸ points out the consequences of the push to develop a distinct identity by trying to counterbalance standardisation. What they try to achieve is '... the protection and controlled presentation of a typical local-historic and artistic atmosphere, in physical and symbolical respect'⁴⁹. Such a strategy can be labelled *preservation*⁵⁰. If this strategy is taken too far, however, it can easily take a parochial turn when places are being stripped of any elements that can disturb the idyll that is being created. Places then become *Ersatzkultur*: museums of real life⁵¹.

Beyond standardisation and preservation

Mommaas argues that focusing on preservation of identity often leads to development strategies in which dynamic aspects of reality are filtered out of the representations of place. For this reason, he warns against making a rigid division between 'market' and 'place' when searching for ways to avoid standardisation:

waarin de clichés en sjabloonmatige schetsen vaak de overhand hebben. Door het construeren van toeristische ervaringen op grond van uniforme formules wordt de verscheidenheid van een omgeving gereducteerd'.

⁴⁴ Urry, 1995; Brouwer, 1999

⁴⁵ Lit: betekenisverdichting; Brouwer, 1999: 38-40

⁴⁶ Harvey, 1989: 295

⁴⁷ The processes described here can be related to more general processes such as the acceleration of the economy and time-space compression (c.f. Harvey, 1989). In Chapter 2, I will describe these backgrounds in more detail.

⁴⁸ See Mommaas, 1997

⁴⁹ Mommaas, 1997: 210. Lit: '... de bescherming en gecontroleerde presentatie van een eigen lokaal-historische en artistieke atmosfeer, in fysiek én symbolisch opzicht'.

⁵⁰ See Caalders et al., 2000

⁵¹ With regard to standardisation in the supply of tourist-recreational attractions in the Netherlands, van der Voet (1985) and Lengkeek (1992b) also point out the consequences of welfare-oriented leisure policies that prevailed in the decades following the Second World War. Policies based on democratic, egalitarian principles were intended to create leisure and tourism opportunities for all. An important difference from processes of standardisation as mentioned in the text, is that these were subject to general societal discussions in the context of political control. See also Chapter 8.

This contrast implicitly maintains the promise of an undivided authentic community, freed from the influences of the false, superficial 'Mickey-Mouse world' of global capitalism⁵².

The challenge should be to '... exploit the tension between identity and development in a creative way', as it was formulated in a brochure for a conference on rural development in the north of the Netherlands⁵³. With regard to rural areas, a strategy in which 'rural' - in terms of nostalgic and small-scale - is opposed to 'urban' (i.e. large scale and dynamic) should be avoided. Dietvorst⁵⁴ has suggested that 'time-space related innovation' can offer opportunities for such an alternative way of development. By using the phrase 'time-space related' he implies that tourism should be linked up with regional characteristics in order to make sure it cannot easily be copied in other places. It can thus help strengthen the regional identity. Innovation refers to the need for renewal and economic development and for avoiding the creation of a 'nostalgic imitation culture'. Mommaas refers to a similar development path when he states that in developing places, the focus should be on the *creation of new identities*. He describes such a strategy as follows:

The design of place should nowadays necessarily take place within a context that permanently enforces openness, diversity, unpredictability and dialogue. Instead of thinking about places as bounded spaces ... we should conceive of them as visual movements in networks of social relations and understanding.⁵⁵

A strategy to strengthen local cultural vitality cannot be based on the idea that this can be done in a non-controversial manner, on an illusion of shared interests, or on the notion of local identity. According to Mommaas the myth of pure locality should be abandoned.

The challenge of this thesis is to find theories on how to support such development and search for ways to establish it in practice.

Rural tourism literature

In rural tourism literature, not many ideas have been developed on how to go beyond standardisation and preservation. Much of the literature distinguishes between 'soft' tourism on the one hand and 'hard' tourism on the other⁵⁶. Soft tourism means that social, cultural and environmental values are placed above short-term economic revenues. It aims at a clientele in search of personal enrichment. Hard tourism, in contrast, is concerned with profit-making, creating economic benefits for a small group and is associated with mass tourism and superfluous experiences ('Been there, done that'). It is thought to lead to the destruction of local culture, external control over resource bases, visual urbanisation and depletion of natural values. Alternatively, soft tourism is

⁵² Mommaas, 1997: 214. Lit: '[m]et de tegenstelling wordt impliciet de belofte instandgehouden van de ongedeelde authentieke gemeenschap, gezuiverd van de invloeden van de valse, oppervlakkige 'Mickey Mouse-wereld' van het mondiale kapitalisme'

⁵³ Elerie (n.d.).

⁵⁴ Dietvorst, 1996 and 1997; see also Caalders et al., 2000

⁵⁵ Mommaas, 1997: 216. Lit: De vormgeving van 'plaats' dient vandaag de dag noodzakelijkerwijs plaats te vinden in een context die permanent dwingt tot openheid, diversiteit, onvoorspelbaarheid en dialoog. In plaats van te denken over plaatsen als ruimten met grenzen ... dienen wij ze ons voor te stellen als zichtbare bewegingen in netwerken van sociale relaties en begrip.

⁵⁶ This dichotomy is given various names; soft tourism is similar to, for example, 'sanfter Tourismus', tourisme diffus, responsible tourism and alternative tourism. In literature on sustainable tourism, a similar dichotomy (sustainable versus non-sustainable or mass tourism) is often mistakenly used (see Hunter, 1997, for an overview).

sometimes also depicted as a sympathetic but amateur and peripheral activity, unable to generate income and jobs that a more professional and large scale approach could provide.

Rural tourism development is thus presented in various ways in popular writing. It is depicted as evil, turning rural places into uniform areas filled with concrete hotels and noisy tourists. Or it is regarded as a means to save the countryside from depopulation, to experience authenticity and to offer city dwellers the opportunity to enjoy the good life. Or again, it is presented as a marginal business, a nice pastime for the farmers' wife. There exists little empirical evidence as to which image most closely relates to reality.

In terms of strategies for rural tourism development, emphasis is on *conservation*. Lane provides a good example of such an approach. According to him, tourism development should only be called rural if it is 'rural in nature': '... management strategies in rural tourism should aim to conserve rurality as an important resource'⁵⁷. His definition of rurality is based on a dichotomy of rural versus urban that can be traced back to Tönnies' 1887 *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. Characteristics of rural societies which he mentions are, amongst others: 'community' (versus association in cities), simple economies, little division of labour, ascribed status (versus achieved status), education according to status (as opposed to status derived from education), locals (versus cosmopolitans), close-knit networks and integration with work environment⁵⁸ (Textbox 1.1).

Lane thus reveals a notion of rurality based mainly on nostalgia, and not representative of developments taking place in rural areas⁵⁹. Amateur management, for example, has little to do with the professional way in which nature resorts or modern agricultural enterprises are managed⁶⁰. Local control of farms is becoming more and more the exception in England, as contract farming has become widespread: in return for a fee and a substantial part of the profit, companies take over the entire management and running of the farm⁶¹. Though Lanes' description probably derives from the best of intentions, his nostalgic approach has serious limitations. Moreover, it is endowed with

⁵⁷ Lane, 1994: 16

⁵⁸ Apart from this dichotomy of urban versus rural, Lane also emphasises the importance of the urban-rural continuum. This does not affect his basic definition of rurality, but rather underlines it by stating that some rural areas can have partly 'urban' characteristics. 'The use of the continuum concept allows planners to recognise this trend, and to take steps either to regulate it, or to make infrastructural provisions for it. It can be strongly argued that management strategies in rural tourism should aim to conserve rurality as an important resource. But, in some cases it may be valuable to allow or even encourage some change to take place' (Lane, 1994: 16).

⁵⁹ Lane, 1994: 14. There are some inconsistencies in his approach towards rural tourism. After having worked out a notion of rurality that can only be characterised as highly nostalgic, he states elsewhere that '... there are powerful tensions which now exist between the forces of rural development seeking to reverse rural decline and the forces for conservation, which may seek to fossilise the countryside. ... A sustainable approach may be capable of helping to reconcile the tensions involved' (page 19). Such a sustainable approach is important, however, because this is the only way to guarantee the maintenance of rurality (page 19/20). Considering his description of rurality, it is not at all clear in what way this includes changes and development, other than the introduction of - just a little bit of small-scale - tourism as such.

⁶⁰ Lane indicates that amateur management can be a selling point for rural tourism. At the same time he proclaims on page 19 '[t]he countryside is especially at risk from unmanaged - or ill-managed - tourism'.

⁶¹ Harvey, 1997

implicit value-notions of what rural areas should be. With his plea, he also keeps the dichotomy of rural versus urban intact.

Text box 1.1 Characteristics of rural tourism according to Lane

Lane (1994) provides an example of a nostalgic approach to rural tourism. According to him, rural tourism is typically:

- located in rural areas;
- functionally rural - built upon the rural world's special features of small-scale enterprise, open space, contact with nature and the natural world, heritage, 'traditional' societies and 'traditional' practices;
- rural in scale - both in terms of buildings and settlements - and, therefore, usually small scale;
- traditional in character, growing slowly and organically, and connected with local families; it will often be very largely controlled locally and developed for the long-term good of the area;
- of many different kinds, representing the complex pattern of rural environment, economy, history and location

In addition, Lane presents a list of characteristics of rural tourism versus urban/resort tourism. Apart from those aspects already mentioned, he names as typical of rural tourism: much part-time involvement in tourism, tourism supports other activities, host-guest relationships are personal, amateur management and local in atmosphere.

Source: Lane, 1994

Dichotomies have a certain appeal, and examples of both types can easily be found in rural areas. Nevertheless, they represent only part of the tourism industry and, more importantly, do not offer openings for the development of meaningful alternatives to either one of the extremes. More interesting approaches are found outside rural tourism literature, for example in rural studies and studies on sustainable development. Only a few authors link these more general debates to tourism development in general or to rural tourism development in particular⁶². Tourism is not a topical issue in scientific literature. Relatively few research institutes exist, and magazines specialised in tourism do not rank highly on scientific quality lists. Tourism is not usually studied by, for example, geographers or economists. This is surprising, considering the development of the sector and the characteristics of tourism as a phenomenon. This is elaborated in the next section.

⁶² See e.g. Brouwer (1999), van der Duim (1997) and Hunter (1997). Brouwer subtly puts the role of tourism in terms of its effects on local population. He studies tourism in relation to other regional activities and developments, and discriminates between various tourist projects and entrepreneurs operating in different ways at different locations. Hunter pleads for a less tourism-centric approach to sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism can, according to him, take a different shape in different circumstances. In regions already characterised by large-scale tourism development, the interests of the tourism industry can be put first; whereas for some areas not yet receiving many/any visitors (nature reserves, arctic areas), non-development might be considered the best option.

1.3 Rural tourism: an interdisciplinary approach

Given the increasingly important role of tourism in such a wide range of processes of restructuring, at a variety of scales from the local to the global, it is surprising that it has been relatively neglected in much of the geographical and related literature⁶³.

Tourism and its potential are viewed somewhat schizophrenically by the policy-making community and in academic literature. On the one hand, it is hailed as a highly important sector with considerable possibilities. On the other hand, tourism maintains a marginal position both in policy-making and science. This 'schizophrenia' is described below, followed by a brief overview of the content of this study.

Approaches to tourism

The economic benefits of tourism are hailed in promotional brochures and policy documents. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, tourism accounts for almost 20 million jobs in the EU. This is over 12% of total employment and represents over 11% of GDP⁶⁴. Though tourism is often depicted as 'the fastest growing industry world-wide', figures tend to be blurred because it is not clear what exactly 'the tourism industry' entails. Travel agencies, tour guides, the hotel industry and holiday parks are clearly part of it. Tourism impacts on restaurants, shops, road sweepers, car rental companies, gas stations and bicycle repair shops are less straightforward, and sometimes are not considered while in other cases they are overestimated.

Such problems of definition may be part of the reason why, despite the large and increasing figures, tourism is politically still a minor field of attention, although interest is growing⁶⁵. There is no separate EU Directorate General for tourism, for example. In the current EU structure (i.e. since 1999), tourism has an even less identifiable position than before. Another explanation for this is tourism's multifaceted appearance. It seems to be hard to come to grips with tourism, not least because it runs through some of the established policy structures. In the various national European policy structures, tourism is sometimes placed under 'leisure and culture', at other times it is part of the ministry of economics or even transport⁶⁶. Only in rare cases does tourism have a separate ministry, as is currently the case in France. Tourism on the one hand and leisure/recreation on the other tend to be regarded as separate policy fields⁶⁷. Recreation policy is usually concerned with the creation of leisure opportunities in rural areas and with concern over negative impacts of tourism development. Tourism policy is focused on developing strategies to increase visitor numbers and making rural areas accessible for tourists⁶⁸.

⁶³ Williams et al., 1995: 3-4

⁶⁴ WTTC, 2002

⁶⁵ Butler, 1998: 224

⁶⁶ Bramham et al., 1993a

⁶⁷ Bramham et al. point out the fragmented nature of leisure policies: '... in many nation-states no coherent body of policy, defined as (national) leisure policy, actually exists' (Bramham et al., 1993b: 5). They discern five rationales for government intervention in leisure. The two most relevant to tourism are physical (environment/nature) and economic. 'Time-space characteristics' – which are related to spreading holidays and lengthening the tourist season – comprise another aspect. The main reasons for intervening in these latter characteristics are environmental (avoiding congestion) and economic (year-round income, higher occupancy rates) in nature.

⁶⁸ Butler, 1998: 225

This implies that tourism satisfaction and leisure experiences tend to be treated separately from economic aspects of tourism.

Another part of the reason for the 'peripheral' position of tourism is that often it is still regarded as a 'residue' category. Leisure still tends to be regarded as the antidote for work: *vita activa* versus *vita contemplativa*⁶⁹.

Dealing with tourism

The fact that tourism is a multifaceted field may be an impediment in many ways. This, however, also makes it a highly interesting field for rural development practice and research. 'It directly or indirectly involves a multitude of public and private sector operators, and is thus a most suitable field for an interdisciplinary view of rural development'⁷⁰.

Tourism is also an excellent area of study to consider ideas on conservation, standardisation and time-space related development. This is related to the fact that tourism is, as Hopkins puts it, indicative of the post-modern shift in present-day society:

The tourism industry is indicative of an important cultural shift - a post-modern shift - in our society: the increase in leisure services of consumption replacing the manufacturing industries of accumulation (...); the growing intrusion of fantasy and spectacle into everyday places (...), and the pervasiveness of images transmitted through various media⁷¹.

For Urry, the tourist is the prototype of a post-modern human⁷². Instead of being a mere 'residue' to working time, leisure time increasingly comes to possess a central position both in individual lives and in society at large. Identity seems increasingly leisure-related rather than work-related. Dietvorst has pointed to the influence of tourism experiences on the 'everyday' world, such as housing, food, culture, and clothes⁷³.

Tourism is interesting not only from the point of view of tourism itself, but also for the trends and changes it evokes in society as a whole.

Tourism lies at the heart of many of the restructuring processes which are remoulding the map of Europe in the last decade of the twentieth century. It plays a central role in the emergence of new lifestyles as well as in new forms of population mobility. The industry also plays a key and increasingly important role in economic reorganization⁷⁴.

With regard to rural areas, this implies amongst other things that the identity of the countryside is changing under the influence of tourism development:

The fact that tourism has come to the countryside, that it is now commodified, promoted and symbolically consumed, is to be expected in the context of today's global capitalism, the expansion of information and communication technologies, and rising consumer demands for entertainment, leisure and recreation. But what the 'rural' has come to mean in light of these changes is open to question: a reinterpretation of rural identity is wanting⁷⁵.

It is all the more remarkable that few in-depth studies exist on the relation between tourism and time-space developments.

⁶⁹ Lengkeek, 1994

⁷⁰ Committee of the Regions/Subcommission 2, 1995

⁷¹ Hopkins, 1998: 68

⁷² Urry, 1990

⁷³ Dietvorst, 2001

⁷⁴ Williams et al., 1995: 3

⁷⁵ Hopkins, 1998: 68; see also Marsden et al., 1993

However, the very pervasiveness of tourism, as a way of thinking and of living in a 'post-modern/structural/colonial world has yet to be related to contemporary discussions of the finer issues in social anthropology'⁷⁶.

Tourism studies do not generally address such issues. As Bramham and colleagues state '[t]he study of leisure appears to be as 'sectoralised' as the state bureaucracies ...⁷⁷. At the same time, the sectoralisation of science in long established disciplines also hampers interdisciplinary research on tourism. Tourism does not fit well in the traditional approaches of sociologists, economists or geographers. As yet, tourism studies have not gained a respected position in science. Tourism studies are generally not well grounded theoretically and most sciences do not consider tourism to be a serious topic for study. In the words of Williams and Montanari: 'Whatever the reason for the ghettoization of tourism studies, there is no doubt that this has impoverished tourism analyses which have tended to be a theoretical and exclusionary'⁷⁸.

This study

The challenge in this thesis is to link the demand for applied knowledge on how to develop rural tourism, with the scientific need to develop a more theoretically grounded approach to rural tourism. My aim is to link the study of rural tourism to discussions which are taking place in relevant disciplines such as economic geography and planning and policy studies. Towards this end, I will draw particularly on those theoretical discussions which suggest alternatives to standardisation and preservation. These can, in other words, help establish the goals of both economic development and conservation of rural qualities. How such solutions can be achieved is relevant from both a practical and an academic point of view. The central question for this research has therefore been defined as follows:

How can the economic development of tourism contribute to the conservation and/or development of rural qualities and how can policies facilitate reaching this goal?

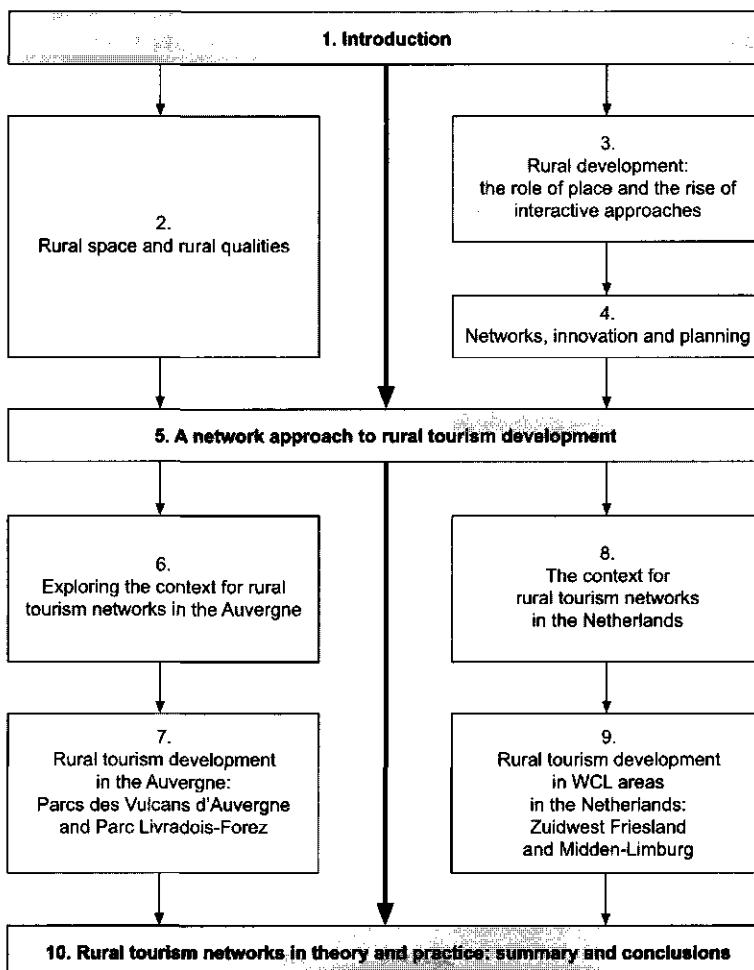
This question is first approached theoretically, by analysing existing academic literature on the notion of rural areas and on rural economic development. Chapter 2 focuses on the concepts of rural quality. It deals with questions of how to conceive of rural space and its consequences for development strategies. In Chapter 3, theories on rural economic development are explored. The question of facilitating development through policy-making is also addressed. From these theoretical explorations, it appears that a network approach is suitable for both analysing rural tourism development, and steering it in the direction put forward above. In Chapter 4 some of the opportunities offered by using this approach are further outlined. Consequently, the application of the concept in the case studies is clarified in Chapter 5. In Chapters 6 to 9, results of the case studies are presented. Chapter 10 offers an overview of the main findings, as well as an evaluation.

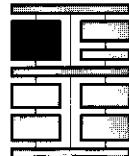
⁷⁶ Abram et al., 1997: 1

⁷⁷ Bramham et al., 1993b: 6

⁷⁸ Williams et al., 1995: 4

Figure 1.1 Content





2 Rural space and rural qualities

For a long time rural studies were located on the periphery of science. In the course of the 1990s this changed - a change related to the developments taking place in rural areas. It has become increasingly obvious that 'rural' and 'agriculture' are not synonymous. Such developments have evoked fundamental questions about the nature of rural areas: what do rural areas have in common? What is typically rural? Is it important to conserve rural qualities, and if so, why?

In this chapter, the way in which such questions are dealt with in the literature is addressed. First I will focus on the nature of rural areas and rural development and the question how 'rural' can be defined. As it appears that no singular definition is appropriate, I will consequently deal with the question how rural areas can be dealt with in academic research. Consequently, the notion of quality and of rural quality in particular, will be further elaborated. As it appears that the concept of networks offers an interesting perspective for studying rural tourism development, the opportunities of such a perspective are highlighted in the last section.

2.1 The European countryside: a heterogeneous space

The integration of peasant societies is now virtually complete. ... However, the opposition between city and countryside remains, and may now take on new social significances depending on the ideological or cultural frame of reference to which the agents refer: natural universe vs. urban artefact; a world of sociability vs. the abstraction of larger organizations; a world of skills vs. the alienation of industrial work. Different versions of the rural-urban opposition are currently being constructed, with different ideological references, various social foundations and some reinterpretation of traditional representations. Hence there are different ways of considering oneself to be rural, of identifying with 'rurality'. ... Rural identity is manifold and heterogeneous¹.

Rural areas used to be treated as the counterpart of the city. The traditional image depicts a rather static dichotomy of the city as a concentration of industry, services and population, whereas rural areas are regarded as open spaces, used for agriculture and nature². Moreover, it was not so much the differences but the similarities between rural areas that were stressed:

... the rural area was considered as one single space. Not only was rural a mould of the urban, it also was a productionist space. Space was transformed to achieve the goals of the expanding modernisation of the agricultural sector, such as the production of food and raw materials³.

¹ Mormont, 1990, 41

² Hidding et al., 1997

³ Keuzenkamp et al., 1997: 2-3

Such image now becomes superseded, and different ways to represent rural areas have come up. It is increasingly recognised that a discourse in which rural areas are opposed to cities can no longer satisfactorily handle the processes taking place. City and countryside are becoming fundamentally interwoven, interdependent spaces⁴. Traditional rural functions (agricultural production) are declining and new ones exist (industry, recreation, nature conservation) or are being developed (e.g. through teleworking). In some cases, core and periphery positions have become inverted. In the Netherlands, this occurs to some extent in housing: a new divide between city and countryside is emerging where more and more people in higher income groups are moving to certain rural locations⁵.

Heterogeneity of rural areas

..rather than searching for one movement from Fordism to post-Fordism, we should look to understand rural change as a whole of series of movements between the differing practices and procedures of various strategies of regulation operating at overlapping scales. When successful in achieving partial and contested stability, these help to form particular structured coherence. This allows us to see rural regions undergoing a series of diverse and contested changes and developments, all socially constructed, rather than leaping from one ideal-typical stage to another⁶.

The European countryside is a diversified area. A study conducted by the Winand Staring Centre⁷ in 1994 presents an overview of this diversity in terms of current agricultural use and potential for non-agricultural development⁸. This study was based on statistic data and provides a general picture of areas more or less likely to be confronted with agricultural marginalisation and areas with more or less potential for diversification of the rural economy. The study shows - amongst others - that a diversity of areas exists, some with a high potential for a large number of new functions, others with hardly any potential at all.

In a French study, also to a large extent based on agricultural data, seven types of rural areas were discerned. Cantons in and around the Paris basin and on the coast west of Bordeaux are the most 'well-placed' in terms of employment opportunities, both agricultural and non-agricultural. These areas have never really been confronted with typical rural problems because of their location and because the soil is highly suitable for agriculture. Other areas with a favourable outlook for non-agricultural development are situated in the southern and mountainous regions, such as the Pyrenees, the Alps and Corsica⁹. For the Netherlands, Driesssen and colleagues distinguished between 'over-pressure' and 'under-pressure' areas. The former are situated near the larger cities and on good agricultural land; here, demand for land is high and various functions compete for space. The latter can be found mainly in the north of the country and are confronted with marginalisation¹⁰.

Murdoch and Marsden illustrate the heterogeneity of the British countryside¹¹. Instead of focussing mainly on function, they refer to the value systems and power

⁴ Hidding et. al., 1997; Boelens, 1996

⁵ Boelens, 1996

⁶ Cloke and Goodwin, 1992

⁷ Institute for research on rural areas, currently known as 'Alterra'

⁸ van de Klundert et al., 1994

⁹ Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Forêt, 1992

¹⁰ Driesssen et al., 1995

¹¹ Murdoch and Marsden, 1994; Marsden, 1998

relations structuring rural areas. They describe four different types of countryside: the preserved countryside, the contested countryside, the paternalistic countryside and the clientelist countryside. Differences between the four are related to 'production' versus 'consumption'. In the preserved countryside, consumption prevails and these spaces are dominated by anti-development and preservationist attitudes of the middle-class. This group controls the local political domain and effectively combats large-scale agricultural developments. In the contested countryside, production still prevails, but newcomers are increasingly contesting such developments from the point of view of environmental quality and amenity. In the paternalistic countryside, production values are largely uncontested. The clientelist countryside represents marginal rural areas, which have to deal with population loss and underemployment, and are often 'colonised' by external developments and are dependent on external (state) finance.

In a similar fashion, Lowenthal¹² discerns three basic attitudes towards rural landscapes in various European countries. These attitudes are based on the dominant relation of the population with rural areas: where rural life still prevails; where rural life is a recent memory; and where rural life is long gone.

Countries 'where rural life still prevails' are those where agriculture or at least agricultural attitudes are still dominant. For rural dwellers, the landscape is their livelihood and it is associated with production. This type of relation still exists in countries in eastern Europe. 'Where rural life is a recent memory', rural areas have been confronted with a loss of population, especially agricultural population, in recent decades. Parents or grandparents used to live on farms and personal rural ties keep the memory of rural life alive. This applies to countries such as France, Scandinavia, southern Europe and Greece. 'Extolled as social paragons, farmers are an endangered breed cherished to save the nation's very soul'¹³. 'Rural life is long gone' in Britain, the Benelux counties and Germany. Here, personal memories, as well as those of parents and grandparents predominantly relate to urban areas and industrialisation. '... rural realms retain some meaning, but what they signify connects less and less with everyday memory'¹⁴.

Heterogeneity of rural areas has led several authors to ask what 'rurality' is¹⁵. In a well-known article on the subject, Halfacree analyses different definitions of rural that have been developed over time. One of the problems in defining it is that '[r]ural places are not identical, with any similarities that they do possess not being significantly different from many features of 'urban' places'¹⁶.

However, he does not conclude from this that we should 'do away with rural'. In order to show why the use of the term has a meaning despite the controversy on its exact definition, he discerns an academic discourse on rurality and a lay one. In this latter discourse rural may not be clearly defined and may be based on an ill-structured image of what rurality contains; nonetheless, it has a strong symbolic meaning.

¹² Lowenthal, 1994

¹³ Ibid.: 14

¹⁴ Ibid.: 14

¹⁵ E.g. Halfacree 1993; Mormont, 1990

¹⁶ Halfacree, 1993: 28

Homogeneity in representation

... what we think of as the rural 'landscape' is normally devoid of farm machinery, workers, telegraph wires, electricity pylons, motorways, derelict land, polluted waters and we may add nuclear power installations and other tourists, although all of these are common in rural areas.¹⁷

According to Halfacree, it is essential 'to distinguish between the rural as a distinctive type of locality and the rural as a social representation - the rural as space and the rural as representing space'¹⁸. It is felt that representations of rural areas have grown more and more apart from what rural localities actually have become. Several other authors point at the increasing divergence between the rural as an idyll and rural 'reality'. Hoggart, Buller and Black describe this as follows:

... the essential paradox of rurality within developed nations is that while the existence of a specific and exclusive rurality is increasingly contested at one level (...), the traditional components of rural areas (farmers, peasants, rural landscapes, fields and forests, etc.), continue to occupy a central and growing place in many national, regional, local and personal representations¹⁹.

Reijnders concludes from an overview of literature, poetry and paintings, that the image of the countryside has become more positive over time. Romanticism especially gave a great push to the promotion of the 'rural idyll'²⁰. The English countryside is presently still a metaphor for tradition, stability and value²¹. Such developments can in turn be influential in structuring rural areas. The 'preserved countryside' described by Murdoch and Marsden is a good example: inhabitants successfully strive to preserve the countryside as they feel it should be.

In tourism especially, representations of space play a crucial role. As has been described in Chapter 1, desire to preserve an idyllic countryside can easily lead to a strategy of conservation. In this way, symbolic representations play an important role in shaping material developments. The tendency to market such spatial qualities can, in turn, create a standardisation of meaning²². Tourism can thus contribute to the standardisation of places in a material sense, and also to an 'narrowing down of meaning'²³. A study by Hopkins shows that such processes have been taking place in Canada:

Perhaps the dominant meaning of 'rural' signified in the symbolic space of ... advertisements is alterity: the rural is represented as some place other than urban, as some time other than the present, as some experience other than the norm. ... The 'rural' is imagined as a spatial and temporal retreat from the urban environs, a place close to nature, rich in community ties, where life is lived at a slower pace in settlements situated amidst idyllic nostalgic settings. These myths of a symbolic countryside are part of the larger stock of countryside ideals prevalent in Anglo-American culture. ... These myths are not, however, tied to any particular locality; they are 'free-floating signifiers' of a symbolic countryside used to give meaning and character to any place in need of a 'rural' identity. ... The notion of the countryside as recreational amenity landscape for a privileged urban class ... endorses the culture of the status quo. ... The ideals, values and myths employed in place promotional material ... provide insight into the vested interests along the shores of Lake Huron. It would appear that the

¹⁷ Williams, R. 1973; cited in Clark et al., 1994: 39

¹⁸ Halfacree, 1993: 34

¹⁹ Hoggart et al., 1995: 91-2

²⁰ Reijnders, 1997

²¹ Clark et al., 1994

²² This process is related to inherent mechanisms of the capitalist economy (Harvey, 1989). Modern economic development is based upon growth and this growth increasingly takes place by ascribing economic value to non-material matter. This can lead to a 'commodification' of nature and culture.

²³ Brouwer, 1999: 39

demands, desires and fantasies of an urban-based leisure class hold particularly sway in the production and reproduction of the symbolic countryside, and ultimately the material one²⁴.

Such studies seem to indicate that the symbolic meaning of countryside lies particularly in the 'other', the non-urban. This is despite, or perhaps a result of, the fact that these 'representations' increasingly diverge from developments actually taking place in rural areas. Such representations exist particularly at some distance from the countryside, for example, among tourists, planners or 'new-comers'. These groups become increasingly powerful in shaping rural developments.

Such representations can add to conflicts in rural areas. Some scholars have stressed this in pointing out the difference between newcomers' expectations of rural areas and those of the current population²⁵. It is particularly newcomers who have a nostalgic view of the countryside and are in favour of conservation. Especially in the 'contested countryside' this anti-development attitude leads to conflicts with, for example, farmers over environmental issues. In a nostalgic view of the countryside, there is no room for weir basins, power plants, discotheques, industrial estates or motorways. Nevertheless, this latter type of characteristics also represents 'quality' for other groups or from other perspectives.

To simply conclude that the identity of rural areas has been found, because the archaic images of the countryside are its main unifying (unanimous) characteristic, does not add much to the understanding of rural areas. At the same time it does not make sense to abolish each notion which becomes more complex, just because it hard to come up with a precise academic definition. Rather, one should look into the concept more closely, in order to understand the nature of its complexity. Therefore, the conceptualisation of rural space will be highlighted below.

2.2 Conceptualisation of rural space

I think it important to challenge the idea of a single and objective sense of time or space, against which we can measure the diversity of human conceptions and perceptions. I shall not argue for a total dissolution of the objective - subjective distinction, but insist, rather, that we recognize the multiplicity of the objective qualities which space and time can express, and the role of human practices in their construction²⁶.

Conceptualisation of space

The relation between space, the activities of individuals and groups of actors, and the meanings and representations attached to space, are described by Lefebvre (1974; 1991)²⁷. He analyses and theorises how space is produced by human activity. He uses the term production to refer not only to actual physical-spatial changes, but also to the social and symbolic dimensions of space. He regards space not as an empty container filled

²⁴ Hopkins, 1998: 79

²⁵ Kerstens, 1977; Murdoch et al., 1994

²⁶ Harvey, 1989: 203

²⁷ Lefebvre 1991; orig. 1974; In the following I give my own account of his book. However, many different interpretations of his text exist and his book is said to be '... open to multiple readings and an almost infinite number of criticisms' (Stewart, 1995, 617). I use quotes from the original to illustrate my own reading.

with human activity, but gives space an active role. According to him '[s]pace considered in isolation is an empty abstraction. ... physical space has no 'reality' without the energy that is deployed within it'²⁸. Elsewhere he rhetorically states:

[i]s it conceivable that the exercise of hegemony might leave space untouched? Could space be nothing more than the passive locus of social relations, the milieu in which their combination takes on body, or the aggregate of the producers employed in their removal? The answer must be no²⁹.

Space 'has some characteristics of a "subject" and some of an "object"³⁰, though it is in fact neither one, 'but rather a social reality - that is to say, a set of relationships and forms³¹. Hajer holds a similar view on space when he describes the role of spatial planners and the consequences of the spaces they design:

With their proposals for the adjustment or re-organisation of space, planners in fact each time take decisions about the adjustment of societal structures: they allow some lifestyles, while hindering others in their development³².

In his theory, Lefebvre strives to construct a theoretical unity between various *fields*: the physical, the mental and the social. To conceptualise the relation between these fields, he uses three central notions: spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces. The idea that space is a *social* reality prevails in these notions. Lefebvre emphasises especially the importance of *representations of space*: symbolic meanings tied to objects in space or to spaces as such. These symbolic representations serve '... to maintain social relations in a state of coexistence and cohesion'³³. Such representations exist at the societal level and subsume existing power relations. Representations of space can be regarded as 'discourses' on space: it is space as conceptualised by the scientists or planners³⁴. These representations are extremely powerful in shaping *spatial practice*: the daily and urban (or rural)³⁵ reality of work, private life and leisure. 'Representations of space must therefore have a substantial role and a specific influence in the production of space'³⁶. Apart from representations of space, he also identifies *representational spaces*. This is space as '... directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users', but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who *describe* and aspire to do no more than describe'³⁷.

This terminology thus helps to describe and understand the complexity of 'rurality'. The distinction between spatial practices, representations of space and representational spaces also serves to explain how our behaviour is influenced by the space that has been created - and that we also have created/recreated - around us. Halfacree has a similar idea in mind when he says that:

²⁸ Ibid.: 13

²⁹ Ibid.: 11

³⁰ Ibid.: 99

³¹ Ibid.: 116

³² Hajer, 1996: 3; *Lit.*: 'Met hun voorstellen voor de aanpassing of herinrichting van de ruimtelijke ordening, nemen planners in feite telkens beslissingen over de aanpassing van maatschappelijke structuren: zij maken sommige levensstijlen mogelijk en hinderen andere in hun ontwikkeling'.

³³ Lefebvre, 1991: 32

³⁴ Ibid.: 38

³⁵ Lefebvre is especially interested in urban spaces, but his theory is relevant to rural space as well.

³⁶ Ibid. 42

³⁷ Ibid. 39

...when we consider (rural) space we must not only consider the structures producing that space but also the way in which that space is subsequently used to produce other space and, fundamentally, to reproduce the original causal structures themselves³⁸.

Essential in this line of thinking is that the various types of space are interrelated. Various images of the countryside ('representations of space') can lead to diverging expectations in terms of representational spaces (the desired living environment) and to conflicts over the use of space (spatial practices). Thus, a one-dimensional representation of space among groups which are influential in shaping space should be a matter of concern.

According to Boelens, space is approached in a one-dimensional way both in spatial policy and by landscape architects. The multilayeredness of space is denied, leading to a landscape that loses its relations with society. Today's planners are focussing on spatial patterns and on '...old familiar spatial categories and their related themes (e.g. home, work, green space and traffic)'.³⁹ Contrary to this, he stresses the importance of multiple processes and of a focus on the underlying issues.

De Vries holds a similar view of the activities of 'those who engage in building': planners, experts on ambience, project developers, architects, contractors and managers. Building and designing cities has become too much an activity taking place behind desks. The 'imaginary space' created by experts 'descends like a gas cloud into real space, or what is left of it'⁴⁰:

Buildings, houses and flats are not built on the place where they will stand. ... Designed behind the computer screen, built in production halls and assembled at a spot that is merely a side issue ... What is constructed is an abstraction, a one-shot projected print of human experience, represented in an block of houses, buildings or city, dropped in one go. In this print, experience has undergone a nearly endless reduction, worked by commercial, technological and administrative procedures⁴¹.

Authors like de Vries and Boelens thus warn about the danger related to a homogenous representation of space. This not only leads to the creation of an increasingly uniform space, but also puts restrictions on experience and leads to an attenuation of meaning of the environment for living. This is comparable to the influence of uniform tourist representations mentioned before. Though such developments are alarming, their influence should be put in the right perspective.

A study by Brouwer nuances the role of symbolic representations related to tourism development in the 'Euregio Maas-Rijn'⁴². He analyses developments as a battle for the

³⁸ Halfacree, 1993: 27; these ideas are clearly influenced by Lefebvre, who states about social space: 'Itself the outcome of past actions, social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others' (73). '...this means of production, produced as such, cannot be separated either from the productive forces, including technology and knowledge, or from the social division of labour which shapes it, or from the state and the superstructures of society' (85).

³⁹ Boelens, 1996: 80

⁴⁰ De Vries, 1996: 5. lit: 'Dit universum daalt als een gaswolk neer op de reële ruimte, of althans wat er nog van over is.'

⁴¹ Ibid.: 6; Lit: 'Gebouwen, huizen en flats worden niet gebouwd op de plaats waar zij komen te staan. ... Achter het beeldscherm ontworpen, worden zij gemaakt in productiehallen en in elkaar gezet op een plaats die bijzaak is. ... Wat tot stand komt is een abstractie, een éénmalig geprojecteerde afdruk van menselijke ervaring, verbeeld in een één keer neergelaten huizenblok, gebouw of stad. In deze afdruk heeft de ervaring echter een schier oneindige reductie ondergaan, bewerkt door commerciële, technologische en bestuurlijke procédés'.

⁴² Brouwer, 1999. The Euregio Maas-Rijn comprises the Southern part of Limburg in the Netherlands, de Voerstreek in Belgium and the adjacent part of Germany, including the city of Aachen.

symbolic appropriation of the countryside and demonstrates that tourist attraction formation does not dominate to such an extent that other meanings are excluded. It does, however, give rise to a redefinition of those meanings and influences the representations of inhabitants, nature organisations and local governments. He describes tourism in this area as an 'exchange process':

It [tourism] provides the local population with a framework for becoming more involved with one another and for expressing a local identity. The latter is especially applicable to the tourist development in the Voerstreek, where inhabitants are actively involved in the creation of unique tourist attractions. Tourist entrepreneurs benefit from this local involvement, because the symbolic value added to the tourist product creates economic advantage. This local involvement also creates public support for tourist entrepreneurs and project developers. ... The commodification of the countryside, by which cultural utterances become priced, provides a basis for the local population to experience the continuation between old and new situations. In this way, the symbolic reconstruction of the history of a village or region for tourist purposes keeps the past alive. Local traditions are not only used symbolically for the creation of attractions, they also contribute to the symbolic reproduction of the life-world.⁴³

As Brouwers' study demonstrates, the tourism sector is only one of the actors influencing the symbolic and material reproduction of the countryside. The fact that it does not dominate or 'colonise' the Euregio, is explained mainly through its dependence on other actors for its own continuation. Nevertheless, his study does confirm the important role of representations of space on representational spaces and spatial practices.

Multi-layeredness of rural space

Another way to refer to the countryside is in terms of different processes occurring in multiple layers. The countryside is the stage for a growing number of different activities and an increasingly diverse range of functions. A distinction between rural and urban functions is increasingly difficult to make. Both rural and urban places are to a growing extent governed by processes that are not just local, but also regional, national and international. And each function is governed by its own particular types of processes. In this line of thinking, it is not the structure of space that is interesting to study, but rather its *structuring*. And it should be recognised that many different modes of structuring exist:

[s]ocial spaces interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another... The principle of the interpenetration and superimposition of social spaces ... means that each fragment of space subjected to analysis masks not just one social relationship, but a host of them that analysis can potentially disclose.⁴⁴

⁴³ Brouwer, 1999: 236; Lit: Het verschaft de lokale bevolking een kader om sterker op elkaar betrokken te raken en een lokale identiteit tot uitdrukking te brengen. Het laatste is vooral van toepassing voor de toeristische ontwikkeling in de Voerstreek, waar bewoners op actieve wijze betrokken zijn bij de totstandkoming van unieke attracties. Toeristische ondernemers profiteren van deze lokale betrokkenheid, omdat de toegevoegde symbolische waarde aan het toeristisch product economisch voordeel oplevert. Voorts zorgt deze lokale betrokkenheid voor een maatschappelijk draagvlak voor toeristische ondernemers en projectontwikkelaars. ... De commodificatie van het platteland, waarbij culturele uitingen een prijskaartje krijgen, verschafft de lokale bevolking ook een bepaalde grond voor het ervaren van continuïteit tussen nieuwe en oude situaties. Zo brengt de symbolische reconstructie van de geschiedenis van een dorp of streek vanuit toeristische overwegingen het verleden weer tot leven. Lokale tradities worden niet alleen symbolisch ingezet voor de totstandkoming van attracties, ze dragen ook bij aan de symbolische productie van de leefwereld.

⁴⁴ Lefebvre, 1991: 86 and 88

Mormont formulates this even more explicitly:

There is no longer one single space, but a multiplicity of spaces for one and the same geographical area, each of them having its own logic, its own institution, as well as its own network of actors - users, administrators, etc. - which are specified and not local.⁴⁵

In order to understand how the various 'logics' of space can be understood, Boelens refers to various domains of reality that relate to a variety in 'velocity' and in spatial processes⁴⁶. He discerns three separate dimensions: the arche space, the hypermobility space and the telematic space. Arche space – the space of the built environment – is lastingly dominant. This is the space that can be grasped with the naked eye. Hypermobility space contains rapid links between nodes of activity: the space that is visible when travelling on the highway. Telematic space gains importance as contacts via telephone and computers increase. In this space, only information (non-material goods) changes hands. These domains can be regarded as separate time-spatial constellations, all present in one single geographical area.

In the countryside, too, there are several dimensions of reality. The countryside is not only a living space for rural inhabitants or a production space for farmers where sociocultural values are different from those in the city and where peace and tradition are dominant. Over this 'layer' new layers have pushed forward, that have brought new meanings and new practical forms. The countryside has become a consumption space for the urban tourist, a living space for new dwellers, many of whom work elsewhere. It is a transit area for those moving from one city to the other: the countryside as the setting along the highway. It moreover has a very new meaning as part of the European cultural and natural heritage: the countryside at a distance. The preservation of the countryside has thus received a more or less abstract function and meaning that has arisen and now persists without interference from those who physically use this space. This countryside-at-a-distance can be visited by turning on the television or by entering this space through the Internet.

The new meanings and uses make the traditional distinction between city and countryside untenable. As Halfacree states (see the quote at the beginning of Section 2.2), city and countryside can no longer be approached as separate worlds, but should be conceived as a multilayered construction. Within some of these layers, the countryside still has a typical function, for example as green space. Within other layers there is a fading of the differences - or of a reversal of the traditional distinction - between core and periphery. In general, functions are less exclusively bound to either rural or urban areas; the dynamics of the various layers is not coupled to one clearly defined space. This makes it clear that the various dimensions cannot be straightforwardly related to various levels of scale (micro, meso, macro). Each dimension has its own micro, meso and macro processes. The countryside can be regarded as a 'heterogeneous, layered and theoretically infinite system. Each layer has its own dynamics, that is not attached to a specific, confined area'⁴⁷. According to Boelens, spatial organisation should take all these different dimensions of the countryside into account. This is not an easy task, however. As each layer is governed by its own logic, it is difficult to think of actions that fit in with all of them. Conflicts are manifest at the local level, as various layers are all present in the same geographical area. As Keuzenkamp and van Tatenhove describe it:

⁴⁵ Mormont, 1990: 34

⁴⁶ Boelens, 1996

⁴⁷ Boelens, 1996: 73

Rural development is an ongoing struggle for the definition of what is considered as rural and in what directions rural areas have to be developed. This struggle is the result of ongoing interactions between actors within rural areas. These actors are linked to each other in a diversity of networks ranging from production, social and policy networks⁴⁸

This shows that the notion of rural quality hides various 'worlds'. Outside these worlds, the notion is meaningless. It is not possible to define rural quality in uniform, global terms. The question is: how should we deal with it instead?

2.3 Rural qualities

In the previous sections, I indicated that rural areas are heterogeneous. Rural space can be characterised as interaction between spatial practice, spatial representation and representational spaces. Also, it is multi-layered in terms of experiences and processes.

If this notion of multilayeredness of rural space is related to rural quality, it becomes obvious that quality is defined in different ways in each layer. What is considered a 'quality' in one layer, can be called by a quite different name in another. Below, some examples of approaches which take a multilayered view on quality are presented, followed by a consideration of the consequences for dealing with rural quality in planning and in research. In the selection of approaches, spatial quality is considered in relation to recreation and tourism. This means that quality is highly related to such notions as regional identity and authenticity.

Quality as a heterogeneous concept

In the mid-1990s, a threefold notion of spatial quality was popular in Dutch policy-making. A difference was made between use value, experience value and future value. Use value and experience value refer to the current opportunities to use and experience the landscape. The future value was introduced as a more strategic value, relating spatial development to dynamic processes and sustainable use (future generations). Specifically with regard to tourism, a similar but slightly different typology has been used⁴⁹: use value, experience value, attraction value and appropriation value. Use value refers to the suitability of an area for recreational use: are there good road connections, sufficient accommodations, cycling paths, ski runs, etc.? Experience value can be referred to with such adjectives as beautiful, quiet, rustic, etc. Attraction value lies in the 'story behind' an area. This value is particularly relevant to tourism and can explain why an otherwise common looking place can be of great interest to visitors (the house where Goethe was born, a bar where Janis Joplin used to drink, a place where the pope kissed the soil, and so on). Appropriation value refers to the value which lies in the personal relation with an area. This is typical of inhabitants, but also of some tourists who visit an area regularly (e.g. who have a holiday home there).

Another example which can be mentioned is the conceptualisation which Ex and Lengkeek present with regard to authenticity⁵⁰. Contrary to a mythic notion of 'The authentic', Ex and Lengkeek state that various types of authenticity can be discerned,

⁴⁸ Keuzenkamp et al., 1997: 2

⁴⁹ Lengkeek, 1994; van der Velden and Lengkeek, 2000

⁵⁰ Ex et al. (1996). Authenticity is a specific type of quality which refers to the original state, free of external influences and to veracity. It is a quality which is particularly stressed as being important for tourism development (e.g. Maccannell, 1976).

depending on the perspective or the type of expertise of those involved⁵¹. Types of authenticity are for example historic, a historic, material and conceptual authenticity. Historic authenticity refers to the process which an object has gone through, while a historic authenticity refers to the original state of an artefact. With regard to tourism, this latter type of development links up with the 'conservation' of an area: a countryside museum. If emphasising material authenticity, the use of original materials (e.g. in the restoration of a painting) is considered important. Material authenticity is related to the popularity to see the 'real' *Nachtwacht* or the real Eiffel Tower. Conceptual authenticity refers to the originality of the idea behind a piece of art, (or the use of the landscape). By discerning various types of authenticity, the concept is de-mystified and the complexity behind it is revealed. Thus the attempt to preserve authenticity can lead to a variety of outcomes in practice.

What is considered authentic space or the quality of space depends on the point of view taken. Moreover, quality implies a value judgement. This is essential, as it means that definitions of quality can only be grasped in relation to a specific actors or a group of people. According to Aamt-Riksen and colleagues, a multidisciplinary approach to spatial quality should therefore be applied:

... an absolute definition of rural quality is impossible and also not necessary. The concept is mainly meant to give a value judgement on how, in certain circumstances and in a particular era, the best reciprocal relation between space and society can be brought into being. Without a value judgement spatial quality is an empty notion. Spatial quality enforces a vision on the interaction between man and landscape. Because of the encompassing character of spatial quality, this should be reached through observation and analysis of the environment and its interaction with people. This requires a wide diversity of disciplines.⁵²

A way of dealing with the multilayeredness of concepts like authenticity or quality which links up with the various values it can represent, is to discern between various types of uses. In this way, a distinction can be made between, for example, environmental quality, quality of the living environment, economic quality, and so on. Similarly, definitions of quality which are applied by various societal groups can be made explicit.

This has been done, for example, in a process in the Dutch Wadden area. Here, a number of organisations⁵³ have taken the initiative to try and create a joint perspective for future development of the area. Although these organisations agree that future

⁵¹ They use a conceptual framework which has been designed within the context of the history of art and translate it to recreation and tourism.

⁵² Aamt-Riksen et al., 1991: 5. *Lit.*: '.... een absolute definitie van ruimtelijke kwaliteit is onmogelijk en ook niet nodig. Het begrip is vooral bedoeld om een waarde-oordeel te geven over hoe, onder gegeven omstandigheden in een bepaalde tijd, een best denkbare wederkerige samenhang tussen ruimte en samenleving tot stand kan worden gebracht. Zonder een waarde-oordeel is ruimtelijke kwaliteit een loze kreet. Ruimtelijke kwaliteit dwingt tot een visie op de wisselwerking tussen mens en landschap. Door het omvattende karakter van ruimtelijke kwaliteit is het bereiken hiervan door middel van observatie en analyse van de omgeving en haar interactie met mensen noodzakelijk. Daartoe moeten de meest uiteenlopende disciplines worden ingezet'.

⁵³ This group calls itself the 'Initiative group for recreation, tourism, nature and environment for the Wadden area'. It includes the Wadden Association, ANWB (the Dutch automobile association, representing the interests of recreation), Fries Bureau voor Toerisme and VVV Waddeneilanden (joint tourist offices), RECRON (association of tourist entrepreneurs), Staatsbosbeheer (Forestry Commission), natuurnmonumenten (Nature conservation), It Fryske Gea (conservation of the Friesian landscape) and Stichting Duinbehoud (conservation of dunes). The Centre for Recreation and Tourism Studies of Wageningen University supports the development of the perspective with advice and research (see also Caalders et al., 1998)

development should be based on the specific qualities of the area, they do not have the same type of qualities in mind. Qualities are related to the rationale from which these different parties operate. Moreover, speaking about qualities is further hampered, because each organisation speaks in a different 'language'. A first step in this process, therefore, was to compare the notion of quality that the interest groups involved hold in relation to recreation, tourism, nature and the environment in the Wadden area. Both material and non-material qualities were taken into account. In order to make clear that actors tend to speak different languages when referring to qualities, a matrix was constructed in which this was made explicit. Each actor has a favourite language through which he or she communicates most frequently with other actors. Developing a joint strategy starts by understanding one another. There is an attempt to develop a common language, by which interest groups in the Wadden area can communicate about quality and goals. In this approach, a specific stance towards quality is taken. Instead of giving a precise definition of what quality is, it goes on to show its heterogeneity and specifically links definitions to the context in which they are applied. Such an approach also takes account of the conflicts which may arise. Its aim is to create a conceptual framework which does justice to the various representations of quality by involving all interests at stake. Quality and interests are interrelated in this case, both in practice and conceptually. Quality is not an objective notion and interest is not just a subjective notion; both evolve from the context in and position from which actors operate. Each spatial layer creates its own qualities and its own interests. The meaning of both can only be understood within the context in which they have grown.

This interrelatedness partly explains why the researcher or planner cannot make a priori choices of which type of quality should prevail. Rather, a plea is made to take the heterogeneity which can be observed as a starting point. The quality of the outcome is thus represented by a process, which starts with the heterogeneity of representations of quality. In this way, heterogeneity itself is considered a quality. A very explicit example of this can be found in van der Ploeg and his followers⁵⁴. In their studies on farming styles, the empirical findings of heterogeneity are used as an argument in favour of a rural policy which leaves more room for the preservation of this heterogeneity. Verschoor, too, starts from the need to take heterogeneity into account in his study on small-scale entrepreneurs in Mexico:

Thus when I talk about the work, the skills, or the knowledge necessary to distribute mezcal, I talk about the heterogeneous materials that cross the boundaries between producers and consumers, constituting a common space between them in the process. A common space in which, ... '... actors define one another in interaction - [through] intermediaries that they put into circulation'⁵⁵.

He builds on theories of Callon, Law and colleagues, in which the *process* of creation, dynamics and relational concepts have a central position. Definitions of rural quality come into being in specific spatial and historic contexts. The acknowledgement that dynamics are central to such notions as quality, authenticity and identity are beautifully phrased by the Dutch/Indian architect Bhalotra, who speaks of *identitijd* (identi-time) instead of *identiteit* (identity)⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ See e.g. van der Ploeg, 1994; de Bruin, 1997

⁵⁵ Verschoor, 1997: 171-2

⁵⁶ Trouw, 25 October 2001

Consequences for dealing with rural quality

These examples can serve to illustrate how the question of rural quality is dealt with in research and planning. A shift in emphasis can be noted. The focus has shifted from the *content* of the notion of quality to the *process* and *context*. A definition of quality is not considered as the input of a planning process, but as its outcome. Whether this outcome can be considered 'high quality' cannot be answered without taking the process itself into account. Quality in terms of content should be built into planning and decision-making processes. Quality itself can be considered a process in this approach. This awareness has led to analytical approaches that do not try to create a uniform definition of quality, but rather analyse how definitions of quality come about.

In academics the question 'What is rural quality?' has been translated into 'How do definitions of rural quality come about?' And in planning, it is increasingly being replaced by 'How can a common definition of rural quality be generated?' Below, I will shortly reflect on these changes.

Steering: dealing with heterogeneity

With regard to planning and steering of rural development, 'what' questions have been replaced by 'how' and 'who' questions. Approaches to steering and planning have gradually shifted the focus from content (what should be created or preserved) to an approach in which actors and processes are central. Current approaches tend to focus on interaction. Crucial questions now re 'How can planning processes be guided?', 'Who is - or should be - involved in planning processes?' and 'Who decides?'

This means that the question of success or failure cannot be answered by referring to the outcome only. An evaluation of results should include an evaluation of the procedures followed. Content and quality should be guaranteed by involving experts and other carriers of knowledge in the planning process. In order to preserve the attraction value of landscapes, for example, experts in tourism experience should be involved in the landscape design.

Heterogeneity is often mentioned in relation to quality: those involved should be a reflection of the heterogeneity of insights and interests. During the process, justice should be done as much as possible to these differences in ideas and opinions. This means that planning is increasingly making use of interactive experiences. The rise of interactive approaches will be further elaborated in Chapter 3.

Analysis

The shift in focus from rural quality to the way in which definitions of rural quality come about implies that quality is considered a social construction, or - rather, a process of social constructing. This does not imply that the 'world out there' is considered fiction. Rather, it implies a difference between 'characteristics' and 'qualities'. Characteristics are 'out there' and make up the world, but we perceive these characteristics in terms of qualities; it is these qualities which are the input for our debates on rural development. To illustrate this difference, a comparison with Meijering's distinction between 'the world' and 'the truth' can be made:

... we should not make the common mistake to confuse the healthy idea that 'the world' is out there with the unhealthy idea that 'the truth' is also out there. Of course, the world also goes on without Einstein or Freud. It is a relatively closed causal system which sorts all kinds of effects without interference of mental causes, and thus independent of the human mind. However, this does not at all

apply to truth! Truth is not out there outside us. ... Yes the world is out there, but this does not apply to descriptions of the world. Only descriptions of the world are true or false!⁵⁷

Meijering refers to Rorty to explain what he means. His aim is not to deny the notion of truth or objectivity (or quality, for that matter), but to strip these notions of their mystifying aura. He emphasises the existence of societal standards to distinguish between good and bad arguments, between intelligent or senseless policy, and between convincing and despicable ethical ideas. We have no trouble making such judgements in daily practice, without need for fundamental philosophical theories. Outside the societal practices which we have created in the course of history, no ultimate court of appeal exists. And only within our societal spaces can we discern between what is true or false, objective or idiosyncratic⁵⁸. The fact that quality is a normative notion does not mean that 'anything goes'.

In the light of these remarks it is interesting to repeat some remarks of Ex and colleagues with regard to the notion of authenticity. Referring to MacCannell's notion of staged authenticity, they state:

The image sketched by MacCannell calls, according to our analysis, not so much for a search for a true reality behind the façade, but rather an attempt by the outsider to penetrate into the exclusive world which is provoked by experts who define authenticity. This statement may seem bolder than it is. There is no objective authentic reality behind what is staged, but only an image or an award of authenticity. This award has been made in advantage, by experts⁵⁹.

Authenticity cannot be found 'out there'. The search for authenticity is not so much a search for reality behind the façade as an attempt to get a glimpse of the exclusive world evoked by experts who tell us what authenticity is. No real authentic world can be found behind the staged authenticity. The expert notion of authenticity, however, guides us in the perception of the scene and in its valuation.

It is thus recognised that such notions as quality are socially constructed and can only be grasped in relation to the contexts or 'worlds' in which the specific notion of quality has arisen. This has led to approaches in which definitions are explicitly related to the 'bearers' of these definitions. Such approaches emphasise perceptions, power relations and interdependencies. Emphasis has shifted from physical patterns to social processes. The physical pattern, however, is not irrelevant. As I argued in Section 2.2, social and physical aspects of space are interrelated. In relation to the social component, moreover, it is not *only* processes, but also patterns or structure which are relevant. These structures co-define the margins within which processes and changes take place.

⁵⁷ Meijering, 1989: 25; *Lit.*: ... we [moeten] niet de gebruikelijke vergissing begaan en het gezonde idee dat 'de wereld' zich daarginds bevindt, verwaren met het ongezonde idee dat ook 'de waarheid' zich daarginds bevindt. Natuurlijk, de wereld reilt en zeilt ook zonder Einstein of Freud. Zij vormt een (betrekkelijk) gesloten causaal systeem dat grotendeels zonder tussenkomst van mentale oorzaken, en dus onafhankelijk van de menselijke geest, allerlei effecten sorteert. Voor de waarheid geldt dit echter geenszins! De waarheid is niet daarginds buiten ons. ... Zeker, de wereld is daarginds, maar voor beschrijvingen van de wereld geldt dat niet. Alleen voor beschrijvingen van de wereld geldt dat ze waar of onwaar zijn!

⁵⁸ Meijering, 1989: 32

⁵⁹ Ex et al., 1996: 38; *Lit.*: Het door MacCannell geschetste beeld roept volgens onze analyse niet zozeer het beeld op van een zoektocht naar een ware realiteit die achter het opgevoerde ligt, als wel een poging van de buitenstaander om binnen te dringen in de exclusieve wereld zoals die opgeroepen wordt door deskundigen die authenticiteit vaststellen. Deze bewering lijkt bouder dan ze is. Er is geen objectieve authentieke werkelijkheid achter de opgevoerde, maar alleen een beeld of toekenning van authenticiteit. Die toekenning is eerder gedaan, door de deskundigen en andere beeldvormers.

These reflections demand an approach which justifies both dynamic and structure, and in which both physical and social aspects can be included. A central position should be that content and process can be analytically separated, but are in fact fundamentally interwoven. The *network* concept seems promising to deal with such needs. The use of this concept as an analytical tool will be outlined in the next section.

2.4 Network as an analytical concept

Network appears to be an interesting notion for studying rural tourism development. Several authors have used the network metaphor, some particularly in the context of rural development⁶⁰. Theory construction on networks is initiated in a variety of disciplines. Boekema and Kamann⁶¹ mention sociological, economic, geographical and technical approaches. Also with regard to physical-spatial structure, the notion of networks is extensively applied (e.g. ecological networks, urban networks and networks of infrastructure).

The network metaphor basically refers to 'a set of interconnected nodes'⁶², or, in other words: ties and the relations between these ties. Ties or nodes can be cities, computers, mobile phones, brain cells, firms, individuals, nature reserves or stock exchange markets. Similarly, relations can be roads, telecom wires, radio waves, kinship, friendship, and so on.

Though the range of network approaches is broad, a number of characteristics are indifferent to discipline. These are related to the nature of the notion of 'network' itself: network implies a focus on interdependencies, interaction and relations. It is therefore a suitable concept for *multidisciplinary studies*, and for integration of various *levels of scale*. The focus on interrelations also offers the opportunity to focus on *dynamics and change*, while also being able to explain *structure and continuity*. This also implies that both *content and process* come into the picture. For all these reasons, networks are particularly suitable for analysing rural tourism development⁶³.

Below, these characteristics will be elaborated, using examples from social sciences, economics, policy science and technology studies.

Networks as a concept for multidisciplinary approaches

The opportunity to take a multidisciplinary point of view is stressed by a number of authors across disciplines⁶⁴. According to Bax⁶⁵, network analysis crosses the boundaries between often separate studies institutions (e.g. politics, economics, friendship). Though network studies are not necessarily multidisciplinary in approach, taking a network vision does facilitate multidisciplinarity. This is related to the fact that various types of relations – which can go beyond the traditional disciplinary scope – can be taken into consideration when searching for explanations for the behaviour of individuals or networks.

⁶⁰ E.g. Lowe et al., 1995; Keuzenkamp et al., 1997

⁶¹ Boekema et al., 1989

⁶² Castells, 1996: 470

⁶³ This does not mean to imply that the concept of networks is always used in this way in academic research, merely that the concept is suitable for this type of application.

⁶⁴ E.g. Groenewegen, 1989; Lowe, Murdoch and Ward, 1995; Boissevain et al., 1973

⁶⁵ Bax, 1978

This does not mean, however, that the disciplinary point of departure is no longer relevant. Depending on the discipline, a different type of actor and a different type of relation is taken as point of reference. In economics, for example, enterprises or households/individuals as economic actors will generally be the focus of attention; in policy sciences, the focus is on governmental actors involved in policy-making⁶⁶. In both cases, however, explanations for behaviour often - though not always - tend to go beyond the traditional disciplinary framework. A good example of a broadening of the disciplinary scope are studies on *innovative milieux*. In such studies, social relations are considered an important factor in the functioning of economic networks. Trust is an essential criterion in many social, political and economic network approaches.

Another quite different example is provided by studies of so-called 'socio-technical networks' or 'actor-networks'. Such studies focus on the shaping of technological artefacts, and the approach starts from the acknowledgement that '[s]cience and technology are a product of interaction between a large number of diverse actors'⁶⁷.

Technology and its shaping has to do with the historical, the economic, the political, and the psychological, as well as with the sociological. But how can we find ways of overcoming the divisions and blinkers that academic disciplines use to set themselves apart? How can we find multidisciplinary ways of talking about heterogeneity: of talking, at the same time, of social *and* technical relations, even-handedly, without putting one or the other in a black box whose contents we agree not to explore?⁶⁸

It should be acknowledged that the world consists of 'hybrids': the social, technique and nature are related through invisible threads. The challenge is: '... to adopt a method that does not distinguish on *a priori* grounds between 'science' (which is purportedly about the 'truth') and 'politics' (which supposedly concerns 'power'). It is our argument that a proper understanding of social and scientific change requires the abandonment of this dichotomy'⁶⁹. The notion of networks has a central place in reuniting these various fields. Networks which consist not only of human actors, but also of technological artefacts⁷⁰:

... actor networks are not thought of as limited to human agents, but also include non-human entities and artefacts such as texts, flows of money or technologies that as 'intermediaries' bind together and lengthen actor-networks⁷¹.

Such ideas on actor networks are probably the most far-reaching in the ambition to go beyond traditional disciplinary fields.

Networks and the structure-agency divide

It has been argued that network approaches can offer insight into micro-macro relationships⁷² and even a way out of the structure-agency divide⁷³.

⁶⁶ An overlap in terms of object of study also exists: e.g. management studies on decision-making processes within firms. A first study on the impact of social networks on the functioning of firms is by Roethlisberger et al. (1950).

⁶⁷ Callon, 1991: 132

⁶⁸ Bijker et al., 1992: 5

⁶⁹ Callon et al., 1986: 4

⁷⁰ This idea of actants is often criticised, for example by van den Broek (1998: 5), who states that '... either one accepts interests, negotiation of power, and even motives behind the 'actions' of non-human 'actors' and ends up with the anthropomorphism Callon wants to avoid; or one does not, but then non-human entities can not be analysed as 'actors' in sociological terms - or at least not in Weverian terms, that is attributing motives and meanings to the actors which become translated into social action'.

⁷¹ Renting, 1999: 10

Moderate claims hold that networks offer an opportunity to take into account the mutual interaction between structure (market, socio-political structure) and behaviour: both the impact of structure on behaviour, as well as the consequences of the behaviour of actors for the dynamic of the system as a whole⁷⁴. Most approaches, however, still focus on either structural features (network structuralism) or individual behaviour (network actionism). An approach which at least to some extent overcomes this divide is the actor-oriented approach developed by Long⁷⁵. This approach is interesting because, though it starts with actors' practices, it integrates these within an analytical framework which problematises the relation between micro and macro actors. Central in this approach are 'interface' situations. The approach has been explicitly developed to overcome the gap between macro and micro perspectives in sociology⁷⁶.

A more rigid claim is that structure and agency are no longer valid categories, but that one rather ought to speak in terms of various types of networks. This is claimed in the 'socio-technical network' approach, which has already been referred to at page 42. According to the practitioners: '[a] corollary of this method is that the distinction between macro- and micro-analysis disappears'⁷⁷. Projects and intermediaries play a central role in the analysis and the project - rather than individual or structure - is considered the level of analysis.

Ideas on socio-technical networks have inspired some rural sociologists, who have adapted these ideas to their own needs⁷⁸. Here, similar claims about opportunities to include micro and macro perspectives are made. Lowe and colleagues, for example, state that network analysis can provide an answer to the necessity to 'hold the local and the non-local together within a unified analysis'⁷⁹. A frequently made distinction in such studies is that between local networks and global networks. Local and global are not used in a geographical sense here, but in relation to the project which is studied. Verschoor⁸⁰ uses these notions to describe the projects of small-scale entrepreneurs in Mexico (e.g. selling liquor, operating public transport). The global network refers to the resources needed to keep the project running (e.g. money, permits, political support, machinery, etc.). The global network contains elements of what would otherwise be referred to as context; however, the examples show that this context is not something abstract but something that can be 'put together' and offers the entrepreneur room for manoeuvre. The entrepreneur is provided with such elements in exchange for a certain result and under certain conditions: this can consist of paying interest or other types of economic return, but also of cultural objects of symbolic value (e.g. obeying the law). The local network refers to using the means provided by the global network, controlling them in day-to-day practice and being able to offer the expected return to the global network. A project is successful if it is able to impose itself as an *obligatory point of passage* between the local and the global network.

⁷² Stokowsky, 1994

⁷³ Bax, 1978

⁷⁴ Groenewegen, 1989:114

⁷⁵ Long, 1989 and 1997

⁷⁶ Verschoor, 1997: 21-24

⁷⁷ Callon, et al., 1986: 228

⁷⁸ Lowe, Murdoch and Ward, 1995; Woods, 1998; Verschoor, 1997; de Bruin, 1997

⁷⁹ Lowe, Murdoch and Ward, 1995: 103

⁸⁰ Verschoor, 1997

Networks, continuity and change

The fact that networks focus primarily on the relations between ties makes the approach very useful to study dynamics. This advantage was particularly stressed in the social network approaches of the 1970s. Network analysis was considered useful to study changes in society and was as such a reaction against structural functionalism⁸¹. Structural functional analysis departs from the idea that balance is the natural state of social systems, while change is regarded as an exogenous force. Each social system has clear boundaries, and within these boundaries each individual has his or her own role. Individual behaviour is regarded as a derivative of the role or function of this person within the total system. This approach can be characterised as 'custom is king'⁸². Whereas structural functional analysis regards conflicts as dysfunctional, in social network analysis conflicts are considered a central societal force. It is therefore a more dynamic type of analysis, in which, however, bounded groups or institutions can still be defined. Network analysis can provide insight in their internal dynamics, tensions and contradictions. This way, a different perspective on these more durable phenomena is offered.

A similar argument is put forward by Bergman and colleagues with regard to economic networks. These are described as: '... a potentially flexible but at the same time structured connection [between economic agents]....'⁸³. The dynamics of a network are related to development at several levels. Firstly, they can be related to changes at the individual level, for example growth of individual actors. Secondly, at the inter-firm level, the merging of firms, takeovers and so on can lead to changes in the make-up of a network and different relations between actors. Thirdly, general trends at the macro level can be discerned, such as technological changes and the flexibilisation of production. Such trends can force entrepreneurs to adapt to the changed situation and can thus cause changes in the functioning of the network⁸⁴. Stability as opposed to dynamics is caused by dependencies between various actors⁸⁵. Such dependencies make it hard for new actors to enter the network. Another observation is that the structure of a network facilitates some types of changes while frustrating others. Thus, completely new ideas which cut through existing production standards, break down existing relations and demand a different combination of means will usually not be accepted⁸⁶. When a network structure is functioning well, this facilitates stability. Such a 'paradigm fixation' can in the long run lead to inertia and ossification of the network. Whether dynamics or stability prevail(s) depends on characteristics of the network, and on the time perspective from which it is analysed.

Networks, content and process

In the socio-technical network approach a radical view towards networks and dynamics is taken. Scholars in this tradition claim not to be interested in structure at all, but only in the process of structuring. Therefore, they do not take context as given. Even actors are not previously defined, but rather 'actors define one another in interaction'⁸⁷.

⁸¹ Boissevain et al., 1973

⁸² Boissevain et al., 1973: VII

⁸³ Bergman et al., 1989: 284

⁸⁴ Kamann, 1989, 61

⁸⁵ Such dependencies can be of various nature, i.e. financial or relational.

⁸⁶ Kamann, 1989: 61

⁸⁷ Callon, 1991: 135

.... it is too simple (though it contains an element of truth) to say that context influences, and is simultaneously influenced by, content. What we require is a tool that makes it possible to describe and explain the coevolution of what are usually distinguished as sociotechnical context and sociotechnical content. In recent work we have used a network metaphor to try and understand this kind of process⁸⁸.

This implies that in this view, content and process are inseparably intertwined in network analysis.

In planning and policy sciences, the need to take both process and content into account is also stressed by many scholars. Planning documents should not be considered a blueprint for the desired outcome, but rather a means to search for the right direction of spatial development⁸⁹. Debates focus on the extent to which academics should evaluate planning and policy-making merely in terms of process, or also in terms of the rationality of the outcome⁹⁰.

It is important to stress that the above-mentioned general characteristics of networks do not always apply to network studies, even if such is claimed by authors. Nevertheless, the concept appears to be a useful tool for rural tourism analysis.

2.5 Evaluation

This chapter explored the notion of rural quality. The exploration shows that rural and urban are not absolute categories, and that space cannot be included in either of the two categories on the basis of strict, universal characteristics. Rural can thus not be defined univocally, and rural quality is not an objective notion. We should discern between rural as space and rural as representing space. Such categories of space can be analytically discerned, although they are inseparably intertwined.

One of the consequences of this line of thinking is that economic development can be considered as one aspect of spatial quality and thus also of rural quality. This conclusion is relevant in the light of the central question of this thesis. At the same time, if economic development of tourism is based on rural qualities, there is a risk of commodification and of a 'narrowing down of meaning' of rural qualities. Rural quality is also not a static notion. It is a heterogeneous concept, which should be considered within the context in which it is being defined. It is therefore better to speak of 'qualities' in rather than a singular quality. When speaking of 'conservation of rural qualities' this should not be explained in static terms. To conserve rural qualities, a process approach is required. The relation between spatial quality and tourist experience is specific, because the relation with an area is generally (but not always) volatile.

If qualities of rural space are to be grasped in scientific research, an approach is needed in which various layers of space can be studied in interrelation. Various perspectives on space and spatial quality, as well as the definition of various actors, should be taken into account. As the definitions of each of these actors are related to different worlds or discourses, analysis should also take into account the context in which these definitions arose. The consequence of this line of thinking is that the question 'What is rural quality?' has been rephrased. With regard to scientific analysis, the issue is how definitions of rural quality come about. In this study the network

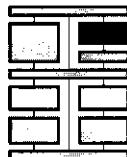
⁸⁸ Law et al., 1992: 21

⁸⁹ Kleefmann, 1985

⁹⁰ E.g. Voogd et al., 1998

perspective will be applied for observing and analysing rural tourism processes. By choosing a network perspective, emphasis is on the interrelations between actors and the rationale behind these relations. Explanations for interaction can be found in the power positions, knowledge and instruments actors can have, their perceptions of the policy issue and of the other actors involved, the rules which apply for interaction, and so on. This approach will be described in more detail in Chapter 4.

With regard to planning, the approach to rural quality has moved towards finding a common definition of rural quality. This has led to a shift towards more interactive types of planning. This has particular consequences for tourism, as tourist experiences are often considered a subordinate or less legitimate interest (compared to agricultural production, housing, real estate, etc.). In interactive planning, the problem of how to address tourism interests remains, as tourists are a difficult group to represent. The rise of interactive planning approaches and the consequences for rural tourism development will be further elaborated in the following chapters.



3 Rural development: the role of place and the rise of interactive approaches

Theories on the mechanisms behind rural development have changed over time. These changes in thinking are related to changes in actual rural development practice and they have had their impact on policies and planning¹. Current ideas have been influenced by the economic climate and political ideologies, as well as by learning from previous policy failures and studying successful regional economic practice.

This chapter reflects on these changes, paying particular attention to ideas about the role of place-related characteristics². It begins with a sketch of early regional development theories that focused on exogenous top-down approaches (3.1). Gradually, growing attention was paid to endogenous development theories, and current theories tend to emphasise the role of interaction and contactnetworks (3.2). Section 3.3. highlights how such changes in thinking relate to ideas on the position of rural areas. The main conclusions are summarised in Section 3.4.

3.1 The early days: exogenous top-down approaches

... it is important to keep in mind ... that the United States possesses the most successfully developed agricultural system in the world; were all other countries able even to approach America's level of output, humanity's food production dilemma would be permanently solved³.

Below, I present an overview of some of the ideas on rural development that prevailed until well into the 1970s⁴.

Early rural development policy

Regional development policies in Europe did not become popular on any scale until after 1945⁵. While some earlier examples of development policies for rural areas do exist, they

¹ '... regional policy and planning, as well as any other policy domain is essentially constructed within the social, economic and ideological framework that is dominant during a given historic era' (Albrechts et al., 1989: 67).

² Though this chapter does give an insight into the main trends in theory and practice, it does not aim to give an overview of all past and existing theories. Emphasis is on developments that have contributed to the rise of interactive approaches.

³ Wheeler et al., 1986: 373

⁴ The dates and periods mentioned throughout this chapter are indicative. Periods can differ, depending on the point of view taken (i.e. mainstream politics, prevailing theory or new ideas and experiments). The description refers to regional development policies in Europe. Though differences between various countries exist, Stöhr (1989) notices remarkable parallels among European countries in terms of regional policies undertaken, as well as their results.

are mainly concerned with the improvement of agriculture. In Ireland, for instance, the British government established in 1891 a special body for the highly populated agricultural areas in the west of the country. This Congested Districts Board mainly engaged in restructuring agriculture, though even the allocated holdings tended to be too small for long-term commercial survival. After independence in 1922, the Irish Land Commission took over this task⁶. In England, a special agency for improvement of the rural economy was established in 1909⁷.

After the World War II, agricultural land reform as a strategy for rural development policy became an important instrument in large parts of Europe. In some cases, this took the form of large-scale land consolidation and land development, as for example in the Netherlands. In southern Italy, the strategy included redistributing land held by large landowners (*latifundistas*) to the peasantry; a policy resembling what has since occurred in various third world countries⁸.

At the same time, policies directed towards the broader (not only agricultural) rural economy were pursued. These were pervaded with the notion that rural meant 'underdeveloped'⁹, and as such were influenced by early regional economic theories¹⁰. These theories, whether of Marxist or liberal denomination, had a tendency to depict rural areas as being dependent on exogenous forces for their development¹¹. Both types of theories were preoccupied with modernisation and the superiority of technological and industrial progress, thus creating a linear development model. Marxist theories tended to regard rural areas as being subservient to the capitalist core and reflected on the colonial relationship between countryside and city. Measures like the redistribution of agricultural land can be traced back to these theories. Within the capitalist view, measures to improve the rural situation included supplying capital and finance, introducing new technologies and providing infrastructure¹². These neoclassical ideas were influential in the first post-war period in many European countries. The improvement of infrastructure and the provision of capital were frequently applied measures. Verhoef and Boekema¹³ indicate that Dutch regional economic development policy up to 1959 was based on this type of theory. In practice this came down to improving infrastructure and subsidising investments. In Italy, the improvement of infrastructure was one of the main instruments for regional development of the Mezzogiorno during the 1950s¹⁴. In the United Kingdom, firms were stimulated to settle in peripheral areas through incentives while at the same time they were discouraged from settling in more prosperous regions¹⁵.

⁵ Verhoef et al., 1986

⁶ Johnson, 1987

⁷ Wood, 1987

⁸ King, 1987

⁹ Saraceno, 1995

¹⁰ According to Verhoef and Boekema the influence of regional economic development theories is easily recognisable in the Netherlands, though policies often contain elements of several theories at the same time (Verhoef et al., 1986); whereas Lambooy (1992) puts forward that policies were not well funded theoretically.

¹¹ Slee, 1994; Long et al., 1994

¹² Slee, 1994

¹³ Verhoef et al., 1986

¹⁴ King, 1987

¹⁵ Wood, 1987

Growth poles

From the 1960s onwards, the regulating role of the government became enlarged¹⁶. In the Federal Republic of Germany, for example, regional development policy became officially part of the *Bundesraumordnungsgesetz* in 1965¹⁷. The growth pole theory has been especially influential in shaping the policies of many European countries in this period¹⁸. A growth pole is an industry or a complex of industries thought to have a stimulating effect on other industries already present in the area, or able to attract new industries because of, for example, agglomeration effects created. Perroux described these industries as *unités motrices*¹⁹. Spatial proximity is a crucial factor in his theory, and is one of the reasons why multiplier effects appear. Though this concept was initially designed to analyse and explain the growth of spatial entities, it has been widely adopted as a means to stimulate development in economically backward areas. The most important instruments are subsidisation and tax deductions for firms willing to invest in these areas. Emphasis was on firms that could be expected to attract other companies in return, so-called key industries²⁰. In many cases, this policy did not have the desired effects. If employment was generated at all, it was usually only temporary²¹. Verhoef and Boekema describe the effects of this type of policy for the Dutch situation as follows:

This Dutch policy seemed successful at first. Places like Emmen, Drachten and Stadskanaal, situated in areas which previously belonged to economically 'weak' regions, were able not only to attract large companies like Philips, but also to fill their business parks with a large number of smaller companies. In the 1970s it became clear that but a Pyrric victory on unemployment had been won. One key industry after another closed its gates or reduced the staff.²²

Comparable developments have been reported for parts of Ireland, southern Italy, and the French Pyrenees²³. In Spain and Portugal, policies to create growth centres had hardly any effects at all. Many industries disappeared as soon as tax benefits or subsidisation were scrapped. Many 'settlements' included replacements from existing to new sites²⁴.

Wever²⁵ gives three explanations for the failure of this type of policy: short-term and structural economic changes, the fact that mainly low-level activities were attracted, and the fact that the resulting settlements usually were branch plants while management decisions were taken elsewhere, at company headquarters. Another reason for the limited success of this type of policy lies in the lack of attention to the context in which these firms should operate. This means that very often few linkages were created with either

¹⁶ Verhoef et al., relate this - for the Dutch case - to the increasing influence of Keynesian ideas.

¹⁷ Stiens, 1986; Blacksell, 1987

¹⁸ Verhoef et al., 1986; Wood, 1987; King, 1987; Naylor, 1987

¹⁹ Verhoef et al., 1986

²⁰ This particular aspect stems from export-base theory. According to Verhoef and Boekema (1986), one of the reasons for the popularity of the growth pole idea is that it can be coupled to many other theories.

²¹ Verhoef et al., 1986; see also Vaessen et al., 1991 and Naylor, 1987

²² Verhoef et al., 1986: 106. *Lit.*: Dit Nederlandse beleid liet zich aanvankelijk als succesvol aanzien.

Plaatsen als Emmen, Drachten en Stadskanaal, gelegen in gebieden die voorheen tot economisch gezien 'zwakke' gebieden behoorden, wisten in korte tijd niet alleen grote bedrijven aan te trekken, zoals Philips, maar slaagden er ook in hun bedrijventerreinen vol te krijgen met een groot aantal kleinere bedrijven. In de jaren zeventig bleek echter dat het een 'Pyrrhusoverwinning' in de strijd tegen de werkloosheid was. De ene na de nadere 'trekpaard-industrie' vertrok, sloot zijn poorten of kromp in.

²³ Camagni, 1995

²⁴ Naylor, 1987

²⁵ in: Verhoef et al., 1986

existing local industries or with new industries. The Shannon Free Airport Industrial Estate in the west of Ireland is regarded as a rather successful example of regional policy as it attracted industries from Britain, Japan, South Africa and Germany. However, hardly any of these industries created serious linkages within the regional context²⁶. Verhoef and Boekema state that the attraction of external industries only makes sense in areas with existing development potential:

... adapting the growth-pole concept in regional policy is only useful if aiming at regions with a growth potential and providing that a motoric element is created or attracted which, considering the circumstances of production and the general economic situation, is able to develop itself²⁷.

Camagni points out that firms need to take root locally, if the region is to profit in the long run:

... in the case that external activities are attracted into the region, they have to link up with and involve other local resources besides a cheap labour force and unspoiled environments if a true and self-sustaining development process is to emerge²⁸.

Without local ties, industries remain 'cathedrals in the desert'. King states that the lack of study into the suitability of different locations for various types of industries has contributed to this phenomenon in the case of Italy. Some industries have been attracted, but multiplier effects have failed to occur. Cost-efficiency was also extremely low²⁹.

Growth pole theory has been useful in explaining growth in Western-European industrial core areas like the Ruhr area, Rotterdam-Europoort and the London agglomeration. It fails, however, as a planning instrument for development in economically backward areas³⁰. According to Smith³¹, economic interventions in this period reinforced the dependency of peripheral areas on the economic core. Friedmann concludes that: '[i]n summary, growth centre doctrine is quite useless as a tool for regional development'³².

From the end of the 1970s, evidence of the failure of attempts to create top-down, externally induced development in economically backward areas has led governments and scientists to search for alternative theories on which to base regional policies. This need for a different approach was strengthened by the fact that the older industrial cores, on the basis of whose success the growth pole theory had been formulated, were in decline³³.

Top-down planning

Growth pole policy can be regarded as a typical example of government planning as it was conducted in the 1960s and 1970s. During this time, planning was going through a

²⁶ Johnson, 1987

²⁷ Verhoef et al., 1996: 106; *Lit*: ... toepassing van het groei-poolconcept in het regionale beleid [heeft] pas zin wanneer men zich richt op gebieden met reeds aanwezige groei-potenties en men een motorisch element weet te creëren of aan te trekken dat, gelet op de produktie-omstandigheden en de algemene economische situatie, in staat is zich te ontplooien.

²⁸ Camagni, 1995: 322

²⁹ In the chemicals and metallurgical industries, where much of the government spending for southern development went, each job created cost GBP100.000 (see King, 1987). Naylor (1987) also reports high costs per job created for Spain and Portugal.

³⁰ Verhoef et al., 1986

³¹ Smith, 1995

³² Friedmann et al., 1979: 175

³³ Mose, 1989

booming period in most European countries³⁴. This boom coincided with economic growth and the widespread belief in progress. The belief in progress also characterised planning, which was based on the underlying supposition that society is makable, that is, that society is both knowable and manageable³⁵. Key words that characterised planning in this period are a scientific (i.e. rational-technical) approach, systems planning and integrated development³⁶. Planning was regarded mainly as a matter of technical manageability, while the government was conceived of as standing above society and being able to 'steer' it.

This hierarchic relation between government and society can be traced back to the principle of bounded rationality (rational actors, but not fully informed)³⁷. The situation of a single actor is taken as point of reference, and policy processes are steered - or at least analysed - from this perspective. It is furthermore assumed that policy processes proceed in consecutive stages: determining policy goals, formulation of alternatives, decisions, implementation, evaluation. Political decisions are translated into policy goals and the implementation of these goals is regarded as a neutral translation of this policy³⁸.

Representation of rural areas and sources of development

During the period described, it was thought that rural development was brought about by exogenous forces and required top-down guidance. Economic development along this line of thinking is regarded mainly as urban-based and industry-driven. Agriculture is regarded as a 'stagnant factor'³⁹. Tourism is not considered to play a relevant role in inducing economic growth. The majority of the service sector is regarded as 'affected industries' as opposed to the key role that industries - especially large manufacturing industries - can fulfil within a region. A students' textbook on economic geography, printed in 1986, puts it as follows:

It has been said that cities are centres of change. This is so because cities have huge information pools, the advanced technology to gain access to their information pools, and the means to transmit that information via transformation and communication facilities ... One of the underlying assumptions in almost all discussions of economic development is that growth is dependent on manufacturing activities.⁴⁰

This has evolved into an attitude towards rural areas in which the attraction of industries and the industrialisation of agriculture have been regarded as the most important means for 'modernisation'⁴¹. It has led to a development where agriculture has invested mainly in vertical linkages within the agricultural production column. Horizontal integration (i.e.

³⁴ Keller et al., 1996; Albrechts, 1994

³⁵ Kleefmann, 1995; Hidding, 1997; lit: 'maakbaarheid' and 'stuurbaarheid'.

³⁶ Keller et al., 1996

³⁷ This is an adapted version of the rational actor model and was applied in much of the literature on policy instruments and some of the literature on implementation. The rational actor model stems from economics. It presupposes that a policy process consists of several phases, in which the actor consecutively analyses the problem, develops and weighs alternatives and then decides which option to proceed with. The main difference between this rational actor model and the bounded rationality approach lies in the fact that the latter stresses the impossibility of a full information situation. Knowability *as such*, however, is not questioned in the bounded rationality model; see Klijn, 1996 and 1997.

³⁸ E.g. van den Aarsen et al., 1995; Kickert et al. 1997b; Healey, 1994; de Bruijn et al., 1991

³⁹ Long et al., 1994

⁴⁰ Wheeler et al., 1986: 66/68

⁴¹ Long et al., 1994

linkages between agriculture and the surrounding region) has decreased. Many of the environmental problems of present-day agriculture, and some of the reasons behind the need for restructuring the sector, can be related to this development.

In this view on economic development, new ideas spread outwards from cities into the countryside. Cities are thus regarded as the locus of new ideas. Innovation in a rural setting comes about mainly through *diffusion*. This links up with the view in which rural is essentially regarded as non-urban and hence undeveloped. Friedmann and Weaver highly criticise this urban bias of growth pole theory. Referring to rural development in third world countries, they state:

On the whole, growth centre thinking reveals a distinctive *urban bias* in development. In the case of the lower-ranking central places [i.e. small rural towns], it would be more appropriate to say that economic growth filters *upward*, in response to agricultural developments in their vicinity, rather than down the urban hierarchy and outwards into the surrounding countryside⁴².

Another bias is related to the central position of technology and large firms. Innovation is seen mainly as the development and spread of new technologies. The prevailing definition of technology is rather narrow. In essence, it is the 'application of scientific knowledge and methods to economic activity, resulting in changes in productivity'⁴³. This implies a 'linear model of innovation' in which technological changes are regarded as induced by a one-way flow of information, ideas and solutions from science, to research and development branches of large firms, applied production and finally products find their way to the market⁴⁴. Large firms, able to invest heavily in research and development, are the catalysts of this technological development. They are, for that matter, regarded as the locus of innovation. The firm environment is of importance mainly from the point of view of the spread of innovation. This environment is referred to, for the most part, in terms of agglomeration effects and information density.

3.2 From endogenous development to networks and interaction

Exogenous and top-down development thinking have gradually lost their dominant position. This has been induced by arguments from a different - though interrelated - background:

- The fact that top-down development fails as a governance strategy;
- New insights into the sources of economic development based on studies in newly developing regions;
- Normative considerations.

As a result, attention has shifted towards more endogenous development strategies, based on the distinctive regional development potential of each area. This shift can be regarded as part of a more encompassing trend to emphasise processes and interaction. Similar developments can be noted in various scientific disciplines and societal fields⁴⁵.

⁴² Friedmann et al., 1979: 175

⁴³ Wheeler et al., 1986: 44

⁴⁴ See Broerse, 1998

⁴⁵ Smith refers to 'la triple crise du centralisme, des économies nationales et des politiques sectorielles' (Smith, 1995: 29).

Rise of endogenous development theories

Attention to endogenous development first came up in a third world context⁴⁶. By the beginning of the 1980s, the region had been discovered – or rather rediscovered – in industrialised countries. This has been referred to by many different names, such as autonomous development, local development, self-reliant development⁴⁷, *eigenständige Regionalentwicklung*⁴⁸, basic needs or agropolitan approach⁴⁹.

This 'movement' was initially mainly a protest against dominant values in regional development policies and was as such imbued with the spirit of the age of the 1960s and 1970s. Initiatives lay mainly in non-economic or alternative economic spheres⁵⁰. Endogenous development was regarded not primarily as a more effective way of economic development, but as a statement against prevailing capitalist values, and an alternative model for a better world, put forward by a new generation:

This minority - especially large among the young - is putting the standard model of development into question in their daily lives ... We are at a crossroads ... The demands of economic competitiveness and economic growth conflict more and more frequently with a growing concern for self-development, social morality, and territorial and ecological integrity⁵¹.

In the course of the 1980s and in the early 1990s, the concept received growing attention, both in practical experiments and in research. While this may partly be the result of a spread of idealist values, as some authors claim⁵², pragmatic arguments as well as evidence of economic development in formerly peripheral areas probably played a more important role.

As a general trend, emphasis on the role of endogenous factors was no longer primarily ideological, but instrumental and pragmatic:

Utopia has been replaced by pragmatism. Self-reliant regional development or endogenous renewal is a strategy of change in which the political system, interest organisations, development organisations, entrepreneurs and initiatives should cooperate to improve the innovative potential of enterprises in the new market circumstances. Utopian solutions play a subordinate role in this process⁵³.

The strong focus on linkages is crucial in the more recent approaches. Endogenous development is no longer used in the sense of 'autonomous' regional development or autarky. Rather, the need to integrate and balance between endogenous and exogenous forces is stressed. New concepts also tend to be more dynamic than their 1970s counterparts⁵⁴.

Nevertheless, a preoccupation with values still characterises many studies on endogenous development, particularly those in a rural context. As Slee indicates: '[e]ndogenous development is not so much a concept with clearly defined theoretical

⁴⁶ Chambers, 1983; Bassand et al., 1986; Friedmann et al. 1979

⁴⁷ Bassand et al., 1986

⁴⁸ Mose, 1989

⁴⁹ Friedmann et al., 1979

⁵⁰ Scheer, 1988

⁵¹ Bassand et al., 1986: 1

⁵² Verhoeven et al., 1986; Bassand et al., 1986

⁵³ Scheer, 1988: 20. *Lit:* ... an die Stelle der Utopie ist Pragmatik getreten. Eigenständige Regionalentwicklung oder endogene Erneuerung ist eine Reformstrategie, in der das Politischen System, die Interessenvertretungen, neue Entwicklungsorganisationen, Unternehmer und Initiativen zusammenwirken müssen, um die Innovationsfähigkeit der Betriebe an die neuen Marktbedingungen zu verbessern. 'Utopische' Lösungen spielen eine untergeordnete Rolle in diesem Prozeß.

⁵⁴ Camagni, 1995

roots but more a perspective on rural development, strongly underpinned by value judgements about desirable forms of development⁵⁵. In a rural context, endogenous development is strongly related to values of heterogeneity, differentiated development paths and entrepreneurial strategies tailored to individual circumstances and motivation⁵⁶.

Place-related interaction

An influential factor in changing regional development thinking derived from studies into new economically successful regions that developed in the beginning of the 1980s. Such studies helped to spread the recognition of the importance of the local environment for economic development. Scientists and policy makers were fascinated by the question why such areas as Silicon Valley, northern Italy, and Baden-Württemberg functioned so well under the changed global economic circumstances. Growth in these regions could not be explained from the principle of redistribution lying behind the traditional approaches of regional development. It is induced by 'territory specific dynamics'⁵⁷.

There are many different names signifying the increased attention to institutional and localised aspects, for example learning region⁵⁸, localised networks⁵⁹, local embeddedness⁶⁰, tacit knowledge and untraded interdependencies⁶¹, institutional thickness⁶², and innovative *milieux*⁶³. Although each notion has its own definition and focus, they have much in common. Each emphasises the role of interactions between both economic actors (firms), government bodies and other organisations at the regional level. Such interactions generate an environment in which innovations are more likely to occur and which favour economic development.

Though ideas on the role of localised networks are widely accepted and referred to, little empirical evidence on the subject exists. As Tödtling states, evidence is based mainly on a small number of 'success stories', whereas evidence about the influence of regional linkages in other areas fails. Moreover, these standard, much cited regions are very heterogeneous, ranging from regions with family- and craft-based industries to high-tech regions 'at the frontiers of technological development'. Studies on the influence of regional linkages are mainly case studies, for which relatively few firms and institutions were interviewed. The evidence is anecdotal, rather than systematically derived⁶⁴.

Tödtling emphasises that it is not just localised networks which have gained importance, but also large-scale and global networks of enterprises as well as supranational institutions:

Thus ... it appears that local firms and networks are becoming increasingly interlinked with global markets, with corporate hierarchies as well as networks. It is actually this interaction of global forces

⁵⁵ Skee, 1994: 191

⁵⁶ Long, A. et al., 1994

⁵⁷ Maillat, 1997

⁵⁸ Florida, 1995

⁵⁹ Tödtling, 1994

⁶⁰ Tödtling, 1994

⁶¹ Storper, 1995

⁶² Amin et al., 1994

⁶³ Camagni, 1995

⁶⁴ Tödtling, 1994

with specific local conditions and histories which is increasingly shaping the innovation process and consequently local and regional development⁶⁵.

He points at the interaction between localised networks and global structures, and thus between endogenous and exogenous forces.

From government to governance⁶⁶

The experiences of the 1960s and 1970s have shown that the steering potentials of government are limited and that it must deal with many other important actors in the policy fields in which it operates⁶⁷.

Changes in thinking on regional development occurred within not only regional economic studies, but also regional planning. The economic crisis in the 1970s led to the need to decrease government expenses. Evidence of the failure of top-down, exogenous development approaches became increasingly evident – and the failure was not restricted to regional development policy. Despite the fact that plans became more and more sophisticated, and an increasing amount of money was spent constructing and implementing them, the results were not overwhelmingly satisfying: formal policy goals were not attained.

The failure of top-down planning attempts led to the adoption of different planning models. The Dutch policy report 'Regio's op eigen kracht'⁶⁸ can be regarded as indicative of the initial changes in regional development planning. Instead of trying to induce growth poles, it stressed that regions should make much more use of their own strength. In addition to conceding to the call for a less top-down approach, it was also remarkably cheaper compared to previous policies. The plea to focus more on a region's own strength therefore also fitted in with the need for the national government to cut down on regional development expenses. Similar trends in regional development policy can be found in other European countries during the 1980s⁶⁹. Even in a traditionally highly centralised state like France, local, regional and European planning initiatives started to gain influence. According to Madiot, the state was no longer the main actor in regional development and spatial planning after 1980⁷⁰.

'Muddling through' and incremental planning became legitimate types of planning during the late 1970s and early 1980s⁷¹. Emphasis in this period was on projects, rather than plans and it moved from rationality, content and outcome, to the *process* of planning. This type of planning coincided with the generally felt need to be flexible. A project-based approach in the short term appeared to be well-adapted to the needs of the highly unstable, volatile environment in which it had to operate⁷².

This *project-led* approach was legitimised by a range of arguments: that existing plans were out of date, as their strategies were no longer relevant given major changes in economic structure consequent upon economic restructuring; that they failed to take account of new values and concerns,

⁶⁵ Ibid.: 83

⁶⁶ The term is taken from Marsden et al., 1998

⁶⁷ Kickert et al., 1997a: 1

⁶⁸ Lit: 'regions on their own'; the turnaround in Dutch regional economic development planning from top-down to bottom-up took place in the mid-1980s (Lambooy, 1992).

⁶⁹ See for example Healey, 1994

⁷⁰ Madiot, 1993: 22

⁷¹ This view on planning became popular during this period, but as a concept it is much older. See Etzioni, 1967.

⁷² Albrechts et al., 1989

notably with respect to environmental quality; that they embodied a statist *command and control* conception of the relation between state and market, rather than a market-relevant conception; and that they were based on technical-rational assumptions about the nature of knowledge to action, rather than democratic debate among parties⁷³.

In spatial planning practice, belief in manageability and knowability were exchanged for an emphasis on the complexity of policy processes. This complexity is related to the large number of actors participating in policy processes, the fact that these actors can change their preferences during the process and the strategic nature of the interactions between them⁷⁴. Because of these characteristics, the outcome of policy processes was considered unpredictable. This led to further reflection on the limits of planning, especially long-term planning. It also led to questioning the makable society and enlightenment ideals more generally. In some cases the entire question of the possibility of planning arose. The result was also a reconsideration of the role of government and its position in society.

In the Netherlands, a 1983 report by the Scientific Council for Government Policy was particularly influential in changing the thinking about the role of government⁷⁵. Planning and policy-making were increasingly approached from a 'pluricentric' perspective. Coordination of planning efforts of various parts and levels of government became an important goal of spatial planning⁷⁶. Smith characterises planning practice in Europe at the end of the 1980s as a *modèle bipolarisé*: a combination of top-down and bottom-up planning⁷⁷. What was recognised was that government planning is but one of many attempts to steer. The incapability of the government to direct societal developments made it clear that it does not stand above society, but is a part of it. Moreover, government could not be regarded as a homogenous whole. It was now conceived of as consisting of different parts and subdivisions - in other words, as a heterogeneous actor.

The failure of attempts to hierarchical steering have thus led to a different focus in political, policy and planning sciences. Alternative models pay greater attention to the interrelations between government and society.

3.3 The position of rural areas

Developments in rural areas and changes in thinking about regional development and governance (as described in 3.2), have led to a different perspective on rural areas. From urban-centric approaches, attention is now shifting to the strengths of rural areas. Several types of arguments can be discerned, all of which emphasise a continued role for place-related characteristics.

Post-Fordism

A first argument for the changing position of rural areas concerns changes in the global economic structure. One important result of these changes is that economic activity has to a large extent become footloose and firms tend to locate wherever production costs

⁷³ Healey, 1994: 7

⁷⁴ Klijn, 1996

⁷⁵ Den Hoed et al., 1983

⁷⁶ The same is true for other types of planning such as environmental planning.

⁷⁷ Smith, 1995: 32-33

can be minimised. Costs of, for example, labour and land are in most cases much lower outside the traditional core areas, which means that the economic map has changed significantly. Moreover, labour is often less organised in peripheral areas as unions are less common in such areas, and there are tax reductions available for companies that decide to settle. Especially those areas that are generally well opened-up (located near airport and highway) and that provide a pleasant environment for living (climate, recreational provisions, cheap housing, open atmosphere) are popular. This line of thinking is especially relevant in relation to the location or relocation of the branch plants of large multinational firms. It is also important when looking at the possibilities of ICT for small firms and commuters: by using new communication technologies, spatial proximity to the market or physical presence at the workplace becomes less important. This provides the opportunity to settle in rural areas which offer a higher quality of life and a lower cost of living. Hansen has described this as an important explanation for the growth of population in the rural hinterland of Marseilles.

The unprecedented attraction of rural hinterlands cannot be explained in traditional terms because it is not associated with rates of investment or capital movements, better employment opportunities, low unemployment rates, or higher wages and salaries. Rather, migrants to such areas are attracted by a milieu, which includes the geographical setting (often mountains), more fluid social structures, more flexible work hours, and the life style that new migrants create amongst themselves⁷⁸.

Place-related characteristics are considered of continued importance in the post-Fordist economy in this view, but the types of characteristics which offer competitive advantage have changed. Post-Fordism thus provides new opportunities for rural areas, because their position within the global economic structure has changed and their place characteristics are valued in new ways. This is, however, mainly due to developments that are out of their own reach, to developments at a global level. In this line of thinking, large firms remain dominant and areas are dependent on global networks and structures for the economic development opportunities which are available to them.

Networks of firms

A second argument emphasises the fact that flexibility and the ability to adapt to a fast changing market is favoured under the current economic regime. This means that small firms and horizontal organisations have significant advantages over hierarchically structured or larger firms. This puts rural areas in an advantageous position as '[r]ural areas have long been repositories of small-firm entrepreneurship, which is now seen to be a key source of economic dynamism and innovation'⁷⁹. It is not small firms in isolation that present rural areas with this advantage, but many small firms in cooperation. This means that the attention is shifting from firms as the central unit of economic development, to networks of firms. The environment of the firm and its external contacts have thus become more central in explanations of economic growth. In this type of approach, it is the firm in relation to its environment which explains regional economic development.

Proximity and innovative milieu

In some theories, place characteristics are given an even more prominent role. Camagni, for example, states that innovations are more likely in certain types of environment.

⁷⁸ Hansen, 1990: 119

⁷⁹ Marsden et al., 1993: 2

These environments are called innovative *milieux*⁸⁰. Such *milieux* are characterised by a high density of interaction between different kinds of local and non-local actors (both formal and informal interaction). The more contact and exchange of ideas there is between different types of actors (e.g. between entrepreneurs, governments and universities) in these networks, the higher the innovative capacity of the region. In this view, firms are more or less considered the product of the local environment, and the latter actually as the innovator⁸¹.

In this line of thinking, proximity is regarded as a crucial factor in creating a 'milieu', for both economic and socio-cultural reasons. Firstly, the local environment can play an important role in reducing uncertainties. Uncertainties arise from the fact that markets are not perfect, because firms do not have access to all relevant information and because they cannot control the outcomes of their actions⁸². This creates a need for institutions to be able to deal with these uncertainties. Especially for small and medium-sized enterprises, the local environment of the firm is one of the most important uncertainty reducing operators. In a similar way, the local environment is important because of the agglomeration effects it evokes. This refers to a reduction of transaction costs through joint R&D and the advantages related to an industrial atmosphere or collective learning processes. Many such advantages are related to informal contacts between local actors, creating an industrial atmosphere. In addition, synergy effects occur because actors have a shared cultural, psychological and often political background. This means there are 'tacit codes of conduct', that create common representations and widely shared 'beliefs'⁸³.

Characterising current perspectives

In this section, three arguments for the changing position of rural areas have been described. These can be analytically separated, but are combined in practice and in many studies. The first and the last argument presented can be regarded as extreme positions. The second is positioned somewhere in between and has elements of both⁸⁴. Table 3.1 characterises these positions.

⁸⁰ Camagni, 1995; Camagni, 1991; see also Fromholt-Eisebith, 1995; Genosko, 1997; Cooke et al., 1998

⁸¹ Genosko, 1997

⁸² Camagni names five kinds of uncertainty, that can be referred to as either static or dynamic. Static uncertainties stem from an information gap, an assessment gap and a competence gap; dynamic uncertainty is related to a competence-decision gap and a control gap (see Camagni, 1991: 126).

⁸³ Because such explanations play an important role, it has been stated that '[i]n spite of the importance of 'proximity' and spatial concentration, the milieu approach is not geographical but rather cultural' (Genosko, 1997).

⁸⁴ Different perspectives can be discerned as well. One perspective which was influential in the end 1980s to mid-1990s, for example, was the theory of Michael Porter. Porter also emphasises the importance of proximity and synergies. Such synergies are generated through the existence of 'clusters' of enterprises working in the same sector. Also, the role of the institutional environment being fine-tuned to these activities and thus adding to a favourable economic atmosphere for these clusters is recognised. Contrary to many others, he particularly emphasises the importance of competition, rather than cooperation between firms for generating innovation.

Table 3.1 Characterising two positions in current perspectives on rural development

	Post-Fordism	Innovative milieu
Argument	Post-Fordism offers competitive advantages for (some) rural areas	Local dynamics create innovation; some regions have a more innovative milieu than others
Position of firms	Small firms gain influence, but large firms remain dominant	Environment of firm is crucial; focus on networks of small firms
Regional development	Different areas are favoured under the new economic regime	Interaction at the regional level induces economic development
Role of place	Amenity and quality of life as economic location factors	Place dynamics induce economic development

Source: this thesis

Relation to tourism

When relating the arguments referred to above to rural tourism development, each is relevant in a different way. The first argument - the footloose economy - relates to a number of processes which have been described in Chapter 2. Amenity and quality of living have gained importance as economic location factors. This implies that values traditionally associated with tourism and leisure (beautiful landscape, healthy environment) have become important for economic development more generally. This trend is part of a process which can be characterised as 'touristification': a growing influence of traditionally leisure and tourism related factors in everyday life⁸⁵.

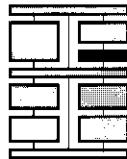
The second argument is relevant to rural tourism, as this sector consists mainly of small-scale enterprises. Also, cooperation in tourism may be even more important than in other sectors, as the tourism product is in many cases a co-production at the regional level. The strength of the sector should lie in flexible cooperation between firms. A similar conclusion can be drawn from the third argument. Here too, interaction is considered crucial. Innovation is induced by territory specific dynamics. In Chapter 4, the relation between place, innovation and tourism will be further elaborated.

3.4 Conclusion

A review of changing ideas on regional development reveals at least two important trends. First, the source of development has moved from being positioned outside the region to an approach where development can also be based on the region's own endowments. From this perspective, rural qualities are relevant to economic development. Secondly, the role of linkages is increasingly emphasised, both between economic activities and the region (embedding) and among economic activities (networks). The relation between linkages and innovation is often stressed. With regard to the opportunities to influence regional development through government planning, top-down models have also been left behind. Instead, emphasis is on interaction between government and other actors.

⁸⁵ Dietvorst, 2001

When linking these findings to the central question posed in Chapter 1, it appears that economic development and conservation of rural qualities are closely related from a regional economic development point of view. Emphasis in relevant theories is on interrelations and networks. As we saw in Chapter 2, an exploration of the notions of rural space and rural qualities also places interrelations and networks central. It seems that from various perspectives the concept of networks is promising in relation to rural tourism development. In the following chapter, the opportunities of a network perspective for rural development will be elaborated.



4 Networks, innovation and planning

In this chapter, the use of networks for rural tourism development in relevant literature will be explored. In 4.1., the relation between networks and innovation will be highlighted. Under the influence of changes in thinking about regional development, the concept of innovation is now perceived differently than before. The consequences of such changes with regard to innovations in recreation and tourism are sketched. Section 4.2 focuses on networks and planning. Different models for interactive planning are discerned, based on the motivation behind the creation of networks. In 4.3, ideas on innovation and planning are combined and the consequences with regard to rural tourism development are outlined.

4.1 Networks as a means for innovation¹

Ever since Schumpeter emphasised the importance of innovations for economic development, it has been a central concept in economic literature. Over the course of time, the emphasis has shifted from individual, large-scale, high-tech enterprises and the role of R&D, to the environment of the firm, the role of knowledge and information exchange and small-scale enterprises. Ideas on innovative *milieux*, as sketched in Section 3.3, are an example of this shift. The content of the concept has broadened to also include 'softer' sectors and services. It is now also frequently applied in relation to policy-making, process management and so on. In this section, I will evaluate the relevance of innovations and of innovation networks for rural tourism development.

Innovation: an introduction

Innovations are generally considered the motor behind economic growth and as a survival strategy for firms. In the narrow sense, innovation includes product development and technological renewal. In a broader sense it includes each type of intentionally introduced change (with the aim of having a positive impact). West and Farr use innovation in this broader sense and define it as follows:

The intentional introduction and application within a role, group or organization of ideas, processes, products or procedures, new to the relevant unit of adoption, designed to significantly benefit the individual, the group, organization or wider society².

Note that this definition indicates that an innovation is 'new to the relevant unit of adoption'. An innovation is not the same as an invention, but can be existing knowledge, which is adopted in a different environment. It is important to look at the extent to which

¹ Parts of this section have been published in Caalders et al., 1998 and 2000

² West et al., 1990: 9

a change is novel. An innovation can thus be new at various levels of scale: to the world, nation, region or enterprise.

Often, a distinction is made between routine innovations (or 'incremental' innovations) and radical innovations. Routine innovations are new, but nevertheless comparable to previous practices and based on an application of existing knowledge. Radical innovations are completely new practices, demanding large changes in terms of attitude or management practice. Radical innovations can be considered to be 'engines of change'³. The latter type is more innovative, but usually also financially more risky compared to incremental innovations.

Most studies on innovation focus on innovations within firms, making a distinction between product innovations and process innovations. Product innovations in tourism are adaptations in products or services offered by a firm, such as a new attraction or improved facilities. Process innovations are related to the production process or the organisational structure of an enterprise. Adoption of management systems or of logistics - for example, through introduction or better use of ICT - are also process innovations. Another type of innovation are market innovations: the search for new target groups, or a different kind of marketing of the same product. This type of innovation is particularly important if a product discerns itself mainly on the basis of image (e.g. soft drinks or running shoes).

Changes in innovation theories

Ideas on the way innovations come about have changed over the course of time. Rothwell⁴ names two crucial changes. Firstly a movement from thinking in terms of either 'technology-push' (1950s and 1960s) or 'need-pull' (1960s and beginning of the 1970s), towards a conception of innovation as a process in which both technique and market play a role ('techno-market coupling process'). And secondly a shift in thinking in terms of a linear process, in which several steps are subsequently passed through, to innovation as a process of constant interaction between firm and environment. As a result of these changes, attention in research has moved to other aspects and other economic sectors:

Currently, we are going through a shift from a Fordist linear model of innovation (formal knowledge, research-based, codified knowledge, large enterprises, national innovation systems) to a post-Fordist bottom-up interactive innovation model. The latter model is adapted to the post-Fordist 'learning economy' in which knowledge is the most fundamental resource and learning the most important process, a process which can be affected by policy-making and, deliberately, institutionalized in more or less efficient ways (...). Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the regional level are playing a much larger role in this model than in the linear model of innovation⁵.

As can be deducted from this quote, the focus has shifted from large to smaller firms and from the firm to the firm's environment. Interaction and learning are regarded as being of central importance for innovation. The increasing importance of learning is related to the fact that knowledge has replaced physical factors as the crucial determinant of economic success⁶. It can be regarded as indicative of the changing perspective on economic development that learning and knowledge are not regarded as an individual asset and process, but as a characteristic of organisations:

³ Lamboooy, 1998

⁴ Rothwell, 1995

⁵ Hassink, 1997: 279

⁶ Florida, 1995

Learning is primarily an individual process, but it can develop better in interactive configurations, as in organisations and producer-consumer relations. This is the reason that 'organisational learning' is getting more and more attention. This means that learning can also be considered as an interactive process of team members and social process, resulting in knowledge building and a 'collective memory' of organisations...⁷.

Such learning takes place through interaction in networks⁸. If innovation is to be stimulated, the make-up and functioning of networks should be critically screened. If necessary, new relations should be actively sought to stimulate the learning process.

As indicated in Sections 3.2 and 3.3, some authors consider learning to be an asset of regions as well⁹. Regions or *milieux* which are characterised by a high level of interaction between crucial actors, offer a perfect ground for innovation. It is important to stress, however, that linkages internal to the region are not sufficient. Regular input of new, external knowledge and ideas is crucial to avoid an 'entropic death'¹⁰. Kamann refers to a similar process when he points out the danger of 'paradigm fixation' within a network. According to him, the structure of a network will allow some types of changes, while preventing others. Particularly dependencies which exist and develop among actors in a network help to preserve this existing structure. 'Paradigm fixation' can in the long run lead to inertia and ossification of the network.

The relevance of learning and interaction to innovation has also been recognised in studies on technological development. Technological development (or innovation for that matter) should not be conceived as a unidirectional top-down process. It is not a linear process starting in laboratories which produce ideas from which products evolve. In stead, 'experience knowledge' that can only be provided by consumers, should be included in the development process from the beginning. This 'local knowledge' is just as relevant to the success of the final product as the 'laboratory knowledge'¹¹.

The importance of such a strategy can easily be illustrated with reference to the failure of many projects aimed at the implementation of technological knowledge in the Third World. This failure is related to the fact that this knowledge does not link up with the experience and life-world of the proposed users of these technologies¹². The definitions of reality of the technological designers differ too much from reality as perceived by those who have to work with their inventions. This gap can be bridged by bringing together these different worlds and starting to think about technological development from this new point of view. Tieleman¹³ refers to such new insights as 'ideological innovations'. Such innovations should lead to the development of 'appropriate technology'. These ideas have been applied and described in relation to biotechnology in the Third World:

The new approaches were now seen as a complement to station-based research and researcher-managed on-farm trials, not a substitute for them. They allow for a complementary process, which links the power and capacities of agricultural science with the priorities and capacities of farmers¹⁴.

⁷ Lambooy, 1998: 7

⁸ E.g. Engel, 1995

⁹ 'In this new economic environment, regions build economic advantage through their ability to mobilize and harness knowledge and ideas' (Florida, 1995: 532).

¹⁰ Camagni, 1995

¹¹ Broerse, 1998

¹² Breemer et al. 1991

¹³ Tieleman, 1991

¹⁴ Bunders et al., 1996: 6; see also Bunders et al., 1991

Differences between innovations which do and which do not involve a change in perspective can be considered as 'doing things better' as opposed to 'doing better things'. This is comparable to the difference between 'radical' and 'incremental' innovations mentioned earlier.

Ideas in which innovations are considered in terms of the meeting of various 'worlds' have also been developed by the Dutch Council for Agronomic Research (NRLO)¹⁵. The NRLO particularly emphasises the need for 'systems innovations' for sustainable rural development. Such systems innovations are innovations which exceed the firm or organisational level and ought to be realised by the joint efforts of various actors. Such innovations demand the input of various types of knowledge and skills, and will drastically change the relations between stakeholders¹⁶.

Systems innovations are aimed at improving the relation between elements, rather than improving or renewing one element in a system. Other institutes and programmes concerning the Dutch knowledge infrastructure work with similar ideas and notions on innovation¹⁷.

Innovation in recreation and tourism

In the light of such ideas it becomes clear that innovation is not just an intra-firm affair or the creation of a new product. The extra-firm environment is essential for innovations, and purposely brought about changes in this environment can be regarded as innovations in their own right. Moreover, innovation is highly related to breaking through standard ways of thinking and doing. New perceptions of reality come about through communication and interaction between different 'knowledge systems'. Networks of relations between firms of exchange of information play a central role in stimulating innovation.

The extra-firm environment may be even more important for recreation and tourism compared to other sectors, because tourism products transcend single tourism firms. The extra-firm environment is therefore relevant in tourism not only from the point of view of innovation, but also because this is the level on which tourism products are defined. As cooperation within the tourism sector is not always straightforward, it has been stated that innovations in terms of organisational structures and cooperatives are more important for tourism development than innovation in physical products¹⁸. The notion of systems innovation is particularly interesting in this respect, as it implies a changing of the whole system, instead of singular elements.

¹⁵ See e.g. NRLO 1998; NRLO, 1999; Dammers et al., 1999

¹⁶ 'Systeeminnovaties zijn bedrijfs- en organisatieoverstijgende vernieuwingen die door uiteenlopende belanghebbenden gezamenlijk gerealiseerd worden, die de inbreng van uiteenlopende soorten kennis en vaardigheden vergen, en die de verhoudingen tussen belanghebbende partijen ingrijpend veranderen' (NRLO, 1999: 1).

¹⁷ In a programme focussing on 'sustainable technological development' (DTO: duurzame technologische ontwikkeling) the importance of 'factor 20' innovations is stressed. Such innovations imply a drastic change in the environmental efficiency (20 to 50 times more efficient) of for example living, mobility and food production. Such drastic improvements can only be achieved by thinking in terms of completely different concepts (for housing, for moving or growing produce). In the DTO-strategy, long term goals on systems innovation are set and a stepwise short-term approach is applied to help bring this goal closer. Apart from the interaction between various knowledge systems, the principle of 'backcasting' plays a crucial role in this strategy. This implies working towards specified, tangible results, with a broad range of partners, evaluating the results and entering a new round of setting short term goals, interaction, output and evaluation of results.

¹⁸ Go et al., 1998

Table 4.1 Examples of innovations in tourism at the firm and regional level

	Firm level	Regional level
Product innovation <i>New tourism products and services</i>	Development of improved holiday attributes (e.g. tents) Offering new products and/or services at the tourist-recreational enterprise (e.g. offering transport to and from accommodation)	Improvement of tourism infrastructure Joint product development e.g. offering packages of singular products Development of new destination
Process innovation <i>Changing the production- or management process</i>	E.g. introduction of new management system, new data processing systems	E.g. new regional booking system
Network innovation <i>Developing new contacts</i>	E.g. membership of organisations, new types of cooperation with other firms, joint marketing of products	E.g. cooperation between entrepreneurs at the regional level, structural communication with other sectors (culture/nature/sports/shopping malls) joint marketing and promotion
Market innovation <i>Searching for new markets</i>	New target groups, enlargement of season Creating different product image	Different marketing and promotion strategies to attract new target groups to the region
Ideological innovation <i>Different perception of tourism</i>	Different entrepreneurial philosophy, new perception of tourism business (e.g. considering nature protection as part of enterprise activity)	Different approach of tourism; new regional tourism development concepts
Systems innovation <i>Different organisation of the regional tourism system based on new concepts</i>		Joint effort of various actors, often based on ideological innovation, leading to different relations between the parties involved (combination of the above); e.g. arrangements between tourism and cultural sector to take joint action for protection of cultural heritage and tourism development

Source: various (see text)

Table 4.1 summarises various types of innovation and presents examples related to tourism. Product innovations at the firm level include physical changes to the tourism product or to the services offered to guests, as well as changes to the image of the product for the purpose of marketing. As tourists can bring part of the 'product' themselves, product innovations in tourism can also include the development and improvement of holiday attributes, such as tents, climbing equipment and sailing boats. The tourism product often transcends the firm level, which means that product innovations in tourism can also be defined at the regional level. This is especially true for rural tourism, as tourists are usually not attracted by the presence of a particular hotel or museum, but by the overall ambience of the area. Product innovations at the regional level include the improvement of regional tourist infrastructure (such as cycling paths and transport opportunities) and the development of a new destination.

Process innovations include the introduction of a new production process or management system. This can include the improvement of existing practices, which will enhance efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the enterprise. It can also include the introduction of new elements, such as monitoring systems or information services to personnel, local population and tourists¹⁹. Also making better use of the opportunities of ICT can be an example of a process innovation²⁰. At the regional level, similar types of process innovations can be discerned, now referring to changes which refer to the sector as a whole.

There is a broad category of what can be referred to as 'network innovations'. Changes in tourism networks can be considered as a precondition or catalyst for innovation. However, as the tourism product is often experienced, assembled and marketed at the regional level, network innovations (cooperation, new joint organisations) can be regarded an innovation in their own right. Discerning network innovations as a distinctive category emphasises the strategic importance of such changes. Network innovations imply new linkages among actors in the tourism sector, or between actors within and outside the sector. Apart from new linkages, a network innovation can also be a strategic change in the content of a relation: more cooperation, formalising already existing contacts etc. Network innovations can be defined at the firm level or at the regional level.

Another category are market innovations. These refer to activities which are undertaken to reach new target groups and to attract different types of consumers. Image is particularly important in tourism. The heart of tourism consists of offering a unique experience, an opportunity to step out of everyday reality²¹. The competitive force of the sector is highly related to the extent to which it succeeds in offering such an experience. Marketing tourism is not about selling a bed or a visit to a nature park. It refers to the desire for experiences and to dreams of potential visitors: in Madeira 'you can feel nature all around you'; the WWF offers 'trips to the jungles of Europe', where you can 'howl with the Italian wolves' and you can discover 'the secret of Holland' in six cities in the Dutch provinces of North and South Holland.

Ideological innovations imply a change in the perception on tourism development, on possible ways forward and so on. An example of an ideological innovation at the regional level would be a change in tourism policy: for example, a switch from a focus on supporting individual tourism entrepreneurs to an approach to tourism as a total concept of experiencing the region. It is, in short, a changed 'perception of reality'.

Systems innovations include a combination of various types of innovations (see also previous section). The combination of leisure with activities such as shopping can be considered systems innovations. This has led to such notions as 'fun-shopping' and 'infotainment'. Ideological innovations are usually either a starting point or a result of systems innovations.

When looking at Table 4.1 it is important to realise that various types of innovation are usually interrelated. A new product often also attracts new customers. When a firm decides to start selling its product through the Internet, for example, this is an innovation in the firms' operational process, but also a market innovation as different target groups are reached. The development of a new destination can be considered a product innovation at the regional level, but it also implies product innovations at the firm level,

¹⁹ Hjalager, 1997

²⁰ Go, 1997; Manniche et al., 1997

²¹ Lengkeek, 1994

process innovations, network innovations and market innovations. An ideological innovation will often have its consequences at the level of networks, markets and products as well. To indicate the fact that various types of innovation are interrelated, the metaphor of innovation tree or trajectory is often used in innovation literature²².

When considering innovation in tourism, it is important to keep the specific nature of tourism products and of the tourism sector in mind. From the point of view of the consumer, the tourism product is the holiday. This holiday in its final stage is 'assembled' by the visitor, its production coinciding with the consumption. Even if on an organised trip, which has been pre-assembled by a tour operator, actual holiday experiences remain dependent on on-the-spot choices and activities. The assembly includes various types of components, and the final holiday experience is influenced by physical aspects (the product, the surrounding landscape, the infrastructure, attributes which have been taken along), as well as aspects of a less tangible nature (stories, background information, chats with other tourists, technical skills, the dreams and imagination of the tourist). As experiences are so crucial for tourism, these less tangible elements may be even more important than physical ones.

This specific nature of tourism makes technological innovations generally subordinate. Technological innovations that do play a role are often developed by suppliers. In some cases, innovative use of technological means helps create new experiences, which is the case for example with holograms and the application of virtual reality techniques. In the Dutch province of Brabant, experiments involving supplying tourists with a CD-ROM. This way, creation of a particular experience can be stimulated by specific stories and sounds (e.g. sounds of the past or of different weather conditions) which relate to the places visited. Network innovations and systems innovations are crucial for the tourism sector. Time-space related innovation would require a specific type of systems innovation. The confrontation of various types of knowledge and skills is a core element in these innovations.

Lack of empirical data

Though much has been written about the importance of contact networks for innovation, there is little empirical evidence. A few authors have tried to measure the impact of networks, but research has been mainly confined to industries and high tech innovations. Evidence concerning the influence of networks is anecdotal rather than systematically researched²³. In the Netherlands a few research projects have been carried out into the influence of networks and external information sources on innovation within industrial firms²⁴. Similar research projects focussing on the service sector or on recreation and tourism are not known. A few authors have published on the relation between innovation and networks for recreation and tourism²⁵, but these articles contain only descriptive information. Though a relation between networks and innovation is made plausible, no distinction between more or less innovative enterprises or regions is made and the influence of networks cannot be checked. In the current study, the relation between networks and innovation is addressed at several levels of scale (see also Chapter 5).

²² NRLO, 1999

²³ Tödtling, 1994: 81

²⁴ Docter et al., 1987; Docter et al., 1988; Oerlemans et al., 1998 (see Caalders, 2001 for a description of these researches).

²⁵ E.g. Go et al., 1998; Hall et al., 1999; Kamann et al., 1998

Notwithstanding this lack of data, creation of networks has been an important goal in all kinds of policies, including tourism and recreation policy²⁶. Apart from stimulating innovation, such policies have other motivations as well. These will be described in the next section.

4.2 Networks as an instrument for governance: characterising interactive approaches

Network is a popular instrument for governance. In this sense, a network is used to refer to a specific type of interrelations between actors, usually of a 'horizontal' type. Emphasis is on cooperation and mutual dependency. A general movement away from a hierarchical top-down approach can be observed in such diverse fields as organisational studies, public administration and political science, communication, development studies, educational science, technology development and water management²⁷. In each of these cases, linear models are shoved aside to be replaced by notions of dependency and reciprocity. Emphasis is on the uncertainties and complexity which have to be dealt with and the role of interrelations and interaction.

One of the indicators of this popularity is the large number of names available for involving stakeholders in planning, design and decision-making processes. General terms like interactive or participatory planning, -policy-making and -development are often used more or less interchangeably, but more specific names have also been invented, for example, interactive bottom-up approach, participative integrated assessment, alternative dispute resolution, reflexive policy-making, open planning processes, communicative planning, collaborative planning, network management, process management, co-production, and consensus building²⁸.

Though various approaches show considerable overlap, there are differences as well. To some extent, such differences are concealed by the use of similar jargon. In order to gain a better insight into the differences between approaches, I will pay some attention to the backgrounds of interactive approaches.

Some backgrounds to the rise of interactive approaches

In order to gain a better insight into the differences between interactive processes, it helps to discern between the various types of advantages which interactive approaches are thought to lead to. In Section 3.2, various reasons behind the *decline of top-down approaches* in regional development were mentioned, that is the fact that top-down development fails as a governance strategy; new insights in the sources of economic development based on studies in newly developing regions; and normative considerations.

²⁶ For the Dutch situation see van der Duim et al., 2000.

²⁷ See e.g. Goodwin, 1998; Kickert et al., 1997a; Geurts et al., 1996; van Woerkum, 1997; Broerse, 1998; Bijker et al., 1992; STOWA (1997).

²⁸ See e.g. Broerse, 1998; Berk et al., 1998; Sidaway et al., 1993; Pestman et al., 1998; Martens, 2000; Healey, 1997; Glasbergen, 1995; de Bruijn et al., 1998; Innes, 1996

With regard to *the rise of interactive approaches* in policy and planning studies, similar arguments are brought forward. De Bruijn and colleagues²⁹ characterise the product of a process approach as (1) having public support, (2) being robust in terms of content and (3) established as a result of a fair process. Other authors give a somewhat different description, but essentially the arguments brought forward include:

1. Legitimacy: a more democratic decision-making process;
2. Quality of content: improvement of the quality of decisions and plans; and
3. Effectiveness and efficiency: more effective and efficient governance.

These arguments will be briefly reflected on below.

(1) As indicated in Section 3.2, bottom-up approaches initially rose as a reaction against top-down and exogenous approaches and were mainly idealistic in nature. The desire for a more democratic and more legitimate decision-making process was an important argument for many grassroots movements. Theories on '*autopeiose*' and anarchist-oriented motives were influential as well. Arguments of legitimacy still play an important role in discussions on participatory planning³⁰, both in a Western and in a Third World context. Low participation rates in elections in the 1990s have made discussions on the gap between public and politics topical in many European countries. An organisation active in trying to fill this gap is, for example, the *Instituut voor Publiek en Politiek* (Institute for Politics and the Public) in the Netherlands. With regard to developing countries, development cooperatives consider it crucial for marginal groups to have more control over their own development. The empowerment of these groups is stimulated through participatory techniques such as RAAKS³¹ and APPA³².

(2) Interaction (networks) can be instrumental in creating new products and new perspectives, as made clear in Section 4.1. By bringing together various knowledge systems, the generation of innovations is stimulated. It is not just formal or academic knowledge which is relevant in this respect, but 'experience knowledge' as well. The importance of bringing together the world of technicians (expert knowledge) and of users (experience knowledge) is emphasised in theories on appropriate technology (see Section 4.1). This argument of better results through an interactive approach has also been used in relation to physical planning³³. In this case, input by more stakeholders means an improvement of the quality of decisions.

(3) The limited effectiveness of top-down planning has been a strong impetus for the rise of interactive planning. Apart from being more effective, it is also argued that interaction with stakeholders can speed up planning processes and is thus more *efficient*.

Until recently the concept 'policy network' had often been negatively evaluated. It was seen as one of the main reasons for policy failure: non-transparent and impenetrable forms of interest representations which prevent policy innovations and threaten effectiveness, efficiency and democratic legitimacy of the public sector. We do not support this view. Networks are a fundamental characteristic of modern society and it should be the task of policy scientists to explore the potentials of public policy-making and governance in networks³⁴.

²⁹ De Bruijn et al., 1998; in a similar fashion, the former Dutch Prime Minister Kok mentioned public support, quality and effectiveness as the three basic principles of the 'Green Polder Model' (cited in: Weggeman et al., 2000).

³⁰ E.g. Martens, 2000

³¹ Engel, 1995

³² See e.g. SNV, 2001.

³³ E.g. Voogd et al., 1998

³⁴ Kickert et al., 1997a: xvii

In this line of thinking, pragmatic, down-to-earth considerations are often brought to the fore³⁵.

Usually, interactive processes are motivated from a combination of the above arguments. For example interactive processes in infrastructure planning in the Netherlands are intended to create support (or to avoid resistance), but the claim is they also lead to better quality plans and that the interests of all stakeholders are better represented³⁶. With regard to development aid projects, arguments of effectiveness are mentioned next to arguments of legitimacy: only through 'ownership' can sustainable improvement of the situation of the target groups be achieved.

Nevertheless, it is not a given that interactive processes more or less automatically lead to a more legitimate, higher quality (or more innovative) and more effective outcome at the same time. In the following section I indicate that these are three separate goals, each of which can be related to a different model of interaction.

Interactive approaches: three models

In interactive approaches, the way in which the process is designed - and especially the kind of actors participating in the process - are crucial for the outcome. Designing a process implies making choices: who should be involved - the most powerful actors or the most marginal groups (or both)? If important issues are at stake, how can it be assured that the voice of these latter groups is heard? In practice, a tension between the various aims exists. Taking a closer look at the various motivations for interactive planning helps to make these tensions more explicit. In Table 4.2, three models for interactive development are discerned based on the motivations described in the previous section.

In the communicative approach, the improvement of democracy is at stake. A central aim is to emancipate groups which currently have little influence over decision-making by working in a bottom-up way and increasing the input of the base. Reaching higher levels of participation of marginal groups or of citizens in general is a main goal. In this way, these groups should get more say over their own future, living environment and so on. This model is concerned with changing power balances or structures.

In the instrumental model, interaction is aimed at bringing together knowledge systems. Improving the quality of plans and decision-making is the main motivation behind this model. Actors involved should possess relevant knowledge, which can be academic knowledge, instrumental knowledge or experience knowledge. The choice who to involve in the process is based on the question who possesses relevant knowledge. Interaction serves to stimulate creativity.

In the strategic approach, efficiency and effectiveness are central. The aim is to achieve more rapid, more effective planning and policy-making. By taking the wishes of stakeholders into account at an early stage, plans can be better attuned to their wishes. By investing more effort and time in the early stages of planning, implementation can be carried out smoother and faster. To put it somewhat cynically, this model implies that interaction (with those who should carry out the plans or with those who will be confronted with the consequences) can prevent these groups from using their 'nuisance power' at a later stage. Creating support for measures to be taken and reaching consensus are the main goals. This model has a somewhat more top-down character, meaning that

³⁵ Geurts et al. 1996

³⁶ Meesters et al., 1996 and 1997

participation is initially regarded as a means to reach already appointed goals, or at least directions of development.

Table 4.2 Three models for interactive development³⁷

	Communicative	Instrumental	Strategic
Subject/motive	Legitimacy	Quality/innovation	Efficiency, effectiveness ³⁸
Issue at stake	Emancipation/democracy (having a say)	Improvement in terms of content (rationality)	Public support
Participation based on	Who has a right? who should decide?	Who has knowledge or skills?	Who has power or influence?
Actors generally involved	Basis, marginal groups	Carriers of knowledge	Interest groups, actors who possess power to influence processes

Source: this thesis

Despite the differences, it should be noted that in each case the processes and actors involved are central. All models are examples of sociocratic rather than technocratic approaches³⁹. This means that in each case the relations between the parties involved are being addressed.

Moreover, the models as described above are *ideal-typical* in the sense that the various motives can be discerned analytically, but are also interrelated. In the instrumental model, for example, actors are being included on the basis of their knowledge or skills. These characteristics will also give them a certain amount of influence and power. Knowledge is not just cognitive, but can also be used in a strategic way or be based on experience. Inequalities of power are important to address whatever the primary motive for interaction is.

Though the various models are interrelated and may be used in combination, it is crucial to discern between them in order to design a process which is suitable for the situation at hand. In the next section, some techniques and instruments which can be applied in each case will be described.

³⁷ Kickert et al. (1997b: 38-39) mention a number of criteria for public policy making; the models presented in this table come close to those by Hood (1991) and Hood and Jackson (1991) as cited by Kickert. 'Hood .. identified three different value patterns. In the first pattern government is supposed to be lean and purposeful. Effectiveness and efficiency, parsimony and performance orientation play pivotal roles. In the second, honesty and fairness are the central values. In government, social justice, equality, legitimacy and the proper discharge of duties are central principles. In the third pattern robustness and resilience dominate. Government must be reliable, robust, adaptive, secure and confident and must survive catastrophes' (*Ibid.*: 38).

³⁸ Effectiveness can be understood in several ways. In the context of policy sciences, it is often understood in terms of rationality of the outcome; in this meaning it might be more appropriate to place it under the heading 'instrumental'. In this case, it is used in the meaning of rationality of the process and the conviction that measures can only be effective if there is support of crucial actors.

³⁹ Van der Valk. 1989

Techniques, instruments and process managers

Lots of techniques and toolkits for interactive processes have been developed. These include principles for process design, techniques and tools for the process manager, and so on. De Bruijn and colleagues⁴⁰ mention four principle criteria for an interactive process design:

- Openness: all relevant parties should be involved in the process at an early stage and a priori restrictions regarding the content of the decision-making process should be avoided;
- Safety: the main interests of the various parties should be fully guaranteed;
- Progress: the process should not be allowed to become bogged down;
- Content: the quality of the decisions should be able to withstand a critical test of their content and not simply be a product of the need for consensus.

These criteria are consequently operationalised. Openness, for example, can be obtained by involving parties that can obstruct decision-making, can enrich decision-making, have an interest in the decision-making, and/or have a moral right to participate.

This reveals the fact that various models of interactive planning are strived for at the same time. Many pitfalls of interactive processes are mentioned, as are ways to circumvent them. Numerous process design principles are brought to the fore. Which actors should be involved in the process depends, for example, on the stage of the process. Many others have presented similar lists of instruments and techniques that can be applied⁴¹.

Depending on the situation, different types of techniques are appropriate. Likewise, the role of the network manager can vary. This role can consist of activating networks to tackle certain problems or issues, arranging meetings to support interaction, brokerage (bringing together solutions, problems and parties), facilitation by creating favourable conditions for joint action or mediation/arbitration⁴².

If such questions and tools are related to the three models for interactive planning which have been discerned, a different approach applies in each case. In Table 4.3, each of the models is characterised on a number of themes.

In the communicative model, emphasis is on enlarging the influence of stakeholders. Particularly those groups which are underrepresented should receive attention. In order to ensure an equal role for each of the parties, differences in terms of power and knowledge should be eliminated as much as possible. This means that information should be available for all and that openness is crucial. The process manager should guard the openness of the process and make sure that information is being passed on to all parties involved. This model links up with Habermas' principle of communicative rationality.

The instrumental model is based on the meeting of actors from various knowledge domains. This implies that a process manager should particularly be concerned with facilitating the creation of linkages between these knowledge domains. Tools should be directed towards stimulating creativity and learning processes are the core of this model.

In the strategic model, process managers should particularly be aware of the various interests which are at stake and should strive for the creation of 'win-win' situations. This model particularly applies in situations where decision-making is frustrated by a conflict between stakeholders. Process managers should be able to resolve conflicts and act as mediators between parties.

⁴⁰ De Bruijn et al., 1998

⁴¹ E.g. de Jong and Hickling, 1990; Senter, 1999

⁴² Kickert et al., 1997b

Table 4.3 Characterisation of interactive approaches

	Communicative	Instrumental	Strategic
Governance	Self-governance	Network governance	Top-down within network
Policy goal	Involving stakeholders in policy-making	Developing plans and policy	Create support for policy decisions
Dependencies	Social relations Communicative action	Knowledge and skills Instrumental action	Power relations Strategic action
Technique	Mirroring norms and values	Activating knowledge and creativity; learning process	Creating win-win situations; exchange
Role process manager	Secure openness and provide information Act as 'facilitator' or 'gatekeeper'	'Open windows' Be a 'bridge actor'	Mediation, conflict resolution Act as a 'mediator'
Criteria for success	Strengthened autonomy/influence of the target group	Renewed policies; improved quality of the content	Smoothen implementation of policy
Fail-factors	Power relations dominate Existing role patterns are not changed Lack of motivation	Lack of resources Failure to stimulate creativity and activate knowledge	Framework unclear Too many different actors involved Lack of trust

Source: this thesis⁴³

This scheme is indicative and is meant to point out the differences in emphasis in each of the models. Discerning between the various models is valuable when designing planning processes (ex ante), but the scheme can also be used when evaluating interactive processes (ex post). In this study it is used for evaluation purposes (see Chapters 5, 7 and 9).

4.3 Networks and rural tourism development

From the description of current ideas on regional development and planning, it becomes clear that interaction has become a central notion both with regard to innovation and in relation to planning. Networks are considered to play an important role in regional development. Consequently, stimulating networks and cooperation have become autonomous policy goals. Emphasis shifts from a preoccupation with the outcome to the process of development. This includes the facilitation of communication and exchange of information among key actors.

Crucial to these assertions is the hypothesis that the nature of linkages - or, in other words, the type of networks which exist or prevail - highly influences the nature of

⁴³ A similar table has been published in Caalders, 2002. I am grateful to Geoffrey Hagelaar, who helped develop this typology.

tourism development taking place. Linking this to the central aim of this thesis (i.e. to find ways to conserve rural qualities through economic development of tourism) several types of linkages appear to be relevant. Below I will indicate what types of linkages are relevant and for what reason.

Linkages in rural tourism

Local⁴⁴ linkages are relevant to the embedment of rural tourism development. From an economic point of view this creates a more stable development. From the point of view of rural qualities, this offers the opportunity to link tourism to local identity. By creating local linkages, tourism becomes related to the dynamics of the area. This can prevent the standardisation of tourism products. Moreover, such linkages can create local synergies as they form the basis of an innovative milieu. For such a milieu, linkages between tourism and other economic sectors, linkages with knowledge centres, financial institutions and governments are important. Linkages within the tourism industry are also important. A well-organised tourism network benefits the coherence of the tourism product and generates economies of scale by sharing overhead (efficient marketing and promotion, presentation at tourism fairs, etc.). It also facilitates the promotion of tourism interests, for example, in the communication with government agencies.

With regard to innovation, authors such as Camagni stress that local linkages are not sufficient⁴⁵. In fact, exclusive attention to the local level can lead to an entropic death. For innovation, external stimuli are considered a necessity. This refers mainly to linkages with carriers of knowledge, either within the tourism sector or external to it. Though Camagni stresses the importance of external stimuli, it should be noted that fresh ideas can be a result of new linkages within the region. Especially when searching for innovations which are related to local qualities (i.e. which are time-space related), local linkages play a crucial role. Linkages external to the region but within the tourism chain are also important for reasons of marketing and promotion. Knowledge of trends in demand and an efficient means to reach the market are crucial.

This overview of various types of linkages can be related to each of the models for described in the previous section. Table 4.4 shows what strategies and goals relate to each model of interaction and type of linkage. The table provides examples of the types of linkages and activities which fit in each cell. In some cases, developments are situated on the interface between cells.

In the first column ('Communicative'), the question who is allowed to decide what kind of tourism should be developed - and even whether tourism should be developed at all - is central. Linkages are used to make tourism development more democratic. At the local level, this means that tourism development should link up with regional identity or local qualities. Linkages between tourism activities and local initiatives can be an interesting way to achieve this. In this model, development of tourism should also take account of tourists who may not be the most interesting groups from a short-term economic point of view.

In the second column, different actors are brought together in order to create new kinds of tourism development. The more different the actors, the more innovative the outcome. Linkages within the tourism sector locally, serve mainly to improve the

⁴⁴ The terms 'local' and 'regional' are used interchangeably here. What exact level of scale is relevant depends on the economic structure, the characteristics of the tourism sector and on the type of destination and tourism product.

⁴⁵ Camagni, 1991 and 1995

coherence of the tourism product. Joint product development can already generate a great improvement of the regional tourism product. If linkages with other local sectors are sought, this can create local synergies and can link tourism development to local qualities. External linkages may be most important for innovation. If these are the only kind of linkages available, this is expected to lead to standard innovations, not specifically attuned to the identity of the place. But discussions on the desirability of sustainable development of tourism can also be induced by external linkages.

In the third column, linkages serve to create support for tourism development and to develop tourism more efficiently. At the local level, strategic cooperation with other sectors can create support for tourism development. The tourism image can be derived from the areas natural qualities, for example. Joint marketing and promotion creates economies of scale. With regard to external linkages, a chain approach can make product development and promotion more effective.

Table 4.4 Linkages at various levels related to interactive models

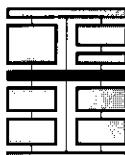
	Communicative	Instrumental	Strategic
Linkages with other local sectors/institutions	Linking tourism development to local identity Embedding of tourism activities	Develop new products, based on special characteristics of the area Local synergies/learning	Create support for tourism development Win-win: strategic cooperation with other sectors; tourism can improve image of region
Linkages within local tourism sector	Linking commercial and non-commercial initiatives	Joint product development coherence of tourism product	Cooperation between entrepreneurs, tourist office: joint marketing and promotion/economies of scale Communication of tourism interests
External linkages	Create/retain supply for all target groups, also niches and less prosperous groups	Knowledge of market trends Product and process innovation, e.g. link up with ICT developments	Effective promotion, knowledge of market trends Chain approach

Source: this thesis

The table only provides examples of positive linkages, meaning that networks function well and lead to cooperation and product innovation. However, it should be realised that networks can be dysfunctional. The already mentioned entropic death can occur if attention is too internally focused. Linkages between commercial and non-commercial activities can lead to exploitation, 'narrowing down of meaning' etc. Moreover, when reading the scheme it should be realised that the examples are mere *hypotheses*, as the relation between innovation and contact networks is not convincingly supported by data.

When linking this table to the central aim of this thesis, it becomes clear that such development requires both local and external linkages. The combination of both types of linkages will ideally be able to create a type of development in which dynamism and

innovation are based on regional identity/identities. The models of communicative and instrumental interaction are particularly suitable for stimulating such development. The model of strategic interaction is particularly relevant to marketing purposes and in order to link the product to the market.



5 A network approach to rural tourism development

In the previous chapters, the central question was explored from a theoretical point of view. Ideas on the notion of rurality, regional economic development and planning were sketched. These explorations show that economic development and conservation of qualities are theoretically related. Economic development can, under certain conditions, contribute to rural qualities. And rural qualities can be an important lever for economic development. It has been argued that interrelations should be a main focus of attention both in analysing and in steering rural tourism development. This perspective is important because of the nature of the subject (rural space, rural processes, tourism development) and the desired direction of processes (innovation, conservation of identity). 'Networks' is a useful concept to both analyse and develop rural tourism development. This concept will be central in the case studies.

The case studies aim to provide more insight into the way in which combined policies for 'economic development' and 'conservation/development of qualities' are translated into practice in rural areas. They also shed more light on the possibilities to stimulate such development.

This chapter describes the design of the case studies, the use of the network concept and the methods applied.

5.1 Issues addressed in the case studies

The aim of the case studies is to explore the possibilities of a network approach as an analytical as well as a governance instrument for rural tourism development.

This means the study should contribute to scientific discussion on rural tourism, and link up with rural practice, including rural policy practice. The analytical challenge is met by focussing on the relation between networks, economic development and conservation of rural qualities. Actors and their interrelations are placed central. With regard to networks as an analytical instrument, the aim is to find out whether the use of a network perspective is suitable for analysing rural tourism development. For this reason, various types of research methods will be applied, both quantitative and qualitative. In Chapter 10, the use of a network perspective for analysis of rural tourism development will be evaluated.

The case studies focus on areas where rural policy is aimed at both economic development and the conservation of rural qualities. In addition, the areas have a potential for tourism development (see also 5.3 for a further account of the selection procedure). Also, a network-type approach to rural development is applied.

With regard to networks as an instrument for governance, the central questions are: 1) how is governance through networks applied in two WCL (Waardevol Cultuur Landschap; Valuable Cultural Landscape) areas in the Netherlands and in two PNR (Parcs Naturels Régionaux; Regional Nature Parks) in France, and 2) do these policy initiatives stimulate economic development of tourism while conserving and/or developing rural qualities, and if so, how?

The analysis of the functioning of networks should shed light on the extent to which these networks contribute to economic development of tourism while conserving and/or developing rural qualities. Especially the role of networks related to WCL and PNR policies in the case study areas will be considered. As made clear in the theoretical chapters, the assumption is that there is a clear relation between network functioning and structure on the one hand, and the content and outcome of rural tourism development processes on the other. In network studies, content is mainly addressed through an analysis of the actors involved in the process and their interrelations. In addition, an analysis of the context, and particularly of the discourses which prevail, will put the issues addressed in networks into perspective. Thus, to answer the questions posed above, the following questions will be addressed:

1. What is the context for rural tourism development in France and the Netherlands, what discourses prevail and how does this influence the relations between rural tourism actors?
2. What were the policy goals for rural tourism in terms of content and governance in each case study area, and how are these aimed at economic development and conservation/development of rural qualities?
3. What is the position of WCL and PNR in the rural tourism network and what role do rural tourism actors play?
4. In what way is innovation in rural tourism stimulated through WCL and PNR, is there any relation between network linkages and innovation and are these innovations relevant to the combination of economic development and rural quality?
5. What governance model has predominated in each case study area and in what way has this influenced the direction of rural tourism development in terms of innovation and rural qualities?
6. How can differences in approaches towards rural tourism development between the various case studies be explained through case specific and through contextual factors?
7. What overall conclusions can be drawn from the case studies with regard to the relation between networks, the economic development of tourism and the conservation/development of rural qualities?

By studying networks from various perspectives, not only do the case-studies provide insight into the relation between networks and innovation, the functioning of policy networks and the influence of the network context, but also the interrelation between these issues can be addressed.

The concept of networks will be applied as a means for analysis, but also considered to be a strategy for governance. In Section 5.2, the use of networks in this study and some other central concepts are explained. In 5.3 the case study approach is outlined.

5.2 A contextualised analysis of networks

Network appears to be a useful concept both to analyse and to create rural tourism development. In this study, it will be used in both ways. It is, however, not straightforward to use networks in both ways at the same time, as discussions in planning and economic network literature make clear.

Networks for analysis and governance

Some authors consider network perspectives to be just a different 'pair of glasses' through which to observe reality. Perruci¹, for example, states with regard to economic networks that strategic alliances have always existed, but became obvious only once economic structure was observed in terms of networks. Similar remarks are made by Lowe, Murdoch and Ward, who state that:

It is important to put aside the normative conception of networks as the defining feature of a new organisational order, for two reasons. First it is undeniable that networks are not novel, and that market and hierarchical relations are not fading away and a key question concerns how these traditional economic institutions can be recast in the network paradigm. Second, it is important not to make prior assumptions about the nature of the relationships in networks ...²

Others do consider networks primarily a new way of societal organisation. A well-known proponents of this approach is Castells³. In his case 'networks' is more than just looking at the economy through 'network glasses'. It includes the viewpoint that the economy is increasingly organised through networks. Defined in this way, networks fit in well with changing demands firms have to meet in the post-Fordist economy. At a more overarching level, post-Fordist society itself is considered a 'network society' in the 'information age':

Networks constitute the new social morphology of our societies, and the diffusion of networking logic substantially modifies the operation and outcomes in processes of production, experience, power, and structure. ... the power of flows takes precedence over the flows of power⁴.

A network in this view not only includes 'nodes and relations', but also relates to a specific type of cooperation and a specific structure of organisations. Networks are considered a mode of organisation in between hierarchic relations and free market. From the point of view of individual firms, cooperation in networks has strategic advantages over the free market:

[A network is] a closed set of selected and explicit linkages with potential partners in a firm's space of complementary assets and market relationships, having as a major goal the reduction of static and dynamic uncertainty⁵.

In policy sciences a distinction is also made between using policy network as an analytical and a heuristic concept, as opposed to a more instrumental approach. In the first case, describing and analysing policy-making in terms of networks is meant to shed light on the way political decisions and policy plans come about. It is acknowledged that policy-making involves a large number and wide variety of public and private actors

¹ Perruci et al., 1989

² Lowe et al., 1995: 101

³ Castells, 1996

⁴ Castells, 1996: 469

⁵ Camagni, 1991: 135

from the different levels and functional areas of government and society. Where a more instrumental approach is taken, an analysis of networks is used to find out how policy-making can be influenced and how goals can be reached. These approaches often include 'toolkits' and prescriptions on how to manage networks and represent a more instrumental approach to policy networks.

This latter type of approach is criticised by some of the more analytical scholars. Their main criticism is not to the fact that such approaches do not work, but that many such studies have a limited scope. According to van Tatenhove instrumental approaches tend to focus on interactions within one particular network. Such a perspective disfigures the fact that it is not just the interests and motives of the actors involved who determine these interactions; existing interdependencies and processes at other levels also play an important role. He therefore stresses the need to perform an analysis not only of the network as such, but also of the context in which this network has to function⁶. Not taking structural patterns and the division of power into account will have adverse impacts at both the practical and the analytical level. With regard to steering, this will imply that problem definitions are derived from the perceptions of policy makers and politicians, and that who will become involved in the process will be decided by this group⁷. Analysis will also start from this limited point of view and will thus provide an ahistoric and apolitical perspective⁸.

Despite the formal distinction between analytical and instrumental network approaches, a combination of both is most common. When a more analytical approach is chosen, a normative evaluation of network relations is usually also applied. This is not surprising, because choosing a network perspective means that relations are the focus of analysis. Thus, explanations for the observed processes will often be sought in the nature of these relations. However, a more analytical approach from the outset, as well as attention to the network environment, will provide a more contextual analysis and help avoid drawing ad hoc conclusions. In the following, the use of networks in this study will be elaborated.

Context analysis

In this study, networks are first and foremost a way of observing and analysing rural tourism processes. By choosing a network perspective, emphasis is on the interrelations between actors and the rationale behind these relations. To avoid an ahistoric and apolitical perspective, this network analysis will be preceded by an analysis of the context in which networks operate.

Relations between actors are partly historically grown and institutionalised. These mechanisms are often undisputed by and invisible to the actors involved. Nevertheless, such aspects do structure the functioning of networks. This becomes particularly clear when comparing different cultures. Such invisible or undisputed mechanisms will be referred to as 'context'. The extent to which such aspects are of influence can best be grasped when confronting the functioning of networks in one context with those in another. In this case, two cases in the Netherlands will be compared to two cases in France.

⁶ Van Tatenhove, 1993

⁷ This means that process approaches are not 'value-free' in terms of policy content, but take the status quo for granted.

⁸ Van Tatenhove et al., 1995

Some scholars will assert that a separate analysis of the role of the context is theoretically incompatible with a network analysis. I do not agree with this assertion in line with the remarks of van Tatenhove quoted earlier. A context analysis helps to put the functioning of networks in the right perspective. It particularly helps to illuminate differences in the make-up and functioning of networks in different national settings, in this case France and the Netherlands. This is in line with the findings of de Jong, who conducted an analysis of policy networks for cross-border cooperation in the field of nature-protection:

The historical analysis sheds light on nationally shared definitions of reality and on rules existing at the beginning of the policy process. The policy context explicates the relations between the actors and offers the opportunity to explain the entrance to the network. By consequently studying the dynamic policy process in the Gelderse Poort, the way in which actors deal with structures and with previous policy becomes obvious. ... The analysis of the development of the nature policy in the Netherlands and Germany previous to the analysis of the policy network Gelderse Poort has proven a valuable supplement. The backgrounds and motives for the various positions held in both countries have been portrayed and voluntarism has been limited. ... Supplementing the configuration approach with an analysis of the institutional context proved relevant for other reasons as well. An attempt was made to make it clear that changes in a regional policy process are related, on the one hand, to other processes in other networks, and are on the other hand partly frustrated, partly stimulated by processes of change at different levels of scale. Apart from that, insight has been created into the aspects and starting points of the national policy that can be used as marginal conditions for a cross-border policy process. This means that, contrary to what is common in many other process approaches, attention has been paid to the content of the policy process⁹.

This long quote shows the usefulness of a *dialectical* approach in which the relation between the historical, institutional and policy context and policy networks at the regional level is analysed both ways. She claims that it helps to understand which actors are involved in the policy process and why. It also makes clear the conditions in which networks have to operate, and helps to formulate future opportunities for cross-border policy-making. And, finally, it takes more account of the *content* of policy.

In this study the context will be studied by analysing the way in which interaction between government and society is regulated and institutionalised, the division of tasks between various actors in the rural and tourism policy field, the ideological backgrounds of institutions in rural policy-making and the history of interrelations between them. This context will be studied mainly at the national level, but specific regional aspects will also be considered.

⁹ De Jong, 1999: 211-212. *Lit:* Met de historische analyse zijn nationaal gedeelde werkelijkheidsdefinities en regels zoals die bij aanvang van het beleidsproces bestaan inzichtelijk gemaakt. De aandacht voor de beleidscontext verduidelijkt de relaties tussen de actoren en biedt de mogelijkheid de toelating tot het netwerk te problematiseren. Door vervolgens het dynamische beleidsproces in de Gelderse Poort te bestuderen is duidelijk geworden hoe actoren met structuren en voorafgaand beleid omgaan. ... De analyse van de ontwikkeling van het natuurbeleid in Nederland en Duitsland voorafgaand aan de analyse van het beleidsnetwerk Gelderse Poort is een waardevolle aanvulling gebleken. De achtergronden en motieven voor de verschillende posities in de beide landen zijn hiermee in beeld gebracht en voluntarisme is beperkt. ... De aanvulling van de configuratiebenadering met een analyse van de institutionele context bleek ook om andere redenen zinvol. Getracht is ... inzichtelijk te maken dat veranderingen in een regionaal beleidsproces enerzijds gerelateerd zijn aan processen binnen andere netwerken, anderzijds deels geremd en deels ondersteund worden door veranderingsprocessen op andere niveaus. Daarnaast is inzicht verschafft in aspecten en uitgangspunten van het nationale beleid die mogelijk als randvoorwaarden voor een grensoverschrijdend beleidsproces geformuleerd kunnen worden. Hiermee is, anders dan in veel andere procesbenaderingen, aandacht besteed aan de inhoudelijke aspecten van het beleidsproces.

Discourses

Part of the context can be described with the notion of discourse, which refers to a more or less consistent societal value system. Discourses can also be called collective representations: images which are shared by a large group of actors. Discourses are the unwritten rules and ideas which influence behaviour. Such rules and ideas are often taken for granted, but can also be put to the test, for example when confronting them with different sets of rules and ideas.

The notion of discourse has been used in various ways in the literature and differently named concepts have been used which have a similar meaning¹⁰. In this study, 'discourse' is used in a way which is similar to the way Frouws¹¹ applies it, though he does not provide an explicit definition of the term in these writings. From his descriptions it is clear that he considers discourses to be societal value systems. These discourses influence acting and policy-making, but are defined at a more abstract and 'higher' level and cannot be related to policy-making in a 1 to 1 manner. Edwards¹² uses a notion of discourse that has some parallels to Frouws. From an analysis of academic writings on the issue, he finds a set of multiple perspectives on local governance in rural areas. In a 'fluid' definition of discourse, he names three key elements which are central to it. Firstly the fact that it is embedded: the concepts and value-systems reflected in the discourse have an impact on everyday material life. Secondly, discourses have a 'naturalising function': it 'encourage[s] the acceptance of particular views or interpretations, in such a way that the discourse itself remains unexamined'. Thirdly, discourses reflect particular power relations and knowledge systems and always offer a specific, partial view: they are 'situated'. This notion of discourse differs somewhat from the social configuration approach of Termeer¹³ and others¹⁴, an approach which is closely related to policy network analysis. In these writings, a much more direct relation between discourses (or definitions of reality in the terminology of Termeer) - which are cognitive - and social interactions is assumed.

Discourses influence policy-making because they direct the content of policy discussions, the definition of problems and the type of solutions which are considered. In various contexts a different kind of battle between different discourses is fought. These vary not only in terms of composition and content, but also with regard to the rules which apply for the battle. Particularly when discourses are taken for granted, i.e. there is no battle, it is difficult to make them obvious. In such cases discourses are hidden. Van Lente refers to such hidden discourses as 'silences' (*stiltes*) in the research material¹⁵. This is not due to the lack of material, but because what is an issue for the researcher is taken for granted by the subjects of study. According to van Lente, interpretation of such silences is both speculative and important. Such self-evident issues are just as typical of a certain period or a certain country as the explicit discussions are.

In terms of the tripartite of Lefebvre which has been introduced in Chapter 2, discourses can be found at the intersection of spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces. Discourses do not necessarily exclude each other completely, and interaction and mutual influencing take place as they do not develop in

¹⁰ E.g. Hidding et al., 1997

¹¹ Frouws, 1997 and 1998

¹² Edwards, 1998

¹³ Termeer, 1993

¹⁴ E.g. de Jong, 1999; Klijn, 1996

¹⁵ Van Lente, 1988: 18

isolation. Rather than being an exclusive and theoretically consistent category, a discourse should be considered a point of crystallisation of societal main streams. Actors which are the main 'carriers' can be pointed out, but at the same time discourses are not directly related to these actors as they are defined at a more abstract level.

In Chapters 6 (France) and 8 (the Netherlands) discourses which influence the way in which rural areas are depicted in the national policy context will be analysed. Consequently, the role of these discourses in relation to PNR and WCL will be addressed in Chapters 7 and 9.

Characterising network structure, interaction and roles

The context and discourse analyses serve as a background for the network analysis. By looking at rural tourism development through 'network glasses', relations and interactions between actors become clear. On the basis of relations between actors, both the network itself and the position and roles of individual actors can be characterised. Reasons for interaction can be found in power positions, knowledge and instruments of which actors can dispose, their perceptions of the issue at stake and of the other actors involved, the rules which apply for interaction, and so on.

Particularly in sociology and anthropology, an extensive terminology has been developed to define the nature of relations and the positions of actors vis-à-vis one another¹⁶. Social network studies were particularly popular in the 1960s and 1970s and focused on the *analysis* of social networks. Results were used to find 'cliques' and central actors in communities and to map power relations and networks of friends. Table 5.1 provides an overview of some of the definitions used.

Network interaction, network structure and the roles of individual actors are approached in a very formal way in this scheme, which can be adapted to any type of situation. In policy and economic network studies, similar notions are used although these are related to the specific economic or policy contexts.

Network roles

Network roles such as 'star', 'bridge', 'liaison' and 'broker' are useful to describe the position of individual actors. These notions are similar to those used in policy sciences and economic studies. Here, such notions are usually imbued with an instrumental meaning as well: the network position can be used to attain a certain type of development (e.g. innovation).

Termeer, for example, discerns brokers, initiators and fixators¹⁷. These roles refer not only to the formal position of an actor, but also to the way in which this formal position is used as a basis for interaction with other actors. Especially the role of actors in relation to various 'configurations' is sketched. A configuration is a group of actors with similar views on reality, and with intensive interaction. Each actor can be more or less 'included' in a configuration - 'inclusion' referring to the centrality of the position within the configuration. Actors can be included in one configuration (single inclusion) or several (multiple inclusion). *Brokers* or facilitators bring actors of various configurations into contact. They function as an indirect intermediary between two or more configurations. Such actors will be included in each of the configurations (multiple inclusion), but not very highly included in either one. They will intensively interact with actors in each of

¹⁶ E.g. Bax, 1978; Scott, 1991

¹⁷ Termeer, 1993

the configurations. This type of actor bears resemblance to the liaison mentioned in the table on page 83¹⁸. *Initiators* are actors that introduce new rules, definitions of reality or new actors into a configuration. They initiate variation. These actors may be highly included in a configuration, but will not be among the most central actors. Interaction with actors from other configurations may have played a role in the introduction of new elements. As regards the network roles mentioned in Table 5.1, this type of actor is comparable to a bridge. *Fixators* are actors that play an important role in grounding definitions of reality, contacts and interaction rules. These actors are usually highly included in one particular configuration and hardly interact with other configurations. They are thus comparable to a star.

Table 5.1 Overview of network terminology in sociology

Type	Definition
<i>Interactional criteria</i>	
1. Frequency of communication	Number and continuity of interactions over time
2. Content of ties	Purpose and functions of relation; types of relational tie (exchange, obligation, sentiment, power)
3. Multiplexity	Redundancy of relationships: number of contents combined in a relationship
4. Reciprocity	Degree of symmetry in relation (if a chooses b, does b choose a?)
5. Strength of ties (strong, weak)	Relative measure of time, affect, intensity, mutuality
6. Durability	How enduring are the underlying relations and obligations which are activated in particular transactions
<i>Structural criteria</i>	
1. Size	Number of people or relationships in network
2. Density	Connectedness of network; actual number of links computed as proportion of total links
3. Distance or proximity	Number of links between any two nodes in a network
4. Centrality	Adjacency and influence of nodes and subgroups in network
5. Clustering	Partition of ties into network subgroups and cliques
<i>Network roles</i>	
1. Isolate	Peripheral node in a network
2. Bridge	Group member who provides a link to another network subgroup
3. Liaison	Node that links several groups without being a member of any group
4. Star	Node with largest number of communication links

Source: Stokowski, 1994: 61 (adapted)

In regional economic studies, some authors also pay special attention to actors who create links between various networks. A 'spider in the web', for example, can be regarded as a star. An example of an analysis of spiders in the web is the list of the Top 100 most influential people in the Netherlands, or the Top 100 most influential women¹⁹.

¹⁸ This type of actor is also referred to as a 'mediator' by other authors (e.g. Sidaway et al., 1993)

¹⁹ Avanta Magazine (2001)

Such lists are based on the membership of boards of directors of large companies (the more personnel or the higher the turnover of the firm, the higher the score) and political functions.

Another way to characterise network positions is offered by Kamann and Strijker, who differentiate between one-dimensional and multidimensional actors. This distinction is comparable to the single and multi inclusion of Termeer. The 'planes' in the quote below have parallels with 'configurations':

The performance of one-dimensional actors is determined by the nature and configuration of the network on a single plane. The performance of multi-dimensional actors on a particular plane is determined by the nature of the networks, and the position of the particular actors in those networks on other planes. This implies that an actor may be hampered in pursuing certain strategies on one of the planes it operates on, since it has to put all its resources in struggle for survival on another plane. Or, conversely, an actor may improve his position on one plane because of cross-subsidizing of its efforts with the profits earned on the other plane²⁰.

Another type of actor in the regional economic literature is the bridge actor, who can make linkages between various planes. This actor does not necessarily occupy a central position on each plane but must be able to function as a communicator. It is comparable to Termeer's broker/facilitator. In economics, such a network position is often linked to innovation:

Diffusion of innovation may be facilitated from one plane to another plane through bridge actors that operate on both planes. This may give this actor a competitive advantage. It also means that actors not only have to be aware of new innovations or potential substitutes on their own plane, but also on all related planes. This is, for the average small firm, without professional gatekeepers, quite impossible given the limited amount of resources²¹.

Gatekeepers are bridge actors which have a specific function for small-scale firms in communication specialised information. A gatekeeper can be considered an 'entrance' to a network of small-scale enterprises, acting at the service of these enterprises. A gatekeeper is a specific type of broker, establishing relations between various networks, but doing so at the request and for the benefit of one of these networks. Intermediary organisations often play - or should play - such a role.

Examples from policy sciences and economics are less formal in their definitions compared to sociology. It is recognised that the position occupied is relevant, but that it is more important to analyse how an actor uses this position. Being part of more than one network does not by itself lead to innovation or to the introduction of new rules. There are many examples of intermediary organisations which do not function very well in this respect.

In this study, positions of actors in the rural tourism field will be analysed. Particularly positions which are most interesting from a governance and development point of view such as stars, bridges and liaisons.

Characterising interaction and network structure

Table 5.1 also gives a number of definitions of interaction and network structure. Interactional and structural criteria are highly interrelated, but are defined at a different level of scale. Structural criteria are the sum of all interactions in a network. Density, for example, is the sum of frequencies of communication. Parallels with policy sciences and

²⁰ Kamann et al., 1991: 47

²¹ Ibid.

economics can again be noted. Several examples of this have been presented in the previous chapter (e.g. dependency in economic networks, *milieu*, and open communication in policy networks). As regards interaction, various types of linkages have been discerned which are relevant for rural tourism development (see Section 4.3).

Interactional and structural network criteria will be analysed in the case studies. The criteria mentioned in the table will function as a starting point for these analyses. In the case studies, particular attention will be paid to the way in which the functioning of networks and interaction in networks is deliberately influenced for reasons of governance. In this context, I will speak of 'policy networks'. A policy network occurs when the existing relations between actors are deliberately at stake in planning and policy-making. In such cases, actors who represent certain values or a societal group, who possess relevant knowledge or who can exercise particular influence, will be included in the policy process. These actors usually represent only part of the total relevant field (in our case the rural tourism field). Policy networks are more or less consciously created for a specific reason. The structure of these networks and their functioning will be evaluated in terms of the various models for interactive planning presented in Table 4.2 and 4.3: it will be assessed whether WCL and PNR policy networks are predominantly communicative, instrumental or strategic.

Content and outcome of interaction in networks

In network studies, content is approached from the point of view of the actors involved in the process. By combining network analysis with an analysis of discourses, these points of view can be contextualised. This prevents the perspective of actors from being considered in an absolute way. It also facilitates maintaining one's distance from the particular case. With regard to rural qualities, these discourses will be used as a point of reference.

Economic network theories indicate that the composition of formal and informal contact networks influences the outcome of regional - and thus rural - development processes. Socio-cultural contacts as well as economic and institutional interaction are considered relevant in this respect. The relation between the composition of networks and innovation (one of the main factors behind economic development) will be analysed. Contact networks will be characterised according to the various types of linkages which have been discerned in Section 4.3 (within the region and/or external, within the tourism sector and/or between sectors). The existence of various types of linkages will be assessed in each of the case study areas. Some interactional criteria will be measured using a questionnaire. The hypothesis is that specific types of linkages will stimulate innovation which is related to rural qualities. It will be assessed which types of innovation (see Table 4.1) have been achieved in each of the four case study areas. To test the hypothesis, findings on types of linkages and types of innovation will be compared for each case study area.

5.3 Case studies: an explorative approach

The case studies focus on analysis of the functioning of networks and the position of actors in these networks. The study includes two times two cases: two in the Netherlands and two in France. By choosing an international perspective, the role of the context in which networks operate can explicitly be addressed. In addition, the comparison of two

cases - representing a similar policy entity - within one country provides the opportunity to differentiate between the influence of the general policy aims and the specific local mould.

In each case, both economic aspects - i.e. innovation - and planning aspects are addressed. The ambition is to use both qualitative and quantitative methods for network analysis. Initially, the aim was to use the same methods and techniques for each case study area, but for various reasons (see also 'research methods') this was not feasible. In making a selection of the issues to be addressed in the case studies, the aim is to evaluate the functioning of networks from various perspectives and to explore different methods and techniques. The research thus has an explorative character, aiming to shed more light on both analytical and instrumental opportunities of a network approach.

In the following, the selection of case studies and the use of methods used will be elaborated.

Selection of case study areas

It was decided to carry out four case studies: two in the Netherlands and two in France. The areas to be selected should be confronted with a decrease in agriculture and should have the potential to develop or to further develop tourism. In addition, some kind of network approach to rural development should apply. The areas selected include two valuable cultural landscape areas in the Netherlands and two regional nature parks in the Auvergne, France. France was considered an interesting country to compare with the Netherlands, for several reasons. Firstly, because of major differences in the tradition of planning. Whereas in the Netherlands planning has a local origin²², France has a highly centralised planning tradition. Also, comparative studies between France and the Netherlands are much rarer than comparisons between the Netherlands and its neighbouring countries Belgium and Germany, or comparisons with the Anglo-Saxon world. Finally, discussions on rural development in the Netherlands tend to be oriented towards the Anglo-Saxon world, while French literature on planning and rural development circulates to a large extent through other journals and publications.

The Auvergne was selected on the basis of a study on new functions for rural areas in Europe²³. Within the Auvergne, both regional parks proved an interesting example of a non-hierarchical planning figure; the fact that the region contains two parks made it possible to compare them. WCL in the Netherlands provides a good example of a rural renewal policy: developing new rural functions and new forms of governance.

In each of the case study areas, hierarchical policy has to some extent been replaced by policies which aim to include new parties in the policy process. The policy of WCL is aimed at the creation of a new dynamic for the countryside, while retaining valuable aspects of nature and landscape, and also of the economy. This should be achieved through a bottom-up approach, in which local interest groups play an important role (see Chapter 9 for a further description of WCL). Areas designated as a PNR should provide opportunities for the protection of nature, and also contribute to the economic dynamism of the area. Tourism development, along with education and extension, was regarded as an important issue from the start. A PNR is in fact a cooperative structure between municipalities, department(s) and region. The role for private local groups and

²² The Woningwet - the first Dutch law on spatial planning - originates from the municipal level (Brussaard, 1976).

²³ Van de Klundert et al., 1994; in this study, the Auvergne came out as one of the regions with both marginalisation of agriculture and a potential to develop tourism and other functions.

representatives of sector interests differs for each park, but in many cases these are represented in a board of associated partners (see also Chapter 7).

Despite a number of similarities, important differences between WCL and PNR can also be noted. Differences occur not only at the policy level (policy details, the status of the planning entities in the national and regional planning systems) but also with regard to the characteristics of the areas involved (size, population density, economic development, etc.). The characteristics of the policies pursued will be dealt with extensively in Chapters 6 to 9, in which the cases are described. Some basic figures on each of the case study areas are presented in Table 5.2.

Research methods

Qualitative as well as quantitative research methods were applied in the case studies. Apart from interviews and surveys, extensive use was made of secondary sources (research reports, articles, policy documents). Such use of various types of research techniques (triangulation) helps create a more complete picture of the research object²⁴. Table 5.3 at the end of this chapter gives an overview of the way in which these sources were used.

The focus of the research was on qualitative methods, including interviews and an analysis of secondary sources. Qualitative research is indispensable for a proper insight into the functioning of networks and implicit and explicit rules for action²⁵. Interviewing actors involved, reading newspapers and more generally getting acquainted with an area is needed to get a grip on the interrelations between actors²⁶. This was particularly relevant with regard to France, as I was an outsider in this context. I visited the Auvergne three times in the course of this research. The first time was in 1995, to make the first contacts and to conduct some interviews (one week). In 1996, I spent a month carrying out in-depth interviews with the main stakeholders in the area and visiting all parts of the region. During this visit, I established contacts with ENITA (an agricultural college), which hosted my stay in 1998. This proved very helpful as regards gaining more inside information from people working on similar issues in this region.

In the Netherlands, interviews with stakeholders were conducted in 1996-9. During this period, WCL became a highly popular planning figure among researchers and I was confronted with an overly-researched subject. Actors were very reluctant to cooperate with yet another research project and, at the same time, many data became available through secondary sources. These sources were an important input for the study, particularly the official evaluation which was carried out by the Winand Staring Centre²⁷. In addition, part of the research in Limburg was carried out in cooperation with an MSc student²⁸.

²⁴ Wester, cited in de Jong, 1999

²⁵ Brunt-de Wit (1972)

²⁶ Van der Veen (cited in de Jong, 1999) indicates that 'intensive research' is probably more suitable to describe such research than 'qualitative'. The history, changes and the structure of a phenomenon are described and explained in this type of research by taking a large number of variables into account at the same time.

²⁷ Haas et al., 1996; Kranendonk, 1996 and 1997; Kranendonk et al., 1997, 2000a and 2000b; Pleijte et al., 2001

²⁸ Heereveld, 1997

Table 5.2

Some characteristics of the case study areas²⁹

	Zuidwest Friesland	Midden- Limburg	Parc des Volcans	Parc Livradois-Forez
Number of inhabitants	ca. 100,000	ca. 90,000	90,000	95,715
Surface	between 300-500 km ²	200 km ² ³⁰	4000 km ²	3000 km ²
Inhabitants/km ²	166 (province) ³¹	450	22.5	32
Number of municipalities ³²	5	6-8	153	ca. 145
Percentage of farms involved in tourism	ca. 5% ³³	1 - 2%	ca. 2.2% ³⁴	ca. 2.2%
Capacity in number of beds	34,700 + ca. 6250 on boats ³⁵	n.d.	ca. 60,000 ³⁶	13,908
Number of beds in classified hotels	900	513 ³⁷	ca. 12,000	1567
Number of places on classified campsites	25,700	8760	ca. 10,000	1686
Occupancy rate hotels	ca. 30% ³⁸	n.d.	ca. 50%	ca. 33%

Sources: various

²⁹ For many of the characteristics mentioned, no standardised statistics at the level of the case study areas exist. The figures mentioned are in some cases approximations and are not for all categories exactly comparable between areas. The table does, however, provide insight into some main differences between the various areas.

³⁰ In 1995 (six municipalities).

³¹ Municipalities in the Netherlands have gone through a series of 'municipal revisions', have a minimum size and consist of a number of villages. In France, almost all villages - no matter how small - are independent municipalities (France has 36,763 municipalities of which more than 75% have less than 1000 inhabitants (Vital Durand, 1994).

³² Estimate of Oostindie and Peters, 1994: 18

³³ Figure for Massif Central (Disez, 1996)

³⁴ Grontmij, 1990

³⁵ Including hotels, campsites, all sorts of gîtes, chambre d'hôtes, holiday villages, private rooms (*meublées*) and chalets (Dionnet, 1995).

³⁶ Classified and non-classified

³⁷ 900 beds/100,000 nights spent (Grontmij, 1990); a questionnaire from 1995-1996 reveals an even lower percentage of 24% (Toerdata Noord, 1998).

For the cases in France and in the Netherlands, a context analysis was carried out. The aim of these analyses was to identify the situation in which networks have to function. The context analysis includes a review of the various discourses on rural development in general and rural tourism development in particular in both countries. This context analysis is necessary to understand some of the differences between the functioning of networks in both countries. This analysis was carried out at the national level. As both cases in France are situated in the same region, this level was included in the context analysis. This regional analysis sheds light on the particular regional context in which both parks in France operate.

Text box 5.1 Methodological remarks on using a network perspective

As a network approach starts from the perspective of interaction, and considers perceptions, discourses and context to be of crucial importance, the researcher should evaluate her own position in this respect. Similar to remarks made about the position of government in Chapter 3, the position of the researcher is not outside the networks. It is impossible to separate the researcher from the research subject. Data are attained through interaction between the researcher and respondents. Moreover, the values of the researcher are the basis for the study. These are the grounds on which choices on research questions, data collection and so on are based (after: Dammers, 2000).

In this research I found that the international comparison made it possible to review not only my own position as a researcher, but also the Dutch context more critically. In France I was confronted with many questions which did not come up in the Netherlands. These questions were related to the rural tourism development and planning procedures, as well as to the nature of the research. Especially during the second visit to France, the consequences for my own research became apparent. In order to be able to understand networks in the Auvergne I would have to gain more insight into the French situation in general, a quite different level of analysis. It was partly due to such considerations that the final choice to compare two times two cases was made. By choosing to focus on two regional nature parks in the Auvergne and on two valuable cultural landscapes in the Netherlands, it became possible to compare between two cases within the same context and at the same time to compare between different national contexts. In this way, explanations at various levels of scale can be offered.

The context analysis was followed by an analysis of the functioning of networks in the case study areas. This analysis focused on the policy networks around WCL and PNR and on the relation between various types of actors in rural tourism (governments, associations, research institutes, entrepreneurs). To identify the functioning of these networks, interviews with stakeholders were conducted. On the basis of these data, governance structure and innovation in rural tourism development were evaluated.

In addition to the qualitative data, an attempt was made to carry out some quantitative analyses. The aim was to test whether the qualitative data obtained about networks could be supported by quantitative data. An additional aim was a methodological one: to find out to what extent quantitative methods were useful to get more insight into network functioning. For this purpose, two surveys were carried out: one among tourism entrepreneurs, focusing on the relation between networks and innovation; the other among organisations and governmental bodies, aiming to find out whether there is a relation between contact networks and perception/discourses on rural tourism development. As each survey was carried out in one case study area only, the surveys are not comparative. This selectivity is due to practical as well as time constraints, and also based on the fact that for some of the cases more secondary sources were available

compared to others. A survey of the relation between contact networks and perception on rural tourism development was carried out in the Auvergne. Interviews with stakeholders in this region had provided a good indication of different ways of thinking about rural development in general and rural tourism development in particular³⁸. The fact that up till then I had been rather unfamiliar with the French situation probably made it easier to spot such discourses. At the same time, cultural and language differences were a handicap in some respects. A survey seemed a good way to try and give the qualitative data more body, especially as no studies on the subject existed. This differed from the Netherlands, where the functioning of tourism networks at the national level had already been described in a number of studies³⁹.

A survey on innovation was carried out in Friesland only⁴⁰. The initial idea was to carry out the survey in all areas, starting with both parks in the Auvergne. The questionnaire had already been translated. Upon arrival at ENITA in 1998, however, I was told that a survey among all tourism entrepreneurs in the region (4800) had recently been carried out. The response to this survey had been 7% (325 questionnaires returned), which was considered high. As my questionnaire was more encompassing and more time-consuming to fill in, it is likely that response would have been even lower. Moreover, I did not have the financial means nor the time to address all entrepreneurs. As ENITA had taken into account a number of aspects in its questionnaire which were also included in mine (i.e. relations between entrepreneurs and government/intermediary structures), I decided to call off the survey. Instead, an interview based on the questionnaire was carried out with entrepreneurs in both regional nature parks (30 interviews in total). Also, some additional statistical analyses were carried out with the ENITA data.

Other secondary sources were available in addition to those mentioned above, including an external evaluation of the functioning of Parc Livradois-Forez. Such sources have been gratefully used and are referred to in the text.

Report of case study results: Chapters 6 - 9

Chapters 6 and 8 describe the context for rural tourism networks in the Auvergne and in the Netherlands. Chapters 7 and 9 contain an analysis of the functioning of networks in the case study areas. As explained, different types of sources were used for each case study. To make transparent what sources were used where and how issues treated in these chapters relate to research questions, an overview is presented in Table 5.3. The research questions are both implicitly and explicitly addressed in the chapters mentioned. In the final chapter (10), an overview of the main findings with regard to each question is presented, as is an overall conclusion on networks and rural tourism development.

³⁸ See Caalders, 1997

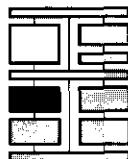
³⁹ E.g. Berkers et al., 1996; Lengkeek, 1992b; Lengkeek, 1994

⁴⁰ Here, a database containing all addresses of tourism entrepreneurs was available.

Table 5.3 Overview of issues addressed in the various chapters and the relation to research questions and sources used

Issue addressed	Related to question	Sources used		
		Secondary sources	Interviews	Survey
<i>Chapter 6: Analysis of the context for rural tourism development in the Auvergne</i>				
Analysis of discourses in France (6.1)	1	x		
Analysis of administrative context (decentralisation) (6.2)	1	x		
Analysis of the rural tourism network in the Auvergne (6.3, 6.4)	1	x	x	x
<i>Chapter 7: Rural tourism development in two PNR in the Auvergne</i>				
Description of history and concept of PNR (7.1)	1,2	x	x	
Tourism development in Parc des Volcans (7.2)	2,3,4,5	x	x	x
Tourism development in Parc Livradois-Forez (7.3)	2,3,4,5	x	x	x
Comparison of the functioning of both parks (7.4)	2,3,4,5 (6)	x	x	
<i>Chapter 8: Analysis of context for rural tourism development in the Netherlands</i>				
Historical perspective on rural- and tourism policy-making (8.1 - 8.4)	1	x		
Policies and networks on recreation and tourism, rural renewal and nature/sustainable development (8.5)	1	x		
<i>Chapter 9: Rural tourism development in two WCL areas</i>				
Description of WCL policy and characteristics of both areas (9.1)	1,2			
WCL policy in Midden-Limburg (9.2)	2,3,4,5	x	x	
WCL policy in Zuidwest Friesland (9.3)	2,3,4,5	x	x	
Networks and innovation in Zuidwest Friesland (9.4)	4		x	x
Comparison of both areas and evaluation (9.5)	2,3,4,5 (6)			

Source: this thesis



6 Exploring the context for rural tourism networks in the Auvergne

Tourism has a long history in rural areas, but its role has for a long time been only marginal, in geographic, economic and psychological terms. Only a very small minority of the population was involved in leisure in the countryside. Nowadays, tourism is called upon to help these areas in crisis. The history of its development, of the evolution of its supply is thus inseparable of the history of the countryside, which is crucial for understanding the complexity and diversity of the current situation¹.

Tourism is an old phenomenon in the Auvergne. The region has been famous for its hot water springs since Roman times. Notwithstanding this rich ancient history, the image prevailing until recently dated back to a less glamorous and more recent past. In the 1950s and 1960s the Auvergne was a destination for social tourism. Only those who could not afford to go to the sea or to the 'real' mountains spent their holidays there and this explains why the region is often still associated with 'cheap' and 'low comfort'. The French also used to consider it a backward region with an ageing population and one that is both cold and dreary with little entertainment. In short, it is traditional in the negative sense².

This image, however, is slowly changing. Linking up with a change in consumer demand, the campaigns of the *Comité Régional du Tourisme* emphasise the open space, the unspoilt nature, the cultural qualities and the opportunities for outdoor recreation and sports. At the same time, efforts are being made to improve the quality of the tourism product. Grants to stimulate entrepreneurs to improve their products are abundantly available, especially in the field of agritourism. Many of these stem from the EU³, but state, regional and departmental governments also provide supporting schemes. Most tourist accommodation is located in rural areas⁴. In addition, spa towns are still a very important part of the tourism sector in the Auvergne: 44% of the hotels are located in a *station thermale* such as Vichy, La Bourboule, le Mont-Dore, Châtel-Guyon, Royat and Chaude-Aigues.

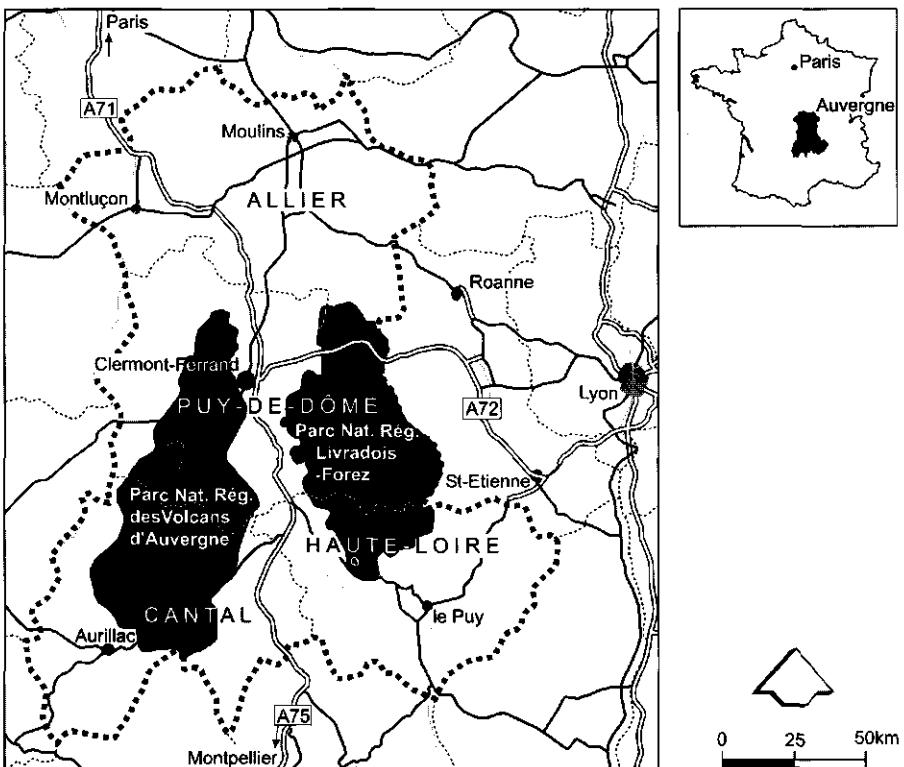
¹ Clary, 1993: 249; *Lit:* 'Le tourisme est ancien dans l'espace rural, mais il est resté longtemps confiné dans un rôle marginal, géographiquement (banlieues, vallées), économiquement et psychologiquement: l'amusement ou le délassement de citadins aux champs ne concernait qu'une infime minorité des habitants. Aujourd'hui, on appelle le tourisme au secours de cet espace en crise. L'histoire de son implantation, de l'évolution des pratiques de l'offre, est donc indissociable de l'histoire des campagnes. C'est elle qui permet de comprendre la complexité et la diversité de la situation actuelle'.

² Vitte, 1990

³ Most of the mountainous rural areas are designated objective 5b, and other parts of the Auvergne are either objective 1 or 2; some areas receive funding from LEADER (both I and II).

⁴ Vitte, 1990

Figure 6.1 Map of the Auvergne



Regional nature parks are relatively new actors in the field of rural tourism in the Auvergne. Many other actors are involved in tourism development in rural areas in one way or another. An analysis of the context is therefore crucial to understand who does what and why and to explain the functioning of tourism development in regional nature parks. In this chapter, the first research questions formulated in Chapter 5 is addressed, that is 'what is the context for rural tourism development in France, what discourses prevail and how do these influence the relations between rural tourism actors in the Auvergne?'.

The context for development of rural tourism in regional nature parks in the Auvergne is thus approached from three angles. In the first place, discourses on rurality in France will be highlighted. These discourses can be regarded as ideological and more or less abstract notions on the role and position of rural areas. An analysis of discourses sheds light on the variety of conceptualisations of what rural qualities are. The discourses can be related to various ideas on how rural tourism development should take place and who should benefit from it. Such discourses play an important role in national politics and in explaining the position of various actors in rural development in general and rural tourism development in particular (6.1). After this focus on the content of discourses on rurality, the changing relation between actors in rural tourism development will be highlighted from a second point of view: that of planning traditions and administrative

relations. Both decentralisation and European policies have influenced the traditionally highly centralised French system. An evaluation of these changes puts opportunities for network planning into perspective (6.2). The third and the fourth section present an overview of the actors involved in rural tourism development in the Auvergne. Their policies and attitude towards tourism development, their instruments and the interrelations with other actors are described in order to determine and clarify their position in the regional network.

6.1 Conceptualisation of rural issues in France

Long defined by its localism and the sense of belonging and proximity ascribed to its inhabitants, rural France exhibits today an increasing tension not only between the different levels and scales of policy-making and programme-funding but also between different social and economic demands made upon it⁵.

Since the French Revolution, the country's peasants have been regarded as the 'cement of the nation'⁶. The countryside should be a densely populated space, as a counterforce to the unstable towns. This privileged status of rural areas, which existed in this form until the end of the Second World War, was primarily a sociocultural one. After World War II the emphasis shifted from the sociocultural role of agriculture to its role as a producer of food, but agricultural issues continued to dominate the political agenda. Apart from this dominant discourse, which was firmly led by the Ministry of Agriculture and the agricultural syndicates, two other discourses can be discerned. These discourses, which are continuations of long-existing notions, have become more prominent in recent years. Below, each of these discourses will be described, followed by an evaluation of their role in rural policy-making and their relation to rural tourism development.

Three discourses on rurality⁷

The 'rural equals agricultural' discourse

In the dominant agricultural discourse, the focus has shifted from the social role of agriculture to its role as a producer of food. Self-sufficiency in food was regarded as a prime political objective throughout post-war Europe. From this point of view, farming was considered to be in the public (national) interest. Other activities taking place in the countryside were considered to be of secondary importance⁸. The Minister of Agriculture 'ruled the countryside'⁹. The fact that agriculture could continue to play such a dominant role was, however, due not only to the strategic importance of the sector and the importance of agriculture in economic terms¹⁰, but also to two other aspects: the effective role of the farm lobby, and the fact that the peasantry kept on playing an ideological role

⁵ Buller, 1997: 221

⁶ Deverre, 1995: 232

⁷ These discourses are derived from Jollivet, 1997; Deverre, 1995 and Billaud et al., 1997

⁸ Deverre, 1998

⁹ Jollivet, 1997: 85

¹⁰ In 1994, France was the largest exporter of agricultural products in Europe and the third largest in the world (Jollivet, 1997). It was not until 1970, however, that France became a net exporter of agricultural products (Billaud et.al., 1997; Clary, 1993).

in the national identity - even though other activities in the countryside became more important in economic terms¹¹.

Professional agricultural organisations have traditionally played an important role through their close relations with the state and because of their exclusive position in rural areas. Though it can be disputed to what extent they were able to direct policy in the desired direction in all cases¹², it is clear that agricultural syndicates in general have strongly influenced government policy¹³. Deverre describes the relation between 'an organised section of the French farmers' and the government as a 'social contract'¹⁴. In fact, the *cogestion*¹⁵ of farmers in agricultural policy is anchored in French law¹⁶. In practice, this meant that the Minister of Agriculture chose to work closely with one of the syndicates (be it a left- or right-wing one), which was considered to be the representative of the farming population¹⁷.

This does not mean that the farming population was united in their ideas, nor that the syndicates necessarily represented the grassroots¹⁸. However, despite the differences between the syndicates there was consensus among the socialist, communist and catholic agrarian movements that peasants were the basis of French society. A common goal of all agricultural movements was to modernise agriculture through technological progress¹⁹. The conviction prevailed that agriculture should be modernised by the adoption of up-to-date technologies and that it should generally create social progress. In this vision of the countryside, there was no room for nature or environmental issues in the current meaning.

Environmental problems were almost exclusively associated with cities and industry: '[u]ntil the end of the 1980s a critical discussion of the relationships between modern agriculture and environment was a political taboo in France ...'²⁰. Nevertheless, recently some changes have taken place. Talking about a 'two-speed agriculture' – modern, large-scale and industrialised on the one hand, and small-scale, integrated in the landscape and pluriactive on the other – is becoming increasingly accepted. Despite all the changes in agricultural practice, the prevailing image of the countryside has remained untouched for a long time. 'The radical transformation of agriculture, its integration into the national economy, and the orientation to modernity is not reflected in perceptions of the countryside ...'²¹. The same goes for the role of farmers in national ideology.

The 'urbanisation is modernisation' discourse

The second discourse on rurality is urban based, and has a predominantly negative view of rural areas. In order to understand this competing discourse, it is necessary to understand that rural and urban are diametrically opposed categories, each referring to different political ideals²²:

¹¹ Billaud et.al., 1997

¹² Coulomb, 1990

¹³ Billaud et al., 1997; Jollivet, 1997

¹⁴ Deverre, 1995

¹⁵ lit: co-management

¹⁶ Coulomb, 1990

¹⁷ Hervieu, 1990

¹⁸ Coulomb, 1990; Hervieu, 1990; Quantin, 1990

¹⁹ Jollivet, 1997

²⁰ Billaud et.al., 1997: 16

²¹ Ibid.: 12

²² Jollivet, 1997; Billaud et.al., 1997

... the rural and the urban are considered two opposed sub-categories. And this opposition consist not only of the opposed meaning of both notions. The idea which prevails is that of an unavoidable choice to be in favour of one - and thus against the other - to assure the future of French society²³.

The opposition has traditionally been between the world of the private property of agricultural smallholders on the one hand, and the industrial proletariat on the other, between the fields and the industrial capital, and between provincialism and the globalising tendencies of the metropolises. This opposition still exists. Whereas the *parti ruraliste*²⁴ puts rural France down as the core of the country, the urbanists hold the opinion that the French grandeur is related to its place in universal culture, its orientation towards the future and its industrial, technological progress. This tradition is represented on state level by the civil and hydraulic engineering departments and the mining engineers²⁵. These represent the France of the industrial estates, ports, airports, nuclear energy, TGV, Concorde and so on.

Rural areas, in their view, are places to pass through and to connect the core industrial areas, ports and the metropolises. They are also places that contain resources such as energy and minerals and spatial reserves for urbanisation and industrial development²⁶.

This antagonism has created an ambivalent attitude among the French towards their *campagnes*. It has created a dynamic tension which has given rural areas a central place in the functioning and structuring of society for a long time. On the one hand, rural and agriculture are regarded as the mainstay of French society. On the other, they are perceived as archaic, backward areas, about to die out²⁷.

The 'rural is natural' discourse

In a third discourse, the countryside is again regarded as the positive antidote of the city - but this time without reference to the social role of the peasants²⁸. 'Rural is natural' is about living in accordance with nature. The village community and local markets are highlighted and the countryside is regarded as the cities' 'green lungs'.

This tradition which dates back to Rousseau and the Romantic Age, is one of the historical bases for the creation of National and Regional Parcs²⁹. The same values are found in the neo-rural movement that came up after May 1968, and that created a '... new rural utopia, born out of the crisis of urbanism and industrialism. It is this movement which combines the issues of rurality, agriculture and environment ...'³⁰. In general, however, it is not a 'wild' nature that is sought after³¹. It is the cultural landscapes much more than nature without people which is valued, and rural development fits very well into this discourse.

²³ Jollivet, 1997: 82. *Lit:* '... le rural et l'urbain sont considérés comme deux sous-ensembles antagonistes. Et cet antagonisme ne consiste pas seulement en une opposition entre les deux termes: l'idée qui prévaut est celle d'un nécessaire choix à faire en faveur de l'un d'eux -et donc contre l'autre- pour assurer l'avenir de la société française'.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid. lit: 'ingénieurs des ponts et chaussées et des mines'

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Billaud et al., 1997; Jollivet, 1997

²⁹ LaFreniere, 1997

³⁰ Billaud et.al., 1997: 12

³¹ LaFreniere, 1997

Discourses on rural areas and tourism development

Each discourse can be related to a different approach to rural tourism. Within the agricultural discourse, tourism was not an area of attention for a long time. Modernisation of agriculture was the only important goal and agritourism was regarded as an activity that 'real' farmers would not want to engage in. From the end of the 1980s the attitude of the farming sector towards pluri-activity started to change. As the impact of transformations on the farming population and on rural areas slowly became visible, alternative sources of income for farmers became more and more regarded as a legitimate option. Development of agritourism is regarded as one of the strategies open to farmers in marginal areas to assure the continuation of their enterprise.

Within the second 'urban' discourse, rural tourism is primarily approached as a leisure opportunity for the urban population. Moreover, products offered should be of good quality: fully-equipped hotels and campsites, well-accessible areas, modern resorts and so on. Agritourism is regarded as an archaic form of tourism development. Farmers are amateurs in tourism and are not able to provide the same level of service and the same quality of product that the professional tourism sector is.

In the 'rural is natural' discourse, rural tourism should be developed in symbiosis with its environment. It should be developed as a small-scale activity, in harmony with nature. This discourse can also be regarded as taking a dominantly urban perspective, as the experience of the - predominantly urban - tourist is placed in the foreground. It links up with trends in tourism and leisure demand:

Lately we have seen a different society coming up, another relation with time and with spending time, another relation with leisure and holidays. No longer an object of consumption, a way to impress others - like having a car in the 1960s and 1970s - but the satisfaction of a vital need, the need to find again the feeling of the body, of nature, for happiness and for personal joy³².

Discourses and policy-making

The discourses described above are abstractions of rural areas. Nevertheless, they have had - and still are having - a real impact on rural policy-making.

The agricultural discourse has traditionally had a firm grip on rural policy-making and in addition, rural areas had a prominent place in policy-making in general. After the Second World War, the agricultural discourse continued to be the most influential. Emphasis changed, however, from the sociocultural role of agriculture to a more economically oriented one. The agricultural sector underwent a process of modernisation, and land consolidation projects as well as other rationalisations fitted in well with the call for *planification*. Nevertheless, rural issues lost some of their dominance in national policy-making in the period after 1945. This has been a slow but ongoing process since the end of the Second World War³³.

³² Clary, 1993: 21; *Lit*: 'Nous voyons naître depuis quelques années une autre société, une autre relation au temps et à ses usages, une autre relation aux loisirs et aux vacances. Non plus un objet de consommation, un moyen de valorisation par rapport aux autres, comme la "bagnole" des années 60-70, mais la satisfaction d'un besoin vital, le besoin de retrouver le sens du corps, de la nature, pour le bonheur et l'épanouissement personnels'.

³³ Clary describes how a different idea of France came into being at that time: 'Sortant de la Guerre, la France se réveille d'une longue léthargie. Pays rural, engoncé dans ses barricades protectionnistes, replié sur son empire colonial, elle était domaine du "pétit": le "petit café" le "petit journal", le "petit blanc", les "petits bourgeois"... La guerre a balayé ces pétites... Dans l'ombre de la Résistance naît une autre idée de la France. Les parties politiques rassemblées dans l'adversité prônent une nouvelle

The agricultural discourse is losing its grip in two ways. In the first place, rural issues are receiving less attention at a national level: '... for the State, rural issues are no longer a priority'³⁴. In this respect, the 'urban' discourse is gaining ground.

Secondly, the agricultural discourse on rurality is losing its grip on rural areas, mainly to the benefit of the 'natural' discourse. The subsidisation of overproduction, which created for example the butter mountains and wine lakes, was - also in France - increasingly criticised in the course of the 1980s as a waste of public money. Having already lost its dominance in terms of employment and population numbers, productivist agriculture is now slowly losing its ideological and political dominance over rural areas. In addition, European policy (after some years followed by French policy) started to take agri-environmental issues more seriously. Deverre, who is quite sceptical about the existence of agri-environmental problems, describes it as follows:

This set of circumstances certainly seems to have opened the door, in France, to individuals and groups promoting land use projects (or production projects) in conflict with those of the *agricultural profession*, drawing strength from the stigmatization of productivist dogma, and gaining legitimacy for interests previously seen as idiosyncratic, secondary or even folkloric³⁵.

The agricultural discourse is thus increasingly challenged. In the next section, the relation of this changing balance with decentralisation will be sketch.

6.2 Changing administrative relations: the impact of decentralisation

Decentralisation in France has been guided by the desire to create preconditions to allow for a more integrated development. DATAR (*Délégation à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Action Régionale* - the French national planning body) has been an important driving force behind the process of decentralisation. Regions as intermediary layers have been endowed with a central role in this process.

Policy-making in France: a tradition of centralism and polarisation

France has a tradition of centralist decision-making. The Ile de France is not only the political core, but also the locus of decision-making in many other branches of society: finance, industry, research, media and so on³⁶. The prevailing notion of the French political culture is that of a dominant national government and of a highly bureaucratic system:

... France is known for the burden of its institutional territorial heritage, unique in Europe: the power of the central state, disintegration at the communal level, resistance of the departments, youth and

³⁴ donne économique: l'industrialisation, l'urbanisation, avec le soutien des pouvoirs publics, et l'encadrement du développement par une "planification à la française" (Clary, 1993: 12).

³⁵ Jollivet, 1997; *Lit*: 'pour l'Etat, le rural n'est plus une priorité'.

³⁶ Deverre, 1995: 233. Deverre considers agri-environmental problems as something forced upon France by 'Europe' and upon the countryside by the city.

³⁷ Statement by Foucher – director of the 'Observatoire Européen de Geopolitique' (in: Scherrer et al., 1995).

weakness of the regions. The growing insufficiency of system, its tendency towards rigidity and its opacity with regard to competencies have often been highlighted³⁷.

In addition, the French political culture is not directed towards cooperation, but is based on conflict. Negotiation is not part and parcel of the political culture in France³⁸. According to an analysis of Coenen-Huther at the end of the 1970s, polarisation, the lack of negotiation and the formal, bureaucratic nature of the administrative organisation are interrelated:

The French society has a highly conflictuous character, which is reflected by a high level of political polarisation. The value systems of the various ideological groups strongly diverge. ... In such a society, relatively little spontaneous consultation between groups and sectors takes place. ... The climate is generally not favourable for cooperation between labour unions and employers' organisations. ... The planning apparatus with its formal structure can, in this context, be considered the institutional answer to the problem of a lack of consensus³⁹.

Such an environment does not seem very fertile for network-planning and development. However, a number of initiatives have been employed to try and change this situation and create an environment in which a more integrated approach becomes possible. The independent status assigned to regions in the beginning of the 1980s is often regarded as a crucial step towards a less centralised administrative system.

Decentralisation

Until the mid-1950s, the political and administrative structure consisted of the state, the communes and the departments. The departments were governed by prefects, who were appointed by the national government. Thus, the departments were formally not an independent political level, but an auxiliary branch of central government.

In the mid-1950s, regions - a new administrative level - were given a role in the *planification*⁴⁰: the stimulation and coordination of regional development. The creation of DATAR in 1963 gave an important boost to spatial planning. The strive for a more integrated development of rural areas was consequently stimulated by the developments of 1968 (related to the discourse on 'rural as natural') These developments played an important role in stimulating initiatives for decentralisation. Rural areas were endowed

³⁷ Vanier, 1995: 138; *lit.*: '... la France est connue pour le poids de son héritage institutionnel territorial, unique en Europe: puissance de l'Etat centralisateur, morcellement du niveau communal, résistance des Départements, jeunesse et faiblesse des Régions. L'inadéquation croissante du système, sa tendance à immobilisme, son opacité en matière de compétences ont été maintes fois brocardés'.

³⁸ To illustrate this, Foucher - the director of the Observatoire Européen de Géopolitique - compares the French situation to the German one: 'La démarche en Allemagne repose un classement négocié et renégocié ... c'est ce que l'on n'arrive pas à faire ici. L'avantage en Allemagne est que l'on arrive, après des journées de négociation, à une décision qui est réellement appliquée. ... La procédure de négociation est un combat permanent, mais le système est vivant. Dans le cas de la France, c'est tout à fait différent' (cited in: Scherrer et al., 1995).

³⁹ Coenen-Huther, 1979: 4; *lit.*: 'De Franse samenleving heeft een sterk conflicterend karakter, hetgeen zich in een hoge mate van politieke polarisatie weerspiegelt. De waardensystemen van de verschillende ideologische groeperingen wijken sterk van elkaar af (...). In zo'n samenleving vindt men relatief weinig spontaan overleg tussen groepen en sectoren (...). Het klimaat is in het algemeen niet gunstig voor een samenwerking tussen vakbonden en werkgeversorganisaties (...). Het planningsapparaat met zijn formele structuur kan, in deze context, als het institutionele antwoord op het probleem van het gebrek aan consensus worden beschouwd'.

⁴⁰ The meaning and role of *planification* has differed in the various Republics, but it has functioned mainly in relation to economic development. For a more detailed analysis of *planification*, see Dekker (1989), Chapter 4.

with symbolic values such as harmony, respect for nature and the quality of local life⁴¹. In the 1970s⁴², such ideas were translated into new instruments for integrated rural development⁴³.

Textbox 6.1 Types of cooperation between municipalities

Conseil Régional	- regional development (<i>aménagement du territoire</i>) - economic development - environment (especially regional natural parks) - education (secondary schools) - training - tourism
Conseil Général	- social aid - rural development (rural infrastructure and local development) - education (intermediate level: <i>collèges</i>) - environment (notably footpaths) - tourism
Communes	- cultural actions - social aid - education (primary and nursery) - town planning

Sources: various

In 1975, DATAR proposed a formula of *contrat de pays*, which created the opportunity for a group of municipalities to set up an integrated development plan. Such plans could be realised through a transfer of budget from the national to the local level⁴⁴. Cooperation is crucial for the functioning of many of the very small municipalities in rural France. There are over 35,000 municipalities, of which over 25,000 have fewer than 700 inhabitants⁴⁵. Nevertheless, cooperation remains difficult in many cases due to rivalry. A number of slightly different types of intercommunal cooperation exist, each of which allows for a more integrated policy-making at the local level (see Textbox 6.1).

In addition to changes in administrative relations at the local level, regions attained more power in the course of the 1970s. In 1982 they became comprehensive, chosen bodies⁴⁶. Departments also became independent political entities with their own government.

A clear consequence of decentralisation is an increase in the number of policy-making levels. Regions and departments are no longer hierarchical subdivisions of the state; now each develops its own policies as well. Textbox 6.2 provides an impression of the main division of tasks between region, department and communes. In addition, the

⁴¹ "...le sens d'harmonie, le respect de la nature (écologie), la qualité de vie dans le local, l'enracinement au pays..." (Clary, 1993: 265).

⁴² In fact, the *Plan d'Aménagement Rural* (PAR) as a regulation for integrated rural development was created already in 1967. It was meant to function as the counterpart of the urban POS (*Plan d'Occupation du Sol*, comparable to the Dutch *Bestemmingsplan*) and SDAU (*Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme*). But it was hardly being used and in the 1980s it was replaced by the *chartes intercommunales* (Clary, 1993).

⁴³ In the following, only the most influential instruments are mentioned.

⁴⁴ Since 1977, the regions have coordinated these contracts.

⁴⁵ Of these, more than 10,000 communes have fewer than 200 inhabitants (Madiot, 1993: 186-187)

⁴⁶ The first regional elections were held in 1986 (Dekker, 1989).

state remains present in each region and department. It has its own representative bodies at the regional and departmental level. Most ministries have a pool of civil servants to communicate national policies to the decentralised levels and to provide technical assistance. Regional and departmental prefects are appointed by the state, and each *arrondissement* (administrative sub-division of the departments) has a *sous-prefet*. The administrative 'tissue' has become rather complex.

Textbox 6.2 Competencies of regions, departments and communes in France

Various types of intercommunal bodies exist, depending on the type of communal tasks delegated to them. Some examples of the bodies active in Auvergne are mentioned below. There are other bodies, but the principle is similar in each case: the delegation of one or more municipal tasks to a common body.

Communauté de communes: all municipal tasks are delegated to the communauté. This is the most far-reaching type of inter-communal cooperation

SIVOM: Syndicat Intercommunal à Vocation Multiple: municipalities cooperating in a number of fields

SIDET: Syndicat Intercommunal pour le Développement Economique et Touristique: cooperation for economic and tourism development purposes

SIAT: Syndicat Intercommunal d'Aménagement Touristique: cooperation in tourism policy-making

SIATD: Syndicat Intercommunal d'Aménagement Touristique et de Développement: cooperation for tourism and development

Pays d'Accueil Touristique: cooperation between municipalities for tourism purposes

SIVU: Syndicat Intercommunal à Vocation Unique: cooperation for one particular purpose

Source: Smith, 1996⁴⁷

It seems as though '... by the mid-1980s France had rapidly changed from a system of centrally dominated administration to one of a plurality of competing levels of government'⁴⁸. Opinions vary as to whether political decentralisation has been successful or not. Those who regard it as successful see in it the seeds of a turnaround of the former centralist structure; others regard the changes as mainly cosmetic and superficial⁴⁹. In any case, the turnaround is not as abrupt as is often suggested. The seed of decentralisation was sown already in the 1960s, when the decrease of respect for traditional hierarchies resulted in the rise of a new type of politician and more concern for local economic development. Smith⁵⁰ points at two other aspects to be considered. Firstly, that prefects have in practice always functioned as political figures, rather than as civil servants. They could only function effectively with the support of local leaders. Secondly, local politics have always been an affair of coalition-building and quests for influence. *Notables* from the local communities had their own links with Paris, either as senators or members of parliament, or as prominent businessmen or representatives of interest groups. The creation of regions is part of an ongoing process of decentralisation. In this process, the emergence of '...regional "spaces" of governance (that is, actor

⁴⁷ Original source: Gerbaux (1996). La genèse du développement local. Grenoble: CERAT, mimeo.

⁴⁸ Smith, 1996: 118

⁴⁹ Clary, 1993

⁵⁰ Smith, 1996: 119

networks and epistemic communities) ...⁵¹ is more important than a change in the formal level of representation.

Decentralisation and rural tourism development

The introduction of the *contrat de pays* played an important role in changing the position of tourism at the local level. Tourism is in many cases an important element of such plans⁵². In the relation between the state and the region, the *contrats de plan Etat-Régions* have increased the role of the regions in tourism development and promotion⁵³. In addition, a procedure for the creation of specific *pays d'accueil touristique* was launched in 1976⁵⁴. This allowed specifically for a more integrated approach to rural tourism development at the local level. Such initiatives were sometimes financed exclusively by the municipalities involved. In other cases the pays were integrated into the departmental and/or regional policy - and financed accordingly.

These instruments created the basis for a new type of involvement in tourism development including rural tourism development. Whereas for a long time rural tourism was the locus of spontaneous activities of private actors and of spontaneous initiatives of local governments, the various types of *contrats* have made it possible to develop rural tourism through joint action within the framework of procedures issued by the state⁵⁵.

When evaluating the impact of decentralisation on rural development including rural tourism development, it is important to take account of the dominant role of the agricultural sector and the Ministry of Agriculture in rural areas. The Ministry has well-equipped branches at the regional and departmental levels. It is involved not only in agriculture, but in all matters concerning rural areas. Regions and departments have tasks in rural development, but not in agricultural policy-making.

The position of the Ministry is reinforced by strong linkages with professional organisations. These organisations are very well organised locally and are omnipresent in rural areas. Farmers have their own separate institutions for, for example, financial matters, social security and pensions. Such an existing position is difficult for newcomers in the rural policy arena to challenge. Nevertheless, in the course of the 1990s, the agricultural sector did lose some of its prominence, especially in national policy.

Changes in the position of the agricultural sector are taking place, in the first place, from within. Whereas modernisation of agriculture used to be considered the only way forward, the idea of a 'two-speed' agriculture is now becoming increasingly accepted. This means that the variation among the farming population is becoming more represented in agricultural organisations. The involvement of the Ministry of Agriculture in rural tourism can be explained by these changes. Rural tourism is mainly considered a means to strengthen the position of farmers in marginalised rural areas. It is particularly in relation to this broader field of rural development that the position of the agricultural sector is challenged in the second sense. Regions and departments have there own

⁵¹ Ibid.: '...the road to local development has actually been a very long one and [...] the regional level has played a relatively minor part. If there are signs that the importance of the region is now steadily growing, this is largely due to the emergence of regional 'spaces' of governance (that is actor networks and epistemic communities) and not simply because the formal level of representation (the *Conseils Régionaux*) have at last come to their own ...'.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Mazuel, 1993-94: 61-62.

⁵⁴ This procedure is related to the SEATER: *Service d'Etudes et d'Aménagement Touristique de l'Espace Rural* (Clary, 1993).

⁵⁵ Clary, 1993

policies in rural development, and their positions have especially been strengthened by EU policies:

Political decentralisation, introduced between 1982 and 1984 in the first term of Mitterand's presidency, has had a critical effect not only upon the actors in French rural policy, but also upon the rural agenda itself. State-led rural planning has thus given way to locality-led rural development. ... This increasing localism ... has clearly been reinforced both by the increasing presence of the European Union as a source of co-finance and as a direct initiator of broad rural policy programmes, and by broader shifts within the European Union itself, from the introduction of the subsidiarity principle in the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty to structural fund and CAP reform. [These] ... have all strengthened the role of sub-national institutions and actors and given greater priority to local initiatives. The 1996 Cork Declaration builds upon such experiences in its identification of the need for specifically 'bottom-up' approaches to rural development⁵⁶.

Though many European regulations (especially those concerning direct agricultural support) are carried out by the state, other regulations, are directly channelled to the local level. It is especially in this way that other discourses (particularly the 'rural is natural' discourse) are gaining influence. Tourism was an important field of attention in the LEADER I and II programmes and this European programme has certainly played a role in decentralising rural tourism policy⁵⁷.

According to Buller, a division is developing between agricultural policy – which is still mainly arranged through centralised bodies – and rural policy, which is much more decentralised. The division of tasks is not very strict, however, and varies from one region to another⁵⁸. This means that a division of tasks is partly a matter of competition between organisations at the local level. Much depends on the relations within the region and the competencies of actors at that level. The nature of these relations in the Auvergne region will be highlighted in the next section.

6.3 Actors in rural tourism in the Auvergne⁵⁹

In France, cooperating is always a bit complicated⁶⁰.

Rural tourism is a field in which a large number of actors are involved. These include (at least) actors in tourism, rural development and spatial planning. The previous section made it clear that decentralisation has created opportunities for integrated rural tourism development at the regional level. But, as Clary remarks, much depends on the role taken by various actors involved at the regional level⁶¹.

In the Auvergne, a large number of organisations are involved in rural tourism in one way or another. Some are involved in the promotion of tourism development, and others

⁵⁶ Buller, 1997: 225-226

⁵⁷ This was certainly the case in the Auvergne. See Maumelat, 1996

⁵⁸ Smith, 1996

⁵⁹ Much of the information in this section was gathered in a 1998 survey and during the interviews held in the same year. Some of the local information may therefore not be completely up to date.

⁶⁰ Remark by one of the respondents, 1995. *Lit:* 'En France, c'est toujours un peu compliqué de travailler avec l'un l'autre'.

⁶¹ Clary, 1993: 267: 'Les moyens existent pour aménagement rural spécifique au tourisme et intégrant celui-ci dans des préoccupations globales. Ils peuvent faire intervenir différents niveaux de concertations et de décision. Mais ils ne sont que des coquilles vides si l'on n'a pas défini au préalable les objectifs, les voies pour y parvenir, les partenaires et leur rôle respectif.'

in creating the preconditions for such development. Those directly involved in tourism development are for example government bodies, representatives of tourism entrepreneurs and associations aiming to improve leisure opportunities (e.g. ramblers' associations). Indirectly involved are all organisations, bodies and associations somehow involved in the protection, transformation and use of the physical and cultural environment: farmers, organisations for the protection of landscape and nature, cultural bodies, associations striving for the protection of the built environment (characteristic houses, traditional masonry), government bodies involved in the creation of infrastructure, hunters' associations, wood owners, and so on. The main organisations involved in tourism development are described in this section.

State government bodies

The Délégué Régionale au Tourisme is the representative of the Ministry of Tourism within the region. This person is responsible for the implementation of national tourism policy in the Auvergne and keeps the Ministry informed about the regional situation. He or she has to deal with the Auvergne on his or her own, assisted by a secretary, and there are no representatives at the departmental level. This limited representation of the Ministry of Tourism is related to the fact it is a rather young ministry (established in 1988)⁶², and because a number of other ministries also have important responsibilities in the field of tourism. Among these are: Internal and External Trade (regulation); Employment and Social Affairs; Culture, Youth and Sports; Maritime Affairs (sea and seaside); Équipement (signposting and other infrastructures); Health (health resorts/spa towns); the Environment; and National Education (schooling)⁶³. With regard to rural tourism, the Ministry of Agriculture plays an important role. Most of these ministries have their own representatives in the Auvergne and in each of its departments.

The small number of staff available to the Ministry of Tourism is in sharp contrast to the large number of civil servants at both the regional and the departmental level available to the Ministry of Agriculture: Direction Régionale and Départementale de l'Agriculture et de la Forêt (DRAF/DDAF). DRAF and DDAF are responsible for the implementation of policy and regulations in the field of agritourism. Though the relative importance attached to rural and agritourism within the Ministry of Agriculture is low, they nevertheless have more people working in tourism development than the Ministry of Tourism does.

The agricultural sector benefits from numerous programmes and grants for rural development, including various opportunities for the development of rural tourism. Most of these are distributed through the Ministry of Agriculture, or one of the related bodies (i.e. ADASEA). Money available for agritourism makes up the bulk of the total budget for rural tourism development.

⁶² Before 1988, tourism was the responsibility of a parliamentary under-secretary and was subsumed under various ministries in the course of time, such as Industry, Post, Telephone and Tourism (1986), Commerce, Trade and Tourism (1985), Foreign Trade and Tourism (1983) and Free Time (1981) (Dewailly, 1991). The last mentioned – the *Ministère de Temps Libre*, which existed for only a short period after the Socialists came to power in 1981 – was occupied with the responsibilities of the traditional ministerial department of youth and sport. The notion of 'leisure' was discarded politically in the early 1960s, as it became replaced by the notion of 'culture' (Poujol, 1993).

⁶³ This list is taken from: Clary (1993: 37).

In 1998, the DRT (tourism) and DRAF (agriculture) signed a statement concerning participation in the field of rural tourism development⁶⁴. This might be a sign that some of the old controversies are beginning to fade away. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Tourism primarily represents the 'hard core' tourism sector and is weary of any drop in quality that might arise from the involvement of 'non-professionals' in tourism⁶⁵. And the Ministry of Agriculture often still takes the position that everything taking place in rural areas falls under its jurisdiction and should benefit the farming population.

Apart from the Ministry of Tourism and that of Agriculture, some other state bodies are involved in rural tourism development in the Auvergne. The *Direction de l'Environnement et de la Nature* (DIREN) is the representative of the Ministry of the Environment. DIREN is responsible for the recreational use of natural areas and the protection of the landscape. The regional nature parks fall under its jurisdiction. In 1989 promotion of 'nature tourism' was formulated as a joint objective of the Ministry of Tourism and of the Ministry of Environment at the national level⁶⁶. Nevertheless, contacts between the DRT and DIREN at the regional level are scarce⁶⁷.

The ONF (*Office National de Forêt* - the state forestry service) takes care of the maintenance of woods and pays explicit attention to aesthetics and the maintenance of roads and paths for recreative use⁶⁸. This office comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture. The *Direction de l'Équipement* (DRE/DDE) is the representative of the Ministry with the same name, and is responsible for the maintenance of roads and regulations on signposting.

DATAR (*Délégation à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Action Régionale*), the national planning institute, is the official body involved in spatial planning and regional development. It was established in 1963. As many of its competencies are similar to those of other administrative bodies, its activities often give rise to friction⁶⁹. In the Auvergne, DATAR is particularly involved in stimulating development in the Massif Central: a *zone défavorisée*.

Regional government

The regional government (*Conseil Régional* - CR) has its own regional tourism policy. In the *schéma* (policy document) three main goals are described:

- To create strong 'poles', able to attract tourists and to inspire them to visit other parts of the region.
- To create public-private partnerships and the organisation of entrepreneurs in affiliations/ alliances/chains, which is stimulated by paying more attention to such groups in the promotion of the region; professionalisation is an affiliated goal (e.g. courses for entrepreneurs).

⁶⁴ An agreement on the cooperation in the field of rural tourism was signed with the *préfet* of the Region on 22 January 1998.

⁶⁵ Indicative of this attitude is the response of the *chargé d'études* working for the *Délégué* (1995) to the question what role the regional parks play in tourism development. She remarked that parks are not really involved in tourism development, but are mainly implementing the EU Common Agricultural Policy (interview 20 October 1995).

⁶⁶ Laurens, 1995

⁶⁷ Survey 1998

⁶⁸ Clary, 1993: 270

⁶⁹ Madiot, 1993: 19

- To improve the quality of the tourist offer; it has been reassured by the CR that no large new accommodation infrastructure will be built, but that existing local enterprises should benefit from the development⁷⁰.

The *Comité Régional du Tourisme* (CRT) is the body actually carrying out the regional tourism policy. Its main activity is the promotion of the region abroad (60% of the budget)⁷¹.

In terms of indirect policy relevant for tourism, the region is especially involved in *aménagement régional* and *aménagement rural* (regional and rural development planning). The region has no general policy on agriculture and is only to a limited extent involved in the conservation of nature (e.g. through a budget to support the regional nature parks).

Departmental government

Each of the four departments in the Auvergne pursues its own tourism policy. Policies between departments vary. Whereas Allier and Haute Loire already had an official *schéma* on tourism development in 1997, Puy-de-Dôme and Cantal were still in the course of creating one⁷². Generally, tourism policies are in line with the regional tourism *schéma*, even though formal contact between region and departments is very limited. Projects eligible for subsidisation due to regional policy can often receive extra finance from the departments. This is the case, for example, for the creation and improvement of campsites and gîtes in the department Puy-de-Dôme (*gîtes de caractère, gîtes ruraux, gîtes d'étape, gîtes de séjour*)⁷³.

In addition to the improvement of accommodation, Puy-de-Dôme aims to improve the quality of the environment (built environment and landscape) and has its own policy for promotion. Though policies vary between departments, the general areas of attention are similar. Haute-Loire, for example, has defined three areas of attention: investments (mainly in accommodation), promotion and commercialisation. The latter includes a *Service Loisirs Accueil* (SLA) for the reservation of gîtes and general information on the offer available in the department⁷⁴. Puy-de-Dôme also has such a SLA, specifically for the reservation of gîtes affiliated with *Gîtes de France*.

Promotion of the department is carried out by the *Comité Départemental du Tourisme* (CDT). Each department issues its own brochures. The general idea on the division of tasks between the regional and the departmental tourism board is that the region takes care of promotion abroad and the department is mainly involved in promotion in France. In practice, however, this division is not very strict, which means that many tasks are

⁷⁰ La Gazette Officiel du Tourisme, 1997

⁷¹ Dionnet, 1995

⁷² Information obtained from CG Puy-de-Dôme.

⁷³ Maison du Développement, 1997. Criteria nevertheless differ to some extent and the various grants cannot simply piled on top of one another. Generally, a maximum of 50% of the total costs can be financed by public means. Whereas the department provides a maximum of 30% of the costs for creation of modernisation of *gîtes ruraux* that will qualify for at least 2 épis (comparable to 'stars' for hotels), the Region only provides funding for gîtes of at least 3 épis (maximum of 30%). In addition, funding from the European Union can be obtained for gîtes of at least 3 épis, to a maximum of 20% of the investment. Maximum subsidisation in absolute terms also varies between the different bodies, and the same is true for secondary criteria. The EU, for example, requires the gîte to be registered with Gîtes de France for at least 10 years.

⁷⁴ Interview, Mme. Bastide, CG Haute-Loire, 20 June 1996.

carried out by both organisations. The departmental tourism board also influences departmental tourism policy, be it formally or informally. In the department Puy-de-Dôme, for example, the CDT is very concerned about the creation of a *qualité de charme* and the professionalisation of the tourism sector:

Improving the quality demands a professional approach. A professional approach is the basis for a healthy sector, Unfortunately, tourism is not really seen as being a true profession⁷⁵.

Representatives of the 'regular' tourism sector

The interests of the regular tourism accommodation sector are represented by the *Chambre du Commerce et d'Industrie*⁷⁶ (CCI: chamber of commerce), by several tourism syndicates (e.g. *syndicat des hôteliers*) and associations taking care of promotion and marketing of hotels (e.g. Logis de France). This sector accounts for most bed nights in the Auvergne, but has also to deal with the rather negative image problem mentioned earlier. Especially the *hôtellerie* in rural areas consists of small family hotels, with low quality standards. Improvement of the quality of tourist enterprises has been a major aim for a long time.

Representatives of this sector follow developments in agritourism with suspicion. Some regard farmers as non-professionals in tourism and thus as a threat to the image of the region⁷⁷. The fact that agritourism development is highly subsidised is considered to be disturbing the competition⁷⁸. Nevertheless, most organisations agree that agritourism and regular tourism development can reinforce one another⁷⁹.

Thermal tourism is usually regarded as a separate sector, which has its own institutions (e.g. *Therm'Auvergne*). The *stations thermales* have special privileges, such as levying taxes⁸⁰. They also pursue their own promotional activities and attract a certain type of clientele.

Representatives of the agritourism sector

Since the end of the 1980s, the agricultural sector has slowly become involved in rural tourism development, not in the least because enormous financial support was available from the EU. At the *Chambre Régionale d'Agriculture* a centre for the promotion, co-ordination and technical (bureaucratic) assistance of agritourism projects was created (*Auvergne Verte*). The main aim is to create and to promote agritourism accommodation (*gîtes, chambre d'hôtes* etc.) and other agritourism products (*ferme auberge, ferme*

⁷⁵ Taken from: report of the conversation with Mme. Bodet, director of the CDT, 28 Mai 1998. *Lit:*

'Améliorer la qualité demande une approche professionnelle. Une approche professionnelle est la base pour le développement d'une secteur saine. Malheureusement, le tourisme n'est pas suffisamment abordé comme métier propre'.

⁷⁶ CCI in the Auvergne operate at the level of a larger town and its surroundings (e.g. Clermont-Ferrand, Ambert, Aurillac). At the regional level, CCI Auvergne sets out more general strategies and standards. Coordination at the level of the Massif Central is provided by UCIMAC.

⁷⁷ Over 20% of respondents from the regular tourism sector were positive or neutral concerning the proposition that agritourism threatens to reduce the quality of the tourist product (survey, 1998).

⁷⁸ Almost half of the respondents in the tourism sector agreed with this proposition, and only 25% disagreed.

⁷⁹ Survey, 1998: almost 90% of respondents agreed with this proposition, including most respondents from the regular tourism sector.

⁸⁰ Pasqualini et al., 1989

équestre). Accommodation should be of a minimum quality standard to be applicable for subsidisation (2 épis⁸¹).

The division of tasks between various institutions is not always clearly defined. The regional and departmental bodies of the Ministry of Agriculture (DRAF and DDAF) provide technical assistance to farmers who want to start a tourism business on the side, but so do the chambers of agriculture⁸². Depending on where exactly one is living, other institutions can be approached. If one is situated in the Parc Livradois, and within the department of Puy-de-Dôme, then the park, the region or the department can be approached for assistance with the creation of a *gîte* or *chambre d'hôte*⁸³.

Gîtes de France is also usually placed under the heading of agritourism. Differences between departments exist with regard to the functioning of this organisation, however. In Puy-de-Dôme, *gîtes* can be booked through the central booking service (SLA) of the *Comité Départemental du Tourisme*. In Cantal, *Gîtes de France* is located at the chamber of agriculture.

The fact that the agricultural sector is so well organised helps to explain why agricultural institutions play a crucial role in rural tourism development. The load of financial opportunities available from Brussels has done the rest. The organisation of the farming sector is in sharp contrast with the situation for the regular tourism sector.

The number of farms in the Auvergne having developed rural tourism is nevertheless rather modest. Though the agricultural sector has become more positive towards development of pluri-activity, it is still considered an option mainly for marginal farms in marginal areas⁸⁴.

Organisations at the local level

There are no general tourism tasks carried out by organisations at the local level. The nature of local involvement is particularly dependent on the political interests of the mayor⁸⁵. Tourism is often regarded as a means to promote one's own political ideas and the attitude towards tourism development varies accordingly: tourism as a means to create employment, as part of a local development strategy, as a means to improve the image of the area, to improve the situation of the agricultural sector, etc.

Professionalisation on the local level and the extent to which a local policy can be pursued depends on the amount of cooperation between neighbouring municipalities and the relation between OT/si (tourism office) and local politicians. Cooperation with neighbouring communities is often difficult, especially if political traditions are different. Jamot describes some of the reasons behind the lack of cooperation between established tourism centres and the surrounding countryside:

... one has ... the impression that the absence of collaboration stems from local mentalities: opposition of hills, heaviness of historically grown administrative traditions, diverging politics, weight of local

⁸¹ An *épis* (lit: herb) can be compared to 'stars' attributed to hotels and campsites.

⁸² The chamber of agriculture owes its role in rural tourism to the fact that it is an important body within the agricultural sector. It is formally a representative of the farming community, but, as is common in most European countries, the agricultural sector has close links with policy. As neither regions nor departments have an agricultural policy, the CRA and CDA often function as representatives of region and department in discussions with state bodies.

⁸³ The region does not interfere in the case of chambre d'hôtes.

⁸⁴ Disez, 1996

⁸⁵ Mazuel, 1993-4

personalities; this sector provides anthology of difficulties to achieve cooperation between communities⁸⁶.

Pursuing local tourism policies is only possible for the larger municipalities (e.g. Thiers and Aurillac), for much visited places or when cooperation between municipalities exists⁸⁷. Some of these are very actively involved in promotion, in stimulating improvement of the tourist product and the general tourist infrastructure, and in trying to generate growth of tourism in the area (e.g. *Communauté de Commune de Cunhalat*)⁸⁸. Others are much less active in tourism or not active at all.

In many cases, tourism policy is being carried out by or in cooperation with the tourist office (OT/si), despite the fact that these offices are formally either associations of tourist entrepreneurs or foundations. Tourist offices often play an important role at the local level, in terms of policy, promotion and informing local entrepreneurs about trends in tourist demand.

The OT/si are represented at the departmental level by the UDOT/si: the departmental union of tourist offices. A similar organisation exists at the regional level.

Other organisations

Organisations for the conservation of nature

Organisations for the conservation of nature are less important and less influential in France than in other north-western European countries such as Great Britain, Germany and the Netherlands. Nevertheless, their influence is growing. This is partly because they are increasingly open to discussion and willing to cooperate with other interests. Small-scale tourism development in natural areas is becoming an issue for some of these associations, as it is regarded as a means to improve knowledge on nature and promote the relevance of the protection of natural values.

Social tourism and tourism as a means for regional development

The origins of associations of holiday centres (e.g. VAL) and of tourists associations such as UNAT, lie in social tourism. This type of tourism was influential in rural France in the 1950s and 1960s⁸⁹. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, this type of tourism has dominated the image of the Auvergne among the French for a long time. In the course of time, these associations have changed their emphasis and have tried to focus on improving the quality and image of the accommodation. They are also concerned with the effects on the regional economy⁹⁰.

In the Massif Central, SOMIVAL has a special position in this respect. It was created in the 1960s by DATAR to stimulate economic activity in the area. For example, it has contributed to the creation of holiday accommodation centres. It is currently mainly

⁸⁶ Jamot, 1995: 55; *lit.*: '... on a ... l'impression que l'absence de collaboration relève des mentalités locales: opposition des versants, pesanteur des traditions administratives d'origine historique, divergence politiques, poids des personnalités locales; ce secteur est un florilège d'étude des difficultés à gérer l'intercommunalité'.

⁸⁷ See page 101 for an overview of the various types of cooperation

⁸⁸ Interview with a representative of the commune, 13 June, 1998

⁸⁹ Holidays and leisure more generally were part of the French cultural policy after World War II. For example, the state gave considerable impetus to the extensive development of *colonies de vacances* for children (Poujol, 1993: 16).

⁹⁰ Vitte, 1990

operating as a private consultancy, though relations with DATAR still exist. SOMIVAL traditionally regarded tourism as a means to contribute to regional economic development. Lately it has developed some interest in integrating tourism development into the landscape⁹¹.

Chamina

An interesting association is Chamina. It is concerned with the development of hiking trails in the Massif Central, but does so from a philosophy of conservation of the regional identity. Small-scale, extensive tourism development should link up with the area's characteristics and should be embedded in a strategy of regional development.

Parcs Naturels Régionaux

For regional nature parks, tourism development is part of a more integrated development strategy. The activities of both parks in the Auvergne will be treated in depth in the next chapter.

Other

The most important organisations relevant to rural tourism in the Auvergne in the period 1994-8 have been described in this section. However, the list is not exhaustive. Different organisations are active locally and the number of organisations changes every year.

6.4 Tourism networks in the Auvergne: finding bridge actors and configurations

Thus, a multitude of actors are involved in tourism development. The background and mission of these actors vary and competencies are not always clearly delimited. This section will shed more light on the interrelations between these actors and the functioning of the regional tourism network. The information used is based on several sources:

- Interviews with representatives of tourism organisations, government bodies, organisations for the protection of nature, agritourism organisations, etc. (held in 1995, 1996 and 1998).
- A survey among organisations relevant to rural tourism development (1998). In this survey, a list of the main organisations in the field of rural tourism was presented. Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of contact with these organisations concerning tourism development. The respondents were also asked to indicate the influence of these organisations on rural tourism development. In a final part, respondents were asked to react to a number of statements on rural development, tourism development and rural tourism development⁹².
- A survey by the ENITA of Clermont-Ferrand among tourism entrepreneurs in the Auvergne (1997).

⁹¹ Interview with representative of SOMIVAL, 27 June, 1998

⁹² The survey also included a part on the role of regional nature parks. The results of this part will be presented in the next chapter.

- Information from secondary sources (including a PhD thesis on tourism promotion in the Auvergne⁹³).

The information will be presented along three lines. Firstly, an attempt will be made to establish whether crucial actors in the rural tourism network can be traced. Crucial actors are those establishing linkages between various parts of the tourism network (bridges or liaisons), or occupying a central position in the network or part of the network (stars). As it would take too far to present the position of all actors in this section, the description will focus on the main positions and some striking observations.

Secondly, the existence of sub-networks, discourses and configurations will be studied. Sub-networks (also called cliques or clusters) comprise actors who interact frequently. With regard to discourses, I will test whether the discourses mentioned in Section 6.1 can be related to actors at the regional level. This means that the survey will not be used to trace discourses, but to test whether evidence of discourses can be found at the level of organisations. Configurations are groups of actors with similar ideas on rural tourism development, who also have frequent contacts. Conclusions will be based on both quantitative and qualitative data. The discourses on rural development as described in Section 6.1 will be a starting point for defining common attitudes towards tourism. A first round of interviews (1995 and 1996) had led me to believe the discourses still play a role in relation to rural tourism development⁹⁴. Some changes and rapprochement could also be noted. As the material gathered in the interviews was unstructured and as discourses are a hard to grasp phenomenon - particularly in a culture which is not one's own - I decided to check some of the assumptions by including specific propositions in the 1998 survey.

Quantitative analyses were carried out with the statistical program SPSS. Data gathered were also analysed using UCINET, a computer-based program to measure and map social networks. Apart from centrality, this program can trace other types of network roles, such as liaisons or isolates. Also, it is suitable for calculating sub-networks or cliques and structural network characteristics. Results can be depicted graphically (using the sub-program KRACKPLOT), which is a useful option, both for the representation of networks and because figures can be very helpful for interpretation. The material can be reviewed at a glance, which means that crucial positions can be easily detected. As UCINET is particularly designed for the analysis of networks, the expectation was that it would prove an interesting addition to the analysis with SPSS.

Thirdly, I will focus on one particular aspect: the functioning of the tourism policy network, which will be illustrated by means of an analysis of the role of various organisations in tourism promotion. This will be based mainly on existing literature and information from the interviews.

Tracing crucial actors

When searching for actors with a crucial position in the regional tourism network, it is obvious that some actors play an important role because of their formal position. This is the case, for example, for all government bodies, which have a monopoly on the use of specific types of instruments. Apart from the formal position, a range of other aspects are of influence as well. This is certainly the case in tourism development, where formal positions are not always very clearly delimited.

⁹³ Mazuel, 1993-4

⁹⁴ See Caalders, 1997

Table 6.1 Scores of various organisations in terms of frequency of contact with respondents and alleged contribution to tourism development

	SPSS analysis		UCINET analysis ⁹⁵		Eigen vector
	Frequency of contact ⁹⁶	Perceived importance ⁹⁷	Indegree	Between	
DRT Ministry of Tourism	22	7.5	9	-	11
DRAF/DDAF Min. of Agric.	35	6.0	24	11	43
DIREN Min. of the Environment	6	4.2	0	0	16
DRE Ministry of Equipment	19	4.4	6	1	12
ONF State Forestry Service	12	4.9	0	0	15
CRT regional tourism body	22	7.9	3	-	7
CDT departmental tourism body	43	8.0	15	19	59
CR regional government	35	7.4	12	-	13
CG departmental government	39	7.5	24	10	36
CCI reg. chamber of commerce	15	5.3	6	2	22
CCILOC local chamber of comm	20	5.4	15	10	40
CRA reg. chamber of agriculture	11	5.2	6	1	22
CDA dep. chamber of agriculture	14	5.6	9	3	30
CHMET ch. of crafts and trade	9	4.2	6	0	12
PVOLV Parc des Volcans d'Auv.	20	7.5*	9	0	8
PLIFR Parc Livradois-Forez	25	7.5*	12	0	14
MAIRES mayors/local level repr.	72	6.6	36	5	43
CNRTER research institutes	6	4.9	0	0	0
SOMIVAL	6	5.3	3	2	30
UDOTSI reg. ass. of OT/si	35	8.1	6	3	23
OTSI local tourism boards	54	8.5	18	2	30
LOGFRAN Logis de France ⁹⁸	12	7.1	12	-	18
GITES Gites de France	28	7.7	18	0	26
ACCFER Accueil à la Ferme ⁹⁹	14	7.5	9	0	16
CHAMINA rambling association	11	7.8	0	0	7
SYNHOT syndicates of hoteliers	9	6.3	6	0	24
SYNAGR agricultural syndicates	5	4.1	6	0	21
VALVAC ass. villages vacances	6	7.0	6	2	2
BATENV nature organisations	12	5.4	3	0	2
PROFFOR forest owners	2	3.2	-	-	-
GERHOT hoteliers	34	6.9	-	-	-
GERCAM campsite owners	23	7.1	-	-	-
ENTAGRI agritourism entrep.	25	7.3	-	-	-
PRESTOU entrep. offering activities	46	8.0	-	-	-

* note that non-response for both parks was considerable: 16% for PdV and 27% for PLF.

Source: survey, 1998

In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate the importance they attached to each of the actors mentioned with regard to tourism development. At the same time, the frequency of contact with each of these actors concerning tourism-related matters was measured. This provides an indication for the centrality of the position of various actors.

⁹⁵ Based on frequency of contact of at least once a month; five highest scores are highlighted.

⁹⁶ Percentage having contact once a month or more; scores of 35% or over are highlighted.

⁹⁷ Average score in terms of contribution to tourism development (on a scale of 1 to 10); the higher, the more important; scores over 7 are highlighted.

⁹⁸ Association for the promotion/marketing of hotels

⁹⁹ Association for the promotion/marketing of agritourism

Of course, answers to the first question are tainted by a certain degree of social desirability or political correctness. The fact that respondents were questioned on behalf of their organisation, and that the names of the organisations were mentioned on the forms, probably added to this¹⁰⁰.

However, because the questionnaires were meant to carry out a network analysis, it was impossible to send anonymous questionnaires. Therefore, answers to this question may best be considered an indication of *formal* roles. Frequency of contact can be considered a measure for the centrality of an actor within the regional tourism network. If the first figure is low and the second is high, this may point at an important *informal* role. Also, information on frequency of contact was analysed using UCINET. An overview of results is presented in Table 6.1. This table is commented on in the following sections. As the methodology of a survey - as well as a statistical and computer-based network analysis - has its limitations, data will be complemented with background information from the interviews and secondary sources.

Centrality: valuation of role

When looking at the importance the respondents attach to the various organisations, the local tourism boards score highest¹⁰¹. The departmental association of these tourism boards (UDOTSI) also comes in the top 3. In addition, the CDT and the CRT (the departmental and the regional tourism boards) are considered highly influential. If comparing the role of the two main ministries - tourism (DRT) and agriculture (DRAF/DDAF) - respondents consider the DRT to be the more important actor of the two in terms of influence on tourism development. Just over 50% gave it a score of 8-10 on a 10 point scale (average of 7.5), compared to 23% for DRAF/DDAF (average of 6.0).

As stated before, scores in terms of valuation are highly related to the formal roles of actors. A more qualitative analysis gives rise to a different evaluation of at least the role of the CRT¹⁰². Valuation of the activities of the CRT by actors in the region varies, but its functioning meets with critique from a considerable number of actors¹⁰³. The fact that no regional *observatoire* for tourism development exists (the Auvergne is the only region without such an *observatoire*¹⁰⁴) was brought to the fore by some of the actors. Many actors feel that the CRT should play a coordinating role with regard to tourism in the Auvergne¹⁰⁵, but that it fails to do so. This is affirmed by Mazuel, who states that 'the internal communication of CRT (i.e. internal to the region) does not function well, for it is badly perceived by all the local actors responsible for promotion with whom we have been in touch'¹⁰⁶. The responsible actors at the CRT tend to remain in their offices and are hardly ever seen on the spot. When comparing these observations to the results of the survey, it appears that actors at the local level (see the scores for local tourist offices and other local actors in Table 6.2) were indeed less positive about the role of the CRT

¹⁰⁰ My impression is that this issue played a considerably larger role in France than in the Netherlands.
This question (as well as others) was often considered to have a political character.

¹⁰¹ This has been measured by calculating the number of respondents giving a score of 8 or over.

¹⁰² Unfortunately, as repeated requests for an interview with the CRT were turned down and CRT did not return the questionnaire, all information is indirect.

¹⁰³ This information comes from the interviews and literature.

¹⁰⁴ Maumelat, 1996

¹⁰⁵ Internal coordination is in fact a formal policy goal of the CRT (Mazuel, 1993-4).

¹⁰⁶ Mazuel, 1993-94: 88. *Lit:* [I]a communication interne du CRT ne fonctionne pas parce qu'elle est mal perçue par tous les responsables locaux de la promotion qui nous avons rencontrés'.

compared to other groups. The same - though less extreme - holds for the valuation of the departmental tourism board. This seems to confirm the statements of Mazuel.

Table 6.2 Valuation of the role of regional and departmental tourism boards, according to sector

	Tourism actors		Agri-culture	Nature	(Other) local actors	Other	Average
	local	other					
Valuation of role of CRT	6.9	8.5	7.3	9.3	7.1	8.9	7.9
Valuation of role of CDT	7.4	8.4	7.4	9.0	7.5	9.0	8.0

Source: survey, 1998

Striking in Table 6.2 is also the high valuation by the nature sector (but note that there are only four respondents in this category). This may reflect the (fairly recent) cooperation between tourism and nature, which is taking shape at the regional and departmental level (mainly with the CRT and the CDT).

With regard to the departmental tourism boards, it is interesting to notice that their scores vary considerably for each department. Puy-de-Dôme (average 7.2) scores significantly below the average (8.0) and the other departments (8.5 for Cantal and 8.8 for Haute Loire). This again shows that the general high valuation of the CDT should be interpreted with some care. The significantly lower score given by actors in Puy-de-Dôme reflects the sometimes difficult relation between the CDT and some other actors in this department (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3 Valuation of the role of the departmental tourism boards by actors in the different departments

	Local and departmental actors			Actors at the regional level	Average Auvergne
	Cantal	Haute Loire	Puy-de-Dôme		
Valuation of role of CDT	8.5	8.8	7.2	8.4	8.0

Source: survey, 1998

Qualitative information and a closer look at figures thus give rise to a different view on the high scores of the CDT and the CRT. A nuancing of the centrality of some actors arising from scores on valuation is also achieved when comparing these figures to frequency of contact in the next section.

Centrality: frequency of contact

Organisations scoring the highest¹⁰⁷ on the question how often the respondent had contact with them concerning tourism-related matters, are those operating on the local level: mayors or representatives of municipalities and tourist offices. These figures may be somewhat blurred, because a relatively large part of the respondents represented local organisations. However, when taking into account only contacts between different types of actors (by taking the average score of actors in one group with regard to contact with

¹⁰⁷ Over 50% of the respondents have contact with these actors at least once a month.

another group as has been done in the UCINET analysis) local actors still score highest (see Table 6.1).

Other actors that scored high were the departmental tourism board (CDT), the regional (CR) and departmental (CG) government, the Ministry of Agriculture (DRAF/DDAF) and the association of local tourism boards (UDOTSI)¹⁰⁸. Among the entrepreneurs, hotel owners and entrepreneurs offering tourist activities scored high.

In terms of contacts, the Ministry of Agriculture scores higher than the Ministry of Tourism. The fact that the former has much more staff available seems to play a role here. This allows a much more active role in the region, which is reflected by the results of the survey. Whereas over 35% of the respondents indicated that they have contact with DRAF/DDAF at least once a month, only 22% have such regular contact with the DRT. Analysis with UCINET also showed that the Ministry of Agriculture has a much more central role in terms of contact¹⁰⁹. Thus, although the Ministry of Tourism is considered more important, the Ministry of Agriculture possesses a more central role in the contact network.

This discrepancy between centrality in terms of contacts and perceived importance also applies to mayors. These are considered of only average importance (score of 6.6), but have the highest score in terms of frequency of contact. This is because mayors and other representatives of the local level are mentioned as one category. Contact is probably not with the same mayor each time, but with different ones on each occasion. The reverse is true for the CRT. This organisation scores high on importance, but lower on frequency of contact. This can be related to the arguments brought forward in the previous section. Some other actors that are considered important but are not frequently contacted are intermediary organisations, the association Chamina and entrepreneurs. Both regional parks also fall in this category. The intermediary actors (e.g. *Logis de France*, *Gîtes de France*, *Accueil à la Ferme*) can be considered a link between entrepreneurs and the market, and are central in that respect. Lower scores in terms of contact with the actors in this survey points at their less important role in the regional, departmental and local policy networks¹¹⁰. The fact that few organisations claim to have frequent contacts with entrepreneurs shows the relative distance between the actors interviewed and the 'work floor'. The position of the regional parks will be treated in depth in the next chapter.

Actors that score high in terms of both contact and perceived importance are the local tourism boards, the departmental tourism boards and the regional and departmental government. These actors can be considered to possess the most central position on the basis of the survey results.

Analysis of network positions using UCINET

For the analysis with UCINET, data on frequency of contact were used. In order to be able to use the data for analysis in UCINET, some transformation of the data was needed. As responses in some cases referred not to individual actors but to groups (e.g. mayors, DRAF/DDAF, local tourism boards), the respondents were divided into the same categories. These categories were empty if no respondents from this type had filled in the questionnaire (this was the case for example with the DRT and the CRT). As

¹⁰⁸ UDOTSI probably scores high because there were many OT/si among the respondents. In the UCINET analysis, the prominent position of this organisation is not confirmed.

¹⁰⁹ INDEGREE for DRAF/DDAF was 24, for the DRT only 9.

¹¹⁰ The survey only included organisations, not individual entrepreneurs.

entrepreneurs were not included in the survey, scores were left out of the analysis. The results thus refer to contact between categories of actors, and are averages (i.e. average frequency of contact between local organisations and departmental tourism board). The types of analyses which can be carried out with the survey data is limited, as data are not symmetric: the average frequency of contact with the CDT as mentioned by local organisations may differ from the frequency of contact with local organisations mentioned by the CDT. Some measures require that the matrix is made symmetrical.

To analyse the survey data, the measures indicated by the program as Indegree, Between and Eigenvector were selected¹¹¹. Indegree can be considered a measure for the centrality of each actor. It counts the number of actors which claim to have contact with this actor. In our case, only frequent contact of at least once a month was taken into consideration. Between is a measure for the extent to which an actor possesses a bridge function. It indicates to what extent an actor functions as a liaison between other actors (the score represents the percentage of the total connectivity within the network). The score can be calculated only for those actors or categories of actors that completed the questionnaires. The measure is thus based on the answers of the actors themselves. Actors with a high score act as a bridge, actors with a low score can be considered isolates. The Eigenvector measure also indicates the extent to which an actor functions as a bridge. As matrixes are made symmetrical to calculate this measure, results for all actors can be obtained (the higher of two values is taken). Results are presented in Table 6.1.

The scores for Indegree show a high centrality for mayors, the Ministry of Agriculture, the departmental government, local tourism offices and *Gîtes de France*. Differences with scores on frequency of contact are due to the fact that the UCINET analysis starts from the average scores of groups of actors. As particularly the categories 'mayors' and 'OTSI' contained a lot of respondents, scores of these groups carry less weight in the UCINET analysis. The fact that mayors still have the highest score means that these actors are frequently contacted not only by actors at the local level, but also by those at the departmental and the regional level. The scores of local tourism boards are still among the highest, but these boards have a relatively lower position, thus indicating that contacts with organisations at the local level may be better developed compared to the regional and departmental level.

Table 6.4 presents an overview of the ranks of various actors in terms of the frequency of contact in both the UCINET and the SPSS analysis. Generally, a higher rank in the SPSS analysis for frequency of contact, implies better developed relations with local tourism boards and representatives at the local level (e.g. UDOSI, CDT). As categories at the departmental level, such as the CDT, can also contain more than one actor, some of the differences between UCINET and SPSS ranks can be attributed to this as well.

¹¹¹ Many other measures to indicate the position of actors within a network exist; these tend to be difficult to interpret or are not useful for the data matrix in question. I do not want to go into the details of each of these measures here. As Ucinet user manuals are not very clear and user friendly, a guidebook has been written for the purpose of this project (see Slijkerman, 1998).

Table 6.4 Ranking of the scores of various actors in SPSS and UCINET analyses¹¹²

	UCINET results: Indegree	SPSS results: frequency of contact	SPSS results: perceived importance
DRT – Ministry of Tourism	11 - 14	10 - 11	7 - 11
DRAF/DDAF – Ministry of Agriculture	2 - 3	5 - 7	17
DIREN – Ministry of the Environment	26 - 29	25 - 28	27 - 28
DRE – Ministry of Equipment	15 - 22	14	26
ONF – State Forestry Service	26 - 29	18 - 20	24 - 25
CRT – regional tourism body	23 - 25	10 - 11	4
CDT – departmental tourism body	6 - 7	3	3
CR – regional government	8 - 10	5 - 7	12
CG – departmental government	2 - 3	4	7 - 11
CCI – chamber of commerce/regional	15 - 22	15	21 - 22
CCILOC – chamber of commerce – local	6 - 7	12 - 13	19 - 20
CRA – regional chamber of agriculture	15 - 22	21 - 22	23
CDA – dep. chamber of agriculture	11 - 14	16 - 17	18
CHMET – chamber of crafts and trade	15 - 22	23 - 24	27 - 28
PVOLV – Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne	11 - 14	12 - 13	7 - 11
PLIFR – Parc Livradois-Forez	8 - 10	9	7 - 11
MAIRES - mayors/local level representatives	1	1	15
CNRTER – research institutes	26 - 29	25 - 28	24 - 25
SOMIVAL	23 - 25	25 - 28	21 - 22
UDOTSI – ass. of local tourism boards	15 - 22	5 - 7	2
GTSI – local tourism boards	4 - 5	2	1
LOGFRAN – Logis de France (hotellers)	8 - 10	18 - 20	13
GITES – Gites de France	4 - 5	8	6
ACCFER – Accueil à la Ferme (agritourism)	11 - 14	16 - 17	7 - 11
CHAMINA – rambling association	26 - 29	21 - 22	5
SYNHOT – syndicate of hoteliers	15 - 22	23 - 24	16
SYNAGR – agricultural syndicates	15 - 22	29	29
VALVAC – ass. of villages vacances	15 - 22	25 - 28	14
BATENV – nature organisations	23 - 25	18 - 20	19 - 20

Source: survey 1998

The Between and Eigenvector measures indicate the extent to which actors function as a bridge between other actors. This shows that the departmental tourism board is most important in this respect. This is an interesting result, as this score is significantly higher compared to its rank on the basis of frequency of contact (Indegree). This implies that although the CDT does not have frequent contacts with as many organisations as some of the other actors, it does occupy a strategically important position in terms of network relations. Despite the critique which has been uttered before on the functioning of this institute, it thus appears that it is a highly important actor in terms of its position within

¹¹² Scores of actors ranking differently for various analyses are highlighted.

the tourism network in the Auvergne. Other actors with a bridge function are the Ministry of Agriculture, the local chambers of commerce, the departmental government and the mayors. With regard to the position of mayors, it is interesting to note the difference between scores for Between and for the other centrality measures. This is related to the fact that Between is based on the answers given by actors themselves. The relatively lower rank on this measure shows that the higher scores on other centrality measures are partly due to the fact that this category contains *all* mayors and local representatives; actors in the survey have contact with different ones each time. When looking at each single mayor, frequency of contact is much lower. Nevertheless, mayors still rank higher on this measure compared to their score in terms of the valuation of their importance by other actors. This implies that these local actors are undervalued and that they are 'silent' but nevertheless important actors in the tourism network.

Searching for subnetworks, discourses and configurations

In searching for the existence of sub-networks, discourses and configurations, several types of analyses were carried out. First of all, an analysis with UCINET, which did not produce a clear picture of sub-networks or cliques (see Textbox 6.3).

Consequently, the data were analysed with SPSS. This includes first of all an analysis of correlations between frequency of contact with various organisations. This analysis shows whether organisations having frequent contact with one of the actors, also interact more often with particular other actors as well (e.g. whether organisations having frequent contact with the Ministry of Agriculture would on average also have more contact with other agricultural organisations). In a similar way, correlation on valuation of various actors was analysed. Also, correlations between various propositions were inspected to see whether certain opinions coincide with others¹¹³.

In a second phase, correlations between frequency, valuation and opinions were analysed. Particularly the testing of a possible relation between frequency of contact and valuation of actors, and between contact and opinions on tourism, is interesting from the theoretical point of view. If such a relation exists, this would point at a relation between contact and opinion. Evidence on the existence of various subgroups of this kind would back the idea of configurations. With regard to the propositions, particularly those propositions on which opinions differ, are interesting for this analysis (propositions on which almost everybody agrees or disagrees will not produce variation between groups). For this purpose, propositions which have both proponents and opponents were selected¹¹⁴ (see Appendix 1, Table III) for an overview of these propositions).

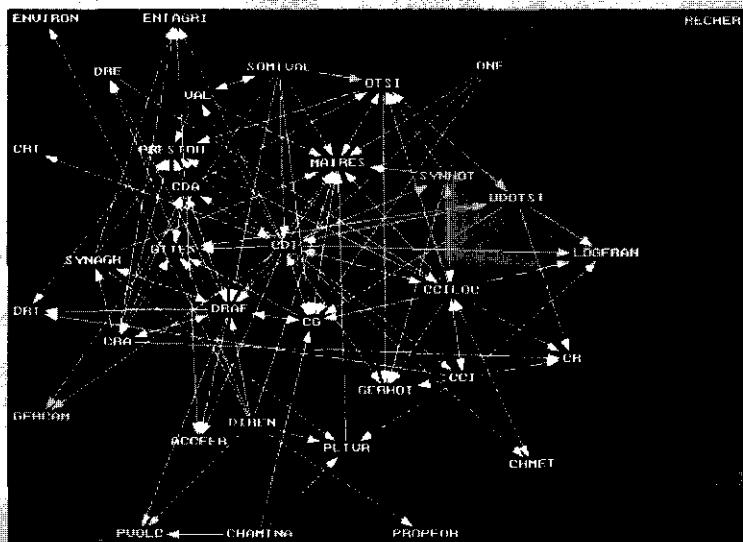
After an analysis of singular correlation, clustering techniques were used to see whether clear sub-groups based on interaction patterns could be distilled. A positive result would point at the existence of subgroups within the tourism network. An analysis of the valuation of the various actors and of their opinions with regard to tourism development was carried out in a similar way. Coherent sub-groups with regard to opinions would point at an influence of discourses.

¹¹³ An overview of the scores of actors on various propositions is presented in one of the following sections (pages 123 to 128).

¹¹⁴ To be selected, at least 10% of respondents should agree/disagree with the proposition.

Textbox 6.3 Experiences of network analysis through UCINET and KRACKPLOT

It is interesting to analyse which actors are particularly linked to each of the bridge actors and whether sub-networks exist. Various UCINET measures can be used for such analysis. However, none of these measures produced any useful results. In addition, it was hoped that a graphical representation of the network would contribute to more insight into network relations. This, however, was not the case, as is illustrated by the figure below (showing the plot for Indegree). Other measures produced similar results.



When evaluating the results produced by UCINET and KRACKPLOT, these produced some extra information compared to the SPSS results. Especially the measures for the bridge function of various actors provided some additional insight into the tourism network. Producing these results took considerable effort; too much effort for too little additional information. The lack of interesting results is partly due to the input. But the disproportionate effort needed to produce these results is also due to the fact that UCINET is - to put it nicely - not a very friendly program to work with. It was even necessary to write our own manual before being able to use the program and to interpret the meaning of the various measures.

Source: this thesis

Visual inspection of correlation

Visual inspection of correlations on frequency of contact shows only few high scores (over 0.4; see Appendix 1, Table IV) These are mostly between similar types of organisations (regional and departmental government, chamber of commerce and chamber of crafts, local tourism boards and departmental association of tourism boards, associations dealing with tourism accommodation, different types of tourism entrepreneurs). With regard to valuation of various organisations, higher correlations are found (Appendix 1; Table V). Here too, similar types of organisations seem to correlate

(high correlations between some of the state bodies, between various types of entrepreneurs, between various types of chambers, between both regional nature parks, etc.). Some of the other correlations can be easily explained. The high correlation between Gîtes de France and the CDT is probably connected to the fact that both organisations are closely related in some departments. In Puy-de-Dôme, for example, they are run by the same president and housed in the same building. At the same time, less straightforward correlations can be detected, such as between hotel syndicates and the association for accommodation on farms (Accueil à la Ferme) or between research institutes and the Ministry of Agriculture. With regard to the propositions, only few correlations score over 0.4. Some pattern seems to exist with regard to questions relating to agritourism development (Appendix 1, Table VII).

A second step was to compare scores concerning frequency with those concerning valuation. In the first place it is interesting to see whether organisations with which contact is more frequent are also valued higher - or organisations with which contact less frequent and valued lower (Appendix 1, Table VI). Strikingly, correlations between frequency of contact and valuation are not very high and rise over 0.4 only in a few cases (for the Ministry of Agriculture, the local and regional chamber of commerce, the regional chamber of agriculture and SOMIVAL). In many cases, there is no significant correlation at all. When looking at correlation between frequency of contact with one actor and valuation of other actors, few scores are over 0.4. High scores are found particularly with regard to the various chambers: more contact with one of the chambers tends to correlate with a higher valuation of the role of these institutes. If in this table high scores for one actor coincide with low scores for others, this may point at the existence of sub-networks with little contact and a negative view of each other. It is particularly interesting to see whether various discourses - which have been discerned in Section 6.1 - can be traced. Little evidence of such can be found in the table. As far as the alleged divide between the regular tourism sector and agritourism is concerned, no evidence can be found.

Two other observations can be made. Firstly, that there is a negative correlation between contact with local tourism boards and valuation of the Ministry of Tourism and that of Agriculture¹¹⁵. This might point at some divide between the local and the national level. Secondly, there is a positive correlation between contact with hotel syndicates and valuation of *Logis de France* and regular tourism entrepreneurs (campsites and hotels). If starting from the hypothesis that various discourses do exist, the fact that significant correlations are found in this particular case and not in others might be explained by the fact that very few actors have regular contact with hotel syndicates. These are most likely actors most highly included (in the terminology of Termeer) in the regular tourism industry. With regard to tourism actors having contact with a much broader range of other actors (e.g. the CDT or local tourism boards), this diversity of contacts will make it less likely that significant correlations are found. Notwithstanding these small observations, visual inspection of correlations between contact and valuation does not point at the existence of clear sub-networks, discourses or configurations.

Clustering techniques

Subsequently, several clustering techniques were attempted. First a cluster analysis of variables was carried out. This did not result in very clear clusters (see Appendix 1,

¹¹⁵ Kendall tau β =-0.36 for DRT and OT/si and -0.42 for DRAF/DDAF and OT/si respectively (significant at 99% level)

Figures I and II). With regard to frequency and valuation, the patterns described before can to some extent be recognised, but are not very clear (similar types of organisations are in some cases grouped at an early stage in the analysis). Next, a clustering of cases was carried out - each case representing either a tourism, an agricultural a nature or a local organisation. This also did not result in a clear pattern. Multidimensional scaling analysis also did not reveal a strong pattern¹¹⁶.

Thus, clustering techniques did not generate statistically significant evidence of subgroups, discourses or configurations. This can be explained by the number of respondents in relation to the variance in the responses. Though a large number of the organisations which play a role in rural tourism development were included in the survey, in absolute terms their number was too small to carry out a quantitative analysis. Only had a very clear difference in terms of interaction patterns or opinions occurred, would this have appeared from the statistical analyses. The tourism network in the Auvergne proved too complicated and diversified to be able to identify statistically significant subgroups. Nevertheless, from a closer look at the data some interesting observations can be made.

A further analysis of actors' perceptions

In this section, scores with regard to question 3 are analysed more closely. The respondents were asked to give their opinion about a number of propositions relating to rural development, tourism development and rural tourism development. Some of these propositions refer to the discourses discerned in Section 6.1, that is: the 'agricultural' discourse, which depicts tourism as a means for farmers to gain additional income; the 'urban' discourse, which approaches tourism as a leisure opportunity for the urban population, emphasises the quality of the tourism product and relates tourism to the professional tourism sector; and the 'rural is natural' discourse, in which rural tourism should be developed in symbiosis with its environment, as a small-scale activity, in harmony with nature. In addition to propositions referring to these three discourses, some propositions referring to the possibility to link economic development of tourism to rural qualities were included in the questionnaire.

It is interesting to find out whether various actors in the Auvergne can be related to any of these discourses. Or, in other words, whether the abstract values in French society are reflected in regional configurations. As a general statistical analyses of the data do not generate evidence on the existence of subgroups or discourses, the responses are analysed in detail in this section. To check whether different groups of actors have a different opinion about rural tourism development, actors are divided into four groups: the regular tourism sector, organisations involved in agritourism, actors related to environment, nature or landscape conservation, and actors in local development (See Appendix 1, Table II for a division of actors among the various groups). For each of these groups, scores on propositions were analysed. It should be noted that some of the groups (especially 'nature', but also agriculture) contain only few respondents. Because numbers in these groups were too small, it was not possible to test the significance of the differences statistically¹¹⁷.

¹¹⁶ As results of clustering techniques were very meagre, data have only been included for a cluster analysis of the variables - as an example.

¹¹⁷ To use χ^2 , expected frequencies should be over 5 for at least 80% of the cases.

Table 6.5 Scores on propositions related to the 'rural equals agricultural' discourse (total scores and scores of actors in particular sectors)

		tourism	agriculture	nature	local development	average
		25	8	3	15	51
No countryside without agriculture	agree	25 83%	8 100%	3 100%	15 100%	51 91%
	neutral or disagree	5 (17%)	0	0	0	5 9%
	<i>total</i>	30 100%	8 100%	3 100%	15 100%	56 100%
The development of rural tourism can solve the problems of agriculture	agree	18 60%	5 63%	2 67%	5 33%	30 54%
	neutral	7 23%	1 13%	1 13%	5 33%	14 25%
	disagree	5 17%	2 25%	-	5 33%	12 21%
	<i>total</i>	30 100%	8 100%	3 100%	15 100%	56 100%
Rural tourism is primarily the affair of farmers	agree	1 3%	3 38%	-	1 7%	5 9%
	neutral	4 13%	1 13%	25%	13%	8 14%
	disagree	26 84%	4 50%	3 75%	12 80%	45 78%
	<i>total</i>	31 100%	8 100%	4 100%	15 100%	58 100%
(-) Subsidising tourism activities of farmers risks to disturb the competition in the sector	agree	13 46%	-	-	3 20%	16 29%
	neutral	8 29%	-	3 75%	4 27%	15 27%
	disagree	7 25%	8 100%	1 25%	8 53%	24 44%
	<i>total</i>	28 100%	8 100%	4 100%	15 100%	55 100%
(-) The agricultural sector should not be involved in tourism development	agree	3 10%	-	-	1 7%	4 7%
	neutral	3 10%	-	1 25%	2 13%	6 11%
	disagree	23 80%	8 100%	3 75%	12 80%	46 82%
	<i>total</i>	29 100%	8 100%	4 100%	15 100%	56 100%

Source: survey, 1998

Some observations with regard to the 'rural equals agricultural' discourse

The questionnaire contained some propositions which refer to the 'rural equals agriculture' discourse. An overview of scores on relevant propositions is presented in Table 6.5.

The idea that there is no countryside without agriculture is still widely acknowledged across all sectors. Over 90% of the respondents agree with this proposition. This implies that the 'rural equals agriculture' discourse has much support in the Auvergne, across all sectors. However, when observing some propositions which refer not only to agriculture but also to the role of the agricultural sector in rural areas, the pattern becomes more diffuse. The chambers of agriculture are among the group of actors who take an extreme position in this respect. Three out of the five respondents who agree on the proposition that rural tourism is primarily a concern of farmers represent a chamber of agriculture. A similar opinion has been uttered in the interviews, in which a representative of one of the agricultural chambers equated rural tourism with a holiday on a farm. According to this respondent, other 'rurals' cannot offer the ambience rural tourists are seeking as well as farmers can.

The proposition that farmers' organisations should not be involved in tourism development can be placed on the other side of the spectrum. Here, too, most respondents (80%) do not agree with this proposition. Those who have a different opinion (five respondents) can mainly be found at the local level (tourist offices and local representatives). In the interviews, some other organisations in the regular tourism sector made statements similar to this proposition.

Strikingly, over 50% of the respondents agree with the proposition that tourism can solve problems for agriculture. Actors in the field of local development are the least convinced of this.

Of those representing the regular tourism sector, almost 50% agree that subsidising tourism activities of farmers causes unfair competition within the sector. None of the representatives of agricultural organisations agrees with this. This indicates a different attitude towards agritourism development, which has been indicated before.

Overall, it can be stated that the idea that 'rural equals agriculture' is still strong in the Auvergne. This is reflected in the fact that the role of agricultural organisations in rural tourism development is accepted by most respondents. Nevertheless, this role is not undisputed and particularly the regular tourism sector is critical about the role of agricultural actors in tourism development.

Some observations on the 'urbanisation is modernisation' discourse

In this discourse, rural tourism development should be done in a professional way, offering products and services of a high standard, for the amusement and relaxation of - predominantly urban - tourists. Good and easy access is also relevant.

Table 6.6 shows that the regular tourism sector is most inclined to agree on such propositions. This was confirmed in some of the interviews. In a conversation with the departmental tourism board of Puy-de-Dôme¹¹⁸, for example, the importance of the 'quality' of the tourism product was stressed as was the need for a professional approach (see also section 6.3). Particularly the villages should attach more importance to the management of public space: it should be clean and have flowers, and attention should be paid to the heritage (*petit patrimoine*).

¹¹⁸This conversation took place because the CDT considered itself not to be in the position to fill in the questionnaire. A formal report of the interview has been made and was approved by the respondent.

Table 6.6 Scores on propositions related to the 'urbanisation is modernisation' discourse (total scores and scores of actors in particular sectors)

		tourism	agriculture	nature	local development	average
The creation of a 'Musée du Volcanisme' offers the opportunity to show the treasures of the Auvergne to visitors	agree	29 94%	5 71%	3 75%	10 67%	47 83%
	neutral or disagree	2 7%	2 29%	1 25%	5 33%	10 18%
	total	31 100%	7 100%	4 100%	15 100%	57 100%
The development of agritourism threatens to lower the quality of tourism service	agree or neutral	7 23%	-	-	2 13%	9 16%
	disagree	24 77%	8 100%	4 100%	13 87%	49 85%
	total	31 100%	8 100%	4 100%	15 100%	58 100%
The improvement of the quality of the tourist infrastructure is one of the best ways to stimulate tourism development	agree	30 97%	6 75%	2 50%	13 87%	31 88%
	disagree	1 3%	2 25%	2 50%	2 13%	7 12%
	total	31 100%	8 100%	4 100%	15 100%	58 100%
The Auvergne should develop more attractions so that tourists will have more opportunities to amuse themselves	agree	16 55%	1 17%	1 33%	11 73%	29 55%
	neutral	7 24%	4 67%	-	2 13%	13 25%
	disagree	6 21%	1 17%	2 67%	2 13%	11 21%
	total	29 100%	6 100%	3 100%	15 100%	53 100%
The fact that the south of the Auvergne cannot be reached by air is a serious obstacle for tourism development in this area	agree	13 43%	2 25%	1 33%	3 20%	19 34%
	neutral	11 37%	3 38%	1 33%	5 33%	20 36%
	disagree	6 20%	3 38%	1 33%	7 47%	17 30%
	total	30 100%	8 100%	3 100%	15 100%	56 100%
The construction of a motorway between Bordeaux and Lyon will contribute to regional tourism development	agree	28 90%	6 75%	1 25%	10 67%	45 78%
	neutral	1 3%	1 13%	1 25%	4 27%	7 12%
	disagree	2 7%	1 13%	2 51%	1 7%	6 10%
	total	31 100%	8 100%	4 100%	15 100%	58 100%
In order to attract more foreign visitors, it is above all necessary to create more 4- and 5-star hotels	agree	10 36%	2 29%	2 50%	6 40%	20 37%
	neutral	8 29%	1 14%	-	7 47%	16 30%
	(completely) disagree	10 36%	4 57%	2 50%	2 13%	18 33%
	total	28 100%	7 100%	4 100%	15 100%	54 100%

Source: survey, 1998

Not surprisingly, nature organisations tend to be more opposed to these propositions. Also actors in the agricultural sector are less inclined to agree. This is in line with the fact that 'rural is agriculture' and 'urbanisation is modernisation' are two opposed discourses on rural areas¹¹⁹.

Some observations on the 'rural is natural' discourse

There is general consensus that protection of the regional heritage is important for the economic development of the region. However, when asking whether protection of the heritage should have priority over economic development, particularly farmers' organisations disagree¹²⁰. This implies that the notion that protection is important has taken root, a notion which can be related to the 'rural is natural' discourse. Agriculture-related organisations seem to be the most distant from this discourse. Not surprisingly, nature organisations tend to agree most on the propositions within the rural is natural discourse (it should be kept in mind that there were only four respondents in this category) (see Table 6.7).

Observations with regard to conserving rural qualities through the economic development of tourism

A few propositions referring to the need to develop tourism in accordance with local or regional identity were included in the questionnaires. Scores on these propositions are presented in Table 6.8. It is striking all these scores are high. Most organisations seem convinced of the need to stress regional identity and to preserve the heritage for tourism development. It is, however, very likely that each has different ideas about what heritage is. On average, agricultural organisations are somewhat more negative than the other sectors. Nature organisations and the regular tourism sector tend to agree most to these propositions.

General conclusions on discourses

Figure 6.2 provides an impression of the attitude of each group of actors towards the discourses which have been discerned. The scores on conservation combined with economic development have not been included, because all groups scored very positively on these propositions¹²¹.

When reading this figure and the scores, it should be borne in mind that 'positive' and 'negative' only have a meaning in relation to the propositions. If developing a score which should actually represent the discourse, propositions should be 'weighed' according to their assumed relevance to the particular discourse. As the survey in the Auvergne was mainly explorative, and not intended as to function as a standardised measure for discourses, this was not considered appropriate in this case. The scores can however be used to position the various sectors *vis-à-vis* one another with regard to the discourse in question. The propositions which have been used to measure the discourse should be kept in mind.

¹¹⁹ See also the quote on page 97.

¹²⁰ None of the agricultural actors agreed on this proposition, compared to 28% of respondents from other sectors.

¹²¹ Scores are 0.78 for regular tourism and local development, 0.73 for local development and 0.60 for agriculture.

Table 6.7 Scores on propositions related to the 'rural is natural' discourse

		tourism	agricul-ture	nature	local develop-ment	average
	agree	5 18%	-	3 75%	5 33%	13 24%
The conservation of heritage should have priority over economic development	neutral	11 39%	3 38%	-	5 33%	19 35%
	disagree	12 43%	5 63%	1 25%	5 33%	23 42%
	<i>total</i>	28 100%	8 100%	4 100%	15 100%	55 100%
The creation of a ' <i>Musée du Volcanisme</i> ' will put too much pressure on an ecologically fragile environment	agree or neutral	11 38%	1 14%	4 100%	9 64%	25 46%
	disagree	18 62%	6 86%	-	5 36%	29 54%
	<i>total</i>	29 100%	7 100%	4 100%	14 100%	54 100%
It is not desirable to try and triple the number of tourists in the Auvergne from the point of view of the natural and cultural heritage	agree or neutral	22 73%	3 37%	3 75%	6 40%	34 60%
	disagree	8 27%	5 63%	1 25%	9 60%	23 40%
	<i>total</i>	30 100%	8 100%	4 100%	15 100%	57 100%
Considering the fact that the landscape is one of the main tourist attractions, it is only normal that tourist entrepreneurs should contribute financially to its conservation	agree	20 67%	3 38%	3 75%	9 60%	35 61%
	neutral	7 23%	3 38%	1 25%	2 13%	13 23%
	disagree	3 10%	2 25%	-	4 27%	9 16%
	<i>total</i>	30 100%	8 100%	4 100%	15 100%	57 100%
Tourism development should above all benefit rural areas	agree	12 39%	5 63%	3 75%	8 53%	28 48%
	neutral	5 16%	3 38%	-	6 40%	14 24%
	disagree	14 45%	-	1 25%	1 7%	16 28%
	<i>total</i>	31 100%	8 100%	4 100%	15 100%	58 100%
Tourism development takes insufficient account of the interest of the local population	agree	4 14%	2 25%	1 25%	5 33%	1 22%
	neutral	8 29%	2 25%	1 25%	-	11 20%
	disagree	16 57%	4 50%	2 50%	10 67%	32 58%
	<i>total</i>	28 100%	8 100%	4 100%	15 100%	55 100%
(-)The number of gîtes in the Auvergne is sufficient; creation of more gîtes will only increase competition among them	agree	9 29%	1 13%	1 33%	2 13%	13 23%
	neutral	10 32%	1 13%	1 33%	4 27%	16 28%
	disagree	12 39%	6 75%	1 33%	9 60%	28 49%
	<i>total</i>	31 100%	8 100%	3 100%	15 100%	57 100%

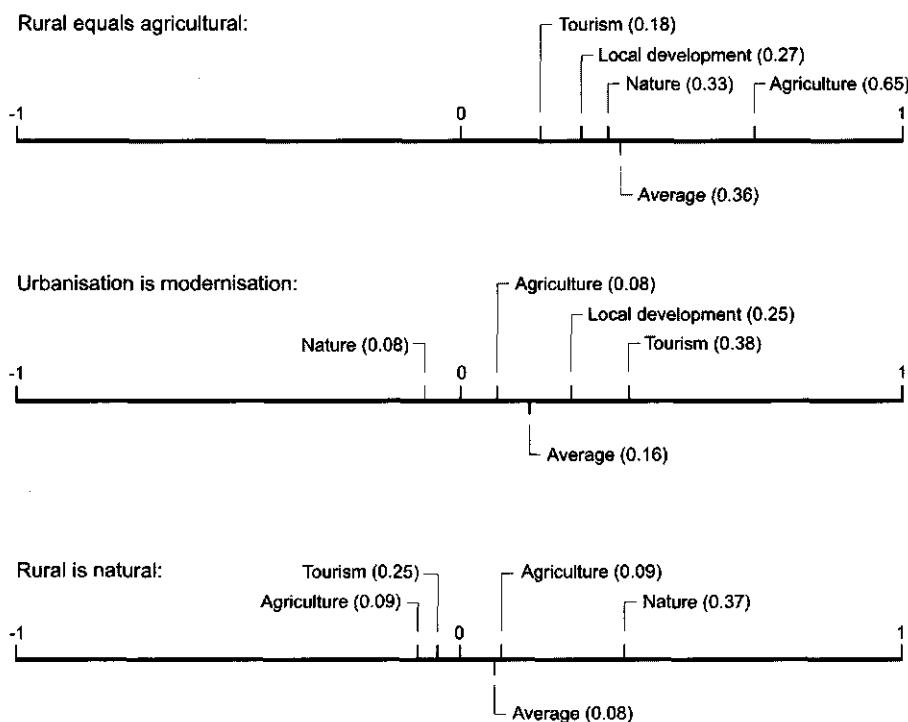
Table 6.8 Scores on propositions referring to conservation of qualities through economic development of tourism

	tourism	agricul-ture	nature	local develop-ment	average
agree	31 100%	7 88%	3 75%	14 93%	55 95%
The conservation of the heritage is important for the economic development in the Auvergne					
neutral	-	-	1 25%	-	1 1.7%
disagree	-	1 13%	-	1 7%	2 3%
total	31 100%	8 100%	4 100%	15 100%	58 100%
In order to attract more foreign visitors, it is above all necessary to stress the identity of the region					
agree	29 96%	7 88%	4 100%	14 93%	54 93%
neutral	2 7%	-	-	1 7%	3 5%
disagree	-	1 13%	-	-	1 2%
total	31 100%	8 100%	4 100%	15 100%	58 100%
(-) Considering that the Auvergne has a less attractive tourism product than other regions, (Midi, Alps) prices of tourism services should be lower					
agree	9 29%	3 38%	-	6 40%	18 31%
neutral	8 26%	2 25%	1 25%	4 27%	15 26%
disagree	14 45%	3 38%	3 75%	5 33%	25 43%
total	31 100%	8 100%	4 100%	15 100%	58 100%
The problem is not that the Auvergne does not have enough to offer tourists; the problem is that it doesn't know how to sell it.					
agree	26 84%	6 75%	3 100%	13 87%	48 84%
neutral	5 16%	1 13%	-	2 13%	8 14%
disagree	-	1 13%	-	-	1 2%
total	30 100%	8 100%	3 100%	15 100%	57 100%
The degradation of the landscape is one of the main dangers for the development of the region					
agree	27 87%	5 63%	2 50%	14 93%	48 83%
neutral	2 7%	3 38%	1 25%	-	6 10%
disagree	2 7%	-	1 25%	1 7%	4 7%
total	31 100%	8 100%	4 100%	15 100%	58 100%
Tourism entrepreneurs should inform their clients about the specific qualities of the region and ask them to respect the heritage					
agree	29 97%	7 88%	4 100%	14 93%	54 95%
neutral	1 3%	1 13%	-	1 7%	3 5%
total	30 100%	8 100%	4 100%	15 100%	57 100%

Source: survey, 1998

The figure thus shows that agricultural organisations score highest on the agricultural discourse. Particularly the chambers of agriculture are strong representatives of this discourse. Opposition comes mainly from organisations within the regular tourism sector. Nevertheless, tourism as a whole also scores positively on this discourse. Tourism organisations score most positively on the 'modernisation is urbanisation' discourse, on which nature organisations are the most negative. This is the only group with high scores on the rural is natural discourse. Organisations for local development score average on each of the discourses. Earlier, it was observed that there were some indications for an approach between nature and tourism organisations. As the scores show, this is the case only with regard to the propositions mentioned in Table 6.8: economic development while conserving rural qualities. In the discourse on urbanisation and on 'rural is natural', both sectors are opposed.

Figure 6.2 Indication of distance of various actors to discourses¹²²



Source: survey 1998

¹²² This figure is based on the scores on the propositions. Positive and negative answers have been weighed and divided by the number of propositions and the number of average number of actors who have responded to these propositions; the more actors from a group agree on the propositions, the higher the score, the more actors disagree, the lower the score.

The tourism policy network

Despite the division of tasks foreseen in the laws on decentralisation, the various territorial structures involved in tourism do not always coordinate their activities. ... The division of tasks is often complicated by political rivalry. The various territorial organisations are a stake in the power game and are subject to electoral changes¹²³.

As the survey data do not present a clear picture of the tourism network in the Auvergne in terms of positions and interrelations, a more in-depth qualitative analysis of the tourism policy network was carried out. The focus was on marketing and promotion¹²⁴.

An overview of the main actors in tourism development in the Auvergne is presented in Section 6.3. Many of these are involved in the promotion and marketing of tourist products. An important actor is the CRT, a body that falls under the regional government. It was the CRT that created the image of the Auvergne as an area of *Grands Espaces*. Departments have their own promotional strategy, coordinated by the departmental tourism committees (CDT). Apart from the CDT and the CRT some other organisations involved in promotion are the *pays d'accueil* (communes cooperating for tourism policy), local tourism offices, regional nature parks, agricultural organisations (such as the chambers of agriculture) and thematic associations (such as Chamina for rambling).

Formally, a division of labour between the regional, departmental and local tourism bodies has been drawn (which can be traced back in official policy documents): the role of the regional tourism board (CRT) is to attract the attention of potential visitors by promoting the image of the region; its activities are aimed at the national and international market. The department's job is to promote the various products available; its activities are aimed particularly at adjacent regions. Local tourism offices provide information on activities and accommodation to visitors on the spot. Despite the seeming logic of this formal division, Mazuel concludes in his PhD thesis on promotion and marketing of tourism in the Auvergne, that little coordination of activities exists either horizontally or vertically. This is due to various types of factors, including geographic, historic, political and organisational¹²⁵.

To start with the regional level: the CRT of the Auvergne is responsible for internal communication and for promoting a coherent image of the Auvergne. It fails to do both, due to its internal functioning and its bad relations with actors at the local and the departmental level. In its choice of promotional strategy, the CRT hardly communicated with departments, local tourism boards and entrepreneurs. As a result, the CRT Auvergne has 'delicate' relations with each of the four CDTs in the region¹²⁶. None of the CDTs in the Auvergne is willing to cooperate under the CRT's conditions, and the CRT does not have the means to enforce or stimulate such a hierarchical relation. Apart from the CRT's incapacity, particularities at the departmental level also hamper cooperation. Tourism promotion at the departmental level is a highly political 'strategic' matter, which is

¹²³ Pasqualini et al., 1989: 247-248. *Lit.*: Malgré le partage des compétences prévu par les lois de décentralisation, les différentes structures territoriales chargées du tourisme ne coordonnent pas toujours leurs actions. ... Ce partage des compétences est souvent rendu difficile par des rivalités politiques. Les différents organismes territoriaux restent un enjeu de pouvoir et sont soumis aux changements électoraux'.

¹²⁴ This section is based on information from the interviews, official policy documents and mission statements, promotional material of various organisations and the PhD thesis of Mazuel (1993-94).

¹²⁵ Mazuel, 1993-4

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

reflected by the fact that the president of the CDT is generally the same person as the president of the Conseil Général¹²⁷. One of the main aims of the CDT tends to be the promotion of the departmental image, for which reason cooperation with the CRT is not considered opportune:

Doesn't the structure of CDT have as its only goal to flatter the inclination of the departmental governments to control everything and in particular whatever touches the reserved domain: all that touches the image, the guarantee of existence, the integrity, the sovereignty of the French Department which is defended at high cost. This is the same critic which can be addressed at the megalomaniac constructions of the departmental governments. The competition for creating an identity, of which the logo is one of the symbols, marks the concern of the departments to not hand over one ounce of power to the regions¹²⁸.

From a marketing point of view, Mazuel questions the relevance of a promotional strategy at the departmental level. The departments (with the exception of Cantal) are hardly coherent tourist areas, which makes it difficult to market them as a whole.

Similar frictions exist in the relation between the departments and various administrations at the local level, though less so in the Cantal compared to Haute Loire, Allier and Puy-de-Dôme. Cantal is the only department which has achieved a certain unity in terms of external promotion. It is the only department in the Auvergne which cooperates with the main destinations (*poids lourds*) in the area (though each of these also has its own promotional strategies on the side). In other departments these main attractions are 'fatally in conflict with the CDT that wants to supervise them'¹²⁹. The fact that Cantal stands out is mainly due to the fragmentation at the local level: cooperation between neighbouring communities is hampered due to historical frictions and single localities lack the means to generate their own promotion.

The *pays d'accueil touristiques* also tend to develop their own tourism policies and their own promotional strategies, not linked to that of the region or the department. They have the possibility to do so, because the regional federation of these *pays* supports their efforts and helps with the commercialisation and promotion of their products. Through cooperation at the national level, access to specific client groups (horse-riding, historical towns) is achieved. In this way, the regional and departmental promotional structures can be escaped from¹³⁰. Some *pays* (like the *Pays de Dauphiné d'Auvergne*) have no contact with the CRT or the CDT whatsoever. Also, hardly any cooperation with neighbouring areas generally exists; these are generally considered competitors.

What is true for the various geographical levels also largely holds for the various types of tourism within the region. Agritourism, the hotel sector, spa tourism, ski resorts and the like: each tends to focus on their own product, instead of cooperating. To a large extent, this is due to differences in organisational background and in a perceived

¹²⁷ Ibid.: 58

¹²⁸ Ibid.: 84; *lit.*: 'La structure du CDT n'a-t-elle pas comme unique but celui de flatter la propension des Conseils généraux à contrôler tout et particulièrement ce qui constitue le domaine réservé: tout ce qui touche à l'image, garante de l'existence, de l'intégrité, de la souveraineté chèrement défendue du département français. C'est la même critique que l'on pourrait dresser sur les constructions mégalomaniques des sièges de Conseils généraux. La course à l'identification, dont le logo est un des symboles, marque le souci des départements de ne pas céder à la région une once de pouvoir'.

¹²⁹ Ibid.: 74; *lit.*: 'fatidiquement en conflit avec un CDT qui veut les superviser'.

¹³⁰ Ibid.: 70-71; 'Dans de telles conditions, ... on comprend aisément que certains pays d'accueil "boycottent" délibérément les CDT, le CRT, conscient des possibilités très intéressantes qui leur sont, par ailleurs, offertes'.

divergence of interests. Mazuel also refers to the existence of different discourses on this respect¹³¹.

The above description demonstrates that it is an understatement to say that cooperation in the field of rural tourism development in the Auvergne is lacking. Geographically, the region is not a unity, nor are the various departments. Historically, it is not an integrated space, little interaction between largely secluded localities existed, as there are frictions between neighbouring communities. Politically, the local governments, departments and region have different colours and different interests. And in terms of organisation, the regional and departmental levels are not able to commit the lower levels or the various parts of the tourism sector to a joint strategy.

The fragmentation and superpositioning of promotional activities is not only ineffective (because it lacks division of labour), but also counterproductive in attracting tourists. Many of the areas promoted are too small to be able to offer a complete and interesting product. Referring to increased promotional activities by the *pays d'accueil*, Mazuel has observed that their cooperation often seems to be forced from an inward-looking strategy that reflects internal competition rather than the tastes of the market¹³².

The lack of coordination in tourism is not restricted to promotion. It can also be observed with regard to other parts of tourism policy such as the subsidisation of rural tourism accommodation (like *gîtes* and *chambre d'hôtes*). Grants are available from the EU, the region and some departments. Each government has created its own particular rules with regard to the type of projects which can receive grants. In some cases these are available for accommodation with at least two stars; in other cases at least four stars are required, or the accommodation should represent a particular regional style (*gîte de caractère*). Moreover, numerous bodies function as intermediaries for applicants who wish to obtain a grant: the regional chamber of agriculture, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Parc Livradois-Forez can be approached for EU grants. The region and the department are contacts for their own particular grants. In addition, *Gîtes de France* can be approached as can the departmental chambers of agriculture and some other agricultural bodies like ADASEA.

The lack of cooperation is considered a problem by most of the respondents in the survey: over 80% agree on the proposition that 'The Auvergne has plenty to offer tourists, but doesn't know how to sell it' (see Table 6.8). More cooperation between various organisations is considered essential¹³³.

Concluding remarks

Summarising, the analysis of the rural tourism 'tissue' in the Auvergne shows that competencies are disputed, tasks are parcelled out, and promotion is not co-ordinated. This is partly due to the nature of rural tourism and of the French administrative relations, but partly also due to factors typical of the Auvergne. Especially the fact that

¹³¹ Mazuel, 1994: 49: 'En effet, les acteurs du tourisme semblent trop souvent enfermés dans des systèmes verticaux différents. Par exemple, les agriculteurs vont être motivés par la DDA, la Chambre d'Agriculture. Sur le même espace, les commerçants vont être sensibilisés par la Chambre de Commerce, les artisans par celle des Métiers, les hôteliers par leurs groupements départementaux ... Lorsqu'on voudra réunir ces volontés à l'intérieur d'une communication, on risque de se heurter aux discours des uns et des autres, aux intrasigences, aux intérêts divergents. N'ayant pas les mêmes formations, les mêmes sensibilisations au tourisme, ils auront des pires difficultés à mettre en place la promotion du pays'.

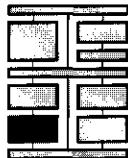
¹³² Mazuel, 1994; Dionnet, 1995

¹³³ All respondents (100%) agreed with this proposition.

some of the institutions - which, based on their formal tasks, could be expected to play a central role - fail to fulfil their mission is relevant in this respect. In other regions, examples of institutes which have been able to take up such a coordinating role exist. As far as the region is concerned, the lack of coordination is not restricted to tourism; the Auvergne is one of the regions which have not created a plan for regional development¹³⁴. Political differences between the region and some departments, and the traditional *enclavement* of the area seem to be of influence. With regard to tourism, part of the explanation is also that tourism in the Auvergne does not have a very dominant economic position. In addition, tourism is very diversified (nature-related tourism, agritourism, spa's, skiing resorts, social tourism, rambling) and each section has its own history, is embedded in different administrative structures and has created its own institutes. Thus, actors in rural tourism development in the Auvergne come from a variety of backgrounds and have different opinions on what rural tourism development is and should be about. Or, in other words: they are part of different discourses on rural tourism development. Two views shared by most actors are the desirability to base tourism development on rural qualities and the need to preserve agriculture in rural areas. At the same time, these shared views do not seem to provide any common ground for rural tourism development. This is especially due to the fact that obvious actors do not succeed in taking the lead. The diversity in practice leads not so much to a highly polarised situation, but rather to a 'blurred' one.

In the next chapter, the way in which both regional nature parks in the Auvergne function within this context is sketched.

¹³⁴ Madiot, 1993: 75: 'Le région semble avoir considéré que le contrat de plan suffisait à lui lui-même et qu'il était donc inutile d'engager une procédure de préparation d'un plan. Le bilan de la planification régionale est ainsi bien pauvre. Ce désintérêt paraît dû à des considérations politiques et idéologiques (rejet de la planification: c'est le cas de l'Auvergne) ...'.



7 Rural tourism development in the Auvergne: Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne and Parc Livradois-Forez

This chapter highlights the functioning of two regional nature parks in the Auvergne, focusing on their activities in the field of rural tourism development. Section 7.1 contains an introduction to the concept of regional parks and some general characteristics of both parks in the Auvergne. It also addresses the policy goals of both parks. In 7.2 and 7.3 the roles of, respectively, Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne and Parc Livradois-Forez in rural tourism are highlighted. In 7.4, the functioning of the parks is evaluated, addressing research questions 2 to 6 (see Sections 5.1 and 5.3). This section contains an evaluation of the policy goals of each park, of the position of the parks in the rural tourism network, of the role of tourism actors and of various discourses, of innovations, of linkages and of governance strategy. Consequences in terms of the contribution of economic development of tourism to conservation/development of rural qualities will be sketched. Differences in the functioning of both parks will be explained referring to local and contextual factors¹.

7.1 PNR: two regional parks in the Auvergne

After an introduction on the history and concept of regional nature parks, a short description of some of the main characteristics of Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne and Parc Livradois-Forez is presented.

Regional nature parks in France

The label *Parc Naturel Régional* (PNR) was established in 1967². DATAR³, the regional development authority, was the main driving force behind the concept. Areas designated as a PNR should provide opportunities for the protection of nature, while at the same time contributing to the economic dynamism of the area. The federation of nature parks in France speaks of *laboratoires de la modernité rurale*⁴, and, more poetically, of a 'marriage of love and reason'⁵. Regional parks can be regarded as the less restrictive,

¹ Research on which this chapter is based was carried out in the period 1995-8. Figures have been updated wherever new information was available.

² Decree of 1 March, 1967

³ See also page 106 for a short description.

⁴ Didier Bouillon, chargé de mission, in: PNR des Volcans d'Auvergne (1993c)

⁵ http://www.parcs-naturels-regionaux.tm.fr/un_parc/index_en.html; accessed January 2000

more flexible and more dynamic counterpart of the *Parcs Nationaux*, where strict regulations for nature protection are in place.

Initial discussions focused on three goals: (1) to protect nature and specific sites in territories of a substantial size, (2) to support marginalising rural areas, and (3) to provide leisure opportunities for the urban population. Tourism development, along with education and extension, has been regarded as an important issue right from the start⁶. Apart from a description of general development goals, the decree which established PNR also included prescriptions regarding the procedure for the establishment of a park. It indicated that parks should be created through local initiative, gave instructions on the management of parks, and indicated that roles, procedures and goals should be laid down in a charter (*charte constitutive*). These initial regulations have been altered a number of times. The most important change regarding procedure has been an increase of the role of the regions at the expense of the communes⁷. Nevertheless, parks cannot be created without the support of all communes involved.

Over the course of time, the precise definition of goals for a PNR has also changed somewhat, but the initial philosophy is still valid. Protection of nature was more firmly included in the PNR statutes by the end of the 1980s. The most recent definition states that the mission of regional nature parks is:

- To protect the national heritage, particularly by appropriate management of nature and landscapes;
- To contribute to rational land-use planning;
- To promote economic, social and cultural development and improve the quality of life;
- To attract, educate and inform the public;
- To conduct experimental or exemplary actions in the above fields and contribute to research programmes⁸.

There are no special legal possibilities to enforce nature conservation within the park boundaries. The main instrument available is through the creation of nature reserves and other types of protected sites.

There are currently 38 regional parks, occupying about 57,000 km² or around 10% of the surface of France. The number of parks is still growing: in the period 1995-9 eleven new parks were established⁹. Two general types of PNR can be discerned: those situated close to large conurbations, mainly directed towards providing leisure space; and those in more peripheral locations, often isolated and in economic difficulty but attractive to tourists¹⁰.

The federation of regional nature parks functions as a supportive and coordinating actor, in terms of both advising the individual parks and promoting interests at the national and the international level. Each park is financially and organisationally

⁶ Lanneaux et al., 1993

⁷ Since 1975, initiatives to create a park should be taken by the region in stead of the communes. In practice, however, this can be considered a decentralisation of initiative, as - prior to 1975 - it used to be the prefect (i.e. the representative of state) who took the initiative (Lanneaux et al., 1993).

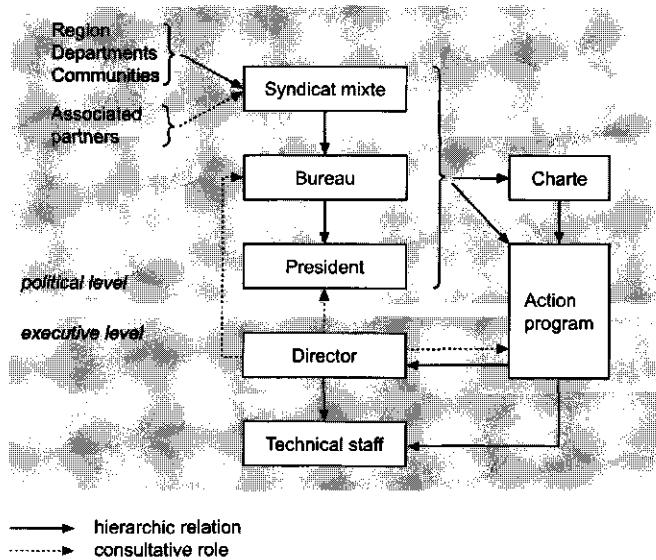
⁸ Art. R. 244-1 du décret n° 94-765 du 1er septembre 1994 pris pour l'application de l'article L. 244-1 du code rural. http://www.parcs-naturels-regionaux.tm.fr/un_parc/loi.html#79-1150; accessed January 2000

⁹ <http://www.parcs-naturels-regionaux.tm.fr/lesparcs/index.html>; accessed January 2000

¹⁰ Lanneaux et al., 1993

independent. The central document for each park is the *charte constitutive* in which the competence of each of the partners is established. Various statutory forms exist, but the *syndicat mixte* is most common¹¹. Such *syndicats* are cooperatives of the municipalities, department(s) and region(s) involved. In some cases, a number of 'associated partners' have been identified, which can include surrounding municipalities, chambers (*Chambre de Commerce*, *Chambre de l'Agriculture* and/or *Chambre des Métiers*), National Forestry Office (ONF) and so on¹².

Figure 7.1 General scheme of the organisational structure of a PNR



Source: this thesis

Most parks have a similar organisational structure. A committee assigned by all members agrees on the general policy (outline of activities, financial programme etc.). This *syndicat mixte* is headed by a president. A *bureau*, consisting of a selection of *syndicat* members prepares the general programme. The implementation of this policy is in the hands of the technical staff, a group of about 20-30 experts (civil servants) presided by the director of the park. The director is responsible for administration and implementation and is usually also involved in the creation of the annual programme of activities, addressing the financial budget and other policy actions. The staff must be in permanent contact with the inhabitants of the park. In addition, the staff and notably the director must also be closely in touch with the governments involved, the associated members and other relevant bodies. It is helpful to be well informed on national as well as EU policy, in order to be able to generate additional funding.

Though the general goals for each park are the same, emphasis differs among the parks. Some parks are more occupied with social and economic development, while for others the emphasis is on the protection of nature or landscapes.

¹¹ Two other types are mentioned by Lanneaux: associations ('type loi 1901') and foundations. Because both parks included in the research are *syndicats mixtes*, the following text refers only to this type.

¹² Lanneaux et al., 1993

Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne

The *Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d'Auvergne* was created in the late 1970s. At almost 400,000 ha. it is the largest park in France¹³, consisting of 153 communes in the departments of Puy-de-Dôme and Cantal. An additional 33 municipalities are 'associated' with the park.¹⁴

General characteristics of the area

The park's main characteristic is the presence of various volcanic chains. Generally, five regions with a different physical geographical and landscape make-up can be discerned within the park¹⁴:

- La chaîne des puys (chaîne des Monts Dômes).
- Les Monts Dore
- Le Cézallier
- L'Artense
- Les Monts du Cantal.

The *chaine des puys* is without doubt the most famous part of the region. It consists of a chain of 80 volcanoes situated west of the city of Clermont-Ferrand. The Puy-de-Dôme is the highest volcano (1464 metres) and lies at a short distance from the city. It is the symbol of the Auvergne and is its most visited site (400,000 people each season)¹⁵. As the area is fragile, this large number of visitors poses some ecological threats. Another threat comes from the decrease in farming. The area used to be bare, almost without trees and shrubs because of its use by herds of sheep and cows (creating the so-called *estives*). As the amount of farming and herding performed on the hard-to-reach hill slopes has decreased during the last couple of decades, the landscape is slowly losing its open character. The park has taken action to try and preserve the characteristic openness.

The Monts Dore is a geologically more ancient volcanic area, which includes the highest mountain top to be found in the Auvergne: Puy de Sancy (1885 metres). The altitude makes the area suitable for skiing in most years, and some of the resorts provide artificial snow when nature lets them down (e.g. Besse/Super Besse). In addition, the area has a tradition of thermal tourism which dates back to Roman times. Le Mont Dore and La Bourboule are renown spa towns. The area also accommodates a number of lakes that are frequented by tourists and inhabitants of Clermont during the summer. Agriculture includes mainly cattle; the AOC-labelled¹⁶ Saint-Nectaire cheese is produced in the area.

Cézallier and Artense both stretch out over two departments: Puy-de-Dôme and Cantal. They are the least visited areas of the park, though some interesting sites can be found. Artense is the less elevated area in the park, lying between 600 and 1000 metres altitude. Cézallier lies between 1100 and 1550 metres. Moorland (*tourbières*) can be found here at several locations, some of which are classified as protected areas. Especially Cézallier has a very harsh climate: the average yearly temperature does not exceed six degrees Celsius. In Cézallier the decrease in agricultural activity has struck hard. This can be seen from the landscape (increase in woods and shrubs) and in the

¹³ Dionnet, 1995

¹⁴ After: Dionnet, 1995

¹⁵ Dionnet, 1995

¹⁶ AOC: Appellation d' Origine Contrôlée

demographic make-up (close to 50% are aged 60 or over). Artense is less dependent on agriculture than other regions in the park.

The Monts du Cantal is the largest volcanic massif in Europe¹⁷. It is also the oldest of the volcanic massifs in the Auvergne. Plomb du Cantal and Puy Mary are the highest and most well-known peaks. They accommodate the skiing resort of Super Lioran. Large differences in precipitation exist between the west and east of the volcanic range¹⁸. At the higher altitudes, snow lies for six months a year. Agriculture is an important activity and consists mainly of dairy farming (five AOC cheeses) and meat. The 'Salers' race originates from the area. Farmers traditionally¹⁹ remained in the mountains from Mai till October to herd the cows and produce cheese. A few of the *burons* in which these farmers lived still exist. The main cultural attraction in the area is the ancient village of Salers, whose fifteenth- and sixteenth-century buildings are well-preserved.

Goals of the park

The park has four interrelated goals:

- To protect of natural and cultural heritage
- To inform and sensitise the public
- Social and economic development
- Experimental and exemplary actions and research.²⁰

The protection of nature and especially landscape is the main activity of the park, both in terms of personnel and in terms of budget. Only a relatively small part of the area falls under a very strict protective regime, however. As the larger part of the park area consists of man-made landscapes, protection in many cases comes down to active management.

Parc des Volcans has been searching funding - mainly from the EU - to preserve the openness of the *estives*²¹. Farmers and farming communes²² are paid to graze their herd on specified parts of the area²³ to prevent encroachment by shrubs (*friches*). They receive a premium per hectare, which is not very high, but nonetheless interesting enough to take part in the programme²⁴. In such programmes, the goals of protection and of social and economic development are highly interrelated.

¹⁷ Dionnet, 1995

¹⁸ An average of 170 days of rain in the western part, representing 1200 to 2000 mm; 120 to 150 days of rain on the eastern slopes, adding up to around 700-900 mm (Dionnet, 1995).

¹⁹ This activity dates back to the 18th century.

²⁰ PNR Volcans d'Auvergne, 1993a.

²¹ Through the so-called OGAF (Opération Groupeé d'Aménagement Foncier).

²² In some areas, part of the land is still communally owned. The slopes of the Puy-de-Dôme, for example, are grazed by sheep of the 'coopérative d'Estives d'Orcines'.

²³ Apart from grazing, some additional measure have to be taken.

²⁴ A farmer I interviewed in 1997 made it clear that – although he too considered the landscape to be important – he would not have taken the measures without financial compensation. Premiums are especially interesting because there are several possibilities to receive grants, so the amounts add up. For example, a farmer whose farm is located in the park (15 km. west of Clermont-Ferrand) and who runs a sheep farm together with his son (470 sheep; 10 ha. cereal crops, 40 ha. pasture (total of 50 ha. of which 7 owned and 43 leased), 174 ha. communal land (shared with the community), 115 ha. communal wood) receives the following premiums (1996): a premium per hectare through OGAF *estives*, OGAF *environnement* and *prime à l'herbe*; a premium per animal through PCO (*prime compassatrice ovine*) and an individual premium for the hectares of cereal crops (*prime à cereal*). All in all, around 25% of the family income comes from the *estives*, 65% from the sheep and 10% from the chambre d'hôte of his wife; 40% of this total consists of premiums.

Text box 7.1 Actors involved in Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne

In Parc des Volcans, the *syndicat mixte* is made up for 40% by the region, 35% the departments, and 26% of the communes (including the associated communes). In addition, a number of actors are being 'heard' by the syndicates, notably the various *chambres* (*de l'Agriculture, des Metiers* and *de l'Industrie et a Commerce*) of both departments and the regional centre of forestry owners. The park is also in close contact with local associations and scientific research groups. The region contributes most to the park financially: it pays ¾ of the annual structural costs.

Source: PNR des Volcans d'Auvergne (1994)

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the park has been trying to increase its opportunities for the protection of the landscape, for example through a *Plan des paysages des Monts du Cantal*²⁵. Other measures are aimed at the protection of nature. Scientific research on nature reserves is supported and the park has certainly contributed to the knowledge currently available. Previous to the creation of the PNR, even basic data on the state of nature were lacking.

Informing the public is an important task of the park. A number of *Maisons du Parc* has been created; these *maisons* are visitor centres focusing on a specific natural value to be found in the area. Such activities are also beneficial for the development of tourism. Scholars comprise another group that is especially addressed.

PNR Livradois-Forez

Parc Naturel Régional Livradois-Forez was established in 1985 and is a park of the 'second generation'²⁶. This means socio-economic development has from the start been more important than the protection of nature. Ecology is certainly not a very important issue for inhabitants of the park, though it has managed to create a number of protected sites²⁷.

General characteristics of the area

The park covers an area of over 300,000 ha, including 168 municipalities and 100,000 inhabitants. The population is extremely aged: over one-third is 60 or older, and population numbers are still decreasing. Between 1982 and 1990, this decrease was almost 4% for the park as a whole, but in some sectors this figure was over 20%. Most municipalities with a population increase are situated within commuting distance of the city of Clermont-Ferrand²⁸.

The park consists of two major geographical areas: Livradois and Forez, separated by the Dore valley. This valley more or less coincides with the most important infrastructural axis through the park: Thiers - Ambert - Chaise Dieu. Population and economic activity are concentrated along this axis. In terms of socio-economic orientation, the northern part is oriented towards Thiers and Clermont-Ferrand, whereas the area around Chaise Dieu is oriented towards Le Puy-en-Velay (south of the park).

The area is less elevated and more covered with wood than the western part of the Auvergne. On average, the plateau is between 800 and 1000 metres above sea level,

²⁵Malavieille, 1993

²⁶Maumelat, 1996

²⁷Interview with M. Jacques Fournier (director) and M. Luc Monteix (at that date responsible for tourism), Parc Livradois-Forez, 1995.

²⁸ACEIF, 1997

whereas the Dore valley lies between 350 and 550 metres. Some of the higher parts (over 1200 metres) represent important ecological values (e.g. Hautes Chaumes du Forez). Other protected areas are some of the bogs and moorland as well as a number of continuous areas of mountainous wood (e.g. Bois Noirs). Many of the rivers accommodate large quantities of fish, though some species have disappeared due to pollution²⁹.

In total, around 40% of the park surface is covered with wood. Most of it consists of small, individually owned lots. The uncontrolled increase of - mainly coniferous - wood plantations on small parcels (referred to as *timbre post*) is perceived as a problem and is a major issue for the park. The increase of woodland is directly linked to the decline in agriculture. In terms of both number of farms and surface area, this decline is substantial. Between 1970 and 1988, the number of farms diminished by over 50% and the surface used by almost 10%. Many of the vacant parcels are planted with trees while others are left fallow, in which case shrubs and trees encroach and turn the land into *friches*.

Apart from agriculture, crafts and manufacturing have traditionally been important in the area. The knife industry in Thiers and the paper mill Richard de Bas are particularly known. Pluri-activity in farming has existed since the Middle Ages, when farmers around Thiers were already involved in the home production of knives. Currently, the manufacturing sector comprises 5000 enterprises and employs about 20% of the working force³⁰. Many are small enterprises in, for example, the construction sector³¹. The largest single employer is the pharmaceutical plant at Vertolaye, though the number of employees has been cut back drastically (currently around 650 employees)³². Other important industries are plastics, metals (both near Thiers), glass (Puy Guillaume), textile (Ambert, Courpière) and cardboard (Courpière). Employment in these sectors is under pressure, however.

The area does not have very special assets to attract large numbers of tourists. Though it is a pleasant area, it does not have a very remarkable nature or landscape. There are a few attractions that do receive a substantial number of visitors (e.g. the *Fourme d'Ambert* museum³³, a steam train and the already mentioned paper-mill³⁴). The southern part of the area has a number of ancient monasteries and is richer in cultural and architectural history. The Chaise Dieu abbey is well-known, not in the least because of its festival. This yearly festival of classical music is quite renowned and attracts visitors from all over the world. All accommodation in the vicinity of Chaise Dieu is fully booked well in advance. It is probably the main tourism attraction, in terms of visitor numbers within the park.

Goals of the park

Local development and restoration of dynamism are two crucial notions in the park's philosophy. Ecology and the preservation of nature as goals themselves have never been very important³⁵. In terms of policy for the environment, it is not so much the protection

²⁹ ACEIF, 1997

³⁰ PNR Livradois-Forez, 1987

³¹ Around 60% of the enterprises do not have employees (PNR Livradois-Forez, 1987).

³² ACIEF, 1997

³³ Fourme d'Ambert is an AOC cheese.

³⁴ Around 90,000 visitors a year in 1995-7 (Tourisme en chiffres, 1998).

³⁵ Nevertheless, it has been placed somewhat higher on the agenda in the most recent *charte*. This is most likely related more to official changes in policy for all regional parks in France, rather than real change in policy in Livradois-Forez.

of specific outstanding ecological qualities (though certain areas and certain species do receive special protection), as the management of the general 'common' environment that is considered most relevant³⁶. This includes both natural and cultural aspects of the environment. In particular, the park is concerned about the landscape becoming overgrown: the unbridled planting and spontaneous growth of trees on redundant agricultural land³⁷. Conservation of landscapes is not so much a goal in itself, nor a matter of aesthetics: in the perception of the local population, it is intrinsically linked to the socio-economic wellbeing and dynamism of the area.

Text box 7.2 General mission of Parc Livradois-Forez, as formulated in the first *charte*

L'objectif fondamental de la Charte

La Charte du P.N.R. Livradois-Forez s'inscrit dans une logique d'auto-développement, cette démarche se caractérise par la volonté de mobiliser les hommes et les femmes de ce secteur afin qu'ils valorisent au mieux les ressources locales par une gestion dynamique de l'environnement et qu'ils maîtrisent au mieux leurs relations économiques et sociales avec l'extérieur.

...

La Charte rappelle que la première richesse du Livradois-Forez est constituée par ses habitants, qui, compte tenu de leur enracinement dans le secteur, dans leurs traditions et dans la conscience qu'ils ont de leur identité culturelle, est seule capable de trouver des solutions adaptées aux problèmes qui se posent.

Source: Charte Constitutive, PNR Livradois-Forez, March 1987

The new *Charte Constitutive* (1997 onwards) formulates the following three objectives:

- To promote knowledge of and enthusiasm about the park
- To offer landscapes and an environment of good quality
- To dynamise the social, economic and cultural life³⁸.

Each of these goals is further broken down into more detailed goals. The goals are all contributive to the general mission of the park, which is to catalyse local development, in cooperation with and for the local population and together with all relevant partners at the departmental and the regional level.

³⁶ Interview Fournier/ Monteix, Parc Livradois-Forez, 1995.

³⁷ A special programme to prevent encroachment by *friches* in four pilot-areas was started in 1992. This project is called GERLIFO (Gestion d'Espace Rural en Livradois-Forez). It is a good example of the way the park is working: in close cooperation with the local population detailed maps of the local area were drawn up. On these maps, the risk of an area succumbing to *friche* is indicated (based, for example, on information regarding the age of the owner) as are the areas which should absolutely be kept open according to the inhabitants. Subsequently, strategies to keep the desired plots free from bushes were developed (management contracts, EU grants for financial support, land consolidation, etc.).

³⁸ Lit: 'Faire connaître et désirer le Parc Livradois-Forez; offrir des paysages et un environnement de qualité; dynamiser la vie sociale, économique et culturelle' (PNR Livradois-Forez, 1997a).

7.2 Tourism development: Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne

In this section some issues related to tourism development in Parc des Volcans are described. First the general tourism policy is outlined. Consequently, the role of the park in tourism development is outlined, using some cases which illustrate its position. These cases focus on the pursuit of tourism goals versus the protection of nature, innovation in tourism products, the relation with entrepreneurs and the tourism sector, and the position of the park within the region.

Tourism development in Parc des Volcans

Tourism has always been important to the park and the park has contributed to its development in several ways, for example, by³⁹:

- creating hiking trails and signposts;
- creating a north to south horse-trail through the park;
- making an inventory of small-scale heritage;
- a *gîtes Panda* label for accommodation bordering nature sites of extraordinary quality
- creating an image for the area of the park ('area marketing');
- creating a number of maisons: visitor centres focusing on a particular natural feature of the park, e.g. maison de la gentiane, maison des tourbières, maison de l'eau et de la pêche, maison de la pierre et de la lave, etc.;
- realising 10 'Nordic zones' between 1982 and 1990, for cross-country skiing.

In 1994, around 9% of the park budget was spent on tourism⁴⁰. The park is particularly interested in the development of 'nature tourism'⁴¹. Tourism should, in addition, be 'quality tourism': quality of accommodation, contact with the population, quality of the environment. It is not the task of the park to create great tourist infrastructures, but it does want to contribute to the management of the areas.

The park invests mainly in the development of a quality tourism, without being élitist, oriented towards the discovery of nature. It will create real tourism products with which it will contribute to its image... The contribution to its image will correspond to a strict description in which particularly the quality of hospitality and of service is included⁴².

However, until recently, tourism was not a coordinated area of attention for the park. A *chargé de mission tourisme* was appointed only in 1996. There is still (1999) no overview of tourist accommodation within the park. Several organisations issue brochures, but none of these covers the complete offer. The park is currently trying to make an inventory of tourism within the park areas and to coordinate some of the developments in the field of tourism.

Some of the results of the survey among a broad range of organisations in the Auvergne are presented in Table 7.1. These answers reflect the fact that Parc des Volcans

³⁹ Dionnet, 1995

⁴⁰ PNR des Volcans d'Auvergne 1994

⁴¹ PNR Volcans d'Auvergne 1993a

⁴² PNR Volcans d'Auvergne 1993a: 30; *Lit:* 'Le Parc s'investira principalement dans le développement d'un tourisme de qualité sans être élitiste, orienté vers la découverte de la nature. Il structurera de véritables produits touristiques auxquelles il attribuera sa marque ... L'attribution de la marque du Parc correspondra à un cahier des charges strict où sera privilégiée la qualité de l'accueil et des prestations'.

is primarily considered a nature-protection organisation. Considering the number of 'socially desirable answers'⁴³, the fact that one-third of respondents stated that the park is insufficiently involved in regional development is striking. The answers also reflect that activities of the park in tourism development are considered marginal by a large number of respondents.

Perhaps the most important achievement of the park in terms of tourism is the fact that it functions as a 'label' for the area. The image of the area has been improved and it is now more well-known by potential tourists.

Table 7.1 Some results of the survey among organisations in the Auvergne concerning the functioning of Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne

	agree	neutral	don't agree
Regional nature parks should stick to the protection of the environment and not interfere with tourism development	12%	10%	78%
Parc des Volcans concentrates too much on protection and is insufficiently involved in regional development	31%	38%	33%
Parc des Volcans deals with matters which are marginal to rural tourism development	38%	45%	16%
Parc des Volcans plays an important role in heritage protection	89%	9%	2%
Parc des Volcans has contributed to the improvement of the regional image	81%	16%	4%

Source: survey, 1998

A closer look at goals: tourism and protection of nature

The Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne is involved in a number of activities to promote nature tourism and to communicate the natural values of the area to visitors. In the *Maisons du Parc* various aspects of nature are explained and communicated. The park also cooperates with nature and mountain guides who provide tours, and it organises events related to the experience of nature itself.

At the same time, there are conflicts between nature and tourism development. Tourism development in some cases conflicts with the goals of nature and landscape conservation. On the one hand, the means of the park to intervene when developments are considered undesirable are limited, especially when it comes to preventing the activities of other actors (municipalities, entrepreneurs). On the other hand, the park itself sometimes takes a double-faced stance towards developments, for example with regard to the development of skiing resorts within the park. Initially the park contributed to the improvement of the quality of the skiing resorts and ski-runs in order to stimulate tourism development, despite the fact that skiing clearly damages the environment and some of the resorts are situated near protected nature reserves (especially the resort of

⁴³ The reaction that people were not supposed to have an opinion about a certain matter occurred relatively often. See also page 114.

Super Besse, bordering the Vallée de Chaudefour, can be mentioned). The ski-lifts strung along the mountaintops do not contribute to the beauty of the landscape. Presently, further expansion of the resorts is not allowed⁴⁴. Especially near the main sites of the park (Puy-de-Dôme, Puy Mary, etc.) the building of large tourist infrastructure is regarded as incompatible with the image of the park⁴⁵. The park continues to include information on skiing in its brochures, however⁴⁶. The development of cross-country skiing is still encouraged (1998). One of the difficulties the park faces in taking a more rigid stance against some types of developments stems from its organisational structure. The park is in fact a cooperative of the communes involved. If the park starts taking highly unpopular measures in favour of the protection of nature, it will lose its support at the base and probably also at the departmental and regional level. Apart from having to take into account the needs of municipalities, political considerations also seem to play a role at a different level. This can be illustrated by the case of 'Vulcania'. This project - an initiative of Giscard d'Estaing - meets with a lot of opposition because of its predicted ecological damage. For political reasons, the park cannot oppose to the plan, even though it may not be desirable considering the park's mission statement (see Textbox 7.3).

The park versus tourist entrepreneurs: a contribution to quality?

Innovation in tourism development, in the sense of creating new attractions, is not an explicit goal of the park. It is mainly concerned with the improvement of quality of the existing supply.

From the mission, an interest in the development of nature-based attractions can be derived. The position towards Vulcania could be explained as an open mind towards innovations in the tourism attraction. Moreover, because of its theme the Centre will be very supportive of one of the main qualities of the area: the volcanic landscape. However, the same applies to the existing volcano attraction, which was not supported. Rather than innovation, political arguments seem to be decisive for the position taken. This also seems to be the conclusion with regard to another case: *la Musée de la Toinette*.

The example of Musée de la Toinette⁴⁷

Murat-le-Quaire is a small village of almost 500 inhabitants, close to La Bourboule and Le Mont-Dore. It offers a number of tourist attractions, such as a lake, a ski-run, a panoramic view and a holiday centre. Though the number of visitors has been growing each year since the 1960s, its attraction nevertheless remains modest.

The combination of an increase in the number of inhabitants (from 382 in 1968 to 476 in 1996) and a decrease in employment in agriculture has created the need to find new development options. It was decided to try and preserve the equilibrium between tourism and agriculture by encouraging the management of the landscape and preserving traditional types of agriculture. In addition, it was considered essential to preserve the originality of the village by acquiring and renovating existing buildings. Conservation of the village was also considered important from the point of view of tourist attractiveness.

⁴⁴ PNR Volcans d'Auvergne 1993a: 28

⁴⁵ PNR Volcans d'Auvergne 1993a: 30

⁴⁶ The 1995-6 brochure *l'aventure nature* includes information not only on hiking, horse-riding and cycling, but also on *ski de fond* and *ski de descente*.

⁴⁷ Sources: Interview with Mme. Lebau, directrice, May 1998 interview with M. Thierry, La Jonquille; visit to Musée de la Toinette, Grange de Julien and sales outlet La Jonquille; brochures of the museum and information provided by the village.

Text box 7.3 Vulcania: a large-scale volcano attraction located in the *chaîne des puys*

In the mid-1990s, a rather controversial plan was launched to create a European Centre of Volcanism within the park area. The Centre is planned for the middle of the *chaîne des puys* in an area where the building of hotels has always been impeded because of the vulnerability of the environment and threats to landscape amenity. The location is on top of an underground water reservoir. The Centre is intended to become the main tourist attraction in the Auvergne, aiming to attract half a million visitors a year. These visitors will be led into the heart of a volcano, where they will be offered interactive information, light shows and so on, all on the theme of volcanoes. The Centre will also house an international documentation centre and a library and will accommodate scientific colloquia. The whole project will cost over EUR 60 million¹, financed mainly by the regional government. The plan was launched by Giscard d'Estaing, the former president of the Republic, who was at the time the president of the Parc des Volcans and of the Auvergne Region.

Nature organisations, as well as many other parties, are opposed to the project because it will put too much pressure on such a fragile area. An action group uniting a number of these organisations was created to stop the project (*Comité des liaisons pour la sauvegarde des Volcans d'Auvergne*). Many actors are especially concerned about the amount of traffic the Centre will attract, all of which will have to enter via a small road that is yet to be built, providing easy access to the planned Lyon-Bordeaux highway. Others are worried about the financial risks involved². To some of the opponents, it is not so much the idea of the Centre itself, but the location that bothers them. According to them, it should be located much closer to or in the city of Clermont-Ferrand, from where the Puy-de-Dôme is clearly visible. The Parc des Volcans, however, supports the project and sees no need to be afraid of environmental consequences. One of the ironies of the plan is the fact that the projected location is right across the road from an existing volcano attraction. This site, which attracts 70,000 visitors a year, is an old stone quarry which offers visitors the opportunity to enter the crater of a real volcano. This *volcan à ciel ouvert* has never received much cooperation from various governments. The request to create an access road leading to the main road, for example, is persistently turned down. It has also never worked closely with the Parc des Volcans and it is not felt the activities of the park have had a positive impact on tourist development, at least not for their enterprise³.

The whole project of Vulcania has become a highly political matter, not only for the Auvergne, but on a national level as well. It is intrinsically linked to the person of Giscard d'Estaing and his political ideas. Opponents refer to the Centre as "the Giscardoscope" or "Giscard's mausoleum". This politicised nature was stressed by many of the respondents in the survey (which included some statements on the Vulcania project). Some respondents refused to answer because of fear it would be regarded as an official statement of the organisation; some state officials responded that their organisation was not supposed to have an opinion on internal regional political affairs. (Other questions, which could equally have been regarded as being regional affairs, were answered without hesitation.) Most Auvergnats consider Vulcania to be a private project of Giscard d'Estaing, fitting into the tradition of French presidents to leave their country a monument. Certainly, no organisation having formal contacts with the *Conseil Régional* (e.g. Parc des Volcans) can afford to be opposed to Vulcania.

¹ Other sources mention EUR 75 million, of which 11.5 million will be paid by the EU and 4.2 million by the state (Sommer, 1997).

² A financial assessment made it clear the Centre will only succeed commercially if it is "fiercely commercialised" and through an "active politics of will" (Sommer, 1997).

³ Interview Vulcan de Lempétry, May 1998

At the beginning of the 1990s, the idea to create a new, innovative tourist attraction was launched by the village mayor (*senator-maire*)⁴⁸. This attraction was to be based on the history of the area, and to allow numerous traditional objects (furniture etc) to be exhibited. Several existing sites were visited in order to gain knowledge on the opportunities available. In cooperation with a specialised firm and with support from the municipality and some local associations, the idea was further developed. A combination of local and external experts realised the final concept. In July 1993, *la Musée de la Toinette* opened to the public - and was an immediate success. Since then, the village has been creating new attractions, all fitting into the concept of innovative tourism development, linking up with the history and geography of the area. The museum employs five staff members on a full-time basis, with eight additional seasonal jobs. Indirectly, the museum has created another six full-time jobs (1998).

The museum is managed by a local association called the Association art et traditions des Monts Dore. The municipality has promised to invest just over EUR 1 million spread over five years, to be used to renovate several buildings and to create the museum. A very small grant was obtained from the EU, with help from the DDAF. Region, park and department were not involved in the project at all. This is allegedly mainly due to a difference in political orientation (the *senator-maire* is a left-winger, while the department and region are oriented towards the right). Nevertheless all representatives were invited to visit the museum, and most have done so⁴⁹.

The park was not involved in the project either, and still hardly any contacts exist – despite the fact that some of the issues addressed link up closely with the park's activities. Especially the vision on rural areas propagated in the Grange de Julien (see Text box 7.4) is interesting in this respect. Here some of the current problems of the Auvergne are presented, such as depopulation and the lack of employment. At the same time, some of the positive sides of rural life are also presented. Without presenting a too romantic view of rural areas, it manages to bring across the message that there is still hope for the countryside. One of the other attractions – the sales outlet of la Jonquille – can be regarded as an example of how the production of high-quality products can go hand in hand with respect for nature⁵⁰. Both these messages seem to fit in perfectly with the philosophy of the park. Nevertheless, none of the parks' – nor the region's - tourist brochures even mentions the museum.

Apart from fitting in well with the parks mission in terms of tourism development, the initiatives in Murat-le-Quaire are also a perfect example of tourism innovations which are based on the qualities of the area. Also in terms of process, this example follows the theory very neatly. The project is based in the local community and owned by the village. External linkages have provided information and knowledge on the use of innovative technologies and on how to present the product in an attractive way to the public. Linkages with different types of local/regional activities (sales outlet) create a more interesting product. What is lacking are linkages within the regional tourism sector. There is no marketing together with other regional products and no joint promotion at the regional level.

⁴⁸ Senator-maire indicates that the mayor is also involved in national politics.

⁴⁹ Giscard d'Estaing as a representative of the region had not yet visited the site.

⁵⁰ To understand the position of this association, it is important to know that it is not in any way associated with the regular agricultural institutions. These have established their own brand for ecologically friendly, regionally produced products.

The lack of interaction between the village's tourist attractions and the park is not only due to the latter. The mayor of Murat-le-Quaire has good contacts with Paris. He used these contacts to create the tourism attractions, and these linkages have probably been one of the reasons why the village has been successful and why help at the regional level was not necessary.

Text box 7.4 New tourist attractions in Murat-le-Quaire

Musée de la Toinette is not a museum in the traditional sense of the word. It is located in an ancient house in the centre of the village. The visitor is guided through four rooms, and in each room is confronted by a different aspect of the life of Toinette Chaumard. This lady tells the story of her life in the Auvergnat mountains at the end of the 19th century. Each room has a different decor, while moving objects, sounds and smells support the story.

Within six months, the museum had been visited by 16,700 people, which was considered very promising. At the same time, some necessary adaptations – both to the museum and to the vicinity – were planned. Especially the creation of additional attractions would provide an opportunity to decrease the waiting time for visitors in the high season. Also, many visitors regretted not being able to buy souvenirs.

In 1994 a nearby barn was restored and let to a regional association of 'green' small-scale producers called la Jonquille. This links up with a demand of visitors to be able to buy souvenirs and also fits into the image of the Auvergne the village wants to promote, as the association sells: "des produits de qualité nés de la tradition, du savoir-faire et de l'inventivité auvergnate". In 1995, a number of additional attractions were created: an atelier/boutique of artisan puppets, and an exhibition of minerals. In 1995, the museum was visited by 53,400 people.

In 1996, a new attraction was created next to the sales outlet of la Jonquille. La grange de Julien aims to give a reflection on the present-day and future rural life in the Auvergnat mountains. It is not a museum, but a kind of movie (or as the brochure states "une mise en scène inspirée du théâtre") in which the problems and opportunities of rural areas are represented by the life of Julien, a descendant of Toinette. In terms of logistics, it provides the opportunity to offer an attraction to visitors waiting to enter La Toinette. In terms of concept, it offers a well-balanced view of life in rural areas today in a way that is attractive to the general public.

Sources: interviews and brochures

The lack of interaction is illustrative of the position of the park with regard to tourism development. Ten innovative entrepreneurs situated within the park all mentioned a lack of relations with the park⁵¹. In none of these cases was there any relation between the park and the enterprise. None of the interviewees was very positive about the role of the park with regard to tourism development, and some were not aware of the activities of the park in this field. The park was first and foremost associated with the protection of nature.

The role of the park in perspective

The Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne is primarily involved in the protection of nature and landscape. It is not very actively involved in tourism development. The main contribution to tourism is probably the communicative function of the park's 'label'. In

⁵¹ The entrepreneurs were selected from the survey carried out by ENITA in 1997, on the basis of their activities, which can be considered to differ from the mainstream.

addition, activities in the field of nature education and communication are undertaken. There is hardly any direct contact between the park and tourism entrepreneurs.

The park cooperates intensively with researchers in the field of nature. Farmers are another important target group. Several programmes are aimed at improving farmer's landscape management. Landscape plans are written to support the preservation of the openness. At the same time, nature organisations indicate that the park does not do enough to protect nature and that much more could and should be done. Also in terms of protection of the landscape, the park receives a certain amount of critique.

When characterising the position of the park within the region, it appears that it keeps a low profile. Its activities are generally acknowledged and appreciated, but they are also considered to be marginal as they are placed in the corner of nature protection. The park does not take a very firm or deviant position in terms of the development of the area. It operates mainly within existing margins.

Though this can be criticised as it means that the park lets some developments happen even though they may not fit well into the area, it may also be common sense. The park, especially the *chaîne des Puys*, is a highly symbolic area for the region. Many regional actors consider it part of 'theirs'. The park has neither the budget nor the operational strength to follow a completely different course, but is partly dependent on these other actors. Trying to prevent developments (Vulcania, ski resorts) from happening may not be the most successful strategy. At the same time, however, a more active role in stimulating and promoting tourism activities which fit well with the park's mission would not do any harm to the park's position. It could strengthen its image, the communication of the area's qualities and could stimulate the development of similar types of tourism activities. A further analysis of the park's position in the region will be presented in Section 7.4.

7.3 Tourism development: Parc Livradois-Forez

The local population is the starting point for all the activities of Parc Livradois-Forez. From there, the park has developed a philosophy of conservation and development. The aim is that in all its activities, the identity of the area gets a central place, but the need to create new dynamics is always directly linked to it. The park speaks of 'finding a new equilibrium between man and nature'⁵². It can be added that this equilibrium is almost always sought to benefit the local population; the conservation of nature – or of landscape, for that matter – is hardly ever a goal in itself. The park wants to create such a development through cooperation and by creating partnerships, both within the park and with external partners.

Tourism development in Livradois-Forez

This general philosophy is also applicable to tourism development in the park. Tourism is regarded as a tool to create employment, dynamise the area and improve the image of Livradois-Forez. Or in the words of the park director: tourism development is not welcomed if it leads to a *banalisation d'espace*, nor if it incorporates a return to former times⁵³.

⁵² PNR Livradois-Forez, 1995a

⁵³ Taken from: interview with J. Fournier and J.L. Monteix 1995

Both in the first *charte* and in the current one, development of tourism is an important area of attention. In the first *charte*, tourism is one of the six main axes defined and the park states it is mainly interested in developing a small-scale type of tourism:

The principal goal of the park is to promote on its territory a diffused type of tourism, which contributes to economic and social development of the region⁵⁴.

The park wants to attain this goal by stimulating the creation of a coherent tourism structure, through the improvement of the quality of the products offered and the promotion of Livradois-Forez. In this, a focus on the natural and cultural qualities is regarded as a guiding principal.

Especially in the period 1992-4, when the park benefited from funding through the LEADER 1 programme, rural tourism development was an important area of attention. Around 50% of the LEADER budget was spent on the development of rural tourism⁵⁵. In the entire 1985-95 period (the implementation of the first *charte*), almost 30% of the budget was spent on tourism⁵⁶.

As the table below shows, the role of the park in terms of regional development is recognised by other actors in the Auvergne. Nevertheless, the park is also considered important for heritage protection.

Table 7.2 Some results of the survey among organisations in the Auvergne concerning the functioning of Parc Livradois-Forez

	agree	neutral	don't agree
Regional nature parks should stick to the protection of the environment and not interfere with tourism development	12%	10%	78%
Parc Livradois-Forez concentrates too much on protection and is insufficiently involved in regional development	-	34%	66%
Parc Livradois-Forez deals with matters which are marginal to rural tourism development	38%	36%	26%
Parc Livradois-Forez plays an important role in heritage protection	85%	13%	2%
Parc Livradois-Forez has contributed to the improvement of the regional image	81%	15%	4%

Source: survey, 1998

Improvement of the tourist product and local partnerships

Livradois-Forez has no spectacular attractions to offer. Tourism development should therefore mainly be based on the quality of the 'ordinary' environment and such 'ordinary' activities as fishing and rambling. The park has always stressed the importance of not regarding this as a constraint but as an attraction. It aims to relate tourism to the cultural and natural heritage of the area.

⁵⁴ PNR Livradois-Forez, 1987: 23; *Lit.*: '... le Parc se fixe pour objectif principal de promouvoir sur son territoire une activité touristique diffuse qui apportera une contribution au développement économique et social de la région'.

⁵⁵ Maumelat, 1996: 114

⁵⁶ ACEIF, 1996: 50

In its first ten years, the park took some initiatives to improve the tourist product and make it more coherent. In an evaluation of the park's activities during that first ten-year period⁵⁷, it was concluded that the park had carried out a lot more activities in tourism than provided for in the *charte*.

The park has invested much effort and money in improving accommodation and supporting individual entrepreneurs in the area. Because the park has also taken the initiative to create an inventory of the tourist enterprises in the park⁵⁸, it is easy to track how the quality and quantity of tourist accommodation has progressed⁵⁹. Over the last ten years, the overall quality of accommodation – in terms of the number of 'stars' – has increased substantially. For hotels and campsites, quality has increased at a faster rate than that of the Auvergne as a whole. However, the economic viability of some of the enterprises is weak⁶⁰. The number of visits to the area is still low compared to the rest of the region (estimated total of 500,000 nights spent each year). Campsites receive the bulk of nights spent. A number of non-classified hotels (i.e. without stars) have been closed down and as a consequence the total number of hotel beds has slightly decreased. The number of *gîtes* and *chambre d'hôtes* has however expanded⁶¹.

In addition to supporting individual entrepreneurs, the park has tried to stimulate cooperation among tourist entrepreneurs. A number of specific initiatives were stimulated by the park, such as a label for small characteristic hotels within the park (*Relais de la Gelinotte*); a horse-riding track that takes eight days to complete, with accommodation along the route (*Boucle d'Or*); and a route along a number of artisans in the area (*Route des Métiers*). Respondents to the questionnaire were very positive about the *Route des Métiers* (92% consider this a good initiative; 8% are neutral)⁶², whereas opinions on the *Relais de la Gelinotte* are more mixed (63% positive, 33% neutral, 4% negative)⁶³. Negative responses came from two respondents within the regular tourism sector. In one of the interviews, the *Route des Métiers* was also criticised. It was put forward that the quality of the *accueil* offered by adherents of the *Route des Métiers* varied and that tourists were not in all cases regarded as welcomed visitors. This critique can be traced back to a different 'discourse' on what rural tourism development should entail. The interviewee considered the route to be an example of the involvement of non-professional tourist entrepreneurs in tourism. Integration of tourism into the local economy is however one of the main aims of the park. The initiative is an attempt to create a link between the tourism sector and other sectors.

But critique also comes from the entrepreneurs themselves. In the interviews with entrepreneurs, some considered the role of the park to have been highly stimulating. But some, including some of those involved in projects initiated by the park, criticised its role.

⁵⁷ For the development of the 'new' *Charte* (1998-2008), the park has asked an external bureau to conduct an evaluation of the functioning of the park during the first ten years of its existence. For this purpose 46 representatives of various communes, economic sectors and (government) organisations were interviewed.

⁵⁸ PNR Livradois-Forez, 1995b and 1994

⁵⁹ Such an overview did not previously exist, and the park is currently the only part in the Auvergne structurally mapping tourism (Maumelat, 1996).

⁶⁰ ACEIF, 1996

⁶¹ ACIEF, 1997

⁶² n=49

⁶³ n=46

Notwithstanding this critique, a survey among tourist enterprises in the Auvergne revealed that local partnerships in Livradois-Forez are more common than in other parts of the region (see Table 7.3). It is likely that this achievement can at least be partly attributed to the efforts of the park.

Table 7.3 Percentage of tourist entrepreneurs with a professional partnership at the local level⁶⁴

	Auvergne (n= 325)	Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne (n=97)	Parc Livradois- Forez (n=34)
Entrepreneurs with a local partnership	59%	60%	74%

Source: survey Enita, 1997⁶⁵

Overall, Maumelat judges that the identity of the area has progressively strengthened since the establishment of the park⁶⁶. In a questionnaire among inhabitants, 20% said they lived in 'Livradois-Forez' when asked in what 'natural region' they were living⁶⁷. She considers this remarkable, because the park area never constituted a cultural or natural homogeneity. An external evaluation concluded that the park is not doing too badly in terms of internal communication, but should pay more attention to it in the future. One of the ways to do so would be to issue newsletters on a more frequent basis. In addition, the park wants to try and strengthen the creation of cooperative structures between municipalities (*intercommunalité*).

The external evaluation indicated that the park had mainly contributed to small and scattered projects, rather than to large structuring ones⁶⁸. It did not contribute to some of the main tourist structures in the park in terms of equipment (e.g. some of the lakes and reservoirs used for swimming), but focussed on complementary activities (accommodation, rambling). It was suggested the park should change its focus in the future. Apart from critique, the evaluation also mentioned a number of achievements of the park with regard to the improvement of the tourist product and local networks. The park had:

- Stimulated the improvement of tourist accommodation and local entrepreneurs;
- Taken the initiative to create associations of entrepreneurs;
- Structured the tourist sector, and coordinated activities and education;
- Stressed the importance of relating tourism to the cultural and natural heritage.

It also concluded that, notwithstanding these positive effects of the parks' involvement, it is still difficult for tourist enterprises in Livradois-Forez to become economically viable.

The role of the park in external networks

The park has defined a role for itself not only in the structuring of the internal network and the improvement of the tourist product, but also in terms of creating partnerships with external actors. With regard to this aspect, the external evaluation is rather negative. Two particular points of critique are the lack of coordination of promotional activities with existing bodies (CDT, CRT, CRA, etc); and the fact that the park duplicates existing

⁶⁴ This includes relations with other entrepreneurs, associations or tourist offices

⁶⁵ Calculation of this table was done by special request

⁶⁶ Maumelat, 1996

⁶⁷ Prugneau, J. (1996). Acteurs et stratégies du développement rural en moyenne montagne: l'exemple du Livradois. Mémoire de DEA de géographie, Clermont-Ferrand; cited in: Maumelat, 1996: 102.

⁶⁸ ACEIF, 1996: 26

structures, especially with regard to subsidisation (of *gîtes*, *chambre d'hôtes* and so on). In this respect, the park appears to be 'yet another service counter'⁶⁹. This has led to an increase in bureaucracy and a duplication of tasks – quite the opposite of what the park is striving for. It can be put forward in the park's defence that direct aid to entrepreneurs and involvement in scattered small-scale activities may not always have fit into the core area of attention of the park, but it did help to give the park credibility in the communities involved.

The lack of cooperation with existing administrative and associative structures applies not only to tourism: it is a weak aspect of the park's overall functioning. In financial terms, the LEADER programme in particular has offered the opportunity to pursue such a strategy. The opportunities of this programme have been much criticised by actors at the departmental and regional levels. Many government bodies and other representatives feel bypassed by the activities of the park. The duplication of tasks is also generally not cost-effective from a regional point of view. In terms of promotion, for example, the park has created its own material, like so many other actors have.

In addition, the content of the tourist promotion of the park is evaluated positively. The recognition of the importance of assembling various tourist products and marketing them in France and abroad is considered to have had a positive impact on tourism development in the area. One of the activities of the park in terms of promotion, *La Malle au Trésor*, has received a prize for tourism innovation⁷⁰.

Though the duplication of tasks is not effective from a regional point of view, it did help the park to gain a position in the regional power structure so that it can now present itself as a strong partner for consultation and cooperation. One of the park's representatives described this as follows:

When a new structure appears, the organisms present often perceive it as a competitor and it will have to create its own position. All beginnings are difficult. But the Parc Livradois-Forez has reached a maturity which permits it to calmly look for joint actions with partners⁷¹.

Nevertheless, the park admits the need to change the strategy in the future, and the development of a better partnership with other actors in the Auvergne is one of the objectives⁷².

Evaluation

During the first ten years of its existence, the park has worked along several axes to try and achieve its objectives. Tourism has been a core area of attention in its development strategy. As a provisional conclusion, it can be stated that the park has created a strong basis for development. In the years to come, this will have to be substantiated by real results (attraction of population, ability to maintain an open landscape in the pilot areas, spontaneous creation of new enterprises, strengthening of local cooperation structures, etc.).

It was suggested that the park should specify what role it would want to play in tourism in the decade to come. In the new *charte*, tourism falls mainly under the third

⁶⁹ ACEIF, 1996

⁷⁰ 'Grand prix de l'innovation touristique', 1990.

⁷¹ Elie Fayette in: PNR Livradois-Forez, 1997c; *transl.*: 'Lorsqu'une nouvelle structure apparaît dans le paysage, les organismes en place la perçoivent souvent comme un concurrent et elle-même doit prendre ses marques, se faire une place. Les débuts sont inévitablement difficiles. Mais le Parc Livradois-Forez a aujourd'hui atteint une maturité qui lui permet d'envisager sereinement des actions partenariales'.

⁷² PNR Livradois-Forez, 1997c

goal – ‘To dynamise the social, economic and cultural life’ – but it is also related to the goal ‘To promote knowledge of and enthusiasm about the park’ and ‘To offer landscapes and an environment of good quality’. In the provisional action programme for 1998–2000, 6.4% of the park budget is assigned to the direct development of tourism under the first-mentioned objective⁷³. An additional 11.6% of the budget is to be spent on promoting the park in France and abroad, and providing a ‘warm welcome’⁷⁴.

The fact that the area is a more or less forgotten part of the Auvergne, in which no-one had much interest, has made it easier for the park to follow a more opinionated course. Regional actors protest against the position the park claims for itself, but are in fact not really interested in the area. A grant from the EU has made it financially possible for the park to follow its own ideas.

7.4 Evaluation of the functioning of both PNRs

The analysis of the goals and functioning of both parks has made it clear that the label ‘PNR’ leaves room for a variety of approaches. Below, the functioning of the parks will be evaluated as to their policy goals, the influence of discourses, the position of the parks and the roles of tourism actors, the extent to which innovation in tourism has occurred, the existence of various types of linkages and governance strategy. Based on this evaluation, the contribution of WCL to innovation and rural quality will be evaluated.

Policy goals and discourses

There is a clear difference between the parks in terms of the content of their policy. Parc des Volcans can essentially be characterised as a single-issue park, whereas Parc Livradois is aiming for a more integrated approach. According to its mission statement, Parc des Volcans is primarily concerned with the conservation of nature, combined with education and extension in this field. Tourism development should preferably be extensive, of high quality, and related to the natural qualities of the area. The park wants to invest in tourism products which contribute to the image of the area. Parc Livradois-Forez states in its *charte* that it wants to focus on local development and the restoration of dynamism within the park area. Tourism should contribute to this general goal. Specific goals for tourism development are: small-scale, contribute to social and economic development of the area, a coherent tourism structure, high-quality products and promotion of the park.

Differences between the approaches of the two parks are at least partly due to the year in which they were created. Parks created in the 1980s – as Parc des Volcans was – tend to focus more on protectionist goals. Parks of the ‘second generation’ such as Parc Livradois-Forez are more involved in social and economic development.

PNR can be characterised as policy networks as they are cooperatives of communes, departments and region. But of the two parks in the Auvergne, only Parc Livradois-Forez has explicitly included interactive policy goals in its mission statement. The park implements a bottom-up strategy, symbolising the crucial importance the park attaches to the local population and to stimulating local dynamism in the park area. In the most

⁷³ This percentage is taken from the total estimate of costs, excluding investments in the building of a new office for the park; the absolute figure for tourism developments amounts to almost EUR 300,000.

⁷⁴ There is no English equivalent of *accueil*.

recent *charte* the park also considers the improvement of relations at the regional level to be an important goal. Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne has not defined explicit process goals. Although it applies an interactive management approach in some of its projects, it does not do so with regard to tourism.

Both parks aim to conserve the qualities of the area, but have different perspectives about what this quality contains. Whereas quality in Parc des Volcans seems to be defined mostly in terms of landscape and nature, Parc Livradois-Forez refers primarily to local dynamism and local identity. Landscape, especially the openness of the landscape, is an important element in this, as the increase of woodlands is related to a loss of population and the desertion of the land. Process-related issues are an important part of the parks' definition of rural qualities.

In terms of the discourses discerned in Chapter 6, Parc des Volcans might seem at first to be mainly oriented towards the 'rural is natural' discourse: living in harmony with nature. Because of its cooperation with nature research institutes and its attempt to protect ecologically fragile sites, it may even seem to take a more ecological approach towards nature than this discourse. This is only partly so, however. As described in Section 7.2, the park used to promote also other types of tourism (e.g. skiing) and it does not take much action against tourism development which is not in line with protection of nature. Moreover, it does not support initiatives like those in Murat-le-Quaire, which are in line with the 'rural is natural' discourse. When considering the development of skiing resorts and of Vulcania, the 'urbanisation is modernisation' discourse is more apt to describe tourism development within the park. In addition, agritourism developments, which relate to the 'rural is agricultural' discourse, take place as well - though these do not prevail. Agriculture does receive a lot of attention within the parks' activities more generally, but not particularly where tourism is concerned. Overall, the 'rural is natural' discourse is most appropriate to describe the parks' own activities with regard to tourism, but the 'urbanisation is modernisation' is probably more influential within the parks' area.

In Parc Livradois-Forez, rural qualities are considered in relation to the local population. This implies that discourses on agriculture, modernisation and nature are important to the extent that these are considered relevant by locals. In terms of content, the parks philosophy contains elements of each of the discourses. This is also a result of the park's activities in rural tourism development. Projects aimed at improving the quality of the available accommodation can be categorised as being part of the 'urbanisation is modernisation' discourse, as they are aimed at creating accommodation with more stars. There is sufficient attention for *gîtes* and *chambre d'hôtes*, which generally fall under agritourism. But no distinction is made between locals offering such accommodations, and farmers - so it might be more appropriate to place this under the 'rural is natural' discourse. The tourism product *route des métiers* links up with the 'rural is natural' discourse, as it demonstrates how people make a living in relation to the environment. Though Parc Livradois-Forez incorporates all discourses to some extent, this park meets with most resistance from actors of various backgrounds. Tourism and agritourism organisations claim that the park carries out tasks which are not its responsibility. Nature organisations indicate that the park does not do enough to protect vulnerable ecological values. Part of the criticism might come from the fact that the park cannot be 'defined' in terms of traditional discourses.

Position in networks and relation to tourism actors

The difference in goals on tourism development is reflected in the ways both parks operate and the partners they choose to work with. Each park cooperates with all sorts of departmental and regional partners, but in the case of Livradois-Forez the range of partners is broader and the interaction is a little more frequent. As Parc des Volcans is more involved in the protection of nature, it has more contacts with research institutes in this field. Parc des Volcans also has a more direct link with the Conseil Régional as they share the same president. Contacts of the Parc des Volcans are mainly aimed at cooperation and fine-tuning. Despite, or possibly due to, the fact that Parc Livradois-Forez has more frequent contacts at the regional and departmental levels, its activities are criticised at these levels: contact here does not mean cooperation. In addition, the frequency of contact has so far not led to a fine-tuning of activities, as many tasks are duplicated by the park. The main difference can be found in terms of the relationship on the local level, however: PNR Livradois-Forez has much more contact with representatives of the communes and with entrepreneurs than PNR des Volcans does⁷⁵.

Table 7.4 Amount of tourism-related contact between the parks and actors at the local and regional/departmental level⁷⁶

Contact:	Local actors		Regional/departmental actors	
	PNR Volcans	PNR Livradois	PNR Volcans	PNR Livradois
At least once a month	6 (33%)	9 (90%)	4 (21%)	6 (32%)
Once a month to once a year	10 (56%)	1 (10%)	8 (42%)	9 (47%)
Once a year or less	2 (11%)	-	7 (37%)	4 (21%)

Source: survey, 1998

This has consequences for the involvement of both parks in tourism development. Whereas Parc des Volcans has hardly any direct contacts with tourism entrepreneurs, the technician in Parc Livradois-Forez personally has contact with the bulk of entrepreneurs in the park area. The fact that this park also accommodates considerably fewer tourist entrepreneurs than the Parc des Volcans should be taken into account here⁷⁷. Parc Livradois-Forez also has more contact with local organisations involved in tourism development and with the communes⁷⁸. In terms of contact with organisations at the regional and departmental level the difference between the parks is less pronounced (Table 7.4).

This does not mean, however, that all or many tourism actors in Livradois-Forez are very actively involved in the parks' initiatives. It is still mainly the park that takes the lead and that tries to convince local actors of the need to cooperate. Local communities that are very active are not necessarily closely related to the park. In Parc des Volcans some local communities are very active, but they use the park only to refer to it as a

⁷⁵ Maumelat, 1996; Enita, 1997

⁷⁶ To create this table, each respondent was classified as operating at a regional, departmental or local level. With regard to the local organisations, only those actors operating within one of the parks were taken into account (Parc des Volcans: N=18; Parc Livradois: N=10). With regard to the departmental level, only organisations in Puy-de-Dôme were counted. Organisations in Cantal (Parc des Volcans) and Haute Loire (Parc Livradois) were excluded to make the figures more comparable.

⁷⁷ Interviews with representatives of both parks and with entrepreneurs, 1998

⁷⁸ The difference is statistically significant at the 99% level.

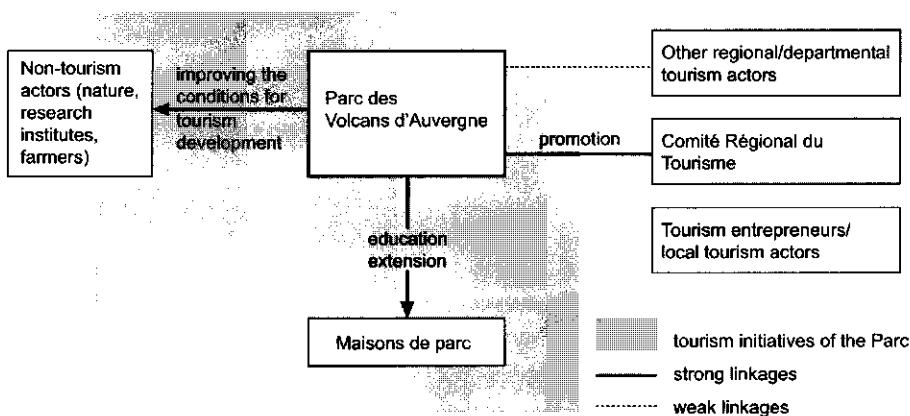
'label' in their brochures. Tourism development strategies are not fine-tuned. At the regional level, the relevance of both parks in relation to tourism development is also mainly considered in relation to this 'label' which provides the area with a more attractive image.

In Figure 7.2 and 7.3, the role of both parks in local and in regional networks is represented. Relations have been simplified to be able to present a coherent picture, but the essence of the differences in the position of both parks is retained. The differences in the parks' strategies in tourism development can be illustrated with their role in marketing and promotion. As Mazuel states:

In fact, the policies of both parcs are radically different, even opposed... The Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne has not clearly defined its strategy... It thus communicates rather 'classically' about the protection of the environment. It takes good care of its mission of education and extension ... The other park, that of Livradois-Forez, has done a lot in terms of tourism development and has aimed towards an original and powerful communication, for it does not have the advantage of being already known to a wider public... The choices are fundamentally different, as are the relations with the departmental and regional organisations for the promotion of tourism⁷⁹.

When characterising the roles of each of the parks in the tourism network Parc des Volcans comes close to being an 'isolate'. Parc Livradois-Forez functions as a 'star' with regard to - at least part of - the interrelations within the park area. At the regional level, its position is that of an isolate, but the park has the intention to change this.

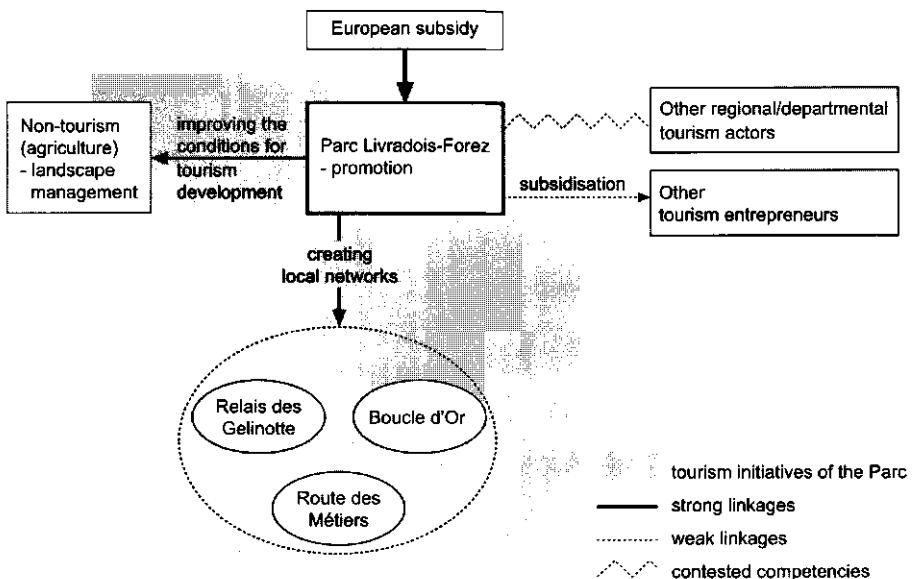
Figure 7.2 Schematic presentation of the position of Parc des Volcans in the local and regional tourism network



Source: this thesis

⁷⁹ Mazuel, 1993-94: 67. *Lit:* 'En effet, les politiques de l'un et de l'autre sont radicalement différentes, opposées même'. ... Le Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne ne définit pas clairement sa stratégie. ... Il communique donc assez "classiquement" sur la protection de l'environnement. Il assure bien sa mission d'éducation et d'animation ... L'autre Parc, celui du Livradois-Forez, a misé énormément sur le développement touristique et a voulu une communication originale, très forte, d'autant qu'il n'avait pas l'avantage du nom et de la "notoriété à priori". ... Les choix étant fondamentalement différents, les rapports avec les structures départementales et régionales de la communication touristique le sont aussi

Figure 7.3 Schematic presentation of the position of Parc Livradois-Forez in the local and regional tourism network



Source: this thesis

Innovation

Both parks aim at an approach where tourism is integrated with other sectors (be it nature or general local development). In practice, Parc Livradois-Forez is much more active in promoting such a development than Parc des Volcans is. Parc des Volcans generally takes a rather passive stance towards tourism development. It was not until a rather late date that a *chargée de mission tourisme* was appointed. In terms of active involvement, its activities are related to education and extension in the field of nature (i.e. creation of *Maisons du Parc*). At the same time, the economic importance of tourism development is recognised. This leads to a sometimes dualist approach, as for example in the case of the promotion of skiing and winter sports. Here, conflicts between tourism and nature protection are obvious, but the park does not clearly choose its direction. It also does not actively promote tourism activities which could strengthen its image.

Parc Livradois has been very active in promoting and improving tourism from the start. Tourism should strengthen local development, which means it should be based on qualities of the area while at the same time strengthening economic development. Activities have been undertaken to improve the general quality of tourist accommodation, but attempts have also been made to link this goal to the preservation of ancient buildings and of local traditional architecture. The critique has been that the focus was too much on individual support of entrepreneurs, whereas attention for more comprehensive parts of the tourism structure was lacking.

Table 7.5 presents an overview of the contribution of the parks to tourism development in terms of the innovations which have been achieved (according to the

various types of innovation discerned in Section 4.1). The initiatives mentioned in the table are innovative to different degrees, but are in any case new to the area.

Table 7.5 Innovations generated by both parks

	PNR des Volcans d'Auvergne	PNR Livradois-Forez
Product innovation/ process innovation	Creation of Maisons du Parc Creation of infrastructure for Nordic ski	Improvement of accommodation, creation of new products through cooperatives
Network innovation	-	Creation of cooperatives, stimulation of cooperation (Boucle d'or, Route des Métiers)
Market innovation	Parc des Volcans as a label	Label of Parc, active promotion of the Parc and of some of the tourism initiatives
Ideological innovation	Experience of nature and landscape within the Parc	Aim to base development on regional strengths has been partly achieved, tourism as a tool for local development
Systems innovation	(Search for new mechanisms for landscape conservation)	Attempt to create cooperation between local actors, stimulation of development based on qualities of the area System innovation at regional level: not yet attained

Source: this thesis

The table shows the differences in the position of both parks in terms of tourism development. Parc des Volcans is much more involved in creating the preconditions for tourism development, while Parc Livradois-Forez is actively promoting and stimulating specific types of tourism development. The contribution of the parks in terms of tourism innovation will be further evaluated at the end of this section.

Governance

The two parks differ as regards the governance model adopted. Both are essentially network organisations, but their strategies in day-to-day management and operational structure are quite different.

The strategy of Parc des Volcans in tourism development is hardly interactive at all. The park is not actively involved in the tourism sector. In terms of promotion, the park coordinates its activities with the CRT (the regional tourism board). As this is mainly aimed at more effective and efficient promotion, this can be characterised as a strategic relation, even though its interactive content is limited. Some other tourism activities - such as the Maisons du Parc - are carried out by the park or under its strict supervision and are therefore not interactive. In terms of creating preconditions for tourism development, the park's strategy for protection of nature and improvement of landscape quality is relevant. For the protection of nature, it cooperates with knowledge and research institutes. As far as it is not just a one-way demand and supply relation, this part of its strategy can be characterised as an interactive strategy aimed mainly at instrumental goals (better protection of nature). In trying to achieve its goals of landscape

preservation, the cooperation of farmers, amongst other actors, is required. The park is actively involved in a number of European programmes which provide financial means to involve farmers in landscape preservation. Activating these farmers requires a strategy which can be characterised as strategic, as their cooperation is sought to achieve a pre-defined goal.

Table 7.6 Parc des Volcans: overview of linkages at various levels related to interactive models

	Communicative	Instrumental	Strategic
Linkages with other local sectors /institutions		Generation of knowledge on nature and protection of nature and landscape, with aid of research institutes (<u>limited interaction</u>)	Involve farmers in landscape protection
Linkages within local tourism sector		(creation of network of <i>maisons du parc</i> , activities in the field of nature tourism) - but <u>not very interactive</u>	Promotion mainly through CDT
External linkages			Education and extension on nature Promotion of the park image

Source: this thesis

Table 7.7 Parc Livradois-Forez: overview of linkages at various levels related to interactive models

	Communicative	Instrumental	Strategic
Linkages with other local sectors /institutions	Mission of the park is to take local population as starting point for development Link tourism development to local identity	Knowledge on local architecture and building traditions (<u>but not very interactive</u>)	
Linkages within local tourism sector	Contact with local entrepreneurs; Create cooperation between entrepreneurs	Improvement of quality of accommodations/ professionalise tourism sector (<u>not very innovative or interactive</u>)	Promotion of cooperation between entrepreneurs, creation of new joint products Joint promotion of park's tourism product
External linkages			lack of cooperation with regional partners with regard to subsidisation, promotion, etc.

Source: this thesis

Parc Livradois-Forez has stated in its mission that its starting point for development is the local population. Tourism development should link up with local identity and there

are frequent contacts with local tourism entrepreneurs. This points at a communicative strategy. The development of new joint tourism products and the stimulation of networks also is based on this strategy. In practice, however, the role of the park in these networks is still prominent and not all entrepreneurs are convinced of the product. This implies that the strategy followed is to some extent also strategic, as it is partly the parks' goals that are being pursued and these goals are not fully supported by or believed in by all entrepreneurs. The park also involves experts, for example the architect who has been brought in to help preserve local building traditions. But generally, innovations are not generated through interaction.

When considering the differences in approach of the two parks, it is important to realise that PNR des Volcans has a stronger tourist image and is better known in France⁸⁰. It has a very characteristic landscape and an important 'land-mark' - the Puy-de-Dôme - both of which are lacking in Livradois-Forez. This is a clear advantage in terms of tourism development, but has some repercussions for the functioning of the park as well. Many actors at the local, departmental and regional levels refer to the volcanoes and incorporate them in their own image. The park seems to have opted for a not too vigorous strategy, operating somewhat in the background in many cases and focusing on its main task - landscape conservation and protection of the most vulnerable natural sites. Livradois-Forez used to be a 'forgotten' area. This helps to explain why the park has been more or less able to get away with its rather autonomous strategy in the past. In financial terms, the LEADER programme has offered the opportunity to pursue such a strategy. The role of this programme in Livradois-Forez confirms the statement made in the previous chapter, that is that Europe has stimulated the creation of 'regional spaces of governance'. The opportunities of this programme have been much criticised by actors at the departmental and regional levels. Many governmental bodies and other representatives feel surpassed by the activities of the park. It has however helped the park to achieve a certain level of internal support and to follow its own course in rural development.

PNR: stimulating quality and innovation in tourism?

The policy goals in both PNPs in the Auvergne were generally aimed at economic development and the preservation of rural qualities. Only Parc Livradois-Forez has related this to an interactive approach to tourism development. Especially the need for a communicative interactive development approach is stressed by this park. Also, the goals of economic development and conservation of qualities are considered in an interrelated way. Though both parks aim to conserve the qualities of the area, the notion of quality has a different content in each case. Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne is particularly geared towards conservation of nature and landscape qualities. Parc Livradois-Forez defines quality more in terms of a process: it is related to local population and local dynamism.

The mission statement on tourism development is hardly translated into policy measures and actions in Parc des Volcans. The park itself does not take the initiative to develop products, nor are interesting projects in the park supported or adverse developments discouraged. The park has hardly any relations with tourism actors at the local level. Strong points in terms of tourism are the image of the park, its activities in the field of nature/landscape protection and extension, and the relations with CRT at the

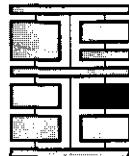
⁸⁰ Even in Clermont-Ferrand, Parc Livradois-Forez is not very well-known. A survey among inhabitants of this city revealed that 80% are aware of the existence of Parc des Volcans, compared to only 30% for the Parc Livradois-Forez (Monteix, 1995: 126).

regional level. From the perspective of the theory sketched in this thesis, Parc des Volcans carries out its mission to stimulate economic development and to preserve the qualities of the area in a rather conservative way. Both goals are approached more or less separately with regard to tourism, as protection of nature and extension are not integrated with a more commercial approach to tourism development. Moreover, the park is rather passive in relation to tourism, leaving the initiative to local and regional actors which traditionally fulfil these tasks. It does not actively try to stimulate alternatives. The park also does not take a very interactive approach. Most interaction is strategic, aimed at achieving predefined goals or more effective strategies.

The park intends to take more initiatives in tourism development in the future. In this, it should make use of its strong points as defined above: emphasis on the protection of nature and landscape, strong image and good relations with CRT. These can be used as a basis for cooperation with entrepreneurs and organisations at the local level. This way, a coherent product can be developed, which relates to the park's mission. This will take a long time and much effort. In the short term, it might be a good idea to focus on some high potentials. The strategy followed in Parc Livradois-Forez can be used as an example, for instance to interest entrepreneurs in offering joint packages which are suitable to experience the park. The park does not have to develop these products itself, but can very well leave the task of actually creating packages to local tourist offices and/or the CRT. Also organisations like Chamina can be of help. It is however very important that the park communicates the type of development desired and possibly develops a label for products which fit with the parks' philosophy. Parc des Volcans should invest in its internal network and the stimulation of cooperation between entrepreneurs and tourism organisations within the park.

Parc Livradois is much more involved in tourism development than the Parc des Volcans is. It also has a much more central position in the local tourism network. Relations at the regional and departmental level are more conflictive as the park performs tasks which are already claimed by other actors at these levels (e.g. improving the quality of the tourism product, facilitating entrepreneurs, promotion). The park intends to improve cooperation at the regional level. Of the two parks, Livradois is more concerned with stimulating innovation in rural tourism. It especially tries to create linkages among tourism entrepreneurs and between entrepreneurs and other local actors. Some interesting initiatives have been taken to strengthen the tourism networks within the park area.

The approach taken by Parc Livradois-Forez fits very well with a strategy aiming to combine economic development and conservation of rural qualities as described in the theoretical chapters. To achieve this goal, the park mainly uses a philosophy based on the communicative model of interaction. Though aiming for an approach which links up with local dynamics, the park has up till now been the main catalyst of developments. The case of Livradois-Forez illustrates that a communicative approach, trying to change the course of development through strengthening local networks, demands a lot of time. Tourism development in the park might gain from combining this approach with the instrumental model of interaction. By improving the innovative character of products developed and presenting these to the public in a surprising way, the area can become more interesting for visitors. Also, success with the public will convince tourism entrepreneurs that this strategy is worthwhile. In order to achieve this, more attention should be paid to the input of knowledge. This means that tourism entrepreneurs and other local actors should be approached as carriers of knowledge and the input of external expert knowledge should be considered. The strategy of the village of Murat-le-Quaire in Parc des Volcans is an example in this respect.



8 The context for rural tourism networks in the Netherlands

To talk about 'the countryside' in a nation where the average population density is over 450 per km² might seem a contradiction in terms¹. Most Dutch would disagree with this, however. The experience of a distinction between urban versus rural areas is real, and green space has always played an important role with regard to leisure and recreation.

However, as the long taken-for-granted role of agriculture in rural areas is decreasing, discussion on the interrelations and distinctions between city and countryside - and in particular the way in which these should be dealt with in policy - has increased. This discussion is related to the expressed need to create new functions for rural areas. In this process of rural renewal, in which creation of new economic carriers is one of the aims, development of rural tourism is a much promoted alternative. WCL ('valuable cultural landscapes') policy is one of the policies pursued in the 1990s within the framework of such rural renewal goals. In the following chapter, tourism development in two areas to which this policy applied is highlighted. In order to understand interaction between various parties involved in WCL and the position of rural tourism in these processes, this chapter describes the context for rural tourism in the Netherlands.

This includes a historical overview of policies for rural areas, recreation and tourism (8.1). Consequently, three developments which have been influential in the 1990s are described. In 8.2, the changing relations in the tourist-recreative field are sketched, focusing on the tourism and recreation policies of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and that of Agriculture. Next, influences of rural renewal processes on tourism development are described (8.3), and in 8.4 the focus is on the trend towards integrating economic and ecological goals. In 8.5 the consequences of these developments are sketched, referring to discourses on rural areas and rural tourism networks.

8.1 Policy for rural areas and recreation and tourism up to the 1990s

Rural areas in the Netherlands are traditionally not only the locus of agriculture. Farmers had income from other activities as well². The bourgeoisie also had vested interests in rural areas, amongst others through financing 'polderisation' in the 19th century. From the 1930s onwards the agricultural vision of green pastures, fertile land and neatly

¹ According to OECD standards, the Netherlands have no *predominantly rural* areas (Strijker, 1999: 12).

² However, differences existed between the more commercialised (and hence more specialised) agriculture in the 'low' (western and northern) parts and the 'high' (southern and eastern) parts of the Netherlands where subsistence farming and pluri-activity were common (Knippenberg and de Pater, 1988).

planted trees became increasingly influential³. Agriculture started dominating rural policy as the sector became increasingly well organised and the agricultural 'corporatist block' became more powerful.

Post-war agricultural policy: rural areas as the locus for productionist agriculture

The countryside is above all a place where profit is made by production factors such as the soil, the work dedicated to agriculture and the invested capital⁴.

After World War II, agriculture became increasingly technological in nature, aimed at maximising production. Farms became regarded as economic enterprises. 'The guiding principle was no longer based on assumptions about the role of rural society in national culture, but rather the role of agriculture in establishing an industrial society'⁵. From the 1950s until well into the 1980s, agricultural politics were aimed at the modernisation of farms, through rationalisation of the production process and maximisation of output. Other policies supported this development. The first national plan for spatial organisation (*Eerste nota Ruimtelijke Ordening*) which appeared in 1960 identified the need for 'ongoing modernisation of the spatial organisation of the countryside, suitable for rational agricultural production'⁶. Rural areas were strictly fashioned to optimise agricultural production conditions and rural policy and planning were considered instruments to rationalise the use of space in accordance with the logic of the market⁷. The landscape changed drastically as a result of land consolidation. Agricultural modernisation was regarded as a means to liberate the countryside from its peripheral position and give farmers the opportunity to achieve a middle-class lifestyle⁸. The belief that agriculture is predominantly an economic activity also determined the Dutch position vis-à-vis European agricultural politics⁹.

This unilinear agricultural development model dominated not only in policy, but also in social and economic sciences¹⁰. The bond between rural sciences and agricultural policy was strong, in terms of both practical commitment and institutional affiliation. Though agricultural politics and research were dominated by this productionist ethos, paradoxically the family farm continued to be regarded as the main organisational unit of agricultural production. 'Although many traditional assumptions of the agrarian myth were abandoned, the idea of the self-employed farmer was upheld as a matter of principle'¹¹. This seems to be at odds with the general tendency to dissociate agriculture from conservative values and images of traditional society. In fact, however, persistent reference to 'family', which was associated with continuity and respect for tradition, helped to break the resistance of the conservative part of the farming population. It thus gave way to further modernisation and industrialisation of farming practice:

³ Ibid.: 243

⁴ *Lit: La campagne, c'est déjà avant tout le lieu où l'on tire profit des facteurs de production que sont la terre, le travail consacré à l'agriculture et le capital qui y est investi* (Ibid., 1997: 237).

⁵ De Haan, 1993b: 151

⁶ *Litt.: '... voortgaande ontwikkeling van een modern ingericht platteland, waar een rationele agrarische productie mogelijk is'* (Quote taken from Hidding, 1997: 101).

⁷ Smit, 1993

⁸ De Haan, 1993a

⁹ Strijker, 1993

¹⁰ De Haan, 1993b

¹¹ De Haan, 1993b: 151-152

Many farmers and broad sections of political parties and farmers' organisations ... viewed this guiding image [of farming based on rational, market-oriented principles] with suspicion. Their doubts explain the fact that farming modernisation came to be cast in the idiom of the family farm. ... It symbolised social welfare and the path of peaceful, calm transition, without violating personal integrity or creating social and cultural upheaval. It thus served as a sort of shield against potential criticism and resistance. The idiom of the family was quite acceptable to modernists when it represented progress based on private initiative and the creation of modern farms, able to support family life at urban middle class standards. I do not suggest that the ideological use of 'family farm' was consciously designed. I do believe, however, that the notion of family, when invoked in agricultural policy, possesses considerable potential to counter fundamentally different value orientations¹².

Though the modernisation of agriculture determined the course of rural politics and rural development in the decades after the Second World War, the example shows that other influences and visions remained active. Economic modernisation should not lead to a deterioration of the traditional socio-cultural values of the countryside. In the 1970s, the issue of liveability/quality of life of small villages became a policy issue. In some areas, modernisation of agriculture and especially the decrease in employment led to a decreasing population in small villages. The loss of local shops and schools had a dissolving effect on the village community. Such developments were combated with spatial (especially housing) and sociocultural policy measures. Problems affected especially the rural areas in the northern provinces and some parts of the extreme southwest and south-east¹³.

Attention to the negative aspects could not, however, disturb the general idea that rural areas are the antidote to modern urban life. This idyllic image has remained vivid until today and in general was not disturbed by the actual developments of modernisation and rationalisation of agriculture and of large parts of countryside and landscape.

Policies for recreation up to the 1970s

The notion of rural green areas as places of a better life was particularly influential with regard to recreation policy, which was based on the notion of compensation. Recreation in a natural environment should provide a societal answer to the inadequate or sober housing conditions of large groups of urban dwellers. Leisure in general was regarded as a compensation for labour and was approached from the point of view of sociocultural education and civilisation. This is reflected by the fact that policies for outdoor recreation fell under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education up to 1965¹⁴. The link between recreation and rural areas is strong. Particularly in the open country recreation is considered to come into its own¹⁵. Moreover, recreation was regarded as a means to stimulate respect for nature and a feeling of responsibility for the protection of nature and landscape¹⁶.

In the 1960s, these policy principles led to the creation of so-called *elementen van formaat* (elements of a substantial size): the planning of continuous areas suitable for recreative use. These were initially green areas situated close to urban centres. As the

¹² De Haan, 1993b: 155

¹³ Hidding, 1997; Huigen et al., 1989

¹⁴ Lengkeek, 1994

¹⁵ This can be read from, amongst others, a speech by the then parliamentary Under-secretary for Recreation in 1959, who stated that: no environment is more suited for recreation than the - virgin - nature. (Quote taken from Lengkeek, 1994: 113).

¹⁶ This goal was included in the articles of the Stichting Recreatie (van der Duim, 1992).

creation of these elements included spatial planning, other ministries and governmental institutes were involved as well (e.g. the government service for the national plan and the Central Planning Bureau). Policies were coordinated in an interdepartmental coordination commission, but the Ministry of Education kept the central role.

Whereas recreation and nature were regarded as natural bonds, some conflicts arose with agriculture. The dominant position of agriculture and the transformation of the landscape through large-scale consolidation of land is a thorn in the flesh of the recreation lobby. According to some of the observers at the time, the issue was often addressed in a rather emotional way and there was little room for a rational approach. The agricultural sector was especially afraid that development of recreation would lead to a restriction on the possibilities to expand¹⁷.

In 1965 recreation became part of the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Welfare Work. This symbolises the new approach to leisure as a means to create welfare and self-expression. Leisure and cultural expression are included as rights in the Dutch Constitution¹⁸. Large amounts of public funding for leisure and cultural services became available. As funding is only available if municipalities co-operate, large numbers of *recreatieschappen* (inter-municipal bodies) arose at the end of the 1960s. Each *recreatieschap* managed its own recreational area. Formal regulations for quality and functional requirements made all these recreational areas look very much alike: surface water for swimming, beaches and a play garden are standard elements. The fact that only a few consultancies had specialised in making plans for these areas added to their uniformity¹⁹.

The recreational bodies tended to function rather autonomously and were hardly bounded by municipal policy or democratic control. Consequently, spatial planning of recreational areas was not integrated with the municipal welfare policy, or with economic policies for tourism. Outdoor recreation and urban recreation were separate policy fields. Segregation was further promoted because political support was self-evident and money was readily available. Lengkeek observes that by the end of the 1970s, this success had created a sector which was mainly inward-oriented²⁰. Generally speaking, communication between the national government and the sector (as well as the academic research institutes) was good, and fundamental differences hardly occurred²¹.

This consensus gradually disappeared in the course of the 1970s when discussions between the government and the sector became more political²². The sector, which

¹⁷ Kerstens, 1972. Indicative of some of the ideas at the time is the quote of Franssens, which is taken from Kerstens, 1972: 104: 'Tegenhouden van de rationalisatie zou een verpaupering van het platteland kunnen betekenen. Van een verzorgd cultuurlandschap kan dan geen sprake meer zijn. Conservering van oude cultuurlandschappen moet onmogelijk geacht worden. Bijzondere monumenten moeten door de overheid of door speciale instellingen worden beheerd. Omdat door het hoge tempo van de technisch-economische ontwikkeling in land- en tuinbouw de schade, die conserverende maatregelen veroorzaken, zo groot is, is in vele gevallen algehele onteigening te verkiezen boven beperking van gebruik en schadeloosstelling daarvoor'.

¹⁸ Lengkeek, 1994: 116

¹⁹ Ibid.: 1994: 118

²⁰ 'De sector was succesvol geworden, en enigszins zelfgenoegzaam geconcentreerd op de verdeling van gelden en de kwantitatieve berekening van de maatschappelijke behoefté aan recreatieluimte' (Ibid.: 1994: 120).

²¹ 'In die periode bestond nauwelijks verschil van mening tussen overheid en particulier initiatief over de gemeenschappelijke taak op het gebied van de recreatie. Recreatie werd beschouwd als een sociaal recht, dat democratisch over de samenleving moest worden verdeeld' (van der Duim, 1992: 122).

²² Van der Duim, 1992

consisted of numerous associations and societal interest groups, was represented by the *Stichting Recreatie*, a critical organisation which promoted debate and reflection²³. Issues like environmental problems and social segregation were entering the debate. At the same time, the bond between recreation and nature was falling apart. This process started already in the 1960s, but was enforced by the appearance of the report of the Club of Rome²⁴. Tensions between nature protection and open-air recreation increased. From being a natural ally, recreation increasingly became regarded as a threat to nature, and visitors of natural areas as potential disturbers of the ecological balance.

1980s: Growing influence of nature and commercialisation

Recreation policy in the Netherlands is like a hungry donkey between the haystack of commercial exploitation and the haystack of orthodox nature development²⁵.

The growing influence of nature protection as a political issue was also felt at the Ministry of Agriculture. In the 1970s, environmental issues gained a firmer place on the political agenda. At first, environmental concern was not specifically aimed at the agricultural sector. Urban and industrial activities received the bulk of attention, although already before 1970, scientific warnings against the polluting effects of modern agriculture were uttered²⁶. In general, however, '... farmers were seen as stewards of green, clean and pleasant lands that constituted their main means of existence'²⁷.

In the 1980s concern about the environmental impacts of agriculture increased. The agricultural sector resisted any attempts for serious changes. At first the competence of environmental actors (amongst others the Ministry of the Environment) was contested and more research into the seriousness of the problem was demanded. These defensive strategies were followed by more offensive ones, aimed at trying to create technological solutions²⁸. Nevertheless, as time went on, the first cracks appeared in the agricultural corporatist block²⁹. The Ministry of Agriculture retreated more and more into its own fortress and its position became seriously undermined during the 1980s. According to one of the officials at the time:

At the beginning of the 1980s, agriculture was one of the strongest ministries, alongside traffic/water management. Independent, with its own instruments for spatial organisation and management, education, extension and research, and with a strong support of the agricultural sector and a solid political base; towards the outside world operating as a unity. ... The ministry was not prepared for and no match for the gulf of criticism which came over agricultural policy. ... And the ministry's reaction was spasmodic, it denied the problems and operated increasingly carefully externally, which

²³ The role of the *Stichting Recreatie* was twofold, as it was on the one hand a representative of the sector and thus an 'opponent' of the government, and on the other hand a 'fellow-player' as it could be charged with the execution of policy tasks (van der Duim, 1992). According to Lengkeek (1994), the former role prevailed until the 1970s.

²⁴ Lengkeek, 1994

²⁵ *Lit.*: Het recreatiebeleid in Nederland bevindt zich als een hongerende ezel tussen de hooistapel van de commerciële exploitatie en de hooistapel van de orthodoxe natuurontwikkeling (Lengkeek, 1994: 193).

²⁶ Frouws et al., 1993; Westerman (1999) describes how Sicco Mansholt, one of the main advocates of and contributors to agricultural rationalisation in the Netherlands and Europe in the 1950 and 1960s, realised already in the early 1970s that things might have gone too far. The appearance of the report of the Club of Rome played an important role in this.

²⁷ Frouws, 2000: 1

²⁸ Frouws et al., 1993

²⁹ Frouws et al., 1993; Termeer, 1993; Frouws et al., 1994

only aggravated criticism. The ministry is now considered 'a giant with feet of clay' and the reason for the existence of the department is openly disputed.³⁰

A new legitimisation for the existence of the Ministry was found in the policy field of nature management. Nature policy had been transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in 1982, when its name was changed to the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries (LNV). Because of growing environmental awareness, the importance and size of the nature department quickly increased. At the same time, recreation was transferred to the same ministry as well. The fact that recreation is not included in the Ministry's name is indicative of the subordinate position of the sector.

Both recreation and agriculture were losing ground to nature, but the effects were initially much more radical for recreation. The economic crisis at the beginning of the 1980s caused a revolution in welfare policy. The central/left government was replaced by a central/right³¹ government, which opted for a strictly budgetary approach. All non-essential posts were scrapped and this affected especially the sociocultural sector, which included at that time recreation.

The 1980s brought an almost complete turnaround of former policies for recreation. From a policy aimed at separate recreational areas, emphasis was now on integrating of recreation and other functions: 'recreative co-use' (*recreatief medegebruik*) of rural areas. One of the assumptions was that such co-use would be less expensive. The policy to maintain separate recreational areas with public funding was no longer tenable as the management and maintenance of these areas had become increasingly expensive. By the end of the 1980s, recreation was hardly an issue any longer in the national spatial plans³². The weak legal basis is regarded as one of the explanations for the weakening of the position of recreation and the lack of integration between recreation, tourism and other sectors³³. Whereas recreation was increasingly integrated with other functions, nature protection was to take place through the creation of separate natural reserves: the *Ecologische Hoofdstructuur* (Ecological Main Structure; EHS). Apart from protection of nature, the creation of 'new nature' was promoted. This referred to the reconstruction of the natural situation as it was in prehistoric times. After the initial phase in which the existing landscape is dug away, the area should be left to the forces of nature and human interference should be avoided as much as possible. For the maintenance of these areas, special breeds of cows and horses were introduced, similar to types which used to inhabit the Low Countries. Recreation within these areas was not stimulated, as it was thought that recreation would disturb the course of nature. Nature and recreation were no longer considered to be natural allies.

³⁰ Post, 1992: 73; *Lit.*: 'Begin jaren '80 kon L&V, naast V&W, nog worden gezien als één van de sterkste Haagse departementen. Onafhankelijk, met geheel eigen instrumenten voor inrichting en beheer, onderwijs, voorlichting en onderzoek en met een sterke achterban van de landbouw met een hechte politieke verankering; naar buiten toe als een hechte eenheid opererend. ... Landbouw was niet voorbereid en ook niet opgewassen tegen de golf van kritiek die zich over het landbouwbeleid uitstortte. ... En Landbouw reageerde krampachtig, ontkende de problemen en ging steeds voorzichtiger naar buiten optreden; hetgeen de kritiek nog verder aanwakkerde. Over Landbouw wordt nu gesproken als een "reus op lemen voeten" en de bestaansreden van het departement wordt publiekelijk bediscussieerd'.

³¹ The coalition of the Christian democratic CDA with the socialist PvdA was replaced by a coalition of CDA and liberal VVD.

³² Lengkeek, 1994

³³ Lengkeek, 1994

This changed attitude towards recreation was noticeable within the Ministry as well³⁴. At the beginning of the 1990s, recreation no longer held a recognisable position within the Ministry. The growing influence of nature policy can be illustrated by the number of policy officials at the provincial level: whereas advisory bodies for recreation retained very small numbers of personnel or even disappeared, bodies for nature protection had up to 20 people in service³⁵.

Another important change was induced from a different angle. At the end of the 1970s, the Ministry of Economic Affairs (EZ) became aware of the opportunities tourism presented for the economic development of peripheral areas. Limburg was the first province to come up with a 'tourist-recreative development plan' (TROP). Consequently, other provinces were stimulated to follow this example and by the mid-1980s each province had its own TROP. Municipalities and regions started writing their own plans as well. One of the results was fierce competition between areas. Another consequence was an improved communication between entrepreneurs, particularly large entrepreneurs, and the government, which gave these entrepreneurs more influence on policy-making.

Two other developments in the 1980s were the trend towards privatisation and the increasing popularity of public-private partnerships. This privatisation finally included most *recreatieschappen* as well, whose considerable debts could no longer be paid by the shrinking public budgets. Privatisation and public-private partnerships can be related to a trend towards decentralisation and deregulation of government tasks.

The balance of power between recreation and tourism had become reversed during the 1980s. Indicative of this reversal are the budgets of the Ministry of Economic Affairs compared to that of the Ministry of Agriculture. Whereas the budget for outdoor recreation decreased from EUR 35 million in 1975 to EUR 20 million in 1993, the budget for tourism increased to EUR 35 million in 1991³⁶. In ten years, emphasis had shifted from recreation as a means for self-expression and welfare, to an economic, supply-side oriented approach. This change in orientation included a change in vocabulary as well: 'quality of supply', 'consumers' and 'marketing strategies' became the new buzz-words. The changes are expressed very well in the following quote from the then head of the recreation department of the Ministry of Agriculture:

I consider the current position of the public recreation sector as very weak. There is only a very narrow vision of the government. There is no money for realising those policies which have been formulated. There are no signals that lower public bodies are stepping into the vacuum which is left by the retreating central government. There is a lot of opposition from the nature and environmental sector. Worse even is the complete lack of political attention to recreation. ... The differentiation in types of recreation and thus the weak defence of interests are the reasons that the recreationist is not 'heard' by the national government. Recreation is not a political issue and is obviously considered an area which does not require a strategy at the national level and which can be dealt with by the private sector³⁷.

³⁴ '...binnen en buiten het ministerie is de veranderde houding van natuur jegens recreatie goed voelbaar' (Post, 1992: 69).

³⁵ Post, 1992: 73

³⁶ Lengkeek, 1994: 134

³⁷ Post, 1992: 70; *Lit.*: Ik beschouw de huidige positie van de openbare recreatiesector als een hele zwakke. Er is slechts een beperkte visie van de overheid. Er is geen geld voor realisering van het nog wél geformuleerde beleid. Er zijn géén signalen dat lagere publiekrechtelijke lichamen in het gat stappen dat door de terugtredende rijksoverheid ontstaat. Er is veel tegenwerking vanuit de natuur- en milieubescherming. Nog erger dan de hiervoor genoemde ontwikkelingen acht ik het volledig gebrek aan politieke belangstelling voor de recreatie. ... De gedifferentieerdheid in recreatievormen en

The approach to recreation and tourism links up with general policy trends in the 1980s. It fits well with the idea of 'regions on their own', which was mentioned in Section 3.2.

Tourism and rural areas: the early 1990s

The 1980s can be characterised as an era of no-nonsense policy, with an emphasis on pragmatism and profitability. In recreation and tourism policy, the trend towards decentralisation, privatisation and public-private partnerships were clear results of this approach. Recreation was no longer approached as a common good, but from an economic point of view. Partly as a result of this, tourism became more important as a policy field compared to recreation. By the end of the 1980s, the notion of 'quality' had achieved a central position and reflected the growing importance attached to the 'consumer'.

Another fashionable notion was sustainability, which was translated into an explosive growth of attention to nature preservation. The former intimate relation between nature and recreation was seriously disturbed as recreation was increasingly regarded as a threat to nature preservation. It also had its repercussions on the position of agricultural in rural policy, as nature preservation and development had gained influence in rural policy at the expense of agriculture.

Developments in the 1990s built on this heritage of the former decade. Some of the trends which have been set in motion are prolonged, others are adjusted or even reversed. In the following sections, some developments relevant to current relations in the rural tourism field are described. This is done by focussing, in turn, on the tourism and recreation policies of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and that of Agriculture, on the rural renewal policies of the Ministry of Agriculture and on the trend towards integrating economic and ecological goals. In each case, impacts on the rural tourist-recreative field will be highlighted.

8.2 Deregulation, decentralisation and restructuring of the tourist-recreative field

In this section, policies for recreation and tourism in the 1990s and their consequences for the relations in the tourist-recreative field are described.

Policies for recreation and tourism in the 1990s

At the beginning of the 1990s, recreation was a policy field in crisis. It had lost much of its former status at the national policy level. At lower administrative levels, governments were also increasingly cutting back on public expenses. This trend continued in the 1990s. Around 1992, the size of the department of outdoor recreation was cut back from 89 to 58 persons (national and subnational). In 1996, only 16 full-time civil servants were employed nationally, and 14 at the regional level³⁸. A small success at the national level was the fact that the policy field of 'green space' was added to the department of

daarmee ook de versnipperde belangenbehartiging maakt dat 'de recreant' in Den Haag niet wordt gehoord. Recreatie is geen politiek onderwerp en wordt kennelijk gezien als een terrein waarvoor geen strategie op landelijke schaal nodig is en dat verder kan worden verzorgd door de marktsector'.

³⁸ In 1996, the policy field of recreation included green space as well. Berkers et al., 1996: 33

outdoor recreation. This helped to strengthen the strategic position of the sector somewhat, but it was hardly a structural improvement³⁹.

Tourism policy experienced an era of growing attention and budget until 1991⁴⁰. After 1991 decentralisation of tasks led to a decrease in spending. In addition, the Ministry has transferred most of the national tasks to the NBT (*Nederlands Bureau voor Toerisme*: the Dutch Tourism Board) and - to a much lesser extent - to AVN⁴¹. These organisations should jointly develop in the direction of a '*kennis- en innovatiecentrum voor de BV Toeristisch Nederland*' (knowledge and innovation centre for Tourism Netherlands Ltd.)⁴². The main part of the tourism budget was spent on subsidising these 'lead organisations' (*spitsorganisaties*) and financing some incidental projects - mainly large ones. By the end of the 1990s, the Ministry of EZ had delegated many of its tasks to these organisations and had more or less retreated from the scene of tourism policy⁴³. The tasks of the Ministry were confined to working behind the screens and improving the conditions for recreation and tourism. It was considered essential that tourism should be integrated as much as possible with other policies⁴⁴. Integration is sought not only for government policy; the sector itself should also integrate more with existing initiatives in other sectors. Tourism should be integrated into projects for the revitalisation of inner cities, transport and new developments in rural areas⁴⁵.

LNV also increasingly took the approach of integration of recreation policy fields into adjacent policies. In March 1996, the then Minister of Agriculture informed parliament that recreation should no longer be approached as a separate sector, but be considered as an important part of integral policy themes referring to urban and rural development⁴⁶. Almost simultaneously - though having another background as well⁴⁷ - the separate advisory body for outdoor recreation (VAROR/ROR) was abolished. This body, which had the formal right of comment and enquiry and which advised the Ministry on relevant policy issues, was replaced by a general advisory body for rural areas (*Raad voor het Landelijk Gebied*). This body covers all policy fields of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Though the strategies followed by LNV and EZ were to some extent similar, the backgrounds were rather different. Whereas EZ had always left much of the initiative to the tourism sector, this was certainly not the case with outdoor recreation. The tradition

³⁹ Lengkeek, 1994

⁴⁰ The budget for tourism is however very small compared to the whole budget of the Ministry of EZ.

⁴¹ Janssen, J., 1990; Berkers et al., 1996

⁴² Speech of the State Secretary for Economic Affairs, drs. G. Ybema, 8 December 1998 (<http://info.minez.nl/speeches/081298.htm>). Currently, both are united in one organisation, the TRN (*Toerisme Recreatie Nederland*)

⁴³ An indication of the subordinate position of tourism within the Ministry is the fact that in 1999, only one official press release of the Ministry of EZ was related to tourism (out of a total of 227 press releases). The release was issued because two members of the opposition asked questions about the increased tourism taxes (<http://info.minez.nl/pers99/99138.htm>). In 1996, 1997 and 1998, the number of press releases on tourism was 3, 1 and 2, respectively.

⁴⁴ See e.g. the speech given by the State Secretary for Economic Affairs, drs. G. Ybema, 8 December 1998 (<http://info.minez.nl/speeches/081298.htm>).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Berkers et al., 1996: 9; this integrated approach started earlier, with policies on rural development (see next section).

⁴⁷ The disappearance of a separate advisory body for outdoor recreation was part of a general reduction of the number of advisory boards. Nevertheless, the choice which boards should merge is a reflection of political priorities.

of government interference in this sector was strong and, moreover, policy tradition within the ministry of LNV was rather hierarchical. The fact that decentralisation was carried through within this ministry can be related to the general need to reduce expenses. According to Post, the weak position of recreation within the Ministry vis-à-vis the well-established policy field of agriculture and the rising star of nature, explained why this was the first department within the Ministry to suffer from decentralisation⁴⁸. Thus, even though the integration of tourism and recreation with other policies was generally presented as the most sensible strategy for tourism development, it can just as well be explained as a failure to appreciate the relevance of the sector. Moreover, joining in with policies developed for other goals was seriously hampered in practice. This was partly due to the fact that the legal grounding of tourism and recreation as a policy field was very weak. Not only was there no legal need to create sector plans for tourism or recreation, but the recreative use of water and land was almost completely dependent on regulations and laws which are based outside the tourism and recreation sphere, or else not regulated at all⁴⁹. The law on outdoor recreation (*Wet op de Openluchtrecreatie*) did not provide for this⁵⁰. This meant that in order to represent the interests of tourism and recreation, it was necessary to anticipate policy-making in a large number of policy fields. However, each of these fields had its own policy culture, its own types of planning and plans, rules, regulations and so on. To deal with each of these fields in an effective way required expertise and a lot of time – two commodities which were less and less available as the number of tourism and recreation officials decreased. The representation of tourist-recreative interests within these policy fields was further hampered because tourism and recreation received little attention within the national government as a whole.

Restructuring of the tourist-recreative field

As recreation and tourism were to remain on the political agenda, representation of interests became increasingly important. This was considered to be a task mainly for the private sector⁵¹. But this sector was fragmented in terms of both organisations and interests (see also Texbox 8.1). Both LNV and EZ considered it very important that the sector strengthened its role as representative of tourist-recreative interests. For this purpose three of the larger associations - HISWA (water sports), RECRON (tourist-recreative entrepreneurs) and ANWB (automobile association/interests of consumer) - were subsidised in order to strengthen their 'booster function'⁵².

As the policies for decentralisation of government tasks proceeded, the regional level became more and more important as well. Stimulation of initiatives and policy development at the regional level became another important policy issue. Projects aimed to reach these goals include the 'pilot-areas' for tourist-recreative product development of the Ministry of EZ (beginning of the 1990s) and the appointment of regional managers or *aanjagers* (boosters). These managers were intended to stimulate cooperation between entrepreneurs, governments and tourist offices (*VVVs*)⁵³. LNV subsidised a number of organisations and initiatives that helped strengthen the position of the sector. In 1995,

⁴⁸ Post, 1992: 67

⁴⁹ See Moerdijk, 1995

⁵⁰ Berkers et al., 1996

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Berkers et al., 1996

⁵³ Ministerie van Economische Zaken, 1993

Textbox 8.1 Representation of tourist-recreative interests

Entrepreneurs

With regard to the representation of the interests of the sector, numerous organisations exist. The most important (i.e. the largest and most influential) organisations are RECRON, HISWA and Horeca-Nederland. RECRON is the largest association of tourist-recreative entrepreneurs in the Netherlands. HISWA represents the interests of the water recreation sector, and Horeca-NL those of the hotel and catering sector. The last-named organisation is less involved in rural tourism.

Two organisations which are relevant in the field of rural tourism are SVR and VEKABO. Both are represent mini-campsites, particularly those situated on farms (agritourism entrepreneurs). Particularly SVR (lit.: foundation for free recreation) is a somewhat deviant organisation. Its aim is to provide opportunities for encounters between farmers and tourists. It has no list of associated members. Tourists can become a member by paying an annual fee. Whenever a member is interested in camping in a certain area, a list of five to ten members in the area is provided, which can then be contacted to make reservations. For each reservation, the farmer has to pay a percentage to SVR. SVR's relation with other organisations in the field is generally not very well-developed. VEKABO can be regarded as a competing association, which was established by agritourism entrepreneurs in Zealand who desired a more entrepreneurial approach. In addition to these two, many smaller associations in the field of rural tourism exist. Recently an initiative to coordinate all organisations in the rural/agri tourism field was launched.

Consumers

With regard to the representation of the interests of the recreationists, the number of associations is even larger. In most cases, associations are organised around a particular activity, such as horse-riding (NHS), golfing (NGF), nude recreation (NPN) or hunting (KNJV). The most influential organisation representing tourist-recreative interests is the ANWB (the Dutch automobile association). As such, this organisation represents the interests of 1 million members, or around 3.5 million Dutch persons. As most of these families are members because of the road service which is offered, the legitimacy of the organisation in terms of representation of tourist-recreative interests can be questioned. Nevertheless, the organisation increasingly takes initiatives in the field of recreation and tourism. Because of its size, its financial position and its role as a spokesman vis-à-vis the government, it has considerable influence. The second largest association is the NVVS (the Dutch association of sport fishers). This is an assembly of regional and local associations for amateur fishing and represents the interests of around 370,000 fishers (1996). It owes its prominent position to the fact that fishing is at most locations only allowed for members of an association.

These examples show that large (and therefore more powerful) organisations are not necessarily the most legitimised to represent tourist-recreative interests. Only 15% of the population fishes, for example, whereas 80% (at least occasionally) goes for a walk, 70% cycles and 50% swims and sunbathes. These interests are nevertheless much less well-represented than fishing, water recreation (sailing, motor boats etc.), golfing and horse-riding. With regard to hiking, only a very small percentage of practitioners are organised, but nevertheless a large number of associations exist. At the national level, about 15 to 20 are active and differences between them are mainly ideological.

One of the main reasons for the diversity in types of organisations is that it is difficult to organise around a common interest. The common interest with regard to recreation and tourism lies in such themes as 'liveability' or 'accessibility' – themes which are not very appealing to the average tourist, also because they are often not considered to be threatened. The fact that the promotion of tourism interests at the national level is not very well-developed is considered an impediment to policy-making, which is why it has been an area of attention in successive policy documents. Three organisations in particular have been chosen to strengthen their position as representatives of the sector and to improve their role as initiators of new developments: RECRON, ANWB and HISWA. As described in the text, these organisations received a special grant from the government to strengthen their roles in this respect.

LENV started a project called *Recreatie Op Eigen Benen* (lit: Recreation on its own feet, generally referred to as ROEB)⁵⁴. This project aimed to create an improved, more independent and financially more powerful position for the recreational sector. In 1996, a joint project with the *Platform Ruimte voor Recreatie* was aimed at creating 'sounding boards' for recreation at the provincial level.

In most provinces, the policy fields of recreation and tourism were integrated by the mid-1990s. Tourist-recreative policy generally resides under Economic Affairs⁵⁵. Most provinces followed the national trend to reduce sector plans for tourism and recreation and to emphasise their integration into other policies. Here too the reduction of the number of specialised tourist-recreative civil servants continued. It led to the same vicious circle noted in national policy. With the disappearance of personnel, expertise on tourism and recreation was lost.

As a result, it became more difficult to integrate tourism as an issue in other policy fields⁵⁶. This seems to be confirmed by a study on the 'performance' of national tourism policy⁵⁷. This study concludes that national policies were well integrated into both sector and integral⁵⁸ provincial policies, but especially in those provinces which still had a full tourist-recreation department (Limburg, Zeeland, Friesland).

The structure of local and provincial tourism boards has changed. Provincial tourism boards are now 'Provinciale Bureaus voor Toerisme'. They are involved not only in promotion and marketing of the provincial tourism product, but also in product development. Subsidisation has decreased and part of the finance has to be obtained from projects. Stichting Recreatie received a new function, and is now acting as a 'knowledge and innovation centre' for the tourism and recreation sector. Its former role as representative of the sector and 'opponent' of the government (see 7.1) has largely been abandoned. All these developments fit into the desire to create a more market-led approach.

Decentralisation and the relative decrease of importance of recreation and tourism as policy issues at the national level might explain the improved relation between the Ministry of Economic Affairs and that of Agriculture. Coordination of tourist-recreative policies started to improve, even though some tension remained⁵⁹.

Despite the above remarks on decentralisation, privatisation and decreasing national funding, Berkers and colleagues state that a general conclusion that budgets for recreation and tourism were cut cannot be drawn. The cuts were at least partly compensated for by an increase in EU funding, in some cases by private investments and also by the availability of funding from other sectors. Though the struggle to integrate tourism and recreation as an issue into other policy fields has been hard, it has succeeded to a certain extent in a number of cases. This included policies aimed at the creation of employment and stimulation of regional economies. It certainly also included rural development policies, as will be described in more depth in the next section.

⁵⁴ Stichting Recreatie KIC, 1999; Wiersema et al., 1996

⁵⁵ Halfway through the 1990s, only the provinces of Noord and Zuid Holland had not integrated their policies yet (Berkers et al., 1996).

⁵⁶ Berkers et al., 1996

⁵⁷ Wiersema et al., 1996

⁵⁸ 'Integral plan' is used here as a translation for the Dutch 'facet plan' - a plan in which various sectoral policies have been integrated (e.g. spatial plans).

⁵⁹ Figuee, 1992; Berkers et al., 1996

8.3 Rural renewal

In the 1990s, public support for agriculture was deteriorating rapidly. The Ministry of Agriculture finally agreed that the sector needed radical restructuring. The relation between the Ministry and the sector was at that time seriously disturbed and consensus within the sector collapsed⁶⁰. The agricultural sector could no longer maintain its strategy of denying the problems, but had trouble finding a new direction.

In search of such a direction, the notion of 'rural renewal' was considered an answer to many of the policy issues LNV was struggling with. Moreover, it offered the Ministry the opportunity to present itself as the leading actor in rural policy-making⁶¹. The idea of rural renewal was launched by the Ministry of Spatial Planning and the Environment (*Ministerie van Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieu: VROM*) in the Addendum to the Fourth Memorandum on Spatial Planning' (*Vierde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening Extra: VINEX*)⁶². The Ministry of Agriculture soon took over this notion and around 1994 it started to appear frequently in policy documents, newspapers and professional journals⁶³. It seemed to be the new 'magic word' for rural policy-making. The definition used varies considerably from one author to the next, but Hetsen⁶⁴ discerns some general points of departure behind this concept.

- Agriculture and countryside are no longer synonymous. Emphasis is on the multifunctionality of the countryside, and in particular on the strengthening of ecological and recreative functions.
- A more sustainable development of rural areas is desired, with regard to agriculture and other functions.
- There is a need to broaden the rural economy in order to revitalise these areas.
- An important element is the search for new types of steering and planning, which more adequately link up with regional qualities and initiatives.

This latter point was a particularly important aspect of the new policy-making, which, again, linked up with a general trend in policy-making in the 1990s (see also Chapter 3).

Though the notion was particularly embraced by the Ministry of Agriculture, other ministries – as well as provinces and municipalities – also developed rural renewal policies. For example, in the *Aandachtsgebieden Leefbaarheid* ('areas of attention for liveability') an area-specific policy to promote liveability was initiated by the Ministry of VROM⁶⁵. The 'coordination centre for rural renewal' which aimed to link the activities of various governments and initiate the development of joint initiatives, was located within the Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Green Space and Recreation (*Groene Ruime en Recreatie: GRR*)⁶⁶.

⁶⁰ Frouws et al., 1994

⁶¹ ... het begrip bood de mogelijkheid aan LNV zich op te werpen als de leidende actor in het beleid met betrekking tot het platteland' (Strijker, 1999: 11).

⁶² Berkers et al., 1996: 9

⁶³ Strijker, 1999: 11

⁶⁴ Hetsen, 1997: 114

⁶⁵ See also Hidding, 1997, Chapter 9.

⁶⁶ It includes LNV (agriculture/nature/fisheries), VROM (housing/spatial planning/environment), VWS (public health/welfare/sports), EZ (economic affairs), BiZa (internal affairs), OC&W (education, culture and science) and V&W (transport and water), as well as the council of the joint provinces (IPO) and municipalities (VNG).

A crucial policy document for rural renewal policy was the *Structuurschema Groene Ruimte* (Structure Scheme on Green Space: SGR)⁶⁷. This policy document presented an integrated vision on rural areas in the Netherlands, in which national policies on nature, agriculture, recreation, forestry, landscape and spatial planning were taken into account. With regard to recreation and tourism, the main aim was to improve the 'quality of supply and facilities, opportunities for recreative co-use and the creation of a number of large recreational areas in the Randstad'. In addition, recreation and tourism were important as a means to broaden the rural economy. The SGR included both policies with a top-down character (e.g. the creation of the ecological main structure) and policies specifically aimed at a more bottom-up approach (e.g. the preservation of valuable cultural landscapes, *Waardevolle Cultuurlandschappen*: WCL).

Another policy document in which rural renewal had a central role was *Dynamiek en Vernieuwing* (Dynamism and Renewal) which appeared in 1995⁶⁸. This document was built up around three themes: market and competitive power (agriculture), dynamism of the rural area (ecological main structure and rural renewal) and knowledge and innovation policy. A specific fund was created to stimulate innovative projects in these fields (*kaderregeling stimulering innovatie*). In this document the need for deregulation and linking up with regional initiatives was stressed once more. Especially the provinces should get a more important role in the coordination and execution of policies.

Within the Ministry of Agriculture, rural renewal was in practice mainly a means to develop a pluri-active agriculture. With regard to recreation and tourism, this meant that focus was on agritourism initiatives. This tendency has been criticised by Strijker⁶⁹, who claims that rural renewal focussed too much on the creation of new economic functions as an alternative to agriculture. This was not in line with the real problems that rural areas were confronted with. Based on statistics on rural development, he defined the real problems as a regional development problem in some areas and one of urbanisation in others⁷⁰. According to him, the idea has emerged that the countryside is a pool of problems, which can be solved through agriculture; both are untrue⁷¹.

Other authors also criticise the fact that policies and strategies for rural areas were not based on a thorough analysis of the problems these areas are confronted with⁷². Another critique is the general optimism about the future and the consensus on the type of solutions to be applied:

⁶⁷ Ministerie van LNV, 1993 and 1995; even though 'rural renewal' is not literally used in the text, the whole document breathes the principles and ideas mentioned above.

⁶⁸ This is stated literally in the document: 'Bovendien kan deze nota beschouwd worden als de bijdrage vanuit het LNV-beleid aan het thema plattelandsvernieuwing'
([http://www\[minlnv.nl\]/thema/algemeen/kernta1.htm](http://www[minlnv.nl]/thema/algemeen/kernta1.htm)).

⁶⁹ Strijker, 1999

⁷⁰ He mentions a number of more specific fields which legitimise paying special attention to rural areas. These include the fact that social coherence is under pressure; concern for the cultural heritage, architecture and spatial integration of new buildings; criminality and *(traffic) safety; poverty; and day care for children. These problems are not exclusively rural, but demand a different strategy in rural areas than they do in urban ones.

⁷¹ Strijker, 1999: 11

⁷² Veeneklaas, 1997; Dekker et al., 1999; Boonstra, 1999

The optimism about opportunities to 'steer' undesired developments and the optimism about expected outcome of these efforts is striking. Problems are hardly mapped while the - abstract - solution is already fixed: 'cooperation and integrated use of space'⁷³.

The need for interaction, amongst others as a means for innovation, is stressed in many recent policy documents. A number of studies which were carried out for the NRLO have emphasised the relevance of these topics for rural areas⁷⁴. Though these advises have been taken over by the Ministry in pilots (e.g. the idea to create Regional Innovation Networks) and experimental policy (WCL, *gebiedscontracten*), the main stream LNV policy has remained generic and has a top-down character⁷⁵. This applies in particular for agricultural and nature (EHS) policies.

Developments and cooperatives in rural areas

Rural renewal policy has led to a renewed attention for bottom-up initiatives in rural areas. The creation of new networks was stimulated through a number of policy initiatives. A lot of attention was given to *milieu-coöperaties* in the mid-1990s. These cooperatives consisted of an association of farmers in a particular area jointly working to improve the environmental quality in that area. Such organisations plead for a more regional-specific approach to agri-environmental policy, which would prove more beneficial for both farmers and the environment.

Most initiatives with regard to rural renewal tended to focus primarily on the agricultural sector. With regard to tourism, this meant that for a long time the emphasis was on agritourism. The regular tourism sector was not too fond of such initiatives. This has changed somewhat in recent years as rural renewal projects now increasingly involve non-agricultural sectors as well. Cooperation between the regular tourism sector and agritourism networks now occurs more frequently. From both sides, it seems that people are more and more willing to, so to speak, take a look at the other side of the fence. Such developments as rural renewal have increased the need for a professional and organised approach to tourism interests, particularly at the regional level⁷⁶.

8.4 Integration of economic and ecological goals

The last point of view from which I want to highlight changes in rural policies in the 1990s concerns the changed approach to ecology and the protection of nature.

Whereas policies for nature conservation in the 1980s were dominated by the idea of separate nature areas (concentrated in the ecological main structure) the 1990s brought a renewed integration of nature and other functions. The ideal of a wilderness nature was at least partly replaced by functional nature and nature for recreative use. For nature and environmental organisations the concept of the ecological main structure itself was not

⁷³ Dekker et al., 1999: 19; *Lit.*: 'Opmerkelijk is het optimisme over de mogelijkheden tot sturing van gewenste ontwikkelingen, evenals het optimisme over het verwachte resultaat ervan. Problemen worden nauwelijks in kaart gebracht, terwijl de (abstracte) oplossing al vast staat: "samenwerking en integraal ruimtegebruik".

⁷⁴ Dammers et al., 1999; van Woerkum, 1999; NRLO, 1998

⁷⁵ Boonstra (1999) illustrates how most of the initial proposals to stimulate integrated regional policy-making for rural areas have been removed from the final version of the LNV policy document 'Kracht en Kwaliteit' (1999).

⁷⁶ Berkers et al., 1996: 10

questioned, but attention broadened to nature outside the EHS, integration of more participants in nature protection and integration of nature as an issue into other policy fields. Actors outside the nature and environmental scene increasingly questioned the EHS itself. The general trend in the 1990s was towards the integration of nature and other functions⁷⁷.

This changed attitude brought the nature and recreation/tourism sector closer together again. At the beginning of the decade some first hesitant steps were made. In 1992, a special prize for Tourism and Environment was founded (*Milieu & Toerisme Prijs*). Also in 1992, nature and tourism sectors met at a conference. According to a report, this conference created a certain fraternisation and the need to cooperate was recognised by all present⁷⁸. In the progress report of the EZ policy for Tourism of 1993, the need to stimulate communication between the tourism sector and nature and environmental organisations was stressed as well. As far as the tourism sector was concerned, this change of attitude was mainly prompted by the fact that nature and green tourism represented a certain market⁷⁹.

The overture was also stimulated by a general societal trend towards care for the environment. Environmental concern started to enter into almost all sectors of society. The international discourse on sustainability - which was highly stimulated by the Brundtland report and the 1992 Rio Conference - influenced debates nationally. Within almost all levels of governmental policy and almost every economic sector, calls for new forms of growth were heard: sustainable, environmentally aware and integrating economic and environmental development. In line with this trend, the tourism sector in the Netherlands gradually started to discuss the concept of sustainable development⁸⁰.

The changing attitude of nature organisations had different backgrounds. These include practical problems with the realisation of the ecological main structure, which proved more expensive than anticipated and was confronted with considerable local opposition in a number of regions. This led to a less strict approach and an enlargement of the opportunities for nature management by private owners (e.g. farmers). Another aspect which is relevant is the privatisation of the State Forestry Service (*Staatsbosbeheer*, SBB; one of the large landowners of forests and nature areas) in 1998. This called for a change in strategy and an increased emphasis on the opportunities to generate income. One of the opportunities was to generate income from recreation and tourism. Promotion of recreation became one of the main goals of the organisation. SBB intended to be not only geared towards nature and environment, but also to have an open attitude towards the general public.

The discussion on sustainability and tourism initially focussed on international tourism. An important critical note, focusing on the negative impacts of international tourism, was the 1994 report of the *Raad voor Natuurbeheer* (Council for Nature Management) 'Are we going too far?'. In this report the debate was opened by posing the central question: 'Do we have to go and see everything which seems attractive and interesting to us, and at what price do we allow ourselves the space and freedom to do so?' One of the consequences of this report was the establishment of intergovernmental task forces, and reluctant admission by the Dutch tourism sector that a percentage of

⁷⁷ Dekker et al., 1999

⁷⁸ Daalder, 1992

⁷⁹ In 1990 the Ministry of Economic Affairs commissioned a research on this theme (Ministerie van Economische Zaken, 1993).

⁸⁰ Van der Duim et al., 2000

international tourism could be seen as a non-sustainable pattern of production and consumption. Though starting from a negative point of view, the report initiated debate and interaction between nature organisations and the tourism sector with regard to sustainable tourism. It was in fact the first time that sustainable tourism was put on the agenda in the Netherlands. Although implementation of the recommendations of the report left much to be desired, the Groeneveld Conferences, in which governments, tourism industry and some environmental organisations meet and the subsequent founding of the 'Initiative Group for Sustainable Outgoing Tourism' (IDUT: *Initiatiefgroep Duurzaam Uitgaand Toerisme*) were direct results of the 1994 report.

Parallel to these discussions focusing on international tourism, the impacts of tourism and recreation within the Netherlands received increasing attention. Amongst others the *Beleidsagenda Milieu, Toerisme en Recreatie* (policy agenda on Environment, Tourism and Recreation; BMTR) is a result of this. This policy agenda resulted from an initiative taken by the tourism sector. A broad representation of tourism organisations and the ministries involved agreed on the policy agenda in 1998 and a small budget for innovative actions was created. In the BMTR, 13 themes are defined around issues related to sustainable tourism development. By the end of the 1990s, a large number of networks and cooperations between the tourist-recreational sector and nature organisations had been formed around sustainable tourism or around green tourism products⁸¹.

These changes with regard to the changing relation between tourism and recreation on the one hand and nature and environment on the other, are part of a more general trend towards integrating ecological and economic goals or the 'ecological modernisation in the rural arena'⁸². Key issues include the question how to harmonise ecology and economy, that is, how to 'ecologise' economic activities through technological innovations, and how to 'economise' ecological imperatives, especially through the internalisation of external effects⁸³.

At the beginning of the 1990s, Lengkeek characterised tourism and nature as two separate worlds. One is a world of rationality, aimed at improving production and the international competitive position; the other a world in which 'green thinking' has the lead⁸⁴. Although the development of sustainable tourism has a long way to go, awareness in the sector and among other stakeholders has certainly increased. At the end of the 1990s, integration of nature and tourism interests took shape through initiatives of nature organisations and joint projects of nature and tourism organisations.

8.5 Consequences in terms of discourses and networks

In the previous sections, some developments in policy-making which had an important influence on rural tourism in the 1990s were described. These policies have had their impact on developments in the field. Below, these impacts are evaluated in terms of discourses on rural tourism and in terms of their impacts on the interrelations between actors.

⁸¹ Van der Duim et al., 2000; continuation of these initiatives is currently (mid 2002) uncertain.

⁸² Frouws, 2000

⁸³ Ibid.: 8.

⁸⁴ Lengkeek, 1994: 207

Discourses on rural development

Rural does not have a univocal sense. It is a polyvalent symbol at various layers of meaning⁸⁵

According to Frouws, rural areas in the Netherlands are traditionally considered more in economic terms than as part of the cultural and historical heritage⁸⁶. This can be related to the various economic uses of rural areas: though agriculture was the main rural activity until well into the nineteenth century, it was certainly not the only one. The countryside was not exclusively an economic space, however. From the eighteenth century onwards, the urban elite started to regard the countryside as an area of beauty and relaxation. Under the influence of this Romanticism, the countryside became depicted as an Arcadian space, where people live in harmony with nature⁸⁷.

As described in Section 8.1, agricultural policy started dominating rural areas from the 1930s onwards. Especially modernisation of agriculture and a rational organisation of rural space prevailed. In the course of the 1990s the agricultural productionist view on rural development lost most of its power over rural politics. Frouws discerns three discourses⁸⁸ presently dominating the rural socio-political field: agri-ruralist, utilitarian and hedonist⁸⁹.

Within the *agri-ruralist discourse*, the social dimension of agriculture is stressed. 'Farmers ... are considered to be the essential carriers of the values represented in the countryside'⁹⁰. The pluralist characteristics of agriculture are stressed, focussing on the differences between "styles of farming"⁹¹. In this discourse, rural areas are approached mainly from the point of view of farmers, but agriculture is not defined only or mainly in productionist terms. Heterogeneity is a key issue. This discourse includes elements of the Romantic tradition, as the relation between farmer and land is stressed and farming is regarded as a way of life. In terms of tourism, this discourse relates to a nostalgic vision of the countryside, but also includes informing the public on modern ways of farming. Agritourism development is an important focal point.

The *utilitarian discourse* stresses the productionist function of rural areas, but agriculture does not have a unique status. In fact, rural areas as such do not have a special status either, as they are valued purely in economic terms. Studies on the economic value of landscapes or nature fit in well with this tradition. When placing rural tourism in this discourse, it too is considered in economic terms. Rural will generally refer to activities which are space-demanding and may generate a relatively low profit per unit surface. Agritourism does not have a special status, but is judged in terms of

⁸⁵ Lit: 'Le rural n'a pas un sens univoque. C'est un symbole polyvalente à plusieurs niveaux de signification' (Frouws, 1997: 243).

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ In addition, two other urban-based images of the countryside can be mentioned. Firstly that of peripheral, underdeveloped and backward areas⁸⁷. And secondly that of an empty, non-urban space, ready to be exploited (Frouws, 1997).

⁸⁸ Though Frouws does not provide us with his definition of discourse, the three categories discerned can be considered societal value systems. The way in which the word is used by Frouws fits into the definition presented in Chapter 4.

⁸⁹ Others have also discerned discourses on rural areas in the Netherlands, for example Hidding et al. (1997). These are, however, not so much based on societal value systems as on an analysis of political-administrative discourses combined with scientific discourses. Some overlap with Frouws exists, but not all of these discourses have gained ground in societal debates and value systems to the same extent.

⁹⁰ Frouws, 1998: 58

⁹¹ Van der Ploeg, 1994

added value. It has to compete with other leisure activities like leisure centres or outlet stores focussing on fun shopping.

The *hedonist discourse* takes a cultural perspective on the countryside. Aesthetic values, green space, quality of life and the countryside as a place for relaxation fall into this category. This discourse can be traced back to the Dutch Golden Age when the urban elite started building luxury *buitenplaatsen* (country-seats) in rural areas. In this discourse, farmers can be considered as guardians of the rural landscape. However, they have to compete for this position with for example nature organisations and other possible guardians. Policies for outdoor recreation fit into this tradition, as do all kinds of policies for landscape protection and for example the creation of *nieuwe landgoederen* (new estates). The countryside is considered spatially and culturally different from urban areas, but is nevertheless approached mainly from the point of view of urban interests and needs⁹². This approach has traces of the 'self-expression' approach which dominated recreation policies in the 1960s.

The discourses as discerned by Frouws offer the opportunity to put the policies described in this chapter into perspective. Policies for rural renewal seem to fit mainly into the agri-ruralist discourse. The position of agriculture in rural areas is considered essential in these policies. Also if other functions are at stake, it is mainly the sociocultural values of rural areas which are stressed. The needs of the countryside are the starting point for these policies, in which agriculture is *a priori* considered to have a prominent position. Policies for recreation and tourism used to give a special status to the value of rural areas, as the antidote of the city. This is no longer the case, however. Utilitarian arguments seem to prevail at the moment, with the demands of the customer being an important argument. In terms of the relation between nature and recreation, win-win is a popular notion. This too points at the influence of the utilitarian discourse. In addition, products developed from this perspective are mainly related to the hedonist discourse (relaxation, extensive recreation).

The description of current discourses shows that a discourse in which rural is considered to be equivalent to agriculture (which is highly influential in France) does not play an important role in the Netherlands. Also, agriculture is no longer defined in productionist terms only. A diversified image of agriculture and of rurality is now framing socio-political discourses. Whereas the agri-ruralist discourse still starts from the point of view of agriculture, notions of 'rural' and 'urban' are more interwoven in the utilitarian and the hedonist discourse⁹³. With a change in thinking, the jargon has also changed. Van den Eeden discerns successively: *platteland* (countryside), *landelijk gebied* (rural area), *groene ruimte* (green space) and *urban field*⁹⁴ as policy terms for rural areas.

According to Frouws, the hedonist discourse is currently receiving a lot of attention. Nevertheless, rural areas remain primarily regulated as economic spaces:

⁹² Other types of discourses may also be discerned, for example an ecological discourse. Though the purely ecological approach lost some of its sharp edges in the 1990s, the issue of the Ecological Main Structure is still prominent in policy terms. An ecological discourse is of subordinate importance in relation to recreation and tourism; nature and tourism are considered spatially separated functions.

⁹³ The need to integrate rural and urban perspectives and to study both from an integrated point of view has been stressed by the National Council for Agricultural Research, an independent advisory body of the Ministry of Agriculture (e.g. Hidding et al., 1997).

⁹⁴ Eeden, 1996: 31

Whereas public debates in the Netherlands appear to express the dominance of hedonist culture, current trends in rural areas generally – and regrettably – correspond more with the utilitarian discourse⁹⁵.

This seems to fit well into the Dutch rural tradition, in which according to Frouws, the production function of the countryside prevailed. This would imply that 'rural qualities' would be approached mainly in economic terms.

Governance through networks and restructuring of the field

Another kind of discourse which is influential is of a different type. This is a discourse on 'governance'. As was remarked in Section 8.3, it seems that regardless of the issue at stake, everyone agrees that cooperation is essential in reaching a solution. This points at the current tendency for interactive planning and development. It can be disputed whether a discourse on steering should be mentioned alongside discourses such as those of Frouws', as he has described his discourses much more in terms of the content of the debate. But if Frouws' discourses are to be regarded as more or less coherent value systems which can be discerned at a super-societal level and which guide societal developments, interactive planning can also be considered such a discourse. Moreover, it is common to speak of steering in terms of discourses⁹⁶. This discourse runs across the utilitarian, hedonist and agri-ruralist discourse, as it influences steering in each of these cases.

The question whether or not this 'discourse on steering' should be placed alongside the three discourses discerned by Frouws is less interesting than the actual acknowledgement that it has had a significant impact on discussions on rural areas. The tendency towards cooperation and interactive planning has contributed to the rise of cooperative networks of organisations. Such networks are intended to create innovation and win-win situations, two other popular notions in the 1990s.

The emphasis on networks, cooperation and interaction fits in well with the Dutch 'polder' tradition. Particularly the idea of creating win-win situations is a pragmatic approach, which will allegedly leave all participants happy. This is in line with general Dutch politics, where '... decisions that are made are not so much principled choices but more mathematical solutions⁹⁷'. According to an article, in which the nature of Dutch society is explained to foreigners:

[c]onsensus has been institutionalised in the Netherlands, where the national identity is reflected in countless advisory and consultative bodies. Each issue where there is a remote danger of disagreement has its own forum in which all interested parties are represented, whether it be traffic issues, defence matters or educational affairs⁹⁸.

This tendency to reach a consensus and the virtual absence of ideological battles can be regarded as an expression of either 'conformist nonchalance' or of 'tolerance'.

All the stories about Dutch tolerance had to be taken with a grain of salt anyway. One thing is certain: the Dutch have always had to be inventive, confronted as they were with the task of completing the Creation in a land of wind and water but very few natural comforts. Add to that the fact that the Dutch are born with a quasi-sentimental ideal of resistance (against Spanish, French and German oppressors) and the fact that everyone believes in a slightly different God, and the choice is clear.

⁹⁵ Frouws, 1998: 65

⁹⁶ See e.g. van Tatenhove, 1993

⁹⁷ Kranenburg, 1999

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Accept chaos or forge compromises until everyone is blue in the face. The latter solution has become second nature⁹⁹.

The popularity of interactive approaches in the 1990s thus builds on a Dutch tradition. This implies that interactive approaches in the Netherlands will have a different status, different application and a different form compared to countries with other planning traditions.

As described in this chapter, the conviction that governance should be based on networks has had its impact on the rural tourism field as well. More emphasis is now on decentralised public bodies and the private initiative of the sector. Policies aim at stimulating private and bottom-up initiatives. The result is a number of changes in the tourism policy network. Particularly in the field of rural development, the number of cooperative structures between various public and private actors at the regional level has increased. This includes cooperatives between actors from various sectors, such as tourism, agriculture and nature. Differences in approach between the main ministries with regard to recreation and tourism (LNV and EZ) have decreased, but despite some coordinating activities policies are generally still separated. In both policy fields, a marginalisation of the policy field has taken place – a tendency which is reflected at the regional and the local level.

⁹⁹ Ibid.



9 Rural tourism development in WCL areas in the Netherlands: Zuidwest Friesland and Midden-Limburg

WCL (Valuable Cultural Landscapes; *Waardevolle Cultuurlandschappen*) areas are a good example of a policy in which the pursuit of economic development and the conservation of regional qualities are combined. WCL policy is a typical example of policies for rural renewal in the Netherlands, in terms of both content and the design of the policy process.

In this chapter, the process and outcome of WCL policies in two areas, Midden-Limburg and Zuidwest Friesland¹ - are analysed and evaluated. Before focusing on WCL policy in the case study areas in Sections 9.2 and 9.3, an introduction to WCL policy is presented, as are some general characteristics of the case study areas. Apart from a qualitative analysis of WCL policy and its contribution to rural tourism development, an attempt is made to measure the extent to which WCL policy has contributed to innovation in rural tourism in Zuidwest Friesland (9.4). In the evaluation, policies in both areas are compared and the contribution of WCL policy to rural tourism is evaluated.

9.1 WCL policy and WCL areas of Friesland and Limburg

WCL policy was initiated in the *Structuurschema Groene Ruimte* (Structure Scheme for Green Space; SGR). This policy document presents an integrated vision on rural areas in the Netherlands, in which national policies on nature, agriculture, recreation, forestry, landscape and spatial planning have been taken into account. With regard to recreation and tourism, the demand for quality is the central issue. The general aim of the SGR is to initiate developments which satisfy two criteria:

1. Provide sufficient room for the continued existence or development of the various green functions in rural areas;
2. Preserve or develop the identity and use value of the countryside as a whole to the best ability.

The SGR presents a framework for rural policies, and it is explicitly stated that the development and execution of this policy are not matters for national government alone. Provincial and local governments and the 'sectors' (i.e. private parties) have an important task as well. In the policy goals for WCL, this area-specific approach is particularly prominent.

¹ For an account of the choice of case study areas and an overview of the research methods, see Chapter 5.

A general description of WCL policy

In 1994, eleven regions in the Netherlands were designated as WCL². WCL policy is aimed at the creation of a new dynamic for the countryside, while at the same time retaining valuable aspects of nature and landscape, and also of the economy. Agriculture should remain an important economic sector in these areas. WCL areas are characterised as follows:

The valuable cultural landscapes are regions with substantial nature and landscape values and an important geological meaning, that are attractive from a tourist point of view. Agriculture – and in some cases forestry - is an important economic carrier in these areas. Functions are usually strongly interwoven; interdependence and influence can lead to tensions between agriculture, nature and landscape. The specific qualities and values are under pressure or affected negatively, which threatens to cause a loss of the special character of these areas and thus a loss of their attractiveness³.

The designation of an area as a WCL is based on existing policy qualifications for the countryside. In particular, WCL areas overlap with areas designated as tourist-recreative areas, include large parts of the Ecological Main Structure and consist mainly of areas to which the so-called blue or green course applies. These latter indications stem from the national spatial policy scheme (VINEX). Blue and green course areas imply an important role for agriculture and an integration of various functions⁴.

The aims of the policy have been defined both in terms of substantial goals and in terms of process. In terms of substantial results, WCL policy aims to preserve and strengthen the specific qualities of the area. This means the multifunctionality of the areas should remain intact and the creation of a sustainable, competitive agricultural sector should be supported. If income from agriculture diminishes, additional sources of income for farmers should be sought. With regard to nature, goals are the creation of a stable and manageable Ecological Main Structure and development of general natural values outside this area. In addition, the quality and characteristics of the regional landscape should be preserved, as should cultural-historical and geological values. This includes a sustainable preservation of forests. For recreation and tourism, the tasks are to strengthen the tourist-recreative attractiveness of the area and to offer opportunities for tourist-recreative development. Apart from these sector goals, a number of goals focus on the interrelations between sectors. These include the improvement of the opportunities for tourist-recreative use of nature, forests and of areas under agricultural use. Development of agritourism is also one of the options mentioned.

In terms of process, WCL policy aims to generate a process of change and bring a new dynamic into the area. This should take place through a project-wise bottom-up approach. An Area Perspective should be created by each region. This document – after approval by the national government – will serve as a guideline for projects. The national

² Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuurbeheer en Visserij 1993; 1995. In 1993, only 10 regions were officially assigned this status (*Ibid.*, 1993: 23); in 1994, the 'Zak van Zuid-Beveland' was added to this list (*Ibid.*: 1995).

³ Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuurbeheer en Visserij (1993: 25). *Lit.*: 'De waardevolle cultuurlandschappen zijn regio's met belangrijke natuur- en landschapswaarden en grote cultuurhistorische en aardkundige betekenis, die recreatief-toeristisch aantrekkelijk zijn. Landbouw en soms bosbouw spelen in deze gebieden een belangrijke, dragende rol. De genoemde functies zijn veelal sterk verweven. Er is sprake van onderlinge beïnvloeding en afhankelijkheid die kunnen leiden tot spanning tussen functies; dit laatste geldt met name voor landbouw, natuur en landschap'.

⁴ In the VINEX, the Addendum to the Fourth National Scheme on Spatial Planning, four types of rural areas are discerned: blue, green, brown and yellow, each indicating a different (desired) relation between spatial functions.

government has a facilitating role at a distance, whereas the province is the main coordinator.

Policies for all sectors have been integrated in WCL policy, but agriculture occupies a core position. It should also receive the bulk of WCL funding: a minimum of 60% of WCL money should be used for agriculture-related projects.

Most interest groups had a positive attitude towards WCL policy, or gave it the benefit of the doubt. Some remarks were nevertheless made, most of which were more or less predictable regarding the background of the actors. Nature organisations felt that the position of agriculture was too central, and preferred to take natural, landscape and recreational values as the point of departure. Provinces felt that WCL policy ran through existing policy and regarded the interference of the national government as being too detailed. The agriculture sector would have liked more information on the real value of WCL status and considered the preservation of a remunerative agricultural sector as crucial⁵.

In short, WCL policy can contribute to tourist-recreative development by:

- Maintaining or improving the general landscape quality and recreative attractiveness of the area;
- Linking up new recreational infrastructure with existing structures and facilities;
- Paying attention to the opportunities for enlargement of individual enterprises;
- Developing agritourism (which is, however, often regarded as a threat by the regular tourism sector).

WCL policy was operational in the period 1994-1999. Formal termination of WCL policy is to occur in 2002, while some funding for projects was still available in 2000 and 2001. The experiences from the WCL programme will be used as input for several new policies on rural areas⁶.

General characteristics of the WCL area Midden-Limburg

The WCL area of Midden-Limburg is situated in the southernmost province of the Netherlands. It is bordered by Germany to the east and the Maas river to the West. It consists of eight (formerly six) municipalities⁷. The municipality of Susteren was added to the WCL area at its own request in 1998⁸ and the municipality of Beesel in 1999. The area is characterised by a spatial integration of agriculture, nature, tourism and forestry. According to the WCL policy documents, the tourist-recreative attraction of the area is to be found in its natural and landscape values and its cultural history.

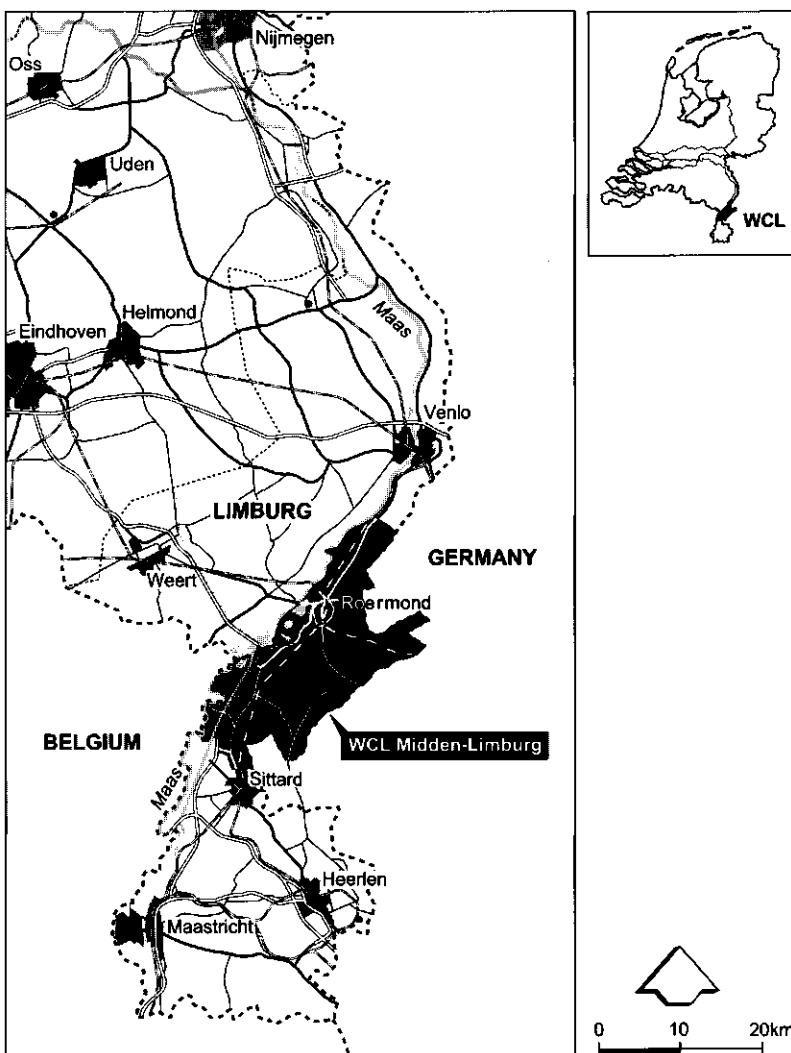
⁵ Ministerie van LNV, 1993: 29-31

⁶ Faber, 2001

⁷ For the municipality of Roermond only the rural part east of the Maas river is included in WCL.

⁸ This description takes the situation in 1994 as a point of departure. At that time, Susteren was not part of the area.

Figure 9.1 WCL Midden-Limburg



Agriculture

The socio-economic structure of the agricultural sector is less favourable than the provincial and national average: over 30% of farms in the area have an income below the official minimum wage and the average age of farmers is high⁹. There is a large diversity in types of farming within the area. Most farms in the area are of a mixed type, combining for example pig raising and the growing of asparagus, arable crops and vegetables, or dairy cattle and pigs. Arable crops are relatively more important than in

⁹ In the municipalities of Roermond, Echt and Swalmen, the percentage of farmers aged 55 or over is 60%, 60% and 56%, respectively.

the rest of the country, although the number of farms specialised in arable farming is small and is expected to decrease. According to current policies, the future of the sector should be sought in stimulating the diversity of the sector, integrating nature conservation, landscape management and tourism development at the level of the farm, improving the environmental quality of the production and cooperation between entrepreneurs and organisations within and outside the sector¹⁰.

Nature, landscape and forestry

The main nature area is the Meinweg National Park, which is situated on the German border. The park consists mainly of woods and covers around 1,500 ha¹¹. The rivers and brook valleys also represent considerable ecological value. These are part of the Ecological Main Structure and are designated as 'ecological development areas' in the provincial policy. The brooks run roughly east to west, and issues into the Maas river. Along the Maas, gravel is excavated at several locations. These gravel pits have created large surfaces of water, many of which are used for recreational purposes¹². Some of these represent important ecological values as well and are designated protected areas or nature development areas¹³.

In addition, a number of scattered areas representing considerable natural values can be found in the various woods and in the areas under agricultural use. The wooded areas include eleven estates, production woods and some pastures where trees have been planted. The woods are owned by a large variety of owners, including the state forestry service (*Staatsbosbeheer*, SBB), the municipalities, the provincial water company (*Waterleiding Maatschappij Limburg*), the provincial foundation for the protection of the landscape (*Stichting het Limburgs Landschap*) and over 100 private owners. The estates and the older woods are most interesting from both an ecological and an aesthetic point of view. They are characterised by diversity in types of trees (mainly foliage), lanes and an irregular pattern of plantation. In many cases, however, the maintenance of these estates has fallen behind. The bulk of forests consists of production woods, monotonous in terms of types of trees (mainly pine forests) planted in a regular pattern and generally of the same age. These are not very valuable from an ecological or an aesthetic point of view. A considerable area (around 250 ha.) is covered with privately owned small parcels of wood (each less than 5 ha.). This leads to certain problems related to a lack of expertise of owners and the fact that subsidies are not available for areas smaller than five hectares.

Large parts of the surface used by agriculture include 'small landscape elements': characteristic elements in the landscape, which are important from an ecological point of view as well. The preservation and in some cases restoration of these elements is an important issue in WCL policy. This importance is not surprising, because agriculture (maintenance), nature (ecological value) and tourism (aesthetic value) come together in these elements.

¹⁰ Provincie Limburg, 1995b

¹¹ Nature policy of the Meinweg is not part of WCL policy. The park is included in WCL with regard to its tourist-recreational value.

¹² See Lengkeek et al., 1993, for an analysis of the controversies regarding the management and recreative use of these areas.

¹³ This nature development along the Maas river is part of a more elaborate plan to restore the natural functioning of the banks of this river, the Grensmaas project. The Allier river, which runs through the Auvergne, is used as an example in this project, particularly the part situated in Département Allier in the north of the region.

Tourism

The attraction of the area from a tourist point of view lies in its landscape, nature and cultural history. Apart from the characteristics mentioned above, one of the striking features of the landscape is its relief. A number of geological fracture lines in the subsoil have created a terraced landscape. At places this rises to 80 metres above sea level, which is high for Dutch standards. The small scale of the landscape and its fine-grained web of paths and small roads offers opportunities for landscape experience.

The main concentrated tourist attractions are the gravel lakes along the Maas river (yacht basins, beaches, surfing), and the Meinweg National Park. A large attraction park – Elfenmeer – is situated near Meinweg. In addition, numerous hiking paths traverse the area. Amongst these are some long-distance hiking trails, like the popular Pieterpad (which runs from Pieterburen in the province of Groningen to Maastricht in the south of Limburg) and four national cycling routes. Local thematic routes are abundant. Small-scale attractions – such as castles, monumental buildings, mills and burial mounds – are scattered over the area. The accommodation facilities are concentrated along the Maas and in the east at Elfenmeer. In addition, small-scale accommodation facilities are available to a limited extent.

Generally speaking, tourism in the area is not very well developed. According to the *Gebiedsperspectief* (Area Perspective), the main weaknesses at the start of the WCL programme were the relative lack of hotels, campsites and other forms of accommodation, and the limited offer of intermediate leisure facilities (especially mid-scale all-weather attractions). Moreover, the area does not have a strong image and is not well known. Indicative of this is the fact there are only two tourist offices in the area. One of the constraints mentioned in the *Gebiedsperspectief* is the limited ‘tourist awareness’ of the local population. The attractiveness of the area for tourists is not recognised and in some cases there is reluctance to develop tourism. Finally, as in most regions, tourism entrepreneurs do not cooperate much and are not very well organised.

The Friesian WCL area

The WCL area in Friesland is situated in the south-west of the province. It is bordered by the IJsselmeer to the west and south, the A7 highway to the north and the Sneek-Spannenburg-Lemmer road to the east. It covers the municipalities of Gaasterlân-Sleat and Nijefurd, and parts of Lemsterland, Wymbritseradiel and Wûnseradiel. Two names by which the area is known symbolise its main economic functions: *Friese merengebied* (Friesian lake district) refers to the main tourist attraction, and *Friese weidegebied* (pasture area) refers to the agricultural use. In addition, the area represents a number of important ecological values.

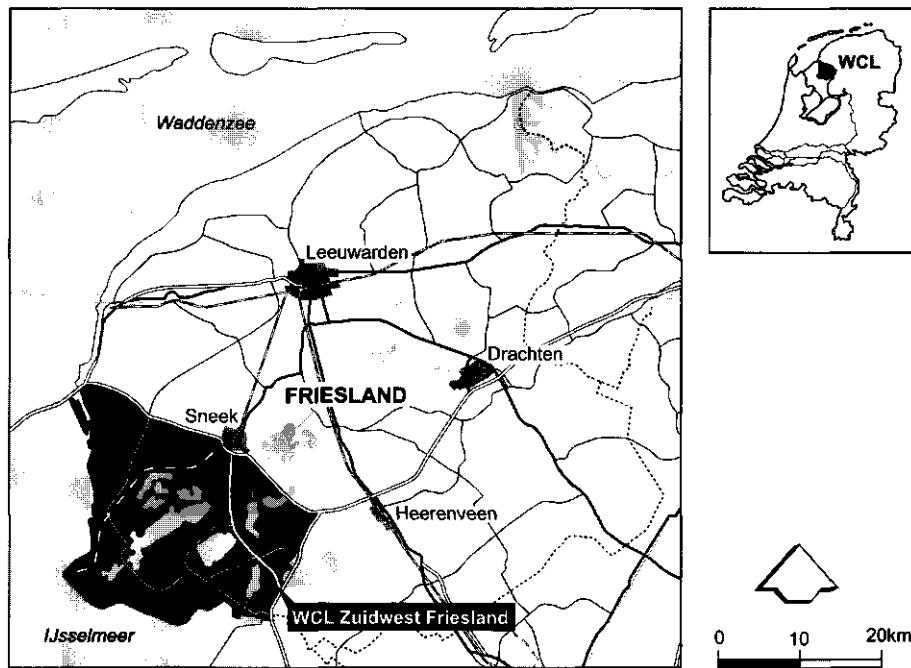
Landscape and nature

The municipality of Gaasterlân-Sleat is the heart of the WCL area. It stands out from the rest of the province because of its relief, formed during the penultimate ice age. This relief, combined with a number of small forests, gives the area a more small-scale and enclosed character than the rest of the WCL area. There, the typical open landscape of the north of the Netherlands can be found, covered with grasslands and small villages. Numerous lakes and waterways make the area particularly attractive for water-related tourism and recreation.

In terms of physical characteristics, a distinction can be made between the municipalities in the south (Lemsterland, Gaasterlân-Sleat, Nijefurd) – which are situated

on peat land – and Wûnseradiel/Wymbritseradiel, which are located on heavy clay soil. Neither type of soil is suited for cultivating crops, and in agricultural terms the area is used mainly for pasture. The grasslands are important for meadow birds.

Figure 9.2 WCL Zuidwest Friesland



Agriculture

The agricultural use of the area consists mainly of intensive dairy farming. The structure of the agricultural sector is relatively advantageous. Farms are relatively large and the number of cattle per hectare is low by Dutch standards. Prospects for farming are generally good, though milk quotas have diminished the opportunities for farm enlargement. The price for production rights is high and this hampers especially the smaller farms. In environmental terms, production is rather clean. There is no problem with regard to deposition of manure, but mineral losses and the emission of ammonia need to be reduced¹⁴.

Another threat from an agricultural point of view is that part of the area falls under the Ecological Main Structure. This applies not only to existing nature areas and woods, but also to areas currently under agricultural use. This has led to some tension between farmers and policy makers, especially in Gaasterlân-Sleat (see also Section 8.2).

Tourism

The municipality of Gaasterlân-Sleat is traditionally the most important tourist destination in the area, but tourist accommodation facilities now suffer from the dialectics of progress. Enterprises are often rather small and their quality is not in

¹⁴ Consulentchap Landbouw Friesland (1992)

accordance with contemporary tourist demand. Because of the small-scale character, room for investment is limited. Large-scale investments, mainly in bungalow parks and yacht basins, were highly stimulated during the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, and so was the upgrading of the existing tourist enterprises. The municipality has long tried to frustrate the unbridled development of agritourism and other similar small-scale campsites and accommodation facilities. In the other municipalities, these issues did not play such an important role in tourism policy.

In these other municipalities, tourism consists mainly of water-related tourism. There are numerous yacht basins, as well as second homes and (relatively small-scale) bungalow parks. In the summer, the area is crowded with boats and visitors, many of whom come from Germany. There are also some land-based tourist attractions, although there are ample opportunities to improve this offer. The Friesian language and culture are other topics which have tourist interest.

As indicated, tourism and agriculture are currently the main economic functions of the area, and this is not expected to change in the near future. According to one of the policy documents from the beginning of the 1990s, development of industry in the area is not favourable because of the level of education of the inhabitants and because the area has not been very well opened up¹⁵.

9.2 WCL policy in Midden-Limburg

Midden-Limburg was chosen as one of the three pilot areas for WCL policy in 1993. In these pilot areas the opportunities of a WCL approach were to be tested. An explicit bottom-up approach was followed from the start. Creating public support and informing and involving interest groups were regarded as the cornerstones of a successful WCL policy. Initial support was generated already in 1993 when various working groups and foundations were formed. Proposals of all interest groups were integrated in the 1994 *Gebiedsperspectief*.

In this section, the process, content and outcome of WCL policy are sketched.

The Area Perspective¹⁶

The Area Perspective consists of two parts: one in which relevant national, provincial and municipal policies are described, and one which includes the themes for execution. WCL policy should be executed within the framework set by the existing policies. Within this framework, the main point of departure for WCL Midden-Limburg is defined in terms of process rather than content: an area-specific approach aimed at the execution of concrete projects through a bottom-up approach¹⁷. The Area Perspective itself came about through such a bottom-up approach, as ideas of all relevant interest groups were included. It also builds on existing national, provincial and municipal plans. It is a joint product of national and provincial government, municipalities and interest groups, and has the support of all groups involved.

¹⁵ SONL (1995)

¹⁶ This section is based on the area perspective (Provincie Limburg, 1995 a and b)

¹⁷ '...een gebiedsgerichte aanpak, uitmondend in concrete uitvoeringsgerichte projecten, ... in een bottom-up benadering' (Provincie Limburg, 1995a: 20).

EUR 4.5 million were available for the realisation of WCL projects for the period 1994-1999. Of this, 60% was designated for projects related to agriculture, 20% to forestry and 20% to recreation and tourism. A precondition for projects was that sustainability of nature, environment and landscape was to be integrated in the general functioning of enterprises in these sectors.

Goals on tourism and recreation

The general goals of WCL Midden-Limburg were in line with the national WCL goals: WCL policy was expected to contribute to an important extent to sustainable economic development. The general WCL approach to recreation and tourism was that the sector should benefit from the increase in landscape qualities, and in return should promote the new qualities of the area:

It is expected that the strategic project WCL will give an important impulse to sustainable development of economic sectors and to the values of the areas in Midden-Limburg in the coming five years. ... A landscape concept for recreation and tourism thus comes into being, which will also give a new additional economic value to the area. The economic stakeholders in recreation and tourism will have to contribute to selling the new WCL product. This means that it is necessary ... to devote attention to a good promotion of the area, in which apart from the quality of the landscape, also the new acquisitions of WCL will be brought to attention.¹⁸

WCL goals should be reached within the confines set by the existing national, provincial and municipal policies. These policies are described in the first part of the Area Perspective. For the WCL area, provincial policies imply that opportunities for developing tourism and recreation are mainly in the western part of the area (along the Maas river) and to a lesser extent in the east (near Meinweg). Specific municipal policies are generally in line with this. Maasbracht, Roermond and Swalmen (Asselt) designated the *Maasplassen* (Maas lakes) as concentrations for water-related recreation. Maasbracht had plans to create a 'riverfront' and pointed at the opportunity to develop hotels. In Roerdalen in the east, Meinweg National Park is the main attraction. Here, creation of new services was not a goal, but some upgrading of existing services was considered necessary and the creation of a visitor centre was planned. In addition, it was regarded desirable to direct the visitor movement towards the villages, in order to optimise the economic multiplier effect. The rest of the WCL area had been designated as a place for dispersed recreation, especially hiking, cycling and horse riding. Along the routes, some development of small-scale attractions and accommodation facilities would be desirable.

¹⁸ Provincie Limburg, 1995a: 20-21; *Lit.*: Verwacht mag worden, dat in de komende 5 jaren het strategisch project W.C.L. een belangrijke impuls kan geven aan de duurzame ontwikkeling van de economische dragers en van de gebiedswaarden in Midden-Limburg. ... Voor de recreatie en het toerisme ontstaat daardoor een landschappelijk concept, dat ook in economische zin een nieuwe toegevoegde waarde aan het gebied geeft. Hiertoe zal door de economisch belanghebbenden in de sector recreatie en toerisme een bijdrage moeten worden geleverd in het 'verkopen' van dat 'nieuwe W.C.L. product'. Daarvoor is het noodzakelijk, dat ... aandacht zal worden besteed aan een goede gebiedspromotie, waarin naast de landschappelijke kwaliteit van het gebied tevens de nieuwe verworvenheden van de W.C.L. onder de aandacht worden gebracht..

Textbox 9.1 Overview of aims, types of projects and criteria for tourist-recreative projects as mentioned in the Area Perspective

General aims:

1. Make the local population conscious of the tourist attraction of the area
2. Motivate potential initiators and organise the tourist sector
3. Market the area outside the province, especially in the rest of the Netherlands and the border areas
4. Improve the quality of the offer of outdoor recreation
5. Strengthen the opportunities for day-trips
6. Improve the quantity and quality of accommodation, especially small-scale
7. Develop the relation with the agricultural sector
8. Develop the relation with nature and landscape
9. Improve the physical infrastructure and zoning tourist-recreative functions
10. Improve the information infrastructure
11. Realise coherence and accessibility of supply of cultural and historical tourism

Types of projects:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of the countryside for outdoor recreation - Including farms in supply for day-trips - Tourist accommodation on farms - Information and extension - Promotion and PR - Raising awareness, continuance - Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accommodation - Day-trips/culture - Mobility - Hotel and catering industry - Events - Day-trip packages |
|--|--|

Criteria for the judgement of projects:

Theme 'promotion of the area in relation to other economic sectors and regional qualities':

- Recruitment according to themes and spread of recreational pressure
- Extension and education for nature, culture and agritourism (guides)

Theme 'intensifying and zoning recreational co-use':

- Route-indication and information
- Recreative co-use of agricultural lands

Theme 'fitting recreational enterprises into the landscape':

- Planting in and around projects/enterprises

Theme 'environment':

- Decreasing use of cars by tourists

Theme 'cultural history':

- Characteristic small-scale buildings

Source: Provincie Limburg 1995b

The second part of the Area Perspective included specific themes. In the section on recreation and tourism, the importance of preserving the quality of the area was explicitly stated:

It is important that the quality and heterogeneity of the area be preserved and strengthened. The economic activities in the field of agriculture and forestry, and also in recreation and tourism, contribute to this, providing they are well attuned to the landscape and ecological functions¹⁹.

¹⁹ Provincie Limburg, 1995b: 34; *Lit.*: 'Belangrijk is, dat de kwaliteit en verscheidenheid van het gebied wordt behouden en versterkt. De economische activiteiten op het gebied van land- en bosbouw, maar ook op het gebied van toerisme en recreatie dragen daaraan bij, mits goed afgestemd op de landschappelijke en ecologische functies'.

After an overview of the current tourism offer and a SWOT analysis, the main aims for the tourism sector are listed, followed by another list of types of projects. In the concluding chapter, a list of criteria for judging of projects is presented. An overview of these themes and criteria for tourism and recreation is given in Textbox 9.1. Apart from these items directly related to recreation and tourism, some other items support tourism development (e.g. the maintenance of landscape or landscape elements, improvement of woods and development of typical regional products). The criteria are indicative, and it was foreseen they should be adapted during the execution of the WCL programme. The list is lengthy and covers a broad range of possible projects.

From the themes listed, it appears that WCL policy can cover a broad range of initiatives. This indicates that in terms of types of projects, a lot was possible within the WCL programme. It is not specifically linked to the spatial structure as promoted in the provincial and some municipal policies. It is, for example, not stated that small-scale accommodation facilities should be specifically oriented towards hiking and cycling routes. However, the types of projects which can be financed are limited by some more basic criteria:

- Money should directly or indirectly benefit entrepreneurs;
- Money should be spent as much as possible on projects which will produce tangible results, not to research, reports, meetings, etc.
- A bottom-up philosophy applies: if not all parties agree to a project, it will not receive funding;
- All projects which lead to the better functioning of entrepreneurs vis-à-vis the existing or improved landscape will be funded;
- Projects should not conflict with the policy described in the Area Perspective.

Both the content (broad) and the process (bottom-up and cooperative) were aimed at involving as many stakeholders at the local level as possible.

Organisational structure and goals regarding process

Figure 9.3 represents the organisational structure of WCL Midden-Limburg. For each municipality and for each sector a separate working group has been formed to coordinate WCL projects.

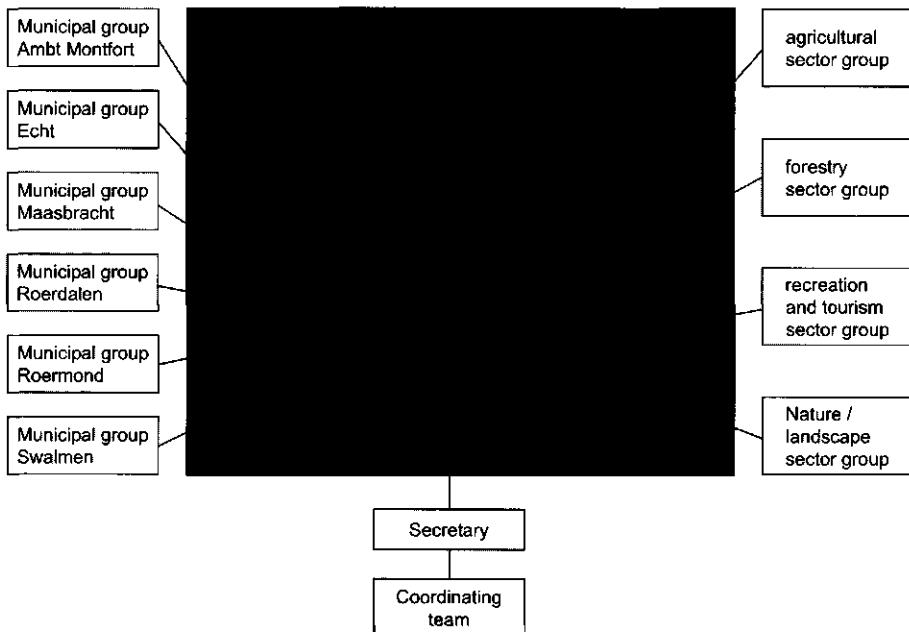
In order to retain the support of the grassroots it was decided that the short-term strategy should be to realise tangible projects. Emphasis was put on speeding up procedures, while as much decisive power as possible should be delegated to the local level. Bureaucracy should be kept to a minimum. Time between the idea for a project and taking a go/no-go decision should be short in order to keep the process going. Mandates were decentralised to the lowest possible level. Approval of projects by the Ministry of Agriculture did not have to take place beforehand, but was accredited in retrospect. The board had decided that projects in concordance with the Perspective (and thus were uncontroversial) did not have to be treated separately by the board, but could go straight from the secretariat to the working groups and sector groups.

The process was as follows: all projects passed through the secretariat for screening (i.e. does it fit in with the goals set in the Perspective?). In 80% of the cases, the projects were handed over to the sector and municipal secretariat. Projects which were delegated to the sector groups were discussed within about a month. If the project was approved, the applicant received a written notice from the secretariat and could start carrying out

the project immediately. If a project was considered controversial, it was placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the board.

If the number of proposals for projects exceeded the budget, the sector groups could set priorities among themselves. In addition, the sector groups had the task of formulating central themes, generating projects and judging the submitted projects. The municipal working groups had the task of assisting the execution of projects, stimulating initiatives and formulating municipal priorities when necessary.

Figure 9.3 Organisational structure of WCL Midden-Limburg



Source: Provincie Limburg, 1995b

WCL and other policies

Existing national, provincial and municipal policies served as a guideline for WCL. In addition some other policies were relevant in the WCL area.

Before WCL, the area was designated as a 'large landscape unity' (GLE: *Grote Landschappelijke Eenheid*). This policy did not include financial means to finance projects, but it did have an impact on provincial policy²⁰. Because provincial policy was setting the framework for WCL policy, it indirectly had an impact²¹.

In addition to WCL, some other area-specific policies applied to the area. The WCL area was part of the more elaborate Maas-Swalm-Nette Park, which straddles the Dutch/German border. This park has existed since 1977 and the Netherlands and Germany (Nordrhein-Westfalen) agreed to guarantee the protection of the natural landscape, the beauty and the identity of the area, without losing sight of the economic,

²⁰ For an elaborate study on the performance of the GLE policy, see de Lange 1995

²¹ Haas et al., 1996

cultural and social interests. In 1989 a framework for the spatial development of nature, landscape, recreation and tourism as well as agriculture was set²².

NUBL (*Nadere Uitwerking Brabant Limburg*) was another policy which applied to the WCL area and included also the Peel, Midden-Brabant and the northern Maas valley. In terms of agricultural practice, most of this area is characterised by highly intensive, industrial cattle breeding (mainly pigs and chickens - the WCL area is an exception to this). The NUBL policy goals were to stimulate a competitive agricultural sector and promote the integration of spatial, environmental and water policies. These policy goals linked up with WCL goals, but NUBL offered more opportunities for the improvement of traditional farming practices. Some projects could therefore be carried out under a joint WCL-NUBL flag.

With regard to national policy, some issues were not dealt with within the WCL framework. The first was the construction of the Ecological Main Structure. This played a minor role in Midden-Limburg in one of the municipalities, and had some impact on the functioning of WCL policy locally. A more influential spatial project was the projected highway between Nijmegen, Roermond and Maastricht (the A73). Despite considerable protests, the highway was planned for the east bank of the Maas river, via Swalmen, east of Roermond and Echt. It had been promised that the road will be carefully fitted into the landscape, especially in the part running through the WCL area. Nevertheless, it is expected that the impact of the road on landscape, environment and nature will be enormous.

Another, this time international, infrastructure project is related to the reopening of the old railway from Antwerp (Belgium) to the Ruhr. This line – the *IJzeren Rijn* (Iron Rhine) – runs through Meinweg National Park. Belgium has claimed its right to use this line, referring to a contract drawn up in 1839²³. The region, as well as some national politicians, was against the reopening because of the natural values of the Meinweg. The alternative would be to make a detour via Venlo, to the north of the WCL area. Expectations are, however, that the Meinweg route will be used for at least a number of years.

WCL policy during the first years²⁴

Midden-Limburg was one of the areas designated as a pilot for WCL policy. Two factors which help explain the choice for Limburg are: the relations between the province and the Ministry of Agriculture were at the time generally good; and the coordinator of WCL Limburg had been involved in discussions on WCL policy at the national level. The coordinator has been one of the people working at the secretariat from the start and one of the main stimulators of the process. The main principle from the start has been to initiate a bottom-up approach and to closely involve various economic sectors in the execution of WCL policy. For the Ministry of Agriculture it was important that at least the agricultural sector would be involved. In addition, other groups were approached: organisations of tourist-recreational entrepreneurs (Recron), representatives of forest owners (*bosgroep Limburg*) and the municipalities concerned.

²² Provincie Limburg 1995a

²³ The division of the Low Countries into Belgium and the Netherlands

²⁴ The evaluation of WCL Midden-Limburg is based on interviews, on the official evaluation carried out by Kranendonk and others (Haas et al., 1996; Kranendonk, 1997; Kranendonk et al., 1997; Kranendonk et al., 2000a) and on the Masters thesis of Martijn van Heereveld (1997), which was written under the supervision of the author.

The initial position of the actors involved

The first reaction of the agricultural sector was defensive. In consultation with the agricultural syndicate (*Limburgse Land- en Tuinbouw Bond*; LLTB) it was decided to work as close to the operational level as possible. After conversation with LLTB representatives at the local level, the WCL programme was given the benefit of the doubt. One of the inducements to cooperate was the need to improve the image of farmers. The forestry sector was rather enthusiastic. This sector was not economically viable and was both in need of support and used to receiving it. Recron promised its cooperation almost immediately, because the idea of improving the quality of the area was appealing, as was the opportunity for subsidisation of projects.

The first joint task was to create a perspective for the area – including a plan for the initial years. The plans for each sector came about in a different manner. With regard to agriculture, it was decided to contact farmers through the local farming syndicates (LLTB). The analysis and ideas for projects came about as a joint effort of these local groups. The analysis and plans for tourism and recreation were completed by the WCL secretariat and the province (the official occupied with tourism and recreation). These plans were then communicated to the sector, which committed itself to them. The other sector groups also agreed to the plans that had been developed.

Generally speaking, WCL policy received commitment from all important groups in the initial phase. However, there were some exceptions to this rule at the local level. In Ambt Montfort the question of the Ecological Main Structure had not been resolved in 1994. This caused a general anxiety among the farming community and a distrust towards government initiatives. For this reason, the WCL policy was rejected as well, even though it might serve as a means to compensate for negative consequences of the Ecological Main Structure. The municipality of Maasbracht was interested mainly in the developing tourism, as this was the main economic sector in the main village (Maasbracht). Agriculture was not an important issue in local politics²⁵ and the WCL policy was obviously considered to be mainly agriculture-oriented. The local tourism sector consisted of one large enterprise – the owner of which did not intervene with the other parties – and various small-scale enterprises operating in an uncoordinated way. Finally, the regional museum took part in the municipal working group as a representative of the sector. The municipality was not very active in the WCL in the first years. The municipality of Roermond, a city of over 43,000 inhabitants, was not very interested in activities on its rural outskirts.

The main driving force behind the WCL was the secretariat, which was staffed by two persons who had been involved from the very start and who were both very enthusiastic about the philosophy. The office was open daily and operated as a ‘spider in the web’. With regard to recreation and tourism, the province was the most active party. The provincial official was enthusiastic and tried to convince and stimulate others.

Strategy

In the first years, the approach was pragmatic, projects were very practical and the point of view was *mainly economic*. *This approach was intended to create local support and make the WCL visible* in the area. In this initial phase, a project which did not really fit in with the WCL philosophy was nevertheless approved, because it was regarded more

²⁵ Some of the smaller, more agriculturally oriented villages within the municipality - such as Linne - felt neglected by this.

important to keep everybody involved in the process than to stick to the letter. Speedy processes and an avoidance of bureaucracy were also means to keep parties enthusiast.

The creation of trust among the parties involved was stimulated through the intersectoral municipal working groups and by optimising communication and the exchange of information. Openness was regarded as another crucial precondition for success. Project proposals were handed over to all parties before approval, so everyone would be aware of what was going on. The aim was to avoid competition between interests and to stimulate the development of initiatives. Problems should be coupled as much as possible to parties with the means to create solutions.

Initial results

The presence of a secretariat was mentioned as an important reason for success by various parties involved. After the first year, the role of the secretariat had become less important as issues were taken up more quickly by the working groups and sector groups:

It has become clear that particularly the secretariat has fulfilled an important role. It has received a lot of appreciation in the region through its strong involvement, attainability and facilitative role. It has stimulated the creation of networks at the regional, sector and municipal level which are interrelated, and has achieved that the region has become actively involved and has committed itself to the project²⁶.

This 'halftime' evaluation of the WCL²⁷ shows that the agricultural sector was the best organised and most closely involved in the WCL. The stakes and the possible benefits of WCL policy for this sector were high. The aim to allocate 60% of the financial means to agriculture was nevertheless officially not achieved in the period 1994-1996. This was due to the fact that a relatively large share had been used for the development of agritourism, which was 'booked' under recreational projects. These projects nonetheless benefited the agricultural population.

Most of the enterprises in tourism and recreation were not related to a professional association, and the sector operated in an uncoordinated way. The same applied to the hotel and catering sector (*horeca*). Communication between enterprises and professional organisations was not very well developed and the organisations had limited instruments and a not very action-oriented apparatus. Nevertheless, the WCL seemed to have improved the contacts within the tourism/recreation sector somewhat, except for the municipality of Maasbracht. The provincial official was the main driving force within this sector group. She was able to attain this position with the entrepreneurs because of the anti-bureaucratic way of working. The sector was somewhat sceptical of WCL policy at first, especially because of the opportunities offered to farmers to develop an agritourism sector. This was regarded as a threat and as a danger to the quality of the tourism product. As the emphasis gradually shifted towards the promotion of the area, attitudes changed.

With regard to forestry, the WCL has contributed to the better organisation of the sector. As far as the municipalities are concerned, Ambt Montfort has become more

²⁶ Kranendonk et al., 1997: 61; *Lit.*: 'Het is duidelijk geworden dat met name het secretariaat een belangrijke rol heeft vervuld. Door de grote betrokkenheid, bereikbaarheid en faciliterende instelling heeft men veel waardering binnen de streek gekregen. Zij hebben ervoor gezorgd dat er netwerken zijn ontstaan op streek-, sectoraal- en gemeentelijk niveau, die in elkaar steken en dat de streek actief is gaan participeren en zich aan het project heeft gecommitteerd'.

²⁷ Kranendonk et al., 1997

closely involved after having resolved the problems around the Ecological Main Structure. Roermond is still hardly involved.

Few contacts had been developed between municipalities and the sectors and between the various sectors. Cooperation between the sector groups of agriculture and recreation was virtually non-existent, and no joint projects were carried out. The relations between LLTB and the municipalities were generally not too good. This seemed to depend partly on the person representing LLTB at the local level (if this was a 'traditionally' operating farmer, relations were generally less well developed). Roerdalen was an exception, as nature, agriculture, tourism and municipal officials had for a number of years been cooperating in the *Stichting Recreatie Roerdalen* (the Roerdalen Recreation Foundation). The chair of the WCL sector group for agriculture²⁸ was a member of this foundation, which explains why communication was good. This person was characterised as a forerunner with regard to integration of new functions in agriculture.

In the first couple of years, projects were carried out on an ad hoc basis and the process depended on a few enthusiastic people. Those closely involved in the sector groups were very enthusiastic, but there were still sceptics. Among these were two municipalities and the traditional part of the agricultural sector. The aim was to create more interrelations between projects in the future and to improve cooperation at the 'bottom'. For these reasons, a communication plan was set up in order to create integration and strengthen local support. Generally speaking, the emphasis was on creating a structure that should in time become self-supporting. In this line of thinking, the creation of cooperatives was to be stimulated. In addition, entrepreneurs involved in WCL policy were to be compensated for attending meetings.

Results of WCL policy after five years

Evaluating results of WCL policy after five years (1999) is difficult because the Area Perspective is too vague to evaluate in strict terms. Nevertheless, an overview of results in terms of projects and process sheds light on what has been achieved and whether this is in line with WCL philosophy. A comparison with Zuidwest Friesland later on will place these achievements in a broader perspective.

Results in terms of projects

Especially during the first couple of years, WCL policy focused on the realisation of individual projects. After this initial phase, projects of this kind continued to be initiated, but the emphasis was on integration and the creation of linkages between the projects. Projects came about more spontaneously, because communication between the partners had improved and because model farms and exemplary enterprises showed how new ideas could be implemented in practice.

Some examples of achievements were the increased production of regional products and the revival of regional traditions. Local governments started to create landscape policy plans. With regard to regional products, around 20% of farmers sold home-produce at the farm (though this practice was older than the WCL) and products were also sold to the regional hotel and catering industry and in regional shops. Projects directly related to recreation and tourism included agritourism developments, general

²⁸ He is chair on behalf of the LLTB.

strengthening of the tourist infrastructure, projects relating to tourism and nature, and promotional activities.

The creation of accommodation facilities on farms was particularly successful. Some regular tourist attractions were also created, but this part has not come into its own to the same extent. The visitor centre for Meinweg National Park was supported with WCL money. Several routes were set up and interest in the protection and tourist use of cultural historical values has grown. Extension and education on nature, cultural and agritourism has been stimulated. Guides have been trained to accompany groups interested in nature or landscape. 1997 was 'the year of the WCL'. This included exhibitions, cycling tours, open days of enterprises involved, and so on. As a strategy to inform the local population, a newsletter was issued (5 issues of 2500 copies). The main target groups were landowners, inhabitants and visitors. Since 1999, information about the WCL area and projects has been available on-line.

Results in terms of cooperation and process

After five years, the WCL process and achievements were positively evaluated by those involved. There was firm local support, and cooperation within and between various sectors and with local governments had increased. This is underlined by some tangible results.

A number of cooperatives have come into being, especially within the agricultural sector. This includes a cooperative for agritourism (nine members) and a cooperative for nature management on farms (since 1999). With regard to agritourism, packages have been developed in collaboration with the hotel and catering industry and tourist-recreational attractions. A cooperative for culinary products was also established at the end of 1999. This consists of eleven members, who have one employee taking care of distribution and coordination of production. Products can be sold directly from the farm and in addition, four regional sales outlets have been created where the complete offer of regional products is for sale. With regard to agriculture, WCL strategy has evolved from supporting individual projects and enterprises to an area-wide approach and the creation of cooperatives.

Owners of small areas of forest have also set up an association. The economic prospects for this sector have not yet improved, however. The bringing together of supply and demand and the creation of chains have not yet received sufficient attention.

With regard to recreation and tourism, coordination and cooperation has increased. Over the years, the tourist offices (VVVs) in particular have become closely involved in the promotion of the area and of WCL products. A subsidisation has been offered to improve the cooperation between Hiswa, Recron and Horeca-NL, and the position of counsellor/consultant for the tourism sector has been created (*NORT recreatieconsulent*). An important task of this counsellor is to advise entrepreneurs on individual and collective issues.

In 1999, all local governments were enthusiastically involved and cooperation within and between municipalities had improved. Cooperation between municipalities had taken place in projects which applied to more than one municipality, such as the creation of hiking and equestrian trails. Municipal officials were involved in the mobilisation of the region. The *Vlotbeekoverleg* – a platform which regularly deliberates about policy-making concerning the ecologically sensitive area around the Vlotbeek (a small stream) – is a tangible result of increased intermunicipal coordination. The platform functions in close cooperation with the agricultural and tourist enterprises in this area. A plan for the

spatial organisation of the area is being developed. Local governments also agreed to financially support the WCL secretariat and some of the cooperatives which have emerged (until 2004²⁹). In addition, 0.2 to 0.5 fte man-days have been allocated to WCL-related activities.

Activities aimed at communicating information about WCL to the local population have also been successful, as knowledge on the achievements of the programme among this group has increased. Activities undertaken include the publishing of a newsletter, the organisation of 'the year of WCL' (1997) – including free entrance to all enterprises involved and presentation of the projects - and the recent launch of an Internet site which replaces the newsletters³⁰. In particular in the municipality of Roerdalen, contacts between population and local government are well established.

Generally speaking, the orientation of the various economic sectors towards the local population and the qualities of the region has increased. An increase of support among the various sectors can be seen from the increase in the number of project proposals. In addition, investments by economic sectors have also grown. Apart from those sectors already involved, plans have come up to also involve larger industries in the area. The idea is to have forests sponsored by industries. 'Captains of industry' are also tackled about their responsibility for landscape and environment, issues which are also in their own interest. This has resulted in the initiative to involve farmers in the management of nature on industrial estates³¹. Another idea was to have industries offer regional products as promotional gifts. The possibility to let farmers work part time in industries is also being studied.

The new cooperatives seem to be viable enough to proceed on their own strength. Each of the associations interacts with knowledge-producing organisations and private parties. A contract has been signed with *Dienst Landelijk Gebied* (Rural Areas Service, DLG), for the further implementation and supervision of WCL policy. This allows a better coordination of WCL policy vis-à-vis other regulations (NUBL, GeBeVe, Landinrichting and the Ecological Main Structure). Since 2000, the contribution of DLG has been paid for by regional partners. The engagement of the Ministry of Agriculture has decreased in terms of both finance and manpower.

There is a plan to sustain local support by combining farmers, civilians and consumers into an 'Association for the Countryside', which should have a minimum of 50 members. This plan has not yet been implemented (August 2002). In addition, an association of the 'Friends of WCL' exists.

Future: possible continuation

At the end of the 1990s, WCL Midden-Limburg received additional funding as a pilot Regional Innovation Network. This has made it possible to further invest in projects, especially those focused on market-oriented production. Recently, the WCL area became part of the Reconstruction Area Limburg: a new policy aimed at improving the spatial quality in sandy areas which are characterised by sandy soils and a concentration of intensive agriculture. This policy is aimed at the same sectors as WCL policy and its goals are partly similar. It is not yet clear (August 2002) whether the WCL secretariat will be allowed to play a role in this process.

²⁹ Information obtained through WCL secretariat, August 2002

³⁰ <http://www.wcl-limburg.nl/>

³¹ Information obtained through WCL secretariat, August 2002

9.3 WCL Zuidwest Friesland³²

There was uncertainty about the WCL status for Friesland until February 1994. Because it was decided to link WCL policy to the European Objective 5b programme, the annual programme for 1994 had to be ready before 1 May, which put a lot of pressure on the process during this first period.

The area perspective³³

Unlike in Midden-Limburg, the creation of the Area Perspective in Friesland was not an activity in which regional interest groups were involved. There was not enough time to get all parties around the table, nor was it regarded desirable to create a new policy for the area. For these reasons, the provincial government drew up the Perspective and based the text on existing (democratically effected) provincial and national policy. Policy for nature, recreation and tourism, landscape environment and agriculture were integrated in the WCL Area Perspective. WCL policy was integrated with the Objective 5b policy of the European Union, and projects were to be financed from both funds. The Perspective was approved by a steering committee, which included representatives from the municipalities and various sectors.

In total, around EUR 6 million were available to subsidise projects during a period of five years. Of this, EUR 2.7 million came from WCL policy and EUR 3.1 million from the EU.

General contents

The Area Perspective included four perspectives for development: economic, spatial, landscape and environment. As these were based on existing policy documents, it included no new statements, but it did provide an integrated perspective for the area. In the WCL document, these general perspectives were described and consequently it was indicated in what way and to what extent WCL projects could contribute to achieving these perspectives.

In economic terms, tourism and agriculture were regarded as the main sectors. The dairy cattle farms should maintain their position in the area, but - because of European regulations - this sector could not grow. Opportunities for growth should be sought in other activities: activities which did not fall under regulations (potatoes, glasshouse horticulture and so on) and biodynamic and ecologically friendly agriculture. Recreation and nature might provide additional income. The increasing orientation towards international markets should be kept in mind, as well as the fact that production should increasingly incorporate care for water, environment and landscape.

Tourism and recreation were important in terms of employment, and their relevance was expected to grow. The entire WCL area was designated as a tourist-recreative core area in the provincial plans. Specific goals for tourism development in the area, defined in the WCL document, included:

- Increase of the capacity of accommodation facilities and services, partly through the development of new projects with a centralised booking system;

³² Preliminary conclusions on this case were presented at the 1997 ATLAS conference on tourism and community development and published in Richards et al., 2000, Chapter 12 (see Caalders, 2000).

³³ This section is mainly based on the Area Perspective. Other sources are mentioned in the text.

- Diversification of the offer, especially in order to lengthen the season and attract new groups;
- Professionalisation of services by improving management, especially through education and quality standards;
- Improvement of the quality and expansion of services and infrastructure. Especially the development of a network for water-related recreation is considered important;
- Promotion aimed at the national and international market³⁴.

The spatial perspective differentiated between stable and dynamic areas. The former represented important natural values which were to be preserved, whereas social and economic functions prevailed in dynamic areas. In addition to these two categories, some areas were designated *Uitwerkingsgebieden*: areas under agricultural use situated within the Ecological Main Structure. These included especially parts of the municipality of Gaasterlân-Sleat. In these areas, both nature and extensive recreation were expected to gain importance.

In terms of landscape, the current situation should generally remain intact. Because of changes in use, some adaptations in terms of management would be needed. The environmental goals focused mainly on the agricultural sector. With regard to tourism, the collection and treatment of waste was mentioned as an environmental goal.

Relevance of WCL policy to tourism and recreation

The aim of WCL policy was to initiate a process of change and stimulate the development of initiatives to establish the goals which were set for the area³⁵. In the document, a number of goals WCL projects should contribute to were sketched:

- Developing sustainable agriculture or sustainable forestry, in concordance with the preservation or development of nature and landscape values and with the recreative attractiveness of the area;
- Stimulating nature and landscape management by agricultural or forestry enterprises, especially through financial incentives;
- Improving the accessibility, experience and use value of nature and landscape, in concordance with the preservation and development of nature and landscape values in the area;
- Improving the accessibility, experience and use value of woods and agricultural lands;
- Developing tourist-recreative products on farms and forestry enterprises in order to gain opportunities for income from these products;
- Improving the spatial relation between functions through zoning or other instruments for spatial organisation;
- Diminishing environmental pressure and dehydration in order to protect specific nature and landscape values.

³⁴ These goals are based on the provincial policy. When comparing the two documents, one important difference in emphasis is the fact that stimulation of cooperation between entrepreneurs is not mentioned as a goal in the WCL document, whereas it was one of the four main goals in the provincial policy at the time (see Provincie Friesland, 1991).

³⁵ lit. 'Doel van het WCL-beleid is om een veranderingsproces op gang te brengen en initiatieven te (doen) ontwikkelen om het geschatste toekomstperspectief dichterbij te brengen' Provincie Friesland, 1994: 14.

In addition to these general guidelines, a list of the main criteria for projects was included. An overview of this list is presented in Texbox 9.2. This list of criteria is much broader compared to the specific goals mentioned above. The criteria can be regarded as the limiting conditions for WCL projects, and they are more or less a summary of the economic, spatial, landscape and environmental perspectives sketched.

Texbox 9.2 Overview of criteria for WCL projects related to recreation and tourism in Zuidwest Friesland

- Interlacing of functions; spatial quality remains intact;
- Specific landscape quality are preserved;
- In the municipality of gaasterlan-sleat, 550 ha. Will be attributed to the ecological main structure;
- Existing nature resorts are adequately protected;
- All surface water meets the general criteria for environmental quality, and the slotermeer and fluessen meet specific environmental criteria; this means measures to combat eutrophication should be taken;
- Expansion of services and infrastructure for tourism and recreation;
- Expansion of capacity of tourist accommodation and services;
- Stimulating tourism relating to nature and culture;
- Stimulating the improvement and broadening of products.

Source: Provincie Friesland, 1994

Projects to be subsidised by WCL policy should contribute to the goals mentioned above. With regard to recreation and tourism, opportunities for subsidisation of regular tourist enterprises were considered to be limited. Projects relevant to tourism and recreation included the improvement of preconditions, such as landscape values, natural values and infrastructure. In addition, the WCL programme offered opportunities for the 'intermingling' of functions, both in spatial and economic terms. This meant amongst others that opportunities for development of agritourism were available.

Goals regarding process and organisational structure

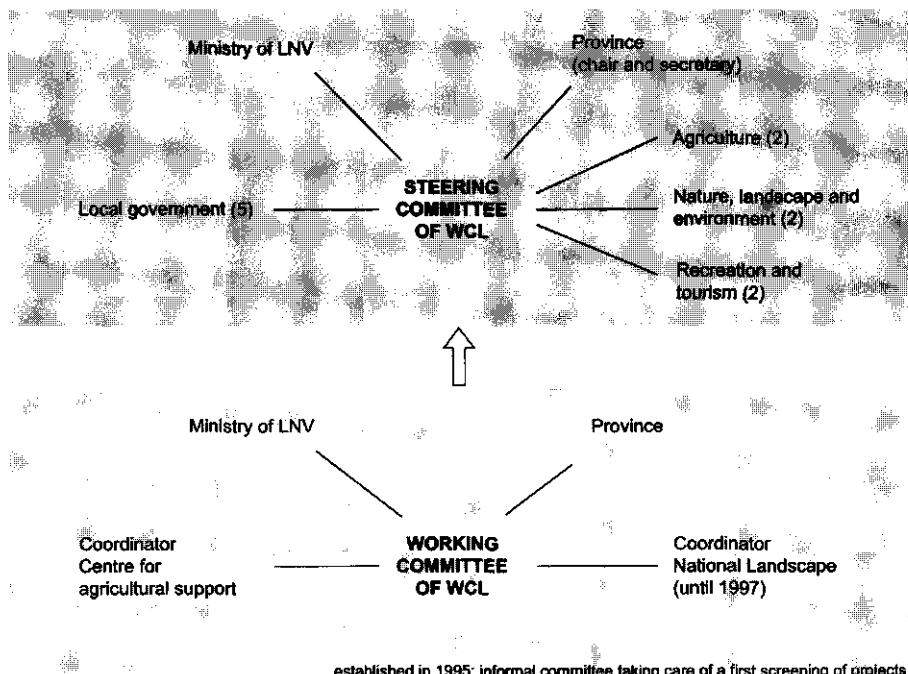
As stated, the general aim of WCL policy was to bring about a process of change. Apart from this general aim, no specific goals regarding process were included in the Area Perspective. This reflected the fact that WCL policy was mainly regarded as a handy instrument to finance existing plans: a 'pot of money' with which to realise projects.

That process was not an issue can be illustrated by the fact that opportunities offered by the provincial policy were not taken up. With regard to recreation and tourism, the provincial policy included the aim to stimulate cooperation between entrepreneurs, for example, a goal which is not mentioned in the WCL document. The same applies to provincial aim for coordination of promotion at the provincial level.

The organisational structure was deliberately kept very simple. According to some of those involved, a 'heavier' structure would not work in the area and reference was made to the Friesian desire for autonomy. The province took the lead and has subsequently involved those parties which were considered relevant. Initially the idea was to have one or two members jointly representing the municipalities. But the municipalities did not agree to this and subsequently the group was extended to include a representative of each

municipality and two representatives of each sector. At the start, the WCL structure consisted only of a steering committee³⁶.

Figure 9.4 Schematic presentation of the organisational structure of WCL Zuidwest Friesland



Source: Provincie Friesland, 1994 and Kranendonk, 1997

Other policies

Existing national and provincial policies which applied to the area were integrated in the WCL perspective. The area was designated Objective 5b and WCL projects should be co-financed by the EU.

Before the region received its WCL status in 1994, a different landscape policy applied to the area, namely, the National Landscape policy. This policy had some goals similar to WCL, notably the preservation of the small-scale natural and cultural landscape. It was less encompassing than the WCL, as it was concerned mainly with tourism development and focused on local government policy³⁷. WCL policy can be characterised as a continuation of National Landscape policy, though its scope is larger, its aim is a more integrated approach and the instruments and financial means make the desired bottom-up philosophy potentially more powerful. For coordination of the National Landscape Programme, stimulation and guidance of initiatives and marketing of the area, a coordinating office was established (SONL). This office was to create cooperation and coordination of tourism development between the municipalities

³⁶ In the course of the process, an informal working group was set up. This group conducted a first screening of proposals and generated ideas for projects.

³⁷ Grontmij, 1990

involved. Coordination took place mainly on a municipal administrative level, between the different local policies. This office functioned until the end of 1996³⁸.

Apart from the subsidisation available directly, the area document states that the WCL area has priority with regard to some other national and provincial instruments. These include instruments for spatial organisation, for the integration of nature management and environmental management on farms and farm improvement.

WCL process and projects 1994-1996³⁹

In this section, an overview of the starting position and initial achievements of WCL policy is presented.

The initial position of actors involved

The main reason to apply for status as a WCL area was the need to finance the goals of National Landscape Policy. Within the framework of this policy a 'product development plan' (POP; *product ontwikkelingsplan Zuidwest Friesland*) for the area had been written. WCL policy was regarded as a suitable means to finance some of these plans. Especially the municipalities were in favour of a WCL status for this reason.

The province was not in favour of yet another status for the area. Nor were most of the other parties very enthusiast at first. The organisation for the protection of the landscape (it Fryske Gea) took part in the process at the request of the province, but felt that other instruments offered many more opportunities to protect nature and landscape. WCL policy was regarded mainly as a way to share out money. Both tourist-recreational associations involved - Hiswa and Recron - decided to take part in the process, but took a critical stance. The associations did not consider WCL policy to be interesting for their members, because there was little room for the projects of individual entrepreneurs.

Nor was the agricultural sector very positive. Nature was a 'contagious' subject, development of agritourism was considered an issue for farmers who could otherwise not survive, and 'valuable cultural landscape' did not sound promising for agriculture. The SONL took the initiative to communicate with representatives of the farming sector. Research by an agricultural bureau indicated 25 types of opportunities which the WCL programme could offer to agriculture⁴⁰. This report convinced the sector of the possible benefits and it promised its cooperation.

1994 to 1996: struggle to broaden the scope

There was very little time to decide how to spend the budget for the first year. This meant that those parties most closely involved and best organised were almost the only ones to get projects financed. The existing relationships between the project coordinator of the National Landscape Programme (and thus the municipal governments) and the provincial government were especially influential.

In 1994, and to a lesser extent in 1995, projects were mainly concerned with improving the tourist-recreation infrastructure (recreational cycle paths, canoeing routes). Cooperation between tourist entrepreneurs was being stimulated, which resulted in for example a collective presentation of some of the bigger firms involved in water sports at

³⁸ Brandenburg, 1996

³⁹ This section is based on interviews and monitoring reports by Kranendonk et al.: Kranendonk, 1997; Kranendonk et al., 1997; Kranendonk et al., 2000b.

⁴⁰ AVM, 1994

'Boot' in Düsseldorf (the main fair for water sports)⁴¹. However, generally speaking the involvement was mainly at the level of municipalities, and to some extent organisations, while tourist entrepreneurs were generally not aware of the existence of WCL policy. This was due to the organisational structure, and also to the lack of enthusiasm among the tourist associations. The relevance to individual entrepreneurs was considered to be low.

Textbox 9.3 Complications concerning the Ecological Main Structure in Gaasterlân-Sleat

The Ecological Main Structure (EHS) is a blueprint for a system of interrelated natural areas. Plans to develop such a structure have been effected by the *Natuurbeleidsplan* (Nature Policy Plan) and the *Structuurschema Groene Ruime* (SGR, the document which also introduced WCL policy). The EHS includes existing natural areas, as well as areas currently under agricultural use, which should be converted back into nature. For each province a target was set, but the final designation of areas to be transformed was left to the provincial governments.

In Friesland, the provincial *Streekplan* of 1994 has indicated which areas fall under EHS. Initially, 1000 hectares were designated in Gaasterlân-Sleat. After negotiations with representatives of the farm sector and nature organisations, this amount was reduced to 550 ha. When the results of these negotiations were presented to the local population in March 1995, it became obvious that the parties' rank-and-file did not agree with the plans which had been approved by their representatives.

The resistance was enormous and inhabitants and farmers decided to unite their forces in the *Initiatiefgroep Verontruste Gaasterlanders* (initiative group of disturbed Gaasterlanders: IVG). IVG was afraid that development of nature would affect specific spatial qualities of the area and would lead to a loss of employment opportunities. A large-scale transformation of agricultural land to nature was not considered a desirable development. Interweaving of agriculture and nature was regarded as a more desirable way forward, and a coupling of EHS with WCL was considered to be a means to achieve this goal.

Sources: various

From 1995 onwards, communication with other partners in the area on WCL policy gradually took off. Communication with farmers proceeded slowly and was difficult. The sector had not been too keen on WCL policy from the beginning as farmers were not very interested in developing non-agricultural activities or in changing their farming strategy. This was related to the fact that farms in the area were rather prosperous. In the course of 1995, relations between the provincial government and the farming community became seriously disturbed when the final plans for the Ecological Main Structure in Gaasterlân-Sleat were made public (see Textbox 9.3). Despite the fact that these plans officially did not have a direct link with the WCL programme, they affected the process of WCL tremendously as farmers had become suspicious of all plans coming from the Ministry of Agriculture and the provincial government.

Though a number of plans for agriculture-related projects had been developed, there was a lack of support among farmers to take up such initiatives. This meant that also in 1995 the intention to spend 60% of the budget of WCL on agriculture-related projects was not realised. In fact hardly any agricultural projects were carried out. Integration of

⁴¹ The success of this action encouraged cooperation between the local tourist offices in the area. This can only partly be attributed to WCL, however. Initially, tourist offices were not involved in WCL at all.

agriculture and tourism – one of the goals of WCL policy – was not stimulated through explicit projects. It was decided that something substantial should be done to involve the agricultural sector in the WCL policy. The plan was launched to create a centre to initiate and support agriculture-related WCL projects. The proposed Centre for Agricultural Support became operational in the second half of 1996. It consisted of one person working to initiate agriculture-related projects and to involve farmers in the WCL policy. The centre was largely subsidised by WCL money. Projects were intended to (1) strengthen the position of agriculture, and/or (2) stimulate sustainable agricultural production (combining agriculture and nature protection), and/or (3) create additional income for farmers.

Since the creation of the Centre, farmers had become more involved in WCL projects. This was further helped by the fact that at the beginning of 1996 the conflict around nature conservation was more or less solved and farmers became more inclined to cooperate. In 1996, projects were mainly of the first type: strengthening the position of agriculture. Examples of such projects are courses for farmers aimed at implementation of compulsory environmental programmes, audit of farm enterprise results and optimising the use of fertiliser. Furthermore some farmers started to develop pluriactivity: processing of agricultural products at the farm (e.g. cheese production) or agritourism. These activities were employed mainly on an individual basis. The Centre explicitly tried to integrate these projects with other regional activities and create linkages between them. It also served as an intermediary between the initiators of a project and the bureaucratic and administrative regulations.

Textbox 9.4 Example of the creation of regional linkages

An example of the attempts of the Centre to integrate individual projects with other regional activities is offered by the case of a farm producing home-made fresh cheese. The Centre intervened so that products could be sold not only at home but also through a regional chain of supermarkets. Local bakeries used the cheese to make cakes and pastry. These cakes were sold as a regional product in the bakeries. This last experiment has, however, been cancelled, because this fresh cheese proved less practical than the powder normally used.

Source: Interview J. Sytsma and visit to the enterprise

Some parties considered the existing organisational structure to be inefficient. Meetings of the steering committee were lengthy, often taken up with discussions of project details. The idea to screen projects in a small group before placing them on the committees' agenda was launched. Because a formal change in organisational structure was not considered to be desirable, it was agreed that an informal working group would carry out a preliminary screening of the proposals. This group became operational at the end of 1995.

The combination with Objective 5b in terms of finance proved to be inconvenient in practice. Criteria for WCL projects and 5b differed and in particular the fact that 5b could not be applied for the support of individual enterprises was considered to be a drawback. The link also made WCL projects more bureaucratic. The deadline for 5b was October of each year, but it would be of avail to WCL projects to shorten the period between handing in a proposal and approval/disapproval. By the middle of 1996, this critique led to an increase of the number of meetings of the steering committee (now three times a year). In addition, a special regulation for agriculture called KIL

(*Kaderregeling Investering Landbouw*) was introduced. This was especially meant to initiate investments in individual farms⁴².

Evaluation of the first period

After two and a half years, WCL policy was not 'alive' in Friesland. Neither the province nor the sectors had systematically brought WCL opportunities to the attention of the broader public. Hardly any feedback to the rank-and-file of the interest groups was being provided. It was not until the creation of the Centre for Agricultural Support that the agricultural sector became mobilised to take part. The lack of involvement was one of the reasons why projects realised in this period mainly came from local governments and were related to the National Landscape policy.

The provincial government deliberately choose a fast, practical approach at the start. As a result, the Area Perspective was ready within a few months. The Ministry approved the Perspective, providing a long-range planning of activities were developed. By the end of 1996 such a plan had not been prepared, however. It was also concluded that little attention had been paid to the administrative part of projects and it was often not clear whether or not projects had actually been carried out.

In retrospect, a number of organisations regretted the lack of discussion about the principles and goals of WCL. Though the position of the province met with understanding, it was nevertheless considered a chance missed. It caused confusion over the meaning of certain concepts. The opportunities of WCL were not fully grasped until the process was already halfway. The perspective did not provide an impulse for the execution of projects. In addition, it did not provide clarity about criteria, which were interpreted in various ways. WCL was often confused with other regulations and policies, such as the Ecological Main Structure and rural renewal.

Generally speaking, there was a lack of communication and interaction with inhabitants and entrepreneurs, and between the involved parties. One of the ideas to improve this was to regularly issue a newsletter. This plan was never realised as it was considered inopportune to generate support at a time when WCL policy was already halfway. By the time project proposals came in, opportunities for subsidisation probably would no longer be available.

The agricultural sector had slowly become more involved in WCL policy. This did not apply to the tourism sector, which regarded WCL policy as potentially useful because of the effects it might have on the landscape - but with hardly any relevance for the individual tourist-recreative entrepreneur. This is clearly reflected by the fact that Recron considered the organisational structure to be too elaborate, considering the limited level of scale of projects. This is at odds with the remarks made by some of the other organisations involved, that would have preferred more input from the grassroots.

In addition, the tourism sector did not welcome the emphasis on development of agritourism. Especially the development of accommodation facilities was considered to lead to a decrease in the quality of the tourist product. Also, supporting individual farms was not regarded as a goal fitting in with the philosophy of WCL. Projects were considered to be too small scale as well. Long-existing things have been 'invented' and too much research has been done. It was that more should be done to preserve the

⁴² Initially, the subsidisation was maximised at 20%, with a minimum investment of approximately EUR 18,000. This amount appeared to be too high for most farmers and the percentage of 20 differs from WCL, which allows a maximum of 30%. Since 1997, the minimum investment level has been approximately EUR 4,500 due to the involvement of the Centre.

cultural landscape instead – an opinion shared by some other organisations. Related to this, a number of actors stated that WCL policy did not carry over into local policy plans. Developments such as the creation of a wind turbine park near the village of Warns were mentioned. This type of project was considered to be contrary to WCL philosophy.

It can be concluded that halfway through the WCL period some broadening of the scope had taken place, but that projects were carried out mainly on an individual basis. The Centre therefore tried to create more structure in these activities, by for example establishing an association for agritourism activities (30 members in April 1997). This association is restricted primarily to the agricultural sector, but will consider taking in 'regular' tourism members after unity among the participating farmers has been created. Contacts with the VVV (tourist office) were established at an early stage.

WCL after five years

The second half of the WCL period was much more positively evaluated than the first years. The Centre for Agricultural Support, set up in 1996, particularly contributed to this success. Because the coordinator could devote much of his attention entirely to the WCL programme, the process accelerated. The results are particularly prominent for the agricultural sector, but have also had an impact on WCL policy more generally.

Results regarding products

Whereas the products created in the first period generally did not have a 'radiation' effect, farmers became more enthusiastically involved from 1997 onwards. This involvement included some nature and landscape management projects, but also initiatives relevant for tourism.

The Centre for Agricultural Support particularly emphasised the importance of tangible projects and results, which could easily communicate the relevance of WCL policy. As a result, a brochure emphasising the opportunities for farmers was issued, as well as an agritourism brochure. In this latter brochure, cycle routes in the area are described, including the possibility to visit several farms. The brochure was available from the WCL centre, but also from the local tourist offices. Most of the cooperating farms offered farm products and some general regional products for sale.

An important achievement was the foundation of a platform for farmers involved in agritourism or home-production ('*it Boerehiem*'). This platform had 35 members by the end of 1999. It takes care of the promotion of the agritourism product and runs courses for its members. This platform helped to create linkages between the different agritourism products being developed: joint marketing strategy, holiday packages, and so on.

Six mini campsites were created with the support of WCL funding, an improvement of the quality was achieved on eight enterprises, ten entrepreneurs let apartments, rooms or holiday homes, three campsites were enlarged (to 25 pitches), and a leisure centre and a nature campsite (with 50 pitches) were created. Several farms produce regional products and some tourist attractions (like a cow museum) were set up. With regard to the provision of accommodation on farms, an expansion of the opportunities (in terms of number of pitches or length of season) would be needed in order make this activity financially rewarding.

Other projects relating to tourism and recreation included the creation of sales outlets for regional products and farm open days during the high season. Such open days have also been organised especially for the local population and the local politicians. This has

increased the familiarity with WCL and has led local governments to financially support the Centre.

According to the parties involved, WCL policy has stimulated the improvement of the quality of the tourism product, especially through investments in agritourism⁴³. Agriculture and environment are now less opposed to one another.

Results regarding process and cooperation

All participants agree that the single-counter function of the Centre for Agricultural Support has been essential. Since 1999, the centre has coordinated all WCL projects. The Centre is oriented towards implementation and it fulfils a role in mobilising the local population and entrepreneurs. In a joint evaluation of the process⁴⁴, it was stated that continuation of the Centre would be a good thing, but at the same time it was recognised that financial means were not available.

The involvement of individuals and organisations in WCL policy has generally increased. Especially the agricultural sector and the tourist offices are participating. Tourist offices have become a partners for farmers who have developed a tourist sector and are more involved compared to other WCL areas. The Recron is still not involved, and nor are tourist entrepreneurs. Some cooperation with individual tourist entrepreneurs exists, but tourist organisations have been bypassed.

The business community in general has not been involved in the marketing of WCL products. Some nature and landscape organisations have been involved in the execution of projects, especially in the agri-environmental projects. District water boards (*Waterschappen*) and environmental organisations have not been involved.

An important change was the fact that the Project Office of the National Landscape Programme was closed. As this was the binding factor for municipal collaboration, it was feared that the disappearance of this coordinator would seriously hamper future communication. Efforts were taken to hand over its function to the Foundation for the National Landscape that existed alongside the Office. This foundation, in which the various municipalities are represented, should continue to function as a platform for regular communication. In practice, an official from the municipality of Nijefurd has taken up this task.

Throughout the process, the municipalities generally had a positive attitude towards WCL policy, which was considered to have had a positive impact on the area. Especially Nijefurd and Gaasterlan-Sleat have participated. In the latter years of the WCL period, local governments financially contributed to the Centre for Agricultural Support. Support was strongest at the political level, however. The administrative level was less committed to WCL policy. As coordination between the political and the official level was not optimised in all municipalities, this sometimes led to frictions.

⁴³ According to the evaluation meeting, this quality improvement has not been achieved at the regular tourist enterprises. Note that Recron - the association of tourist-recreational entrepreneurs - was not represented at this meeting.

⁴⁴ See Kranendonk et al., 2000b

9.4 WCL policy and innovation in tourism: Zuidwest Friesland⁴⁵

In Zuidwest Friesland, an attempt was made to measure the extent to which networks (including WCL policy) have contributed to innovation in individual tourism enterprises (including both the regular tourism sector and agritourism). This was done by means of a survey among tourism entrepreneurs in the area. This survey aimed to establish the relation between networks and innovation at the enterprise level.

In order to shed light on this, the enterprises were asked to indicate what changes had been carried out in the period 1994-1998⁴⁶. In addition, information on a number of factors which could be assumed to be of influence on innovation was gathered (see also next section), among which involvement in WCL policy⁴⁷.

Research design and general findings

In the survey a distinction was made between different types of innovation: changes⁴⁸ in the product or services offered (product innovation), changes in the management of the firm (process innovation), changes in the target groups which are being addressed (market innovation) and changes in terms of cooperation with other entrepreneurs (network innovation).

Also, the relation with networks in a broader sense was tested, as well as the use of information sources (e.g. cooperation with other entrepreneurs, visits to fairs, membership of local and professional organisations and subscription to professional journals). More details on the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2.

⁴⁵ Results of the survey on which this section is based are published in Caalders (2001).

⁴⁶ The survey was conducted in 1998.

⁴⁷ See also appendix 2 for the questionnaire and details of the survey

⁴⁸ In the questionnaire information was asked about 'changes' rather than 'innovation' in order not to be dependent on the definition applied by the respondent. It was indicated that changes should be seen in terms of 'improvements' (in accordance with the definition on innovation given by West et al., 1990). Clearly, not all changes are innovative to the same extent. Therefore, the respondents were asked to describe the changes in a separate question. This information was separately analysed. In the further statistical analysis, a measure for innovativeness is achieved by counting the different types of changes which have been carried through. The idea behind this is that an enterprise which changes at all levels is more innovative compared to an enterprise that, for example, only adapts its management. There are certain parallels with the notion of systems innovation (Chapter 3).

Table 9.1 General characteristics of tourism enterprises in Zuidwest Friesland (n=74)⁴⁹

<i>Types of enterprises; percentage of enterprises with (mixtures possible):</i>	
• Yacht harbour	26%
• Hotel/pension/b&b	16%
• Camp site	38%
• Day attraction	9%
• Other	46%
<i>Position of tourism within the enterprise</i>	
• Tourism main source of income	53%
• Income from other activities:	46%
- agriculture (% of total)	22%
<i>How long does the (tourism part of the) enterprise exist?</i>	
• 10 years or less	33%
• 11 - 20 years	30%
• 21 - 30 years	20%
• > 30 years	17%
<i>Number of people employed year round</i>	
• 0	60%
• 1 - 5	31%
• > 5	9%
• (> 20)	(1%)
<i>Number of people employed (including owner/family) in high season</i>	
• 1 or 2	43%
• 3 - 5	23%
• 6 - 10	10%
• 11- 20	16%
• 21 - 50	7%
• > 50	1%
<i>Age of the respondent</i>	
• 35 or under	15%
• 36 - 45	30%
• 46 - 55	31%
• 56 - 65	16%
• > 65	8%
(average: 48)	
<i>Subscription to newspapers and professional journals; access to internet</i>	
• Subscription to regional newspaper	86%
• Subscription to national newspaper	50%
• Access to internet	31%
• Subscription to professional journal(s)	82%
• Subscription to 3 or more professional journals	14%
<i>Number of years living in Friesland</i>	
• 4 or less	3%
• 5-9	10%
• 10-19	11%
• 20 or over	76%

Source: survey, 1998

⁴⁹ Missing values have not been taken into account in the calculation of percentages (all tables in Section 9.4).

Cooperation

Over half of the respondents cooperate with other tourist-recreative entrepreneurs in one way or another. Almost 30% offer packages together with their colleagues, and 22% sell tickets for other attractions or make reservations for guests. More than a quarter cooperate with entrepreneurs in other sectors. Almost 25% of the respondent indicated that they never consult others about matters which concern the enterprise.

Table 9.2 Cooperation with other entrepreneurs

<i>Cooperation with other entrepreneurs</i>	
• Cooperation with tourist-recreative entrepreneurs	55%
• Cooperation with entrepreneurs from other sectors	20%
• Packages	28%
• Selling tickets for other attractions	20%

<i>Consulting other entrepreneurs on issues concerning the own enterprise</i>	
• Never	23%
• Occasionally	70%
• Often	7%

Source: survey, 1998

Contacts with governments and knowledge on policy (including WCL)

Slightly under 50% of the enterprises have been visited by the official responsible for recreation and tourism within the municipality. Where a visit was paid, the reason was often related to tourism tax or other regulations (building permits etc.). In about a quarter of the cases, the initiative for the visit was taken by the entrepreneur.

A large majority of the respondents (80%) claimed to be well informed about municipal tourism policy; provincial policy was slightly less well known (62%). With regard to WCL, 56% are aware of its existence, about a third claim to be aware of the goals of WCL policy and 22% have attended a WCL meeting.

Table 9.3 Opinions on WCL policy

<i>Familiarity with WCL</i>	
• Familiar with WCL	56%
• Familiar with goals of WCL	34%
• Attended a WCL meeting	22%

<i>Of those familiar with goals (n=23)</i>	
• Agree with goals WCL	18
• Have gained new ideas on tourism development through WCL	16
• WCL took account of needs of entrepreneurs	10
• Important projects have been realised because of WCL	15
• WCL has had positive impact on tourism development	17
• Enterprise has received subsidisation from WCL	12

Source: survey, 1998

Of those who knew about the goals of WCL (25 entrepreneurs), almost all indicated that they agree with those goals or have a neutral position (14%)⁵⁰. A large proportion indicated that WCL policy has generated new ideas on tourism development. The question whether WCL policy takes account of the needs of entrepreneurs was answered in a diverse way: about a quarter disagreed and another quarter had a neutral position. There is a general opinion that through WCL policy important projects have been realised (two-thirds agree) and that WCL policy has contributed positively to tourism development (three-quarters agree). Note that half of the respondents familiar with WCL policy have actually received funding through this programme⁵¹. This is 16% of all respondents.

Membership of organisations

The tourist office (VVV) is the most popular organisation among the respondents; about 75% are a member of this organisation, and of these members about 75% attend a meeting now and then. Over 90% of the entrepreneurs are a member of at least one organisation in the field of recreation and tourism. Local/regional organisations are more popular than national ones.

Questions were also asked about membership of agricultural organisations (almost 22%), organisations in the field of landscape (16%), nature and environment (0%) and organisations pertaining to culture and cultural history (11%).

Almost 18% are active in a political party, and slightly over 40% are active in (another kind of) local or regional association.

Table 9.4 Membership of organisations⁵²

<i>Membership of tourism organisations</i>	
• VVV (local tourism office)	77%
• Recreative Platform Gaasterlân-Sleat (local)	14%
• RECRON (tourist-recreative entrepreneurs)	14%
• HISWA (water recreation)	22%
• Horeca NL (hotel and catering)	3%
• SVR/Vekabo (agritourism)	16%
• It Boerehjem (regional agritourism association)	22%

<i>Membership of other organisations</i>	
• FLTO (farmers)	22%
• It Fryske Gea/other landscape organisations	16%
• Organisations for the protection of nature and environment	0%
• Organisations for the protection of cultural heritage	11%

Source: survey, 1998

⁵⁰ For the calculation of percentages, missing values have not been taken into account.

⁵¹ Most respondents did not answer the question whether the available means are used in an efficient way. This question has been omitted from the analysis.

⁵² Questions were asked about membership, membership of the board and attending meetings, in order to discern between the more and the less active members. In this table, only figures on membership are presented.

Overview of changes: starting a new business

Of the 74 enterprises interviewed, 9 had been created during the previous 4 years. This includes 7 enterprises that developed tourism as a means of additional income, of which 3 had received a grant from WCL. The new enterprises include campsites, bed & breakfast and selling regional products. This group of new entrepreneurs has a lower average age (42.3 years) than the total group, and on average is slightly better educated. The most frequently mentioned reasons for starting an enterprise were 'financial reasons' and 'independence'.

The idea to start a business⁵³ was a private idea (4), was born in conversations with family or friends (4) and/or was seen at other locations (3). Important sources of information were tourists (4), other entrepreneurs (4), the tourist office (3), family and friends (3) and sector organisations (3). Other entrepreneurs were mentioned most frequently as a crucial source for implementing the idea. One of the new entrepreneurs indicated that he had never spoken with others about matters concerning the enterprise, five do so occasionally and two on a regular basis.

Overview of changes on existing enterprises

Of all respondents, 85% indicated that they had carried out one or more changes during the previous four years:

- Two-thirds had invested in the quality of the product;
- Slightly over a half had enlarged the capacity of the firm;
- Three-quarters had tried to change the image of the enterprise or the product;
- Over 60% had tried to interest new target groups in the product;
- About 60% had invested in the improvement or simplification of management;
- 43% had intensified cooperation with other entrepreneurs
- Almost 50% had carried out 'other changes'.

The respondents were asked to describe the changes more precisely. Almost 200 different types of change were mentioned in this question (which implies that not all changes had been included). A large number (92) were adjustments in terms of embellishing the enterprise (renovation, painting, new building) or improving the facilities (more toilets, more showers, more green, more space, reception, new type of boats, etc.); in 24 cases an enlargement of the capacity was mentioned. As such, this type of changes cannot be considered real innovations.

With regard to new products, several degrees of 'newness' can be discerned, from offering extra service to the clients (playground, selling ice-cream, creating a harbour, shop, bicycle shed; mentioned 26 times) to developing a completely new sector within the firm (creating a campsite, building a bungalow park, a four-star group accommodation, a petting farm, starting boat rental; total five respondents). In five cases, a change of the nature of the enterprise was mentioned: from mini campsite to landscape campsite; from bed & breakfast to hotel, casting off part of the business. This type of changes consists of product innovations in the sense they are new for the enterprise concerned. In most cases the examples are not new for the sector or within the region, however.

Changes with regard to service and human resource management were mentioned in thirteen cases (more service, new manager, better qualified personnel, optimising

⁵³ More than one answer was possible.

management, cleaning schedule, etc.). In thirteen cases the management had been computerised. Also with regard to these changes in terms of process, a reservation as to the level of innovativeness can be made.

In terms of market innovations, the offering of new packages was mentioned twice; improvement or a different way of marketing the business (brochures, logo, green or professional image) was mentioned twelve times.

Nine remarks were related to cooperation or joining professional organisations (changes in the network).

These descriptions show that certainly not all changes which are pursued are real 'innovations'. This does not alter the fact that the changes are often of great importance to the enterprise in question. In order to be able to evaluate the impact of the changes, a more in-depth study would have been necessary. In such study, especially the way in which individual changes fit in a broader entrepreneurial strategy would have to be answered. A different cleaning schedule can be a way to address labour shortages at a regional level, for example, or part of a more encompassing strategy to create more flexibility in labour conditions. Without further research, it is impossible to know whether changes are strategic choices or merely ad hoc adjustments.

Background to changes

To the question how the idea for renewal of the *product*⁵⁴ arose, the most frequent answer was 'own idea' (27 times) and 'demand by customers' (25 times). Conversations with others were mentioned 15 times ('other': 7). Professional journals, other literature and fairs were not mentioned once as a source of ideas.

Also where sources of information are concerned which are consulted in between the idea and its realisation, the emphasis is on people in the entrepreneur's proximity: customers, suppliers and other tourist-recreative entrepreneurs. Consultancies, sector organisations and professional journals appear less influential.

Of the respondents who stated they had aimed at new target groups, about half specified which groups these were. Groups which were mentioned more than once include the elderly (4), families with children (4), enterprises (3), foreigners (Belgians or Germans; 3). Advertisement was the main way of reaching these groups. The main reason new target groups were sought was to lengthen the season.

The new types of cooperation with other entrepreneurs included referring customers to colleagues, offering joint packages, and joining an existing or creating a new platform. Striking is that about two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they sought cooperation on their own initiative.

Slightly over half of the entrepreneurs indicated that plans for changes were being discussed with others.

Further analysis of changes

One of the goals of the survey was to find out which factors were related to changes in the enterprise or the management. For this purpose, a measure indicating the number of changes was created ('TOTAL'). This measure is used as an indication for the innovativeness of a firm. Table 9.5 shows which items correlate with this variable.

⁵⁴ This includes changes in the quality, capacity or image of the enterprise or change in the management. The answers refer to the last change to have taken place.

Influence of personal and enterprise characteristics

When analysing the relation between changes and personal characteristics it appears that younger entrepreneurs, who have on average been working for fewer years in the tourist-recreational sector and those with a higher education score higher in terms of renewal. Entrepreneurs who feel more attached to Friesland or who have lived there for a longer period are somewhat less inclined to change. There is no relation between renewal and access to the Internet, and no difference between smaller and larger enterprises (number of employees) or between entrepreneurs who have tourism as their main or as an additional income.

Table 9.5 Correlation between TOTAL and a selection of variables⁵⁵

	Kendall's tau b ⁵⁶
v303 (age)	-0.25
Number of years in the tourism branch	-0.20
Number of years living in Friesland	-0.30
Attachment to Friesland	-0.26
Education	0.20
BEURSREC (visiting fairs)	0.39
Consulting other entrepreneurs	0.37
FINALSAM (cooperation with other entrepreneurs) ⁵⁷	0.35
ABONTOT (subscription to professional journals)	0.22
Received WCL-subsidisation	0.33 ⁵⁸
Attending WCL meetings	0.35

Source: survey, 1998

Influence of contacts and external information

The number of contacts and means of accessing external information show a clear relation with the number of renewals. Particularly high correlations exist with visiting fairs and consulting other entrepreneurs with regard to matters concerning the own enterprise. Entrepreneurs cooperating with others also score higher in terms of renewal. The number of subscriptions to professional journals shows a slight correlation as well. Whether one is member of few or many organisations is not of influence, nor is the extent to which one is informed about various types of policy.

WCL and other forms of support

There is a slight correlation between renewal and having received subsidisation through the WCL programme. The same is true for attending WCL meetings. To some extent this seems logical, as grants are generally received in order to carry through changes. There is

⁵⁵ Only significant correlations are shown

⁵⁶ Alpha smaller or equal to 0.05

⁵⁷ Variable composed of joint scores on a number of variables referring to cooperation: cooperation with tourist-recreational entrepreneurs; cooperation with entrepreneurs from other sectors; offering joint packages; selling tickets for other attractions and consultation of others on matters concerning the own enterprise.

⁵⁸ Alpha = 0.07

no relation between innovativeness and previously having received grants from other sources.

Multiple regression

Various variables show a correlation with the number of changes. In an additional step, the extent to which these variables jointly explain the difference in innovativeness has been analysed. In such an analysis, four variables remain, together explaining this difference for 50%⁵⁹. These are visiting fairs, subscription to professional journals, cooperation with other entrepreneurs, and age⁶⁰ (Table 9.6).

Table 9.6 Multiple regression analysis (backward) results for dependent variable 'TOTAL', representing the number of different types of changes (n=67)

	Beta	T	sig T
BEURSREC (visiting fairs)	.258198	2.593	.0119
ABONTOT (subscription to professional journals)	.345127	3.763	.0004
FINALSAM (cooperation with other entrepreneurs)	.311168	3.255	.0018
v303 (age)	.204347	1.816	.0367
Multiple R	0.70807		
R square	0.50137		

Source: survey, 1998

WCL policy no longer comes out as an explanatory factor. It is striking that visiting fairs comes out of this analysis, as there are no entrepreneurs that indicated 'fairs' as one of the sources for an innovation which has been carried through. Of course, the relation between both factors can also be more indirect (innovative entrepreneurs have an entrepreneurial attitude, which includes visiting fairs).

Four groups of entrepreneurs

Finally, a factor analysis has been carried out to find out whether various factors can be discerned in the data⁶¹. In this analysis those variables proving most explicative for innovation have been included, and in addition the various types of changes which have been carried through (product, process, market and network innovations). This results in four groups, which can consequently be described as 'innovators', 'association members', 'young entrepreneurs' and 'cooperators' (see Table 9.7).

Innovators: this group consists of entrepreneurs who score on all types of changes, except for changes in terms of cooperation. They can be discerned from other groups,

⁵⁹ If the variable 'subscription to professional journals' is left out, variance explained is 41%.

⁶⁰ In reading these results, it is relevant to know that various variables correlate amongst each other. These include 'age' and 'number of years living in Friesland' (0.45); 'visiting fairs' and 'subscription to professional recreational journals' (0.45).

⁶¹ A general rule for factor analysis is that a minimum of five variables for each factor found are needed, there must be at least 50 respondents and the number of respondents should be at least five times the number of variables analysed (Hair et al, 1995). Based on this rule, a maximum of three factors should arise.

mainly in terms of changes in management and changes in the image of the company. They also score higher than the others on visiting fairs.

Association members: this group scores highly on membership of organisations, attending meetings and subscription to professional journals⁶². They are well-informed on government policy. They hardly score on changes, except slightly on product innovation. In this respect, there is no clear difference from the other groups.

Young entrepreneurs: the third group consists of entrepreneurs who are on average younger, and who feel less attached to Friesland compared to the rest. Education level is generally higher and the group contains more new enterprises. Visiting fairs is comparable to that of the first group.

Table 9.7 Result of factor analysis over 16 variables (n=68)⁶³

	Factor 1 <i>innovators</i>	Factor 2 <i>association members</i>	Factor 3 <i>young entre- preneurs</i>	Factor 4 <i>co- operators</i>
BEURSTOT (visiting fairs)	0.32666	0.38374	0.43493	
ABONTOT (subscription to professional journals)		0.73776		
LEDENTOT (membership of organisations)		0.76745		
RECRMEET (visit meetings of tourism organisations)		0.79887		
FINALSAM (cooperation with other entrepreneurs)				0.73009
BELEID (aware of tourism policies)		0.53572		
v303 (age)			-0.64059	-0.39087
v 306 (feeling attached to Friesland)			-0.86217	
v311 (education)			0.69026	
v312 (going on holidays)				0.58380
NEW (started a business in last 4 years)	-0.73418		0.46379	
PRODUCT (product innovation)	0.43944	0.38372		
COOP (new cooperation with other entrepreneurs)				0.71549
v53 (changing image of product)	0.83248			
v54 (searching new target groups)	0.67331			0.45549
v56 (changes in management)	0.74483			
Eigenvalue	4.24550	2.17890	1.91646	1.48370
% of variance	26.5	13.6	12.0	9.3
Total variance explained: 61.4%				

Source: survey, 1998

⁶² Note that subscription to professional journals scores highest on the factor which does not score on innovation. This differs from the results of the multiple regression analysis.

⁶³ Varimax rotation (seven iterations); only scores above 0.35 are shown.

Cooperators: score high in terms of cooperation with other entrepreneurs and changes which have been carried out are also mainly related to new cooperatives. Apart from that this group searches (to a lesser extent) for new target groups. This group is also younger than the average entrepreneur.

As the general statistical rules for factor analysis do not completely apply (according to the standards only three factors should have been found according to the with this amount of variables and respondents; see also footnote 61), the existence of the above groups cannot be proved very firmly. The factors should mainly be considered interesting for the formation of hypotheses.

Some conclusions pertaining to the survey

The survey on innovation among tourist entrepreneurs in Zuidwest Friesland is a first attempt to quantitatively measure renewal in the sector. The aim of the research was to find out to what extent contact networks of entrepreneurs are of influence for innovation within enterprises and to what extent WCL policy has had a role in this.

Remarks on the side

The results provide a reasonable view of the situation in the area as almost 30% of all tourist enterprises completed the questionnaire. The response is representative for the total group of enterprises (see Appendix 2). Generalising the results should be done with some care, because only one area has been researched and because, in absolute terms, the number of respondents was small. It should be remembered that the definition of 'innovation' applied in the sample was referring to any type of change. These changes are relevant from an enterprise perspective, but not all of them are necessarily 'innovations' if looked at from a regional or national perspective. The descriptions of the changes show that only in a few cases can changes be considered innovations at this level as well. This should be taken into account when interpreting the results. Moreover, the general restrictions of questionnaires apply. In order to get a better grip on the extent to which changes can be regarded as 'innovative' a different kind of research is needed, i.e. more qualitative. This would require a different kind of preparation and a separate research project in itself⁶⁴. The data presented should be considered a first exploration of the subject. As such, the data give rise to some interesting hypotheses on innovation in tourism enterprises.

Zuidwest Friesland

The tourism sector in Zuidwest Friesland consists mainly of small-scale enterprises. For many of the entrepreneurs, tourism is a source of additional income. Entrepreneurs are generally highly educated and well-informed. Over half of the enterprises cooperate in one way or another with other enterprises. Practically all are a member of at least one professional organisation, the tourist office being the most popular among these. Generally speaking, entrepreneurs are more often affiliated to local and regional organisations than to national ones. Entrepreneurs are mainly members of professional organisations in tourism (farmers are also members of the professional farming

⁶⁴ Currently, research on innovative enterprises in the field of sustainable tourism in the Netherlands and Costa Rica is being carried out by Wageningen University, BUITEN Consultancy, Retour Foundation and Prodessarollo.

organisation) and only to a limited extent of other types of organisations (protection of cultural heritage or landscape).

Over a four-year period, a lot of improvements were made in terms of the quality of the product, the management and the image of the enterprise or product. Over half of the respondents had sought new target groups. More intensive cooperation with other entrepreneurs is the least mentioned type of change: 43% of respondents answered positively.

Important catalysts for change are consumer demand and the entrepreneurs' own ideas. Apart from these, suppliers and other tourist-recreative entrepreneurs are mentioned as sources of information. When looking for statistical relations, particularly age, visiting fairs, subscriptions to professional journals and cooperation with other entrepreneurs are relevant. Striking in this respect is that visiting fairs and professional journals are not mentioned by the entrepreneurs as sources of ideas.

The influence of membership of organisations on innovation could not be established. In a factor analysis, indications were even found that association members belong to a different group than innovators. Association members hardly score on innovation. This group may be too busy with activities outside the firm to implement changes, but another explanation may be that these networks are not sufficiently involved in issues which are relevant for innovation. 'Cooperators' – another group to emerge from the factor analysis – score on network innovations. 'Innovators' score on all types of changes, except for changes in cooperation. In addition, more 'young entrepreneurs' had started a new business.

Innovation, networks and conservation of regional characteristics

The results of the survey give cause to reconsider the relation between networks and innovation. There is no straightforward relation between networks and innovation. Within the research group, there was no relation between memberships of associations and innovation. There was, however, a positive relation between innovation and cooperation with other entrepreneurs. Visiting fairs and subscriptions to professional journals are also of influence.

A further factor analysis of the data shows that cooperation is mainly related to network innovations. Innovation in terms of product and concept links up with visiting fairs. If this can be confirmed in surveys among a larger group of entrepreneurs, it implies that product and process innovations mainly stem from ideas originating from outside the region⁶⁵. This can easily give rise to a standardisation of the tourism product. Another aspect which might point in that direction is that young entrepreneurs, with new enterprises, feel less attached to Zuidwest Friesland. But the argument can also be turned around: if it is desirable to stimulate entrepreneurs to link changes to characteristics of the region, fairs and professional journals are good media to bring entrepreneurs into contact with such ideas. Communication of the possibilities should preferably take place through offering ready-made information about and examples of the opportunities to link changes to local roots (e.g. design for holiday accommodation inspired by local building traditions).

The limited relation between networks and innovation is also relevant in this respect. Cooperation with other entrepreneurs was the most influential, but WCL policy has also had some influence. The other networks to which entrepreneurs are affiliated may be

⁶⁵ It should be kept in mind, however, that the entrepreneurs themselves did not indicate that fairs have contributed to innovation.

insufficiently geared towards innovation. It would therefore be worthwhile to pay more attention to innovation in professional and policy networks.

9.5 WCL policy: conclusions and evaluation

In this chapter, the position of rural tourism in two WCL areas in the Netherlands has been described. Although general policy goals and framework are similar in Zuidwest Friesland and Midden-Limburg, a comparison of the two cases reveals that local factors have a considerable impact on the approach to WCL policy, the processes which evolved and the results which have been reached.

Below, WCL policy in both areas will be evaluated with regard to policy goals, the influence of discourses, the relation between WCL policy and tourism actors, the extent to which innovation in tourism has occurred, the existence of various types of linkages and governance strategy. Based on this, the contribution of the policy to innovation and rural quality will be evaluated.

Policy goals and discourses

Policy for WCL areas explicitly aims to combine economic development with the preservation of the special values of those areas. In terms of process, the aim is to generate a dynamics of change through a project-wise bottom-up approach. In Midden-Limburg, process-related goals were prominent, and goals in terms of content were considered secondary to this - though of course not irrelevant. Only after local support had been gained was a more strict approach in terms of projects applied. In Friesland, policy goals were taken from existing policy documents. The WCL status was considered an extra financial means to achieve these goals. Only after the initial phase was more emphasis put on creating local support, especially in the agricultural sector.

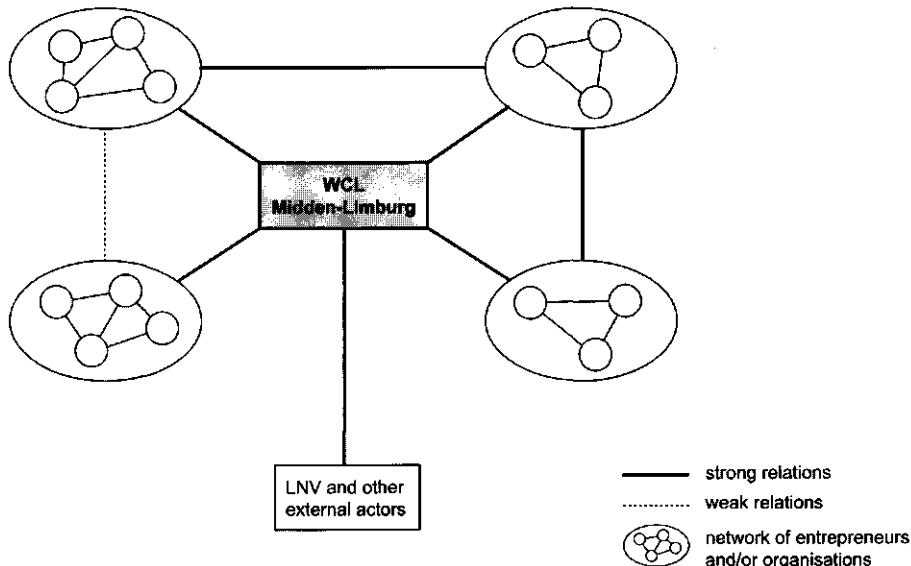
Referring to the discourses introduced in the previous chapter, general WCL policy goals seem a combination of utilitarian, hedonist and agri-ruralist discourses. They include aims to generate new economic functions, in combination with conservation of special qualities of the area. Agriculture should retain its special position, but other functions should be stimulated as well. It should however be remembered that WCL is a 'rural renewal' policy. As stated in Chapter 8, policies for rural renewal tend to take the position of agriculture as a point of departure. In most rural development processes, the agri-ruralist discourse prevails. As far as a utilitarian discourse applies, it is biased towards agriculture. Especially the 'hedonist' discourse is lacking. In both WCL areas studied, rural development - and rural tourism development - is mainly approached from a supply-oriented perspective: the desire to create new functions for the countryside. Agriculture has a privileged position: of WCL funding, at least 60% is intended for the agricultural sector.

Position in networks and relation to tourism actors

In Midden-Limburg, WCL policy was primarily aimed at the creation of linkages at the local and regional level. The importance of communication both between actors in the same sector and between sectors is reflected in the WCL organisational structure. At the municipal level, interaction between sectors took place in working groups. At the regional level, interaction within the sector took place through sector groups. After a few years, attempts to inform and involve a larger proportion of the local population were

taken. Linkages with external administrative actors were established in several ways. Linkages with actors at the provincial level were established through provincial representatives in the sector groups. Linkages with the national level, i.e. the Ministry of Agriculture, are both formal – through the Steering Committee – and more informal, through the contacts of the WCL coordinator. Some attention has been paid to the creation of market linkages, by means of, for example, the website. Through this emphasis on linkages, WCL policy has come to occupy a central position in the rural development network in the area. When characterising its position, it has moved from a ‘star’ to a ‘liaison’. Whereas the WCL structure was at first a crucial link in bringing the actors together, at the end of the WCL period it had withdrawn somewhat: it occupied a position more or less outside the networks, but nevertheless linked to them. The networks functioned more or less independently.

Figure 9.5 Schematic presentation of the position of WCL Midden-Limburg in the rural network



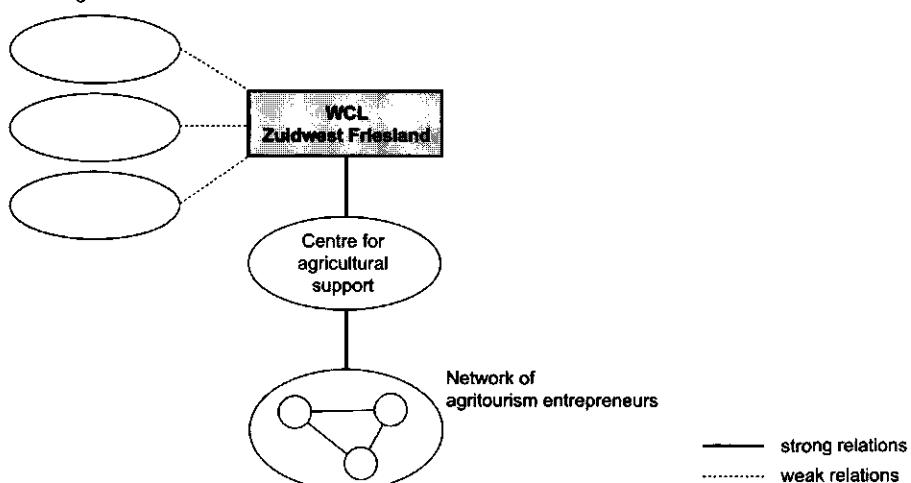
Source: this thesis

In Zuidwest Friesland, WCL policy was at first mainly approached from the point of view of content, rather than process. In terms of its initial network position, it can be characterised as situated on the edge of the regional network. The actors involved in WCL policy remained at some distance. The main added value of a WCL status was the extra financial means to realise previously defined goals. Its role within the regional network can be characterised as an ‘isolate’. None of the actors involved considered WCL policy to be a real opportunity for creating a new perspective towards rural development. After a while, the situation changed, mainly because of the Centre for Agricultural Support, which took seriously the task to create networks. The Centre acted as a liaison to try and establish linkages between actors at the local and regional level, both between the WCL structure and farmers, and among farmers. After a while, the tourist office became involved as well. In this way, some linkages between sectors (i.e. part of the tourism sectors and agritourism) have been established. These networks now

function independently. In the later stages of the WCL period, the Centre functioned as a 'gatekeeper' and continued to function as a 'catalyst'.

Figure 9.6 Schematic presentation of the position of WCL Zuidwest Friesland in the rural network

Other regional actors



Source: this thesis

In both cases, tourism proved a difficult sector to work with. Results were mainly achieved in the field of agritourism and in the traditional municipal fields of attention. Overall, tourism actors in Limburg were more involved than in Friesland. In Friesland, emphasis was first on municipalities (i.e. improvement of tourism infrastructure) and only later did agritourism actors become more closely involved in the process. Not many attempts to involve regular tourism actors more closely were made. After a few years, the tourist office was approached to become involved in the promotion of agritourism products. In Midden-Limburg, many more attempts to involve the sector were taken. But despite these efforts, it proved difficult to interest tourism entrepreneurs in WCL policy. Nevertheless, one of the achievements of the policy is the establishment of a cooperation in which the catering industry is involved. Especially in Roerdalen, where communication between sectors at the local level was already well-established, various tourism subsectors were involved in the process.

Innovation in tourism

In both areas, new tourism products have been created through the WCL programme. These include mainly agritourism products and improvement of tourism infrastructure. Though these products are a contribution - and in some cases, a very interesting one - to the regional tourism product, they are not the main achievement of the WCL process. More important is the improved cooperation between actors in networks. In Friesland, cooperation in networks is very specifically organised around new activities for the agricultural sector. In Limburg, networks are a derivative of the general philosophy to stimulate bottom-up initiatives. After five years this philosophy had created the basis for a systems innovation. Enthusiasm to continue working together along the lines of the WCL programme was widespread.

Table 9.8 Impression of innovations in tourism in both WCL projects

	WCL Midden-Limburg	WCL Zuidwest Friesland
Product innovation/ process innovation	Creation of agritourism accommodation, working with regional products; contribution to visitors centre, tourist routes	Improvement of route infrastructure, creation of agritourism products
Network innovation	Stimulation of cooperation also between sectors, creation of cooperatives Strictly bottom-up approach	Cooperative of agritourism initiatives attempt to link regional products to regular distribution channels
Market innovation	Informing local population through newsletter, setting up web-site, setting up sales outlets for regional products	Promotion of agritourism initiatives through tourist offices Selling regional products in supermarket
Ideological innovation	Bottom-up philosophy to rural development	Agritourism development (and other pluri-active and sustainable development options) have become more accepted by agricultural community
Systems innovation	New perspective on rural development through cooperation between regional actors; continued pilot with regional innovation networks; desire to continue the process among those involved; municipalities finance continuation	(Impulse for agritourism development through stimulation of regional networks and cooperation)

Source: this thesis

In Friesland, the survey among tourism entrepreneurs shows that involvement in the WCL process is to some extent related to innovation at the enterprise level. The survey also shows that 'official' networks – such as tourism organisations – are not related to innovation. Cooperation with other entrepreneurs in the area does however correlate with innovation. In addition, two general sources of information are relevant: professional journals and visiting fairs. The survey also indicates that only a few entrepreneurs are members of organisations for protection of the cultural heritage or the landscape. This implies that in terms of networks of entrepreneurs, the conditions are not attuned to stimulate innovations linked to rural qualities.

Governance

When characterising the WCL process in terms of governance model, the differences between Friesland and Limburg are striking. In Friesland, the approach mainly corresponds with the 'efficiency' model. It was geared towards establishment of public support and all the actors involved were representatives of sectoral interest groups. The support of these actors was needed to achieve the WCL status and the related finance. Each of the actors saw a possible additional gain for the own sector, and thus agreed: 'Even if it doesn't help, it won't do any harm'.

Table 9.9 WCL Midden-Limburg: overview of linkages at various levels related to interactive models

	Communicative	Instrumental	Strategic
Linkages with other local sectors/institutions	Steering groups with representatives of each sector per municipality Possibility to join association of the countryside'	(stimulation of joint product development in co-operatives)	(newsletter for local population) Creation of intersectoral cooperatives for marketing of regional products
Linkages within local tourism sector	Promotion of communication within the sector through creation of sector group tourism		
External linkages	Membership of 'Friends of WCL'		(national and provincial government only indirectly involved in decision-making on WCL projects) 'Smoothening' of bureaucratic regulations

Source: this thesis

Table 9.10 WCL Zuidwest Friesland: overview of linkages at various levels related to interactive models

	Communicative	Instrumental	Strategic
Linkages with other local sectors/institutions	Centre for Agricultural Support acts as catalyst to stimulate cooperation	Centre for Agricultural Support acts as catalyst to stimulate product innovation	Area Perspective was approved by all sectors interest groups and municipalities involved
Linkages within local tourism sector			Cooperation between municipalities to realise existing plans for tourist routes (only in first period) Cooperation between agritourism association and tourism office to sell agritourism products (after few years)
External linkages			(Negative influence) EHS discussion hampered execution of WCL policy

Source: this thesis

In Limburg the strategy followed links up with the communicative model. The main target group was the economic carriers in the rural area. It was considered crucial that these should take the lead in moulding WCL policy. Both individual entrepreneurs and sector interest groups/organisations were involved. After support among these actors had been established, WCL policy became more oriented towards innovation. Whereas the criteria for financing projects were somewhat loosely interpreted at first, they became increasingly strict: in the later stages, only projects with a real renewal content and those which truly fitted in with the WCL strategy were supported. The position of the secretariat as a process manager also gradually changed over the years: from trying to create communication among and between sectors, it gradually became more important to open windows of development opportunities.

WCL policy: stimulating quality and innovation in tourism?

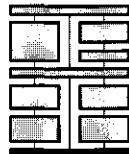
WCL policy goals include both economic development and conservation of rural qualities. In Midden-Limburg this goal is pursued through a bottom-up approach, which is in line with the communicative governance model. In Zuidwest Friesland, a more pragmatic point of view prevails and emphasis is on the opportunity to get additional funding to carry out existing policies. In line with this goal, the strategic model of governance best describes the initial stages of the WCL process. Later on, a more communicative approach was chosen to try and involve the agricultural sector.

Tourism development is part of WCL policy goals in both areas. Emphasis is on agritourism development and the improvement of tourism infrastructure. In terms of results, some tourism products have been created which have improved the overall regional tourism supply. There proved to be a slight correlation between WCL policy and innovations at the enterprise level in Zuidwest Friesland. More important, however, were network innovations at the regional level. In both areas, new types of cooperation have been established as a result of the WCL process. Whereas WCL network innovations in Zuidwest Friesland were mainly induced by the Centre for Agricultural Support, in Midden-Limburg these stemmed from the general WCL philosophy. This philosophy consisted of a bottom-up approach to rural development which can in itself be considered an ideological innovation. This approach has been successfully implemented and has resulted in creating the conditions for a systems innovation. WCL policy will need a continuation in order to fully reap the fruits of all these efforts.

The regular tourism sector was involved in the WCL process only to a limited extent. This is related to WCL goals, but also to the position taken by the sector. Agritourism and the tourism infrastructure receive the bulk of attention. Though both issues are strategically important, the sector is not very interested to become involved and to influence the process. The WCL process illustrates the limited scope of a large part of the tourism sector. If projects are not of direct short-term relevance to the tourism enterprises, the sector is apparently not interested in becoming actively involved. Also, the sector did not take a leading role in trying to create more integration between various tourism subsectors, an aim which would have fitted very well in the WCL philosophy. Tourism actors obviously do not consider processes such as WCL to be of strategic importance to the future of the sector. WCL practice confirms the fragmented nature of the tourism and recreation sector and shows that it is difficult to coordinate tourism activities in bottom-up processes. It also implies that the influence of the tourism sector in rural development processes is limited. Chances to link economic development of tourism to rural qualities and to rural development more generally are thus missed.

The survey among tourism entrepreneurs in Friesland to some extent confirmed this picture. Tourism entrepreneurs carry through a lot of changes. The results showed however no relation between innovation and membership of professional organisations - including organisations in tourism. An explanation may be that those organisations are not geared towards stimulating innovation. In addition, hardly any tourism entrepreneurs were members of organisations in the field of culture, cultural history, nature and landscape. This strengthens the idea that tourism entrepreneurs are generally not very sensitive to linking tourism products to regional qualities. Especially visiting tourism fairs proved to relate to product and process innovation. This may prove a good medium to communicate opportunities to link innovations in tourism to regional qualities.

Overall, it can be concluded that WCL policy contributed to innovation, especially innovation in terms of networks. It has, however, not led to 'radical' innovations in recreation and tourism and chances to innovations more closely to regional qualities are missed. In Friesland, the WCL structure did not manage to achieve a central position in the regional network and it involved only few actors. In Midden-Limburg, many ingredients for creation of innovations related to regional qualities were present at the end of the WCL period. Not all relevant actors were represented in the WCL process, however. Tourism actors in particular had remained relative outsiders. Also, internal linkages were much better developed than external ones. As WCL Midden-Limburg worked 'bottom-up' an instrumental approach could only be successful after relevant actors had become involved in the process. In 1999, some progress had been made in terms of an instrumental approach generating innovation. The Regional Innovation Network pilot - an extension of the WCL process - focused particularly on this goal. If the aim is to continue the role of local networks in rural development, future rural development processes should link up with the existing WCL structure.



10 Rural tourism networks in theory and practice: summary and conclusions

This research started out as a theoretical and empirical search for ways in which the economic development of rural tourism can contribute to the preservation and/or development of rural qualities. The theoretical exploration indicated that under certain conditions developing tourism by making use of networks (i.e. the relations between actors) can contribute to this double goal. In the case studies, four areas in which rural tourism development is pursued through a network approach were studied.

This chapter provides a summary of the main findings of this thesis as well as an evaluation of the use of network analysis. In 10.1 the main conclusions of the theoretical exploration are presented. Consequently, the approach which has been taken in the case studies is highlighted in Section 10.2. The main case study findings are presented in Section 10.3. In Section 10.4 the use of a network perspective for analysis of rural tourism development is evaluated from a theoretical perspective. Finally, 10.5 evaluates the use of networks as a strategy for governance in relation to rural tourism development and gives recommendations for rural tourism practice.

10.1 Theory: rural qualities and innovation through networks

The central question as presented in Chapter 1 is 'How can the economic development of tourism contribute to the conservation or development of rural qualities and how can policies stimulate reaching this goal?' To explore the central question, the theoretical chapters first focus on the questions 'What is rural quality?' and 'How can regional economic development be generated?' This exploration provides information on how to stimulate rural tourism development ('steering' or 'governance'), and deals with the question how to approach this issue analytically.

Rural quality

Rural quality is a normative concept, meaning that no objective or general definitions of rural quality can be presented. A diversity of definitions exists as various societal groups emphasise different spatial values of rural areas. Depending on the type of quality which is stressed, a different view on rural development will arise. As the question 'What is rural quality?' is hard to grasp scientifically, many scholars shift attention to how definitions of rural quality come into being. This means emphasis has shifted to the processes behind defining rural quality. Also in planning the issue of rural quality is increasingly addressed as a process. The issue here is how a common definition of rural quality can be reached in a particular area or case.

As definitions of rural quality are the result of interaction, analysis should take account of the role and positions of the various actors involved. Apart from the interaction between actors, attention should be paid to the context in which this process takes place. A short-term, isolated analysis cannot explain what actors are involved and why, nor the balance of power between them. Studying the context will shed light on the views which are influential in framing discussions on rural development. Such views are referred to as *discourses*.

Rural development processes should satisfy to specific norms if development is to lead to quality. An analysis of the background of rural quality and the relation between actors can help to design a process which creates a legitimate and robust definition of rural quality. A general proposition made by many scholars is that the process is 'better' if various perspectives on rural quality (i.e. those of actors from a diversity of discourses) are represented. This indicates the need for an interactive approach to rural tourism development.

Regional economic development

An interactive approach is relevant not only from the perspective of rural quality: recent theories on regional economic development state that place-related qualities and spatial characteristics play a crucial role in generating economic development. These theories are particularly concerned with sustainable, long-term regional economic development. Embedding of activities within the region is an important precondition for economic success in the long run. Particularly in theories on innovative *milieux*, place is considered to play a prominent role in economic development. Such theories presuppose a close relation between contact networks (interaction) and innovation - innovation being essential for economic development. These ideas are inspired by studies of regions which arose in the 1990s, like Silicon Valley, Baden-Württemberg and the Third Italy. The nature of linkages is considered crucial for the type of development which is generated. Simply stated, relations internal to the region - and especially between different types of actors - create local embeddedness and stimulate developments which are related to regional qualities. External relations are crucial for standardised innovations and for contact with market developments. A balance between local and external linkages is supposed to create the best position for rural tourism development, as it will stimulate innovations related to local qualities and locally embedded economic development.

Because networks are so crucial for innovation, changes in the network structure are often considered innovations in their own right. More generally, changed insights into regional development have given rise to a reorientation on the notion of innovation, shifting from a focus on technological improvements and the firm level, to the role of extra-firm influences, contacts and 'softer' types of renewal. This new perspective on innovations makes good sense in relation to tourism, as the tourism product is to a large extent intangible and often transcends the firm level. If the economic development of tourism is to contribute to conservation of rural qualities, such a perspective on innovations is also required.

Especially relevant types of innovation are network innovations, ideological innovations and systems innovations. Network innovations are changes in the relations between actors in the tourism sector, or in the relation with other sectors. In relation to rural tourism, contact networks are of crucial importance, as products are defined at the regional level. Ideological innovations are changes in the approach to tourism development: a different perspective on what tourism development contains, which may

be based on a different value system. Systems innovations are based on the joint efforts of various actors and often include ideological innovations in combination with a network innovation. Systems innovations are the most far-reaching type of innovation, as they imply a change in the functioning of the entire system and of the relation between the parties involved. A systems innovation can be induced by various types of changes. Systems innovations in rural areas have been induced, for example, by the introduction of cars, the introduction of subsidisation of farming and - at least in some areas and in some respects - the increasing emphasis on the environmental problems caused by agriculture. Each of these changes has created a different perspective on rural areas and/or farming, new players have entered the rural network and relations between actors have changed. If the economic development of rural tourism is to contribute to the conservation of rural qualities, this will require a systems innovation in most regions. Changes are needed in the organisation of tourism at the regional level, both in terms of the perspective on what tourism is and in terms of network linkages.

Rural quality and economic development demand an interactive approach

Rural quality can only be grasped through an interactive approach. Also, interaction is relevant from an economic point of view as it creates innovation. Such considerations have made interactive approaches to governance popular: they are considered to be more legitimate and more efficient compared to top-down development strategies, while the outcome is of higher quality - quality again being an intersubjective notion. Interactive approaches, however, do not by definition create these results. In order to elaborate how networks can stimulate innovations related to rural qualities, it makes sense to discern between different types of interactive approaches.

Three ideal-typical models for interactive governance have been discerned: a communicative, an instrumental and a strategic approach. In each of these models, a different goal prevails, implying a different process design. The communicative approach focuses on the participation of the grassroots in decision-making processes. It is primarily aimed at the emancipation of this group, and the improvement of the democracy of planning and decision-making. The instrumental approach focuses on the quality of the content and on finding innovative solutions. Participants are selected for their knowledge or creativity. The strategic approach is geared towards a more efficient and effective planning process. Parties involved are interest groups and other organisations representing relevant and influential sections. Both in theory and in practice, the various models and goals are often mixed up. Differences lie not only in the type of actors which should be involved, but also in the role of the process manager, the type of dependencies between parties involved, the most applicable techniques, the criteria for success and failure, and so on. It is crucial for the success of interactive approaches that goals and motivations are made explicit and that the process design is suited for that purpose. Combinations of the various models can nevertheless be relevant, and often occur in practice.

When relating these models to the aim to stimulate economic development of tourism while conserving rural qualities, a communicative and an instrumental approach are most relevant. Such approaches can stimulate the creation of network, ideological and systems innovations - which are needed according to the theory.

In short, the theoretical exploration shows that stimulating rural economic development while conserving rural qualities demands an approach which focuses not only on 'what', but also on 'who' and 'how'. It indicates the need for innovation within

networks, and for governance and planning in which various types of stakeholders are represented: it demands an interactive approach towards rural development. Such approaches are based on the idea of networks of interdependent actors. Particularly the role and position of tourism actors in networks is of interest in the framework of this research. This includes not only networks which focus on rural tourism, but also networks which are involved in rural development in a broader sense. Tourism actors should be part of such networks in order to be able to influence relevant rural development processes.

10.2 Methodology: an explorative approach

Interactive governance is being applied in various rural areas across Europe. In these areas, top-down government planning has been exchanged for or supplemented with planning in networks. In many cases, developing tourism is among the aims of these rural development strategies. In this research, experiences with network approaches of rural tourism development in four areas have been evaluated. The case studies were carried out in two valuable cultural landscapes (WCL) in the Netherlands and in two regional nature parks (PNR) in the Auvergne, France. In each of these areas, rural policies which pursue a combination of conservation and economic development applied. The development of tourism was a policy goal in each of these areas.

The aim of the case studies is to shed light on networks as an instrument for governance, and also on the use of networks for analysis of rural tourism development processes. The analytical challenge is met by focussing on the relation between networks, economic development and conservation of rural qualities. Actors and their interrelation are placed central. It was decided to take an explorative approach to rural tourism networks. Several research methods – both qualitative and quantitative – were applied. Analysis was performed at three levels: a macro analysis of the context, a micro analysis at the actor level, and a meso analysis of network characteristics. Networks were studied from various perspectives, combining ideas on governance, innovation and rural quality and applying these to tourism development. The issue of quality was addressed in terms of process-criteria, by a review of the discourses structuring the discussion and of the actors involved in rural development processes.

With regard to networks as an instrument for governance, the central questions were: how is governance through networks applied in the case study areas, do these policy initiatives stimulate economic development of tourism while conserving and/or developing rural qualities, and if so, how?

Cross-national perspective

Chapters 6 (France/the Auvergne) and 8 (the Netherlands) deal with the context for rural tourism networks. In these chapters, the first research question is addressed, that is: 'What is the context for rural tourism development in France and the Netherlands, what discourses prevail and how does this influence the relations between rural tourism actors?' By taking two similar planning figures in two countries, comparisons could be made between both French cases, between both Dutch cases and between France and the Netherlands. The cross-national perspective can help clarify network functioning from a super-network perspective. Comparing the functioning of similar networks in the same context provides an insight into the influence of local and case-specific aspects on the

functioning of networks. Thus, the case studies can be used to assess to what extent case-specific and contextual factors influence differences in approaches towards rural tourism development (research question 6).

Functioning of WCL and PNR

An analysis of the functioning of WCL and PNR was presented in Chapters 7 and 9. This included, first, an evaluation of the policy goals for rural tourism in terms of content and governance and the relation to economic development and conservation/development of rural qualities (research question 2). This was based mainly on policy documents. Consequently, the position of WCL and PNR in the rural network was addressed in order to clarify its relative strength and its position vis-à-vis rural tourism actors (research question 3).

Innovation

The relation between linkages and innovation was addressed in two ways. First, an evaluation of the achievements of WCL policy and PNR in terms of tourism innovations was carried out. This relates to all types of tourism innovations which have been discerned, particularly network, ideological and systems innovations. And secondly, a survey among tourism entrepreneurs in the case study area of Zuidwest Friesland was carried out to see whether a relation between innovation and networks at the enterprise level could be found. Special attention was paid to the role of the WCL policy efforts in this respect. These analyses answer the fourth research question: 'In what way is innovation in rural tourism stimulated through WCL and PNR, is there any relation between network linkages and innovation and are these innovations relevant to the combination of economic development and rural quality?'.

Governance

With regard to governance, it was evaluated what model best describes the approach taken in each of the case study areas. This includes a review of the way in which this approach has influenced the direction of rural tourism development in terms of innovation and rural qualities (research question 5).

10.3 Case study findings

This section provides an overview of the case study findings by answering research questions 1 to 6.

1. What is the context for rural tourism development in France and the Netherlands, what discourses prevail and how does this influence the relations between rural tourism actors?

When comparing rural tourism networks in France with those in the Netherlands, part of the context is similar: western Europe provides a distinctive institutional environment. Rural issues are to a certain extent comparable and strategies to deal with these issues are on a similar track. This is certainly related to the influence of the EU, but similarities are not only due to formal and explicit aspects. Perhaps more important are similarities in

planning tradition and in sociocultural terms. Though less tangible, they have induced sensitivity to interactive planning across western Europe¹.

But a closer look also reveals a number of interesting and significant differences. Rural areas have a different status in France than they do in the Netherlands. In France, the countryside has a highly symbolic value and is closely related to national identity. In the Auvergne it is still predominantly perceived as the locus of agriculture. In the Netherlands, the countryside is approached in a more utilitarian and functional way. Economic values are stressed in current discourses. In processes of rural renewal, however, the position of the agricultural sector is still very dominant.

Also, the attitude towards interactive planning differs. In the Netherlands interactive planning fits very well into the 'polder' tradition in which pragmatism and efficiency prevail. In France, the situation is much more politicised, and differences in ideological stance are hard to reconcile. When comparing interactive approaches in the two countries, it appears that in France the principles of the constitutional state and the power of institutions are much more important. French interactive planning initiatives tend to link up more with existing democratic institutions, whereas in the Netherlands civil society plays a more dominant role. In France, agricultural organisations are an exception to this. They have achieved a special status through the principle of *cogestion* and are involved in policy-making. In the Netherlands organisations defending the interest of private sectors play an important role in interactive processes.

Both in the Netherlands and in France, the number of actors involved in rural tourism development is impressive. Involvement in this field has grown from a large variety of political and sectoral backgrounds. This has resulted in a complex field in which tasks are divided and competencies are disputed. In France, a distinction can be made between the regular tourism sector, agritourism and actors striving for a more integrated approach. In the Netherlands, the classical divide is between tourism (economic affairs) and outdoor recreation (currently the domain of agriculture). Complexity is further enhanced because tourism touches on many other policy fields such as mobility, sports and leisure, culture, nature and environment. In both countries, there have been attempts to bridge the gap between these policy fields. This has stimulated cooperation to some extent, but certainly not to the point that an integrated approach to rural tourism development is taken. This would require a much stronger position for tourism in general and within the rural development policy field in particular.

At the regional and case study level, a similar complicated pattern can be observed. In the Auvergne the number of actors involved in tourism is large and tasks often overlap. Because there is no strong coordinating actor, rural tourism does not have a strong position in regional policy. In the Netherlands representation of tourism interests in regional policy is also weak. This is partly due to a lack of man power and knowledge in local and provincial governments, partly because of the weak organisational structure of the sector. There is a general lack of attention for tourism and rural tourism in policy-making at all levels. As far as rural development processes are concerned, tourism is approached from the point of view of the agricultural sector and agritourism development is the main interest.

¹ Healey et al. (1999: 341); Stöhr (1989: 191)

2. What were the policy goals for rural tourism in terms of content and governance in each case study area, and how are these aimed at economic development and conservation/development of rural qualities?

In each of the case study areas, policy goals were aimed at economic development and at conservation of rural qualities. In each case, specific goals for rural tourism development were formulated.

In Parc des Volcans, the development of nature-related, quality tourism was envisaged. In terms of process, no specific goals were set. In Parc Livradois-Forez, tourism development is intended, as are all types of economic development, to contribute to the general mission statement of the park, that is, to dynamise the region without destroying its specific characteristics. The local population is the point of departure and main target group in all the park's policies. In WCL Zuidwest Friesland and WCL Midden-Limburg, tourism is one of the areas of attention. In both cases, the aim is to generate more integration between sectors, the quality of the landscape as a precondition for tourism development is stressed and agritourism development is an important aim. In Limburg, the need for a bottom-up approach is stressed. In Friesland, no specific criteria in terms of process were defined on the outset.

The analysis of the four case studies reveals considerable differences in terms of the role of tourism as part of the rural development strategy in practice. Parc Livradois-Forez has played the most active role in developing tourism products and in marketing and promotion. In Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne, activities in the field of tourism are limited and directly related to nature education and extension. In WCL Zuidwest Friesland, the focus shifted from creating tourism infrastructure (such as route structures) to developing agritourism. In WCL Midden-Limburg, tourism was one of the four policy fields. In the course of the WCL process, a number of tourism projects were carried out covering a range of activities (e.g. improvement of the general tourism infrastructure, development of agritourism, nature extension, promotion and the creation of linkages between tourism and regional products).

3. What role do rural tourism actors play in WCL and PNR and what is the position of WCL and PNR in the rural network?

Tourism actors do not play a very prominent role in rural development processes in any of the cases studied. In Livradois-Forez and in Midden-Limburg, tourism entrepreneurs and their representatives are not very actively involved, despite many attempts by the park and by WCL. Nevertheless, there have been some successful activities: in both cases, networks were created. In Livradois-Forez this concerns networks between tourism actors, in Midden-Limburg an initiative of producers of regional food and the catering sector can be mentioned, as can an agritourism network. Parc Livradois-Forez has conflictive relations with most tourism actors at the regional level. This is related to the fact that the park is developing its own products and handling its own marketing, practically without consulting or cooperating with existing organisations. In Midden-Limburg, relations with other tourism actors at the regional level are predominantly harmonious. There is a tourism sector group in which various tourism actors are represented.

In Zuidwest Friesland, municipalities carried out a number of tourism projects at the beginning of the WCL period. Their involvement was due to a pre-existing policy entity, in which municipalities were closely involved and which had covered insufficient finance to cover all the projects. Gradually, the agricultural sector, and to a certain extent the tourist office, became involved in the WCL process as well. The regular tourism sector was officially represented through an intermediary organisation, but in practice was not really involved in the process. In Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne, hardly any contacts with tourism entrepreneurs exist. The main relation is with the regional tourism board.

Figure 10.1 Characterisation of case studies

	PNR Volcans d'Auvergne	PNR Livradois-Forez	WCL Midden-Limburg	WCL Zuidwest Friesland
Goals - general	Contribution to nature conservation, education and extension	Dynamic development of the area while conserving special qualities	General goals of WCL; emphasis on bottom-up philosophy	General goals of WCL; contribute to rural development
Specific goals on tourism	Development of nature-related and quality tourism	Contributive to general goal	Very general (agritourism, infrastructure, landscape); have been adapted during the process (subordinate to process goals)	Very general (agritourism, infrastructure, landscape); have been adapted during the process
Goals on process	-	Involve local population; dynamise the area	Bottom-up process, generate support of region	
Role of tourism actors	Local actors not involved	Local actors partly involved; regional actors not involved	Some actors involved, not very active	Some actors involved, but not very active
Position in tourism network	Isolate	Star at local level; isolate at regional level	Star, later liaison/gatekeeper	Isolate
Impact on innovation	Some product innovations; market innovation (PNR as a label)	Emphasis in tourism on network innovations; also product innovation, market innovation, ideological innovation and attempt to create systems innovation	Attempt to create systems innovation, to some extent successful - network innovations, ideological innovation, some product innovations	Mainly aimed at product innovations, in later stage also network innovation; ideological innovation among part of the agricultural sector
Governance strategy	Not very interactive - mainly strategic	Mainly communicative, also strategic	Communicative - in later stages also instrumental	Strategic, later on also communicative

Source: this thesis

There are two explanations for the marginal position of tourism actors. First, the case studies show that - especially in the WCL areas - rural development processes are still mainly geared towards the position of agriculture. In both areas in France this was less so; especially Livradois-Forez, tourism has received a lot of attention and funding. A second explanation is that tourism actors do not sufficiently see the importance which these kinds of processes can have. Rural development processes are considered time-consuming and are thought to generate few rewards, especially in the short term. If processes are only or mainly concerned with tourism infrastructure and other general measures, entrepreneurs and their representatives are obviously not interested in devoting a lot of time to them. It should be acknowledged that the tourism sector in rural areas consists mainly of very small enterprises that have little manpower available to devote to such processes.

Apart from the position of WCL and PNR in the regional network, its position in more general rural development is also relevant. Considering the experiences in the case study areas, it can be stated that both WCL and PNR are not considered very important planning initiatives by policy makers at the regional/provincial and national level. The issues which are taken up - rural development and qualities - are also not top priority. This can be illustrated by the decision-making around the Iron Rhine railway - which is projected to pass through the National Park Meinweg - and the construction of the A73 highway. Of course, these issues have an importance which goes beyond the WCL area and are considered to belong to a different level of strategic national importance. Nevertheless, in both cases very sensible alternatives are available, which would have a less detrimental impact on nature and landscape values. Conflicts with the Ecological Main Structure in Friesland are also evidence of the marginal position of WCL policy within the rural policy field at that time. Another example is Volcania in the Auvergne. In this case too, the park is surpassed and activities are projected in a top-down manner. In the case of Livradois-Forez, initiatives of the park are criticised by many actors at the regional level, but no obvious examples of conflicts with top-down processes have come up. This only confirms the marginal position of the area in this respect.

4. In what way is innovation in rural tourism stimulated through WCL and PNR, is there any relation between network linkages and innovation and are these innovations relevant to the combination of economic development and rural quality?

It has been stated that particularly systems innovations, ideological innovations and network innovations are relevant to rural tourism development and to the combination of economic development and rural quality. WCL and PNR have at least to some extent contributed to the creation of such innovations. The relation between network linkages and innovation was addressed in a survey among tourism entrepreneurs. Results indicate some relation between WCL policy and innovation. They also show that membership of a professional tourism networks does not contribute to innovation in individual enterprises.

The general strategies applied in Livradois-Forez and in Limburg imply an attempt to create a systems innovation. In both cases, this has been achieved to some extent. In Livradois-Forez the idea that regional development should be based on the qualities of the area has been an important driving force, and the main interest is in the local population. This strategy has to some extent been successful in generating cooperation

between actors and in changing the course of development. In Limburg, the notion that a bottom-up strategy should be followed was placed central and has been successful in involving regional actors in rural development. Content was made temporarily subordinate to local support to start up the WCL process. This strategy was successful and in the second half of the policy period led to some interesting network innovations. These cooperatives seem to be able to survive without continued support of WCL funding.

In Friesland, strategies initially were not aimed at systems innovation. However, the creation of the Centre for Agricultural Support in Friesland has contributed to network innovation and has also changed the perception of at least some the farming community with regard to environmental management and pluri-active farms, which can be considered an ideological innovation. In Parc des Volcans, the mission statement with regard to tourism has only to a very limited extent been translated into practical measures. The park hardly plays a role in stimulating innovation in tourism.

The possible existence of a relation between innovation and networks at the enterprise level was tested in a small survey in Zuidwest Friesland. The results indicate that networks are less important than other sources of information such as visiting fairs and professional journals. In terms of networks, particularly cooperation between entrepreneurs seems to be of influence and a slight relation with WCL policy existed. Membership of professional organisations did not correlate with innovation. Obviously, this type of network does not stimulate innovation at the level of the enterprise. It should be remarked, however, that membership was mainly sector-based and that only a relatively small percentage of entrepreneurs were members of organisations for the protection of landscape or cultural history. When interpreting the results of the questionnaire it should be remembered that the research had only a limited scope. Nevertheless it is interesting to note that for the entrepreneurs covered by the research, a relation between innovation and networks could only be made for a selective type of contacts.

5. What governance model has predominated in each case study area and in what way has this influenced the direction of rural tourism development in terms of innovation and rural qualities?

Between the two WCL areas and between both regional nature parks, considerable differences in terms of governance strategies exist.

In Friesland, a strategic approach was followed at first. As this appeared insufficient to realise WCL goals, a more communicative approach was chosen to involve the agricultural sector. In the initial approach some general tourism projects were realised, but these were not really innovative. In later stages, projects in the field of agritourism were initiated - coupled to the creation of an association of entrepreneurs.

The strategy of Parc des Volcans is hardly interactive at all. Its functioning in the regional network has more to do with the division of tasks. Promotion is to a large extent carried out by the regional tourism board. With regard to tourism, the park has - rather autonomously - established some projects in the past.

In Midden-Limburg and in Livradois-Forez, the emphasis was on a bottom-up strategy, which fits in the communicative model. In addition, the aim was to stimulate innovation - in Limburg particularly in the later stages of the WCL process. In Livradois-Forez, some initiatives for network innovations in tourism were taken by the park -

which can be considered a strategic approach. Involving the local population and entrepreneurs in specific projects has to some extent been successful in this park. The strategy has resulted in activating and organising at least part of the tourism sector. Nevertheless, there is also criticism about the effectiveness and support of the projects which have been realised. In Limburg, the strategy has been highly successful in general, but the tourism sector has proven to be difficult to work with in interactive processes. As the bottom-up approach created a broad support for WCL policy among the grassroots, the emphasis could be shifted to quality and innovation in later stages.

Experiences show that, generally, a communicative strategy can in the first stages generate support for interactive planning. This requires paying attention to short-term results. After this initial period, the focus can be shifted to a more instrumental approach, emphasising innovation. The tourism sector has, however, proven to be a difficult sector to work with in rural development processes. Involvement was particularly generated in Park Livradois-Forez, partly by a strategic approach. Drawbacks to this approach are that scepticism among some of the participants has remained. Considering these experiences, it might be a good idea to try and involve tourism entrepreneurs by taking a more instrumental approach from the start. This would require working with a small group of 'forerunners' in the area, possibly in combination with experts from outside the area. This would provide the opportunity to achieve fast and innovative results. Whatever strategy is taken, however, it is imperative that the sector becomes more involved in rural development processes.

6. How can differences in approaches towards rural tourism development between the various case studies be explained through case specific and through contextual factors?

There are clear differences between WCL Midden-Limburg and WCL Zuidwest Friesland and between PNR des Volcans d'Auvergne and PNR Livradois-Forez. This indicates that the local setting and the local actors have been highly influential in the shaping of both WCL and PNR policies. Contextual factors are also of influence, but have been of less importance in the cases researched. The marginal position of WCL and PNR explains to a large extent how local factors could play such a prominent role (see research question 3). Differences are mainly related to the role of the process manager and - related to this - the process design, and the socio-economic characteristics of the area. Other factors were also of influence but played a minor role.

With regard to the role of process managers, the extent to which these actors consider it important to involve the local population in the planning process appears to be influential. Both the WCL coordinator in Midden-Limburg and the park director in Livradois-Forez were convinced of the importance of the local population and have stimulated a bottom-up approach. The preparation phase played an important role in both WCL areas, as did the perception of the opportunities offered by WCL policy among stakeholders. In these areas, clear goals as regards process were set, unlike in Zuidwest Friesland and Parc des Volcans. This has also had a positive impact on results.

The socio-economic situation in the area also explains some of the differences. Whereas in Friesland agriculture was still doing comparatively well, in Midden-Limburg it consisted predominantly of small-scale enterprises and had less prospects. In terms of tourism, Zuidwest Friesland has a long history and is thriving, in Midden-Limburg it is more recent and not developed to its full potential. Actors in Midden-Limburg were

therefore more a priori geared towards cooperating in the WCL process. There is a similar difference between Livradois-Forez and Parc des Volcans. Though both areas suffer from marginalisation and depopulation, the situation is much more severe in the eastern part of the region (i.e. Livradois-Forez). Parts of Parc des Volcans are doing rather well. In terms of tourism development, this is also the more developed part of the region, with well-known features, more visitors and a better developed infrastructure. The 'advantage' of the situation in the eastern part of the region is that regional actors are not so much interested in the area. This is one of the reasons why the Parc could follow a rather autonomous strategy.

Other factors have been of influence, for example the relation to other policies. The construction of the Ecological Main Structure in Zuidwest Friesland, for example, seriously hampered the process at the start. Also, the fact that funding of WCL projects was coupled to EU structural funds was a threshold. But the reason that these matters became so crucial for WCL functioning can be related to the already mentioned reasons. The relation to EU funding could have been dealt with in another way, for example. This would, however, have required a clearer idea about the process design and the functioning of WCL policy from the start.

One fundamental difference between the functioning of WCL and that of PNR is the fact that the latter are semi-permanent structures (ten years, with the possibility to extend this period) while WCL policy was a five-year experiment (extended to seven years). Experiences in Livradois-Forez demonstrate that ten years is a rather short period in which to develop bottom-up structures and an integrated approach. Continuation of WCL policy under another name (e.g. 'provincial landscapes') as proposed for some former WCL areas is not really a solution. In the first place because it is - again - a new policy entity, with a new structure to be set up. Also, the period between WCL and a possible new planning status is - in most areas - too long, which means that the 'momentum' is lost and energy should be devoted once more to starting up the process.

10.4 A network perspective on rural tourism: evaluation of research methods

It has been argued in Chapter 2 that a network analysis provides a useful perspective for studying rural tourism development processes. According to the literature, it is suitable for a multidisciplinary approach: it offers the opportunity to combine a micro (actor) and macro (structure) perspective, and it can include both continuity and change, as well as content and process. This section evaluates the use of networks as an analytical device, based on experiences acquired during this research.

Networks as an analytical device

A network perspective has proven a suitable instrument to deal with the tension between content and process. As rural quality cannot be defined objectively, it has been approached from the point of view of the various actors involved. By analysing the content of discourses, one can avoid taking an ad hoc and instrumental point of view. A network perspective also offers the opportunity to adopt a multidisciplinary approach. Planning, policy, social and economic aspects can be approached in an integrated manner. Rather than being some kind of magical way out of the micro-macro divide, studying networks provides a means to combine both levels of analysis by focusing on

the interactions and relations between actors. It is essential to take the context in which networks operate into consideration.

In researching policy networks, it is crucial to distinguish the motives behind these policy entities. Distinguishing between a communicative, an instrumental and a strategic approach proved to be a useful way to analyse differences in approach between the case study areas. It also provided the opportunity to recommend alternative processes, which would be better able to facilitate innovations based on rural qualities.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods provided particular opportunities. The qualitative analysis was indispensable to gain an insight into interrelations between actors, and the quantitative analysis helped to put the results into perspective. A program specifically designed for network analysis (Ucinet) was found to offer little additional information compared to general statistical analysis of the data.

Future network research

In terms of breadth, a further development of network analysis would be interesting. The multidisciplinarity could be enlarged by more strongly linking the analysis to physical-spatial characteristics. This can imply a link with ecology (e.g. for research on sustainable tourism), with design and landscape architecture (e.g. for research on tourism accommodation²) or with technology (e.g. the consequences of ICT developments). Integrating such elements into a network analysis would be possible by, for example, adopting elements of socio-technical network theory (see also Chapter 4)³ or by adopting methods of action-research, in which a process of change is at the same time initiated and studied.

In terms of depth, it would have been interesting to carry out comparative quantitative analyses for each of the case study areas - a goal which was unfortunately not achievable within the context of this study. A more encompassing empirical research of the relation between policy, innovation and networks would be an interesting continuation of this study. The methodology which has been developed in this study could be used to carry out such research.

Networks versus top-down approach

The question whether governance in networks per definition creates better results compared to other types of governance has not been addressed directly in this study. Based on the nature of rural tourism in particular and the goals of rural development in general, it is however highly unlikely that a top-down approach would be able to stimulate innovations based on rural qualities.

² Such a study was recently carried out by two MSc students in Costa Rica.

³ Some interesting studies and articles which can be used as a starting point exist (e.g. Verschoor, 1998).

It would be advisable, however, to make such a project a joint effort between social and physical scientists, in order to be able to treat technological and physical-spatial aspects in some more debt and to get not only a social constructivist view on technology, but also a technological view on social aspects.

10.5 Policy-making: improving the contribution of networks to innovation and quality

Experiences in WCL Midden-Limburg and Parc Livradois-Forez show that governance through networks can stimulate innovations based on rural qualities. In these areas, the preconditions for such development have been created and a number of changes which have been initiated can be placed under this heading. In these areas, the actors involved have been working towards a systems innovation, aiming to involve local actors in rural development and to relate economic development to qualities of the area. At the same time, the results achieved are not (or not yet) 'radical' innovations in tourism and relation with rural qualities can be further strengthened. Based on the experiences in the case study areas, some recommendations for improving network governance related to rural tourism development processes can be made.

Taking interactive development seriously

Differences in approach between the two WCL areas and between the two parks indicate that local factors play a decisive role in governance through networks. This may sound like a success, but it is mainly due to the fact that interactive planning at the regional level is not taken seriously enough by many actors, including the national government.

Although interactive planning and interaction with regional actors are often heralded as the new way forward for rural development, the way interactive planning is dealt with in practice tells another story. A tension exists between interactive planning and top-down approaches. In the 'good examples' in this study, the involvement of the local population - or at least some of it - in rural development has been increased, but this concerns mainly 'subordinate' policy issues. Policy issues such as the construction of a road, the development of a large-scale tourism attraction and development of nature were decided on in separate policy networks. This leads to friction with the goals of WCL and PNR and in some cases to overt conflicts and boycotting of the interactive policy process.

The examples of WCL and PNR show that in both cases interactive planning worked better in the more marginal, more peripheral areas and with regard to 'softer' themes. Taking regional governance seriously means that the region should also have a say on 'heavier' subjects, for example mainstream agriculture or the development of nature in the Dutch case. Also, the separation between rural development issues which are dealt with in regional planning networks and other issues relevant to regional development should be reconsidered. This separation derives mainly from the division of tasks between various ministries and is artificial and counterproductive from a regional point of view. This does not mean that everybody should become involved in everything, but that choices on what issues to include should be based on a more careful consideration of opportunities and on interrelations between various issues.

Clarity about motivation and goals

Currently, the notion of interactive planning applied in rural development processes is too general. In the Netherlands, this often leads in practice to a strategic approach, involving mainly intermediary interest organisations in the process. Zuidwest Friesland is not an exception but a rule in this respect. Processes are mainly approached pragmatically aiming at win-win situations. Also, input from regional actors is often considered a must: 'Of course the region should be involved. We need local support.'

This type of approach works counterproductively if there is no real transfer of power and if processes are not aimed at results which will be implemented. Network planning would benefit from a clear view on the motivation and goals of interactive governance, combined with an appropriate process design.

If rural development processes are to generate economic development related to the qualities of the area, the emphasis should be on what has been defined as a communicative and instrumental approach to governance. Contributing to the conservation of rural qualities demands input from a broad range of actors - preferably representing the various discourses on rural areas. In addition, an instrumental approach is best suited to stimulate innovation. Interest organisations can still play a role, but should be addressed for their knowledge. A combination of both types can generate a legitimate and at the same time innovative rural development process. Experiences in Midden-Limburg show that putting the emphasis on the communicative approach in the initial stages of the process is a way to create local support and ownership. In other cases, where more scepticism towards interactive planning dominates, it is important to show short-term results. This can be achieved through an instrumental approach. Considering the scepticism, it may be necessary to emphasise external input of knowledge in the initial stage. Gradually, the process should be directed towards a combined communicative/instrumental approach, which requires input from local carriers of knowledge. Such an approach is best suited to stimulate innovation based on regional qualities.

It should be realised that such an approach demands a long-term strategy. Five to seven years is certainly not long enough for the process of change which is required. The opportunity to continue interactive processes - possibly in a different form - in areas which have been successful is crucial if developments are to take root.

Innovation

Innovation based on regional qualities calls for new ways of thinking about rural development in general and rural tourism in particular, and for changes in rural development and tourism practice. The cases studied in the Netherlands and in France show that interactive methods have not yet led to radically new rural tourism practices. Rural tourism development would benefit if interaction processes were developed according to the instrumental approach of governance. Attention should particularly be paid to the involvement of actors with knowledge on tourism. The case studies show that tourism actors are hardly involved in rural development processes, and as far as they are, their contribution is certainly not aimed at creating a systems innovation.

This weakness of rural development processes can be addressed at two levels. More attention should be paid to the design of such processes (i.e. they should be more focussed on generating innovation) and the role of tourism actors therein. And tourism actors should become more aware of the relevance of rural development processes. Ideally, this will lead to an improved input of knowledge and the development of a strategic view on the future of the sector. Because tourism and recreation are less powerful actors than agriculture - and, in the Netherlands, than nature - knowledge can be a crucial instrument in interactive processes. Knowledge is power and it may partly compensate for the weaker institutional position. It is also relevant to gain more insight into the factors which influence innovation at the enterprise level. The research carried out in Zuidwest Friesland provides some information on this (one of the ways to

influence entrepreneurs might be to provide information through fairs). It is recommended to invest in a more large-scale study on this subject.

More input from the tourism sector

As indicated, experiences in the four case study areas show that involvement of the tourism sector in rural development processes is limited. Tourism actors only play a marginal role in rural networks. This is due to a lack of organisation of the sector, the continuing bias of rural policy towards agricultural issues and the perception that interactive rural development processes concern matters of marginal importance.

It is curious that tourism, with its alleged strategic importance, does not receive more political and policy attention. There seems to be a vicious circle of little attention, defective representation of interests and institutionalisation, and hence few means to attract attention. At the same time, tourism development in rural areas does progress, but out of reach of rural development processes. This is particularly true for large-scale tourism and leisure developments. Volcania in Auvergne is but one example. In this way, tourism is no different from other large-scale developments which are changing the countryside and which are also not incorporated in interactive rural development processes. This adds to the perception that interactive planning does not deal with matters which make a difference.

At the same time, the tourism sector is generally not very interested in becoming involved in rural development processes. Such processes are not considered to be of importance to the sector, which is mainly interested in short-term profits. The strategic potential of rural development processes is not appreciated. The rural tourism sector should start to claim a more important position in such processes, if it does not automatically get one. The tourism sector should take a more proactive as opposed to its currently defensive role. Especially the intermediary organisations, representing the interests of entrepreneurs, can play a much more important and stimulating role in this respect. The last few years, tourism organisations in the Netherlands have become increasingly aware of the strategic importance of rural development processes and are increasingly involved. But it is still hard to acquire a position alongside agricultural and nature interests.

It is imperative for the future of rural tourism and for the future of the countryside that the development of tourism be incorporated into the rural development processes. These processes should take more account of the strategic importance of tourism and make more efforts to involve tourism entrepreneurs. This means that, for example, attention should be paid to short-term benefits and results.

Finally

The lack of attention to tourism in rural development processes poses serious threats, both for the future of the rural tourism sector and for rural areas. Considering the strategic importance of tourism - both in economic terms and in terms of identity - an innovative approach to rural tourism is crucial for the future of the European countryside. It is also of crucial importance for the rural tourism sector. Competition between different rural areas is becoming fiercer, as is competition between the current rural tourism sector and new leisure developments. If tourism is not incorporated into rural development processes, these processes will be overtaken by reality.

Offering an interesting product of high quality, preferably based on the qualities of the area, fits in well with the development goals set by many rural areas. Interactive

governance offers good prospects to achieve such results. It requires, however, clarity about the status of interactive planning as opposed to other policies influencing rural development, a careful design of governance processes (which should generally be aimed more at innovation) and more input from tourism actors in rural development processes.

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Appendix 1

Survey on tourism development in Auvergne: Background and details

In 1998, a survey among actors (organisations) relevant for rural tourism development in Auvergne was carried out. While carrying out the research I was a guest at ENITA of Clermont-Ferrand and could use all facilities at this school. Questionnaires could be send back to the institute, which without doubt had a positive result on the responses.

A Questionnaires, selection of respondents and response

The questionnaire consisted of 6 questions, 3 multiple response and 3 open. Closed questions concerned contacts with other organisations, perception of the influence of those organisations on tourism development and a number of propositions with which the respondents could agree or disagree (5 point Likert scale). Open questions concerned the role of the organisations with regard to tourism and recreation, possible changes in co-operation with other organisations and possible changes in the organisations attitude towards tourism development. A draft version of the questionnaire was talked through with a number of people well-informed about the regional situation, and consequently adapted.

In May 1998, questionnaires were sent to 109¹ organisations directly involved in tourism developed, or creating preconditions for (rural) tourism. Government bodies, interest groups, associations and semi-governmental bodies in the fields of tourism, agri-tourism, landscape, local development, culture and nature were addressed².

The questionnaires have been collected in two ways. Most respondents were asked to return the questionnaire by post. A group of 20 organisations were selected where I wanted to collect the questionnaire in person. This group is representative for the population and included all crucial government bodies. Personal collection was done for two reasons. Firstly, response of these organisations was regarded to be more certain and a minimum response was thus guaranteed³. Secondly, it would provide insight into the way the questionnaires were filled in by various respondents and help put the results into perspective. In addition, the philosophy of the organisation with regard to rural and tourism development could be addressed more in-depth in the interviews.

¹ This number is excluding a few questionnaires that were sent to organisations whose addresses could not be verified or that have completed it in co-operation with another organisation which also received a questionnaire. In two cases, for example, the questionnaire was completed by the Office de Tourisme, in co-operation with the SIVOM or SIDET (co-operative of municipalities aimed at local development).

² For the selection of organisations, a first list of relevant organisations was drawn up. This list was complemented with information from sources such as a review publication on rural development in Auvergne, address books and contact data bases of ENITA-C and CNRTER. This list has been presented to several contacts in Auvergne (CNRTER, CEMAGREF, Chambre d'Agriculture d'Auvergne, ENITA). Based on their responses, the list has been altered and names of addressees have been added or changed.

³ Personal collection of all questionnaires would have taken too much time.

Questionnaire

Question 1

Vous trouverez ci-dessous une liste des noms de différentes organisations (institutions/associations). Nous vous prions de bien vouloir indiquer, en mettant une croix, combien de fois votre organisation (branche de l'organisation) entretient des relations (coups de téléphone, rapports personnels, réunions...) avec ces organisations. Veuillez considérez uniquement les relations concernant le tourisme ou les loisirs.

	pratiquement tous les jours	au moins 1 fois chaque 2 semaines	environ 1 fois par mois	entre 1 fois par mois et 1 fois par an	1 fois par an	moins de 1 fois par an	jamais
Délégation Régionale du Tourisme DRT etc.							

Question 2

Veuillez indiquer dans le tableau ci-dessous, dans quelle mesure, selon vous, les organisations, institutions, associations etc. citées contribuent au développement touristique de (certains secteurs de) l'Auvergne.
(1 veut dire qu'on ne contribue pas du tout; 10 veut dire qu'on contribue énormément).

	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Délégation Régionale du Tourisme DRT etc.										

Question 3

Ci-dessous vous trouverez un grand nombre de propositions (relevées au cours d'entretien réels) concernant le développement touristique en Auvergne. Veuillez indiquer pour chaque proposition dans quelle mesure vous y souscrivez. Exprimez s.v.p. votre opinion au moyen d'un chiffre entre 1 et 5, sachant que le chiffre 1 signifie que vous êtes tout à fait d'accord, le chiffre 5 que vous n'êtes pas du tout d'accord et le chiffre 3 que vous êtes indifférent vis-à-vis de la proposition en question.

	pas d'accord		d'accord		
	1	2	3	4	5
La conservation du patrimoine est importante pour le développement économique de l'Auvergne etc.					

Question 4

|| Veuillez donner ci-dessous une brève description de la mission de votre organisme concernant le développement touristique?

Question 5

|| Veuillez indiquer ci-dessous si votre organisme a, pendant les quatre dernières années, vu des changements importants dans la coopération avec des partenaires concernant le tourisme.

Changements 0 oui
 0 non

partenaire plus/moins de coopération

partenaire plus/moins de coopération

partenaire plus/moins de coopération

Description des changements:**Question 6**

|| Veuillez indiquer ci-dessous si votre organisme a, pendant les quatre dernières années, vu des changements concernant la réflexion à propos du développement touristique?

Changements: O oui
 O non

Rempli par:

Organisme:

Votre nom:

Fonction:

|| Veuillez s'il vous plaît, utiliser l'espace ci-dessous pour d'éventuelles questions ou remarques à la suite de cette enquête:

Merci de votre collaboration

Table I Actors who have received a questionnaire - (and respondents) - according to sector and type of actor

	Government (related) bodies	Associations	Syndicates	Enterprises	Chambres	Tourist offices
Tourism	7 (3)	7 (1)	4 (1)	4 (3)	6 (5)	24 (18)
Agriculture/agritourism	4 (3)	1 (1)	1 (0)	-	5 (4)	
Nature/landscape	1 (1)	5 (2)	-	-	-	
Culture	3 (2)					
Parc Naturel Regional	2 (2)					
Local development	21 (13)	1 (1)				
Forestry	3 (1)		1 (0)			
Regional or spatial development	4 (3)					
Others	4 (2)				1 (1)	

Source: survey 1998

Organisations that had not responded by the end of May were all⁴ approached by telephone with the request to still return the questionnaire. Several additional forms were sent to those organisations that seemed to have not received any, or that were unable to trace it⁵. By mid-July, a reminder was sent along with a new form⁶. Finally, 65 valid questionnaires were returned, a response of 60%.

The non-response included three crucial government bodies: Délégation Régionale au Tourisme (DRT), Comité Régionale du Tourisme (CRT) and Comité Départementale du Tourisme Puy-de-Dôme (CDT). Each of these had been included in the group to collect the questionnaire in person. DRT and CRT each claimed to be too busy to fill in questionnaires or to conduct an interview⁷. CDT declared to be unable to fill in the questionnaire, but allowed an interview instead⁸. An interview with DRT and CDT had been conducted in an earlier stage of the research in 1995.

⁴ All except for four organisations of which the telephone number was unknown.

⁵ This applied to ten organisations.

⁶ This was sent to 39 organisations that had not yet responded.

⁷ Both organisations have been approached several times with the request to make an appointment. Each kept informing me the persons in charge were very busy and after some attempts at persuasion I was told to "please call back later". It was not possible to have an interview with somebody else instead. Reference to local contacts and the ENITA did not help. Finally, a new form was sent to each of them along with a formal request for cooperation of my promoter, and again followed by a telephone call, but without any response. It was not problem to get in touch with many other organisations, including official government bodies. Other researchers have also reported lack of cooperation from the part of DRT and CRT (e.g. Mazuel, 1993-94: 91).

⁸ In the official report of this conversation this is stated as follows: "[CDT] a indiqué qu'elle a du mal à répondre aux questions posées, parce que les catégories aux répondre donnent peu des coudees franches pour apport de nuances indispensables. Ça a donné l'occasion d'un entretien sur le développement touristique de la Département".

B Division of actors over groups

In some of the analyses in chapter 6 the scores of groups of actors have been mentioned. Below, an overview of the actors positioned in each group is presented.

Table II Division of actors over groups

Tourism- local	Local tourist offices (OT/si) Local Chambers of commerce (CCI local)
Tourism - non local	Ministry of Tourism (DRT) Regional Tourism Board (CDT) Regional chamber of commerce (CCI regional) Chamber of crafts and trade (CdM) Departmental union of tourism offices (UDOTsi) Logis de France Syndicates of hoteliers Associations of holiday centres Chamina
Agriculture	DRAF/ DDAF CRA CDA Accueil à la ferme Agricultural syndicates
Nature	DIREN ONF Associations for the protection of nature Proprietaires forets
Local	Mayors, representatives of communes
Other	Ministry of Equipment (DRE/ DDE) Conseil Régional Conseil Général Parc des Volcans Parc Livradois-Forez Centres de Recherche Somival Gîtes de France

C Propositions on which opinions of actors differ

Table III Propositions on which opinions of actors differ

	agree	disagree
La conservation du patrimoine doit avoir la priorité sur le développement économique	23%	43%
La création d'un "Musée du Volcanisme" mènera à une trop grande pression sur un environnement fragile	20%	51%
Le développement touristique devrait surtout bénéficier à l'espace rural	48%	31%
Etant donné que l'Auvergne a une attractivité touristique moins forte que d'autres régions françaises (Midi, Alpes), les prix des services touristiques doivent être moins élevés.	32%	45%
L'Auvergne devrait créer plus d'attractions touristiques afin que les touristes aient plus de possibilités de s'amuser	51%	22%
La construction d'une autoroute entre Bordeaux et Lyon contribuera au développement touristique de la région	77%	11%
La faible desserte aérienne du sud de l'Auvergne empêche sérieusement le développement touristique de ce secteur	32%	31%
Les intérêts des habitants ne sont pas assez respectés par le développement touristique	20%	57%
Afin de cibler plus de clientèles étrangères, il est avant tout nécessaire de créer plusieurs hôtels 4 étoiles ou 4 étoiles luxe	35%	32%
Le développement du tourisme rural peut remédier aux problèmes de l'agriculture	54%	20%
La nombre de gîtes en Auvergne est maintenant suffisamment important; la création d'encore plus de gîtes ne fera qu'augmenter la compétition entre eux	20%	54%
C'est aux collectivités locales de doter la région d'une bonne infrastructure touristique	57%	15%
Etant donné que le paysage constitue un des principaux atouts touristiques de la région, il est tout-à-fait normal que les entrepreneurs dans le tourisme contribuent financièrement à sa conservation	65%	14%
Les collectivités locales n'ont pas à s'occuper du développement touristique; c'est avant tout l'affaire des entrepreneurs	11%	75%
Subventionner les activités touristiques des agriculteurs risque de fausser la compétition dans le secteur	29%	42%
Une seule organisation centrale devrait s'occuper de tous les aspects concernant la promotion touristique de la région	60%	34%

Source: survey 1998

Correlation matrices

Table IV Correlations between frequency of contact with various types of organizations (Kendall's tau-b)

(Table IV continued)

	DR	DRAF	DIREN	DRF	DNF	DRB	DIRB	CD	CDA	CR	CG	CR	CD	PVOLC	CHME	RECH	SOMIV	UDOT	OTSI	GITES	ACCFER	CHAMIN	SYNHTO	SYNAGR	BATENV	PROFFO	GERHOT	GERCA	ENTAGR
SYNHTO	.223																												
SYNAGR	.325																												
VALVAC																													
BATENV	.262	.341																											
PROFFO	.212	.223	.335	-.222																									
GERHOT			.280																										
GERCA				.203																									
ENTAGR					.234																								
PRESTO						.236																							

Only significant correlations shown (significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)).

Correlations over .400 are highlighted

Table V Correlations between valuation of the role of various organisations (Kendall's tau-b)

(Table V continued)

DRAFT	DIRFEN	DRF	ONF	CRT	CDT	CR	CG	CCI	CCII	CCLIO	CHME	PVOLC	PLIVR	MARIE	SOMLIV	UDOT	OTS1	LOGFR	GTTES	ACCFER	CHAMIN	SYNTHOT	VALVAC	BATENV	PROFFO	GERHOT	GERCAM	ENTAGR	PRESTO					
415	344	555	411	490	448	475	460	456	419	437	295	1,000																						
348	469	425	332	339	335	265	263	301	225	235	219	285	272	273	235	555	411	490	448	475	460	456	419	437	295	1,000								
310	229	395	310	473	464	361	224	246	403	346	321	306	333	334	346	517	241	436	436	316	369	387	446	274	410	473	1,000							
381	327	446	325	417	413	383	297	266	261	322	381	256	279	375	320	480	530	531	485	469	469	476	441	567	490	516	1,000							
310	327	446	325	417	413	383	297	266	261	322	381	256	279	375	320	480	530	531	485	469	469	476	441	567	490	516	1,000							
219	351	232	291	280	276	229	229	229	229	229	229	282	334	335	335	234	253	490	544	544	486	479	525	437	492	581	1,000							
213	294	248	248	281	276	214	218	218	218	218	218	309	380	390	390	441	250	392	403	345	423	534	502	400	366	507	438	285	642	657	1,000			
297	283	278	402	319	255	281	281	281	281	281	281	212	213	341	263	280	396	294	532	540	390	389	427	540	372	387	509	437	364	655	674	774		

Only significant correlations shown (significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)). Correlations over 0.600 are highlighted.

Table VI Correlations between valuation of role and frequency of contact (Kendall's tau_b)

		Importance																																				
contag		DRT	DRAF	DIREN	DRE	DRF	DRG	DRT	DRV	CR	CCI	CII	CG	CR	CCI	CD	CDA	CHME	PVOLC	PLIVR	MARE	RFCB	SOMIV	UDOT	OTSI	GTRFS	ACCFER	CHAMIN	SYNAG	SYNHO	BATENV	VALVAC	PROFO	GHOTM	GCAM	ENTAG	PRESFO	PRESFO
DRT	.281	.280																																				
DRAF	,411	,226																																				
DIREN			,217																																			
DRE				,208																																		
DRF					,235																																	
DRG						,213																																
DRT							,236																															
DRV								,219																														
CDT									,224																													
CR										,219																												
CG											,269																											
CCI												,219																										
CCII													,292																									
CCILO														,258																								
CRA															,254																							
CDA																,259																						
CHME																	,206																					
PVOLC																		,174																				
PLIVR																			,415																			
MARE																				,444																		
																					,517																	
																						,365																
																							,330															
																								,261														
																									,241													
																										,286												
																											,231											
																												,241										
																													,215									
																														,214								

(Table VI continued)

PRESTO-215
Only significant correlations shown (significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)).
Correlations over 0.400 are highlighted

Table VII Correlations between some propositions on agritourism development (selection) (Kendall's tau_b)

	agric. baisse tour.	agri. et tour. se renforcent	nombre de gîtes
agri. et tour. se renforcent	-,602	1,000	
coop. org et agric	-,336	,542	
agric. pas s'occupe tour.	,368	-,487	,394
nombre de gîtes			1,000

(only scores over 0.3 are shown)

E Examples of results of cluster analyses

Figure I Clusteranalysis of variables, based on frequency of contact (question 1)

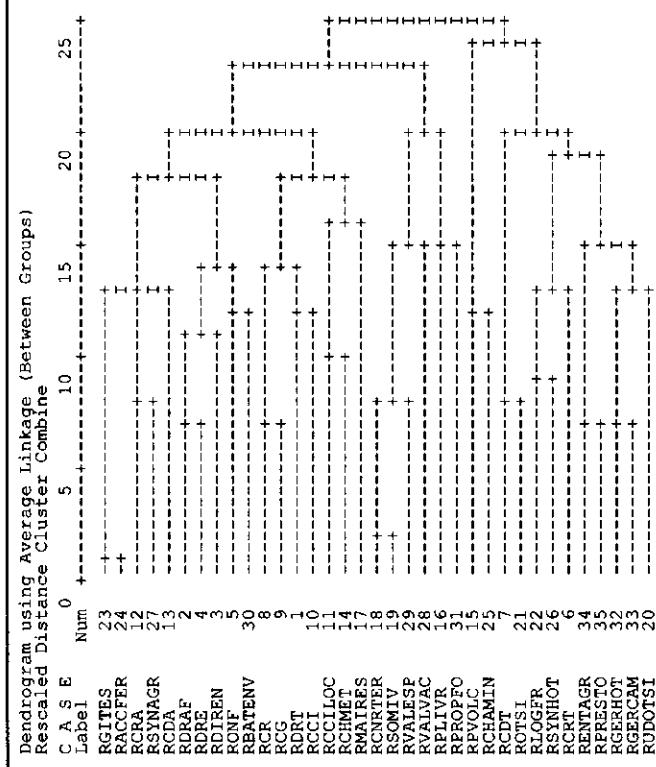
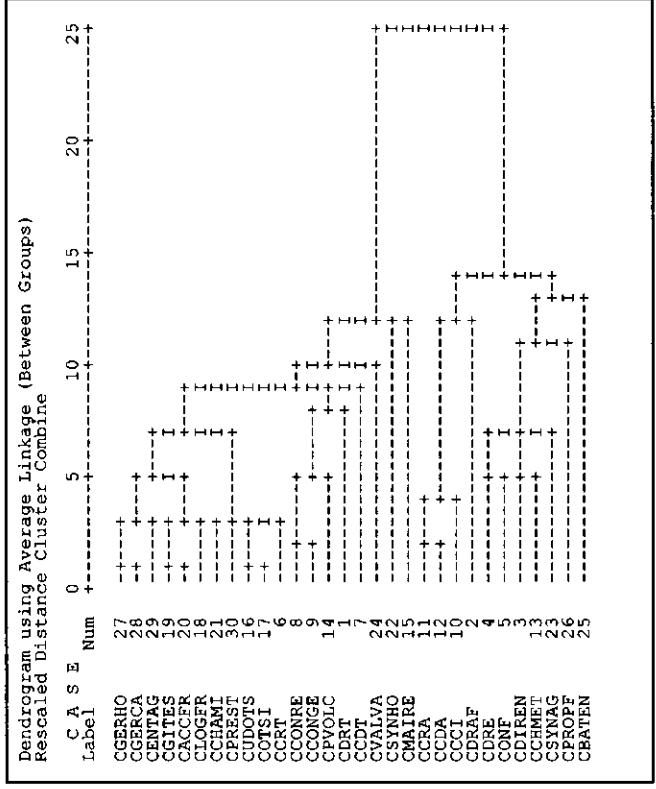


Figure II Clusteranalysis of variables, based on valuation of role (question 2)



35 variables included

30 variables included

Appendix 2

Survey on innovation in tourism in Zuidwest Friesland

A: Survey and response

A survey on innovation in tourism enterprises in Zuidwest Friesland was carried out in the spring 1998. A database containing all names and addresses of tourism entrepreneurs in the area was provided by the province: 268 in total. Of these, 74 responded (28%). The response is reasonably divided over the various types of enterprises (see Table VIII).

Table VIII Actors who have received a questionnaire and number of respondents according to type of enterprise

	yacht harbour	hotel/B&B	campsites	day attraction	other ¹	no. sent ²	response
yacht harbour	x					47	10
yacht harbour + hotel	x	x				1	0
yacht harbour + hotel + campsites + other	x	x	x		x	1	1
yacht harbour + campsites	x		x			14	5
yacht harbour + campsites + other	x		x		x	2	2
yacht harbour + other	x				x	2	1
only hotel/B&B		x				32	6
hotel + campsites		x	x			8	2
hotel + campsites + other		x	x		x	2	2
hotel + other		x			x	4	1
campsites			x			61	10
campsites + other			x		x	10	6
day attraction				x		17	7
other					x	67	21
						268	74
questionnaires sent	67	48	98	17	88		
response	19	12	28	7	34		
% respons	28%	25%	29%	26%	39%		28%

¹ e.g. sales outlet for regional products, renting of boats

² According to the provincial statistics

B Questionnaire

(adapted layout)

Het is de bedoeling dat deze vragenlijst wordt ingevuld door degene die verantwoordelijk is voor het doorvoeren van veranderingen op het bedrijf.
Wilt u steeds aankruisen wat van toepassing is?

MOGELIJKHEID	Uw toeristisch-recreatieve bedrijf bestaat <u>langer dan 4 jaar</u>	u gaat door naar onderdeel B op pagina 2
MOGELIJKHEID	U heeft uw toeristisch-recreatieve bedrijf in 1994 of later opgericht	u kunt beginnen bij onderdeel A

A OPRICHTING VAN TOERISTISCH-RECREATIEF BEDRIJF

- Zou u een korte omschrijving willen geven van de activiteiten van uw bedrijf (of van de toeristisch-recreatieve tak op uw bedrijf) bij de oprichting:
- Wat was het belangrijkste motief om het bedrijf op te richten? (bv. financieel, zelfstandigheid, interesse)
- Hoe ontstond het idee voor een toeristisch-recreatief bedrijf / tak (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)

0	via gesprekken met vrienden, familie of bekenden
0	etc.
- In welk jaar heeft u het bedrijf opgericht? 19.....
- Welke informatiebronnen heeft u geraadpleegd om uw plan te kunnen realiseren? (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)

0	toeristen/bezoekers van Zuidwest Friesland
0	etc.
- Welke informatiebronnen of contacten waren onmisbaar of cruciaal voor het omzetten van uw idee in een bedrijf?
- Heeft u in verband met de oprichting van uw bedrijf ooit een subsidie ontvangen?

0	ja, namelijk van (<i>instantie invullen</i>)
0	nee

- Zou u voor elke stelling willen aangeven in hoeverre die van toepassing is op uw bedrijf:

• Er is bewust rekening gehouden met inpassing in het landschap	0	0	0	0
• etc.				

ja	enigszins	nee	niet van toepassing
0	0	0	0

B VERANDERINGEN OP UW BEDRIJF

Hieronder staat een aantal vragen over veranderingen die de afgelopen 4 jaar op uw bedrijf zijn doorgevoerd. Daarmee wordt bedoeld in 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997 of in de eerste maanden van 1998. Het gaat om veranderingen die zijn doorgevoerd *met als doel de kwaliteit van uw product te verbeteren of de omzet/winst te verhogen.*

B1

Hieronder treft u eerst een aantal algemene vragen over veranderingen op uw bedrijf aan. Er zijn vragen opgenomen over het product dat u aanbiedt en over de bedrijfsvoering.

product

- | | Ja | Nee |
|--|----|-----|
| 1 Heeft u een investering gepleegd om de <u>kwaliteit van het aangeboden product</u> te vergroten? (<i>U heeft bijvoorbeeld een camping en biedt klanten nu ook de mogelijkheid om fietsen te verhuren</i>) | 0 | 0 |
| 2 Heeft u een investering gedaan in de vergroting van de <u>capaciteit</u> van de onderneming? (<i>Hiermee wordt bedoeld een investering die de mogelijkheid biedt meer gasten te ontvangen, bijvoorbeeld door het vergroten van het aantal staanplaatsen op een camping.</i>) | 0 | 0 |

bedrijfsvoering

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 3 Heeft u geprobeerd om de uitstraling (het "imago") van uw bedrijf of product te veranderen? (<i>NB: dit hoeft niet persé te betekenen dat het aangebodene zelf ook is aangepast.</i>) | 0 | 0 |
| 4 Heeft u geprobeerd om <u>nieuwe doelgroepen</u> te interesseren voor uw product? (<i>Bijvoorbeeld door via andere kanalen te gaan adverteren of door uw product in een pakket samen met andere ondernemers aan te gaan bieden?</i>) | 0 | 0 |
| 5 Bent u een intensievere samenwerking aangegaan met andere ondernemers? | 0 | 0 |
| 6 Heeft u een verandering doorgevoerd om het management van uw bedrijf te vereenvoudigen of te verbeteren?
<i>(Bijvoorbeeld: aanschaf computer, invoering management informatiesysteem, verandering interne verhoudingen binnen het bedrijf).</i> | 0 | 0 |

overig

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7 Heeft u andere veranderingen doorgevoerd die als doel hadden de omzet of winst te verhogen of de kwaliteit te verbeteren? | 0 | 0 |
|---|---|---|

- Als u vraag 1 of 2 met "ja" heeft beantwoord, kunt u doorgaan naar de volgende pagina
- Als u alleen een van de vragen 3 t/m 6 met "ja" heeft beantwoord, kunt u doorgaan naar pagina 4
- Als u alle bovenstaande vragen met "nee" heeft beantwoord, kunt u doorgaan naar onderdeel B2 op pagina 5
- Als u alleen vraag 7 met "ja" heeft beantwoord, kunt u dan hieronder kort aangeven wat deze verandering inhield? U kunt vervolgens doorgaan naar onderdeel B2 op pagina 5

VERANDERING PRODUCT *Graag invullen als u vraag 1 of 2 op pagina 2 met "ja" heeft beantwoord*

- 8 Kunt u een korte omschrijving geven van de veranderingen die u de afgelopen vier jaar heeft doorgevoerd in uw product (zie de vragen 1 en 2 op pagina 2)? *Wilt u voor elke verandering aangeven in welk jaar deze werd doorgevoerd?*

Verandering 1:

etc

De volgende vragen hebben steeds betrekking op verandering die u het laatst heeft doorgevoerd

9 Waarin zit het vernieuwende van deze verandering?

10 Hoe ontstond het idee voor deze verandering? (*belangrijkste reden noemen*)

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 0 | klanten vroegen er om |
| 0 | etc. |

**11 Welke informatiebronnen heeft u in de periode tussen idee-vorming en uitvoering geraadpleegd
(meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)**

0	klanten
0	etc.

**12 Welke informatiebronnen of contacten waren onmisbaar of cruciaal voor het omzetten van uw idee
in een bedrijfsaanpassing?**

13 Heeft u in verband met deze verandering ooit een subsidie ontvangen?

- | | |
|---|--|
| 0 | ja, namelijk van (<i>instantie invullen</i>) |
| 0 | nee |

14 Zou u voor elke stelling willen aangeven in hoeverre die van toepassing is op deze vernieuwing:	ja	enigs zins		
		nee	n.v.t.	
• Er is bewust rekening gehouden met inpassing in het landschap	0	0	0	0
• etc.	0	0	0	0

VERANDERING BEDRIJFSVOERING *Graag invullen als u een van de vragen 3 t/m 6 op pagina 2 met "ja" heeft beantwoord*

15 Kunt u een korte omschrijving geven van de veranderingen in de bedrijfsvoering (zie de vragen 3 t/m 6 op pagina 2)? Wilt u voor elke verandering aangeven in welk jaar deze werd doorgevoerd?

Verandering 1
etc

U bent zich op ANDERE DOELGROEPEN gaan richten: vult u dan de vragen 16 t/m 18 in.

16 Kunt u aangeven om welke doelgroepen het gaat?

17 Op welke manier heeft u deze doelgroepen proberen te bereiken? (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 0 | via advertenties |
| 0 | etc. |

18 Wat was de reden om u op deze groepen te gaan richten?

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 0 | seizoensuitbreiding |
| 0 | etc. |

**U bent een INTENSIEVERE SAMENWERKING aangegaan met andere ondernemers:
vult u dan de vragen 19 en 20 in.**

Anders gaat u door naar vraag 21

19 Wat houdt deze samenwerking in?

- | | |
|---|---|
| 0 | gezamenlijk aanbieden van arrangementen |
| 0 | etc. |

20 Wie nam het initiatief voor deze samenwerking?

0 zelf
0 etc.

**U heeft geprobeerd om DE UITSTRALING ("het imago") van uw bedrijf te veranderen:
vult u dan vraag 21 in.**

21 Op welke manier heeft u dit gedaan?

U kunt nu verder gaan op de volgende pagina

B2

- 1 Als u nieuwe plannen heeft, bespreekt u die dan wel eens met collega-ondernemers of met (andere) deskundigen? 0 ja 0 nee

Zo ja, welk bedrijf of welke instantie betreft het dan?

- 2 Heeft u wel eens plannen gehad om vernieuwingen door te voeren op uw bedrijf, die u om een of andere reden niet heeft gerealiseerd? 0 ja 0 nee

- 3 Indien u bij vraag 2 ja heeft ingevuld:
Wat hielden deze vernieuwingen in en wat was de reden dat u deze plannen niet kon of wilde realiseren?

**Omschrijving van de vernieuwing:
Reden om er van af te zien:**

- 4 Speelde onvoldoende medewerking van overheden of van andere instanties een rol bij de keuze die van de vernieuwing af te zien? 0 ja
0 nee

Toelichting:

C BETROKKENHEID BIJ ORGANISATIES

Hieronder volgt een aantal vragen over uw betrokkenheid bij organisaties en verenigingen. Deze vragen zijn opgenomen omdat we willen weten of deze contacten van invloed zijn op innovatie.

Zou u door middel van een kruisje willen aangeven van welke organisaties u lid of bestuurslid bent en van welke organisaties u wel eens vergaderingen bijwoont?

Als u lid bent van andere branche-organisaties of belangenorganisaties kunt u die zelf toevoegen

			woon vergaderingen bij:			
	lid	bestuurslid	altijd	regelmatig	soms	nooit
1 <u>Recreatie en toerisme</u>						
RECRON	0	0	0	0	0	0
etc.	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 <u>Landbouworganisaties</u>						
FLTO	0	0	0	0	0	0
etc.	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 <u>Organisaties op het gebied van natuur en milieu</u>						
etc.	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 <u>Cultuur, cultuurhistorie en heemkunde:</u>						
etc.	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 <u>Overige verenigingen en organisaties</u>						

	ja	nee
6 Bent u zelf of is een van de leden van uw gezin actief in een politieke partij?	0	0
7 Bent u zelf of is een van de leden van uw gezin actief in het (lokale) verenigingsleven of in het bestuur van organisaties, voorzover die hierboven nog niet aan bod zijn gekomen?	0	0

Indien u hier ja heeft ingevuld: Zou u hieronder willen aangeven welke vereniging(en) dit is/zijn en welke functie(s) daar worden bekleed?

Vereniging	Functie
Vereniging	Functie
Vereniging	Functie

D INFORMATIEBRONNEN, CONTACTEN

- 1 Bent u geabonneerd op een van de volgende tijdschriften of dagbladen?
Graag aankruisen wat van toepassing is

0 Recreatie en toerisme
 0 etc.

- 2 Bezoekt u wel eens vakbeurzen?

Zou u hieronder aan willen geven welke beurzen u de afgelopen 4 jaar bezocht heeft?

0 RECRON Congres + beurs
 0 etc.

- 3 Heeft u (na uw schoolopleiding) wel eens een cursus gevolgd die gericht was op het verbeteren van uw toeristisch-recreatieve bedrijfsresultaten?

ja	nee
0	0

E SAMENWERKING MET ANDERE ONDERNEMERS

Hieronder volgt een aantal vragen over samenwerking met andere ondernemers. Het is de bedoeling dat u hier alleen vormen van samenwerking invullen die nog niet eerder in deze vragenlijst (bij onderdeel B1) aan bod zijn gekomen.

	ja	nee
1 Biedt u uw product aan in de vorm van arrangementen samen met producten van andere toeristisch-recreatieve ondernemers? (<i>U verhuurt bijvoorbeeld huisjes en biedt de mogelijkheid om een all-in weekend te boeken waarbij ook de prijs van sauna, bezoek aan pretpark of museum zijn inbegrepen.</i>)	0	0
2 Werkt u wel eens samen met andere toeristisch-recreatieve ondernemers?	0	0
3 Werkt u wel eens samen met ondernemers uit een andere branche?	0	0
4 Indien u vraag 2 en/of 3 met ja heeft ingevuld: <u>kunt u toelichten wat deze samenwerking inhoudt?</u>	vaak	af en toe
4 Overlegt u wel eens met andere ondernemers over zaken die uw eigen bedrijfsvoering betreffen?	0	0

		ja	nee
5	Kunnen gasten bij u ook kaartjes of toegangsbewijzen kopen voor andere attracties, of kunt u voor hen reserveringen maken?	0	0

F BELEID

Hieronder volgt een aantal vragen over verschillende vormen van beleid en uw ervaringen met en mening over dit beleid.

		ja	nee
1	Bent u op de hoogte van het gemeentelijk beleid op het gebied van recreatie en toerisme?	0	0
2	Bent u op de hoogte van het provinciaal beleid op het gebied van recreatie en toerisme?	0	0
3	Heeft u wel eens gehoord van WCL?	0	0
4	Bent u op de hoogte van de doelstellingen van WCL? <i>indien u hier nee heeft ingevuld kunt u doorgaan naar de volgende pagina</i>	0	0
5	<u>Indien u bij vraag 4 ja heeft ingevuld: Wat is uw mening over dit beleid?</u> <i>Wilt u per stelling aangeven in hoeverre u het hiermee eens bent?</i>		

	geheel mee eens	enigszins mee eens	neutral	mee oneens	helemaal mee oneens
• Ik ben het eens met de doelstellingen die worden nagestreefd	0	0	0	0	0
• etc.	0	0	0	0	0
			altijd	soms	nooit
6 Heeft u wel eens vergaderingen bijgewoond in het kader van WCL?	0	0	0	0	0
7 Heeft u ooit subsidie ontvangen via WCL?	ja	0	0	0	nee
8 Heeft u ooit een subsidievoorstel ingediend in het kader van WCL of heeft u dit overwogen?	ja	0	0	0	nee

G ALGEMENE KENMERKEN VAN UW BEDRIJF

Om een indruk te krijgen van het type bedrijf dat u heeft volgt hieronder een aantal algemene vragen

1 Wat voor soort bedrijf heeft u?

Kruist u a.u.b. aan welke van onderstaande categorieën van toepassing zijn op uw bedrijf of welke faciliteiten aanwezig zijn (*meerdere antwoorden mogelijk*):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 0 | hotel |
| 0 | etc. |

2 Is toerisme uw hoofdtak of een neventak?

(Hoofdtak wil zeggen dat inkomsten uit toerisme meer dan 50% van uw bedrijfs- of gezinsinkomsten uitmaken).

hoofdtak neventak

0 0

ja nee

3 Heeft uw bedrijf nog inkomsten uit andere activiteiten?

Als u een familiebedrijf heeft kunt u ook aangeven of een van de leden van uw gezin inkomsten uit andere activiteiten heeft.

(NB: Periodieke uitkeringen zoals WW, AOW, WAA of studiefinanciering kunt u hierbij buiten beschouwing laten)

Indien u hier ja heeft ingevuld: wat voor type activiteit betreft dit?

(*meerdere antwoorden mogelijk*)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 0 | landbouw (inclusief tuinbouw, bosbouw en visserij) |
| 0 | etc. |

4 Hoe lang bestaat uw huidige toeristisch-recreatieve bedrijf of hoe lang biedt u op uw huidige bedrijf al toeristisch-recreatieve diensten aan?

.... jaar

5 Hoe lang bent u al werkzaam in de toeristisch-recreatieve branche?

.... jaar

6 Hoeveel werknemers heeft u in loondienst?

Hiermee wordt bedoeld het aantal werknemers dat u het hele jaar in dienst heeft

.... werknemers

7 Hoeveel personen werken in het hoogseizoen op uw bedrijf? (inclusief uzelf)

.... personen

NB: Vraag 6 en 7 zijn bedoeld om een indruk te krijgen van de grootte van uw bedrijf.

H ALGEMENE VRAGEN

Tenslotte willen wij u verzoeken om hieronder nog een paar algemene vragen te beantwoorden

1 Wat is uw leeftijd ? jaar

man

vrouw

0 0

2 Wat is uw geslacht?

3 Hoe lang woont u in Friesland? jaar

ja

enigszins

nee

4 Voelt u zich Fries?

0

0

0

5 Bent u geabonneerd op:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 0 | een landelijke krant |
| 0 | een regionale/lokale krant |

		ja	nee
6	Heeft u een <u>aansluiting</u> op Internet?	0	0
7	Wat is uw hoogst genoten opleiding?		
	0 lagere school		
	0 etc.		
8	Hoe vaak gaat u zelf op vakantie?		
	0 vaker dan 2 keer per jaar		
	0 etc.		

Als u zelf nog vragen of opmerkingen heeft naar aanleiding van deze vragenlijst, stellen wij het op prijs als u de ruimte hieronder daarvoor benut.

Als u geïnformeerd wilt worden over de resultaten van deze enquête, verzoeken wij u ook uw adres in te vullen. Wij sturen u dan te zijner tijd een verslag toe.

HARTELIJK DANK VOOR UW MEDEWERKING!

Plattelandstoerisme: een netwerkbenadering

Samenvatting

Dit onderzoek verkent op welke manier de economische ontwikkeling van toerisme bij kan dragen aan het behoud en/of de ontwikkeling van de kwaliteiten van het platteland, en hoe dit via overheidsbeleid kan worden gestuurd. Hierbij komt de vraag aan de orde hoe dit soort vraagstukken wetenschappelijk en beleidsmatig kan worden benaderd.

Om deze vragen te beantwoorden is eerst een theoretische verkenning uitgevoerd en vervolgens is voor vier regio's in Europa nagegaan hoe deze theoretische ideeën in de praktijk worden toegepast. Hieronder volgt een samenvatting van de theoretische verkenning (A), de methode die is gekozen om de cases te bestuderen (B) en de resultaten van de case-studies. Daarna volgen een evaluatie van de gebruikte methode (D) en aanbevelingen voor beleid (E).

A Theoretische verkenning

De theoretische verkenning richt zich op twee vragen: 'Wat is rurale kwaliteit?' (hoofdstuk 2) en 'Hoe kan regionaal economische ontwikkeling worden gegenereerd?' (hoofdstuk 3). Aangezien vanuit beide verkenningen een belangrijke rol voor interactieve benaderingen via netwerken wordt geconstateerd is dit begrip centraal geplaatst in de analyse. In hoofdstuk 4 zijn de mogelijkheden van netwerken voor sturing van toeristische ontwikkeling verder theoretisch uitgewerkt.

Wat is rurale kwaliteit?

Hoofdstuk twee behandelt de vraag wat rurale kwaliteit is. Literatuur over dit onderwerp geeft aan dat het een normatief begrip is, wat wil zeggen dat er geen objectieve, algemeen geldende definitie van rurale kwaliteit kan worden gegeven. Afhankelijk van de achtergrond of de belangen van de betrokkenen zullen steeds andere aspecten van het platteland worden gewaardeerd en als kwaliteit worden bestempeld. Omdat de vraag wat rurale kwaliteit is daarmee lastig te beantwoorden is, richten wetenschappers zich in toenemende mate op de vraag hoe definities van rurale kwaliteit tot stand komen. Dat houdt in dat de aandacht is verschoven van de inhoudelijke definitie naar de processen achter het definiëren van kwaliteit. Ook in planning wordt niet langer alleen naar de inhoud van kwaliteit gekeken, maar komen processen in toenemende mate centraal te staan. De vraag hier is hoe een gezamenlijke definitie van rurale kwaliteit in een bepaalde situatie tot stand kan worden gebracht.

Omdat definities van rurale kwaliteit het resultaat zijn van processen van interactie, moeten bij het analyseren ervan de rol van en relaties tussen verschillende betrokken partijen in beschouwing worden genomen. Het begrip 'netwerken' vormt hiervoor volgens de literatuur een goede ingang, omdat een multidisciplinaire benadering mogelijk is; omdat zowel het microniveau (actoren) als het macroniveau (structuur) in de

analyse kan worden betrokken; en omdat zowel continuïteit of stabiliteit en verandering kunnen worden omvat – een netwerk heeft immers een bepaalde vorm, maar door te kijken naar interactie tussen actoren kunnen ook veranderingen hierin worden verklaard.

Een analyse van de achtergronden van rurale kwaliteit en van de relatie tussen de betrokken partijen is een goed hulpmiddel bij het ontwerpen van een proces om tot een legitieme en robuuste definitie van rurale kwaliteit te komen. Een vrij algemene opvatting is dat een proces ‘beter’ is als een diversiteit aan perspectieven van rurale kwaliteit (dus verschillende discoursen over rurale kwaliteit) erbij worden betrokken. Als gevolg hiervan zijn interactieve benaderingen van planning populair geworden.

Hoe kan regionaal-economische ontwikkeling worden gegenerereerd?

In hoofdstuk 3 wordt ingegaan op de vraag hoe regionaal-economische ontwikkeling gegenerereerd kan worden. Theorieën hierover en ook het gevoerde beleid zijn in de loop van de tijd nogal veranderd. Tot in de jaren zeventig werd economische ontwikkeling vooral gezien als iets dat van buitenaf komt en werd voor ‘top-down’ benaderingen gekozen. De nadruk lag op het verplaatsen van (grote, industriële) bedrijven naar de te ontwikkelen regio. Na die tijd kwam er steeds meer aandacht voor de initiatieven in regio zelf, en kozen beleidsmakers vaker voor ‘bottom-up’ benaderingen, waarin wordt aangesloten bij de kwaliteiten die al in een gebied aanwezig zijn.

Recente theorieën over regionaal-economische ontwikkeling geven aan dat plaatsgerelateerde kwaliteiten en ruimtelijke kenmerken een cruciale rol spelen in het genereren van economische ontwikkeling. Het ‘inbedden’ van economische ontwikkeling in de regio is een belangrijke voorwaarde voor economisch succes op langere termijn. Vooral theorieën over zogenaamde innovatieve milieus hechten veel waarde aan de rol van plaatsgebonden factoren en lokale uitwisseling. Zulke theorieën veronderstellen tevens een relatie tussen contactnetwerken (interactie) en innovatie – waarbij innovatie een belangrijke voorwaarde is voor economische ontwikkeling.

De veranderingen in regionale ontwikkelingstheorieën overziedend blijken regionale kwaliteiten in toenemende mate relevant te worden gevonden voor economische ontwikkeling. Ook wordt het belang van interactie in netwerken steeds meer benadrukt. Interactie op regionaal niveau is belangrijk voor het inbedden van economische ontwikkeling. Daarnaast spelen netwerken ook een belangrijke rol bij innovatie.

Netwerken, innovatie en sturing

Interacties en netwerken blijken een centrale rol te spelen in relatie tot rurale kwaliteit én in relatie tot economische ontwikkeling. In hoofdstuk 4 wordt het begrip netwerken in relatie tot innovatie en tot planning daarom nader uitgewerkt. Vervolgens wordt een typering gegeven van interactieve netwerkbenaderingen.

Innovatie

Innovatie is een centraal begrip in veel theorieën over economische ontwikkeling. Onder invloed van veranderde inzichten over regionale ontwikkeling is ook de definitie van innovatie veranderd. De aandacht is verschoven van technologische verbeteringen en het bedrijfsniveau naar de rol van bedrijfsexterne invloeden, contactennetwerken en ‘zachtere’ vormen van vernieuwing. Een dergelijk perspectief op innovatie is zeker zinvol als het gaat over toerisme. Het toeristisch product is immers voor een groot deel ‘ontastbaar’ en het overschrijdt in veel gevallen het bedrijfsniveau. Als economische

ontwikkeling van toerisme bij moet dragen aan het behoud van rurale kwaliteiten is een dergelijk perspectief op innovatie eveneens vereist.

Tabel A Verschillende typen innovaties en voorbeelden uit de sfeer van toerisme

	Bedrijfsniveau	Regionaal niveau
Product innovaties	Nieuwe producten/ diensten op bedrijfsniveau; ontwikkeling van verbeterde valkantie-attributen (tenten, zeilboten)	Verbetering van de toeristische infrastructuur, gezamenlijke productontwikkeling, ontwikkeling van nieuwe bestemming
Proces innovaties	Verbetering van het productie- of managementproces	Verbetering van het productie- of managementproces
Netwerk innovaties	Nieuwe contacten, hrb. lidmaatschap van organisaties, nieuwe vormen van samenwerking met andere ondernemers	Nieuwe vormen van samenwerking op regionaal niveau tussen toeristische ondernemers of met andere sectoren
Markt innovaties	Nieuwe doelgroepen aanspreken, seizoensverlenging, ander imago	Inzetten van nieuwe marketing en promotie strategieën om andere doelgroepen aan te trekken
Ideologische innovaties	Andere opvatting over toeristische ontwikkeling, andere bedrijfshilosofie	Andere benadering van toerisme, nieuwe regionale toeristische ontwikkelingsconcepten
Systeminnovaties	-	Bedrijfsoverstijgende initiatieven, vaak voortvloeiend uit een ideologische innovatie, die leiden tot een anderen verhouding tussen de betrokken partijen

Zoals tabel A laat zien kunnen verschillende typen innovatie worden onderscheiden. Typen innovatie die in het bijzonder relevant zijn in relatie tot de vraagstelling van dit boek zijn netwerkinnovaties, ideologische innovaties en systeeminnovaties. Netwerkinnovaties zijn veranderingen in de relatie tussen toeristische actoren of in de relatie met actoren uit andere sectoren. In ruraal toerisme zijn contactennetwerken van groot belang, omdat producten op het regionale niveau worden gedefinieerd. Ideologische innovaties zijn veranderingen in de benadering van toeristische ontwikkeling: een nieuw perspectief op wat toeristische ontwikkeling inhoudt – wat kan zijn gebaseerd op een ander waardesysteem. Systeeminnovaties zijn gebaseerd op de gezamenlijke inspanningen van verschillende partijen, omvatten vaak ideologische innovaties in combinatie met een netwerkinnovatie. Systeeminnovaties zijn de meest vergaande vorm van innovatie, aangezien er een verandering in het functioneren van het hele systeem optreedt, en in de relaties tussen de betrokken partijen.

Netwerken en sturing

Netwerken zijn populair in relatie tot sturing. ‘Netwerk’ refereert dan aan een horizontale relatie tussen partijen, waarbij de nadruk ligt op samenwerking en onderlinge afhankelijkheid. De populariteit geldt zowel de wetenschap als de (beleids)praktijk. Interactieve benaderingen worden geacht een geschikt antwoord te zijn op onzekerheid en complexiteit, en onderlinge relaties en interactie worden erin centraal gesteld. Hoewel er veel overeenkomsten zijn tussen verschillende benaderingen die worden toegepast in uiteenlopende domeinen, is er ook een aantal cruciale verschillen. In essentie kunnen drie motieven worden onderscheiden om te kiezen voor een netwerkbenadering. Deze motivaties zijn: een legitiemer beleidsproces, een kwalitatief betere uitkomst en een

efficiëntere en effectievere sturing. Elk van deze motieven vertegenwoordigt feitelijk een ander interactief model en vraagt om een specifieke inrichting van het interactieve proces. In tabel B worden deze verschillende modellen getypeerd op basis van een aantal kenmerken.

Tabel B Modellen voor interactieve ontwikkeling

Onderwerp/ motief	Communicatief	Instrumenteel	Strategisch
Doel	Legitiemiteit	Innovatie / kwaliteit	Efficiency / effectiviteit
Criterium voor participatie	Emancipatie / democratische / zeggenschap	Verbetering van de inhoud (rationaliteit)	Draagvlak
Betrokken partijen	Wie heeft het recht mee te beslissen?	Wie heeft kennis of vaardigheden?	Wie heeft (hinder-)macht of invloed?
Sturing	Basis, marginale groepen	Kennisdragers (ook ervaringdeskundigen)	Belangenbehartigers, partijen met (hinder)macht
Beleids- doelstelling	Zelfsturing	Netwerksturing	Top-down binnen netwerk
Afhangelijkheide n	Betrekken basis bij beleid	Ontwikkeling plannen / ontwikkeling beleid	Draagvlak voor beleid / uitvoering beleid
Techniek	Sociale verhoudingen / communicatief handelen	Kennis en vaardigheden / instrumenteel handelen	Machtsverhoudingen / strategisch handelen
Rol procesbegeleider	Spiegelen van normen en waarden	Activeren van kennis en creativiteit	Vinden van win-win situaties
Succes criterium/ ijkpunten	Waarborgen openheid, informatie aanleveren, faciliteren	Openen 'windows', brugfunctie	(Conflict)bemiddeling
Faalfactoren	Versterkte autonomie doelgroep	Nieuw, realistisch beleid; verbetering inhoudelijke kwaliteit	Soepeler uitvoering
	Machtenverhoudingen domineren, gevestigde rolpatronen worden niet doorbroken, gebrek aan motivatie	Gebrek aan hulpbronnen, creativiteit wordt niet gestimuleerd / kennis wordt niet geactiveerd	Geen heldere kaders, te veel verschillende partijen betrokken, gebrek aan vertrouwen

Een netwerkbenadering van plattelandstoerisme

De theorieën over netwerken in relatie tot regionaal-economische ontwikkeling en in relatie tot sturing overzienend kunnen een aantal gevolgtrekkingen worden gemaakt voor plattelandstoerisme.

Theorieën over innovatieve milieus veronderstellen dat de aard van de relaties en interacties bepalend zijn voor het soort ontwikkeling dat tot stand komt. Eenvoudig gesteld dragen relaties binnen de regio – en dan vooral die tussen verschillende soorten partijen – bij aan lokale inbedding en aan ontwikkeling die plaatsgerelateerd is. Externe relaties zijn cruciaal voor gestandaardiseerde innovatie en om contact te houden met marktontwikkelingen. Een balans tussen lokale en externe relaties zou volgens deze

theorieën de beste uitgangspositie voor toeristische ontwikkeling bieden, aangezien dit het ontstaan van innovaties die samenhangen met lokale kwaliteiten zal stimuleren.

Ook de modellen voor interactieve benaderingen kunnen worden bezien in relatie tot de vraagstelling van dit boek. Een communicatieve en een instrumentele benadering zijn het meest geschikt om economische ontwikkeling van toerisme te stimuleren die bijdraagt aan het behoud van regionale kwaliteiten. De communicatieve benadering doet het meeste recht aan de veelheid aan opvattingen over rurale kwaliteit op het lokale niveau en de instrumentele benadering is gericht op het genereren van innovatie en sluit daarmee aan bij de doelstelling van economische ontwikkeling.

B Methodologie: een exploratieve benadering

In de case studies worden processen van toeristische ontwikkeling in vier plattelandsgebieden geanalyseerd. Het betreft twee 'Waardevolle Cultuurlandschappen' (WCL) in Nederland - Zuidwest Friesland en Midden-Limburg - en twee 'Regionale Natuurparken' (PNR) – Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne en Parc Livradois-Forez - in Frankrijk. Beide Franse case-studies zijn gelegen in de regio Auvergne. In elk van deze gebieden omvatten de doelen van plattelandsbeleid zowel economische ontwikkeling als behoud/ontwikkeling van rurale kwaliteiten. Bovendien is er telkens sprake van netwerkachtige vormen van sturing. De case-studies moeten meer inzicht geven in de mogelijkheden van een netwerkbenadering, zowel voor het analyseren van processen van toeristische ontwikkeling, als voor sturing ervan.

De analyse richt zich op de relatie tussen netwerken, economische ontwikkeling en behoud van rurale kwaliteiten. Actoren en hun onderlinge relaties staan centraal in de analyse. Tegelijkertijd wordt echter erkend dat de - beleidsmatige, historische en institutionele - context waarin interacties plaatsvinden een rol spelen. Aandacht voor deze context voorkomt dat alleen de huidige relaties tussen de betrokkenen worden onderzocht, waarmee niet kan worden verklaard waarom juist deze partijen betrokken zijn en ook niet wat de machtsverhouding tussen hen is. Door de analyse te verbreden komen de opvattingen die discussies over plattelandsontwikkeling inperken in beeld. Deze opvattingen worden in deze studie aangeduid met het begrip *discourses*.

Er is gekozen voor een exploratieve benadering van rurale toeristische netwerken. Daartoe zijn verschillende onderzoeksmethoden toegepast – zowel kwalitatief als kwantitatief. Er heeft een analyse plaatsgevonden op macro (context), micro (actor) en meso (netwerk) niveau. Netwerken zijn vanuit verschillende optiek benaderd, waarbij ideeën over sturing, innovatie en rurale kwaliteit zijn gecombineerd en toegepast op toeristische ontwikkeling. De mate van rurale kwaliteit is geëvalueerd aan de hand van procescriteria, door te kijken naar de discourses die de discussie structureren en naar de actoren die betrokken zijn bij het plattelandsvernieuwingsproces.

Centrale vraag in de case-studies was hoe sturing via netwerken in elk van de gebieden is toegepast, of deze beleidsinitiatieven van invloed zijn geweest op innovatie en rurale kwaliteit en zo ja op welke manier. Hiertoe zijn zeven onderzoeksvragen geformuleerd:

1. Wat is de context waarin plattelandsvernieuwingsprocessen in Nederland en Frankrijk plaatsvinden, welke discourses voeren de boventoon en hoe beïnvloedt dit de relaties tussen rurale toeristische actoren?

2. Wat waren inhoudelijke en procesmatige beleidsdoelstellingen voor rurale toerisme in elk van de onderzochte gebieden en hoe zijn deze gericht op economische ontwikkeling en behoud/ontwikkeling van rurale kwaliteiten?
3. Wat is de positie van WCL en PNR in het rurale toeristische netwerk en welke rol spelen toeristische actoren?
4. Op welke manier stimuleren WCL en PNR innovatie in rurale toerisme, is er een relatie tussen netwerken en innovatie en zijn deze innovaties relevant voor het realiseren van economische ontwikkeling die gebaseerd is op rurale kwaliteit?
5. Welk sturingsmodel is dominant geweest in elk van de onderzochte gebieden en hoe heeft dit de richting van plattelandsontwikkeling in termen van innovatie en rurale kwaliteit gestuurd?
6. Hoe kunnen verschillen in de benadering van rurale ontwikkeling tussen de verschillende gebieden worden verklaard vanuit lokale en contextuele factoren?
7. Welke conclusies kunnen worden getrokken uit de bestudeerde cases over de relatie tussen netwerken, de economische ontwikkeling van toerisme en behoud/ontwikkeling van rurale kwaliteiten?

Onderzoeksvragen een tot en met zes worden beantwoord onder C. Onderzoeksvraag zeven komt in de evaluatie aan bod.

C Case studie resultaten

Onderzoeksvraag 1: context, discoursen en relatie tussen actoren

De context voor ontwikkeling van toerisme op het platteland in Nederland en Frankrijk is tot op zekere hoogte vergelijkbaar. Dat geldt bijvoorbeeld voor het feit dat interactieve benaderingen in beide landen (en in heel West Europa) populair zijn. Er is echter ook een aantal significante verschillen. Zo heeft het platteland in Frankrijk een grote symbolische betekenis en is het sterk verbonden met de nationale identiteit. In Nederland wordt het platteland op een meer functionele manier benaderd en wordt vooral de productiefunctie (van landbouw, maar ook van natuur en toerisme) benadrukt. De landbouw speelt in beide landen nog steeds een dominante rol als het om processen van plattelandsvernieuwing gaat, maar de positie van de landbouw in Frankrijk is sterker dan in Nederland.

Ook de houding ten aanzien van interactieve planning verschilt. In Nederland passen netwerkbenaderingen goed in de ‘polder’ traditie waarin efficiency een belangrijke waarde is en waarin een pragmatische houding overheerst. In Frankrijk is sprake van een veel sterkere politisering, en is het lastig om ideologische verschillen te overbruggen. Institutionalisering is hier veel meer van invloed op interactieve processen en ook de bestaande democratische instellingen spelen een belangrijkere rol. In Nederland hebben belangengroepen een grotere rol in deze processen.

Zowel in Nederland als in Frankrijk is het aantal partijen betrokken bij ontwikkeling van toerisme op het platteland indrukwekkend. Dit heeft geleid tot een complex veld, waarin de onderlinge taakverdeling onduidelijk is en partijen elkaar’s competentie betwisten. In beide landen zijn pogingen ondernomen om een brug te slaan tussen verschillende ‘stromingen’, wat wel enig effect heeft gesorteerd. Er is echter nog geen sprake van een geïntegreerde benadering van ontwikkeling van toerisme op het platteland. Om dit voor elkaar te krijgen is een sterkere (beleids)positie nodig voor toerisme in het algemeen en binnen plattelandsontwikkeling in het bijzonder. Binnen

processen van plattelandsontwikkeling wordt toeristische ontwikkeling vooral ingevuld in termen van agritoerisme.

Onderzoeksraag 2: beleidsdoelstellingen in case-studie gebieden

In elk van de onderzochte gebieden was het beleid gericht op het realiseren van economische ontwikkeling met behoud van rurale kwaliteiten. In alle gevallen viel ontwikkeling van toerisme onder de doelstellingen. Analyse van de vier cases laat echter aanzienlijke verschillen zien in de manier waarop toeristische ontwikkeling onderdeel uitmaakt van plattelandsontwikkeling. Dit hangt samen met de beleidsoriëntatie die eveneens sterk uiteenloopt (zie tabel C). In Parc Livradois-Forez komt de doelstelling het meest overeen met de in dit boek geformuleerde probleemstelling: economische ontwikkeling levert een bijdrage aan behoud / ontwikkeling van rurale kwaliteit. In Parc des Volcans staat natuurbehoud voorop, waarbij wordt gekozen voor een vrij 'klassieke' benadering. In Midden-Limburg was de insteek dat WCL-beleid moest zijn gebaseerd op draagvlak onder lokale partijen. In Zuidwest Friesland was de houding veel pragmatischer: men zag het nut van WCL aanvankelijk niet zo, maar een extra 'pot met geld' werd niet afgewezen.

Onderzoeksraag 3: rol van toeristische actoren en positie van WCL en PNR in het rurale netwerk

Toeristische actoren spelen in geen van de onderzochte cases een prominente rol in het plattelandsvernieuwingsproces. Dit hangt erneé samen dat plattelandsvernieuwing – zeker in de WCL gebieden – vooral draaien om de positie van de landbouw. In Frankrijk was dit minder het geval: zeker in Livradois-Forez heeft toerisme veel beleidaandacht en ondersteuning gekregen. Een tweede verklaring ligt erin dat toeristische partijen onvoldoende belang zien in deelname aan plattelandsvernieuwings-processen. Men vindt dat deelname teveel tijd vraagt te weinig oplevert, zeker op korte termijn. Ondanks de beperkingen van dit type processen is er voor toerisme zeker meer te halen dan nu gebeurt. Dat kansen onvoldoende worden benut hangt samen met de kleinschaligheid van veel bedrijven in de sector en het feit dat het toeristisch product nog teveel wordt gezien als iets dat op toeristische bedrijven wordt gemaakt.

Ondanks de beperkte betrokkenheid van toeristische actoren is er toch sprake van een aantal succesvolle initiatieven op toeristisch vlak, vooral in Midden-Limburg en in Livradois-Forez. In beide gebieden zijn samenwerkingsverbanden van (agri) toeristische ondernemers opgezet of ontstaan. Wanneer wordt gekeken naar de verhouding met andere toeristische partijen op regionaal niveau is er in Livradois-Forez sprake van een conflictueuze situatie. Deze is ontstaan omdat het park zijn eigen koers vaart en een afzonderlijke marketing en productontwikkelingsstrategie heeft. Bestaande toeristische organisaties vinden dat het park zich hiermee teveel op hun beleidsterrein beweegt. In Midden-Limburg is de verhouding met andere partijen op regionaal niveau goed. Een aantal ervan is vertegenwoordigd in de WCL-sectorgroep toerisme. In Zuidwest Friesland zijn toeristische projecten in de beginfase vooral geïnitieerd door de gemeenten (vooral op het gebied van infrastructuur). In een latere fase zijn vooral agritoeristische projecten gehonoreerd. Toeristische belangenorganisaties waren hier officieel wel betrokken bij WCL, maar speelden een weinig actieve rol. In Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne bestaan nauwelijks relaties tussen het park en toeristische ondernemers. Wel is er een goede relatie met het regionale bureau voor toerisme.

Tabel C Overzicht van een aantal kenmerken van de onderzochte gebieden

	PNR des Volcans d'Auvergne	PNR Livradois-Forez	WCL Midden-Limburg	WCL Zuidwest Friesland
Doelen - algemeen	Bijdrage aan natuurbehoud, educatie en voorlichting	Dynamiseren van het gebied met behoud van gebiedskwaliteiten	Ontwikkeling van onderop	Wcl kan een bijdrage leveren aan plattelandsontwikkeling
Specifieke toeristische doelen	Ontwikkeling van natuur- en kwaliteitstoerisme	Toerisme levert bijdrage aan algemene doelstelling	Is ondergeschikt aan de (algemene) procesdoelstelling	Zeer algemene doelstellingen – zijn in de loop van het proces bijgesteld
Procesdoelen		Betrekken van de lokale bevolking; dynamiseren van het gebied	Ontwikkeling van onderop; draagvlak in het gebied creëren	
Roel van toeristische actoren	Lokale actoren niet betrokken	Lokale actoren deels betrokken; regionale actoren niet betrokken	Aantal actoren betrokken, maar niet erg actief	Bepaalde actoren betrokken, maar niet erg actief
Positie in toeristisch netwerk	Geïsoleerd	Op lokaal niveau centrale positie; op regionaal niveau geïsoleerd	Centrale positie met sturende rol, later meer op de achtergrond	Geïsoleerd
Invloed op innovatie	Bepaalde productinnovaties; marktinnovatie (PNR als 'merk')	Nadruk i.r.t. toerisme op netwerk innovaties, verder ook productinnovaties, markt innovatie, ideologische innovatie en poging om systeem innovatie te creëren	Poging om systeem innovatie te creëren, tot op zeker hoogte succesvol, netwerk innovaties, bepaalde productinnovaties	Voornamelijk gericht op productinnovaties, in later fase ook op netwerk innovatie, ideologische innovatie in deel van de landbouwsector
Sturingssstrategie	Niet erg interactief – voornamelijk strategisch	Vooral communicatief, ook strategisch	Communicatief – in later fase ook instrumenteel	Strategisch, later ook communicatief

Los van de positie van WCL en PNR in het regionale toerisme netwerk is ook relevant te kijken naar de positie in relatie tot plattelandsontwikkeling in bredere zin. Het valt op dat in alle onderzochte gebieden een aantal ingrijpende ontwikkelingen spelen die geen relatie hebben met WCL-beleid en PNR, maar die wel van invloed zijn op de processen binnen deze kaders en/of een grote invloed hebben op de rurale kwaliteit in het gebied: de EHS in Friesland, aanleg van de A73 in Midden-Limburg, de bouw van Vulcania in Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne en de aanleg van de snelweg Bordeaux-Lyon. Dit soort beslissingen heeft uiteraard een belang dat uitstijgt boven dat van het WCL gebied of het regionale natuurpark. In alle gevallen waren er echter alternatieven vorhanden die een minder ingrijpende impact op natuur en landschap zouden hebben.

Onderzoeksraag 4: relatie tussen netwerken, innovatie en gebiedskwaliteiten

De relatie tussen netwerken en innovatie is op twee manieren benaderd. In de eerste plaats zijn de resultaten van WCL en PNR geanalyseerd op hun innovatieve gehalte. Hierbij is onderscheid gemaakt naar verschillende typen innovatie en zijn vooral netwerk-ideologische en systeeminnovaties gezien de probleemstelling interessant. En in de tweede plaats is een enquête gehouden onder toeristische ondernemers in Zuidwest Friesland om na te gaan of er een relatie is tussen innovaties en netwerken op bedrijfsniveau. Hierbij is speciaal aandacht besteed aan de rol van WCL.

WCL en PNR hebben bijgedragen aan het ontstaan van netwerk- en ideologische innovaties. Bij de strategieën die in Midden-Limburg en Livradois-Forez zijn gevuld was de ambitie om een systeeminnovatie te stimuleren. In Livradois-Forez werd gewerkt vanuit de filosofie dat regionale ontwikkeling gebaseerd moet zijn op de kwaliteiten van het gebied en wordt de inbreng van de lokale bevolking hierin centraal gesteld. In Midden-Limburg werd gewerkt vanuit een "bottom-up" filosofie. In beide gevallen is het gelukt om vormen van samenwerking tussen partijen te bevorderen en om economische ontwikkeling te koppelen aan gebiedskwaliteiten. In Zuidwest Friesland was aanvankelijk weinig belangstelling voor de innovatieve mogelijkheden van WCL. Gaandeweg het proces kwam hierin verandering en uiteindelijk is een bijdrage geleverd aan netwerkinnovaties (onder andere samenwerking op het vlak van agritoerisme). In Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne is de doelstelling op het gebied van toerisme heel beperkt in de praktijk gebracht. Het park speelt nauwelijks een rol in het initiëren en bevorderen van toeristische innovatie.

De relatie tussen netwerken en innovatie op bedrijfsniveau is gemeten via een enquête onder toeristische ondernemers. De resultaten hiervan laten zien dat er een (zwakke) relatie is tussen WCL beleid en innovatie op bedrijfsniveau. Netwerken zijn minder belangrijk dan andere bronnen van informatie zoals beurzen en vakbladen. Lidmaatschappen van professionele toerisme organisaties hebben geen meetbare invloed hebben op innovatie op bedrijfsniveau. Lidmaatschappen zijn vooral sector-georiënteerd en maar een klein percentage van de ondernemers is lid van organisaties voor behoud van landschap of cultuurhistorie. Bij het interpreteren van de resultaten van de enquête moet worden bedacht dat het gaat om een kleinschalig onderzoek. In de onderzochte populatie kan maar op beperkte schaal een relatie worden gelegd tussen netwerken en innovatie. Het zou interessant zijn te onderzoeken of deze uitkomst overeind blijft in een grootschaliger onderzoek.

Onderzoeksraag 5: sturingsmodel

Voor sturing is geëvalueerd hoe de praktijk in de verschillende gebieden zich verhoudt tot de modellen uit tabel B. Hierbij is tevens gekeken op welke manier de sturingsstrategie van invloed is geweest op de innovatie en rurale kwaliteit in relatie tot toeristische ontwikkeling. Een belangrijke conclusie is dat er – ondanks dat het om vergelijkbare planningsfiguren gaat - sprake is van aanzienlijke verschillen in sturingsstrategie tussen de onderzochte gebieden.

In Friesland wordt aanvankelijk vooral het strategische model gevuld. Aangezien dit echter te weinig resultaten opleverde werd voor een meer communicatieve benadering gekozen om ze te proberen de inbreng vanuit de agrarische sector te vergroten. Dit leidde onder andere tot een aantal agritoeristische projecten. De reguliere toeristische sector was niet op deze manier betrokken bij WCL.

De strategie van Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne is nauwelijks interactief. Het park heeft nauwelijks tot geen relaties met ondernemers of toerisme bureaus op lokaal niveau. Wel is er een goede relatie met het regionaal toerisme bureau, maar deze relatie is er meer een van 'taakverdeling' dan van samenwerking. In het verleden heeft het park een aantal toerisme projecten ontwikkeld, maar dit waren vrij autonome activiteiten.

In Midden-Limburg en Zuidwest Friesland lag de nadruk op een bottom-up benadering, die past binnen het communicatieve model. Ook was het de bedoeling innovatie te stimuleren, in Limburg vooral in de latere fasen van het WCL proces. Het park Livradois-Forez heeft nadrukkelijk het initiatief genomen op een aantal punten, om zo ontwikkelingen te stimuleren die passen binnen haar visie op de ontwikkeling van het gebied. Dit kan worden geplaatst binnen het strategische model. Het betrekken van de lokale bevolking bij ontwikkelingen is tot op zekere hoogte succesvol geweest en in elk geval een deel van de toerisme sector is op die manier bereikt. Er is echter ook kritiek en sceptisisme over de gevolgde aanpak – ook bij een aantal direct betrokken ondernemers. In Limburg is de aanpak via het communicatieve model over het algemeen heel succesvol geweest. Nadat draagvlak voor WCL onder lokale partijen was verworven kon de aandacht verschuiven naar de inhoud van de projecten en ontstond een meer op innovatie gerichte aanpak die past binnen het instrumentele model.

Uit de case-studies blijkt dat het lastig is om de toeristische sector mee te krijgen in interactieve processen. In Midden-Limburg is het wel gelukt om via een communicatieve benadering andere partijen te interesseren voor WCL, waarna kon worden overgegaan op een meer instrumentele benadering. In Livradois-Forez is het wel gelukt om een deel van de sector mee te krijgen via een meer strategische benadering. Nadeel hiervan is dat een deel van de betrokkenen sceptisch is over de resultaten. Op basis van deze ervaringen is het aan te raden te proberen om de toeristische sector bij dit type processen te betrekken door vanaf het begin voor een meer instrumentele benadering te kiezen. Dat vraagt om het betrekken van een beperkte groep 'voorlopers' in een gebied, mogelijk in combinatie met een aantal partijen van buiten. Dit biedt de mogelijkheid om snel tastbare resultaten te bereiken, een belangrijke voorwaarde voor 'commitment'. Welke strategie ook wordt gekozen, het is belangrijk dat de sector meer betrokken raakt in rurale ontwikkelingsprocessen.

Onderzoeksraag 6: verschillen tussen gebieden

De resultaten overzienend kan worden gesteld dat er meer overeenkomsten zijn tussen WCL Midden-Limburg en Parc Livradois-Forez dan tussen de beide WCL-gebieden of tussen de beide parken. Dat duidt erop dat lokale factoren een belangrijke invloed hebben gehad op het vormgeven van deze interactieve processen. Het komt er op neer dat alleen voor een interactieve benadering wordt gekozen als centrale partijen op het regionale niveau het belang hiervan inzien en een voortrekkersrol op zich nemen. Deze partijen hebben een sterke invloed gehad op het procesontwerp: in beide gebieden was een centrale rol weggelegd voor lokale partijen. Ook de sociaal-economische setting speelt een rol bij het verklaren van verschillen: Midden-Limburg en Livradois-Forez zijn 'marginale' gebieden. Hierdoor hebben economische partijen meer interesse om deel te nemen (Nederland) en is er vanuit partijen op regionaal niveau minder interesse in het gebied (Frankrijk). Andere factoren – zoals de relatie tot andere vormen van beleid - zijn van invloed geweest op het verloop van het proces, maar spelen een ondergeschikte rol.

Een fundamenteel verschil tussen WCL en PNR is dat de Franse parken semi-permanente structuren zijn die telkens voor een periode van tien jaar worden ingesteld.

WCL beleid was een eenmalig experiment. Ervaringen in Livradois-Forez laten zien dat tien jaar nog steeds betrekkelijk kort is als het gaat om het ontwikkelen van bottom-up structuren. Evaluaties van het WCL-beleid geven aan dat het voor een aantal gebieden – waaronder Midden-Limburg – wenselijk zou zijn om het beleid te kunnen voortzetten. Gelukkig functioneert de WCL structuur in Limburg nog steeds, maar de toekomst is onzeker. Het voortzetten van delen van het WCL-beleid onder een andere naam heeft het gevaar dat de nieuwe beleidsvormen te lang op zich laten wachten en het ‘momentum’ verloren gaat. Als opnieuw een – vergelijkbare – structuur moet worden opgezet treedt verspilling van energie op en het is niet ondenkbaar dat dit sterk ontmoedigend werkt op de lokaal betrokkenen.

D Netwerkperspectief op plattelandstoerisme: evaluatie van de onderzoeks methode

In dit onderzoek is – op basis van de literatuur – gekozen om ontwikkeling van plattelandstoerisme te benaderen via een netwerkperspectief. De analytische meerwaarde van een dergelijk perspectief komt in dit onderzoek inderdaad tot uitdrukking. Met het spanningsveld tussen inhoud en proces kan effectief worden omgegaan door te kiezen voor een actorperspectief, gecombineerd met een analyse van discoursen. De aanpak is multidisciplinair in de zin dat een economisch en een planningsperspectief zijn gecombineerd. Ook is plattelandstoerisme benaderd vanuit verschillende analysesniveaus door interacties tussen partijen centraal te stellen.

In relatie tot beleidsnetwerken blijkt het essentieel analytisch onderscheid te maken tussen verschillende modellen voor dergelijke interactieve benaderingen. Het onderscheid tussen een communicatieve, een instrumentele en een strategische benadering bleek een goed hulpmiddel om verschillen tussen de case-study gebieden te verklaren. De modellen geven ook houvast bij het zoeken naar alternatieve sturingsstrategieën waarmee op een effectievere manier totstandkoming van toeristische innovaties kan worden gestimuleerd die zijn gebaseerd op gebiedskwaliteiten.

In het onderzoek zijn zowel kwalitatieve als kwantitatieve methoden toegepast. Beide methoden bieden specifieke mogelijkheden. De kwalitatieve benadering bood inzicht in de onderlinge relaties tussen partijen en een kwantitatieve benadering heeft geholpen om deze relaties in perspectief te plaatsen. Analyse van de data met behulp van een computerprogramma speciaal ontworpen om netwerkrelaties in kaart te brengen (UCINET) bleek een beperkte toegevoegde waarde te hebben ten opzichte van een ‘gewone’ statistische analyse van de data (SPSS).

E Aanbevelingen voor beleid: netwerken meer laten bijdragen aan innovatie en kwaliteit

Ervaringen in Midden Limburg en in Livradois-Forez laten zien dat via netwerksturing het ontstaan van innovaties gebaseerd op rurale kwaliteit kan worden gestimuleerd. In deze gebieden zijn de voorwaarden voor een dergelijke ontwikkeling gecreëerd en is een aantal veranderingen in gang gezet dat onder deze noemer kan worden geschaard. Er is gewerkt aan een ‘systeeminnovatie’ met als doel om lokale partijen bij plattelands-

ontwikkeling te betrekken en om de economische ontwikkeling aan te laten sluiten bij gebiedskwaliteiten. Tegelijkertijd is er echter nog geen sprake van 'radicale' innovaties in toerisme en kan de relatie met gebiedskwaliteiten zeker nog verder worden versterkt. Op basis van de bevindingen in de onderzochte gebieden kan een aantal aanbevelingen worden gedaan voor het verder verbeteren van sturing van processen van plattelands-toerisme via netwerken.

Interactieve sturing serieus nemen

Hoewel interactieve planning vaak wordt neergezet als 'de nieuwe weg' laat de praktijk zien dat het door veel betrokkenen te weinig serieus wordt genomen. Er is sprake van een spanningsveld tussen interactieve planning en top-down benaderingen. In de 'goede' voorbeelden in deze studie is de invloed van de lokale bevolking – of in elk geval een deel daarvan – op het plattelandsbeleid toegenomen. De goede voorbeelden blijken echter ook de meest perifere gebieden te zijn, en de invloed heeft vooral betrekking op beleidsthema's van 'ondergeschikt' belang. Over ingrepen zoals de aanleg van een weg, de ontwikkeling van grootschalige toeristische attracties of van natuurontwikkeling worden in afzonderlijke beleidsnetwerken besluiten genomen.

Als interactieve benaderingen serieus worden genomen zou moeten worden overwogen om ook deze 'zwaardere' onderwerpen erin te betrekken. Deze hebben immers veelal een grote(re) invloed op plattelandsontwikkeling. In algemene zin zouden beslissingen over wat wel en wat niet aan regionale netwerken wordt overgelaten meer moeten worden genomen op inhoudelijke gronden, en minder worden gekoppeld aan de beleidsvelden van afzonderlijke ministeries.

Duidelijkheid over motivatie en doelen

Er bestaat te weinig duidelijkheid over de motivatie achter interactieve benaderingen: worden deze om strategische, inhoudelijke of emancipatoire redenen geïntroduceerd? In Nederland is vaak sprake van een strategische benadering, waarin processen vooral pragmatisch zijn en win-win situaties worden nagestreefd. Zuidwest Friesland is hierin geen uitzondering maar eerder regel. Het betrekken van regionale en lokale partijen en een 'bottom-up' benadering hebben alleen zin als deze partijen daadwerkelijk de kans krijgen om invloed uit te oefenen en eigen keuzes kunnen maken.

Als processen van plattelandsvernieuwing moeten leiden tot economische ontwikkeling die gebaseerd is op de kwaliteiten van het gebied, moet de nadruk liggen op een communicatieve en instrumentele benadering van netwerksturing. Behoud van rurale kwaliteiten vraagt om de inbreng van een groot aantal partijen – liefst vanuit verschillende discoursen. Een instrumentele benadering is het meest geschikt om innovatie te genereren. Belangenorganisaties kunnen hierin een rol spelen, maar moeten dan vooral worden aangesproken op hun kennis. Via een combinatie van beide benaderingen kan een legitiem en tegelijkertijd innovatief plattelandsontwikkelings-proces in gang worden gezet. Een dergelijke benadering vraagt overigens om een lange termijn strategie: het WCL beleid is te kort geweest om daadwerkelijk de vruchten te kunnen plukken van de gevuldte aanpak. Het is belangrijk dat de mogelijkheid bestaat om initiatieven voort te zetten in gebieden waar de aanpak succes heeft.

Innovatie

Innovatie gebaseerd op regionale kwaliteiten vraagt om nieuwe manieren van denken over plattelandsontwikkeling en over toerisme. De onderzochte gevallen in Nederland en

Frankrijk laten zien dat interactieve benaderingen nog niet hebben geleid tot radicaal nieuwe toerisme praktijken. Toerisme op het platteland zou gebaat zijn bij een meer instrumentele benadering van sturing. Partijen zouden meer op basis van hun inhoudelijke kennis bij deze processen moeten worden betrokken. Zeker gezien de relatief zwakke positie van de toerisme sector in verhouding tot bijvoorbeeld landbouw en natuur, is inbreng van kennis en goede ideeën een van de manieren om toch invloed op dit soort processen te kunnen uitoefenen.

Meer inbreng van de toeristische sector

De inbreng van de toeristische sector in plattelandsvernieuwingsprocessen is beperkt. Dit hangt samen met het gebrek aan organisatie binnen de sector, het feit dat het toeristisch product door de sector nog teveel wordt gezien als iets dat binnen de hekken van recreatiebedrijven tot stand komt én met het feit dat plattelandsontwikkelings-processen gepreoccupeerd zijn met de landbouw.

Het is merkwaardig dat toerisme, met zijn veronderstelde strategische belang, niet méér beleidsaandacht krijgt. Er lijkt sprake van een vicieuze cirkel van weinig beleidsaandacht, gebrekende belangenvertegenwoordiging en institutionalisering, en daarmee weinig mogelijkheden om beleidsaandacht te trekken. Tegelijkertijd is er wel sprake van toeristische ontwikkelingen in plattelandsgebieden, maar die voltrekken zich buiten de invloedssfeer van plattelandsvernieuwingsprocessen. Dit geldt vooral voor grootschalige toeristische en 'leisure' ontwikkelingen (bijvoorbeeld Volcania in de Auvergne). Hiermee verschilt toerisme overigens niet van andere grootschalige ontwikkelingen die het platteland veranderen en die geen deel uitmaken van plattelandsvernieuwingsprocessen.

Tegelijkertijd is de toeristische sector over het algemeen niet bijster geïnteresseerd om betrokken te worden bij plattelandsvernieuwingsprocessen. Dit soort processen wordt niet als belangrijk voor de toekomst van de sector beschouwd en het potentieel strategische belang van dit soort processen – zeker voor kleinschalige en middelgrote bedrijven – wordt niet onderkend. Als toerisme niet automatisch een grote rol in dit soort processen krijgt toebedeeld zou de sector zelf een belangrijkere plaats moeten claimen. Van een defensieve zou een meer offensieve strategie moeten worden gekozen – zeker door intermediaire organisaties. Overigens is de laatste jaren wel een kentering te bemerken in de houding van belangenorganisaties.

Tenslotte

Het gebrek aan aandacht voor toerisme in plattelandsvernieuwingsprocessen betekent een serieuze bedreiging, zowel voor de toekomst van toerisme als voor de toekomst van plattelandsgebieden. Het strategische belang van toerisme – zowel op economisch gebied als in relatie tot de identiteit van het platteland – in ogenschouw nemend, is een innovatieve benadering van plattelandstoerisme cruciaal voor de toekomst van het Europese platteland. Het is ook van cruciaal belang voor de plattelandstoeristische sector. Concurrentie tussen verschillende plattelandsgebieden wordt heviger en zo ook concurrentie tussen toerisme en andere 'leisure' ontwikkelingen. Als toerisme niet worden ingebetekend in plattelandsontwikkelingsprocessen worden deze ingehaald door de realiteit.

Het bieden van een aantrekkelijk product van een hoge kwaliteit, bij voorkeur gebaseerd op de kwaliteiten van het gebied, sluit goed aan bij de doelstellingen die in veel plattelandsgebieden worden nagestreefd. Interactieve sturing biedt goede

mogelijkheden om dergelijke doelstellingen te realiseren. Dit vraagt echter om duidelijkheid over de status van interactieve planning ten opzichte van andere vormen van beleid die van invloed zijn op rurale ontwikkeling, om een goed doordacht ontwerp van sturingsprocessen - die in algemeenheid meer op innovatie moeten worden gericht - en om input van toeristische actoren in plattelandsvernieuwingsprocessen.

About the author

Janine Caalders was born in Roggel, a village in the south of the Netherlands, in 1969. She completed her secondary school education (Gymnasium B) in 1987 and went on to study Human Geography at the University of Utrecht. She was awarded her *doctorandus* degree in 1993. After her studies she worked for a consultancy in Utrecht, before accepting a PhD. research post at Wageningen University. Janine has published about her research in professional and scientific journals, has given guest lectures and has presented intermediary research results at several conferences and workshops.

Alongside her appointment at the university, she started a consultancy in tourism and leisure together with Birgit Elands and Marcel Jansen in 1997. After a few years, she turned this into a full-time job. She found a new business partner in Joost Hagens, with whom she is currently managing BUITEN, a consultancy specialised in regional economic development. Within BUITEN, Janine is responsible for rural development and tourism. The company currently employs six consultants and carries out projects both in the Netherlands and internationally.

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