CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

One day in 2006, I travelled around many districts of Ubon Ratchatani province to seek for a field site to conduct research on organic agriculture. I stopped at one village within Trakarnpuedphon district of Ubon Ratchatani province and talked to villagers about organic agriculture. Most villagers who are farmers suggested me to visit a farmer who was well-known within this district. He is an outstanding farmer who has practiced organic agriculture for many years. When I met him, however, he worked on construction as a supplementary income. Later on, I realized that he kept growing organic rice, but he was stopped selling organic rice to global niche markets for fair trade[1] and organic rice. He told me about his terrible experience to be a farmer within the export-oriented organic rice production system, especially the more tired to work on farm, the demand of intensive labors, the increasing transaction cost and production cost, the waste of time and cash for reception guests from oversea, the increasing transportation cost, the low rice price, and the deduction of rice price from the charge of contaminations. My initial experience of interview with the farmer who grows organic stimulates my interest to study the advantages and disadvantages of organic rice farming.

Organic farming can represent defined an important element of innovation in rural areas. Organic farming is an innovative way of envisioning and practicing agriculture. Its innovative force manifests itself in various aspects. Organic farming is a complex innovation, requiring a high information level and low technology input. It does not affect production techniques exclusively, it rather influences farm management in its entirely (Pugliese 2001). The discourse of organic agriculture links organic agriculture with sustainable agriculture, rural development, and alternative food networks (AFNs) (Pugliese 2001; Darnhofer 2005). This leads to a normative

[1] The birth of first fair label, namely Max Havelaar, was created in the Netherlands in 1988. It started from an alternative store to sell a few products which represented Third World products. Fair trade is mainly concerned with fair pay for the producers and workers' rights (Renard 2003: 89).

judgment that organic agriculture is a solution to economic, social, and environmental problems. Organic agriculture is seen as a challenge to conventional agriculture, a new form of food configuration operating as a counter-culture to globalizing logics, and a resistance to industrialization of foods incorporating utopian visions, with a commitment to health, society, and environment (Marsden 2000). The political aspect of organic agriculture, however, is overlooked.

However, this normative judgment on organic agriculture is challenged both by academics and lay farmers. It is correct that organic agriculture originated as a critique of modernization in agriculture. The criticism is concern about negative impacts of the green revolution[2] that have often expressed in terms of problems of maintaining high yield levels, high production costs, environmental contamination, loss of biodiversity, threats to human health from use of chemical and erosion of traditional farming systems (Pugliese 2001).

Yet, theoretical debate about organic agriculture recently reflects on a contradictory aspect embedded in organic agriculture. For instance, Guthman (2004: 307) argues that as organic agriculture is developing toward commercialization and internationalization; organic agriculture is appropriated by conventional agriculture.

Moreover, both farmers who are engaged in organic agriculture and those who are not engaged question the legitimacy of organic agriculture. In Na Sawan sub-district of Ubon Ratchatani province where intensive fieldwork was conducted, a survey conducted by the Ministry of Interior in 2008 found that there were 11,271 households and majority of households engaged in rice farming. However, there were only 36 households engaged in organic rice production in this sub-district. Although most farmers did not engaged in non-organic rice farming, they are directly or indirectly affected by the emergence of export-oriented organic rice production in the rural communities. The impacts of the organic rice production on non-farmers include high competition among farmers for wage labor, increasing labor costs, competition

[2] The green revolution is identified as as a 'package approach' used to increase productivity, and included widespread use of high yielding varieties (HYVs), intensified cropping, and a high level of reliance on irrigation systems, machinery and agricultural chemicals. Some research has argued that the green revolution was only effective if the package approach was undertaken. From this perspective; therefore, the introduction of HYVs alone was not enough to create the beneficial green revolution effects, because water control, high fertilizer inputs, and the prevention of disease and insect management, were also important (Pingali et al. 1997).

in access to natural resources, and new conflicts among farmers in relation to farm management.

The farmers who are not engaged in the organic rice scheme challenge the authority of the experts who claim a strict division between conventional and organic rice farming, linking organic agriculture with discourses on "sustainable agriculture", "environmental friendliness", and "social responsibility". The farmers question the binary opposition notion of organic and conventional agriculture, and the attempt to represent organic agriculture as the agricultural system which is clean, safe, and sustainable in contrast to conventional agriculture which is represented as contaminated, unsustainable and dangerous. This association has created the spaces of purification and it is a reason for market inclusion and exclusion. The farmers not being incorporated into the export-oriented organic agriculture normally receive lower rice price compared to those who are incorporated into the global niche markets. That is the reason why they question the legitimacy of organic agriculture.

Additionally, farmers who are not engaged in organic agriculture distrust in science and the authority of the experts. They complain and gossip about violations of the rules undertaken by the organic farmers. They blame the farmers who grow organic rice are concealed to use chemical fertilizer and insecticide, and they also claimed that they observed crabs died in the rice crops of their neighbor farmers who grow organic rice. The slander which is the most critical in my view is the statement: *"practicing organic agriculture in the day time, but practicing chemical agriculture in the night time"*. This statement implies the mistrust not only in the farmers who do organic agriculture, but also the mistrust in the abstract system of standardization and certification of organic agriculture. At the same time, it is a challenge to the authority of the experts which claim to the legitimacy of organic rice farming. The spread of rumor, gossip and slander in the local communities in which most farmers are excluded from export-oriented organic rice farming is an example of the politics of organic agriculture. It represents the attempt to question the claims that organic agriculture is honored and sustainable.

In addition, the farmers who are engaged in organic agriculture also question the legitimacy of organic agriculture and fair trade. They question the unreasonable quality standards imposed upon them; they sometimes neglect to follow the strict

rules insisted on by the contractor. They modify the guideline of rice farming practices, secretly sell organic rice outside the contract, harvest the crops in ways that maximize their wages, circulate gossip stories about the misuse of the fair trade premium and group savings. They also resist completing conversion to organic rice farming, maintaining a combination of non-organic rice farming and organic rice farming. These practices are "practices of politics" in the organic rice scheme in northeastern Thailand. For this reason, although rural development in organic and fair trade rice production fits within Tania Murray Li's (2007) frame of the "will to improve", I argue that the politics of organic agriculture are taking place and cannot be neglected.

The growth of organic agriculture in northeastern Thailand is partly related to increasing demand of food quality and the rise of flexible specialization in developed countries. Since the 1980s onward the notion of flexible specialization has emerged to refer to the alternative to Fordism, focusing on economic and social conditions of mass production and mass consumption which are in crisis. Then, flexible specialization is regarded as alternative path of development of late-capitalism associated with small-scale batch production, satisfying specialized demand, and offering more skilled and varied work (Fine 1998).

The rise of new production system has contributed to agricultural restructuring in the Third World countries in two folds. Firstly, emerging new pattern of consumption in developed countries stimulates the rise of niche markets for specialty foods. The fear of dangerous and negative impacts of industrially-produced foods has led to opportunities for agribusinesses which change their strategies to focus on production of specialty foods, focusing on health-conscious, fresh, exotic, and ethnic foods. Secondly, governments in developing countries have adopted an export-orientation policy to earn foreign currency and have shifted to high value food production. The two trends contribute to the rise of new global division of labor based on countries which produce low-value products and others which produce high-value products (McMichael 1994). The rise of niche markets for specialty foods is a new opportunity for producers in developing countries to shift to produce high value food. However, the competitiveness of the high value food sectors rests on the low costs of production and the extent to which quality can be established (Watts 1997).

Yet, the impacts of globalization on agricultural sectors in developing countries vary between different regions that produce different commodities, and vary between different groups of producers that produce commodities within the same system. Minority of farmers benefits from the growth of global organic markets; other farmers are excluded from the global niche markets, so they still grow inorganic rice to serve conventional markets. Moreover, Ben Fine argues that capitalist restructuring constitutes contradictory tendencies, it is apparent that the constitution of flexibility in one component of an economic system may require rigidity or non-flexibility in another component (Fine 1998). Hence, the study examines how a re-organization of spatial production of rice has brought about flexibility in some component and rigidity in another component, and agrarian transition in the Northeast.

I find that the growth of organic rice farming in Ubon Ratchatani province since 2000 onward is related to four factors. Firstly, farmers are pressured from economic constraint in conventional agriculture, because an ability to intensify rice crop is constrained by limited rainfall, unavailability of irrigation, and high dependency on external inputs. Moreover, territorial expansion of rice crop is also restricted by the limited land, and high prices of land and labor. Economic pressure in conventional agriculture has forced many northeastern Thai farmers to conversion to organic rice production to get a premium.

Secondly, agro-ecological system in the province is suitable for the production of high quality of "organic jasmine rice" rice (written in Thai as *'Kaw Hom Mali' or 'Kaw Doc Mali'*). The production of organic jasmine rice generally requires agro-ecological systems in which a mixture between severe draught and high degree of rainfall can be converged, especially in northeastern Thailand (Hutanuwat 2007). Moreover, I argue that there is a high potential for situation of conversion to organic agriculture by neglect, since farmers in some remote areas of Ubon Ratchatani province use only small proportion of chemical fertilizer in the rice plots, due to limited financial capital. In addition, most farmers perform free chemical-pesticides in rice production before the coming of organic agriculture, because, as the farmers said, the spread of pests and insects are not severe problems in the areas.

Many districts of Ubon Ratchatani province are less risk and cleaner, therefore, these areas are targets of capitalist to seek for high competitive advantages

for flexible accumulation. The productive environment of each specific rural area plays an important role in determining capacity of region to acquire competitiveness advantage in the new markets (Saraceno 1994). Therefore, local actors employ the unique environment of particular region to create territorial identities and exchanged value in order to gain benefits from the rise of niche markets (Tregear 2006).

Thirdly, there are competitive advantages within the province in terms of flexibility of labor recruitment and labor cost. Since labor cost is a large proportion of overall production costs; seasonal migrant labors from Lao PDR have been recruited to meet labor demand of the conventional and organic farms. This allows the Thai farmers to overcome problems of labor shortage and to reduce the labor cost because the Lao wage laborers receive lower incomes than the Thai ones. The use of migrant labor in organic agriculture always leads to problem regarding worker's rights in some areas such as in North America (Shreck 2006). Therefore, the utilization of Lao migrant labor in organic rice farming in northeastern Thailand calls into question whether or not organic agriculture in Thailand really contributes to sustainable development.

Fourthly, the province is the homes of relatively poor farmers who are the targets of rural development schemes. Since the mid 1970s alternative agriculture was initiated by local non-government organizations (NGOs) in Thailand as a means to challenge the mainstream development (Learnchamroon 1982) The study of Nantiya Hutanuwat in 2007 argues that organic jasmine rice farming can be alternative for poverty alleviation of lower-northeast for several reasons. For instance, firstly, the organic rice farming improves soil fertility. Secondly, it relies on farm inputs. Thirdly, the farmers can benefit from other organic farm products for home consumption and for sale. Finally, organic rice farming is safer for farmers and consumers. Yet, Nantiya argues that the domestic and international market of organic rice is still small, hence the farmers who converted to organic rice farming because of market price have become disappointed and gave up (Hutanuwat 2007).

Since organic rice production represents alternative development and organic rice trade represents alternative market; it is expected that the integration of farmers into organic markets through the local development scheme leads to improving yields, sustainable environment, and better well-being. Yet organic jasmine rice production is

increasingly developed towards commercialization and internationalization; this calls into question whether or not the goals of sustainable agriculture and sustainable development can be met through the vertical integration of farmers into mainstream markets.

Moreover, since organic rice is recognized by international markets if it is only certified by international certifying agency, the requirements of international markets and regulations become a new force of change in agricultural practices in developing countries like northeastern Thailand (Raynolds 2000). Once northeastern Thai farmers have been linked to international markets; they cannot avoid being controlled by regulatory regime of fair trade and organic. In addition, the farmers are controlled by contractual relation employed in fair trade and organic rice scheme.

Glover and Kusterer (1990: 9) underline the role of contract farming in rural development. They argue that contract farming is widely adopted at the global scale, as it has a potential to overcome some of the problems existing in rural communities. These problems include a lack of new technologies and inputs for new crops, a lack of initiative from private sector, a lack of agricultural extension, a lack of credit provided to smallholders, a lack of market information and market access for high value goods, and a lack of channels for access the international markets. Therefore, potential of contract farming in fulfilling the needs of northeastern Thai farmers is examined.

The critics of contract farming focus on the structures of dependency, exploitation, and capitalist penetration. The critics concern about the exploitative surplus extraction and extension of capitalist control into agricultural labor process (Watts 1994). Moreover, the critique concern about the use of contracting in agriculture which has led to the destruction of the peasantry and has accelerated differentiation among the farmers (Little 1994).

With all these criticisms, the remaining questions are why, how and through what processes contracting is utilized as a means for achieving the sustainable development of the Northeast. This study focuses on the repositioning of agricultural relations in liberalized but re-regulated set of trade arrangements to meet new consumer demands for food safety and quality. The global institutions such as international standards and global actors play a critical role in re-arranging agrarian relations (Bain 2005). This study examines how international regulations are imposed

on farmers, as well as the intended and unintended consequences of the enforcement of these regulations on farmers.

Globalization of foods has always led to re-regulation (Watts 1997). In the context of globalizing agro-food, quality certification constitute a mechanism of market entry and market exclusion (Renard 2005). Certification is an important form of regulatory practice, but certification focuses on the control of labor to be inserted into each point of production and into a series of monitoring tasks (Mutersbaugh 2005). Therefore, this study examines the governing organic rice scheme through certification. The regulatory regime of organic rice scheme thus represents the control of production processes as well as control of the agro-ecological environment. Key issues concerned in this study are the use of technologies of government to govern farmers' lives, and the practices of politics by the farmers.

Therefore, the questions I address here are: (i) Why have local farmers and natural environment in northeastern Thailand been incorporated into global organic and fair trade networks in the context of flexible accumulation and agricultural restructuring? (ii) How are the regulations of organic rice and fair trade standards enforced on farmers and the agro-ecological environment of the Northeast through certification? (iii) In what ways do local farmers perceive, negotiate and contest the rise of international regulations and certification of organic and fair trade rice?

1.1 Revisiting Agrarian Transformation

1.1.1 Debate on Agrarian Transformation

In the 1960s Marxists provided theoretical insight into the position of peasantries vis-à-vis the capitalist world market and post-colonial nation-states. Marxism considers agrarian transition as a part of capitalist transformation. In this respect, there is no different between development of capitalism in agricultural sector and in industrial sector. The insertion of capitalism into the rural areas inevitably results in the polarization of landholdings, the process of depeasantization, and the rise of the proletarianization. Within this perspective, the concentration of land in the hands of a small number of landlords and the replacement of peasantry by proletariats indicates the

development of capitalism in agricultural sector in the same line as development of capitalism in industrial sector (Shanin 1980).

The studies of agrarian transformation in Southeast Asia during the 1950s to the 1960s were strongly influenced by the structural-functional theory, the theory of modernization, and the theories of revolution. These studies mostly focused on categorization of the peasantry, the relationships between peasants and non-peasants, especially industry, the significance of farm land, and the external forces of agrarian change such as the market, states and culture. For instance, the work of Banfield described peasant society as a "backward" and "immoral" society and Potter described peasant society as a "loosely structured" community (Banfield 1958; Potter 1968). This analysis adapts traditional customs and culture to determine the drive of development of agricultural sector.

However, problem of these analyses is that peasantry and rural community are regarded as essentialist and bounded entity. Peasants seem to be identified in relation to locational and occupational boundaries. As a result, farmers are only those who make their living on land and farming, and they live within their communities, with less relationship with outside.

By the 1980s peasant studies focused exclusively on the debate on substantivist and fomalist approaches of which Scott (1976) and Popkin (1979) were prominent representatives emerged. Both Scott and Popkin focused on economic behaviors of the farmers in relation to labeling. Despite the disagreement between Scott and Popkin about motivations of economic engagement for peasant households and characteristics of peasant communities, both of them shared a limitation in regard to the use of the household as the unit of analysis. Popkin and Scott were likely to see a change in peasant community from a way wherein each family farm adjusted itself in congruence with changing contexts; therefore, they tend to ignore the changes derived from ideologies and collective action (Scott 1976; Popkin 1979).

However, scholars who study agrarian transformation in the 1980s to the 1990s argued that it may be incorrect to consider peasantry and rural community as essentialist and bounded entity, since peasants are no longer living within their own communities, and they do not make their living by farming on land only. Therefore,

peasantries are regarded as a politically construction of agrarian labour process (Kearney 1996).

Bryceson (2001: 3-5) studies the role of smallholders in Africa, Asia and Latin America in relation to debate on peasantization/de-peasantization. Bryceson finds that peasant livelihood involves a changing agrarian labour process that cannot be equated with an agricultural livelihood and rural residence. This finding leads to her argument that even though a tendency towards de-agrarianization is seen at the global scale, de-agrarianization is not equivalent to de-peasantization. As a result, it is necessary to separate between de-peasantization and de-agrarianization. The term 'de-agrarianization', used by Bryceson, means households became increasingly dependent on non-agricultural activities; it indicates economic activity reorientation, occupational adjustment, and spatial realignment of residence. It thus involves a move away from dependence on farm production.

Moreover, Bryceson points two trends. The first phenomenon is that the economic sector change arising from expansion and contraction of rural populations that derive their livelihoods from agriculture. Another is that the fluctuating populations of rural producers involved in the peasant labour process denoted by family farm contracting. These two trends point not to the disappearing of the peasantry, but the growth of peasantries and the complex forms of peasant labor process.

The agrarian study in the 1980s focused significantly on the role of family farms in relation to the agrarian transformation and industrialization. Definition of family farms generally refers to a farm that uses only family labor, or they may hire labors as supplementary labors for specific tasks but management remains with the family farmers who also work on the farms. The Marxist debate about family farming in capitalist economy had an underlying argument that family farming was either supposed to be marginalization of the medium scale family farms, or disappearance. In contrast, the pro-family farming argued against the disappearance of family farming. They contended that the family modes of organizing rural production were resilient so that the family farming could be able to compete the large-scale farms and to resist the impacts of capitalism in agricultural sector. Moreover, family farmers can access to capital inputs through contract production; they can minimize the limitation

by engaging contractors to undertake the more capital-intensive parts of the farm operation. They can also take advantage of economies of scope through the use their resources for more than one purpose (Brookfield 2007).

Current scholars try to situate family farming in the context of late capitalism. Pollak argues that family farming contains comparative advantage compared to plantation or large-scale farmers in relation to the transaction costs. The transaction costs of hired labor was found much higher than those being used for family labor in the later 20th century. The agricultural enterprises employed labor works over a large area and cannot easily be supervised, but family labor has a much greater interest in working efficiently and the family farm labor is a response to the difficulty of supervising works (Pollak cited in Brookfield 2007:115).

Considering the association between contract farming and family farm, many scholars consider contract farming as a means by which smallholders are linked with industrial sector. Through contract farming, mode of production has been shifted from a subsistence production to the commercial production and from commercial production to commercial production for the food industry (Rigg 2001). With respect to Southeast Asia, the growth of canning factories and contract farming systems show that the farmers in the region are becoming more tied into agro-food industrialization (Glover 1992). In Thailand in particular, contract farming and out-grower schemes are principal means through which small-scale farmers have been incorporated in agro-industrial food manufacturing (Manarangsan 1992).

Contract farming has been promoted as an innovative way to link large agribusiness corporations and simple commodity producers. The agribusiness enterprises handle the upstream and downstream activities such as input supply, output processing and marketing. The small-scale farmers are capable of self-exploitation and strategies to allow them to compete with large enterprises. Small-scale producers are frequently considered to have the capability to bypass capitalist enterprises; as a result, they can avoid being integrated into full market relations (Moran 1996). The linkage between large agribusiness enterprises and small-scale producers through contract farming revitalizes the debate on modernization and agrarian transition.

The important characteristic of the contract farming relationship is the insulation of small-scale farmers from the open market. Within this aspect, smallholders can incur potential advantages and disadvantages, once they produce under contract. On the one hand, the potential advantages of contract farming occur under the condition that the integrator provides inputs at lower prices and buy outputs at a higher price than the price offered by the open market.

Contract farmers capture economies of scale in access to material inputs and support services and they can access larger markets for their outputs. On the other hand, the potential disadvantages of contract farming in relation to the insulation from open markets rest on the division of value added between the growers and contractors. The industrial subcontracting structures permit the contractor to accumulate wealth on the basis of value added generated by small growers, but is not captured by them, due to price manipulation (White 1997).

Moreover, contract farming of family farms leads to the concern about issues of power of control and autonomy of producers. By leaving direct production in the hands of small-scale producers, contracting enterprises can avoid risks in regard to agricultural production and problems of fluctuation in demand and supply by passing these risks onto small-scale producers (Wilson 1986). Buying products from family farms instead of contracting wage labor, the contractor can shift all problems associated with labor recruitment, labor compensation, and labor control onto the contracted growers. Besides, the contractor can have indirect access to unpaid labor within peasant households, such as the labor of women and children (Porter 1995).

Watts characterizes the family farms producing under the contract as "semi-proletarients" in the context of flexible accumulation, as contracted farmers own a means of production but they use the means of production to serve the need of others and to make profits for others. Moreover, smallholders producing under the contract are also seen as "disguised" labour, because they are employed in family units but they are not paid. Watts argues that if plantation agriculture is the agrarian analogue of a large factory, contract farming bears a striking resemblance to family-based sub-contracting enterprises. For this reason, contracting enhances capital flexible accumulation through the use of flexibility with respect to a search for low-cost labor, the same workers performs a variety of tasks, and the propensity of firms to adjust the

quality of labor used; contracting leads to tighter control for growers producing under the contract (Watts 1994).

Additionally, as pluriactivity is an important aspect of family farming, it leads to argument that it allows the family farms to diversify their livelihoods and to diversify the household sources of income without a need to give up farming. The pluriactivity puts agriculture directly into competition with non-agricultural enterprises in the labor market; therefore, process of de-agrarianization is much more difficult (Brookfield 2007). Rigg (2001, 2002) and Elson (1997) also focus on the increasing role of off-farm based livelihoods and incomes for survival of farming households in Southeast Asia. Because rural livelihoods have shifted from farm-based to off-farm-based strategies; this leads to the believing that wealth is accumulated independent of land and poverty cannot be determined by the land-based production (Rigg 2006).

1.1.2 The Crisis of the Green Revolution and Emergence of Alternative Agriculture

The green revolution is a form of modernization in agriculture. It involves the use of high yielding grain varieties, intensified cropping, intercropping of tree and ground crops, increasing reliance on irrigation systems and industrial inputs, and mechanization. On the one hand, the introduction of green revolution in rural communities of Malaysia has brought about substantial improvements in productivity and the improvement of life conditions for the majority of peasants (De Koninck 1992). On the other hand, critiques of the green revolution point to the negative impacts of social and ecological transformation. These impacts include the problems of maintaining high yield levels, rising costs of production; agro-ecological deterioration; loss of biodiversity and effects on human health from chemical fertilizer and pesticide use; deterioration of agricultural ecology, disqualification and displacement of labor, and profound modification of gender relations as well as property and tenure structures. The problems involved with modernization in agriculture have forced farmers to depend significantly on machinery and improved rice seeds (Pingali 1997).

Importantly, the coincidence of costs-price squeeze and the relatively higher incomes of non-agricultural activities is a new condition that forces the poor and landless farmers to migrate out of villages to seek wages in urban-based activities. Intense rural-urban social mobility has affected of the viability of family farms and the capability of peasant communities to maintain their life circle (Elson 1997). Within the context that land-based activities no longer a major source of income for peasant households and rural households increasingly depend on off-farm activities, some writers such as Rigg argues that agrarian transition is developing towards de-agrarianization (Rigg 2006).

Economists postulate that efficiency in the whole process of rice production would maintain the productive potential of rice farming. For neo-classical economists, the invention of biotechnologies, such as genetically modified organisms (GMOs), capitalist penetration of plant science, and commodification of seeds could help to enhance outputs (Greenland 1997). In contrast, social scientists argue that agricultural techno-science tends to compensate for contradictions in modern industrial agro-food by providing short-term and medium-term stabilization (Goodman 2001). Others argue that the adoption of technological innovation makes possible capital accumulation at the expense of social and environmental costs (Marsden 1999).

Since commercialization in conventional agriculture creates negative impacts on environment and human health, it leads to the call for a sustainable path to agriculture. The origin of the organic agriculture movement in the US is considered a radical form of sustainable agriculture (Pugliese 2001). In Thailand, organic agriculture was promoted in the 1970s as a form of "alternative" agriculture that had a potential to challenge the green revolution (Siripat 1994). The potential of organic agriculture to forestall modernization in agriculture and the industrialization of food is based on the belief that organic agriculture represents a convergence between principles of alternative development and principles of alternative agriculture. Alternative development emphasizes practices proceed outside the state, community-based initiatives, and self-sufficient value (Friedmann 1992). Alternative agriculture focuses on the use of farm-derived resources, production for consumption, and improvement of ecological conditions. In reality farmers regard the conversion to

organic agriculture as a strategy to reconfigure farm resources and to take advantage of opportunities offered by rural development activities (Darnhofer 2005).

The growth of organic agriculture in Thailand since the 1970s onwards involves four factors. First, the growth of environmentalism that emerged in the 1970s contributed to the growth of organic agriculture in the country. Thai urban-based environmentalism is influenced by the Western conceptualization of "nature". "Nature" here is perceived as a thing to be protected, and at the same time "nature" is conceived as a "natural resource" to be controlled and used for generating economic growth (Phatkul 2000). The growth of urban-based environmentalism partly resulted in a call for state control over territorial expansion of agriculture into reserve forests (Hirsch 1997). In Thai society the call for state control over forest lands coincides with the call for environmentally-friendly agricultural practices. Some local NGOs argued that conventional agriculture has contaminated soil and deteriorated the environment; therefore, the promotion of alternative agriculture by NGOs is closely related to the constitution of concept of risk. Risk is created by linking chemical fertilizers and pesticide use with dangerous to human health.

Second, the growth of green consumerism in Thailand has contributed to the growth of organic agriculture in the country. The evidence for this argument is that high levels of pesticide residue found in Thailand coincided with increased demand for organic foods. Although the growth of organic food markets in Thailand is obvious, consumers find it is difficult to differentiate between various pesticide safe labels and organic ones. Therefore, Thai consumers do not trust safe food labeling, although they occasionally buy it (Schobesberger 2008).

The growth of green consumerism at the global level has led to a claim that market orientation would be a sufficient mechanism to build changes both in the marketplace and in the production process. The emergence of the fair trade movement has brought about the hope that consumers and producers would benefit from the win-win situation that rested on market initiatives, because in fair trade networks improvement of the social conditions of the producers and environmental conditions are prioritized. Once more consumers in developed countries turn to buy green labeled and fair trade products, purchasing power of consumers becomes a new market force to shape the productive environment and social conditions of production

in the developing countries to conform to the new demands of consumers (Raynolds 2004).

The emergence of an urban-based culture, namely "macro-biotic", represents the green consumerism in Thailand. Macro-biotic culture is based on the commodification of nature on the one hand, and prohibition of the consumption of toxic substances on the other. The "nature" which has become a target of consumption for Thai upper and middle urban consumers is not wild nature, but disciplined nature. For Thai urban-based consumers, the meaning of nature is constructed by reference to safety, freshness, hygiene and peacefulness. In addition, the use of detoxification to extract the toxic from the human body shows a fear of the toxic among Thai urbanites (Juengsatientrup 1999). The construction of the dichotomy of nature-society here can be traced back to the environmentalism of urban elites, which construct the concept of rural in contrast to the concept of city (Stott 1991).

Third, the creation of alternative markets by Thai NGOs to link local-based producers and urban-based consumers is conceived to be creating a win-win situation for producers and consumers (Panyakul 2004). The alternative food supply chains are considered as shorten food supply chain which have the capacity to challenge the industrialization of food because these chains could bypass the corporations and retailers (Marsden 2000). Moreover, the alternative food supply chains are conceived as a defensive localism, because it enhances regional and local capacity by creating value added to activities and to enterprises associated with locality, region, specialty and nature (Marsden 1999). Organic food chains could raise public awareness of environmental ethics so that consumers change their behavior and buy local organic foods instead of industrially-produced foods. Therefore, these organic food chains are believed to lead to sustainable consumption. However, alternative food supply chains demand localization and re-embeddeding of the economy within social networks (Seyfang 2006). We cannot say that all alternative food supply chains generate sustainable production and consumption.

Fourth, the establishment of the "Alternative Agriculture Network" (AAN) in the late 1970s served as a mechanism to mobilize cooperation among NGOs involved with alternative agriculture. The first meeting of this network was held in 1982 and led to the establishment of a formal definition of alternative agriculture. An attempt to

re-define the meaning of alternative agriculture occurred in the context of many governmental and non-governmental agencies being involved in the construction of discursive meanings on alternative agriculture (Panyakul 1982).

Fifth, Thai NGOs adopted the discourse on "sustainable agriculture" to replace "alternative agriculture" by the 1990s; the mainstreaming of alternative agriculture represents a turning point for the development of the alternative agriculture movement. The notion of "sustainable agriculture", invented by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), refers to an agricultural system in which convergence between economic growth and ecological conservation is possible. Yet, the integration of the discourse on alternative agriculture into the discourse on sustainable agriculture calls into doubt whether the capacity of alternative agriculture to forestall conventionalization has been reduced.

Although organic agriculture originated in alternative production practices that explicitly countered trends in the industrialization of agriculture, it has turned toward conventionalization and commercialization in recent years. This turn has led to a concern about agribusiness attempts to take over the processing and marketing of high value organic products and to reshape organic agriculture within a conventional model (Hall 2001). However, the findings from field research indicate that the conventionalization process is not as universal as often assumed.

The worlds of food production and consumption seem to be not linear, but varied and contested. Some groups of small-scale producers in Australia are not marginalized by the growth of agribusiness because agribusiness does not attempt to target small-scale producers and they do focus on converting some conventional medium-scale and large-scale growers for export markets. As a result, the domestic market is neglected, leaving room for small-scale producers to continue their alternative practices. Since export-oriented production is narrow in the range of crops, it retains an opportunity for small-scale producers to continue to highly diversify their crops. Thus the small-scale producers serve local and regional markers (Coombes 1998).

The notions of professionalization and sustainability are employed by local producers in Brazil to create spaces of negotiation in response to the process of marginalization. Local producers claim that family farms have competitively been

associated with improvement of quality and productivity to meet standards, and their claim to be professionals in milk production rests on the adoption of innovative production technologies and environmentally-friendly practices (Gehlen 2003). Van der Ploeg argues that a new style of conventional farming, namely "economic farming", can be a space of resistance to conventionalization, since it depends less on external inputs, and depends highly on farm-derived resources and family labor (van der Ploeg 2000).

Green consumerism is also identified as a mechanism to create sustainable production and consumption; market-initiatives is used as driving forces for creating changes in the marketplace, trade relations, and environment production (Seyfang 2006). Although market-oriented initiatives represent an attempt to reconcile agricultural production and environment, the degree to which market-oriented initiatives deliver environmentally sustainable food production is in doubt (Buller 2004).

The critique of green consumerism points to contradictions inherent in market-oriented initiatives. For instance, the fair trade movement initiated in the 1960s represents a challenge to conventional agriculture and conventional trade, and also represents a search for more egalitarian commodity networks linking consumers in the global North with marginal producers in the global South. Fair trade principally concerns exchange ethics, fair labor, and the recovery of the agro-ecological system. Fair trade aims to offer aid to newly formed producer cooperatives so that they can meet democratic and economic principles (Raynolds 2002; Renard 2005). However, fair trade has been recently guided by commercialization rather than solidarity. Fair trade labeling becomes a mechanism which limits opportunities for market entry by small-scale producers, who cannot maintain the quality to meet the demands of international trade and cannot conform to democratic administrative principles (Renard 2005).

1.2 Understanding Global Agro-Food Study

1.2.1 Globalization and Its Consequences on Agriculture and in Rural Spaces

The process of globalization usually refers to the world-wide flows of capitals, goods, people, and ideas, both imaginary and institutional; nevertheless, Kelly argues that what makes globalization become meaningful is not the intensity of flows per se but the sense of interconnection and integration of activities across the world (Kelly 2000). Moreover, globalization involves the process of differentiation and disjuncture (Appadurai 1996). The rise of globalization in the agricultural sector has brought about the heterogeneity and multiplicity of farming styles and types of relationships between capital and labor (Watts and Goodman 1997).

The emergence of globalization has impacted on agriculture in four different ways. The first impact concerns the emergence of new forms of governance, both public and private governing. The second impact concerns the reshaping social relationship within rural space to create labor flexibility. The third impact concerns issues of quality of life, associated with environment and food but it can be extended to include labor conditions. This has led to two consequences for small-scale farmers in developing countries. The first consequence is the increasing concentration of the production of the commodities in the hand of transnational productive chains. The second consequence is the restriction imposed on producers located in the area of ecological interest, which most often undermines the traditional agricultural systems that have been in used in those areas. Third, beyond the difficulty that small producers have faced in the production system, globalization accentuates the exclusion of both small-scale producers and rural wage workers, through its acceleration of processes of technological innovation. Consumers with lesser purchasing power are also discriminated in globalization. Finally, globalization has led to the new international division of labor with regard to the agricultural products market, based on countries which produce high-value foods and those which produce low-value foods. It has led to greater uneven development between countries which

are included and excluded from market integration and between producers in different regions (Silva 2002).

The combination of the diversification of mass produced foods and the emergence of niche markets is the logic of new global economy. This logic reflects the shift from standardization of mass production and mass markets to flexible specialization and decentralization of tasks and fragmented markets. It hopes to solve problem of rigidity inherent in capitalism and to create greater capitalist accumulation (Watts and Goodman 1997). With the implicit de-regulation of the agro-food system in the 1990s, the analysis of reconfiguration of agricultural sector and rural space usually considers restructuring by focusing capitalist force.

Within the capitalist force of restructuring, political economists focus on the changes of food regime or rule-governed structure of production and consumption on a world scale (Goodman 1994). The transition from agriculture in the Second World War until the early 1970s to fragmented and flexible specialization is a fundamental frame of reference for understanding the political economy of agrarian restructuring. Political economists share a common perspective about the crisis of Fordism and a transition to new regime of accumulation (Friedmann 1993). Political economists study two themes. The first is political economists who study changing international food regimes focus mainly on new processes of globalization in the world economy, the evolution of new forms of production, and correlate changes in the organization of production and their spatial expression at national, regional, and local levels. The second theme concerns the territorial, local expression of globalization. Spatial factors are given a central role in the configuration of flexible specialization. The new industrial geography has revitalized the significance of locality, rurality, and restructuring in agrarian political economy (Goodman 1994).

However, Goodman and Watts question whether literatures of regulation theory and Fordism/post-Fordism debates are appropriate to use as a tool for analyzing the dynamics of change in agrarian production structures and rural spatial organization of the late twentieth-century agro-food system. Goodman and Watts argue against the collapse of agricultural restructuring into industrial restructuring. They argue that the it is unclear in what ways a new mode of Fordist regulation-a means to subsidize and restrict production coupled with new sources of credit,

insurance, research and regulatory institutions-forges fundamental linkages in agriculture between mass production and mass consumption. Goodman and Watts argue against the use of binary opposition concept of Fordism/post-Fordism to analyze the agro-food system because this concept does not recognize exceptionalism and diversity in agrarian transition which has brought about multiple trajectories (Goodman 1994).

To understand how the repositioning of agriculture within the food system associates with the rural economy, Goodman and Watts suggest that the concern here is the specific context of any repositioning of agriculture at national and local levels. The internationalization of agriculture has led to multiple trajectories of capitalist development and agrarian change. The site of capital accumulation changes to the periphery under rural-industrialization and the role of nation state is not eliminated but changes to be supporter of the market (Hart 1997).

The weakness of this sort of analysis, however, is an overemphasis on the hegemonic role of global actors and transnational corporations. Political economists tend to underdetermine the role of nation state, regional and local agents in negotiating and reformulating agrarian relations. In addition, they make insufficient allowance for either local action or non-material considerations in explaining the movement, fixing and accumulation of capital (McMichael 1993).

Another concern is the nature of globalization and the global commodity chain. Watts and Goodman argue that it is impossible to think about the commodity chain as global, since transnational production systems often rely on complex vertically and horizontally integrated firms, and global outsourcing. This leads to re-configuration of spatial organization of production to accelerate capital mobility and to create greater flexibility in commodity chain (Watts and Goodman 1994).

The study of the commodity chain usually focuses on the question of how value and quality is created and added at particular sites in the food chain. Yet, the commodity chain theory has limitation in analyzing the ways in which added values are contested locally, nationally, and globally by local actors in the contradictory tendencies toward health consciousness and industrial production of fast food (Marsden 2000). Moreover, the commodity chain approach may neglect the nature of specific commodity. Fine argues that the questions of risk, season, sustainability, and

non-identity of production and labor time are important to grasp the commodity-specific dynamics of production systems (Fine 1994).

1.2.2 Governmentality and Certification

Governmentality, as Foucault notes, is a combination of the term "government" and "mentality". It refers to diverse ways in which rules are exercised in advanced liberal democracies since the eighteenth century. The term "governmentality" sought to draw attention to a certain way of thinking and acting embodied in all attempts to know, to improve and to govern the wealth, health, and happiness of populations. Government in neoliberalization centers on the mechanisms that seek to shape the beliefs and conduct of others in desired directions by acting upon their will, their circumstances, or their environment. Governmentality is intrinsically linked to the activities of expertise whose role is acting to make practicable calculative administration of diverse aspects of conduct through tactics of education, persuasion, inducement, motivation, and encouragement (Rose 1992).

Foucault notes that rationale of government or what he calls the "art of government" implies a new idea about the exercise of power, focusing mainly on systems of thinking about the practice of government. Foucault suggests that governmentality represents the capability to get things done through the attempt to make amenable the self-regulated practices both to its practitioners and to those upon whom it was practiced (Power 1997).

Government is important in neoliberalization, as it is a particular way of thinking about the kind of problems that should be addressed by authorities. Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose discuss various aspects of the government of economic life in a neoliberal democratic way. Governmentality is programmatic in the sense that it is driven by an eternal optimism that a domain or a society as a whole could be administered better or more effectively in some way or other through programmatic means. The operation of government is made in terms of the calculated supervision, administration, and maximization of force of each and all. The key question in the analysis of governmentality is the variety of forms of governmental technologies that seek to shape the beliefs and conduct of others (Rose 1992).

Mechanisms of government include the program, calculations, techniques, apparatus, documents, and procedures through which authorities seek to embody and give effect to desirable outcomes. Through the analysis of association between the rationale of government and technologies of government, government works on construction and circulation of certain truths, normalizing, and disciplining techniques, methods, discourses, and practices that extend beyond the state and stretch across the social body (Foucault 1991; Li 2007).

Governmentality differs significantly from other forms of power, as governmentality relies less on coercive power, but more on the production of consent. The constitution of consent is important in governmentality, since consent makes people unconscious of the power of domination and the politics of the desire to govern other's lives. Governmentality can create the consent, as it claims to generate welfare for populations at large, to improve their life conditions, and to create progress. Apart from use of supervision and regulations, neoliberal government is operated more effectively by educating desires, raising awareness, and configuring habits and practices.

Governmentality sets the conditions which make people believe that to follow the conduct means to achieve the self-interest they ought to seek. To improve the life conditions of population, the rationale of government is necessary; it signifies a way of thinking about government as the right manner of disposing things in pursuit of one dogmatic goal and implies a way of thinking about things as the whole series of specific finalities achieved through multiform tactics. Government comes to rely on the production of consent through which various forms of technology of rule are applied. Coercion represents a disciplinary power, the micro-physics of power, and the making of subjects, which all represent indirect mechanisms. These mechanisms of government make the subject of surveillance and control become visible and amenable to intervention. In short, government is aimed to create desirable outcomes among those who are governed by using the conduct of conduct.

Another dimension of government is the capacity to act upon the other at a distance in order to conduct ways of seeing and perceiving things. The center can act upon others who live far away through the production of regimes of truth, the

identification of problems by the experts and the specification of solutions to such particular problems in order to achieve desirable outcomes (Foucault 1991: 87-104).

Bruno Latour notes that an action at a distance[3] has come to rely in establishing a network of conduits for the detailed and systematic flow of information from individual locales of production and trade to a center. Networking helps constitute a single economic domain whose constituent elements could be known and regarded at a distance. In this way, authorities can act upon and enroll those who are distant from them in space and time in the pursuit of social, political and economic objectives without encroaching on their freedom or autonomy (Latour 1987, cited in Rose and Mill 1992: 186).

Foucault's contribution to the analysis of power is its productiveness. Power produces reality and domains of subjects to be governed. For Foucault, power cannot be held, but circulates via networks that work through and produce different bodies, discourses, institutions and practices. Foucault asserts that power comes from below, working through webs of different power relations. Foucault further complicates the supposed binary between those who govern and those who are governed by insisting that power is intentional but non-subjective. While there are goals behind the exercise of power, these goals cannot be ascribed to decisions or desires of particular people. For this reason, Foucault asserts that the exercise of power to control is not separate from resistance. As resistance is a component of power, it cannot be seen outside of power (Foucault 1972).

Tania Murray Li (2007) adapts Foucault's concept of governmentality to examine conservation development projects in Indonesia. While Foucault calls the construction of the rationale of government as the "art of government", Li calls it as the "Will to Improve", because development projects aim to govern people who live within the protected forest areas and to improve the well-being through various technologies of government. As government is the attempt to shape human conduct by calculated means, Tania Li argues that the constitution of rationale of government to improve well-being of disadvantaged people signifies a way of thinking about

[3] Bruno Latour' s notion that action acts a distance has sought the answer to the question: "How it is possible to act on events, places, and people that are unfamiliar and a long way away?" (Miller and Rose 1990: 9).

government as the right manner of disposing things in pursuit of one dogmatic goal and implies a new idea about the exercise of power (Li 2007: 5).

Li focuses on the question "How power is exercise to direct conduct and intervene in social processes to produce desired outcomes and avert underside ones?" Li examines coincidence of various forms of technology of government employed in the projects of community forest management, and then Li proposes the study of "the practices of assemblage". The practices of assemblage refer to the way in which heterogeneous elements including discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions are assembled to address an urgent need and invested with strategic purpose. Li identifies six practices that are situated into the concept of "practices of assemblage" as follow.

The first practice is "Forging alignments"; it refers to the work of linking together the objectives of the various parties to an assemblage, both those who aspire to govern conduct and those whose conduct is to be conducted. The second practice is "Rendering technical"; it refers to the interventions of the experts to transform social world into technical problems in order to allow for the use of calculation and expert's authority to solve such problems and to create beneficial outcomes.

The third practice is "Authorizing knowledge"; it refers to the attempt to specify the requisite body of knowledge, to confirm enabling assumptions and critiques. The fourth practice is "Managing failures and contradictions"; it refers to the presentation of failure as the outcome of rectifiable deficiencies, and the interventions to screen out contradictions so that they seem superficial rather than fundamental.

The fifth practice is "Anti-politics"; it refers to the attempt to repose political questions as matters of technique. It aims to close down debate about how and what to govern and the distributive effects of particular arrangements by reference to expertise, or it aims to encourage people to engage in debate while limits the agenda. The sixth practice is "Reassembling"; it refers to graft on new elements and rework old ones, to deploy existing discourse to new ends, to transpose the meanings of key terms. The third feature of assemblage is its potential for finesse question of agency

by recognizing the situated subjects who do the work of pulling together disparate elements without attributing to them a master-mind or totalizing plan (Li 2007).

As we understand how power is articulated and enacted in places, a spatial analysis enriches the study of governable spaces and objects. By examining the ways in which rules are applied differently in different places, we can understand how particular spaces or places are formed and managed through governmentality. The study of the relation between governmentality and territoriality illustrates the way by which statistics have been utilized in agricultural sector to render visible farmers, farms and the national farm, which, once made visible, can be known and acted upon by state centers (Murdoch 1997). Higgins illustrates how calculation can be a rational and technologies of governmentality that make farmers become self-regulated and manageable farmers (Higgins 2005). Additionally, by applying scale to rules, we can see the ways in which the body, the household, the region, the nation, and the globe are constituted by and through the operation of governmentality. The analysis of governing nature illustrates the way in which nature is embodied as crises, knowledge about the environment is formed, the truth about nature is governed, and the authority to save the environment is manifested (Rutherford 2007).

The concept of "spatiality" is helpful in examining the politics of organic agriculture, as quality certification for organic commodities places importance on a commodity's spatial location, documents, and context relative to temporal characteristics such as turnover time. The spatial analysis of organic agriculture points out the reconfiguration of objects of control and surveillance in organic agriculture. Governable spaces in organic agriculture extend beyond the accountability of the labor of producers and inspectors to include the accountability of socially constructed norms attached to organic commodities such as fair trade, organic, good animal husbandry, biodiversity conservation, and certified forest products (Mutersbaugh 2005).

Organic certification imposes bureaucratic and industrial conventions which typically counter the traditional norms and practices of local producers. The rise of governable spaces and objects of control frequently indicate contradictions embedded in certification standards and their implementation within reality of village life. Thus, the implementation of organic certification has brought about negotiating and

contesting spaces which are constructed on the basis of local interpretation of international standards, as well as culturally-based determination of field inspections (Mutersbaugh 2004).

Through the analysis of the ways in which places are made through economic, social, cultural, political and biophysical processes, moreover, we can see the processes of urban-rural interactions which have in turn affected agrarian change. A study on the role of remittance money in determining rural households' investment in the Philippines helps to understand the association between the reformulation of local landscape and gender conflicts (McKay 2003). Wood argues that the reconstruction of rural space under globalization involves the processes of negotiation, manipulation and hybridization. Saraceno examines what he calls "intermediate areas" or a space which is determined not only by the degree of penetration of globalization processes, but also the way in which those globalization processes are mediated through, and incorporated within, local processes of place-making (Saraceno 1994; Woods 2007).

As rural change is embedded within restructuring processes, we cannot understand local experience of changes without analyzing the changing position of rural areas under globalization. The countryside can be constructed and reconstructed by reference to many factors such as the changes in production and consumption domains, commoditization processes, changing representation of the countryside, and changing property relations within rural areas (Marsden 1993).

1.2.3 Intensification of Regulations

Regulation theorists study the regime of accumulation and its institutional modes of social regulation that help to secure capital accumulation (Jessop 2006). Regulationists stress the complementary function of mechanisms such as institutions, collective identities, shared visions, common values, norms, conventions, networks, procedures and modes of calculation in structuring, facilitating, and guiding capital accumulation.

For regulation theorists, questions of agrarian transition involved the restructuring of national agricultures according to new food regime and the shift in the regulation of food production and consumption to create greater capital accumulation

(Raynolds 1993). The increasing role of international regulations and increasing influence of consumptive forces has brought about new rules to be imposed upon farmers, at the same time it also represents new opportunities for farmers who claim their agricultural practices to be in pursuit of environmentally-friendly and fair labor (Marsden 2000).

Food governance serves to make the market as a rational instrument of global development and serves to make the market rule to be a governing discourse (Peine and McMichael 2005: 19-34). Food governance is linked with globalization through the extension of commodity circuits, the centralization of capital in transnational corporate organizations, and the privatization of public institutions to expand the markets and to reduce the role of state. The emergence of GATT Uruguay Round over agricultural regulation is served to institutionalize an international trading system and to install a new regulatory system in the world economy, privileging transnational firms (McMichael 1993) .

The spread of neo-liberalism has led to privatization of regulations beyond the state. The privatization of food governance can be seen in two positions. First, there is an increasing use of public-private partnerships as a mechanism of food governance, involving a number of tasks previously undertaken by government, but these tasks are contracted out to private or sub-state agencies. Second, the rationale underpinning government intervention has changed from welfare governance toward another system in which the state seeks to reduce its role by facilitating conditions for population self-governance (Higgins 2005). The decline of the state's role in controlling flows of commodities, meanings, people and technologies coincide with the increased influence of supra-national institutions, such as the WTO, NAFTA, the private sector and retailers in determining the transformation of the agro-food system (Busch 2004).

The privatization of regulations in the agro-food world is indicative of the increasing role of non-state actors, such as certified agencies, self-help consultants, community development officers, capacity building experts, financial counselors, product standard groups, and buyers who are connected to certification standards and norms. These non-state actors have exercised power by enrolling in complex networks

of power relations. Through these networks, these non-state actors are able to exert considerable influence over local events, decisions and actions (Cheshire 2005).

Higgins and Lawrence suggest that the change in the agricultural regulations has occurred in three ways. First, the regulation of space is neither state nor market-based, but is based on multi-level partnerships that enable the creation of a complex pattern of spatial reconfiguration. Second, de-politicizing practices emerge, since global integration of the agro-food sector has led to new practices for governing food production that are not simply state-based. The market seems to be the main mechanism for regulation, because the neo-liberal discourse emphasizes that markets are more efficient. Third, the objects and subjects of governing are reconfigured, because the globalization of food provision contributes to the emergence of new sites of governing concerning the environment, consumption, animal welfare and agro-food risks (Higgins and Lawrence 2005).

Growing concerns about food safety, quality, traceability and sustainability of agro-food production has created new perspectives that state regulatory measures are insufficient to deal with the complex character of contemporary food provision. To ensure the quality of foods adheres to international requirements, new regulatory modes are introduced (Renard 2005). International agricultural standards represent one of the most significant regulatory practices in food production nowadays. Through the use of third-party systems of verification, standards are developed to enable the harmonization of claims to "quality" and "safety" along the entire food supply chain. The process of standardization in organic commodities focuses on the issue of contracting, the control of inputs and production processes, and the control of price and commoditization (Campbell 2005).

Standards for organic commodities can be classified into two categories: public standards and private standards. The establishment of public standards has significantly influenced the reformulation of agricultural production. The establishment of the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement under the World Trade Organization (WTO) authority provides rules to meet standards for food safety, animal well-being, and plant health, and to ensure that these standards do not create trade barriers. The most important of these public standards are the 'Codex Alimentary's Commission (Codex), administered jointly by the World Health

Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). The establishment of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) reflects an attempt to discipline both organic commodities and producers (Bain 2005).

Private standards, unlike public standards, make authoritative reference to a firm or a group of firms rather than a government. Private standard-setting bodies rely on third-party systems of verification to bolster their claims all along the vertical supply chain. For instance, the rise of EUREPGAP in 2001 indicated a benchmark standard of fresh fruits and vegetables. The use of one standard benchmark reflects the effort to harmonize standards (Bain 2005). The emergence of private standards has led to an increasing role for third-party entities which are independent and are responsible for assessing, evaluating, and certifying quality claims based on a certain set of standards and compliance methods.

The use of private standards and third-party certifiers by major retailers is larger at the global level. The development of niche markets relying on specific private standards may offer opportunities for producers in certain countries. Nevertheless, opportunities will be available for a minority of producers in those countries who can make the appropriate organizational and institutional arrangements, and have the financial capacity to pay for expensive applications of the science and technologies, transportation methods, and logistics necessary to meet the standards. Additionally, private standards often involve international trade and export from developing countries to developed countries. A potential benefit derived from the use of private standards frequently concentrates in the hands of exporters and retailers, while burdens to meet private certification are left on the shoulders of producer groups and cooperatives within developing countries. The process of standardization has frequently driven many small-scale farmers out of new markets, and has accelerated large-scale farmers and agribusiness (Bain 2005).

In Thailand two forms of organic standards have been established. One organic certification is called the "on trust" system of organic production. Within this system, the quality of products is controlled by producer groups, and consumers are

expected to pay a premium to support the alternative agriculture[4] and local producers. However, this system comprises a small proportion of total market supply of organic products within the country, as the small-scale producers find some difficulties associated with high transaction costs and inadequate knowledge (Panyakul 2002).

Another certification system adopts international standards, especially the IFOAM standard for organic products which has been broadly adopted at the global level[5]. The implementation of international standards has led to a significant change within the production system. The producer's organization has turned into an object of control, and the livelihood of producers has turned into a subject of discipline (Renard 2005).

Features common to the certification systems include: (1) a public norm or standard that defines certified qualities within the system, (2) an inspection process, carried out by third-party inspectors that determines whether goods conform to published standards, (3) a quality label that alerts consumers to the presence of certified qualities, and (4) a network of institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, operating at local and transnational scales, that govern labels and inspections, and set standards for certification practices.

Within the system of qualification, certification can be considered as space of conflict, negotiation and power. The significance of certification in determining the quality of organic commodities raises two important questions. The first is: How is power exercised within certification schemes by multiple stakeholders who compete to establish standards, inspection procedures, labeling and commercialization arrangements? The second question concerns the social contexts that influence the practice of certification (Mutersbaugh 2005). This calls into question whether the growth of organic production is beneficial to organic growers. How do we define the impacts of the conventionalization of organic agriculture on local organic producers and social movements? Lastly, how do we identify the power and weakness, the capacity and impotence, as well as the rigidity and flexibility of organic food chains?

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[4] http://www.sathai.org/images/Hotissue/021-pic/07.pdf
[5] http://www.actorganic-cert.or.th/standard.html

1.3 Conceptual Framework

Many global and local actors such as retailers, consumers overseas, regulators, and NGOs have been involved with the process of the incorporation of northeastern Thai farmers into the global niche markets for organic and fair trade. The incorporation of northeastern Thai farmers into these global niche markets is based on the organic rice production system. Yet the organic rice production system adopts various mechanisms of governmentality to conduct farmers' behaviors and to regulate agricultural practices. Governmentality is important in the organic rice production system because it produces the consent among the farmers so that they follow the instructions of the experts in order to create well-being. This contributes to the standardization of organic rice, and it allows for the improvement of the natural environment to pave the way for increased profits.

The governmentality used in the organic rice production system depends upon the regulatory regime. Two types of the regulatory regimes are used in the organic rice production system. The first regulatory regime of the organic rice production system is the control of the production process. The control of production process aims to control of labor to be inserted into farm management. The control of production process involves the practice of politics because it aims to transform agricultural practices to conform to the requirements of international market and regulations. However, the control of the production process also creates tensions and conflicts within the organic rice production system, such as conflicts between farmers and the project experts. Therefore, the farmers use the practices of politics in response to the attempt to control of production process and labor, and to create negotiating space within the organic rice production system.

Another regulatory regime of the organic rice production system is the control of the agro-ecological environment. The control of agro-ecological environment is made possible through the re-arrangement of the physical landscape of organic farms, the creation of imitated nature, and the re-establishment of the relationship between humans and nature on organic rice farms in order to create a space of purification and safety, and to improve the biodiversity of organic farms. However, the control of the

agro-ecological environment also creates tensions and conflicts within the organic rice production system, such as conflicts between organic farmers and their neighbors.

The analysis that supports the theoretical arguments in this study is guided by the following conceptual framework:

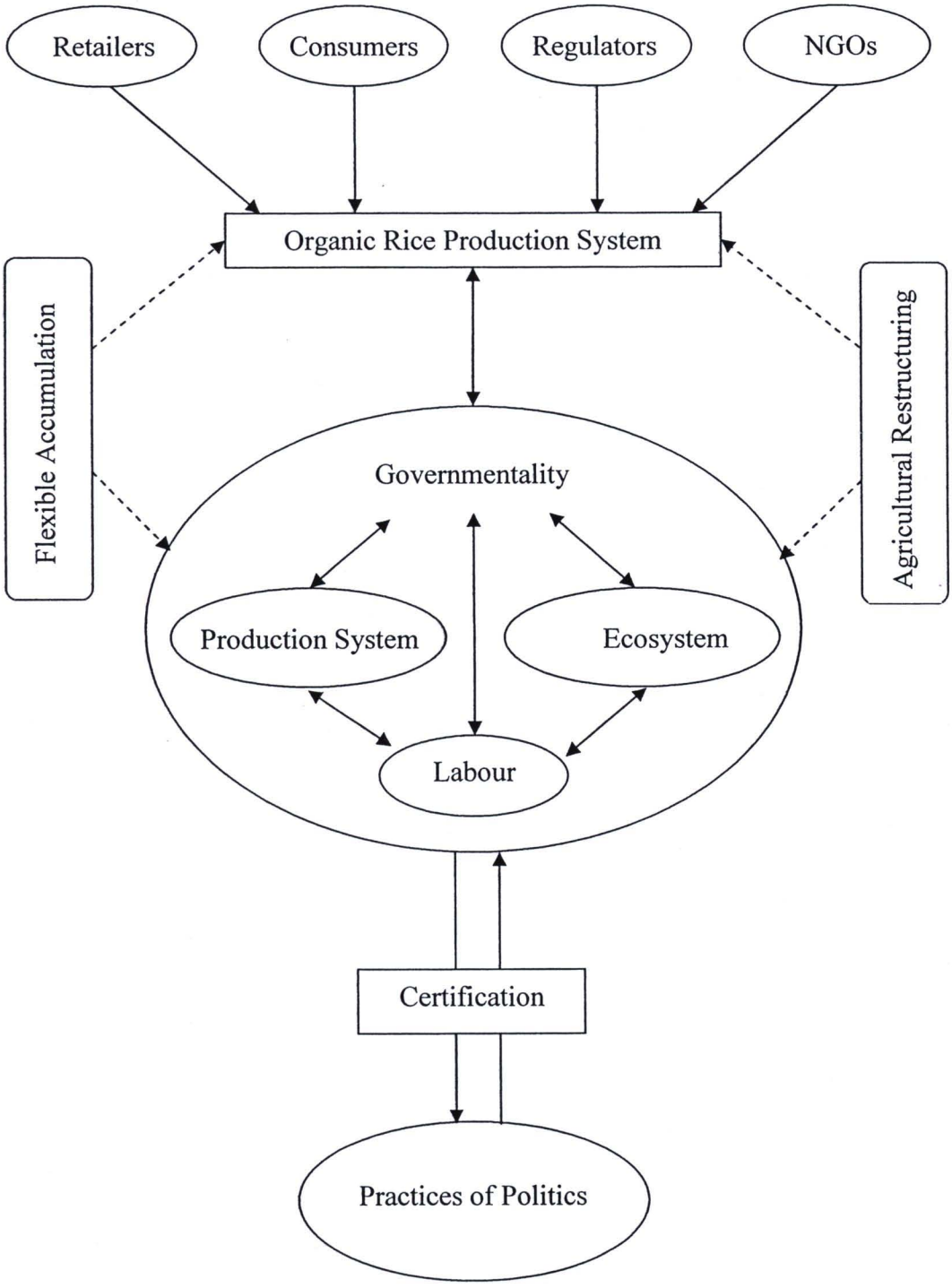

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework for Politics of Organic Rice Farming

1.4 Research Objectives

This study examines the process of agrarian transition from conventional to organic agriculture that has emerged in northeastern Thailand. The northeastern farmers are incorporated in organic and fair trade rice commodity chains. Organic agriculture is a form of agriculture, one which is adopted to solve the undesirable outcomes of the implementation of green revolution. Moreover, fair trade is an innovation of alternative trade, one which is created to solve problems regarding conventional trade by focusing on democratic decisions within producer organizations and fair labor. However, the effort to transform conventional agriculture towards organic agriculture and to transform conventional trade towards fair trade depends on food governance and certification.

As food governance rests on enforcement of international regulations on farmers, mechanisms of government are important to govern farmers and agricultural practices. Yet the food governance and certification of fair trade and organic scheme is a contested process, because contestations between global and local actors are involved.

The overall objective of the study is to examine how the process of market integration and commoditization of organic and fair trade rice has brought about changes in natural management, in rice farming practices, and in social relationships within rural community.

The specific objectives of the study are:

(1) To examine the process of market integration for northeastern Thai farmers in relation to flexible accumulation and agricultural restructuring.

(2) To analyze the governmentality used in organic and fair trade rice scheme to conduct the farmers' perspectives and practices, to reshape labor processes, to re-arrange physical landscape, to impose regulations on farmers, and to control labor used in organic jasmine rice production system, and to explore the social and environmental consequences of the incorporation of northeastern farmers into the new global market as well.

(3) To study the ways that farmers negotiate with, and contest global, national and regional actors with the advent of standardization and certification.

1.5 Research Methodology

1.5.1 Locating the Field Site

The study sites include some districts of Ubon Ratchatani province along the Thailand-Laos border zone which has become an important place for organic rice production for export (see details in figure 1.2). This study is not a village-based study but an analysis of network of agro-food system. It investigates the role of actors involving in the commodification of organic and fair trade rice. A survey and in-depth interviews of key informants were conducted within one sub-district whereby a large amount of farmers have been engaged in organic rice farming. An estimated 500 farmer households have been incorporated into a vertically organic food network; the network of local farmers has been linked to fair trade markets since 2002. Fair trade aims to offer aid to newly formed producer cooperatives so that they can adhere to democratic and economic principles.

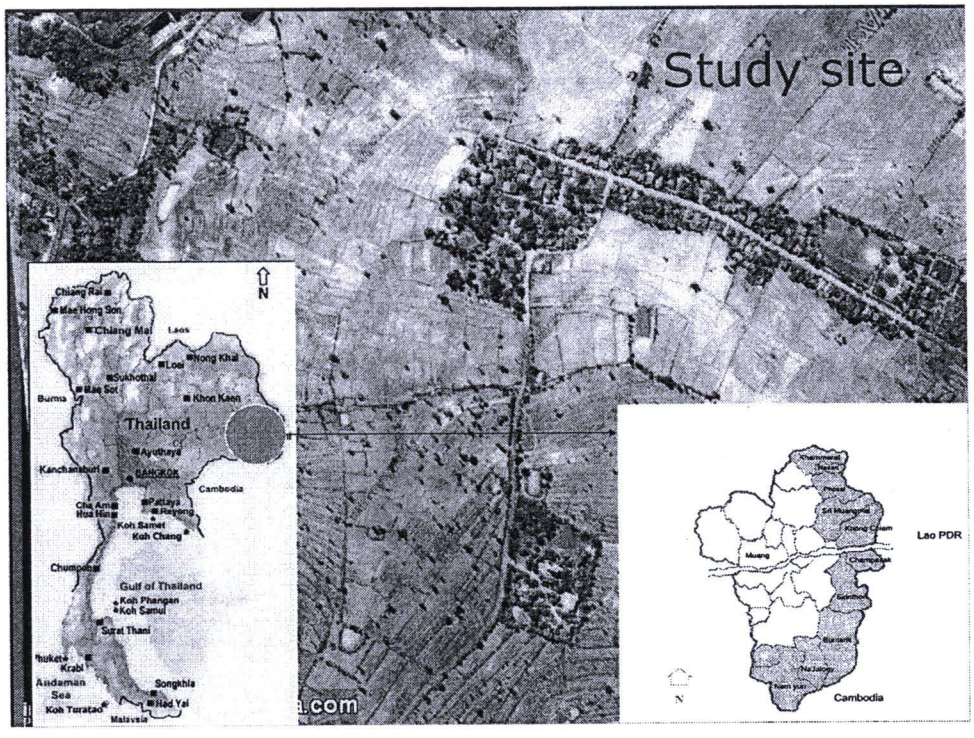

Figure 1.2 Locations of Studied Sites

The interest in these areas derives from the distinctiveness of the areas in relation to rice production and the issue of population dynamics. The farming households sending their family labor to work in non-agricultural sector. At the same time, they recruit seasonal migrant labors from Lao PDR to meet labor demand in rice farming.

1.5.2 The Analytical Approach

This study adapts an actor-oriented approach as a method for analyzing the governing organic rice scheme and certification. The actor-oriented approach is used to examine the ways in which actors such as NGOs, retailers, trainers, farmers, and inspectors define issues and critical events, as well as local-global interactions. This study focuses on agency of actors. Moreover, the actor-oriented approach is employed for understanding the implications of issues and events perceived by the actors involved.

Considering the actor-oriented approach, Norman Long (Long 2000) suggests that the actors usually make sense of and give meaning to their experiences through the use of shared experiences and cultural perceptions in everyday life of the actors. Drawing on Long's argument, this study analyzes the agency of actors through their perceptions, values, and decisions in relation to their experiences, social practices, and conflict. So, this study emphasized the practices that situated individuals do. Additionally, this study explains "collective actors", particularly the capacity of farmers as a social group to make sense of experiences and act upon them. This analysis is adopted through an ethnographic study of how specific actors deal organizationally and cognitively with the problematic situations they encounter.

Moreover, this study examines food governance through governmentality of organic rice scheme and certification. By examining mechanisms of governmentity, this study focuses on the question of "how" the power of government is exercised and operated in a rural development program in northeastern Thailand. Finally, this study examines the impacts of governmentality on farmers and rural communities of the Northeast. The contingency, unintended consequences and fracture have emerged in processes of governmentality and certification of organic and fair trade rice schemes.

The contingency has created tensions and conflicts between actors involved with the production and certification of organic rice; these tensions in turn have created the practices of politics by farmers. The practices of politics by farmers engaged in organic and fair trade rice scheme make government difficult and not total.

1.5.3 Research Design and Procedure

The study applies an anthropological approach to analyze the governmentality of organic rice production system in northeastern Thailand. Ethnographical methodology is employed for observing and gathering data at the field sites, together with other methods such as a household survey, in-depth interviews of key informants.

First of all, documentary research was conducted. I examine the development of organic agriculture in Thailand to understand the characteristics of organic agriculture in the country and social relations regarding to commodification of organic foods which shape farmers' orientations and actions. Then, I read document of development project and participated in many meetings and training sessions of the farmers held by the NGOs during 2007 to 2009. The participatory observation method helps to know the interactions between northeastern farmers and other actors in processes of government and certification of organic and fair trade rice, especially the conditions to enter into and withdraw from the markets, the role of networks in enhancing the capability of farmers to enter the niche markets, and the role of networks in re-formulating agricultural practices and the physical landscape according to international standards.

Following, household survey was conducted in Na Sawan Sub-district of Ubon Ratchatani province in 2007 to know about the demographic data, sources of capital, sources of inputs, land use patterns, water management, labor arrangements, migration experience, and sources of income and debts. The number of farm households that are selected as a random sample is 27 households. The information about the change in agricultural practices and the change in livelihoods of farmers helps to understand issues of rural change, urban-rural linkages and global-local interactions.

Finally, an ethnographic analysis of what happens to organic rice development project is adapted to examine social relations within the organic and fair trade rice networks. This method is used to study the meetings, trainings, farming practices, and field inspections. It is helpful in examining perceptions, underlying logics under agreements, contradictions, and contestations existing in the processes of production and certification of organic and fair trade rice.

In-depth interviews are used to examine roles that are undertaken by key informants in the organic and fair trade commodity chain, such as farmers' group leaders, NGO staff, retailers, state officers, inspectors, self-help consultants, and financial counselors. It helps to understand properties of acting at a distance. In addition, it aims to provide clearer pictures about the intra-and inter-relationship within farm households, together with interactions between farmers and others in organic food networks. The interviews with the farmers are helpful to understand the constraints faced by the farmers, as well as the capacity of local farmers to express their agency in response to the process of change.

1.6 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this study is processes of governmentality and quality certification of organic and fair trade rice scheme. Quality certification for organic commodities usually refers to the control and monitoring of labor to be inserted along the entire food supply chain, and quality certification for fair trade commodities means the assurance of democratic arrangements and fair pay for labor along the entire food chain (Mustersbaugh 2005, Renard 2005). In this study the unit of analysis is the governmentality and quality certification. Governmentality of organic rice scheme is the assemblage of six practices of governmental interventions used to improve well-being of farmers and to enhance agro-ecological environment. Quality certification represents an "intermediate space" whereby the power to control and the power of negotiation interface within the hybrid network. As a result, ethnographic analysis is conducted in multiple sites including training sessions, workshops, production process, post-harvesting process, and field inspections.

1.7 Case Study

Case study here is the network of organic and fair trade rice production system, linking together various actors such as farmers, local NGO, international NGO, retailers, state officers, regulators, inspectors, self-help consultants, and financial counselors both who intend to govern conduct and those whose conduct is to be governed. The export-oriented organic rice network is the assemblage of various actors that has emerged by 2002 in the context of flexible accumulation and agricultural restructuring at the global scale. Initially, there were five hundred farming households which had been incorporated into the network. They were conventional farmers who grew conventional rice farming, but have encouraged to shift to organic rice farming. However, Northeast farmers earn income not only by growing organic rice alone but they make their living by combining farm and non-farm activities. The transition from conventional agriculture to organic agriculture rests on transformation of agricultural practices and re-arrangement of spatial organization of production to accelerate capital accumulation. Northeastern farmers and natural environment are turned into objects of governance and are manipulated by market forces. The distant actors and institutional frameworks have power in seeking to structure how the physical landscape should be transformed, how farmers should perform agricultural practices and interact with the environment, and how labor processes must be arranged.

1.8 Overview of the Dissertation

Agricultural restructuring in Thailand began in the 1990s when the Thai government supported the policy to encourage the change from traditional food production toward export-orientation and high-value food production. The initiation of a development project to support export-oriented organic rice production in northeastern Thailand in 2002 was a rural development project and was a part of Thailand's agricultural restructuring policy. The development project was an effort to improve the well-being of poor farmers, to recover deteriorated natural environment from the outcome of green revolution, and to fulfill the demand of consumers in global niche markets.

Under the Thailand agricultural restructuring policy, many governmental development projects were initiated in the Northeast to encourage the change from conventional to organic agriculture. Because the state policy supports the market-oriented organic agriculture, the farmers consider organic agriculture is a negotiating strategy to gain benefits from the government and local NGOs in terms of financial loans, technical knowledge, production inputs, supervision, and certification. Moreover, they expected the shift to organic agriculture is a negotiating strategy to improve their identity as producers who are responsible for the environment and consumer health, because organic agriculture is synonymous with sustainable agriculture.

The emergence of locally-initiated development projects in Ubon Ratchatani province to encourage the shift to organic agriculture can be seen as an example of the implementation of the market-based development model. The implementation of market-based development based on commoditization and export has drawn small-scale northeastern farmers into the global commodity chain. Once small-scale farmers have been incorporated into the export-oriented organic agriculture, they have gained advantages and disadvantages from the shift to organic agriculture. Within the transition to organic agriculture, northeastern farmers are encouraged to collectively act as an organization, and the internal management within the organization is re-formulated to comply with international regulations as well as labor processes are also re-arranged to generate flexible accumulation.

To clarify the first research questions concerning issues of market integration, global-local interactions and agrarian transformation, Chapter Two the study intends to address a place-specific documentary research. It therefore provides background on the theoretical debates regarding modernization in agriculture and socio-economic and agrarian change. This chapter identifies that the green revolution is a form of modernization in agriculture which has created undesirable outcomes, and organic agriculture is represented as a solution to the problems of the green revolution. Yet, organic agriculture is also a form of modernized agriculture, based on scientific knowledge and expert management. The Thai government encourages the change to organic agriculture and export orientation in the hope that it would increase comparativeness of Thai rice within global rice markets. Finally, this

chapter discusses implications of Thai agricultural restructuring policy and rural development policy for the Thai agricultural sector and agriculture in the Northeast. The socio-economic and ecological contexts of the Northeast create competitive advantages in the production of high quality organic jasmine rice, due to the relatively healthy environment and flexibility of labor recruitment.

Chapter Three illustrates the re-arrangement of spatial organization of production within fair trade and organic rice commodity chain. I adapt the concept of "alternative agri-food networks" (AFNs) to analyze the ways in which the natural and social conditions of rice production have been re-shaped within agro-food system. This chapter questions whether or not the organic and fair trade commodity chain is considered "alternative" in the context that the chain is linked to conventional supply food chains.

This chapter illustrates the nature of AFNs with regard to fair trade and organic food provision, which recently has become more complex, because it combines social and economic development. On the one hand, the conversion to organic agriculture is a strategy used by retailers to "green" agriculture in order to add value to rice products. The attempt to "green" agriculture is a response to environmentalism, niche markets, and green consumerism. On the other hand, the emergence of export-oriented organic agriculture in northeastern Thailand is a local response to changing context of food economy. Northeastern farmers turn to organic agriculture in the hope that it would increase rice prices and access to global niche markets.

Chapter Four illustrates the process of standardization and quality control in fair trade and organic food commodity chains. I examine the ways in which transnational regulations and new demands of consumers have been imposed on farmers and have transformed agricultural practices to organic rice farming in accordance with the principles and standards of organic agriculture and fair trade. This chapter emphasizes the technologies of governmentality or the mechanisms that have been utilized to make possible the government in organic and fair trade rice scheme. Hence, central to the discussion is the construction of new objects and subjects of food governance in the context of trade liberalization and standardization. Key issue is the analysis of the use of technology of the self to create the self-

regulated and calculative farmers or the farmers who have capacity to discipline themselves and to act as entrepreneurs.

Chapter Five focuses on the labor supply, labor control, and the labor process in the organic and fair trade production system. This chapter examines how the introduction of organic rice farming into rural communities of the Northeast has differently affected the farmers. The northeast farmers are classified into three categories according to land management, labor, and capital. Then I examine the ways in which different groups of farmers respond to requirements of regulations and international markets. This study argues that the large scale and medium scale farmers gain more benefits from the global niche markets, because they have greater land, labor and capital. In contrary, the small scale farmers have relatively less land, labor and capital, and they gain relatively less benefit from the rise of new markets. In this sense the introduction of export-oriented organic rice farming into rural communities of the Northeast has accelerated pre-existing differentiation among farmers.

In Chapter Six, I investigate the practices of politics in organic and fair trade rice production systems. I focus on contingency and vulnerability emerged within the new production system which represents a rupture of power or control on the one hand, and agency of farmers to make a room for maneuver on the other hand. I examine the ways in which the farmers create negotiating space within the capitalist production of organic and fair trade rice commodities.