

Agri-tourism and Rural Revitalization in China's Peri-urban Areas: The Case of Dutang

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Pre-face

This thesis is part of my short time as a master student in Cultural Geography: Tourism Geography and Planning in the University of Groningen. It is a remarkable year due to the worldwide pandemic. I, as a student, was under more pressure and loneliness than usual in terms of both study and daily life.

Thankfully, I am finally able to present my Master thesis to you with my pleasure and honor! And, the road to growth is always with the help of my tutors, classmates, friends, and even strangers around.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Yongjun Zhao for his encouragement and guidance. In particular, at the beginning of my thesis, he told me to clarify the idea of my article in my mind, which laid the foundation for my later research. Then, I am grateful to my cousin Yaqi for the support she gave me at every critical moment. Also, I am very happy to have the company of my friends in Leeuwarden! Lastly, I would like to thank every respondent for the valuable and unique experiences you have provided to my research.

My study experience in the Netherlands is unforgettable, and what is even more unforgettable is every single person I met during this year. It is this special experience that made me discover the beauty of myself, the beauty of life and the beauty of the world!

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Liuwenyue Feng

Abstract

Agri-tourism in China's Peri-urban areas (PUAs) is seen as having the potential to respond to the societal issues caused by agricultural transformation and urban expansion. However, this paradigm emphasizes the collaboration of governmental and non-governmental actors at the local level and the integrated development of local resources, cultures, and activities. The development of PUA areas in China involves too many grassroots and private enterprises for actors in rural development to be fully considered. Therefore, the idea that agri-tourism drives rural development still needs to be articulated in the Chinese context for a more critical understanding. Through a case study of in-depth interviews with stakeholders associated with agri-tourism in Dutang, China, this study finds that stakeholders consisting of four parties follow "top-down" governance at the destination level, which provides a legitimate platform and financial support for the development of Dutang Village while ensuring relatively broad participation. However, inequitable participation (empowerment) prevents Dutang agri-tourism from negotiating and balancing the use of internal and external resources.

Keywords: Agri-tourism, rural development, peri-urban areas, tourism governance, integrated rural tourism

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List of Abbreviations

PUA (s)	Peri-urban areas
IRT	Integrated rural tourism
TPA	Targeted poverty alleviation strategy
CFO	Farmer's professional cooperative
GRP	Gross Regional Product
MLHX Tourist Attraction	Mulanhuaxiang Tourist Attraction
MLHX Ltd.	Mulanhuaxinag tourism developmental corporation

1. Introduction

With the changes in global social and economic conditions as well as the fast-developing urban sprawl, conventional agriculture in peri-urban areas is facing multiple vulnerabilities (Che, et al. 2005; Zasada et al., 2011; Yang, Cai & Sliuzas, 2010). Peri-urban areas (PUAs) are acting as closer rural areas with a mix of land uses, such as farmlands, leisure and sports venues and industrial bases, etc. (Errington, 1994; Morán et al., 2016). In particular, predominantly agricultural land use is considered by Legates and Hudalah (2014) to be economically competitive compared to urban uses in PUAs. However, changes in agricultural sectors, for example, the intensification of agriculture, have reduced the demand for farmer labour in PUA (Yang, Cai & Sliuzas, 2010). Next to this, urban expansion, spatial fragmentation and increasing land prices make conventional agriculture more vulnerable (Morán et al., 2016). Back in the 1990s, China PUA which once functioned to provide food for the urban population and achieved self-efficiency, has been experiencing rural labour and land decline since the 1990s (Chen, Li & Liu, 2018; Yang, Cai & Sliuzas, 2010). As a result, socio-economic and socio-cultural issues in rural areas, such as the migration of rural populations to cities (demographic issues) and the lack of rural community services and infrastructure, are increasing (Keyim, 2016).

The characteristics of neighbouring cities of PUA also provide opportunities for differentiated positioning of agriculture (Morán et al., 2016). In this context, agri-tourism, a form of multifunctional agriculture, is a value-added way to agriculture. It encourages tourists to enjoy and participate in agricultural life in rural areas and to educate them about agriculture-related knowledge (Che, et al. 2005; Lobo, 2001). On the one hand, agri-tourism itself provides a broader agricultural market for farmers (e.g. food supply of tourism) (Torres & Momsen, 2004); on the other hand, it has the potential to catalyse the local socio-economic (e.g. local services and infrastructure) and socio-cultural (e.g. local knowledge and social cohesion) development in rural areas (Telfer, 2014; Moscardo et al., 2013). In essence, agri-tourism as a rural development driver aims to develop rural areas as a whole.

However, the aforementioned benefits of agri-tourism to rural areas can be affected by the extent to which collaborative governance exists at the local level (Keyim, 2017). Simply put, the cooperation between 'state' and 'nonstate' stakeholders is crucial for the achievement of agri-tourism in rural development (Keyim, 2016). Based on Keyim (2017), the state actors refers to the governmental actors and "public sectors", and include actors at the different organizational level (e.g. municipal, regional and supranational levels), while the nonstate actors as those non-governmental actors or "private sectors" (p1). Koutra and Edwards (2012) verify in Ghana that tourism cannot significantly revitalize rural regions, because of the unequal relationships between different actors and the uneven resource allocation related to it. In this context, it is also necessary to identify, explore and conduct the integrated development of actors, activities and resources in some certain areas (Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2016; Oliver & Jenkins, 2003).

China's earliest agri-tourism was initiated by farmers in the 1980s. At that time, agri-tourism fully complied with market demand and was not regulated and supported by the government (Yang, Cai & Sliuzas, 2010). In 2017, there were 2.2million farmhouse enterprises in rural China (Chinabaogao, 2019), of which local private enterprises account for a large proportion, which undoubtedly increases the difficulty of governance and integration in the destination. For instance, Li and Zheng (2020) proved that diversified resources, tourism products and cultural activities were created by various actors in some China PUA, but these were not integrated on the basis of agri-tourism. Meanwhile, China's rural areas consist of a large number of grassroots with low education levels, which resulted in some grassroots in rural China lacking the ability to self-develop (Zhou et al., 2018). Academically, plenty of articles on multifunctional agriculture, agri-tourism, and destination integration are discussed in the context of Western countries. For example, Marsden and Sonnino (2008) stress that multifunctional agriculture should be discussed in the UK context. The complete bottom-up development and the concept of governance proposed by Western researchers may not be applicable to Chinese society. According to the gap based on

literature and on practices previous referred, the central research question of this paper is to explore “*How are China’s peri-urban areas using agri-tourism to catalyse rural development?*”

To be more specific, three sub-questions are listed as following:

- (1) *What are the existing types and development models of agri-tourism in China’s peri-urban areas?*
- (2) *In what ways does agri-tourism contribute to the development of China’s peri-urban areas?*
- (3) *What are the opportunities and challenges of agri-tourism in China peri-urban areas in terms of tourism governance and integrated development?*

This will be empirically explored by a case study on Dutang Village, China. Prior to the development of agri-tourism in 2014, this PUA was in economic, socio-economic and demographic decline. Since the development of flower agri-tourism, it has been officially awarded by the Chinese government as a paragon of agri-tourism for rural development (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the PRC, 2019). Most importantly, planning projects about tourism in Dutang Village involve stakeholders from multiple scalars, such as governments, farmer cooperatives and the local community. It is believed that Dutang can bring valuable insights to researches in the field of agri-tourism in China.

Chapter 2 opens with an introduction to China PUA to provide readers with more knowledge on China. It also obtains an overview of the conceptual framework of this paper by reviewing the existing literature on agri-tourism, rural development, collaborative governance, integrated rural tourism, and socio-cultural/economic geography. Next to the theoretical framework, Chapter 3 will describe and classify the practices of agri-tourism in a relevant context in China. To provide readers with an in-depth insight into the study are, Chapter 4 will describe the case study area and discuss how it is inextricably linked to this study. Chapter 5 will indicate the methodology, followed by the results and a discussion of the findings in Chapter 6. In the final chapter, conclusions and limitations will be discussed.

2. Conceptual framework

2.1. China peri-urban areas (PUA)

With the continuous expansion of urban areas, a new concept named the peri-urban area (PUA) has replaced the traditional urban-rural dichotomy (Errington, 1994). Peri-urban areas (also called urban-rural continuum in China) are defined as areas along the borders of urban built-up areas on the edge of the city, and are considered closer rural areas by comparing to remote rural areas when taking the city as reference substance (Errington, 1994; Wandl & Magoni, 2017; Han & Cai, 2011). Sprawling cities and agricultural industrialization have led to the transformation of previously rural areas around urban areas into PUAs (Errington, 1994; Wandl & Magoni, 2017; Pan, 2009). It is also worth mentioning that these factors continue to affect the development of PUA to a large extent today.

According to Morán et al. (2016), there is no common agreement on the spatial division of PUA as the different national conditions for different countries. Some urban-rural researchers have proposed methods according to different physical characteristics, such as population density, distance and settlement size. (Vizzari, 2011; Bibby & Shepherd, 2004). For instance, Webster (as cited in Legates & Hudalah, 2014) describes PUAs by measuring distance. He states “*the peri-urban area is usually an irregular donut shape around the urban core, and can be anywhere from 18 to 186 miles wide*” (p. 335). Or some other researchers have spatially classified PUAs based on land use or functional information; mapping different types of areas by conducting a GIS system (Cloke & Edwards, 1986; Harrison, 1992; Morán et al., 2016)

For China, some aforementioned physical features do not seem to be applicable. This is evident in the work undertaken by Wu and Shen (2015), the population density of some China PUA could be even much higher than the urban population density of most large Western countries. Although within the territory of China, the physical features of peri-urban areas and the process of peri-urbanization also vary from region to region. Based on Pan (2009), the progress

of peri-urbanization in China is largely tied to regional economic growth. This has led to the fact that in China's fastest-growing city, Beijing, the PUAs are described as having a high population density and high-rise buildings (Fleischer, 2010).

On this premise, this study is more inclined to the division proposed by Pan (2009), who categorized PUA into four types based on the percentage of non-agricultural workers, the proportion of fixed asset investment across the area, and proportion of arable land. These are Core, Inner, External and Marginal PUAs, each of which is driven by different mechanisms and has its own unique features.

Regarding the characteristics of the case study area, this paper focuses on the "External PUAs", which are areas far away from the central cities that have relatively more abundant tourism and agriculture resources compared with other types of PUAs (Pan, 2009). Most of the leading regional industries are characteristic industries (the tertiary industry) directly transformed from the primary industry. Yet, the development of PUAs driven by urban expansion and agricultural industrialization has led to a weak tertiary industry base and lagging local community services and infrastructure constructions (Legates & Hudalah, 2014; Pan, 2009; Wandl & Magoni, 2017). Also, most rural populations still choose to work in cities or have dual work identities. Thus, several of China's External PUAs are trapped in poverty and lagging development (Ye, Chen & Liu, 2007; Zhou et al., 2018).

2.2. Linking up agriculture with tourism

2.2.1 Challenges of agriculture and multi-functional agriculture

With the acceleration of regional industrialization, the role of agriculture in national economic and social development has gradually diminished (Hara & Naipaul, 2008; Galdeano-Gómez, Aznar-Sánchez & Pérez-Mesa, 2010). Historically, agriculture in American rural areas has contributed significantly to the development of the national economy (Hara & Naipaul, 2008). At the same

time, agriculture has been an important contributor to the economy of many rural areas in the US. For example, the agricultural sector was the largest single sector in Polk County; the total economic value of main crops in Polk County was US\$ 4.2 billion in 1999 (1999 Evans Report, as cited in Hara & Naipaul, 2008, p. 10). To further develop secondary industry in Europe after World War II, industrialization gradually occupied a dominant position. This led to a situation where the main function of agriculture in rural Europe was to supply food to urban areas (Yang & Zhao, 2013). In China, about 40 years later, Beijing's PUA agriculture fed the rapidly growing urban population caused by the dramatic urbanization in the 1990s (Yang, Cai & Sliuzas, 2010). These exogenous development methods ignore the development of culture and environment in rural areas, which are undoubtedly destructive to rural development.

Meanwhile, changes in agriculture put a lot of pressure on small farmers in rural areas of developed countries; the global competition, falling prices of food productions, capital and technology-intensive agricultural productions and the consequences of price-cost squeeze (Che et al., 2005; Li, 2014). The intensification of agriculture reduces the distinctiveness and sustainability of several regions, although it improved agricultural productivity (Horling & Marsden, 2014). The loss of distinctiveness is mainly reflected in the fact that places, their productions and services are becoming increasingly substitutable. This leaves rural areas without specialized agricultural products in dilemma.

On the sustainability front, the implementation of agricultural intensification policies to increase agricultural production has caused serious environmental problems (Gao, Hua & Allaert, 2012). Heavy use of pesticides, overgrazing and agricultural production in ecologically fragile areas have caused environmental problems such as soil erosion and the destruction of biodiversity in rural areas.

Also, the "cost-price squeeze" forces the agriculture industry to obtain more output while reducing labour employment resulted in increasing socio-economic problems in rural areas such as the unemployment directly, and the migration of

rural population to cities, population ageing, and the lack of rural community services indirectly (Horling & Marsden, 2014; Keyim, 2017).

In parallel to this, China has the largest agricultural population in the world, which exposes its rural areas to more serious socio-economic and socio-cultural problems (Li, 2014). This leads farmers to either leave rural areas or remain in poverty in their villages. In contrast to the global competition faced by agriculture in developed countries, China has relatively high competitiveness globally on agricultural commodities. Che, Veeck and Veeck (2005) believe that global competition has intensified after China joined the World Trade Organization. As the world's most populous country, it is relatively rich in human resources for production and the labour costs are relatively low. Horling and Marsden (2014) mentioned that China's labour and production costs are extremely low when they studied Michigan's agriculture restrictions. Also, China's capital mobility has experienced high savings, high investment, and low consumption over time, leading to insufficient domestic demand, and forcing some commodities forced to be exported (Shen & Hu, 2008). Therefore, global competition is not considered a challenge for Chinese agriculture in this paper. In essence, Chinese agriculture is facing challenges from a large number of farmers, falling prices for food productions, capital and technology-intensive agricultural production and the consequences of a price-cost squeeze.

To cope with those challenges in agriculture, western scholars and regional planners primarily carried out the concept of multifunctional agriculture, which refers to the shift from agricultural production with food supply as the main goal to a service-oriented agriculture form (Marsden & Sonnino, 2008; Morán et al., 2016). The term "*multifunctional agriculture*" was originally used in a 1988 document entitled "*The Future of Rural Society*" published by the European Commission (1988). Multifunctional agriculture in Europe combines commodities and services to provide a variety of social, environmental and economic functions (Piorr et al., 2007; Van Huylenbroeck et al., 2007); Agricultural landscapes sightseeing, tourism and agricultural education, as well as the transition to diversified organic food and healthy and high-end agricultural products rather

than food production and fibre (Zasada et al., 2011; Morán et al., 2017; Gao, Hua & Allaert, 2012). In this case, PUAs become a space for various socio-economic or cultural activities, often including specialty and organic food production, consumption and even e-commerce, tourism and leisure, rather than being associated solely with agricultural production (Saxena et al., 2007).

2.2.2 Agri-tourism as a tool for rural development

Among several functions of today's multifunctional agriculture, tourism is seen as the leading strategy since it can create economic growth while promoting socio-economic development (e.g. local income, services and infrastructure) and social cohesion of the destination (Telfer, 2014; Moscardo et al., 2013). Specifically, tourism is considered to penetrate and integrate with local and regional economies in an inextricable way, generating local income and broader development benefits such as job creation, maintenance of local facilities, and preservation of local cultural and environmental resources on a joint, synergistic and participatory basis (Telfer, 2007; Saarinen, 2003; Keyim, 2017). The detailed categories of socio-economic, socio-cultural and economic development in the context of tourism are shown in table 1.

Furthermore, tourism is seen to enhance the competitiveness of agriculture in relation to urban functions in China PUAs, thereby creating employment and improving living conditions of rural communities around cities (PUA communities), while providing leisure and recreational activities for urban residents (Yang, Cai & Siluzas, 2010). Next to this, The State Council of the PRC points out in Article 11 of '*Opinions on Comprehensively Promoting Rural Revitalization and Accelerating Rural Modernization*' (2021), rural development ought to rely on rural characteristic advantageous resources to build the entire agriculture circuits and develop high-quality leisure agri-tourism routes. Specific speaking, rural China emphasizes the creation of a coherent and integrated agricultural network among various needs of society for fresh and organic food, entertainment, and unpolluted natural spaces. From this content, there is no doubt that tourism has been seen as a drive for rural development.

Table 1 Details of tourism benefits for rural areas

Categories	Indicators
Economic growth	e.g. increase in tourism flow, generate foreign exchange, enhance government tax revenues (Hindley & Smith, 1984; Mihalič, 2002; Du, Ng & Lew, 2016)
Socio-economic development	e.g. Well-being of individuals, groups or families, living conditions, education, health, population growth (Kozic, Mikulic & Kresic, 2013; Saarinen, 2014)
Socio-cultural development	e.g. improve people's quality of life, conservations of landscapes and historical heritage, collective meaning of a place, social cohesion (Glasson et al., 1995; Mbaiwa, 2005)

Agri-tourism is a manifestation of multifunctional agriculture. It combines tourism and agriculture to encourage tourists to enjoy and join agricultural life in rural areas and to educate them about agriculture-related knowledge (Lobo, 2001). Traditionally, agriculture had been a production-based industry with the sale of agricultural products as its main business. Through its linkage with tourism, it has been transformed to service-based where farmers provide customers with agricultural products, while providing guests with accommodation, catering and even local knowledge and culture (Sonnino & Marsden, 2006; Che, Veeck & Veeck 2005). For example, the earliest agri-tourism in China was in the peri-urban of Beijing, with organic fruits and vegetable picking, farm-to-table food, and accommodations as the main activities, and it has a history of more than 40 years (Yang, Hao, Liu & Cai, 2016; Guo, Sun, Ren & Lv, 2008).

It is believed that agri-tourism can be used not only as a means of economic diversification and landscape protection, but also to engage in various activities about social and natural environmental (Che *et al*, 2005; Meeus,1993; Petrin & Gannon, 1997; Roberts & Hall, 2001; Sarkar, 2010). Especially for rural areas, Wyproska and Mosiej (2010) emphasize that agri-tourism activities should be used to enhance the quality of life and affect both the social and economic aspects of rural regions, and then realize sustainable rural development.

2.3. Stakeholder relations and integrated development

In the development of tourism for the purpose of regional development, it is essential to understand and manage the relationship between stakeholders (Oliver & Jenkins, 2003; Keyim, 2017; Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2016). In the case of Landge Miao village, China, stakeholder networks and their voices are important success factors for regional development (Li, Ryan & Cave, 2016). The case proves that in China, local actors' voices can increase the transparency of the planning process, and subsequently grow the confidence of the local community (Chen *et al.*, 2013). Similarly, Park and Kim (2016) highlight that one of the difficulties of sustainable tourism development in a region is to facilitate the cooperation of all potential actors, so as to realize that each actor will not be marginalized and thus obtain a consistent commitment.

Stakeholders are complex and present at various layers. Reports for the Wadden Region published by Steijn and Huizer (2013) and Hartman and Sijtsma (2018) both state that the involved multiple stakeholders in Wadden region have various values and interests, which means stakeholders are "*layered*" (p. 24). The global-local nexus by Milne and Atelijevic (2001) provides a clear insight into this concept. In their model, interactions are happening between and within different actors from the global, national, regional and local levels. Hence, regional planners should pay attention to balance the relationship between multi-layered stakeholders and avoid conflicts between different sectors. For example, the conflicts between nature and economy (Klostermann & Toonen, 2011).

However, many tourism destinations still suffer from a lack of collaboration between multi-layered actors, power imbalances and differing stakeholders' interests, leading to inclusiveness in bottom-up tourism development that may be entangled to status quo perspectives (Dredge, 2006). In the example of Whiskey tourism studied by Stoffelen and Vanneste (2016), the local stakeholder composition is diverse; numerous Whiskey distilleries and public departments, such as regional council and local business groups are involved in the tourism development. It is difficult to identify whether everyone is benefiting from Whiskey tourism as the power position between distilleries and the local community are polarized.

In addition, Saarinen and Wall-Reinius (2019) point out tourist enclaves such as health resorts are inherently executed by non-local drivers (e.g. international tourism sectors), which has resulted in the marginalization of local communities. Local communities are only allowed to participate in the tourism development process for the purpose of serving as labour. In Fazito et al. (2016) research on Brazil tourism development, local tourism planning is aligned with regional elite thinking. Moreover, Oleksii et al. (2019, p. 100) even divide governance in rural China into "*grassroots governance*" and "*elite governance*". They argue that rural areas in China aspire to achieve "*grassroots governance*" with the broad participation of local communities. However, due to incomplete organizations and a weak collective economy of villagers, governance practices are gradually becoming tools for elites to make profits, resulting in the loss of local cultural identity (Oleksii et al., 2019).

2.3.1 Governance and integrated rural tourism

In this context, as Keyim (2017) concurs, a collaborative governance approach contributes to the socio-economic development of rural areas and the protection of local communities. In the words of Yee (2004), governance refers to an emerging governing activity that not only includes the government. Hall (2011) addresses that individual and public actors from different levels should be involved in the process of governance.

The term governance always mentions along with the concept of sustainable tourism (Hall, 2011; Keyim, 2017). Sustainable tourism is committed to searching for wider sustainability of the entire system (i.g. the balanced evolvement of “*People, Planet and Profits*”, as shown in figure 1 (Hartman & Sijtsma, 2018, p. 5). This presents that the goal of governance is to focus on not only the economic growth but the development of the environment, residents’ quality of life etc. In this process, the actors involved in tourism activities have shifted from simple government management to the participation of both governmental and non-governmental actors (Nunkoo, 2017). More importantly, the role of non-governmental actors in tourism development is increasing (Hezri & Dovers, 2006).

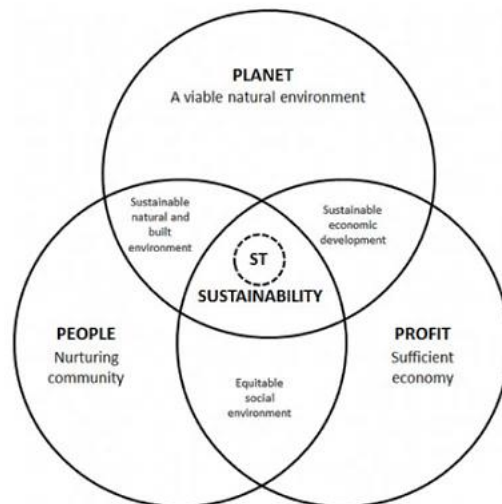


Figure 1 Sustainability and sustainable tourism (Source: Hartman & Sijtsma, 2018)

Further, Keyim (2017) argues that effective collaborative governance should be achieved instead of simple governance. He then proposes that the first step of reaching that effective collaborative governance is to ensure broad and equal participation in the decision-making and executive phase, which follows a similar line with the argument in the first paragraph. And then, a legitimate platform that links multi-scalar stakeholders together is required. Also, adequate resources play a vital role in the process; some tourism plans may be terminated due to

insufficient funds, human resources or technical supports (Keyim. 2017; Edwards et al. 2001; Sharpley, 2002).

The use of “Bridging network” is a proper example of collaborative governance. It claims that participants with different knowledge and values can achieve more by working together than acting alone (Stokke & Haukeland, 2018). The “Bridge network” is an innovative take on the simple network, trying to strengthen the weak links in the network through a communicator to gain more resources, knowledge and pathways (Stokke & Haukeland, 2018; Rydin & Falleth, 2006). In this network, the attendance of key individuals is important since they act as “bridging builders” of the network (Rydin & Falleth, 2006). In other words, they have the ability to talk to each side of the network and provide a platform for each actor to present. Yet, the midway departure of key players may lead to irreparable results, which requires institutions in the network (Schmitter, 2002).

When it comes to the institution of the network, integrated rural tourism (IRT) is brought to the fore. Saxena and Ilbery (2008) define IRT as tourism established through building a social network with clear links to “*the economic, social, cultural, natural, and human structures of the localities in which it takes place*” (p.1140). It has been used as a means of debating about actors, activities, resources and their integration in the context of the tourism industry (Saxena et al., 2007, Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2016). And it emphasizes relational thinking that enables local actors to interact with each other in terms of knowledgeable, cultural and other types of resources (Saxena et al., 2007). As the term was invented in the context of rural areas, rural situations have been taken into consideration. In particular, it is often overlooked that the responsibility for promoting and developing tourism falls mostly on family-oriented, small enterprises. In general, those family-centred, small corporations have a low capital base, limited skills and experience. In addition, they may be too novel or in an unfavourable location (Fleischer & Felsenstein, 2000).

Saxena et al. (2007) point out social networks constructed in IRT share the characteristics of embedded, endogenous and empowering. Embeddedness

refers to the integration of socio-cultural and contextual aspects in certain localities in tourism development in order to comprise local resources, knowledge and relationships in the network connections. Simply put, it is the integration of local socio-cultural relations into tourism through locally shared traditional culture, values and symbols (Murdoch, 2000; Hinrichs, 2000).

In terms of endogeneity, it is an ongoing process of (re)interpretation and (re)negotiation of external and internal elements by local people to reach a balance, allowing the introduction of new forms of interaction with the market, using new technologies, management and natural resources (Amin & Thrift, 1994). It also opens to the cross-cultural production of local meanings, self-images, expressions and patterns of life in rural areas (Salazar 2005). However, too much exogeneity of the network can lead to difficulties in integrating internal stakeholders in the face of interference from external decisions, which in turn can undermine local values (Saxena et al., 2007).

Based on Stoffelen and Vanneste (2016, p 48), empowerment refers to “*the shift of power balances so that everyone in a tourism destination can join on an equal footing in its management and is able to benefit from this process*”. This is to say, less powerful groups are empowered to gain more control over local resources and can participate more in decision-making.

Based on the previous relational thinking, the theoretical framework of this article is shown in figure 2.

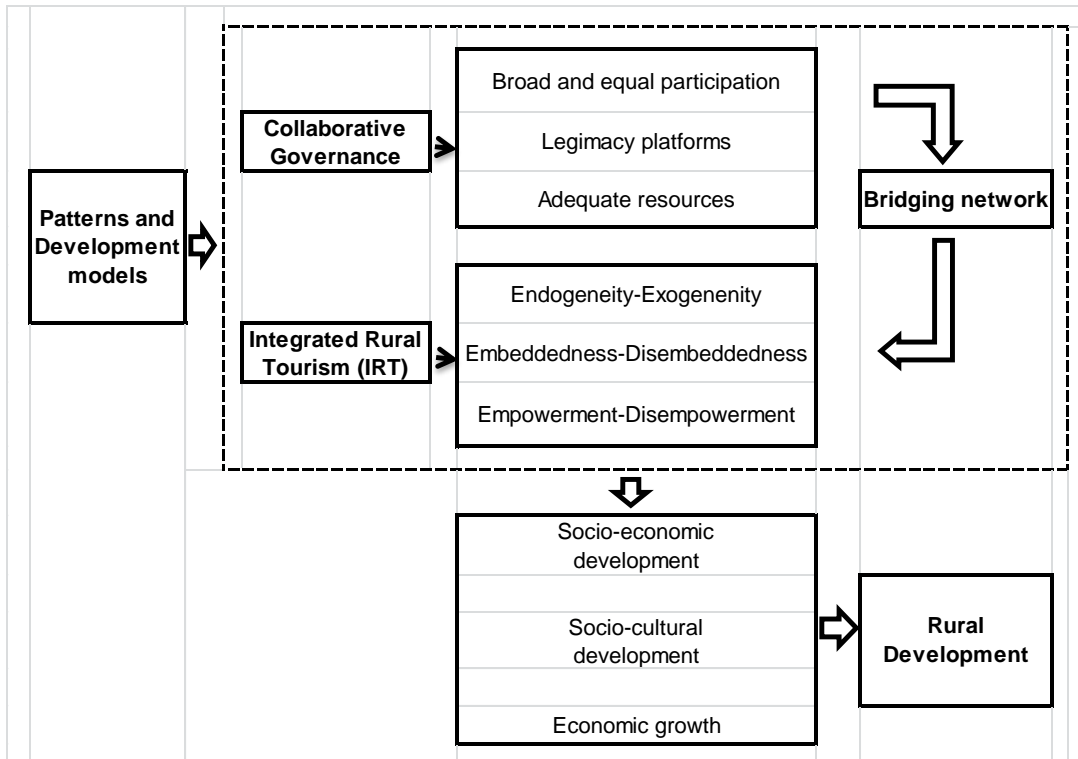


Figure 2 Conceptual framework (Source: by author)

3. Agri-tourism practices in China peri-urban areas

3.1. Rural revitalization strategy in China rural areas

In order to achieve China's overall goal of a well-off society in an all-around way, poverty alleviation in rural areas has always been the focus of the Chinese government and patriots from all walks of life (China Daily, 2020). It has always been an essential task of the development of “*socialism with Chinese characteristics*”. At the end of 2020, China has eliminated all the absolute poor population in rural areas through a targeted poverty alleviation strategy (TPA) (China Daily, 2020). Absolute poverty means that individuals or families cannot maintain their daily necessities by relying on their income under certain social production methods and lifestyles. People with a per capita annual net income of less than RMB 2,300 are regarded as absolute poverty in China (Xinhua News Agency, 2011).

With the elimination of absolute poverty in rural areas, rural development enters a new stage. On the premise of ensuring the outcome of poverty alleviation, China strives to achieve rural revitalization. Rural revitalization strategy refers to the comprehensive revitalization of rural areas in 2050 (Song, 2018). It is a major strategy for China to promote rural development. The primary task of the rural revitalization strategy is to solve problems appearing in agriculture, farmers and rural areas (Stoyanets, Hu & Chen, 2019). To be more specific, it aims to solve the problems of rural industrial development and farmers' employment. Ultimately, promoting rural economic growth, socio-economic (e. g. quality of life, residents' income, local services) and socio-cultural development (e. g. social cohesion) in rural areas (Xiong, Hong & Wang, 2019; Song, 2018).

The “Sanxiang Project” is one of the activities raised by the Hubei Provincial Government to promote the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy (Chen, 2017). Three specific actions have been brought out, which are 1) Encouraging citizens who live in the urban area to go to the countryside as consumers or investors, 2) Encouraging well-educated residents who work outside return to the countryside and participate in rural constructions, 3)

Encouraging the investment of enterprises and making idle resources in rural areas more valuable (Chen, 2017). These three measures are meant to enable urban areas to drive rural development and reduce the gap between urban and rural areas. Meanwhile, developing multifunctional agriculture, promoting agriculture development with secondary and tertiary industries, and realize the modernization of agriculture and the countryside. Most importantly, the “Sanxiang Project” emphasizes the active participation of local residents, that is, residents become stakeholders (or shareholders economically) of each sub-project in the development planning.

3.2. Three types of China agri-tourism

To achieve the goals of rural revitalization and the “Sanxiang” project mentioned previous, agri-tourism must be translated into specific patterns and development models (Zhang, 2011). In this study, patterns focus on how local agriculture and tourism are linked and how local agricultural resources are developed.

In Chen and Peng’s (2011) study of agri-tourism brand management in Hunan, they classify agri-tourism into idyllic life, rural, technological and agro-trade types. Meanwhile, Jia et al. (2011) propose three patterns of agri-tourism, which are agricultural sightseeing, urban technology and recreational vacation, in their study of tropical agri-tourism in Hainan. Similar to this, Zhang (2011) categorizes agri-tourism into sightseeing picking and science demonstrations, ecological landscape, farmhouse and leisure, as well as folk festivals based on the featured resources in China rural areas.

After summarizing and generalizing these types of agri-tourism, this paper categorizes agri-tourism into agri-production-oriented, rural ecology-oriented and farmer idyllic life-oriented patterns.

3.2.1 Agri-production-oriented agri-tourism

Agri-production-oriented agri-tourism emerged from the process of both the traditional and high-tech agricultural production, combined with the unique features of agricultural productions in certain areas (Zhang, 2011; Yang, Cai &

Sliuzas, 2009; Jia et al., 2011). This type of tourism develops sightseeing, picking, leisure and other agri-tourism by insisting on the introduction of organic agricultural products to create environmentally friendly agricultural tourism. In addition, it can show the scientific research results of high-tech agriculture, with the function of science education, demonstration and promotion. For example, Yang, Cai and Sliuzas (2009) find out that the main agri-tourism services of the Xiedao Green Resort in Beijing PUA were fruits, vegetables, ecological eggs and crab picking and agro-industrial demonstrations before 2005. Also, farmers can also hold farm trade fairs and production shopping events to broaden the channels for selling productions (Chen & Peng, 2011).

3.2.2 Rural ecology-oriented agri-tourism

Rural ecology-oriented type is based on the natural ecological landscape of the countryside and provides visitors with a back-to-nature and relaxing tourism experience by offering activities such as hiking and farmlands sightseeing (Zhang, 2011; Lai, 2016). Some supporting recreational facilities are also generally established to add interest to this pattern (Chen & Peng, 2011). Moreover, ecological concepts, such as low carbon emissions, energy conservation, and resource recycling, play an important role in this type of agri-tourism (Zhang, 2011). This also reduces the environmental pollution and waste of resources that agri-tourism activities bring to China PUA.

3.2.3 Farmer idyllic life-oriented agri-tourism

Farmer idyllic life-oriented pattern encourages visitors to participate in farmers' lives, folklore celebrations and local traditional farming culture and then enhances the interaction between visitors and local farmers (Chen & Peng, 2011). The farmhouse is the main manifestation of this pattern of agri-tourism. It dominated by peasant families, who can run family restaurants, hotels or other idyllic recreational activities (Zhang, 2011). Apart from this, folklore events based on local cultural characteristics in this pattern attract urban citizens to the countryside, so that tourists can not only enjoy the idyllic landscapes, but also experience and understand the local culture (Chen & Peng, 2011).

3.3. Development models of China agri-tourism

3.3.1 An introduction of CFO in China PUA

China's farmer cooperative organizations (CFO) are organizations vigorously promoted by the Chinese government. From "Farmer Cooperative Act" published by Xinhua News Agency (2017), CFO refers to "*a mutual-aid organization that is based on the rural household contracted management, the producers and operators of agricultural products or the providers and users of agricultural production and management services, voluntary alliances and democratic management*". In that organization, farmers can gather their resources in certain activities (production or tourism) so that they can obtain mutual benefits (P.R.C The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council, as cited in Yang & Hung, 2014). In most cases, these organizations are non-governmental but supported by the government that provides a platform for local communities to benefit from the tourism industry (Song et al., 2014; Yang & Hung, 2014). However, the effects of farmer cooperatives are little known, and the relationship of stakeholders in China rural areas, especially between local residents and other stakeholders still remains unclear (Yang & Hung, 2014).

3.3.2 Development models in agri-tourism

The development model refers specifically to the actors or organizations that participated in the development of agri-tourism and their networks. As mentioned in the previous literature, agri-tourism in China started with small-scale or family-based operations (Yang, Cai & Sliuzas, 2010; Fleischer & Felsenstein, 2000). These are indeed the original development model of agri-tourism in China, in which a single family is the main operator and the income is used for the family's household, such as a family-run farmhouse or B&B (Li, 2014).

Gradually, agri-tourism is no longer aimed at individual (family) income, but it becomes a way to restructure and optimize the economy of rural communities. Farmers cooperate with each other to form the "Farmers + " development model. In this model, individual farmers work together, each of them offering tourism

activities that are as different and unique as possible, in order to complement each other (Li, 2014).

As agri-tourism plays an increasingly important role in China's rural areas, the "Companies + Farmers + Communities" model of development has emerged. In this model, the community normally refers to the villagers' committee, which represents the local collective power (He, 2005). The representatives of the villagers' committee are voted by the local ordinary residents. Their role is equivalent to the board of directors of a corporation (Han, 2009). In this model, the villagers' committee protects the interests of the farmers while working with the company to ensure that tourism is developed both internally and externally.

When agri-tourism is not only an economic activity, but also a regional development driver, the government joins the development model. Also, Farmer Professional Cooperatives (CFOs) are formed in order to involve more farmers in the development, leading to the creation of the "Government + Company + Farmer + CFOs" model (Zheng & Zhong, 2004). In this development model, the government plays a management role and creates a legal platform to communicate management experience (Li, 2004). Private enterprises focus on strengthening the development of agri-tourism attractions and provide corresponding tourism services (Zhang, 2011). Meanwhile, farmers can participate in the development process through CFO and villagers' committees to enhance communication and resolve conflicts while gaining benefits.

4. Case study area-Dutang, China

Spatially, Dutang Village is located in the peri-urban area of Wuhan city. This village is subordinate to the Huangpi District, which is 66km away from the city centre of Wuhan. Huangpi District is known as the “Back Garden of Wuhan” because of its unique cultural and historical background, in particular Mulan culture¹, its abundant natural or tourism resources, such as year-round habitat for egret, mountains and lakes, and its geographical location in the peri-urban Wuhan (Research Institute of ZUEL, 2017).



Figure 3 Location of Dutang Village in China Map

In the context of tourism, Dutang rural area locates within the “Mulan Mountain and Water Health Tourist Area” (Xu et al., 2017), surrounded by the Mulan Cultural Eco-tourism Area, Mulan Gumen Scenic Area, Tiantai Mountain Forest Park and other mature national star-rated² tourists areas.

¹ Mulan culture from the folk story of Hua Mulan joins the army for her father

² Refers to the scenic level according to the quality level of tourist attractions in the People's Republic of China, 5A is the highest level.

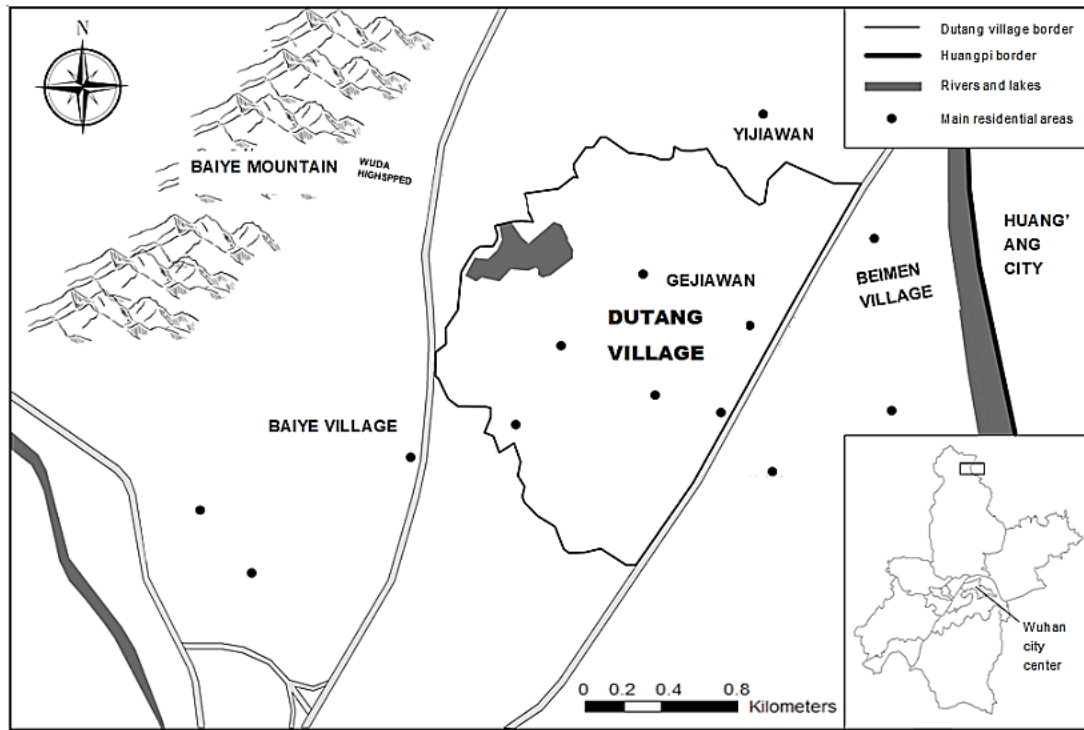


Figure 4 Location of Dutang Village and villages around it.

Historically, Dutang Village was a poor village where agriculture was the main source of livelihood for local residents. However, agricultural income was no longer able to support the daily lives of the locals, so villagers chose to work outside. Before 2014, nearly 85% of the arable land was left idle, and the village had less than 20% of its annual population (Yangzte Daily, 2021). Also, this area is surrounded by hills and mountains, making it difficult for residents to transport to the outside areas. Although there are already several 4A and 5A³ tourist attractions around Dutang village, as mentioned previous, the economic, socio-economic and socio-cultural situations of Dutang were still lagging behind. Based on Hubei Daily (2018), the average annual income of Dutang residents was less than 5,000 Yuan in 2000.

This rural area started combining flower agriculture with tourism in 2014. Initiated by Wuhan Municipal Government and a local entrepreneur constructing the “Mulanhuaxiang Scenic Area” (MLHX Tourist Attraction), which aims to use agri-tourism to create rural landscapes, drive rural industries, advocate rural culture,

³ See footnote 2

and create enjoyable rural life for local residents based on the overall tourism planning of Huangpi district (Xu et al., 2017). From various online newspapers, articles, government planning documents and interviewees, it is clear that tourism planning in this area involves several sectors and stakeholders at multiple scales and both inside and outside the Dutang area (see in Chapter 6). This follows a similar line with the concept of global-local nexus raised by Milne and Ateljevic (2001). In contrast, China's social structure dictates that this area is operating under a strict top-down system. The patterns of activity of local stakeholders under such circumstances are temporarily unknown, which will be derived from the results of this study.

5. Methodology

5.1. Research design

The main goal of this research is to identify how are the peri-urban areas in China using agri-tourism to realize rural development. This paper is based on the context of China's agri-tourism as a tool for rural revitalization. The purposes of this research are to first further confirm and in-depth explore the types and development models of agri-tourism in China PUA. Second, it stresses the integrated rural development, that is, the relational thinking between multiple stakeholders, activities and resources (Saxena & Ilbery, 2008) to identify opportunities and challenges in the process of rural revitalization. According to King, Keohane, and Verban (as cited in Keyim, 2017, p4), the social sciences explore the answers to the research questions by conducting '*descriptive and causal*' analysis on collected relevant empirical materials. Therefore, this study is conducted by using the qualitative research method and tries to find out in-depth information on respondents' values, ideas and experiences (Winchester & Rofe, 2016).

A case study approach is used to dig deeper into the different perspectives of various stakeholders in China PUA, and to explore and explain the Chinese contextual influence on the research purposes above (Baxter, 2016). This case study focuses more on theory-generating as one of the features of qualitative research is to generate new theories or revise theories (Hay, 2016). Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted online with stakeholders mainly from local communities, Dutang rural tourism farmer cooperative organization and Mulanhuaxiang tourism developmental corporation (MLHX Ltd.) in order to explore various opinions and experiences of respondents. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews enable more interactive and reliable communications that provide "*greater breadth and depth of information*" (Klandermans & Staggenborg, 2002). To gather complementary evidence (Kearns, 2016), an online virtual observation that took place around Dutang village was held by the author's friend who has urban planning background. This observation was conducted before in-

depth interviews to obtain as much descriptive message as possible since researchers in qualitative research are required to (more or less) join respondents' lives (Kearns, 2016). To ensure the rigor of this study, textual analyses were done by studying online published articles, newspapers, official planning documents, as well as the published pictures of landscapes for non-marketing purposes. In particular, reading landscape can help researchers understand the “*social meanings and intentions*” of a place since the physical landscape is a social construction (Hay, 2016). The detailed analyzing process will be explained in 5.4.

5.2. Data collection

5.2.1 Semi-structured in-depth interviews

Semi-structured interviews get access to information about events, experiences and opinions through social interaction and communication with respondents (Dunn, 2016; Howitt & Stevens, 2016). It also enables the author to understand the respondents' various interpretations of a certain meaning and phenomenon (Dunn, 2016). The primary data were obtained by doing semi-structured in-depth interviews with 8 respondents. Due to the current situation of Covid-19, interviews were completed online by using WeChat, which is the most popular online communication tool among Chinese people. Also, some interviews were done by answering open-ended questionnaires via Wechat since respondents were not willing to talk online. All interviews were recorded after informed consent (Appendix C) and transcribed verbatim. To ensure confidentiality, all transcribed documents are anonymous.

Participants were selected by using the criterion sampling technique from Lockwood et al. (2010) and snowball sampling from Kirby and Hay (as cited in Hay, 2016). Stakeholders that recruited by using the former technique is based on whether they live or work in Dutang Village or around (criteria 1) and how relevant their experience is to agri-tourism in Dutang Village (criteria 2). In order to get in touch with some selected potential interviewees, the author contacted the gatekeepers, who are the interviewee's subordinate, the former supervisor

and the friend. Meanwhile, the author contacted some informants through phone calls, messages and Wechat texts after finding their phone numbers and identity information that have been published on the internet. To reach enough ordinary residents, snowball sampling was also used as a technique for the recruitment of informants. An extra question was added about asking respondents to recommend their relatives or friends who are interested in this research at the end of each interview. Ordinary villagers in this study have relatively low social status, and most of them belong to a relatively vulnerable group. It is believed that the adaptability of the snowball sampling method helps the author to get access to the target group (Naderifar, Goli & Ghaljaie, 2017).

Eight stakeholders from different levels and sectors have been selected to generate more diverse insights and to meet the purpose of this study (Vaseileiou et al., 2018). An overview of the participants is provided in table 2. Also, the background information of respondents is provided in detail to ensure the transferability of this study (Hay, 2016).

Table 2 Pseudonyms of Respondents

Pseudonyms	Description	Data gathering methods
Mr Wei	Department manager of the Wuhan MLHX Tourist Attraction, who has been working in Dutang area for nearly 8 years.	Semi-structured In-depth interview online via Wechat
Mr Xing	Department manager of the Wuhan MLHX Tourist Attraction, who has nearly of 10 years working experience in the tourism industry	Semi-structured In-depth interview online via Wechat
Mr Cai	A member of Dutang Village Party Branch (government officer) and private entrepreneur. Grew up in Dutang village	Semi-structured In-depth interview online via Wechat
Mr Jun	The owner of a farmer cooperative organization. Grew up in Dutang village	Open-ended questionnaire via Wechat
Mr Mao	The owner of a farmhouse around Dutang village, near to the MLHX	Semi-structured In-depth

	Tourist Attraction. Grew up in a village around Dutang village	interview online via Wechat
Mr Rui	The owner of a farmhouse around Dutang village, who has been operating the farmhouse for 10 years. Grew up in a village around Dutang area	Semi-structured In-depth interview online via telephone
Mr Wu	A resident near Dutang area, who is one of the returnees from working out. Grew up in a village around Dutang area	Semi-structured In-depth interview online via Wechat
Ms Fu	A resident of Dutang village, who is one of the returnees from working out. Grew up in Dutang area	Semi-structured In-depth interview online via telephone

Before interviews, an interview guide (Appendix A) was developed following a hybrid structure of combining both the pyramid and funnel structure. The interview guide started with shallow and easy-to-answer questions to make informants become accustomed to being interviewed, followed by particular and more reflective (e.g. the particular experiences of the respondents) and then moved to some sensitive questions (e.g. questions about the Party Branch in this study) (Dunn, 2016). Primary questions were followed by prompts (secondary question) to extend the scope or depth of answers to some phenomena and clarify some vague or incomplete answers (Whyte, 1982). This research guide covers seven to ten primary questions, corresponding to approximately 35-minute interviews.

The content of the interview guide is connected tightly to the theories of multifunctional agriculture, three stages of collaborative governance, three major concerns of integrated rural areas and others that explained in the literature review chapter. As a relatively inexperienced qualitative researcher, a rigorously worded semi-structured interview guide is more appropriate than a general interview guide because it provides the researcher with more confidence and a fallback plan. However, challenges arose as overly planned questions sometimes appeared in inappropriate places. To avoid this, the researcher changed and

skipped certain irrelevant questions during the interview process based on the interviewee's answers and wording as appropriate (Hay, 2016). This also avoided repetitive responses from the interviewees. Also, the researcher avoided asking questions in order instead she chose the order of questions based on their relevance.

In order to obtain more information, questions during the interviews were asked in an easy to understand and contextual way while academic terms will be explained beforehand. The interview language was Mandarin, and the quotes used in the discussion part were translated by the author. Yet, there are many differences between Mandarin and English. Some idioms or spoken words in Chinese may not be translated very accurately.

5.2.2 Textual analysis

Texts are filled with the social structures and processes of the time and space it is set in, and the meanings they convey are incomplete in themselves (Smith, 2009). Therefore, textual analysis deconstructs incomplete or incoherent texts in order to generate new understandings or interpretations of phenomena or meanings (Pratt, 1994). Through this, Winchester and Rofe (2016) believe that it actively engages with the articulated and unarticulated meanings or discourses encoded in texts. Moreover, they also point out that textual methods comprise not only written texts but also “*creative, documentary and landscape sources*” (p. 11).

Based on the content above, Huangpi Comprehensive Tourism Development Planning and MLHX Tourist Attraction Planning, online newspapers, articles, as well as pictures of landscapes with non-marketing purposes were analyzed in this article. The planning documents were obtained by the author through a request in the information Disclosure department of the Huangpi District Online Government Platform. Other textual materials were selected online by referring to their relevance to the themes of this research. Moreover, the author has found photographs of the former as well as the present Dutang village from Xiang (2019) and from Google images, and then interpreted and analyzed them. In this

textual analysis process, landscape reading contributed widely as the landscape is regarded as full of social meaning and as the expression of the physical surroundings (Winchester, Kong & Dunn 2003). Practically, reading landscapes can also help researchers to create a powerful connection with the study area (Winchester & Rofe, 2016).

5.3. Data analysis

The three coding procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), which are open coding, axial coding and selective coding in grounded theory were used to analyze and interpret data. This aims to ensure that researchers can generate theories from empirical data in an exploratory and inductive way (Cope, 2016). The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim in Word documents in Chinese and then printed out for analysis. And the transcribed contents were checked by the peer of the researcher who has proficient qualitative research knowledge, in order to ensure rigor and trustworthiness in the coding process (Maher et al., 2018).

The first step (open coding) was to find as many comprehensive categories as possible in order to saturate the codes through reading the interview transcribed contents and other textual materials repeatedly. Instead of simply placing the “raw” data under each label with a concept, the author set comments in Word Document for each code while written down the ideas and meaning that she interpreted in selected quotes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In this way, the analyst is able to find out all “*potentials and possibilities*” contained in the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 160). The second step (axial coding) was to identify relationships among the open codes the author found in the first step by recalling theories and connect them in a series (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For instance, in the open coding step “transport improvement” and “Increasing planted roadside trees” are pointed out. In the axial coding step, these two initial codes were concatenated to “socio-economic development”. At this step, the general outline that the data want to express has been reflected. Moreover, these codes are descriptive instead of In Vivo (taken directly from participants’ phrasing) based on Saldana (2016) because different respondents used different terms to describe a

similar situation during interviews. Taking the initial code “transport improvement” as an example, this code is logically followed by codes such as “the traffic lane has changed from two-lane to six-lane road”, “hard to get access to this place” and “water transports from small boats to ferries”, etc. At last, selective coding (or theoretical coding) was conducted to refine themes that able to answer the research question. All codes were then collected and documented in a code book (Appendix B), including code labels, the descriptions of the codes and the concepts to which the codes are linked.

5.4. Positionality

This research is conducted by using a qualitative research method that intends to illuminate and explore respondents’ personal experiences and current social structures (Hay, 2016). This emphasizes the inevitability of social interactions between both sides and the introduction of subjective opinions and personal features of researchers in the research process. Therefore, the researcher should always be reflexive, which regulates the researcher to continuously review her self-consciousness as a researcher and of the research process (England, 1994). As for the researcher, she has lived for nearly 18 years in Hubei Province, where the case study area is located. She used to spend her weekends and holidays in peri-urban areas that similar to the research area a lot. Although she barely talks to local residents in that area before this study, her family members always communicate with farmhouse owners, managers of farmer cooperative organizations and local farmers, etc. The content above demonstrates that the researcher has already got familiar with the research knowledge of the context under research to some extent, which may affect her discourse during interviews. Based on Hay (2016), knowledge is directly powerful on people as it affects political issues that point to people’s daily lives. It is indirectly powerful because researchers’ languages, actions and interpretations of the world may change the way people thinking potentially. In this sense, the researcher positioned herself in the context of this certain project, and she aimed to reach the ideal mid-point of “insiders” and “outsiders” (Hay, 2016) because she

believes that researchers cannot divorce from their background knowledge. To ensure the rigour and trustworthiness of the results, she continuously practised reflexivity during the research process and acknowledged that everyone has a different understanding and experience of certain phenomenon (Berger, 2016).

Furthermore, the power relations between the participating parties are asymmetric. The researcher is a student while the respondents are composed of grassroots and private enterprises, government officers and tourism company managers. For the former two groups of informants, the researcher is in a greater powerful position than respondents as she has higher social positions and better education than those respondents. For the latter two groups of informants, those being studied are in a more influential position than the researcher, because this kind of people has more access to financial and cultural resources (Hay & Muller, 2012). This asymmetrical relationship is even more obvious and inevitable when studying a country with a strict hierarchical system like China. Under this content, the researcher began to consider the ethical and power issues involved in this study at the stage of the topic formulation and responded with critical reflexive thinking during the research process.

5.5. Quality of data

Cross-country study, the impact of the Covid-19 and China's strict hierarchical society posed certain challenges to the quality of data. This research is of a China PUA that was conducted in the Netherlands. All data were gathered online, where the nonverbal communication (e.g. body language and expressions of the respondents) could not be detected readily, which has the potential to make the data fail in getting the thick description (the detailed context contained within the data) (Hay, 2016). To complement this situation, interviews were transcribed verbatim. Intonations, tone and hesitations were recorded in transcriptions, as these would also reflect the feelings and experiences of the informants and then provide a thick description. Also, the online interview raises the ethical issue of confidentiality and impacts how we perceive participants (Maher et al., 2018). The online environment may have affected the understanding and interpretations

of both parties. This is particularly challenging in qualitative research, as part of interviewing is about interpreting meanings through the manner in which things are conveyed (Hay, 2016).

Moreover, the epidemic made people more inclined to find someone to talk to, to ask for suggestions, and to complain about their lives. For example, one interviewee, who is a local resident, often tried to chat with the researcher during the interview about his daily life while another interviewee, who is a farmhouse owner, wanted to know the future governmental planning of the Huangpi from the author. In this case, the researcher maintains a firm positionality as a researcher and is always be reflexive. She tried to pace the interviews and direct the conversation back to the research itself, according to the interview guide.

Furthermore, the government officer asked for checking the interview guide and made some changes according to his supervisor due to the strict hierarchical organization. Also, it is easy to identify some of her words were prepared in advance. This reduced the quality of data to some extent since the interviewee attempted to present only the positive aspects, which is incomplete for data collection, and the data may not represent the subjective feeling, understanding or experiences of the interviewee.

5.6. Research Ethics

Private information about participants should be kept absolutely confidential and not be shown to the public (Hay, 2016). In order to complete this research, planning documents of MLHX Tourist Attraction and Huangpi tourism have been obtained online through the Huangpi district government. To ensure confidentiality, the information of requiring remained visible only for both parties, and the documents provided by the government must be kept in a safe place where others cannot access them. As China is a country with a strict hierarchy and a broad “guanxi” net, the identifying characteristics of participants in this study are masked (Yang & Hung, 2014; Hay, 2016).

Informed consent is the main ethical issue in each research (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011). Participants must consent to participate in this research, and they should

know exactly the content that they are consenting to (Hay, 2016). Instead of only informing participants about the research topic, informants should also consent to the general outline of this research and the sorts of questions this paper will explore. Moreover, the author should inform the participants how she will store and use their data, and what she expects from them (eg. how long the entire interview will take). Informed consent is a means to protect the personal rights of participants (Fouka & Mantzourou, 2011). When people feel that their rights are not protected, they may not provide true and effective answers which can lead to the invalidity of final results.

Harm can be defined as physical and psychological harm (Hay, 2016). For psychological harm, this research involves the poor group in China PUA, but “admitting to poverty is a sensitive issue (Sime, 2008)”, and most of them do not perceive themselves as the poor. Dean (1996) addresses that process of poverty research may lead to the disempowerment of the poor. Moreover, the COVID-19 has caused the stagnation of rural tourism, many private enterprises are facing bankruptcy, and farmhouses run by villagers cannot be avoided. Asking questions about the content above may cause people emotional or psychological problems, such as acute stress disorder and tension, sadness, and acceptance (Gensini et al., 2004; Cabrera-Barona & Carrión, 2020).

6. Results and discussion

6.1. Existing types of agri-tourism

Tourism in Dutang is mainly rural ecology-oriented agri-tourism, supplemented by farmers' idyllic life-oriented and production-oriented agri-tourism. The rural-ecological type of agri-tourism includes a series of back-to-nature activities developed based on the natural landscapes of the countryside (Zhang, 2011). The natural landscapes of Dutang are dominated by flower fields. The total land area of Dutang is 4.67km², while the flower fields account for nearly one-half of its land area, which is 2.59km².

"We have thousands of acres of Four-season Sea of Flowers, tulips in spring, lavender in summer, gerbera in autumn and white sunflowers in winter." (Mr Wei, 2021)

Meanwhile, the flower fields is the core scenery of the MLHX Tourist Attraction, which gives the flower fields the catchy name of "Four-season Sea of Flowers". This is because the varieties of flowers change according to the seasons. Also, there are trestles and train tracks in the flower field areas, and visitors can walk for sightseeing, or take a tour around Dutang village on a train provided by MLHX Tourists Attraction. In addition to the flower field sightseeing, the textual analysis of the local landscape reveals that Dutang village has a lake, streams and forests where visitors can go hiking, camping and sightseeing. These natural landscapes provide tourists with a relaxing and leisure experience (Lai, 2016), which is also a manifestation of rural-ecology-oriented agri-tourism.

To engage more visitors, Dutang also employs farmer's idyllic life-based and production-based agri-tourism. Farmhouses and B&B ⁴ are the most representative ones of the former type of agri-tourism. There are currently 15 houses as B&Bs (Bed and breakfast) in Dutang. Unlike other B&Bs in China, these local B&Bs are self-contained and relatively better decorated, but retain the appearance of the former farmers' houses. Each B&B has farmland in the yard

⁴ B&B refers to Bed and Breakfast, it is a type of accommodations that provides overnight bed and breakfast, usually converted from a private family house.

where local vegetables are grown, the in-house customers can grow, pick and cook those vegetables themselves, which preserves the traditional farming culture (Chen & Peng, 2011). Apart from this, many of the farmhouses run by local residents offer tourists the opportunity to stay in farmhouses, pick and eat organic foods (e.g. vegetables, pork, chicken) grown by farmhouse owners on their own farmlands.



Figure 5 Tulip field in spring



Figure 6 Farmland in one B&B's yard

The latter pattern of agri-tourism is dominated by seasonal fruit (strawberry and orange) and tea picking. Next to this, Dutang village has also opened a commercial street where farmers can sell their local specialties, which allows local agricultural products to be sold through more channels (Chen & Peng, 2011). For example, Mr. Wei told the researcher a Dutang resident is selling his home-brewed wine on the commercial street. This is similar to the agri-tourism of French wineries, where visitors can not only watch and participate in the wine-making process but also taste in the shop (Jia et al., 2011).

6.2. The development model of agri-tourism

These types of agri-tourism are supported by an organizational development model consisting of four organizations in Dutang. As mentioned earlier, tourism at the destination level worldwide is fragmented since stakeholders with various interests and values from local, municipal, national scales are involved (Dredge & Jenkins, 2003; Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2016). To ensure the interests and values of local stakeholders, especially farmers, Dutang agri-tourism has embraced the

development model of “Farmer Professional Cooperative (CFO) + private enterprises + villagers’ committee + the Party Branch”.

Meanwhile, mapping stakeholders plays a key role in any strategic planning project, which embedded with complex power relations and interests (Healey, 1996). Therefore, the specific development model is presented by a stakeholder mapping in Figure 6 to demonstrate the stakeholder relationships in Dutang village and how Dutang Party Branch Committee acts as a “bridge builder” linking the Huangpi district government and actors in three major sectoral actors of Dutang village together.

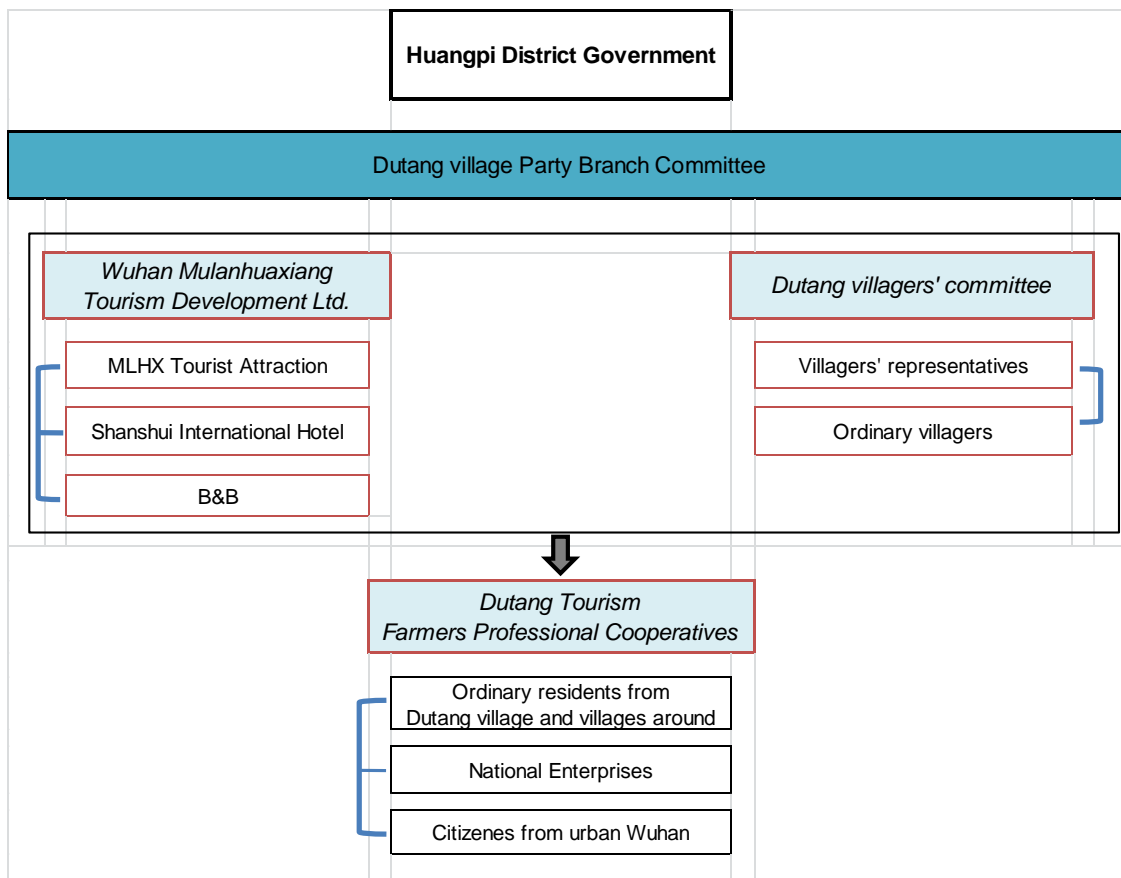


Figure 7 Stakeholder mapping

According to media materials, the agri-tourism project in Dutang village was initially proposed by the Huangpi District Government and a local resident, who is also the owner of MLHX Ltd., in response to the “Sanxiang” Project. The planning of agri-tourism in Dutang village is under the overall political framework of

Huangpi District Government. And, it is included in the scope of the Huangpi Comprehensive Tourism Development Plan developed by the Hubei Provincial Government. This makes agri-tourism planning in Dutang to obtain financial support from the government. Moreover, the political framework of the Huangpi District government is regulated by the laws and normative standard documents of the PRC (nation). This way of initiating a project ensures the participation of the local residents and also receives recognition, policy and financial supports from the higher administrative institutions for local agri-tourism, such as the provincial and national levels. This responds exactly to one of the barriers to the sustainable development of the rural destination through tourism proposed by Dodds and Butler (as cited in Hartman & Sijtsma, 2018, p. 10).

At the local level, the actors scatter among three main sectors: the MLHX Ltd. (contains MLHX Tourist Attraction, Shanshui International Hotel and specialty B&B), Dutang villagers' committee (Contains ordinary villagers/farmers and village representatives elected by vote of the villagers), and Dutang Tourism Farmer Professional Cooperatives (CFO) (involves in national enterprises, Wuhan urban citizens and villagers from Dutang and around).

“Dutang Tourism Farmer Professional Cooperative was established by representatives of the private enterprise, representatives of the village committee and representatives of the ordinary villagers.” (NDRC, 2020)

An online article by the NDRC (National Development and Reform Commission) clearly states that the CFO was constructed by representatives of the other two main groups. Also, provisions in MLHX Tourist Attraction Planning document indicate that the CFO allows local residents to participate in local agri-tourism projects, where they can invest their unused houses and farmlands as B&Bs, restaurants or shops in the scenic area and get paid by the CFO at the same time. Meanwhile, the CFO also encourages Wuhan urban citizens and national enterprises to act as stakeholders in the agri-tourism development in Dutang.

“The Farmer Professional Cooperatives carries out unified design planning for each zone and then the investors themselves furnish the houses.” (Mr. Wei, 2021)

While MLHX Tourist Attraction is dedicated to attracting Wuhan citizens to Dutang village for tourism and leisure, the goal of the CFO is to encourage Wuhan citizens and national enterprises to invest and participate in agri-tourism development. CFO has done a good job of securing the interests of many grassroots in China PUA. From Mr. Wei, the external actors who join the CFO can decide on the decoration of the house that they invest, as long as the appearance of the house is within the framework of the overall tourism plan.

In this network, the Dutang Party Branch acts as a bridge builder that provides a platform to regularly bring stakeholders from Huangpi District government (administrative level) and actors from those three main groups (multi-layered stakeholders) at the destination level together to discuss topics about tourism development in Dutang area. According to the aforementioned content, the development of agri-tourism in Dutang is following top-down management with bottom-up governance, and this study calls it “Top-down” governance. This will be derived in the following sub-chapter.

6.3. “Top-down” governance

Dutang does generate collaborative governance at the local level, but it is also under top-down hierarchical management of the Huangpi district government, the Wuhan city government and the national government. At the local level, Dutang's development almost fulfils Keyim's (2017) theory of achieving collaborative governance (broad and equal participation, legitimate platform and adequate resources). And, the top-down management also provides a strong push for local governance in terms of resources.

Dutang achieves broad but not equitable participation. Among the local stakeholders, Dutang Tourism Farmer Professional Cooperative (CFO) is represented by five prestigious villagers, who were elected through a vote of the ordinary villagers from local organizations (private enterprise and villagers’

committee). Moreover, CFO's legal person is also a local resident, but CFO welcomes internal villagers, corporates and external provincial/national companies and Wuhan citizens to join the local agri-tourism as stakeholders. On the one hand, this makes multiple actors from different levels participate in the development of agri-tourism, ensuring broad participation (Keyim, 2017). On the other hand, it increases the villagers' trust in the whole project and makes them more actively involved in the planning and development of local agri-tourism.

However, farmers with less economic support (who are poorer) and whose houses are in unfavourable locations are still marginalized and have to continue farming to make a living. This shows that agri-tourism in Dutang has not achieved equal participation and less powerful actors are still not empowered to obtain more control over participation or to benefit from local agri-tourism (Keyim, 2017; Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2016).

“For my family, (we have) no money to invest, (our house) location is not good, we can only do farm work, and fortunately my family still have lands.”
(Mrs. Fu, 2021)

Moreover, Dutang offers stakeholders a legitimate platform for sharing ideas, in particular, the Dutang Party Branch serves as a transition (bridge builder) between top-down management and bottom-up governance (Stokke & Haukeland, 2018). The presence of the Party Branch plays a decisive role in the Chinese-style governance. It can inform the stakeholders at local levels about policies and guiding ideas from the administrative levels, and it can summarize the ideas of local actors and inform the higher levels. Moreover, the Party Branch itself has a set of rules and regulations to govern its own behaviour and activities. Under such circumstances, this article has reason to believe that it is a legitimate platform for stakeholders to express their interests and values with relative freedom (Keyim, 2017).

Also, the Party Branch, local private companies and CFO collaborate on conducting training and communicating events to make low-educated grassroots to get more knowledge and understand their rights. Specifically, these education

programs include teaching tourism and agriculture skills to grassroots, as well as cooperative development thinking. As the department manager of MLHX Tourism Development Ltd. says:

“In order to cooperate with the villagers better and dispel their concerns, I collaborated with the Party Branch and the CFO. We communicated fully with the local residents, telling them about the advantages of cooperative development and the current national policies so that they can understand why we wanted to cooperate.” (Mr. Wei, 2021)

Even if local educational programs are provided for local residents to ensure a legitimate platform for participants, the sense of participation of low-educated farmers is still low. Most of them feel they are unable to provide valuable perspectives and advice. Local farmers and self-employed people said:

“I am just running a small business here, and I don’t feel that my knowledge can contribute to the planning” (Mr. Mao, 2021)

“I think I have nothing to say (about tourism), I don’t know anything” (Mrs. Fu, 2021)

In addition, the spontaneous sale of agricultural products by residents in Dutang village is minimal. According to Mr. Wu, a local resident, there is no sense of autonomy among locals to participate in the agri-tourism industry. From the Chinese farmers’ perspective, they are generally poorly educated and lack confidence in themselves. As seen from the previous quotes, most of them feel that they are unable (without sufficient knowledge) to provide their own ideas.

“As an ordinary citizen, they tell me (about development plan), and I don’t think I need to know!” (Mr. Wu, 2021)

Also, from this quote, peasants’ autonomy has been inhibited due to the strong state control in the early years of the foundation of PRC (1949-1976), state laws and policies were forcibly introduced into rural society through political means (Stoyanets, Hu & Chen, 2019). In relation to the development of agri-tourism, the development lacks the local atmosphere of rural humanity and fail to create a collective consciousness for local residents (Jia et al., 2011; Glasson et al., 1995).

It is worth mentioning that top-down management is complementary to local bottom-up governance. Governments at administrative levels provide sufficient resources for agri-tourism development in Dutang, especially in terms of financial and skills support (Jia et al., 2011). The construction of MLHX Tourist Attraction was financed by Huangpi District Government and private enterprises. Meanwhile, the “Sanxiang” Project initiated by Hubei Province has been bringing in many experts to Dutang in order to provide technical training and even join in the local agri-tourism development.

“Top-down” governance is not a bad way for Dutang, and even for China. On the contrary, it provides opportunities for rural revitalization of Dutang. “Top-down” governance is a method of governance with Chinese characteristics (Yan, 2019) and is more suitable for China than bottom-up governance. In PUAs with various and complex stakeholders, the support and acknowledgement of the provincial, national or higher levels are essential to creating effective planning (Hartman & Sijtsma, 2018). To be more specific, this kind of governance responds to the problem of low educated grassroots who are unable to achieve self-development once leaving agriculture (Zhou et al., 2018). Also, it allows local stakeholders or sectors to have a strong backing in terms of organizational structure and collective economy (Stoyanets, Hu & Chen, 2019). In this case, the presence of top-down management avoids the fragmentation of governance at the local level.

6.4. Relational stakeholders and IRT

To reach long-term rural development, empowerment of local actors is crucial (Saxena et al., 2007; Ilbery & Saxena, 2011; Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2016). Yet, in light of Dutang’s “Top-down” governance discussed earlier, Dutang has only generated the partial empowerment of local actors in the network during the process of tourism development. Thankfully, this PUA achieves endogenous development (utilizing and adding values to emplaced resources and focusing on local people's interests and values), while still retaining linkages to exogenous factors (Oliver & Jenkins, 2003; Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2016).

The endogeneity of agri-tourism in Dutang village is well reflected through the attention and sublimation of Mulan culture and the rational use of local flower agriculture. From the online media “Yangtze Daily”, Dutang village has established the Mulan Culture Museum as well as the Intangible Culture Clay Museum. With those two museums, the story of Hua Mulan and the local traditional culture and heritage are presented to both internal and external visitors. According to Mr. Xing from the MLHX Tourist Attraction, the director and producer of the Disney movie Mulan have visited the Mulan Culture Museum before filming the movie. This allows the spatially disadvantaged area such as China PUA to get a boost from the unique combination with international film art and local traditional culture, especially Mulan culture gained value (Saxena et al., 2007). Meanwhile, the Huangpi District government offers Huangpi (including Dutang) citizens the opportunity to visit every attraction in Dutang for free, so that local residents can gain more cultural knowledge and benefit from it.

"Before preparing the tourism in the village, there was actually a local flower and seedling company, and later this company started to carry out the planting and cultivation of flower field landscape and garden plants in for tourism." (Mr. Wei, 2021)

In parallel with this, the flowers and landscape trees in the flower field tour and the MLHX Tourist Attraction are sourced from a local company in Dutang, which utilizes and enhances the value of emplaced resources to a certain extent and ensures maximum local interest (Goodwin, Pemberton & Woods, 1999).

The policy of Dutang tourism planning gives priority to employing villagers with labour in the local and surrounding areas so that villagers can apply their skills and knowledge to local tourism development, although such opportunities do not cover everyone. Villagers are also treated equally and given opportunities to be promoted and serve as managers. Mr. Wu, a local villager, has also approved and agreed on this policy:

"There are indeed a lot of local residents (work) in MLHX Tourist Attraction. Some of them seem to be old people, about 60 or 70 years old. They do cleaning and look after flower fields here. And the young people do some

management in the theme park or hotel. We can get salaries at the attraction and be close to home, so why would not we do that?" (Mr. Wu, 2021)

However, partial empowerment still led to an uneven distribution of power and local resources, which in turn prevented Dutang from mobilizing embedded resources (Saxena et al., 2007). In other words, partial empowerment poses a huge challenge to the balance between embeddedness and disembeddedness (integration with locally shared knowledge and socio-cultural relationships).

The flowers and Mulan culture are symbols of the Dutang region, and they are embedded within the names of tourist attractions in Dutang village, and they are preserved and known through museums. Yet, Mulan culture is only used in the museum, while other tourist facilities and activities in Dutang Village have little to no local cultural representation. As one of the residents said:

"There are so many types of activities, like slides on grass, glass walkways, but these things do not reflect the culture and history of my hometown." (Mr. Wu, 2021)

As this quote shows, agri-tourism in Dutang village brings too many external entertainment facilities, activities and even festivals. Slides on grass and glass walkways are homogeneous with rural tourism activities in other PUAs and even urban areas of China, without local cultural identity, let alone integration of Mulan culture.

6.5. Agri-tourism in rural revitalization

"The changes here can be described as EARTH-SHAKING!" (Mr. Wei, 2021)

When asked by the researcher how he felt about the changes in Dutang Village since the planning of agri-tourism, Mr. Wei replied excitedly above. All interviews showed positive attitudes towards the contribution of tourism to this area. From their words, the author found that they all believe that agri-tourism has provided opportunities for the future development of Dutang Village and believe that their

hometown will get thriving. To be specific, the positive impacts they mentioned are mainly economic growth and socio-economic development.

The help of tourism to economically depressed areas is significant and timely (Dogru & Bulut, 2017). Under the industrialization of agriculture and urban expansion, Dutang once lagged behind in terms of Gross Regional Product (GRP), even as many farmers were in poverty. Agri-tourism laid the economic foundation for the locals and helped this area to witness a significant economic growth. According to former academic articles, the GRP of Dutang Village increased 25.7 times in 2018 compared to 2015. And, the annual per capita disposable income of Dutang villagers increased from 3100 yuan in 2015 to 29,300 yuan in 2018, an increase of nearly 8.5 times.

“I feel that recently our village is quite crowded with tourists on holidays and weekends [...] I think our village has become more popular!” (Mr. Jun, 2021)

In addition to the economic data mentioned earlier, local residents also stated that they could clearly observe the rise in the number of tourists. From Dogru and Bulut’s (2017) *tourism-led growth hypothesis*, growth in tourism numbers and revenues will subsequently result in economic growth (p. 427).

During the interviews, the most mentioned impact of agri-tourism to Dutang by the respondents was the socio-economic development. Agri-tourism contributes to the socio-development in terms of infrastructure construction, solving demographic issues, ensuring employment and income in Dutang.

“Roads in our village are already six-lane roads, other villages are two lanes” (Mr. Jun, 2021)

Mr. Jun was very proud to talk about the road in front of his farmhouse, when he was asked to think about the most impressive change brought by agri-tourism in the area. The development of tourism has led to the improvement of the local infrastructure, which subsequently improved the quality of life of the residents (Tiraieyari & Hamzah, 2012). Another indefensible evidence is from the government office. Mr. Cai told the research that Dutang village and the surrounding four villages have achieved a domestic waste treatment system. A

new sewage collection network of 16.8km, 20 sets of village-level sewage treatment facilities, and 36 public toilets were built.

*“Tourism makes it easier than ever for us to find a job and get more money”
(Mr. Wu, 2021)*

Also, agri-tourism diversified the income sources of local farmers; from purely agricultural production to income from part-time jobs, investment and entrepreneurship. According to the department manager of MLHX Tourist Attraction, 60% of the merchants in the commercial street are local residents, and employment in agri-tourism gives priority to local residents.

As for socio-cultural development, from several online articles, local Mulan culture has been revitalized, and the story of Dutang's community development as the “Most Beautiful Countryside” is being spread throughout China. From the tone of the interviewees' voice during the interview, it could be heard that the development of agri-tourism in Dutang Village has boosted residents' sense of pride (Mbaiwa, 2005).

“My parents are not interested in tourism here, they think there is nothing to care about and they are more willing to be at home looking at the scenery from their doorstep.” (Mr. Rui, 2021)

However, agri-tourism does little for the collective meaning of the local community. From Mr. Rui's words, local elder residents still lack perceptions and expectations of tourism. This is also one of the reasons for residents' low sense of participation.

Overall, the case Dutang Village builds on the Keyim (2017) literature to create “Top-down” governance with local characteristics, taking into account the Chinese context. “Bridging network” also connects stakeholders with the support of the Party Branch, which is consistent with Stokke and Haukeland's (2018) literature. This is an opportunity for local agri-tourism development. However, in “Top-down” governance, stakeholders are still unequally involved and partially empowered, which in turn leads to an imbalance between embeddedness and disembeddedness. Dutang fails to integrate local resources, culture and socio-

cultural relations with the external culture in a rational way. Next to this, the sense of participation of the local population is extremely low due to the strict control of the rural areas at the foundation of the PRC. These pose a challenge to integrated rural development.

Therefore, Dutang Village should pay more attention to the integration of Mulan culture and local community meaning in agri-tourism. Combined with the educational function of agri-tourism (Che, et al. 2005), local farming knowledge and past peasant production life can be integrated into tourism programs through events and festivals. More educational programs for local farmers should also be integrated into the activities and farmers should be encouraged to participate.

7. Conclusion

This thesis offers some insights into the governance and integrated development of agri-tourism in peri-urban areas in the Chinese context. It adds to the debate on agri-tourism and rural revitalization with a case study. First, three types of agri-tourism in China's PUAs are identified, and it empirically confirms the existing rural tourism types proposed by previous researchers in China. Second, regional stakeholders were mapped to explore the organizational development models and stakeholder relationships in the PUA. Interestingly, this paper proposes the name of a new type of governance, "Top-down" governance, which refers to top-down management at the administrative level and bottom-up governance at the local level, with the Party Branch acts as a communicator (bridge builder) or legitimate platform in this model (Keyim, 2007; Stokke & Haukeland, 2018). The creation of this paradigm is based entirely on empirical research according to the case study of Dutang and the fundamental nature of Chinese society.

The "Top-down" governance exposes the problems of partial empowerment and low sense of participation among residents in rural development networks. Partial empowerment leads to an uneven distribution of resources and power, resulting in an imbalance between embeddedness and disembeddedness (Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2016). There are too many external resources and investments, but internal cultural and collective community meanings fail to be embedded in tourism activities. Thankfully, the local area has preserved a certain traditional culture in museums and spread the culture to the international people, realizing a boost in the value of local knowledge.

To answer the research question, agri-tourism is mainly a rural ecology-based type of tourism in the local area, which has achieved partial empowerment and endogenous development under the development model of "Top-down" governance. However, it lacks the embedded factors to balance the excessive external factors. Ultimately, agri-tourism is considered to contribute to local economic and socio-economic development but still needs to be focused in terms

of socio-cultural development, in particular the community collective meaning, to achieve a more integrated development.

Furthermore, this paper still has limitations that need to be addressed in future research. First, it is undeniable that the small number of interviewees allowed the researcher to capture the in-depth experiences of the participants and generate rich data (Vaseileiou et al., 2018). However, the number of respondents, in particular those who identify as ordinary farmers and private entrepreneurs, should be increased to gain more insights and experiences from the grassroots, and thus improve the rigor of the study.

Second, the interviews were conducted online, which raises the ethical issue of confidentiality and affects the researcher's perception of the participants (Maher et al., 2018). The online environment may also have affected the understanding and interpretation of both parties. This is particularly challenging in qualitative research, as part of the interview is about interpreting meanings through the manner in which things are conveyed (Hay, 2016).

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Appendix

A Interview Guide

Interview guide based on Hay (2016)

Type of questions	Example Questions	Reasons	Literature
Descriptive (primary question)	在过去的五年里，您是怎么看待杜堂村的变化？ What do you think of the changes in Dutang village in the past five years?	Easy to answer Opening question	General Questions
Opinion (secondary question)	您觉得最让您印象深刻的变化是什么？ Which change/changes impressed you the most?		
Storytelling (primary question)	您如何描述您 (父母)之前的工作？ How would you describe your previous job?	Details on informants' work and experiences. Easy to answer Opening question	Upcoming questions (optional)
Storytelling (secondary question)	您如何描述您现在的工作？ How would you describe your current job?		
Opinion (secondary question)	您怎么描述在工作上做的改变？ How would you describe the changes		

	you have made in your work?		
Storytelling (primary question)	您觉得杜堂村的农业旅游给您带来了什么(好处)? What do you think the agri-tourism in Dutang Village has brought to you?	Identify the aspects from which agri-tourism promotes rural revitalization (development) based on the categories of economic, socio-economic and socio-cultural development.	Rural revitalization
Storytelling (primary question)	您觉得农业旅游给整个杜堂地区带来了什么? What do you think agri-tourism has brought to the entire Dutang area?		
Descriptive (secondary question)	能否提供三个具体的例子? Could you provide three specific benefits or disadvantages brought by tourism?	Encourages sustained input from the respondent	
Opinion (primary question)	您觉得杜堂村现在的旅游发展进程如何? How is the current tourism development progress in Dutang?	Allows informant to become accustomed to the interviews for asking deeper reflection later	Tourism as a rural development driver
Descriptive (primary)	旅游在杜堂村现在是起到什么样的作用	Identify whether they regard tourism as a rural	

question)	呢？/处于什么样的地位呢？ What role does tourism play in Dutang now?	development driver	
Descriptive (secondary question)	您认为杜堂的旅游优势在哪里？ What are the tourism advantages of Dutang?	Encourages sustained input from the respondent	
Descriptive (secondary question)	旅游是怎样与农业结合在一块的？ How is tourism integrated with agriculture in Dutang villages?	Finding the answer for How do they link up tourism with agriculture	Agri-tourism and its types
Storytelling (primary question)	您如何与这个地区的其它企业家，农民或者农村合作社合作？ How do you cooperate with other entrepreneurs, farmers or rural cooperatives in this area?	Figure out the development model Allows informant to become accustomed to the interviews for asking deeper reflection later	Development Model and stakeholder relations
Storytelling (secondary question)	您如何描述各个与您合作的团体？引导谈论顺序 How would you describe the various	Identify the potential challenges of stakeholder relationships	Governance and IRT

	groups that you work with?		
Opinion (secondary question)	您觉得自从旅游和农业相结合以来，这些团体是怎样变化的？ How do you think these groups have changed since the integration of tourism and agriculture?		
	你有什么问题要问我吗？ Do you have some questions for me?		Clearinghouse question (Closing)

B Codebook

Descriptive codes			
Coding themes	Subcategories	Description and example	Code label
Descriptive			
	Personal Characteristics	Background information of respondents	PC
	Occupation		PCO
	Length of working		LW
	Gender		PCG
	Place of residence		PCPR
	Characteristics of Dutang	Details of the case study area and its changes	COD
	Features of China external peri-urban area (Pan, 2009)	Identifying features of peri-urban areas: spatially, culturally and economically	FPA
	Previous Dutang	Something shows the changes	PD
	Current Dutang		CD
Analytic codes			
Agri-tourism			AT
	Multi-functional agriculture	It combines commodities and services to provide a variety of social, environmental and economic functions (Piorr et al., 2007; Van Huylenbroeck et al., 2007)	MFA

	Types of China agri-tourism		PCAT
	Production-oriented agri-tourism	Agri-tourism emerged from the process of both the traditional and high-tech agricultural production, combined with the unique features of agricultural productions in certain areas (Zhang, 2011; Yang, Cai & Sliuzas, 2009; Jia et al., 2011)	POA
	Rural ecology-oriented agri-tourism	Based on the natural ecological landscape of the countryside and provides visitors with a back-to-nature and relaxing tourism experience by offering activities such as hiking and farmlands sightseeing (Zhang, 2011; Lai, 2016).	REOA
	Farmer life-oriented agri-tourism	Encourages visitors to participate in farmers' lives, folklore celebrations and local traditional farming culture and then enhances the interaction between visitors and local farmers (Chen & Peng, 2011)	FFOA
	Development modes	The actors or organizations participated in the development of agri-tourism and their networks.	DM
Rural revitalization			RR

	Economic growth	e.g. increase in tourism flow, generate foreign exchange, enhance government tax revenues (Hindley & Smith, 1984; Mihalič, 2002; Du, Ng & Lew, 2016)	EG
	Socio-economic development	e.g. Well-being of individuals, groups or families, living conditions, education, health, population growth (Kozic, Mikulic & Kresic, 2013; Saarinen, 2014)	SED
	Socio-cultural development	e.g. improve people's quality of life, conservations of landscapes and historical heritage, collective meaning of a place, social cohesion (Glasson et al., 1995; Mbaiwa, 2005)	SCD
Stakeholder relationships			SR
	Bridging network	Participants with different knowledge and values can achieve more by working together than acting alone (Stokke & Haukeland, 2018).	BN
Collaborative governance		An approach that contributes to the socio-economic development of rural areas and the protection of local communities (Keyim,	CG

		2017).	
	Broad and equal participation	-	BEP
	Legitimacy platform	-	LP
	Adequate resources	-	AR
Integrated rural tourism		It emphasizes the relational thinking, and builds social networks that enable local actors to interact with each other in terms of knowledge, cultural and other types of resources (Saxena et al., 2007 ; Stoyanets et al. (2019).	IRT
	Endogenous-exogenous	To maintain maximum benefits in a locality by using emplaced resources	ENDEXO
	Embeddedness-disembeddedness	Resources or activities are directly linked to local socio-cultural relations	EBDIS
	Empowerment-disempowerment	Local actors are empowered to gain control over local resources and can participate in decision-making.	EPDIS
Chinese context			CC
	Low education level	-	LEL
	Number of grassroots	-	NOG
	Low sense of participation	-	LSP

C Informed consent

知情同意书

对武汉市黄陂区杜堂村农业旅游与其地区发展的定性研究

研究员:冯刘文岳

所属机构: 荷兰格罗宁根大学, 空间与科学学院

研究目的

您被邀请参与这项学术研究。在您接受邀请之前,我非常荣幸可以给您先介绍我的学术研究,并给您介绍您被邀请的目的。

这项学术研究是为探究杜堂村整体地区如何发展旅游业(农业旅游为主),以及旅游业对当地整体发展的影响。

请您仔细阅读整篇知情同意书,如果您有不清楚的地方,请随时与我联系。

研究过程

如果您同意参与研究,访谈过程中可能会涉及到您的个人信息,我将在学术发表时对你的身份做匿名处理。随后,您将会被问及一系列关于西沟地区旅游和发展的的问题。您完全**不需要**担心任何有关您隐私的安全性问题,以及我们从您的访谈中获取的信息的私密性的问题。我保证不会在用于学术研究和分析外,分享和泄露任何在此次访谈中收集到的信息。

预计访谈时长

本次访谈将进行 35-40 分钟

自愿参与情况

请知晓,您是自愿参与到这次研究当中。如果您决定参与,您将被要求在下方签名以获得您的同意,作为您参与的确认。您可以在任何时候决定退出本次研究,也可以拒绝回答具体问题,如果您有这样的意愿,请务必告知我。你的退出不会影响到我的关系。如果您在数据收集完成前退出本研究,所有信息,包括同意书将被删除。

联系人信息

这项研究是由格罗宁根大学批准并发起的。如果您有任何关于这项研究的问题,您可以通过以下方式联系到研究者。

电子邮箱: lfeng_3@student.rug.nl

微信以及手机号: (+86) 18389696971

我自愿意参加本次研究。我已阅读以上内容,并清楚理解。我得到了提问研究者的机会,这些问题都得到了满意的回答。我自愿参与这项研究,即我可以在任何时候决定退出,而不需要提供理由。格罗宁根大学和研究者人员特此被同意匿名使用和处理这些数据。如有需要,我同意研究人员储存资料,以便日后做进一步分析。我明白访谈过程中的录音文件仅用于分析和/或科学目的。

签名:

日期: