# PARTICIPATION, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AND CHANGING PRODUCTION RELATIONS IN RECENTLY SETTLED FOREST AREAS OF THAILAND

by

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# ABSTRACT

This study examines aspects of change and development in two peripheral Thai communities. Rural development is seen as a generic term used to describe processes of change occurring or meant to occur in rural areas of countries such as Thailand, its desirability or direction depending on the point of view of the analyst or practitioner concerned. It is observed that participation is stressed increasingly as an essential element in such development. Since a dynamic common to most forms of rural development is incorporation into the wider structures of state and capital, participation becomes an issue of the "terms of incorporation". These differ significantly depending on which point of view among the many groups of "developers" and "developed" we choose to adopt.

The main argument of the thesis is illustrated with reference to the situation of two recently settled communities on the northwestern periphery of the Central Plains of Thailand. Issues of rural development and participation are related to changes in production relations being brought about to show that incorporation in the name of increasing control within the wider system leads to a loss of control over local material and social resources necessary for production on the part of the poor. Alternative attempts to regain control are discussed, and implications for participatory development as a struggle over terms of incorporation on the part of the rural poor are drawn.

The study first examines rural development from a theoretical perspective, and relates it to historical processes and the Thai social formation. It goes on to set out the general and local geographical contexts of recently settled areas. An account of production in the study villages is followed by a discussion of differentiation. Finally, the themes of cooperation and participation are taken up and related to issues of control and power.

In memory of

Uayporn Sangthong

B.E. 2500 - 2528

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# GLOSSARY

Most Thai terms are glossed in the text as they appear. However, some words are used frequently and appear after their first usage without translation. These are given below.

| | |
|---|---|
| *amphoe* | = administrative district, also the district administration |
| *baht* | = Thai unit of currency, approximately UK 2.5p |
| *chaonaa* | = rice farmer |
| *chaorai* | = upland farmer |
| *kaan-phatthana* | = development |
| *kamnan* | = *tambon* head |
| *paa* | = forest |
| *rai* | = unit of land measurement, 1600 sq.m, or 0.4 acres approx. |
| *sii krasuang lak* | = four ministries with statutory functions at *amphoe* |
| *tambon* | = administrative cluster of villages, or "sub-district" |

# ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| ALRO | = Agricultural Land Reform Office |
| BAAC | = Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives |
| CDD | = Community Development Department |
| CIDA | = Canadian International Development Agency |
| DAE | = Department of Agricultural Extension |
| LDAP | = Local Development Assistance Programme |
| LDC | = Less developed country |
| LDD | = Land Development Department |
| MCC | = Mennonite Central Committee |
| NESDB | = National Economic and Social Development Board |
| NGO | = Non-governmental organization |
| NKYFRD | = Nong Kha Yang Foundation for Rural Development |
| REGP | = Rural Employment Generation Programme |
| TC | = *Tambon* Council |
| TPC | = Thai Plywood Company |
| UPRC | = Uthaithani Pig Raisers' Cooperative |
| VC | = Village Committee |

# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

The process of settlement and subsequent integration of small frontier communities into political and economic institutions of a wider society is of interest in at least two ways. First, the process is an important element in agricultural expansion and associated deforestation. Second, examination of the process aids an understanding of changing relationships between relatively isolated communities and the "mainstream" society. The context of rapid change in these peripheral communities allows participant observation of some key aspects of such change. In particular, the ethos and themes surrounding "development" provide empirical and conceptual foci for analysis of the meaning of change to the various actors involved.

The context for this study is a situation of changing production relations in two villages in recently settled Lan Sak district of Uthaithani province, Thailand ($99^{o}30'E$ $15^{o}30'N$). Rural development is the subject of the study, with an emphasis on the theme of participation. I identify a problem in gaining access to, and control over, the material and social resources of the wider society on the one hand, and maintaining or increasing control over local resources on the other. While rural development is often posited as a means for residents of small communities to participate in control over resources of the wider society, the access to village institutions and resources afforded to state, capital, and their local representatives by rural development at once diminishes control for the majority of villagers. These contradictory processes have both material and discursive aspects. The contradiction[1] thus outlined is vital to understanding changes

internal to the communities under study. In this light, I shall argue that rural development cannot be examined independently of an analysis of broader issues of control and the exercise of power.

The disciplinary origins and content of the thesis are in both geography and anthropology. The geographical aspect is brought out in two main ways. First, the locale for the study is contextually significant for its peripherality and the importance of this geographic fact is evident throughout. Second, the spatial emphasis is manifest in the stress on problems inherent in localization[2] of human control over a rapidly changing socio-economic and natural environment. This is closely connected to the anthropological aspect of the changing relationship between a "little community"[3] and the wider system. However, since attention would only be diverted away from the problems referred to by treatment of the community in question primarily as "territory", "place", or "locality",[4] the emphasis is less on a discipline concerned with such units than on one whose etymon directs it to the people, in all their diversity, who occupy our community.

In this introduction I present a thematic and historical background to the contradiction under study. This is followed by a brief treatment of the approach used and a synopsis of the thesis. Finally, notes on fieldwork methodology and terminology are provided.

## I.1 Background

The process by which isolated agrarian communities become part of a wider society underlies much of what is now termed "rural development". This process has both temporal and spatial dimensions.

The temporal dimension is commonly referred to in terms such as "modernization", movement from a "backward" to an "advanced" state, and even "catching up". The spatial dimension of this aspect of development is spoken of as "integration", "linkage", or "incorporation". More often, these dimensions are combined so that physical isolation implies backwardness, while proximity to the metropolitan core represents, for the community, an implicit modernity. Under such terms, a village "develops" both with changes in the system as a whole over time and by change in its position within the system.[5]

Only by consideration of these two dimensions can the issue of "development" of a peripheral community in Thailand be understood. For more than a century, the principal dynamic in Thai agriculture and demography has been a steady expansion in the cultivated area facilitated by the establishment of new communities at forest fringes. Following settlement, these communities have seen a gradual integration within the wider spatial economy and polity, such that a majority of the 55,000 villages now registered have undergone this type of transformation during the present century.[6]

It would be misleading to represent this process of settlement, integration, and contined migration as a unilinear response to agrarian and demographic pressures. At each stage, settlement has been the product of specific historical circumstances concerning both the position of Thailand[7] in the world economy and changes in the domestic political economy. This is reflected in the pattern of settlement at different stages from early on up to the present day. Moreover, the nature and method of subsequent integration into the wider system has itself been shaped by contingencies specific to each period. Central to the current situation is the context of rural development.

Nevertheless, there are certain continuities that make the situation of a recently settled and rapidly integrated forest community in the mid-1980s analogous if not equivalent to that of the majority of villages that have experienced change over a longer period of time. The transition from a subsistence based economy dependent on local resources, whose use and surrounding social relations are governed by indigenous institutions, to a more commercialized economy with an increasingly external orientation and incorporated into the national polity is common to both types of community. The rapidity of the transition and special circumstances of the prevailing social formation mark out the recently settled forest community in ways that will become apparent, but it is hoped that this study of two such communities offers insights also into the more general situation pertaining in established villages.

As was intimated above, the process of such rural change is now normally subsumed under the term "rural development". Rural development emerged as a concern in Thailand as a result of the uneven development of the national economy after 1960 (Saneh 1983). While Bangkok and surrounding areas reaped the material fruits of rapid growth, peripheral parts of the country showed limited involvement in the national economy (IBRD 1980 : 36ff.). The imbalances that this created were behind some of the political changes of the 1970s, and the Fourth and Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plans have emphasized the need for rural development. A key element in the strategy of the Fifth Plan is the Poverty Eradication Programme, which identifies approximately one third of the country's districts as "target districts" for special attention, all in peripheral areas (NESDB 1977; 1981).

Given this apparent shift of focus to the periphery and the above context, it is surprising to find that many rural development

initiatives assume as a starting point a stable, well established community undergoing change from generations of "traditional" ways toward an accommodation of the outside world. In part this is probably due to the fact that most studies of rural development, its rationale, and implications have dealt with such situations. Population movement associated with rural development is considered mainly in the context of rural-urban migration resulting from upheavals in established communities and opportunities arising in urban areas, or of planned resettlement, the latter usually resulting from displacement of an entire existing community by construction of a dam or other infrastructural project. It is quite rare to find studies on rural development in the context of more spontaneous settlement, despite the fact that unplanned settlement of forest reserve and marginal lands is currently an important dynamic in the agricultural expansion of numerous agrarian societies.

Thus to treat villages in new areas of settlement as somehow exceptional and marginal to mainstream agricultural development is not only to write off a significant process in agricultural, and by extension socio-economic change in Thailand; it is also to ignore an important feature of the areas in which the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) and other developers are placing increasing emphasis. Rural development in such areas takes on a number of specific characteristics, by virtue among others of the recent and heterogeneous character of the settlements, their frontier nature, the marginal situation of their mainly rainfed agricultural production, the context of rapid change, the rural development emphasis on "catching up" with less peripheral areas, and specific government attention to areas on the margins of state control.

The focus in this study of rural development in the specific

historical and geographical context outlined above is on production. This is not because other aspects of rural development (health, education, etc.) are considered unimportant. However, as is explained and qualified in Chapter V, production is often seen both academically and by producers themselves as the basis for livelihood, while production relations and their change are the basis for wider social relations and change therein, both within communities and between communities and the outside world. Moreover, in peasant communities production and other aspects of life are intimately related, so a focus on this aspect at once provides an insight into wider phenomena while enabling us to establish a manageable framework for study. These themes are expanded on shortly.

This brings us to the main theme under study : participation. A perusal of development literature over the past decade reveals a heavy and growing emphasis on this concept by analysts and practitioners alike.[8] While I do not wish to go into unwarranted detail at this stage, it is appropriate to mention two facets of the concept of participation that make it especially pertinent to the present study. The first is the wide variety of interpretations and applications of the term, particularly in the Thai context, that makes it an important subject of study for an understanding of the motivations of the various actors on the Thai rural development stage. The second goes back to the specific characteristics of the communities under study, since participation at whatever level we choose to operate implies involvement of individuals in a wider formation. Thus the relationship between participatory rural development and the more general incorporation described above provides a key point of interest.

A final point is that an understanding of strategies for increasing self-reliance through participatory rural development, in

terms of a changing relationship between communities and the wider system, cannot rely on an undifferentiated approach to the community. On the contrary, the basis for treatment of a territory as a unit for policy action is rejected, since this assumes a fictitious homogeneity of interest within that geographical area. Current strategies often hold that increasing the total monetary value of production in a defined area - be it nation, region, or village - necessarily increases the self reliance of that area. By a similar token, treatment of the territorial community (village) as a unit equates community participation with incorporation into the wider system. Indicators of low regional product become indicators of low self reliance, peripherality becomes the antithesis of participation. This is in manifest contradiction to the subjective experience of rural producers in the villages under study. Thus we return to where we started out, and opt for an anthropological step into the rubber flip-flops of a Lan Sak peasant.[9]

## I.2 Approach

A few words of explanation are necessary regarding the multistranded approach. A note on the perspective adopted is followed by the rationale for selection of the two communities under study. The attempt of the study to link the two parallel but all too often separate strands in development debates is clarified, and the focus on production is explained. Lastly, the case for a political economic approach is made.

The false dichotomy between a bird's eye view and a worm's eye view of the world is compounded in the field of development by the continual conflict between "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches.[10]

This study is concerned primarily with the effects of integration into the wider system on small communities and individuals within those communities. The interest, therefore, is of an outsider looking in, while the subject of interest is the insider looking out. Consequently, the mode of description is omniscient (in the literary rather than epistemological sense!) and set in terms often alien to modes of thought in the communities involved. Yet the perspective taken is that of the villager, small farmer, rural producer, rural poor, peasant, or whatever term is applied to the agriculturalists who form the majority of most village populations and indeed of the population of Thailand and other developing countries (see section I.5 below for a discussion of terminology).

Adoption of such a perspective has three main implications for our approach. First, the subjective experience of villagers and other actors is considered as of inherent importance and not merely as illustrative. This means that discourse is of interest and consequently drawn on frequently. Second, the life of a Lan Sak villager is not divided neatly into parcels that conform with academic disciplines, so that even where emphases are placed we cannot limit ourselves exclusively to one or another aspect of village life (cf. Chambers 1983 : 22 - 23). Third, issues connected with rural development play an increasingly important role but still not a dominant part in the daily life of the villager, which means that care must be taken to see such issues only as they fit into the broader schema of village life. Ultimately, we must recognize the indivisibility of a livelihood in which production, consumption, health, education, debt, and so on are intricately bound up. Thus a multi-disciplinary approach opens new avenues toward the understanding of rural development from the point of view, and sometimes through the words, of those most intimately involved.

The two villages selected, Ban Dong and Ban Mai, are both in a recently settled forest area on the northwestern periphery of the Central Plains. One is a lowland village whose economy is dominated by rice cultivation, the other an upland[11] village whose economy is almost exclusively given over to cash cropping. One is a spontaneously settled community with limited state involvement, the other is a partially planned settlement affected by the state land reform programme. Although the aim of the study is not principally one of comparison, the selection of two communities rather than one was deemed beneficial in offering a more holistic view of the situation faced by Lan Sak villagers, since these two types represent the broad range of production regimes and strategies of outside intervention.[12] It has also proved useful for the observer in helping to sort out common elements from epiphenomena, a difficult task when limited to a single case study. Finally, some comparisons are made where they are deemed relevant, in particular regarding the different levels of commercialization and state involvement between the two villages, but it must be stressed that these are presented inductively, since two cases with so many variables are hardly sufficient for deductive conclusions to be drawn from comparison.

A word is in order as to how the study fits into the broader development debates. The latter word is used in the plural here because a brief glance at the literature is enough to show that there are two broad strains which run parallel but rarely come together. The first is the discussion of development in terms of historical processes, structures, and inter-relationships. The second sees development as a range of interventions, policy options, and programmes. The first debate covers opposing analyses of social, economic, and political change in the developing world. It is framed in terms of broad concepts

such as modernization, dependency, modes of production, capitalist transformation. The second debate is essentially one of technique. It covers policy orientation, institutional design, bottom-up versus top-down, and so on. At the risk of falling between two stools, the present study attempts to bring these together in relating the programme side of rural development to broader changes in the social formation on the one hand, and suggesting how an understanding of these changes provides insight into the directions new local level initiatives can take, or are prevented from taking, on the other. The determinism that is sometimes a product of the first approach (Rostovian and Marxist economism alike) fails to allow for human agency, while the technocracy or introversion that is associated with the alternative shuts out broader forces that cannot be ignored (cf. Worsley 1984). Rural development initiatives must be seen in terms of processes such as state formation, establishment of control, capitalist development of agriculture, or, alternatively, of reaction to dominant processes such as in negation. The aim of participatory development is, surely, for people as subjects to devise means to establish control over the way in which these broader forces affect their lives.

The emphasis on production takes into account the principal distinguishing characteristic of peasant production, which is that it cannot readily be divorced from consumption or other aspects of livelihood. Since a proportion of peasant production is for own use, direct consumption is a principal objective. Meanwhile, production involves the use of family labour, which in turn requires adequate food consumption, health, and education in the broadest sense (Bennett 1978 : 62 - 63). Thus a focus on production provides an entry into the central element of peasant livelihood, one that is not divorced from other aspects of life to the extent that fully commercialized farming is.

At this point it is pertinent to provide an initial exposure of the fallacious model of "rational production" that lies behind conventional development thinking and has parallels in the political sphere. Broadly framed, the argument runs as follows. Traditional agriculture is characterized by feudalistic, pre-modern production relations whereby factors other than "rational" free market considerations (kinship, patron clientage, compounded by ignorance) determine systems of production and exchange. Meanwhile, agrarian communities remain isolated from affairs of the state, leading to undemocratic forms and perpetuation of semi-feudalistic structures. The process of development involves a rationalization of such relations. On the economic front, egalitarianism is fostered by equal access to the market through the impersonal medium of cash exchange. A rational distribution of society's resources is achieved by free operation of supply and demand, while mobilization of resources is enhanced by opportunities for gain and accumulation. Legally guaranteed property rights ensure a rational long term use of society's resources. Moreover, the state that guarantees these rights and the institutions by which it does so are controlled by the masses, since the process of modernization includes previously isolated villagers in the affairs of the state. In sum, development means bringing the backward institutions of developing countries into line with those that have emerged in Western Europe and North America.

The fallacy, and thus the first hint at the contradiction in participatory rural development as observed in Lan Sak, lies in exclusion in such an analysis of the the issue of power and its manifestation at various levels. As the analysis of change in the two communities under study shows, "rationalization" of the traditional economy does not free rural producers from constraints on production faced under traditional relations. On the contrary, these are often

reoriented such that exploitative relations become internal to the communities in question. New economic opportunities reshape the "non-rational" exercise of power, they do not decrease it. This has its parallels in the political arena, in that the very process of incorporation into the wider polity gives the state control over village institutions via those whose economic position is enhanced by changing production relations. The contradiction involved in participation lies in the process by which rationalization and decentralization are manifested locally as concentration and cooptation respectively. The approach used here to exemplify this is to include in the analysis the study of the exercise of power.[13]

A final note on the approach concerns the political economic analysis. As was pointed out above, analysis of change from the perspective of the villager must take into account the indivisibility of various aspects of livelihood. Likewise, concern with changing structures cannot draw a meaningful distinction between economic and political aspects of these structures. The increased role of capital in determining production relations in Lan Sak cannot be studied independently of state interventions via physical and institutional infrastructure. Likewise, the motivations for the exercise of power cannot be divorced from these very production relations. The overlap of political and economic power at the village and other levels is an empirical attestation to this fact (cf. Witayakorn 1983; Turton 1984, 1985; Ananya 1985).

## I.3 Synopsis

The argument of the thesis runs as follows. Rural development is

a generic term used to describe processes of change occurring or meant to occur in rural areas of countries such as Thailand, its desirability or direction depending on the point of view of the analyst or practitioner concerned. Participation is stressed increasingly as an essential element in such development. Since a dynamic common to most forms of rural development is incorporation into the wider structures of state and capital, participation becomes an issue of the "terms of incorporation". These differ significantly depending on which point of view among the many groups of "developers" and "developed" we choose to adopt. The argument is illustrated with reference to the situation of two recently settled communities on the northwestern periphery of the Central Plains of Thailand. Issues of rural development and participation are related to changes in production relations being brought about to show that incorporation in the name of increasing control within the wider system leads to a loss of control over local material and social resources necessary for production on the part of the poor. Alternative attempts to regain control are discussed, and implications for participatory development as a struggle over terms of incorporation on the part of the rural poor are drawn.

The structure of the thesis warrants a few words of explanation. I do not adhere strictly to a single tried and trusted theoretical approach, the productionist approach outlined above being taken for illustrative rather than deterministic purposes. My initial theoretical chapter thus draws together a number of strands into the framework for analysis of development that I have adopted. The sections most resembling a more conventional literature review come later in the thesis, since they follow more specific themes (notably differentiation in Chapter VI, peasant economy in Chapter VII, and participation in Chapter VIII) rather than the broader structure of the thesis. Also, rather than present a "regional overview" of the Lower North or Central

Region of Thailand (depending on in which administrative regional classification we place Uthaithani province), I give a thematic background to recently settled forest areas in Chapter III and not the place of Uthaithani in one or another administrative region, since it is the historico-ecological fact that is the salient feature of Lan Sak.

Following this introduction, the exposition begins in Chapter II with a consideration of rural development from a theoretical perspective. The place of development in wider processes of change is outlined, and an "ethos" of development is related to ideologies, discourse, and structures at the local level. The place of institutional change in rural development is examined. Participation is considered as a dialectic between the various groups of "developers" and "developed", and each of these is identified within the current Thai social formation and rural development framework.

Chapter III sets the geographical context. The history, patterns, and significance of settlement in recently settled forest areas are considered, with special emphasis on the fringes of the Central Plains. The place of such areas in agricultural development in particular and rural development in general is discussed in historical and contemporary perspective.

The specific situation of Uthaithani, Lan Sak, and the two study villages is explained in Chapter IV. The history and pattern of settlement are detailed. Environmental considerations and their interaction with broader aspects of production are shown to be important. "Developers" and "developed" are identified in terms of the framework set out in Chapter II, with a preliminary exposition of state, NGO (non-governmental organizations), and indigenous institutions along with structures of leadership, interest groups, commerce, and other

local manifestations of the social formation.

Detailed analysis of data from the two study villages commences in Chapter V, with a study of resources for production in the context of changing production relations. The agricultural regime is described, and this is followed by analysis of how access to resources for production is determined in the changing situation. A detailed account of production in the two villages under study is then given, with a comparison highlighting certain aspects of control over production in the two communities. At each stage of the analysis, the place of rural development in such change is highlighted.

Chapter VI deals with the consequences of concentration of control and changed production relations within the two communities. The first part of the chapter discusses differentiation that results from processes identified in the previous chapter. This is illustrated by case studies of individual households in Ban Dong and Ban Mai. The second part examines individual responses to shortage produced by such differentiation, in particular measures taken to regain control over production. It is shown that at present most of these measures involve solutions that are detrimental to the environment, further increase differentiation, or are external to the community. The implications for this on rural development are considered briefly.

The way in which rural development in its various forms applies to increasing control by various actors is approached in Chapter VII via the issue of cooperation and development. The collectivist versus individualist debate is summarized as it applies to peasant society and related to production in Lan Sak. The contradiction between an individualistic ethos and cooperative programmes is brought out, and the approach of the various actors toward cooperation is used to show how it

relates to the concept of control.

Chapter VIII brings the various themes that have been discussed together in a reconsideration of participation in light of the foregoing data. Conceptualizations and revisions of participation are presented, and these are used to re-emphasize the two key themes of control and power. Specific aspects of these are discussed, drawing on preceding accounts of the context of rural development and changing production relations, and specific schemes are reviewed in light of this new perspective.

Finally, the conclusion reiterates the dilemma of participatory rural development. The overall role of participation in rural development is reconsidered. Obstacles to participation are acknowleged, but spaces for action are also highlighted.

## I.4 Fieldwork methodology

The data used in this study were collected during a period of sixteen months' residence in the two study villages, from March 1984 to July 1985. The fieldwork approach was based on three types of information gathering : participant observation, informal and unstructured interviewing, and a structured household survey carried out by myself.[14] These three methods were mutually reinforcing. Observation of social and economic patterns and immersion in the linguistic and cultural environment of the community was a prerequisite to direct questioning. To the extent that direct questioning was applied, questions had to be framed in terms of subject's language and experience in order not to impose the researcher's own meanings on

respondents' answers. Sensitivity was required in knowing what questions to pose in what way and how best to follow up ambiguous or indefinite answers. Meanwhile, the more structured approach reinforced earlier participatory research by arranging information in a form that would be readily comparable from one respondent to another and that could be readily analysed systematically. The mutual reinforcement was also helpful in terms of relationship with the community. Participation in the life and work of the village to the fullest extent possible established an understanding and rapport that proved invaluable in later systematic surveying, not least in interpretation of responses and assessment of their accuracy On the other hand, the systematic survey in the offing was of some use in making the researcher's purpose and method more readily intelligible. On a similar note, the survey reduced the necessity for constant jotting down of detailed information that might have distanced the researcher in earlier stages of fieldwork.

The data gathered were of two main types. The first type was basic social and economic data concerning the internal structure of the community, means of livelihood, and production relations. The second was information about specific institutions that regulate the above. Certain information of both types is common to the community as a whole, and needed not be included in the household survey. Other information concerns individual households, and particularly that which needed to be aggregated or cross-tabulated was included in the household survey carried out among 148 households, or a quarter of each community, during February to May 1985. The interview schedule and sampling methodology is contained in Appendix 1.

Information gathering for the majority of the time spent in the village was by observation rather than survey. Both notebooks and tape recorders were seen as two edged swords. Constant jotting down of

information was avoided, since it would have interrupted smooth and natural dialogue and created a distance between myself and the community, limiting the type of information I could expect to obtain. In particular, it would have bared interest in certain sensitive issues (such as deforestation, corruption) and closed the few avenues of access to such information. Tape recorders are likewise inhibiting. A suggestion by a local official to hide one in my shoulder bag was rejected on ethical grounds. In any case, hours of taped conversation would have taken a much greater number of hours to analyze. Most of the information was recorded in notebooks at intervals during the day, based on memory of conversations held and overheard and on other observations and insights. The drawback to this approach was information lost due to selectiveness of memory, but this was also an advantage in one respect in that it avoided information overload and heightened aptitude for culling of relevant material from the plethora of everyday events. This was a skill that developed over time, both with improving conceptualization of the research theme and with ability to make mental notes. Tape recorders were used on two types of occasion. One was experimental group discussions on certain topics, which proved quite successful in that they involved guided exchanges between villagers rather than dialogue between myself and research subjects. The other was interviews conducted with selected officials.

My participatory mode of research turned out to go beyond involvement in everyday life of the community. Although I stressed from early on that I was not bringing or offering anything by way of development aid despite having been introduced to the community by a local non-governmental development organization, I did get involved in a local initiative to dig an irrigation channel in Bung Khiew. I also played a part in some of the liaison and coordinating activities of the buffalo bank and the Nong Kha Yang Foundation for Rural Development

(NKYFRD) activities in Lan Sak and helped draft project proposals with community leaders. Such involvement is of potential benefit to community and researcher alike. The outsider's wider range of contacts and official standing may place him or her as an asset in the hands of villagers, while the insights gained into contact between officials and villagers in the course of such work makes the "diversion" worthwhile from a research point of view.

## I.5 Note on terminology

I wish to provide a brief note on terminology used in the text of the thesis. My concern is threefold : to clarify use of terms that are ambiguous or non-specific, particularly in a relatively new and jargon littered field such as rural development; to explain my arrival at certain categorizations for the purpose of field research where such are to some extent arbitrary; and to explain my use of Thai terms.

The most difficult rules to apply consistently are those concerning description of people whose self-images are themselves multiple in character. Thus in referring to farmers, peasants, villagers, rural producers, the rural poor, and so on I am not talking about mutually exclusive groups of people. Rather, I use each term according to the context in which people are referred to. Thus I use "villager" to refer to those who live within the confines of the village. I use "rural poor" when their relative economic status is being stressed. The difference between "farmer" and "peasant" is more problematic : both refer to a livelihood that is broader than the narrow interpretation of production implied by "rural producer", and I prefer to use the term farmer except in the context of more general debates on

"the peasantry".

In a similar vein, discussion of people as "labourers", "tenants", "small farmers", and so on is problematic, and this is discussed further in section *II.3.ii* As a result, I avoid the use of such terms except in a temporary sense.

"Village" is used to refer to the geographically bounded area, while "community" refers to the social body living within that area. "Settlement" refers to the area of residence within the village.

Certain concepts are used rather loosely, and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to enter into the lengthy debates on appropriateness of some of these terms. Among these is "patron-clientage", which is used to refer to traditional reciprocal relationships between people of higher and lower status in Thai society; use of the term is not intended to generalize about the social formation, and it is applied only when no less loaded term is applicable. Other problematic terms are explained as they appear in the thesis.

Definition of the household is a particularly tricky task in any village study. The term normally used in Thai for census purposes, *khruareuan*, refers usually to those living under one roof. However, this may not be equivalent to a discrete production unit, since parents and children may work fields together despite living in separate abodes. It may also not be significant as a consumption unit, since families may share their rice with close kin and eat many of their meals with those living in the same compound but under different roofs. The closest I have come to adopting a formal definition of the household in Ban Dong and Ban Mai has been to treat it as closely as possible in terms of the

most common local grouping : "*khon kin ruam mo'o diawkan* : those eating from the same pot". Clearly this is problematic in terms of production, although in actual fact there is a close if not total correspondence between households as production and consumption units.

Since discourse is one of the foci of interest in this study, I make considerable use of Thai terms. My method of presenting them is as follows. If the English translation of a Thai word or phrase is its direct equivalent and not bound by context, I give the English word or phrase followed by the Thai equivalent. If the Thai word or phrase is bound by context or there is no equivalent translation, I give the Thai word or phrase followed by a the English closest equivalent or by a literal translation and an explanation if this is deemed necessary. Longer statements are translated as naturally as possible, with the Thai followed by the English. In the case of paraphrasing, only the English is given.

For transliteration rules applied, please see Appendix 2.

Notes

1. I deliberately use the notion of contradiction to indicate a range of processes that underly the ambiguity of the term "participation", and which are viewed by various "participants" in different ways depending on how each is involved. The argument in this thesis is that these different processes are linked to a central problem. I use the term "contradiction" because it picks up on both existing uses in neo-marxist discussion concerning materialist conceptions of contradiction and on more discursive and logical senses of the term. In keeping with my concern not to assume any simple dualism between materialist or production relations, on the one hand, and discourse on the other, I retain a single term in order to show how it works out differently in different contexts and for different people, for a key aim in the thesis is to show how these processes are understood or represented by different parties involved. I should also note at this point that for heuristic purposes, my notion of discourse as used here picks up more on language use than in a more encompassing account of discourse; this concept is discussed further in the following chapter.

2. "Localization" is used here in the sense of "bringing to [or maintaining at] the local level" rather than "identifying the locality of". Alternatively, distinguishing between the Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary (1972 edition) definitions, I am discussing "assign[ation]" to a place, not "limit[ing]" to a place.

3. Robert Redfield's (1956) essay on the "little community" marked a turning point in the emphasis of modern anthropology in that it implicitly placed the subjects of anthropological study within a wider context than their immediate, "closed" surroundings. I use "community" in the singular here as a concept, whereas my study is actually based on two such communities (see section I.5 below for discussion of terminology).

4. Such mistaken emphasis as a result of relying on aggregated data from territorial units has been referred to as an "ecological fallacy" (see Alker 1969; Johnston 1981 : 89).

5. Hainsworth (1982) conceives of these two aspects of development as a "rediscovery of the idea of progress (p.3) combined with a concern for "diffusion" (p.5). The latter has been an important theme in the geographer's paradigm of development.

6. According to National Statistical Office data, there were 41,100 villages registered in 1965; 45,661 in 1970; 49,178 in 1975; and 55,746 in 1983.

7. To avoid confusion, I use "Thailand" rather than "Siam" throughout this study since this is the name by which the country is most popularly known today. In some cases this is retrospective use, since the change was only made in 1939.

8. See, for example, FAO 1973, 1981; Cohen and Uphoff 1977; Galjart and Buijs 1979; Pearse and Stiefel 1979; IBRD 1980; Thawitong et al. 1984. The theme of participation is discussed more fully in Chapter VIII.

9. I find this the most appropriate position in which to stand for two reasons : one, flip-flops are the normal footwear of Lan Sak villagers; two, as anyone with experience of village life can attest to, they are convenient above all in the ease with which they can be taken off and

put on when ascending a house, and this ease of movement in and out of a villager's shoes is likewise useful for the perspective taken in this study.

10. Johnston and Clark are particularly critical of the extremity of positions taken in this debate. They suggest that the direction of initiative is secondary to the importance of fitting technology and organization to local needs. Their participatory framework involves a balance of cogitation (planning) and social interaction (acting out). In an integrated rural development framework

> it makes little sense to ask [local people] what they want and treat their answers as the last word on the subject, only to discover how many other people want incompatible things. (1982 : 34).

Limiting ourselves for the time being to discussion of perspective rather than scales of action, it is true of course that while birds can always return to the ground, worms cannot fly. Perhaps, therefore, caterpillars would make a better analogy for our case, and one of the ways to facilitate participation in the cogitation process is to speed up metamorphosis. Alternatively, the worm has the advantage that it can go underground. In our peasant analogy this need not be taken in the political sense : Scott's concept of the "hidden transcript" of the peasantry that is kept away from those in positions of power is of relevance here; see also his reference to the nocturnal aspect of peasant discourse and resistance (Scott 1986 : 10).

11. "Upland" in the Central Thai context does not imply a great change of altitude from the rice-growing plains. In this case the difference is one of about 100 metres. The significant feature of "upland" villages, or "upland" farming, is that they are not suited to rice cultivation due to lack of irrigation and terracing. Crops grown on such upland are hereafter referred to as "field crops" (locally known as *pheud rai*).

12. This immediately raises the issue as to whether Ban Dong and Ban Mai can be represented as exhaustive or mutually exclusive in terms of the range of production regimes and strategies of outside intervention in Lan Sak. In the first instance, the broad range of crops produced in Lan Sak is represented within the two villages, and the techniques used in production are similar to those used elsewhere in the District. The only two Lan Sak communities that differ significantly in their economic orientation from either Ban Dong or Ban Mai are Paak Meuang, the market centre, and Rabam, a small forestry village within a re-afforestation scheme. These atypical and peripheral cases respectively do not warrant separate treatment as "types". In terms of outside intervention, there are communities more remote than Ban Dong, but these are all upland villages. In the second instance, it must be stressed that there is a good deal of overlap between production in Ban Dong and Ban Mai, particularly in field cropping. However, the orientation and self-perception of villagers in the two communities is distinct (see section V.3). Certain aspects of state led development are apparent in both villages, but in Ban Mai the outsiders' role has been important since the formal establishment of the community.

13. See in particular Foucault (1977 : 222 - 223) on the "panoptic disciplinary mechanisms" that maintain an asymmetry of power within supposedly egalitarian regimes. Foucault emphasises the "systems of micro-power" that maintain the "disciplinary link" behind the "contractual link". More specifically in the context of agrarian change, Griffin (1979) shows that power relations as expressed, for example, through skewed factor prices, are more important than a Smithian "hidden hand" in determining how benefits of such change are

distributed. He concludes that:

> The reason [for HYVs failing to alleviate rural problems] lies not so much in inadequate technology as in inappropriate institutions and poor policy. The explanation for the latter, in turn, lies not in the ignorance of those who govern but in the powerlessness of those who are governed (p.259).

Thus supposed "rationalization" in both its broader and more narrowly defined contexts fails to diminish the relevance of power in determining social and economic relations.

14. Having already spent some time in Thailand before undertaking field research, I had achieved a degree of language fluency before commencing the village studies. As a result, I was able to work without having to employ an assistant, which I deemed an advantage in establishing a more direct relationship with the community than might otherwise have been possible and thence in making observations that might have been missed and holding conversations that would have proven awkward had I worked through an interpreter or field assistant. This proved beneficial also in the systematic survey, since the distance that normally exists between social surveyor and subject was reduced by familiarity, which led to the interviews being carried out in a more informal style than might otherwise have been the case. It was also beneficial to carry out the survey with the benefit of a knowledge of the area and research topic in that I could follow up questions, clear up ambiguities, and subjectively assess the likely accuracy of answers.

# CHAPTER II

## ACTORS, INSTITUTIONS, AND PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT

The concept of development as something a country, a society, a people, or an economy does (or has done to it) is recent, but the processes behind it are not. This is reflected in the emergence of development in the postwar period as an issue and a science at once separate from pre-existing disciplines and yet initially based on the premise that the "developing" or "underdeveloped" societies were going through, or had yet to (or even *failed* to) go through, certain transitions that had brought the "developed" world up to its high levels of productivity and consumption within integrated nation states. As a result, development has served in one sense as a cover for underlying processes occurring at various levels of these rapidly changing societies. Most of these processes can be found in the history of the "developed" world : state formation, national integration, growth, capitalist transformation, urbanization, industrialization, to name but a few prominent ones. Needless to say, this does not imply that such processes take the same form as they did in earlier developers (to use the term retrospectively), given the very different historical specificities, different cultural and societal background, and of course new constraints imposed by the world system that are themselves a product of earlier transitions. The relevant point is rather that such processes are now subsumed under the generic term "development", which has found its own niche in the ideology, discourse, and structures not only of international bureaucratic organizations and western universities as is commonly supposed, but also within the domestic framework of developing countries themselves. The corollary of this extended "rediscovery of the idea of progress under the name

development" (Hainsworth 1982 : 3) is that a study of certain aspects of development within a national or even a local and highly specific context can reveal a great deal about some of the underlying processes for which development serves as an intentional or unintentional front.

That Thailand, for example, is conceived of as a developing country is not just due to a place in the global division between LDCs (less developed countries) and (M)DCs ([more] developed countries), underdeveloped and (over)developed (see Caldwell 1977), poor and rich. It is as much to do with domestic pressures and a domestic awareness. Discourse centring on development (*kaan phathanaa*) has found its way into political, administrative, economic, and everyday aspects of life in rural as well as urban areas. Such a preoccupation shows little in itself about the intended nature or direction of development, but it does mean that the development issue is a live and pervasive one. In its praxis and discourse, therefore, is reflected much about the current polity and social formation.

I propose in this study to concentrate on a particular theme concerning the relationship of individuals and groups to the larger society and its resources in an examination of rural development, the latter an important sub-paradigm within the larger field of development in general. In this background chapter the ethos of rural development, as reflected in its ideological basis, its discourse, and structures surrounding it, provides a context and a starting point for examining what are to some extent hidden processes[1] at the village level. Particular attention is then given to the role of institutions and institutional change as foci for empirical analysis. The empirical stage is set by an account of the Thai rural social formation, and this is related to existing structures in rural development. Finally, the main theme under study, popular participation, is considered in terms of

the above, and certain contradictions vis a vis participation are revealed as a consequence.

## II.1 The Ethos of Development

In Thailand, changes that are induced as part of the transformation of the economy and the extended role of the state have created what I would like to call an ethos of development with its own ideological basis or bases, discourse(s), and structures. Since the First National Development Plan was formulated in 1961, development through economic growth within a context of national security[2] has been a conscious national priority. To the extent that growth and development can be equated, moreover, the Thai national economy has in fact fared well until recently when compared with other developing economies. A cumulative GNP growth rate of 8.6 per cent was achieved between 1959 and 1969 (Ingram 1971 : 223), followed by a slightly lower rate of 7.5 per cent during the 1970s (NESDB 1981). However, it became increasingly clear that growth alone is insufficient for even and sustained development as inequalities between rich and poor, centre and periphery, and urban (chiefly Bangkok) and rural areas increased and as resource depletion and environmental deterioration became more apparent. In 1970 rural-urban income differentials in Thailand at 3 : 1 were among the highest in the world (Panayotou 1983 : 41). Between 1960 and 1979 per capita income disparities between Central and Northeastern Thailand rose from 2.4 : 1 to 3.5 : 1 and between Bangkok and the Northeast form 5.2 : 1 to 6.0 : 1, while during the same period the agricultural land frontier was more or less closed (Girling 1981 : 67) and forest cover was reduced from 53 per cent to 34 percent of total land area (Boonchana and Thongchai 1983 : 39). These imbalances took on

a political significance during the 1970s that led the country's planners as well as students, academics, and other concerned groups to turn more specifically to rural development as a counterbalance to the policies that had failed to uplift the living standard of many of the four-fifths of the population who dwell in the countryside.

An ethos of development is thus well established, in the sense of an awareness of change and concern about how to reorient that change. The current concern for rural development has sprung from the inequities of a past development strategy based primarily on economic growth and national security. The inequities have been posed as a development problem in a number of ways : politically, as a dangerous gap between aspirations and achievement; economically, as a failure to increase productivity and create a rural market; morally, as an unjust social distribution of the fruits of economic growth. How to ensure a "trickle down" of these fruits has now become the principal issue.

However, concealed within this broad concern lies a multitude of explanations as to how this unequal state of affairs has arisen and what strategies should be used to ensure a more balanced form of development. The ethos of rural development, far from being a monolithic set of values, assumptions, and approaches, is rather a heterogeneous milieu of tensions and contradictions obscured by an apparent consensus associated with this innocuous term. In the various manifestations of this ethos can be discerned some of the hidden struggles associated with the processes of change that are themselves the background to rural development.

*II.1.i Development ideology*

Before examining state and alternative ideologies of development in the rural Thai situation, it is worth considering briefly the broader role of ideology in effecting change and domination. Much has been written recently on Gramscian hegemony as applied to the Thai state in an attempt to identify the morally accepted basis for power (in contrast, that is, to repression).[3] Establishment of hegemony relies in part on imparting an ideological basis for common action that identifies the interests of the rulers (developers) with those of the ruled (developed). Imposition of the dominant ideology through ideological domination therefore serves as the means by which the state in its various manifestations seeks to achieve legitimacy (Turton 1984b), and these manifestations include various structures involved in state rural development strategy.

Behind state-led rural development, we have seen, lie more fundamental processes, primary among which are state formation and capitalist transformation. In the context of rural development, these processes involve penetration[4] of the village by state and capital, effecting a reorientation of power structures and a change in agrarian production relations. Supporting these basic changes in turn lies an ideology that is expressed publicly as an ideology of development and has acquired its own discourse. The objective of the state developer is to transfer this ideology to the rural population as part of the legitimization process for state activity in rural areas. Meanwhile, alternative ideologies emerge from the actual experience of rural producers (Turton 1984b : 62ff.) and from non-governmental approaches to development.

Apart from its anti-communist stance, the most clearly identifiable element of state development ideology is the need for

modernization. In agriculture, this means a move away from subsistence oriented production toward commercial crops, an increased role for capital through mechanization and use of inputs such as fertilizer and pesticides, supported by increased rural credit in pursuit of higher yields. It is a capitalist ideology that promotes individual accumulation of wealth and monetized production relations, one that promises material prosperity. Meanwhile, Buddhism as the national religion[5] is invoked along with associated moral values such as honesty, hard work, and punctuality. This is part also of the broader nationalist ideology of nation-religion-monarchy and associated ideals of unity,[6] order, and respect for national institutions. Also present is a statist ideology of unity through integration of national institutions in the name of democratization. In short, state rural development ideology is one that promotes capitalist transformation and state penetration as a path from poverty to prosperity, from isolation to integration, from backwardness to civilization.

An important part of village level rural development activity by the state is devoted to imparting this ideology, as is evident from the emphasis on training programmes whose content is largely ideological. One government training manual, for example, stresses the importance of ideology, whose importance is as "a system of ideas with a plan to inspire actions, or abstinence from certain actions, in order to achieve the best conditions possible at a given time". Ideology is to be created by exemplary behaviour, symbols, songs, slogans, and institutionalized training. (National Primary Education Office n.d. : 1 - 2). Most of the songs and slogans in the manual concern respect for national institutions, unity, and individual morality.

Non-governmental approaches to development are varied and cannot be identified with a clear alternative ideology. The principal

oppositionist ideology, that of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), is illegal and in direct challenge to the state, so cannot pose itself in terms of rural development, although many state rural development activities were conceived at least in part as preemptive measures to the taking hold of this opposition ideology.[7] Many NGOs do, however, have an anti-capitalist ideology and emphasize subsistence before commercial production, the bargaining position of the poor, and traditional (as opposed to state) Buddhist values. Meanwhile, as a result of a process of what Turton (through Gramsci) calls "negation", elements of a popular ideology that differs from the dominant state ideology can begin to be identified.

### *II.1.ii Development discourse*

As a tool for analysis, language is a two edged sword. On the one hand, use of language is revealing of subjects' values, motives, perspectives, or other abstract variables that cannot be measured or determined in any other way, but which nevertheless influence and help explain actions. On the other hand, language can just as easily be used by subjects to obscure intentions and cannot be taken at face value. However, this latter aspect of language is not entirely a negative influence on its interest as an item for study, for ambiguity itself contains significant meanings that can be interpreted where the context is clear. Ambiguity may be a deliberate technique to disguise intentions or paper over contradictions, or it may (as is probably more often the case in the present context) be a logical result of contradictions inherent in a particular process.

Discourse[8] also has intrinsic interest in that it represents

communication and hence interaction between subjects under study. In Parkin's (1982) analogy, we need not only to interpret fixed orders, but also to interpret interpretations internal to those orders. Without discourse, ideology and non-material influences on the formation of the social subject are devoid of means of transmission. Therefore, while at one level we must be wary of literal interpretations, at another we can treat discourse as an expression of the dialectic between groups under study. In the present context, the discourse of the "developers" and the counter-discourse of the "developed" both give insight into the ethos of rural development in Thailand.

Rural development programmes have acquired a vocabulary of their own, and this set of lexical items is a reflection of the priorities associated with such programmes. Development (*kaan phathanaa*) is often equated with prosperity, or civilization (*khwaam jaroen*). An expression of underdevelopment is that a village is far from prosperity/civilization (*klai jaak khwaam jaroen*). Prosperity and civilization in this case take on urban, material forms : fences, streets, electricity, consumer goods, cleanliness (sic)[9] and reflect the urban orientation of development strategy whereby villages and villagers are to develop by "catching up". Other concepts that reflect this orientation include convenience (*khwaam saduak*) associated with roads and electricity, order and tidiness (*khwaam rabiab riabroi*), and the contraposition of rurality as expressed in the word forest (*paa*) as backward, wild, dangerous with civilization (*khwaam rungreuang*) as secure, a measure of achievement (see Chapter III).

Discourse associated with development training programmes places attention and the onus for development on the individual. Much is made of the need to develop people (*phathanaa khon*) by effecting moral and spiritual development (*phathanaa jitjai*). This is further refined in

terms of the need to impart values such as diligence (*khwaam khayan*), punctuality (*khwaam trong weelaa*),[10] and honesty (*khwaam seusat*) among other civic virtues. The implication is that underdevelopment comes from a lack of these virtues in individual villagers, and lectures, songs, and exhortations place stress on this. A village is seen as ready (*phro'm*) for development according to the moral fibre of its citizenry as defined by outside developers according to these values. Programmes such as the national level *Phaen din tham, Phaen din tho'ng* (literally, land of [Buddhist] virtue, land of gold) programme emphasize giving up drink, gambling, and other pursuits deemed as representing obstacles to development.

Another important aspect of state-led rural development at the village level concerns security (*khwaam mankhong*). A number of specific programmes are justfied in terms of villagers' security, or as a means of ensuring ease of administration (*kaan pokkhro'ng ngaai*). More ambiguously, intrusion of state structures into the village (see below) are sometimes justified as to ensure comprehensive coverage (*kaan duulae thuatheung*). However, the word *duulae* implies not only paternalistic "watching over", but also potentially repressive "keeping an eye on". This control and access by the state represent another key element of its rural development strategy as reflected in its (albeit ambiguous) discourse.

The most recent strand of discourse in the various programmes involves an attempt to move away from the traditional welfare (*songkhro'*) role of state aid to rural areas. Participation expressed as "*kaan khao maa mii suan ruam* : lit. to come in and take part" is an exhortation for villagers to become involved in the programmes. Self-help (*kaan chuai tua eeng*) is an ideal of reducing the dependence of villagers on the state for various services. However,

closer examination of these concepts as applied reveals an emphasis on the doing rather than the initiating or deciding, and participation or self-help is very much on the terms set by outsiders. At its extreme, this form of participation represents a new type of corvee!

The discourse that emphasises urban style prosperity and security as objectives for rural development suggests continuity rather than a break with previous development strategy. At the same time, it is an ambiguous form of discourse in the sense that not all groups stand to gain equally from this prosperity and security. As will be seen, rural differentiation and emerging rural power structures are increasingly such that the prosperity favours those with access to capital and transport, while security is a potentially repressive development within the village. Emphasis on the individual takes the focus off underlying structures, while participation and self-help are based on the (unstated) premise that first and foremost villagers require training in order to be willing (in the case of participation) and able (in the case of self-help) to take on externally defined development tasks without having to rely on the paternalism of the state.

There is a more general ambiguity that lies behind the inherent contradictions of a strategy of rural development through national integration. The discourse of rural development contains much that deals with villagers' increasing their rights, duties, and responsibilities as citizens, and the unity of the Thai people. Implied is a sense of belonging, of the village as an integral part of the state, of villagers as subjects rather than objects of state policy, of farmers as the "backbone" of the nation (*chaonaa pen kraduuk sanlang kho'ng chaat*). Yet by the same token, the official discourse of nation, religion, and monarchy (*chaat saat kasat*) is reinforced by physical and instititutional accessibility afforded by schemes falling

under the aegis of rural development to establish an increasing monopoly in terms of legitimacy of state institutions and procedures affecting the everyday social and economic life of village and villagers.

To a certain extent ambiguity succeeds in obscuring some of the contradictions inherent in the rural development strategy, and to this extent discourse serves a useful function for the state in its ideological training programmes. Nevertheless, certain aspects of peasant discourse in reaction to the programmes with which the dominant discourse is associated show that contradictions are not wholly submerged. Feelings of being continually pestered (*jukjik jai*) by rural development programmes, various development tasks, and so on are commonly expressed. Many feel forced (*thuuk bangkhap*) into activities. Individual programmes are punned, for example "*Phaen din tham, Phaen din tho'ng*" becomes "*Phaen din tho', Phaen din thae*", or "land of desperation", in the words of some villagers.

It must be stressed that this discourse and counter-discourse is not exchanged in neutral dialogue. Development discourse is to be understood in terms of power structures within as well as outside the village. Meanwhile, counter-discourse is a dialectical response to the dominant discourse, but at the same time it is contained in what James Scott calls the "hidden transcript" of the powerless. That is to say, those against whom development as reflected in the dominant discourse is objectively or subjectively biased refrain from presenting their counter-discourse in front of its articulators.

An enigmatic aspect of the dominant discourse is what may be termed an "implicit dialectic"[11] in key terms. "*Prachaathipatai* : democracy" implies (negatively associated) communism as the alternative to state ideology. Espousal of virtues such as *winai* (discipline) and

*khwaamkhayan* (diligence) evokes a disorderly and lazy impression of "undeveloped" village life, though this is never made explicit. The unstated alternative to *khwaammankhong* (security) implies danger in opposing coercive elements of state policy at the local level. *Khwaamjaroen*, *rungreuang* (civilization, prosperity), and *rabiab* (order) as key objectives within development discourse imply a cultural as well as physical underdevelopment represented in the backwardness, poverty, and lack of regimentation in village life.

A last point on development discourse is that it would be wrong to give the impression that the dominant (statist) discourse and the counter-discourse represent exhaustive categories. Significant also are non-governmental organizations, whose perspective and ideology tend to be distinctly non-statist. Foremost in the NGO discourse are concepts of dignity (*saksii*), self-reliance (*pheung ton eng*), decision making power (*amnaat nai kaan tadsinjai*), and bargaining power (*amnaat nai kaan to' ro'ng*) and others reflecting an alternative conceptualization of rural development. Of equal interest is the element of common discourse, whereby participation and spiritual development, for example, are basic principles of NGO approaches to a bottom-up, non-materialist development strategy. Connotations are defined by context, however, and a study that traced the connotative transmutations as items of discourse pass from one user to the next would reveal the necessity of interpretation.[12] In each case, "we should identify as far as possible the circumstances by which the apparently chance event becomes an interpretative inspiration" (Parkin 1982 : xlvii).

### *II.1.iii Development structures*

The broad range of activities carried out by the state bureaucracy at the local level are generally labelled as rural development. Attention is directed particularly to the NESDB poverty concentration districts. State programmes consist of a purportedly benign transformation or initiation of legal and administrative institutions and implementation of specific schemes directed at local people's welfare (expressed as *yuu dii kin dii* : lit. "live well, eat well") and increasing agricultural production.

The principal administrative arm of the state at the local level is the district administration, in the form of departments of the four (locally) principal ministries (*sii krasuang lak*). These are not necessarily coordinated in a common development strategy, as will be detailed in section *II.3.ii* below, but in training programmes they come together as the direct representatives of the state at the local level. Other state structures support these activities, such as the military, various departments providing occasional services (public works, land development), and the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC), the principal formal agricultural credit institution.

Government controlled cooperatives have been in operation in Thailand for over 60 years, but these are usually little more than agricultural credit institutions, mainly catering to the better-off farmers. Farmers' associations at the *tambon* (sub-district) level serve a similar function. Limited attempts at agricultural marketing and supplying in collaboration with the state run Farmers' Marketing Organization have come to little.

At the *tambon* and village levels, *tambon* councils and village

development committees are now integrated into the rural development framework and play a part in administration of rural development programmes. These bodies are dominated by the *kamnan* (sub-district head) and village heads respectively, and their position as agents of the state in the village is often further enhanced by their rural development roles.

Non-governmental organizations now have projects in many districts. In 1984, 113 NGOs were working in the field of development, and this does not include numerous student development activities (Thai Volunteer Service 1984). Most NGOs undertake village level cooperative activities and training, and they often involve informal leaders from among the poorer sections of the community.

Rural development structures are presented diagrammatically in Appendix 7.

## II.2 Development Institutions

Whatever else development may or may not be, it is commonly agreed that it involves more than mere technical change. The other element of change that affects the relationship of people to the wider society and its resources is institutional change, both institutional change that is established in formal arrangements and that encompassed in informal understandings.

Institutions take on many forms, but generally defined they are "the rules of a society or of organizations that facilitate coordination among people by helping them form expectations that each person can

reasonably hold in dealing with others" (Ruttan and Hayami 1984 : 204). This broad definition includes arrangements enshrined in law, established by cultural convention, or formulated in some other way. They represent the regulatory modifications a society makes to an anarchic free for all use of power and the means by which cooperation toward a common goal can be achieved.

Institutional structures thus are concerned with distribution of power in a society. More specifically, they determine the way in which control is secured over resources and the way in which decisions are made over their use. Securing control may involve mobilization or redistribution, and resources may be private or communal goods, for consumption or production. What are commonly referred to as development initiatives involve implementation of new institutional arrangements or modification of old ones in order to improve (in the eye of the developer)[13] such control.

### *II.2.i Institutional change*

In Thailand, uneven urban-led development through growth was justified by national planners in part by the claim that a leading sector would stimulate demand for change in other sectors following Hirschman's (1958) model. In fact, political repression and the absolutist nature of the Thai state has prevented the emergence of counterbalancing institutions, particularly in rural areas (Saneh 1981). Development as institutional change therefore concerns power relationships and rural development cannot be seen independently of political context, especially local power structures (see Turton 1987).

What stimulates or allows institutional change to take place? Ruttan and Hayami (ibid.) have developed a theory of induced institutional innovation, in which they identify key demand and supply side elements inducing institutional change. In addition to Marx's emphasis on technical change, whereby disequilibrium between material forces and existing social relations of production leads to a revolutionary situation, changes in cultural endowments and resource endowments are shown to be important. In contrast to Marxist analysis, moreover, these authors stress the incremental nature of changes. On the demand side, such factors as increasing scarcity of land or rising prices of certain commodities are shown to induce new production relationships, for example through property rights, land rental arrangements, and terms of labour contracts. On the supply side, institutional innovation - and this, of course, includes informal or even illegal innovation[14] - is affected by the distribution of power among interest groups in society and the expected return to political initiatives by these groups. Meanwhile, cultural factors such as traditions of cooperation or moral reciprocal welfare obligations are also important supply side factors, as is ideology as a means of increasing receptivity to changes. Education is suggested as a separate factor on the supply side, but should not in fact be divorced from ideology as a means of making a population more supportive of a particular direction of change or alternatively of maintaining aspects of the status quo (see Chayan 1984). The ethos of development creates both supply side and demand side factors influencing the direction of institutional change.

At this stage it must be recalled that "development" is simply a term used as an umbrella for more specific transformations taking place in a changing society. A development ideology is built up in part through a development discourse that thereby plays a significant part in

the supply side of institutional innovation. Meanwhile, less visible processes are at work on the demand side creating the conditions inducing institutional change. It is to the institutions themselves that we now turn.

### *II.2.ii Local level institutions and development*

At the local level, state institutions and village institutions have traditionally been quite distinct from one another, as have institutions of outside capital and those of village level production relations. However, this distinction is rapidly becoming blurred, rural development itself serving as a primary blurring agent.

Institutions of the state include local administration, laws governing land tenure and other property rights, law enforcement, and increasingly formal village leadership. Additional outside institutions include credit and marketing structures, agricultural input suppliers, and other agents of capital. Until recently, in many areas, cash exchange would have been regarded as an outside institution.[15] Village institutions include local ("natural" : see footnote 18, Chapter VIII) leadership, temple administration, reciprocal labour arrangements, mutual welfare obligations, kinship structures, informal recognition of land rights by usufruct or other criteria, and assorted cooperative community activities.

I have argued elsewhere that rural development serves to render less meaningful the contradistinction between state and village (Hirsch 1985). This is because in the process of effecting institutional change so as to give villagers a greater role in state affairs and control over

resources external to the village, the state itself gains access to village institutions. This is the process that leads to blurring of the distinction between what is a state institution and what is a village institution, as transformed village institutions increasingly take on state functions and serve to link the village economy with external capital. A focus on institutions is thus useful in the analysis of the role of rural development in affecting the relationship of rural people with the wider society. The way in which people control and are controlled by institutions determines the way in which they participate in this society. Before moving on to consider participation, however, we must stress that, for the purpose of this study, institutions are taken only as empirical units of analysis that regulate interaction within a broader social formation.

## II.3 Thai rural social formation and development

So long as the motivation behind rural development arose as a result of the inequities of past development strategy, development could be posited as a corrective to urban bias, neglect of agriculture, and lack of attention to rural areas in general. The rural development problem was one of making good these deficiencies. In conventional planning terms, it was time some of the benefits started to "trickle down". Rural development was in effect a problem of how to direct national resources to rural areas and thereby to increase the prosperity and productivity of these areas.

Such a one-dimensional approach does little to illuminate the rural development "problem" or the underlying processes that are a part of rural development strategy. Were there to be such a readily

identifiable problem, framed in terms of how best to mobilize, divert, or otherwise organize and use available resources so as to deal with an environmental obstacle for common benefit, rural development would be a relatively simple process. As is increasingly recognized by development social scientists, however, the real difficulty lies in the very absence of such a consensus on what is the "problem". The lack may be one of common perception, common analysis, common socio-cultural values, or common interest; more often it is a combination of these.

The actors on the development stage are not a homogeneous group of people working toward a common identifiable goal. The most immediate division is that created by the conventional orthodoxy of development under which "rural development is undertaken *for* peasants, not *by* them" (Heyer et al. 1981 : 1), producing a hierarchy of "developers" and "developed". By virtue of their administrative, political, or socio-economic position, the former are bound to develop, civilize, educate, or otherwise elevate the latter. Moreover, within these broad categories,[16] many further divisions exist. Neither "developers" nor "developed" constitute homogeneous groups, and as such they must be distinguished further according to their places both in rural development and in the broader social formation.

### *II.3.i Divisions in rural society*

Characterization of the Thai social formation in terms of Marxist or other Western categories is problematic. Despite the considerable inroads made by capitalism and consequent changes in production relations, class structure still does not approximate that of industrialized societies.[17] This is partly due to the rurality of

Thai society, with some four fifths of the population still living in the countryside and much of the urban population being first or second generation urbanites. Moreover, continued change is such that a static view of class divisions would carry little meaning. A brief outline of traditional divisions in Thai society will thus be helpful in setting the scene for understanding present day cleavages.

Excluding the King at the apex, traditional Thai society was characterized by a two class division into nobles and commoners (*naai* and *phrai*). The former were princes and lesser nobles (*khunnaang*), who were given rankings expressed in terms of riceland (*sakdina*) but whose real power depended on control over labour. This ranking was obtained initially by royal patronage, and by hereditary process it declined with each succeeding generation. The latter consisted of serfs who had to pay labour services either directly to the King (*phrailuang*) or to a local noble (*phraisom*), and of slaves (*thaat*) who had sold themselves into debt bondage and comprised one third of the population during the mid-nineteenth century. Only the Chinese remained outside this system, and in so doing assumed an increasingly important role as entrepreneurs and free, mobile labour (Akin 1969; Girling 1981 : 25 - 27).

The modernizing reforms during the reign of King Chulalongkorn transformed this system, which had lasted through the Ayuthaya and Thonburi periods and the first century of the Bangkok era. In abolishing slavery and doing away with the corvee, the reforms released Thai labour for the first time. In establishing an administrative system based on European principles of functional ministries, a bureaucracy was established, which until 1932 was accountable to the King. Former *phrai* and *thaat* constituted a peasantry that was at once increasingly mobile and commercialized, while bureaucratic

positions went to the ruling class, i.e. the former nobles. Meanwhile, secularization of education and the beginnings of meritocratic ideas provided alternative ways into the bureaucracy. As such, the two class system was maintained, but it was one in which a certain degree of mobility was possible. The bureaucracy, in particular the military arm, was strengthened by the abolition of the absolute monarchy after the 1932 "revolution".[18] As society was increasingly urbanized and westernized, the elite or upper class was referred to less frequently in terms of its landed status (*naai*, *sakdina*) and more often in terms of social attributes as contained in the terms "*phuudii*" (approximating to gentlefolk) and "*panyaachon*" (lit. "intellectual", but in fact referring to a broad section of society regarded as educated).

The two-class structure of traditional Thai society is still evident in village discourse.[19] For most rural dwellers there are two classes of Thai : villager (*chaobaan*) and official (*khaaraachakaan* : lit. royal servant). The other main group with which villagers come into contact, traders, are mostly of Chinese descent and called "*jek*", often just descriptively but sometimes pejoratively. Officials and others of higher status are often addressed as *naai*, reflecting the persistence of traditional categories in social discourse. Senior local officials are addressed and referred to publicly in the third person as *than*, a respectful indication of higher status that is also used for royalty and monks. The status and security associated with official position is such that villagers place high priority on attaining such posts for their children as an objective of investment in their education, sometimes expressly in order to *hai [khao] pen jao pen naai khon* (have [them] be lords and bosses over others).

The relative simplicity of the traditional two-class structure is

based on a relative homogeneity of the rural population in the absence of caste and the historically limited differentiation of economic function in production. However, this simplicity breaks down with the increasing influence of capitalist relations of production in rural areas, and divisions multiply within rural groups as specialization increases not only at the regional level but also within villages. Increasingly common are village elites consisting typically of some five per cent of the population who, while retaining the status of "*chaobaan* : villager", cease to be included by poorer villagers as "*phuak rao* : us lot" and are sometimes referred to instead as "*sangkhom* : village society" (for the latter, see Turton 1984b : 30 - 31). As these elites develop connections with local officials, their social and political position often becomes ambiguous, and this is an important part of the blurring process that was referred to in section *II.2.ii* above.

In terms of rural development, the principal division between "developer" (*nakphatthanaa*) and "developed" (*khon ruam phatthanaa*) is still a key one, with important implications for participatory development (see section II.4 below). For many purposes, this division follows closely the official/villager, outsider/insider cleavage described above. However, it is increasingly necessary to look beyond the simple dualism in order both to understand more fully the variety of currents subsumed under development and personified in the various groups of developers and to take into account the differentiation of village society.

*II.3.ii The "developers"*

Our main concern here is the range of development activities at the local level, which were introduced briefly in section *II.1.iii*. Before moving on to a more detailed account of the developers and their place in the social formation and change therein, the role of policy decided at a non-local level should be emphasized. For the villager, rural development impinges most visibly in the persons of local development personnel, but the centralized nature of the bureaucracy and the increased links between local and national level polity and economy mean that decisions made at supra-local levels are an important influence on rural development. Of particular influence are pricing and fiscal policy for rice and other crops, large scale infrastructural programmes, forest reserve and land title policy, and agricultural credit programmes. More general in terms of policy but specifically geared to rural development is the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), which is responsible for development planning but carries no regulatory power.[20] Therefore decisions are made by technocratic government agencies with only limited reference to parliament, the one forum where nominal representatives of villagers have any influence at the national level. Thus to a large extent, important aspects of rural change are entirely removed from local direction.

The above notwithstanding, the 1980s have seen a mushrooming of development activities at the local level, and with this has come a plethora of "developers". The principal commonly recognized distinction between these developers is that between state and non-governmental (NGO) workers, but within each of these groups further differences arise. The present section identifies common interests and characteristics of each of these two major groups, and this is followed in turn by an account of some cleavages within each sector.

Prior to discussion of the common standpoints and divisions among state developers, a consideration of the place of the Thai state in the social formation is necessary. Chayan (1984 : 305) and Douglass (1984 : 164) both stress the non-monolithic nature of the state in the Thai context, in other words that the state is not an equivalent for "ruling class". Douglass personifies the state as an

> ensemble of people in institutions - military, bureaucratic/administrative, and law-making - which independently and together exercise the collective power of the national society over the economy (ibid.).

In other words there exists scope for multiple directions of state action and thus also for differences of emphasis, divergence of goals, non-coordination and even incompatibilities among state development programmes. On the other hand, Chayan suggests that the "bureaucratic-authoritarian" state that has emerged with and in support of the increasingly capitalist social formation is one that exists primarily to serve capitalist ventures and the bourgoisie by reproduction of the social formation, i.e. by avoiding basic structural changes. The independence of action of state developers may therefore be more apparent than real, but it would nevertheless be an error to treat the state as a monolith.[21]

State led rural development has been an issue on the national agenda for over two decades. During the 1960s, programmes concentrated on potential "trouble spots", mainly in the Northeast under the U.S. backed Accelerated Rural Development scheme. Emphasis was placed on building roads into "sensitive areas", and a close link was thus established between rural development and counter-insurgency and more general aspects of "national security". This link was maintained through the 1970s and re-emphasized during the 1980s with the political element of counterinsurgency contained in the important 66/2523 policy (see footnote 7). Returnees from "the forest" (i.e. from joining forces

with the CPT) are officially termed "national development participants", and the Community Development Department under the Ministry of the Interior continues to serve the dual purpose of welfare and surveillance at the *tambon* level.

Another aspect of state led rural development is the emphasis on increasing the place of the rural sector in the commercial economy. This is effected by agricultural extension that emphasises cash cropping and new inputs and varieties that are intended to increase output and thus agricultural surplus. This is reinforced, as is the security emphasis, by increased accessibility afforded by construction of roads. State agricultural credit has also been in support of high input agriculture since 1966, channelled directly or indirectly (via cooperatives and farmers' associations) through the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC). This programme has been expanded greatly since the mid-1970s, as commercial banks use BAAC to fulfil their requirements to place at least 13 per cent of investments in the agricultural sector.

The two principal concerns for rural development - national security and growth - still obtain, but the measures taken during the 1970s and followed by the Fifth Plan (1982 - 86) reveal a broadening of concerns. Following pressure from the Peasant Federation of Thailand in 1974, the government passed legislation including the Land Reform Act that established the Agricultural Land Reform Office (ALRO), which was charged with reallocating illegally settled public lands and carrying out reform on private lands in areas of high tenancy. Kukrit's *ngern phan* (revolving fund) scheme was intended to increase rural employment and provide basic infrastructure, and this has been followed up with the Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP), in which *tambon* level decision making is emphasized. Meanwhile, the Fifth Plan is the first

to address past failures in development strategy and make limited suggestions for a reorientation in favour of rural areas. However, no fundamental restructuring of the bureaucracy is evident. Rather, emphasis is given to the area approach, whereby selected target districts are given special attention by the existing local administration in the form of extra assistance under 33 separate programmes, with a total budget of 8593 million *baht* over the five year period.[22]

The broadened state interest in rural development can be attributed to a number of concerns. First, there is a recognition among many government departments that two decades of rapid growth failed to improve the lot of the rural poor. NESDB in particular fears the increase in income disparities and notes that if measures are not taken, the decline in rural poverty may be reversed as the agricultural land frontier disappears as an outlet for the landless (NESDB 1981 : 278). Second, an awareness of low productivity in rural areas as reflected in low incomes, low level of technology and other inputs, and low yields leads to a sense that Thai agriculture has fallen behind other that of Asian countries. Third, conflict in rural areas during the 1970s resulted in an increased sense of urgency regarding the disparities in living conditions and the social gap between villagers and officials. Fourth, there is a recognition that industrialization and economic growth depends on the establishment of a national market, and this means raising incomes in rural areas (see IBRD 1983). In sum, therefore, the emphasis is still on economic growth and national security, but awareness of the importance of rural areas in achieving these ends has led to increased state activity in the countryside.

The foregoing discussion has focused on state developers as an "ensemble"; the following considers the state led rural development

apparatus as a differentiated entity. Although the departments of the *sii krasuang lak* (four ministries at the district level) are supposed to act in concert, accountability and promotion is still largely internal to each department. Vertical rather than horizontal communication is the result, since bureaucratic relationships are still largely based on patronage and local level officials gain merit points (*khwaamdii khwaamcho'b*) by following orders from the next rung up the administrative ladder rather than by knowledge of or skill in dealing with local affairs (Withaya 1984 : 157). The latter is inhibited by frequent transfers ordered centrally, ostensibly to avoid local officials establishing a power base. Centralization is reinforced by promotion structure and the status accorded to transfer from district to provincial level and from provincial level to Bangkok.

The effect of this vertical at the expense of horizontal linkage is to inhibit coordination between the state's local level developers. Each department within each ministry runs its own projects with its own budget, and duplication is rife. Furthermore, it is in each department's interest to expand its role at the expense of others in order to secure larger budget allocations. While the infighting related to this is largely at the national level, it does little, given the nature of linkages described above, to secure cooperation or coordination between departments in the implementation of local programmes.[23]

Other than the *sii krasuang lak*, other state agencies have self-appointed roles in rural development. BAAC works independently of the rest of the state apparatus.[24] The military operate numerous programmes that are labelled as developmental, and other enforcement agencies have followed in this mould, notably the police and the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC).

The multiplicity of state developers at the local level has been shown to lead to duplication and competition. In many cases, it goes further and leads to conflicts of interest. These may be personal, involving competing attempts to control a particularly lucrative source of payoffs, notably forestry. Alternatively, they may revolve around issues where, for example, the Forestry Department's desire to preserve forest reserve status may be undermined by the Department of Local Administration's desire to maintain control by registration (and therefore legitimization) of new settlement and the Primary Education Department's concern to build new schools to serve such areas.

NGO developers start from a different perspective to that of their state counterparts. This can best be understood in light of a brief history of NGOs in Thailand. Non-governmental approaches to development have been in existence for some time, despite suspicion and harassment of independent initiatives by an absolutist state bureaucracy (see section *II.2.i* above). The Thai Rural Reconstruction Movement was set up at Chainat in 1969 by Dr. Puey Ungpakorn and others. It was based on the principle of working directly with the people and learning from farmers, based on Dr. James C. Yen's experience and ideas in pre-revolutionary China and the Philippines. At the same time as state interest in alleviation of rural problems increased during the 1973 to 1976 liberal period following the October 14, 1973 student uprising, there was a realization particularly among students that potential existed for effecting rural change outside state structures. The largest scheme to be set up at this time was the Maeklong Integrated Rural Development Programme, which involved cooperation between three universities.[25] In addition, a large number of students gained first hand experience of rural problems during this period by means of student workcamps, many of which included political conscientization. This

brought students and villagers under suspicion and sometimes into conflict with state authorities, which further increased scepticism among the former of state development programmes. Following the 1976 coup and military clampdown, non-governmental development work in rural areas was proscribed, and many who had previously worked for change within the system fled to the forests to join the CPT, since non-state activity at this time was regarded as oppositionist and those involved were placed in jeopardy. However, following the 1977 coup and limited liberalization that followed, particularly after 1980, there followed a flourishing of the NGO movement. By 1986 NGOs are working in rural development in a large number of districts.

The extent to which NGO developers are alternative and the extent to which they are supplementary to state programmes is not well defined and depends in part on the NGO developers in question. Many of those working with small scale organizations were involved in student activities during the 1970s, and their perspective differs significantly from that of state developers. There is an emphasis on increasing the bargaining power of villagers, often vis a vis the bureaucracy. Approaches to working with farmers differ from those of most state developers, being more cadre oriented and less technocratic in order to reduce status differences since, like their state counterparts, NGO developers generally come from educated, middle class backgrounds. Most NGOs rely on funding from abroad, and the sponsoring organizations are themselves often keen to see alternative approaches to what are generally perceived as unsuccessful bureaucratic methods. The result of this has been for NGO developers to place stress on issues such as participation, spiritual development, self-sufficiency and working specifically with the poorer groups, rather than technocratic, materially oriented projects and commercial cropping on an area basis.

On the other hand, liberalization by state authorities and recognition on the part of NGOs of the necessity of working within the existing framework have led to an increasing degree of coordination between state and NGO activity. While differences in approaches and suspicions persist, many NGOs work directly with state officials such as teachers and health workers. In a move that has at once made NGO activity less precarious but also raised the suspicions of many NGO developers, the government has indicated a desire for much closer cooperation between the state and NGO sectors in the Sixth Plan (1987 - 1991).[26]

Within the NGO movement,[27] a number of different approaches is evident. One approach, which may be characterized as "avoidance" (see conclusion to Chapter IV), is to emphasize traditional cultural values and preserve existing relationships against the dislocations of capitalist development by "*thuan krasae* : going against the current". The alternative, "engagement", involves increasing bargaining power and ability to operate within the system, accepting that capitalist and other outside forces already affect village society. Other NGOs take a specifically Buddhist approach, emphasizing particular values within a locally bound situation and not regarding themselves as part of a wider process. This classification is neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive, but it serves to highlight the heterogeneity of approach among non-governmental developers, which itself leads to a running debate at numerous seminars that covers the dilemmas faced by independent developers as a result of certain contradictions that are brought out later in this study.

It is clear from this account that the task of rural development has been taken on in a number of ways by various bodies at different times. Each developer maintains a role in the social formation and

objectives that vary with historical specificities of the contemporary situation. State structures and priorities vary not only over time but also between and within government departments or organizations. NGO activity varies according to limitations set by the state, but in addition the range and diversity of such bodies must be taken into account.

### *II.3.iii The "developed"*

As has already been suggested in the previous section, state developers tend to take an undifferentiated view of the rural populace in their area approach. NGO workers, partly as a consequence of their initial standpoint and partly as a result of proximity to and familiarity with the problems of the rural poor, take into account the heterogeneity of village society to a greater extent. The present section examines the composition of those who are all too often described as "targets" of development. Since even "beneficiaries" is too laden with assumptions regarding the results of development activity, I prefer to use the term "developed".

In line with the account of the social formation given above, the simplest description of the developed is "*chaobaan* : villager". However, this fails to take into account the increasingly differentiated nature of rural Thai society as a result of changes in production relations. Differentiation is considered in more detail in Chapter VI, so for the time being the discussion is limited to a review of the principle divisions among village populations.

The criterion employed by the National Statistical Office for

calculating rural poverty in 1976 was a cash income below 150 *baht* per month (IBRD 1980 : 62). If cash income is taken as a measure, the rural population shows great inequalities. In 1970, the top quintile received 51.0 per cent of income, as compared to 5.5 per cent for the bottom quintile. Moreover, this represents a deterioration over the situation in 1962, implying a sharpening of inequalities (Panayotou 1983 : 39). However, such a measure is inadequate for a number of reasons. An important proportion of rural production and consumption is outside the cash economy. Calculation of income is of limited significance when household labour is used for home production. In any one year, outlays in capitalized farm operations may exceed proceeds. Quite apart from this, no adequate system of income measurement has been established. Of greater significance, therefore, are differences based on production potential, measured in terms of access to basic means of production.

Land tenure in rural Thailand varies from region to region, but overall the situation has not traditionally involved a high degree of landlessness. This is partly due to the availability until recently of uncleared land suited to agriculture, which has enabled dispossessed farmers to clear new areas (see Chapter III below). Nevertheless, substantial inequalities remain, both in quantity and quality of land owned. Land tenure is most even in Northeast Thailand, where land is of lowest quality. The areas of highest tenancy and landlessness are in the fertile and well irrigated Central Plains and valleys of the North. Table 2.1 shows the situation of land ownership in the regions, along with the concentration of ownership. The increasing importance of capital in agriculture has led to concentration at the village level, producing a growing landless class who are dependent partly or wholly on wage labour in the village and elsewhere. A concomitant trend is the emergence of a locally based landowning minority who use a combination of externally raised capital and local labour to farm their land. In a

Table 2.1 Distribution of land by size of holding 1978

| Size of holding (rai) | Whole Kingdom % of holders | Whole Kingdom % of land | Central % of holders | Central % of land | Northeast % of holders | Northeast % of land | North % of holders | North % of land | South % of holders | South % of land |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| < 2 | 1.6 | 0.02 | 3.0 | 0.03 | 1.0 | 0.01 | 1.8 | 0.03 | 0.8 | 0.01 |
| 2 - 6 | 14.3 | 2.3 | 12.8 | 1.7 | 9.2 | 1.4 | 22.5 | 4.1 | 16.8 | 3.2 |
| 6 - 15 | 27.4 | 11.4 | 21.6 | 7.5 | 26.3 | 10.6 | 30.5 | 14.3 | 33.4 | 16.4 |
| 15 - 30 | 29.0 | 25.7 | 27.2 | 20.3 | 33.4 | 28.4 | 22.6 | 23.3 | 29.7 | 31.0 |
| 30 - 50 | 17.3 | 27.1 | 19.8 | 25.9 | 19.8 | 29.6 | 13.5 | 24.6 | 13.3 | 24.6 |
| 50 - 100 | 9.0 | 24.3 | 12.8 | 29.0 | 9.1 | 23.4 | 7.8 | 24.9 | 5.3 | 16.9 |
| > 100 | 1.4 | 9.3 | 2.7 | 15.5 | 1.2 | 6.5 | 1.3 | 8.7 | 0.8 | 7.8 |

Note : These figures omit households with no land at all.

Adapted from NSO Statistical Report of Thailand 1981 - 1984

study of 9 Central Plains provinces, it was found that 18 percent of farmers possessed little or no land (Suthiporn 1981), while 45 per cent of rural households in upper northern Thailand were found in a subsequent survey to be landless or near landless (ALRO n.d. [post-1982] : 38).[28] Suthiporn (1981 : 28) points out that the problem of landlessness is likely to increase rapidly as the land frontier is closed (see also Witayakorn 1983 : 127ff. for discussion of polarization in the Central Region).

Inequality of land ownership is reinforced by unequal access to capital in an agricultural economy increasingly oriented to high-input agriculture. In part this inequality is a product of skewed land ownership, for access to formal credit depends do some extent on collateral in land. It has been shown that agricultural credit from the principal formal source, BAAC, is biased in favour of larger farmers, so that 81 per cent of BAAC clients possess more than the median amount of land for their province (Lightfoot 1985 : 13). Meanwhile, mechanization involving "lumpy" investments amidst a general shortage of capital has enabled wealthier villagers to profit from possession of tractors and other items of machinery. Informal borrowing at high rates of interest is not new to rural Thailand, but such borrowing is on an increasing scale and more and more frequently involves fellow villagers rather than outside middlemen. There is no evidence to show that institutional credit replaces rather than adds to non-institutional debt.

It is evident that the developed are an increasingly differentiated group whose interests not only vary but may be in direct conflict. Nevertheless, attempts to characterize the rural population in simple class terms or other categories are problematic. Not only is the process of differentiation incomplete, with a majority of rural producers retaining control over what is at least perceived as the basic

factor of production, namely land, but class consciousness as normally defined[29] has not kept up with the material realities of changing production relations. Anan (1984 : 1 - 3) speaks of "classes and groups of rural producers" and uses a production approach to stress the contradictions internal to the northern Thai village where he was working, particularly those between wealthy landowners and their tenants and wage labour. Households are classified into five groups : landless labourers, poor, middle, and rich peasants, and an emerging class of capitalist farmers. The classification was initially based on size of land holdings but modified in light of additional information regarding production and employment. Anan notes the increasing tendency among villagers themselves to differentiate according to cash as well as land holdings (ibid. : 10, 409 - 411). Siwarak (1985 : 2) also notes the need to take into account more than one factor of production in determining class position. She stresses labour as the principle indicator, both direct wage labour and labour secured indirectly by way of tenancy. Use of abstract categories such as landlord, rich, middle, and poor peasants, and landless labourers is criticized and traced to Maoist influence. Both Anan and Siwarak stress the need for an historical approach involving the concrete realities of class differentiation by examining changes in production relations, and Siwarak notes the slow development in class differentiation due to the abundance of land (ibid. : 17). In a case study of a central Thai village, five classes are identified : capitalist landlords, independent farmers (i.e. farming their own land), sharecroppers of creditors, tenants, and landless labourers. Villagers use the term "*phuak* : group" rather than "*chonchan* : class" (ibid. : 21). Persistence of the patronage system (*rabob upatham*) and the effectiveness of state domination lead to a lag in emergence of class consciousness behind material relations of production (ibid. : 29, 40).

The two studies quoted above demonstrate the need for concrete historical analysis in examining the development of class relations, but they also show the difficulty of generalizing the rural social formation in crude class terms. Such generalization fails to take into account two basic disjunctures : that between material realities as perceived by an outside observer and as felt by villagers themselves; and that between the situation in different villages depending on specific local and historical experience. This latter point is evident in the present study of villages only 10 kilometres apart but with very different experiences of differentiation. The point to emphasize is that the "developed" cannot be classified on a general basis, but the situation of each village must rather be examined.

While a strict categorization of the rural population into rigidly defined socio-economic groups is to be avoided, particularly as these are categories alien to the conceptualization of villagers themselves, more fluid but no less pronounced divisions are all important. The emphasis here is on the coincidence of economic status that is based on a combination of control over production and trade with the assumption of political position within the village at a time when such position is increasingly ambiguous vis a vis representation of interests. This coincidence is much more readily recognizible in local discourse than are more formal class identifications, with categories such as "*hua naa muubaan* : village heads", "*khon ruai* : the rich", or "*jao kho'ng rot thai* : tractor owners" commonly identified as exploiters who also control and benefit from externally oriented village institutions. Through *tambon* councils and village committees, these formal village leaders are taking on more and more official duties, and many of these are in the name of development. This involves channelling state development resources in such a way that the blurred margin between official and villager described above now becomes

one between developer and developed.[30]

It is at this point that the ascribed social roles of "developer" and "developed" need to be called into question. For if rural development is to respond to the situation of rural producers in other than a paternalistic way, then these actors must take on the role of subjects who participate in making decisions affecting their own lives. However, if such participation is assumed by key individuals in structural contradiction to the majority at the village level, it implies less a decentralization of power than a process of cooptation. In the consideration of participation that follows, therefore, the issues of control and power will be brought to the fore.

## II.4 Participatory Development

As was described in section II.1, the concern for rural development has arisen due to the imbalances created by an urban oriented growth strategy. Consequently, rural development has been put forward as a means of allowing the rural poor to participate in this growth : both by consumption of the fruits of growth that result from a channelling of state resources to the rural sector, and by production within the wider system by reorienting agriculture to national and international markets using non-local inputs. A more recent interpretation has been to move away from a paternal welfare approach of providing services in rural areas toward encouraging villagers to participate in many of the construction projects, training programmes, and other concrete aspects of rural development. Meanwhile, small scale non-governmental development organizations emphasize participation in planning, carrying out, and following up projects.

Thus it appears that as an item of development discourse, participation (*kaan [khao maa] mii suan ruam*) is ambiguous in its implications for the role of villagers in institutional change at the village level. Is participation merely a redistributive measure to include villagers in what they have previously been left out of? Indeed, is participation on these terms necessarily redistributive? Is participation effected by persuading or forcing villagers to join in new programmes, or by making villagers more amenable to institutional change desired by outside developers by concentrating on what Ruttan and Hayami call the supply side? Or does participation arise from facilitating adjustment of local power relationships such that the new demand structure induces institutional change that benefits those who suffer most under "backward" institutional arrangements? The answer to these questions clearly lies in our definition of participation.

The most elementary formulation of participation is a moral position that holds that in a society producing an ever larger cake, the slices should be shared more evenly than hitherto, in other words that all should have a right to participate in the consumption of society's produce. This redistributive approach to participation does not address the questions of the method by which the cake is produced or of who takes part in producing it. These questions are raised to some extent by those who regard participation as an opportunity to produce within the broader capitalist economy (IBRD 1980; see also Gould 1981 : 56 for general and Anan 1984 : 365 for specific critiques of this position). Under this interpretation, participation implies production within the formal, cash economy, just as "participation rates" in western economic jargon measures the number of people in formal paid and taxed employment positions. So-called informal sectors, subsistence agricultural production, or non-economic pursuits become the antithesis

of participation. A similarly supra-village oriented approach to participation has been discussed above as the state developer's concept of *kaan khao maa mii suan ruam* (section *II.1.ii*).

The common factor in all the above interpretations of participation is the conception of state and capitalist economy as being on the "inside", while village institutions that are non-statist or non-capitalist in function are so by definition on the "outside". Participation means moving in from the outside and development is thereby spread to include all. This is, although it may seem a contradiction in terms, a top-downward view of participation.

A polar opposite perspective is to set participation entirely in terms of village society. In Thailand, certain populist development workers and academics maintaining this perspective are known as "culturalists" (*faai watthanatham*). A leading "culturalist" suggests that it is wrong to regard the village as a micro-level unit within the larger macro-level system. In terms of villagers' lives and experience, the village is the macro-level unit, while outside ("higher") influences are only secondary, or micro-level according to villagers' frame of reference (Apichaat 1984 : 21).

Although they represent polar opposites, these approaches share the assumption that village and supra-village (the latter pertaining specifically to outside capital and the state) are institutionally separate and that development can only be achieved by subjugation of one by the other. As has been suggested in section *II.2.ii*, however, this contradistinction is no longer appropriate, and participation must hence rather be seen as a means of adjusting the terms of individual and community relations within the larger society. Moreover, divisions internal to the village involve a divergence of interests among

villagers and a partial convergence of interests between village elites and state developers. Participation becomes an issue of power, and participatory development a dialectic between different groups over the nature of institutional change.

Participation in its broadest sense refers not just to what individuals get from the larger society or how they get "into" it, nor to a denial of the existence or importance of influences that the larger society has over village life. Rather, it refers to terms of control. The "participation debate" is detailed further and put into context in section VIII.1 below.

The contradiction regarding participation under current development strategy can now be recapitulated as follows. On the one hand, integration of village institutions into supra-village structures gives villagers potential access to supra-local resources and influence over decisions that affect them made at a higher level. On the other hand, the penetration of state and capital into the village that is a concomitant part of this process transforms village institutions in such a way that they take on state functions or are reduced to monetized relationships within the larger economic system. This *reduces* villager control over local resources and decisions in deference to state power, which itself falls into the hands of powerful individuals within the village. Meanwhile, differentiation means that access to the wider resources lies in the hands of a village elite, who themselves take on state roles as mentioned above. This means that any programme of institutional change under rural development represents not so much a changing relationship between homogeneous village and separate state, as in the community development ideal, as a readjustment of arrangements internal to village polity and economy.

## Conclusion

We have seen that the sense of positive change implied by the term "rural development" serves as an ideological tool for influencing the direction of institutional change in rural areas. It also serves to cover over some of the contradictions inherent in rural development strategy vis a vis popular participation and the tensions that result. In the same way that discourse is of general interest both in what it tells us about its separate articulators and in its role in the interaction between them, then, so an examination of rural development can be expected to shed light both on the underlying contradictory processes within it and on the role of the actual concept in obscuring the contradictions to the "actors" themselves. An understanding of participatory development requires first and foremost a demystification of the supposed unitary path to development, and a dialectical unravelling of contradictions. As was suggested at the beginning of this chapter, such a task can be approached by a study of development in a local and specific context, and it is to this context that we now turn.

Notes

1. Processes such as state formation and capitalist transformation are to some extent hidden for a number of reasons. One is that they are primarily significant as generic change at a supra-village level, so that they are not immediately locally explicable as *processes* so much as apparently isolated phenomena (e.g. debt, externally oriented leaders, intensification of work). Another is the continuity of certain social relationships such as ties of kinship or patron-clientage, which partly disguises changes in the nature of these relationships that monetization, for example, brings about.

2. Thailand was under military rule during the growth decade of the 1960s and part of the generally buoyant 1970s. For much of this time, the large U.S. military presence contributed both to growth and to the emphasis on security.

3. See for example Girling 1984. Gramscian hegemony concerns the means by which the bourgeoisie establishes its rule other than by physical force. It thus has to do with the basis of consent established by a dominant class. In this light, the hegemonic facet of rural development in legitimizing state activity in rural areas is quite apparent.

4. The penetration concept is one that must be treated with caution insofar as it implies a forcible violation from the outside. Popkin (1979) criticizes the term on these grounds by showing that it is as often a case of individual "insiders" reaching out as of "outsiders" forcing their way in. In this sense, articulation would appear metaphorically more apt a description of the state/capital-village relation, but specific association of this term with modes of production makes it problematic, especially when dealing with the state aspects (Worsley 1984; Booth 1985). In this study, I prefer to use the term "incorporation" in the sense of formation into a body, or absorbtion, implying a two way movement and a dissolution of the autonomous significance of the smaller part.

5. The role of the Sangha (Buddhist administration) in Thailand has been discussed by a number of authors. Somboon (1982 : Chapter 2) shows how the Sangha has become connected with and subservient to political authority in a tradition that stems from patronage of the former by the latter over a long period of time. Heinze (1977) describes how this process was enhanced by the various Sangha Acts. The first Act, carried through by King Chulalongkorn in 1902, was designed to create a Sangha hierarchy with a single line of authority (p.29). Following the 1932 revolution, Buddhism was invoked in the name of nationalism, so that "being a Buddhist was equated with being a true Thai". Under Prime Minister Phibulsongkram, the second Act of 1942 reorganized the Sangha to resemble the secular ministries (p.32). The third Act, under Sarit, was explicitly in support of national anti-Communist ideology, and "any progress and especially national development programmes seemed to rest on the support of the two pillars of Thai culture, the King and the monastic Sangha", the latter being highly centralized (p.34). Somboon concludes likewise:

> Politically, the reoganization of the Sangha authority structure by political leaders has frequently been intended to make the religious structure an instrument for the promotion of national government policies. (Somboon 1982 : 51)

"Development" through standardization of a national Buddhism is evident in Lan Sak, for example in the stipulation that every classroom must have a 14" Buddha image and pedestal. Villagers in Ban Mai were asked by the headmaster to donate 3,000 *baht* for purchase of such an image "as a present for the King's 60th birthday", since the 10" existing one was smaller than the regulation size. At a development meeting, the Lan Sak police chief claimed that most of Lan Sak's temples were "*phid kodmaai* : illegal", since they were not registered with the Department of Religious Affairs.

6. The Community Development Department of the Ministry of the Interior, which has development fieldworkers in every *tambon* (sub-district), sets as its first policy "(t)o eliminate conflict among people themselves and between people and government" and as its first objective "(t)o lead the people to coincide in opinion and to have identical faith" (Suraphol 1976).

7. Of particular note is the influence of prime ministerial policy order 66/2523, which outlined a dual strategy to deal with insurgency. In addition to continuation of the military strategy, the order stipulated "political" measures that include attention to rural development in remote areas. It is interesting to note that returnees under the amnesty policy are called "national development participants".

8. Discourse as used here means language in context. As a discrete entity, *a* discourse refers to language as used or found in a particular context, and that context can be defined either by the user of the language or by the situation in which it is used. The most specific discourses, therefore, are those used by specified groups of people in specified situations.

9. An extreme example is that of officials exhorting villagers to impose fines on the owners of buffalo whose faeces are found on village streets.

10. See Turton (1984b : 39-40) for discussion of the ideological content of clock-time in the context of change in rural Thailand.

11. I am grateful to David Parkin for comments on a preliminary research paper that led me to consideration of this concept.

12. Even words that are "all things to all men" hold specific purpose, and by extension meaning, in their very ambiguity. Note, for example, Turton's (1984b : 44) exposition of the use of *prachaachon* to mean "the people" as a hegemonic instrument in the Thai context.

13. Whether or not development in any one form is desirable change cannot be answered absolutely : "We can only remark that most people want what *they* mean by development" (Fossi 1977 : 170).

14. Ruttan and Hayami note, for example, the infringement of land reform rules on subletting (since the official rent is depressed below the equilibrium rent), which is operable only because of the nature of the distribution of political resources within a Phillippine village. See Chapter V below for an account of a similar phenomenon in one of the Thai study villages.

15. Use of cash in rural Thailand became widespread originally for the purpose of fulfilling tax obligations following abolition of the corvee. Cash was raised by production of a saleable surplus of the main item of subsistence production, namely rice. As a result, cash exchange was largely oriented externally to the village. Wage labouring only occured

on any significant scale from the 1890s in the core areas of settlement (Johnston 1975 : 225). In more peripheral areas, wage labour and cash exchange internal to the village replaced indigenous modes of securing labour and exchange at a much later date. These modes are still significant in Lan Sak and other peripheral areas and will be discussed further in Chapter V.

16. The categories of "developer" and "developed" are my own, but they conform to the situation of development within the current social formation in which "villagers", "target groups", and so on are to be developed by those in the position of developers (*nakphatthana*). The rationale for this categorization will become apparent from the discussion below.

17. For a discussion of class formation in rural Thai society, see Turton (1984b : 33ff.). Turton shows how an apparently low numerical level of development of a rural working class is less significant than processes that turn rural producers into "wage labour equivalents". In the ideological sphere, embryonic class formation is evident, for example, in the experience of sugar cane producers in northeastern Thailand, who feel that production for a local Japanese owned factory is "like working for wages on your own land".

18. The "revolution" of 1932, which was in fact a coup by disgruntled members of the foreign educated urban elite, marked the end of the absolute monarchy and the beginning of what is termed the "democratic era : *yuk prachaathipatai*". Most of this period has been dominated by the military; for details, see Girling 1981 : Chapter 3; Morell and Chai-anan 1981 : 50 - 64.

19. The present discussion concentrates on villagers' perspectives rather than abstract structural formulations of Thai society. Turton (1984b : 24 - 28) takes issue with the notion of continuity in the Thai social formation, stressing the dismantling and reassembling that has taken place at various times, for example Chulalongkorn's reforms or Sarit's version of *sakdina* ideology which "no longer corresponds to actual class relations, and is used manipulatively". While not discounting the importance of such hiatuses, I would suggest that this very ability to manipulate depends on past formations and conceptualizations contained therein.

20. NESDB's Fifth Five Year Social and Economic Development Plan contains an analysis of rural problems that represents a significant departure in bureaucratic approach. In analysing the causes of rural problems, account is taken of mistakes made in past development strategy. The key factors are as follows:

- The priority given to growth has led to neglect of rural areas, particularly peripheral areas.
- Past attempts at development tended to be welfare oriented and lacked involvement of local people.
- While the central administration lacked insight into the causes of people's problems, rural dwellers themselves were also unable to conceive their causes.
- Such things as roads and electricity do not increase productivity and do not benefit people equally. (NESDB 1981 : 278)

However, without regulatory power such an analysis cannot be incorporated into specific departmental programmes, and in terms of spending the Fifth Plan period has seen a continuing emphasis on roads and electrification.

21. In his analysis of community-state relations in southern Italy, Davis (1975) calls for an "ethnography of the state" and of other supra-community elements. Such has been carried out to a limited extent by Wilson (1962), Riggs (1966), and Morell and Chai-anan (1981), but there is scope for a more specific ethnography of the Thai state development apparatus.

22. When measured as a proportion of the GDP for 1980 of 701.3 billion *baht* (Suthiporn 1981 : 1), this amounts to 0.25 per cent on an annual basis.

23. Chai-anan has compared the Thai bureaucracy to a bamboo hedge, in which the leaves at the top intermingle while the inflexible stalks at the bottom remain isolated from one another.

24. BAAC is currently running an experimental programme in 28 villages in which DAE and BAAC officers work in tandem. However, most attention is being given to finding ways of increasing farmers' use of fertilizer rather than to securing more fundamental improvements in farming methods (communication from Paul Lightfoot).

25. The Maeklong Integrated Rural Development Programme was set up by Dr. Puey Ungpakorn and others as a joint project between Thammasat, Mahidol, and Kasetsart Universities. These were responsible for social, public health, and agricultural sides of the programme respectively. The programme had to be abandoned following the 1976 coup (Akin 1980 : 9).

26. Originally, the government established a State-Private Sector Coordinating Committee and included both NGOs and agribusiness in the private sector (*phaak eekachon*). More recently, a Coordinating Committee for Rural Development Organizations has been set up in each region to link the two sectors, from which agribusiness is excluded.

27. Inasmuch as it can be defined as such, the NGO movement includes a number of voluntary organizations whose perspective differs from that of state developers. Emphasis is on small scale community based programmes, use of indigenous social and material resources, increasing the power of the poorer sections of the community, and eschewing of a "blueprint" type of development. Many of those working within this movement were students during the politically active period of 1973 to 1976, and this has oriented their approach to rural problems. Although it is difficult to draw a dividing line, the movement does not include all organizations involved in various aspects of development outside the state development apparatus. For example, the voluntary organizations run by wealthy Bangkokians, often titled wives of influential persons ("*khunying*"s), tend to be more straightforward charities with a paternalistic approach to welfare projects. Royal projects stand out on their own with the large resources behind them and by virtue of their exceptional patronage given the place of the royal family in Thai society, and they cannot be considered as non-governmental in light of the close connection between the monarchy and the state. The Population and Development Association (PDA) is of more indeterminate status, but for present purposes it is considered as being outside the movement due to its size and semi-bureaucratic method of operation and its non-involvement in joint NGO activities (seminars, training programmes, exchange visits).

28. Nevertheless, inequality of land ownership in Thailand is still lower than in many other Asian countries if measured by the Gini coefficient of 0.41. While South Korea and Taiwan show the lowest

degree of concentration (coefficient of 0.32 in 1973 for the former), India, Pakistan, Malaysia, and the Philippines all show a higher land concentration, with figures of 0.63, 0.60, 0.54, and 0.51 respectively (Douglass 1983 : 196).

29. Class consciousness refers to the subjective awareness of being a member of an objectively defined class; the material basis of class must precede such consciousness (Fetscher, in Bottomore 1983 : 79 - 81). Turton (1984b : 36) reveals embryonic forms of class consciousness among Thai peasants in their concern with "the immediate and daily experience" of "problems of the market", which "might suggest a distortion or substitution in consciousness of more fundamental and determining relations of production, an attention to the appearances of capitalist production".

30. A clear example of the cooptive aspect of state development strategy that helps in this blurring process could be seen at a development training session for village heads and *kamnan*s at Lan Sak in 1985. At this meeting the state officials made a point of addressing the audience as "*nakphathanaa thanglaai* : fellow developers", clearly changing their intended status versus the majority of villagers.

# CHAPTER III

## FOREST SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PERIPHERY

Settlement of forest land has been the principal dynamic of Thai agricultural expansion for more than a century (Ingram 1971 : 76; Silcock 1970 : 40; IBRD 1983 : 3). In the mid-nineteenth century, Siam was still lightly populated in relation to its agricultural potential. As late as 1931 there was a concern for settlement of outlying areas, while no serious possibility of overpopulation was in sight. Every district was still within 50 kilometres of an underpopulated area : "all the outlying districts need more people" (Zimmerman 1931 : 311). Yet by the 1980s, demographic and agricultural expansion has been such as to make deforestation and shortage of agricultural land a serious concern. A number of factors, including a certain "momentum" established by the institutions and associated expectations that have developed with past experience of land settlement, lead to a continuing pressure on the seriously diminished supply of forest land suited to agriculture.

To understand the place of forest settlement in rural development, it is necessary to look beyond the common historical image of an inexorable migratory response to demographic pressures of which the current situation is the tail end (e.g. Rigg 1985 : 24 - 25). The steady expansion of cultivated area at the expense of forest land in Thailand over the past century has taken place at the same time as major internal and external structural changes have affected the Thai political economy. Of particular note are expansion of the bureaucratic state apparatus and partial integration into the international capitalist system that have taken place since the late nineteenth century (Wilson 1962; Morell and Chai-anan 1981; Chatthip and

Suthy 1981; Chatthip et. al. 1981; Anan 1984). It was the latter that led to rapid expansion in the rice economy (Johnston 1975) and later to demand for upland crops such as maize, cassava, and sugar cane (Uhlig 1984). In turn, the pattern of structural change has been influenced both by the persistence of a habitable periphery outside centralized control and a resource endowment allowing agricultural expansion by encroachment on the forests. This has led to a state rural development strategy that is oriented to communities' "catching up" with longer settled areas, their transformation from forest (*paa*) to "civilized" (*jaroen*) status, and above all integration of peripheral areas into the national economy and polity.

The present chapter provides the historical and geographical backdrop for the area in which the study villages are located. However, the areas described do not constitute a segmentary region that conforms with administrative boundaries.[1] Rather, they make up what may be termed a "thematic region" in that they are affected by a particular common process despite being non-contiguous. They have a common status as the "periphery" or "frontier", but it must be borne in mind that it is in the nature of a frontier to be dynamic, and many of today's established villages were themselves peripheral in the living memory of older inhabitants. The frontier differs from region to region, both in pattern and extent. Our focus is on one type of frontier, that of the Central Plains borderlands.

The chapter begins with a description of the extent and pattern of settlement in historical, regional, and social settings. This is followed by an analysis of the relationship between forest settlement and agricultural expansion. Socio-political aspects of forest settlement are discussed from the point of view of the state and of settlers themselves, and the significance of the relationship between

forest settlement and rural development is considered.

## III.1 Extent and pattern of forest settlement

Forest settlement for agriculture and associated timber operations have largely been responsible for the depletion of Thailand's forests. The rate of settlement is such that depletion would leave little land under forest by the end of the century were recent trends to continue (Nart 1984 : 86). Yet serious concern over deforestation is relatively recent. For the most part of the past century, forest settlement by expansion of broad frontiers, movement into forest land that previously surrounded isolated villages, and settlement deep in forest reserve areas have been supported by institutional, economic, and infrastructural measures by government and also by agents of capital. Despite notional recognition of the need for conservation of remaining forest areas, many current programmes and policies support continued forest depletion.

### *III.1.i History of settlement*

It has been estimated that the cultivated area in Thailand increased sixfold from 1850 to 1950, representing a 1.8 per cent annual increase, while the period 1950 to 1970 saw an acceleration to 2.7 per cent (Marzouk 1972 : 17). Over the period, growth in cultivated area has outstripped population increase (Feeny 1984 : 50). Since the natural vegetation of much of Thailand is forest of a number of types,[2] most of this expansion has been by clearance of forest areas.

This clearance has been compared to the period of medieval forest clearance (*Mittelalterliche Rodungsperiode*) in Europe (Uhlig 1984 : 9). The scale of deforestation is difficult to determine precisely, but it is likely that from the beginning of the twentieth century the forest area has declined from over three-quarters to less than one-quarter of the national area (Table 3.1).[3]

Until the mid-nineteenth century, settlement had mainly been along river banks and coastal areas in the Central Plains (Sharp and Hanks 1978 : 36), in isolated pockets of alluvial land near watercourses in the Northeast, and in intermontane valleys and plains in the North. Expansion of cultivation commenced in earnest with demands for rice exports after the signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855, although Tanabe (1978 : 53 - 54) notes that the expansion was a far from smooth progression. Initially settlement involved clearance of new areas in the Central Plains, but expansion of the commercial economy together with the need for new riceland for subsistence needs later also affected the North and Northeast. The depression in the rice economy early on in the twentieth century was only a temporary interruption, and settlement continued apace. Following the Second World War, the agricultural economy diversified, and settlement of upland areas unsuited to wet rice became the main feature of agricultural expansion.

At each stage, infrastructural development has played an important role in settlement. In the latter part of the nineteenth century and early on in the twentieth, construction of canals played an essential part in expansion of rice cultivation (Tanabe 1978 : 52ff.; 1981 : 222 - 226). The railways constructed early in the twentieth century linked the Northeast, North, and South with Bangkok, opening up those regions for commercialization. More recently, especially since 1950, road construction has increased accessibility immeasurably, and

Table 3.1 Estimates of changes in area under forest 1913-86

| YEAR | PERCENT OF TOTAL AREA IN FOREST | AREA IN FOREST IN '000 HA | SOURCES AND COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1913 | 75 | 38,514 | Graham (1913 : 347); includes forests, marsh, and jungle. |
| 1930 | 70 | 35,946.4 | Ministry of Commerce (1930 : 35). |
| 1947 | 63 | | Tsuji (1979 : 29); taken from MOA data. |
| 1949 | 69 | 32,600 | Donner (1978 : 71); area in forests and pasture. |
| 1955 | 63 | 32,129 | Sukhum (1955 : 8). |
| 1956 | 58 | 30,288.3 | Pendleton (1962 : 134); area in forests and pasture. |
| 1959 | 58 | 30,010 | Chalermrath (1972 : 20); official estimate. |
| 1961 | 56 | 29,000 | Donner (1978 : 133); estimate from aerial photography. |
| 1961 | 52 | | Chalermrath (1972 : 24); guesstimate of forestry official. |
| 1963 | 53 | 27,100 | ADB (1969 : 475); FAO world forest inventory estimate. |
| 1965 | 53 | 27,300 | Donner (1978 : 22); land-use survey; probable overestimate. |
| 1965 | <40 | | Chalermrath (1972 : 24); guesstimate of forestry official. |
| 1966 | 51 | 26,500 | Krit (1966 : 5). |
| 1969/70 | 52 | 26,900 | LDD estimates from aerial photography. |
| 1970 | 39-49 | 20,000 - 25,000 | Donner (1978 : 134); author's guesstimate. |
| 1970 | 30 | | Tsuji (1979 : 29); guesstimate of forestry expert. |
| 1974 | 37 | 19,040 | NESDB (1977 : 149); estimate based on satellite imagery. |
| 1975 | 41 | 21,068 | World Bank estimate based on sattelite imagery. |
| 1978 | 25 | 13,018 | Wilson (1983 : 133); estimate based on satellite imagery. |
| [1978 | 25 | | Girling (1981 : 71n)] |
| 1980 | <30 | | NESDB (1981 : 7). |
| [1980 | 25.5 | | Panayotou (1983 : 5); based on FAO/UNEP figures.] |
| [1982 | 25 | 13,000 | Chirapanda (1982 : 105); estimate of ALRO official.] |
| [1986 | 15 | | Informed unofficial estimate (Philip Stott).] |

Note : The total land area in Thailand is 51,352,000 ha.
[Sources in brackets sought out by the present author.]

Source : Feeny (1984 : 53 - 54)

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Table 3.2 Expansion of the Thai road network 1950 - 1980

| YEAR | STATE HIGHWAYS | | PROVINCIAL ROADS | | TOTAL LENGTH |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Paved | Unpaved | Paved | Unpaved | (Kilometres) |
| 1950 | 809 | 5022 | - | - | 5831 |
| 1955 | 1815 | 5299 | - | - | 7114 |
| 1960 | 2972 | 5474 | 151 | 1967 | 10565 |
| 1965 | 5046 | 4436 | 405 | 2388 | 12275 |
| 1970 | 8620 | 1781 | 1478 | 4413 | 16292 |
| 1975 | 11840 | 818 | 3398 | 4043 | 20099 |
| 1980 | 13733 | 160 | 8670 | 5587 | 28151 |

Note : These figures do not include the network of approximately 43000 km of rural roads.

Source : Uhlig (1984 : 126)

this has played an important part in the settlement of new areas. Table 3.2 shows the rapid expansion of communications in the postwar period.

Settlement has also to be understood in terms of changing institutional arrangements concerning labour and land (see Feeny 1982 : chapter 6). Following abolition of slavery and later of the corvee under Chulalongkorn's reforms, the peasantry became at once more mobile and free to settle new land (Girling 1981 : 65).[4] Introduction of wage labour was an important element allowing for entrepreneurial settlement. Meanwhile, reform of the system of land tenure in 1902 increased the incentive for land settlement and improvement. Issuing of land titles or expectation of such has led to an increasingly significant speculative element in the motivation for land settlement.

Thus settlement has been in response not only to demographic pressures, but also to demands of the market and changing physical and institutional structures. The state has played a role in establishing the infrastructure facilitating or encouraging settlement, which it uses as a means of increasing control over the national area.

### *III.1.ii Regional patterns of settlement*

Settlement of forest areas is a response to a number of pressures and incentives, which vary over time and space. Moreover, patterns of settlement are both ecologically and culturally determined. As a result, these patterns vary considerably from region to region. In Thailand, three broad regional patterns of settlement are usually drawn.

In Northeastern Thailand, an egalitarian village structure has

traditionally precluded acquisition of new land from poorer neighbours. This has meant that migration for clearance of forest land is the only alternative to subdivision of holdings, and new villages have traditionally been established three to five kilometres away from the original village in a "leap frog" process that leads to a "leopard spot" pattern of settlement (Ng 1978 : 42). However, longer distances are also covered in search of better land than that normally found in the semi-arid, infertile Northeast, and distances of 100 kilometres or more may be covered as a group of villagers moves *en masse*. Ng cites the case of transferral of part of a village in Kalasin province to a new location in Pichit in the upper Central Plains (ibid.).

In Northern Thailand, where much of the older settlement is in intermontane valleys, new land settlement is patterned accordingly. Incremental settlement usually takes place onto higher land adjacent to the village, requiring terracing and usually involving a move onto lower quality land. Alternatively, new communities are established higher up the valley, often commencing with cultivation of *miang* (Northern Thai tea, the leaf of which is fermented and chewed : see Chayan 1984 : 187ff.). With the move into upland cash cropping, the constraints on valley settlement are removed, and this has led to rapid clearance of upper slopes for planting of maize and other crops. Meanwhile, minority groups such as the Hmong, Karen, Lisu, Yao, and Lahu have been extending their shifting cultivation with population growth and engagement in commercial cropping, and this has led to conflict between groups and with lowland Thais. Turton (1975 : 356 - 362) describes Thai encroachment on Karen settlements as land is terraced at higher elevations. Minority groups and lowland Thais are also in conflict with the state, since much of the land involved is officially classed as forest reserve (Uhlig 1984 : 8).

In Central Thailand, settlement of forest lands has followed a more conventional frontier type of settlement. This has involved a steady movement outward from the older core areas of settlement, particularly the Chaophraya Delta area around Ayuthaya and Bangkok. Development of communications has been an important determining factor. Several fronts of settlement are apparent at any one time, and these emerge as a result of a number of factors : availability of land; popular knowledge of such availability; the suitability of the land for cultivation of a crop currently in demand; the provision of infrastructure such as roads and processing facilities; marketing structures; and provision of finance by entrepreneurs who encourage settlement (ibid. : 126).

Settlement along the frontier in Central Thailand takes a number of forms. Uhlig, author of the most comprehensive study to date of the under-researched subject of spontaneous land settlement in Thailand, identifies three types of settler. First, there is the incremental type of settler who opens up land close by to the existing community, supplementing existing cultivation. Second is the permanent long distance settler, who leaves behind the old area of settlement. Third is what is termed the "commuting" farmer, who maintains the original residence but expands cultivation at some distance - up to 100 kilometres - from the home village (ibid. : 20). Over time, the composition of a settlement may change : Moerman's (1968) Ban Ping study shows evidence of movement to dominance by the second from the third type, while the case of our study village of Ban Mai represents a move from the first to the second type.

*III.1.iii Social patterns of settlement*

Those who engage in forest settlement are not necessarily those who benefit most from it. Early settlement sometimes involved those displaced by seizure of land by the army or railway authorities (e.g. Sharp and Hanks : 89). Alternatively, prisoners of war were settled in areas that the central authorities wanted developed (ibid. : 40 - 42). More recently, settlement has often been promoted and financed by wealthy timber traders, maize and cassava merchants, or sugar millers (Uhlig 1984 : 41). Thus settlers differ from pioneers in the American mould in making do with harsh conditions rather than seeing themselves as on an entrepreneurial mission of transforming a wilderness (Sharp and Hanks 1978 : 57 - 58).

While there is usually a voluntary and even pioneering aspect to most recent settlement of forest lands, settlers themselves have usually faced some sort of displacement. This may be due to population growth accompanied by a reluctance to subdivide land, at which point elder sons and their young families move to clear new land, at some distance if necessary. Alternatively, displacement may be more purely economic, due to debt foreclosure, loss of tenancy rights, or insufficient capital to purchase land on the part of young families. Displacement may be caused by infrastructural schemes, notably dam construction and associated reservoirs, in which case resettlement is usually planned and state directed. Enviromental problems may lead to large scale migration in search of better land, particularly in the case of sustained drought in the Northeast. However, problems of drought, flooding, and siltation that arise from deforestation has led to displacement more generally, especially in the piedmont areas on the edges of the Central Plains. This leads to a cycle of migration, forest clearance, environmental deterioration, poverty, and further migration in a leapfrogging pattern (Panayotou 1983 : 68).

Several authors have commented on social attributes that encourage migration for settlement of new lands. Uhlig (1984 : 125) suggests that Thai farmers are not tied to the village community. Established mechanisms for settlement are embodied in various social practices. Matrifocal residence encourages forest settlement, as sons-in-law are encouraged by parents-in-law with limited land to seek out new areas. The movement *en masse* from Northeastern villages is supported by return visits to the home village during the annual *Phaya paa baa* ceremony to pay homage at the Buddhist temple, during which friends and relatives may be told of opportunities in the new area of settlement and encouraged to follow (Ng 1978 : 42 - 43). Elsewhere, contact maintained with home villages likewise maintains a flow of migrants. Alternatively, residents of villages on the edge of forest areas may encounter areas of settlement or land suited to settlement during recreational hunting trips during the dry season, and this may lead to a permanent move at a later date.

The social characteristics of new communities vary, but those on the edges of the Central Plains are popularly renowned for their individualism and violence.[5] Individualism is attributed to a number of factors. The very move to clear new land is seen as an individualistic venture. The staking out of land is assumed to be more concerned with establishing boundaries and therefore distance between neighbours than in establishing cooperation between settlers. This is reinforced by the well known multiplicity of origins of settlers in many areas, reducing the potential bond of common origin or previous ties that might otherwise be maintained. Violence is presumed to result partly as a natural consequence of individualism (*tua khrai tua man* : each to his/her own). Land disputes feature prominently in the high rate of murder that characterizes many new areas of settlement, since

land title is non-existent and claims to land can only be supported by influence. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that during initial settlement land is plentiful and carries little value, resulting in poorly defined boundaries denoted, if at all, by marks placed on trees. Following migration on a larger scale, land rapidly increases in value while the boundary markers have often disappeared, at which time disputes arise.[6] Other factors often mentioned are the shortages of state law enforcement personnel in such areas and the use of such areas as hideaways by fugitives from the law.

While there is some basis for these common perceptions, the picture is distorted. Individualism of frontier society can be overstressed. As we saw in the previous section, migration is commonly a joint enterprise involving substantial sections of whole villages. Even where it is more incremental, it often involves movement to areas where kin or other acquaintances have already settled. The initial process of "staking out" is normally the prerogative of influential individuals rather than the majority of poorer settlers. Where disputes develop among the latter group, it is usually because they have been sold, or otherwise allocated in return for services rendered, plots of land that overlap with those sold or allocated to others. The issue of state enforcement personnel is not clear cut. In early stages of settlement, there is usually little violence and community mechanisms are utilized for resolving disputes in the absence of state authorities. It is during the later stages of settlement, which usually coincides with the construction of roads, district offices, and other aspects of state infrastructure, that violence abounds. It is said that the police or "*phraan* : rangers" often use a policy of getting rid of undesirables (normally referred to as "*seua* : lit. tigers", or ruthless men of violence) at this stage by a policy of "*keb*", or selective killing. Only when state authorities are well established and

land titles issued does the violence decline somewhat, but even then there is little evidence that this is due to an increased police presence.[7]

The distinction between individualistic and communal spirit of settlement is sometimes represented by outsiders as evident in spatial patterns of settlement. The two types commonly recognized are clustered and scattered settlement, or "village" and "line" patterns (Uhlig 1984 : 35). Uhlig suggests that the latter pattern is evidence of individualism in the process of settlement, since "during this stage, the relationship between neighbours is more characterized by the staking out of personal property than by joining it together" (ibid. : 140). However, he fails to mention that this pattern of settlement follows widespread and longstanding Central Plains preferences for residence near the fields, precluding clustered settlement, which furthermore is not incompatible with cooperative working practices. The history of settlement in the study villages outlined in the following chapter illustrates the general danger of utilizing form to interpret function, more specifically in drawing conclusions about the nature of frontier society from patterns of residence.

It is important to underscore the pace of change that is a feature of frontier society, particularly in the areas with which we are most concerned, notably the fringes of the Central Plains. Early settlement is usually for subsistence agriculture on newly cleared plots, using family labour. In upland areas, this rapidly gives over to commercial cropping, which leads to a relatively rapid process of social differentiation (ibid. : 141, 149). Processes of differentiation are intimately related to the transformation of the environment. In early swidden plots, family labour and local inputs are used in all stages of production. The importance of family labour in early settlement cannot

be overemphasized. Prior to cultivation, labour is needed to clear land, and at an even earlier stage to lay claim to it. In the settlement of one Central Plains community in the late nineteenth century:

> The provision of labour, not of material resources, was the problem; and it is no wonder that an enduring tradition developed that material wealth in Bang Chan should be measured not in material possessions but in the number of productive workers included in a household over the long term (Sharp and Hanks 1978 : 45).

In more recent settlements, this overriding importance of family labour typically lasts for three years, after which a tractor is used to plough the land. At this stage money is borrowed from traders for the first time, leading eventually to a high rate of indebtedness and the start of the process of differentiation (Uhlig 1984 : 165 - 167).

A final point to note concerning social patterns of settlement in forest areas is the role of influential backers. Historically, settlement was directed by the elite. The Saen Saeb canal area east of Bangkok was settled by prisoners of war under royal direction. Ministers with distinguished service were given lands in newly cleared areas along with prisoners of war to develop them (Sharp and Hanks 1978 : 40 - 42). Ananya (1985 : 88) notes the importance of slaves in early clearance of lands near Paedriw (Chachoengsao). Once freed, these slaves would go on to clear their own land. More recently, cassava and maize traders have often financed settlement, for example on either side of the Lom Sak - Pitsanulok road in Thung Saleng National Park (Uhlig 1984 : 47). Traders in forest products collected by subsistence cultivators may encourage and finance expansion of cultivation such as for maize (ibid. : 149). In the case of clearance for sugar cane planting, control by the influential persons involved is more direct. Contract farmers (*pa boei*) are hired to clear new land for planting.

Once the land is developed, the *pa boei* move on to clear new land, while the sugarcane planters (*long juu*) arrange a contract for production with nominal owners of the land, poor farmers to whom the land had been sold (*luuk rai*). This makes it difficult for the authorities to suppress incursion on forest reserves, since the cultivators are numerous and can easily be bailed out by their patron. In this way the "sugarcane front" in Chonburi has progressed 35 kilometres in 15 years. Typically 10 kilometres ahead of this front are subsistence cultivators in isolated clearings, who are moved on by the *long juu* using their *pa boei* clients in sometimes violent confrontations (ibid. : 212 - 220). An analogous process goes on in other areas, including that which is the focus of this study. In this case the influential persons behind settlement are illegal timber traders, who promise poor, often landless farmers a piece of land in exchange for help in timber operations. In this case too it is the small farmers who take the risks of arrest, and in this case too the backers take advantage of this fact either by bailing out those who are arrested or by assuring their clients that in such a politically "sensitive" area (*khet sii chomphuu* : lit. pink area),[8] the government would not dare risk alienating them by arrest.

## III.2 Forest settlement and agricultural expansion

As was observed in section *III.1.i* above, agricultural growth has been via expansion of the cultivated area, and this expansion has been achieved largely at the expense of forest land. Although forest exploitation has often been for other purposes in the first instance (notably timber felling), farming is the end use of forest land where this is sustainable in the long term. Since Thailand is a country whose

economy and population have been oriented overwhelmingly to agriculture as a way of life and means of sustenance, this expansion is of primary importance in development of the present day economy, and by extension of the national polity. This section details the connection between forest settlement and expansion of the agricultural economy first via expanded rice cultivation, then by diversification into upland crops, and shows how this expansion fits into the development of the wider political economy.

### *III,2,i Expansion of rice agriculture*

The 75 years following the Bowring Treaty of 1855 saw a twenty-fivefold increase in rice exports. Over the same period, the Thai population doubled to about 12 million (Ingram 1971 : 37 - 40). Meanwhile, productivity of riceland fell substantially, from 1883 kilogrammes of paddy per hectare in 1906 to 1294 in 1940 (Feeny 1984 : 58). Since rice was and remains the staple food crop, the only way the balance could possibly be made up was by a rapid increase in the area under rice, from less than 6 million *rai* (1 *rai* = 0.16 ha.) in 1850 to more than 9 million *rai* in 1905 and 35 million *rai* by 1950. Half of this was in the Central Plains area, which accounted for the bulk of exports (Ingram 1971 : 43). This expansion required large scale clearance of forest areas.

Johnston (1975) has studied this expansion in detail, covering the years 1880 to 1930. He shows that much of the early expansion was facilitated by canal construction in the Delta area. Among the earliest waterways to be constructed, Phasijaroen and Damnoensaduak Canals[9] to the west of Bangkok were a product of initiatives by high-ranking

officials using government revenues under their jurisdiction. These officials had a personal stake in trade and development of new land following the opening of the economy after 1855. Initially, cultivation and transport of sugar cane provided the main source of revenue, but rapid expansion of the rice economy from the 1880s and the boom of the 1890s created a seemingly insatiable demand for rice and so also for new riceland (Tanabe 1978 : 58 - 67). Some of the early expansion was not at the expense of forest. The Prawetburirom Canal to the east of Bangkok was dug by government in order to open up grasslands for cultivation, and land settlement was both encouraged (by exemption from land tax for the initial period of cultivation) and regulated (by registration of land). Establishment of the Siam Lands, Canals, and Irrigation Company in 1888 by royal and Chinese capital (ibid. : 65) resulted in a virtual monopoly of canal building and thus control over land settlement by this one company. The Rangsit network of canals northeast of Bangkok was the most comprehensive result, accommodating 100,000 new settlers on up to 1,500,000 *rai* of land by 1905, accounting for one quarter of riceland in the Central Plains.

Following this period of rapid expansion, there followed a sharp but temporary reversal of fortunes in the rice economy during the period 1905 to 1912, particularly in the newly settled areas. This resulted from a combination of adverse weather conditions, disease, siltation of canals, a rise in land taxes, labour shortage, and a fall in the domestic price of paddy brought about by appreciation of about one-third in value of the *baht*. The population of the Rangsit area fell by as much as 35 per cent during this period due to emigration and tenants' abandonment of riceland. Although this slowdown and localized reversal in settlement of forest lands for rice cultivation was short-lived, it was significant in marking a watershed between boom conditions and the more gradual expansion that followed. Whereas rice

exports had increased more than fourfold between 1880/84 and 1905/09 (taking five-year means), the period 1905/09 to 1925/29 saw exports less than double. This more gradual rate of growth was largely due to shortages of labour and capital necessary for opening of new lands, which had to be raised domestically unlike the situation in Siam's colonial neighbours. Johnston (1975 : ch.9) suggests that the slower rate of expansion in Thailand than in Burma, for example, resulted in sufficient "slack" in the economy for the Thai peasantry to be able to adapt to depression in the 1930s by reversion to subsistence production of many goods. Farmers responded to the fall in rice prices of 40 per cent between the 1920s and 1934 by *increasing* their production. This was effected by continued land clearance in order to maintain cash incomes, while cash outlay was minimized by further extensification of production and cutting down on leisure time for home production of goods in place of cash purchases.[10]

A notable feature of agricultural expansion during the period before the Second World War was the lack of intensification. The technology and techniques employed in rice farming remained essentially the same throughout this period. A number of factors led to a decline in land productivity of 18 per cent between 1921 and 1941 (Feeny 1982 : 47). Although this has commonly been attributed to a move onto less favourable soils (e.g. Uhlig 1984 : 13), Feeny (1982 : 49ff.) shows that this only partly explains declining yields, which are also accounted for by diminished factor inputs per unit area.

Disruption of trade during the Second World War led to a sharp decline in rice production, but this was soon reversed following the end of the war. In the 1950s and 1960s, a number of factors led to a slowing down in the rate of increase in area of riceland. One was the growing shortage of land suited to rice cultivation, as clearance took

farmers onto more and more marginal land. This was concurrent with the first major steps toward intensification in rice cultivation on existing land with the construction of large scale irrigation works associated with the Chaophraya Dam at Chainat and smaller schemes in the Northeast. This also allowed limited development of new seed varieties and use of inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides, but these latter had limited overall impact on yields. Of greater significance was the expansion of opportunities in non-rice agriculture, opening up large areas hitherto unexploited due to their unsuitability for cultivation of the subsistence crop.

### *III.2.ii Expansion of upland agriculture*

Until approximately 1950, rice cultivation accounted for a stable proportion of all annual cropping in Thailand, approximately 90 per cent. As can be seen from Table 3.3, however, the period following 1950 saw a rapid increase in the importance of other crops, notably maize, sugarcane, and cassava. It should be noted that the area under rice has continued to expand, and that it is only in relative terms that rice cultivation has diminished in importance.

While the diversification away from rice in favour of upland crops has been commented on widely (e.g. Ingram 1971 : 237, 261; IBRD 1980 : 10; Girling 1981 : 65 - 66), the close relationship between this process and that of forest clearance is relatively unexplored. Social aspects of this relationship are even less often touched upon. The only major work that addresses the some of the issues is Uhlig's 1984 study, and much of the present section draws on this work unless otherwise indicated.

Table 3.3 Increase in Thai cultivated area 1950 - 1978

| YEAR | TOTAL CULTIVATED AREA | | RICELAND | | | DRYLAND / PERENNIALS | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | ALL | | | Cassava | Maize | Sugarcane |
| | '000 ha | Index (1950=100) | '000 ha | Index | % of total | '000 ha | Index | % of total | '000 ha | '000 ha | '000 ha |
| 1950 | 6271 | 100 | 5540 | 100 | 88 | 731 | 100 | 12 | 14 | 36 | 54 |
| 1960 | 7717 | 123 | 5921 | 107 | 77 | 1796 | 246 | 23 | 72 | 286 | 158 |
| 1970 | 10867 | 173 | 7494 | 135 | 69 | 3373 | 461 | 31 | 225 | 829 | 138 |
| 1978 | 15197 | 242 | 9346 | 169 | 62 | 5851 | 800 | 39 | 1323 | 1386 | 510 |

Adapted from Uhlig (1984 : 123, 124)

Table 3.4 Agricultural investment and productivity in Asia

| COUNTRY | AGRICULTURE AS % OF TOTAL GOVT. INVESTMENT | | CULTIVATED AREA PER CAPITA (HA) | PADDY YIELDS (KG / HA) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1966 | 1974 | 1976 | 1969 | 1978 |
| South Korea | 17 | 28 | 0.06 | 4661 | 6385 |
| India | 15 | 12 | 0.29 | 1609 | 1963 |
| Malaysia | 23 | 20 | 0.49 | 2315 | 2502 |
| Pakistan | 17 | 11 | 0.34 | 2220 | 2466 |
| Philippines | 14 | 36 | 0.20 | 1681 | 1972 |
| Sri Lanka | 16 | 16 | 0.17 | 2565 | 2895 |
| Taiwan | n.a. | n.a. | 0.01 | 3867 | 4468 |
| *THAILAND* | 12 | 10 | 0.41 | 1934 | 1875 |

Source : Douglass (1983 : 196)

As we observed in the previous section, the traditional way of life of the Thai farmer has been rice growing, and commercialization of Thai agriculture was exceptional in the colonial era in being characterized by increased production of the subsistence crop rather than a switch to a non-locally consumed cash crop.[11] However, more recent expansion has been in cash crops that are for export or to meet other non-local needs:

> The modern clearance settlement, ...following a new socio-economic development, has abandoned the traditional wet-rice cultivation in favour of marketable crops of dry field cultivation (Uhlig 1984 : 27).

The reasons for this switch are complex, relating to pricing policies, marketing structures, ecological imperatives, and more general social and economic developments. The rice premium[12] as a disincentive to commercial rice cropping is often quoted as a key element in encouraging a switch to other crops, but there are a number of problems with too simplistic an analysis such as this. At the level of production, a subsistence crop such as rice whose cultivation involves chiefly family labour and non-cash inputs is not strictly comparable with upland crops, which require cash inputs and entail the extra cost of land clearance. The reality of choices for most farmers does not involve straightforward tradeoffs between crops on a particular piece of land. Thus the diversification that has taken place at the national level is not based on a fundamental change in the pattern of agriculture in older rainfed rice areas, for

> the increase in agricultural production and the diversification of crops were not so much the result of successful intensification and crop diversification in the rice areas, but were mainly due to the rapid development in the areas of spontaneous land clearing (ibid. : 125).

This was facilitated by world market demand for the crops suited to newly cleared upland areas (Girling 1981 : 66n), which was timely given the unsuitability of most of these areas to rice cultivation.

Three crops are pre-eminent in the expansion of field cropping on the fringes of the Central Plains area. Maize was the earliest field crop to obtain widespread popularity, especially after the introduction of Guatemalan hard maize during the 1950s. Its cultivation is spread over a diverse range of areas, but it is the Upper Central Plains (administratively classified as the Lower North) area that is commonly termed Thailand's "corn belt". Approximately 90 per cent of maize cultivation is for export, mainly to supply the feedstock industries of Japan and Taiwan. Cassava became popular in the 1960s with increasing demand for alternative feedstocks by the European Economic Community. Although the bulk of its cultivation is now in the Northeast, where it has provided an alternative to kenaf,[13] it has also remained popular in the Southeast and become so in other Central Plains fringe areas (see section *V.1.i* below). Demand reached a peak during the 1970s when alternatives to grain feedstocks were in high demand, but it has since tailed off and the EEC has set strict quotas for import of tapioca products, leading to overproduction. Sugarcane has a long history in Thailand, and indeed rice specialization in the late nineteenth century had coincided with a decline in the sugar industry (Johnston 1975 : 26 - 31) that was only revived under government encouragement during the 1950s and 1960s (see section *III.3.ii* below). The 1970s saw buoyant prices for sugar, and large areas on the eastern and western fringes of the Central Plains in Chonburi and Kanchanaburi provinces respectively were turned over to this crop. Unlike maize and cassava, sugar enjoys a substantial domestic market, but over half is still exported and the price received by producers is dependent on world market fluctuations.

Although the pattern of settlement for upland cropping is that of farmers geared to permanent agriculture, some doubts arise as to the long term viability of the current agricultural regime in many areas.

Many of the newly settled areas are of low natural fertility, and yields in the early years following clearance are only obtainable due to a residue humic content of the soil that quickly dissipates with removal of the forest cover. Repeated monocropping of such soils can lead to rapid loss of soil nutrients, and problems of soil exhaustion, soil erosion, and invasion of weeds (notably *yaa khaa* : "roofing grass", or *Imperata cylindrica*) are visibly evident in many areas. Certain soils are suited to long term monocropping of upland crops given proper management and inputs, notably the rendzinas associated with karst formations, but these cover a small proportion of the areas cleared. Thai lowlanders who settle upland areas do not practise shifting cultivation in the same way as, for example, the Lua' (Stott 1978 : 11 - 12), and there is an increasing tendency for soils to be "mined" until they are taken over by *yaa khaa*, at which time farmers move on to clear new areas. As we observe in Chapter VI below, this is intricately related to socio-economic processes. Uhlig (1984 : 20 - 21) notes the irony of the current policy of trying to settle ethnic minorities who in their shifting cultivation practice may have developed the only ecologically sustainable use of the forest (Chin 1977 : 110; Stott 1978 : 9), while at the same time lowlanders are moving into what inadvertently turns out to be temporary swidden agriculture.[14]

Thus the settlement of upland areas contains the paradox of opportunistic adaptation to world market demand that results over the long term in impoverishment of many of those involved in settlement and the environment in which they have settled. This brings us back to our initial observation in section *III.1.iii* concerning the beneficiaries of settlement, and helps to explain why such areas are home to some of the poorest of Thailands poor, while at the same time they are represented as the "most dynamic, wealthiest, and innovation-receptive agrarian regions" (Uhlig 1984 : 43).

### *III.2.iii The political economy of agricultural expansion*

In the mid-1980s Thailand is the world's largest exporter of rice and tapioca and an important exporter of maize and sugar. Yet area yields of all of these products, particularly of rice, are extremely low by world standards (Table 3.4). An important factor in this low productivity has been the reliance on extensification of agriculture by continuous land settlement rather than intensification on existing lands. Recently yields in both new areas of settlement and in some older areas have shown downward trends. This is because deforestation associated with land settlement has resulted in environmental deterioration affecting agriculture both locally and in older areas. The present section shows that the extensive pattern of agricultural growth is a result of conscious choices of those in power.

Feeny (1977, 1982) analyses trends in rice productivity during the pre-war period to show that the decline in yields was due to a divergence between the social rate of return from investment in agriculture (particularly irrigation) and the return accruing to the elite who made the decisions to invest otherwise (notably in railway construction). The area under paddy increased by 3.14 per cent annually between 1911 and 1941, while the annual increase in output was only 1.91 per cent (Feeny 1982 : 24). In 1941, paddy yields in the Central Plains were only at 82.2 per cent of their level of 20 years earlier (ibid. : 45). By the 1970s, rice yields had recovered to their 1900s levels, but productivity could hardly be seen to have shown a dramatic improvement.

Part of the explanation for declining yields certainly lay in the diminishing quality of the land being settled for cultivation, and much of the rest of the explanation lies with declining factor inputs per unit area that are themselves associated with extensification. Feeny argues that the main reason for lack of intensification at a time of increasing demand for rice both domestically and on the international market was failure to implement the large scale irrigation scheme proposed by Van der Heide in 1902 or that proposed a few years later by Ward.[15] Pelzer (1945 : 60) suggests that the failure to implement the former scheme was a direct result of political pressures brought to bear by landlords in the Rangsit area, who feared the loss of tenants that would result if large new areas of potential riceland were made available in Suphanburi and elsewhere. Feeny (1982) analyzes the politics of the non-implementation of Van der Heide's proposal in more depth, showing that the Rangsit landlords were influential in palace circles. He establishes a direct connection between failure to invest in irrigation and the decision to invest in railway connection of the North, Northeast, and South as an alternative use of limited funds (see also Johnston 1975 : 93ff.). Comparing the rates of return between the two projects, Feeny shows that irrigation would have produced a minimum return of 19 per cent per annum, as compared with less than one per cent for the railways. However, the return on increased agricultural productivity would have been difficult to recapture, in particular in light of the limit imposed on land taxes under the terms of the Bowring Treaty. In general terms,

> While the demand for institutional change will respond to changes in potential profits for economic units (such as farm producers) associated with some change in institutions or policy, the supply will respond to changes in the potential profits for the elite decision makers. This difference represents a potential source of a divergence in the expected rate of return on a change for the economic units and the elite. In the Thai case this divergence was, in fact, quite important. (Feeny 1982 : 9)

Railways were seen by the elite as necessary for national security purposes, specifically in extending central control from Bangkok over the outlying regions in light of European expansionism in surrounding territories (ibid. : 80 - 84) and provincial rebellions (Johnston 1975 : 93).

The divergence between individual choices and social return is also evident in the increasingly unstable ecology of agricultural expansion. As early as 1945, deforestation was noted to be responsible for siltation of canals and rivers (Pelzer 1945 : 62). Non-local implications of settlement have become more acute with the various "downstream" effects of movement onto marginal land and forest destruction (notably siltation, flooding, drought), but these are difficult to measure. Panayotou (1983 : 46 - 47) incorporates these "externalities" into his assessment of urgent issues surrounding deforestation in the context of agricultural expansion. Ultimately this divergence can be seen as a political economic issue in that it represents an outcome of choices by those in positions of power (e.g. concerning investment policy, property rights, enforcement), an outcome which contains a failure of institutions to equate what individuals are encouraged and able to do with the social good.

Although the postwar period has seen increased state attention to increasing agricultural productivity, agricultural pricing and export strategies have played a part in the continued importance of forest settlement in agricultural expansion. Following the Second World War, intensification of rice agriculture was further stunted by imposition of the rice premium, which was initially an important source of state revenue (see footnote 12). Later the premium became more useful as a means of depressing the price of rice for urban consumers, which in turn has allowed urban wages to remain low as part of the government's

emphasis on industrial expansion. Meanwhile, the desire to increase exports as a basis for industrial expansion and a desire to diversify agricultural production away from rice led to a set of policies that combined with favourable world market conditions to promote the cultivation of upland crops as outlined in the previous section. As we have seen, this expansion was at the expense of forest areas rather than riceland, and the period since 1960 has seen a decline in forest area from over 50 per cent of the national land area to possibly under 20 per cent by 1986. By the mid-1980s, the most peripheral areas are producing crops for urban and export markets.

It would certainly be wrong to write off state programmes in rural areas in recent years. Construction of the Chainat Dam in the 1950s followed Van der Heide's plans more than half a century after they were drawn up. Research into improved rice seed, pesticides, mechanization, and other aspects of cultivation technology has increased following its extremely limited prewar results. Agricultural extension work has aimed at increasing yields through application of new technology. Yet the fact remains that investment in the agricultural sector remains extremely low compared with other Asian countries, and as we have seen yields remain low while continued forest settlement maintains extensification (Table 3.4 above). As we will see in the following sections, this extensification has been facilitated not only by neglect of agricultural investment, but also by other aspects of state spending in rural areas, notably on roads. Agricultural development as an opening up of new areas through improved communications rather than increasing productivity in existing areas thus provides a continuity in the political economy of agricultural expansion up to the present day.

## III.3 Socio-political aspects of forest settlement

We have seen that forest settlement is closely related to agricultural expansion, and that through this it is an expression of particular aspects of the Thai political economy. However, expansion into forest areas must be seen also in the light of social and political phenomena that are not in themselves part of the agricultural economy. An understanding of the cultural background to forest settlement provides the basis for an appraisal of the interplay between central and peripheral forces that lies behind the phenomenology of settlement.

### *III.3.i Ideas about the forest*

Thai conceptions of the forest are varied, influenced as they are by a mixture of animism, Buddhism in its various forms, and Western ideas alternatively of "progress" and "conservation". Popular discourse contains much that reflects the lawlessness, backwardness, and danger associated with the forest. The phrase "*paa theuan* : lit. illicit forest"[16] is used to describe an area that is far from the centres of power, whether or not there is anything illegal going on and whether or not there is actually any forest remaining in the area. "*Khon paa* : lit. forest people" is a pejorative term for the backward, uncivilized, wild, as opposed to "*khon meuang* : lit. town people", but including villagers who are not *khon paa*. Villages that are some distance from provincial towns are said to be "*yuu nai paa* : in the forest" to indicate their peripherality. "*Kodmaai paa* : the law of the forest" is rule dictated often by influential persons outside the aegis of state law. "*Paa*" denotes "wild" as opposed to the urban, civilized

"*baan*", such as when applied to animals : wild and domestic cats, for example, are *maewpaa* and *maewbaan* (lit. house cat).

The contradistinction between forest and authority, urbanity, civilization, safety, metropole is contained in numerous such expressions and in other forms. One of the most interesting is a song that has been a radical "Song for Life",[17] a revolutionary song, and more recently a "song for development" used in one of the government's ideological training programmes:

> History may have many aspects
> But never has the worker been mentioned
> Bearer of burdens, wader through water and mud,
> *Creator of the city from the forest*
> *The magnificent walled city*
> With the blood and muscle of the road builder
> *The way is cleared*
> For others to follow.
>
> *From one lonely forest to another*
> As a wanderer, only the ground to call "home"
> However *cold, painful, dangerous*
> Never a flinch of fear
> *Hurrying forth to clear*
> For others to follow
>
> Their every footstep like fading shadows
> Their names and bodies buried within the land.
>
> (my translation)

Progress as the laudable product of forgotten heroes is set in terms of transformation of the wild forest into a habitable domain.

Traditional ideas about the forest are reflected in various local cultural practices. In Northeast Thailand, villages maintain a resting place for the remains of the dead called a *paa chaa*, which consists of a small area of sacred woodland. In addition, nearby some villages is an area of forest that belongs to the spirit of the male ancestors (*phii taa puu*), which cannot be cut for fear of offending these spirits. Elsewhere non-affinal spirits are believed to hold influence over areas of forest, and it is believed that anyone who cuts wood from such an area will soon meet a violent death. In Chonburi *takien* trees

are protected by a malevolent female spirit (Stott 1978 : 16). In the Tai autonomous region of Xishuangbanna in southern China, forests in near pristine condition on some 400 "holy hills" are preserved as the gods' gardens and account for between 1.5 and 2.5 per cent of the total land area (Pei 1985). Stott (1978 : 17) mentions the significance of the Buddhist ascetic tradition of "forest dhamma", which requires the forest as a place of retreat and tranquility. The forest also represents a place of retreat in other contexts, to be expanded on in section *III.3.iii* below.

Thus forest and civilization have been seen as opposites, but with certain forces to be considered before the forest is destroyed. Traditional beliefs provide an indigenous mode of conservation, and local development workers have noted the "mini-forest reserves" of the Northeast. Conservation strategy as pursued by the government has, on the other hand, adopted a western approach and does not take into account uniquely Thai or other local cultural approaches to conservation (Stott 1978 : 18). Recently, a number of environmental issues have achieved prominence, supported by public awareness of the problems of deforestation through extensive coverage in the national press. The controversy that arose over the construction of the Nam Choan dam in Kanchanaburi has been cited as an example of increased public participation in forest conservation (Nart 1984 : 91; see also Hirsch 1986).

### *III.3.ii Settling and connecting the periphery*

We have noted the state's concern with integration of peripheral areas and its connection with land settlement and deforestation. The

failure to improve agriculture on existing land due to investment elsewhere led to a consequent but incidental need to seek out new lands. However, the investment in canals, railways, and roads, and in certain other infrastructural projects in rural areas established a more direct connection between government priorities and settlement and connection of outlying areas.

The centralized nature of power in the Thai context has traditionally meant that control radiated out from the centre and diminished with distance. The concept of fixed frontiers at the periphery is a new one (Withaya 1984 : 150 - 151). As a result, central authority has normally been established by strengthening administrative and physical links between outlying areas and the centre, which for the past two centuries has been in Bangkok. In the nineteenth century, the release of previously tied serfs and slaves (*phrai* and *thaat* respectively) led to a concern by central authorities for maintaining control:

> Such a large group could not be permitted to run the risk of vanishing or of abandoning society. So they were carefully settled on virgin or other lands by newly appointed commune chiefs, registered at newly built district offices managed by officers newly trained in the recently established civil service, and supervised by the newly organized police (Sharp and Hanks 1978 : 88).

Soon after the signing of the Bowring treaty, cultivation of new lands had been encouraged by lifting of taxes on newly cleared land. During the reign of Rama V (1864 - 1910), land settlement was encouraged by construction of canals as described in section *III.2.i* above. Since even earlier dates, canal construction had also had a strategic aspect, notably in the construction of the Saen Saeb canal during the reign of Rama III (ibid. 1978 : 39; Johnston 1975 : 42 - 43). Early in the twentieth century, railways were constructed to link peripheral regions even further afield (see section *III.2.iii* above).

Early on, promotion of settlement and linking outlying regions was achieved by provision of administrative and physical infrastructure along with a range of incentives and institutional reforms (notably property rights). However, since 1940 the government has been involved more directly in land settlement, in particular through the Land Settlement Division of the Public Welfare Department under the Ministry of the Interior and the Self-help Land Settlement Schemes of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. Uhlig (1984 : 32 - 33) notes six other government departments also involved in land settlement, while Chirapanda (1982 : 107) counts a total of fourteen, leading to numerous problems of duplication and lack of coordination (see also Demaine 1984). These include the Agricultural Land Reform Office (ALRO), set up following the 1975 Land Reform Act. Ostensibly established to deal with growing problems of landlessness, particularly in the Central Plains and parts of the Upper North, ALRO has tended to locate projects in recently settled areas in order to legitimize control over land that would otherwise be occupied by forest squatters (Uhlig 1984 : 36). In some cases forest land has been cleared specifically to make way for a "land reform" settlement (see the following chapter for the case of Ban Mai).[18] In all settlement schemes since 1940, some 230,000 families have been settled on 700,000 hectares of land. To put these figures in perspective, however, there are estimated to be at least one million squatter families farming four to five million hectares of forest reserve (ibid. : 37 - 39).

Since the 1960s, the largest part of government investment in rural areas has been in road construction. Concentration in "sensitive" areas such as the Northeast and the cooperation of the United States Operations Mission (USOM) shows the security orientation and the emphasis on maintaining or increasing central control over peripheral

areas. Feeder road construction has received a boost since the 1970s with the various *tambon* schemes (see section *II.1.iii* above, also following chapters), and a major strategic road construction scheme has been underway in the early 1980s to make accessible peripheral areas that had previously been zones of influence of the Communist Party of Thailand. By the mid-1980s, the vast majority of villages are accessible by four wheeled motor vehicles. This opens up large areas for commercial cropping, and it has been noted that apart from security considerations, road construction is also concentrated in areas suited to cultivation of export crops (ibid. : 126).[19] Roads linking maize producing areas with Bangkok have been shown to reduce marketing costs by 20 per cent (Goldberg 1979 : 359), while local feeder roads are all important in making cash cropping feasible. Even improved bus communications promote land settlement in increasing the contact between new settlers and potential settlers in home villages and by increasing the possibilities for "commuter" farming.

Other than provision of transport infrastructure, the government has taken a number of other measures directly or indirectly promoting land settlement. In particular, sugarcane planting was promoted as part of the import substitution and export promotion policies of the 1960s and 1970s. Initially sugar actually had to be imported to feed the mills, but expansion in peripheral areas (see section *III.2.ii* above) soon made up the shortfall, and there was a rapid expansion onto forest lands during the sugar boom of the early 1970s (Uhlig 1984 : 129 - 32). The role of ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs was important in this process, as it was also in establishing the marketing structures and sometimes the finance for production of maize and cassava (ibid : 49,135; see also Rigg 1986). As in the case of sugarcane, cultivation of maize and cassava helped by government export promotion has normally been on previously forested lands.

An important part of increasing control over peripheral areas is the establishment of administrative structures. Uhlig (1984 : 140) characterizes the formation of new administrative units in newly settled areas as a type of "successive cell division". This is the process by which a *tambon* (cluster of villages) becomes a *king amphoe* ([temporary] branch district) with limited administrative functions and usually within three to five years an *amphoe* (district) with the full range of functions. The new district is made up of several *tambons*, which may themselves eventually be "promoted" to district status. Johnston (1975 : 36 - 38) suggests that creation of *khwaeng* (equivalent to present day *amphoe*) is the best evidence we have for early population growth and expansion of cultivation in Ayuthaya province.

The process of establishing state control over peripheral areas by increasing administrative and physical links is one fraught with conflict. Part of the conflict is internal to the bureaucracy. Conflicts of interest arise between departmental objectives, such as the protection of forest reserve by Forestry Department officials as against the desire for registration of villages and provision of schools by the Interior and Education Ministries respectively (ibid. : 47). Such conflict does not only revolve around issues of departmental function; it also arises due to the desire for various departments to expand their range and scale of activities (Morell and Chai-anan 1981 : 49), resulting in a competitive duplication of function that may take on a territorial dimension[20] that is most clearly evident in the staking out of new areas for land settlement programmes (see above). In the words of a senior land reform official:

> Up until now, no one can say with a reasonable degree of confidence what precise policy is to be adopted towards the millions of squatters in forest reserves (Chirapanda 1982 : 110).

Other areas of conflict surrounding land settlement are between settlers and the state. Settlers on forest reserve land are mistrustful of state intentions in projects such as land reform, while state officials are keen to gain administrative control over scattered outlying settlements. Resettlement or even physical removal of whole villages may result, while villagers may in turn devise means to evade such control.

### *III.3.iii The forest haven*

Despite the dangers associated with the forest, the shelter, resources, lands, and protection afforded have historically made this peripheral environment a source of security for individuals. Onerous corvee and military service up until the nineteenth century frequently caused people to take to the forests (Akin 1969 : 87; Chayan 1984 : 187 - 188; Withaya 1984 : 154), leading to tattooing of bonded men. Early settlement of Bang Chan (now almost a suburb of Bangkok) was by those escaping corvee obligations, since until the 1890s

> Bang Chan lay beyond the orbit of government, its inhabitants having 'headed for the woods (*pai paa*)' as effectively as an escaped slave (Sharp and Hanks 1978 : 65).

While the corvee was still in operation, the option of fleeing to the forests gave serfs (*phrai*) some sanction on the demands of their masters (*naai*), since excessive exploitation would lead to an escape to the forests (ibid. : 82) at a time when control over labour was more important than control over land (Feeny 1982 : Chapter 6). However, the forest offered a different source of security once slavery and the corvee had been abolished:

> Once the wilderness had been a retreat for the disaffected few. In the new social order the many more without a place in the productive scheme had to fend for themselves, and the wilderness offered

them a haven (Sharp and Hanks 1978 : 88).
Thus forest settlement to avoid control by higher authorities was partly replaced by migration in the search for means of subsistence after displacements caused by institutional changes at the centre.

During the twentieth century, the forests as a haven have continued to serve both these political and economic functions. Disaffected groups took to the hills and forests following the outbreak of armed hostilities between government forces and the Communist Party of Thailand in August 1965. By the mid-1970s, bases had been established in forest areas of most provinces, and these served to receive those fleeing political repression following the massacre at Thammasat University on October 6, 1976. The action of escape was referred to most commonly as "*khao paa* : going into the forest".

As an economic haven, forests have over the past century yielded sustenance mainly in the form of land to millions of new settlers (see sections III.1 and III.2 above). Although population pressure has been partly responsible for this displacement, social and economic displacement has also arisen as a result of structural changes. It is estimated that at least one million rural households are tenants and half a million landless labourers (Chirapanda 1982 : 106), and the 30 per cent of farm households that this represents may choose to seek security in further forest settlement.

A final aspect of the forest haven is the aesthetic one. The forest as Buddhist retreat has already been mentioned (section *III.3.i* above), and some forest monks have attracted large urban lay followings in recent years. This can lead to construction of permanent roads, buildings, and other infrastructure, leading to occasional conflicts between certain sects and local authorities. In other cases, monks have

been instrumental in helping villagers to preserve forest on upland watersheds whose destruction has been threatened by development projects. A more Western type of aestheticism is manifested in the establishment of several national parks, but here too there is a conflict between preservation of forest and its opening up as a retreat for urban dwellers.

*III.3.iv Forest settlement and rural development*

In this chapter, we have reviewed the process of forest settlement, its place in overall agricultural expansion since the opening up of the Thai economy, and the social, administrative, and political contexts of forest settlement. So far, the pattern of settlement has appeared as a matrix of interactions between central authorities and peripheral populations. These interactions are an outcome of struggles for control by the groups involved. On the part of the state, the objects of control have been people and territory, and latterly economic surplus generated in peripheral regions. On the part of peripheral populations, the concern has been to maintain control alternatively over their own labour, physical safety, and means of sustenance. The most recent arena for interaction in this dialectic is that of rural development.

Rural development as directed change in rural areas is naturally concentrated in those areas in which the "developers" are most concerned with the need and potential for change. In the case of state developers, a number of considerations are taken into account. As we have seen in section *II.3.ii*, there is a close link between development and "security" considerations, i.e. the maintenance of

centralized control over the polity. Other considerations, particularly under the Fifth Plan, concern reduction of regional income disparities and increasing efficiency of resource use. These considerations combine to place the emphasis on peripheral areas, many of which are also areas of recent settlement.

246 poverty concentration districts are earmarked for special attention during the Fifth Plan. Most of these areas are peripheral to the older areas of settlement, since:

> In the selection [of the districts], the principal criterion will be the actual physical areas, and not the income level. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the concept using spatial distinction will assist in grappling with important causes of poverty concentration problems. Secondly, it is necessary to solve poverty problems in the areas from where the problems originate. If the people are not urgently assisted they have to find ways and means of living. The result has been the destruction of natural resources and migration, both temporarily and permanently. (NESDB 1981 : 281)

The rural development measures undertaken in these areas are nominally concerned with improving the welfare of the majority of Thailand's rural poor who live in the target districts. While there is no doubt that many of the programmes are sincerely intended to fulfil just this purpose, it will be shown in this study that this is only one aspect of rural development as practised by state authorities, that it is an aspect that achieves only limited success, that certain measures are positively detrimental even in terms set out by the developers, and most importantly for the present discussion, that rural development represents in one important respect a continuity with past attempts to gain control in the power struggles between the centralized state and peripheral populations.

It is also necessary to note that most NGO projects are also located in peripheral areas. This is due partly to the recognition of

the poverty of such areas, but it is also considered more practicable to set up community schemes in villages less affected by urban influences. As we saw in the previous chapter, NGO activities are often oriented to increasing the bargaining power of the rural poor. While the government on the one hand welcomes the input of resources that NGO schemes provide for such areas, it is at the same time often suspicious of alternative approaches in areas considered politically sensitive, and this has produced another axis in the dialectic of control and power in peripheral areas.

## Conclusion

The issues addressed in this chapter give a new perspective to the situation of the Thai periphery, which has been equated with areas of existing or recently cleared forest. Rural development in such areas is a continuation of processes of agricultural expansion and socio-political change discernible for more than a century. Nevertheless, there is a shortage of detailed data on the process of integration of which rural development is the latest manifestation, and the need for detailed case studies has been noted (Uhlig 1984 : 10). The remainder of this thesis presents the results of one such study, based on two communities in a peripheral area of the Central Plains. Participation and rural development are shown to be integral to the dialectic between centre and periphery referred to in this chapter.

Notes

1. In this way, the Thai frontier differs from that elsewhere in Southeast Asia. In his study of pioneer settlement, Pelzer (1945) identified large territories that were frontier zones, notably Mindanao in the Philippines and the Outer Islands in Indonesia. Similarly, Cochin China was for long a frontier zone in which Annamese and Tonkinese pioneers settled (Scott 1976 : 67).

2. FAO/UNEP (1981 : 430 - 434) identify 5 categories of forest in Thailand, within which are 15 sub-categories. These are as follows, with their extent (where estimable), location, and main characteristics noted:

| CATEGORY | SUB-CATEGORY | EXTENT (ha) | LOCATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| Closed broadleaved | Tropical lowland evergreen | 350,000 | Far south peninsula |
| | Semi-evergreen rainforest | 800,000 | Rest of peninsula to 11°N and SE below 1000 m |
| | Dry evergreen | 3,900,000 | W Tenasserim 11-16°N, W Phetchaboon, Dongphraya, S edge and NE of Khorat Plateau, SE, N near Laos |
| | Hill evergreen | 350,000 | Above 700m in North, W edge of Khorat Plateau |
| | Freshwater swamp | - | Centre, south (mostly cleared for riceland) |
| | Mangrove | 316,000 | W, E peninsula coast, delta, SE coast |
| | Beach forest | - | Sandy beaches along coast |
| | Lower mixed deciduous | | Below 300m in NE of N Thailand, S of Petchaboon |
| | Dry upper mixed deciduous | 4,200,000 (all decidous) | Above 300m in Tenasserim N of 12°30 N, through N to Laos |
| | Moist upper mixed deciduous | | Above 300m in N extremity. E and N edges of Korat plateau |
| Open broadleaved | Dry dipterocarp | 3,290,000 | Plains and ridges on poor soils in NE, Upper C, N |
| | Savanna | 3,150,000 | Patches all over on sandy, lateritic soils |
| Bamboo | | 900,000 | Khwae, Maeklong watersheds, NW border with Burma |
| Coniferous | | 200,000 | 700-1,400m on sandy soils and red loams in N,NE,C |
| Scrub formation | | 140,000 | From 11°N northward in peninsular coastal plain |

3. Estimates of forest area are problematic, depending on whether actual forested area or area classified as forest is considered. It is safe to say that government figures consistently overestimate forested area. Girling (1981 : 67n) quotes an estimate suggesting an increase in cultivated land of 4 per cent between 1950 and 1962, 1.6 per cent 1962 to 1975, and 0.5 per cent 1975 to 1985, with a halt to expansion following closing of the frontier by the mid-1980s. However, for reasons to be given below, the absence of land ideally suited to agriculture does not in itself prevent clearance for cultivation. This means that there is no clearcut point at which the frontier can be regarded as closed.

4. However, there is evidence to suggest that land settlement was facilitated for some families by access to slave labour. Ananya (1985 : 88) describes how slaves helped in early clearance of land in Theparaj and how once freed they went on to clear their own land. Johnston (1975 : 24 - 25) recognizes the ambiguous effect of abolition of slavery on new settlement in at once freeing labour but at the same time both depriving potential large scale cultivators of labour and depriving small scale cultivators of their only mortgagable security, i.e. the promise of bonded service, with which to raise the finance for expansion of cultivation. Decline of the corvee unambiguously favoured increased settlement, as did its replacement by head taxes which required expansion of cultivation for production of a marketable surplus.

5. Chonburi has acquired a reputation as the "Wild East" of Thailand due to the level of violence associated with influential groups in newly settled areas and elsewhere.

6. This is comparable to the situation described by Johnston (1975 : 125), in which the initial low value of land along the Prawetburirom Canal led to its original owners leaving the land fallow for several years following clearance. Such land would then be settled and cultivated by new claimants, resulting in subsequent land disputes as the land increased in value.

7. Johnston (1975 : 186ff.) gives an account of the spread of police authority into rural areas. This appears to have led more to a general "sense" of security rather than a demonstrable decrease in crime, as law enforcement was regularized in place of the *ad hoc* military suppression campaigns that had previously dealt with rural banditry. It is also suggested that banditry in frontier areas was partly a result of suppression in more accessible areas of older settlement, suggesting that enforcement displaces rather than eliminates banditry. The presence of fugitives from the law during the period of rapid settlement of Lan Sak to be described in the following chapter was a factor in the violence of this period.

8. Many recently settled forest areas are politically "sensitive" due to their proximity to zones of recent Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) influence. They are distinguished from CPT held areas (*khet daeng* : lit. red areas) and are alternatively known as "*khet saekseum* : infiltration zones". Parts of Lan Sak were classified as such in the late 1970s.

9. Phasijaroen can be translated as "prosperity from taxes" and Damnoensaduak as "convenient travel".

10. Such a response is a classic Chayanovian response by the peasantry to hard times. Rather than cutting back on production with a fall in prices, leisure time was sacrificed in order to maintain acceptable subsistence levels. This is evidence in favour of a strong subsistence

orientation even among the relatively commercialized Central Plains population at this time, and such an orientation is supported by accounts given by elderly villagers in Lan Sak of the revival of crafts such as weaving during times of shortage during the depression and war years. The response was no doubt facilitated by the considerable scope remaining for expansion of riceland in parts of Thanyaburi and on the west bank of the Chaophraya, despite more congested conditions in some older areas of settlement. This contrasts with the contemporary situation in Burma (see Johnston 1975 : Chapter 9).

11. Demand for Thai rice was itself due to a switch to cash cropping in colonial Asia. This resulted in a shortfall in rice production in many countries where rice was the staple diet. In addition, rice was needed to feed the large migrant labour forces of plantation economies (see Johnston 1975 : 19 - 20).

12. The Rice Premium is an effective tax on rice that was first instituted in 1955. Between 1955 and 1976, the premium provided the government with between 1 per cent and 17 per cent of its revenues. The chief benefit of the premium for government has been to hold down domestic rice prices and thus also urban wages. Various estimates show that farmers would receive anything from 23 to 85 per cent higher farmgate prices for paddy were the premium to be removed, and there is widespread agreement among economists that the premium serves to discourage intensification of rice production and distorts agricultural incentives. The principal beneficiaries are state revenues and urban consumers, and as such the rice premium represents a regressive resource transfer from rural to urban populations. Between 1953 and 1963, for example, the rice premium represented 60 per cent of the net flow of resources from the agricultural to the non-agricultural sector (Feeny 1982 : 113 - 114, 116; Girling 1981 : 63; see also in particular Ingram 1971 : 243 - 261 for arguments for and against the rice premium and its effects vis-a-vis broader development strategy).

13. The fibre crop kenaf, an inferior substitute for jute, is used mainly in making gunny sacks for rice and other grains. It was promoted in the Northeast in support of industrialization policy from the 1950s onward (Silcock 1970 : 77 - 78).

14. Chin (1977) discusses several classifications of shifting cultivation. Many of these are evolutionary in orientation or distinguish systems according to levels of technology. However, the most significant distinction is that between what Conklin (1957) has called partial and integral systems. Integral systems are those that have developed over a long period of time and involve cultural and ecological adaptation of the shifting cultivators to their environment in a non-destructive use of tropical forest land. Partial systems, on the other hand, involve cultivators familiar with permanent field cultivation and monocropping, who use soils more destructively, since:

> These are often areas where demand for land is great and there is a tendency to tax the soil to the extent of permanent impoverishment. (Chin 1977 : 109)

Of particular interest in Chin's survey is the socio-economic origin of environmental damage implicit, for example in "incipient" shifting cultivation in Latin America. Here, the shifting cultivator

> has little or no prior knowledge of shifting cultivation techniques and is usually forced to resort to shifting cultivation as a result of

> poverty and land hunger (for the better soils). This cultivator is a product of the economic and social circumstances in the local or national community in which he lives. It is found that this kind of cultivator is most frequently destructive to the soil. (ibid : 109 - 110)

This latter type of cultivator most closely approximates poorer settlers on steep land in Lan Sak.

15. Without water control, rice agriculture in the Central Plains is at the mercy of the elements. Whereas 1800 millimetres of rainfall are needed for ideal cultivation, only 1000 to 1500 millimetres can be expected in the Central Plains (Johnston 1975 : 4; Uthaithani commonly receives less than 1000 millimetres - see Appendix 3). Dependence on annual flooding by the Chaophraya River before construction of the Chainat Dam was risky : of the 99 years to 1945, only 32 had satisfactory water levels; in 30 years levels were too low; in 22 years they were barely sufficient; and in 15 years there were floods (Pelzer 1945 : 60). Variations in flood levels have to some extent been evened out by the Bhumiphol and Chainat Dams (Donner 1978 : 223 - 225).

16. The word "*theuan* : illicit" itself originally meant "forest", "jungle", or "wilderness" (MacFarland 1944). Modern usage and more recent dictionary definitions refer almost exclusively to the metaphoric sense of the word.

17. "Songs for Life" (*phleng pheua chiwit*) were popular among students and other radical groups during the period 1973 to 1976. Following the coup of October 6, 1976, many of these songs were banned and thus became associated with opposition to the government. Several of these have latterly been taken up by state developers and their connotations have been transformed by their new context. Others remain popular with students in a period characterized both by a more liberal regime and less radical student population.

18. The first discussions of land reform in Thailand in 1906 placed an emphasis on land colonization rather than redistribution (Johnston 1975 : 379n).

19. The ambiguity of purpose in road construction is matched historically by early canal development. Johnston (1975 : 43n) notes the difficulty of differentiating political and economic motivations of government in such development.

20. Until Chulalongkorn's administrative reforms of 1874, organization of government ministries was partly on a territorial rather than a functional basis (see e.g. Johnston 1975 : 6). The names of some ministries still reflect this organization For example *Kaalahoom*, or Defence, was responsible for the Southern region and *Mahaad Thai*, or Interior, for the North (Akin 1969 : 66). Girling [after Tambiah] (1981 : 30) relates this to the traditional "cosmological design" of authority and administration, which involved a "totalizing" of religious and secular, civil and military, as well as territorial and functional. He shows how such attitudes have persisted up to the present despite structural reforms. Morell and Chai-anan (1981 : 42ff.) characterize operations of the Thai bureaucracy as a type of "internal colonialism".

# CHAPTER IV

# CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT IN LAN SAK

The place of development in overall change was discussed in Chapter II, and this was followed by an analysis of the relationship between development and the rural social formation in order to set out the socio-political context for the present study. Chapter III went on to examine the geographical context of the study in order to demonstrate the significance of rural development as the most recent manifestation of a history of tensions between the Thai centre and periphery. The present chapter sets out the local context of change and the place of development in this change. A history of settlement of Lan Sak is followed by description of the two villages under study. Certain aspects of change are then examined. Finally, an account is given of the social formation in each village, and the local significance of development in overall change is reviewed.

## IV.1 The Context of Change

Although included in the Lower North region administratively, Uthaithani is geographically part of the northwest fringe of the Central Plains. Bordering the Chaophraya River in the East, just below its emergence as the confluence of the Ping, Wang, Yom, and Nan Rivers that drain much of northern Thailand, Uthaithani rises westward into the mountains that extend through Kanchanaburi and Tak Provinces into Burma (Figs. 4.1 and 4.2). Until 1961, 73 percent of the province was covered by forest. By 1982, forest cover was less than 43 per cent

Figure 4.1 **THAILAND**

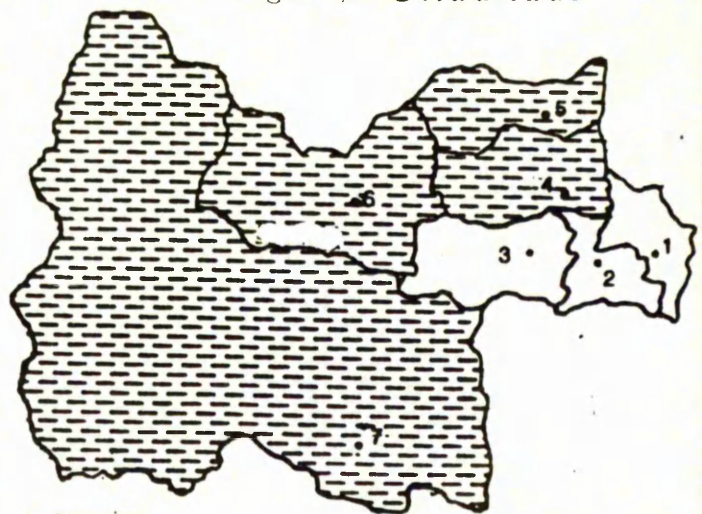
Uthaithani

Bangkok

0 100 Miles

0 100 Kilometres

Figure 4.2 **UTHAITHANI**




1 Meuang
2 Nong Kha Yang
3 Nong Chang
4 Tab Tan
5 Sawang Arom
6 Lan Sak
7 Ban Rai

0 Kilometres 50

(Boonchana and Thongchai 1983 : 33), and deforestation continues apace. For many years, Uthaithani was known in surrounding provinces and further afield as a province of opportunity, where land was to be had virtually for the taking. It also became known as a wild frontier area, where hazards to life and limb included malaria, wild animals, and later on murderous land disputes. Such were the land pressures in neighbouring areas, however, that settlement has continued unabated. This was facilitated in no small part by the clearance of large areas of forest under concession to the state-run Thai Plywood Company (TPC) and the construction of roads into a province that as recently as 1966 had no hard surfaced road outside the provincial town and only 40 kilometres of all-weather light surfaced road, and that until 1978 could only be reached by road via a ferry across the Chaophraya River at Manoram. By the mid-1980s, a bridge connects the Asia Highway (the main Bangkok-Chiang Mai road) with approximately 180 kilometres of hard surfaced road and hundreds of kilometres of all weather gravel roads in the province (Fig. 4.3).

The earliest inhabitants of western Uthaithani[1] were Karen upland subsistence cultivators. Lao[2] settlers were the earliest lowland people to move into the area. The oldest Lao residents report that settlement in Ban Rai dates from the forced migration of prisoners of war associated with the defeat of Laos in the reign of Rama III in the early nineteenth century (in villagers' words, *to'n Wieng Jan taek* : the oldest Lao resident told me that his great-grandmother had come from Vientiane at this time). Early communities were only semi-permanent. When someone died of sickness, the small community might move on to another part of the forest, taking only what they could "*haab* : carry across their shoulders on a pole". The first Lao community in what is now Lan Sak District dates from the second decade of the twentieth century, and until the 1950s it consisted mainly of the

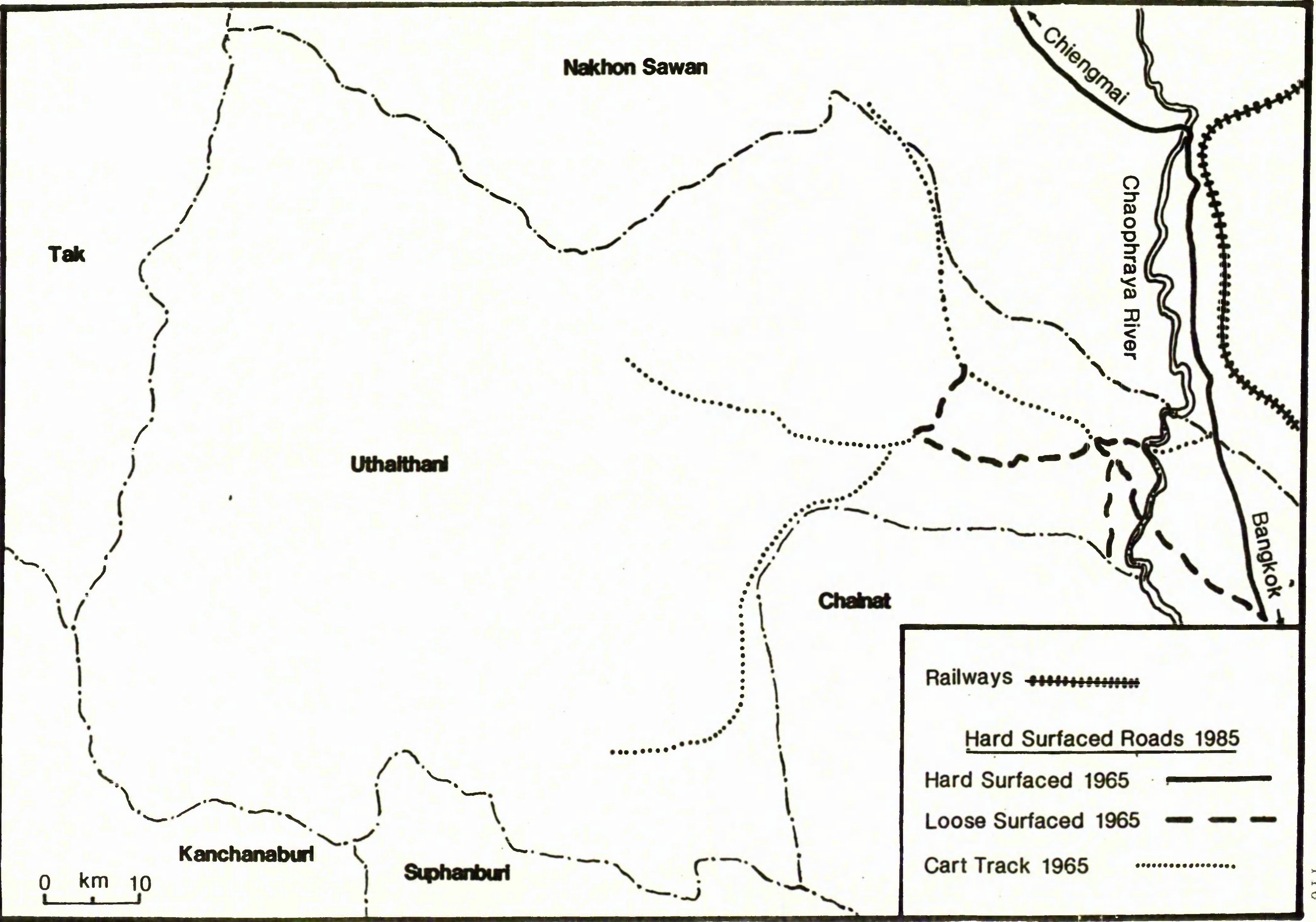



Figure 43 Communications in Uthaithani 1965 and 1985

settlement of thirteen families at the site of what is now Ban Dong. Lao and Karen coexisted mainly in separate communities, but in the case of one community, Ban I-Dang, intermarried.

Being Lao implies an ethnicity distinct from the Thai (lowlanders) or Karen (upland shifting cultivators). In the local context, the Lao occupy an intermediate position, in having for several generations lived an isolated existence in forest communities despite having roots in a lowland rice culture. Apart from linguistic and other cultural distinctions, Lao settlers appear to have developed a relative immunity to malaria. This and ability to cope with other rigours of forest life helped to maintain their isolation from lowland Thais, whose fear of the forest was a factor inhibiting large scale migration in the absence of great land pressures. Lao settlers planted rice, chillies, and other subsistence crops in small forest clearings. Land rights were according to usufruct, and for many years after settlement land held no exchange value. The same held true for timber, whose abundance and lack of exchange value prevented competitive exploitation of this resource. Communications were by foot or cart track, and trade was limited to sale of forest products such as *yaang* oil (from *dipterocarpus* spp.)[3] and skins in exchange for salt and a limited number of other non-local goods. Trade was by buffalo cart and carried out by lowland Thais. Clothes were made of cloth woven from home spun, home grown cotton. Rice was husked by foot pounding. Wildlife was abundant, and the Tap Salao River teemed with fish, so that there was no need to rear livestock other than chickens for meat. The village leader had only occasional contact with the outside world, since to get to the district administration at Ban Rai involved a full week's round trip. Decisions and rules were internal to the community.

In the 1950s the first Thai settlement was established at Thung

Khaa by enterprising settlers who came to make a living off trade in *yaang* oil, whilst maintaining subsistence plots in a similar fashion to the Lao communities. One of the earliest settlers became the *de facto* leader (*khon to*) of the community and he took in new settlers "who hadn't received justice (i.e. entitlement to land) from their parents (*mai dai rab khwaam yuthitham jaak pho' mae*)". The locality had previously been unoccupied apart from a small number of Karen, most of whom moved away into the hills with the influx of the Thais, and a few Lao. This community of about twenty families was also relatively isolated : a trip to the nearest market town, Nong Chang, took two to three days.

Pressures of land and increasing problems with lowland agriculture led to a growing stream of Thai settlers from neighbouring districts and provinces in the 1960s. Settlers were mainly landless or near landless farmers, or those whose land was insufficient in size or productivity for their children to make a living on. With this influx, land sales commenced, albeit at negligible prices. Foresight had led some Lao residents to claim areas of forest land which they later divided among the Thai settlers. Likewise, certain residents in Thung Khaa claimed areas of *yaang* forest land that they had worked (measured by number of trees rather than by land area) and retained these for later sale to new migrants. As land took on value, a claim to a tract depended increasingly on ability to control it, and this meant wielding a certain amount of authority. In order to do so "you must have a following, or group of mates : *to'ng mii phak mii phuak*".

Nevertheless, despite increasing pressures for new settlement and staking out of large tracts by influential individuals, the pace of settlement remained gradual. Many older Lao residents complain now of their lack of foresight 25 or 30 years ago in not staking out land, or

in giving away land to early Thai settlers. Few imagined that within a short space of time land would take on such value, or that the landscape of their community would be transformed from a clearing in the forest to a cluster of planted fruit and coconut trees amid an otherwise virtually treeless landscape dotted by scattered homesteads with their own clusters of young trees.

The significant change came with the granting of a concession to TPC in 1970. This led both to a legal clearance of large areas of hardwood forest for timber and a lucrative illegal timber trade arising from abuse by subcontractors to the concessionnaires and from the surreptitious trade in non-concession areas that was now facilitated by the new timber roads. Where timber had no monetary value twenty years ago (many villagers say they could cry when they think of the timber they burnt in clearing subsistence plots), it soon acquired a value far in excess of the land it was standing on. Quick profits were made by employing landless settlers to extract the wood in exchange for promises of land at token prices or free.[4] Clearance of forest by concessionnaires and others removed a major constraint to settlement, i.e. the hostile forest environment. This coincided with a time when crop diversification was encouraged and prices for maize and other field crops[5] were buoyant, and when land shortages in the Central Plains and elsewhere were increasing. Moreover, deforestation in the west of Uthaithani Province had started to cause problems of flooding[6] and perhaps also of drought in the lowland eastern part of the province, reducing the productivity of rice agriculture in Nong Kha Yang, Meuang, Tap Tan, and Nong Chang Districts. This started a vicious circle of environmental degradation, poverty, migration, and further deforestation that continues to the present. With all these contributing factors, it is hardly surprising that such a spectacular rate of deforestation has taken place : the figures for Lan Sak would be even more dramatic than

those province-wide were they available, but the extent of deforestation can be gauged from Fig. 4.4.

The period of heaviest migration was the mid to late 1970s. The year 1975-76 in Lan Sak saw a 37 per cent population increase from 13,565 to 18,580, followed by a 34 per cent rise the following year to 24,883. By 1979 the population was 32,505 (NSO 1980 : 8 - 9), and 38,533 by 1981 (Ministry of the Interior 1982). Many of the settlers came from Nong Chang, Nong Kha Yang, and Tap Tan Districts in the same province, while others came from neigbouring provinces or from further afield, in which case mainly from the Northeast. The vast majority came in pursuit of land. A combination of land alienation arising from commercialization of agriculture and debt foreclosure, environmental degradation leading to drought and flooding, and population growth had forced many to uproot. Often settlers came in groups, and on occasion whole villages or sections of villages transplanted themselves from Petchaboon and Northeastern provinces.

The period of rapid immigration during the mid-1970s was one of violent land disputes. Villagers speak of a single month during this period in which there were thirty murders in Lan Sak, out of a total population of less than 20,000. Even official statistics show 128 cases of murder being brought to Uthaithani courts in 1976, mostly in the two western districts, and this represents only a fraction of the actual total (Uthaithani Provincial Administration 1977). Disputes arose over the indistinct land boundaries that had been established when land had little value, but which assumed importance once demand for land and the timber on it pushed up the price of both. Authority is the key to control over land, boundaries of which were sometimes demarcated by the sound of a gun fired from a central point in the forest, signifying that whoever was within earshot was on that claimant's territory. This area

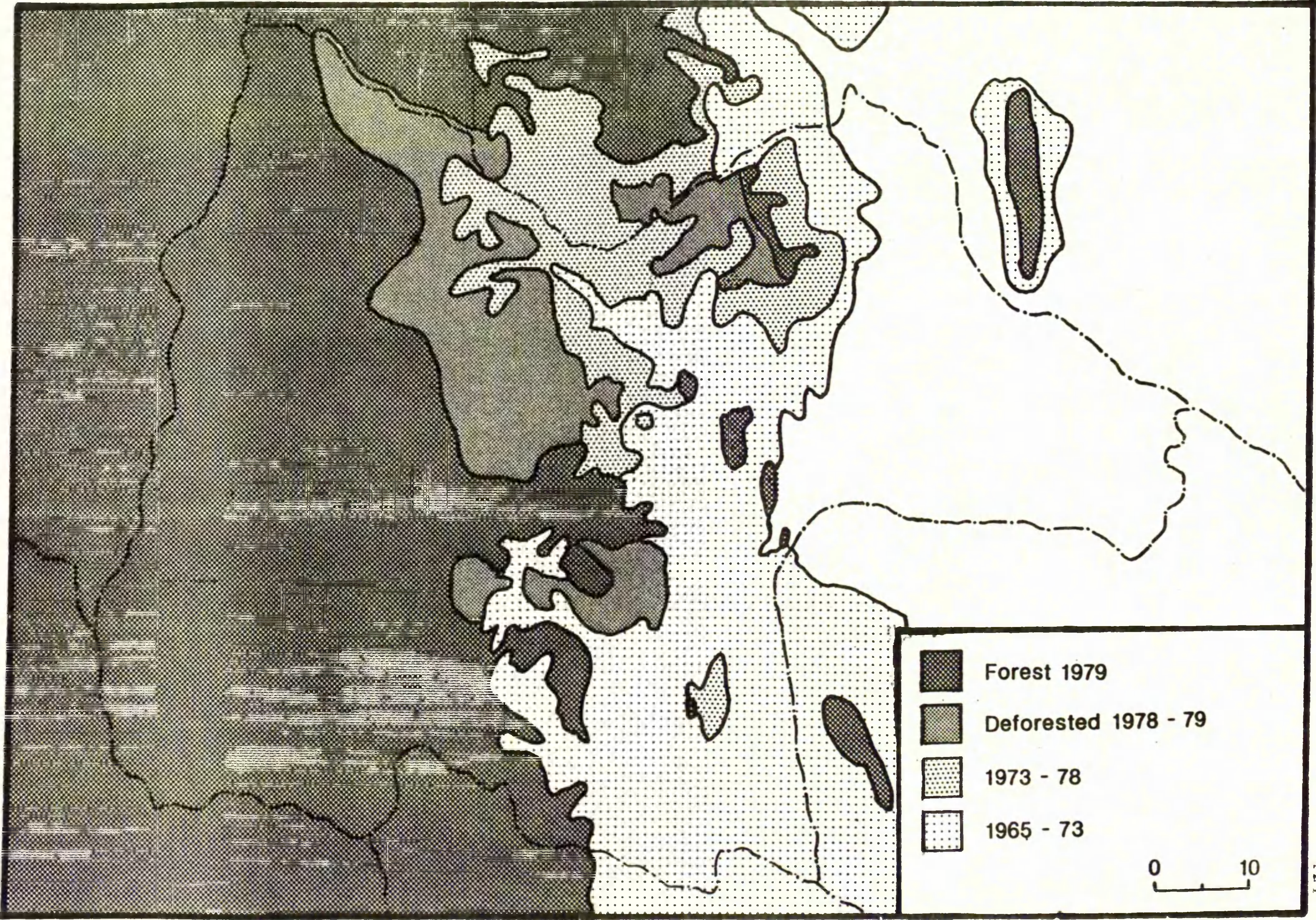



Figure 4.4 Deforestation in Uthaithani 1965 - 1978

also served as a hideaway from the law, since state authorities were more or less excluded access to many villages. Influential people who ruled by the gun were known as "tigers" (*seua*). To be a stranger in someone else's territory was dangerous, and this served to reinforce the cohesion and separateness of individual communities.[7]

As mentioned above, the government at this time had relatively little control over the area. Lan Sak was still a *tambon* of Ban Rai District until 1975 and only became a full district in 1981. In the Thung Khaa *kamnan*'s words, "by the time a death had been reported at the *amphoe*, a corpse would be rotten". Police were hardly seen in most communities, and until the late 1970s schooling only extended to a few villages. Rules were made and enforced by the community itself, generally through an influential person who may or may not have been formally elected village head or *kamnan*. Early on, settlers practised a subsistence economy, usually bringing with them enough rice to tide them over the first year and sometimes enough to exchange in barter for a parcel of land. Upland rice was planted initially, along with field crops. Wildlife remained abundant until large scale forest clearance destroyed the natural habitat of the larger animals.

Commercialization came both with the construction of roads by the Highways Department, the Agricultural Land Reform Office (ALRO), TPC, and later by villagers themselves, and with the establishment of a market at Paak Meuang around 1980 by an influential Chinese trader based in Uthaithani. Meanwhile, this same trader (later shot dead by a business rival in Lan Sak) provided land for establishment of the District administrative headquarters a few kilometres east of Paak Meuang, nearby which a police barracks was built. At this time, Lan Sak was classified as a (Communist) "infiltration zone" (*khet saek seum*) due to its proximity to Umphang District in Tak Province, which gave the

government an added interest in establishing state control.

Settlement patterns were varied. The traditional Lao settlement is similar to that generally found in the Northeast of Thailand, a cluster of houses with animals and implements kept under the house, and many of the fields are located at some distance. Initially, many of the new Thai settlements followed this clustered pattern for reasons of security and convenience in the common task of clearing areas of forest for subsistence cultivation. However, with more complete clearance of forest, enlargement of agricultural holdings, reduced concerns about security, and anxiety over fire in the clustered settlement, houses were moved to near the owners' fields in conformity with the traditional pattern of settlement in lowland Uthaithani and elsewhere in the outer Central Plains. Small clusters of settlement can often still be noticed, but these tend to be extended family units or small groups of settlers from the same area rather than representing the entire village or community with which the settlers identify. Latterly, this tendency toward dispersal has been checked in some cases by a government policy of grouping houses together, of which more below.

By 1985, virtually all but the steepest land of Lan Sak is under cultivation. Forest still stands on the steeper mountainsides and in the TPC reafforestation project at Rabam and the portion of the Huay Kha Khaeng wildlife reserve lying within Lan Sak. A teak stand near Paak Meuang stands isolated, having been pronounced sacred by a widely respected monk in Uthaithani,[8] a reminder of the forest that covered much of the area until as little as ten years ago. Environmental degradation is evidenced in reduced rainfall,[9] periodic flooding such as that in 1983 which caused loss of life and severe damage in Lan Sak and in the ricelands of lowland eastern Uthaithani, soil erosion and gullying, siltation of irrigation channels, and poisoning of water

sources by pesticides.

These chemical pesticides are now part of the necessary inputs in the agricultural regime predominating in Lan Sak. Approximately 50,000 *rai* were given over to rice and 250,000 *rai* to field crops in 1984. Official statistics show yields of rice to be nearly 40 *tang* (420 kg.) per *rai*, but this estimate is almost certainly too high as much of the marginal riceland was affected by drought. Yields of maize were put more realistically at approximately 19 *tang* (300 kg.) per *rai*. Production costs for these two crops was put at 800 and 750 *baht* per *rai* respectively (Lan Sak DAE Office 1985). Fertilizer use is encouraged by DAE but is still low, so most of the inputs are seed, pesticides, hired labour, and hired machinery.

## IV.2 Study villages

Of 33 administrative villages in Lan Sak District, two were selected for detailed study (Fig. 4.5). Selection of the villages is explained in section I.4 above. One is an extension of the early Lao settlement at Ban Dong, while the other is an extension of the first Thai settlement at Thung Khaa. The first represents a lowland settlement based primarily on wet rice agriculture, albeit mostly rainfed, with field crops important but secondary to the village economy. The second represents an upland settlement whose agricultural production is dominated by field cropping and with few areas suited to wet rice. Other notable differences include the nature of government involvement in the two communities, their age, degree and nature of NGO activity, degree of differentiation, relative importance of land and capital, and relative significance of off-farm employment. Similarities include problems of leadership, factionalism and fragmentation, and

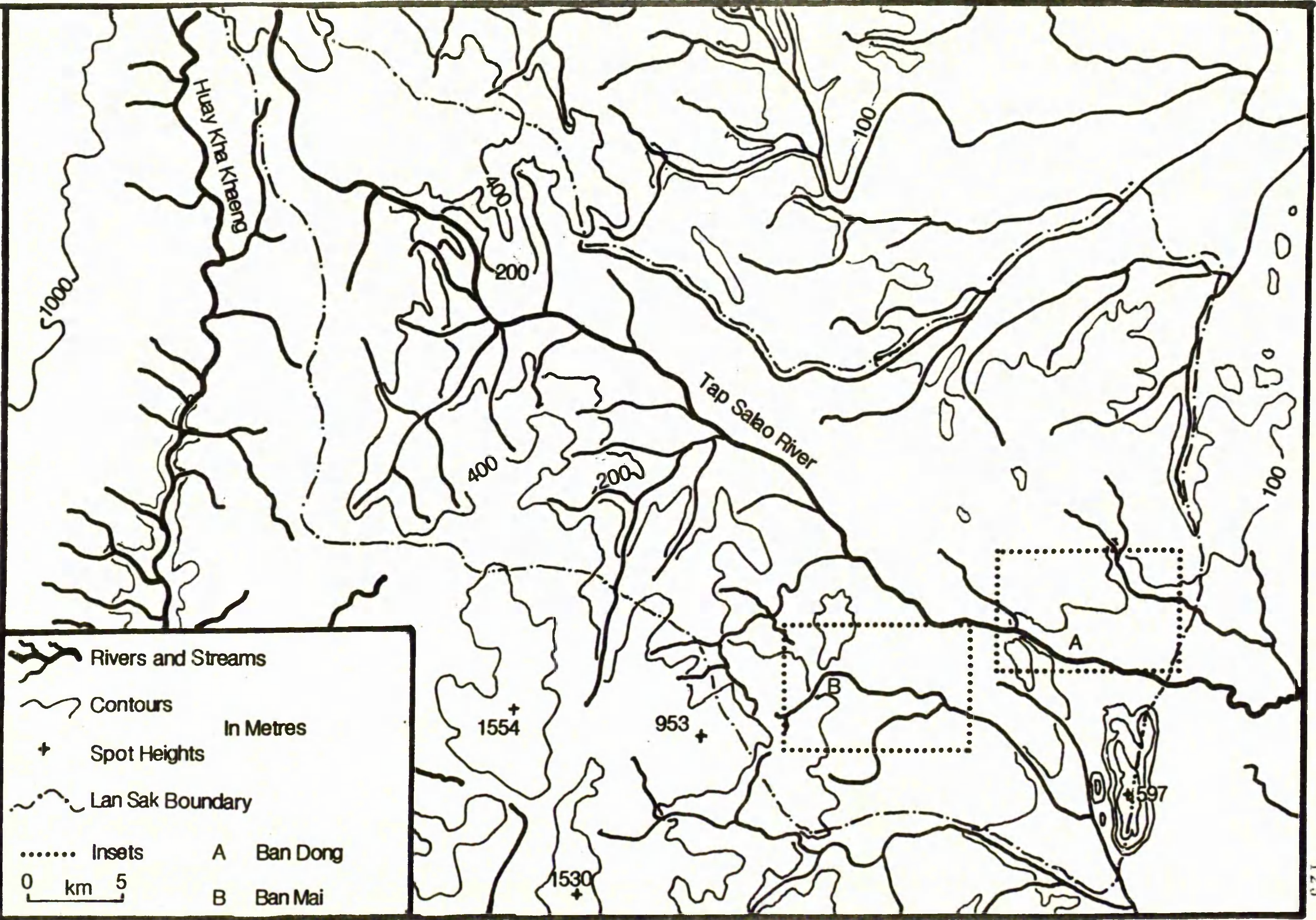



Figure 45 **Lan Sak Topography**

multiplicity of origins of the inhabitants. An examination of how these two villages have emerged, changed, and ultimately been subject to "rural development" sheds light on the place of development in such marginal areas more generally.

### *IV.2.i Ban Dong*

Ban Dong is an administrative village of approximately 300 houses located on the north bank of the Tab Salao River (Fig. 4.6). It consists of a core settlement of mainly Lao families, whose residence dates from the original settlement which was located on the opposite bank of the river, and several scattered communities of more recent Thai settlers that at once maintain their own separate cohesion but nevertheless identify themselves with Ban Dong by virtue of its temple, its school, its administrative and certain other functions, though this identification decreases somewhat with distance and proximity to other administrative villages.[10]

Much of Ban Dong is level, at an altitude of approximately 100 metres above sea level. A granite outcrop forms the core of a ridge and associated higher area of land in the West of the village, and fields rise gradually northward in a way that affects significantly the irrigability of the rice fields.

Until the early 1970s, settlement was mostly near the Tap Salao River. A dry season cart track made this one of the first points of contact for lowland traders, but the Lao villagers were virtually self-sufficient in food, clothing, building materials, and other basic necessities. Around this time, settlers mainly from neighbouring Nong Chang District had begun to arrive and to purchase land from the earlier

Figure 4.6 Ban Dong

110
110
110
100
100
100
Bung Khiew
mouang
Ban Dong
338

Rivers and Streams
Contours
Metres
Spot Heights
Roads
0
1000
metres

Figure 4.7 Ban Mai

160
180
200
250
200
300
140
120
Ban Mai
Thung Khaa

settlers who had laid claim to large tracts. Initially, these new settlers were preoccupied with clearing sufficient land for subsistence and surviving the hazards of forest life. Wild elephants were feared in particular, and fires had to be kept burning at night to keep animals at bay. The task of clearing land was done communally. For these reasons, early settlers clustered their houses together, even though this placed some at a considerable distance from the land that they had purchased, staked out, or been given.

An example of one such cluster that was later to become a community in its own right is Bung Khiew. This now scattered settlement of approximately 40 houses is located three kilometres north of Ban Dong temple. The earliest settlers arrived here approximately twenty years ago from Wat Singh District in neighbouring Chainat Province and Nong Chang District in Uthaithani. These were followed later mainly by Nong Chang settlers. Most of the settlers had received little or no land from their parents and some had previously been renting riceland, paying half their crop in rent. Typically they would pay 100 to 200 *baht*[11] per *rai*[12] for forest land. Timber on the land would be used to construct a house, while the previous owner might have removed some of the larger trees, particularly in the case of later settlers. Most of the larger trees would, however, be left on the land for the first few years of subsistence cultivation. In the late 1970s TPC cleared the area of the remaining valuable timber.[13] Until Bung Khiew villagers widened the track to accommodate light vehicles in 1978, the settlement could only be reached by footpath. Initially houses were clustered in two main groups. As the forest was cleared, however, settlers began to move their houses closer to their fields according to the traditional scattered pattern of settlement. This has to do with the convenience of cultivating close by, risks of fire in a clustered settlement, and subjective factors concerned with a desire for independence and a

self-perceived individualism commonly expressed as "*cho'p isara* : lit. to like independence" and "*thii khrai thii man* : lit. each to his/her own" respectively. On the other hand, intermarriage within the community has strengthened kinship links and thus the social cohesion of Bung Khiew. Villagers continue to use Ban Dong temple and school, and remain within its administrative boundaries, despite occasional moves to establish a formally separate community.

In 1976 communications between Ban Dong and Nong Chang, then the nearest large market, were improved by construction of an all-weather gravel road, and by 1985 this has been upgraded to a hard-surfaced road that runs as far as Paak Meuang. Ban Dong is connected to this road across the Tab Salao River by a wooden bridge that is washed away in heavy floods, or by a circuitous route via the district headquarters. In 1983 the village was effectively cut off by floods, except via a small river ferry, for several weeks. Meanwhile, the dry-season track into Bung Khiew was improved by villagers themselves in 1984, as was the small bridge leading into the settlement. Electricity was extended to Ban Dong in 1982 but does not yet reach Bung Khiew. A survey was made in 1984, but villagers cannot afford the 30 per cent of connection costs that they would be required to contribute. Ban Dong has had a temple since the early Lao settlement, but its site has moved and it has been expanded. Ban Dong primary school was built in the 1950s, and for long it served many small communities as the only school in Lan Sak.

Ban Dong was originally located in what was "preparatory forest reserve" (*thii triam kaan paa sanguan*). This meant that officially land was state-owned, but it is a traditional feature of land ownership in rural Thailand that ownership is by usufruct or by staked claim. This is reinforced by the collection of tax by the Land Department, often to the annoyance of the Forestry Department, whose forest reserve

policy is undermined since tax receipts are treated as official land title by the holders.[14] In Ban Dong, land title has more recently been upgraded to NS3, or exploitation testimonial, which gives the holder right of transfer and therefore permits use of land title deeds as collateral for loans. In 1985, the first Chanood (full title deed) was granted in some parts of the village. Land ownership is uneven, and landless labourers, partial and full tenants comprise approximately 20 per cent of the households. Average land ownership is 25 *rai*.

Wet rice agriculture is the mainstay of the village economy, with subsidiary income from maize, millet, mung beans, and other field crops. A portion of the village is irrigated by a channel dug by early settlers. This directs water from Paak Meuang weir, which is constructed of logs and woven timber panels. A water committee maintains the weir and administers water distribution in exchange for a fee based on irrigated area and paid in rice. A few households obtain a dry season rice crop. However, most manage only a single rice crop, some with a secondary crop of mung beans, and the majority of these depend entirely on rainfall for watering their fields. The whole of Bung Khiew, for example, is in this position, despite several efforts to divert irrigation water. Higher land is used solely for field crops. Buffalo are still used for ploughing, although two-wheeled power tillers (also known figuratively as "*khwaai lek* : iron buffalo" or onomatopoeically as "*rot itaek*") and even four wheeled tractors are increasingly in use. Threshing is mostly by hand or using buffalo, although threshing machines are also becoming popular.

Apart from agriculture, employment within the village is limited. Only a few families depend entirely on non-agricultural incomes, and these are either traders, artisans, or civil servants. On the other hand, many families earn a subsidiary income from occasional activities

within the village, ranging from hairdressing to selling homemade sweets. Off-farm employment outside the village is still at a low level and involves younger males for the most part, but this is increasing not only due to the opportunities for construction work in Bangkok and certain provincial towns, but also due to the declining opportunities for productive dry season activity with local resource depletion. Another increasing employment trend is wage labouring in surrounding villages, mainly on larger farms and in some cases on sugar estates.

*IV.2.ii Ban Mai*

Ban Mai is of a similar size to Ban Dong. It is located approximately ten kilometres southwest, at the foot of Khao Manora mountain, the beginning of the high mountain ranges (Fig. 4.7). The prominent feature of Ban Mai's layout is the grid-pattern nucleated settlement that forms the heart of the community and tells of the partially planned nature of settlement. Meanwhile, scattered homesteads reveal the incompleteness of this attempt at directed resettlement.

Ban Mai lies at an altitude of approximately 200 metres above sea level. The land is rolling, more level in the East but steepening toward the foot of the mountains and attaining steep gradients near and on the mountainsides. Huay Nam Wing stream runs past the village and drains the area into Huay Khok Khwai. Soils are sandy, generally of low to moderate fertility, and without tree cover they quickly lose their humic content.

Ban Mai is a more recently settled village than Ban Dong. The longest standing resident in the area is an elderly Karen, who moved from the nearby Karen village of Ban I-Dang in 1960. Until 1978, most

For Figure 4.7

Please see page 127.

of the area was still under dense forest. Small clusters of houses of early settlers who had moved out from Thung Khaa, of which Ban Mai was originally an extension, were scattered in small clearings in the forest. The economy was based on *yaang* oil tapping and subsistence agriculture. In 1978, the Agricultural Land Reform Office (ALRO) chose Ban Mai as the site for the first stage of the Tap Salao Land Reform Project, having failed to persuade villagers at the more established settlement of Thung Khaa to accede to land reform. This involved immediate clearance of the forest by TPC contractors, leaving the area within the land reform borders virtually treeless. Deforestation has since continued apace as land has been cleared beyond the ALRO area.

Following land reform, migration into the newly cleared area was rapid. In addition to ghost transactions (land sales to relatives to satisfy land reform rules regarding individual land holdings), land was sold by its previous "owners" to settlers from lowland Uthaithani and several provinces in the Central Region and the Northeast. Initially, many settlers built their homesteads on or near their agricultural plots, despite provision of separate home plots by ALRO in the grid-pattern settlement. Later, ALRO stipulated that settlers must reside in this area, but while some complied others have resisted doing so, many going to the lengths of building token shacks on their allocated plots.

Until 1978, dry season cart tracks were the only means of communication with the outside. With deforestation and land reform came first the logging roads, followed by a network of all-weather gravel roads built by ALRO, which of all villages in the district made Ban Mai physically one of the most comprehensively linked with the outside despite its remoteness in terms of sheer distance. Flooding has on occasion disrupted communications, particularly in 1983, but ALRO

maintains the roads at considerable cost. Electricity came to the village in 1982, bypassing many villages to make Ban Mai one of the first villages in Lan Sak to be electrified. Moreover, residents were exempted from the 30 per cent village connection charge, although individual houses have to pay for connection from the mains, so that it is mostly the houses of wealthier residents which have been connected.

Before 1978, Thung Khaa temple served as a focal point for the scattered community, and there was also a small temple in an outlying forest settlement. The temple at Thung Khaa and the school there had been built by villagers at the instigation of the *khon to* (see section IV.1 above), who was later to resist land reform. The school and temple in Ban Mai were established in 1978 after deforestation, and in 1982 a large concrete primary school was built in the village at a cost of 1.5 million *baht*. A health station and the ALRO office lie on the edge of the village.

A key feature of the ALRO project has been division of the area into rectangular plots of 24 *rai* each. Prior to land reform, the forested area had been "owned" mainly by Thung Khaa settlers who had staked a claim to the forest land and worked some of it for its *yaang* oil. They had started to divide up some of these areas for sale by 1978. On land reform, ALRO stipulated a single agricultural plus house plot per family and set land prices at 210 *baht* per *rai*, irrespective of the location and quality of the land. ALRO loans were provided for land purchase and zinc roofing. Subsequently, owners of large tracts of land invited relatives and friends to sign their names to plots, without necessarily having to come and work them. Other plots were in fact sold off to the large number of settlers who were attracted by land reform, but rarely at the price stipulated, which was considerably below the market price. As a result, poorer settlers went

into debt or forwent the right to farm their plots until the (covertly) agreed price had been paid. Meanwhile, once the land had been cleared in the ALRO area, illegal logging and land clearance beyond the boundaries commenced, resulting in deforestation of many steep slopes on the mountains Khao Manora and Khao Hin Lek Fai.

An ALRO land title can only be transferred by inheritance or with the approval of ALRO. This means that it cannot be used as collateral on commercial bank loans or be bought and sold freely on an open land market, although the deed can be used as collateral on loans from the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC).

Except for on low-lying land to the east of Ban Mai and in gullies where water can be held back, wet rice farming is not practicable. The field crops grown are maize, mung beans, soya beans, tapioca, sorghum, cotton, and to a lesser extent groundnuts, castor, and sugar cane. Despite the suitability of much of the area for tree crops,[15] only a few scattered banana groves break the pattern of annual field cropping.

The nature of field cropping has changed drastically since deforestation. Planting in a forest or immediate post-forest environment requires few inputs. Ploughing is unnecessary since the soil is soft and a hoe suffices. Weeds and insects that affect monocropped annuals are generally not part of the forest habitat or intercropped fields in forest clearings, and under forest cover the humic replenishment of the soil renders a natural fertility. The relative absence of weeds and the lengthy rainy season in a forest environment, moreover, allows flexibility in timing of planting, which means that family labour or reciprocal labour exchange predominates. However, once this environment changes, soil hardens under the impact of

rain, pests find little competition in the absence of the forest, soils quickly lose their fertility, and the rainy season is shortened. As a result, cropping requires increasing inputs, including hired labour, while yields decline significantly. In Ban Mai, this has affected poorer farmers the most, for they have to hire tractors for ploughing and obtain pesticides and sometimes fertilizers on high interest credit. At the same time, they are most likely to take up wage labouring opportunities.

Most fields in Ban Mai are rainfed. The exceptions are where rice is planted in stream gullies and adjacent to a community fish pond built by ALRO, from which water can be pumped in case of drought. In 1985 - 86 ALRO constructed a small dam above the village, which might eventually serve a limited irrigation feeder system, at a cost of several million *baht*. In addition, ALRO provides a land leveling service and removes tree stumps from the fields to facilitate ploughing by tractor.

Tractors are now used for ploughing on every plot. A few owners hire out their tractors, often recouping their capital outlay in less than two years. Planting is done by hand, mostly using hired labour, although reciprocal labour arrangements are still in practice among poorer households. The same holds true for harvesting, while threshing and milling are now mostly by machine.

Full time non-agricultural employment in Ban Mai is limited to a few retail traders, pickup owners, and salaried officials. Occasional work with ALRO is available at minimum wage rates, which are nearly double the normal farm labour rate. Illegal forestry by influential local timber traders provides another source of local employment. Petty trade provides a small income for many villagers : there are now 15

shops in the village, and in addition homemade sweets and services such as hairdressing provide a small supplementary income. Non-local off-farm employment is much more common in Ban Mai than in Ban Dong. A large number of young people find work on construction sites and at factories in Bangkok, either during the dry season or year round. Increasingly, whole families are renting out their land to wealthier villagers and seeking urban employment, due to debt obligations and lack of capital to plant their own land. Several men from Ban Mai are working in the Middle East on two year contracts.

## IV.3 Aspects of change

It is apparent from the above account that Lan Sak as a whole and these two communities in particular have undergone recent and rapid change. In discussing change in recently settled communities, it is useful to distinguish between intrinsically local aspects, i.e. change that has affected pre-existing phenomena (notably environment and facets of the pre-existing community), and the non-locally bound change that has affected the substantial proportion of these communities that has its origins elsewhere. The following discussion concentrates on the former aspects, although the latter are considered inasmuch as they affect the present community more generally.

### *IV.3.i Environment*

The most visible element of change in Lan Sak has been environmental change, in particular deforestation. This has affected

not only the immediate vicinity of the study villages and other deforested areas. It has also had significant "downstream" effects in terms of factors related to water control, and also possibly "downwind" effects in terms of climate.

According to the reports of early settlers, rainfall in Lan Sak before deforestation was fairly consistent and extended over more months of the year than it does now. Maize planting in Ban Mai eight years ago took place in February or March and in Ban Dong rice fields were ready for transplanting by June or July each year. Drought was unknown. The alluvial soils of the eastern lowlands of Uthaithani have been worked as rainfed ricefields for many generations, suggesting that rainfall was once sufficient for regular rice planting.

Deforestation has caused a radical change in the rainfall regime. Locally, rainfall is now inconsistent and extends over a shorter period. Maize planting in Ban Mai in 1984 took place in April and May, as is now normal, and rice in rainfed fields in Ban Dong was not planted until September in many cases. As a result, agriculture has become a marginal and risky activity where previously there was a great deal more certainty. Meanwhile, many fields in Nong Kha Yang District have lain idle for a number of years partly due to drought, suggesting that overall rainfall has decreased over a wider area than that subjected to deforestation.

The reasons for decreased rainfall are broadly twofold. First, loss of tree cover increases albedo, resulting in a loss of the cooling effect that leads to condensation, cloud formation, and rainfall. Second, loss of transpiration, whereby trees return water directly to the atmosphere, results in a decrease in relative humidity and thus less water available for condensation and rainfall. The first of these

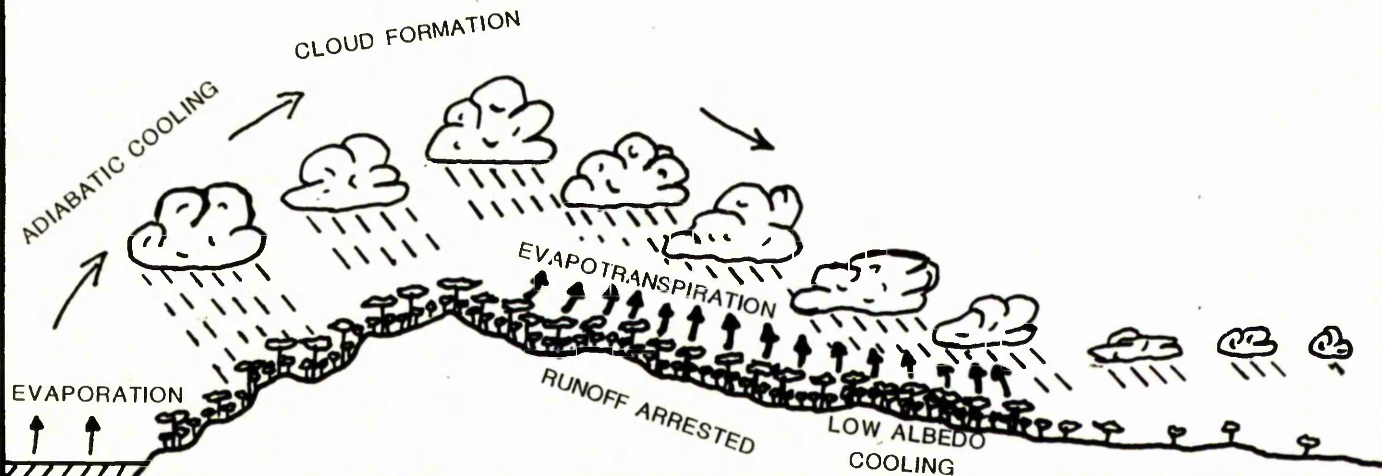
factors has mainly local effects and explains the high degree of local variation in rainfall that can now be observed.[16] The second has both local and "downwind" effects, potentially decreasing the amount of water that falls as rain in eastern Uthaithani. It must be noted also that this area is susceptible to reduced rainfall due to its rain shadow location, making it particularly dependent on recycling of moisture that has fallen as rain over the mountains to the west (Fig. 4.8).

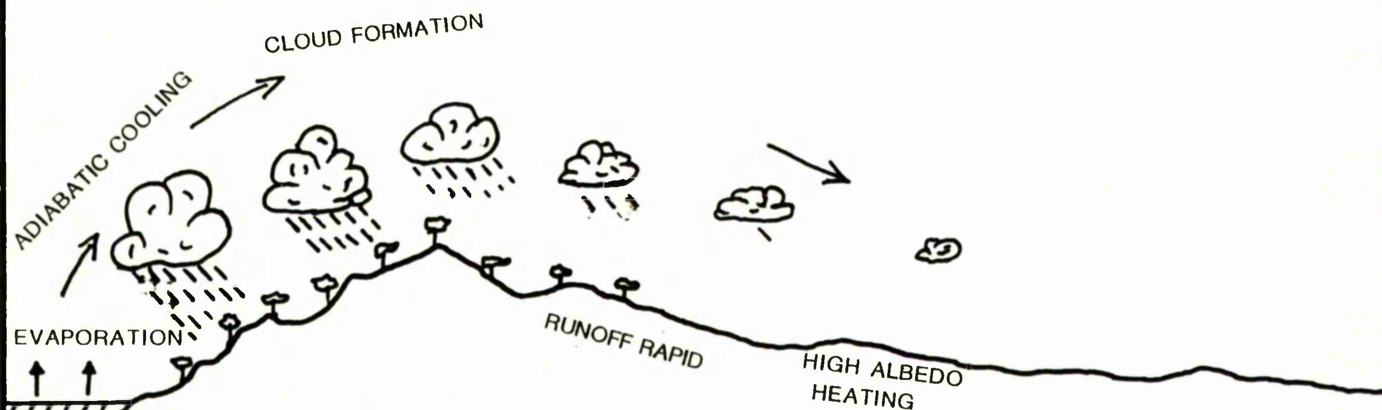
In addition to an altered rainfall regime, deforestation has also resulted in changed runoff patterns. Not only did trees increase the amount of water returned to the atmosphere; they also delayed the rate at which water ran off the soil and into streams and rivers. Water was thus held in the soil for a much longer period of time, and entered the streams mainly as groundwater. This led to a relatively regular rate of streamflow, with minor seasonal variation.

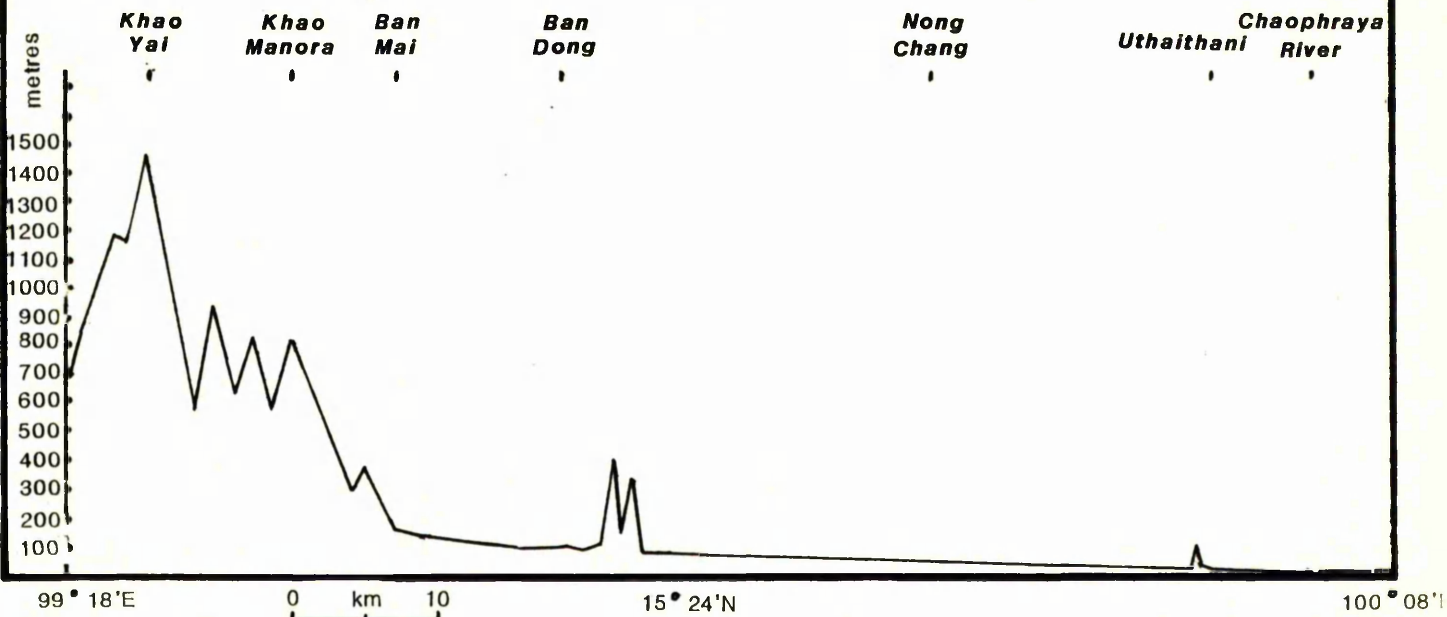
Deforestation has greatly increased the proportion of rainfall entering streams as surface runoff. Streams that used to flow year-round are now dry for several months of the year. Even the Tap Salao River is reduced to a trickle in the dry season, causing problems for the Tap Salao irrigation project in Nong Chang District to the east, although this is also partly due to local irrigation channels upstream and the pervious nature of the sandy river bed. On the other hand, flooding has become a major hazard, since trees and forest soils no longer inhibit immediate runoff by absorbing rainfall. In 1983, loss of life, crops, and livestock was widespread in Lan Sak and downstream. This is another factor leading to abandonment of ricelands in Nong Kha Yang and Meuang Districts, which is in turn a cause of migration and further deforestation.[17] A positive aspect of hydrological change associated with deforestation in both Ban Dong and Ban Mai is a rise in the water table for most of the year, resulting in more accessible well

Figure 4.8





water.

Forest soils are productive as long as they are maintained with a humus input. Immediately following deforestation, soils appear fertile, and in some parts of Lan Sak they have maintained their fertility in part by manure from draught animals (mainly buffalo) and in part due to a natural relative fertility and low gradients on lowlands immediately adjacent to the Tap Salao River, such as at Ban Dong. For the most part, however, soils are of low fertility and are fragile. In Ban Mai and some higher parts of Ban Dong, soil erosion is evident in gullying and washing away of topsoils, while reduced yields reveal the rapid loss of fertility resulting from mono-cropping on such soils. Meanwhile, flooding further east in Uthaithani has deposited infertile silt on the previously fertile alluvium, and soil erosion has also led to siltation of the Tap Salao weir, which is the distribution point for the 123,000 *rai* irrigation project in Nong Chang District. Elderly residents of Ban Dong and Ban Mai also attest to the siltation of local streams since deforestation.

It is apparent that environmental change with deforestation has had detrimental effects on the natural resource base for agriculture, both locally in Lan Sak and more generally in Uthaithani, and this has led to a vicious circle of environmental deterioration and migration. More and more, external resources are required in compensation : dams and irrigation projects for flood control and rice agriculture, chemical fertilizers for soil fertility.[18]

*IV.3.ii Resource situation*

Land rights have changed from illegal but locally recognized control over indefinitely demarcated plots of mainly forested land to various forms of state guaranteed control. In Ban Dong, NS3 and Chanood certificates leave the individual owner with freedom to use and dispose of land as he or she wishes, while in Ban Mai ALRO retains a significant element of control over disposal of land. Outside the ALRO area, forest reserve land has now been claimed by influential individuals and is in the process of being parcelled out and sold off cheaply to small farmers, some of whom have also worked as illegal foresters for these landowners.

Ironically, the freedom to dispose of land in Ban Dong has led to only limited concentration of land holdings to date, whereas in Ban Mai the effective concentration of control over land (inasmuch as it was ever actually relinquished) has been much more noticeable, albeit through indirect, covert and therefore less visible means. This point is of interest in that it demonstrates the importance of power relationships based on other than state guarantees or free market exchange in determining control over resources, even in a community that has been affected to an unusually high degree by intrusions of state and capital. This will be discussed further in following chapters.

Before large scale deforestation and extension of roads into the area, the utility of forests in Lan Sak was limited to their local use value. This included timber for local construction, charcoal, herbs that were used as medecines, the fish and wildlife that were part of the forest habitat, and assured rainfall. Certain items of exchange value were obtained, notably *yaang* oil and animal skins, but these left their exploiters with an incentive to maintain the forest for sustained natural production of what were virtually the only sources of cash income. In the words of one early settler, they refrained from clearing

land for other than subsistence crops because they were "*huang ton yaang* : concerned for the yaang trees" since clearing would expose the forest to fire and threaten their principal livelihood. Forest was an open resource, but its sheer abundance and lack of exchange value prevented competitive use. The only private control over this resource was the control over *yaang* trees established by prior claim.

Granting of concessions at once made this resource scarce and opened up the forest for a virtual free for all exploitation in a classic "tragedy of the commons" situation (Hardin 1968; see Panayotou 1983 : 53 - 55). Those who may previously have had a stake in maintaining forest, and in any case had little opportunity to exploit it other than for what it could produce replenishably, now had both the incentive (to make what they could before TPC got to it) and the means (roads) to make quick profits from timber. The Forestry Department now maintains rights over both timber in forest reserve areas and that remaining on privately owned land. However, influential local people and even agents of the state (particularly the local police) continue to make profits from illegal timber exploitation.

Other than for timber, forest is also exploited for charcoal. Previously, wood was abundant on individual plots in both villages. However, more complete clearing of fields for commercial cropping has removed this source of household fuel. Many households in Ban Dong now need to buy their charcoal, and most Ban Mai plots will be devoid of stumps within a couple of years. This leads to burning of the forest fringe, both for household use and as a source of cash income for those without alternative means of subsistence. Thus resource shortages in a lowland village such as Ban Dong intensifies the forest exploitation in more recently deforested areas such as Ban Mai.[19]

Before deforestation and commercialization of agriculture, inputs were minimal and yields were high. The land and associated forest resource itself provided all that was necessary for cultivation but the labour and seed, the former generally family or reciprocal labour, the latter kept over from the previous year's crop. With the radical change in the agricultural regime that has taken place, however, these resources are no longer available nor sufficient and most inputs must now be purchased, particularly in Ban Mai field cropping, to a lesser extent in Ban Dong rice farming. Most food protein must now be purchased, especially in Ban Mai, the majority in both villages coming from pork raised by rice mill owners and some farmers.

Another resource previously available and controlled locally was knowledge of a more or less stable environment, as evidenced by the detailed forest knowledge of the longer term residents. Such knowledge is less often recognized as a resource important for production, but like resources that can be applied or consumed more directly, this too has been exhausted (in terms of relevance) in Ban Dong and Ban Mai. This has given way to numerous uncertainties associated with the new inputs and technical knowledge that are a part of the environmental and agronomic change.

The common element in all these changes in the resource situation is the loss of local control in favour of dependence on external (i.e. non-local) influences. In the case of land rights, forestry, agricultural inputs, knowledge, and other resources affecting production, the rapid environmental and agronomic change and the increased role of state and capital in these two villages have placed the whole question of resource management outside the capability of pre-existing local institutions to cope with.

*IV.3.iii Production*

A key element of peasant subsistence production such as that prevailing in the communities of Ban Dong and Ban Mai before deforestation is the undifferentiated nature of the subsistence sector. Even in the exchange sector (in this case *yaang* oil and other forest products), production by individuals varied more in terms of quantity than in terms of economic function. Household labour was used in both cases, reciprocal exchange labour in subsistence production, while trade was carried out by outsiders who brought their exchange goods by ox-cart to the villages. This did not mean an undifferentiated community : differential control over family labour and over *yaang* trees in the case of Ban Mai led to differences in economic status. However, these inequalities were based on differential access to certain resources, and not on direct commoditization of labour or other unequal exchange or production relations within the community. Differences in status *were* associated with social power position within the community, but only later were these to have a direct bearing on the production process.

A transitional period can be identified when agricultural production took on a secondary role to forestry and land sales as the dynamic of the local economy, although clearly this benefited different groups far from equally. During this period, those with the authority to lay claim to large areas of land enhanced their positions considerably through a combination of illegal forestry, subcontracting for TPC, and selling off land to new settlers. Meanwhile, the latter together with less influential members of the older communities continued to make a subsistence living in a deteriorating environment and to take on wage labouring jobs in forestry in some cases.

As has been described above, deforestation and accessibility afforded by the new roads has transformed the agricultural regime. Particularly in Ban Mai, cash cropping is now predominant. Unlike the situation of the previous village economy, differentiation is rife under commercialized agriculture. Tractor owners, shop owners and creditors in Ban Mai now control most sectors of the village economy by provision of inputs and marketing of produce in their strategic position as intermediaries between capital (in the form of suppliers and commodity markets) and peasant production. Increasingly, they are taking direct control over production by hiring labour to work land over which they have secured control. This is accomplished either by effective foreclosure of debtors' land (nominally temporarily but usually for several years and sometimes open ended) or by renting land of those without access to credit and equipment to produce, and who therefore have no alternative but to rent out land at a going rate of 100 *baht* per *rai*.

In Ban Dong, commoditization of labour has been less complete, due in part to the importance of rice as both a subsistence and cash crop and the lower inputs necessary for production. Debt foreclosure is leading to a certain amount of land concentration, however, and rising land prices are inhibiting young farmers from buying land, which is sold off in some cases to outsiders who either rent out the land for cash or under sharecropping arrangements, in the case of riceland, or plant sugar cane on higher land.[20]

Production in both communities is thus increasingly outward oriented. Control over production is effectively in the hands of those controlling commodity prices and factors of production, and these tend increasingly to be influential members of the community as well as

outsiders. Moreover, these intermediaries assume new socio-political positions as structures and the functional role of leadership undergoes change.

*IV.3.iv Leadership*

Ban Dong has had formally appointed, and later elected, village heads for some time. In Ban Mai, the village head has only adopted his formal position since land reform. Before that the *khon to* in Thung Khaa commanded authority and respect, as did lesser *khon to* in smaller outlying communities. Nevertheless, despite the more clearcut break in Ban Mai from inward oriented, community established leadership, to formal, externally oriented leadership when compared with an apparent continuity in Ban Dong, the role of the village head or *kamnan* in the latter has actually undergone some similar changes.

Ban Dong until the 1970s was remote from the district headquarters. As a result, the village head or *kamnan* rarely travelled to the Ban Rai district seat, and likewise district officials and police rarely had occasion to visit Ban Dong. This meant that the leader, despite being formally appointed, was answerable first and foremost to the community of which he[21] was a part, and would be seen as the community's spokesman in dealing with the administration. In one instance, Ban Dong villagers actually successfully petitioned for the removal from office of a *kamnan* who was embezzling registration fees. With state led rural development in the form of increased accessibilty due to road building followed by designation of Lan Sak as a sub-district and then NESDB priority district under the Fifth Five Year Plan, contact between the village and the administration has

increased, and the *kamnan* has served as the principal intermediary. As rural development funds have been channelled into the area, so opportunities for self-enrichment by village leaders have increased, using funds that have come from outside and thus also outside the sanction of the community.[22] The point has been reached where the *kamnan* is seen principally as an agent of the district administration in the community, with substantial material interests in maintaining that position.[23] Meanwhile, his family economic interests extend far beyond Ban Dong, including ownership of an air-conditioned restaurant and a construction business in the provincial town 50 kilometres distant.

Ban Mai, meanwhile, remained isolated longer and more completely. The *khon to* referred to above resisted land reform and associated roads : in his words, "you can have roads or you can eat rice : *ja mii thanon reu ja kin khao*", an allusion to the cultivable land that roads destroy. He was the undisputed authority in the area, and this he established by a combination of patronage (e.g. by helping settlers to establish themselves as *yaang* oil tappers), fear (e.g. by a sanction of violence in the case of infringement of strict rules against gambling and other unruly behaviour), and respect (e.g. by organizing villagers to build the local school and temple in 1968 and 1972 respectively). Doubtless one reason he and others resisted land reform was the loss of this leadership role that he was to suffer, since he was too old to be elected *kamnan*[24] and disliked dealing with officialdom. On the other hand, he negotiated with officials to provide a teacher for Thung Khaa school, whom he put up at his own house, successfully resisting the authorities' desire to make Thung Khaa a branch of Ban Dong school. Four years after its construction, the school was enlarged using government funds.

In the *khon to*'s words, problems came to the community "with the election of a *kamnan* and village head". The *kamnan* and village head who were to emerge in Thung Khaa and Ban Mai respectively (the latter was established as a separate village in 1978) were also influential villagers who were making large profits through the timber trade, the former as subcontractor for concessionnaires as well as through illegal timber operations. They differed significantly from the *khon to*, however, in their outside connections, both in business and in contact with government officials. At the time of land reform, the present Ban Mai village head was a young and charismatic member of one of the outlying communities, well established in the area at a time when considerable upheaval and distrust was rampant due to the influx of new settlers. He was chosen unopposed as head of the new village by a show of hands at a village meeting, and he will remain in that position until he is 60 in the year 2005. He now spends large amounts of time away from the village.[25] Many villagers are in debt to him, and he profits from the new roads with his daily pickup service to Nong Chang, while retaining effective control over his lands by renting from debtors who cannot afford to plant their own land and now work for him and others as wage labourers.

The common element of change in village leadership that can be observed in these two villages is thus an orientation outward, and a reduced sanction over abuse of privelege. In making their increased connections with outsiders villagers rely on the village head, and to a lesser extent the village committee, as intermediaries. These latter obtain their positions by virtue of connections, patronage, or self-confidence based on some other form of power base. At the same time, the district administration and interests of capital,[26] insofar as they can be distinguished, rely on those same people, particularly the village head, as entry points into the village. With the resources

at their disposal, they are making it both possible and more worthwhile for formal leaders to assume the position of representative of the state and capital in the village rather than vice versa. The greater a role external resources play in the village economy, the greater potential there is for economic gain by such intermediaries.

## IV.4 Development in Lan Sak

This, then, is the context in which rural development is taking place. Development is at once part of the change described and an attempt to direct that change. However, as is clear from the discussion in Chapter II, development is not unidirectional change. An understanding of the parameters and contradictions of development in Lan Sak requires an examination of the local actors on this particular development stage.

### *IV.4.i Local "developers"*

A number of activities that are are generally termed "rural development" are taking place in or otherwise directly affecting the two study villages. A brief summary here will help to set the scene for examining the actors themselves.

In both villages, the four principal ministries with statutory activities at the district level (*sii krasuang lak*) have a number of schemes. These include housewives' groups and pre-school centres run by the Community Development Department (CDD); agricultural extension by

the *kaset tambon* (local agricultural extension officer) of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE); activities associated with the village primary schools; health stations close to each village; frequent training programmes and intermittent "advice" at village meetings; and administration of national programmes, such as the Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) and *Phaen Din Tham, Phaen Din Tho'ng* (see section *II.1.ii*). The *tambon* council is instrumental in the administration of these programmes, but initiatives, final decisions, and budget allocations are made by district or provincial officials. Meanwhile, other government agencies have occasional activities at the village level : the Land Development Department has carried out a soil survey of Ban Mai; the military hold occasional "development" training programmes in both villages, the latest being the Army Reserve programme (*ko'o no'o cho'o*) in Ban Dong and National Defense Volunteers (*o'o so'o po'o cho'o*)in Ban Mai; BAAC is the major institutional credit institution in both villages; in Ban Mai, ALRO plays an important development role, both in land reform and in infrastructural development. Government is also active in road building and electrification, infrastructural development that affects both villages.

NGO activity in Ban Mai involves training of youths from poorer families in cooperative integrated farming methods and other skills at the youth training centre of the province-wide Nong Kha Yang Foundation for Rural Development (NKYFRD), with some follow-up work in the village, including activities of the associated Uthaithani Pig Raisers' Cooperative (UPRC). In Ban Dong NGO activities are more community based and involve a rice bank, a buffalo bank, and communal fish ponds. These latter are at present limited to one section of the administrative village, Bung Khiew.

Most of the state developers reside at the District headquarters (*amphoe*) or at the market centre of Paak Meuang. Senior officials are from various parts of the country, while many of the more junior officials, including those working at the *tambon* level, come from Uthaithani or surrounding provinces. With a few notable exceptions, these officials socialize among themselves, barring special occasions when a deliberate show of "mixing" is made as a matter of policy, notably in the monthly *amphoe khleuanthii* (mobile district), when officials spend an evening socializing and the following day providing various administrative services in one of the 33 villages in the district.

Publicly, state developers present a show of unity, and in presenting programmes to villagers it is stressed that *thaang ratchakaan* (the state bureaucracy) or *rathabaan* (the government) rather than a particular department is helping. There is a policy of concentrating on one village in each *tambon* for special attention as a show village for visiting provincial and other senior officials, and this brings various departments together. Training programmes involve officials from all four of the *sii krasuang lak*, and this often leads to a blurring of function as individual officials make semi-political speeches on subjects outside their own field of duty (see section *VIII.3.iii* below).

On the other hand, individual programmes are carried out independently of each other, and while not normally in open competition, departments tend to avoid treading on each others' toes. For example, the *tambon* DAE officer told me that she did not bother with Ban Mai since there are already ALRO officials working there, despite the fact that the latter have no training in or activities concerning agricultural extension. Meanwhile, duplication arises, for example in

the provision of community rice barns by both DAE and CDD. The blurring of function mentioned above is a product of the desire for each department to expand its range of activities. This brings the police, military, and other departments which would not normally be thought of as developers into the rural development field, and such activity also doubles as an image building tool. On occasion, conflict between departments comes into the open, such as in 1986 when the Lan Sak police retaliated over confiscation of one of its illegal timber consignments by arresting a Forestry Department vehicle.[27]

Developers' attitudes to development and the developed can be illustrated by reference to ALRO officials in Ban Mai and the CDD officer for Lan Sak. The official in charge of the Tab Salao Land Reform Scheme is based in Uthaithani but spends lengthy periods at the Ban Mai office. Unlike his predecessor, who was on close terms with many villagers and well liked, Pid does not mix socially with Ban Mai villagers. Unlike most officials, however, he avoids official language and is direct and vernacular in his speech at village meetings, the main forum for communication between ALRO and villagers. He is said to be "*du* : sharp, aggressive" by villagers who have had to deal with him, but he is also seen as fair and uncorrupt. Pid privately considers Ban Mai villagers to have benefited unduly from ALRO's infrastructural provision and to be ungrateful in their lack of interest in ALRO projects. In particular, he sees failure to repair roads following the 1983 floods as irresponsible and made a point of not repairing roads in the village, although ALRO undertook repair work on the agricultural roads outside the settlement.

The CDD officer for Lan Sak has little direct contact with villagers except as a speaker at training sessions and at village meetings; those with direct contact are the *tambon* level officers.

The present CDD officer has spent most of his career in politically sensitive areas in the Northeast and sees his development role as part of the political side of counter-insurgency strategy. In practice, the CDD maintains a prominent position in state led rural development as a coordinating agency between the *tambon* council and the *amphoe*, deciding which villages are most "deserving" of help. The CDD officer stresses the importance of finding appropriate local leaders. The first three things he says he looks for as a sign of "quality" are a clean and tidy house, a fence around the house, and a latrine in or near the house. He uses the standard formula of poverty, ignorance, and illness among villagers to express the obstacles to development. Also prominent in his list of obstacles are Chinese merchants and "*ithiphon* : influence". He suggests that one way to combat the latter is to coopt *kamnan*s and others with influence by sending them for training, such as on the *Phaen din tham, Phaen din tho'ng* scheme (see section *II,1,ii*).

*IV,4,ii Local developed*

In section *IV,3,iv* above, the increasingly ambiguous status of village elites was noted. Since these key individuals within the village polity and economy are seen by fellow villagers at least partly as agents of the state, and since that status is enhanced by their role in various rural development programmes, they perhaps ought to be discussed along with other "developers". However, due to their place of residence, inclusion as villagers (*chaobaan*), and continuity in social relations from a time when the distinction between state and village was more clearcut, they are considered along with their fellow villagers as the "developed", and their changing status is discussed

more fully in the following section.

As we observed in Chapter II, classification of Thai villagers along rigid class lines is not possible and is alien to indigenous categorization. Villagers in Ban Dong and Ban Mai do, however, have their own terms for distinguishing social status. A villager at a development meeting told me that he would have liked to have talked to *amphoe* officials present, but was afraid to do so because of the latter's "*sak* : status". The majority of poor villagers in the two communities refer to the wealthy elite by financial situation as those with "*thaana dii* : lit. good status", "*khon mii tang* : people with money", or even "*khon ruai nai muubaan* : the rich of the village". In Ban Mai they are often referred to by a more specific characteristic of their place in the local polity or economy, notably "*hua naa muubaan* : village heads" or "*jao kho'ng rot thai* : tractor owners". Such people are usually publicly keen to represent themselves as "*chaobaan* : [ordinary] villagers" or "*chaorai chaonaa* : [ordinary] farmers", representing their own interests as those of the poor. The *kamnan* of Ban Dong, for example, frequently complains of the exploitation of "us farmers" by BAAC and various government officials who join hands with "*jek* : ethnic Chinese", despite the fact that he himself does not farm. In private discussion, however, many of the elite consciously or unconsciously distinguish themselves from poorer villagers by use of "*chaobaan*" in the third person, "*khon suan yai* : the majority", or more directly "*khon jon* : the poor".

Differences in status can also be identified by certain social patterns. Although in village society there are as yet no formally exclusive occasions, socialization in Ban Mai in particular is to an increasing extent governed by economic status. However, such patterns are difficult to disentangle from other determinants, such as common

place of origin or present location of residence. The latter is important in the social cohesion and identification of common interest within sub-communities of each of the administrative villages under study. In Ban Mai this takes the form of small clusters of houses in outlying areas and residents of the same *soi* (lane) in the grid settlement. In Ban Dong it involves communities such as Bung Khiew (see section *IV.2.i* above), and here community leadership in the person of Boi is an important resource that has facilitated the establishment of rice and buffalo banks by villagers.

A clearer statement of status is that publicly pronounced by donations to the village temple in Ban Dong. Other distinguishing features are connections with outsiders, particularly local officials, and this takes several of the more influential Ban Mai villagers away from the village. The Ban Mai village head and Thung Khaa *kamnan* and his brother the *tambon* doctor (himself an influential Ban Mai resident) are frequently to be seen at the District offices. The DAE *tambon* worker in Ban Dong stays at the *kamnan*'s residence, making this the main point of contact for *amphoe* officials. Another source of external contact and patronage comes from the local member of parliament, who owns among his other interests the largest pineapple estate and canning factory in Thailand, at Cha-am. In return for delivering votes at election time, several Ban Dong and Ban Mai villagers receive favours and this may take them away from the village for periods of time. For example, the *tambon* doctor in Ban Dong, who also owns a small rice mill, arranges distribution of "T"-shirts of the MP's Siam Democracy party and organizes patronage of the local temple fair.

In terms of production relationships, the major distinction recognized socially in Ban Mai is tractor ownership, while in Ban Dong

it is role as a trader and moneylender. Materially, differentiation goes beyond this, and the following two chapters illustrate the range of production contraints and opportunities faced by Ban Dong and Ban Mai villagers. As will become clear, the economic interests of the "developed" are by no means convergent, and this has important implications for the direction of specific development projects.

### *IV.4.iii Development and change*

In Chapter II it was suggested that development is a generic cover for specific aspects of structural change, and that an ethos of development itself serves as an ideological instrument in bringing about certain forms of change. The present chapter has shown a context of rapid change in Lan Sak, change that has occurred by virtue of the location of the district at the frontier of agricultural land expansion but which retrospectively has been termed development and which latterly has been shaped according to the interests of state and capital in securing control over the polity and economy of an area until recently on the periphery of such control. Control has been secured partly by means of an incorporative rural development strategy. Meanwhile, alternative attempts to direct change on the part of non-statist developers provide separate initiatives by and on behalf of villagers. Latterly, both sets of developers have emphasized villager participation as an essential aspect of rural development, and this raises the question of the role of villagers themselves in orienting change.

Early initiatives by Ban Dong and Ban Mai villagers were detailed in sections IV.1 and IV.2. Such initiatives were not considered at the time as "participation" or even as "development", but many of the

activities concerned (clearing tracks and roads, construction of schools, land improvement) are described in developmental terms retrospectively. These projects were undertaken by villagers themselves, using their own labour and latterly using pooled cash resources. Since most such projects were on a small scale, they usually involved a common agreement among neighbours over a fulfilling a mutual need or overcoming a mutual obstacle. Where direction was involved, for example in construction of Thung Khaa school and temple, local forms of leadership in the person of the *khon to* were employed. This was at a time when production in the community was still relatively undifferentiated by function if not necessarily by scale. More recently, leadership in the context of development projects that orient change in Ban Dong and Ban Mai has come from the more powerful elements in increasingly differentiated communities. Alternative attempts to maintain control on the part of less powerful sections of the community in the context of change are less visible but will become apparent in the following chapters.

Thus change in the context of development involves an interplay between a variety of local and nonlocal actors. Initially posited as a dialectic between outside "developers" and local "developed", this interplay in actuality involves a broad range of interest groups within which can be identified a number of sub-dialectics. The villager/outsider dichotomy becomes less relevant in the face of new divisions and new alliances. Participation in development by one or another of these groups means taking an active part in the direction of change or in controlling its effects. Since we are concerned above all with development as incorporation, participatory development becomes a struggle over the terms of incorporation. The struggle that most concerns us here is that over production, and an account of changing production relations in the following chapter shows how this struggle is

to an increasing extent one that is internal to the community.

Conclusion

To recapitulate, change in Ban Dong and Ban Mai has resulted in a loss of control over resources and decisions affecting their use by a majority of villagers. Rural development appears to pull in a number of different directions with regard to maintaining, increasing, or decreasing such control. A key issue for participatory rural development is thus how to maintain or increase control. Broadly, initiatives along these lines involve one of two possible strategies. The first, which may be termed "avoidance", is to reemphasise local resources as the basis for the village economy in such a way as to give villagers sanction over resources for production. The problem is achieving this via a non-atavistic approach to development, which means accepting the need for new community based institutions. Bung Khiew rice bank and buffalo bank may be seen as steps in such a direction. The second strategy is to accept at least to some extent the importance of external resources in rural development, particularly since there is already a net transfer of resources out of the community,[28] and readjust the terms of control. This means dealing with local power structures, which include not only the village elite but also state elements, although the former can increasingly be seen as coincident with the latter (Turton 1987). Independent initiatives and representative leaders are of key importance in this respect, while obstacles include threat, long standing patron-clientage, and the absolutism of state rural development strategy.

It is neither feasible nor, in the eyes of most "developers"

and "developed", desirable to pursue an atavistic course in search of a lost community that in all reality never existed, and in any case such an option is pre-empted in Lan Sak by permanent material transformations wrought by environmental change and infrastructural development. Having acknowledged change, the question for analysis of the role of rural development vis a vis the position of villagers is rather how it relates to the power position of each of the developers and developed, and thus in what way the terms of participation are defined. This requires an analysis of the implications of various rural development initiatives as they affect participation of the villagers of Ban Dong and Ban Mai in controlling both local and supra-local resources and decisions affecting their use. The following chapter investigates the determinants of control over resources necessary for production in the two villages.

NOTES

1. Western Uthaithani approximates roughly to what are now Ban Rai and Lan Sak Districts (see Fig. 4.2). Archaeological evidence shows that military campaigns of the Ayuthaya period probably used this area as a base of some sort during campaigns against the Burmese. Cave paintings provide evidence of prehistoric settlement.

2. "Lao" is the ethnic name used by members of that group and by lowland Thais to refer to them. While this group did indeed originate in what is now Laos, "Lao" is sometimes used more generally also to refer to people from the Northeast of Thailand (*Isaan*).

3. *Yaang* oil is obtained by burning a hole near the base of the *mai yaang* tree (*Dipterocarpus* spp.). It is used in varnishes, and locally it is used in firelighters for charcoal stoves.

4. Land ownership, and therefore land transactions, had no legal basis. At this time the land area was classified either as forest reserve (*paa sanguan*) or preparatory forest reserve (*thii triam kaan paa sanguan*).

5. Annuals other than rice are hereafter referred to generically as "field crops".

6. Flooding in lowland Uthaithani has also become more severe due to the construction of the Chaophraya Dam at Chainat 30 kilometres to the South. This has created a backup, which raises the water level to several metres above the fields during September and October of some years (most recently, 1981, 1983, and 1985).

7. This somewhat paradoxical element of social cohesion conflicts with the popular and bureaucratic conceptions of frontier settlements as anarchic free for all zones. In fact, the pattern is rather more akin to the traditional "cellular" corporate village structure described by Douglass (1984 : 26) for pre-twentieth century Central Thailand.

8. Phra Seemaa proclaimed that ill fortune would befall those who cut wood from this teak stand. True to his prediction, the few who failed to heed his word have, it is said, met premature and violent death.

9. Evidence for this comes mainly from accounts of longer term residents of Lan Sak. Meteorological readings at the Lan Sak weather station date back only to 1981, hardly long enough to measure the effect of deforestation on rainfall. Records kept at Uthaithani weather station show a significant decline in annual rainfall over the period 1957 - 1983 (see Appendix 3).

10. Jeremy Kemp (1985) questions the whole notion of "village" as bounded entity rather than simply as place where "villagers" live. While there is insufficient space to take up this point in detail, it can be said that the increasingly important administrative function of the village gives greater significance to its borders (a point that Kemp touches on), and that even in those domains or for those functions where the borders are blurred, association with a specific community in that particular domain or for that particular function is still evident. Thus villages can be seen as radiating out from a centre, boundaries being somewhat blurred, in a similar fashion to that of the traditional state described in Chapter II.

11. 1 *baht* = approximately U.K. 2.5p.

12. 1 *rai* = 1600 square metres = approximately 0.4 acres.

13. The most valuable timbers in this area were *yaang* (*Dipterocarpus* spp.), *makhaa* (*Ormosia*), *mai praduu* (*Pterocarpus macrocarpus*), *teng* (*Shorea obtusa*), *sadao* (*Margosa*), *takhien* (*Hopea* spp.), and *mai daeng* (*Xylia kerri*).

14. Use of tax receipts as land title is a general phenomenon. See, for example, Gardener 1979, p.19.

15. Extension of tree cropping was one of the major recommendations of the Land Development Department's 1984 report on Ban Mai. Unfortunately, the report lies buried in the stacks of the LDD offices in Bangkok, and DAE officials (not to mention farmers, many of whom expressed an interest in learning what the government surveyors who came to take soil samples in 1983 had found) remained unaware of its existence a year after its publication.

16. Local variation in rainfall can be dramatic. This is partly stochastically determined due to the nature of convectional rainstorms, which can drench one part of a village and leave another part dry. A generally higher rainfall is also observable near forested areas.

17. The Chaophraya Dam is also an aggrevating cause of flooding : see footnote 6 above.

18. Chemical fertilizers are of highly questionable utility in an area such as Lan Sak. Apart from the risk associated with use of costly inputs together with uncertainty of marginal rainfed agriculture, fertilizers may also have adverse effects on soil structure and natural fertility, making ploughing more difficult and requiring ever greater applications of fertilizer to maintain steady or even falling yields (see Rigg 1985 : 222 - 250). Conversations with farmers in neighbouring Chainat Province and in Khon Kaen in the Northeast, both areas with longer experience of fertilizer use, support this concern.

19. The effect of this is particularly localized due to the illegality of commercial charcoal production. This makes transport a risky business, which means that demand is usually satisfied by production nearby, or concomitantly that charcoal producers or traders prefer to sell locally despite the substantially higher price to be obtained in town. The risks involved in such trade are evidenced by a 20,000 *baht* "fine" (bribe) paid to the police by one Ban Mai trader in 1984.

20. Because of its high investment requirement, long wait necessary (2 years) for economic returns, and necessity of obtaining a quota from a refinery, sugar cane tends to be a crop limited to large scale farmers.

21. The masculine pronoun is used here because there are no women village heads or *kamnans* in Lan Sak. Indeed, it was only in 1981 that women were legally entitled to stand for such offices, since which time several have been elected in other parts of the country.

22. Traditionally, government assistance has been regarded as a free gift (*kho'ng frii*), the administration of which villagers had no sanction over. This is not to say that the embezzlement of such resources goes without comment or resentment - quite the contrary - but channels for redressing such practice are not available to ordinary villagers as they would be in the case of indigenous resources.

23. The *kamnan* in Ban Dong, for example, secures lucrative local contracts for his wife's construction business by virtue of his position. In 1984 he received a 100,000 *baht* contract for construction of a wooden bridge across the Tap Salao River to replace the one washed away in the 1983 floods. For this he used his position not only in securing the contract, but also in conscripting unpaid labour and using wood cut from forest reserve land in addition to that remaining from the previous bridge.

24. Village heads and *kamnans* must retire at 60 under Thai law.

25. So much so that the myna bird outside his house has learned to say "*Phuu yai mai yuu ro'k* : the headman's not in"! This has become something of a village joke.

26. Influential villagers who are also moneylenders and middlemen having connections with larger traders are known as "*hua naa*", or agents. This demonstrates a conscious recognition by their clients of their intermediary status.

27. A further example of conflict occurred in 1985 when students from Kasetsart University held a summer workcamp in Lan Sak. The village in which they were to build a school was located in a forest reserve area. The Primary Education Office was keen to establish a school, but the Forestry Department was reluctant to recognize the right of villagers to squat on its land. Students asked villagers to prepare materials for construction, and while they were away in Bangkok the Forestry Department arrested several villagers for illegal cutting of wood that was to be used for the school. In the end, the students had to move to a different village and use concrete blocks instead of timber.

28. Scott (1976 : 206) is critical of inward looking self-help solutions for this reason (see section *VIII¸2¸i* below). More concretely, it has been estimated that approximately half of pre-tax income of Thai villages was paid out via the rice premium, import duties, sales taxes, other taxes, and registration fees paid by villagers between 1965 and 1975. This exceeds the cost of education, public administration, irrigation, and other services received by villagers (Feeny 1982 : 116).

# CHAPTER V

## RESOURCES FOR PRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

When the tractor owner comes to plough our land, we ask:
'How much?'

When the seed merchant sells us grain, we ask:
'How much?'

When the moneylender sets the interest rate, we ask:
'How much?'

And when the middleman comes along to buy our corn, we ask:
'How much?'

Ban Mai villager

Production presents a problematic for development in two main ways. First, production relations represent the basis for social relations at a broader level. Thus they limit and to some extent determine the way in which society is organized,[1] in particular concerning the distribution of power at various levels. Second, production determines the total material product of a society. As such, it is the basis for reproduction of material elements of the social order, and alternatively for extraction of surplus, for investment in new forms of production, or for redistribution of the social product. Inasmuch as development is concerned with progressive change in social organization and with directing the social product, it is thereby intimately bound up with production.

Production is governed in the first place by resource[2] availability, which in turn is limited on the one hand by the "social" aspect of institutional access via relations of production and on the other by the "physical" aspect of natural availability and technology.[3] The former becomes relatively more important as a

measure of control as natural resource scarcity increases, and the institutional forms of control themselves change concurrently with, if not necessarily consequently from, increasing scarcities. Development therefore becomes more concerned with institutional change and less with "opening up" of untapped natural resources. The physical aspect of technological development plays an important part in integrating local and non-local resources for production, itself requiring new institutional forms.[4]

This tension between development as increasing total production through intensification of resource use and as a reorientation of production so as to effect more equitable social relations is parallelled by two important dichotomies with respect to resources for production. One is the distinction between local and supra-local resources, with most models of development relying on intensification through progressive integration of production such that local production can be increased by non-local inputs. The second is the issue of whether development is primarily a means of mobilizing resources for production or a redistributive process for socially more efficient and/or equitable participation in production.[5]

The present chapter gives an account of production in Lan Sak with special reference to the two study villages. An account of the agricultural regime details the spatial and temporal patterns, with a brief account of the range of technology and inputs utilised. The issue of choice is considered, and constraints on such are exemplified with reference to the determinants of control over production in the study villages, namely modes of access to factors of production. This is followed by accounts of the timing and patterns of production and change in such in each of the study villages, followed by a comparative section. Unless otherwise specified, statistical data is derived from

the systematic survey carried out in 1985 (section I.4 and Appendix 1).

## V.1 Production in Lan Sak

It is evident from the discussion in Chapter IV that production in Lan Sak has undergone recent and rapid change. Individual producers have gone from reliance on an abundant natural environment to an increased dependence on external inputs. Meanwhile, production has moved increasingly away from a subsistence orientation to production for the market, partly as a result of change in ecological conditions and partly as a consequence of increased integration through communication links and marketing structures.

That this change has resulted in an increased total product as measured in cash-equivalent terms is unquestionable. Less certain is the sustainability of this level of production.[6] Yet what is clear from the examination of production in Lan Sak that follows is that this reorientation of production has been associated with changes in production relations which have affected institutional access to resources. These changes have important implications for social reproduction, for social differentiation, and for the relationship of individuals with the wider community.

While I do not want to anticipate these changes and their implications for control over production before a detailed desription of production based on surveys in Ban Dong and Ban Mai, one element is of over-riding importance in that it underlies the principal contradictions of change that are the focus of this study. That is the less than total switch to a market economy controlled by "rational", capitalist

relations of production under which access to land, labour, and capital are the product of monetized relationships. The persistence of other means of access to resources for production reflects power relationships that are not simply anachronistic remnants of pre-capitalist production, but are an integral part of the change that has been taking place.[7]

*V.1.i Lan Sak agricultural regime*

There are both spatial and temporal dimensions to the pattern of agricultural production in a recently settled forest environment such as Lan Sak. Spatially, cultivation is influenced by gradients, soils, accessibility to markets, water supply, and patterns of land holding. However, these patterns change over time as land is improved or, alternatively, as soil erosion and other forms of degradation occur, as accessibility increases, as water control improves or deteriorates, as land tenure changes occur, and as commodity prices fluctuate. This pattern and influences affecting it can best be illustrated with reference to specific crops and parameters affecting their distribution.

Rice. Rice holds a unique place in Thai agriculture as the principal subsistence crop. It is the crop that farmers are most adept at cultivating, and it is generally the preferred crop. However, rice is demanding in terms of water requirements and level land, as a result of which it represents only one-sixth of the total cultivated area of the upland district of Lan Sak.[8]

Rice is grown primarily on the level low-lying land near the Tab Salao River (Fig 4.5) in the eastern part of the district. Here a limited area of land is irrigated by water diverted from the river and

small streams by locally constructed and managed irrigation channels. However, the majority of riceland is entirely rainfed, consisting of level land at elevations too high for diversion of irrigation water.[9] Meanwhile, the desire to grow rice at least sufficient for production, due to an aversion to relying on an uncertain cash income for purchase of such a basic element of subsistence, leads many upland farmers to cultivate often tiny plots amenable to rice by virtue of micro-environmental suitability. These include gullies, shallow depressions, or even level land adjacent to a water source from which water can be pumped up.

Nevertheless, Lan Sak is a marginal environment for rice. Irrigated areas are low-lying and increasingly prone to flooding such as that which ruined a large portion of the crop in late 1983. Rainfed areas are susceptible to drought to an increasing extent, as was evidenced most recently in 1984. The topography and pattern of land holding is such that for most farmers risks cannot be minimized easily by the strategy common elsewhere of dividing a household's planting between flood- and drought-prone areas. This is because of the gradual rise of land away from the Tap Salao River, which means that only a minority of farmers have land that straddles the boundary between flood- and drought-prone conditions. Those who do vary rice strains accordingly (cf. Ng 1978 : 40).

Rice cultivation in Lan Sak requires few inputs. Ploughing is generally carried out using buffalo, although power tillers are becoming popular since they are labour-saving and less susceptible to theft. Planting and harvesting are carried out by hand, planting involving the use of nursery beds and transplanting (except on poorly watered land where broadcasting is sometimes used) and harvesting being by sickle. Chemical fertilizer use is minimal, with buffalo manure traditionally

replenishing the soil. Seed is kept over from the previous harvest or obtained at the DAE office in straight exchange for old grain. Various rice varieties are used, depending principally on irrigability and susceptibility to flooding, since new varieties are short and cannot survive inundation as well as traditional varieties.

Riceland is classified into three types: *thii tam* or *thii lum* (low-lying); *thii klaang* (middle); and *thii sung* or *thii khook* (elevated). Rice is classified first and foremost by its growing period as *khaao nak* (lit. heavy rice, or lengthy growing period of approximately six months), *khaao klaang* (lit. medium rice, or moderate growing period of approximately five months), and *khaao bao* (lit. light rice, or short growing period of approximately four months). The heights and ability to grow quickly if inundated increase with their "*namnak*" (lit. "weight", meaning length of growing period), thus *khaao nak*, *khaao klaang*, and *khaao bao* tend to be grown on *thii tam*, *thii klaang*, and *thii sung* respectively, although this is an oversimplified portrayal. In the high risk environment and without adequate water control, little difference in yield between varieties is apparent; where new varieties are used it is primarily for their short growing period. Intensive high-input rice farming is practised only in the few fields where a reliable second rice crop can be grown.

Although rice production is primarily for subsistence, it is also the principal source of cash income for many farmers. Traders come from Uthaithani and Nong Chang to purchase rice at prices comparable to those found elsewhere in the province. Rice grown for home consumption is milled mechanically, and this means for many farmers having to transport rice to the mill at Paak Meuang. Increasingly, however, small mills are being constructed at the village level. The terms of milling are standard: rice is milled in exchange for the bran, broken rice, and

husks. The husks are used in some cases to power the mill, while the bran and broken rice are either sold or used by the mill owner for pig rearing.

Since the early 1980s, many rice farmers have used their riceland for cultivation of mung beans as a second crop between January and March. Other than providing a small subsidiary income, cultivation of this leguminous crop is recognized as being beneficial for soil fertility (i.e. by fixing nitrogen). Mung beans are a demanding crop in terms of water requirements, even though total rainfall needed is low. In 1984 many farmers recorded a loss due to a complete absence of rainfall, while in January 1985 an unseasonal downpour ruined the crop of those with low lying land. Caterpillars have rapidly become a hazard, and even the expensive insecticides are proving ineffective as the pests appear to build up a resistance.

Field crops. Most of the cultivated area of Lan Sak is given over to field cropping. Although diversification away from rice in the form of field crops has been the principal feature of change in cropping patterns in Thailand over the past quarter of a century (Table 3.3), this has been a national strategy supported by land settlement patterns rather than a deliberate household strategy adopted by the majority of farmers (cf. Uhlig 1984 : 37). This is particularly the case in the Central Plains and on its fringes. That is to say, it is mainly out of necessity rather than farmer preference that the agricultural growth that has been afforded largely by settlement of new land has involved non-rice annuals, since the riceland frontier had largely been occupied by the 1960s (ibid.). This has been supported on the one hand by pricing and fiscal strategies in favour of field crops and until recently buoyant world market conditions, particularly for maize and tapioca, and on the other by fiscal policy depressing the price of rice,

notably the rice premium (Silcock 1970 : 88 - 90; see also footnote 10 of Chapter III above). However, it is important not to overemphasize the enthusiasm, as has sometimes been done (e.g. IBRD 1980 : ii) with which farmers have "diversified". Comparison of upland cropping and rice farming is in any case problematic, given the very different cost considerations between commercialized and subsistence production (Uhlig 1984 : 164).

For a period, though, settlers in Lan Sak did appear to be facing favourable conditions for a switch away from the rice farming that most would have been accustomed to. Moreover, in some cases, albeit a minority, the prime motivation for settlement in Lan Sak was indeed that it was thought commercial field cropping would be a quick route to riches, unlike the modest, no matter how stable, income that was possible under existing rice cultivation. Yet others did in fact make a conscious diversification decision, either by settling land amenable both to rice and to field crops, or by maintaining links with lowland rice farming through kinship ties. The majority, however, had little choice but to cultivate according to the dictates of the micro-environment, and this meant field-cropping for the most part.

As has been described in Chapter IV, field cropping on newly settled forest land produces highest yields for lowest inputs soon after deforestation, and thereafter it involves a progressive deterioration. This has been accompanied in Lan Sak by unstable and generally falling prices for the major field crops following the earlier buoyancy, as a result of which certain of these have become progressively less economic. Even many of the farmers who ten years ago came to Lan Sak specifically in the hope of moving out of rice farming into field cropping would now prefer to switch back to rice, as evidenced not only ideologically by expressed preferences, but also economically by the

premium on riceland[10] and phenomenologically by the pattern of land use.

Maize is the main field crop grown in Lan Sak. Cultivation of the main crop is normally from May to August. Production is almost entirely for the market.[11] Ploughing is mainly by tractor, the large Ford 5000s being the most popular. The dominant seed is the commercially developed Suwan 1. Planting is done by hand, in teams of hoe-wielding "diggers (*khonkhud*)" and "sowers" (*khonyo'd*). Rodenticides and herbicides are necessary inputs, although in some cases weeding is carried out by hand so as to decrease dependence on the latter. Until 1985, fertilizer use was minimal. Harvesting is also manual, and husking is done largely by machine.

Latterly, maize yields have declined significantly. This is attributed in many cases to poor seed ("*pen man*", lit. sterile; or "*krathoei*", lit. transvestite) or disease ("*pen rook luuk tiin*" or "*pen rook bai leuang*", meaning disease of the stem and leaves respectively. Soil exhaustion is clearly a major factor, and this is acknowledged to varying degrees by maize farmers. As a result of declining yields, many farmers have gone into debt from maize cultivation. Yields vary according to soil type, rainfall, and intensity of cultivation, but overall the DAE office reports an average of 19 *tang* per *rai* for 1984, which at going prices of 35 *baht* per *tang* is not even enough to cover inputs estimated by DAE to be 750 *baht* per *rai*. This is not to mention imputed labour costs and interest on loans for inputs.

Following the maize harvest, a second crop is usually planted. Although some plant a second maize crop, most favour other crops. Mung beans, sorghum, and soya beans are the most popular second crops. All

these are also relatively high input crops, mung beans more so and soya beans and sorghum to a lesser degree. Cultivation and milling of these second crops can last until January or February, by which time there is little time before field preparation in March or April for the following season. As a result, some have turned to less intensive crops such as cassava, which is left in the ground for nearly a year with little attention. This allows farmers to seek waged employment for extended periods. Alternatively, larger farmers may opt for this extensive form of cultivation on rented land to minimize labour requirements and supervision that is necessary for other crops. This is despite a general awareness of the destructive impact that cassava has on the soil.

A third stage in extensification of cultivation is apparent with the expansion of sugar cane production. Sugar cane is a crop limited to those with considerable long-term capital and has been planted by a few large owners who gain control over land either by purchase or by rental from debtors who can less and less afford to cultivate their own land. From one Lan Sak village in particular, there is a visibly expanding green carpet of sugar cane engulfing surrounding fields. This is a progression that parallels that which has occurred in other recently settled forest areas of western Thailand, notably in Kanchanaburi province to the south of Uthaithani. Its future is uncertain with the present instability in world sugar prices, but other forms of large scale agriculture are increasingly popular in Lan Sak and elsewhere, notably cattle ranching.[12]

*V.1.ii Choice in Lan Sak Agricultural Production*

Compared with Ban Ping farmers in Chiang Rai province in 1960, whose basic option was between plough and tractor agriculture (Moerman 1968), Lan Sak farmers a quarter of a century later would at first sight appear to be veritably spoiled for choice. Not only are there several crops to choose between, but each crop can be cultivated at each stage by one of a number of methods. Moreover, labour and capital input options are numerous. However, it is asserted here that this choice is largely illusory, since choices of crop, cultivation method, and inputs are dictated by factors largely and increasingly beyond the small farmer's control. In particular:

> The choice of crops [in newly cleared upland cropping areas] ... is a result of the dependence of the farmer on the trader. As a result of the pressure of paying back his debts and his resulting obligation to deliver all yields after the harvest, the farmer has practically no other choice than to cultivate on his land only those crops which are of interest to the trader (Uhlig 1984 : 166).

Even more significant is the fact that the very choices that small farmers are forced to make move them toward a system of agriculture in which they no longer control key factors of production. This becomes apparent from the discussion below concerning control over production via access to resources.

Table 5.1 summarizes the production possibilities for the two main crops in Ban Dong and Ban Mai respectively. The way in which farmers in the two villages respond to these possibilities has been discussed in the previous section, and the following section shows how constraints in access to key factors of production affect choices by different members of the community.

## V.2 Access to Resources for Production

Table 5.1 Production possibilities for rice and maize in Lan Sak

| | RICE | | MAIZE | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Method | Input/Output | Method | Input/Output |
| Seed | KEEP OVER/ exchange/buy | FOREGONE CONSUMPTION/ cash | BUY/ keep over | CASH/ foregone sale |
| Preparation | BURN/ plough | HOUSEHOLD LABOUR | CUT AND BURN/ burn/ plough | LABOUR/ tractor |
| Ploughing | BUFFALO/power tiller/ tractor | OWN/ rice/ cash | TRACTOR/ power tiller | CASH/ own |
| Planting | TRANSPLANT/ broadcast | HOUSEHOLD LABOUR/ reciprocal labour/ hired labour | SOW | HIRED LABOUR/ reciprocal labour/ household labour |
| Pest control | NONE | NONE | HERBICIDE/ weeding | CASH, HOUSEHOLD LABOUR/ hired labour/ reciprocal labour |
| Fertilizer | BUFFALO MANURE/ none/ chemical | OWN/ rice/ none/ cash | NONE/chemical/ compost | NONE/ cash |
| Harvest | BY HAND | RECIPROCAL LABOUR/ household labour/ hired labour | BY HAND | HIRED LABOUR/household labour/reciprocal labour |
| Threshing/ husking | BUFFALO/ power tiller/machine/ by hand/tractor | HOUSEHOLD LABOUR/ reciprocal labour/ cash | MACHINE/ By hand | CASH/ Reciprocal labour/ household labour |
| Use | CONSUMPTION/ sale/ keep over | FOOD/ cash/ seed | SALE/ keep over | CASH/ seed |

Note: The predominant form of production is indicated in UPPER CASE.

Control over production means securing access to resources, or factors of production. Such access is determined by production relations through institutional arrangements determining *de jure* ownership through state guaranteed property rights and *de facto* control that may not be legally guaranteed. Ultimately, control may depend more or less on either of these: there is no guarantee that *de jure* rights will be associated with enhanced control over production if other influences undermine the significance of those rights (see Witayakorn 1983 : 102 - 103). This is particularly relevant where agents of the state are unable or unwilling to enforce, or are collusive in infringing, such rights.

### *V.2.i Land*

Control over land in Ban Dong and Ban Mai varies both in terms of *de jure* ownership and *de facto* control. In Ban Dong land ownership is now guaranteed by the state by N.S.3 exploitation testimonials, which serve to all intents and purposes as land title deeds giving the holder full control over the use and transfer of the land. Some Ban Dong residents' land overlaps the boundary into neighbouring villages, which have not yet been granted land titles. Here tax certificates are treated by landholders as title deeds for purposes of purchase, inheritance, and even informal collateral, but they have no legal basis. Unlike N.S.3 certificates, therefore, they cannot be used as collateral for bank loans.

In Ban Mai, land within the ALRO area is held under the special ALRO land title. This guarantees rights of the holder for use, but it

restricts transfer except through inheritance. As a result, this land title cannot be used as formal collateral except with BAAC under an agreement with ALRO. Other restrictions include a ban on rental of ALRO land. Land outside the ALRO area is forest reserve and holders have no documentary proof of ownership. Ownership over such land is established by verbal agreement.

Control over land is achieved in any one of a number of ways. Purchase of N.S.3 land is a free and straightforward transaction, despite nominal approval that is required from the District Land Office. Purchase of land without title is also relatively unrestricted, although in the case of land without tax certificates conflicts can arise. In 1984, one Bung Khiew villager found that his land in a nearby forest reserve area had been sold by someone else to a third party: only a direct and potentially dangerous intervention redeemed him his land.

Purchase of land with N.S.3 title is increasingly difficult for young families. This is due to the steeply rising price of land. Land that sold for 200 *baht* per *rai* ten years ago now sells for 2,000 *baht*, and the best partially irrigated land in Ban Dong now commands 7,000 *baht* per *rai*. Ban Mai land has always been sold covertly at above the ALRO stipulated price. Cheap land is still available in hilly forest reserve areas at 100 *baht* per *rai*, but this is land of poor quality and carries with it the risk of arrest for illegal settlement. Thus there exists a steep land price gradient, prices rising with both quality of land and security of title. As a result, the best land is falling into the hands of those with ready capital, increasingly in the case of Ban Dong to wealthy outsiders.

Land can be acquired through inheritance, but the traditional division of land among offspring is inhibited by a number of

factors.[13] In Ban Dong, debt has forced a number of elderly farmers to sell rather than to pass on their land. In Bung Khiew in 1984 - 1985, for example, two of the longer-term residents divided up their land. One sold a large portion to an outsider from Nong Chang to pay off 50,000 *baht* in debts to BAAC, a commercial bank, and neighbours. The other sold his land to his children at half the going price of 2000 *baht* per rai in order to meet debts. While this is not a direct form of debt foreclosure, it represents a long-term trend toward loss of control over land and an inability to reproduce the family production unit : even in the second case just described, young families are starting off with the burden of a land debt.[14]

In Ban Mai, inheritance of the family plot is only possible for one of the family, since subdivision of holdings is prohibited. It is too early to assess the long-term effect of this or to determine how it will affect inheritance patterns, but already the solution for some has been to move on to clear or purchase forest reserve land, for others to take on wage labour in Ban Mai or elsewhere.

In some cases, state guaranteed rights to land are not sufficient. An example in the case of Ban Mai is that of Dam, a migrant from Ban Dong who helped Pot, a friend, clear land in 1975. In exchange, he was given 25 *rai* of this land at a time when its cash value was minimal. This land was duly allocated to Dam on land reform in 1978, and he has farmed it since. In 1984, Pot turned up to demand 15,000 *baht* for "his" land. Unable to pay and feeling the demand unjustified, Dam refused. Pot reacted by renting the land to another villager. Frightened of Pot (two people were killed in nearby Isa the previous year in similar circumstances), Dam went into the forest at Thong Lang to rent *yaang* trees for tapping in the hope of raising the cash. However, he only just broke even, the whole family having caught

malaria, and in early 1985 was unable to pay Pot when he again demanded payment. By April 1985, Pot had raised the demand to 20,000 *baht*, with threats to Dam's life if he could not raise the money within a week. Dam spoke informally with the village head, who suggested he tell ALRO but declined to intervene on Dam's behalf. Dam felt that going to ALRO would only make Pot more violent, and ALRO is seen not to intervene in such cases. Dam fled with his family back to relatives in Ban Dong and Pot continues to rent out the land. Dam summarizes his rationale quite clearly: "Having no land is better than my children having no father and my wife no husband. (*Mai mii thii dii kwaa luuk mai mii pho', mia mai mii phua*)". This is a stark example of where power has superceded state guarantees in access to land.

Less extreme cases result from the ability of influential villagers to gain access to land by renting debtors' land at token rates and in some cases in lieu of interest. ALRO rules prohibit rental of land, since the land reform ideal is to encourage equal family size plots. However, the people involved in illegal renting include the village head, *tambon* doctor, and other influential moneylenders within the village. ALRO has neither the will nor the means to enforce its rules against such people, some of whom are in any case by virtue of their position minor state functionaries. The same held true of sales of land by influential local people to newcomers at prices in excess of the ALRO price, which in many cases meant that the ALRO loan was insufficient for full purchase. In some cases this has meant that Ban Mai families are unable to work the land that is legally theirs, and fear of the owner prevents them from bringing the matter into the open. While ALRO is aware of the problem, it admits helplessness in enforcing its own rules.

Foreclosure is still uncommon but nevertheless an increasingly

important means of land acquisition in Ban Dong. In Bung Khiew, for example, one farmer had to sell all his riceland in 1984 to pay off a debt to a Ban Dong villager. His intention was to move on to newly cleared forest land in Bung Waeng along with another landless Bung Khiew villager. Many Bung Khiew villagers expressed uncertainty as to whether they would be able to survive another drought year such as 1984.[15] More common, but less overt, is the rental of Ban Mai land by wealthy farmers described above, which often amounts to foreclosure in all but name. The owners of rented land express uncertainty as to the period of rental. In some cases, such land has been put over to sugar cane, which is at least a three-year and sometimes a four-year investment.

Whereas rental is a strategy of the better-off for control over land in Ban Mai, in Ban Dong it tends to be the landless or near-landless who rent land (Table 5.2). Usually the land rented is sufficient for subsistence requirements only. Three broad types of rental contracts exist: cash, *ka*, and *baeng suan*. The first involves a fixed payment in cash, the second in rice. The latter is a sharecropping agreement, with one-third to two-fifths of the rice crop the normal payment; a second crop of mung beans may be cultivated without charge. The operator is responsible for all inputs. In the case of *baeng suan*, the rent may be reduced at the discretion of the owner in a bad year. Fixed payments are increasingly preferred by landlords as giving a predictable income.[16] Even tenants with assured income sometimes prefer the *ka* system. They see it as giving more incentive to increase yields, and also prefer being able to sell rice immediately after it is harvested and threshed.

The original means of securing control over land, staking claim to it, is more or less precluded now that even the steepest land behind Ban Mai has been claimed. Much of this land has been claimed by

influential people in Ban Mai, Thung Khaa, and surrounding villages. Some of these staked out or bought this land as a result of having had to sell land within the ALRO area. It is sold off to landless families as far afield as Ban Dong for the same price as they would pay to rent land for a single year in their own villages.

Table 5.2 Tenant characteristics in Ban Dong and Ban Mai

| | % of villagers who rent land | Average land owned (*rai*) | Income as % of average |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ban Dong | 29 | 13 | 44 |
| Ban Mai | 21 | 33 | 150 |

Despite the complexity of control over land in Ban Dong and Ban Mai, certain significant points can be drawn from the above patterns. Legal ownership and actual control over land do not necessarily move in the same direction. Aspects of power, inability of household production units to reproduce themselves in an increasingly commercialized village economy, and discrepancies between state guarantees and their praxis all work against control over land by the poorer, less powerful sections, both inside and outside the two villages. In Ban Dong, where state control over land is restricted to guarantees over property rights, such processes are above board and to some extent visible but usually take the form of undramatic intergenerational trends rather than blatant dispossession. In Ban Mai, where state controls are greater and nominally more equitable, most of the processes are covert and thus largely invisible to outsiders, but more sharply felt by those affected.[17]

*V.2.ii Water*

For most Ban Dong and Ban Mai villagers, water is controlled by *thewadaa* (the gods). Athough the ritual of parading a cat in a cage (*hae maew*) is still practised occasionally if the first rains are late, for most it is a matter of chance and where possible risk minimization strategies are taken accordingly. In Ban Dong, water storage in rice paddies is maximized by the usual practice of diking. In some cases paddies have been created by levelling. The availability of commercial machinery on hire has led some of those with sufficient capital to undertake such levelling, and it is an expressed desire of many even in Ban Mai to use any capital that should come their way for levelling to enable water storage and rice planting.[18] ALRO has undertaken some levelling work for ease of ploughing in Ban Mai, but this has failed to prevent serious erosion on steeper ALRO land. Indeed, in 1984 poor timing of grading work led to an almost total loss of piled up topsoil down a gully from one family's land with the arrival of the first rains.

In Ban Dong, water is controlled communally through an elected irrigation committee. This committee looks after the bamboo and log weir at Paak Meuang and the channels that divert water from the Tap Salao River to the lower-lying rice fields of Ban Dong. Although this is an indigenous group, District authorities have recently attempted to formalize control and now attend group meetings. Several attempts have been made by Bung Khiew villagers to divert water to their fields, but so far without success. One such attempt is documented at length in Chapter VII.

Both in Ban Dong and in Ban Mai, natural streams provide an intermittent source of water for rice cultivation. Water can be diverted by the owners of land adjoining these streams. In a few cases,

it may be possible to practise fish farming where enough water can be held back. Since there is no community or legal sanction governing the use of this resource, upstream farmers have the advantage of prior access.

On a larger scale, two long term projects that will affect Ban Dong and Ban Mai are under way. One is the large 565 million *baht* dam at Rabam (see Map 5), which will store water in an 11,390 *rai* reservoir as part of the larger Tap Salao irrigation project. Because this was first planned in the early 1970s when little of Lan Sak was under cultivation, no provision has been made for diversion of irrigation water to Lan Sak fields except for a resettlement site at Phet Nam Pheung. 123,000 *rai* of land in Nong Chang are scheduled to receive water from this project, which will be completed by 1990 at the earliest and involves no local planning or management of irrigation. It will benefit Ban Dong, however, in reducing flood risk. The other project is a smaller dam costing about 3 million *baht* (excluding distribution channels), built above Ban Mai in 1986. Irrigation potential is still uncertain, and Ban Mai villagers have had no part in the planning of this dam. The immediate benefit anticipated by poorer families was a sustained period of wage employment at minimum wage rates (nearly twice the agricultural wage) in construction of the dam, but this has failed to materialize (see section VIII.3.iii below).

Insofar as trends in control over water are discernable, one tendency is worthy of mention. This is a deteriorating natural situation, which farmers at least had the means of adapting to if not controlling absolutely, matched by a compensatory programme of large scale works.[19] However, where control by adaptation in the past was in the hands of individual farmers and community institutions, the large scale programmes are run by the bureaucracy. In one important respect

there is thus declining control over this resource for production.

### V.2.iii *Capital*

The increasing external orientation and deteriorating natural resource situation of the village agricultural economy in Lan Sak mean that local resources are insufficient for sustained or increased production. As a result, control over non-local inputs to agriculture assumes importance. This is determined by access to both short-term capital for seasonal production inputs and long-term capital for control over non-locally produced factors of production.

Except for those with income surplus to consumption and minimum production requirements, access to credit is the means of securing control over capital. Credit is usually divided into institutional, or formal, credit and non-institutional, or informal, credit. The former is at fixed and relatively low interest rates but limited to those who fulfil set conditions regarding collateral or other forms of guarantee. The latter is at variable and relatively high interest rates, but is accessible to those who would otherwise not qualify for an equivalent loan from institutional sources. This is often because the guarantees covering the latter type of loan are not based on legally foreclosable assets but rather on unofficial tenure of land, even less tangible ties of patron-clientage, or exertion of authority. Table 5.3 shows the proportion of credit received from each source in the two villages.

Ban Dong and Ban Mai farmers have four potential sources of institutional credit. These are briefly outlined below, as are parameters affecting their importance to various groups.

1. Commercial bank loans. These are limited to wealthier villagers. The normal collateral here is land with N.S.3 or *Chanood* title. However, machinery or other readily saleable assets can also be used. The advantage of such credit is that a loan can be obtained up to the value of proffered collateral. Also, it is arranged on an individual basis. Only 4 per cent of Ban Dong villagers and no Ban Mai villagers reported having such loans (Table 5.3). In 1984-85, the interest rate for short and medium term loans was 18.5 per cent per annum.

2. Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC). This is the most important source of institutional agricultural credit. Hypothetically, any farmer is entitled to a BAAC loan. The need for individual collateral as guarantee is replaced by the joint liability system, whereby any number of farmers from six upward guarantee each other's repayment. It is possible, therefore, that even landless farmers can qualify for loans. In practice, however, there are considerable obstacles to poorer farmers obtaining loans. Local BAAC loan officers are reluctant to accept landless or otherwise assetless new members. Likewise, local groups are reluctant to guarantee members who may be unable to repay their loans. The bias of BAAC loans in favour of larger farmers has been adequately documented (e.g. Lightfoot and Fox 1983 : 43). In fact, BAAC figures show that in Uthaithani as a whole, this bias is considerably less severe than elsewhere (Lightfoot 1985 : Table 1). In Ban Dong and Ban Mai many poorer farmers are members of BAAC. However, for reasons that will become apparent, this does not give them equal access to loans. In 1984, one third of Ban Dong farmers and one quarter of Ban Mai farmers took out BAAC loans. In 1984-85 the BAAC annual rate of interest was 14 per cent, rising to 17 per cent on default of the one year loan

Table 5.3 Access to credit in Ban Dong and Ban Mai

| | Ban Dong | | | Ban Mai | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cumulative No. of debts** (%) | | | | | | |
| 1 debt | 66 | | | 81 | | |
| 2 debts | 23 | | | 43 | | |
| 3 debts | 4 | | | 8 | | |
| **Creditors** | % of villagers receiving credit | Credit given | % of total credit | % of villagers receiving credit | Credit given | % of total credit |
| Commercial banks | 4 | 172,000 | 6.1 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| BAAC | 33 | 844,000 | 29.8 | 25 | 792,000 | 18.2 |
| Cooperatives | 11 | 132,000 | 4.7 | 15 | 332,000 | 7.6 |
| Agricultural middlemen | 7 | 478,000 | 16.9 | 67 | 2,290,000 | 52.6 |
| Village traders | 26 | 562,000 | 19.8 | 20 | 756,400 | 17.4 |
| Relatives | 11 | 644,000* | 22.7 | 5 | 184,000 | 4.2 |
| TOTAL | 93 | 2,832,000 | 100.0 | 132 | 4,354,400 | 100.0 |

* More than 90 per cent of this is accounted for by 2 debts, those of a schoolteacher and village trader.

Notes : Total amounts of credit are estimated by multiplying the 25% sample total by 4.
Numbers of debts and creditors may not tally due to rounding.

contract.

In addition to one-year (short-term) loans, medium and long term finance is offered by BAAC at slightly higher interest rates. This is secured almost exclusively by better-off farmers and used for the most part for purchase of agricultural machinery. In 1985, a wealthy Ban Dong resident was building a rice mill in Bung Khiew, using a 250,000 five year BAAC loan. The formation and operation of BAAC groups will be described further in Chapter VII.

3. Government cooperatives and farmers' associations. These organizations exist mainly as sources of agricultural credit. They obtain finance from BAAC at an interest rate 3 per cent below their lending rate, which is in line with that of BAAC. Repayment records of these organizations are very poor when compared with direct lending. This is largely due to their lack of personnel or sanction when compared with other creditors. As a result, BAAC now allocates relatively little credit via these organizations. In 1984, 11 per cent of Ban Dong farmers took cooperative credit, from Lan Sak Agricultural Cooperative (LSAC) and Ban Dong Farmers' Association (BDFA). This amounted to less than 5 per cent of total and only 11 per cent of institutional credit in Ban Dong. BDFA now gets no support from BAAC, so its credit operation is relatively insignificant, relying on members' subscriptions as a pool of revolving credit. Its other function of selling rice via the Farmers' Marketing Organization (FMO), for which many farmers originally joined, lapsed after a year as FMO did not carry on its preferential marketing service. In Ban Mai, ALRO set up a cooperative, membership of which is compulsory for all non-BAAC members. It has no function other than supplying agricultural credit and has an abysmal repayment record: in 1984, 139 out of 145 borrowers defaulted. 15 per cent of Ban Mai farmers took out cooperative credit in 1984, representing 30 per cent of

institutional credit.

Table 5.4 Interest on debt in Lan Sak

| | | FORM OF INTEREST | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Cash | In kind | Free |
| CREDITOR | Commercial Bank | 100 (18.5% pa) | - | - |
| | BAAC/Coop. | 100 (14% pa) | - | - |
| | Middleman | 82 (3-5% pm) | 13 (15-25 *tg* ps) | 5 |
| | Village Trader | 47 (5-10% pm) | 47 (10-30 *tg* ps) | 6 |
| | Relative | 75 | - | 25 (3-4% pm) |

Figures are percentages showing the incidence of interest charged by various creditors. Figures in brackets show the range of interest rates.

pa = per annum pm = per month ps = per season *tg* = *tang*

4. Hire-purchase. In Ban Mai, this is used mainly for financing purchase of consumer goods such as refrigerators and televisions. However, power tillers, other vehicles, and other items of agricultural machinery are also commonly sold under such schemes, and most Ban Dong h-p loans are for the multi-purpose power tillers and trailer attachments. Effective interest rates are usually in excess of 20 per cent per annum. The hire-purchase item itself serves as collateral. This necessitates a steady income, since several consecutive missed payments enable the h-p company to repossess without compensation, as not infrequently happens in Ban Dong and Ban Mai when aggressive sales tactics result in villagers' making purchases beyond their means.[20]

Non-institutional credit is of three main types. Although the discussion here is limited to cash borrowing, it should also be mentioned that borrowing in kind is common, particularly rice. Whether or not this is considered as borrowing for production depends on our conceptions and functional differentiation of the peasant household economy. This type of borrowing is discussed further in section *VII.5.ii*.

1. Agricultural middlemen. This is the main form of non-institutional credit in Ban Mai. Agricultural middlemen have as their principal security the crop itself, since creditors are obliged to sell their produce to them. They thereby establish a monopsony position. Interest is usually paid in cash, at 5 per cent per month for

an ordinary loan. In Ban Dong, only 7 per cent of villagers borrow from agricultural middlemen, whereas in Ban Mai two thirds of all villagers borrow from this source. Most Ban Dong villagers borrow from middlemen in nearby Paak Meuang, while Ban Mai villagers go further afield: many borrow from Nong Chang or Uthaithani, and some go as far afield as Lopburi and Takhli in neighbouring provinces. In one respect this demonstrates the patron-client nature of the creditor-debtor relationship, since most of the more distant links are remnants of past ties in areas from which the debtor has migrated.

2. Village traders. For those unable to secure an outside loan due to insufficient connections or lack of tangible collateral, wealthy villagers provide an increasingly important source of credit. Most of these are village traders, and in Ban Mai they are known as "*hua naa*", or agents [of middlemen], since they obtain credit from middlemen typically at 2 to 3 per cent per month. They lend in cash; the principal is repaid in cash, but the interest is often repaid in kind, typically 20 to 30 *tang* of rice or maize per thousand *baht* borrowed. With a maximum five month period between borrowing and repayment, this works out to at least 12 per cent and as much as 24 per cent per month interest equivalent. Sometimes the whole crop goes in just paying off interest, and an even larger amount needs to be borrowed to get through the following year. Debtors are obliged to buy their inputs, sell their produce, and very often to plough their land using the services of this same creditor. In Ban Dong, village traders serve as a source of security in that they can be called on for cash loans at any time, but in Ban Mai poorer villagers complain that the shop owners now have to see the crop in the fields before they will advance any cash credit. In Ban Dong 26 per cent of villagers borrow from village traders, while in Ban Mai 20 per cent borrow from this source. In Ban Mai, certain creditors lend to poor families who would otherwise have no

source of capital, not out of sympathy but due to their reputation as being able to exert authority. It is known, for example, that Saeng, a wealthy trader and tractor owner, killed a man in his youth, and this is linked to his ability to extract payment without the need for collateral ("*khao mai to'ng phuud siang dang mai mii khrai klaa biaw ro'k* : He doesn't have to raise his voice : no-one would dare cross him...").

3. Family and close relatives. If loans from relations are of short duration, no interest is charged. In any case, such loans are generally of small amounts. In some cases, they are a matter of reciprocity, whereby two distantly related households who might otherwise expect interest tacitly agree to help each other over periods of shortage.

Many households depend on more than one source of credit. This strategy is necessary for a number of reasons. BAAC credit is popular for its low interest, but other factors drive small farmers back toward dependence on the same informal lenders that institutional credit is supposed to replace. One is that BAAC credit is insufficient in both quantity and flexibility to cover both production and consumption requirements. BAAC adopts the conventional capitalist separation of production from consumption. It therefore sees its concern with the peasant household as limited to the role of the latter as a production unit and lends accordingly, failing to take into account even imputed family labour costs in agricultural production. As a result, most households have not enough cash to see themselves through the year. This is particularly true in Ban Mai, where virtually everything necessary for subsistence must be bought, including rice. In addition, timing of BAAC loans is inflexible. Borrowing is once a year, to be repaid within twelve months for short term loans. As a result, many are forced to resort to interim loans from middlemen or wealthy villagers,

and to a lesser extent relatives, in order to make ends meet throughout the year. A further problem with BAAC credit is the stipulation that seed and (as of 1985) fertilizer must be taken in kind as part of the loan, otherwise no entitlement to credit is given.[21] This is despite the fact that many farmers have reservations about the suitability of the seed used compared with local varieties in this marginal environment, for example concerning its ability to withstand drought during middle growth. Even BAAC officials could provide no scientific rationale for replacing it every year.[22] Fertilizer is of even more uncertain suitability, and it is clear that most farmers do not want it. This is evidenced by the fact that in 1985, most Ban Mai clients of BAAC sold their fertilizer to Paak Meuang traders at less than the price they were forced to buy it for by BAAC. This, together with the general association of BAAC with unmanageable debt, contributes to the frequently expressed sentiment that is at once a pun on BAAC credit: "*Ngern klum klaai pen ngern klum* ([BAAC] group money has become worry money)".

Middlemen and wealthy villagers maintain a hold on their debtors in a number of ways. One is the increasingly insatiable demand for credit with commercialization of agriculture and corresponding increase in inputs. Another is the debt cycle, whereby outstanding debts are carried over (with interest accruing) on the understanding that the debtor will continue to use the trading and mechanical services of the same merchant and/or tractor owner the following year. This is a remnant tie of patron-clientage, although its multiplexity has diminished. However, the attitude of creditor as provider (*thii pheung*, lit. "one to depend on") remains strong. Moreover, there is usually a greater pressure to repay a non-institutional loan before an institutional loan, due to the pressure (*kaan reng* : lit. "hurrying") brought to bear and the higher interest rate accruing.[23]

On a phenomenological plane, the difference between formal and informal debtor-creditor relations is reflected in the actual priority for repayment. Altogether 24 of the 148 Ban Dong and Ban Mai villagers interviewed defaulted on one or more debts while paying back the other. Table 5.5 shows in which cases debts were repaid first and in which they were outstanding. It is interesting to note that overall, debt is repaid more promptly to informal than formal lenders. This is partly due to the higher rate of interest accruing on such loans. It is also due to the ability of middlemen to "rush : *reng*" repayment, while BAAC and especially cooperatives have little sanction. Latterly, many BAAC members have in fact made desperate attempts to pay back their loans so as not to "*sia prawat* : spoil [their] records" and disqualify themselves from further credit. This was evident in Ban Mai in 1985, when groups of BAAC clients arranged to borrow from village traders at 10 per cent for a single month in order to repay their BAAC loans and obtain the following year's loan, which was immediately used to repay the trader. This is one of the clearest examples of the downward slide into permanent multiple debt faced by many Ban Mai villagers.

Table 5.5 Priority in debt repayment

| PRIORITY | CREDITOR: Relative | Village trader | Middle man | BAAC | Coop | Comm. bank | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| High | 1 | 7 | 15 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 28 |
| Low | 4 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 14 | 0 | 28 |

Note: The total is 28 in each case because 4 of the 24 debtors defaulted on two debts.

Among informal lenders, middlemen are repaid most promptly, village traders next, and relatives last, since greater flexibility is possible in a more intimate debtor-creditor relationship. It is also possible for kin or fellow villagers to repay partially in kind, for example in labour services.[24]

In summary, the expansion of institutional credit has increased the overall level of debt rather than replaced exploitative non-institutional debt. In Ban Dong the average long term farmer debt is 6,400 *baht*, in Ban Mai 9,400 *baht*. Less than half of this is left over from the previous year's current debt, the remainder representing debt outstanding from previous years. This outstanding long-term debt is increasing rapidly in both communities, particularly so in the commercialized economy of Ban Mai.

The demand for credit and resulting debt arises, as suggested above, from the need for ever greater inputs in commercial agriculture. Supposedly high-yielding maize seed - from which not a single farmer I spoke to reported having noticed better results - is a precondition for credit for other purposes. Given freedom of action, most farmers would utilize a single stock of seed for about three years before purchasing new stock even if they were to use the HYVs Suwan 1 or Suwan 2. An aggressive policy of marketing by the Charoen Pokaphan (CP) company, which uses BAAC meetings as a forum, also plays a part. Impressive charts show the yield to be expected with CP seed compared with local varieties, backed up by evidence from demonstration plots which have been intensively cared for, watered, and fertilized on top grade soils in Lopburi province. This is recognized by local farmers, who comment that "*khao mii weelaa fao duu lae talo'd yiip sii...* : they [CP] have time to mollycoddle [the plots] 24 hours a day...". Seed accounts for 15 percent of cash inputs in first crop maize planting, but only 1.5

per cent for the second crop since seed is kept over from the first harvest. For rice, seed only accounts for 5 per cent of cash inputs (Table 5.6a).

Herbicides are necessary for maize cultivation in particular. Since the forest environment has been altered, weeds have become a major problem. Particularly rampant are *yaa khommunit*[25] (lit. communist grass), *yaa khaa* (*Imperatus cylindrica*), and *yaa phong* (*Thysanolaena maxima* Ktze). The first of these has little use, except potentially for compost. *Yaa khaa* is used for thatching and *yaa phong* for making brooms, but they are otherwise seen as pests. Two types of herbicide are used: *yaa khum yaa*, which is preventative, and *yaa khaa yaa*, a weedkiller which is sprayed twice during growth. The first of these has detrimental effects on the soil, felt in particular by those who plant mung beans as a second crop. The precise nature of the pollutant effect on water sources is unknown, but fish disease is evident.[26] Herbicides account for 10 per cent of cash outlays for the first crop of maize, 5 per cent for the second crop.

Potentially more hazardous both directly to human health and indirectly in their effects on wildlife are insecticides. Every year farmers spraying insecticides suffer serious reactions.[27] These chemicals have become necessary in particular for mung beans and cotton, both affected by caterpillars. However, the various pests quickly acquire a resistance to the pesticides. Moreover, those using little or no pesticide protection come off worse if their neighbours use it than if none is used at all, since the damage is then concentrated in their fields. As a result, farmers are forced into an ever less effective cycle of insecticide use. Insecticides account for 16 and 26 per cent respectively of investment for upland and riceland mung bean cultivation, and fully 69 per cent for cotton.

Until 1985, fertilizer use in Ban Dong and Ban Mai was minimal. In rice agriculture it was limited to the small areas of dry season irrigated crops, while it was only used in a few cases and in small quantities for other crops. The reasons for such low usage are manifold. The principal reason is the uncertainty of rainfall and lack of confidence that the expense is warranted. Many fear the dependence (*khwaamkhoey*) on fertilizer that the soil acquires once it is used and the hardening of the soil that results from protracted use. Such fears are justified by experience elsewhere.[28] Indeed, many of the negative ideas that Lan Sak farmers have about fertilizer come from first or second hand experience in other areas, since many retain links with the district or province from which they moved to Lan Sak. Another reason is that the soil is still productive ("*din yang mai sia* : the soil is still unspoilt") since it has only been used for a short time. The district DAE office has a policy of achieving a standard fertilizer usage of 25 kg per *rai* and does not differentiate between soils. This crude approach does little to raise farmers' confidence in chemical fertilizer use. It is not surprising, therefore, that when in 1985 BAAC stipulated that its clients take fertilizer as part of their loan, the reaction was one of feeling "forced (*thuuk bangkhap*)", and evidence to the aversion to fertilizer use is its resale as described above. On the other side, DAE and BAAC regard the low use of fertilizer as symptomatic of the ignorance (euphemistically phrased as "*khaad khwaamruu* : lit. lacking in knowledge", rather than the more direct "*laloei* : ignorant") of farmers, although individual field officers understand and sometimes accept as valid the farmers' case but are powerless to contravene the official policy.

The other major use of capital in seasonal production is in the hire or purchase of machinery. The most important item here is outlay

for ploughing. In Ban Dong rice agriculture, ploughing by buffalo is still prominent, but power tillers are increasingly popular. This involves a capital outlay of 30,000 to 40,000 *baht*, depending on terms of purchase and what accessories (such as trailer, pump) are acquired. If they are not bought outright, BAAC medium or long term credit is available for some, but most depend on hire-purchase. 18 per cent of farmers in the two communities have power tillers, and of these two-thirds use them only for their own fields. Four wheel tractor owners, on the other hand, use their machines principally for hiring out to other villagers. Not even the largest farms warrant full-time use of a tractor; meanwhile, ploughing for upland cropping is now almost exclusively by means of tractor. Rates vary from 70 to 120 *baht* per *rai* for a single tillage, although more is charged if the land is newly cleared or heavily overgrown with weeds. To purchase a second hand Ford 5000 tractor requires at least 200,000 *baht* and is thus limited to those with substantial capital. In Ban Dong and Ban Mai such capital has been acquired through land sales, illegal forestry, or trade. On the other hand, the cost can be recouped in less than two years if the tractor is put to full use. This means being able to hire it out elsewhere during the local slack seasons. One Lan Sak tractor goes as far afield as Paak Chong in Korat after the second ploughing. Personal connections external to the village are important in this case. For the majority of upland farmers, particularly in Ban Mai, hire of a tractor is the single most costly cash input. It accounts for 38.1 per cent as a whole, 35.1 per cent in Ban Dong and 39.0 per cent in Ban Mai. For maize cultivation it accounts for 40.7 per cent of inputs, while for cassava and sorghum 54.3 and 57.3 per cent of costs respectively go on tractor ploughing. Even for rice, tractor ploughing now accounts for nearly half of all cash inputs, but this is half of a smaller outlay (Table 5.6).

TABLE 5.6a Proportion of cash expenses incurred in each stage of cultivation : ALL

| | Tillage | Seed | Planting | Herbicide | Insecticide | Fertilizer | Spraying | Weeding | Harvest | Milling | Transport | OUTLAY PER RAI *baht* | INCOME PER RAI *baht* | AV. RAI PLANTED (No.pltg) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| RICE1 | 49.3 | 5.1 | 9.3 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 13.4 | 19.0 | 3.1 | 105 | 866 | 16.1 (69) |
| RICE2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 35.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 58.8 | 2.9 | 0.0 | 269 | 1088 | 5.0 (3) |
| RICE3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0 | NA | 1.0 (1) |
| MAIZE1 | 40.7 | 15.0 | 3.7 | 10.0 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 1.2 | 3.3 | 12.3 | 7.5 | 6.0 | 295 | 646 | 23.4 (99) |
| MAIZE2 | 69.4 | 1.5 | 3.1 | 5.1 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.6 | 9.9 | 6.9 | 2.6 | 118 | 219 | 21.4 (7) |
| MAIZE3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 12.5 | 87.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 160 | 900 | 1.0 (1) |
| MUNG1 | 35.5 | 12.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 16.1 | 0.2 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 28.1 | 4.7 | 1.4 | 267 | 405 | 16.6 (73) |
| MUNG2 | 26.8 | 9.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 26.0 | 0.0 | 3.9 | 0.0 | 32.6 | 0.7 | 0.1 | 215 | 496 | 11.2 (25) |
| CASSAVA | 54.3 | 2.5 | 3.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 36.6 | 0.0 | 3.3 | 406 | 699 | 17.7 (3) |
| SOYA | 30.8 | 12.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 25.7 | 16.6 | 8.4 | 389 | 1575 | 20.0 (1) |
| COTTON | 10.2 | 8.1 | 0.0 | 0.4 | 68.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 4.5 | 6.1 | 0.0 | 1.9 | 966 | 2740 | 4.2 (5) |
| SORGHUM | 57.3 | 10.3 | 1.4 | 0.0 | 1.4 | 0.0 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 14.5 | 10.6 | 4.0 | 144 | 246 | 16.1 (13) |
| COWPEA | 14.0 | 46.4 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 17.1 | 0.0 | 5.9 | 0.0 | 11.1 | 0.0 | 5.4 | 153 | 146 | 10.5 (4) |
| CASTOR | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0 | 1500 | 2.0 (1) |
| TOTAL | 38.1 | 9.6 | 4.2 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 0.2 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 22.3 | 6.1 | 4.2 | | | |

TABLE 5.6b Proportion of cash expenses incurred in each stage of cultivation : Ban Dong

| | Tillage | Seed | Planting | Herbicide | Insecticide | Fertilizer | Spraying | Weeding | Harvest | Milling | Transport | OUTLAY PER RAI *baht* | INCOME PER RAI *baht* | AV. RAI PLANTED (No.pltg) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| RICE1 | 46.3 | 0.0 | 10.6 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 16.0 | 23.0 | 3.2 | 100 | 938 | 18.5 (51) |
| RICE2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 35.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 58.8 | 2.9 | 0.0 | 269 | 1088 | 5.0 (3) |
| RICE3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0 | NA | 1.0 (1) |
| MAIZE1 | 37.7 | 22.5 | 3.3 | 7.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 5.6 | 8.4 | 8.1 | 6.2 | 214 | ??? | 14.2 (34) |
| MAIZE2 | 85.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 8.0 | 5.1 | 1.1 | 83 | 120 | 12.5 (2) |
| MAIZE3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 12.5 | 87.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 160 | 900 | 1.0 (1) |
| MUNG1 | 37.2 | 6.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 19.2 | 0.0 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 29.5 | 4.9 | 1.0 | 235 | 463 | 8.4 (19) |
| MUNG2 | 27.4 | 10.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 25.9 | 0.0 | 3.5 | 0.0 | 32.3 | 0.6 | 0.1 | 204 | 473 | 11.2 (24) |
| CASSAVA | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - (0) |
| SOYA | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - (0) |
| COTTON | 9.2 | 17.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 73.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 820 | 2700 | 4.5 (2) |
| SORGHUM | 44.8 | 11.3 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 3.7 | 0.0 | 1.2 | 0.0 | 18.0 | 17.2 | 1.9 | 144 | 413 | 14.0 (5) |
| COWPEA | 16.9 | 50.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 8.1 | 0.0 | 4.8 | 0.0 | 20.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 112 | 156 | 6.5 (2) |
| CASTOR | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0 | 1500 | 2.0 (1) |
| TOTAL | 35.1 | 7.6 | 7.8 | 3.4 | 7.5 | 0.3 | 1.7 | 2.3 | 24.9 | 7.1 | 2.2 | | | |

TABLE 5.6c Proportion of cash expenses incurred in each stage of cultivation : Ban Mai

| | Tillage | Seed | Planting | Herbicide | Insecticide | Fertilizer | Spraying | Weeding | Harvest | Milling | Transport | OUTLAY PER RAI *baht* | INCOME PER RAI *baht* | AV. RAI PLANTED (No.plts) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| RICE1 | 59.3 | 21.9 | 5.1 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 4.8 | 5.8 | 2.7 | 119 | 660 | 9.1 (18) |
| RICE2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - (0) |
| RICE3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - (0) |
| MAIZE1 | 42.2 | 11.2 | 3.9 | 11.6 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 1.3 | 2.1 | 14.3 | 7.1 | 5.9 | 337 | 768 | 28.1 (65) |
| MAIZE2 | 62.8 | 2.2 | 4.4 | 7.1 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.8 | 10.7 | 7.6 | 3.3 | 131 | 259 | 25.0 (5) |
| MAIZE3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - (0) |
| MUNG1 | 34.9 | 14.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 15.1 | 0.2 | 1.9 | 0.0 | 27.6 | 4.6 | 1.5 | 278 | 384 | 19.5 (54) |
| MUNG2 | 14.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 28.8 | 0.0 | 12.3 | 0.0 | 41.2 | 3.3 | 0.0 | 486 | 1035 | 5.0 (1) |
| CASSAVA | 54.3 | 2.5 | 3.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 36.6 | 0.0 | 3.3 | 406 | 699 | 17.7 (3) |
| SOYA | 30.8 | 12.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 25.7 | 16.6 | 8.4 | 389 | 1575 | 20.0 (1) |
| COTTON | 10.9 | 1.9 | 0.0 | 0.6 | 65.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 7.5 | 10.2 | 0.0 | 3.1 | 1063 | 2767 | 4.0 (3) |
| SORGHUM | 65.2 | 9.7 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 12.4 | 6.4 | 5.3 | 144 | 142 | 17.4 (8) |
| COWPEA | 11.1 | 42.8 | 2.3 | 0.0 | 26.1 | 0.0 | 7.0 | 0.0 | 2.1 | 0.0 | 10.7 | 193 | 136 | 14.5 (2) |
| CASTOR | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - (0) |
| TOTAL | 39.0 | 10.2 | 3.1 | 6.8 | 5.5 | 0.2 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 21.4 | 5.8 | 4.9 | | | |

n.b. RICE1 is the principal rice crop; RICE2 is the secondary, irrigated rice crop; RICE3 is glutinous rice.
MAIZE1 is the principal maize crop; MAIZE2 is the secondary maize crop; MAIZE3 is sweetcorn.
MUNG1 is the upland mung bean crop following MAIZE1; MUNG2 is the riceland mung bean crop following RICE1.

The income from unsold rice is calculated at 29 *baht* per tang.

*V.2.iv Labour*

Labour for production is secured in three main ways. First, household labour (*tham eng*) provides the basis for peasant production.[29] Second, reciprocal labour (*ao raeng* or *long khaek*) provides the means for social mobilization of labour for tasks beyond the capacity of household labour. Third, waged employment (*jaang*) commoditizes labour within the monetized economy. Two additional minor forms of labour are free labour given to relatives and neighbours, and community labour secured by dictate or agreement.

Household labour is the form of labour over which the household production unit has most direct control. Control over household labour depends first and foremost on reproduction of the family unit. This in turn requires adequate levels of food consumption and health, both traditionally secured largely from own production and locally available resources. However, recent changes have altered this situation greatly, and cash is now important for both forms of bodily sustenance. In the case of food, most families in Ban Mai purchase the bulk of their requirements, including rice. In Ban Dong, subsistence production still commonly provides basic food needs, although most families supplement this with cash purchases. However, in the case of medicine cash has become necessary with the decline in traditional herbal practices, reliance on modern drugs and hospitals, and the need for cash payment to local doctors who in the past would have taken payment in kind (e.g. rice, chickens, labour services). The slide into debt is commonly precipitated by medical expenses, and these may in turn arise from illness related to production (see footnote 26 and the cases of Phad and Porn in section *VI.1.iv* below).

Traditionally, control over household labour would have been an important asset in a situation of relative land abundance and low capital inputs. In particular, clearing of forest land in Lan Sak and maintaining a claim to land depended on "having a following or 'mates' : *mii phak mii phuak*", at the heart of which would have been a close and preferably large family (cf. Ananya 1985 : 83 - 84). Several of the most influential villagers in Ban Mai, for example the village head and the *tambon* doctor, come from large Thung Khaa families. With increasing land scarcity, changing means of securing control over land, and the growing importance of capital inputs in the production process, the advantages of control over household labour diminish in relative significance. Indeed, an excess of household members can be a liability in terms of increased consumption demands.[30] Furthermore, in the relatively closed village economy, household labour was fully under the control of the household production unit. Declining opportunities for employment of such labour and increasing off-farm employment, on the other hand, cause young people to leave their families at an age where they are most productive.[31] This is widespread in Ban Mai in particular. Many of the young people who leave lose contact with their parents, and large remittances from children working in Bangkok or elsewhere are the exception rather than the rule. 40 per cent in Ban Mai and 26 per cent in Ban Dong who live away from home send no remittance at all. Despite these changes, a certain amount of household labour is still important for most stages in the agricultural production process, as is evident from Table 5.1.

The major exceptions are in non-rice agriculture, where ploughing is done mostly by tractor because of two main environmental constraints. One is the hardening of the soil that has taken place following deforestation, which makes use of draught animals difficult. This is

compounded by the effect of tractor ploughing itself, which further compresses the soil and leads to the formation of a hardpan, while not providing nutrients and the healthy structural effect that animal manure has on the soil. The other constraint is the shortened planting season, which means that the period for ploughing is short. Delays are therefore risky, and ploughing early is not practicable because of weeds. Milling, husking, and threshing is mainly by machine because of the need to get produce sold quickly. The buyer usually also mills, husks, or threshes the produce.

Household labour is not sufficient for many of the stages of the cropping process, since there is only a "window" of a few days due to weather related factors or to the need for even planting and harvesting. This has always been true in rice cultivation. Reciprocal arrangements have been a traditional method of securing control over village labour within the community but beyond the individual household. These arrangements will be discussed in more detail in Chapter VII; for the time being, discussion is limited to the trends in use of this form of labour.

*Ao raeng* has diminished in importance rapidly throughout the Central Plains (Ananya 1985 : 92; Girling 1981 : 45). In Lan Sak it is still common in rice harvesting and in maize planting, but otherwise it is used decreasingly (Table 5.7). Previously, *ao raeng* would be used for rice transplanting and other parts of the agricultural production cycle. Importantly, control over such labour depends not on access to capital or other external resources, but on two intrinsically domestic resources, namely household labour and social relations within the community.[32] Reasons for the decline of *ao raeng* are suggested in Chapter VII. Meanwhile, Table 5.8 shows that ability to depend solely on household and reciprocal labour varies both between crops and between

Table 5.7a Proportion of non-household labour hired/reciprocal : ALL

| | Planting | Spraying | Weeding | Harvesting |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | (No.pltg) | | |
| RICE1 | 65% R | 87% H | 100% H | 70% R |
| RICE2 | 82% H | – | – | 100% H |
| RICE3 | – | – | – | – |
| MAIZE1 | 54% H | 97% H | 63% H | 85% H |
| MAIZE2 | 92% H | 100% H | 100% H | 80% H |
| MAIZE3 | – | – | – | – |
| MUNG1 | 90% R | 95% H | – | 97% H |
| MUNG2 | – | 100% H | – | 94% H |
| CASSAVA | 88% R | – | – | 81% H |
| SOYA | – | – | – | 100% H |
| COTTON | 100% R | – | 100% H | 65% H |
| SORGHUM | 100% H | 100% H | – | 76% H |
| COWPEA | 79% R | 100% H | – | 100% H |
| CASTOR | – | – | – | – |

Table 5.7b Proportion of non-household labour hired/reciprocal : Ban Dong

| | Planting | Spraying | Weeding | Harvesting |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | (No.pltg) | | |
| RICE1 | 67% R | 100% H | 100% H | 69% R |
| RICE2 | 82% H | – | – | 100% H |
| RICE3 | – | – | – | – |
| MAIZE1 | 53% R | 100% H | 62% H | 60% H |
| MAIZE2 | – | – | – | 100% H |
| MAIZE3 | – | – | – | – |
| MUNG1 | – | 100% H | – | 91% H |
| MUNG2 | – | 100% H | – | 94% H |
| CASSAVA | – | – | – | – |
| SOYA | – | – | – | – |
| COTTON | – | – | – | – |
| SORGHUM | 100% H | 100% H | – | 82% H |
| COWPEA | 100% R | 100% H | – | 100% H |
| CASTOR | – | – | – | – |

Table 5.7c Proportion of non-household labour hired/reciprocal : Ban Mai

| | Planting | Spraying (No.pltg) | Weeding | Harvesting |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| RICE1 | 55% H | 100% R | – | 79% R |
| RICE2 | – | – | – | – |
| RICE3 | – | – | – | – |
| MAIZE1 | 56% H | 97% H | 63% H | 89% H |
| MAIZE2 | 92% H | 100% H | 100% H | 79% H |
| MAIZE3 | – | – | – | – |
| MUNG1 | 90% R | 94% H | – | 98% H |
| MUNG2 | – | 100% H | – | 100% H |
| CASSAVA | 88% R | – | – | 81% H |
| SOYA | – | – | – | 100% H |
| COTTON | 100% R | – | 100% H | 65% H |
| SORGHUM | 100% H | – | – | 70% H |
| COWPEA | 100% H | 100% H | – | 100% H |
| CASTOR | – | – | – | – |

n.b. RICE1 is the principal rice crop; RICE2 is the secondary, irrigated rice crop; RICE3 is glutinous rice. MAIZE1 is the principal maize crop; MAIZE2 is the secondary maize crop; MAIZE3 is sweetcorn. MUNG1 is the upland mung bean crop following MAIZE1; MUNG2 is the riceland mung bean crop following RICE1.

H = HIRED LABOUR

R = RECIPROCAL LABOUR

communities for the same crop. In general, subsistence rather than cash crops can be produced using solely these domestic labour resources, and the less commercialized economy of Ban Dong shows a greater reliance on household and reciprocal labour than Ban Mai even for cash crops.

Table 5.8 Households using only own and reciprocal labour in labour intensive stages of production* for each crop

| | Ban Dong | | Ban Mai | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| RICE1 | 62.7 | (69.8) | 83.3 | (24.0) |
| RICE2 | 33.3 | (4.1) | - | (0.0) |
| RICE3 | 100.0 | (1.4) | - | (0.0) |
| MAIZE1 | 38.2 | (46.6) | 12.3 | (86.7) |
| MAIZE2 | 50.0 | (2.7) | 40.0 | (6.7) |
| MAIZE3 | 100.0 | (1.4) | - | (0.0) |
| MUNG1 | 31.6 | (26.0) | 14.8 | (72.0) |
| MUNG2 | 12.5 | (32.9) | 0.0 | (1.3) |
| CASSAVA | - | (0.0) | 33.3 | (4.0) |
| SOYA | - | (0.0) | 0.0 | (1.3) |
| COTTON | 100.0 | (2.7) | 33.3 | (4.0) |
| SORGHUM | 40.0 | (6.8) | 12.5 | (10.7) |
| COWPEA | 50.0 | (2.7) | 50.0 | (2.7) |
| CASTOR | 100.0 | (1.4) | - | (0.0) |

* Planting, spraying, weeding, harvesting

Note : Figures in brackets represent % planting that crop

While the importance of household labour and reciprocal labour has been diminishing, hiring of labour has been on the increase. In Ban Dong 62 per cent and in Ban Mai 68 per cent of households are engaged in paid agricultural employment. Although the wealthier farmers are the larger employers, even small, capital deficient households employ labour at some stages of the agricultural production process. As a result, 40 per cent and 57 per cent of Ban Dong and Ban Mai households respectively are simultaneously agricultural labourers and employers of labour. Table 5.6 shows the extent of use of hired labour relative to reciprocal labour in each stage of cultivation of various crops in the two villages.

It should be noted that securing even wage labour is not entirely independent of social relations. Use of the term "*khaek* : lit. guest" as opposed to "*luuk jaang* : lit. employee" is a continuity of discourse that underlies a certain continuity of functional status in the producer-labourer relationship. Proof of this lies in the treatment of wage labourers working alongside reciprocal labourers as ordinary *khaek*, whereas quite different expectations are held of teams of wholly hired labour. Wealthier farmers who employ solely or mainly wage labour recruit from large pools all round the village, although practicality often involves having to "*bo'k khaek* : lit. tell labourers" who live close to each other in order to save time in summoning labour. Smaller farmers recruit from within a limited circle, often employing *khaek* from families who later employ them. Teams of reciprocating families during the planting season will hire labour first and foremost within the circle when it comes to harvesting.

Nevertheless, even though wage labour does not entirely undermine the importance of social relations, control over agricultural labour depends to a decreasing extent on intrinsic household resources and to a greater extent on the ability to hire labour. This in turn requires access to capital. As a result, poorer households suffer a loss of control over labour for production, since they are at once unable to summon reciprocal labour, as in the past, and at the same time are constrained in their ability to hire wage labour. Such households thus become net suppliers of wage labour, while wealthier households manage to secure labour beyond what could be achieved using only household resources.

Management of labour shows a qualitative change in the move from household and reciprocal labour to hired labour. No supervision is required for household labour, since those involved are all part of the

same production and consumption unit. It is often said by villagers that they prefer working on their own land, since "*tham maak dai maak; tham noi dai noi* : do a lot and you get a lot; do little and you get little" and "*neuai ko' phak dai*: if you're tired you can rest". In the case of reciprocal labour, supervision is limited to pointing out which fields are to be planted when. Any members of the "host : *jaophaap*" household in the fields will work alongside the *khaek*, while rests are taken by common agreement. The knowledge that the task is to be reciprocated prevents shirking, but the work is more relaxed and timing more flexible than hired labour : if a field is finished early, *khaek* may go home early; if a small amount remains to be done at going home time, *khaek* often stay on to finish the job as they would on their own fields. For hired labour, on the other hand, supervision is much stricter. An adult member of the hiring household supervises the work, calls the breaks, and occasionally admonishes slackers. Timing is strictly by the clock.

Agricultural wage labour rates are well below the minimum wage in Uthaithani province of 54 *baht* per day. In Ban Dong and Ban Mai in 1984 the standard rate was 30 *baht*. Occasionally this rises to 35 *baht* at times of peak demand, for example during the height of the planting season in Ban Mai. Larger employers of labour even bring in teams from lowland villages during such periods. An increasing incidence of reliance on cash income from wage labour means that the availability of such labour has increased, especially in Ban Mai. This has been accompanied by stagnant or falling wage rates. Despite inflation, the normal rate has not risen for four years. Even more telling is the rice wage as alternative to cash payment in Ban Dong. The eldest residents report that this once standard form of payment has stood at one *tang* of paddy for as long as they can remember. This same *tang* payment is for the employer equivalent to slightly less than

the 30 *baht* cash wage, and for the employee it amounts to slightly more than the rice that could be obtained for the cash wage.[33] Meanwhile, the price of rice has fallen steadily relative to the overall price index. The downward pressure on wages is felt acutely by those most affected. It is explained by one Ban Mai landless labourer as being due to the fact that "*pii nii khaek maak khao lomjom loei mai mii thun tham rai* : this year there are many labourers [lit. guests]; they've gone under [lit. sunk] so have no capital to plant [their own] field crops". Harvesting wages for field crops are usually at piece rate, by the sack for maize and by the basket for mung beans. Piecework harvest rates in Ban Mai have fallen recently with declining crop prices and reduced yields.

In summary, traditional forms of labour were controlled within the household and the community. Commoditization of labour removes these limitations. It gives those with capital potential control over a much wider pool of labour than they could secure by traditional means. At the same time, it means that those without capital become themselves the commodity subject to control by monetized relations.

*V.2.v Fuel*

Fuel for cooking was until recently plentiful in Lan Sak in the form of charcoal. Even after deforestation, tree stumps burnt in the fields provided a source of wood. In Ban Dong, many families (41 per cent) now need to buy all or some of their requirements. In Ban Mai, wood is also becoming increasingly scarce, as a result of which forest reserve land nearby is encroached upon with severe environmental consequences. 80 per cent of households still manage without having to

purchase charcoal, but this number can be expected to decrease rapidly. Charcoal in Ban Dong is purchased mainly from villages to the north, which were settled more recently and still have a supply of wood and stumps. Charcoal is sold here for 30 to 35 *baht* per sack. In Ban Dong the price can reach as much as 50 to 60 *baht*. The reason for this differential is not just the cost of transport *per se*. More important is the risk involved, since transporting charcoal is illegal and heavy fines can be imposed. In Ban Mai, such a differential is absent, since charcoal is available on the fringes of the village. However, some traders (Ban Mai pickup owners) buy charcoal for 30 to 40 *baht* per sack in Ban Mai, mostly from landless or near-landless families, and sell it at Nong Chang market for double the price. This is risky for those not in with the police, as the "fine" referred to in footnote 9 of the previous chapter demonstrates. In Ban Dong, a few wealthy households have begun to follow the trend elsewhere in the Central Plains of switching to cooking on gas stoves.

Motive power for ploughing and transport is increasingly dependent on petrol or diesel engines, as indicated above. Draught animals are still used widely for ploughing rice fields, but relatively rarely are they now used for drawing carts as in the past. The exceptions are in carting home the rice harvest from distant fields and in (illegal) transport of logs, usually at night, from villages nearby Ban Dong into the village.

Therefore, whereas fuel was until recently an abundant resource over which control was universal, it is now in short supply and increasingly secured within the monetized economy. One side of this monetized fuel economy is covert, since the law proscribes manufacture of charcoal for other than own consumption.

*V.2.vi Knowledge*

"I am master of [this] college;
...what I don't know isn't knowledge!"

- Epigram on Benjamin Jowett

"I am native of this village;
how can what *I* know be knowledge?"

- P.H.

Long term residents of Ban Dong and Ban Mai have an intimate knowledge of the forest environment. Early settlers in both communities quickly adapted to the exigencies of subsistence production and *yaang* oil tapping by acquiring an extensive knowledge of flora and fauna, soils and water resources. Settlement was governed by use of natural resources, particularly water courses. Traditional land preparation, ploughing, selection of seed, harvesting, and threshing techniques were adapted to the constraints of the environment and locally available resources. Knowledge was acquired through direct experience, learning from neighbours - by observation and communication - and by passing on from one generation to the next. Of course, such knowledge was not perceived of as such (*khwaamruu*), for *khwaamruu* is something that one gets at school or from official training. Rather, such knowledge was part of a "practical consciousness" (see Giddens 1984 : xxiii, xxx, 41 - 45).

As long as the production regime remained the same within a not greatly altered environment, possession of such knowledge gave Ban Dong and Ban Mai settlers an advantage over outsiders in terms of control over production. However, several changes have taken place to undermine this control. Loss of the forest environment has meant a rapid disappearance of many elements fundamental to the subsistence production

regime. Large and small wildlife, assured rainfall and fluvial water sources, forest shrubs and herbs, *yaang* trees, and a replenished soil were all part of the disappearing system. The result has been uncertainty, where traditional knowledge is insufficient to cope with the pace of environmental change. Change to market-oriented production has meant introduction of new crops, new methods, and new inputs which require a new stock of knowledge for successful production.

Despite rapid adaptation and adoption of new methods, Ban Dong and Ban Mai farmers do not maintain the same advantage as they did with indigenous production in a less altered system. From the official's point of view, the basic obstacle to villagers' improvement in their circumstances is that they "*khaad khwaamruu* : lack knowledge". Villagers themselves jest to an outsider that "*phuak rao ngoo; mai mii khwaam ruu...* : we're stupid; we don't possess knowledge...". The old *khon to* in Thung Khaa says of outside events that are known to affect farmers such as the 1984 devaluation of the *baht* that it is not worth trying to explain them over the radio : "*Meuan sii so' hai khwaai fang* : It's like playing the violin to a buffalo".

What has been lost is not the essence of the knowledge itself. Rather, it is first the relevance of that knowledge in a changed situation, and second, even where indigenous knowledge maintains its relevance or has been adapted or supplemented so as to suit the new situation, the status of indigenous knowledge has diminished. As mentioned above, "*khwaamruu*" is used to apply only to formally recognized information, skills, or techniques that have been passed on in a situation of DAE official, schoolteacher, or other outsider conveying "knowledge" to an ignorant peasantry. It is thus by definition that "Villagers are without knowledge : *chao baan khaad khwaamruu*", for what they know is not knowledge as defined by the

dominant discourse.

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Access to land, water, capital, labour, fuel, and knowledge has been described as the means to control over key resources for production in Ban Dong and Ban Mai. Before moving on to a closer examination of production itself in the study villages, four aspects of control over these resources need to be reiterated:

1. The trend toward declining local control and concomitant increase in control by external forces or through external connections.
2. The commercial monetized economy as a key element in facilitating this reorientation.
3. Within each community, differential assumption or relinquishing of control by different groups.

## V.3 Production in the Study Villages

The principal parameters of production in the agricultural economy of Lan Sak have been described. This was followed by an account of the means by which individual households gain control over production via resources and institutions governing access to them. The emphasis has been on change and the ways in which it has affected control. These points are now illustrated by reference to production in the two study villages. For each village there is a description of the agricultural production cycle, and this is followed by a brief comparative section.

### *V.3.i Production in Ban Dong*

Ban Dong is primarily a rice growing village, but most farmers also grow field crops. Ban Dong farmers consider and refer to themselves as *chaonaa*, or rice farmers. This is despite the fact that non-rice production may be a larger portion of some farmers' agricultural activities, measured in time spent, area planted, or income derived. Overall, rice accounted for 80 per cent of crop production by value[34] and 66 per cent of total area planted in the 1984 main crop season, while secondary crops grown on riceland made up 57 and 51 per cent of production and area respectively. Considered alternatively, 60 per cent of Ban Dong villagers who cultivated crops in 1984 produced mainly rice, and 69 per cent planted mainly riceland. Table 5.9 shows the relative importance of the various crops planted in Ban Dong.

Table 5.9 Ban Dong cropping

| | | % households planting | % area planted | Yield per *rai* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rice1 | 70 | 47.3 | 32.4 *tang* |
| | Rice2 | 4 | 0.8 | 37.5 *tang* |
| | Rice3 | 1 | 0.1 | 25.0 *tang* |
| | Maize1 | 47 | 24.3 | 13.0 *tang* |
| C | Maize2 | 3 | 1.3 | 3.8 *tang* |
| R | Maize3 | 1 | 0.1 | 15.0 '00 cobs |
| O | Mung 1 | 26 | 8.0 | 4.3 *tang* |
| P | Mung 2 | 33 | 13.5 | 4.6 *tang* |
| S | Cassava | 0 | 0.0 | - |
| | Soya | 0 | 0.0 | - |
| | Cotton | 3 | 0.5 | 208.3 kilogrammes |
| | Sorghum | 7 | 3.5 | 12.3 *tang* |
| | Cowpea | 3 | 0.7 | 1.7 *tang* |
| | Castor | 1 | 0.1 | 10.0 |

Note : for explanations of crops see Table 5.6

As is clear from the preceding section, control over land, water,

and household labour are the key factors in rice production. Average land ownership in Ban Dong is 24 *rai*, or 33 *rai* if land owned outside the village is included, and ranges from none to 139 *rai*, or 180 including land owned elsewhere. Most of the non-local land is forest reserve or preparatory forest reserve land owned elsewhere in the district, and much of it has yet to be cleared and put under permanent cultivation. One in five villagers is landless, while another 17 per cent own less than 5 *rai* in the village. Of those farming, less than one-quarter have mainly irrigated or semi-irrigated fields, but 37 per cent gain at least some benefit of irrigation water from the *meuang*. Technically, most of the riceland in Ban Dong is at least semi-irrigable, but various factors to be discussed in Chapter VII leave large areas, including almost the whole of Bung Khiew, to rely on rainfall. Household labour is still mostly locally employed, although nearly one in three households had at least one member absent for part of 1984. Of these, many were only away for the dry season.

Rice is planted from June onward. Timing of planting depends both on the rains in any one year and on the situation of particular fields with regard to water. Fields are ploughed once the soil has been softened by the first rains. If possible, rice is sown in nursery beds and transplanted. This is more labour intensive than broadcasting, but it gives higher yields and facilitates harvesting.[35] In 63 per cent of cases, only family labour was used. Of the non-household labour used for transplanting, one third was hired labour and two thirds reciprocal labour. In 1984 the drought was such that Ban Dong farmers could not inundate rainfed fields, so that they had to resort to broadcasting, using family labour.

Between planting and harvesting, there is little to attend to in Ban Dong rice farming. Those with upland (51 per cent) manage to

intersperse maize and secondary crops[36]. Approximately ten days before harvesting, local varieties of rice are deliberately toppled (*naab*) so as to fall neatly in one direction and ease harvesting. A few days before the day of the harvest, labour (*khaek* : lit. guests) is summoned for that particular day. Most of these come under reciprocal labour agreements, but some may be hired. The harvest is usually completed within one or two days, those with larger fields inviting more *khaek*.

Threshing and winnowing of rice is done in any one of a number of ways. Those with buffalo often maintain the traditional practice of stamping (*yiabyam*), the grain being laid out on an earth threshing floor and buffalo driven around a stake planted in the middle. Winnowing is then done using trays. This process may be mechanized partially by driving a small tractor or power tiller over the grain in place of a buffalo. Full mechanization in the form of threshing machines is becoming more popular, however, at a charge of 1 baht per *tang*. These machines are owned by wealthy villagers.

Most (60 per cent) of Ban Dong villagers have small granaries, but surplus rice is nevertheless usually sold within a short time after threshing and winnowing are completed. This is due to the immediate need for cash, both for consumption and for paying off debt. Rice is sold either directly to Uthaithani or Nong Chang middlemen, who come with a lorry to the farmstead, to the Lan Sak rice mill, or to village brokers, of whom two get most of the trade. Many have to sell through the latter due to debt obligation. Middlemen are seen as exploitative not so much in the low price they offer as in the discounts they claim for broken rice and the cheating they practice with the scales.[37]

Paddy is sold unmilled, but rice for home consumption is milled

mechanically. Until 1985, rice in Ban Dong was milled at the small mills of one of the two village millers or at the larger Lan Sak rice mill under the standard terms described in section *V.1.i* above. In 1985 a small mill was constructed at Bung Khiew by a wealthy Ban Dong family.

The dry season mung bean crop is planted immediately following the rice harvest. Planting is broadcast and cultivation is not as intensive as it is in the North of Thailand. Lack of water control is a major uncertainty. Intensive spraying of pesticides is necessary to protect against caterpillars. The harvest is normally during March or April, using hired labour for those with larger areas under cultivation. Husking can be carried out using traditional rice threshing methods or by machine.

To describe agricultural production such is to risk presenting an oversimplified picture of the agricultural community as a homogeneous production system with minor variations due to varying preferences or micro-environmental constraints. To do so would be misleading, for the possibilities and actualities facing individual households (the basic production unit) are varied, dependent to a large degree on control over resources for production and the relations governing such control. As we saw in the preceding section, such control is changing as access to resources for production is increasingly monetized, concentrated, and subject to external influences. The effect of this is illustrated and discussed in the following chapter.

*V.3.ii Production in Ban Mai*

In contrast to Ban Dong, Ban Mai is primarily an upland, or field cropping, village. Ban Mai farmers speak of themselves as *chaorai*, or non-rice farmers. Wherever possible by virtue of the micro-environment, Ban Mai farmers will grow rice, but opportunities are so limited that on local land field cropping is the overwhelmingly predominant activity. Only 7 per cent of land owned by Ban Mai villagers is suited to rice farming, and much of this is non-local land. Rice only accounts for 8 per cent of the area cultivated and 7 per cent of the cash-equivalent value of Ban Mai crops during the main planting season.

Ban Mai is heavily commercialized. Aside from that which is kept over for seed or for animal feed, all produce is sold. Moreover, inputs of purchased seed, herbicides, insecticides, and latterly of fertilizer, require capital, as does hire of machinery for ploughing and husking and hire of labour for planting, weeding, and harvesting. To treat the household in cash calculations merely as a production unit does not conform with the material realities of Ban Mai families' situation. Cash is needed also to purchase most food for sustenance and by extension for continued use of household labour for production. Moreover, commercialization and electrification of the village increase further the need for cash.

The range of field crops grown in Ban Mai is considerable. The standard double cropping regime followed by 72 per cent of farmers is of maize followed by mung beans. Up to five crops are planted by individual farmers, but most grow two or three. A second crop of maize, millet, and black cowpea are alternative second cropping field crops. Cassava is an extensive alternative to double cropping, while cotton is an intensive alternative on small plots (Table 5.10).

Table 5.10 Ban Mai cropping

| | | % households planting | % area planted | Yield per *rai* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rice1 | 24 | 4.8 | 22.7 *tang* |
| | Rice2 | 0 | 0.0 | - |
| | Rice3 | 0 | 0.0 | - |
| | Maize1 | 87 | 53.3 | 24.6 *tang* |
| C | Maize2 | 7 | 3.6 | 7.3 *tang* |
| R | Maize3 | 0 | 0.0 | - |
| O | Mung1 | 72 | 30.7 | 3.4 *tang* |
| P | Mung2 | 1 | 0.1 | 9.0 *tang* |
| S | Cassava | 4 | 1.5 | 8.4 tonnes |
| | Soya | 1 | 0.6 | 15.8 *tang* |
| | Cotton | 4 | 0.4 | 208.3 kilogrammes |
| | Sorghum | 11 | 4.1 | 4.1 *tang* |
| | Cowpea | 1 | 0.8 | 1.6 *tang* |
| | Castor | 0 | 0.0 | - |

Note : For explanation of crops see Table 5.6

Land preparation for all forms of field cropping begins in March or April with the clearing and burning of weeds. This is usually done using household labour. During this period, fire is a serious hazard to straw(*khaa*)-roofed houses. In the winds of the hot season it can cross roadways, and in 1985 it spread to the main village settlement. Not only houses are at risk. Of the few attempts at tree cropping (mainly bananas and mangoes), most have been destroyed by fire. This danger is a major obstacle to establishment of perennials, particularly since most farmers live at some distance from their fields.

Ploughing commences in April. There are eight tractors in Ban Mai, and these plough most of the area. Each plot needs to be ploughed over twice. Some use power tillers, and those with newly cleared hill land use just a hoe, but otherwise dependence on tractors is the norm. Timing of planting is important for two main reasons. For the first crop, it is important to take advantage of the early part of the monsoon, since there is often a tapering off in July and August, and late ploughing can mean drought at a critical stage of growth. Double cropping also means that if the first crop is harvested late, the second

is susceptible to drought if the monsoon finishes early. At the same time, premature planting of the first crop can lead to its failure in the event of a false start to the monsoon. In 1984, the early planters did well, whereas the reverse was true in 1985. Because of this uncertainty, the ploughing and planting period is a tense time of year. This tension can turn to exasperation or anger at the tractor owners on whom villagers are dependent if they do not plough at the time promised. Few have sanction over the tractor owners, however, since many are also creditors and the ploughing operation is an expensive part of field cropping (Table 5.6c).

Planting of maize usually takes place in May. Those with sufficient capital hire labour. Large farmers sometimes bring in labour from nearby rice farming villages. Those without capital make use of reciprocal labour in teams of 15 to 20, sufficient to plant a 24 *rai* plot in one or two days. Rodenticide is mixed in with the seed. While the maize is still short, herbicide is usually sprayed. Alternatively or additionally, manual weeding is carried out once or twice. Spraying usually uses household labour, although a machine sprayer may need to be hired, and weeding involves reciprocal, hired, and household labour (Table 5.7).

Harvesting of maize is by hand. Mostly this requires hiring of labour, but some use reciprocal arrangements. Either way, labour is rewarded by piecework: 10 *baht* per sack or one sack's labour debt. Husking is mostly by machine, at a standard rate of 7 *baht* per sack of husked maize. Transport of maize from field to homestead is an extra expense for many because of the distance they have to live from their fields.

Immediately following the maize harvest in August, tractors are

in action again for the second crop, having been employed on neighbouring villages' and districts' ricelands in the intervening period. A single ploughing suffices. Mung beans and sorghum are broadcast almost exclusively with household labour, usually taking no more than one day. Insecticide is the major input for mung beans to protect against caterpillars. Spraying machines sometimes have to be hired, but most use manual sprayers. Harvesting mung beans involves hired labour on piecework, paid by the basket.

Cassava differs from maize and mung beans in that it takes almost a full year to mature and can be left in the ground without ill effect. Planting, harvesting, and slicing require hired labour, but for the rest of the year little attention is required. It is thus favoured by two main groups. Large scale farmers who wish to minimize supervision find cassava attractive, and debt-ridden farmers with off-farm employment combine cassava with urban wage labouring. This is despite the awareness of the destructive impact on the soil, for in the former instance it usually involves rented land with little concern for long-term fertility, while in the latter pressures of debt do not allow long-term considerations to carry much weight.

An interesting feature of production in Ban Mai that is distinctive of a recently settled community is the importance of kinship ties in maintaining diversified production. Several Ban Mai families spend part of the year working on relatives' land at some distance from the village. This is reciprocated either in labour during periods of peak activity in Ban Mai's upland cropping or in rice, but since the exchange is usually between close relatives it is normally not on a calculated basis. The family of Tu, for example, lives for part of the year at Thung Naa where they rent riceland, and labour is shared between the two sites. Another family, that of Pik, helps out on parents'

riceland at Pradahak in exchange for an unspecified amount of rice, and they work some of a relative's irrigated riceland during the dry season in exchange for letting the same relative work some upland in Ban Mai. Khao works land in Ban Mai with the help of relatives from Nam Phu and Nong Chang, and in turn Khao helps out in their ricefields in an uncalculated labour exchange; machinery is also shared between the families.

As in the case of Ban Dong, Ban Mai is a heterogeneous community. However, the basis for Ban Mai's heterogeneity is more stark than in Ban Dong. This is largely to do with the influence of capital in mediating production relations. And as in Ban Dong, the variety of situations faced by and strategies open to Ban Mai villagers is illustrated in Chapter VII.

### *V.3.iii Comparison*

Comparison of two communities is usually an outsider's indulgence. However, in the case of Ban Dong and Ban Mai certain interactions enable us at least to start off with a villager's perspective. Many *chaorai* (upland farmers) of Ban Mai have been *chaonaa* (rice farmers) in the past. For many of them, field cropping seems in retrospect a hazardous and strenuous occupation. "At least you have rice to eat (*yaang noi mii khaao kin*)" if you are a *chaonaa*. "If I had rice [no matter how much my debt] no creditor would dare take sacks of rice from my house : *mai mii jao nii thii nai ja klaa kheun baan yeud khaao*". With cash or other assets it is a different matter. This is a representative reflection of a former *chaonaa* who sold his riceland with the express purpose of striking it rich as a *chaorai*.

The hardiness required of *chaorai* is expressed in the common comparison, "Rice farmers have to work in the rain, but [we] upland farmers have to work under the blazing sun : *chao naa to'ng taak fon; chao rai to'ng taak daed*".

Several families have direct experience of both communities. Two Ban Dong families, both Lao kin of one of Ban Dong's oldest families, have returned to Ban Dong after a period in Ban Mai. One is the family forced out by threat (see section *V,2,i* above). The other could not stand the pressures of Ban Mai life and speaks with bitterness of the village leaders (*hua naa muubaan*), the factionalism (*kaan len phak len phuak*), and the "oppressive feeling : *khabkhaenjai*". She says that in Ban Mai "there is no freedom at all : *mai mii isara sak yaang*", for example in having to pay a bribe of 5000 *baht* to the Village Committee just to sell your land. She sums things up as "*ruai baeb nii yuu mai wai* : This kind of wealth I can't live with". This family has left land in Ban Mai and the husband has gone to Malaysia as a construction worker for two years. On the other hand, some Ban Dong villagers who have visited Ban Mai[38] speak of *Baan Tua Yaang* (Model Village) as it is known locally as "*jaroen* : prosperous, civilized" due to its provision with roads, electricity, large concrete school, and other material evidence of government attention.

On the production side, the main contrast between rice farming and field cropping is the relative significance of land and capital. This is reflected in Ban Dong and Ban Mai, where the significant variables in control over production are respectively land ownership and access to short and long term capital. Average cash inputs in Ban Mai are three times those in Ban Dong. Although in Ban Dong capital is becoming more important, mainly as a means of gaining access to hired labour with the decline of reciprocal labour, subsistence farming is

still practicable with little capital input and not undue opportunity costs incurred by domestic production. In Ban Mai, on the other hand, land ownership is supposedly equal. Even were the ideal conformed to (in fact over 37 per cent of Ban Mai villagers fail to conform with ALRO land rules on tenure grounds alone), land tenure is itself no guarantee of control over production. Without capital for annual production, field cropping is not feasible. Control over production is concentrated in the hands of those with such capital, more particularly those with the machinery for ploughing, husking, and transport. This control is expressed even by villagers who farm their own plots but depend on other villagers for ploughing of their fields, husking and sale of their produce, and capital inputs: "We are like their employees : *rao meuan luuk jaang khao*"; or even, "We just become their low-down slaves : *rao tok pen khii khaa khao*". A discussion of this subjective alienation is presented in section *VIII¸2¸iii* below. In many cases, Ban Mai villagers do in fact become wage labourers, having rented out their land to those with sufficient capital to work it. The point here is to show that the subjective experience of proletarianization as an alienation from control over the means of production commences before this point is reached, if in fact it is reached at all.

Conclusion

To recapitulate, land is of primary importance in Ban Dong production relations, in its own right and inasmuch as it is the key to control over the secondary factor of production, namely capital. In Ban Mai, capital is the key variable, and it is this that is the key to *de facto* control over land. Thus "ownership" is distinct from "control". In the words of Khao (section *V¸3¸ii* above), land "is in

the name of the poor but in the hands of the rich : *yuu nai naam kho'ng khon jon tae yuu nai meu kho'ng khon ruai*". In order to determine control over a particular factor of production, its place in the entire production process must be established. In Ban Dong, variations in ownership of land is considerable, but ownership of a large amount of land does not in itself establish control over production of those with less. With a subsistence crop, it is feasible for a household to produce more or less independently of the wider system. In Ban Mai, no such option exists for the majority of farmers. For a commercial crop, capital secures control not only over one's own production, but also over one's capital short neighbour's, irrespective of the relative size of land plots.

The implications of these changes in control over production for development of the community are many. We are most concerned here with the dual relationship between production and development with which we started this chapter, namely the way in which production affects social relations in the community and its place in mobilization of resources. The following chapter examines these two issues in terms of differentiation of the community and resulting heterogeneity of interest, on the one hand, and responses by those who lose out in their attempt to retain control over production, on the other.

Notes

1. The extent to which social organization is or is not determined by relations of production, i.e. the economic "base", is a subject of controversy in the Marxist debate on economism. Lenin (1902) attacked the deterministic concept primarily as stunting of political action through its "worship of spontaneity" (p.93) and its "downgrad[ing of] the conscious element in social life" (Bottomore 1983 : 143). While the argument should be considered in order to avoid the pitfalls of a crude determinism, it is also important to bear in mind the political context and purpose underlying these attacks, namely a crusade against strains of reformism within social democratic politics. Production relations are to be seen for present purposes as limiting rather than determining in any absolute manner, but wherever possible the way in which changing production relations affect social relations (or are affected by them) will be pointed out.

2. "Resource" is used here in the wide sense of "that which is necessary for achieving an end", the end in this case being production. Alternatively, resources may be seen as our factors of production.

3. Cohen (1969 : 217) notes the distinction between "economic process" as interactions between people and scarce resources, and "economic relations" as interactions between people themselves. He suggests that social anthropology has traditionally been concerned with the latter [and human geography with the former? - P.H.] and goes on to suggest how the economic merges into the political.

4. See Ruttan and Hayami (1984) for a discussion of the change in institutional arrangements concerning terms of control over various factors of production in the context of scarcity in England under the enclosures, Japan under the Meiji refoms, Thailand with commercialization of the rice economy, and in a more detailed discussion, the Philippines in the context of the Green Revolution and associated technological innovation.

5. A third dichotomy of resources for production concerns the distinction between control of resources by individuals and control by the community. This issue is discussed in Chapter VII.

6. It is beyond the scope of this study to give a detailed account of long term production potential of various Lan Sak soils for various types of cropping. However, a number of indications should suffice to demonstrate the instability of the present regime. These include the near universal reports of drops in yields, increase in frequency of symptoms normally associated with soil exhaustion, increased inputs that are necessary, the progression from maize to cassava to sugar cane that is observable, and expressed uncertainty from farmers themselves as to the sustainability of the regime. In addition, a Land Development Department study of Ban Mai soils shows that large parts of the area presently under field cropping is only suited to tree crops or extensive cattle rearing in the long run (LDD 1984). Moreover, even those areas suited in principle to field crops are only sustainable with inputs of fertilizer and land improvements that are uneconomic given conditions of production and current crop prices.

7. This observed superimposition of "non-rational" determinants on a supposedly rational production system as part of the dynamic of development has already been referred to in the introduction as a

pointing to a fallacy in the model of rational production. The dualistic assumptions underlying this model are not restricted to materialist explanations. Joel Kahn (1985) also reviews debates concerning the inevitability, nature, modes, and desirability of this "modernization of the peasantry" in the ideological sphere. He points out the inherent parallel between Marxist assumptions of class consciousness with proletarianization and liberal assumptions of "rationality" as innate or produced by modernization. This leads both groups to regard millenarianism, syncretism, and religious theology as regressive. The alternative approach to peasant ideology is in fact to see such movements as adaptive rather than atavistic through a "history from below", i.e. to recognize a peasant mode of action that is independent of both forms of determinism. The explanations of why such forms of struggle are adopted are, presumably, not to be found in some inherently atavistic peasant ideology, but rather lie in interaction with the wider social formation that maintains them in a subjugated role. More specifically concerning development, Hickey (1985) welcomes the new paradigm that escapes the stranglehold of dualism, deploring the "dichotomization [that] has had baleful effects on the conceptualization and implementation of development in Asian developing countries".

8. Lan Sak DAE Office 1985. DAE statistics are only rough estimates, based on assessments by the *tambon* level extension workers. These workers do not have the resources for surveying.

9. There is a detailed account in Chapter VII of attempts by villagers in Bung Khiew to overcome this.

10. Irrigated riceland sells in 1985 for 6,000 to 7,000 *baht* per *rai*. Rainfed riceland sells for about 2,000 *baht*, while upland sells from anything from 100 to 2000 *baht*, depending on land quality and title. Chayanov (1926) noted the overcapitalization of subsistence farmers due to their valuation of land suited to subsistence crops at above an economically rentable price.

11. 90 per cent of Thai maize is exported, mostly to Japan and Taiwan for their livestock industries. The domestic market is growing, albeit slowly, with the involvement of agribusiness in intensive livestock rearing. Only small amounts of maize are used locally, for household pig- and duck-raising.

12. Already one large landowner has begun to acquire large amounts of land in Lan Sak from indebted farmers. This he divides between a large sugar estate and buffalo rearing on several thousand *rai* of land.

13. The customary practice of inheritance in most of Thailand is equal division among all the children. An exception to this is when a son moves to clear new land, in which case land is divided up among those remaining at home. The homestead and house usually go to the youngest daughter. Moerman (1968) suggests that this is not so much a case of formal ultimogeniture as a matter of circumstance, since the youngest usually stays at home to take care of the parents until they die, by which time other siblings will have married and established separate households. This is borne out by inheritance patterns in Lan Sak, among both Lao and Thai villagers.

14. The issue of decapitalization is an important one concerning development. It is a prominent part of the process of differentiation that is discussed in the following chapter.

15. The 1985 harvest was much better than that of 1984, but the price

of rice fell sharply. Farmers received from 1700 to 2200 *baht* per *kwien*, compared with 2900 *baht* a year earlier.

16. Scott (1976 : Chapter 1) gives a detailed analysis of the effect of a change from sharecropping to fixed payments on distribution of risks between tenant and landlord. Clearly sharecropping minimizes risks for the tenant, whereas fixed payments assure the landlord a predictable income. There is some evidence in Ban Dong that this is taken into account in the relative terms of rental, i.e. that over the long run sharecroppers would pay a higher rental in exchange for increased security. This would in turn help explain why farmers not on the borderline of subsistence prefer fixed payments, although there is no evidence that this plays a conscious part in their preference.

17. This leads to an interesting divergence in subjective assessment of these two types of process by "developers" and "developed", for what is comprehensible from the perspective of the outsider and thus visible may be different from the stark experience of villagers affected by covert processes. Chambers' (1983) concept of "visibility" as applied to rural development shows that there is a dynamic in rural processes and the way in which rural development administrators view them that leads to bias through oversight, as is the situation in Ban Mai's hidden transactions. On the other hand, piecemeal change that fits more readily into conventional analyses of land alienation impinge less forcefully on the consciousness of those affected (Scott 1986 : 13), as is the case in Ban Dong. It should be added that the sharper experience of Ban Mai villagers conforms more closely with reality than that of the administrators, since processes of alienation are in fact more rapid and extreme than in Ban Dong as we shall see in the following chapter.

18. The way in which capital-short villagers would invest is by definition a hypothetical issue, but it does indicate aspirations within the monetized economy. Such a hypothetical circumstance was appraised by asking what informants would do were they to win the lottery. Since most villagers gamble on either state or underground lotteries, responses were not entirely out of the realms of possiblity.

19. The discussion on adaptation of rice agriculture in section *V,1,i* above is an example of control through knowledge of the microenvironment. Many similar adaptations are noted elsewhere, such as "floating rice" that can grow five centimetres per day in areas susceptible to flooding and saline-resistant varieties in brackish coastal areas (Feeny 1982 : 38). Meanwhile, Panayotou conceptualizes infrastructural development on a broader level as being a compensatory programme for the environmental degradation caused above all by deforestation. In particular, he questions the substitutability of natural watersheds by irrigation:

> Initially intended as complementary to watershed protection to provide additional control, gravity and storage capacity, for capturing and distributing the runoff from the watersheds, irrigation has increasingly become a man-made substitute for the function of the natural watersheds... Moreover, the use of irrigation structures as substitutes for watershed protection results in accumulation of sediment in the water bodies, increased flooding and salinity and a shortening of the economic life of the irrigation system itself (Panayotou 1983 : 17 - 18).

20. One sales method is to allow the purchaser a trial period without

obligation to buy, but traditional deference (*krengjai*) does not allow the villager to return the item. The Singer company is particularly successful with its fleet of travelling salesmen and commissioned company agents in many villages.

21. It would appear that this is actually in breach of BAAC policy. When I raised the issue at BAAC headquarters in Bangkok, it was suggested that this was a case of local officers getting carried away with the idea of delegated responsibility, and I was assured that an urgent note was to be sent to the Uthaithani office ordering compliance with Bank policy.

22. BAAC officers in Lan Sak rationalized their action by saying that cross-pollination of local varieties with improved seed leads to reduced yields, and that their policy was thus to compel all farmers in the area to use BAAC seed. Only when this was adopted universally would they relax the stipulation.

23. In Ban Mai, 95 per cent of BAAC debtors take additional loans from other sources; in Ban Dong, the corresponding figure is 42 per cent. The implication of dual loans is serious for BAAC objectives. Since BAAC loan amounts are fixed while informal loans are flexible, the marginal rate of interest on capital is more likely to be calculated by the debtor as that which the middleman or village trader charges rather than the BAAC rate. As the BAAC objective in lending to small farmers is to allow them to intensify agriculture through capitalization on the basis of cheap loans, this objective is largely nullified by the irrelevance of the BAAC rate in the farmer's calculation of the marginal cost of capital.

24. In Ban Mai, for example, *Khruu* Cherd, a local schoolteacher who farms and raises pigs and whose wife is a machinery contractor and who are one of the wealthiest families in the village, gets paid in kind by poorer neighbours. The son of a local debtor helps out in raising pigs by collecting rice water from nearby houses of those "who sometimes receive favours from *Khruu* Cherd". The daughter of another debtor is a live-in help. Sometimes someone will bring a monitor lizard or other delicacy back from a hunting trip.

25. The origin of the term "*yaa khommunit* : lit. communist grass" is unclear, but two local explanations are given. One is that it springs up everywhere no matter how much effort goes into suppressing it. The other relates to its reddish colour.

26. Fish disease has occurred on a national scale since the 1982 outbreak in 21 provinces. Despite a great deal of scientific research into the causes of this, no firm conclusions have been reached. However, a recent report published by the Department of Fisheries suggests that pesticides have a role in lowering the resistance to disease. Of particular concern are the chemicals Dieldrin and Eldrin, commonly used in insecticides (see also Wattana et.al. 1985).

27. I witnessed several cases of unconsciousness as a delayed reaction after a day's spraying. Many regularly complain of stomache ache and "heart flutters : *jai san*" soon after spraying or maize planting when rodenticide is used (see the case of Phad in section *VI.2.iv* below). Eckholm in a chapter entitled "Who pays for production?" suggests that the health cost borne by producers is greater than normally accounted for, and he specifically mentions pesticide use in developing countries (1977 : 154 - 155). According to a WHO survey in several countries, 40 per cent of sprayers show symptoms of poisoning (ibid. : 165). A report based on detailed surveys in each of Thailand's regions shows widespread

health problems related to pesticide use (Supot 1982).

28. Farmers in Wat Singh district in Chainat have found that a short period of increased yields with use of chemical fertilizers on rainfed fields is quickly followed by a period of steady or declining yields despite increasing applications of fertilizer (information from NGO worker Reuang Suksawat, of Nong Noi project, Wat Singh). In Khon Kaen in the Northeast, farmers report similar problems. One farmer I spoke to described how the yields had declined after a sharp increase in the first year of use. By the third year the soil was almost too hard too plough by buffalo, and this farmer reckons that he stopped just in time to avoid the soil being ruined (*din sia*). Apichaat Thongyuu, a prominent traditionalist development worker and writer on rural development issues, speaks of a "fertilizer ideology" leading to a psychological dependence irrespective of the physical effect on the soil. It is difficult to obtain objective data on long term effects of fertilizer on different types of soils in rainfed areas. Local DAE officials insist that if there are ill effects it is either because farmers are not applying the fertilizer correctly or because they do not use it in combination with compost and other organic fertilizer. Although such a combination would appear to be the ideal, it is hardly realistic to expect such high inputs of both capital and labour as would be required in a high risk environment like Lan Sak. Meanwhile, Ban Mai farmers being forced to buy BAAC fertilizer express fears that "*din ja khoei* : the soil will get used to" fertilizer.

29. Household labour as the basis for production is often cited as one of the primary criteria in the definition of "peasant" as distinct from "farmer" (e.g. Johnston 1981 : 250). Wolf (1966 : 2) points out that the peasant runs a household, rather than a business concern. He quotes Chayanov to show that the peasant will utilise labour differently from a capitalistic enterprise: if land is locally abundant, it will be farmed less intensively than under capitalist enterprise, while land scarcity will lead to more intensive use, a low imputed wage, and high valuation of rented or purchased land in order to make use of surplus (household) labour (pp. 14 - 15). Meanwhile, Foster (1967) stresses the structural and relational aspects of peasant livelihood as of more definitive significance than the occupational, and primary among these former aspects are the peasant's use of labour and relations of exchange deriving therefrom.

30. Part of Chayanov's analysis was to show how peasant households tend to work with decreasing returns to labour as land scarcity increases in order to maintain a subsistence livelihood. An important factor affecting the welfare of the peasant household at any one time is the ratio of productive to non-productive workers in the household (see Harrison 1982; Scarborough 1985 : 30 - 33).

31. Even Moerman (1968) in Ban Ping noted this process of individualization of production at the expense of the household as a unitary production unit. In the case of Ban Ping farmers, it was the opportunities presented by commercial rice production afforded by tractors at Thunglor that offered young people the possibility of a cash income partly independent of the larger household, whereas in Lan Sak it tends to be the non-farm economy that presents such opportunities. Uhlig (1984 : 164) notes the breakup of the extended family unit in spontaneous land clearance, as a result of which families have less access to household labour and depend on hired labour as a consequence, thereby increasing the cost of dryland cropping.

32. Moerman (1968 : 129) maintains that social relations are as important a resource for production as are material goods, particularly

in the case of mobilizing labour.

33. A *tang* of paddy could be sold for 28 or 29 *baht* in 1984. 100 kilograms of milled rice cost at least 500 *baht*. At 15 kilograms per *tang*, this amounts to 75 *baht* per *tang* of milled rice. At the usual volume conversion rate of 42 per cent, the milled equivalent of one *tang* of paddy yields rice worth at least 31.5 *baht*. Since the standard daily harvesting wage is 30 *baht*, both employer and rice-deficient employee thus benefit by payment in paddy.

34. The value of rice not sold is calculated at 29 *baht* per *tang*. See Chapter VI, footnote 3 below.

35. See Johnston (1975 : 200 - 202) and Hanks (1972 : 23 - 68) for comparison of broadcasting and transplanting. Ananya (1985 : 238 - 239) documents a switch from transplanting to broadcasting by larger farmers as a means of reducing labour costs, assisted by new techniques made possible by improved water control.

36. Field cropping will be described in detail in the section on Ban Mai. Certain specifications differ, but the production process is basically the same for the same crops in the two villages.

37. It is generally appreciated by farmers that farmgate prices of paddy are fairly standard. The low price is blamed on the government, since the latter fails to support its guaranteed price. Farmers protest each year, and the January 1986 protests in Bangkok involved large delegations from Uthaithani (The Nation 5/1/86; Far Eastern Economic Review 17/1/86).

38. Some Ban Dong villagers own land behind Ban Mai. Others have been to see relations in the village or passed through on hunting trips.

# CHAPTER VI

# DIFFERENTIATION, DEARTH, AND DEVELOPMENT

Changes that are a product of development were outlined in Chapter IV. Chapter V examined the consequences of such changes for control over production for Lan Sak farmers. The interaction of institutional and environmental change was shown to be important. A growing heterogeneity of socio-economic position was identified within the two communities under study, and this was seen to be bound up with the processes of change. The present chapter examines more specifically the forces shaping this heterogeneity and the consequences for those who lose control over production.

The discussion begins with a theoretical background to the issue of differentiation in the context of agrarian change. Aspects of this theoretical approach are then applied to the situation of producers in Ban Dong and Ban Mai, with illustration in the form of case studies of individuals. It is shown that the response to resource shortage is oriented to retaining control over production for reproduction of the family social unit,[1] and this has consequences regarding further differentiation and environmental change. Finally, implications for development are drawn in order to set the scene for the following two chapters, which look more directly at development initiatives.

## V.1 Differentiation

Ban Dong and Ban Mai are heterogeneous communities that are

undergoing further differentiation. The focus in the preceding chapter was on the concentration of control over production. It was intimated that such control is not determined solely by ownership of isolated means of production. Power relations at a broader level, including those of the state, are involved, and these are discussed further in Chapter VIII. The following discussion, meanwhile, limits itself to a conventional consideration of differentiation as concentration of control over land, labour, and capital.

*V,1,i Theoretical aspects*

The issue of differentiation of the peasantry as a product of agrarian change was brought into prominence by Lenin. Rejecting the Narodnik doctrine of the "community" village, Lenin maintained not only that the logic of capitalism as it spread to rural areas was to polarize the rural population into landowning and labouring classes, but also that this process had reached an advanced stage in early twentieth century Russia. Describing differentiation as "the sum total of all the economic contradictions among the peasantry", Lenin held that the process created new types of rural inhabitants and was referred to as "depeasantizing" in peasant discourse. The new classes of agrarian bourgeoisie (comprising less than one fifth of the rural population) and rural proletariat (more than half) were characterized above all by participation in the commodotized, monetized economy. This was in contrast to the middle peasants, who still worked their own land using family labour. However, agrarian conditions were such as to make the continued existence of this latter group precarious, since they could only make ends meet in good years and relied increasingly on the new "masters of the contemporary countryside" for loans and labouring

opportunities. Migration to the cities was highest among this group, who according to Lenin were rapidly being "swept away" as a class (Lenin 1899 in Harriss 1982).

An alternative interpretation of differentiation of the peasantry at this time was that of the populist Chayanov. Rather than seeing rising and falling fortunes of different members of the agrarian community as a unilinear polarization, Chayanov emphasized the cyclical nature of peasant livelihoods. He suggested that at different stages in the life cycle peasant households are subject to varying labourer-dependent ratios and have access to different amounts of land within a basically homogeneous community. Rather than working within a capitalist profit-oriented framework, the peasant maximizes utility by means of a trade-off between total factor income and leisure. Even though involved within a wider economy, the peasant family remains the basic unit of production, distribution, and exchange. The implication is that peasants continually adapt to changes in factors of production by reliance on domestic resources, sometimes in a "self-exploitative" way, but in a way that preserves their existence against the apparent logic of capitalist relations of production (see Chayanov 1926; Harrison 1982; Scarborough 1985).

More recent analysis of agrarian change in peasant societies has drawn widely on these early debates. The empirical problem facing a Leninist analysis is the apparent persistence in most agrarian societies (some would argue even in Western Europe) of smallholders who in certain aspects of production resemble Lenin's supposedly doomed middle peasantry. In suggesting ways out of empirical subjection to theory, White (1987) argues against rigid adherence to models developed in a specific historical and political context,[2] since:

> There is no universal or all-purpose 'agrarian question' awaiting investigation, nor is there any

universal form of 'agrarian differentiation'.

This is not to reject entirely the relevance of classical analyses to current situations. Such a relevance is, however, to be explored rather than assumed or imposed, for as White points out Lenin himself distinguished between underlying trends and specific situations, recognizing the incompleteness of "proletarianization". Even the Chayanovian and Leninist models are not entirely incompatible, and for White a key task is to disentangle cyclical and long-term trends. He goes on:

> Differentiation...involves a cumulative and permanent (i.e. non-cyclical, which is not to say that it is never reversible) process of change in the ways in which different groups in rural society - and some outside it - gain access to the products of their own or others' labour, based on their differential control over the means of production and often, but not always, on increasing inequalities in access to land (ibid.).

"Pumping out" of surplus labour is a key common denominator, but beyond this concrete forms of differentiation are varied and complex. What is needed in place of the dichotomous focus either on polar extremes (i.e. landlord/labourer classes) or on small peasant households is explanation of the *coexistence* of the two forms.

Another recent departure in the analysis of differentiation has been to consider the political and ideological as well as the economic. Hart (1987) considers the state's role in rural differentiation, in particular the creation of state supported elites which fulfil a policing role for the state and in turn receive state patronage such as in the form of control over development programmes. However, the relationship between states, rural elites, and poorer villagers varies according to specific aspects of the polity and social formation. Hart contrasts Thailand with Indonesia, for example, and shows that whereas in the latter a highly centralized and exclusive state apparatus (Golkar) means that local elites invest in socializing with government

officials in order to gain official standing themselves at a local level, in Thailand a less powerful or centralized state results in "local powers" having more independent authority and seeking constituencies not only among senior officials and representatives of capital, but also among village populations. Turton (1987) focuses on these local powers, emphasizing that they are to be found among village elites (typically five per cent) as well as among district level officials and traders. The structural position of these elites is enhanced by their "linkage" role,

> above all through relations which enable them to accumulate (or be the first stage in the accumulation of) village surplus through wages, commodity dealing, retail prices, rent, and interest (ibid.).

However, polarization in the ideological sphere is not as clearcut, partly due to continuity in control over certain basic means of production. Thus despite being drawn increasingly into commodity currents in the sphere of exchange and being in a material sense "wage labour equivalent", peasants *seem* to retain control over land and labour. The village community is maintained in part also by mitigation of contradictions by village elites, who use their new position in social and religious patronage to "benefit from association with more traditional and village forms of relationship and legitimacy" (ibid.).

Nevertheless, the new relationships entailed in this specific variant of rural differentiation entail transformations not only in structural or material position but also in the ideological sphere. Turton has demonstrated elsewhere (1984b) how peasant discourse reveals emergent forms of consciousness. Anan (1984; 1987) shows how rapid differentiation in a northern Thai village leads to new alliances and cleavages despite the only partially developed nature of markets in land, labour, inputs, and products and constraints on capitalist development such as efforts by poorer villagers to hold on to small

plots for subsistence production. If we are to follow Hart (1987) in seeing change as a dialectical rather than a linear process, it is essential to focus on these specific contexts and draw patterns from reality rather than vice versa. The reality here is studied in terms of control over production in an integrated sense (i.e. not just isolated factors such as land) and subjective reaction to changes in such control.

### *V,1,ii Factors of production and surplus accumulation in the study villages*

In the recently settled communities of Lan Sak we face the complication of dual starting points for analysis of differentiation. The first is the indigenous community, which was marked by a homogeneity of economic function (subsistence production supported by trade in forest products), even though access to land was a variable determining scale of production. The second is the situation of recent settlers, most of whom came in search of land due to loss of this basic factor of production in a differentiated home community.

The process of settlement itself led to restructuring of the village economy. While new settlers regained control over land, earlier residents who had previously been land-rich but pursued similar forms of production to those with less land now made quick profits from land sales and forestry. The way in which these have been put to use varies depending on the production regime in each newly settled community. The resulting differentiation varies accordingly, and this is now illustrated with reference to the present situation in Ban Dong and Ban Mai.

In Ban Dong, control over production is secured first and foremost by control over riceland. With sufficient riceland, it is within the means of most households to secure additional resources for subsistence production. The most important of these are water, buffalo, and household labour. In Ban Mai, on the other hand, land is secondary to capital in securing control over production. Capital is important both in the form of machinery and as more "liquid" seasonal production investment.

Table 6.1 shows the distribution of local and non-local land in Ban Dong and Ban Mai. Average land ownership is the same, but Ban Dong land is much less evenly distributed. More than one in three Ban Dong villagers have little or no local land, compared with less than one in twelve for Ban Mai. In the latter village, more than four-fifths are within the medium range of land ownership, with three-quarters owning the standard ALRO 25 *rai*. If land owned outside the village is taken into account, the average land ownership for the two villages remains similar, but the distribution of land among Ban Mai residents becomes markedly less evenly distributed.

Table 6.1 Land distribution in Ban Dong and Ban Mai

| | None | 1 - 5 *rai* | 6 - 15 *rai* | 16 - 30 *rai* | 31 - 50 *rai* | 51+ | Mean *rai* | *sd* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ban Dong | 20.5 | 16.5 | 8.2 | 26.0 | 20.6 | 8.2 | 24.1 | *26.3* |
| | (15.1) | (10.9) | (8.2) | (28.8) | (19.2) | (17.8) | (33.5) | (*35.8*) |
| Ban Mai | 2.7 | 5.3 | 2.7 | 81.3 | 8.0 | 0.0 | 24.1 | *9.4* |
| | (0.0) | (2.7) | (2.6) | (70.7) | (14.7) | (9.3) | (33.1) | (*23.5*) |

Notes : figures in brackets include non-local land;
all figures are percentages;
sd = standard deviation.

The low variation in local land ownership in Ban Mai is due to its status as a land reform village. In fact, the 37 per cent of households who do *not* conform to ALRO rules on tenure grounds and the many more who infringe on grounds of tenancy are the significant phenomenon, in demonstrating the persistence of alternative sources of control over land. In Ban Dong, differential access to land is a product both of historical processes and of dynamics of current production relations. Historically, access to land depended upon ability to lay claim to a tract, which in turn required authority. Latterly, capital or trust has been more important for the acquisition of land. Trust (*kaan waijai kan*) was important in the case of landless settlers who would buy on credit from earlier settlers. Loss of land by those who once held it is usually due to debt, which arises either by unsuccessful involvement in the commercial economy or through other expenses, often unavoidable such as in the case of illness. As was shown in section *V.2.i*, this is often an intergenerational process, and as such it is less immediate and hence less salient than stark foreclosure.

Capital in the form of implements necessary for production is heavily concentrated in Ban Mai, less so in Ban Dong (Table 6.2). Overall, 56 and 19 per cent of farmers in Ban Dong and Ban Mai respectively own some form of ploughing implement. Only one Ban Mai villager in twenty owns a tractor, but these account for roughly half of all cash investments in field cropping (Table 5.6). Although ploughing also accounts for half the cash investment cost of rice planting, this is half of a much smaller amount, and non-cash inputs (household and reciprocal labour, household resources) are considerably more important. Overall, inputs as measured in cash equivalent are lower for rice in proportion to the value of output,[3] and this is reflected in the

premium on riceland expressed both in voiced preference and in relative prices on the land market.[4] Hence the greater significance in Ban Dong of land ownership as a variable influencing control over production.

Table 6.2 Control over tillage in Ban Dong and Ban Mai

| | % of households owning | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Tractors | Power Tillers | Buffalo |
| Ban Dong | 5.5 | 24.7 | 24.7 |
| Ban Mai | 5.3 | 12.0 | 0.0 |

Accumulation through surplus appropration is generated in three main ways in Ban Dong and Ban Mai : moneylending, trading, and renting out of factors of production. Moneylending is an important means of surplus accumulation in both communities. It is also an effective means of decapitalisation, or alienation from control over means of production, of debtors. This is particularly so in the case of conditional credit, for example the stipulation to use a creditor's tractor and sell produce to a village merchant or to buy inputs from BAAC.[5]

The second principal means of surplus appropriation that leads to differentiation within the village is trade. In the past, trade was mainly carried out by non-local middlemen. Now 52 per cent of rice is sold to village traders, 14 per cent of maize, and 13 per cent of mung beans. This is particularly important in Ban Dong, where the percentages are 55, 51, and 70 respectively. In Ban Mai, no rice and only 9 and 2 per cent respectively of maize and mung beans are sold to village traders. Dominance by village traders does not necessarily reflect an absence of opportunities for villagers. What they lose in lower prices given by village traders is made up in part by lower

transport costs and flexibility in timing of sales. It does, however, enhance intra-village differentiation and dependency relationships that result. In turn, this is detrimental to the village as a community of interest, inasmuch as this ever existed, and it bolsters the position of those who are increasingly identified with state and outside commercial interests. This is in part due also to their role as village level mediators of state led rural development, as for example in the cases of village committee members Maen and Ad (cases 6 and 12) below (cf. Ananya 1985 : 169; 205).

Surplus appropriation by renting out of factors of production varies between Ban Dong and Ban Mai. Renting out of land is most important in Ban Dong, with 29 per cent of farmers renting in, accounting for 17 per cent of cultivable land. As we observed in Table 5.2, these are mostly land-short farmers. In Ban Mai, on the other hand, renting in helps generate surplus for wealthier farmers since they employ wage labour (often including the nominal owner of the land rented). Renting out of tractors is the principal form of rentier surplus in Ban Mai, and as we have seen from Table 5.6c, this accounts for an important part of the Ban Mai economy. It should be noted that money lenders, traders, and tractor owners are the same few people in Ban Mai. In Ban Dong, moneylending is combined with trading, but this is not coincident with large scale land ownership. Less conventional means of surplus appropriation include running or serving as agent to illegal lotteries (*huai tai din*), as in the case of the *kamnan*'s wife in Ban Dong and the village head in Ban Mai. In addition, use of political office for personal gain, such as by charging a "fee" for registration of births and deaths and pocketing portions of development project allocations, is rife in both communities.

*VI.1.iii Differentiation in Ban Dong*

Before discussing differentiation in Ban Dong, it should be pointed out that production based on a subsistence crop with an as yet low level of capitalization does in fact lead to a more homogeneous community than where commercialization is more advanced. But this homogeneity is only relative. The key factors of production are unequally distributed within the community. To illustrate the effect this has on household production, the cases of six not untypical Ban Dong households are presented below. Each household is referred to by a pseudonym of the reported household head, and this is used also to refer to the entire household. Although it usually refers to a male, this is not to imply that the male head of household is the dominant individual regarding household production, for example in land ownership or labour input.

1. Nid, landless labourer. Nid has never owned land. Before coming to Ban Dong, Nid's family rented land in Nong Chang, but the land was poor and the family moved to Lad Yao in Nakorn Sawan in the hope of being able to buy cheap land. They were unsuccessful, and moved to Ban Dong in 1974. In some years they rent 23 *rai* of rainfed riceland, but in 1984 they did not plant because of drought. Since they pay rent under *baeng suan* (sharecropping) contract, the owner agreed not to take any rent.

There are five people in Nid's household. Two of the daughters, aged 17 and 12, have finished school. The youngest is about to start school. Noi, Nid's wife, complains about the cost of sending children to school. In particular, she resents the cost of sweets at the village shop. In the past, children would ask for a *baht* for sweets once a

week or once a fortnight for home-made sweets wrapped in banana leaves. Now it is two or three *baht* per child per day for plastic wrapped sweets with no nutritional value. If the children do not get the same as their schoolmates, they complain that they are "ashamed : *aai khao*".

Although two children have now finished school and can contribute to the family's labour, Nid himself is unable to work in most jobs following a pillion motorcycle accident which left him permanently crippled. In 1984, the entire family income of about 9,000 *baht* came from local agricultural wage labouring. Half of this was required just for purchase of rice and charcoal. They are also in debt to a neighbour for 3,000 *baht*, on which they pay 1,800 *baht* per year in interest.

Only a small proportion of Nid's consumption needs can be satisfied by use of local resources. Without land, access to rice and other necessities requires cash. They grow some vegetables for home consumption, but not all year round. They managed to make some of their own charcoal on wasteland, but not enough to last year round. A few chickens provide an occasional source of food. Other than the small thatched bamboo and timber shack they live in on a sister's land, their only other main possession is a bicycle. Given a windfall, the first priority would be to pay off debt, then to buy a small amount of riceland and buffalo.

2. Nai, tenant farmer. Nai has also never had land of his own. He lives in Bung Khiew on his brother's land and rents poor quality land from one of Ban Dong's larger landowners, who is a member of the village committee. Nai moved to Ban Dong with his parents in 1974. They had been affected by drought on their rainfed riceland in Lad Yao, so moved to Lan Sak. Nai's parents and sisters work a small plot of

land on the edge of the village. Since Nai now has a family of his own, he and Lad, his wife, have built their own tiny house. They have a seven year old son.

In 1984, Nai rented 30 *rai*, but because of drought only planted 13 *rai* on a *baeng suan* (sharecropping) basis. In 1983, he had lost part of the crop because of flooding. Apart from cultivating 5 *rai* of the local variety *luang prathaan* rice, Nai also planted 8 *rai* of maize, followed by a second crop of sorghum. Nai uses household labour or reciprocal labour wherever possible. However, for harvesting the field crops, it was necessary to hire labour. It is notable that for the rice crop no hired labour was used at all, whereas for cash crops it accounted for approximately three-quarters of non-household labour.

Nai had to rent two buffalo at 50 *tang* of rice each. In this way, he could use his own labour for ploughing, threshing, and winnowing the rice crop. For the cash crops, however, he relied on hiring a tractor to plough the fields and a machine for husking the maize and sorghum. He also had to use chemical pesticides for the maize and millet and hire a sprayer to apply them. For all these cash inputs, Nai relied on family wage labour and a small loan from a village trader, to whom he was obliged to sell his crop.

In a good year, Nai could expect to harvest up to six *kwien* (600 *tang*) of paddy. However, in 1984 he only managed two *kwien*. Half of this went on buffalo rent, and another quarter on land rent. The land rent was reduced by the landlord because of the poor crop, as is common in *baeng suan* arrangements, making them less risky for the tenant than *ka* (fixed rice payment) or cash. The remaining 50 *tang* is not enough to see two adults and a child through the year. The previous year Nai had had to purchase three sacks of rice at 600

*baht* each because of crop loss from flooding. Cash for purchase of rice is obtained in part from profit from field cropping, which in 1984 yielded just under 5,000 *baht* net. This would have been reduced by half had Nai had to pay interest on debt incurred by borrowing for inputs.

Nai raises a few chickens and plants vegetables for home consumption. He hopes to make some supplementary income by raising buffalo for a wealthy villager. However, Nai does not see a long term future in Ban Dong. Even off-season work or activity such as sawing wood and house construction is now scarce. Nai spends periods during the dry season hunting with his father in the mountains beyond Ban Mai. One such trip has taken him to Thong Laang, where he has met Karens on an ALRO/military scheme to settle hill people in permanent agriculture. However, since this conflicts with traditional Karenni shifting cultivation (in Nai's words, "*karieng mai cho'b thii tien* : Karens don't like cleared land"), the Karen are secretly selling off the forest reserve land allocated to them by ALRO to lowland Thais at 300 *baht* per *rai* and Nai expects to move there soon. Nai believes that study beyond the compulsory six years is out of the question for children of someone of his means and he expects them to be farmers, which is one reason he would like to obtain his own land.

3. Norm, part tenant. Norm moved to Ban Dong as a child from Wat Singh in Chainat province in 1966. His parents were among the first settlers in Bung Khiew. They had little land in Wat Singh and used the proceeds from selling that to buy a larger area from earlier Lao settlers. However, Norm's father has been unable to give his land to his married children, as would be customary, because of debt. Instead, he has sold them each a plot of 10 *rai* for half the going price. Norm now farms this land but also rents 15 *rai* from a wealthier neighbour

Thiip, for whom Norm used to work as a mahout until Thiip's work elephant died in 1983. Norm and his wife Sao live with their two young children in a small hut next to their fields.

In 1984, Norm planted 15 *rai* of the hardy local *khaao leuang* rice, a drought and disease resistant strain that nevertheless commands a poor price. He also planted small areas of maize and mung beans, two crops of the latter. Like Nai, Norm rented two buffalo and used mostly household or reciprocal labour for the rice crop, whereas the field crops required cash inputs. However, Norm started working in late 1984 as an "*Or Jor*", or (abbreviated) Provincial Volunteer, under a military programme recruiting villagers to help in the "psychological warfare" village development scheme in Ban Rai. This takes Norm away from Ban Dong for 15 to 20 days per month, but it also provides a steady income of 1500 *baht* per month. As a result, labour was hired for the rice harvest and the paddy was machine threshed. On the other hand, the small yields of mung beans were husked using household labour, since this could be done by Sao at home. Sao is now left to cope with most of the domestic and agricultural work.

In 1984, Norm's fields yielded 450 *tang* of paddy. Of this, 250 *tang* had to be sold immediately in order to raise cash to pay his parents for land. The remainder was not enough even to cover land and buffalo rent and interest on a cash loan paid in rice, which means that he has to buy rice until the next harvest. The maize and second mung bean crops were severely affected by drought, and Norm made a loss on both, not even taking into account labour expended. Again not taking into account labour, these losses were barely made up by a small profit on the first mung bean crop. If interest on the loan required for inputs for the field crops is also taken into account (37.5 *tang* of rice on a 1,500 *baht* loan from a village trader), it turns out that in

effect Norm's rice crop subsidised losses on his cash crops.

Norm is moving rapidly toward cash oriented production despite the seeming economic irrationality of such a move in light of the above. His salary (*ngoen deuan*) makes it both possible and necessary to hire labour.[6] Whereas previously he would have expressly avoided debt to outsiders, even BAAC, he is now paying off a 600 *baht* per month half-yearly hire-purchase loan for a television set, run by a car battery. The incongruous sight of a television aerial rising out of Norm's tiny hut in the middle of rice paddies testifies to the consumerist influences brought to bear by connection with the outside world. Nevertheless, given enough cash, Norm ideally would prefer to buy riceland nearby and improve his house. He is also adamant that he would like his children to study.

4. Sud, self-sufficient. Sud lives with his wife and two children in Nong Sung, where he himself was born. Nong Sung is another small outlying community of Ban Dong. Sud's father moved there from Ban Dong when it was still dense forest. Still a relatively isolated community, Nong Sung is connected to the outside via Ban Dong only by a footpath. However, it has been cleared of forest for some time, the main influx according to Sud being when "people came from 'down below : *khaang laang*' [i.e. to the East] when the price of maize rose [in the early 1970s]".

Sud owns 28 *rai* of land in Nong Sung, of which 15 *rai* are semi-irrigated riceland and 11 *rai* upland. He bought this land in 1978 for an average of 2,500 *baht* per *rai* from a villager who had staked it out. In early 1984, Sud spent 11,000 *baht* on levelling his riceland, part of which he irrigates by means of a pump powered by the engine of his power tiller, for which he also has a trailer attachment.

Sud uses his tiller on his own and his mother's land but does not receive a cash income from it.

In 1984 Sud planted 15 *rai* of riceland, using the new variety RD7, and 8 *rai* of maize. Secondary crops of mung beans were planted on 14 *rai* following the maize and rice harvests. Sud used his power tiller to do all his own ploughing, threshing and husking of mung beans and rice, and transporting produce from the fields. The only machinery he needed to hire was for husking maize. Planting was done using family labour, and reciprocal labour in the case of rice transplanting. Family labour was used for weeding in the case of maize and for spraying insecticide to protect mung beans. The rice harvest used household and reciprocal labour, the maize harvest only household labour. The only labour hired was for harvesting mung beans. Cash inputs were limited to petrol, maize and mung bean seed, and insecticide. These were obtained on a 2,000 *baht* BAAC loan, using Sud's father's membership.

The rice harvest yielded 6 *kwien*, of which 5 were sold. 70 *tang* each of maize and mung beans were obtained; overall, Sud's crops yielded a net cash income of just over 20,000 *baht*, after deducting inputs and interest on Sud's loan, and enough rice for annual consumption needs.

Other than cropping, Sud derives a small income from occasional labouring for neighbours. Fruit trees also yield a small income, and duck eggs provide small but steady cash earnings. Chickens are raised for home consumption. To date, Sud has never had to purchase charcoal, but the supply of wood is nearly exhausted.

Sud is an example, then, of a more or less self-sufficient farmer. He has control over most of the basic means of production,

sufficient for but not surplus to his own household needs. Capital is used mainly for improving on-farm production, such as by levelling land and pumping irrigation water. Involvement in the wage labour economy is minor, despite the fact that most of Sud's crops are produced for the market. Sud would like his children to study if they are up to it ("*thaa hua dii* : lit. if [they have] good heads"), otherwise he expects them to be rice farmers. In the latter case, Sud would seek to purchase additional riceland.

5. Thii, extensive farmer. Thii was born in Ban Rai and moved to Ban Dong in 1953 when he married Jai, the then *kamnan*'s daughter. Both Thii and Jai are Lao, Jai from one of the old Ban Dong families. They still farm with three of their children and son-in-law (temporarily away on military conscription), and also have living at home one child studying at secondary school and one infant grandchild.

Thii is a large landowner, with 139 *rai* of land in Ban Dong. Of this, 80 *rai* is riceland and 55 *rai* upland. Nearly half of Thii's land was staked out by his father in law during the 1930s, while the remainder was bought cheaply by Thii in 1964. Thii has a small tractor which he uses exclusively on his own and his children's land.

In 1984, Thii let his children work 40 *rai* of his land. An additional 25 *rai* were let to a relative for 180 *tang* on a *ka* contract. Of the remainder, 50 *rai* were planted to *luang prathaan* rice, 20 *rai* each to maize, sorghum, and mung beans, the latter two intercropped. Thii's children who still live at home planted mung beans on riceland after the harvest, but separately from the main household in which they are included otherwise.

Thii relies heavily on cash inputs. In 1984 his tractor had

mechanical trouble, and he had to hire a large tractor for ploughing. No reciprocal labour is used, even in rice cultivation. Rice is broadcast, as are millet and mung beans. Other than household labour, hired labour is used for maize planting, weeding, spraying herbicide, and harvesting for all crops. Herbicides and insecticides are purchased, and rice and maize are threshed and husked by machine. These are financed in part by a 10,000 *baht* BAAC loan. Thii also borrowed 1500 *baht* from Maen, a village trader, with no interest but an obligation to sell his maize crop to him. The small tractor is used to *yiabyam* (thresh by trampling) the sorghum and mung bean crops.

Drought affected the rice and maize crops, birds and caterpillars the sorghum and mung beans. Of the 5 *kwien* of rice harvested, two were to be kept for home consumption. Overall, each of the cash crops made Thii a small profit, with a net income of just under 10,000 *baht*, allowing for interest on the BAAC loan. In addition, the rice harvest yielded a 2,000 *baht* profit and enough rice for annual home consumption.

Other than their own crop cultivation, Thii's children work as occasional wage labourers. Otherwise, Thii raises chickens and ducks for home consumption. Charcoal is produced for own use.

Thus Thii, despite being one of the largest landowners in the village and having relatively easy access to capital, chooses to farm extensively. He is a large net employer of labour. Water shortage is a barrier to crop intensification, but only a joint project with other farmers would secure Thii irrigation water for his riceland (see section *VII¸5¸iv* below).

6. Maen, village trader. Maen moved to Ban Dong from Sawang

Arom district in 1970. The family had been farmers, but drought was such that they decided to sell up and follow relatives to Ban Dong. They opened a small shop, and this has become one of Ban Dong's three main general goods suppliers. Their two children study at secondary school, one in Lan Sak and the other in Uthaithani. Maen is a member of the Village Committee, and Aa, his wife, is vice president of the government initiated Housewives' Group.

Maen owns 8 *rai* of land, which he bought from a relative in 1974. Part of his land has a strategic road frontage location. In 1984, Maen planted 5 *rai* of maize, using hired labour for planting, weeding, and harvesting. A tractor and husking machine were hired for ploughing and husking, and seed was purchased from BAAC. Maen made a small profit on this crop, despite drought.

Maen's principal activity is trade. Apart from running a general goods store, which Aa looks after for most of the time, Maen is one of two main village traders in rice and field crops. He lends cash, usually charging interest in rice and maize, but sometimes in cash at 5 per cent. He obtained 12,000 *baht* credit himself from BAAC in 1984, but most of the cash he lends out is either his own or is obtained from urban wholesalers. Maen owns a pickup and also makes about 6,000 *baht* per year driving a lorry. Apart from a few chickens, Maen produces little directly for subsistence. Rice and charcoal are bought.

Maen faces two main problems with his trade. The first is that retail trade has gone down with improvement of roads, since mobile traders now come into the village and it is easier for villagers to shop at Paak Meuang or even Nong Chang and Uthaithani. Although Maen does not mention it, the improved communications do, however, benefit Maen in encouraging cash crop production and thereby increasing the volume of

agricultural trade. As was observed in the previous chapter, outside middlemen have not made large inroads. The second problem is theft, with a loss of 5,000 *baht* in 1984. This is the only thing that might cause Maen to move elsewhere, if it gets worse. Maen would like his children to study and become government officials. One difficulty is having to buy expensive clothes for their son who studies in Uthaithani, otherwise he too (like Nid's children : case 1) is "*aai khao*". Even Maen, whose current income derives mainly from trade rather than direct agricultural production and who does not expect his children to farm, feels a desire to acquire riceland as a security ("*yaak dai kho'ng pen lak wai...* : I'd like to get something as a nest-egg for the future...").

These six cases demonstrate the very different measures of control over production achieved by various Ban Dong families, and the implications this has for reproduction of the household production unit. Unequal control over land as the key factor of subsistence production is compounded by different capacities to secure labour, water, and motive power. The result is greatly differing surpluses. Transfer of surplus is mainly through rent, trade, and interest, rather than in direct control over factors of production.

Of particular note is the propensity to hire labour with increasing scale of operation. Whereas Nid is solely a labourer and Thii almost solely an employer of labour, Nai and Norm are net suppliers of labour (in the case of Norm an external wage income may make him a net employer at the local level) and Sud marginally a net employer, albeit at a very low level. This is paralleled by a tendency for those at either extreme to engage relatively more in wage labour

arrangements compared with those in between, who maintain reciprocal arrangements where possible and have control over the necessary factors of production to utilise their own labour more fully.

Finally, it must be stressed that production in Ban Dong continues to change, and trends in relations determining control over factors of production can be summarized as follows. Ploughing and threshing are slowly becoming mechanized even though those with buffalo retain the means for their reproduction. This is due to three main pressures: decapitalization, since debt is forcing some farmers to sell buffalo; limited natural resources in the form of space for grazing and watering; and social factors, notably the rise in buffalo theft (cf. Ananya 1984 : 187 - 188). A minority of families are able to afford power tillers. In 1984, 44 per cent of Ban Dong farmers had no implements for ploughing or threshing/husking.

Land shortage and consequent landlessness will increase for several reasons. Most families have more than two children, which means that subdivision or unequal inheritance of holdings is inevitable. Land prices are rising, and outsiders are buying up land. Debt is forcing sale of land. Slowly declining fertility and rainfall takes small subsistence farmers below subsistence level.

Labour is still mostly employed locally. Use of reciprocal labour is on the decline. While this is replaced by hired labour in most cases, the opportunities for off-season employment are declining as traditional non-agricultural subsistence occupations such as house construction, sawing wood, and charcoal burning are limited by the resource situation. Meanwhile, mechanization decreases total labour requirements in seasonal cropping, albeit to a limited extent as of 1985.

*VI.1.iv Differentiation in Ban Mai*

With its commercialized cropping system and the importance of capital in the village economy, Ban Mai might be expected to conform more neatly with the classic differentiation model. However, a number of factors complicate the picture. One is land reform, which gives a nominally egalitarian and fixed pattern of land ownership. This means that control over production is secured in other ways than straightforward land alienation through foreclosure on land title such as in Theparaj (Ananya 1985 : 126 - 127), and aspects of power beyond the rational-legal framework are important determinants of such control. This leads to a situation of starker differentiation than found in Ban Dong, as illustrated by six case studies, whose production schedules are presented in Table 6.4.

7. <u>Phad, Landless labourer</u>. Phad moved to Ban Mai with his wife Nuai and three children from Nong Kha Yang in 1980. Phad had never owned any land and had worked in Bangkok and elsewhere as an itinerant labourer. Land reform attracted Phad as his first opportunity to acquire land, since ALRO provided loans and was supposed to facilitate purchase of land at a low stipulated price of 210 *baht* per *rai*. The 24 *rai* of land Phad was supposed to get was a hilly plot on the edge of the land reform area, and it was at the corners of land owned by three earlier settlers. Phad obtained an ALRO loan sufficient to buy the plot at the price stipulated, but the owners would not sell at this price. Phad used the loan to put a down payment on a 9 *rai* section of the land belonging to Raeng, who wanted nearly four times the

ALRO price per *rai*. Phad hoped to raise the remaining cash by labouring but to date has been unable to do so. Raeng has been renting out the land in contravention of the ALRO rules, but Phad is afraid of him ("*Khao ying ao* : he shoots") and does not dare to bring the matter into the open. Raeng let Phad work the land for a single crop of mung beans in 1982, but the crop failed because of drought and Phad only has an 8,000 *baht* BAAC debt with accumulated interest to show for it. He has also been unable to repay the ALRO loan and has accumulated small debts elsewhere.

In effect, Phad is still landless apart from the one *rai* house plot owned in the village. Until 1984, the family had been relying on local wage labour, mostly agricultural labouring at the standard 30 *baht* per day. During the dry season, Phad occasionally works as a labourer for his carpenter neighbour Wan (case 11), mainly planing wood for house construction. In May 1984, Phad and his two teenage children went to Bangkok for construction and welding work with a Chinese firm subcontracting to a Japanese company in Rangsit. After receiving two weeks' pay, Phad and his son worked for a further three months without getting paid, and in August the subcontractor went bankrupt without paying outstanding wage bills. Meanwhile Mii, Phad's daughter, worked in a small textiles factory. They came back to Ban Mai empty handed, and the family is again labouring locally except for Mii, who is working at a shop in Thung Naa for 400 baht per month. Their existence once again conforms closely to the local idiom of "*haa chao kin kham* : lit. look for [food] in the morning, eat in the evening". During the 1986 planting season, Phad was hospitalized after suffering a reaction from the rodenticide mixed in with the hand planted maize seed, threatening the family with further debt.

Khiang, Phad's son, has received periods of training at the NGO

youth training centres near Uthaithani. These centres emphasize integrated farming, particularly based around pig rearing. Latterly, cooperative training has been emphasized. As of yet, Khiang has not been able to put the training into effect to help the family situation, but the course is seen as a source of employment and the foundation and associated pig raisers' cooperative as a *thii pheung* (patron : see section *V,2,iii*). Phad and Khiang talk of raising chickens in the future, but lack of capital is a major obstacle.

8. Porn, dispossessed farmer. Porn moved to Ban Mai in 1977 from Kamphaengphet, where he had been renting upland. On land reform, he bought 25 *rai* from a Thung Khaa landowner at slightly higher than the ALRO stipulated price, and he is still in debt to ALRO. For the first few years, Porn managed to farm his plot, but deterioration of the soil (in Porn's words, "*din man khaeng* : the soil's hardened") and uncertain rainfall ("*khoei pluuk khaao phood deuan sii; to'n nii to'ng ro' deuan hok* : you used to be able to plant maize in the fourth month [March]; now you have to wait for the sixth month [May]..."). Porn could continue cultivating only by getting into debt to the village head, who charges 5 per cent per month interest, and BAAC. The debt was compounded by hospital bills for treatment of malaria, and by amenities of the "model village", namely electricity connection and purchase of a television set. Porn and Mai, his wife, have two teenage children, two children still at school, and one infant son.

By 1984, debt had accumulated such that Porn was unable to raise the capital necessary for cultivation, and the land was rented out to their village creditor, namely the village head. The rent they received (100 *baht* per *rai*) was about half the amount they pay in interest alone on the village head's loan. Porn and his two teenage children went to Bangkok for construction work, while Mai stayed to look after

the children. Nine months in Bangkok provided Porn with a much higher gross income than could be expected in Ban Mai, but costs of living are so high there that they barely managed to save enough for subsistence needs. Porn is vague as to being able to plant his land again.

Porn has not been dispossessed in a legal sense, but *de facto* control of the land has gone to the village head. Meanwhile, Porn expects to go on working as a labourer for the time being. In the longer run, he is considering moving on to clear more land if things do not improve, since he expects his children to be farmers.

9. <u>Som, subsistence farmer</u>. Som moved to Lan Sak from Nong Chang in 1976, where she and her husband had been labourers. Initially they moved to a mainly rice growing village the other side of Thung Khaa, but on land reform Ad (case 12), a Ban Mai landowner afraid of being dispossessed, asked Som if she would come and take over her land in name, while selling only 8 *rai* for nearly four times the ALRO price. Ad maintains control over another 9 *rai* of the 24 *rai* plot, while a third owner Tuk still owns the rest.

In 1983, Som's husband left her but has been back since and beaten her severely. Som and her common law husband now live with her teenage daughter, two schoolage children, and infant daughter in a tiny shack on her land. Som also maintains a token residence in the village in compliance with ALRO regulations. ALRO stipulated that all village residences were to have zinc roofs, and Som's only financial debt is an outstanding ALRO loan for purchase of roofing. In 1984 she also incurred a rice debt, on which 10 *tang* interest was paid on a loan of 25 *tang*. Som had to purchase 4 sacks of rice in 1984, but managed to produce all her own charcoal. She raises chickens and ducks for home consumption, but in 1984 they were all killed by a

neighbour's dog.

Som would desperately like to purchase the remainder of the plot and to this end is sending her teenage daughter to work as a housemaid in Nong Chang in order to be able to borrow 6,000 *baht* from her daughter's employer as a down payment on Tuk's six *rai* of riceland. This riceland is rainfed, but cooperation between neighbours in digging an irrigation channel from a nearby stream could partially irrigate the fields. Som cannot obtain credit from BAAC, since she would require her husband's signature as joint owner of the land and he refuses to divorce her.

Som farms her 2 *rai* of riceland and 6 *rai* of upland intensively, using household labour for the most part. In 1984 she planted rice, maize, and mung beans, and the only non-household labour used was reciprocal labour for the rice harvest and weeding the maize crop. A buffalo was rented and used for ploughing the riceland and for the mung bean crop, and it was also used to *yiabyam* (thresh by trampling) the rice. The only mechanical inputs were a tractor for maize cultivation and husking machines for the maize and mung beans. Herbicide was used for the maize crop, but household labour was also used for weeding. Mung bean seed and insecticide had to be purchased for the mung bean crop. Thus with low cash inputs, Som managed to maximize on use of household resources and obtained a rice yield of over a *kwien*, while making a profit of about 1,350 *baht* on the field crops. Of the rice, just over half went in rent for the buffalo and paying back the rice loan, which means having to take out another small rice loan to survive the year.

Som's common law husband now supplements the family income by doing a bicycle ice cream round. He cycles over a rough track from the

homestead four kilometres into Paak Meuang each day to pick up the ice cream and cycles the six kilometres back to Ban Mai to sell to villagers. Som occasionally supplements her income by selling home grown bananas and wild vegetables in Paak Meuang. The three working members of the family also derive a small cash income from occasional wage labouring. Ultimately, though, she sees her future in acquiring and working the remainder of her plot of land and having her children provide for her in her old age. Her husband had wanted her to accept an offer of 17,000 *baht* for their land, arguing that the children will go their own way and having cash in hand now is the safest course of action: this was one of the main points of contention that led to their separation.

10. Lak, debt-ridden small farmer. Lak moved to Ban Mai with his wife Rat and four children from Chainat in 1978. They had been landless, and when they came in the year of land reform, they bought 30 *rai* of land on the edge of the village from a local landowner. Of this, 6 *rai* are outside the ALRO area. They live in the village. Since 1978 they have been cultivating maize and mung beans, but Rat complains that the soil has been hardening steadily.

Other than their land, house plot, and zinc roofed house, Lak owns nothing of significant value. They are dependent on a Paak Meuang tractor owner working through a village *hua naa* (middleman's agent : see section *V,2,iii* above) as creditor, tiller of their land, and as purchaser of their produce. In 1984, Lak was promised that their land would be ploughed by late April in time for optimum planting, but the tractor owner kept on putting off the ploughing since the tractor was busy on other fields and Lak had no option but to fret and wait for the land to be tilled. It was June by the time the land was finally ready for cultivation, and by this time the prospects for maize were too risky

to rely on this crop alone, and in any case it was going to be too late to plant a second crop. Therefore Lak planted only 20 *rai* of maize and put the remaining 10 *rai* to cassava, using left over stems given by a neighbour.

In the event, the maize crop failed because of the late ploughing. Although Lak maximized use of household and reciprocal labour, the need for cash inputs of seed, hiring the tractor, herbicide, transport, and husking meant that the entire yield of 100 *tang* only offset the interest on the 5,000 *baht* loan required for investment in cultivation. For the cassava planting, weeding, and slicing, household and reciprocal labour sufficed, but labour was hired for the harvest. Other cash inputs included ploughing and transport from the fields. Proximity to the edge of the forest led to the crop being ravaged by wild boar[7], but a 3 tonne yield was nevertheless obtained. In 1984 the price of cassava was only half the price of the previous year, at 850 *baht* per tonne, and Lak only broke even on the crop, not even taking into account household labour input.

Not surprisingly, therefore, Lak is heavily debt ridden. 18,000 *baht* is owed to the Paak Meuang middleman, and another 14,000 *baht* is owed to a village trader who charges interest in maize. The whole family engages in occasional wage labour, but this is only sufficient for subsistence, since rice and other commodities have to be purchased and only charcoal can be home produced. The prospect for clearing debts is thus remote, and the village creditor is threatening to sue. Lak is considering selling up and moving back to Chainat, where at least they have relatives. There is an obstacle to this, in that if they went they would want to dismantle and move (*reu*)[8] their house with them, and to do this they would have to obtain permission from the provincial authorities via the village head. He will not help out without a 3,000

*baht* bribe, with which he would agree to turn a blind eye and avoid the need for official permission altogether.

11. Wan, farmer/artisan. Wan moved to Ban Mai in 1976 from Ban Rai, where he had owned only a small plot of land. He purchased 25 *rai* of land cheaply from the *kamnan*, who was at that time starting to sell off his large holdings in anticipation of land reform. Wan lives in the village with his wife, two teenage daughters, and schoolage son, although during the cultivation season he spends long periods in the shelter on his land, which is about two kilometres from the village.

Wan is a self-taught carpenter and latterly has made a modest income from house construction. The dry season is the busiest time, but work is available throughout the year in "even [lunar] months : *deuan khuu*", which are the auspicious months for house building. He owns an electric plane and in this way has benefited economically from electrification of the village, although even in surrounding villages a generator is sometimes set up such are the time savings. Wan sometimes employs Phad (case 7) and another villager on the same *soi* (lane, often now used to specify where in the village one lives).

Far from carpentry reducing farming as part of Wan's enterprise, the income of approximately 30,000 *baht* actually enables him to extend cultivation. In 1984, Wan rented 19 *rai* of upland from a poorer villager, which he planted in addition to his own 22 *rai* of upland and 2 *rai* of riceland. On the upland area, Wan planted 41 *rai* of maize and followed this with mung beans and sorghum. His cash inputs were high, including having to purchase seed for all the field crops, hire a tractor for the ploughing, hire labour for maize planting and harvesting and for sorghum harvesting, purchase pesticides for maize and mung

beans, hire a machine for husking the field crops, and transport maize, sorghum and rice from the fields to his home plot in the village. Otherwise mainly household labour was used, although reciprocal labour was used for maize planting and weeding. In addition to obtaining 50 *tang* of rice to cover part of subsistence needs, Wan made a large profit on the maize crop, so that despite a small loss on the sorghum and a minor profit on the mung beans, he still cleared nearly 20,000 *baht* net after rent on land and interest on loans had been paid.

Wan borrowed 6,000 *baht* at 5 per cent per month from village creditor Ad (see below), to whom he had to sell his crop, and 8,000 *baht* from BAAC. He is head of a BAAC group and also works for the BAAC "welfare fund" at Paak Meuang, for which he receives a *per diem*. His wife and daughters take on occasional agricultural wage labour, and in 1985 his eldest daughter went to work in a textile factory in Bangkok. Wan's main expenses are purchase of rice and other necessities, and in 1984-85 he extended his own house. Wan still manages to produce charcoal sufficient for home use.

12. Ad, tractor owner/trader. Ad moved to Ban Mai in 1972 from Nong Chang. Before that, her husband Jon had been a monk in Phitsanulok province for ten years. Ad bought land from a previous resident, at a time when it was still largely forested. On land reform, Ad sold all but a single plot, though as the case (9) of Som shows, she actually retained control over a larger area than the mandatory 24 *rai* plus house plot.

Latterly, direct agricultural production has become less important to Ad than other activities. She runs one of the larger general stores and agricultural suppliers in Ban Mai, and like Maen (case 6) in Ban Dong she uses this as the basis for trade in grain and

associated moneylending. Ad has become wealthy as a consequence and in 1985 bought a Ford 5000 tractor, which will be the basis for an even larger accumulation.

Nevertheless, Ad and Jon continue to farm their land and in 1985 expanded production by renting another plot. They rely mostly on hired labour, although household labour and even reciprocal labour is also used. In 1984, the 19 *rai* of upland were planted with two crops of maize, and the 5 *rai* of riceland were planted to *luang prathaan* rice. Overall they made a profit of nearly 14,000 *baht* on the maize, despite having to invest cash in every stage of the production process. Labour was hired for most of the rice cultivation, and the *kwien* plus that was harvested is plenty to see the family of three through the year.

Ad is a member of the village committee. She is seen as one of the "*hua naa muubaan* : village bosses" who run affairs in the village. She is very reticent about her own economic situation. Neighbours, debtors, and others talk of her and other shopowners in indirect but bitter tones.

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The above cases illustrate the parameters affecting control over production in Ban Mai. The most immediate and interesting points, which are interrelated, can be summed up as follows. First, legal control over land does not in itself assure or limit control over production. In the case of Porn and Lak, for example, control is almost entirely in the hands of moneylenders and tractor owners. In the latter case, crucial control over timing of ploughing and planting is lost, and this in turn means loss of control even over crop choice. In the former

case, control over land for agricultural production has been lost indefinitely. The second point is the degree to which control over labour has moved away from the household. This has allowed those with capital to expand agricultural production by means of securing control over land and labour through both monetary and other means, as the examples of both Wan and Ad demonstrate. The third point is the increasingly dominant role of capital in determining production relations in this commercialized village economy, where key means of production are beyond the control of all but a few individuals. The fourth point, significant for the political economy of the village, is the way in which other aspects of power than legal guarantee and "rational" economic relations determine control over production. This means on the one hand, that Phad, Porn, and Som lose control over land that is legally theirs. On the other, the alternative of withdrawal and maximal use of household resources for subsistence production as evidenced by Som's case involves self-exploitation (Chayanov 1926) in the form of labour inputs and valuation of land that bear no relation to opportunity costs of these two domestic factors of production.[9]

The mechanisms that determine trends in control over production in Ban Mai can be summarized in terms of three inter-related processes. First is the increasing indebtedness of the less well-off farmers. Second is capital accumulation by a few traders-cum-tractor owners. Third is the declining fertility of the soil and other environmental change. The first and third factors make it increasingly difficult for farmers to work their own land, since they suffer declining access to capital at a time when required inputs are ever greater. Fully 81 per cent of Ban Mai farmers lack control over ploughing implements. This is taken advantage of by wealthier farmers, who rent in land at low cost, often securing control for three years.

This they can manage due to the enlarged pool of wage labour, their access to capital, and their control over key means of production, namely tractors. They can also minimize on soil conservation such as by planting cassava and neglecting contour ploughing, since they have little long-term interest in land quality on rented land and even less on land on which their tractors are hired for ploughing.

## VI.2 Response to Resource Shortage

The problems of the rural poor are a product both of factors concerning resource endowment and of social relations of production. As agriculture moves away from subsistence oriented production based on use of local resources toward linkage with the wider economy, so access to resources is less bound or guaranteed by the local resource situation. Therefore, resource shortage cannot be calculated merely in terms of such indices as person to land ratios. They must also take into account institutional aspects of differential control over resources such as those discussed in Chapter V and illustrated in the previous section. Furthermore, commercialization itself affects the local resource situation in such a way as to affect subsistence production. In considering resource shortage and responses to it, then, we must take into account these supra-local influences.

Chapter IV revealed rapid changes in the natural resource situation in Lan Sak over the past ten years. These have resulted in restricted opportunities for subsistence production. At the same time, cash cropping has become more marginal. The need for cash is greater now both for consumption and production, inasmuch as these can be delimited in peasant agriculture. Response to resource shortage thus

consists of attempts to secure control both over traditional subsistence resources and over the exchange economy via cash. This dual strategy is a product of the dual element in resource shortage described above (i.e. natural resource shortage and shortage resulting from relations of production). It can be characterized as attempts to deal with the larger system by avoidance and by engagement. Although the strategy is presented here in dichotomous terms, the two types of option are by no means mutually exclusive to individual households.

Four types of response to resource shortage are presented below. Each contains elements of both types of strategy outlined above.

*VI.2.i Local resources*

A number of traditional responses to resource shortage are available to Ban Dong and Ban Mai villagers, albeit in an altered form. Shortage of land and shortage of draught animals can both be overcome by renting in, a strategy followed by both Nai (case 2) and Norm (case 3). Riceland is rented by *baeng suan*, *ka*, and cash contracts. Upland is rented only for cash, but renting in Ban Mai does not represent a response to resource shortage so much as a way of taking advantage of others' shortage of capital by wealthier farmers and moneylenders such as Ad (case 12). Buffalo are still rented mainly for rice. In 1984, 22 per cent of Ban Dong villagers rented buffalo, most of them renting a pair in order to be able to harrow. Rent is paid in rice, 40 or 50 *tang* per animal being standard rents.

In the event of shortfall in rice in Ban Dong, rice can be borrowed from relations if they have a surplus. Otherwise, as in the

case of Som in Ban Mai (case 9), rice must be borrowed from wealthier villagers at high interest rates, usually 40 to 50 per cent payable on the following rice harvest. The practice of selling "green rice (*khaao khiew*)", which involves selling part of the future harvest at well below the expected price, is not as common in Ban Dong as it is elsewhere in Thailand, particularly in the North (e.g. Moerman 1968 : 74).

Until recently in Ban Dong, and still in Ban Mai, a strategy for the landless has been to make use of the local forest resources. One way is to burn charcoal for sale. It is not only the landless who are responsible for the forest encroachment for charcoal, Lak (case 10) for example using this public resource, but it is only they who make a significant proportion of their cash income from it. A second way is to farm steep forest land. Even some Ban Dong villagers now farm land on Khao Manora behind Ban Mai, having lost their rental contracts in Ban Dong. The forest resource is also a supplementary source of protein (skink, wild boar, monkeys, bear, monitor lizard, and other wild animals are hunted), fruit (wild bananas, *mafai*), of bamboo and more permanent building materials, and of herbs used in traditional medicines. Nai of Ban Dong (case 2) and Phad of Ban Mai (case 6) both spend time hunting during the dry season, and in Ban Mai forest products provide a potential source of cash income if sold to wealthy villagers or government officials at Paak Meuang.

There are many other means of survival based on use of local resources. One is to sell assets that are or would once have been redeemable from the local environment. A common strategy is to sell a house, since this is a means of selling timber quite openly; wood can then be cut to build a new house. Norm's (case 3) father has done this twice, but with the near complete clearance of the forest in Ban Dong

and increasing surveillance by the Forestry Department in Ban Mai, this option is now severely limited. Buffalo can also be sold, as can land, but these latter are harder to redeem, particularly as prices rise faster than cash income from selling agricultural produce.

With closure of traditional outlets, more desperate means are sometimes resorted to. Buffalo theft has always existed, but it has increased greatly over the past few years. Long term Ban Dong residents speak of the time they used to leave buffalo to graze unattended for several days. Now few farmers let buffalo out of their sight even during the daytime, and at night they are shut in pens adjoining the owners' houses. The switch to power tillers is partly due to the ease of locking up a machine compared with keeping an eye on buffalo. In Ban Mai, petty theft is rampant. Villagers complain that you cannot leave tools unlocked, you cannot raise chickens or grow vegetables in the village unless there is someone at home all day, which is difficult to guarantee as wage labouring becomes necessary for survival. Several violent incidents occurred due to theft or suspected theft while I was in Ban Mai. It is generally reported that theft is particularly common locally in bad agricultural years, in other words it is directly associated with shortage.[10]

A final way of responding to resource shortage by reverting to use of locally available resources is one that is atavistic by most "rational" economic considerations but characterised by its own peasant logic. That is to respond to shortage of capital in a capital oriented agricultural regime such as that of Ban Mai by withdrawal from the monetized system and pursual of a labour intensive subsistence-first strategy. This may be termed the "self-exploitative" option after Chayanov (1926), as it involves highly labour intensive cultivation in place of modern inputs (see footnote 8). Such an option is taken in

different forms and to varying degrees, from those who reluctantly use reciprocal labour in place of a now more standard wage labour (see section *VII.1.iii*) to Som (case 9) and a few others like her (usually women coping on their own) who work toward an ideal of self-sufficiency of this type.

*VI.2.ii Local cash economy*

Need for capital for production and cash for consumption is increased due to changes in the agricultural regime and the absence of opportunities for subsistence production, particularly in Ban Mai. Consumerism as part of development also increases the desire for cash. The need for cash is now most readily fulfilled by local wage labour. In Ban Mai agriculture, wage labour predominates, and it is becoming more prevalent in Ban Dong. However, the low wage (30 *baht* per day) and the seasonal nature of production limits this option as a survival strategy. Households such as Phad in Ban Mai (case 7) who rely entirely on local wage labour are among the poorest in both villages.

On the other hand, differentiation increases potential for cash income through specialization. The example of Wan in Ban Mai (case 11) shows that an artisanry skill can be a vital supplementary source of income. The local cash economy is put to use by 15 Ban Mai villagers who now engage in petty trade, mostly in combination with agricultural production. Other forms of cash earnings are on the decline or becoming more risky, notably logging.

*VI.2.iii Cash borrowing*

Although borrowing is by no means a novel response to shortage, the scale and form it has taken in both Ban Dong and Ban Mai differ from traditional borrowing. The change from borrowing in kind to borrowing in cash, and from borrowing for urgent consumption needs to borrowing for production inputs has altered the nature of borrower-lender relationships. Interest is calculated on all but short term loans to immediate kin. Since a cash debt is universal, precise, and can be allowed to accumulate indefinitely, it tends to undermine traditional forms of reciprocable assistance and redistribution within the community. New dependency relationships are established by this form of debt, whereby debtors surrender partial control over production to the creditor who determines when and by whom land should be ploughed, crops processed and transported from the farmstead, and what price should be given for them. For most, debt is an inescapable response to seasonal or longer term resource shortage, but it is not surprising that many try to avoid it. When in debt, "you can't sleep, you can't eat properly : *no'n ko' mai lab kin ko' mai long*". On the other hand, debt can become habitual. One medium scale farmer reports being so used to (*khoeitua*) borrowing that he borrows even in years when it is not absolutely necessary. It is commonly seen and expressed as a failure of self-discipline or resolution (*mai mii maana*) to fall into debt and as such is a demoralizing response to shortage.

*VI.2.iv Migration*

Migration has long been a common response to resource shortage in Southeast Asia and elsewhere. In Lan Sak, most of the present

inhabitants have quite recently taken this option; if they had not, Lan Sak would still be sparsely populated. Of these migrants, many have moved more than once. While it would be wrong to overstate the itinerant nature of the population, the youth of the communities nevertheless reduces cultural barriers to migration that exist elsewhere.

Ban Dong and Ban Mai villagers possess two types of migration option. The first is the traditional option of seeking out new land in forest areas. This opportunity is restricted by the virtually complete occupation of land well suited to agriculture, but pockets of unoccupied land still exist. Nevertheless, farmers making such a move are usually on the limits of subsistence, and long term potential of the land is secondary to subsistence needs. This renders large areas of steep forest land susceptible to encroachment, often facilitated by influential timber traders who offer land in exchange for help in logging. One Ban Mai informant estimates that at least twenty families have moved on to settle new forest land in the past two years. Permanent movement from Ban Dong is less rapid, but a number of families have moved to Bung Waeng and other newly cleared areas to the north. In 1984-85, many families in both communities were considering moving to new forest areas, mostly as a way out of debt or landlessness, others as a form of insurance for their children. Two areas are particularly popular: Thong Lang in Ban Rai (see the case of Nai of Bung Khiew [case 2] above) and the area past *Thanon Sud* (lit. "the end of the [uncompleted Nong Chang - Umphang] road"), into Nakorn Sawan, Kamphaengphet, and even Tak Provinces (Fig. 4.3).

A decision to move to a frontier area cannot be taken lightly. The hardships of frontier life have been described in Chapter IV. Insecurity is increased by the Forestry Department policy of

occasionally clearing settlers off forest reserve land.[11] Thus permanent migration of this type may be seen as a last resort strategy to gain control over the basic means of subsistence production, namely land.

The alternative means of securing a livelihood by migration from the village is urban employment. Opportunities for waged employment are made more accessible by roads and daily transport between Lan Sak and Bangkok via Uthaithani. Several Ban Mai families have moved to Bangkok, either through having lost their land entirely or having mortgaged it to local moneylenders.

Nevertheless, permanent migration is a last resort response, and temporary migration is more common both in the case of use of the forest resource and in urban migration (raiding the natural environment or "raiding the cash economy" [Scott 1976 : 212ff.]). Moreover, temporary migration almost always precedes a permanent move. The case of Dam in Ban Mai (see section *V.2.i* above) is an example of how a perhaps temporary loss of control over means of production, in this case land, is overcome by the use of forest resources. Urban migrants from Ban Mai who rent out their land by the year due to lack of capital but maintain a house in the village while they move to the city as construction workers (such as Porn [case 8]) pursue an alternative form of temporary migration as a survival strategy.

Not only is migration often not permanent; it is also not necessarily a unitary strategy. Some members of the household may remain to make use of local opportunities while others supplement the household income by temporary wage employment elsewhere. In Ban Mai this is common and oriented mainly to other Central Plains towns and Bangkok (e.g. Phad [case 6]), but the Middle East is also a sought-after

destination.[12] In Ban Dong such migration is less prevalent but is still common and ranges from driving a tractor on newly cleared land in Tak Province to construction work in Malaysia.

## VI.3 Implications for development

The purpose of this short section is to raise issues concerning development of the local community and to suggest how such development relates to changes in and integration with the wider system. It is clear from the foregoing account that differentiation does not only or necessarily lead to what is commonly termed "proletarianization" in Ban Dong and Ban Mai. Rather, it leads to marginalization within the local community.[13] "Rational" commoditization of land and labour is far from universal in the two local communities. Nevertheless, alienation through loss of control over production affects a large number of households, who take corresponding courses of action to retain some form of control so as to maintain family subsistence.

These processes pose several questions vis-a-vis development. To what extent are the processes and responses described above the consequence of strategies, programmes, and phenomena normally regarded as "developmental"? What are the effects of these processes and responses regarding development of the local and wider communities? What are the implications for restructuring development initiatives? The latter question is our principal concern in this section, but the former two must first be attended to briefly.

Resource shortage that results in the variety of responses outlined above may be represented alternatively as deficient access to

factors of production. This in turn is caused by differentiation processes that alienate people from control over production together with a rapidly changing local resource situation. Both of these are consequences of development strategy, albeit not expressly intended as such. Differentiation has been shown to result from integration of the local economy into the wider market as part of the incorporative development strategy of moving away from isolated subsistence production and increasing cash income. The transformation of the physical environment results from the opening up of the area's resources through forestry concessions, the impact of agricultural inputs on the ecosystem, the rapid commercial exploitation of forest and soil that is facilitated by road construction, and the influx of settlers that can be explained in part by upheavals caused in established communities by earlier processes of change that development has had a part in effecting. This influx is also, as suggested in section IV.1, partly a consequence of crop diversification strategy.

The effects of differentiation and responses to resource shortage that it has a part in causing are manifold regarding development of the local and wider communities, and a few points are summarized here. Social equity is clearly not enhanced by the divergence of economic fortunes entailed in differentiation. A community of interest becomes more difficult to establish for future joint development initiatives as exploitative relations become internal to the community. Differentiation encourages short term uses of local resources that lead to medium or long term deterioration. On the part of wealthier farmers in Ban Mai, this includes "mining" of soils on land rented in from debtors. On the part of the poorer, marginalized farmers, it includes a range of short term responses for survival and debt clearance, including a similar mining of soils on their own land, exploitation of forestry resources for fuelwood and cash income, depletion of fish and

wildlife,[14] and underutilization of farmland due to lack of capital inputs. Resource shortage is associated with social tension reflected in theft and violence. At a broader level, external effects unaccounted for locally are of relevance to wider issues of development. Further forest clearance leads to "downstream" problems of flooding and siltation and possible "downwind" problems of drought, drawing more and more into the vicious circle of migration, environmental deterioration, poverty, and further migration.[15] Migration in the opposite direction is associated with social problems in urban areas : slums, prostitution, low wages due to competition for jobs, alienation, and drug addiction.

We are thus faced with the situation of past and current development strategy playing a part in causing the upheavals associated with differentiation and resource shortage, and these upheavals leading to responses that contravene most conceptions of a desirable path of development. It is my contention that movement along such a path can only be achieved by a reorientation toward the rural poor in a way that addresses the question of control over resources for production. Some implications of this for development initiatives are set out below, and the following two chapters take up these themes.

The local agricultural economy in a marginal environment such as Lan Sak has a limited productive potential.[16] Moreover, in the case of marginal upland cropping, this potential may be declining over time with environmental deterioration. This means that as far as the agricultural economy is concerned, improvement in control over production and its fruits by the poorer sections of the community depends to some extent on relinquishing of control by the better-off.[17] This is not to suggest that mobilization of resources (notably water) is not a significant option, but rather that under present conditions and social relations of production institutional

aspects of control and restructuring of production are more pertinent than attempts to increase total output.[18]

Given that this is the case, local initiatives need to be directed by and on behalf of the rural poor. Under existing power structures, the rural poor are individually at a social and political disadvantage to the better off members of the community. This leads to a need for consideration of the place of joint initiatives for control over production on behalf of the poor. Chapter VII addresses this issue.

If marginalization is at least partly responsible for the socially and environmentally harmful aspects of development mentioned above, then this problem must be attacked more generally. The obverse to overcoming marginalization is increasing participation. The discussion in Chapter VIII shows that the form that participation takes locally depends on what approach to development is taken more generally, since participation is ultimately a struggle over "terms of incorporation".

## Conclusion

In summary, control over resources for production is not evenly distributed within the two communities under study. Control is determined both by the natural resource situation and by institutional structures influencing production relations. In Ban Dong, ownership of riceland is the most important variable, while in Ban Mai control over capital is more important. Neither of these can be seen in isolation, and each interacts with other factors in production and exchange

relationships to lead to new forces of differentiation. In response to resource shortage, i.e. lack or loss of control over factors of production, both traditional and new strategies are followed by individual households in the two communities.

Responses to resource shortage provide us with two instructive indications concerning development. First, they show how individual households deal with loss of control over resources and what adaptations are made to changes in the local resource situation and in production relations resulting from external influences in attempts to reestablish control first and foremost for subsistence (immediate reproduction of the household unit) and secondly for continued production (sustained reproduction of the household unit). Second, they illuminate the consequences of differentiation for individual households and the externalities that are a part of short term struggles for survival. These externalities include social tension, resource depletion, and on a wider scale the costs of urban squalor and environmental deterioration. In both these ways, the priorities for a development strategy oriented toward less powerful sections of the community become clearer.

Notes

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1. For a fuller treatment of the peasant "subsistence ethic", see Scott 1976, Chapter 1. The explanation for the emphasis on social reproduction in peasant concerns can be seen in the definition of the peasant household as "the socially institutionalized convergence of an agricultural unit of production, consumption, and human reproduction" (Bryceson 1986 : 3).

2. White (1987) reminds us that the Lenin/Chayanov debate was not a purely academic confrontation, but rather one between the Bolshevik (socialist) and Narodnik (populist) points of view in a concrete situation.

3. It is unrealistic to measure the value of a subsistence crop purely in cash terms, since this calculation is not made by those producing the crop. However, for purposes of comparison this is the nearest approximation of value possible.

4. See Chapter V, footnote 10.

5. See Bharadwaj 1985 on interlinked markets in land, labour, and credit. Bharadwaj maintains that the resource position of a small farmer determines not only the *scale*, but also the *type* of exchange relations entered into, so that "it is the production relations which socially interrelate both the parties to the transaction that influence the form of the exchange relation" (p.12).

6. *Ngoen deuan* (lit. "monthly money") is a prized source of security. Villagers commonly differentiate themselves who live "*taam duang* : according to fate [lit. 'the stars']" from those who have *ngoen deuan*. Advice given by officials such as DAE officers may be derided because "they have a salary, so they can do it [without risk] : *khao mii ngoen deuan kin loei tham dai*".

7. If Lak's family were able to live closer to their fields, there might at least be some compensation in the form of hunting, as there is for those who live in the forest behind Ban Mai. As it is, Lak has to travel more than two kilometres each day to the field plot. Since the boar come at night, Lak cannot lie in wait.

8. A normal village house is quite mobile. Consisting basically of posts, planks, and roofing panels (zinc or thatch), dismantling and transport (*reu*) is not only easy but also common. Thus farmers will often literally "move house" when they change their location of residence. It is also common practice to sell all or part of a house for cash in case of emergency and build a new one or reextend the old one little by little with hand-sawn planks.

9. Scott (1976 : 14 - 15) shows that Chayanovian self-exploitation can be explained in terms of neoclassical microeconomic theory as a rational use of factors of production in the absence of opportunity costs. In one sense, these opportunity costs do exist in Ban Mai (local and non-local wage labouring, rental price of land) and prevent many people from taking a course of action such as that of Som. A neoclassical economist would thus take issue with the rationality of Som's decisions, and Chayanov would cite her as an example of the divergence of peasant mentality from neoclassic rationality. However, understood subjectively from the point of view of the farmer involved, the uncertainty and loss of control over production associated with these new "opportunities" must be included in the equation, in which case opportunity costs of the

"safety first" course are correspondingly diminished and the microeconomic rationality of the peasant remains intact. A less theoretical objection to economists' consideration of household labour in terms of "imputed wages" is put forward elsewhere:

> Since family members have not made an economic decision when they work for their household, there is little theoretical justification for imputing a 'wage' to them. Assigning cash value to all the factors in rice farming would be misleading socially and offensive morally to the villagers who do not live in a world where everything and everyone has a price (Moerman 1968 : 159).

10. Johnston (1975 : 152) notes the inverse relationship between rural crime and village welfare early in the century, for example relating outbreaks of crime to crop failures.

11. For "security reasons" there is a reluctance to antagonize illegal squatters on forest land by evicting them. This reluctance has declined since about 1981 with diminished concerns about the possibility of villagers going over to "the other side : *faai trong khaam*" (i.e. CPT), and the Forestry Department has become more aggressive in its evictions. According to the long time manager of TPC in Uthaithani, influential illegal timber traders would encourage landless farmers to settle on forest reserve land in exchange for help in logging operations, assuring them that the government would not dare alienate them by driving them off the land for fear they would join the Communists.

12. Employment in the Middle East is highly prized, but a large amount of capital is necessary to pay the agent's and other fees in order to be able to go. It is also a notoriously risky investment, as stories abound of people getting cheated out of large sums by agents. At least 30,000 *baht* is required, and relatives are often called upon to provide their NS3 land title deeds as security in order to raise the loan from a commercial bank. Some Middle East workers spend a year or more of their two year contract just paying off the debt incurred in getting there.

13. Scott (1986 : 12) draws the distinction between proletarianization and marginalization as follows. Proletarianization is the process by which labour is alienated from control over the means of production and becomes a commodity, such as peasant producers becoming wage labourers on land that was once their own. Marginalization is the process by which labour becomes redundant. Although this would normally be preceded by proletarianization and effected by replacement by machinery (in Scott's case the combine harvester), it may also be independent of this process. In our case, for example, Ban Mai producers are alienated from control by having to rent out their land in lieu of debt, and redundancy occurs as a result of two main processes : the large number of people facing the same situation, resulting in an oversupply of wage labour; and the extensification of production such as by cassava planting which results in a decline in seasonal demand for labour.

14. In addition to suffering from pesticides, fish populations have declined due to fishing techniques that lead to rapid depletion of stocks. In particular, "*cho't plaa* : fish electrocution" using car batteries or even bicycle dynamos and "*yaabeua* : poisoning" kill large and small fish alike, unlike the more selective traditional methods of *waan hae* (casting nets) and *wid* (blocking a stream and manually emptying water out of a section). This is a classic "tragedy of the

commons" situation and cannot be attributed solely to poverty : I was told by one wealthy Ban Mai illegal timber trader who had just returned with a 5 kilogramme catch that "we poor have to make ends meet somehow"; he had used his car battery to electrocute the fish in a nearby stream, showing that the technology of affluence can actually exacerbate the situation!

15. See Panayotou (1983 : 68) for a diagrammatic representation of this process of poverty, migration, and environmental deterioration.

16. Rigg (1985) comes to similar conclusions for the Northeast, showing that ultimately agricultural production is constrained by environmental factors and that in the context of a closed land frontier, growth in the rural economy must increasingly be sought outside the agricultural sector.

17. It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss in detail the role of rural industrialization in providing alternative productive potential in a situation of marginal agriculture. Suffice it to say that peripheral communities such as those of Lan Sak suffer numerous disadvantages for such production, which has had very limited development to date even in more accessible communities in the Central Region. See IBRD 1983 for an analysis of non-agricultural growth potential in rural areas.

18. An alternative production regime is envisaged by NKYFRD, which emphasises integrated farming. While it is beyond the scope of this study to investigate this alternative in detail, the main features are as follows. Integrated farming involves the household in a wide variety of activities. Its rationale is first, to maximize use of on-farm resources in an ecologically efficient way, for example by allowing pigs to feed on home-produced feedstuffs, chickens to feed on pig manure, chicken manure to feed fish, biogas production, and intensive kitchen gardening. Second, integrated farming is based on traditional peasant production in producing most of the goods required for home consumption within the household economy. Third, inputs to this type of agriculture are minimized, and it is therefore in principle of particular relevance to capital- and land-short poorer families. In practice, the dozen or so Ban Mai youths who have trained in integrated farming at NKYFRD have faced numerous difficulties in putting their training into practice, largely due to problems of debt within their families and the consequent need for immediate cash that can only be obtained by wage labouring. More fundamentally, the extent to which a village economy already geared to commercial production can revert to a more subsistence oriented regime is questionable.

# CHAPTER VII

# COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

> "Reality had taught them the value of joint action during peaceful times, such as during *long khaek* (reciprocal labour sharing) for transplanting and harvesting. Large jobs got done with the strength of the many who joined as one. These lessons enabled them to join together to get at the roots of the injustices that oppressed them." (Seni Saowapong, *Pisat* [devil] p. 253; my translation)

> "In the past we used to help each other; now we step on one another to get ahead. It's everyone for themselves".
> - Ban Dong villager returned from Ban Mai

> "Just imagine if next year farmers agreed not to sell any rice. If only we (sic) *chaonaa* could stick together."
> - Ban Dong *kamnan* ruminating

> "Working on your own you're like single fingers on a hand; work as a group and you're like a fist."
> - NGO worker talking to villagers

> "The trouble with us Thais is that we don't work together. Groups are what is needed for village development."
> - District official at a public meeting

The ethos of development in Thailand is imbued with the need for cooperation. Concern over lack of farmer bargaining power, fragmentation of village communities, decline of traditional cooperation, and the administrative difficulties associated with the "*thii khrai thii man* : each for him/herself" attitude all contribute to a discourse, ideology, and new structures that stress cooperative endeavour. At the same time, processes are at work that place the emphasis on the individual. Individualization of production, differentiation of the village community, increased importance of monetized relations within communities as described in the previous chapter all work against cooperation as an ideal or a practicality. This fundamental contradiction is the subject of the present chapter.

Neither traditionally nor formally established cooperation are new concepts on the Thai scene. As is detailed below, traditional village structures contain many cooperative elements, despite certain prevailing official myths to the contrary. Formal cooperatives were established as long ago as 1916, although they have rarely moved beyond a credit function and a notoriously unsuccessful one at that.[1] What is more recent is the association of cooperative activity at all levels with rural development, and the associated proliferation of groups (*klum*).

In examining the contradiction inherent in pursuing cooperative forms within an individualistic ethos, theories and actualities of peasant economy and associated structures are first taken into account. This is followed by a consideration of the rationale of cooperation or otherwise, particularly as it applies to production in Ban Dong and Ban Mai. Development as institutional innovation is examined in its divergent form with respect to the cooperative/individualistic dichotomy, and consideration is given to the concept of *klum* as it applies to the ideology of state, NGO, and villagers. Specific instances of cooperative development are described, with particular emphasis on one project that spans indigenous initiative, NGO, and state rural development structures and with which the writer was directly involved. Finally, potential areas for cooperation are examined with reference to Ban Dong and Ban Mai production, and obstacles to their achievement are identified.

## VII.1 Peasant economy and village structure : collectivist or individualist?

The collectivist versus individualist debate has taken on many forms. Ultimately it is linked to the basic communal and "rational" self-maximizing principles underlying socialist and capitalist social and economic systems respectively. In terms of peasant systems the main debate has been around the moral versus political economy arguments. Underpinning these arguments are conflicting accounts of village structure from different parts of the world at different conjunctures in history, but much of the recent debate has drawn on evidence from Southeast Asia in the context of colonial and capitalist change. The present section outlines the essential points of the debate and extends it beyond academic theorizing into popular notions of traditional village structure in Thailand as reflected in various discourses. This is followed by an analysis of indigenous production arrangements as evidenced in Chapter V to show that neither corporate nor individualist notions explain in isolation what arrangements are arrived at. Finally, the debate is considered in the context of the rapid change in production relations occurring in Lan Sak. It is suggested that a major omission in the moral versus political economy debate is that of the reflexivity of change on peasant social structure, where the latter is all too often taken as a given and response or reaction to change used to prove the nature of this given.

### *VII.1.i Theories of peasant economy and village structure*

The principal opposing theories of village structure as interpreted through peasant economy are James Scott's (1976) moral economy approach and Samuel Popkin's (1979) political economy approach. Scott uses evidence from Burma and Vietnam to suggest a

morally based world view of peasants based on the principles of reciprocity and assured subsistence. Popkin counters with evidence from Vietnam to suggest that Scott's ascription of atavism to peasants is unjustified, and that peasants are in fact forward looking, self-maximizing individuals with a universalistic investment logic.

Scott develops his argument by first considering the basis for the "subsistence ethic" as he terms it. The peasant household enterprise as consumption as well as production unit places assured subsistence before long term income maximization. This leads to norms of reciprocity and exchange relationships that may appear exploitative but form the moral basis for peasant society. What peasants sacrifice to their village 'betters' in status and long term income, they gain by way of insurance against starvation. This is mediated by collective village institutions, patron-clientage, expectations of better off members of the community, and reciprocity that keep peasants in moral debt for most of the time but able to call on a wealthy fellow villager or community resources in time of need. These norms were infringed by the claims of the colonial economy and state, which shifted risk onto the peasantry so that in times of shortage they paid proportionately more rather than less in order to stabilize colonial revenues. It was this infringement that led to peasant rebellions even against enormous odds. Rebellions are, however, rare, and Scott shows that the moral economy more often leads to redistributive and self-help solutions that are concerned above all with assuring subsistence of the household. A number of alternatives to outright rebellion are suggested as indicators of whether the moral economy has been infringed in concrete situations.

Popkin rejects the moral economy analysis on four main grounds. First, while acknowledging that peasants are concerned with short term

survival, he suggests that the "safety first" emphasis takes insufficient account of investments and even gambles made by peasants when opportunities present themselves. Second, he questions the efficiency of village institutions in guaranteeing subsistence through redistribution, maintaining that needs are normative and norms are flexible and therefore subject to uncertainty. Third, the potential of villagers to act collectively is thrown into question by the problem of free riders. Finally, patron-clientage is seen by Popkin as continually open to change depending on the relative bargaining power of the sides involved, and such relations are governed by endogenous circumstances rather than by a culturally determined, fixed ethic of reciprocity. Popkin supports his argument by showing that traditional villages were far from harmonious, that individual maximization preceded village level strategies, and that elites appropriated community resources for themselves. Rebellion is shown to be a response to opportunties in the specific context of strong leadership rather than a retreatist attempt at regaining a lost harmony.

The two theories thus differ fundamentally on the issue of what causes peasants to act, specifically in response to changes affecting the village influenced by outside events. Scott's peasants react to change in a negative way when the moral premises of subsistence guarantees are threatened or actually infringed. Popkin's peasants are astute respondents to opportunities presented by change. At one level, Scott's cutters of losses and Popkin's maximizers of gains are the same peasants cast on swings and roundabouts. More fundamentally, however, implicit and explicit assumptions about village structures underly the two principal arguments.

Whereas Scott uses as his starting point the collectively organized and harmonious village, Popkin questions the validity of both

of these characterizations of traditional village structure. On the one hand, he questions village communality by showing that collective institutions are difficult to establish and that peasants are motivated primarily by an individualistic investment logic. On the other, he raises numerous examples of exclusion of segments of the village population from involvement in village affairs and infringement of community institutions by village elites. The implications of these disagreements over peasant motivations and village structures range from response of peasants to market opportunities through constraints on community development to potential for revolutionary action.

On the Thai scene, popular, populist, and other non-academic versions of history contain their own discourses on the nature of the "traditional" Thai village and its inhabitants. The urbanite conception is of the village as containing the source of the true "Thai" character. Villages are places where the *chaobaan*[2] are poor but content, where people help each other, where poverty is shared, where honesty and simplicity border on stupidity (hence the dual connotation of the word *seu*, meaning both "honest" and "naive to the point of ignorance"). Among those with more intimate acquaintance with the realities of village life, there is a range of theorizing about the true nature of the village, and this is complicated by the realities of change and substantial variation between regions. Among NGOs, for example, there is a tendency for workers in the North and Northeast to work according to an undifferentiated model of village structure, a rejection of concepts of class, and a consensual approach to decision making. Those working in the more "developed" Central Region, and this includes Uthaithani, work to a model of differentiated villages in which identification of "target groups" (despite much consternation over this term) is necessary. Among officials, inasmuch as they can be seen as distinct from the general urbanite population, the village is

differentiated not so much in economic terms as in the quality of its inhabitants in their responding, acquiescing, or reacting in other ways to official contact (see Section VII.3.i below). Meanwhile, there is an official exasperation at the perceived inability of villagers to work together on official projects. The principal oppositionist element in Thai society, the CPT, split seriously over its own conceptualization of the Thai social formation, including village structures, as either semi-feudal/semi-colonial or semi-colonial/ semi-capitalist.

Academic analyses of the structure of traditional Thai village society are manifold, and there is only room to provide a brief guide to them here. Scholarship was for long distracted by the debate on the supposed "loose structure" of Thai society, based on Embree's (1950) observations (see Evers 1969 for aspects of this debate). Potter's (1976) study attempted to refute the loose structure paradigm. Meanwhile, Thai political economists take a more dynamic approach, focussing on the impact of state and capital in specific historic contexts rather than trying to identify the nature of a primaeval village society (see e.g. Chatthip and Suthy 1981; Chatthip et.al. 1981). Specifically in the frontier village context, Johnston (1975 : 152ff.) makes the interesting observation that redistributive mechanisms existed within a village society whose inhabitants perceived a "limited good" (a la Foster) and thus saw loss and gain in terms of the community rather than specific individuals.

### *VII.1.ii Peasant economy and village structure in Lan Sak*

Just as no amount of theorizing, academic or otherwise, will arrive at a definitive formulation of the nature of village structure or

peasant economy, so no isolated case study can provide proof or vindication for a particular theory. However, theories that have been built upon experience elsewhere can help in the interpretation of structures, processes, and contradictions phenomenologically observed, and at the same time empirical studies do shed light on the appropriateness or otherwise of assumptions underlying more general theorizing.

The practical and ideological discourse of peasants is evidenced in village level institutions. It must be recalled that Lan Sak villages are relatively young. As a result, institutions are to be seen as a combination of traditional arrangements that were carried over from settlers' home villages on the one hand, and on the other, adaptations that were made to suit the demands of a new type of environment, novel production constraints and opportunities, the peculiarities of frontier life, and as will be discussed in the following section, rapid changes in all of the above. The current section deals first with what are termed "traditional" Lan Sak structures, even though it is acknowledged that in a newly settled area the only specificities are likely to be ones of adaptation.

What is the evidence concerning collectivism versus individualism during early Lan Sak settlement? Data is now presented from Ban Dong and Ban Mai (and the latter's parent settlement at Thung Khaa) to show that elements of both are strong, and it is held that the predominance of one or the other in peasant actions and establishment of village institutions is governed by local and historical circumstance. This fluidity subsequently helps explain the rapid shifts that are apparent with changes resulting from external events.

Cooperation in early Lan Sak settlements was essential for

survival. Construction of the settlement involved cooperative effort in many tasks. Housebuilding, cutting of paths and later of tracks, construction of temples and in the case of Thung Khaa also of the village school, were all indigenously organized cooperative activitities. Labour could be summoned from each house in the community during the agricultural off-season : such cooperative effort is referred to as "*khon la mai khon la meu* : lit. a piece of wood each, a hand each". Natural and human hazards encouraged a spirit and settlement patterns that diverged from settlers' previous experience. In the case of Bung Khiew, for example, early settlers from different locations, even from different provinces, established a concentrated settlement in order to guard against natural and supernatural dangers of the forest. Communities relied on mutual protection, and outsiders were distrusted. Yet trust within the community was strong. In Ban Dong long term Lao settlers speak of having been able to leave buffalo out to graze for days on end. In Ban Mai, early forest settlers talk of the time when a house would remain unguarded; if neighbours arrived and nobody was at home, the neighbours could help themselves to "enough rice for a meal and charcoal to cook it : *khao pho' kin thaan pho' hung*". All of this produced a cohesion that is rarely associated with frontier life in the minds of outsiders.

Meanwhile, activities more directly concerned with production involved several important elements of cooperation. The most ubiquitous and the one least specific to the locality is that of reciprocal labour (*ao raeng*). In the past many tasks had involved mutual help on an uncalculated basis (usually termed simply "*chuai kan* : lit. help each other" [cf. *coj* in Moerman 1968 : 116 - 117]), and among these some survive such as moving a house and preparing food for a household feast. However, *ao raeng* is on a strictly calculated basis, whereby one day's labour is returned in kind, almost always for the same task. As is

evident from Chapter IV, *ao raeng* is more prevalent in some agricultural tasks than in others. In Ban Dong, *ao raeng* is most commonly used in rice harvesting, while in Ban Mai it is used mainly for maize planting. In the past, Ban Dong farmers would use this arrangement for other agricultural tasks that involved a large number of people, notably transplanting.

*Ao raeng* labour is summoned ("*bo'k* : lit. told") a few days in advance by the "host" household (*jaophaap*). On the day, most labourers ("*khaek* : lit. guests") are in the fields by about 8, but some may arrive a little late. Several members of the host household remain at home to prepare the midday meal for as many as 50 or more people, but at least one member will work in the fields and supervise the work. Shortly before noon, the *khaek* stop work and in the case of Ban Dong go to the *jaophaap*'s house, where lunch is waiting. It is a matter of pride that a meal above the usual standard should be provided, with several dishes and plenty of meat. *Khaek* are exhorted to eat their fill, and the bowls of curry that are set in the middle of each circle of rice bowls are constantly refilled from large tureens. In the case of Ban Mai, this important social aspect of *ao raeng* is lost, since fields are usually too far from the *jaophaap*'s house to go back for lunch, and the meal provided at the field shelter (*haang*) is more modest. Work resumes at 2, although some may arrive slightly late if they have been home after lunch to attend to household tasks. Halfway through the afternoon, there is a short break called "*phak noi* : lit. little rest", at which homemade rice spirit is usually served; this is one of the few occasions when homemade spirits are consumed openly and liberally, by women as well as men. The remainder of the afternoon's work is often boisterous in the case of the rice harvest, with much singing and joking.

Despite the social importance of *ao raeng* to the cooperative spirit of the community and the enjoyable aspect it brings to what is otherwise hard toil, its operability depends on a number of key conditions. Since *ao raeng* depends above all on reciprocation, it is important that a sufficient number of members of the community continue to use it. Although cooperating households do not have to have identical labour requirements, it would clearly be impossible for a family with a large number of fields to fulfil its reciprocal obligations were it to utilize *ao raeng* labour. By the same token, it would be pointless for a family with few fields to engage more *ao raeng* workers than it could employ, and it is entirely irrelevant to the landless. Thus *ao raeng* requires a moderately egalitarian scale of production between participating households. It is also important that the tasks for which *ao raeng* is used are flexible at least to some degree in their timing, otherwise all will attend to their own fields or employ hired labour at the optimum times. A third condition for successful *ao raeng* arrangements is the relative social cohesion of the community or section of the community participating, since the social element is still a strong one and there is at least some degree of trust involved in expecting obligations to be fulfilled in an only partly mensurable way. *Ao raeng* is adaptable to a limited amount of change in these conditions, as will be shown in the following section.

Apart from cooperative arrangements in early establishment of the community and in agricultural tasks, indigenous cooperation is also evident in the mobilization of an important factor of production in Ban Dong, namely water. From the time when farmers first practised settled rice farming on any scale in Lan Sak, in the 1960s, they have dug irrigation channels and constructed weirs on the Tap Salao River. Ban Dong fields are partially irrigated by water diverted at Paak Meuang (whose name means "head [mouth] of the irrigation channel") via a

channel that also makes use of natural streams and another small weir at Khong Chai (see Fig. 4.6). This channel was dug by hand under the cooperative effort of Ban Dong residents when much of its course was still forest or scrub. Since its inception, this mini-irrigation system (*meuang faai* : lit. channel and weir) has been administered by an indigenous irrigation committee akin to the type of arrangement more commonly found in the North of Thailand. This committee is elected annually, with individuals putting out tenders to the members (i.e. beneficiaries of the system) and mustering their own team if elected head (*hua naa faai*). In exchange for constant control of the water level by adjustments to the bamboo and log weir and distribution of water fairly among the hundred or so members in Ban Dong and further downstream, the committee receives an agreed rice payment of two *tang* of rice for every three *rai* of land harvested. The committee generally have little land of their own, since most of their time is taken up by administering the system. During the agricultural off-season, the committee summons labour from the member households, who each have to provide an agreed amount of materials in the form of bamboo and timber.

Finally, the household as a cooperative unit should be mentioned, since it is so often taken for granted as being such without consideration of its potential divisibility. Traditionally the household functions as a corporate unit, with little or no differentiation of rewards accruing to its constituent members according to the amount of labour they perform in its name. Differentiation of tasks there is: in traditional rice agriculture, men are responsible for the "heavy" tasks, notably ploughing, while women perform most of the "fiddly" tasks, notably transplanting. Both men and women take part in the harvest. In fact, this division of labour is not strict, and it is common to see women ploughing and men transplanting if there is a

shortage of male or female labour in a particular household. The household itself is often defined by "those who eat from the same pot : *khon kin ruam mo' diew kan*" and the word for family is "*khro'bkhrua* : lit. those sharing a kitchen"; in the village, it is more often referred to as a "*langkhaa baan*", or those living under the same roof, or simply "*baan*", or house (see section I.5 above). If children or other members of the household work for a wage elsewhere, they are expected to pool their earnings in the family kitty.

The above are the main indigenous aspects of cooperation in the field of production to be found in Lan Sak villages. In counterbalance, it is necessary also to mention some individualistic aspects of traditional life. To begin with, the decision to migrate is itself an individual one, and despite the fact that many choose to settle near friends or relatives who have made the move before them, the uprooting of whole villages or large parts of them is the exception rather than the rule. Thus Ban Dong and even more so Ban Mai are inhabited by settlers from a diverse range of locations, and village cohesion that has developed over generations in established villages has only had a short period to develop in Lan Sak villages. The common perception of frontier life as individualistic and ruled by the law of the gun is distorted, but there is an element of truth inasmuch as boundaries are as yet poorly defined, leadership up for grabs, and social and legal controls weakly established.

Another aspect of individualism is the preferred residence pattern of Thai settlers. Living close to one's land is partly a matter of convenience, since many economic activities are only possible in proximity to the homestead and farmers prefer not to have to walk long distances to their fields each day. However, such a preference is also ideologically expressed, and lowland Thais see themselves as different

from Lao in this respect, since the latter prefer to settle in a clustered community. When forced to settle in such a community as in the case of Ban Mai, many villagers complain not only of the material inconvenience of having to spend up to two hours travelling to and from their land and of not being able to raise ducks and chickens or plant fruit trees, but also express feelings of discomfort, unease, feeling pestered or annoyed in the common plaints of "*mai sabaaijai* : uncomfortable", "*jukjikjai*: bothered", "*thuuk ramkhaan* : annoyed".

A further aspect of individualism is the importance of the household, however loosely defined, as the basic production unit and the basis for calculation. Whereas the household is traditionally as pure a corporate institution as is found anywhere in Thai and most other societies, the corollary is a lack of any such cohesion at a level above that of the household. *Ao raeng* calculations are made on the basis of the household, land is held and rice is stored at the household and not the community level, and the household serves as the most common basis for calculation of interests.

The seemingly contradictory notions of self-perceived individualism as a Thai trait and the normative ideal of cooperation is expressed ideologically in a number of ways. The most powerful element in the discourse of villagers on individualism in everyday life is the phrasal pattern ___ *khrai* ___ *man*. Thus *thii khrai thii man* (each to his/her own), *baan khraai baan man* (each house[hold] for itself), *reuang khrai reuang man* (each person's affair is their own concern), and so on. The Buddhist concept of *kama* (karma) holds that each individual is responsible for his or her own fate. On the other hand, one often hears the need to *ruam meu* (lit. join hands), and *ao raeng* is seen as much as a way of helping neighbours as a matter of self interest. The distinction between self-perception and the ideal is

apparent in the frequent admiring comments made by Thais about other ethnic groups. On the Lao (Isaan) in a neighbouring village, for example, is often heard the comment that they *ruam meu kan dii* (cooperate well together). Despite resentment of the Chinese traders in Paak Meuang and elsewhere, their success is admired and put down not only to hard work but also to the fact that "*jek chuai kan euafeua kan mai biadbian kan meuan khon Thai* : the [pejorative term for] Chinese help and support each other, they don't exploit each other like [us] Thais".

### *VII.1.iii Cooperation and change*

It was suggested above that at no point in time can villages or villagers be characterized as exclusively collective or individualist, but rather that elements of each are manifested according to the pertaining material situation. It is to be expected, therefore, that changes in this situation are accompanied by both disruptions in the rationale for traditional cooperation and emergence of new forms in response to change. Since cooperative practices require rules, mutual expectations, and even moral codes (these being the basis for institutions : see section II.2), they take time to get established. At the same time, infringement of these rules, expectations, and codes can quickly undermine established forms, and it is therefore unsurprising that cooperative endeavour suffers in the context of rapid change.

In Lan Sak, a number of changes have resulted in a decline in traditional cooperation. One is the dispersal of communities away from village clusters with more complete deforestation and decline in the dangers that produced cooperation through safety in numbers. Another is

the large size of most villages, making cooperation based on kinship or affinity difficult to establish on a village-wide basis. However, more fundamental changes have been due to external influences, in particular the state and the market economy.

As was noted above, an important form of cooperation in early Lan Sak settlements was the joint construction of infrastructural projects such as roads, irrigation, and even schools. Since the state has started to provide resources for such projects, the need for community cooperation has declined and only the temple is still entirely a joint village responsibility. The state also impinges on the irrigation administration, village leadership in general, and other spheres of village life, and this issue is discussed further in section VII.5 below.

Economically, monetization, debt, and differentiation produce a change in production relations that makes traditional cooperation difficult to sustain. In particular, the decline of *ao raeng* can be attributed to these factors. *Ao raeng* depends on the more or less equal valuation of a day's labour by participating households, otherwise households with more ready cash will be more likely to hire labour so as to avoid having to fulfil what are seen as tedious reciprocal obligations. Differentiation in control over land makes it unlikely that those at either end of the spectrum will engage in *ao raeng* and after a point the pool of participants is too small for continued viability of the system (cf. Anan 1984 : 461; Ananya 1985 : 92,164). Intensification of cultivation by double cropping makes for more critical peaks of labour demand, which in turn makes it more difficult for *ao raeng* for a particular task to be spread over two or more weeks, and labour is hired in preference. These periods have become known as times of *yaeng khaek*, or fighting over [hired] labour, and

the wage rate rises temporarily to 35 *baht* or even more in exceptional circumstances.

*Ao raeng* carries on in part due to its adaptability to changed circumstances. In Ban Dong and Ban Mai it is not uncommon to find reciprocal and hired labourers (*khaek raeng* and *khaek jaang* respectively) working alongside each other. In this case the *khaek jaang* have to provide their own lunch or have a small amount (usually 5 *baht*) deducted from their day's wage. Monetary relations also help introduce an element of flexibility into the reciprocal relationship by allowing a household unable to fulfil its obligations to hire labour from a third household to work on the day in question. Alternatively, any outstanding obligations are cleared in cash if not reciprocated by the end of the season.

A combination of differentiation, monetization, and natural resource scarcity also effects changes in the administration of traditional village institutions. A case in point is the irrigation administration in Ban Dong. Until 1984, the committee was paid in rice and members contributed labour and materials for the upkeep of the weir and channels. In 1985 for the first time, it was decided at the annual meeting to contract out the administration to the lowest bidder, dispensing with the need for labour and material inputs from the members. The former is increasingly difficult to organize as wealthier farmers place a higher valuation on their time, and bamboo and timber is difficult to find. As a result, these inputs are now to be replaced by equal cash contributions from the members, which is of course regressive in its effect on landholders of different sizes. Rice is still paid to the irrigation committee for administration, but this could eventually also be replaced by a cash payment.

In Ban Mai, the individualization of production has even undercut the household. Young people who seek employment in Bangkok and elsewhere, and even some who work locally, keep most or all of their wages for themselves. This is influenced in large part by the consumerist culture that has developed in the competitive environment of the village, which means that young people value the independent income that wage labour gives them for purchase of material goods such as western style clothes, radios and cassette players, and motorcycles. Even between husband and wife, pooling of resources cannot always be taken for granted, as in the case of a Ban Mai woman whose husband will not send home any of his savings from the Middle East where he is working for fear that she will run off with another man and the money to boot.

The response of villagers to the changed production relations brought about by these trends can be summarized by a brief comparison of *ao raeng* as seen by Ban Dong and Ban Mai villagers. As was noted above, *ao raeng* still fulfils an important cooperative social function in Ban Dong, whereas in Ban Mai some of the traditional and enjoyable aspects that distinguish reciprocal from hired labour in a qualitative way have been lost. The following two paraphrased statements of Ban Dong and Ban Mai villagers respectively comparing *ao raeng* with *jaang* speak for themselves. In one Ban Dong villager's words, "Given the choice, I'd rather work under *ao raeng* any day. If you're a bit late it doesn't matter. You don't feel you have to be at it every minute of the day, and you can talk and joke as you work. There's the fun of the midday meal and the *phak noi*; generally it's more fun, and you don't have to have cash." In contrast, a Ban Mai villager complains, "I wish I had the cash like some to hire labour. *Khaek raeng* turn up late and horse around instead of putting in a proper day's work like *khaek jaang*. *Ao raeng* is only for us poor

lot who haven't the cash to *jaang*."

Finally, in response to changed conditions and outside influences, new forms of cooperation can be detected as emerging. Most of these are discussed below under the heading of development initiatives since they are specifically associated as such, but three new forms of cooperative endeavour are spontaneous enough to be considered primarily as indigenous responses. The first is the pooling of cash for joint infrastructural projects that are urgently desired but which the District authorities have not budgeted for. Examples are road improvement and an attempt at irrigation channel construction by Bung Khiew villagers, both of which were carried out using machinery of private contractors hired using funds collected specifically for the purpose; in the past, joint labour would have been used in the agricultural off season to perform the same tasks. The second is the spontaneous mobilization of villagers for an appeal to government authorities when an issue too urgent to be left to formal village leadership arises. In September 1984, one such issue arose in Ban Mai, when ALRO brought in machinery to remove tree stumps from fields that had already been planted with mung beans. About 50 Ban Mai villagers whose crops were threatened went to the ALRO office 60 kilometres distant in Uthaithani to petition the provincial authorities, and they were successful in having the work put off until after the harvest. In May 1985, Bung Khiew villagers angered by substandard work on a community granary constructed by a contractor commissioned by the provincial DAE office appealed through a local leader over the head of local officials to have the work inspected. Eventually they not only got a new granary but also persuaded the provincial DAE officer to award the reconstruction contract to a team of five Bung Khiew villagers. A third example of indigenous cooperation in response to change also comes from Bung Khiew, in the donation of land by several villagers for

community projects. This will be detailed in section VII.5 below, and some of the factors pertaining in Bung Khiew that make for cooperation are suggested in the following chapter.

## VII.2 Rationale for cooperation in production

It was suggested in the previous section that the rationale for cooperative or individual endeavour changes with changes in production relations and other influences on the production regime. The present section examines the rationale for cooperation or otherwise under existing conditions in Ban Dong and Ban Mai as detailed in Chapter V. The rationale is that of an outsider with detailed knowledge of the two communities, but wherever possible reference is made to considerations of villagers themselves.

As monetary relations become more pervasive, the scope for individual production independent of the rest of the community increases. Under traditional arrangements, the scale of production was limited largely by ability to summon labour, which in turn depended on the amount of household labour available both for domestic production and for partaking in labour sharing arrangements. Monetization gives larger farmers access to a potentially unlimited pool of labour within and even outside the community. Meanwhile, villagers at the other end of the spectrum with few or none of the other resources necessary for production depend on hiring themselves out as wage labourers rather than engaging in reciprocal arrangements. Thus the rationale for this form of cooperation is reduced, and in the case of the Ban Mai farmer quoted above it is relegated to a reluctant response to resource shortage, where individual cash hiring would be preferred.

Another evident aspect of monetization is that of debt. On the one hand, this leads farmers to take individual short term measures, often relying on resources external to the community, and this is detrimental to prospects for longer term cooperation based on indigenous resources. Differentiation not only reduces the scope for cooperation in a material sense; it is also destructive of the village as a community of interest. The commonest complaint referring to lack of social cohesion in Ban Mai and to a lesser extent in Ban Dong is that "*khon ichaa kan* : lit. people envy each other", and this is often used in explanation of why cooperative projects fail. Some even claim to have had their crops tampered with in the event of doing better than a neighbour.

However, new forms of production and changes in production relations do also open up potential avenues for cooperation. Some of these have been followed with varying degrees of success under development schemes and will be discussed below. Others remain ideas or ideals in the minds of villagers. Most of these ideas are based on finding ways to avoid the principal means of surplus extraction in the two communities and would thus be redistributive in their effect. One idea is to reduce the loss of resources in the form of interest on debt from the community or their concentration in the hands of individuals by establishing community based lending institutions. A second attempt to recoup surplus by cooperative action would be to control trade, both in joint purchase of agricultural inputs and in joint marketing of produce. A third method would be for small farmers to gain control over "lumpy" factors of production, i.e. those which are generally too expensive for an individual to purchase and use to the full on his or her own farm. In particular, ploughing implements if cooperatively owned would increase farmers' control over production and

decrease the surplus accruing to tractor owners and buffalo rentiers. Even divisible factors such as buffalo can be obtained more cheaply if bought in bulk at the large market at Tab Tan, and this requires cooperation. Other ideas concern mobilization of resources by cooperative effort, notably water.

## VII.3 Development as institutional innovation : individual or cooperative?

Development as institutional innovation was discussed in Chapter II. Insofar as institutional arrangements for the mobilization, distribution, and exchange of resources can be individually or cooperatively organized, the alternatives for development can also be categorized as such. This conceptualization is not out of line with village categories. In local discourse, you can either do things *baan khraai baan man* (each to him/herself) or you can do them *ruam kan* (jointly).

With regard to development, however, we find a blatant contradiction between an ethos that places increasing emphasis on the individual as the primary agent for development and specific programmes that involve cooperative effort. The ethos is inherent in the background ideology, discourse, and structures involved in promoting capitalist development of the countryside. Specific programmes are those initiated by state and NGO developers. This section examines the contradiction with reference to "development" as observed in Lan Sak.

*VII.3.i Individualistic ethos*

The ideology of capitalist development places stress on individual advancement. Capitalist, monetized relations of production free individual producers from the social constraints imposed by traditional relationships for mobilization of labour and other factors of production. Commoditization of labour turns individuals into marketable factors of production, control over which (whom) is potentially unlimited with cash as the sole constraint. Thus the underlying national strategy of capitalist development of the countryside itself is a powerful ideological instrument toward individualization. It is evidenced in Lan Sak above all in the decline of *ao raeng* in favour of *jaang* as the means for securing control over labour and by the concentration of control over a key factor of production, namely tractors, in the case of Ban Mai.

In addition to the individualistic logic of capitalist relations of production, a number of other effects of national development strategy favour individual advancement. Most powerful of all is the consumerist culture that is produced by availability of goods, conspicuous consumption by village elites, association of material goods with social status, and the embarrassment of those unable to keep up with the consumption standards of their neighbours. Introduction of electricity into the village such as in Ban Mai is a major stimulus to promulgation of such a culture. On the heels of electrification follow vans of travelling salesmen from the Singer and other companies, and many of these have commissioned agents within the village. This is the most sharply felt aspect of the ideology of competition, whereby individuals are not only released from social constraints over getting ahead independently of their neighbours, but actually see getting ahead in material terms as their goal. In Ban Mai only half have paid

electricity connection costs despite not having to pay anything toward village connection costs and only paying for individual household connection of electricity, yet many even of these have incurred debt by connecting and spending beyond their means.

The competitive approach is promoted by state rural developers as a key incentive for village development. Village competitions are held at the district, provincial, regional, and national levels. Within the village, competitions are held for best kept households. The emphasis is on outdoing others and feeling ashamed at being outdone. Another aspect of such competitions, that of power and their use by officials to impose their own standards on village life and village development and to coopt local leaders is discussed in the following chapter.

As was suggested in section *VII,1,i* above, officials often have a differentiated view of the village based on the moral character of its citizens. This is imparted in district development training programmes. An example is the nationwide programme *Phaen din tham, Phaen din tho'ng* described in Chapter II above. This places emphasis on the moral fibre of villagers, and the vices condemned in Buddhist discourse (*abayamuk*), notably gambling and drinking, are held up as the greatest obstacles to development. By implication, development is above all an individual path. A sign placed at Ban Dong temple in 1985 read : "Obstacles to development : selfishness, bickering, laziness, stupidity and bragging, and vice". The concept of spiritual development (*phatthana jitjai*) as originally coined by NGO workers in opposition to the exploitative, self-oriented mores associated with capitalist development, has been taken by state developers to mean an individual path of development through abstention (*lod la loek*). The dominant discourse ties national salvation (*kaan yuuro'd kho'ng chaat*) to personal salvation through individual discipline.[3]

An elaboration on this general emphasis was made during a training programme for village heads in Lan Sak in April 1985. There are, it was explained by the District DAE officer, six types of people. The first is *hua wai jai suu* (lit. quick witted and resilient). These are always looking for new ideas. The second is *ro' duu thii thaa* (wait and see). These are willing to listen but are not active seekers. Third are those who *boeng taa langlee* (lit. look on hesitantly). They sit on the sidelines and are slow to get involved in new ideas. Type four is *hanhee hua deu* (lit. stubborn). It is difficult for anything to get through to them. Fifth are those who *ngo' meu jabjao* (lit. sit hugging their knees). They are almost beyond help. The last group *mai ao nai loei* ([are] good for nothing). The first three groups are classified as *bua phon naam* (lit. lotuses above water), which in popular Buddhist terms means enlightened. The lower three types, on the other hand, are *bua tai naam* (lit. lotuses under water), or those with the potential for enlightenment but not yet ready.[4] This is an example of popular Buddhist terminology used (inaccurately as it turns out - see fn.) to differentiate people in their willingness to accept new ideas, where most of these are concerned with "modernity"; coming from the district agricultural officer, this implies fertilizer, pesticides, and other aspects of capital intensive farming. The implication is that the *bua phon naam* are those deserving of help, whereas the *bua tai naam* are not worth bothering with.

The individualistic, competitive ethos is evident in several aspects of village discourse. Ban Dong returnees from Ban Mai complain that they dislike the competitive spirit (*khaeng kan*) and the currying of favour in order to get ahead (*ao naa*) in the latter village. Shame at inability to keep up in consumption standards is commonly expressed in the phrase "*aai khao*" (see case 1, section *VI,1,iii*).

Differentiation is accompanied by mutual resentment between different social strata in the village. In Ban Mai, one of the village traders who is also a tractor owner and influential village committee member "exploits the poor [of the village] : *khuud riid khon jon*", for example by the low wages he pays for menial work like humping sacks of grain onto his lorry. He in turn says of the majority of villagers that they "are not serious : *mai ao jing*" about farming; his wife puts down the problems of the village to the fact that "people are not willing to listen to the [village] leaders : *khon mai yo'm cheua fang phuu nam*".[5] Mutual interdependence between the better off and poorer villagers has lost its reciprocative social content, and as such the (not necessarily egalitarian) corporate elements of village social relations have given over to individualistic priorities and opportunities for gain.

### *VII.3.ii Cooperative programmes*

Despite the emphasis on the individual and the divergence of individual fortunes that is inherent in capitalist development and evident in associated discourse, the actual programmes that come under the aegis of rural development are specifically cooperative in orientation. The emphasis on farmer cooperation in small groups originated in Thailand with the NGO movement in the 1970s. The problems of farmers were interpreted as being due to lack of bargaining power vis-a-vis moneylenders, traders, and the state. Collective action by formation of groups was seen as the basis for increasing the power of small farmers to act within a political economy that stacked the odds against them. Such groups were a sensitive political issue at the local level, and NGO workers who tried to set up cooperative schemes at the

village level were often accused of trying to "*pluk radom* : lit. mobilize", or stir up trouble.

However, with the government's rural development programme and poverty alleviation scheme under the 1982 - 86 Five Year Plan, the idea of setting up groups at the village level has been taken up. "Development : *kaanphattana*" is now associated closely with "groups : *klum*", such that for a village to be entered for a competition it is mandatory that groups are set up as evidence of the developed state of the village. These include housewives' groups, young farmers' groups, youth groups, village scouts, and others set up by various branches of the District administration. In addition, other state agencies utilise groups in their programme strategies at the village level, such as the BAAC joint liability groups and military reserves. NGOs still place emphasis on cooperative action, with rice bank and buffalo bank projects examples of NGO initiated groups to be found in Ban Dong. The only indigenous group of any permanence to be found in either of the two villages is the Ban Dong water users' group described above.

## VII.4 The Concept of *Klum*

The previous section discussed the contradiction between the underlying ethos of individualism in capitalist development and the cooperative emphasis in most projects labeled as "development". Before going on to examine specific projects in Ban Dong and Ban Mai, it is necessary to consider the principle of cooperation as seen by the various actors on the development stage. To this end, the concept of *klum* (group) is considered from the viewpoint of state developers, NGO workers, and villagers affected by *klum*. The conceptualizations

presented below are culled from observation of specific programmes at the village level and discussions with the people involved rather than from formal interviewing or abstract questioning along the lines of "what do you understand by '*klum*'?".

### *VII.4.i State concepts*

State developers attach importance to the formal establishment of development groups (*klum phattanaa*) at the village level. The stated objective of such groups is to encourage self-help, using the group as a forum. Varying degrees of pressure are put on villagers at monthly village meetings to join the group. For the official involved, the establishment of groups is an objective in itself, since merit points (*khwaamdii khwaamcho'b*) are gained within each department at the district level by setting up formal groups. Each department in turn vies for influence at the village level in order to secure increased budget allocations. Each group has a name that delimits its membership and its function to some extent, but there is overlap of both. Thus it is possible to be a member of several groups and at the same time activities may be similar in each of these.

In fact, activities of most of these groups are limited to training sessions often lasting several days, at which *withayakorn* (instructors) from different government departments, from the Buddhist clergy, from the military, and even from NGOs are invited to speak. Most of the time is spent teaching civic virtues, explaining government policy on various issues, speaking on the need for security, the need for vigilance, and on the threat posed by Vietnam.[6] Training on some programmes includes subjection to humiliation, using psychological

methods to incur a sense of unity and loyalty to the group in a similar way to that used in the Village Scout movement.[7]

The function of these "development groups", then, is first and foremost to give district officials a forum for access to the village population. By electing villagers as president and committee members, groups have a semblance of independence. In fact, both group officials and government officials claim that the primary use of groups is to "ease administration : *tham hai kaan pok khro'ng ngaai khao*". Communicating with villagers via groups means having only to contact the head of the group. In an important sense, therefore, *klum* in the state's terms is a means of extending the pyramidal hierarchy down to the village level, bringing with it the features of duplication, top-downward orientation, lack of coordination, and stress on formal rules (*rabiab*).

*VII¸4¸ii NGO concepts*

As described in section *VII¸3¸ii* above, collective action by farmers is the basic philosophy of non-governmental organizations in increasing bargaining power vis-a-vis exploitative outside forces. Like state initiated schemes, NGO groups are characterized as self-help organizations. Unlike state initiated groups, NGOs are concerned that group members themselves initiate these new institutions from the design stage, and membership is voluntary or by peer pressure rather than by pressure from an external authority. The problems faced by NGOs in establishing groups at the village level are precisely those concerned with giving villagers a sense of proprietorship over the groups.

Until approximately 1981, NGOs working at the village level had to proceed extremely cautiously with the setting up of farmers' groups. At the local level, genuine bargaining power in the hands of farmers threatened local monopoly interests. On a wider scale, the government regarded many such groups as Communist front organizations. As a result, groups were open to accusation and where they did operate it was within a politically sensitive context. Consequently, farmers' groups were not directly confrontationist, they relied mainly on indigenous resources, and their discourse was as politically neutral as was possible given their function.[8]

Following state interest in setting up groups, the concept of *klum* has acquired a new legitimacy, and the scope for NGO action has to this extent been enhanced. Indeed, much of the statist rhetoric on development and *klum* is borrowed from NGO discourse. However, the NGO concept of *klum* as a power instrument in the hands of villagers differs fundamentally from that of state developers' notion of *klum* as an instrument of administration and dissemination of official policy.

### *VII¸4¸iii Indigenous concepts*

The concept of *klum* is not entirely alien to the indigenous community. The irrigation group (*klum meuang faai*) described above is an indigenous community institution. The *hua naa faai* (group head) and his team are not very different from the group "presidents : *prathaan*" and "committees : *kamakaan*" of externally initiated groups. Thus when collective effort is required to secure control over a basic factor of production, in this case water, cooperative practice

is the norm. It is recognized that an authority is required both to summon the resources (labour and materials, latterly cash) to maintain the system and to adjudicate in allocation of resources, in this case the protection of those whose fields are downstream ("*thaai naam* : lit. at the end of the water") from those upstream with prior access ("*hua naam* : lit. at the head of the water"). This authority is legitimated by annual selection from within the ranks of the group.

Also not entirely alien to indigenous experience are collective involvement in ideological activities and instances of collective bargaining with outside authorities. In the first case, the village temple is administered by a temple committee, traditionally selected from among elders of the village, for administration of what is the villagers' principal ideological institution. In the second case, petitioning of state authorities is not unknown. An example in Ban Dong is the successful unseating in the 1960s of a *kamnan* who had been appropriating registration fees instead of sending them on to the District authorities at Ban Rai. In Thung Khaa in the 1970s, the *khon to* bargained hard with the authorities on a number of issues, including provision of a schoolteacher and the terms of land reform. This latter differs, however, in the permanence suggested (though not always demonstrated) by *klum*.

*Klum* that exist as channels for dissemination of statist ideology are, however, alien. So are multipurpose or vague groups based on membership rather than function, such as housewives' or youth groups. In bargaining with outside interests, local leadership is called on to deal with specific issues as they arise, and permanent functional groups to this purpose are superfluous in the traditional close knit community. The alienation of most villagers in Ban Dong and Ban Mai is evidenced in a number of aspects of their discourse, most simply by use of the third

person pronoun *khao* in referring to the groups. Alienation is also shown in the confusion over the proliferation of *klum* and their associated acronyms.[9]

## VII.5 Cooperative development in Lan Sak

In the preceding sections, cooperation has been discussed in terms of theories and actualities of village structures and in terms of its rationale vis-a-vis production in the two study villages. The issue of development as institutional innovation within a contradictory context of an individualistic ethos into which cooperative structures are to be incorporated was considered, and the specific concept of *klum* was presented in illustration of the different interpretations of cooperative action or structures that are made by various actors on the development stage. The present section draws together these issues by means of empirical examination of specific projects in Ban Dong and Ban Mai. State, NGO, and indigenous schemes are described in turn, and the section is concluded by an extended account of one (ultimately unsuccessful) project that incorporates all three sectors.

### *VII.5.i State schemes*

The proliferation of state schemes at the village level has been indicated above, and Table 7.1 lists the various groups that have been established in the two study villages. Two of these are examined here in order to illustrate the way in which groups are set up, run, and led.

Table 7.1 Permanent groups in Ban Dong and Ban Mai

| State initiated | NGO initiated | Indigenous |
|---|---|---|
| Housewives group | Rice bank | Water users' group |
| BAAC groups | Buffalo bank | Temple committee |
| Farmers' association | | |
| Young farmers' group | | |
| Cooperative branch | | |
| Funeral association | | |
| Village scouts | | |
| National defense volunteers | | |
| Reserve volunteers | | |
| Development groups | | |

Housewives' groups. Housewives' groups (*klum mae baan*) were set up in Ban Dong and Ban Mai by the Community Development Department (CDD). This department was established in the 1960s, and for much of its life it has been concerned with rural pacification through social programmes. Housewives' groups were conceived of ostensibly to give women a role in community development. They provide a forum for training programmes in domestic skills and hygiene and in handicrafts such as crochet.

The Housewives' Groups are started in the following manner. The district CDD officer (*phathanaakaan amphoe*) speaks at a monthly village meeting, announcing that a group is to be set up and a training programme (*kaan obrom*) is to be held at the village temple on such and such a date. A member of every household is supposed to attend, and it is said by the *phatthanaakaan* to be a matter of shame for the village if attendance is less than that avowedly achieved in surrounding villages. This is an extra incentive for the village head to exhort villagers to attend the training, and responses vary from those who see such occasions as fun to those who feel pressured into attending despite urgent tasks at home. At the training session, "instructors : *withayaakorn*" speak on various matters of government policy and on the

importance of unity and loyalty to the group. Group officials are elected by a vote, candidates often having been suggested by the officials present or by the village head; rarely is there more than one candidate for a post.

In Ban Dong, the president of the Housewives' Group is the wife of one of the village traders who is also the *kamnan*'s assistant (*sarawat kamnan*). The vice president is wife of Maen, the village trader and Village Committee member mentioned in section *VI,1,iii* (case 6) above. In Ban Mai, the president of the Housewives' Group is wife of the village head, the vice president is wife of a village trader and member of the Village Committee, and the treasurer is wife of the *tambon* doctor, who is also Village Committee and ex-officio *tambon* council member, wealthy trader, and lorry and tractor owner.

In the case the Ban Dong group, activities since training in 1982 have mostly consisted of providing support for official training programmes at the village and district levels. Housewives groups are expected to provide the food and clean up afterward at such events. In April 1985, housewives' groups from the four *tambons* of Lan Sak had to provide food at the five day training session of village heads for the *Phaen din tham Phaen din tho'ng* programme. This labour has to be provided free of charge, and in the case of the Ban Dong group there was exasperation at the fact that they had to contribute out of their own pockets since the money (200 *baht*) allocated to feed 50 people for three meals was not enough, and pride meant that a decent meal had to be provided. The Ban Mai group was set up in 1983, and since the initial training the only activities have involved members of the group committee, who have been sent on training courses at which they are provided with a *per diem* that exceeds the normal daily wage.

Another function of the housewives' groups is to establish savings groups, whereby members save ten to twenty *baht* each per month which is paid into a common fund, to be used for a communal purpose at a later date. To date, the Ban Dong fund has not been used, while in Ban Mai small interest free loans are made. The treasurer is adamant that such loans go only to those who in her judgement will be able to repay, and this effectively restricts membership of the savings group. In any case, the amounts of money involved are insignificant, and from the point of view of the CDD it is more to "*feuk nisai* : get [people] into the habit" of saving rather than to accumulate any large fund of major benefit to the community.

We see, then, that the Housewives' Groups are instruments of the state in three main ways. First, they give access to a section of the community who tend otherwise to have less contact with officials than their male counterparts. Second, they serve (literally) as useful resources for the state in organizing events at the village level. Third, they provide a forum for dissemination of official ideology in the form of encouraging espousal of civic virtues. Some of these are conservative urbanite conceptions concerning the role of women as providers of domestic service, occupationally most proficient in light cottage industry rather than agricultural or other heavy work, and supportive of men in the "real" work of administration or agricultural production. Others are more general aspects of capitalist production ideology, particularly the need for cash savings in place of [the common official notion of] profligate spending.

<u>BAAC groups</u>. BAAC groups (*klum thor kor sor*) have mushroomed throughout Lan Sak in recent years. This is a result both of the increased demand for credit with the move into commercialized agricultural production and also of the increased amount of credit

provided by the Bank.[10] BAAC operates quite separately from the district administration. It maintains an office at Paak Meuang, at some distance from the District offices. It arranges its own meetings with villagers, separate from the monthly village meetings. BAAC field officers operate independently from District officials such as DAE extension officers.[11] Nevertheless, BAAC is a state institution and is perceived as such by villagers : this is evident, for example, in their unfulfilled expectations of BAAC in fields such as marketing (thus, "If the government guarantees the rice price at 3300 *baht* per *kwien*, why doesn't BAAC set up a scheme to buy it at that price?").[12]

BAAC groups are set up on the initiative of individual villagers. BAAC credit is well enough known in its availability and low cost that it does not have to be very actively promoted. A group of neighbours usually appoint one among their number to obtain application forms from the office at Paak Meuang. Once at least six individual applications have been made to set up a group, a BAAC field officer will come around to interview each of the applicants. These officers are informal in their manner when compared with district officials, and they have a strict code of conduct in dealing with villagers. For example, they are not supposed to accept food or drink or any other form of deferential hospitality, and although this goes against traditional interaction between villagers and outsiders, I frequently heard it mentioned by villagers in a positive light and observed its veracity. This is in stark contrast to senior district officials, for whom considerable preparations have to be made, otherwise it is considered *naakliat* (despicable).[13]

In principle, any group of six or more honest, able bodied farmers over the age of twenty are eligible for BAAC credit through a

joint liability group. In fact, several factors tend to prevent the poorest farmers from joining such a group. One is the reluctance or refusal of local BAAC officers to accept applications from those without individual collateral in the form of land or a house. This suggests that the joint liabilty principle fails in local officials' eyes to provide an effective mutual guarantee, and this is borne out by the rarity of groups being called on to pay up for a defaulting fellow member; the exception seems to be when such a defaulter actually disappears and cannot be accounted for. This brings in another factor, which is that the joint liability is real enough to make farmers reluctant to accept as a fellow member someone with insufficient personal collateral, who would thereby make it more likely that fellow group members would have to pay up in the event of default. A final factor is the reluctance of many of the poorest villagers to entertain the idea of institutional debt, preferring either to avoid borrowing altogether or to maintain the flexibilty afforded by village creditors.

Credit given via the group rather than individually makes sense to BAAC and the members involved in a number of ways. In addition to the potentially reduced need for individual collateral that joint liability affords, a group with a responsible leader provides the peer pressure on the one hand, and a convenient point of contact on the other, for eased administration by BAAC officers. At the same time, small group action gives members a certain solidarity, and this is not only utilized in deference to BAAC rules. Quite the contrary was the case, for example, in Ban Mai as described in section *V,2,iii* above, where the BAAC group was used to acquire credit from a village trader in order to pay off BAAC, and where the BAAC group was a forum for comparing notes on the best way to get rid of unwanted BAAC fertilizer!

The irony of BAAC groups is that they represent the most

enthusiastic cooperative action by farmers under the aegis of state led rural development, while at the same time having a key role in the processes leading to the individualization of production as described in Chapter V. Farmers join BAAC groups to obtain credit for themselves or their household production unit, not in an effort to raise the productivity of the group as a whole. Group solidarity is limited strictly to the functions directly served by BAAC operations; production, marketing, and non-BAAC inputs are still arranged individually.

*VII.5.ii NGO schemes*

The principal local NGO operating in Lan Sak is the Uthaithani based Nong Kha Yang Foundation for Rural Development (NKYFRD), whose activities are described more fully in Appendix 7. Two villages based schemes are described below. Both are based in Bung Khiew, the Ban Dong subcommunity of approximately 45 households described in Section *IV.2.i* above.

In late 1983, workers of the NKYFRD spent a few days in Bung Khiew speaking with farmers about their debt and production problems. Bung Khiew was chosen as a village of interest for two main reasons. One was the precariousness of production and consequent poverty in this rainfed area. The other was the role of Boi, a Bung Khiew villager who is also a volunteer who helps coordinate the activities of NKYFRD in Lan Sak and even further afield. Three principal and immediate problems emerged from talking with villagers : the uncertainty of rice production that leads to villagers having to borrow rice or cash with which to buy it at high interest rates; lack of means of tillage, which means that

farmers must rent buffalo and surrender a significant portion of their rice crop in return; and lack of an assured water supply for rice cultivation.

Rice Bank. The first of these problems has two deleterious effects, one at the level of the household and the other at the level of the community. At the household level, having to borrow rice and pay interest in kind of 50 per cent over the space of an agricultural season means a loss of surplus to the creditor and the continual cycle of debt and dependence that results. Since most of the creditors are from outside Bung Khiew, mainly from Ban Dong, this loss of surplus also represents a loss of resources to the community, even though the community as a whole may not face a rice deficit. In reponse to this problem, it was suggested to Boi and other villagers that a meeting be called to propose the setting up of a rice bank.

The purpose of a rice bank is to establish a community store of rice from which members can borrow in times of shortage. The advantage to individual members is that the interest paid is low, at a rate agreed on by the members themselves. At the community level, the advantage is that this surplus remains within the community, to increase the stock available for lending, to pay out as dividends to members, or to use for some other community purpose. The functioning of the Bank relies on an initial stock of rice, and this can be secured by voluntary donations, purchase of shares in rice, or institutional support.

Bung Khiew Rice Bank was started after a meeting in March 1984 at Boi's homestead, a common meeting place for Bung Khiew villagers. A worker from NKYFRD came to talk about the principles of cooperation and in particular the way in which a rice bank might work. Details were discussed by villagers themselves, and representatives of most

households were present. This discussion included whether contributions should be equal and calculated or dependent on individual households' capacity to contribute, what interest rate should be charged, and what provision for payment of dividends should be made. A group president and committee were elected; Boi declined election, since he is keen to get other villagers involved in responsibility for community affairs. It was decided to make provision both for donations and shareholding, the latter limited to group members. The interest rate was set at 20 per cent, which is actually higher than the NGO workers had in mind. Two weeks later, rice was deposited in shares of five *tang* each.

Lending is decided by the rice bank committee, which it was decided to put up for election every two years. Some even suggested annual elections, and this element of leadership accountability is seen as important. This is also evidenced in the annual elections held for the Ban Dong irrigation committee (which does not involve any Bung Khiew villagers).

In 1984, the stock of rice was still small, with an initial deposit of five *tang* each from 29 households. As a result, only the poorest could borrow, and these a borrowed a maximum of 25 *tang* per household. Because the 1984/85 harvest was so severely affected by drought, some of these were unable to repay in rice the following year, and those who planted mung beans were allowed to repay in this crop to a sale value equivalent to the amount of rice owed. Others had to carry their debts over to 1986, but even with interest accruing this still amounted to less than they would have had to pay in interest for a single year to a private creditor. The 1985/86 harvest was a good one, and with all debts being cleared and new deposits made, villagers have accumulated a total of fourteen *kwien*, half of which is held in individual shares, the rest consisting of donations and institutional

support. In January 1986, visiting NGO workers from neighbouring Nakorn Sawan province were impressed to see rice bank members depositing their shares on a trust basis, and both NKYFRD and villagers themselves hold it as a matter of pride that the rice bank should be based on mutual trust (*cheua kan* : lit. believe [in] each other; or *seusat to' kan lae kan* : lit. honest toward each other).

Initially, the Rice Bank relied on support from NKYFRD since there was no community granary. The rice was transported to, stored, and milled at the integrated agricultural training centre at Nong Kha Yang 50 kilometres distant (see Appendix 7). In 1985, Boi requested that the DAE in Lan Sak provide funds and the standard five *kwien* paddy grant for a community granary, which was to be built on land donated by three villagers. DAE agreed, and a commercial tender was put out for construction. Villagers suggested that they carry out the construction themselves, but DAE maintained that only licenced contractors could put in a bid. Furthermore, the granary had to be built according to official specifications, which conflicted with the requirements of the villagers in size (the 10 *kwien* capacity allowed for is too small for the rice bank store), shape, and alignment of the roof. In the event, the contract went to an influential provincial assembly member (*sor jor*), who is known to have [corrupt] connections (*sen*) with certain senior provincial officials. The amount of the bid (40,000 *baht*) was at least four times as high as the villagers would have charged. A team of labourers from neighbouring Chainat province was sent in by the contractor, having been hired on a contract basis (*mao*) for 5,000 *baht*. They had to wait three days before the materials (wood, zinc, and concrete piles) arrived. By this time, Boi had left for a two day training course in Phitsanulok, but other villagers noticed that the wood was inferior quality softwood that would not last more than a year; the materials were estimated to have cost

the contractor a maximum of 5000 *baht*. The workmen were asked to wait until the specifications could be checked, but by this time they were impatient to get started, so the concrete piles were set in and construction of the granary was well under way when Boi returned. On seeing the wood, some of which was worm-eaten, he used his position as village committee member to radio the provincial office from the local DAE office, and the workmen agreed to stop work until an inspection could be made. The following day, the deputy provincial DAE officer, who had approved the contract in the first place, arrived while Boi was away on his rounds as family planning volunteer,[14] and told the workmen "not to listen to any daft old villager who pokes his nose in". The granary was thus completed using the substandard materials and with the roof in alignment contrary to village practice (*taam tawan* : West - East instead of *khwaang tawan* : North - South). Within two weeks the roof had blown off (this was due to the fact that the workmen had had to supply nails out of their own pockets and had therefore used nails that were too short), fortunately before any rice had been deposited. Boi and Bung Khiew villagers had an unexpected success, however, since the widely respected and down to earth provincial DAE officer made a visit after a chance meeting with Boi, and on inspecting the granary immediately ordered that it should be dismantled and reconstructed by contracted Bung Khiew villagers using new materials.

The rice bank is thus an externally initiated project based on locally expressed needs and relying in the first instance on endogenous resources. Of key importance in its functioning are broad participation of the community from the start, not in joining an exogenous project but in setting the rules and establishing a strong but accountable leadership. This depends in turn on the structure of the community itself and the nature of the leadership, issues that are discussed in Section VII.6 below and in the following chapter.

Buffalo Bank. The second production problem faced by Bung Khiew villagers mentioned above is tillage. Many have to rent buffalo at 50 *tang* of rice per season. Since all of these are rented from outsiders, this also represents a loss to the community.

In late 1983, during negotiations with a small international aid agency (Mennonite Central Committee) for a larger project, NKYFRD also successfully requested assistance in setting up a buffalo bank at Bung Khiew. Ten animals were purchased, and a committee was elected among sixteen group members to allocate the animals based on need.

The Buffalo Bank works on the following principles. The buffalo remain the common property of the Bank, which is a community institution. All the initial buffalo purchased were cows in calf. After weaning the first calf is returned to the Bank for reallocation, although it is not useable for work until it is three years old. Male calves are sold in exchange for females, prices being roughly equal. The second calf becomes the property of the member renting the cow, the third goes back to the bank, and the fourth calf goes to the member, the cow at this stage being returned to the Bank. In this way, each member ideally ends up with a team of two buffalo, and the stock of buffalo in the Bank is built up.

Initially, Bung Khiew Buffalo Bank members elected to charge a rental of 10 *tang* of paddy per year. However, it was then felt that this would antagonize those who normally rented out buffalo to Bung Khiew villagers, based on experience elsewhere recounted by NKYFRD workers of buffalo that had been poisoned by those who stood to lose out. It was decided instead to take 40 *tang*, only 10 *tang* less than the private rate. However, 30 of the 40 *tang* are deposited in the

Rice Bank (to which all Buffalo Bank members belong), and this can be reclaimed after three years. This also helps to build up the stocks of the Rice Bank.

Bung Khiew Buffalo Bank has been faced with a number of problems. One is the long time it takes for such a project to become a full community institution, since the gestation period of buffalo is long (fourteen months) and animals are not fertile or ready for work until their fourth year. This has been compounded in Bung Khiew by the death of several of the Bank buffalo, so that by 1986 after two years of operation there are still only 20 cows and calves from the original 10 pregnant cows. This has led to a certain amount of gossip that "people don't look after a 'project' (lit. royal, based on the royally donated buffalo) like they'd look after their own : *khon mai dai liang kwhaai luang meuan khwaai tua eng*." There is no evidence to suggest that the buffalo died due to any form of neglect, but this shows the jealousies that can be generated by such a scheme. In the cases where buffalo died, NKYFRD were consulted immediately, since they are still considered to be the owners of the buffalo.

The Buffalo Bank, like the Rice Bank, is a group initiated externally but based on local participation and responsibility. It differs in the key respects that it was founded with external resources and in that it will take many years before the whole community can become involved in its benefits.

*VII.5.iii Indigenous schemes*

In discussing indigenous cooperation, a problem arises as to what

is to be discussed as "development" and what to be treated as indigenous work practices. The state and NGO schemes described above come under "development : *kaanphathanaa*" in the discourses of villagers and outsiders alike. Since this is a category exogenous to the community, but since certain aspects of indigenous cooperation are now often termed "*kaanphathanaa*", we can follow the local discourse as a guide to what is and what is not "development" for present purposes.

Indigenous aspects of change and their retrospective connotation as development have been discussed in section *IV¸4¸iii*. High on the list of concrete examples of development as locally defined come roads. Although these are commonly a state responsibility and state emphasis, road building is also undertaken in some circumstances by villagers without any direct involvement of the government. It may be recalled that the original communications into Lan Sak were constructed entirely by villagers, although some more recently established communities had more assistance than earlier ones in road construction.

A comparison of road construction into Bung Khiew[15] with that into Ban Mai reveals some interesting features of indigenous cooperation for development. As was described in Chapter IV above, Bung Khiew villagers were connected to the outside world only by footpath via Ban Dong until 1978. In this year, villagers cooperated by giving land and labour for the construction of a dry season cart track into Bung Khiew, and this track was later extended to villages to the North. During the dry season the track was rough, but during the rains it was impassable. Moreover, it entered Bung Khiew via a precarious log bridge over the *meuang* (irrigation channel), which under no circumstances was passable by anything larger than a pickup. In early 1984, Bung Khiew villagers got together to improve the road by leveling, with the promise that gravel would be laid at the District authorities' expense. This

time, a bulldozer was hired instead of using manual labour, with each household contributing an hour's vehicle time (600 *baht*) in cash, although those who could not afford the cost were exempted and some households paid more.[16] It was also agreed to build a proper bridge, passable by vehicles of up to six tonnes. This involved three days' labour from each household in Bung Khiew. Materials were obtained in the form of planks from the bridge over the Tap Salao River into Ban Dong that had been washed away in the previous year's floods. This wood had originally been donated by villagers in the village adjoining Bung Khiew to the North since the road also provided their only access, and it had been transported using the free services of Thiip's work elephant (see section *VI.1.iii*, case 3).

Once the leveling and bridge building were complete, in April 1984, villagers were anxious to have the gravel laid before the onset of the rains. They had to wait a further month for the *tambon* council to arrange the laying, using a Nong Chang contractor. In the event, the "gravel" laid was soft laterite, and it was said that half of the money made available had gone into the pockets of the *kamnan* and other council members. After much complaint, the road was relaid with firm gravel.

This local initiative contrasts sharply with the situation in Ban Mai. The original tracks into this area had been cleared by *yaang* oil tappers, but the first roads passable by motorized vehicles were the logging roads constructed by TPC contractors. The major road construction was carried out by ALRO, which provided a dense grid of roads inside the village, linking the agricultural plots, and linking the village to the outside (Fig. 4.7).

The effect of this state provision has been to make roads for Ban

Mai villagers *kho'ng luang* (lit. of the King, i.e. state property/responsibility). In 1983 floods destroyed or cut many of the roads and bridges, both inside and outside the village, including the bridge across the Tap Salao River linking Ban Mai with Paak Meuang. The officer in charge of the ALRO Tap Salao project, whose headquarters is half a kilometre outside Ban Mai, complains that villagers are not interested in maintaining the roads, even those directly in front of their own houses. He made a point of only repairing the "agricultural roads" so that the roads within the village remained unrepaired two years after the floods. Villagers, on the other hand, complain that ALRO does not maintain its roads, and the *khon to* who was opposed to their construction in the first place cites this as an example of official irresponsibility. The bridge across the Tap Salao River was repaired partly using villagers' contributions, but only on an initiative from a neighbouring village, and it is notable that this bridge is outside the ALRO area.

Indigenous cooperative initiative, responsibility, and commitment to particular projects thus depends on the degree to which communal "ownership : *khwaampen jaokho'ng*" is established. Other factors relating to the community itself are also important, and these are discussed in Section VII.6 below.

### *VII.5.iv Bung Khiew Irrigation Channel*

As is apparent from the above cases, state, NGO, and indigenous schemes are not mutually exclusive. Each relies to some extent on the other, and in an alternative sense the very term "cooperative development" has been taken to mean cooperation between these various

sectors rather than within them.[17] The saga of Bung Khiew Irrigation Channel is recounted below as an example of the problems encountered in inter- and intra-sector cooperation for development.

*Meuang* Bung Khiew, as the project came to be known, has a history going back to the late 1970s. As described above, Bung Khiew ricefields are rainfed, as are those in villages "upstream" and "downstream" at a similar distance from the Tap Salao River. Unreliable rainfall is increasingly a problem, and in 1976 money from the *tambon* revolving fund scheme (*ngern phan*)[18] was used to dig a channel from the channel serving Ban Dong just below Paak Meuang through Bung Khiew and on to villages lower down, using both hired labour and digging equipment. However, the course had not been surveyed, and when the section across the granite rise at Khao Din was traversed, the depth required of the channel was greater than the depth of laterite before bedrock was struck. The cost of blasting that would have been required far exceeded the funds available, and the project was abandoned despite the fact that a seven kilometre long channel had been dug over two years and the obstruction was less than 200 metres long.

In 1981, Bung Khiew villagers decided to make another attempt at securing irrigation water. In order to avoid the obstacle of Khao Din, it was decided to divert water lower down the Ban Dong channel, and to dig a short 500 metre link to the lower end of the channel that had been dug in 1976. This would serve most of Bung Khiew and villages below it, but several villagers would not be able to get water via this channel. The 30 households who expected to get water agreed to contribute 1700 *baht* per household, a considerable sum in village terms, to hire a mechanical digger for the job. Again there was no means of surveying, and the project failed due to unstable soil over part of the section to be dug and unexpectedly hard rock over a short portion. Since the

digger was paid by the hour, all the risk was placed on the shoulders of the villagers, who say that they were quite aware of the gamble involved.

By 1984, Bung Khiew villagers were once again talking of reviving the *meuang* project. At the same time, NKYFRD had become involved in the village through the Rice and Buffalo Banks and was aware of the uncertainties of rainfed cultivation. In May 1984, after two months' residence in the village, I was asked by Sompong, the NKYFRD director, what issue most concerned Bung Khiew villagers in terms of short and long term development. Consultation with Boi and other villagers unanimously confirmed my answer that irrigation water was the pressing need, and Sompong suggested that if villagers were prepared to put in resources of their own, external help might be available via NKYFRD. The villagers hastily called a meeting to discuss what could be proposed and how much each household could be called on to contribute. A contribution of 1000 *baht* per household was agreed on, and initially it was decided to opt for the link channel, since it was not thought that sufficient resources would be available for the larger project, despite the fact that the latter was favoured in terms of the reliability of water and number of beneficiaries. From the information and suggestions put forward, a short proposal was written in Thai and English (the latter for application to foreign aid agencies) by Boi and myself. This was discussed with Sompong in the chance presence of the Canadian MCC representative, who took an immediate interest an provisionally agreed to fund the project provided a technical survey was carried out in advance.

Two weeks later, Sompong and other NKYFRD workers came to inspect the options. The nature of the soil, the lack of gradient over the link, and the fact that more resources appeared to be available than was

first thought led him to examine the Khao Din option as well. Villagers were enthusiastic at this possibility, and a day was spent by Sompong, Boi and other Bung Khiew villagers, and myself talking with villagers near Khao Din. Two possibilities were put forward, one being to use explosives to deepen the existing channel and the other to circumvent Khao Din by digging a new section of approximately two kilometres to the North. It was decided to leave it to surveyors from the Royal Irrigation Department to recommend the feasibility or otherwise of the various options.

The Khao Din options posed a number of potential problems over and above the technicalities mentioned above. Since the channel had originally been dug, a fisheries project had been established at Bung Lom, and it would be necessary to cross this. It was not known whether the *kamnan* of *tambon* Lan Sak, in whose area Bung Lom lies, would agree, or whether permission would be required from the Fisheries Department, since a fish grate would have to be installed and there was a risk of siltation. If Khao Din was to be circumvented, the owners of the land would have to give their permission, although this was not thought to be a major obstacle since they would benefit from the irrigation water and money could be made available for compensation if necessary; it was decided to leave this until other problems had been cleared. Another task was to obtain permission from the Royal Irrigation Department for extension of the agricultural area irrigable from Paak Meuang weir, since in the original Tap Salao project only 3000 *rai* was allocated and this was already taken up in Ban Dong. MCC had also not confirmed the amount of money available. The project thus involved villagers, NGO, state, and international aid staff.

Despite the uncertainties and complexity of the project, villagers were keen to go ahead. The first step was for Sompong to use

his influence and connections as president of the Uthaithani branch of the Kasetsart University Alumni Association to arrange for Porn, the chief engineer of the Tab Salao project, to make a preliminary assessment of the project and then to approach the chief of the regional Small Projects Division at Chainat. Porn rejected the possibility of blasting as too expensive, but he suggested that RID surveyors from the Tap Salao project could be made available to establish the feasibility of the circumventing route and measure the amount of earth to be moved. Following this, Sompong, another NKYFRD worker, Porn, and I arranged a meeting at the Small Projects Division, and the regional manager was enthusiastic at the combination of villager initiative and NGO/foreign interest. It was agreed to waive the 3000 *rai* limit provided no formal request was made, and surveyors were to be put at the disposal of the project. It was then confirmed with the Lan Sak *kamnan* and the Fisheries Department that no objection would be raised, since silt content was not in fact great and the fisheries project had not materialized. MCC agreed to the revised project and confirmed that at least 90,000 and up to 120,000 *baht* would be made available. Several delays in surveying and estimating the amount of earth to be moved ensued due to the surveyors not turning up as appointed; this disappointed the Bung Khiew villagers, who had prepared food, having provided manual help and advice based on local knowledge for the outsiders involved at each stage. Conversation for several months centred on the progress of the *meuang*. Another intitiative was to approach villagers upstream and downstream to secure a commitment to help top up the MCC funds, and enthusiasm was extended to neighbouring communities.

It was not until February 1985 that the technical feasibility had been confirmed by the surveyors and the scale of the job calculated. At commercial rates, it would have been beyond the combined resources of

the villagers and MCC. The *tambon* council was in the process of deciding on how the Rural Employment Generation Programme funds were to be spent that year, and the *kamnan*, in whose area the benefit from the channel was to be obtained,[19] pressed for part of the money to be spent on the channel. However, the technical advisors from the District had another project in mind and used various means to get this through.[20] The apparent shortage of funds was overcome when Sompong persuaded a committee member of NKYFRD who is an equipment contractor to give an estimate for digging the channel on a non-profit basis as a contribution to the Foundation, and he agreed a contract (*mao*) figure of 80,000 *baht*, well within the resources available.

Owners of the land to be crossed by the channel had been consulted informally by Boi and other villagers at an early stage, but before the route, feasibilty, and resources available were known no definite arrangement could be established. Altogether six farmers' land was to be crossed. Four of these lived permanently near their land, while two were large landowning brothers in Ban Dong; one of these is Thii, (case 5 in section *VI.1.iii*). All six had expressed a willingness to make land available for the channel, and those living locally were enthusiastic at the prospects of getting irrigation water themselves.

A meeting was called in March 1984 at which the owner of the digger that was to carry out the work came for a final inspection before the work was to begin two days later. Quite unexpectedly, Thii's wife Jai and their nephew raised an objection to the channel crossing their land where it had been surveyed, asking that it follow the land boundaries on either side. Technically, this is impossible, since the northern boundary is too low lying for a diverted channel to rejoin the old one, while the southern boundary is so high as to mean that any new

digging would have to go almost as deep as that which caused the original channel to be abandoned. Thii and his brother Lek were concerned that the channel would *phaa thii* (divide [their] land), despite the fact that each stood to benefit from the irrigation water.

There followed a long period of escalating negotiation and conflict, backed by an urgency due to the limited time for which the digger could be made available at cost and the impending rains that would make work impossible. A delegation of Thii and Lek's closest associates in Bung Khiew went to see each of them in turn, negotiating and offering compensation for any land lost to the channel. After several visits, positions only seemed to be further entrenched, and Nii, a Bung Khiew villager and long time friend of Lek decided on an alternative, confrontationist course of action. Until then, Lek had only been able to get his tractor to his land by means of crossing Nii's land. Now Nii blocked the track with posts and organized the other two Bung Khiew villagers with access tracks to Lek's land to do the same, and he received help in this from other Bung Khiew villagers. The only alternative access involved a diversion of several kilometres. They let it be known that the posts would only be removed when Lek and Thii agreed to let the channel cross their land: "If he crosses our land, why shouldn't we be able to cross his?" was the reasoning. This only hardened Lek's resolve and reduced the possibilities for compromise. The next step was for villagers to urge Boi and myself to talk with the brothers, and a meeting was arranged at Thii's house at which the temple abbot, *kamnan*, Boi, Nii and I spent an evening, the abbot and *kamnan* doing most of the talking. Thii said little except that his wife and children were the ones who objected more than he did, and they were not present. Lek refused to speak even to the *kamnan* or abbot about it, and a Village Committee meeting was called to which Lek's wife was

summoned. Four of the nine Committee members are from Bung Khiew, so there was considerable interest, but the *kamnan* did not turn up and this reduced the authority present. It was threatened that the matter would be taken to the District authorities, but no progress was made.

By this stage, many of the villagers were suggesting that the channel be dug to either side of the approximately 300 metre stretch crossing Thii and Lek's land in order to pressure them into giving in. Sompong and Boi were reluctant to raise the level of conflict yet further, and their fears were justified by the words of some villagers who, asked what might happen if they still refused access once the channel was dug, said "someone might get killed : *khon aaj taai*".

The last resort was to take the matter to the District Office, but at this stage both Sompong and I agreed that we had no role in taking sides with one group of villagers against another in dealing with the authorities.[21] Boi served as intermediary, and after several trips the Deputy District Officer (*Palad Awusoo*) agreed to speak to Lek and Thii. On his next trip, Boi was told that they had agreed to let the channel cross their land provided compensation was provided. Believing that all was set, Boi and several villagers arranged with Lek and Thii to point out the definite route and discuss terms of compensation; by now it was the last opportunity to start work before the rains. On the day appointed, Lek and Thii were at their land and said that they had decided once again only to allow the channel to follow the boundaries.

The project was abandoned.

A compensation for Bung Khiew villagers was that MCC agreed to allow the money allocated to be spent on another community project. A

village meeting decided to construct two large village fishponds on land donated by seven villagers. The water in these ponds is insufficient for full irrigation, but some supplementary irrigation can be provided to nearby fields using a pump. Fish spry were supplied by the Fisheries Department in 1985. In fact, villagers would have preferred to have dug individual fishponds, but MCC was insistent that this must be a community project.

The lessons to be gained from the above project are many, involving aspects of villager cooperation, cooperation and coordination between villagers, NGOs, state authorities, and international aid, various means of conflict resolution, and participation of villagers in concrete development projects for communal mobilization of production resources. Implications are discussed in the following section and in Chapter VIII.

## VII.6 Potentials and obstacles for cooperation

Neither cooperation nor conflict are new to Ban Dong or Ban Mai. The parameters affecting potential for cooperation change as new opportunities present themselves and as new obstacles are placed in the way of cooperative endeavour, as the above accounts demonstrate. Lack of cooperation does not in itself imply conflict, just as projects involving cooperation themselves can heighten the potential for conflict. Peasants in Ban Dong and Ban Mai avidly seek out new opportunities in both individual and collective ways; yet peasants in both communities place a high priority on securing control over the resources necessary to assure subsistence production, be they collectively or individually mobilized. Moral norms do not entirely

overcome the problem of free riders, but at the same time non-contributors are accommodated where their incapacity to contribute is accepted by the remainder of the community. Moral and rational, collectivist and individualist, are determined by locally and historically specific circumstances.

If it is accepted that these circumstances provide the key parameters, it should be possible to make certain statements about the basis for cooperation or otherwise from the concrete situations described above. Starting with the rationale for cooperation, we saw in Section VI.2 above that changes in production relations have diminished the extent to which individual producers are constrained by reciprocal arrangements with the advent of monetization and differentiation of the respective communities. On the other hand, differentiation as expressed in the alienation of individual producers from the means of production and concentration of these means in the hands of others can provide new scope for cooperation. This is particularly true in the case of "lumpy" items of technology. While I was in Ban Mai and Ban Dong, I heard farmers discussing the possibility of joint ownership of power tillers and tractors,[22] and further conversation revealed some illuminating factors concerning cooperation in production. Both of these items of machinery are beyond the means of most individual farmers, particularly tractors, and both if put to full use would be superfluous to the needs of most individual farms, again particularly so in the case of tractors. Why then was there not a single case of cooperative purchase?

It should perhaps first be mentioned that power tillers are often used on more than one farm, not so often on a rental arrangement as in helping out close kin, often an elderly parent. However, this is quite different from joint ownership. In the case of power tillers, two factors were raised as obstacles to cooperation. The first is the

problem of maintenance and repairs. If the machine were to break down, it is considered inevitable that quarrelling would arise over responsibility for fixing it. The second obstacle is the issue of allocating usage, since ploughing even with a power tiller can take several days and, as described above, intensification of production limits flexibility in timing. The maintenance problem arises also in the case of tractor sharing, and with such an expensive item of machinery the stakes are much higher. Timing is not so great a problem, since a single day is sufficient for ploughing most farmers' land using a Ford 5000. A much more considerable problem is raised by the schedule of tractor usage described in Chapter V above. In order to be used to the full, a tractor must be able to plough fields in neighbouring districts and provinces or even further afield outside the periods of local peak demand. This is accomplished by wealthy tractor owners with outside connections, means of collecting payment, and time to put into the considerable managerial task involved. Such a task is beyond the individual and cooperative capabilities of small farmers in Ban Dong and Ban Mai.

Other than the rationale for cooperation as delimited by material aspects of production relations, a number of other factors present potentials and obstacles. Interaction with outsiders, specifically with "developers" is one such factor. As is apparent from the ideology of NGOs and the experience, for example, of Bung Khiew Rice Bank, the stimulus of ideas and institutional support provided from the outside can enhance cooperative development. On the other hand, other aspects of exogenous ideology and structures can work against cooperative effort. Some of the factors determining the effect of external involvement are set out below.

In terms of interaction, the method of approach that is made by

external agents affects the degree to which cooperation is promoted or otherwise. Three principal types of approach can be identified from the examples raised above. The first is what can be termed the "cadre" approach, whereby outsiders spend time among the villagers and differences in status are minimized. This has the benefits of enhancing communication, increasing the outsiders' understanding of the problems of the community, and minimizing the power difference between the actors involved. The second approach can be termed the "friendly technocrat" approach, whereby an externally determined policy that requires set patterns of villager cooperation is put into effect by fieldworkers who try to reduce the gap between themselves and villagers. BAAC approximates this type of approach. It is successful in ensuring cooperation within the limits of its objectives, but as was suggested it involves a contradiction in a wider sense in that it is part of the promotion of change in production relations that is actually individualizing production. The third approach suggested here is the "hegemonic technocrat" approach, which is used to implement state policy at the village level in the name of cooperation and benefit to the community that is to arise therefrom, but with little or no diminution of the power or status gap between "developer" and "developed". This issue of power is dwelt on at greater length in the following chapter.

A second issue of outsider influence is the extent to which overinvolvement of outsiders and consequent demands made on villagers' time and other resources can sap latent cooperative potential. As was seen in Section *VII¸5¸i* above, state schemes are often overlapping and mutually competitive, with villagers being pressed into joining many different groups each. There is often a minimal understanding of the purpose of these groups, apart from vague ideas that they are to promote "unity : *saamakhii kan*".[23] Moreover, use of NGO discourse as part of the state rhetoric leads to confusion over what are often already

alien terms to village discourse. It thus becomes ironically more difficult for NGOs or others to involve the community despite the apparently liberalized political environment, as connotations shift and confusion reigns. It must be recalled that for villagers, it takes time for the cadre approach of NGO workers to distinguish them from state officials, given the traditional dualistic class distinction as postulated in section II.3.[24] Official schemes may thus insert an intended or unintended "static" that inhibits the emergence of indigenously organized groups, either out of sheer overwhelming by the proliferation of *klum* or by usurping potentially useful discourses necessary in the establishment of independent forms.[25]

A third aspect of relations with outside "developers" and the implications for cooperation concerns the direction of communication. If cooperation is to make use of external resources in a way that gives participants a sense of responsibility through common "ownership", the initiative must come from below as in the case of Bung Khiew Irrigation Channel. In this case, a literate villager with outside connections was able to make the necessary link such that villagers were able cooperatively to call on external resources. An advance in enhancing this potential more widely was made with the foundation of the Local Development Assistance Programme (LDAP) by CIDA (the main Canadian government development agency working in Thailand), which seeks short proposals in Thai from villagers themselves, although the NGO network is at present used for most applications.[26] (In 1985, Boi applied for funding for a community woodplot from LDAP). The government has followed this idea by establishing a Village Development Fund under the Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plan, but the fact that proposals will have to be channelled through village committees and *tambon* councils poses potential problems to be discussed in the following chapter.

A final pair of factors influencing cooperation is that related to the community itself. First, the size of the community can have a key influence on the practicability of cooperative arrangements. As was seen in the case of Bung Khiew Rice Bank, trust plays an important part in the success of such a scheme. Bung Khiew's cohesion, partly based on kinship ties, has been discussed in Chapter IV. It is unlikely that any such scheme could be established on the same basis in a village as large as the Ban Dong or Ban Mai administrative villages. Similar problems have been described in achieving villager cooperation in large, recently settled villages in Sri Lanka (Harriss 1982b : 328), and while no set figure can be placed on size, larger communities are clearly more easily fractionalized than are small ones bound to a considerable degree by kinship. Here NGOs show a flexibility that is difficult to achieve within the rigid structures of the state, where administrative boundaries precede natural communities for most considerations. One attempt was made by the Ban Dong *kamnan* to overcome the size problem, when he ordered that "development groups : *klum phathanaa*" be set up to ease administration, in particular for the compulsory fence building programme.[27]

The other factor concerning the community is the extent to which it is actually a community of interest. Differentiation of the community clearly reduces the commonality of interest as economic fortunes diverge, systems of production vary from one household to another, and conflicts of interest arise. Thus it is unlikely that a village trader who is also a moneylender and buffalo rentier or tractor owner is going to support cooperative marketing, indigenous cooperative credit, or buffalo banks. The fact that no Bung Khiew villagers are major rice lenders or buffalo rentiers meant that there was not the conflict of interest that would have arisen in a Ban Dong wide scheme.

Increasing the power of villagers through cooperative action is bound to involve conflicts of interest, but the key aspect of this is whether or not this conflict is internal or external to the cooperative institution. A common external adversary can enhance as much as threaten group solidarity.[28]

## Conclusion

The parameters affecting cooperation for development are complex and contextually bound. The NGO analysis as discussed in section *II,3,ii* still pertains, and it is expressed succinctly in the quote at the head of this chapter. However, without a recognition of the limits to, constraints on, and lack of inherent "sanctity" of cooperative in preference to individual action, neither state nor NGO development efforts at encouraging cooperation can succeed. Ultimately "the answers lie in the village", but this still covers a lot of ground figuratively as well as physiographically in the scattered, differentiated villages of Lan Sak. It can be held that for small, powerless farmers, cooperation is necessary if participation in controlling factors affecting one's life is to be achieved, but this cannot be drawn independently of wider issues of power associated with the various cooperative forms that come under the aegis of "development". It is to these issues that the next chapter is addressed.

Notes

1. Even earlier institutional means for cooperation had been suggested by the Assistant Minister for Agriculture Chaophraya Wongsanupraphat in 1905. He suggested the formation of "farming associations" (*samakhom thamnaa*) as vehicles for government promotion of technical improvements, such as use of fertilizers and improved seed (Johnston 1975 : 356). However, no action was taken on this, and action following the establishment of formal cooperatives was similarly sluggish : by 1926 there were only 1414 cooperative members in the country (ibid. : 399).

2. "*Chaobaan*" used by an urbanite is a distinctive category that refers to a different, lesser educated sort of people. It can be used to mean "the common people" even if they live in town. Used (less frequently) by a villager, *chaobaan* refers to people of the speaker's village or a village specifically mentioned.

3. The individualistic emphasis on moral character overlaps into state discourse on cooperation. The Uthaithani ALRO head attributes problems in Ban Mai to the fact that villagers "*mai hai khwaam ruam meu* : lit. don't give cooperation" [to ALRO], and there is thus a need to "*phattana jitjai* : develop the [cooperative] spirit" of villagers.

4. The popular Buddhist classification of people is as follows. *Bua phon naam* (lotuses above the water) have reached enlightenment, although not of course in the strict Buddhist sense. *Bua prim naam* (lotuses on the surface) are prime for enlightenment and just need some help in getting there. *Bua tai naam* (lotuses under water) are not yet ready, but they have the potential for enlightenment. *Bua tid tom* (lotuses stuck in the mud at the bottom) have no hope of attaining enlightenment. Strictly speaking, only the first, fourth, and fifth categories were classified according to this by the DAE officer. The second and third categories should have come under *bua prim naam*, and the last under *bua tid tom*.

5. The word "*fang* : lit. listen" contains a connotation of obeisance (cf. Turton 1984b : 46).

6. Irvine (1982) discusses at length the way in which Communism is posed as a threat to the developing, modernizing Thai nation. Since Irvine did his fieldwork, the situation has changed somewhat, in that the "internal" (i.e. CPT) threat has declined, and in compensation the "external" (i.e. Vietnamese) threat has increased in the rhetoric with the occupation of Kampuchea and increased presence in Laos. Even in a province as far from these borders as Uthaithani, the Vietnamese are continually posed as a threat, and official myths such as the poisoning of coffee that supposedly led to the "shrinking penis syndrome" (see Irvine : Chapter 8) are still purveyed.

7. Muecke (1979) gives a detailed and interesting account of Village Scout training.

8. This situation refers to the period subsequent to the 1976 coup. Prior to this, farmers' organization was more open and political, notably in the case of the Farmers' Federation of Thailand (see Kanoksak and Kanjana Kaewthep 1985; Turton 1984b : 58). The example of this organization, 30 of whose leaders were assassinated by right wing elements in 1975, shows the dangers for farmers of overt political

organization even during a nationally liberal period.

9. At a development training meeting, the DAE officer opened the meeting by instructing that "the most important thing to learn for development is the meaning of acronyms". Use of acronyms rather than more direct description of project activities has a number of interesting implications. It gives programmes an official ring to them, implying a status distinction from independent initiatives. It serves to take the emphasis off the name of the programme which contains the original intention, so that for example "*Kaan saang ngaan nai chonabot* : Rural Employment Generation Programme" has become associated with infrastructural projects rather than employment generation. It adds to the specialized vocabulary of development discourse that is used at meetings and serves to limit participation of those not adept at use of official language.

10. BAAC credit increased at more than 6 per cent per year in real terms between 1976 and 1980 (Lightfoot and Fox 1983 : 11).

11. In 1984, BAAC set up an experimental project in 28 villages in several provinces, involving cooperation with DAE officers, in an attempt to link credit with extension advice. A study based on these villages and 14 control villages is forthcoming, but early indications are that the activities were mainly oriented to increasing use of commercial fertilizer.

12. In November 1985, the government attempted to support its guaranteed rice price of 3000 *baht* per tonne by setting aside a fund to be administered through rice mills. Despite having been warned in advance that the scheme was unworkable (Far Eastern Economic Review January 17, 1986), the scheme went ahead, but failed due to the immense difficulties of supervising such distribution of funds through over 20,000 rice mills. Uncertainty combined with other factors to depress the price to its lowest point for several years, 2200 *baht* per tonne.

13. The word "*naakliat* : despicable, hateful" is commonly used to describe failure to live up to obligations of traditional reciprocity or respect. In response to a question regarding what sanction a household has for "repayment" of labour obligations engendered under *ao raeng*, it is said to be *naakliat* not to fulfil such customary obligation. In quite a different context, the District military conscription officer in preparing villagers for receiving senior officials at a military run development training programme in Ban Dong in 1985 declared at a meeting that it would be *naakliat* not to lay on some sort of special welcome.

14. Boi's role as volunteer coordinator for the Meechai organization in Lan Sak takes him to every village in the District once a month. This has allowed him to make external connections and to make frequent stops at the *amphoe* offices, which have in turn proved important in making the connections necessary for coordination of projects in Bung Khiew that rely on external resources.

15. Ban Dong is linked to the outside by the main Highways Department road.

16. This is an example of where the "free rider" problem posed by Popkin is overcome by village solidarity in a community bound by strong social ties partly based on kinship and partly based on relative lack of differentiation when compared with the larger community (see Chapter IV). In such as situation, norms of mutual assistance do apply, and they are operable for four main reasons:

- The community is tightly knit enough that those receiving assistance at the expense of others are identifiable, as is their material situation, making it difficult for anyone to become an anonymous free rider;

- Affectual relations within the community are strong, based on kinship and neighbourliness;

- New institutions of mutual assistance overlap with traditional forms;

- It is clear to the majority that if they do not include some element of subsidy to the less well off the project will not come off at all, and consensus as to who is to contribute what is relatively easily achieved when the scale is limited.

On the other hand, a case from the same community is illustrative of awareness of potential free rider problems. In helping surveyors on the Bung Khiew Irrigation Channel (see following section), it was decided to send a member from every household, so as to "*mai lamiang kan* : not create bias", even though fewer helpers would have sufficed.

17. "Cooperative development", like other aspects of development discourse, is subject to a variety of interpretations. As in English, the Thai word for cooperate, *ruam meu*, has different connotations depending on grammatical and situational context. Cooperation as joint action or as obedience to a higher authority provides an ambiguity that is extended to cooperative development. The effect is to blur the boundary between cooperation and cooptation. This is determined by power relationships that are discussed more fully in the following chapter; they can be seen phenomenologically at two levels. At the local level, "cooperation" is most often expressed by officials as "*hai khwaam ruam meu* : lit. to give cooperation", implicitly with official policy, official groups, official announcements, and so on. It thus involves obedience to those in a position of power. At the broader level, "cooperation" between NGOs and state developers has been catered for in the Sixth National Plan by the establishment of the coordinating bodies mentioned in Chapter 2, footnote 26.

18. The Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP, locally known as "*kor sor chor*" after its Thai initials) is a continuation of the *ngoen phan* (lit. revolving money) programme initiated by Prime Minister Kukrit Pramote in 1975. This programme divided 2500 million *baht* equally among *tambons* for local infrastructural programmes that were in principle designed to create local employment during the agricultural off-season. Although numerous local roads have been constructed under these programmes, employment effects have been limited in part by the use of heavy machinery in place of labour, and this has gone hand in hand with a high level of corruption in connection with these funds since the allocation of funds is decided on by *kamnan*s who may have direct or indirect interests in heavy machinery contracting. This has led such schemes to be ridiculed locally as at best irrelevant to the poor and at worst instrumental in fostering corruption and what many refer to as a detrimental "wage habit" that detracts from community spirit in joint projects (see also section *VIII,4,ii*).

19. Decision making by the *tambon* council and other local bodies may be adversely affected by a parochialism of interest that is exacerbated by rigid structures. An example is that of the weir serving Ban Dong, *Faai Paak Meuang*. Because the weir is located in the adjoining *tambon* but serves mainly Ban Dong fields, it has proven impossible to

raise funds for improvement of the weir since it is outside the remit of the Ban Dong *tambon* council, and the adjacent *tambon* council has no interest in allocating funds to a project from which it will not benefit.

20. In 1985, the Ban Dong *tambon* council was presented with two major projects on which to spend its annual allocation under REGP. The *kamnan* and several other village headman were in favour of supporting the Bung Khiew irrigation channel, while the "technical advisors" from the *Amphoe* had decided to press for a water jar construction project. The *kamnan* and others claimed that the irrigation channel would give by far the greater benefit. However, health officials, despite not being allowed in principle to speak other than to give technical advice, made an impassioned case for the water jar project, stressing that all villages would be able to share in the benefits. Since only five of the *tambon*'s fourteen villages stood to benefit from the irrigation channel, most headmen were in favour of the water jars. In the event, the council voted two thirds of the funds to the water jars and one third to the channel; however, the *Amphoe* subsequently disqualified the latter, since it was claimed that only one project was to be allowed (despite precedents for multiple projects elsewhere). In the event, no local employment was created since contractors were brought in from another province to construct the jars. This illustrates the considerable bureaucratic control over supposedly participatory bodies such as the *tambon* council.

21. This brings back into consideration the role of the researcher in the community (see section I.4). The example noted here shows the delicate nature of any involvement in community affairs, in particular where potential conflicts of interest may arise, even as in this case where they might not be foreseen. On the other hand, a refusal to get involved and reciprocate hospitality given by the community is equally to be ruled out on ethical grounds. In this case, the involvement of villagers in the project and the limited role of the researcher as an intermediary at once maximized use of the resource most valuable to the villagers (i.e. means of outside contact) and reduced the involvement of the outsider in the taking of sides in internal aspects of the conflict. Nevertheless, a limit had to be drawn when it came to representing one group of villagers against another in appealing to district authorities.

22. Cf. Moerman (1968 : 69 - 70) on why Ban Ping villagers did not buy a tractor cooperatively. "The natural environment of Thunglor requires the tractor; the social environment of Ban Ping prevents villagers from owning one". This is because no individual is wealthy enough to purchase a tractor, while no social institution exists for joint ownership. It was envisaged, just as the following account shows for Ban Dong and Ban Mai, that joint ownership would lead to bickering over maintenance and ploughing schedules. Where the situation of Lan Sak in 1985 differs significantly from Ban Ping a quarter of a century earlier, then, is in the ability of *individuals within the village* to purchase such a large item of machinery.

23. The word *saamakhii* is used ambiguously in the sense of implying unity alternatively as solidarity and of prohibiting dissenting voices. This is another example of the importance of context in interpreting the discourse of development.

24. See the instance of villager reaction to visiting NGO workers in section *VIII¸3¸iii*.

25. Maurice Bloch discusses "exercise of power through formalisation" (1975 : 10) in Merina society, as a result of restrictive formal

discourses effectively pre-empting alternative or countervailing speech. The restriction of choice as to what can be said entailed in formalisation (p.17) extends into what can be done, and in this way formalisation of *klum* can be seen as a pre-emptive exercise of power. On the other hand, Bloch notes certain limitations to the power of formalisation, namely that it is must be restricted through skills necessary for formal articulation or by a restrictive political situation. The implication is that given a more liberal political environment, it is possible for individuals such as Boi to acquire the formalistic skills necessary for exercise of countervailing power.

26. The coordinator of LDAP would ideally like to make direct contact with village groups, but in the first period of operation regards it as necessary to work through local NGOs. He envisages a second stage developing with more direct funding of village groups.

27. A recent emphasis in superficial development programmes has been on fence building as part of a "tidying up" of the village and an easing of administration for village and *Amphoe* officials. In 1985, the Ban Dong *kamnan* set up eight "development groups : *klum phatthanaa*", appointing a villager in each group with the task of disseminating instructions to [assigned] members. Most of the groups' activities concerned the passing on of *Amphoe* instructions via the *kamnan* to reluctant group "heads". The significance of this initiative is discussed in the following chapter.

28. An interesting political use of the "common adversary" is detectable in the Ban Dong *kamnan*'s frequent outbursts against Chinese traders, officials (especially schoolteachers), BAAC and other banks, and politicians. Despite not having been directly involved in agricultural production for some time, he frequently speaks of "*rao chaonaa* : us farmers" (see the quote at the head of this chapter).

# CHAPTER VIII

## PARTICIPATION AND POWER IN DEVELOPMENT

"[Us] poor have no right to speak, no right to voice opinions"
- Ban Mai villager

"Now it is the people who are the regulators."
- Lan Sak District Officer

The recent emphasis on participation in development is based on the premise that "taking part" is something new for villagers. In the past, it is reasoned, villagers were excluded (from what, for the moment, being a moot point). Development programmes that came from the outside were initiated and run by, and often for, outsiders. The principal issue for development thus became how to involve local people in these schemes.

This emphasis has gone hand in hand with the linking of the village to the wider political and economic systems. As the village polity has become integrated into the nation state and as the village economy has become linked increasingly to the national and international capitalist systems, so influences of these wider systems have affected villagers to an increasing extent. At one level, therefore, participation in the wider system has already been established by means of the general incorporative rural development strategy. However, the passive and dependent nature of this incorporation places most villagers at a disadvantage in terms of political and economic bargaining power.

The initial premise stated above needs to be examined more closely. In the past, it is true, villagers did not "take part" in the wider system to any significant extent, but at the same time decisions

taken at a supra-village level had only a limited effect on village life and production. Meanwhile, villagers did have an active part in the decisions affecting community affairs and household production, i.e. in the affairs that most directly affected them. These latter were based not on formal committee decisions but rather on local cultural norms and informal relationships in which kinship and social obligation played an important part. Local leadership was established by acceptance and respect rather than by formal election. The main function of the local leader was to manage or arbitrate affairs within the community, while contact with external authorities played only a secondary role. It is only latterly, particularly in the case of recently settled forest communities, that dealings with the wider system have raised the issue of participation. As will become apparent from the discussion in the present chapter, these very linkages now pose questions concerning participation internal to the village community.

This chapter deals with the principal contradiction identified in Chapter II. Briefly recapitulated, this is the process whereby incorporation into the wider political and economic systems through rural development leads to a lessening of the control that most individuals have over factors influencing their own lives, in particular resources necessary for production and reproduction. The argument starts with an examination of various conceptualizations of participatory development. The concept of participation is then revised to show how it needs to be considered in terms of control and power, illustrated by reference to agricultural production in Lan Sak. This is followed by an examination of specific issues of control affecting participation in Lan Sak, and these are then related to the wider issue of power. Finally, rural development programmes in Ban Dong and Ban Mai are considered in a revised perspective.

VIII.1 Participation and development

The difficulty of discussing a concept such as "participation" stems from the very looseness with which the term is used and the resulting ambiguity it takes on. Indeed, it is this ambiguity that underlies the contradictions to be expanded on presently. Like "democracy", everyone must be for "participation" : precisely because of this vagueness, there is everything to play for (Turton 1984b).[1] The value of examining the concept thus lies not in achieving any universal measure of participation that can be used to determine the relative participatory merits of specific rural development schemes, but rather in a contextual identification of the term within various discourses. Meanwhile, it is insufficient to list a variety of definitions and then select the one we deem best suited to our own purposes without having first outlined discursive evolution of the term.

The literature on participation is vast, and here I propose simply to summarize interpretations that have been used both implicitly and explicitly. As will become apparent, any meaningful use of the terms under consideration is highly context bound (ideologically, historically, and spatially), and I therefore intend to treat at somewhat greater length the contextual approach of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and the specific manipulations of "participatory development" in the Thai context. Four main sources are used for the latter case, representing the principal strands of discourse on participation influencing current debates. These are, respectively: World Bank conceptualizations; the Thai section of the UNRISD project on popular participation; a conference of prominent Thai academics, civil servants, and development workers; and

local level discourse as witnessed in Lan Sak during 1984 - 1985.

*VIII.1.i Conceptualizations of participation : general*

Early postwar discourse on development contained little that dealt specifically with issues of participation. The participatory role of the masses in development was seen as one of taking part in economic development as producers by provision of cheap labour and, in the longer run through "trickle down" effects, as consumers of the enlarged national products that development would bring about (Stiefel and Wolfe 1984). Decisions on the direction of development were to be left to the technocrats, since such deliberations were seen as basically management decisions to be made by experts concerning the best way to move along the unitary path of growth, industrialization, and increased productivity. In the Thai context, this was epitomized by Sarit's doctrine of concentrating on economic development while stifling all forms of popular political participation in the early 1960s (Morell and Chai-anan 1981 : 5 - 6; Chai-anan 1984 : 34 - 35).

However, it soon became apparent that two sets of factors were inhibiting development of the kind the technocrats had envisaged. The first had to do with the unequal distribution of the benefits of growth, with elites adopting western lifestyles at the expense of the impoverished masses, leading to "apathy" and "unresponsiveness". The latter term itself indicates the way in which participation of the rural population was seen as the following of directions set by policy makers at a higher level. The second inhibiting element was what is sometimes summed up as "cultural inertia", which may be translated as a failure to recognize the benefits of accumulation via participation in the

capitalist economy. The answer to this was "modernization", requiring new attitudes, institutions, and a culture of consumerism and efficiency, such that:

> Popular participation ... was a form of therapy, the purpose of which was to transform 'backward', 'traditional', 'unresponsive' populations into 'modern, responsive' citizens ready to assume their duties and obligations in a predetermined development process (Stiefel and Wolfe 1984 : 10).

This led to the establishment of channels and superficial mechanisms for participation based on western models, but left unchanged traditional structures of exploitation and inequality.

Conceptualizations of participation have changed along with other strands of thought in the wider development debate. The rejection of modernization theory and the emergence of models of dependency, modes of production, and the consequent political economic emphasis that was thrust into the debate, led to political formulations that approached participation from the point of view of the poor, the powerless, and above all the "excluded". Exclusion of the rural poor from the fruits of capitalist development led to a set of analyses concerning the failure of "trickle down" mechanisms. These ranged from urban bias (Lipton 1977), imperfect factor markets (Griffin 1979), superficiality of understanding by national planners (Chambers 1983) to world system models of dependency (Frank 1967), modes of production (Hindness and Hirst 1974), unequal exchange (Amin 1976).

As to how these mechanisms actually affected the rural poor, these biases, imperfections, and injustices were articulated initially in terms of problems of "access", defined by Buijs (1982) as the ability to obtain resources through institutions. According to Buijs, the poor generally have least access as a result of four primary factors: inadequate coverage of institutions; high relative cost of services; cultural reasons; and low quality of functionaries, particularly those

who deal directly with the poor. The inadequacy of western type legislation and institutions in ensuring access is suggested by another group of authors in a distinction between formal and factual dimensions of access:

| | | FORMAL DIMENSION | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Right to access | No right to access |
| FACTUAL DIMENSION | Access | Incorporation | Corruption |
| | No access | Denial | Exclusion |

Figure 8.1 : Access to institutions
Source: Shadid et al. 1982

Denial is the cell that planners frequently fail to take account of, and Buijs (1979) uses a distance model to show how access may be denied following a function of geographical, financial, and social distance.

Whether access is defined generally as "including the excluded" (Palmer 1975 : 1) or more specifically as "the relation between the administrative allocation of goods and services and the people who need them, and for whom they are intended" (Shaffer 1975 : 3), it clearly places people as passive objects rather than active subjects vis-a-vis institutions.

The search for a more active way of involving the rural poor in development led to increasing reference to the need for participation, not only as passive recipients but as formulators, planners, doers, and beneficiaries of various programmes. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the debate had stepped back from the "how" of participation in a mechanical sense to consider the "why", many still saw participation as primarily a means to achieve predefined objectives and only secondarily an end in itself. Kent (1981) sees the advantages of participation in three main dimensions: contextually, local people know their own social and physical environment and can be expected to use this knowledge to

increase the effectiveness of decision making;[2] practically, participation in planning and decision making enhances the probability of participation in implementation, where imposed programmes may be ignored or avoided; morally, people have a right to take part in making decisions that affect their own lives.

A common aspect of the writing on participation has been what may be termed a "programme orientation", i.e. a focus on what makes specifically identified development programmes more or less effective. While this is of interest to development workers involved on such programmes, participation seen from the perspective of the rural poor involves a range of social, political, and economic processes that are included in many structural analyses of development but ignored or taken as givens by those concerned with specific development programmes. It is the recognition of the importance of these processes as fundamental to the issue of participation that makes the UNRISD popular participation programme a novel departure.

The UNRISD programme stressed from the start the irrelevance of selecting specific "experimental" participatory programmes in isolation as objects of study, since these are marginal to the experience of most third world rural producers. Likewise, it was stressed that the object was not to utilise or devise any body of "participation theory". Rather, such areas as social change, class, power, hierarchy, ideology would provide the theoretical background to an analysis of the constraints and openings for participation in a variety of social situations. Moreover, participation was seen not as a way of altering backward societies so as to emulate more participatory systems that had developed in the West or, alternatively, the socialist bloc. It was specified from the start that the battle against domination and stifling of creative powers is a universal one, albeit fought in many ways. Thus

in the West democracy and trade union rights have been won, yet industrial society still faces growing alienation from responsibility and creativity. In societies where formal class structures have been abolished, bureaucracies and political power monopolies have taken choice away from the mass of individuals.[3] And in the third world new forms of oppression are continually taking shape (Pearse and Stiefel 1979). As such, forms, emphases, and even definitions of participation are necessarily highly context bound, hence the commitment to avoiding universalistic prescriptions (Stiefel and Wolfe 1984).

A primary tenet of the UNRISD approach is that participation is a basic element in reversing the trend toward dependence and marginalization of the masses, and so "the central issue of popular participation has to do with power" (Pearse and Stiefel 1979 : 5). Early on, participation was seen as

> active and meaningful involvement of the masses of people at different levels: (a) in the decision making process for the determination of societal goals and the allocation of resources to achieve them and (b) in the execution of resulting programmes and projects (UNRISD 1978 : 2).

A distinction was thus made between active and passive participation, the latter being the provision of cheap or free labour to community development programmes and rejected in the above terms.

In its effort to establish "outer obstacles" (structures of anti-participation) and "inner limits" (contradictions between central and local authority), UNRISD was committing itself to a political economic approach. More specifically:

> The study of poverty and the political economy of the production of wealth during the last few decades has shown convincingly that the generation of poverty is a function of the concentration of power and the monopolization of resources, which puts the cheap and obedient labour of the poor at the disposal of the monopolizers, thereby increasing their power. It must be accepted, therefore, that the struggle for people's

> participation implies an attempted redistribution of both control of resources and power in favour of those who live by their own productive labour (Pearse and Stiefel 1979 : 5).

This commitment to get to grips with issues of control and ultimately of power represents a departure from previous work in two main respects. First, it links what is commonly regarded as a "programme related" issue, viz. participation, with underlying structural phenomena, enhancing the understanding of issues within mainstream development debates. Second, it tackles head on the association of participation with issues of existing or potential conflict. The realization that such issues must not be sidestepped led to a revised working definition of participation, as

> the organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control (ibid. : 8).

Participation thus defined represents an unambiguous identification with disadvantaged social groups.

Participation is seen in a number of different dimensions.[4] Primary for UNRISD are analyses of the anti-participatory structures and ideologies as outlined above and encounter between the "excluded" and those that maintain exclusion. Such encounter may take on many forms, from bargaining to armed struggle, between groups, classes, or organizations. An "encounter model" is devised, whereby participation is seen as being concerned with "struggle over terms of incorporation" (Pearse 1980 : 2) in the context of change and loss of effectiveness and relevance of traditional institutions. Moreover, the struggle is not seen as a simple encounter of village with state or any other defined rural social unit with the larger system, for

> the fact of participation by the village in regional and national affairs (i.e. as political force, source of commodities, recipient of services, as supplier of labour, etc.) is no

> guarantee that it acts as an agent of popular participation, though indeed it may *if national class divisions do not penetrate and divide it too deeply* (Pearse 1980 : 6; emphasis added).

The importance of this proviso will become apparent in our discussion of the terms of participation in Lan Sak below.

I have dwelt at some length on the UNRISD formulation of participation for two main reasons. First, the importance attached to underlying structural aspects of the political economy corresponds with the production approach used in this study, and the resulting emphasis on control is of value for the following analysis of participation in the context of changing production relations in Lan Sak. Second, the rigorous avoidance by the UNRISD studies of universal applications and consequent focus on (world) regional, national, and local contexts is of value in a locally bound study such as this one.

Indeed, UNRISD as part of its continuing programme has revised its approach for different world regions. The initial regional distinction is between the Asian and Latin American contexts, due to the different constraints faced by alternative movements in the two sets of studies. Whereas in Latin America popular autonomous action has had a long tradition, in the Asian case the more pervasive power of the state allows less "space" for such movements. Thus where the working definition of participation stated above is still applied in the Latin American studies, it has been amended in light of experience in the Asian context to include

> reference to policies of particular states and governments whose purported aim is to devolve such control to the people (Pearse and Stiefel 1979).

As we will see in the following section, the approach is modified yet further within individual national contexts.

*VIII.1.ii Conceptualizations of participation : Thailand*

The World Bank has long held influence in orientation of the Thai national development strategy. Since the early 1960s, with the start of national economic planning, the Bank has promoted a growth oriented strategy in which traditional economic indicators have been used to reflect a buoyant economy and remarkable success in the Bank's own terms (IBRD 1959). Yet toward the end of the 1970s, as the results of the forementioned strategy became ever more apparent in steadily increasing inequalities between town and countryside, regions, and social groups within each of these, the Bank turned itself toward issues of redistribution. In part this represented a shift in thinking among conventional development economists toward the "redistribution with growth" orthodoxy that had emerged in the 1970s.[5] In the Thai case, it led to a report entitled "Thailand : toward a strategy of full participation" (IBRD 1980).

The Bank's interpretation of participation is clear from this report even though it is not explicit. The problems of past development strategy, according to the Bank's analysis, stem not from the capitalist penetration of the Thai economy; rather, they stem from the fact that it has not gone far enough, that it has not involved all in its "benefits". Those who have "participated" most fully to date are those on the edges of the Central Plains who have managed to diversify by movement into non-rice agriculture in response to market signals. In the local terms of the present study, this makes Lan Sak farmers exemplary "participants", the more so in Ban Mai than in Ban Dong. Wider participation is thus to be achieved by ensuring more complete involvement of the mass of the population in the capitalist economy. Non-capitalist elements are to be ironed out by road construction,

extension of credit, improved marketing, and other measures designed to increase the cash income of the rural poor.[6]

Although this analysis clearly represents exogenous influence, it cannot be represented in isolation from Thai discourse on development. The approach is that adopted by the mainstream macro-economic planners of the NESDB. Indeed, this strand of discourse has been prominent ever since the early 1960s with the popular slogan of then Prime Minister Field Marshall Sarit, "*Ngaan kheu ngoen ngoen kheu ngaan bandaan suk* : Work is money, money is work, creating happiness".

A contrasting Thai discourse on participation is contained in the UNRISD project on Thailand. This involved a group of Thai academics, development workers, and the rural poor themselves in an attempt

> to document and contribute to a popular history of organized and everyday efforts made in the past few years by (and on behalf of) the rural poor to enhance their livelihood and social power [and to] assess the potentialities, obstacles, and limitations of such efforts (Turton 1984a : 2).

Not only was the analysis broadened beyond simple participation in the market, but the market itself, or rather lack of control over it, emerged as a ubiquitous problem.

The UNRISD studies identify power as a key element in participatory struggles of the rural poor. In line with the Asian focus stated above, the power of the state is of key significance. Thus, it is concluded:

> While the public statements of governments may give some currency to values of democracy, pluralism, self-reliance, and popular initiative, in practice government policies and agencies have largely had the effect of fragmenting, demobilizing, and preventing autonomous forms of solidarity among and between various strata and sectors of the people (ibid. : 4).

This is not to say that individual government officials, groups, or

programmes are not supportive of participation. Indeed, the study found that no particular form of organization was itself enabling or limiting in any absolute sense. However, it was found that for the most part official groups stifle initiative, work to rigid bureaucratic standards, and provide unrepresentative leadership. In order to meet with success in terms of participation as set out in the UNRISD definition, groups have to overcome these drawbacks.

More important than the nature of specific groups, however, are underlying cultural and political economic elements that explain the anti-participatory organization of Thai society. A "culture of subordination" is identified, and Turton speaks of the fragmenting effect of the increasing variety of labour processes and the intensification of labour. At the local level, socio-economic differentiation of the village and the links between village elites and the state are identified as the first stage in surplus accumulation. As a result, conflict and participation are seen to be inseparable, since conflicts of interest are already so firmly established. Suppressing participation at present is not so much an absence of a sense of injustice as a lack of "space" (in the legal, institutional, and linguistic sense) for criticism of the social order, given the close association of government, state, nation, religion, and monarchy.

A third set of discourses on participation on the Thai development scene emerged from a conference held in February 1984 involving Thai civil servants, academics, and non-governmental development workers. The resulting publication (Thawithong 1984) reflects well the variety of interpretations of participatory development held among different sections of the intelligentsia,[7] but at the same time it points to an apparent consensus on the need for broader involvement in the development process than has taken place

hitherto. The principal differences concern the terms of participation involved.

The contributions fall roughly into three categories, in line with the three groups of participants in this dialogue. First, there are the civil servants expounding the official version and policies of popular participation, with heavy emphasis on officially designated institutions. It must be stressed that most of these are senior officials whose statements reflect accurately the rhetoric but not necessarily the local practice of the state in promoting its form of participation. Participation is defined by the Director of the Community Development Department as

> the process by which the government promotes, persuades, supports, and provides the opportunities for people in the community, whether they be individuals, groups, clubs, associations, foundations, or voluntary organizations, to take part in carrying out any piece(s) of work ... in order to fulfil stipulated development objectives and policy (Phairat 1984 : 6; my translation).

Participation is something sponsored by outsiders, and its aim is to encourage local involvement in achieving objectives that are stipulated elsewhere. Other vehicles for participation than formal government institutions (e.g. cooperatives, farmers' groups, *tambon* council) are permissible, but the examples of "non-formal" organizations given are hardly independent initiatives : Village Scouts, National Defense Volunteers, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs.[8] The emphasis in these contributions is on improving the efficiency of specific mechanisms such as the administrative framework of the *tambon* council (Chit 1984). The starting point is that of encouraging a hitherto apathetic or ignorant village population to take an interest in official projects. Within this framework there is much talk of the need for projects to be self sustaining, involve villagers from the start in assessing needs and in planning, implementation, and following up.

The academic contributions are critical of this project orientation and emphasis on official channels as media for participation. Thawithong criticizes the ambiguity of the Fifth Plan regarding the place of popular participation in development policy, especially in the political economic sphere. In particular, he regards official conceptions of participation as misguided, since they are concerned primarily with expanding activities of each department (or "empire : *anaanikhom*" in Chai-anan's words) and with increasing the number of villages rather than the quality of work in any one project:

> The [official] meaning of participation tends to be used as a means to get people to cooperate in activities or projects that the state or its officials have stipulated ... Most state officials think that participation is a new instrument or technique for getting villagers to accept the activities already laid out by those officials (Thawithong 1984 : 2 - 3; my translation).

This leads to villagers' being forced into numerous activities that increase not only their burden but also their dependence on outsiders. Saneh Jamrik in his critique of Phairat's approach criticizes the idea that initiatives and forms must be external to the community, ignoring the potential of what is already there. He is particularly worried about the use of "participatory development" as a tool for imposition of alien structures:

> We overlook the resources that already exist. What is already there is like a local plant whose growth ought to be supported. Instead, what is being done now is equivalent to uprooting and discarding this plant and replacing it with one unsuited to local conditions. In the end, the plant dies (Saneh in ibid. : 24; my translation).

Saneh defines participation as developing and using the full potential capacity of people, in other words starting with what is already there. Thawithong expands the definition as:

> The development of popular or community capacity in managing and controlling the use and distribution of resources and means of production existing in society for the purpose of carrying

> on social and economic livelihood (ibid. : 2; my translation).

Meanwhile, a prominent Thai political scientist deals more directly with participation as involving issues of power and broader structural aspects of the social formation. Since participation is concerned primarily with the devolution of power from those who have it to those who do not, it cannot be divorced from the political process. In the Thai context, monopolization of legitimacy by the civil service system (*rabob raachakaan*) means that it is above all the role and internal functioning of this system that needs to be addressed. In achieving participatory aims, there are essentially two alternatives : voluntary devolution of power on the part of those with, versus use of pressure tactics by those without (Chai-anan 1984).

Those closest to the practical concerns of participatory development are the non-governmental development workers. While recognizing themselves as "outsiders", they attempt to adopt a perspective as close to that of villagers themselves as is possible (see Chapter II). One prominent such worker of many years' experience questions the premise that villagers have not participated in the past. On the contrary, enthusiasm was at first great, with villagers expending large amounts of time and other resources on projects, meetings, and new forms of production brought in from the outside by developers. Many leaders were used by outsiders to the extent that their own families suffered hardship, and the fruits of this development went to a minority of better off villagers. Meanwhile, the result for most was increasing indebtedness, loss of land, and destruction of traditional ways of life. More fundamentally, and going even further back, villagers were not without their own ways of making decisions, working in groups, and changing things for the better. Outside interference in the name of development has, over the past 30 years or so, tended to undermine such indigenous organization. Recent concern to enable villagers to

participate is often illusory, since participation is within a predetermined framework set out by non-villagers, and participation is considered simply as a technique; meanwhile, it is a convenient way of blaming failures on local level deficiencies, neglecting to take account of how nationally set priorities limit and determine local action. True participation (though not explicitly defined as such) must involve villagers as the main actors, outsiders being relegated to a support role. This involves a re-evaluation of past development by villagers and a reassessment of their own attitudes by outside development workers, who must seek to build on the existing community rather than try to replace it with alien forms. Finally, there is a need for reconsideration of the relationship between community and national objectives : to date the community's task has always been to accommodate nationally set priorities and interpret them into local action; there is a need to reverse this in order that national direction is set at the local level (Bamrung 1984).

### *VIII.1.iii Structures and discourse of participation in Lan Sak*

Participation has become a catchword attached to, if not quite as pervasive as, "development". This has worked its way through all levels, from the conventional and more radical international organizations concerned with development, such as the World Bank and UNRISD respectively, through mainstream and alternative national development organizations, to local level structures. At one level, this merely reflects the desire of each of the developers to involve people in its own particular form of development. More fundamentally, however, it relates to the terms of involvement. Such can be illustrated by reference to structures and discourse of participation in

Lan Sak, particularly as observed in Ban Dong and Ban Mai.

The two key official structures for participation (*kaan khao maa mii suan ruam*) are the *tambon* council (TC) and the village committee (VC). Although the TC has been in existence since 1956, it has gone through several modifications and only in the Fifth Plan has it been stressed to the current extent as a principal vehicle for popular participation in development. As in every other *tambon* in Thailand, the councils in Ban Dong and Thung Khaa are presided over by their respective *kamnan*s. In addition, all village headmen and elected elders (*phuu songkhunawut*) sit on the council, as do a local headmaster as secretary and *tambon* (village) doctor. All these must be approved by the District Officer. Local health and community development officials attend the council in an advisory capacity. Meanwhile, the VC is presided over by the village head and is made up of several other elected members (see Appendix 7).

Through such bodies, according to the Lan Sak District Officer, "villagers are now the regulators : *to'n nii chaobaan pen phuu kamnod*". However, a closer examination of these structures in the two study villages reveals two substantial weaknesses vis-a-vis participation in any other than the formal senses outlined in the previous section. The first weakness has to do with official conceptualizations of the role of TC and VC. The second is the extent to which these bodies represent the interests of all sections of the community.

The synaptic role of officially sanctioned village institutions and leaders[9] places them in an ambivalent situation with respect to relations between villagers and the wider polity. At a development training programme for village heads in Lan Sak in 1985, the Senior

Deputy District Officer summed up the function of the VC in the following words: "*Kamakaan muubaan hai khwaamhencho'b kae nuai raachakaan taang taang nai pheunthii kho'ng muubaan* : The VC gives approval to government units within the bounds of the village". This legitimization role as expressed in local official development discourse is a reiteration of wider official conceptualizations such as the following statement concerning the TC:

> [It] is not an organization for local administration. Nor does it have independent legal status (*nitibukkhon*). Rather, it is the basic unit of government administration (*nuaingaan pheun thaan kho'ng thaang raachakaan*) (Chit 1984 : 54 - 55; my translation).

These expressions conflict sharply with participatory notions as conceived by academics and non-governmental development workers. Many high level bureaucrats have taken progressive ideas concerning participation on board, recommending for example that participation of villagers must involve decision making, planning, carrying out work, benefits, and evaluation, and that officials should take a back seat role as "*phuu hai kham naenam* : advisers" rather than "*phuu kratham* : doers" (Chit 1984). However, the reality of the functioning of the VC and TC as observed in Lan Sak shows them to be more relevant as tools of state power at the village and sub-district level than as vehicles for articulation of community interests in dealings with the state authorities.

If the VC and TC serve primarily as vehicles for official entry to local communities, what of their role in serving the communities by representative leadership? In both Ban Dong and Ban Mai, village committees are dominated by the village head and one or two cronies, in all cases men of exceptional economic status in the village context. The TC in Ban Dong and Thung Khaa are both heavily dominated by their respective *kamnan*s. In both these cases the head of the VC or TC is an ex-officio member who remains in office up to the age of 60 and has

an exceptional status by virtue of his position in the village or *tambon*. As a result, VC and TC meetings are dominated by these personalities, who because of their economic status are not seen as representative by the majority of villagers (see Section *VIII.3.ii* below). This pattern is typical of VCs and TCs all over Thailand (e.g. Pathaan 1984; Turton 1984b).

The main official forum for participation in village activities is the monthly village meeting. In Ban Mai, attendance is compulsory on penalty of a 50 *baht* fine. The meeting is dominated by the VC, in particular by its president, the village head. The meeting takes place at the temple hall or at the village school. A microphone is used to address the 400 or so villagers present in Ban Mai, fewer in Ban Dong, and the VC sits at the front. Up to two hours is spent reading official announcements from the District Administration (*Amphoe*). Occasional proposals are presented by district officials or the village head, who require a yes or no vote rather than a choice between alternatives. Government personnel including police and army officers, to whom a show of deference is made by the village head, regularly use the meeting as a forum for dissemination of official policy; indeed, the meeting is timed to occur a few days after the meeting of village heads at the *Amphoe* at the beginning of each month.[10] Any other business is then called for, this in the knowledge that there is another hour and a half's roll call before anyone can leave for lunch and what is left of the day's work, and rarely does any other business arise. There is occasional contribution from the floor, but too much spontaneous interjection evokes a reprimand from the village head, who insists on anyone who wants to speak raising a hand and waiting to be called upon before being given the floor, unaided by microphone.

Another official forum for participation is the array of training

programmes provided by various government departments at the village level. These take place mainly during the agricultural off-season (February to April). Attendance is often compulsory. A common method is for *Amphoe* officials to state publicly at a village meeting that it would reflect badly on the village if not all households sent a representative, placing the onus on the village head to ensure that all households "participate". The following dialogue at a VC meeting in Ban Dong discussing arrangements for a two day training programme for the "*Phaen din tham Phaen din tho'ng*" project (see section *II,1,ii*) speaks for itself about the terms of participation:

> *Kamnan* : *To'ng bangkhap hai maa thuk khon!* (Everyone must be forced to attend!)
>
> Official : *Mai yaak hai chai withii kaanbangkhap khuan ja chai withii kaan chakchuan* (I don't want to force people; they should be persuaded).
>
> *Kamnan* : *Man khlaaikhlaai kan si!* (They amount to just about the same thing!)

More importantly, villagers themselves frequently express the feeling of being forced (*thuuk bangkhap*) into attending numerous meetings and training sessions. The content of the training is largely ideological, with emphasis on loyalty to the national symbols of *chaat saat kasat* (nation, religion, monarchy), duties as a citizen, unity, and anti-Vietnamese rhetoric. Another aspect of *thuuk bangkhap* is mandatory participation in "development days" proclaimed by the *Amphoe*, when the VC is responsible for organizing activities such as roadside grass cutting. In 1984, village heads were chided by the *Amphoe* for not being zealous enough in securing participation.

Non-governmental structures of participation in Ban Dong and Ban Mai are few, and participation has yet to enter into non-official discourse. Even the Bung Khiew Rice and Buffalo Banks, perhaps the most genuinely participatory structures in either of the two communities (according to the approach used below), are not spoken of by members in

terms of participation as such, but rather in terms of *chuai kan* (mutual help) or *ruam meu kan* (cooperation). Discourse and structures are thus independent and not always coincident articulations of participation in any situation, and in the case of structures participation must be interpreted according to criteria implicit in the various conceptualizations set out above. It can be seen, moreover, that the more radical of these include non-institutional action and expression of power by the powerless as important elements of participation, which might be taken to include resistance to official or hegemonic programmes.[11]

## VIII.2 Revised concepts of participation

Even though the previous section deliberately avoided being definitive about participatory development as a universal concept, it will have revealed two things. One is that any notion as widely applicable - and applied - is capable of more or less infinite ideological manipulation. The other is that its application and interpretation are highly context bound. The present section utilizes strands from the various interpretations outlined above to develop a revised approach that is of relevance in examining issues of participatory development in the context of changing production relations in recently settled forest areas such as Lan Sak. The approach is deliberately context bound and adopts, as do all interpretations, specific ideological assumptions.[12]

Two emergent themes in the discussion of participation have been the determination by various actors of the course of their own lives and the involvement of the "hitherto excluded". More generally expressed,

these are the basic themes of control and power. The following two sub-sections relate these themes to issues discussed in Chapters V and VI respectively, and this is followed by a reconsideration of participation as it applies to the political economy of Lan Sak agriculture.

### *VIII.2.i Participation and production*

A notable feature of the programmes involving the discourse of participation in Lan Sak described above is that they are only marginally concerned with production *per se*. Some of the training programmes include agricultural advice and some of the TC projects involve construction of infrastructure with a direct or indirect bearing on production such as irrigation facilities or roads, but most activities under this heading are concerned with administrative or ideological aspects of development. None enter into the area of production relations. This tendency follows experience elsewhere in Asia, as evidenced by a set of ten participatory studies in seven countries, which show that the majority of participatory projects are peripheral to the main production process and therefore have little effect on productivity of the poor. The reason for this is that most projects bypass the issue of the share of the poor in the main production process (e.g. wages, tenants' shares, access to inputs) and try to work outside the main economy, where the resource base is correspondingly small (Mehta 1981). In Lan Sak, most of the project oriented participation is likewise peripheral to the main economy.

The alternative approach outlined here starts with production as the principal target of participation. The principles of participation

as on the one hand increasing (or maintaining) control over factors influencing one's own life, and on the other power vis-a-vis the wider system, are taken as the starting point, but it is considered vital to address these primary issues to areas of villagers' lives that affect their circumstances most directly. For this reason, the emphasis is on production, based on the premise that production is of importance both in itself and as a determinant of wider social relations. The issues of control and power are related to production as follows. First, since production is the basis for livelihood, the link between control over influences affecting one's life and control over factors of production is inextricable. Second, power within the communities under study and in relations between the communities and outside influences (notably state and capital) are closely related to production.

Movement from subsistence oriented production toward capitalist relations of production involves steady erosion of decision making power in a number of respects. Most basic in the political economic analysis is the alienation of labour by capital, i.e. the treatment of labour as a commodity as any other, which ultimately leads to its subsumption by capital. The process by which this occurs is complex and extremely varied, and in peasant agriculture it often occurs in "disguise" in that it may not involve clear cut or immediate alienation of land or other means of production as in the classic Leninist model. Moreover, superficially capitalist specialization often provides an appearance of diversified production choices. However, from the point of view of the rural producer, these choices are largely illusory in that most of the parameters affecting the ultimate choice recede ever further beyond the producer's control.[13]

It is useful to divide these parameters affecting production into two categories. The first has to do with the fact of producing for the

market rather than for own use. This involves such areas as prices, marketing structures, transport of goods to market. In such a case, loss of control is over the value of the product, while its production may remain unchanged from subsistence methods. In an ideal case with no other influences, a producer faces a straight tradeoff between personal consumption of the product and sale, retaining control over everything but the terms of sale. The second set of parameters has to do with restructuring of the production process itself, whereby control is lost over factors of production. These include land, labour, tillage, and material inputs. The first case is one of commoditization of produce, the second of commoditization of factors of production. The first is typical of almost every type of peasant agriculture,[14] while the second is a feature of "Green Revolution" technologies and associated changes in production relations. In the context of the present study, the first is an idealized representation of Ban Dong rice agriculture, whereby traditional production methods are utilized and only rice surplus to subsistence requirements is sold, whereas the second case is representative of Ban Mai, where production is not only almost entirely market oriented, but also itself heavily commoditized. These representations are expanded on in Section *VIII¸2¸iii* below.

Alternatively, the subjective experience of rural producers can be considered. In this case we can postulate a progressive loss of control over work processes in the move from use of family labour and labour exchange (*ao raeng*) to day labouring and contracted extended employment. In addition, "subsumption" leads to subjective experience of loss of control over what is normally classed as family labour. Examples of these experiences are raised also in Section *VIII¸2¸iii* below.

Together with the information presented in Chapter V, such an

analysis suggests that hitherto development has been notably anti-participatory in effect. Given that commoditization first of agricultural produce and then of the production process itself involves progressive loss of control, participation as a regaining, maintaining, or increasing of control cannot avoid concern with production relations. Regarding strategies for participation with this emphasis, it has been shown above that official participatory development schemes fail to attack this problem. NGOs, on the other hand, concern themselves both in their analyses and in some cases in practical action with production. Broadly, there are two schools of thought among NGO developers. The first, which may be termed "avoidance", is to aim for self-sufficiency, concentrating first and foremost on subsistence production.[15] This approach is seen as trying to "*thuan krasae* : swim against the current", for many determinants of production (e.g. debt, consumer ideology) preempt any such return. Atavism is criticised by Scott, who regards the self help approach as "retreatist", for

> it involves 'making do' with the resources at hand rather than recapturing the surplus taken in taxes and rents by the state and landowners. A large share of the community's land and its product, after all, is now controlled by outsiders. Most of the opportunities for employment, education, and assistance are no longer in the hands of villagers and even the effort to minimize external demands for taxes and rents requires connections, directly or indirectly (sic), with the external world (Scott 1976 : 206).

The alternative strategy, which can be termed "engagement", involves altering the power balance within the system in order to increase control over production. Because of the limited power of the individual rural producer, this usually involves cooperative efforts, which are the subject of the following section.

*VIII.2.ii Participation and cooperation*

It was shown in Chapter VI that the rationale for cooperation is in allowing individuals greater bargaining power and potential for mobilization of resources as a group than any of them would have on their own. In seeking greater control over production, therefore, cooperative endeavour is often a necessary element in this aspect of participation. Cooperative marketing is the main way of increasing bargaining power so as to establish control over the value of produce. In the case of controlling the production process itself, cooperation extends to credit arrangements, labour organization, tillage, and in exceptional cases communal production.

The problematic for cooperation is determining who cooperates with whom for what, and for whose benefit. We have seen in section *VII.1.i* the difficulty of establishing norms and preventing free riders in any cooperative enterprise. In the struggle for participation through increased control, the problematic can only start to be resolved by consideration of where or to whom control has gone. For example, has control over surplus gone to persons or mechanisms external to the community? Is production controlled by key individuals within the community? Only when such questions are answered can forms of cooperation be established.

This raises a common dilemma faced by cooperative initiatives in the context of village society : should cooperative action involve a socio-economically relatively homogeneous group, or should a heterogeneous group be involved? The advantages of the former rest with the commonality of interest that lies within a more uniform group and the correspondingly reduced potential for internal conflict. The advantages of the latter include the increased material resources and social influence that can be brought to bear on behalf of the group by

inclusion of more powerful elements within the community. The generally non-exclusive nature of Thai village society, in which there are no traditional caste boundaries, does not lend itself to exclusive organization of the poor. Latterly, exclusion has occurred at the other end of the spectrum, where a village "*sangkhom* : society" has emerged (Turton 1984b : 30 - 31). This clearly poses a problem to cooperative attempts to establish control where such has been usurped within the community.

### *VIII.2.iii Participation and Lan Sak agriculture*

The above discussion holds that participation is concerned with establishing control over factors determining production decisions, and in redressing power imbalances that result from iniquitous production relations. The present section applies this approach within the specific situation faced by Lan Sak rural producers. It is suggested that it is a general desire for participation in this wider sense that explains many courses of action taken by rural producers in the two communities under study, and subjective experiences are brought in as evidence of the importance of control and power in determining strategies of livelihood.

In Chapter V above, we saw evidence of loss of control over factors of production as a result of the change from subsistence oriented production in the relatively isolated forest community to commercialization in the context of rural development. Family and reciprocal labour, determined by social relations internal to the community and established by the participants themselves, have given way to wage labour controlled by cash arrangements, placing control in

the hands of those with cash resources, i.e. the more powerful within and even outside the community. Control over land has in many cases passed out of the hands of poorer villagers as a result of debt obligation, either through outright sale or through effective mortgaging to debtors. Rising land prices are another way of concentrating land ownership in the hands of a few villagers or outsiders. Control over production has been further undermined by changes in the production process itself. Control over tillage is often in the hands of a few tractor owners, while control over inputs rests with village traders. Access to these increasingly essential factors of agricultural production requires cash, control over which is concentrated in the hands of village traders, agricultural middlemen, and state credit institutions, who use this as leverage for control over agricultural production decisions. One stage removed, production decisions are affected by price changes that are determined in Bangkok and Chicago, over which producers have no control.

The subjective experience of this loss of control is expressed in a number of ways. One such expression is found in the categorization of forms of labour control from *tham eng* (own production) through *khaek raeng* (reciprocal labourer) to *khaek jaang* (hired labourer), *luuk jaang* (extended contract labourer), and *khii khaa* (low down slave). The implication is that *tham eng* involves greatest control over one's own labour and by extension over production. This is evidenced by the fact that family labour is almost exclusively used before any other type of labour, except by the few households well enough off to be able to limit family labour use to a supervisory role. Particularly indicative of the premium placed on control afforded by use of family labour is its use in tasks where the implicit return is substantially below the going wage rate.[16] The maintenance of *ao raeng* reciprocal exchange arrangements where possible demonstrates a preference for relying on

resources over which family and community maintain intrinsic control. The uncertainty of relying on *khaek jaang* arrangements is twofold. In periods of peak activity, competition with better off members of the community means having to pay higher wage rates to secure labour. Meanwhile an existence as permanent *luuk jaang* is precarious, involving day to day uncertainty over livelihood, as is described more fully in Section *VIII.3.ii* below. The contrast between being a *luuk jaang* and *tham eng* is expressed in the feeling that as a debtor of middlemen, village traders, or even BAAC, one becomes a *luuk jaang* on one's own land since production decisions and even choice of crop may be determined by the creditor. The low status of having to *rab jaang*, or depend on day to day employment for livelihood, is expressed by one landless labourer in the expectation that his teenage children, currently working in Bangkok, "*khong mai phon aachiip rab jaang* : probably won't escape [in the sense of rise above] labouring". Many debt-ridden farmers see labouring as a last resort in case of destitution through bankruptcy. In extreme cases, where the creditor's choice of crop, timing of production, or other decisions conflict most sharply with preferences of the producer, it is not uncommon to hear the expressed feeling of being *khii khaa khao* (their low down slave). Where the control is lost to less readily identifiable or more anonymous factors, expressions such as "*thuuk sethakit biib* : lit. being squeezed by the economy" are common.

Loss of control by one group is complemented by its assumption by another. Control over labour is enhanced by those with access to cash. Control over land by creditors and control over specific aspects of production by tractor owners and village traders gives them control over production in a wider sense. Control over production by capital, including international capital, is mediated by local credit and marketing structures. Whereas loss of control over the value of produce

in the relatively isolated and undifferentiated community was to outside traders, the loss of control over production suffered in the differentiated community is in the first instance to fellow villagers. The implications for cooperative attempts to increase participation through re-establishment of such control are clear, and signal the repeated failure of community development efforts that take an undifferentiated approach.

If Ban Dong actually matched the ideal case postulated above, loss of control would be primarily to external traders who would have little control over production within the community. In fact, debt, diversification into market oriented cash cropping, and village level differentiation has led to increased control over production by key village traders. Nevertheless, the dominance of rice in the village economy and the maintenance of traditional methods of tillage and labour sharing have made it possible for many to retain control over most aspects of production. This is particularly true in sub-communities such as Bung Khiew, where differentiation is relatively minor and is based on ownership of different amounts of land rather than on exploitative relations between villagers. However, consumerism and crop failures due to the failure to secure control over water have exacerbated debt, giving outsiders increased control over production within the community.

In Ban Mai this process is much further advanced, both because of the ecology of the area which restricts subsistence based production and because of the accessibility afforded by the ALRO road network that enables specialization in production for the market. In Ban Mai loss of control has been to three main groups : tractor owners, village traders and suppliers, and creditors. However, as we saw in Chapter VI, these are largely the same few influential villagers who invest surplus

capital in all three of these lucrative enterprises, securing increasing control over village production.

So far, the role of the state in this loss of control by the majority of rural producers has not been discussed. At a basic level, it can be seen that the emphasis on roads, electricity and associated consumer culture, ideology of *khwaamjaroen* (prosperity, civilization) as described in Chapter II, BAAC credit and associated high input agriculture are all part of the ethos of individualistic capitalist development. Specifically in the case of Ban Mai, state control is heavily felt in the stipulated settlement pattern, which places important constraints on production. Resistance to residence in the nucleated settlement can be seen as an expression of the desire for control, particularly in the area of production. Invariably, ability to keep a close eye on one's land, raise chickens, plant fruit trees, get in some work before breakfast, and other aspects of the convenience of production on the isolated homestead were advantages most keenly extolled by those who had held out against resettlement in 1984 - 85.

More fundamental is the role of rural development in providing the state with access to village institutions. As we saw in section *V,I,iii*, the principal institutions for villager "participation" are now the TC and VC. Yet if we examine the membership of these bodies, we find that they are in the hands of the same people who are assuming control of the village economy, particularly in Ban Mai. At the same time, they are taking on the role of minor state functionaries by virtue of their new rural development role.

In the context of Lan Sak agriculture, what participatory strategies exist to regain control over production? Certain individual strategies were discussed in Chapter VI, and these included moving from

the area altogether. Forest encroachment is a means of regaining control over the basic factor of production, land, and escaping from the constraints of capital in a subsistence oriented existence. Urban migration represents an adaptation to the market economy, in which cash is the means of securing control over key factors of production. This latter move is more often a desperate attempt to avoid further loss of control rather than a means of enhancing long term control over agricultural production.

Within the community, constraints imposed by local conditions impair participatory cooperation. The intensification of work in Ban Mai leaves the majority with little free time for socializing, not to mention involvement in meetings; such are the luxuries of village elites. This is not such a problem in Ban Dong, where the agricultural off season is a period of socializing and cooperative activity, and when there is still considerable time available for organizing cooperative activity. However, in Ban Dong as in Ban Mai, the very size of the administrative community represents an obstacle to cooperative development, since the increasing role of the state means that organization is more along lines of administrative convenience than of natural communities. The success of Bung Khiew initiatives can be traced partly to the involvement of a cohesive natural community rather than an artificial and cumbersome administrative unit.

## VIII.3 Issues of control

The discussion in Section VIII.1 noted definitions of participation that stressed modes of control, while Section VIII.2 placed these in context by reference to production and cooperative

initiatives in Lan Sak. The present section examines specific issues of control faced by villagers in Ban Dong and Ban Mai in the context of change. Control is a two way process, in that individuals can control and can be controlled. The tension that this creates underlies the following discussion of institutions, leadership, and uncertainty and threat in the two communities under study.

### *VIII.3.i Institutions*

It will be recalled from Chapter II that institutions are defined in their widest sense as means by which common expectations of behaviour are formed. Institutions mediate the control which people exercise over influences on their lives in two main ways. First, the structure of a given institution determines the terms on which individuals interact with the wider society, for example in gaining access to resources. Second, the actual shaping and modification of institutions is carried out by people who thereby control the terms of control. This latter aspect of control is often hidden in the manipulation of institutions concerned with rural development.

Traditional institutions (e.g. kinship, patron-clientage, land rights, water users' groups) emerge as a set of implicit agreements that are legitimized in local cultural norms and expectations. Control over labour is achieved by means of family bonds and neighbourly reciprocation. Control over land is secured by recognition of rights by others in the community, despite the fact that no legal title deeds have been issued. Control over water is attained by establishment of a cooperative group within the community. The means by which such institutions are established are indigenous to the community, affording

an inherent legitimacy.

New forms, on the other hand, are exogenous. Rural development provides an aegis under which standardized institutional forms can be imposed on village society. Most of these are in the name of enhancing control by villagers over wider societal resources as part of the incorporative process. However, the terms under which such control is exercised are themselves controlled by the designers of the new development institutions, and inasmuch as they replace indigenous forms, such institutions may thus represent a loss of control within the community. This contradiction can be illustrated by reference to specific programmes in the state led rural development strategy involving institutional change. I wish to demonstrate in particular how apparently cooperative institutional innovation actually accelerates processes of individualization and leads to a loss of control by poorer rural producers.

As was illustrated by the account in Chapter V, a major problem faced by producers, especially in Ban Mai, is the rising investment cost of commercial agriculture, due both to inflated costs of inputs and to changing ecological conditions. Demand for credit and associated usury have been eased by the expansion of institutional cooperative credit, particularly that of BAAC. Such a trend may be seen to represent a step toward rational, equitable, and cooperative participation in the market economy by small farmers. Certainly such credits represent one of the government's major financial commitments in its rural development programme and are presented as welfare measures to ease the burden of usury from the small farmer's back.

Yet any programme that increases the involvement of rural producers in commercial agriculture also serves to remove them from

decisions affecting production. Associated with BAAC credit, moreover, are stipulations as to the type and quantity of inputs to be used, and credit is given partly in kind. The only credit normally given in cash is expressly for payment of wages or hire of machinery. BAAC credit is thus heavily biased against peasant agriculture and is designed to hasten adoption of capitalist production relations. It is also biased against any major change in the agricultural regime, particularly relevant in Ban Mai where present agricultural practices are causing rapid environmental deterioration. While this is not to suggest that BAAC itself is responsible for adoption of such practices, these biases do mean a loss of control over production, and they represent a contradiction in terms of survival of the small independent producer. Meanwhile, the cooperative element is for the convenience and security of BAAC rather than a means of enhancing the bargaining position of group members (although as was shown in section *VII¸5¸i* there are advantageous unofficial organizational spinoffs), and the credit provided is part of the individualization of production that was described in Chapter VI.

Another form of cooperation that is supposed to increase community control over resources is the range of projects initiated by the Community Development Department (CDD). CDD discourse emphasizes its own mode of community participation (*kaankhaomaa mii suanruam* : lit. come in and take part). No budget is provided by CDD, and villagers provide "voluntary" labour and donated materials for schemes such as a daycare centre. The housewives' and associated savings groups are run by villagers through committees. In principle, therefore, these projects or *klum* (groups) offer villagers increased opportunities for improving control over their own welfare.

In fact, these *klum* have been used as a means of enforcing

"participation" on the terms of outsiders and key individuals within the village. The case of housewives' groups has been described in Section *VII.5.i* above. Control of the terms of participation is in the hands of state functionaries, who determine the standardized forms of such groups. Day to day running of, and benefit from, the groups is controlled by a small minority of village "*sangkhom* : society", while the only activity related to production, viz the savings group, is limited to better off members of the community since the treasurer will not make loans to anyone of insufficient status to ensure prompt repayment.

Bureaucratization of procedure is another aspect of institutional innovation on outsiders' terms, whereby supposedly participatory institutions become channels of access from state into village, that can be observed as part of the rural development strategy in Ban Dong and Ban Mai as elsewhere. Proliferation of committees and rules is a component of the *klum* referred to above, but most prominent in the current rural development strategy is the *tambon* council as the cornerstone of the popular participation programme. Through a combination of bureaucratic and nominally democratic procedures, villagers now have, in principle, a say in requesting certain projects and thereby gaining access to state development resources (see Appendix 7). Yet the TC is merely consultative vis-a-vis the state bureaucracy. Actual decisions over the use of resources are made by the latter, and the TC has no independent source of revenue or independent legal status. The five year plan presented by the TC was described to me by one NESDB official as being a kind of "menu" from which government departments could order at their own whim (or, incidently, have dishes made to order). The drawing up of projects is done by the village elders, village heads, and *kamnan* who make up the TC, with advice from technical personnel provided by the *amphoe* and local headmaster, who

acts as secretary. In fact, the status and education of the latter give them a disproportionate say that easily goes beyond their advisory role (see Chapter VII, footnote 20). Village representatives are free to consult villagers or otherwise in their proposal of projects, and as is evident from the account in Section *VIII.1.iii* above, the nature of village meetings is such as to minimize participation in project formulation or other TC responsibilities.

### *VIII.3.ii Leadership*

Control through institutions is not established by an automatic process of mutual assent, even in the relatively cohesive indigenous community. As we saw in Chapter II, early leadership in the person of the *khon to* was an important element in the making and enforcing of rules in Ban Dong and Thung Khaa. Likewise, development institutions rely on new forms or adaptation of older forms of leadership. However, control through leaders first implies control over leaders, i.e. that the leaders are representative of their communities. The corollary is that non-representative leaders reduce control exercised by the community as a whole and may increase outside control over it.

The concept of "leader : *phuu nam*" is indigenous to the community. Several categories embrace this position. As was described in Chapter II, the traditional leader in Ban Mai was the *khon to* (lit. big person). Another category is the *phuu yai*, used for someone of exceptional status. Thai social hierarchy is often defined in terms of *phuu yai* and *phuu noi* (lit. large and small people respectively; see Girling 1981 : 38 - 39). *Hua naa* means "head", or someone with some authority. *Naai*, or "boss" is a remnant of the feudal (*sakdina*)

division of Thai society into *naai* and *phrai* (serfs). The formal leadership posts are *kamnan* (head of a *tambon*), who has occupied the leadership position in Ban Dong for some 50 years, and *phuu yai baan* (village head). A recent category is that of *phuu mii ithiphon* or simply *ithiphon*, meaning "(those with) influence", referring to persons with unofficial and often illegally wielded authority.

The extent to which leadership and feared authority are coincident in the indigenous community is illustrated by the terms given to the two most feared wild animals in the early Ban Dong and Ban Mai communities. Tigers were known as *kamnan*, while elephants were referred to as *phuu yai baan*. The actual *khon to* attained and maintained his position by a combination of patronage, respect, and fear. Yet ultimately a leader depended on resources that could be mustered from within the community. Local resources were the basis of the village economy and the polity was such that support came from within rather than without the community. In the limited dealings with state authorities, the leader served as representative of the community, and in the case of Thung Khaa this for long involved a resistance to state intervention through land reform, deforestation, and construction of roads. Negotiations for supplying a village teacher were carried out by the *khon to*, whom both villagers and government officials saw as representative of the community in dealings with the outside as well as in organization and adjudication of village affairs.

It is a misconception to view the isolated forest village as a homogeneous and democratic community. Differences in economic status predate changes in production relations, and leadership was exercised according to "the law of the forest : *kodmaai paa*".[17] However, differences in economic status were limited and based on varying scales of production in an undifferentiated production regime, so that any

exploitative relations were external to the community. While the law of the forest appears undemocratic in form, it is based on normative concepts of justice established by the villagers themselves. The ultimate sanction over village leaders rests with villagers, and the outcome of struggles depends on the resources that the leader is able to muster within the community. The *khon to*'s resistance to changes associated with land reform was in part due to a sense of responsibility to the community if, as he expected, things were to go wrong.

Opening up of the community involves a number of changes with regard to control over and through leadership. On the one hand, incorporation into the national polity and rural development programmes mean adherence to apparently democratic norms. The village heads and *kamnan*s must now be elected, committees are set up in the name of community participation, and apparently arbitrary systems of justice and enforcement are replaced by defined legal statutes. However, the new leaders' role can only be properly understood in terms of changing production relations alongside the changing polity. Opening up of the village and associated differentiation as described in Chapter VI results not only in increasingly divergent economic fortunes of individual members of the community, but also in internalization of exploitative relationships within the community. Meanwhile, as the village economy and polity becomes ever more dependent on external forces, the position of village leaders as representatives of the community is diminished as they come to depend on external resources and hence are seen as representatives of state and capital within the village. This is best exemplified by reference to the position of the *kamnan*s, village heads, and village committees in Ban Dong and Ban Mai.

The Ban Dong *kamnan*s have always come from among the Lao

section of the community. In the past there was little to distinguish the *kamnan* in economic status. Contact with officials was rare. In the one instance of abuse of position, the *kamnan* was replaced by the community. In contrast, the present *kamnan* (also village head) is exceptionally wealthy. Following forest clearance by TPC, he sold off large areas of land in Bung Khiew and elsewhere at many times the price he had paid for it. Although he still rents out land, he does not farm and his main business interests lie outside the community. Until recently, he owned the only air conditioned restaurant in the provincial town 50 kilometres away. More importantly, his wife, who is a Provincial Assembly member (see Appendix 4), runs a construction business, and this wins contracts for most local development schemes, in particular road construction. In 1984 she won a 100,000 *baht* tender for reconstruction of the bridge that had been washed away in the previous year's floods. The *kamnan* used his position to summon labour from within the village, and wood was cut from nearby forest reserve land. Villagers received little or no payment and estimate that a profit of at least 50,000 *baht* was made. A similar case of corrupt practice was recounted in the case of the previous year's road construction into Bung Khiew. Meanwhile, the position of the *kamnan* as village head provides opportunities for self-enrichment and patronage. Registration of births and deaths requires a small "service charge : *khaa borikaan*". At election time the local member of parliament disburses large sums via the *kamnan*. State welfare is at the discretion of the *kamnan*, involving handouts of blankets, relief in case of flooding or fire, and free health treatment cards for the poor. Awareness of corruption and favouritism is evident in local discourse, particularly of the poor. There is talk of "*ngoen rua* : lit. leaky money" in the context of development funds, while sometimes the comment is more direct:

> "*Kin ngoen yaang diew mai dai koed prayoot arai*
> *tae man dii yaang luuk no'ng khao dai mii ngaan*

> *tham kae dai ruai* : All [he] does is eat up money without any benefit [to anyone]; but it's good in one way, his underlings have work and get rich" (Ban Dong villager in private conversation).

The Thung Khaa *kamnan*'s wealth is based more on local resources. Following land reform and deforestation, he made large sums in land sales to new settlers in Ban Mai, forestry subcontracting, and illegal forest poaching. He gained favour with the *amphoe* by supporting land reform and road construction, and he enjoys the same benefits by virtue of his position as does the Ban Dong *kamnan*. The Ban Mai village head is also from one of the older Thung Khaa families. He was elected unopposed for his youthfulness and energy, but there is now general disillusionment with his favouritism, inefficiency, and corrupt practices. I witnessed his ability to use his position as minor state functionary for own economic gain in his ability to summon labour from a household that had its own urgent tasks to attend to but dared not refuse for fear of not being able to call on his help in dealing with the authorities in the future. He runs one of the two local bus services to Uthaithani, acts as a moneylender, and rents land of creditors; he is a large employer of labour for his tapioca production. Both he and the *kamnan* have received sums of money from the local MP at election time and in exchange for recruiting labour for his pineapple plantation in Cha-am.

The VCs in the two villages are somewhat more heterogeneous in composition, although the poorest sections are not represented in either community. However, the VC is dominated by the village head and one or two other influential people. In Ban Mai, the *kamnan*'s eldest brother, who is also *tambon* doctor and one of the wealthiest traders and tractor owners in Ban Mai, is also an influential member of the VC. The same is true of Maen (case 6, section *VI,1,iii*) in Ban Dong. In Ban Mai the VC members are as of 1986 allowed to carry twin bore shotguns as part of the *or phor por* (self defence village) scheme,

adding a potentially repressive element to their role. They are identified closely with the tractor owners and traders and referred to collectively as the "*hua naa muubaan* : heads of the village". Their position is clearest at village meetings and on community work days. In 1984 the King's birthday was set aside by the *amphoe* as such a workday, and the village head decreed that grass along the road edges should be cut. The VC took up a supervisory role, not actually taking part in the manual work, leading to comments that "*kamakaan muubaan khii kho'o* : The VC ride on [our] backs [lit. necks]".

The connection between economic status and official leadership position is not coincidental. To begin with, the amount of time that a village head has to spend at *Amphoe* meetings and other official engagements would make it difficult for most villagers to take on the position. In the local cultural context, "to be of consequence : *mii naa mii taa*" is increasingly linked to economic status, and this is a prerequisite to election. More directly, large sums are now spent by contenders for such positions since the potential rewards are large, though not so if measured only in terms of official salary (400 *baht* per month for a village head). The village head is expected to be able to entertain officials or other outsiders, and this is impossible for most villagers.

This is not to suggest that all leaders are concerned purely with personal benefit or that those that are so motivated are entirely devoid of respect from within the community. The culmination of the *Songkran* new year water festival (*song namphra* : bathing of the Buddha image) is preceded in Ban Dong by bathing of the *kamnan* as a sign of respect and ritual washing away of antagonisms. Until recently, the *kamnan* was popular for his informality and, significantly, in that he "left you alone" (from official matters). However, the point to

stress is that leaders depend less and less on the indigenous economic and social resources of the community for their position and more and more on external resources of state and capital. Many of these resources enter the village via such leaders in the name of rural development programmes or as indirect results of changes in production relations that are themselves part of the underlying rural development strategy.

A final point to note is that so called "natural leaders : *phuu nam thamachaat*"[18] do emerge, such as in the case of Boi in Bung Khiew. A key role played by such leaders is as a link with the outside, as spokesperson who can represent villagers' interests. Boi's role in the rice barn controversy (section *VII.5.ii*) and the Bung Khiew irrigation channel (section *VII.5.iv*) demonstrates this clearly. Such a leader requires a number of qualities, including willingness to represent community before personal interests, ability to communicate in official language, a non-confrontationist approach which often means involvement in many official programmes (cf. Turton 1984a : 104), and the trust of the local community.

In summary, the opening up of the village is not the beginning of the process of differentiation. Rather, it marks a change in the control exercised through village leadership as a result of the changed structural position of such leaders. The leadership function is increasingly oriented to that of intermediary between village and bureaucracy and between petty producer and external capital, giving external resources a more important place in maintaining the leader's standing as they play an increasingly important role in the political economy of the village. At the same time, differentiation is a consequence of increasing internal commoditization of labour, which means that those in positions of power are now in direct exploitative

relationships with other villagers. Lost is the sanction that dependence on local or internal resources afforded. Meanwhile, control over village institutions and economy by state and external capital is facilitated by the minor functionary status that formal leaders now take on. In this context, leadership of participatory initiatives usually requires the emergence of alternative leaders who may or may not pose a challenge to existing formal leaders.

### *VIII.3.iii Uncertainty and threat*

A third dimension of control relates to the certainty or otherwise that decisions or courses of action are going to lead to the intended results. Peasant livelihood is normally considered to be one fraught with uncertainty, and many of the measures associated with rural development are at least nominally concerned with reducing this uncertainty. In particular, the vagaries of the weather and other natural elements are to be overcome by technological innovations that are a part of the "green revolution" strategy. However, the alternative face of such change is a different sort of uncertainty that results from changes in production relations as a part of the incorporative rural development strategy:

> The consequence [of change] is a substantial loss of autonomy and the exchange of one type of uncertainty for another involving greater dependency on others, on remote economic developments, and on shifting priorities in government policy (Hainsworth 1982 : 16).

This new uncertainty serves as an obstacle to increasing popular participation through control over production.

A recently deforested area such as Lan Sak differs from other situations of rural development inasmuch as natural uncertainties

actually increase over time. The degradation of soils, variability of rainfall, and increase in pests was documented in Chapter IV, and this has led to decreased control over the environment by agricultural producers. As such, many of the modern inputs of fertilizer, irrigation, and pesticides are seen as compensatory rather than as positive measures of improvement in line with the extension worker's perspective. This is particularly the case in a situation of declining yields.

A second set of uncertainties results from the commercial orientation of agriculture. Whereas in the subsistence oriented community local resources could be used for production, control over which was achieved by community based institutions, credit is needed for the increasingly capital intensive production. Uncertainty over credit stems from the dependence on middlemen or BAAC, both outside community control. Equally important, creditors gain control over debtors' production, leading for example to uncertainties in ploughing schedules as in the case of Lak (case 10, section *VI,1,iv*). Increased dependence on the market leads to uncertainties over prices, and table 8.1 below shows the basis for this uncertainty in terms of fluctuation of the principal crop prices observed in Ban Dong and Ban Mai.

Table 8.1 Crop prices in Lan Sak 1984 - 1986

| | Rice[1] | Maize[1] | Tapioca[2] | Mung Beans[3] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1984 | 2700-2900 | 4000-4200 | 1800 | 110-130 |
| 1985 | 2900-3100 | 3200-3800 | 900 | 110-130 |
| 1986 | 1700-2400 | 2300-2600 | 1800 | 110-130 |

Notes : 1. Price per *kwien*
2. Price per tonne
3. Price per *tang*

Marketing is one of the main uncertainties for producers in Ban Dong and Ban Mai. Most depend on the middleman coming to the homestead, and prices can vary from week to week. A common tactic in Ban Dong is to agree provisionally on a price; a fortnight later, when the lorry arrives and the sale is made, the price has fallen. Middlemen use their access to marketing information, control over the scales, and determination of quality to their own advantage, at least in the eyes of the farmer. Indeed, it would be difficult for the local middleman to make any substantial profit without some cheating, so low are the margins.

Another uncertainty arises from the increasing dependence on labouring income for subsistence. Whereas a certain amount of planning is possible in own production, day to day wage labouring depends on the demands of the labour market, which in agriculture vary from season to season and from year to year. In Ban Mai, there are many occasions when an employer requests labour for the following day at distant fields and then fails to turn up to collect the day labourers, by which time it is too late to arrange an alternative daily income. In the longer run, families planning on a more steady income can be similarly misled. Two examples occurred during 1984 - 85. The first was a proposal by the local MP to employ labour from Ban Mai and surrounding villages on his pineapple plantation in Cha-am. The *kamnan* and village head were to arrange transport, with each labourer paying 300 *baht* per head to go (the return fare by public transport would have cost under 200 *baht*). Originally the leaving date was to be the end of March. This kept on getting delayed, until finally at the end of the dry season the scheme was called off, with those waiting to go having little or no chance of local employment in the meantime. In the event, several ended up seeking work in Bangkok instead, including Phad (case 7, section *VI,1,iv*). A second prospect of sustained employment that fell through

was the reservoir built by ALRO above Ban Mai. The planning of this was done without any consultation of villagers, but it was rumoured that it would employ many labourers for several months at ALRO minimum wage rates, i.e. nearly double the agricultural wage. In the event, ALRO brought in its own contractors, and much of the construction was carried out using heavy machinery.[19]

An important aspect of uncertainty in connection with changes in agricultural production pertains to knowledge systems. As we observed in section *V,2,vi*, local knowledge has been downgraded not only in terms of its status but also in terms of its relevance to the new production regime. Whereas subsistence production in the isolated community utilized a body of locally acquired and adapted knowledge, use of new inputs and production techniques requires a body of knowledge that cannot as readily be assimilated by local producers. As a result, crop failures may be wrongly interpreted, effects of applications of new inputs may lead to unexpected side effects on both plants and users, and long term effects of new inputs may not appear until it is too late to rectify. This uncertainty is reinforced by the lack of knowledge of local conditions by extension workers, making it difficult for farmers to turn to them in adapting new inputs.

On the project side of rural development, uncertainty takes on many forms. A basic element of uncertainty is over responsibility for infrastructural work. In the isolated community, all community schemes were the joint responsibility of villagers, usually at the behest of a community leader. In Bung Khiew, for example, roads were constructed by the villagers, while in Thung Khaa villagers constructed their own school. At present, the uncertainty over whether government or villagers are responsible for such projects often leaves work undone, as in the case of road repair after the 1983 floods (see section *IV,4,i*).

The result, in the words of the old *khon to* in Thung Khaa is *doen ko' mai dai; tham naa ko' mai dai sia iik* : [now] you can't go anywhere [lit. walk], nor can you plant rice [in reference to the land the roads have 'eaten' : section *IV,3,iv*]". The piecemeal and haphazard way in which the REGP scheme is carried out also leads to uncertainty and work left undone. One reason is the uncertainty both by villagers and local government officials as to whether the principal aim of work is to create employment or to build up rural infrastructure. In 1984, work was stopped halfway through construction of a dyke around Ban Dong school to prevent flooding since the piecework rates, measured in cubic metres of earth, became less and less attractive as earth needed to be brought from further and further afield. Eventually machinery had to be brought in to finish the job. In 1985 and 1986, no local labour was used at all in the water jar construction that REGP money was used for, since skilled artisans were required for the standardized model of jar stipulated by the *amphoe*. Instead a contractor was brought in with his own team, making a profit of over 100,000 *baht* after labour and materials.

Such uncertainty about government programmes among villagers resulting from deviation from principles or lack of clarity in such principles in the first place is parallelled by uncertainty within the local administration over responsibility for particular programmes. The duplication and lack of coordination among departments at every level was noted in section *II,3,ii*. This impinges most strongly on villagers' experience at village meetings or training programmes, where it is not uncommon to hear the District Agricultural Officer talking about the benefits of giving up drink, the police chief about raising chickens, the Community Development Officer on the dangers of communism, the Health Officer about loyalty to the King, the local headmaster about the need for vigilance and national security in the face of imminent

invasion by the Vietnamese, and the abbot about the need to follow the government's advice on rural development.

Associated with the contradictions inherent in state led rural development is uncertainty produced by an ambiguous development discourse. The very word for development, *kaanphatthanaa*, is at once associated with general improvement in livelihood and programmes that impinge on one's time and freedom of action. *Khwaamjaroen* (civilization, prosperity), which is often equated with *kaanphatthanaa*, is also associated with debt and other consequences of commercialization. In the words of one longstanding Ban Dong resident, buffalo theft commenced "*to'n khwaamjaroen roem kheunmaa* : when civilization started to arrive [from lower down, i.e. on the plains]". *Khwaamsaduak*, or convenience that is often associated with roads and electricity, benefits those who can afford transport and connection costs. Yet longer standing Ban Mai residents associate the coming of moneylenders with the coming of the roads. The word *duulae* (to watch over) as an aim of development is used ambiguously in the need to *duulae thuatheung*, or watch over everyone, translatable alternately as "take care of" in the welfare sense and "keep an eye on" in the sense of surveillance. Similarly, *khwaammankhong* (security) implies safety against external threat (see below) while giving powers that increase repressive potential within the village. The ambiguity of *saamakhii* has been referred to in Chapter 7, footnote 23 above. Last, *kaan(khaomaa)mii suan ruam* (participation) itself is used to mean semi-compulsory joining of official schemes in the name of giving villagers a say in their own lives.

A final aspect of uncertainty concerns the issue of legitimacy. In the face of rapid expansion of state involvement in village affairs through its rural development strategy, the legitimacy of initiatives

that do not conform with the recognized structures is called into question. An example of this uncertainty came early on in the setting up of the Bung Khiew rice bank, whose status vis-a-vis the *Amphoe* was a subject of some doubt and concern. A month after the first rice deposits had been made, a group of NGO workers from Chiengmai came to visit and exchange experiences with Bung Khiew villagers. The thrust of the exchange was to compare similarities and differences. This, combined with the manner of one of the visiting development workers, caused several of the villagers to suspect that they were government officials sent to spy on the group. The reasons for concern were the apparent non-conformity between the Bung Khiew group and that of the visitors and the assumption that any visitors who were not farmers (some villagers commented that "you only have to look at their feet to see that they have never planted rice!") must be officials (see Section *II,3,i*).

This brings us to the area where uncertainty and control impinge most forcefully : threat. This can initially be divided into two areas, threat by the state and threat by non-state influences, but it will become apparent that the two are ultimately inseparable. Fear of state reprisal for illegal initiatives as evidenced by the above account are not unjustified. Until approximately the start of the Fifth Plan (1982), the climate of suspicion in rural Thailand was extreme. Use of particular words by villagers, association with visiting students or NGO workers, voluntary spirit, and a number of other traits were enough to place someone under suspicion (see Turton 1984b : 51). Although this climate has relaxed considerably, there are still many ways in which the watchful eye of the administration is kept on any potential dissidence. Every village has "volunteers" who "listen out : *haa khaao*". The Community Development Department's (CDD) *tambon* level workers are responsible for keeping an ear to the ground and reporting any

suspicious activity.[20] The danger of "*phai khommunnit*: communist menace" is still frequently invoked, and it can be used as a generic form of accusation against non-conformists. In one Lan Sak *kamnan*'s words, you can always tell a communist from among villagers, for "*khraikhrai mai khao kab thaokae khong mii thaokae yuu khaanglang* : whoever does not rely on a [moneylender] patron must have a [subversive] patron behind [him or her]." Such insinuation is not mere rhetoric in terms of state threat, for the history of violence against leaders of movements of the rural poor is well known.[21] The policy of "*keb*", a selective killing off of "undesirables" - criminals and political dissidents alike - is applied widely, particularly in northern Thailand. At a less overtly political level, the local police are generally feared and detested in Lan Sak and, commonly being referred to as "*joon nai khreuangbaeb* : thieves in uniform".

However, the climate of rural violence is not generally perceived as being perpetrated directly by state authorities. More commonly feared are certain influential people, and these are increasingly those in official leadership positions. When asked in private conversation why no voice of protest is raised at the sometimes blatant abuses of position by the Ban Dong *kamnan*, villagers who complain of such abuse commonly reply that "*klua doon ying hua* : [we're] afraid of being shot in the head". The general level of violence in Lan Sak over relatively minor conflicts of interest provides a constant reminder of the basis for such fears. The case of Dam (section *V,2,i*) illustrates the extent to which blatant injustices will be borne as a result of threat. Although the level of violence has declined greatly since the late 1970s (the period of peak inmigration), the murder rate in 1984 was still four times the (already high) national average of 25 per 100,000. A surprisingly uniform figure of 70 - 80,000 *baht* was quoted on a number of occasions as the amount needed to get away with murder (literally) by

bribing the local police.

Returning to the theme of control, we find that the uncertainty imparted by the atmosphere of threat is a means of maintaining control over action and discourse on the one hand, and preventing the assumption of control by independent bargaining power on the other, through what Turton (1984b : 59ff.) terms "the ideological mediation of fear". This is the combination of hegemonic rule by establishment of legitimacy and forceful suppression by creation of a climate of fear of dissidence. In Lan Sak in 1984 - 85, rural development programmes loomed large in the legitimization of the state at the village level, giving state functionaries control over village affairs through key intermediaries whose position relied increasingly on power divested legitimately via external links and semi-legally or illegally as part of the collusion of what may be referred to as "local powers" (Turton : 1987).

## VIII.4 Issues of power

As we saw in Section VIII.1, a political economic interpretation of participation concerns basic issues of power. According to the UNRISD analysis, the aim of participation is to empower the powerless. As such, participation involves the recognition and resolution of certain contradictions. This inevitably involves conflicts of interest. In most community development analyses, such conflicts are seen as existing between the community and the outside, for example between village and external state. However, incorporation of village by state and capital and associated differentiation alters the axes of power struggle, and many contradictions are now internal to the community.

The present section deals with the contradictions of rural development strategy in terms of power. The first part of the analysis shows how state rural development programmes enhance the power of the state in village affairs, affording a new type of hegemony. However, the process by which this is achieved itself involves certain transmutations of power that are internal to the village. The second part of the analysis thus goes on to interpret the contradiction in terms of contemporary village polity and production relations. The subjective experience of the latter by the "excluded" in Ban Dong and Ban Mai is illustrated by reference to the discourse of the "hidden transcript".[22]

### *VIII.4.i State power and participation*

Stephen Young characterized the Thai village as a "non-participatory democracy". It is a democracy because of the sanction held by villagers over their leaders. It is non-participatory because of four axiomatic principles guiding action in the political sphere : limited government; minimal public involvement with government; government legitimization through concern with the public interest; and obedience to authority. These guides to political behaviour reflect the traditional separation between state and village affairs, whereby state authorities have responsibility for defined functions, mostly connected with the provision of public infrastructure. The separation of functions or duties (*na[a]thi[i]*) is such that villagers play no part in state affairs, which are thus left to those who wish to get involved in politics (*kaanmeuang*). Young was cautious about the likely participation of villagers to be expected in the Developing Democracies

Programme (part of the Thai-US development / containment programme in the 1960s) with which he was concerned; he placed greater faith in establishing the presence of state power or authority at the village level, in line with his fourth axiom, so as to maintain its role as the "significant other" (Young 1968 : 873 - 886). The rural development strategy pursued since that time has, as was intimated in the previous section, involved a combination of this presence with a more visible incorporation.

The normal rationalization of the incorporative rural development strategy is that villagers have hitherto been excluded from the management and fruits of extra-village resources, i.e. that the village has not played its due role in state affairs. Democratization means providing the institutions that give villagers some hold over supra-village resources, in principle making state authorities accountable to villagers rather than vice versa. As we have seen, however, the reality of incorporation is that state authorities gain an increasing influence in village affairs via their monopolization of village institutions, and this is done partly by means of a cooptive strategy involving certain powerful individuals within the village. Thus profusion of committees, *klum*, and individual "volunteer" positions represents an entry of the state into village affairs in the name of villager participation in affairs of the wider polity. The potentially repressive element of such an entry is expressed clearly by one such volunteer, the deputy village head of Ban Mai, who in his role of "*saaiseub* : intelligence" sees his duty as one of collecting information on anyone who tries to form an independent group or "*pluk radom* : stir up trouble, mobilize".

The hold that this entry gives state developers over village affairs can be illustrated by reference to a key aspect of the state

rural development strategy, that of holding village competitions. This epitomises the shift in the state-village power balance in a number of ways. First, it is part of the standardization that is basic to state led rural development. Second, it involves cooptation of village leaders. Third, it enhances the competitive element in the ethos of rural development. Fourth, it places state officials as instigators, arbiters, and beneficiaries in programmes that are at best of marginal relevance to the needs of the majority of villagers. Fifth, it favours short term reward oriented projects at the expense of long term structural change.

A typical village competition is that held in Ban Dong in 1985. At the instigation of the *Amphoe*, the Ban Dong *kamnan* entered the village for the provincial competition. The normal practice is for each *Amphoe* to concentrate its resources on a single village that it can show to visiting senior officials as an example of "development". In this case, village development involved a number of steps. The first and most visible effort was to build bamboo fences around each house plot, in line with the *Phaen din tham Phaen din tho'ng* (see section *II,1,ii*) policy of having every village fenced. The purpose of this is twofold from the point of view of the *amphoe*. First, it gives the village an appearance of "civilization" (*khwaam rungreuang*) compared with the "messy" (*keeka*) appearance of an unfenced village. Second, it enhances control by the *amphoe* and village officials over villagers, expressed as "*pokkhro'ng ngaii* : lit. ease of administration", since it allows for easy identification of house plots and residents. This is further enhanced by the construction of awnings and name signs at the front of each house. The fence building was effected by the constant exhortation of the *kamnan*, who threatened to withdraw all cooperation (i.e. statutory services, such as issuing identity cards) from anyone who refused to comply. Villagers had to

provide materials themselves, involving wood for posts, bamboo, and nails : this involved some expense, due to the shortage of naturally available materials. Despite some grumbling, most of the Ban Dong road frontage was fenced. The backs of houses were not fenced, and in Bung Khiew it was decided to take a common stand against fence building unless the *kamnan* could provide the materials, since it was felt that the fences provided no tangible benefit and that in any case they would soon fall into disrepair. This united stand at the regular meeting of Bung Khiew villagers to discuss the rice bank and other community matters raised the confidence of individuals to resist the scheme.

The non-material side of preparation for the competition was to set up eight "development groups : *klum phattanaa*". This was done at a Ban Dong village meeting by the *kamnan*, who divided up the village and appointed group heads to be responsible for each group. Some of these were absent at the time of the meeting, as in the case of Yot, a Bung Khiew resident who normally has little to do with the rest of the community but now found himself head of the Bung Khiew group. The *kamnan* has since used these groups for relaying orders via the group heads, placing them in often uncomfortable positions since they are not natural leaders and the orders they carry are perceived to be the whim of the *kamnan*. The first duty was for each group to provide several "volunteers" to go on a trip to visit a village in a neighbouring province that had won the previous year's regional competition. Those who went had to provide the 70 *baht* bus fare themselves, and on the day only about half the busload turned up; after some discussion the *kamnan* agreed to pay the remainder of the charter fee. Before entering the village, the District Officer gave a welcoming talk to the visiting Ban Dong villagers, in which he gave advice on how to win a competition. Most of this consisted of how to take good care of the judging committee and how to catch their eye, for example by

selecting a pretty girl to welcome the judges and to know what they were looking for. This was followed by a visit to the village, at which the villagers provided a hospitable welcome and showed the group around the model houses (*baan tua yaang*) that had been selected for their cleanliness and conformity to set criteria.

At the meeting following the fence building, the District DAE officer spoke of his admiration at how the village had developed almost overnight. The material effect was less enthusiastically appreciated by some villagers, who in the past would have been able to cut across each other's land but now had to go the long way round because of the fencing. The principal benefit went to the *kamnan*, who came second in terms of the annual award of "*khwaamdii khwaamcho'b* : merit points", for which he received an undisclosed sum of money from the provincial administration. Had he come first, he would have received a gold medal and a revolver. Following this, however, his uncharacteristic burst of enthusiasm for village "development", which had surprised many villagers who had grown accustomed to his concern for his own private business affairs, waned. By 1986, the fences had fallen into disrepair.

As a one-off event, the competition is symbolic rather than characteristic of the various aspects of exercise of state power through rural development outlined above. However, these can be expanded on with reference to the broader thrust of state led rural development strategy in Ban Dong and Ban Mai. Standardization is a key element in this strategy and can be viewed in a number of ways. At an organizational level, standardization reflects the incorporation of village institutions into the bureaucratic framework (*rabob raachakaan*), which places stress on uniformity. Thus committees, modes of operation, structures of authority, and even specific material aspects of development such as fence building are all determined by a set of rules

imposed from outside and above. At a political level, standardization is part of the stress on the one-ness of the Thai nation and metropolitan cultural domination. This hegemonic aspect can be seen materially in Ban Dong and Ban Mai in the awnings in front of each roadside house, many of which are painted in the red, white, and blue colours of the national flag and some of which display pictures of the royal family and slogans extolling civic virtues that have been provided by the *Amphoe*. More generally, the various *klum* and training sessions described in Chapter VII above are each used as a forum for dissemination of official policy by *Amphoe* officials. Many of the schemes that are introduced reflect an urban orientation, both in the discourse of "*khwaamjaroen* : civilization" and in the material emphasis such as construction of waste bins, imposition of fines for cattle dung on the village streets in Ban Mai, and grid pattern of roads.

The cooptation of village leaders is part of the process by which the state uses rural development as a means of gaining control over village institutions. The Ban Dong *kamnan* and the Ban Mai village head find it in their own economic interest as well as politically convenient to serve as the mouthpiece of the *Amphoe* at the village level, even though in private conversation they attest to the superficiality of *amphoe* programmes (in the words of the Ban Dong *kamnan*, such programmes "*kao thii mai khan; mai kao thii khan* : scratch where it doesn't itch; don't scratch where it itches". Not only do they gain the major benefits of rewards for performance in competitions, but they serve as the channels through which resources enter the village, and these resources are greater for villages which are seen as "*phro'm* : ready, together" than others. In this context, the advantage of the awnings described above is largely symbolic. In Yot's words,

> "*Thaa khao hen waa rao phro'mphriang kan khao ja maa chuai rao reuang eun* : If they see that we're ready, together [to conform] they [*Amphoe* officials] will come and help in other matters."

This is confirmed in official discourse by the DAE officer's repeated analogy of *amphoe* and villages as mother and children : the child who cries the loudest (i.e. the village which shows it is *phro'm* : ready, together) gets fed (helped) first. Readiness becomes conformity, togetherness unanimity of response to superior authority.

The competitive ethos of rural development strategy is enhanced by village level competitions. The emphasis is on doing better than one's neighbour or neighbouring village. This reinforces the consumerist ideology that affects village life to an increasing extent, as each tries to outdo or at least keep up with others in terms of gadgetry, size of ceremonial feasts,[23] or simply in providing their children with packaged snacks (see Nid, case 1, section *VI,1,iii*). The same feeling of not wanting to be "*aai khao* : ashamed [before] them" is used in exhortation by officials to join in official schemes so as not to lose individual or collective face.

The power of state officials is also enhanced by such schemes in that they serve as the effective instigators, arbiters, and beneficiaries of many programmes. The *Amphoe* decides which village is to be given priority and what type of programmes are to be put into effect. Since the judges are all senior district or provincial officials, conformity with their criteria of "development" is the key to success.[24] If success is achieved, the immediate reward goes to village and district level functionaries in terms of *khwaamdii khwaamcho'b*, which for village officials may mean a material reward, while salaried officials are rewarded by a double jump on the civil service promotions scale (*leuan so'ng chan* : lit. move [up] two steps).

A final point to make about the rural development strategy epitomized by village competitions is the superficial and short term orientation it gives to initiatives. It is a reflection of the power that state officials and their village representatives have over village activity that many of those involved in fence building, training programmes, and other initiatives see them as of marginal relevance to their needs, but they are unable to do other than comply or find compliance less costly than otherwise. Non-compliance does take place on occasion as in the case of Bung Khiew, and this depends in part on strong independent leadership, although Boi had no part in this particular initiative. More often non-compliance is a fragmentary dragging of feet, which is interpreted as apathy and results in more forceful measures of compulsion, leading to the common complaint associated with development measures of feeling "forced : *thuuk bangkhap*", particularly in Ban Mai. In addition, this orientation leads to an association of development with superficial infrastructure, pre-emptively usurping the concept and preventing its association with more substantial structural change.

### *VIII.4.ii Power, production, and participation*

It has often been noted that the powerlessness of the poor is compounded by their lack of voice (e.g. Chambers 1983 : 131ff.). Here I would like to modify the Ban Mai villager's statement at the head of this chapter by suggesting that what the rural poor lack is a *public* voice, but that their "hidden transcript" (see footnote 22) expresses eloquently their position vis-a-vis various forms of power, the statement itself being one example.

In relation to the power of the state, specific rural development schemes are punned via their acronyms or otherwise : *ro' pho' cho'* (Accelerated Rural Development) becomes *ruam phuak khon chua* (a gathering of the evil [corrupt]); *ko' so' cho'* (Rural Employment Generation Programme) becomes either *kin saam chan* (eat [i.e. be on the take] at three levels [village head, *kamnan*, *amphoe* official]) or *koong sin chaat* (cheat the life out of the nation); and *Phaen din tham Phaen din tho'ng* becomes *Phaen din tho' Phaen din thae* (land of desperation).

The situation of the rural poor vis-a-vis power not directly associated with the state is expressed in statements such as "*khwaam yuthitham laew tae khwaam pho'jai kho'ng khon to* : [in a reference to corruption by village leaders and officials] justice is at the whim of the 'big boys'". More direct statements are made with reference to specific instances of perceived injustice : "*Mo'* ___ *khuud riid khon jon* : [One of the Ban Mai tractor owners] exploits the poor", this in reference to the low wages he pays and the high prices he charges in his shop and for medical treatment since he is also *tambon* doctor.

However, the power of the state and the power of certain individuals are not seen as entirely separate. The association between state and other local powers is captured in the observation that : "*Rathabaan khao mai theung chaorai chaonaa khao theung khae pho'khaa* : The government doesn't reach [us] farmers; it only gets as far as the merchants". With reference to the police, it is often commented that they "*thai khon jon* : squeeze [lit. plough[25]] the poor". One of the most vivid analogies I heard was to compare the poor with fish in a water jar, which could easily be caught; the rich are like fish in a stream, difficult to catch (*khon jon meuan plaa nai*

*oong jab ngaai khon ruai meuan plaa nai lamhuai jab yaak*). Another was to represent poor villagers who use wood on their own land as "*meuan luuk jiab nai meu khao* : like chicks in their [officials'] hands" which (who) could be squeezed at any time, while timber contractors go scot-free if they bribe the right amount.

The above discourse of the poor is an articulation of the subjective reaction to exercise of power in the context of the changing polity and production relations at the village level. The previous section showed how the attempt to increase one form of control, over the vagaries of the natural environment, leads to a loss of other forms of control as a result of the change in production relations and the associated transformation of the village polity that is a part of this change. However, this does not represent a neutral substitution of one type of control by another. The key difference is that between control, or lack of it, by people over their natural environment, and control by people over other people. In other words, the essential variable is the aspect of power.[26]

Returning to the theme of participation, the means by which control over production can be increased by the majority of rural producers becomes the key challenge, and this requires an understanding of the relationship between production and power in the two communities under study. This relationship is reviewed briefly below in three main dimensions : the association of control over production in the context of changing production relations with positions of political power at the village level; the way in which exercise of power affects production; and the embryonic forms of countervailing power that show signs of emerging in indigenous attempts to retain control over production.

Chapter VI and section *VIII,3,ii* above document the coexistence of economic and other positions of power in key individuals at the village level. That this coexistence is more than coincidence is implied by the criteria for assumption of formal village leadership detailed in section *VIII,3,ii*, and it has been shown that these positions are then reinforcing of economic status. The significance of this overlap is that decentralization of power in the name of participation through institutions such as the TC merely serves to decentralize inequality and reinforce or reshape, rather than replace, "non-rational" aspects of power and economic relations.

Indirect expression of power affects production in a number of ways. The desire for control as expressed in the resettlement of Ban Mai villagers in the nucleated grid-plan settlement precludes a range of productive economic activity and makes field cropping less convenient for those with fields at a distance from the village. Training sessions and village meetings are time consuming, and during the agricultural season they are regarded as seriously disruptive by those with urgent tasks to attend to. Power of feared individuals in several cases deprives producers temporarily or permanently of control over key means of production to which they are entitled.

Countervailing power is expressed quietly and, to most outsiders, almost invisibly. In Ban Mai, resistance to resettlement is justified first and foremost in terms of convenience of production, although there is also a subjective expression of the freedom (*isara*) from being forced (*bangkhap*) or pestered (*jukjik*). In the words of one who has resisted resettlement:

> "Whose convenience is it [resettlement] for - ours or theirs? For them it's fine, they can keep control. Here [on the farmstead he has resisted leaving] we're out of sight and earshot (*klaihuu*

> *klaitaa*), and that worries them. Yet here we can raise chickens and ducks, can get some work in before breakfast...".

Although much everyday resistance is fragmentary, this particular case involves a number of homesteads in one of the older communities of Ban Mai. Other forms of resistance include the Bung Khiew refusal to build fences.[27]

## VIII.5 Participation and rural development in perspective

In this chapter we have considered the various interpretations and manipulations of participation as it has been used in rural development. Particular stress has been placed on the issues of control and power as the key elements in a revised approach. The approach is context bound in its emphasis on production in a local situation of rapid change. This final section examines local rural development schemes in the revised perspective. The questions to be asked concerning a particular initiative are as follows. How relevant is it to production?[28] How does it affect relations of control and power? Who in the community is it relevant to and in what way? The initiatives covered are those discussed in section VII.5.

BAAC credit is clearly of immediate relevance to production. As we saw in Chapter V, 30% of credit for inputs to agriculture in Ban Dong and 18% in Ban Mai comes from this source. This form of credit is cheaper than non-institutional credit, and as such it gives recipients control over inputs that would be difficult to attain otherwise. In this respect BAAC credit as the state's principal financial commitment to agriculture in Lan Sak and elsewhere enhances participation in the high input production regime that predominates. However, by promoting

involvement in such a regime and by enforced continuation of involvement by means of the debt cycle, credit on easy terms ironically serves to decrease control in the long run by those with insufficient means of production to keep their heads above water. This is manifested both directly in the credit in kind that BAAC clients are forced to take and indirectly in the loss of control over production decisions that are detailed in Chapter V. It is ironic that many of the poorest farmers in Ban Dong and Ban Mai forego BAAC credit not only because they are excluded by virtue of their economic status from joining a BAAC group, but also sometimes because they prefer to borrow from fellow villagers over whom they feel they have some sanction and who can therefore be expected to show some flexibility and accept partial repayment in services other than cash. Since BAAC works more or less independently of the *amphoe* administration and village polity, BAAC groups do not impinge on power relations within the village to any significant degree. Where BAAC does enhance the position of the better off villagers is in giving long-term credit for purchase of machinery, in particular tractors and power tillers.

The CDD housewives' group only affects production marginally in its associated savings scheme. In Ban Dong, this scheme involves a larger number of women than in Ban Mai, but in neither case has the limited amount of savings been put to any productive use. Rather, such groups place individuals in positions of authority as minor state functionaries within the village and give state officials access to village institutions and village women's labour in support of its own programmes. Proposed training, which would follow CDD use of housewives' groups observed elsewhere in Thailand, involves handicraft production as cottage industry.[29] As suggested in Chapter VII, these initiatives tend to impose urban standards on production by women, failing to take into account their role in agricultural production.

The Bung Khiew rice bank is relevant to production inasmuch as it provides a cheap means of credit for a subsistence crop and maintains resources within the community. It removes one of the main forms of dependence on external resources that existed in the marginal rice economy of Bung Khiew, which was the need to borrow rice in deficit years. As such, it increases the control of the community as a whole over the basic item of subsistence, and since lending priority is based mainly on need, it benefits the least well off most, although this is less relevant by 1986 when the 17 *kwien* that have been accumulated are sufficient to fulfill most borrowing needs among the 40 members. Control over the terms of lending and the shape of the institution are also in the hands of the members. The rice bank also serves as a forum for other community initiatives, and has the potential (expressed by members) for communal marketing and purchase of inputs, increasing the bargaining power of Bung Khiew villagers vis-a-vis the market. Already it has been used to negotiate external resources in the form of the rice barn and a stock of rice. Thus it has moved beyond the retreatist "self-help" function criticised by Scott.

The Bung Khiew buffalo bank is also of direct relevance to production in that it gives farmers direct control over the means of tillage. It removes another main area of dependence on external resources for subsistence production in Bung Khiew agriculture. Control is collective, and leadership is representative of this relatively undifferentiated community. The initial beneficiaries have been the poorest members of the community. Control over this institution is less indigenous than in the case of the rice bank since the resources have initially come from the outside in the form of donation. As a result, the buffalo bank members still feel accountable to the NKYFRD, and in the cases where there has been a problem (for example the death of

several buffalo), these outsiders have been consulted. This can be expected to decrease as more of the bank's buffalo are offspring of the original herd and are thus seen as indigenous community resources, but this will take many years to become established.

The final scheme under consideration for its participatory content is the Bung Khiew Irrigation Channel. This was part of an effort to secure control over another factor necessary for subsistence production, water. Unlike the rice and buffalo banks, it was not inherently concerned with production relations but rather with mobilization of a resource for community use. This initiative had its roots in indigenous forms of cooperative development, and it was preceded by several attempts that relied solely on local resources. Through a local leader, Bung Khiew villagers called on and secured a commitment to provide external resources in their attempt to construct the channel in 1984 - 85, both from NGO sources and from the state. The participatory nature of this scheme was thus based on indigenous modes of mobilizing community resources, but it included an adaptation to incorporation into the wider community in its use of key "link" figures to secure assistance from further afield.

## Conclusion

If the tone of this chapter has been somewhat negative, it is because the emphasis has been on a fundamental contradiction concerning participation and the existing terms of incorporation faced by Ban Dong and Ban Mai villagers. Where possible, potentials have been identified and "spaces" pointed out. The concluding chapter that follows pursues some of these potentials and examines some of the wider implications of

participatory rural development.

Notes

1. The flexibility of interpretation of "democracy : *prachaathipatai*" in the Thai context opens it to similar manipulations in the constitutional field to those of participation in the field of development. Thai "democracy" celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1982, the 1932 abolition of the absolute monarchy having marked the start of the "democratic" era. However, most of this period has seen domination of the political arena by the military and several abrogations of the Constitution. Democracy is popularly used in contradistinction to communism and is thus associated with support for the national symbols of *chaat saat kasat* (nation, religion, monarchy). One Lan Sak village headman pointed out the newly installed public address system in his village as evidence that democracy had arrived, since the national anthem could now be played for all to hear and stand at attention to each day at 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. On a more mocking note, the Thai political system is often referred to as "*prachaathipatai baeb thaithai* : Thai style democracy" or "*prachaathipatai khreung bai* : half-baked democracy".

2. Uthong (1986 : 9ff.) warns against use of local knowledge as a tool in the hands of outsiders, and criticizes the prevailing academic interest in local knowledge as primarily concerned with its utility to scientific research. Lacking is an understanding of, or interest in, how knowledge functions within the community and its relations with other institutions.

3. The dilemma of participation through revolutionary action has been commented on in the context of the Bhoomi Sena movement in Maharashtra :

> Often, in order to promote participation on a wide scale, macro-action will involve struggles with opposing macro-forces representing the status quo of the social structure and institutions, and the contingencies of such struggles may necessitate that the immediate issues and methods of action be determined centrally. The dilemma is that in thus seeking to "liberate", the very thing to be liberated - i.e. people's creativity - may fail to be created, and what has not been created cannot be liberated. In such a situation the most likely outcome of a successful macro-action would seem to be the domination of the new institutions by one or another of the forces that already exist (e.g. party or government bureaucracy), to promote their power rather than "people's power" (Rahman 1981 : 20 - 21; original emphasis).

The disillusionment that led to the decline in fortunes of the Communist Party of Thailand after 1979 was partly due to this high level of centralization.

4. Six dimensions are discussed overall, as follows. Participation is seen as encounter between the excluded and those who maintain exclusion. Such encounter may take many forms from bargaining to armed struggle, between groups, classes, organizations, etc. Movements and organizations are of inherent interest, and the focus is on internal organization, interests, leadership, forms and tools of struggle, circulation of information, and education regarding the aims of the

movement or organization. Individual experience is relevant to participation, since individual consciousness is "the crucible in which 'social forces' are put into human action". This is termed the "biographical approach". Programmes or projects implemented from above are of interest, particularly regarding the motivation of their sponsors : are such programmes "system maintaining" or "system transforming"? More abstractly, policy contributing to national development is a determinant of participation : most systems espouse the ideals of democracy, but it is important to see in what form it is promoted. The space for increased participation exists as an "open frontier ... in all societies and the main forces of most popular and emancipatory movements ... are deployed along it or seeking it out". Last, anti-participatory structures and ideologies need to be examined, in particular in the context of contemporary forms of modernization and nation building.

5. See in particular Chenery et al. 1974. This study was itself sponsored by the World Bank. Its starting point was inequality associated with growth in LDCs, but it did not see the two as necessary correlates. The study examined the context and scope for intervention and identified target groups before going on to a more technocratic analysis of policy options.

6. The emphasis on cash income in part reflects, and in turn is reflected by, the use of income as the principal indicator of rural poverty. The World Bank follows the National Statistical Office (NSO) definition of poverty in rural areas as per capita monthly income below 150 *baht* (IBRD 1980 : 61 - 62). The NESDB defines rural poverty in the Fifth Plan poverty eradication programme as per capita monthly income below 165 *baht*. Criticism of use of such a crude criterion can be levelled on a number of counts. In an economy in which subsistence production is still important, cash income does not accurately reflect opportunities for consumption or other improvements in livelihood. In a situation of widespread debt, income figures are of limited meaning, since outlays may actually exceed income in any one year. Cost of living varies considerably from one part of the country to another, and the local natural resource situation may affect significantly the extent to which a cash income determines levels of consumption, especially of fuel and proteins. In addition, all cutoff points are to some extent arbitrary, the more so for an ultimately relative concept such as poverty which cannot readily be compared over time and space. Turton (1987) warns of the "pitfalls of inappropriately precise conceptual classification" in defining rural poverty.

7. Note the category *panyachon* discussed in Section *II.3.i*.

8. See Muecke (1980) on Village Scouts. The president of the Ban Dong Village Scouts, which is now more or less inactive, is a wealthy rice mill owner and buffalo renter. Turton (1984b : 32) notes that the membership of Rotary and Lions Clubs consists of local elites, who often wield power in semi-legal or illegal and repressive ways.

9. For the dual role played by traditional village leadership, see Moerman (1969) on synaptic leaders. In 1960 the headman of Ban Ping, a relatively homogeneous and isolated community, was facing the difficulty of having to please two constituencies, namely officials and villagers; he was the "door" (ibid. : 543) of the village. Partly by comparison with villages that had been more fully integrated into the wider polity and economy, partly by far-sightedness, Moerman foresaw the decline of the synaptic role of the leader as he became more accountable to and dependent on officials and external resources.

10. The timing of meetings at various levels is a clear indication of the persistence of the "top-downward" orientation, despite rhetoric on participation that would suggest the contrary. Meetings at each level - village, district, provincial, regional, national - are timed to follow the meeting at the level immediately above, indicating the direction in which information and policy orders are designed to flow.

11. See Scott and others on everyday forms of peasant resistance in the January 1986 issue of *Peasant Studies*. The reluctance of villagers to attend meetings may be interpreted as one form of resistance in Ban Dong; the fact that they have to be forced under penalty of fine in Ban Mai also indicates a resistance of consciousness, if not of action - this type of phenomenon as refutation of the idea of false consciousness is discussed by Scott (1976 : 230), who suggests that increase in repressive powers is itself evidence that compliance is through other than passive acceptance of authority. In this sense, resistance to resettlement by Ban Mai villagers can be viewed as a move to retain control over livelihood and is thus participatory in the terms outlined above. A more collective case of resistance occurred in 1985 during a meeting at Ban Dong temple. Having invested heavily and made a loss in a temple fair without consulting villagers, the Abbot and members of the Village Committee attempted to make up the loss by securing contributions of 200 *baht* from each villager. One respected village elder stood up to speak against the proposal, asking why villagers had not been consulted. Following this, the Abbot and VC members went on at length about the villagers' moral obligation to "stick together". While they were talking, the villagers one by one stood up and descended from the temple hall where the meeting was being held, despite pleas from the VC member to remain. Resistance to forced purchase of fertilizer has already been mentioned, and this may take on ingenious forms : one Bung Khiew farmer said, "*phom mai deuad ro'n meuan khon eun* : I'm not troubled like other people", and went on to explain that he borrows from BAAC ostensibly to buy a buffalo; this he does, sells one of his own (he has five), and uses the proceeds for rice farming, thereby avoiding the stipulation that those who borrow for rice farming must buy fertilizer!

12. The main ideological assumption I use consciously is that participation and rural development should be oriented toward improving the lot of the disadvantaged, be they described as "poor", "powerless", "excluded" or in other terms. A subsidiary assumption is that local cultural values and more universal values such as human dignity, the right to a basic livelihood, and involvement at various levels of society on equal terms, are of inherent importance and should not, therefore, be subjugated to alien forms or crude economistic or materialistic measures of "well-being". Doubtless I have other unconscious assumptions underlying my approach, as do all treatises concerning the organization of society, and I apologize only for not being able to make them more explicit.

13. I am grateful to Anan Kanjanaphan for insight into this perspective that I gained from his discussion with students on a field study in Nong Kham on 19 October, 1984.

14. In his Peasant Society and Culture, Robert Redfield defines the peasantry in terms of its place as a "part society", emphasizing not only its indigenous agrarian tradition but also its production relationship with the larger society (1956 : 17 - 22; 23ff.).

15. Recently, the need for self-reliance (*pheung ton eng*) has found its way into the discourse of state led rural development. In part, this is a progressive step in the approach of state functionaries. However, skeptics see this emphasis as a means of cutting costs and

reducing the burden on strained government budgets. Certainly at the local level the frequent lambasting of villagers for sitting back and waiting for government assistance is evidence of this attitude among some officials. One criterion for selecting outstanding *kamnan*s and village heads in the official local administrator's diary for 1984 is help in construction of public infrastructure, without relying on public money, to the tune of at least 50,000 *baht*. This includes schools, health clinics, meeting halls, roads, bridges, irrigation channels, weirs, fire engines, wells, community ponds, *amphoe* headquarters, police stations, and houses for government officials (Department of Local Administration 1984 : 73; see Appendix 5).

16. Chayanov characterizes the peasant's penchant for subsistence production using household labour as self-exploitation, since implicit returns to labour are far below those found elsewhere in the economy. However, viewed another way, the opportunity costs of using household labour for subsistence production are discounted against the uncertainties and loss of control associated with wage labour or production for the market. See Chapter VI, footnote 8 for perspectives on this analysis.

17. Compare *kodmaai paa* with *kodmuu* (lit. group rules) of Phra Pho Pan in Ban Mai Sawan (Tanabe 1986). Many aspects of traditional leadership and changes therein following increased state attention to this previously isolated village are similar to the situation of the *khon to* and leaders who succeeded him in Ban Mai. See in particular pp. 37 - 41.

18. *Phuu nam thammachaat* (natural leader) is commonly used in NGO discourse to distinguish leaders with genuine respect and authority in the community and who are seen as community representatives from the formal leaders recognized by the government.

19. ALRO employs several labourers in Ban Mai. Because of the favourable rates of pay, there is heavy competition for such work and a certain amount of ill feeling is generated through jealousies, including accusations of favouritism against influential villagers who hold sway with ALRO officials.

20. CDD was set up in the early 1960s with the explicit role of being the government's eyes and ears at the village level, as well as fulfilling the hegemonic function of showing concern for village development. While collecting data at Lan Sak, I overheard the *amphoe* CDD officer giving his monthly briefings to the *tambon* level workers, stressing above all the need to report immediately there was any unusual gathering (*chumnum*) or stirring (*khleuanwai*) within their areas. In a moment of frankness during an interview, this same officer told me that he had shot and killed two villagers during his previous posting in a sensitive area in Nakorn Panom province in northeastern Thailand, since he had "reliable information" that they were out to get him as he had a (CPT) price on his head (*khaahua*).

21. In particular, leaders of the Farmers' Federation of Thailand (FFT) were targets of assassination by right wingers. In 1975 over 30 FFT leaders were killed in this way, without a single assassin being caught. (Kanoksak and Kanchana 1985 : 22).

22. The "hidden transcript" of the rural poor is a concept used by James Scott to refer to the discourse of the powerless in the absence of the powerful. Public discourse only provides a limited expose of real attitudes, and the greater the disparities of power, the greater the extent of the "hidden transcript". Such a thesis conforms with the

nature of public and private discourse in Ban Dong and Ban Mai, the more blatant power differences in the latter being reflected at once in a greater level of bitterness expressed in private, often hushed conversation, and a smaller number of opportunities for public exchange. (James Scott : public lecture at Thammasat University on 16 May, 1985).

23. In recent years, ceremonial occasions such as topknot cutting, ordinations, weddings, and funerals, have involved ever greater expenses as local entertainments and catering have given way to hiring of films, *likee* (Thai street opera), loudspeaker equipment, and provision of large quantities of alcohol that must be purchased. Several villagers I spoke to are privately contemptuous of the waste involved, particularly in the competitive aspect (*khaengkan*), but since most fear the castigation through gossip that failure to provide such entertainment invokes, the competitive atmosphere is maintained. The urban orientation to this competitive ethos (see Chapter II) is evident on such occasions, with the latest trend for those who can afford it (and many who cannot!) being provision of tables and chairs and even issuing invitation cards. However, there is now a movement for sharing of expenses by joint ordination of monks. In 1985, several youths from Ban Dong and Ban Mai were ordained at a joint ceremony for 200 monks at the temple of a respected monk near Nong Chang, while in 1986 a joint ordination of 50 monks was organized at Ban Dong temple. This cuts the cost for each family and increases the scale of entertainment that can be provided. This tension between ostentation and modesty in expenditure is also present in more permanent use of savings. On the one hand, wealth invested in an urban style concrete or brick house helps someone "*mii naa mii taa* : to be of consequence". On the other, it can arouse envy. One farmer who lives in a modest abode outside the Ban Mai settlement told me of his desire to keep wealth tucked away (in this case in a bank account), for he "*mai yaak thayoethayaan* : do[es]n't want [to appear] ambitious", otherwise he would not be able to count on his neighbours as now for help in cultivation or when he is ill.

24. The power that the state achieves over organization of village society through competitions is akin to that referred to by Foucault in his discussion of examinations:

> The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgment. It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them. That is why, in all the mechanisms of discipline, the examination is highly ritualized. In it are combined the ceremony of power and the form of the experiment, the deployment of force and the establishment of truth. At the heart of the procedures of discipline, it manifests the subjection of those who are perceived as objects and the objectification of those who are subjected. The superimposition of the power relations and knowledge relations assumes in the examination all its visible brilliance (1977 : 184 - 185).

Competitions are the epitome, not the sum of state power, just as they provide the symbol, not the substance of its rural development strategy.

25. Compare this with James Scott's translation of the Malay word for exploitation as "ploughing : *membajakkan*" the peasantry (public lecture at Chulalongkorn University on 15 May 1985).

26. This is reflected in popular sentiment as expressed in Seni Saowapong's novel Pisaat (Devil), in which he follows Sai's thoughts after nearly getting shot:

> Back in the days of clearing the forest, humans only faced wild animals and nature; we could at least anticipate how and when the danger was going to come and take some steps to protect ourselves in advance. But in these days of exploitation, use of power, competing interests, we can hardly tell when and in what form the danger will be upon us, when people are corrupted into despising each other with bribes and other forms of evil... (Pisaat : 283) [my translation].

27. Scott (1986) emphasises the importance of such everyday resistance, as at once the "unremitting guerrilla warfare that [takes] place day in and day out" (p.5) and an effective if not revolutionary means of resisting demands of the state and dominant classes. Scott defines everyday resistance among peasants as:

> ...any act(s) by member(s) of the [oppressed] class that is (are) intended either to mitigate or to deny claims (e.g. rents, taxes, deference) made on that class by superordinate classes (e.g. landlords, the state, owners of machinery, moneylenders) or to advance its own claims (work, land, charity, respect) vis-a-vis these superordinate classes (p.22).

Thus, although collective action is emphatically not a necessary part of resistance, intentions and symbolism or ideology are part of the act.

28. This is not to suggest that aspects of rural development not directly related to production are irrelevant to people's needs. However, the emphasis here is on production as the basis for people's livelihood, which is what most people are most concerned about and which itself is the most important determinant of other forms of well-being.

29. For example, crochet was being taught at a training session in Phrao in 1985. Housewives's groups elsewhere help to market handicrafts, such as dried *phak tob chawaa* (water hyacinth, or *Eichhornia crassipes*) weaving in Phayao. These generally give very low incomes, the latter case yielding an average of 10 to 15 *baht* per day; the advantage is that they can be carried on in spare time at home.

# CHAPTER IX

# CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis has been to identify and examine a contradiction inherent in participatory rural development, especially regarding production for the majority of rural producers. Briefly recapitulated, this is the loss of local control over resources necessary for production entailed in an incorporative development strategy in which "participation" is invoked as a means of affording access to wider societal resources. The examination has focussed on processes of change, both directed change and spontaneous responses to a changing social and physical environment. There has been no attempt to propose alternative strategies for development, for in revised perspective participation is seen as a dialectical process concerning power relations at the local level rather than an implementation of standardized prescriptions. In this short concluding chapter I would like to examine some of the wider implications of adopting such a participatory approach to development.

Since local context and aspects of power have been important in the preceding account, it is worthwhile reviewing some salient empirical findings. Lan Sak agriculture has seen a rapid set of material changes as a result of changing social and physical environments in the context of recent settlement of previously isolated communities. The changing material basis for production, new opportunities and constraints, and an increasing role of capital in production, form the background to changing production relations within the communities under study. However, the nature of these changes differ between the communities as a result of factors such as ecologically determined differences in

production regime; patterns of settlement; the role of state and other developers; patterns of differentiation; and response to resource shortage. Changes in power relations are such as to create internal axes of tension where previously the principal axis was between a relatively isolated community and the outside world. Not only are these internal manifestations of power intimately connected with changes in production relations; they are also important in determining control within nominally "participatory" institutions that are part of rural development strategy.

## IX.1 Dilemma of participatory development

In terms of the contradiction identified, the dilemma of participatory development becomes one of how to maintain control over production within the local community while at the same time increasing community control over wider resources necessary for production. As we have seen, attempts to secure such wider control frequently lead to concentration of control and power within the community, and the objective of participation at a wider level is lost in the disintegration of control over local institutions. The dilemma can be viewed in two main dimensions : as a problem of organizational design and as a structural problem concerning the political economy of the village.

The organizational dimension of the dilemma is the problem of how to adapt existing institutions or establish new fora for action without resulting in a bureaucratization of process in which non-participatory structures are inherent. The problem is exacerbated by exclusive attention to organizational forms and consequent neglect both of how

these forms are established and of interaction within new institutions and social processes, particularly vis-a-vis power relations. For some state developers, the primary objective may well be to establish such a bureaucratization of village process, and in this sense the contradiction is more apparent than real in the terms in which participation is conceived by such developers. However, this is not true of all state developers and manifestly not so for NGO developers. The problem for the latter is in the first instance one of how to establish innovative forms of participation that do not conflict with indigenous modes of control over and through village leaders. Subsequently, the issue of spreading such forms to cover a wider area than the single community or sub-community, both in terms of "replicability" and in widening solidarity networks, raises the problem of standardization and consequent lack of local involvement in shaping new institutions.

The structural dimension of the dilemma is concerned above all with differentiation within the village and the consequent divergence of interest between the majority of rural producers and those who secure control not only over important areas of the village economy but also over supposedly participatory institutions. This poses a number of alternatives for participatory initiatives. On the one hand, initiatives can be exclusive in order to minimize internal power differences. On the other, they may work within the traditionally non-exclusive modes of village society and make use of the wider connections and larger resources that inclusion of wealthier villagers allows. Initiatives may address areas of major significance to distribution of resources within the community, or they may avoid conflict by concentration on peripheral areas of the village economy. Initiatives may be oriented to a particular group such as by age, sex, or residence within the village, or they may be geared to a particular

issue or activity.

## IX.2 Obstacles to participation

Faced with the above dilemma in its organizational and structural aspects, I would like to reiterate some of the more concrete obstacles and "spaces" for participatory action before going on to discuss the implications of a participatory approach. The obstacles to participation for the rural poor in Ban Mai and Ban Dong have been seen in terms of obstacles to control over production in the face of lack of political and economic power within the village. An important contributor to this powerlessness is the problem of fragmentation, by which I mean the set of processes that alienate individuals in three important dimensions : spatially, consciously, and socially.

For individuals in Ban Dong and even more so in Ban Mai, lack of control over basic resources for production has meant having to seek opportunities external to the village, and this is an area where participatory initiatives have little potential for organizing the rural poor. Temporary or permanent migration beyond the village is one of the most fragmenting of all the consequences of inability to secure a livelihood locally, and this obstacle to participation is thus particularly relevant in the more transitory situation of recently settled communities of Lan Sak.

Other fragmenting aspects of change that make it difficult for the poorer sections of the village to take part in cooperative initiatives designed to facilitate control include ambiguous class identification and intensification of work. The lack of clear class

identification among the peasantry is enhanced by the ambivalent situation of rural producers who are at once wage labourers and employers of labour; concurrently tenants, landowners, and even renters out of (mortgaged) land; and simultaneously subsistence farmers and commercial croppers. Intensification of work among debt ridden farmers is a result of introduction of double cropping, off-season employment to pay off debt or accumulate the capital necessary for inputs in the increasingly capitalized production regime, or intensive labour input in a deteriorating natural environment in an attempt to avoid debt that results from capitalization.

The effects of such fragmentation for participatory initiatives are to reduce the time available for organizational aspects of participation and to undermine potential communality of interest. Many of the poorest families in Ban Mai find it difficult to attend monthly meetings despite the fine imposed for absence, since they may be away from the village for periods of labouring, involved in labour intensive cultivation on their own fields due to lack of capital, or engaged in wage labouring on other people's land in a hand to mouth existence. For this group, any extra demands on their time beyond official meetings are difficult to justify. The corollary of this is the position of wealthier villagers who employ wage labourers on their fields and have a correspondingly greater amount of time for involvement in formal institutions such as the VC and the establishment of contacts with *amphoe* officials. On the other hand, villagers in Bung Khiew still have periods of the year in which social activity is important, and this has been a vital element not only in maintaining the cohesion of the community but also in catering for the organizational demands of the Rice and Buffalo Banks. Indeed, poorer villagers working their own land in Ban Mai frequently express as one of the hardships of being a *chaorai* as opposed to *chaonaa* that one never has any free time.

Since many aspects of development cater specifically for smallholders working their own land, the direct or indirect alienation of poorer farmers from control over production precludes successful participation in many types of initiative. Wealthier farmers and ALRO officials in Ban Mai told me on several occasions that smaller farmers "*mai ao jing* : are not serious" about farming, for example in not providing the proper inputs or spending too much time away from the farm. However, smaller farmers themselves explain this as being due to "*thuuk khao biib* : being squeezed". This results in short term strategies for survival and a failure to practise longer term soil conservation such as by participation in compost training programmes run by the Land Development Department. Demonstration plots become irrelevant when maintained by salaried DAE officers. Meanwhile, wealthier farmers who rent in debtors' land have little incentive for long term soil management, and a vicious circle is continued of declining yields and short term response in which local orientation in the management of resources is steadily undermined.

Participation through cooperative institutions is difficult to establish in the face of increasingly dominant moneylenders. Som's (case 9, section *VI.1.iv*) daughter was to have been sent for training to the NYKFRD cooperative training centre near Uthaithani, but the need for credit forced her to work as a housemaid for her mother's creditor. Cooperative marketing cannot be established so long as farmers are obliged to sell produce through their creditors and suppliers. Moreover, increasing institutional credit does not on its own solve the problem, since such credit is incremental and conditional on a particular (and unsustainable) production regime rather than liberating from the constraints of the moneylenders. In the past, such control over production was limited to external moneylenders and its effects

were minimized by a low-input production regime. However, as more control is assumed by key villagers, so it becomes interwoven with village level production relations and community based cooperative institutions, posing obstacles to participatory initiatives.

Another set of obstacles to participation is connected with subjective aspects of change. As we noted in Chapter II, the traditional class structure of Thai society is one of masters and followers, and the assumption of power by individual villagers often does less to blur this difference or give the latter representation among the former than to transform such villagers into *jaonaai* (masters) themselves. Not only does this have a divisive effect at the village level; it also reinforces the sense among the majority that certain domains remain the affairs of others. Thus institutions such as VC, TC, and other development institutions become the preserve of these key individuals. Such a lack of sense of ownership (expressed in development discourse as "*khwaampen jaokho'ong*") of new institutions among the majority of villagers is also apparent even where power differences are minimized, for example in the case of Bung Khiew Buffalo Bank, which villagers still see as the property of NKYFRD. This points to another principal obstacle, that of uncertainty as discussed in the previous chapter. The absolutism of the Thai state and weak development of civil society (Turton 1987) undermines confidence in the legitimacy of non-state institutions, and rhetorical statements by officials as to the rights and duties of villagers do little to offset the pervading climate of suspicion and fear that surrounds innovative and non-official action. Meanwhile, within the bureaucracy the accountability to seniors and lack of accountability "downward" leads to a hierarchical and non-participatory mode of action that readily extends itself to the bureaucratization of village procedures. The frustration of some local officials with development initiatives that contravene such control from

above can be detected in the District Accountant's recommendation that I study royal projects rather than development initiatives in Lan Sak, since the royal projects get things done by having someone to "*kho'oi jii* : point an accusing finger, oversee [i.e. maintain control]". He sees the failure of local state led projects to do the same as a problem of inadequate resources rather than difference of approach.

## IX.3 Spaces for action

Despite the considerable obstacles to participatory development resulting from concentration of control and power within the communities under study and perpetuation of traditional non-participatory attitudes, recent developments have opened up a certain "space" for action. One such opening is the legitimation of NGO activity in rural areas. Partly as a result of liberalization of state development policy and partly due to an awareness of the constraints and openings among NGO workers themselves, the working atmosphere between the two sectors has eased. Each main region now has a Working Group responsible for coordination between NGOs and state developers. Although NGO workers were initially wary of the potential cooptive pitfalls of such cooperation, especially since non-governmental organizations were at first to include agribusiness (this sector has now been given its own coordinating group under the Sixth Plan), growing confidence among NGO workers has allowed them to take part on an equal level in such exchanges and thus also to increase potential influence over development strategy at a wider level than is possible within the limited geographical scope afforded by NGO project areas. The prominence of individual NGO workers at a local level is exemplified by the example of the head of NKYFRD, who uses his position as president of

the Agricultural University (Kasetsart) Alumni Association in Uthaithani to effect in securing cooperation from irrigation officials, ALRO, DAE, and elsewhere (see section *VII.5.iv*).

This brings us on to a second positive development regarding a more participatory strategy : increasing awareness of the wider meaning of participation by certain officials and others such as doctors, monks, and teachers. This has been afforded in part by increased contact with the "cadre" type of approach of NGO workers and the dissemination of ideas in magazines such as "Folk Doctor", "Social Development", and newsletters of various organizations. However, it is also partly a spontaneous response by individual officials committed to social development and presented with new opportunities as rural development becomes a major plank of state strategy in rural areas. Thus certain officials provide isolated examples of changing attitudes within the bureaucracy, such as the DAE head in Uthaithani (see section *VII.5.ii*) and the DAE officer in *tambon* Lan Sak, who in eschewing chemical fertilizers in many cases maintains a distance from official DAE policy in favour of strategies in line with local realities.

Among villagers, the potential for participatory action is enhanced by a slowly growing confidence in the legitimacy of independent action. Many local level workers comment that "*chaobaan klaa kheun* : villagers are becoming bolder" or "*chaobaan chalaad kheun* villagers are getting cleverer [at dealing with authority]". In part, these trends are due to integration into a national polity that plays at least lip service to principles of democracy. However, the most significant factor in enhancing participatory action by villagers within and beyond the village is the emergence of local leaders who at once differ from the unrepresentative formal leaders such as the Ban Dong and Ban Mai village heads, while managing to utilise new structures for the benefit

of the community. An example of such a leader is Boi in Bung Khiew, who has been instrumental in involving villagers in the various programmes described in Chapter VII. An important aspect of Boi's leadership is his concern to involve other community members in assuming responsibility, in order to avoid the common phenomenon found at every level of Thai society of individuals who "wear many hats", and in such concentration of responsibility and power in a single individual diminish both participation and efficiency within the organizations for which they are responsible.

## IX.4 Implications of participatory development

Since participation has become such a common item of development discourse, we might best be able to gain an understanding of its implications by reflecting briefly on its rationale : why participation? As we noted in the previous chapter, each actor on the development stage rationalizes participation in terms of a particular perspective on how people are to be involved in a wider polity and economy. Participation is to involve people in something from which they have hitherto been excluded, in order to spread the material and social benefits of inclusion. The implications of participatory development, then, are in two main areas : the reversals inherent in a strategy that starts with people making choices over wider strategies that affect the way in which their lives are run rather than having such strategies determined by others; and the way in which incorporation itself affects the lives of those involved.

As villages such as Ban Dong and Ban Mai are integrated more fully into national structures of state and capital, the reversals

implied by a participatory approach can be seen less and less as bound by local considerations. Significant areas of villagers' lives are affected by decisions taken at centres remote from Lan Sak, and control over such decisions can be established only by representation at a higher level or by increasing collective bargaining power. Existing means of non-local representation (notably the national parliament) are at present meaningless in terms of offering alternatives concerning issues affecting the lives of villagers. Organs for collective bargaining among farmers are still weakly developed in rural Thailand, but institutions such as Bung Khiew Rice Bank can be seen as embryonic forms of organization that may provide the base for an extended solidarity. It has been noted how leadership associated with this initiative has been instrumental in limited but significant ways in negotiating for external resources and in maintaining a stand against externally imposed programmes. However, the broader prospects for establishment of strong bargaining instruments in the hands of individually powerless sections of the rural community are still dim, and there is an ever present tension in the desire for state developers to maintain control over new groupings.

The implications for individuals of participation via incorporative rural development strategy are ambivalent. On the one hand, incorporation in principle involves people in the material benefits of the wider society and in deciding how those benefits are to be distributed. On the other hand, this study has shown how skewed such involvement is at the local level, and that this results from, and is not in spite of, the "participatory" approach of state led rural development. Incorporation as it impinges on the life of the poorer rural producer takes the form of increasing demands on his or her time, rising levels of debt, higher levels of uncertainty regarding means of livelihood, and decreased sanction over local leaders.

An alternative approach to implications of participation, and one that perhaps transcends some of the rhetoric associated with the concept, is to consider in what areas participation is of relevance in improving the livelihood of the majority of rural producers. Clearly certain aspects of rural development require technical and administrative expertise and therefore direction that is beyond the immediate capability of individual villagers. Thus the notion of maximizing direct participation in every aspect of rural development is neither realistic nor desirable from the point of view of most of those involved. Johnston and Clark's (1982) combination of "cogitation" and "acting out" (see Chapter I, footnote 7) is clearly a *sine qua non*, and the question becomes one of how the cogitation can best be oriented to the needs of less powerful sections of the community in such a way as to reduce uncertainty and increase control that people have over livelihood.

In the context of state led rural development in Lan Sak, a key area for increasing control in this sense is in clarifying the status and function of external developers vis-a-vis the local communities. The head of NKYFRD says that he would now prefer not to be seen as a "*nakphathanaa* : developer", for such a status has become ambiguous and tends to usurp moral responsibility that people have in deciding for themselves. He would rather be seen as an "educator", leaving it up to people to apply his teaching or otherwise. From the point of view of villagers, such a clarification of status especially among the numerous state officials and their village level proxies would seem essential if state developers are to be seen as providing services to be called on by locally responsive and representative groups rather than as dictators of change from above.

In the last instance, though, participation as increased control over livelihood cannot be divorced from the material realities of production in a local context. The NGO worker referred to above does not see the difference between Ban Mai and Bung Khiew as essentially one of attitude or social cohesion : in his words, "*chaobaan pro'om thii ja khuud riid kan* : the villagers are ready to exploit each other" in Bung Khiew just as they are already doing in Ban Mai; the fundamental difference between the two communities is that in Bung Khiew they have not reached the same level or type of material development. On the one hand, this thesis has attempted to move beyond a purely materialist analysis of change and has used local discourses to assess its subjective meaning. On the other hand, we have seen that the shaping of participatory initiatives in these two recently settled and rapidly changing communities depends largely on historically and locally specific material conditions and social relations of production. In practice, therefore, the research imperative as a basis for practical action is to gain an understanding of these realities both through "objective" familiarity with local conditions and through the medium of discourse.

# APPENDIX 1

## Structured Survey

The Ban Dong and Ban Mai survey was preceded by a pilot survey of ten households in a third Lan Sak village in October 1984. Modifications to the interview schedule were made following the pilot, and the main survey was carried out between February and May 1985. Households were selected in a systematic sample of 25 per cent by taking each fourth household on village registration lists. 148 households were interviewed, 75 in Ban Mai and 73 in Ban Dong. The interview schedule is summarized below.

Section 1 : Household census, place of origin, education.

Section 2 : Local employment, non-local employment, cottage industry.

Section 3 : Land holding, type, rental, use.

Section 4 : Crop production, inputs, yields, and sale.

Section 5 : Vegetable garden, fruit trees, domestic animals, fishpond.

Section 6 : Credit.

Section 7 : Water, machinery, household facilities.

Section 8 : Group membership, agricultural advice from officials.

Section 9 : Miscellaneous - Domestic responsibilities, contingency, use of hypothetical lottery earnings.

Data from the survey were processed using the SPSS package on the Amdahl computer at the University of London Computer Centre.

# APPENDIX 2

## Transliteration

Thai terms are transliterated according to the following system :

| | Thai letter | Transliterated | Approximate sound |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Voiced stops | บ | b | ball |
| | ด | d | dog |
| | จ | j | job |
| 2. Voiceless unaspirated stops | ป | p | spot |
| | ต | t | stop |
| | ก | k | skid |
| 3. Voiceless aspirants | ฟ | f | fig |
| | ซ | s | sit |
| | ฮ | h | hut |
| 4. Voiceless aspirated stops | ค | kh | kick |
| | พ | ph | pot |
| | ท | th | tap |
| | ช | ch | chat |
| 5. Lateral | ล | l | less |
| 6. Trill | ร | r | rob |
| 7. Nasal | ม | m | man |
| | น | n | not |
| | ง | ng | sing |
| 8. Front rounded vowels | -ิ | i | sit |
| | -ี | ii | see |
| | เ-ะ | e | set |
| | เ | ee | estuary |
| | แ | ae | act |
| 9. Central rounded vowels | -ึ, -ื | eu | - |
| | เ-อ | oe | learn |
| | -ะ | a | sitter |
| | -ั | a | an |
| | -า | aa | last |
| | อ | [illegible] | saw |
| 10. Back rounded vowels | -ุ | u | hood |
| | -ู | uu | whose |
| | โ- | oo | hallo |
| 11. Voiced semi-vowels | ย (initial) | y | yes |
| | ย (final) | i | day |
| | ว (initial) | w | wet |
| | ว (final) | w | few |
| 12. Dipthongs | ไ, ใ, | ai | lie |
| 13. Vowel combinations | เ-ีย | ia | skier |
| | เ-ือ | eua | - |

Tones are not indicated. Where names are spelled according to established convention or preference, these rules do not apply.

# APPENDIX 3

## Rainfall in Uthaithani 1957 - 1983

| Year | Total | March |
|---|---|---|
| 1959 | 1091.0 | 51.8 |
| 1960 | 1109.8 | 20.8 |
| 1961 | 1118.6 | 12.1 |
| 1962 | 1229.1 | 13.7 |
| 1963 | 1241.8 | 35.1 |
| 1964 | 1317.0 | 44.1 |
| 1965 | 1185.2 | 44.1 |
| 1966 | 1091.2 | 51.5 |
| 1967 | 1002.0 | 52.7 |
| 1968 | 1004.2 | 41.1 |
| 1969 | 991.5 | 29.7 |
| 1970 | 1077.5 | 30.4 |
| 1971 | 1145.2 | 26.0 |
| 1972 | 1240.0 | 30.0 |
| 1973 | 1210.8 | 22.8 |
| 1974 | 1203.8 | 24.0 |
| 1975 | 1181.4 | 23.3 |
| 1976 | 1147.7 | 17.1 |
| 1977 | 981.7 | 8.8 |
| 1978 | n.a. | 3.2 |
| 1979 | 892.1 | 0.0 |
| 1980 | 810.9 | 0.2 |
| 1981 | n.a. | 0.2 |

Figures are five year running means, in millimetres as measured at Uthaithani meteorological station.

Change can be measured by correlating rainfall with time. In the case of change in annual rainfall since 1959, this produces a Pearson's r statistic of -0.413, indicating a decline in rainfall significant at the 0.05 level. In the case of pre-ploughing season rainfall, a Pearson's r statistic of -0.649 is obtained, showing a decline significant at a 0.0005 level. However, if we look at change over the main period of deforestation, since 1972, we find Pearson's r statistics of -0.937 and -0.923 for total and March rainfall figures respectively, both significant at the 0.0005 level.

# APPENDIX 4

## Local Powers

A full analysis of local power structures would require a study in itself. The following is meant to be an illustrative rather than exhaustive presentation of the links between economic and political power at the local level in Lan Sak, through influential persons.

| Level | Official/ political | Commercial/ economic |
|---|---|---|
| DISTRICT AND ABOVE | Member of Parliament, deputy head of Chat Thai Party | Owns largest pineapple plantation and canning factory in Thailand, located in Cha-am but employs some Lan Sak labour. |
| | Chinese trader, provided land for District HQ | Had large forestry interests in Lan Sak in 1970s, built Paak Meuang market; shot dead 1981, wife carries on business. |
| | Sawang Arom Education Officer; used to be Lan Sak Education Officer; stood in 1983 election as Social Action Party candidate for MP | Wife is teacher who owns nursery school for children of Lan Sak officials and merchants; owns land to be developed into market near District HQ, also "own" forest reserve land near Rabam. |
| *TAMBON* | Ban Dong *kamnan*, head *tambon* council (also Ban Dong village head) | Sells, rents local land; "owns" several '000 *rai* of forest land in Khlong Lan (Kamphaengphet), is selling for 300 *baht* per *rai*; Owns a/c restaurant in Uthaithani; wife runs construction business; helps MP buy votes. |
| | Thung Khaa *kamnan*, head of *tambon* council | Sold large amount of land in Ban Mai; had extensive forestry interests; helps MP buy votes. |
| | Ban Dong *tambon* doctor, influential Village Committee member | Owns small rice mill; serves as local agent for MP. |
| | Thung Khaa *tambon* doctor, brother of *kamnan*, influential Village Committee member | Influential Ban Mai tractor, truck owner, moneylender, farms own, debtors, and community land; helps MP secure labour for plantation and factory; runs chemist and agricultural supply shop in Ban Mai. |
| VILLAGE | Ban Mai village head | Moneylender, runs pickup service, farms several debtors' plots, helps MP buy votes. |
| | President of Ban Dong Village Scouts | Rice mill, truck owner; large scale buffalo owner, renter. |
| | Assistant Ban Dong *kamnan* | Shopowner, village trader, moneylender. |

# APPENDIX 5

Criteria for selection of "Outstanding *Kamnan* or Village Head"

The Local Administration Department's (1984) Local administrator's diary notes that financial compensation to village officials is not commensurate with their wide range of duties. As a result, outstanding officials are to be selected according to the following criteria:

1. Carries out official work and duties with good results, serving as an example in the following main ways:

    - Dedicates time to duties and cooperates with the government in carrying out duties;
    - Pays attention to meetings, training villagers, looks after the well-being of area, protects against and suppresses bandits, cattle theft, and other crime;
    - Pays attention to investigation of incidents or movements which may be of danger to the Nation and Crown, and finds ways to prevent such danger as far as able;
    - Fully cooperates with the government in encouraging and inducing villagers to develop the area or community to increase prosperity;
    - Pays attention to and supports the livelihoods of villagers, improves land and water communications, and helps combat animal epidemics;
    - Helps in ensuring full tax collection;
    - Maintains a speedy postal service;
    - Supports education, religion, culture;
    - Carries out registration duties properly;
    - Pays attention to preventing disease;
    - Is respected by villagers.

2. Risks life, for example in suppressing terrorists or major criminals.

3. Helps construct useful public works or official buildings without having to use state funds, or find cash or material worth at least 50,000 *baht* for example in building schools, health stations, meeting halls, roads, bridges, irrigation channels, weirs, fire engines, wells, public ponds, *amphoe* headquarters, police stations, or residences for government officials.

4. Carries out work specially allocated by the government with good results.

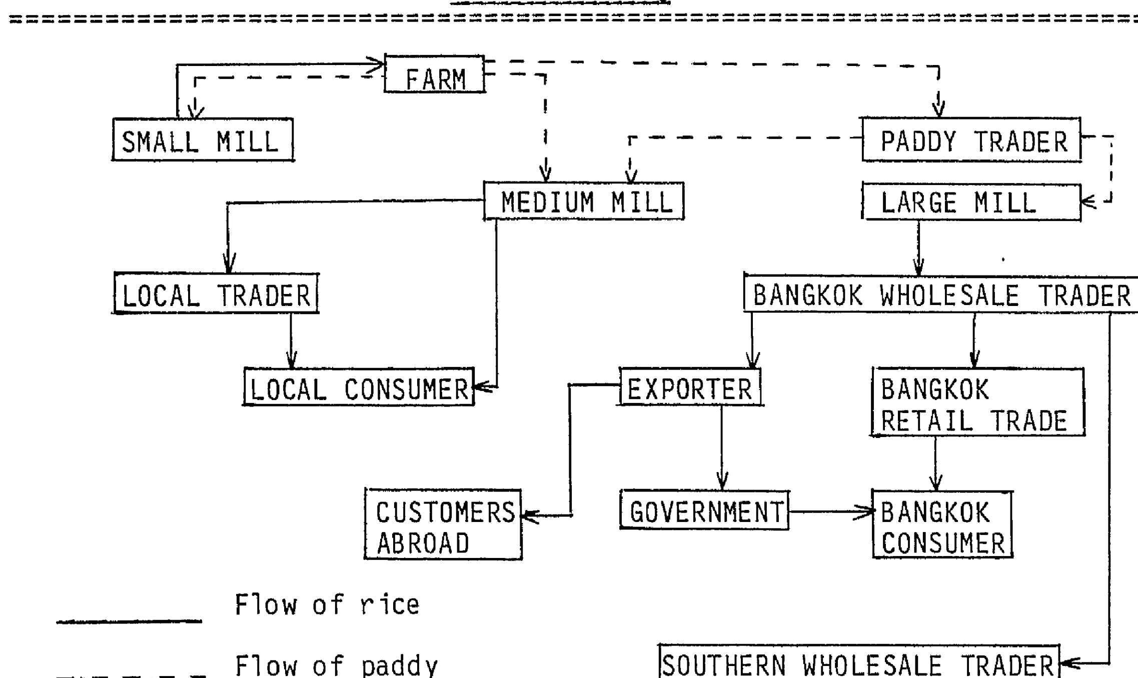
The District Officer submits names of deserving village officials to the Provincial Governor, who appoints and presides over a committee of heads of department at the provincial level; this committee then judges as to who is most deserving of a prize, and the decision is final (Department of Local Administration 1984 : 72 - 73; my translation).

APPENDIX 6

Marketing Structures for Rice and Maize

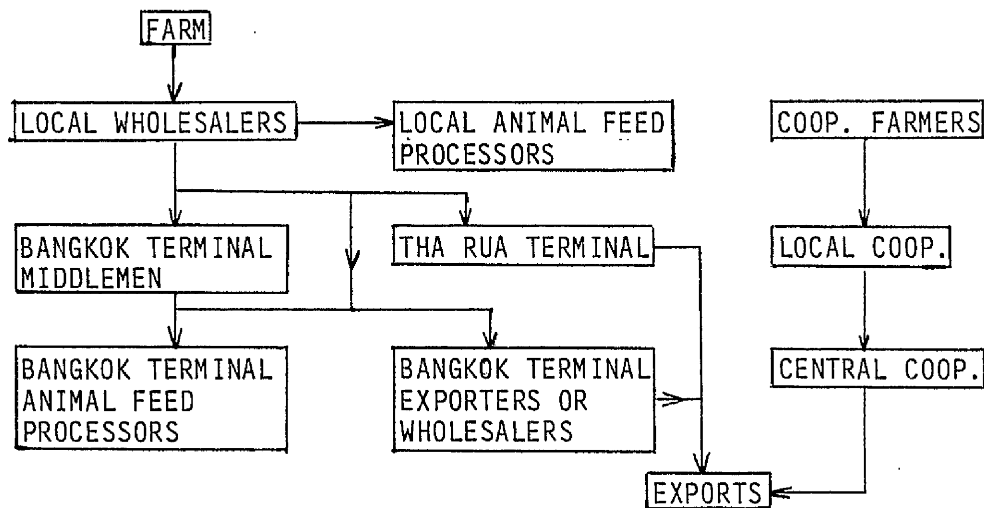
The following are diagrammatic representions of the principal marketing structures for the main crops grown by Ban Dong and Ban Mai farmers.

1. Rice Marketing




Adapted from : Chirmsak Pinthong (1978), A Price Analysis of the Rice Marketing System. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, p. 69.

2. Maize Marketing

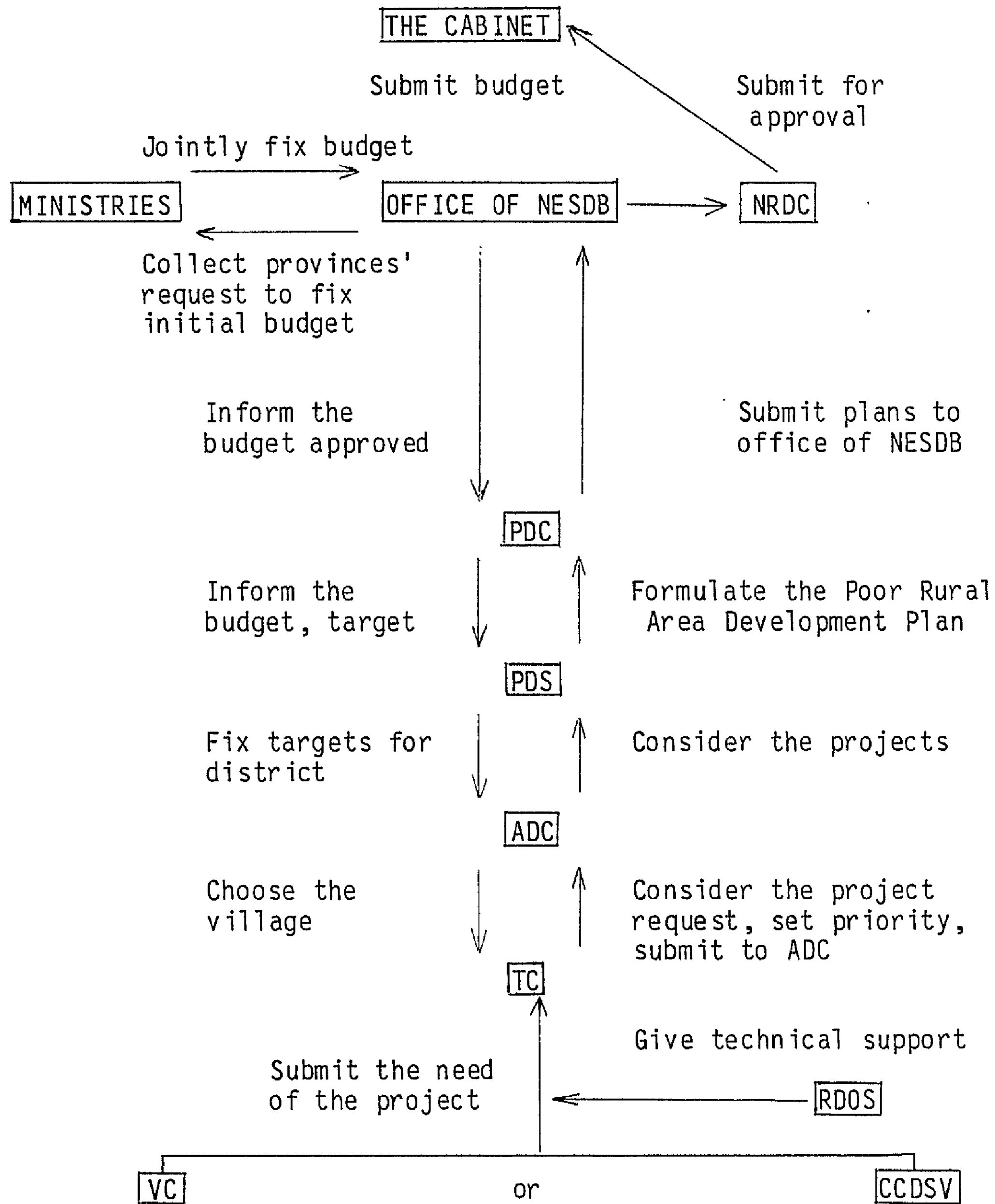



Adapted from : Chaiwat Konjing (1981), Marketing System and Policy of Thai Maize Trade. Report submitted to the National Economic and Social Development Board, p. 4.

APPENDIX 7

Local Administration and Rural Development Structures

1. NESDB Chart of Poor Rural Areas Development Plan

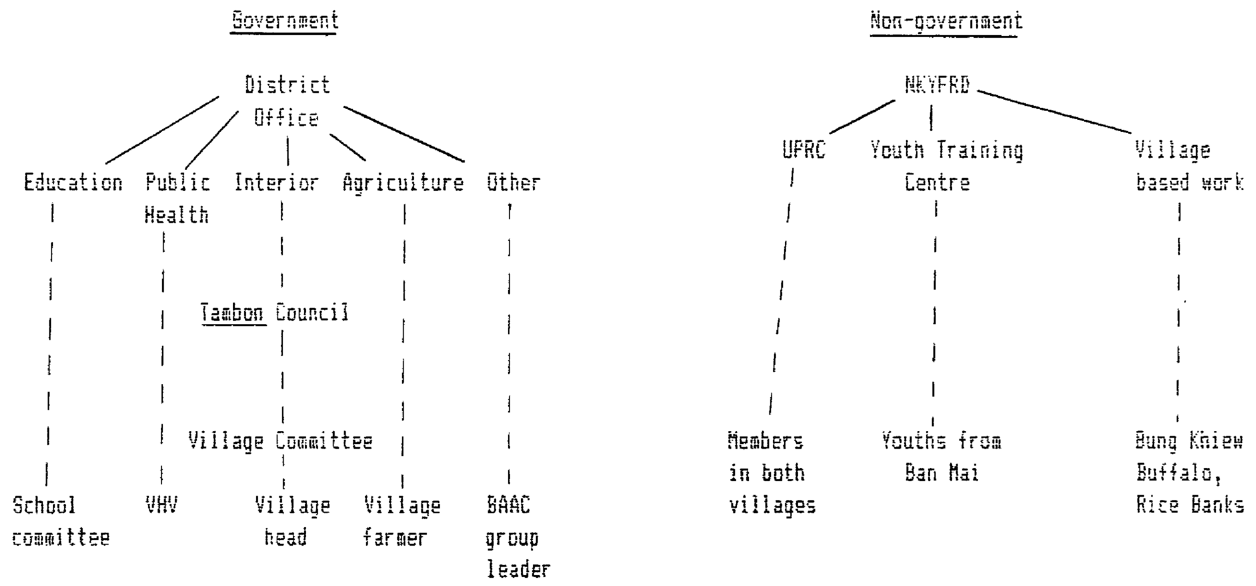



Note : NRDC = National Rural Development Committee
NESDB = National Economic and Social Development Board
PDC = Provincial Development Committee
PDS = Provincial Development Scheme
ADC = *Amphoe* Development Committee
TC = *Tambon* Council
VC = Village Committee
CCDSV = Central Committee of the Development and Self-Defence Village
RDOS = Rural Development Operational Support

Source : National Economic and Social Development Board document.

( Appendix 7 cont'd )

## 2. Principal Rural Development linkages in Lan Sak



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