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**RURAL CROSSROADS: CLASS AND MIGRATION
IN PERI-URBAN CHIANG MAI**

TUBTIM TUBTIM

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN SOCIAL SCIENCE**

**CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY
UNDER COTUTELLE AGREEMENT WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY
FEBUARY 2014**

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IN PERI-URBAN CHIANG MAI**

TUBTIM TUBTIM

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN SOCIAL SCIENCE**

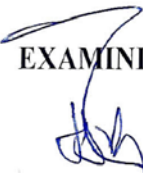
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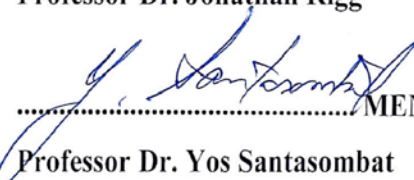
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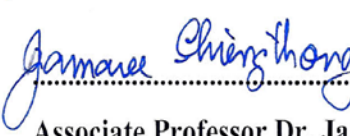
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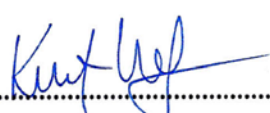
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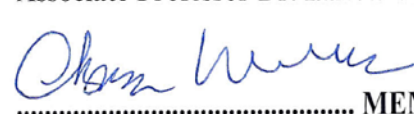
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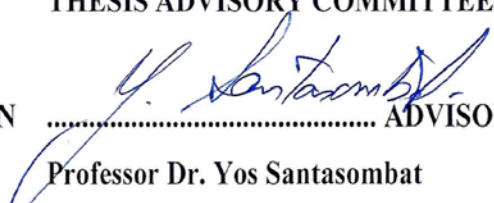

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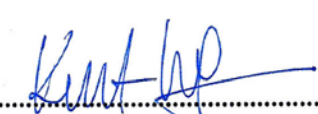

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17 February 2014

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When I graduated from my Masters degree in 2001 based on a study of resource management in Laos. I did not think of studying further toward a PhD. However, when I came to live in Nam Jam village in 2007, I found myself living between different worlds in a single village. The diversity of the village, and my own complex place in it, piqued my curiosity. I decided that if I were ever to study this was going to be my new field site as well as my new home.

Before continuing with the story of how this thesis originated, was carried out and was completed with the help of so many people, I would like to make some formal and genuine expressions of gratitude. First, the Royal Golden Jubilee PhD Program of the Thailand Research Fund provided generous scholarship support, without which I could not undertake my PhD. Other grant support came from the Challenge of the Agrarian Transition in Southeast Asia Program, which provided not just funding but also scholarly support and guidance in my field of enquiry. Thanks are due in particular to Professor Philip Kelly, whose encouragement and assistance resulted in a key publication on migration that was part of my program. Money from the Royal Thai Embassy in Australia towards a field research grant also helped supplement my fieldwork costs, as did the PRSS scheme administered through the University of Sydney.

The Cotutelle Program between Chiang Mai and Sydney Universities allowed me to benefit from the combination of two PhD programs, each of which provided its own style and approach to PhD supervision and support. The Social Sciences program at Chiang Mai gives an intensive up-front theory-based coursework program. The geography program at Sydney provides a collegiate working and social environment and a range of seminar-based and field-based opportunities for collaborative and applied thinking.

At Chiang Mai University, Ann helped to keep all the students on track - and more or less on time - with her great administrative support. At Sydney University, the staffs of the Postgraduate Office of the Science Faculty were most helpful, and in

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Friends and fellow students have been an indispensable part of the support network that helped me toward my PhD. Ed and Jo, my PhD cohort at Chiang Mai, joined me in the “no coffin, no tears” approach to procrastinating PhD work. At Sydney University, we had our Southeast Asian gang at AMRC who bound their fate together along the PhD path of no return – Toey, Lada, Mattijs, Oulavanh, Somatra, Rotha, Wora, Huy, Surin, and Zoe among others. Trina taught me how to make maps. Also in Sydney, Estelle Dryland provided outstanding assistance with language editing.

My supervisors came on board with my project in different ways, and each has made a unique contribution toward its completion. Professor Yos Santasombat, my primary supervisor, originally asked me whether I was interested in studying further when we met at a conference in Chiang Mai. I replied that I was interested, but had no financial support. He told me that he had funding from the Thailand Research Fund. I was honoured that he thought of me to join as one of his dozen or so students – it was only later that I learned that this funding was about to expire if he could not find a student to take it up! He said that he knew that I *could* finish, but was not sure that I *would* finish. So I replied that there is no concern here – I would be too concerned about the reputation of my clan not to complete.

Associate Professor Jamaree Chiengthong, when I asked her to join my supervisory team, said that she was easygoing and agreed to come on board straight away. Once when I talked with her about my fieldwork I told her about the lack of interaction between different groups. Her response was very practical and straightforward – she asked, “why do they need to interact?” In this way she helped bring me back from any temptation to romanticize the village.

Associate Professor Kurt Iveson came on board as supervisor as the key University of Sydney advisor under the Cotutelle arrangement. He was completely new to the field area, but gave a great deal of support. He told me that in his experience there were two groups of students. The first group always came to see him when they had problems. The second group, to which I belonged, avoided him when they had problems. Kurt helped me see and articulate the significance of place and place-making, which shaped my thesis a good deal. He had several plans to visit my field site, and finally managed to do so in time to join my comprehensive exams and my thesis defence.

I wish also to express my thanks to the various external examiners who served at my various exams in Chiang Mai. These include Associate Professor Paul Cohen for my qualifying exam, Assistant Professor Chusak Witayapak during my thesis proposal and defence, Dr. Amporn Jirattikorn for my comprehensive exam, and Professor Jonathan Rigg during my thesis defence. Jonathan's work has also inspired me.

At my field sites, the staff of twelve sub-districts in the peri-urban area around Chiang Mai and some further afield gave time and information essential to the thesis, as did several government officials including Sapon Tangphet and Arkorn Buakhlai. I would like to express particular thanks to Nong Khwai sub-district staff and to village leaders in Nong Khwai and Nam Jam, along with other key informants. Many, many people from all social groups in the village who are the subject of this thesis have been generous with their time and understanding when I entered their life worlds with all kinds of questions. They have not only been helpful in the research process, but have also allowed me to get to know them as friends and neighbours.

Doing this research made me realise how much I owe to my own original "habitus", based on my background in rural society. My parents' pleasure and pride at my completion of the PhD is no less than my own, and this pleasure has also given me a sense of "reaching the shore" in becoming the first PhD in my home village in Samut Prakan, where my parent's generation had limited opportunities for education.

My husband Phil listened to my thesis angst and to my questions about theory and concepts, often after midnight. His good ideas and suggestions more often than not met with my resistance. Nevertheless, his constant support helped me finish the thesis with a soft landing. Some say that travel is the best test of a couple's relationship. For me, the PhD journey has been a great proof, not least because of all the other nice things we have enjoyed together along the way ☺. The nicest way I could think to thank him is by promising him that I will never do another PhD!

To all readers, thank you for your interest in my work. Hope you will enjoy some parts of it. My supervisors like Chapter 5 the most.

Tubtim Tubtim

Thesis Title Rural Crossroads: Class and Migration in Peri-urban Chiang Mai

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Degree Doctor of Philosophy (Social Science)

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Abstract

Peri-urban Thailand is a site for the coming together of rural and urban people from various class backgrounds, who hold different values and understandings of place, and who practice diverse economic activity and use land in multiple ways. Yet social science research in Thailand has paid little attention to the peri-urban. Most studies of social change have been in either urban or rural contexts.

Similarly, most studies of migration in Thailand and other developing countries, whose population has until recently relied on mainly agrarian-based livelihoods, have focused overwhelmingly on rural to urban population movement or, less recently, on migration to the farming-forest frontier. There has been little or no study of movement from city to non-urban areas, despite the wealth of studies of migration within the wider field of counter-urbanisation in Europe, North America and Australia.

In Thailand, peri-urban growth, landscape change and social dynamics have been more dramatic and rapid than either urban or rural change. In many ways, the peri-urban is Thailand's new frontier. Furthermore, there is now a significant and growing movement of urban middle-class lifestyle-oriented migration away from cities toward certain locations where those with the money to do so seek to combine

enjoyment of accessible urban facilities and employment opportunities with the amenity of a country lifestyle. This migration to the countryside is concentrated particularly, although not exclusively, in peri-urban zones.

The countryside surrounding Chiang Mai has increasingly been drawn into its peri-urban zone through connections afforded by roads and other infrastructure and facilities. We see various patterns of peri-urban growth including the growing number of gated communities and also the “in-filling” of previously agricultural communities with in-migration by urban middle class migrants and also those from more distant rural areas seeking work opportunities. At the same time, this urban expansion has been accompanied by agrarian change that sees a rapid move away from farming by people resident in peri-urban villages.

The processes of mixing of different groups in the peri-urban village help to redefine the village as place, both in physical and social dimensions. Further, place is remade through class-based processes as different groups previously living far from one another encounter each other directly as a result of their proximate residential patterns. Through a partly auto-ethnographic study of one such village, we can understand peri-urban place-making as an outcome of everyday processes associated with new types of class formation, which differ markedly from earlier agrarian studies in which class was linked intimately with access to agricultural means of production. In today’s peri-urban space, class is about values, performance, habitus and lifestyle, and class interaction similarly follows these dimensions as people define themselves and others in relation to one another.

A key tension in the peri-urban village is between the expectations and desires of local villagers, migrant workers and those of the middle class migrants. Local aspirations of modernity and livelihood enhancement sit uneasily with the desires of urban middle class migrants whose images of rurality have been shaped significantly by public representations in textbooks, media, film, drama, tourism, and documentary accounts of elite- and NGO-led rural development projects.

ชื่อเรื่องวิทยานิพนธ์	ชนบทที่ทางแยก: ชนชั้นและการอพยพ ในเขตรอบนอกเมืองเชียงใหม่
ผู้เขียน	นางสาวทับทิม ทับทิม
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บทคัดย่อ

พื้นที่รอบนอกเมือง (peri-urban) เชียงใหม่ ประเทศไทย เป็นพื้นที่ของการมารวมกันของคนกลุ่มต่าง ๆ ทั้งที่มาจากชนบทและจากในเมือง ซึ่งคนเหล่านี้มีชนชั้นที่หลากหลาย มีค่านิยมความเข้าใจต่อพื้นที่ การประกอบอาชีพ และการใช้พื้นที่ต่างกัน อย่างไรก็ตามงานวิจัยทางสังคมศาสตร์ยังไม่ได้ให้ความสนใจกับพื้นที่รอบนอกเมืองนี้เท่าใดนัก โดยการศึกษาส่วนใหญ่ยังมุ่งไปที่พื้นที่ชนบทหรือพื้นที่เมืองเป็นหลัก

การศึกษาเรื่องการอพยพในประเทศไทยและประเทศที่กำลังพัฒนาที่ประชากรส่วนใหญ่ยังมีวิถีชีวิตพึ่งพาภาคการเกษตรก็มีลักษณะคล้ายกัน คือ ยังมุ่งศึกษาการเคลื่อนย้ายของประชากรจากชนบทสู่เมือง หรือในอดีตที่มีการศึกษาเรื่องการอพยพของชาวชนบทเพื่อไปหาที่ทำกินในพื้นที่ป่า แต่ทั้งหมดนี้ยังไม่เคยมีการศึกษาเรื่องการเคลื่อนย้ายของคนจากในเมืองไปยังพื้นที่ที่ไม่ใช่เมืองหรือพื้นที่ชนบทอย่างจริงจัง ซึ่งการศึกษการเคลื่อนย้ายในลักษณะนี้มีอยู่อย่างแพร่หลายในยุโรป อเมริกาเหนือ และออสเตรเลีย

การเติบโต และการเปลี่ยนแปลงของพื้นที่รอบนอกเมืองในประเทศไทยเป็นไปอย่างรวดเร็วมากเมื่อเทียบกับการเปลี่ยนแปลงที่เกิดขึ้นทั้งในเมืองและชนบท จากองค์ประกอบหลาย ๆ ด้านเราอาจถือได้ว่าพื้นที่รอบนอกเมืองเป็นพื้นที่พรมแดน (frontier) ของการเปลี่ยนแปลงแบบใหม่ของไทย ยิ่งไปกว่านั้นปัจจุบันมีการเคลื่อนย้ายของชนชั้นกลางออกจากเขตเมืองเพื่อแสวงหาความแตกต่างจากการใช้ชีวิตในเมือง โดยคนกลุ่มนี้เป็นผู้มีฐานะ ทำให้สามารถได้รับประโยชน์ทั้งจากเมืองในเรื่องโอกาสการทำงาน ความสะดวกสบายต่าง ๆ และขณะเดียวกันก็สามารถมีบรรยากาศการใช้ชีวิตแบบอยู่ในชนบทด้วย เราจะพบเห็นการเคลื่อนย้ายของคนชนชั้นกลางออกจากเมืองในลักษณะนี้มากขึ้นเรื่อย ๆ โดยไม่เฉพาะเจาะจงแต่พื้นที่รอบนอกเมืองเท่านั้น

พื้นที่ชนบทรอบ ๆ เมืองเชียงใหม่ค่อย ๆ เปลี่ยนเป็นพื้นที่รอบนอกเมือง ที่มีความสะดวกสบายเหมือนอยู่ในเมือง โดยมีถนนต่อเชื่อมพื้นที่ เราเห็นรูปแบบการเติบโตของพื้นที่รอบนอกเมืองจากจำนวนหมู่บ้านจัดสรรที่เพิ่มมากขึ้น และจากคนกลุ่มต่าง ๆ ทั้งชนชั้นกลางจากในเมือง คนที่มาจากพื้นที่ชนบทห่างไกลในเขตภาคเหนือเพื่อมาแสวงหาโอกาสการทำงานในพื้นที่ และในเมือง ย้ายเข้ามาอยู่ในพื้นที่ร่วมกับชุมชนท้องถิ่นที่เคยทำการเกษตรเป็นหลักมาก่อน ซึ่งการขยายตัวของเมืองนี้เกิดขึ้นพร้อม ๆ กับการเปลี่ยนแปลงในสังคมเกษตรกรรม ที่การผลิตจากภาคการเกษตรลดความสำคัญต่อชาวบ้านในพื้นที่ลงอย่างรวดเร็ว

กระบวนการผสมผสานของคนกลุ่มต่าง ๆ ในหมู่บ้านที่อยู่รอบนอกเมืองนี้ ช่วยให้เกิดการตีความคำว่า “หมู่บ้าน” ใหม่ ในมิติของการเป็น “พื้นที่” (place) ทั้งทางด้านกายภาพและทางด้านสังคม ทำให้พื้นที่ได้รับการจัดการใหม่โดยผ่านกระบวนการความสัมพันธ์ทางชนชั้นของกลุ่มคนที่ต่างกันและมาจากพื้นที่ต่างกัน มาอาศัยร่วมกันเป็นเพื่อนบ้านในพื้นที่ของหมู่บ้าน ส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษานี้ใช้วิธี auto-ethnography ในหมู่บ้านแห่งหนึ่ง จึงทำให้เราสามารถเข้าใจเรื่องการสร้างพื้นที่ในเขตรอบนอกเมือง ในฐานะที่เป็นผลของกระบวนการปรับเปลี่ยนความสัมพันธ์ทางชนชั้นแบบใหม่ ซึ่งต่างกับการศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ทางชนชั้นในสังคมเกษตรกรรมก่อนหน้านี้อย่างชัดเจน ที่ความสัมพันธ์เชื่อมโยงกันผ่านปัจจัยทางการผลิต ทุกวันนี้ความสัมพันธ์ทางชนชั้นในพื้นที่รอบนอกเมืองเป็นความสัมพันธ์เชิงค่านิยม อุปนิสัย (habitus) การใช้ชีวิต ซึ่งการปฏิสัมพันธ์ทางชนชั้น

ก็เป็นไปตามลักษณะความสัมพันธ์เหล่านี้ เพราะคนเรามักกำหนดตำแหน่งความสัมพันธ์ของตน และของผู้อื่นตามความสัมพันธ์ที่มีต่อกันและกัน

ความขัดแย้งหลัก ๆ ที่พบในเขตรอบนอกเมืองเป็นเรื่องของความคาดหวัง ความปรารถนา ต่อพื้นที่ของคนกลุ่มต่าง ๆ ที่ต่างกัน โดยชาวบ้านต้องการพัฒนาชีวิตความเป็นอยู่ของตนไปสู่ความทันสมัย ในขณะที่ความปรารถนาของชนชั้นกลางที่ย้ายจากในเมืองมาอยู่ในหมู่บ้านกลับต้องการหมู่บ้านตามความเข้าใจที่ตนมีอยู่จากภาพตัวแทนชนบท (rural representation) ที่มีการนำเสนอผ่านสื่อสาธารณะต่าง ๆ อย่างแพร่หลาย ทั้งแบบเรียน นิยาย ภาพยนตร์ ละครทีวี การท่องเที่ยว และสารคดีโครงการพัฒนาชนบทต่าง ๆ ที่จัดทำโดยกลุ่มชนชั้นนำและองค์กรพัฒนาเอกชน

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	iii
English Abstract	vii
Thai Abstract	ix
List of Tables	xvi
List of Figures	xvii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background and Rationale	1
1.2 Research Questions	5
1.3 Aim of the Study	6
1.4 Methodology	6
1.5 Organisation of the thesis	6
CHAPTER 2 PLACE-MAKING AND CLASS IN PERI-URBAN AREAS	9
2.1 Peri-urban as a site of urban-rural interaction	10
2.2 Migration and transformation of rural space	15
2.3 Rural class formation	20
2.4 Social representation and contested place making	27
2.5 Theoretical discussion	42
CHAPTER 3 SETTING THE SCENE FOR PERI-URBAN CHIANG MAI: LANDSCAPE AND CLASS TRANSFORMATIONS	44
3.1 Location of the study	45
3.2 Methodology	48
3.3 Chiang Mai	54
3.3.1 Location and Characteristics	55
3.3.2 Demography	56
3.3.3 Economy	64

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

	Page
3.4 Peri-urban Chiang Mai	64
3.4.1 Road development	66
3.4.2 Demographic changes	72
3.4.3 Physical characteristics and conditions of peri-urban area	75
3.4.4 Patterns of development and change in peri-urban Chiang Mai	79
3.5 Residential categories of in-migration	83
3.5.1 Homogenous residents	88
3.5.2 In-filling groups of people	94
3.6 Conclusion	97
CHAPTER 4 RURAL FRONTIER: MIGRATION AND CLASS IN NAM JAM	99
4.1 Introduction	99
4.2 Methodology	100
4.3 Nam Jam: from an agrarian based to a peri-urbanised community	104
4.3.1 Before electricity came into the village in the 1970s	113
4.3.2 Big land sales during the economic boom of the late-1980s	117
4.3.3 Peri-urbanisation of the area from road networks since 2000	121
4.4 A diverse and dynamic community	124
4.4.1 Long-term local residents	124
4.4.2 The in-filling groups	133
4.4.3 Commuting workers	154
4.5 Class mobility and class stratification	158
4.6 Micro-geography of social classes in everyday life	161
4.6.1 Location	161
4.6.2 Physical characteristics	164
4.6.3 Micro-geography of everyday life	165
4.7 Conclusion	172

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

	Page
CHAPTER 5 PROXIMATE SOCIAL RELATIONS AND CLASS ENCOUNTERS	174
5.1 Introduction	174
5.2 Methodology	175
5.3 Implications of migration and class positioning	180
5.3.1 Class positioning from categorisation of social groups	182
5.3.2 Complex class relations arising from migration	194
5.3.3 Distance between classes	197
5.4 Class encounters between post-agrarian villagers and urban middle-class migrants	209
5.4.1 Ideal type of local community	209
5.4.2 Development and modernity in the rural village	218
5.4.3 Green and peaceful rural villages	220
5.4.4 Aesthetics and utility	228
5.4.5 Local villagers' attitudes towards urban middle-class newcomers	230
5.5 Conclusion	231
CHAPTER 6 REMAKING THE PERI-URBAN	233
6.1 Introduction	233
6.2 Peri-urban Chiang Mai as an urban-rural frontier	234
6.2.1 Place of transition	235
6.2.2 Reflections on three frontier shifts	238
6.2.3 Interpenetration and confrontation of urbanity and rurality	242
6.3 Class in the remade peri-urban village: difference, deference and indifference	246
6.4 De-cropping the Thai countryside: remaking and rethinking place	260
6.4.1 A de-cropped peri-urban countryside	261
6.4.2 Beyond the cropped rural image	263
6.5 Conclusion	265

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

	Page
CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION	266
7.1 Summary of findings	266
7.2 Implications of the study	273
7.2.1 Theoretical implications	273
7.2.2 Methodological implications	278
7.3 Limitations of the study and ideas for further research	280
7.3.1 Limitations	280
7.3.2 Further study	281
BIBLIOGRAPHY	282
ABBREVIATIONS	294
CURRICULUM VITAE	295

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
3.1 12 local administrative organisations in 13 sub-districts of peri-urban Chiang Mai	53
3.2 Ratio of ethnic minority peoples in Chiang Mai from 2001 to 2009	57
3.3 Populations residing in Chiang Mai by nationality between 2000 and 2010	58
3.4 Gross Provincial Product at current market prices (reference year 1995)	60
3.5 Change of rice-planted areas by district between the years 2000 and 2010	61
3.6 Farming land and households in different district zones	63
3.7 Population and gated communities in each peri-urban sub-district	88
3.8 TAO and Municipalities' incomes from land sales fees (million baht)	92
3.9 Number of owners and dormitory rooms in each local administration	97
4.1 Total number of total families and number of families interviewed in different social groups	102
4.2 Diverse ethnicities in temporary residences and established years of residence in Nam Jam (unit: household)	148

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Page
2.1 Picture of an ideal community in the Thai textbook, Mana-Manee	33
2.2 Advertising pictures Four Seasons Hotel in Chiang Mai.	34
2.3 A picture of King Bhumipol and his sufficiency economy activities, particularly in the countryside.	35
3.1 Map of peri-urban zone (NESDB)	47
3.2 Map of Thailand	54
3.3 Topographical map of Chiang Mai and the upper northern provinces, Thailand	56
3.4 Regions in Thailand	60
3.5 Maps of districts and area types in peri-urban Chiang Mai	65
3.6 Map of main roads and ring roads in peri-urban Chiang Mai	66
3.7 Temporary shops along the ring road (2013)	69
3.8 Temporary shops along the ring road (2013)	70
3.9 Map of demographic change in each sub-district	73
3.10 Maps show changing household size in each sub-district	74
3.11 Physical landscape and important attractions in peri-urban Chiang Mai	75
3.12 Sign for selling a big plot of rice fields (approximately 11.50 hectares) along the canal road (2013).	81
3.13 Hmong farmers transplanting rice in a field along the outer ring road (2012)	81
3.14 Gated communities in San Sai Noi. (Imagery date 2010)	84
3.15 At the front of a gated community in peri-urban Chiang Mai.	85
3.16 The very grand entrance of a new gated community.	87
3.17 Gated communities with houses priced around 1 million baht (above); and 20 million baht (below).	87
3.18 Picture from the gated community facebook advertising for house styles of English country in Chiang Mai	87
3.19 Advertising sign of Seewalee Choeng Doi (foothills), 2013.	88
3.20 Maps of housing estate density in specific areas for each period of time	90

LIST OF FIGURES (CONTINUED)

Figures	Page
4.1 Map of area around Nong Khwai	105
4.2 Land use map and estimated borders of the three clusters in Mu 5	106
4.3 Rice field in the middle of Mu 5 between Nong Khwai and Nam Jam at the far end, after harvesting (October 2012)	107
4.4 Rice field in the middle of Mu 5 between Nong Khwai and Nam Jam at the far end (January 2013)	108
4.5 Composition of social groups in Mu 5	110
4.6 Numbers of each age group in Nam Jam	125
4.7 Current percentage of education levels in Nam Jam	125
4.8 Current numbers of people and families in each occupation in Nam Jam	130
4.9 Wood turning in Nam Jam (May 2009)	131
4.10 One of the two grocery shops in Nam Jam (May 2009)	132
4.11 One of the two main seamstress groups in Nam Jam (June 2013)	132
4.12 One of the five budget dormitories in Nam Jam (May 2009)	133
4.13 Number of in-migrated urban middle class families	135
4.14 A group of urban middle class houses at the edge of rice field in Nam Jam (November 2009)	137
4.15 A foreigner's house in Hua Thung, the rice field is in Nong Khwai cluster	138
4.16 Sign of land sale written in both Thai and English.	138
4.17 Expansion of middle class houses construction on the rice field, Nong Khwai cluster (January 2013)	139
4.18 Levels of urban middle class newcomers' education in Mu 5	142
4.19 The most recent 5 unit dormitory in Nam Jam, 2011 (July 2013)	144
4.20 Units of dormitory rooms in three clusters of Mu 5	145
4.21 Diverse groups of people in Nam Jam	146
4.22 Diverse ethnicities of dwellers in temporary residences in Nam Jam	147
4.23 Numbers of dormitory rooms in Mu 5 and in Nong Khwai sub-district	149
4.24 Housing of Tai Yai workers (July 2013)	152

LIST OF FIGURES (CONTINUED)

Figures	Page
4.25 A Hmong family prepares for rice transplanting, Nam Jam (September 2011)	156
4.26 A temporary shed of a Hmong family, Nam Jam (September 2011)	156
4.27 Residences of different social groups and land uses in Mu 5	163
4.28 Village communal work on the development day in Nam Jam (November 2011).	167
4.29 Village communal work on the development day, Nam Jam (May 2012)	168
4.30 Villagers were waiting at the community area after offering food at the spirit house (May 2012).	168
4.31 The new sala in the community area. (July 2013)	169
4.32 Village annual spirit worshipping day at the spirit house, Nam Jam (May 2012)	169
5.1 Different scales and styles of houses.	183
5.2 Collective work at the cremation ground, during a funeral in Nam Jam	199
5.3 Scene during lunch time of a funeral in the village.	200
5.4 Behind the scenes at a funeral.	200
5.5 Villagers were organising a boun to mobilise money for construction of the new community building (October 2012)	211

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale

An intriguing phenomenon in present day Thailand and perhaps several developing countries in Southeast Asia is the movement of urban middle class residents away from the city into non urban areas. Such newcomers bring with them different lifestyles, values, understandings, and expectations about the countryside, both in terms of its physical and social aspects. The juxtaposition, in particular, of urban middle class migrants and long-standing rural residents raises the possibility of a new type of class formation and class conflict in the countryside. Rather than a set of class relations rooted in processes of agrarian production, we see instead the possibility of conflict and accommodation based on differing aesthetics and consumption lifestyles.

There have been studies of countryside in Southeast Asia and in Thailand, in particular, for a long time. Most studies show rapid changes in the nature of rurality and that the distinction between the city and the countryside is increasingly blurred. However, this discussion and understanding tends to be limited to academic scholars and people who have direct experience in the countryside. The wider society, especially the urban middle class, understands rurality differently due to what they have learnt through such sources as public media, textbooks, tourism, and government development programs, which largely pick up only selective symbols representing idealised countryside images. These different understandings of Thai rurality do not create direct problems in terms of everyday life, as both urban middle class and rural villagers live at a distance from one another. In-migration, especially of the urban middle class, brings diverse groups to share physical space in proximity to one another, with a closer status as neighbours with real interactions leading to class encounters in everyday practices.

The peri-urban zone is, by definition, a place where the countryside and the city are adjoined. Here, agricultural activities are decreasing significantly, yet the physical landscape of agricultural fields still partly remains. The peri-urban area is also the fastest changing part of Thailand in most respects compared to urban and rural areas. It has transformed both from outside urban expansion and economically and socially changed from within, including through processes of agrarian change. The peri-urban hence is an area marked by several mixtures of physical landscape, different groups of people who live there; each group's own values and lifestyles; and social relations among and between groups. However, there is surprisingly little study on the peri-urban area itself, especially on aspects of social change where most studies are either in urban or rural areas.

In the case of peri-urban Chiang Mai, Thailand, there are multi-directional migrations occurring in the area, but a particularly significant migration is the urban middle class residents moving into the area, especially where there are nice natural scenic views of mountains, streams and some remaining agricultural landscapes such as rice fields. So this phenomenon of movement away from the city is not just a product of urban expansion, but also responds to the urban middle class people's preferences with certain expectations in choosing the place for residence. At the same time, however, a much-neglected phenomenon – including by this researcher in the early framing of my study – is the in-migration of workers who also share peri-urban village space and are integral to the peri-urban demographic change and are a mainstay of the peri-urban economy through provision of labour services.

The movement of the urban middle class away from the city generally referred to as counter-urbanisation has been studied for a long time in developed society which is often considered to be in a post-productivist condition, with new forms of value beyond the production value created in agriculture. In a developing country like Thailand where there is an ongoing agrarian transition process, this phenomenon has not yet been raised as an issue. However, an area such as northern Thailand shows some parallel aspects of counter-urbanisation and post-productivism. Questions raised include why middle class people choose to live in the countryside, what values

and expectations of their new locales as "rural" they take with them, and what happens when they find themselves living as neighbours with people of farming background. Thus, the focus will be on class encounters primarily between the urban middle class newcomers and the local residents based on their different understandings of rurality.

In the Thai countryside nowadays, most farmers do not rely economically on farming for the entirety or even majority of their income, but rather derive income from off farm activities. Labour on the farm also tends not to be the land owner's as there are machines so that farming does not require as many workers as before, thus this allows people to be employed outside agriculture. Therefore, the social structure of the countryside has changed enormously. Analysis of social relations in the community using a materialist economic approach based in production relations and neo-Marxist class analysis are no longer enough, and study of class even loses its apparent significance to research on agrarian issues. Interestingly, however, explanation of class is increasingly used in relation to consumption, but to date this has mainly been in the urban context.

At this point, it is worth explaining why I have chosen to use class as a central category and concept in this study. For many, the decline of productionist and neo-Marxist analysis of agrarian society marked the end of class as the defining and differentiating concept that provides useful structural and subjective understandings of social position. The emergence of new social movements, moreover, took away from the idea that class is the main basis for consciousness and collective action (Laclau and Mouffe 1985), in favour of gender, ethnicity and other aspects of social identity. Yet, we have seen a revival in class as an analytical category in post-productionist work, notably that of Bourdieu and his concepts of habitus and taste. Because social background and the values associated with it are so central to my study, I have found that class remains a useful way of understanding what happens when people of multiple backgrounds with different positions in a social hierarchy find themselves sharing the same space. While identity and ethnicity do relate to my work, neither captures the relational and hierarchical dimensions of class that helps

interpret the interactions and encounters behind place-making in peri-urban Chiang Mai.

In the case of a peri-urban village as a place where there are diverse groups of people with different backgrounds sharing the same area, their relations do not link so much through production activity in the village locale. Analysis of social structure in such areas requires attention to broader aspects of consumption lifestyles and values of each group of people based on their different experiences of economic, cultural, and social capitals. There is also a tendency that social analysis has to go down to the level of individuals rather than households, as people are more and more diverse and individualistic so that social division has become blurred and complex.

In peri-urban areas, people within each group have been making their own places according to their capitals, backgrounds, and understandings of the area. A new class formation has emerged. The aesthetics, lifestyles, and rationales of each class group are not homogeneous. Their practices and their thinking sometimes clash with each other. Some of the conflicting values are accommodated, while others are ignored, and yet others are contested, depending very much on their forms of capital in relation to the context and hidden rules in the place. Hence, these encounters between different class groups could expand their social distance even though they are now living closer in physical space. This study is based on the idea that ongoing processes of making and remaking place help form the particular physical and social characteristics that shape and define peri-urban Chiang Mai.

The study will use a case of a peri-urban village in Chiang Mai, northern Thailand to show how a place once unambiguously rural has transformed with the arrival of newcomers of diverse geographical and class backgrounds. The peri-urban village is presented as a “crossroads”, in the sense of being both a meeting place and a point of change away from rurality but not in a clear linear pattern toward (sub)urbanity. Chiang Mai is an alternative city where people can enjoy convenient facilities of the central city of the north and feel the relaxation of the countryside within a short distance. As a result, it has attracted an increasing number of urban

middle class migrants, both Thai and foreigners, to live in the area. For other groups, mainly the workers, the peri-urban area also provides them with working opportunities in the area or in the city as the area has been developing rapidly. Apart from this, the longstanding local residents also are able to live with their families in the village and work nearby, so that they do not need to migrate to work outside as before. It can be seen that the place of the peri-urban village is full of diverse groups of people and activities, which are evolving rapidly. This study aims to understand the physical and social characteristics of the area that have been captured during the time spent conducting this research.

1.2 Research Questions

Overall question: How are social and physical landscape characteristics of the village in peri-urban Chiang Mai shaped by class encounters resulting from diverse migrations?

1. How are the meanings of rurality - as countryside and community - represented and understood by different groups of local people and newcomers in the peri-urban village, and more broadly in the public media?
2. What are the patterns of migration in peri-urban Chiang Mai, and what are the desires of each social group?
3. When migration brings different classes to live in close proximity, what are the value-based encounters between newcomers and locals?
4. How is class manifested in the increasing post-agrarian context of peri-urban Chiang Mai?
5. How do different classes accommodate different values? How does the changing class formation shape social relations in the peri-urban countryside?

1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to reveal the changing pattern of class relations that emerge from social diversity resulting from various patterns of in-migration in an increasingly post-productivist community in a peri-urban developing/middle-income country setting.

1.4 Methodology

This thesis has split discussion of methodology into three chapters, based on the different nature of methodology used for each part of the study. Chapter 3 is about the changes in peri-urban Chiang Mai in general, and data was collected by retrieving primary and secondary data and statistics from several sources and interviews from all local authorities in the area defined as peri-urban Chiang Mai. Chapter 4 is about the case study of a peri-urban village in terms of its historical background, changes, and diversity of social groups. The data were collected by interviewing key informants and representatives of all social groups in the village case study. Chapter 5 focuses on the class encounters, for which data was gained during interviews and from my own observations and casual conversations with people in everyday life over an extended period of time, including the employment of an auto-ethnographic approach.

1.5 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, the literature review takes as its over-arching theme the making of place in peri-urban areas. The chapter starts with discussion of the peri-urban zone as a space of interaction between the more often studied urban and rural. It then reviews migration literature to reveal the very limited study of urban to rural migration outside developed country contexts. The chapter then turns to alternative concepts of class and class formation, in particular with regard to rural areas. Finally, the significance of representation in forming notions of rurality gives the chapter an important role in

setting the scene for the clash of value systems that come when urban people import received notions into the reality of previously rural places.

Chapter three sets the scene for the physical and social transformations of peri-urban Chiang Mai. It systematically pieces together hitherto highly fragmented data to paint a picture of peri-urban expansion. It uses tables, maps and photographs to build as comprehensive a picture as possible, not only of the overall patterns of peri-urban development, but also of the different place-based characteristics of various parts of the peri-urban zone. A key contrast is between gated communities and in-situ in-filling of pre-existing villages, but beyond this there are also more nuanced characteristics of peri-urban places based on landscape and social characteristics of local villagers and in-migrants.

Chapter four drills down to the case study village of Nam Jam, a small hamlet that is part of a larger peri-urban administrative village. The chapter gives a history of the village in terms both of its endogenous development out of a relatively recently largely agricultural society into an urban-oriented place, and in terms of the history of migration first out of, and more recently into, the village. The diversity and dynamism that mark Nam Jam emerge clearly in this chapter. Finally, the significance of micro-geographies of everyday life in Nam Jam helps set the scene for encounters between different groups that are the subject of the following chapter.

Chapter five addresses the subject of interaction between different social groups head-on. It begins by setting out the class positioning associated with the diversity of this small hamlet, and shows both interactions and distance as twin phenomena that help define class relations. The latter part of the chapter gets to multiple examples of the key phenomena that are employed in the study to explain peri-urban place making, which are the encounters between different groups that stem from the proximity of their residences that contrasts with the social distance between them and clash of expectations amongst them.

Chapter six is a synthesis of the three empirical chapters that have zoomed into the phenomena that lie behind behind place making in peri-urban Chiang Mai. Three key conceptual lenses assist in this process of synthesis. First is the idea of the peri-urban space as a type of frontier, which is explored in a number of dimensions. Second is the association of class and place in the peri-urban village, where class formation and structure is marked by diversity, hierarchy and social distance – termed here as difference, deference and indifference. In all three of these approaches to class and place we find surprising as well as more obvious inter-relationships. Third, twin meanings of “de-cropping” are used to reveal a tension between the realities of a partly de-agrarianised countryside and a persistent image of rurality derived from wider societal representations in Thailand.

Chapter seven, the concluding chapter, reviews the findings of the thesis by returning to the research questions and seeking to answer them with reference to the preceding data and analysis. It then draws out some of the theoretical contributions and implications of the study’s findings, and makes certain observations on the methodological reflections to be drawn from the study. Finally, the conclusion identifies the limitations of the study based on its necessarily constrained empirical scope, and it makes a few suggestions for further research that builds on the study’s findings and insights.

CHAPTER 2

PLACE-MAKING AND CLASS IN PERI-URBAN AREAS

This research attempts to understand the current physical and social landscapes of peri-urban Chiang Mai, an area that was once located within a rural agrarian context but has now transformed into a complex post-agrarian milieu. The four areas of conceptual discussion employed in this study are examined in the following way. First, the peri-urban in Southeast Asia, as an area of urban and rural interaction, is laid out to show the complex context of the area and how scholars have studied it. Second, the migratory pattern in the countryside elucidates different and shared characteristics of both developed and developing societies. This leads to the third set of concepts of rural class relations in a new context shaped by the immigration of the various groups and the resultant proximity through sharing of everyday space. Lastly, representations of a Thai rural idyll influenced by mass media lead to contestation for place making by all groups, interactions that have the potential to create ambivalent feelings within as well as between different groups. Hence, as a consequence, negotiations to shape the emerging peri-urban place as living space exercised by all of the groups involved sometimes threaten to develop into a new form of class conflict.

Each set of concepts will be discussed to provide a wider understanding of the developed society and developing countries, especially in Southeast Asia. Then, they will be narrowed down to the case of Thailand and Chiang Mai where study of contestation over the peri-urban zone can be done at appropriate scale. However, it should be noted here that my aim is not to look at the context dualistically; rather, I will show how developed and developing societies have several things in common. These four sets of concepts will be discussed within the context of agrarian change and concept of peri-urban as a frontier, a zone of transition and contestation of both physical and social attributes of urbanity and rurality.

2.1 Peri-urban as a site of urban-rural interaction

The peri-urban zone presents an ideal social laboratory in which to study the combined physical and social phenomena associated with rural-urban interaction. Compared to urban and rural areas, the peri-urban area has recently undergone the most rapid change. Somewhat ironically, this indeterminate status means that peri-urban areas have been neglected in the fields of both urban and rural studies. In this section, I will show how scholars use the term ‘peri-urban’ and what aspects have been studied. Then, the concept of ‘frontier’ will be discussed. I look at peri-urban as inter-linkage and as a frontier between urbanity and rurality.

The term ‘peri-urban’, as commonly used by scholars, refers to a geographical location somewhere between the city and the countryside. In effect, it has no absolute meaning. Use of the term ‘peri-urban’ implies aspects of interaction between the urban and the rural, and transition in that location which fits well with the concept of ‘frontier’ that I discuss later in this section. Scholars use various terms and provide a range of details with slightly different explanations of peri-urban areas employing broad to specific meanings or dimensions to fit their different focal points of interest. Many urban planners (Pryor 1968; Bunker and Houston 1992; Gallent and Andersson 2007) use the term ‘rural-urban fringe’; which implies a transition zone and its land use, demographic and social characteristics resulting from urban expansion into the rural hinterland. Meanwhile, the term ‘peri-urban interface’ is used to emphasise the obvious and active interaction between the city and the countryside, which often means that human activities from urban sprawl are harming the environment in the area, causing pollution of the ecosystem and problems for rural people’s livelihoods. Most studies using this term focus on developing countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, especially India (McGregor, Simon and Thompson 2006; Narain and Nischal 2007; Jakkett 2012; East-West Center n.d.), and on a few areas in Thailand (Amorn Kritsanaphan and Sajor 2011).

McGee (1991) uses a local term ‘*desakota*’, which in Bahasa Indonesia means village and city, to stress that there is a particularly Southeast Asian or developing

country type of peri-urban merging of urban and rural space. The associated livelihood change is different from that in other parts of the world. Subsequently, many scholars have used *desakota* as a site of linkage between rural areas and urban metropolitan cities. In addition, they have expanded its use to other aspects such as ecosystems or to bringing in new actors to the changes (Ortega 2012).

Another term used is ‘rurban’ space, a combined name of the two areas, rural and urban. This term, which was first used to describe the American context in the mid 20th century, referred to places or people that used to inhabit rural areas and are now merging with urbanity, perceivably upgrading their physical access and social livelihoods (Alexandru 2012). In this context, ‘rurban’ does not need to be a physically connected area between the town and the country but an area in which urban and rural are integrated. This term, which is mainly used in the American context, is rarely heard in Asia. In fact, rurban could imply an area like a *kampung*, Eric Thompson’s integrated rural-urban village discussed further below (Thompson 2004). However, Thompson did not use the term rurban in his work. All of these studies tend to take peri-urban as a geographical location where town and countryside physically meet.

Regarding the study of the peri-urban in Southeast Asia, several studies show the various ways in which the city and the countryside are interlinked. In the early 1990s, Terry McGee and Jenifer Gray studied peri-urban areas, both in Southeast Asia and Chiang Mai, Thailand, respectively. McGee (1991), an urban geographer, was interested in how urbanisation led to certain forms of interaction between the city and the countryside in the *desakota* or peri-urban areas, the merging zone of the rural and urban. He studied zones peripheral to several large metropolitan cities in Southeast Asia, which at that time were wet rice farming areas. He claimed that in some respects, certain *desakota* supported the city’s food production, resources, and cheap labour, in effect benefiting its economic development. As a consequence, it created more small farming landholders: diverse types of land use; increasingly diverse off-farm activities with increasing numbers of women participating; and people who were fluid and mobile due to convenient transportation. In Chiang Mai, Gray undertook an

ethnographic study of the peri-urban area, showing how young daughters in the area could generate income from urban development and thereby contribute considerably to their households' upward mobility. Most of them were involved in agriculture (Gray 1990). It may be seen that agriculture in the peri-urban area played a major role in people's lives at that time. But, things gradually started to change from the 1970s when some areas got connected to the city and accelerated from the 2000s when the ring roads were completed.

More recent studies of peri-urban and rural areas in Southeast Asia have shown current aspects involving the context of globalisation wherein time and space are compressed (Harvey 1990), where rural people find their ways to the urban, and where urban values find their ways to the rural (Rigg 1998). Globalisation in this case involves not just the urbanisation resulting from Thailand's incorporation into the global economy through its industrialisation, but also cultural processes. In particular, the influence of a globalised media over lifestyle choices, sense of and aspirations for modernity, values around authenticity and new aesthetics, all result from the cultural flows that Appadurai (1996 and 2001) discusses in his work. Appadurai also talks about desires based on imagination that become a fact of social life, which in turn lies behind various migration processes that are the key to change in peri-urban areas. Leaf (2002) compares the cases from two countries, China and Vietnam. In China, where the study community has good local governance, people manage urban expansion well and benefit from it. Conversely, in the study village in Vietnam, where leaders do not assume any role in managing the change, problems occur markedly. Several scholars have expressed concern regarding unplanned and rapid urbanisation in developing countries where the transition has occurred following market demand with weak regulation. For example, Hall, Hirsch and Li (Hall, Hirsch and Li 2011: 120-121) show that peri-urbanisation has become a regional phenomenon in Southeast Asia as a result of global and regional capital integration. This has given rise to four unique situations: high population mobility; land conversion from farmland to non-farm usage; government support of peri-urbanisation by providing infrastructure; and, the creation of inequality and uneven

development in this transitional process which can be regarded as an exclusion by price.

Urban-rural interaction does not only occur in peri-urban zones. It has also become obvious in rural spaces. Thompson, who raises the case of the Malaysian *kampung* villages located far from industrial zones, found that apart from the different physical aspects of the area such as location and population density, the socioeconomic foundations in the villages were essentially urban due to consumption (Thompson 2004). Thompson argues that it is not that the urban simply spreads into the rural space. There are longstanding linkages between the two such as migration of rural to urban and remittances from urban to rural, and the mass media's penetration of rural areas. In this way, countryside values change from within, revealing urban-rural interpenetration, the hallmark of modern society in Southeast Asia.

However, to date, there are still some gaps in peri-urban studies. First, most have focussed on the interests of urban planners, urban geographers, and ecologists. While they have looked at the results of urban expansion, there has been no study of issues such as characteristics of agrarian transition and class mobility specific to the peri-urban zone. Second, *desakota* refers to interaction involving core cities only: attention is mainly on changes in people's livelihoods, transportation, communication and economic systems (Moench and Gyawali 2008). McGee's study, for example, was limited to cosmopolitan cities two decades ago when globalisation was not yet influential in non-metropolitan study areas. Thus, the inter-linkages between the urban and rural areas were oriented in certain ways such as towards economic aspects. Interpenetration nowadays involves several new social and cultural issues such as lifestyles and values. Regional cities like Chiang Mai, Thailand, in this time of globalisation, reveal several new and different aspects of interaction, the social dimension, in particular. Third, even though the recent rural studies of Southeast Asia show urban-rural interpenetration, as yet there is little focus on everyday interaction between the city and the countryside vis-à-vis the in-migration of the diverse social groups that form the significant social landscape of the peri-urban area. Moreover, the city and countryside did not just meet when they became peri-urban. Their

attributes have to a degree been mutually embedded for some time, rendering the urban-rural border blurred. However, urban-rural dualities still remain very strong in people's minds and can determine people's expectations.

In this study, the peri-urban will be looked at as a 'frontier', a place of interaction, contestation, and transition between attributes of urbanity and rurality. The term 'frontier' has long been given diverse meanings. In several zones, it gives a geographical sense of a powerful core pushing the border to encroach on the periphery. Historically, 'frontier' was used in a colonising context wherein powerful groups sought resources beyond their borders (Fold and Hirsch 2009). The uses of frontiers are also influenced by transition when the contexts change. Contexts wherein scholars locate frontiers include the 'agricultural frontier', which used to mean expansion of farmland into forest areas (Hirsch 1990) but nowadays suggests new relations of production, conservation, natural resource use, and management. The term 'national frontier' was typically used where a powerful country benefited from its economic and political inequalities with its neighbours, implying the new meaning of 'resource frontier' across the national border. The term 'peri-urban frontier' is a new areal context, employing frontier as a metaphor to describe rural-urban interaction. Hirsch proposes that Thailand's economic growth effectively lay behind the creation of the peri-urban frontier. The peri-urban frontier derives from urban expansion encroaching on the countryside, resulting in vast residential settlements and some land used for higher-value crops. Hirsch, who compares two shared aspects of traditional agricultural frontier and the current peri-urban frontier, maintains that both are zones of maximum population expansion and have significant patterns of land conversion from less productive activities to higher value activities (Hirsch 2009).

The concept of frontier clearly reflects a zone of transition from one type to another with characteristics of both that interact. In the case of the peri-urban frontier, it is the moving of the periphery of the city outwards, transforming the peri-urban into towns and transforming the rural into the peri-urban. As well as addressing physical transformation, this study will expand the use of peri-urban frontier to

explain the more complex and abstract encounters between urban and rural attributes based on class values, tradition, modernity, production, and consumption through the in-migration of the diverse social groups that live in the area. These interactions, while forming the making of the physical and social landscapes of the area, have as yet not been subjects of study.

2.2 Migration and transformation of rural space

Migration is one of the key phenomena in rural studies, both in developed and developing societies. However, because agrarian transition is not an evolutionary process, the developing countries do not always follow linearly in the steps of the developed. The changes in rural areas of all societies are diverse, due to differences in their historical, geographical backgrounds, and development policies. Typically, studies of internal migration in developed contexts focused on counter-urbanisation, while studies in developing contexts have focused on rural to urban migration. Nevertheless, some shared aspects between both types of societies appear in this case study, particularly regarding middle class migration to the countryside. One of the arguments that differentiates this case study from most studies of migration is that people from remote areas also move into peri-urban areas searching for work opportunities arising from urban expansion. Therefore, the differences in the migration purposes of diverse social groups in relation to the transition of the area are significant issues, delineation of which could lead to better understanding of the peri-urban area as a frontier.

For several decades, studies of migration undertaken in developed countries in relation to rural areas have been dominated by counter-urbanisation, which is a continuation of migration away from the urban area to non-urban environments. While most studies in Europe refer to migration from urban to rural areas, studies in Australia often focus on migration from metropolitan to non-metropolitan areas, such as to smaller towns. This process has allowed urban and progressive middle class values and environmental attitudes to exercise direct influence at the local level. As regards the reasons driving migration away from the urban area, they range from

structural economic forced migration to individual will (Boyle and Halfacree 1998a; Burchardt 2012). Counter-urbanisation, in each context, is slightly different based on its historical background.

In Europe, especially in the United Kingdom (UK) since the 19th century, people migrated out from the rural areas through the enclosure movement that saw agricultural lands privatised to big landlords. This was followed by the industrial revolution that attracted people to the cities. As a result, the value of the countryside as a place in which to maximize agricultural production for farmers' livelihoods gave way to value created in scenic living space, tourism, and nature, for example. These changes reconstructed people's engagement with the countryside, both in their activities and values towards the countryside (Boyle and Halfacree 1998b; Wilson 2001; Wilson and Rigg 2003). Since the early 1990s, scholars have called this new phenomenon post-productivism to describe the multi-dimensional aspect of this transition of which counter-urbanisation is one of several significant indicators.¹ Since then, the topic of in-migration to the rural areas in the UK has been studied widely in several dimensions (Boyle and Halfacree 1998a) and in other parts of Europe (Hoggart 1997). However, historically, counter-urbanisation in some parts of the UK happened much earlier due to the implementation of certain policies (Burchardt 2012).

In line with this particular historical background, Australia unlike Europe, was not an agrarian productivist based society. In addition, geographically-speaking, the remote outback areas had few facilities and few large settlements. For this reason, counter-urbanisation in Australia saw migration away from the large cities to smaller and more pleasant towns. This movement was often called "tree change" in the case of the inland areas and "sea change" vis-à-vis the coastal areas, which were relatively close to urban facilities. Since the 1950s and 1960s, counter-urbanisation has

¹ Wilson and Rigg (2003) allude to six interconnected 'indicators' of post-productivism: policy change; organic farming; counter-urbanisation; the inclusion of environmental NGOs at the core of policy-making; the consumption of the countryside; and, on-farm diversification activities.

influenced demographic change in the form of second homes and retirement home migration, mainly in and to the warm climate of the eastern coastal area. By the 1970s, moving away from the city had accelerated, especially the seasonal migration of people who owned second homes (Connell and McManus 2011).

Counter-urbanisation in Australia followed longer and healthier lives. Now more affluent than in the past, people spent their money on better life conditions in more pleasant areas served by infrastructure. Different groups of people moved out of the cities for various reasons. For example, some among the urban middle class searched for more pleasant living places, the anti-urbanisation group were 'downshifting', and the 'hippies' were rejecting the urban lifestyle, seeking more self-sufficiency. Connell and McManus (2011) question most of the studies on counter-urbanisation's generalising of the reason for migration as changing lifestyles, claiming that they fail to give a clear explanation regarding what lifestyles really changed. The term 'changing lifestyle' is perceived as too broad: it fails to facilitate an understanding of the migration situation. Another group is those moving out from the city for economic reason or welfare-led migration such as for employment and for more affordable housing (Hugo and Bell 1998).

In contrast to studies in developed countries, studies of migration in relation to the rural areas in developing countries have heavily focused solely upon labour out-migration from the rural areas for work in both urban areas and abroad (Ellis 2000). Studies of migration in Southeast Asia link this phenomenon with urban development and agrarian transition in the countryside and with the extensive out-migration of young people in particular, who have opted to work in urban centres and abroad (Hirsch 1990; Kelly 1997; Anchalee Singhanetra-Renard 1999; Rigg 2001). Good transportation connects rural and urban effectively. Villages located closer to towns have more opportunities for jobs. They experience less out-migration than the more remote rural villages; and, family members can live together (Rigg 2002). Rural-urban migration occurred in Southeast Asia for a long time following the flow of diverse information and facilities to the countryside. This long inter-linkage blurs the

distinction in economic terms and in people's thought regarding their lifestyles such as choosing between the rural and the urban (Rigg 2013).

In Thailand, the commercialisation of agriculture during the 20th century led to widespread migration of rural farmers into the forests, the agrarian frontier, to occupy farmland. This internal movement continued until the 1980s (Hirsch 1990) when Thailand intensified state policies in land titling and territorialisation through national parks, resulting in the closure of land and the agrarian frontier (Ritchie 1993; Hirsch 2009). In addition, transportation improved in the rural areas and investment in national economic growth was implemented. These factors enabled people from outside to own land in rural areas through secure land titling rights. At the same time, there was a demand for labour for urban development. As rural people could no longer expand their farming land, many migrated to work in the city and abroad. Many studies have shown that for some decades now, rural people have demonstrated high mobility and increasing dependence on non-farm incomes (Gray 1990; Hirsch 1990; Ritchie 1993; Rigg 1994; Anchalee Singhanetra-Renard 1999; Mills 1999; Rigg 2001; Yos Santasombat 2008).

Gray observes that when the Northern Industrial Estate opened in a neighbouring province of Lamphun in the mid 1980s, it attracted a number of commuting workers especially from peri-urban areas where transportation was available. During that time, many local people commuted to work during the day, which caused the villages to become "dormitory villages" and function more like places simply for sleeping overnight (Gray 1990). Anchalee Singhanetra-Renard (1999), who studied rural demographic change in Mae Sa Valley, 13 kilometres to the north of Chiang Mai city where road connection had developed, traced how the Thai national development five-year plans for the period 1961-1981 gave priority to industrial development over agriculture. This caused a huge flow of rural-urban migration. By 1995-1996, people living in Mae Sa Valley no longer relied on self-sufficient farming but more on beneficial non-farm activities associated with urban development.

The most common factor of migration presented in the studies is better economic gain. One of the results of out-migration is migrants' remittances to families so that their parents can continue to invest in agriculture. In the Philippines, Kelly studied a case of people who migrated from the countryside, found work in urban areas and sent remittances back home, enabling significant change in the economic and social class mobility of the people in their communities (1997). In addition, in developed areas such as peri-urban and areas near industrial estates, local people economically benefit from and partly depend on migrant workers, in particular local dormitory and shop owners (Rigg 2013). Apart from the economic aspect of the migrants, Mills shows that there are other aims for experiencing urbanity and consuming modernity. Out-migrant workers, upon returning home, introduce urban cultures, values and lifestyles, all of which are regarded as modern, to their rural communities (Mills 1999; Rigg 2013). Urban lifestyles and modernity could not be achieved without economic power; hence, migration becomes an important strategy to attain these goals which by extension result in class mobility, a subject I will discuss in the next section.

A site that has received relatively little attention in Southeast Asia is the peri-urban area where the direction of migration has been reversed from out-migration to in-migration both for work and counter-urbanisation, and for middle class residences for Thais and foreigners similar to the developed countries. It may be seen that peri-urban represents both urban and rural characteristics in one place to which different groups of people migrate in search of different means of living. The peri-urban area is essentially a meeting place, a melting pot, a frontier of migrant people from various spheres together with local villagers who were former farmers. Studies of migration, which tend to only be about rural people searching for modernity, should apply to other groups as well, given that all migrate in search of a better life believed to be implicit in modernity. However, it may be that the meaning of modernity could be interpreted differently by each social group. This complexity of migration leads to new class formation in a transforming rural space.

2.3 Rural class formation

Class, a relational concept, is used to explain social inequality. Class defines social relations both in material and cultural terms. In the past, class found popular focus in agrarian studies looking at rural societies through modes of economic production. However, class analysis has lost its prominence over the last few decades due to the current process of globalisation in which society has become hybrid and members are no longer homogenous but increasingly individualistic. Class differentiation is still at work; but, it can be subtle, fluid, diverse, and transform depending on changing contexts. Discussion of class has shifted from solely economic factors (especially relationships to the means of production) to wider aspects in which consumption is increasingly becoming a new angle for better understanding of the complex society. However, the term 'class' can have different meanings which need to be defined when used. In addition, each society has its own characteristics that add additional conditions to determining how class is defined and recognised. In this study, I aim to look at how people position themselves in relation to others in everyday practice and how class differentiation is determined by various factors of meaning in people's lives.

The most well known classical concept of class analysis is Marxism, which defines class relationships through economic ownership and control over means of production. Class conflict occurs through exploitation under capitalism, a concept that has been used widely in rural studies and in Southeast Asia (White 1989); but, in more recent times it has lost some of its popularity. In developed societies, studies of class differentiation have paid more attention to cultural aspects and individual identities, with increasing interest in consumption influences illustrated through hierarchical lifestyles (Crompton 1998; Devine and Savage 2005). Therefore, 'class' has diverse meanings, as structured inequality in economic means of production and as individual lifestyles and cultural moves influenced by consumption. Some of these cultural aspects will be applied in this case study together with economic means of production.

In the modern era, rural people do not have direct production-based relationships like those in agrarian societies; therefore, approaches to class analysis have shifted. Cloke and Thrift (1987) wrote that many studies of developed societies divide class into three groups: (1) capitalist class who own the means of production; (2) a middle class who are in the service of bureaucratic professions owning skills; and, (3) a working class owning labour. However, there are other aspects to be considered: first, the division of labour is more complex than before; second, certain skills are developed rapidly from education; and, third, increasing mass consumption influenced by capitalism creates unclear class differentiation from outside. These three aspects differentiate class structures in terms of who has the power or the capital to accumulate and their capacity to gain resources more effectively. Class position, which was earlier considered at the household level, needs to be reconsidered more as an individual trait based on aesthetics and lifestyles, notably in post-productivist societies. Class formation is not static: it involves strategies for negotiating and accommodating surrounding conditions with the other groups. Apart from class relations and class conflict between groups, there is an intra-class breakdown of diverse social groups such as gender, ethnicity, and language that together form the dynamism of the class relations and class positioning that have to be taken into consideration. While many points raised by Cloke and Thrift could prove useful to the case study, adoption of this approach has not attracted the interest of scholars of rural studies in developing countries, particularly where people from different social groups migrate to live in close proximity to the village community.

Another significant approach to understanding class differences is social distinction. In his book titled *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Bourdieu (1997) based his analysis of social stratification on aesthetic taste and lifestyles. His definition of class referred to conditions and dispositions of groups which allied well with his concepts of capitals, habitus and field. Even though his study which focussed on the tastes and lifestyles of bourgeois high culture in France was undertaken in the mid 1960s, there are some aspects that can be applied to this case study.

Class distinction defines social hierarchy: it establishes who is higher or lower than others in specific groups of people. Bourdieu's work on three interrelated capitals showing class distinction reflects levels of power (Swartz 1997). Economic capital is the ability to accumulate wealth: social capital is relationships and networks; and, cultural capital involves the skills, education, and family upbringing that transform attitudes into habitus. Later, Bourdieu added symbolic capital or recognition of honour. In his view, class is not based on one single indicator but on its composition of diverse forms of capital, cultural aspects in particular. These capitals are then internalized as part of a person's habitus, reflecting class distinction at the individual and class levels. People in the same class share similar cultural capitals that other classes might not understand. Bourdieu's way of looking at class is flexible but concrete. It includes several dimensions of people's lives, not only economic as class in Marxism, but also cultural, social, educational, linguistic and others as forms of capital (Sayer 2005). Thus, they fit quite well with the concerns of everyday life.

Bourdieu sees social and economic capitals as the foundation of cultural capital that needs accumulation over time. Economic aspects might be achieved by new rich families but networks, taste and attitudes still require family upbringing and inheritance; thus, they cannot be contested or imitated easily, especially by lower classes. Bourdieu's approach discloses the analysis of interaction between the different types of capitals that each group might have, albeit unequally. Education in the form of certificates or degree legitimately assists as a mechanism to exclusively convert cultural capital and, at the same time, to elevate people from the lower class to higher status. Bourdieu's approach is developed further by presenting how capitals are internalized into people's habitus. People express habitus through tastes and lifestyles, which indicate the hierarchical relationships that obtain among different social groups. These are the symbols that judge and distinguish one group from another. Social interaction takes place in the 'fields', in social arenas, and are mainly led by the dominant culture group.

Another concept that can support understanding of class positioning well is Erving Goffman's work on the *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Goffman 1959). Class can be regarded as part of individual identity. Goffman claimed that social interactions between groups constitute the stage upon which to establish social identities to repeatedly 'perform' according to expected roles determined by society (Barnhart 1994). Performances are done at the 'front' of the stage: they present to specific audiences who share the same social norms. At the same time, however, audiences also have their roles to follow. At the 'back' of the stage is the personal area in which actors can be independent from social expectations. Both actors and their audiences are pressured to conform to their distinctive roles. This concept can be applied to class positioning in everyday life: first, there are understandings and expectations regarding ours and others' roles during hierarchical social interactions, especially between different social groups; and, second, actors and audiences actively participate in performing their roles to establish their class identity and maintain their social structure. Performance to establish class identity is also specific to particular places and this helps to define the emerging peri-urban class structure.

In Southeast Asia, class differentiation based on agricultural production was taken seriously in the old style agrarian transformation studies such as the seminal work *Agrarian Transformations: Local Processes and the State in Southeast Asia* edited by Hart, Turton and White (Hart, Turton and White 1989). Subsequent to publication, several agrarian studies of Southeast Asia appeared; but, they did not take class differentiation as the core of the studies as before. This may have been due to rapidly changing contexts and to newly emerging concepts that appeared more relevant. Gray (1990), who studied peri-urban Chiang Mai in the late 1980s, questioned the conventional agrarian differentiation, claiming that it was not able to explain the situation. She found that processes of development mainly incorporated capitalist activities outside of the rural sphere. This resulted in rapid class mobility: people increasingly lost their connection to agricultural production. Class was not determined by means of production: some landless families, who had other off-farm and urban businesses, were richer than others who owned land. In addition, people tended to invest in the education of their children. They saw it as prestigious and as

offering a better future outside of the farm. Thus, while economic status was still important, it was decreasingly linked to agriculture. In addition, many rural people aspired to upward class mobility outside of their agrarian society and sometimes through other types of capital.

A central term used in this thesis is “urban middle class”. The middle class has always been a difficult category to define. In some cases, for example in the US, middle class refers to the great mass of society who are neither very rich nor very poor. The term incorporates better-off blue-collar workers. In the United Kingdom, “middle class” was conventionally associated with higher strata of society who nevertheless remained outside the social worlds of aristocratic and other elite groups, but who also are not working class. In the context of Southeast Asia, as a result of continuous growing industrialisation and commercialisation, a ‘new urban middle class’ or the ‘new rich’ (King 2008) has been created as a result of transnational migration and agro-industrialisation at the global level (Kearney 1996). In the Thai context there has been no systematic academic classification of class. However, Juree Namsirichai Vichit-Vadakan (1979) identifies class differentiation in Thailand as defined by the social order built around monarchy, Buddhism, patron-clientage and other country-specific aspects. For her, the middle class is an urban phenomenon and has emerged out of new opportunities that come with social and physical mobility. Class is based on a mix of wealth and social background, with middle class people distinct from those who use their own physical labour and also from the aristocratic elite. In the context of contemporary political polarisation in relation to changes in the rural Thailand, Apichat Satiniramai, Yukti Mukdawijitra, and Niti Pawakapan (2013) write of the ‘new middle classes’ (based on economic aspects of incomes from 5,000-10,000 baht per month). Nidhi (2010) uses the term ‘lower middle class’ as the lower or emerging middle class that is different to the old middle class. Keyes (2012) creates the term ‘cosmopolitan villagers’ for rural people in the northeast who have gained income in a significant portion from working abroad while Walker (2012) uses the term ‘middle-income peasants’ from his study in northern Thailand among rural peasants who increasingly rely on commercial agriculture and continue to remain in rural areas. I use the term urban middle class broadly to describe those with

education, intellectual occupational background and material standard of living that set them apart from manual workers, tradespeople and farmers, but who also remain outside the higher elite groups. In the context of peri-urban Chiang Mai, most of these would be referred to by Apichat et al (ibid) as old middle class, which is similar to categorisation of Thai middle class by Funatsu and Kagoya (2003) and King (2008). On the other hand, more affluent rural groups may find their way into the new middle class. Of course, these are ideal types, and there is a great deal of diversity and fluidity within each.

A study of changing class identity of Filipinos from migration by Philip Kelly (2012) demonstrates how spatiality has implications for class mobility. In this case study, Filipino transnational migrations to Canada have to change their consumption and lifestyles from their home towns as they live and work in a more subordinate condition in Canada. Apart from consumption that determines class identity, Kelly shows that embodied attributes such as gender and race also define identity. Filipinos, especially females, are seen as the main group working as domestic helpers, maids, and nursing aides thus the characteristics of these low-rank careers become part of their identity which means they experience downward class mobility. This is similar to the case of Burmese migrant workers in Chiang Mai, who are often considered to be lower class when they are in Thailand because of their consumption and race even though their lifestyles might be better in Myanmar. Therefore, class identity is determined by bounded spatiality. While Kelly follows one group to see the changes in class identity from their home towns to the location of their destinations, I take the peri-urban as a place of class formation of different social groups who experience upward and downward class mobilities through migration.

Apart from the various capitals, consumption, and embodiment that determine how society and people position themselves in relation to others, each society has its own specific characteristics that influence class positioning. Thai society is hierarchical due to the former feudalism that was a component of absolute monarchy until 1932, the continuing monarchy, and Buddhist-based belief in deeds from previous lives. In addition, Thailand has a history of communism and of the Cold

War in the region during the 1960s-1980s during which ‘class’ (*chon-chan* in Thai) was employed to mobilise people – especially farmers in the rural areas – against the powerful state. Significantly, the term *chon-chan* has not been commonly used in everyday language since that time. However, it was strategically reintroduced again after 2010 during the political conflict that resulted from the Thai coup d’état in 2006. Since then, Thailand has been clearly divided into two main political groups, signified by the wearing of yellow and red shirts distinguishing the upper class urban people from the lower class rural people. This conflict has crystallised perceived class differences between the urban and the rural.

Thongchai Winichakul (2000), a historian, writes that in the thinking of the Thai people, they have spatialised the classification of *siwilai* or modernising. They have visualised the city and its urban people as at the centre had more *siwilai* than the *chao-ban-nok*, literally people at the outside (of the town), or the rural people who are considered uneducated and backward. Several Thai terms carry certain meanings within them. This hierarchical way of thinking is explained as having emerged during the mid 19th century following the colonial period. Its aim is to mark the Others Within, i.e., that the urban elite are clearly distinguished from the backward rural people, a thinking that has persisted subtly up until today. In the Thai context, people define social stratification in relation to various capitals evident in concrete means such as occupation, ethnicity, education, background, where a person comes from, her/his clothes, even manners. The current study goes beyond spatiality of class to show what happen when previously spatially separated classes come together in the new peri-urban setting.

In sum, the study of class formation and social interaction, together with physical change, can lead to a more effectively understanding of how the rural space is transformed. In the context of the high mobility of people, class positions are increasingly individualised and fluid. Different social classes meet in various places with statuses such as acquaintances or neighbours; hence, there are different levels of relations. Because class is hierarchical, some classes are dominant over others. Some are rendered invisible, and the power of certain classes may alter if they move from

their allocated places. Therefore, the meeting places in which people interact are significant.

2.4 Social representation and contested place making

The place of this study is peri-urban – a place of high in-migration of diverse social groups from various locales. Peri-urban has become a frontier, a stage where people from different social backgrounds – who used to be distanced – live in proximity as neighbours, coming into close interaction, and making their place in the ways in which each thinks it should be. At the same time, place can determine the power relations between groups, processes and outcomes of a specific place, marking both physical and social landscapes. Place making involves diverse understandings and expectations of both the place and the peoples in the place, i.e., of each social class.

Place as a concept is not just a location on a map. Scholars sometimes use the terms ‘space’ and ‘place’ interchangeably. For the purposes of this study, I employ Cresswell’s explanation that “space becomes a place when it is used and lived” (Cresswell 2009: 170). Space becomes more abstract and is transformed into place when people experience and give meaning to it. Place is not something to be simply observed; rather, it is how we see it. The main ideas about place in this study will be drawn from two scholars, Harvey and Massey. Cresswell (2004) explains and compares their ideas comprehensively.

Harvey sees place construction as an attempt by people to fix the boundaries against the pressure and rootlessness implicit in the time-space compression of global capitalism. This pressure urges people to search for authenticity and rootedness in particular places and to construct their own imagined places and communities in a bid to live distinctively from the masses in the society. Place does not have memories of its own: it is collectively constructed. He claims that on a larger scale of construction of national memories, through consumption such as heritage and the historical, places become political agendas on which to establish identity or a sense of place in the

world. The production of place could be a process of social order and exclusionary because it establishes a certain understanding of place that might only be shared by a particular group of people. Hence, it could prove to be place making at the expense of others (Harvey 1996).

Massey, who disagrees with Harvey, sees place as a route of change, not as rooted and fixed. People are very fluid and mobile for different reasons; and, when subjected to time-space compression, they experience place in various ways, thus always make and remake their places accordingly. Place is being made all the time. Different national peoples and products can be found almost everywhere in the world; thus, the issue of fixity of place is impractical (Massey 1997). Massey defines place as compositions of three intertwined propositions: place is the product of interrelations; a sphere of coexisting heterogeneity; and, always under construction, a process of being made and never finished. Thus, it cannot be enclosed (Massey 2005). In her view, place is relational, an action that cannot exist outside of interaction between place and the meaning given it by the people. She emphasises that place is not a container: each place has specific characteristics that are not static and keep changing in a non-unilinear pattern.

Cresswell notes that both Harvey and Massey base their analysis on different types of place (Cresswell 2004). Harvey looks at place in which there is little diversity. When threat starts to come, people want to exclusively clarify their boundaries. Massey explains place as so diverse that it cannot be halted or bounded. Place, she claims, is just an attempt, not the result. However, both Massey and Harvey agree that power relations influence the process of place construction, and that the dominant group tends to determine the direction of place making more than the less powerful group.

In fact, both could be right and useful for analysis in this study. Massey looks at place from the inside, showing that it is in continuous construction with change and is in the process of becoming. Harvey, who looks at place from the outside, sees places as fixation. Outsiders or society in general may understand the place in a static

way using representation of the place produced by the dominant social group. Those who actually experience the place understand it differently. These different understandings could continue in parallel; but, they may enter into contestation when they meet. In addition, different groups of people, scholars for example, could see place differently based on their particular backgrounds and understanding from the information they have received. This could impact on their interactions when making the place into what they want it to be.

In addition, in this case study, I have drawn upon Harvey's viewpoint regarding the fixing of place. Influences such as education, mass media, and tourism could fix the place and fixate certain groups of people on certain places, hence they become stereotypes, myths and recorded memory. Again, flows of information could result in placelessness, i.e., in people not needing to physically be in the place to experience it. Their sense of place can evolve from what is represented. However, representations are often selective, just symbols of things. It is also a form of power to determine what a place should be, and what should be hidden or gotten rid of (Mitchell 2008). Once these symbols are believed, they become reified in people's minds and can become true in reality (Cohen 1985). So, concepts surrounding physical place and mental place might differ.

Apart from place being constructed, place also controls people. When place is made, definitions are created and subject to explicit or subtle rules. The expected normative behaviour exercised by people in that society then shapes the interactions of the people in the place. If the people do not behave accordingly, it can become 'out-of-place' or crossing the line of defined relations between place, meanings, and practice (Cresswell 1996). Crossing the line can be intentional: it may aim to contest the normative practices or to remake the place. Competition and contestation of representing the place could occur but nature of hegemony in the society and in the place may gear the result.

The peri-urban area is an explicit stage for social interaction between different groups who have the diverse aims of residing or working in a particular place. For

this reason, each tries to make her/his own place. A clear frontier between ‘urbanity’ and ‘rurality’, it comes with different ideological meanings vis-à-vis modernity and tradition. Peri-urban is in rapid change. The simplified terms of rural, urban, even peri-urban are not able to capture and explain the complex situation of place construction. Physical change, social mobility, representations of place and what people have experienced in their interactions should be taken into account.

It is important to study production and consumption of representation in the context of a given society and to situate it in the wider regional and global context. In the case of Thailand, the term “rurality” as physical countryside and social community might mean different things to different groups of people. Diverse understandings could come from certain sources of knowledge, and from the information that each group has gained during their upbringing, i.e., their socialisation. Rurality has long been constructed and represented in a certain way influenced by development policies, education, mass media, and the consumerism of the place. These representations impact upon how people – especially those of higher class – understand the particular place and its people.

Rural studies in Thailand have been approached differently. Since agriculture has long been – and is still – a dominant activity in the countryside, its various components are tied together in the studies. More importantly, historical backgrounds and certain fields of study have not only influenced the direction and focus of rural studies, but in part have shaped public perceptions of the countryside today. Hirsch (2012) looks at how agrarian studies in Southeast Asia and Thailand in particular have evolved. In the case of Thailand, during the Cold War of the 1970s, studies mainly aimed to serve political agendas. The context of the Green Revolution in the region during the 1960s – 1970s together with Thailand’s National Economic and Social Development Plan which was first implemented earlier in 1961, aimed to facilitate market-oriented production. These two projects led to a mega change in the countryside, so much so that scholars studying class-based analysis stressed that these projects created massive inequality. As a consequence, many scholars and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as Chatthip Nartsupha, Apichai Panthasen,

Prawase Wasi, Apichat Thongyou, Decha Siriphat, and Bamroong Bunpanya defended the poor. Many of them criticised the market and raised populist alternatives and later defended sufficiency economy. Some even went so far as to initiate the invention of tradition. This return to nostalgic sets of ideas that were popular several decades ago has been underpinned by particular reasons which I will discuss further in the last section on place making in this chapter. Academic study of the countryside, while one of those sources, is still limited to a specific group and is not the main influence on perceptions at the popular level.

For the mass understanding of rurality, the main sources of knowledge are the mass media and education. In the case of Thailand, understanding of rurality as interlinked with the city is still limited either to academic scholars or to people who have direct experience of the countryside. Wider groups in society, especially the urban middle class, still interpret several conventional understandings of the physical landscape, lifestyles, and the social context of the countryside in an idealised way. These views have continuously and accumulatively been constructed in people's minds.

One of the simple construction techniques of rurality is to dichotomise it with the city, citing pairs of contrasting characteristics such as modernity and tradition, civilisation and backwardness, development and conservation. In addition, when these terms are used in Thai, e.g., countryside – *chon-na-bod*, community – *chumchon*, village – *mu-baan*, and villager – *chaao-baan*, they impart particular impressions and understandings connoting agricultural settings in harmonious communities. Even though the countryside has changed dynamically over a long period of time, especially under globalisation, these terms tend to have a bounded meaning attached with their normative ideal notions of “traditional” rurality.

Social construction, which is based on the notion that phenomena are not simply independent facts, is a method that examines how social discourse and practice construct reality. In one sense, social construction contrasts with essentialism in that it is not a natural given. However, in another sense, social construction essentialises

reality. It reproduces and imposes a partial set of judgments explaining through generalisation taken-for-granted characteristics without specifics and sufficient reasoning (Baldwin et al. 2004). This process of social construction is often based on the interests of one social group that is often dominant over others. It relates to the power relations of members of a dominant group, who hold positions in the sphere of knowledge such as teachers, researchers, doctors, media, and the state, rendering them superior to the subordinate group. However, social construction is not based on a simple hierarchy of power but can also draw on legitimacy and authority that come from long-term association with place. In addition, construction of place requires active members who share similar experiences and values to accommodate and maintain the places that they have jointly constructed.

Social construction works efficiently through repetitive everyday representations, which can be exposed explicitly or hidden subtly without notice in both conscious and unconscious ways. Commercialisation by the tourism industry, media representations, and even depictions in Thai school textbooks also play a significant role in perpetuating romanticised, selective and static images of rural life. Four brief examples illustrate the ways in which rural life in Thailand is being reworked as an object for consumption.

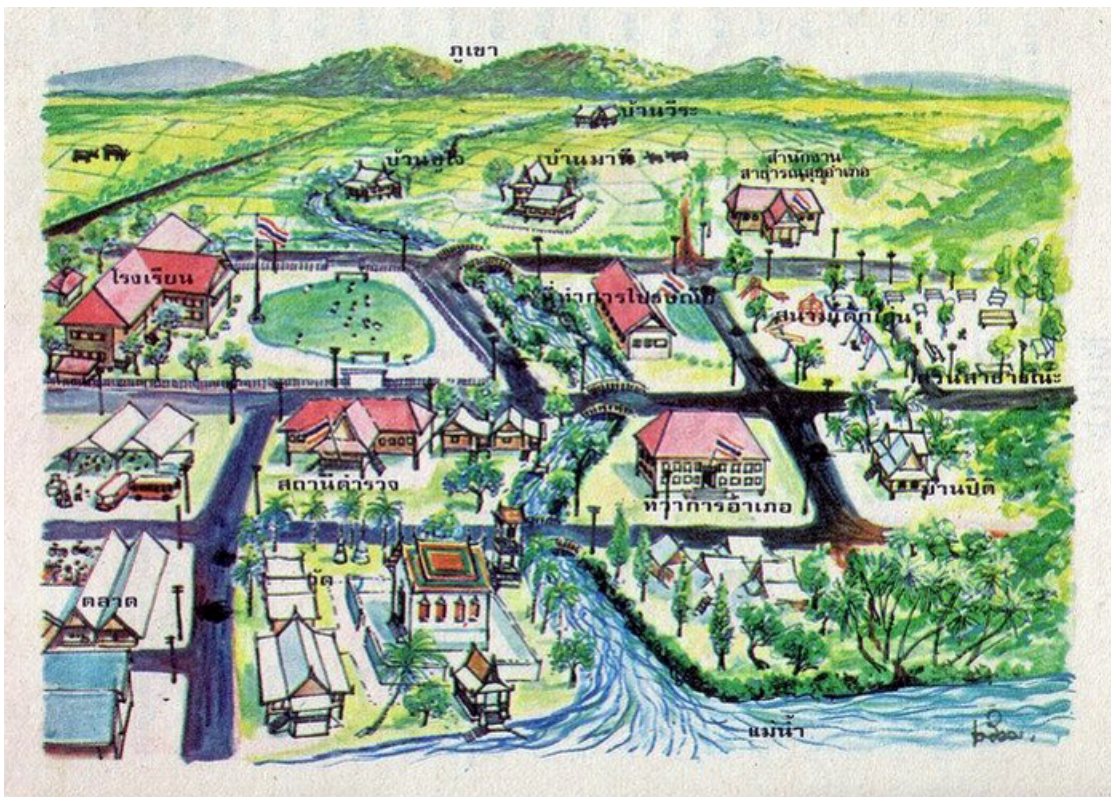


Figure 2.1: Picture of an ideal community in the Thai textbook, *Mana-Manee*

One way in which representations of the countryside influence people's understandings is through education, notably through the content of school textbooks. In a study of the ways in which primary school textbooks construct patriotism and love of "Thai nationhood", Nujaree Jaikeng (2008) traces the many sets of primary school Thai texts from 1971 until the 1990s that have employed romantic Thai countryside scenes with peaceful, harmonious communities. Nujaree Jaikeng maintains that the images and impressions of previous decades are firmly embedded in the minds of today's adults. A well known set of the Thai textbooks called *Mana-Manee*, which was used in primary school classrooms from grades one to six between 1978 and 1994, contained an ideal rurality showing mountains, rivers, rice fields, buffaloes, and a neat organisation of the community. All players in the story were from the countryside. They enjoyed close relations with the urban middle class people who came to live and work in the area, such as school teachers and government officials who were always helpful to the villagers. The village was conflict-free: all of the families were kind to each other and self reliant. Nujaree

Jaikeng observes that these beautiful portrayals of the countryside have been influential in forming the nostalgic view of rural Thailand, and that these textbooks have become a classic reference in everyday discussion / website discourse about the countryside. Education is a clear example of the functioning of an official and well-accepted source of knowledge, ideologies, and values to be represented, implanted, constructed, and stabilised in people.



Figure 2.2: Advertising pictures Four Seasons Hotel in Chiang Mai.
They are on the front web page of (Four Seasons Hotel n.d.)

Second, tourism plays a significant role in representing “tradition” to its customers, most of whom are urban middle class consumers. Rigg and Ritchie (2002) provide a specific example of how rural areas in northern Thailand have been re-presented for consumption by the Thai middle class and foreigners. They discuss the example of an exclusive resort near Chiang Mai that features a working rice farm complete with buffaloes, and farmers wearing indigo *mor hom* shirts signifying genuine local Thai farmers working in the field. The whole spectacle is performed for the benefit of the hotel guests, who are led to believe that they are witnessing (i.e., consuming) a piece of authentic Thai rurality. Tourism has been the mainstay of Thailand’s national economy for several decades. There are several ways in which rural lifestyles are packaged for tourists to evoke nostalgia including home stays and local pseudo-traditional markets selling ‘authentic’ locally made goods (Tourism Authority of Thailand n.d.). Although culture constantly changes, tourism has renewed, frozen, and in some cases reinvented local traditions in a bid to depict a peaceful landscape and harmonised community, thus fixing a particular concept of rural places in order to profit from the traditional landscape. While some tourists may be aware of the selectivity of portrayal of rural life, as recipients, they may opt to enjoy these representations rather than to look more deeply through the veneer for the genuine detail which may reveal the harsher aspects of people’s lives in the countryside.



Figure 2.3: A picture of King Bhumipol and his sufficiency economy activities, particularly in the countryside.

A third example of the constructed countryside is found in the current powerful Thai national ‘sufficiency economy’ program. This concept, which was first promoted by King Bhumipol in 1974, has been more extensively adopted since 1997 after Thailand faced the regional economic crisis (Sufficiency Economy Research Project n.d.). It was later incorporated into the 9th (2002-2006) and the current 10th (2007-2011) five-year National Economic and Social Development Plans (Anonymous n.d.). Since then, several development projects have supported rural activities linked to the notion of a sufficiency economy. This new theory takes over the concept of community culture – community as a united group of people with good traditional practices, a subsistent economy and living in harmony with nature (Chatthip Nartsupha 1986) – an idea that used to be limited to a small group of Thai scholars and some urban middle-class NGOs workers. The community culture school proposes that authentic wisdom resides in simple agrarian village life (“the answer is in the village”).

These ideas of culturally-oriented livelihood based on subsistence agricultural practices have created or brought back an agrarian myth about making rural life resilient to rapid capitalist development in rural areas and the economic globalisation that destroys rural ways of living (Brass 2000; Dayley 2011). At the same time this is an agrarian essentialism that selects some attributes and freezes them in the imagination of some urban middle class people. In Thailand, these ideas are strategically raised when there are problems such as opening large forest areas for agriculture to serve global demand since the 1960s; and lately in the case of economic crises in 1997 and again in 2008. These ideas are proposed as a swing away from global capitalist linkage toward a direction that counters the state’s large scale development projects and returns rural people to traditional land-based livelihoods that somehow link with Buddhist morality.

Walker sees this campaign as a fairy tale for rural people designed to reduce their expectations to be equally included in the national political and economic development (Walker 2008). Samchai Srisant (2012) adds a strong further analysis

that heavy budget for promotion and widespread implementation² of this scheme is well-planned and politically strategized in order to replace Thaksin's³ populist policy and to reconstruct and confirm the hierarchy of class differences between the higher class and the rural people. This scheme claims to be alternative to capitalism. It has appended scholars, academic institutes, and urban middle class on its side, observed from several sufficiency economy curriculums at all levels of education; projects at all administrative levels; continuous advertisement on how to live sufficiently: go back to nature; practice organic farming; live economically; and not go to work in the city where capitalism may lure them. If they do not behave accordingly, they will be stigmatised as insufficient. As for the urban middle class, they have a role to assist with gratitude to rural people by visiting and buying local products. This ideology nails the rural people to a lower rung on the social ladder in the traditional countryside and excludes them from equal benefit sharing and equal participation with other social groups.

My fourth example is drawn from the popular media such as literature, film, and TV dramas. Two popular books that later became film and TV dramas provide examples. The first, *phu-yai-li-kab-nang-ma* was published in 1965 and has been adapted to film and TV several times. The latest TV version appeared in 2009. The second, *kwam-suk-khong-ka-ti*, won the S.E.A Write (Southeast Asian Writers) Award for literature in 2006 and was made into a film in 2009. Another example is a popular film titled *bun-choo* that has produced 10 episodes over the last two decades, the most recent being released in 2010. All of these stories depict lush green rice fields and the homogeneity of local communities. In episodes where class distinction between urban and rural groups is tackled, rural people are depicted as simple, honest and more pure than their often devious urban counterparts. The assumption is that the urban middle class are there either to cheat or to charitably assist the rural dwellers.

² Samchai Srisant demonstrates that the number of websites about sufficiency economy has grown approximately from 1.7 million websites in 2009 to 2.5 million websites in 2010 and to 9.6 million websites in April 2012.

³ Thaksin Shinawatra was the 23rd prime minister of Thailand during 2001-2006. He has become well known for his populist policy benefiting the rural people, in particular. He was overthrown by military coup in 2006.

These fictional portrayals both reflect and perpetuate widespread attitudes among Thailand's urbanites regarding the country's rural villagers. The implication is that they have kind hearts but are naïve and often poorly educated and for these reasons need the assistance and knowledge of the often more privileged city dwellers. The media gradually inculcate these representations of the Thai countryside into the minds of people with little or no direct experience, thereby influencing the latter's everyday imaginings of rurality. Middle class migrants to the countryside inevitably carry some of this mythology with them.

In addition, most soap opera dramas screened during primetime TV still these days subtly emphasise class differences. Many include selective rural scenes of rice fields and buffaloes, with emphasis on organic farming. At the same time they often highlight the contrast with the middle class attached to evil capitalism. In reality, it is rare to find buffaloes working the fields today as agriculture in Thailand has been mechanised for several decades. Some farmers continue to raise buffaloes but only to sell for meat. These essentialised pictures of rural Thailand have hardly changed over time.

All of these sources of representation, from textbooks, tourism, the sufficiency economy to fictional dramas are highly influential and formative from an early age. They have reified an imagination of the countryside and "community", particularly in the minds of those city dwellers who lack direct experience of rural life. But, when agriculture is threatened or diversification is proposed and seen as a threat to the rural traditions implicit in this imagination, urban appreciation of these traditions grows. Rather than continuing to be seen as backward, agendas are set to assist the countryside to retain its bucolic traditions. In some qualified ways, rural people may also gain from tourism income. But, in most cases, the city's engagement with the countryside is constituted by the temporary encounters of the tourist or customer, or by migration of rural dwellers to the city.

Many scholars have attempted to question these ideal impressions and representations of rurality. Rigg (1994), for example, shows that in the West, the

image of the traditional is systematically represented in distinction from the modern village in literature and in the popular imagination. The traditional village is stereotyped with the following five positive characteristics: egalitarian, corporate, peaceful, self-reliant, and moral. These static views have been inculcated in the minds of people generally, especially in the city dwellers' minds. They stand in stark contrast with the modern village, which has been polluted by the five urban characteristics of inequality, individualism, violence, dependency on the outside, e.g., commercialism, and immorality.

Tracing back through history, Stott found that the Thai elites had their first direct experiences of the Thai countryside during the first student uprising in 1973 and during the conservation movement in the 1980s (Stott 1991). Some among the student group had experienced study abroad which had influenced their views regarding the countryside, that it was "*pa-thu'n*" or wild. As a dominant class, they assumed that they should guide improvement of the area. Kemp, in his work titled *Seductive Mirage: the search for the village community in Southeast Asia*, investigated the use of the term *mu-ban* or village community in Thai history. He found that the term was in fact invented by the government to organise and introduce development projects into the area (Kemp 1988). Similarly, Hirsch sees the Thai village community as a construct, as an administrative boundary that has different meanings for different groups of people. According to him, mapping has enabled both the village members and outsiders to understand village boundaries (Hirsch 1993). However, people have gradually internalised the meaning of village as defined by the state. Therefore, place making happens in various levels of state authority and also at the ideological level.

Most of the traditional studies of agrarian societies explore local people's livelihoods based on agricultural producers who opt to remain on their lands. In fact, Yos' recent work on flexible peasants (Yos Santasombat 2008) shows that in many cases people have engaged in several non-farm activities. They are no longer closely attached to farm land and agrarian activities. Due to the vagaries of uncertain weather, to poor return from farming, and to increasing concern regarding their health

and the use of chemicals, people have gradually sold off their land and abandoned agriculture. However, Walker still considers Yos' view of flexible peasants as 'romantic'. Yos claims that even in the course of rapid change, rural peoples have maintained their ideal identities as repositories of local wisdom and as active resource conservationists. Walker, however, critiques his claims, declaring them too simplistic and as presented without enough context (Walker 2009). Forsyth and Walker, in their book titled *Forest Guardians, Forest Destroyers* (2008), attempt to clarify the myths surrounding environmental degradation in northern Thailand by emphasising the conflict between lowland and upland groups. They urge their readers not to think of rurality as essentialised, but rather to look at it within a context that links with the outside, both at the national and global levels. Anan criticises the idealised views of community culture advocated by Chatthip Nartsupha (Anan Ganjanapan 2001). He argues that it is not simple to separate fact from scholars' expectations of the village as the village's image is indicative of the particular scholar's impressions and interpretation, especially when it involves the contesting of meaning. Rigg admits that sometimes (using Kemp's term) he is still 'seduced' by the mirage of the "traditional village" which has been given powerful meaning constructed over a long period of time by the West (Rigg 1994).

Some representations of the rural idyll have been employed strategically under certain contexts of Thai society. The community culture school of thought, including Chatthip Nartsupha and Apichat Thongyou, raised this view in the context of struggle opposing capitalism and the state (Chayan Vaddhanaphuti 1993). The school textbooks also reflect certain perceptions of Thai politics that want the Thai people to feel united, a sense of belonging, and love of nationhood which has been represented as a rural community. Mass media focus on tourism and films facilitates the flow of cultural codes, linking local and global together. The rural idyll has become a "symbolic sign" (Baudrillard 2001) for commercialised consumption. The construction of symbolic signs can be both collective and individual when it comes to identities. While people consume, they create and maintain the sense of who they are; in other words, they are their identities communicating through consumption. For Baudrillard, consumption is not primarily a material process but an idealist

practice. Apropos of this case study it is *ideas* which are being consumed along with the meanings of place, not objects (Bocock 1993). Today, under the influence of globalisation wherein time and space are compressed, the world has become deterritorialised, and the images, values, and discourses produced float in a sphere of exchange across national spaces and globally (Appadurai 1996); for example, as a picture of foreigners enjoying transplanting rice in the Thai countryside.

These romanticised representations of the Thai rural community have long persisted among the public. Thais rarely seem to question whether the message received from and conveyed to others is a pure and undecorated reality. The question here is not whether it is true but rather whose truth it is. Representation is a two way form of communication during which senders selectively represent certain messages either with intended purposes or unconsciously and contingently. The receivers might not accept them as they are. People interpret and understand things differently depending upon their respective cultures, experiences, and habitus (in Bourdieu's term). In other words, they interact drawing upon the codes they share (Halfacree 1993). All is dependent upon their positions vis-à-vis representation and contestation based on class, values, power, and contexts of their particular cultures. Representation involves active agents; but, they often have unequal power relations. To use Bourdieu's term 'capitals' (Bourdieu 1986), the more economic, social, and cultural capitals people have, the more power they will be able to exercise when imposing ideas on the lower group; i.e., those who have less capital.

Migration of the urban middle class into rural areas has given rise to a whole new level of closer interaction, which is quite different from the experiences of the countryside which are based on representations of short-term tourist visits. These different understandings of one group towards the other will be tested and some may be accommodated. But, clashes may occur when people have to live adjacent to each other, sharing physical and social landscapes.

2.5 Theoretical discussion

Building on the concepts discussed above in the literature review, and in the context of transforming rurality into a peri-urban developing country setting, this study aims to understand the changing pattern of class composition and class relations that has emerged as a consequence of social diversity resulting from counter-urbanisation in an increasingly post-productivist community. I have selected a peri-urban community in northern Thailand as my case study.

In the case of Thailand, a romantic representation of rurality has been constructed both by scholars and public media as a two-pronged opposition to urbanity by virtue of its physical and social landscapes. However, the existing context of the countryside has shown interconnection between the rural and urban over a long period of time, especially from diverse migrations into both areas. The countryside has increasingly changed from an area for production by longstanding residents into an area for consumption by urban middle class newcomers, who bring with them certain perceptions of the Thai countryside. Local people have gradually changed their modes of living and earning. They no longer totally rely on agricultural activities as their lifestyles of consumption increasingly move towards modernisation in the post-productivist pattern. Class formation in the peri-urban area is dynamic and continuing. As a result, at one level urbanity and rurality seem to be interpenetrated, while at another, local people's values have hardly changed. Thus, the concept of class is introduced in an attempt to understand the relations between groups who have different habitus (backgrounds, economics and social capitals, consumption lifestyles and values). Focus is in the main upon their views and expectations towards each other.

The concept of place is employed to explore a peri-urban village as a place where people have met, that they are making, and a place that controls people's activities in the sense that they are deemed either appropriate or out of place. The in-migration of the urban middle class has created a situation for them to face actual and direct experiences as neighbours of the rural people in a village that used to be very

rural less than a generation ago. Each group of people has to negotiate and accommodate their values with other groups' values in order to construct the place, and to make and remake their own place for living, a task that is an ongoing process. As a consequence, the construction of place becomes a significant factor in determining how the class relations of both groups will be shaped.

CHAPTER 3

SETTING THE SCENE FOR PERI-URBAN CHIANG MAI: LANDSCAPE AND CLASS TRANSFORMATIONS

‘Peri-urban’ is a term employed to indicate where urban and rural areas interpenetrate. Nowadays, it is a sphere of rapid change, and in this respect, peri-urban Chiang Mai is no exception. To date, developing countries studies have paid little attention to peri-urban zones. The few that have been undertaken have focused in the main metropolitan cities, such as Bangkok, Manila and Jakarta. Thus, there is a paucity of studies of regional cities. The more common studies of developing countries present a relatively clear cut view of urban and rural zones. However, scant thought has been given to peri-urban zones where urban and rural areas interpenetrate and there is a mix of urban modernity and rural traditional mores.

Peri-urban Chiang Mai, compared to other cities in Thailand, has particular characteristics of rapid development of infrastructure, physical geography, and cultural attractions, the sum of which has a general appeal for people. One of the key phenomena in peri-urban Chiang Mai is the increasing rate of migration involving all social groups. This influx of migrants has resulted not only in land conversion from agrarian fields to residential properties, but also in a great mixture of people from different backgrounds, ways of living, and reasons for migration residing in close proximity.

This chapter aims to set the scene for exploration of peri-urban Chiang Mai; that is, to show how its physical and social landscapes have transformed an agrarian-based society to a rapidly growing urban setting in just a couple of decades or in less than a generation of people.

Studying peri-urban areas is particularly difficult as they are ambiguous areas: their boundaries are not clear cut and may change quickly. The information gained and presented in this chapter represents the macro scale of the whole of peri-urban

Chiang Mai. Data and statistics are limited and were found to be scattered throughout various government offices. The maps and tables shown are the result of prolonged gathering and extraction of raw data from various sources. Details of the methodologies employed are discussed below, followed by scene setting of peri-urban Chiang Mai.

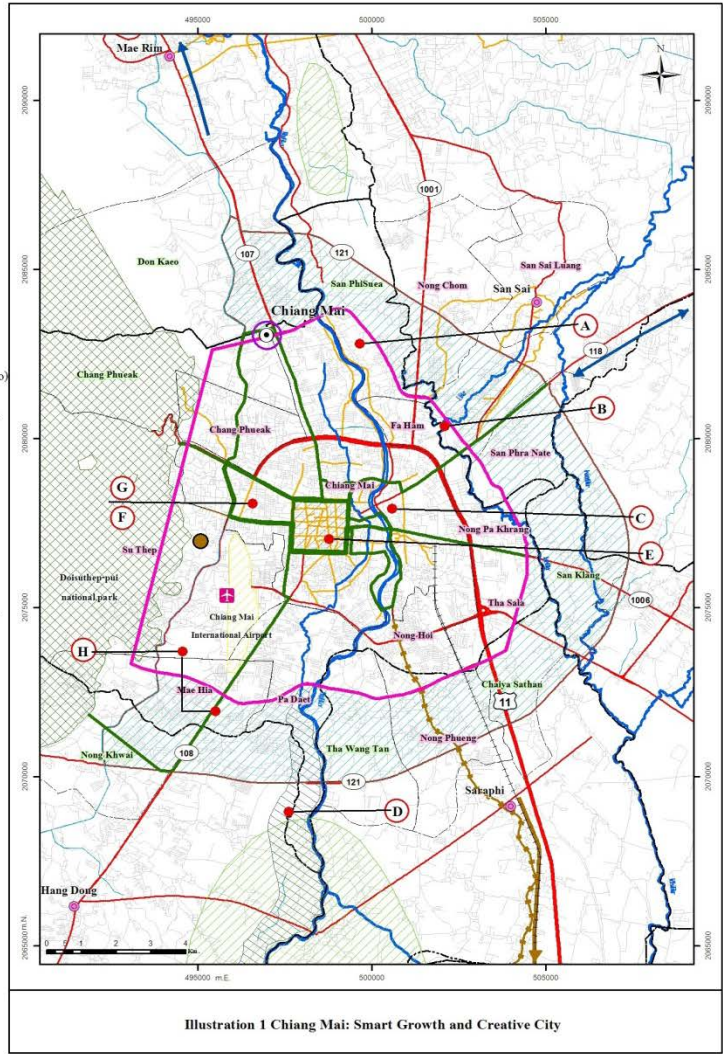
3.1 Location of the study

Peri-urban zones are generally adjoining or border areas between urban suburbs and the countryside. However, it is hard to delineate them specifically as all areas are constantly transforming. Gray who undertook a study in 1990 of 5 rural villages in “peri-urban” Chiang Mai in 1990, defined the area within a five to fifteen kilometres radius of Chiang Mai city, which was linked by major routes, as a fringe of the city in which local economies were incorporated with those of the city (Gray 1990). At the time, there were no middle or outer ring roads. The key movement lay in the connection and commuting of people to the centre. For the purposes of this study, I will draw on a report titled “The study for city development action plan: Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, and Lamphun” which provides information vis-a-vis setting up a development strategy for the Northern part of Thailand as a centre in the upper part of the Greater Mekong Sub-region (Maha Nakorn Consultant Co. 2010). With reference to Chiang Mai, this report defined 3 zones: inner city, a peri-urban zone, and the countryside in line with the road network. The inner city, which has 9 local administrative organisations, extends from the centre to the middle ring road; the peri-urban area, the border zone between the urban area and the countryside, covers the area between the middle to the outer ring roads. The peri-urban zone in this defined location was approximately within a three to twelve kilometres radius of the inner city of Chiang Mai. This report was produced in March 2010 as an assignment of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB). I have employed its interpretation of the peri-urban zone in this research. In its official report, the peri-urban constitutes 11 local administrative organisations: Chang Phueak, San Phi Suea, Don Kaeo, Nong Chom, San Sai Luang, San Phranet, San Klang, Chiya Sathan, Nong Phueng, Tha Wang Tan, and Nong Khwai. The NESDB map that appears below

provides a strategic plan for how Chiang Mai, especially the city and peri-urban zone, should be developed. The middle and outer ring roads are defined as 'peri-urban areas', with a specific plan for each particular area.

This research will focus on 12 local administrative organisations and one neighbouring sub-district in the south, San Phak Wan, the sub-district between Tha Wang Tan and Nong Khwai because the outer ring road passes across the area, and it has a significantly increasing rate of housing estates.

- Surrounding town
 - Center of Secondary Education Level
 - Government Center at regional level
 - Mass Transit (BRT) 20 years plan of the transportation office of Chiang Mai. Transform to a low carbon city. Connect the area with the red bus line.
 - Commuter train connecting Chiang Mai-Lamphun and Regional Linkage
 - Ton Yang – Ton Kee Lhek (Historic Route)
 - ↔ Connect with NSEC
 - Connect with Myanmar border (Kiew Pah Wok, Chiang Dao)
 - International Airport (Hub) has capacity to accommodate 2 Million people/year. 6 Million domestic travelers/year (possibly until B.E.2570, 2027)
- Smart Growth and Creative City:** Quality of life development as well as a good community improvement plan will create a creative city. The plan will reflect a new planning paradigm in terms of environmental development, social, and an economic structure that combines local culture with innovative and technology.
- Ⓐ Promote the mixed-land use. Create connected urban development (Low Rise High Density) for effective infrastructure management.
 - Ⓑ Promote residential options to suit all lifestyle.
 - Ⓒ Promote public transportation and walkway
 - Ⓓ Reserve plains area for agricultural purposes. Conserve natural area, and environment risk area.
 - Ⓔ Promote unique custom and culture.
 - Ⓕ Promote open society for cross-cultural exchange.
 - Ⓖ Facilitate development of the creative economy model (Live-Work-Play-Learn)
 - Ⓗ Vision-Based community development. Promote community participation.
- (9 local admin org. in the urban area. 10 local admin org. in the peri-urban area.)



- **The Historic Center**
covers the area of 2 square kilometers. The historical area connects with Ping River, which helps promote a creative city.
- **Town Center (Urban Area)**
covers 133.1 square kilometers. There are 9 local administrative organizations. This area is the center of the economy in the greater Mekong sub regions. Low rise Building high density, Area character.
- Peri-Urban covers 182.76 square kilometers. There are 10 local admin organizations. It is the residential area, which supports the city area expansion. Peri-Urban should be developed to facilitate the suburban area and agricultural irrigation systems in the compact city.
- Green spaces. It covers a large area which supports tourism.
- Natural stream water protected area (mitigate flood impact). It is also a recreational route (Chiang Mai-Lamphun)
- Suburban agricultural area (North and South of the city pursuant to the principle city plan). Promote eco-town status and organic food. Reducing impact from polluted smoke and climate changes.
- Flood plain restricted area. it is the area which supports environmental management of the central city area.



Figure 3.1: Map of peri-urban zone (NESDB)

3.2 Methodology

Two methodologies, raw data collection from various local authorities and government sources interviews, were employed to gain data for this macro scale investigation. At the national level, secondary data from web sites and reports compiled by relevant central government offices were collected. At the local level, provincial, district, sub-district, and business offices were contacted regarding the collection of available data. In addition, the views of senior officers from almost every local administrative organisation were sought, particularly their impressions of changes in the area. Then, all of the statistics were extracted and data from the interviews compiled to suit the purposes of this study. Within this process, I was confronted by significant challenges related to the searching for, organising and use of these data.

In Thailand, one still finds conflict between statistics compiled at the national and local levels. The official statistics used in this thesis were obtained from ministries' offices at the national level such as the Bureau of Registration Administration, Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interior; National Statistics Office; Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board; and Office of Agricultural Economics, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. All of the statistics were retrieved from their web sites where the smallest unit of data is at the national and provincial levels, with the exception of the data on population retrieved from the Bureau of Registration Administration for which the data unit is at sub-district level. Some provincial and sub-district administrative offices have data on their web sites; but, most of that data included errors and required cross checking with relevant staff at each office. In such cases, national data are used: most of the statistics collected from local offices are omitted, with a few exceptions. Conflicting data, such as data related to both national and local are presented even though they are not exactly the same. However, they follow a similar direction and serve as a good indicator of trends.

Data at the local level were limited, scattered and had not been recorded and

computerised correctly. Most was kept in hard copy in the forms of annual reports and monthly record books: some had been put into storage. The data used here are drawn from manually entered numbers in spreadsheets. Different local offices had different ways of recording data. In some cases, changes of staff and re-location to new buildings resulted in the loss of data, making it even more difficult to compare. In addition, the provincial and the district level offices did not have data about the sub-district offices that came under them: such data could only be obtained from each sub-district office.

This was the case with statistics pertaining to land sales and number of rooms in dormitories. Changes of area were also reflected in these data. However, the Provincial Land Department, that organises and transfers money, does not organise and computerise the above data; and, raw data are withheld as the money is transferred to local organisations. Raw data has to be collected from 12 local administrative organisations; but, several do not computerise the data. A further form of statistical data collected from the local administrative organisations are the annual records of numbers of dormitory rooms. This also needed some data extraction.

Regarding background of the history of road development in Chiang Mai, details of the years of commencement and completion are neither compiled nor kept at the central level. Rather, they are scattered throughout several reports and known only by particular officials. Therefore, gaining this data required the assistance of officials who were prepared to make the effort and were willing to search for these reports.

Data about real estate in Chiang Mai had a similar problem. The Land Releasing Section, Chiang Mai Provincial Land Department has the authority to consider providing permits for land release mostly for housing estates. Thai law (2000) requires that any person or agency seeking to divide land into any 10 plots or more has first to obtain permission from the Land Department. This ruling applies to all real estate projects such as commercial complexes and gated communities, the latter being the most dominant on record. Project owners have to provide

standardised communal facilities such as roads and security. There are, however, cases where business owners seek to avoid extra expense on communal facilities; so, they sub-divide the land into several plots then divide it again in less than 10 plots of land and immediately transfer ownership to the individual buyers. Thus, the data shown in this thesis is not necessarily the exact number in reality. However, it can provide good relatively evidence of the transactions.

In addition, data on housing estates could not be treated as complete data due to data storing issues. The Land Release Act was only implemented in 2000; since then land officials started entering data in books and keeping relevant documents in cabinets. They began to computerise data in 2002, and all permit documents were kept in cabinets and entered in computers. Some were lost during the organisation process and when moving office. Data was recently centralised on the Land Department's web site in Bangkok. However, there is less data than in the Provincial Land Office. In addition, data from the web site in the form of records or lists cannot be used for analysis purposes. The re-entering of each record of data from the Provincial Land Department in Chiang Mai in a spreadsheet is required. The data presented here dates for December 2011 when these statistics were collected.

Third, the reality is that official demographic statistics are not entirely accurate due to the following two reasons: first, regarding the demographic data of each sub-district, it appears on the web site of the Ministry of Interior (The Bureau of Registration Administration 2012), that is, data from 1993 to the present; but, later some sub-districts were up-graded to municipality level. Many of them had to combine populations and areas of neighbouring sub-districts to meet the requirements. The web site shows data appertaining to both sub-districts and municipalities that share the same name but have populations divided among different administrative authorities. Due to these complications, it was a major task to compile, check and coordinate them into usable statistical form.

Another important point is that while it is clear that there is a large number of hidden populations in areas subject to high in-migration, this does not show in any

official statistics, the main reason being that many people do not officially register their names in their new places (both the permanent and temporary residents), especially those living in dormitories. Official demographic house and population numbers only recognise official registration whereas in reality there may be numbers of non-registered people living in the area. 'Registered houses' means houses in which a registered member may or may not be living in that house. People register houses when they build them in order to gain access to electricity and other facilities but they might not register their names to where they actually live. At time of local or national elections, they have to vote in the area in which their names are registered. In fact, this is quite a common phenomenon in Thailand and may be found in areas with a high rate of in-migration and in housing estate projects. People who have more than one house to rent out may physically move away from their extended family but do not 'move' their names. There may not be a survey of the actual people who live in the house. Moreover, some of the registered houses remain empty. This happens in cases such as the houses of elderly people who have either died or moved away to live with their children. However, the house numbers have not been cancelled. In the case study, there are 76 empty houses: this prevents one from obtaining the true numbers of people in the household, and data on in-migration and out-migration. Some local administrative organisations provide estimations of non-registered populations such as in-migrant workers in their areas, drawn from their assessments of increasing numbers of dormitories and housing estates. The National Statistics Office, Chiang Mai Province estimates that in 2010 approximately 80.8% of people will live in their registrations; 11.5% do not live in their registrations but are still in Chiang Mai; 5.2% live in Chiang Mai but have their names registered in the provinces; 1.7% are foreigners; and 0.8% are foreign migrant workers (National Statistical Office of Thailand 2012a).

Furthermore, one finds difficulty using official statistics to reflect population changes in each local administrative authority as some local authorities have up-

levelled from TAO⁴ to municipality, in the process annexing more area and people from neighbouring authorities. In addition, because some municipalities do not cover only one whole sub-district, they fail to keep consistent records of population changes. The official population statistics from the Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interior show statistics at the sub-district level, not at the local authority of the TAO and municipality. So, data appertaining to some municipalities do not match.

Fourth, presenting visual data in maps at the unit of sub-district proved a great challenge. To start with, in general there is no readymade map shown at this level. Moreover, one has difficulty using different data systems. The 12 local administrative organisations cover approximately 13 sub-districts. This is because the local administrative border and the sub-district border are not the same. In these 12 local administrative organisations of 6 districts, some are TAO and some are municipality.⁵ Some municipalities cover more than one sub-district or parts of a few sub-districts; therefore, data overlap with the sub-district map. Fortunately, the Provincial Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning has used a map of Chiang Mai for its sub-district boundary. Even though this GIS data is as yet incomplete, and cannot be taken as official, it helps when using other statistical data to visualise them in map form. Details of the covered area of each local organisation are shown in the table below.

⁴ TAO = Tambon (sub-district) Administrative Organisation. In 1994, concomitant with the decentralisation policy, sub-districts were transferred to become TAO, an autonomous organisation. The organisation's leader is directly elected by the people in the area. TAO can manage its own income (collected from the area such as land and other service taxes which are used for local development) without following a command from the government.

⁵ Sub-district Municipality (Municipality here) constitutes another autonomous organisation at the subdistrict level. It is densely populated and gains more income than the TAO. In general, a municipality covers a whole sub-district. However, some municipalities cover parts of several sub-districts. This can happen when one municipality is established and annexes some areas of the TAO or municipalities so that it reaches the criteria. Some qualified TAOs do not want to become municipalities. This depends on how people in the area will decide as taxes tend to increase and the administration will be further distanced from the people than the TAO.

Table 3.1: 12 local administrative organisations in 13 sub-districts of peri-urban Chiang Mai

Administrative organisation	Districts	Area covered
Chang Phueak TAO	Mueang	Part of Chang Phueak. Note: Chang Phueak is divided into 3 administrations, one TAO in the peri-urban zone and the other two in Chang Phueak and Nakorn Chiang Mai municipalities in the urban zone.
San Phi Suea TAO	Mueang	Whole sub-district
Don Kao TAO	Mae Rim	Whole sub-district
Nong Chom TAO	San Sai	Part of Nong Chom
San Sai Luang Municipality	San Sai	Parts of San Sai Luang, San Phranet, Pa Phai, and whole area of San Sai Noi
San Phranet Municipality	San Sai	Parts of San Phranet and San Sai Luang
San Klang TAO	San Kamphaeng	Whole sub-district
Chaiya Sathan Municipality	Saraphi	Whole sub-district
Nong Phueng Municipality	Saraphi	Whole Nong Phueng and part of Yang Noeng
Tha Wang Tan Municipality	Saraphi	Whole sub-district
San Phak Wan Municipality	Hang Dong	Whole sub-district
Nong Khwai TAO	Hang Dong	Whole sub-district

Apart from the challenges associated with procuring statistics to show in maps, several data were difficult to access and needed personal communication and willing local officers. Gaining access to statistical data at the local level required local

staff to search and compile the material. This took time and required follow up on more than one occasion. A good interview with the owner of a housing estate could be achieved through friends, or connections of friends; otherwise, it was difficult to gain valuable information. Base maps of sub-districts were also made available through good friendships. Making maps required the learning of map software, ArcGIS. Fortunately, student cohorts at the University of Sydney helped me reach a level of being able to use basic features in the program to present maps in this thesis. Thus, most of the maps that appear in this work were constructed by the author unless otherwise referenced.

In sum, even though collecting data at the macro level to gain a good picture of changes in the area posed some difficulties, valuable understandings and experience were gained. In addition, my acquiring of statistical data from the local officers may have encouraged them to personally start checking, using the data for their purposes in the future.

3.3 Chiang Mai



Figure 3.2: Map of Thailand

Chiang Mai, which is located in the north of Thailand, is the centre of all forms of development, business, education, transportation, health care services, tourism and culture. Its geographical landscape has attracted various groups of people to move into the area, especially into its urban and peri-urban zones. This has resulted in rapid urban expansion, gradually extending into rural areas. In this section, I will provide a background and factors relevant to the transformation of peri-urban Chiang Mai.

3.3.1 Location and Characteristics

Chiang Mai, which is located in the north of Thailand, is the country's second largest province (20,107 square kilometres) after Nakhon Ratchasima in the northeast. Its population totals almost 1.7 million people, making it the fifth most populous province of Thailand's 77 provinces. Chiang Mai has 25 districts and 204 sub-districts (Chiang Mai Province n.d.); Mueang, the central district of the province, is located about 700 kilometres from Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand.

Historically, Chiang Mai is more than 700 years old: it is almost 500 years older than Bangkok. An old Lanna Kingdom founded in 1296, it had close connections with Burma (now Myanmar) and Laos, especially through trading. Lanna was ruled by Burma from the mid 16th century to the late 18th century when the local Lanna leader was assisted by the rulers of the Thonburi kingdom and Rama I of the Chakri Dynasty of Bangkok to free Chiang Mai from Burma. Following this, Chiang Mai was loosely administered by Bangkok. In the early 20th century, when European colonialism expanded into the areas, all of the regional cities, including Chiang Mai, were annexed as provinces to Bangkok and became known collectively as Siam. Later, in 1939 this name was changed to Thailand. This annexation transformed the country into a unified, modern state, similar to the colonial countries. Since then, the national development of highways and railways has enabled Bangkok to secure power over the regions.

Geographically, the upper northern region of Thailand is mountainous; e.g. 80% of Chiang Mai is mountainous terrain (Chiang Mai Province n.d.) with several mountain ranges stretching from the north to the south. These ranges are mainly managed as 44 national conservation parks. The lowland of Chiang Mai lies approximately 310 metres above sea level: the highest mountain is 2,565 metres above sea level. Thus, Chiang Mai experiences cooler weather than other parts of the country. Ping, the main river in the area, is one of the major tributaries of the Chao Phraya River, the country's main river that flows from the north to the Gulf of Thailand. The plain area, which is small by comparison, lines the rivers and valleys.

It is used mostly for fertile agricultural purposes, and is of some importance to the urban and peri-urban zones.



Figure 3.3: Topographical map of Chiang Mai and the upper northern provinces, Thailand

3.3.2 Demography

Northern Thailand, which shares borders with Myanmar and Laos, is home to diverse ethnic minorities. The dominant ethnic minority groups in Chiang Mai are: the Karen, Hmong, Lahu, Akha and Shan. The table below shows data from the National Statistics Office (National Statistical Office of Thailand 2012b), indicating that there were 343,092 ethnic minority peoples in Chiang Mai in 2009, with some living in the urban and peri-urban districts of Mueang, Mae Rim and Hang Dong. Mae Rim and Hang Dong districts, which are partly in the hills area, have large areas containing many sub-districts. In 2009, in Mueang district, which is an urban area,

there were 2,507 ethnic minority people, most of whom came from the hills area to trade in Chiang Mai town.

Table 3.2: Ratio of ethnic minority peoples in Chiang Mai from 2001 to 2009

Districts	2001			2009		
	Total	Ethnicity	%	Total	Ethnicity	%
Whole province	1,600,850	239,077	14.93	1,632,548	343,092	21.02
Rural districts	959,291	229,645	23.94	966,564	330,788	34.22
Urban and peri-urban districts						
Mueang	260,961	2,428	0.93	238,460	2,507	1.05
Mae Rim	78,499	6,020	7.67	84,570	8,562	10.12
San Sai	95,168	-	-	113,499	-	-
San Kamphaeng	73,329	-	-	76,611	-	-
Saraphi	75,088	-	-	76,331	-	-
Hang Dong	58,514	984	1.68	76,513	1,235	1.61
sub total	641,559	9,432	1.47	665,984	12,304	1.85

Source: Ethnicity data is adapted from the National Statistical Office website (2012b)

Population data is extracted from Ministry of Interior website

Apart from large numbers of ethnic minority peoples, Chiang Mai has increasingly accommodated a significant number of foreign residents. Table 3.3 lists the foreign population in Chiang Mai who have official registration; that is, they either reside permanently or are long-term residents (for the year 2000 to 2010). It is likely, indeed may be assumed, that the majority of them resides or works in the urban and peri-urban zones. People from America, Europe, the Pacific, and some countries in Asia such as Japan and Singapore, reside in Chiang Mai either for business purposes or because they have Thai partners.

Most of the foreign residents from other countries in Asia, particularly from Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, are assumed to be labouring workers. The workers from Myanmar constitute the largest group of migrant workers in Thailand; and Chiang Mai is one of the top provinces in the country that

accommodates Burmese workers. Most migrant workers in Chiang Mai from Myanmar are members of the Shan group, commonly called Tai Yai, who speak a dialect related to Thai. They are mainly work in the construction sector. The number of migrant workers has increased considerably: approximately 80% of foreign workers are Asian. Thai labourers are not prepared to accept low wages; for this reason, Thai workers prefer to work in the developed countries. Burmese workers, who live near the border, have filled this labour gap. Another reason is that the Myanmar and Thai governments introduced a policy in 2007 to facilitate workers from three neighbouring countries, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos to work in Thailand legally (Office of Foreign Workers Administration 2009). As long as these workers have passports and register as workers in Thailand, they will be protected under the national labour law. Thus, they can work continuously with extensions every 2 years.

Table 3.3: Populations residing in Chiang Mai by nationality between 2000 and 2010

Nationalities	Year	Year
	2000	2010
Thai	1,437,492	1,619,112
Foreigners	62,635	117,929
Asia	28,632	56,045
Myanmar	(13,208)	(44,844)
America	630	2,120
Europe	718	3,547
Pacific	147	285
Others	20,870	28,851
Unknown	11,638	27,080
Total	1,500,127	1,737,041

Source: Adapted from the National Statistical Office website (2012b)

It is clear that Chiang Mai is home (either temporarily or permanently) to diverse groups of people. It also attracts Thai people from other parts of the country due to its rapid economic development.

3.3.3 Economy

Chiang Mai has become a major centre in the north for various reasons. For example, Chiang Mai has 12 universities and 8 international schools. Chiang Mai University was the first regional university of Thailand to be established (in 1964). As regards health care, Chiang Mai has the best medical facilities after Bangkok. As well, it has 17 consulates to serve foreign visitors and residents (Chiang Mai Creative City 2012). In the area of transportation, trains reached Chiang Mai in the 1920s: the airport was established in the 1950s. In the 1970s, it became an international airport and later became a regional node for international transportation. Because the roads in the area are well maintained and continuously developed, Chiang Mai has attracted huge numbers of people including tourists, business people and academics and other intellectuals. However, the focus of development in general has mostly been upon the inner city area where most of the business and academic institutes are concentrated. Development in the surrounding district towns has been slow.

Chiang Mai, as well as other remote provinces located some distance from Bangkok, has agriculture as a leading economic sector. However, as Table 3.4 shows the GPP (Gross Provincial Product) of Chiang Mai has for a long time been dominated by the service sector that are trading, real estate, education, finance, tourism, and education (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board 2012). Nevertheless, these services activities are very much concentrated in the urban areas, with tourism prominent in rural areas. Agriculture does not contribute much in term of returns due to (a) the low price of the products; and (b) to the fact that most products are sold in raw form.

Table 3.4: Gross Provincial Product at current market prices (reference year 1995)

Sector	1981	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010p
Agriculture	3,509	2,911	5,758	7,033	7,516	19,387	35,242
Industry	1,937	2,905	5,422	14,507	11,009	18,657	26,760
Services	7,895	12,272	26,052	39,450	47,436	69,086	85,559
G P P	13,340	18,088	37,232	60,990	65,962	107,130	147,561

Source: NESDB with assistance of its staff who recalculated the most up-to-date data.
 Note: Industry includes mining, manufacturing, construction, and electricity and water supply; services include trading, real estate, education, finance, tourism, and education

Data obtained from the Office of Agriculture, Chiang Mai Province (Office of Agriculture 2011) show that Chiang Mai has 12,566,911 rai (20,107 square kilometres) of land in total. In year 2009, Chiang Mai had only 1.45 million rai of farm holding land or 11.57% of the total area. Of this farming land, approximately 35% was in irrigated zones, with most of the farm land dependent upon rain-fed practice.

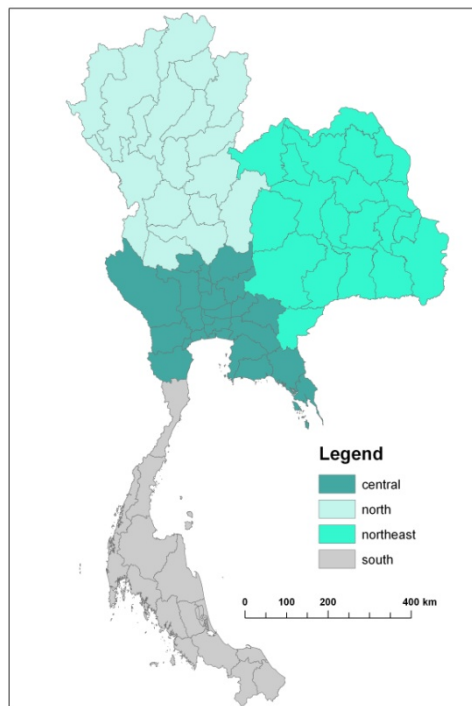


Figure 3.4: Regions in Thailand

On average, the farmland holding size for the whole country in 2010 was approximately 26 rai per farming household, while regionally the centre had 37, the north 25, the south 24, and the northeast 23 rai per farming household. However, among 76 provinces of Thailand, Chiang Mai is the fifth rank of the provinces that have the least area per farming household, with 13.25 rai (Office of Agricultural Economics 2012). All these 5 provinces that have the least land per farming household are in the north because of the physical valley landscape of the

area with limited plains areas.

Concerning farming area of Chiang Mai, paddy, which constitutes the main agricultural fields, is mostly for domestic consumption or trading in Chiang Mai and with neighbouring provinces. With the exception of orchards, farming area in Chiang Mai in general showed little increase over the last decade (2000-2010); in fact, farming land of all type steadily decreased. Rice fields have shown overall decrease, perhaps most drastically in the urban and peri-urban zones (see Table 3.5). Only in San Kamphaeng district have rice fields increased. An official at the Chiang Mai Provincial Agricultural Office explains that since the government has introduced the policy to support rice farming, it has encouraged farmers in sub-districts distant from the urban and peri-urban zones to expand the rice fields (Napatarawimon Yingyote 2012)⁶.

Table 3.5: Change of rice-planted areas by district between the years 2000 and 2010

Districts	Rice area (rai)		Change	Orchard area (rai)		Change
	2000	2010	%	2000	2010	%
Mueang	3,721	2,479	-33.38	4,917	2,223	-54.79
Mae Rim	20,195	19,404	-3.92	7,360	10,280	39.67
San Sai	34,009	21,325	-37.3	9,304	11,596	24.63
San Kamphaeng	35,100	50,584	44.11	3,355	4,275	27.42
Saraphi	12,117	5,621	-53.61	24,970	26,933	7.86
Hang Dong	22,291	15,522	-30.37	10,602	16,712	57.63
Urban and peri-urban districts	127,433	114,935	-9.81	60,508	72,019	19.02
Rural districts	425,811	400,851	-5.86	267,381	388,791	45.41
Whole province	553,244	515,786	-6.77	327,889	460,810	40.54

Source: Adapted from web site of Office of Agriculture, Chiang Mai Province (2011)

In addition, labour used in the agricultural sector is also decreasing rapidly due to improved agricultural technology (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board Northern Region 2004). An interview undertaken at the

⁶ I suspect that this figure is erroneous nonetheless, but this local authority believes it is correct.

Provincial Office of Agriculture, Chiang Mai revealed that rice farming will continue to decrease because the major plains areas in the peri-urban zones are being converted into residential areas. Moreover, some paddy lands adjacent to the residential areas have problems with blocked water channels. As a result, some farmers are converting their rice fields into orchards. Additionally, in 2015, when the region becomes part of the ASEAN Economic Community, and ceases charging tax at the border, cheaper rice from neighbouring countries will dominate the rice market in Thailand. Thus, even though the price of the rice is high in 2012, it is not stable, being dependent on the policy of each government. Therefore, rice fields in Chiang Mai may keep decreasing (Pichet Chaiyarit 2012).

Regarding the current farming situation in the district level, the Table 3.6 shows that among the total number of 663,240 households, 164,512 households are farmers (or 39.26%). Almost half of total households are crowded into the districts adjacent to Chiang Mai city which are Mueang, Mae Rim, San Sai, San Kamphaeng, Saraphi, and Hang Dong districts. However, only 11.52% of these households are farmers. Unfortunately, there are no statistics relative to previous decades showing the changes in farming in each zone.

Table 3.6: Farming land and households in different district zones

District	Total area	Farm holding land	% of farming	Total HH	Farming HH	% of farming
	rai	Rai	area			HH
Urban and peri-urban districts	908,419	239,008	26.31	320,160	36,884	11.52
Mueang	95,244	9,517	9.99	132,796	2,441	1.84
Mae Rim	277,271	47,573	17.16	33,760	7,069	20.94
San Sai	178,137	59,232	33.25	52,310	8,077	16.06
San Kamphaeng	123,646	51,784	41.88	34,230	8,402	23.62
Saraphi	60,911	32,379	53.16	30,626	5,073	16.56
Hang Dong	173,210	38,523	22.24	36,438	5,815	15.96
Rural districts	11,646,512	1,596,417	13.71	343,080	134,697	39.26
TOTAL	12,566,911	1,835,425	14.61	663,240	164,512	24.80

Source: Adapted from the web site of the Chiang Mai Provincial Agricultural Office

Data: Agricultural land and household from Office of Agriculture, Chiang Mai Province, 15 February 2011; total households from Ministry of Interior at 31 December 2010

In sum, over its long history, Chiang Mai has established cultural distinction from the other parts of the country. The north, including Chiang Mai, has been regarded by the centre as having sophisticated traditions, with people of local background and attached to agriculture. The northern dialect is perceived as a pleasant dialect, second only to the official central Thai, according to what is often shown in the Thai mass media. In addition, due to rich natural landscape and enjoyable temperature, urban people from outside generally regard Chiang Mai as more impressive than other parts of the country for living and working in. They bring with them economic capital for investment in housing, and moreover the rapid increase in land prices generated by the popularity of the area for housing also generates new capital amongst local landholders who have been selling off inherited

agricultural land. Furthermore, the city and countryside are located very close to each other; within half an hour, people can commute from a busy shopping area in the inner city to areas of the countryside with the paddy fields, orchards, mountains, waterfalls and conservation areas. Apart from this, Chiang Mai is also a northern centre for business and development facilities. Therefore, for all these reasons, Chiang Mai has attracted people from various social groups and places.

3.4 Peri-urban Chiang Mai

The above admixture of urbanity and rurality has created certain characteristic landscapes, both physically and socially peculiar to peri-urban Chiang Mai. There are particular influential factors that determine the characteristics. One of the significant results of peri-urban development has been the in-migration of different social groups. In this section, I will discuss the transformation process of peri-urban Chiang Mai, focusing mainly on significant factors of the in-migration of several social groups into the area, and how they are connected to the city by road networks, natural landscapes and backgrounds, and the mega development projects of each area. These conditions have transformed the former agrarian landscape and rural economy of the area into a fast growing peri-urban zone based upon an urban-oriented economy and a mixture of social classes. More details about the transformations and class are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

In order to understand the in-migration that increasingly defines the peri-urban zone around Chiang Mai, it is also useful to consider the wider context that lies behind such migration. Perhaps the most generalisable political-economic context of peri-urban growth is uneven development in Thailand and even between Thailand and its neighbours. On the one hand, we see movement in of those with limited economic opportunities in more remote rural areas and who are seeking to move out of agriculture. This also extends to migrants from Myanmar. On the other hand, the affluence of the city and the values that go with it help to explain the movement of middle class people into the peri-urban countryside. Again, this extends to foreigners as well as to those born in Thailand.

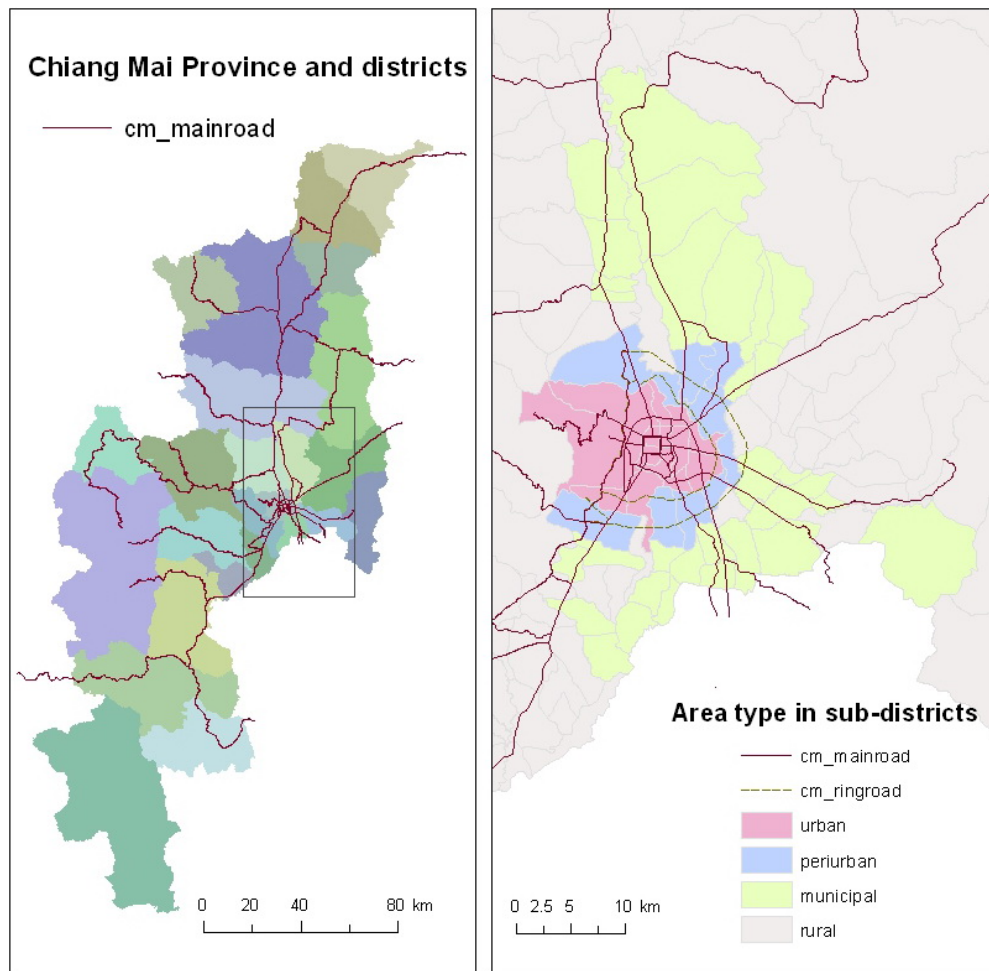


Figure 3.5: Maps of districts and area types in peri-urban Chiang Mai

In this study, the area under consideration is divided into 4 zones: urban, peri-urban, municipal and rural zones. The urban zone covers most of Mueang District in the core of the inner city: the peri-urban area is the area surrounding the inner city. ‘Municipal’ refers to the sub-districts located next to the peri-urban area that gained municipality status when they reached the required level of population and income. This municipal zone has the potential to be incorporated into the peri-urban zone; therefore, it is split from the rural area. Several TAO are now slowly gaining more income and will soon become municipalities.

3.4.1 Road development

The road system in Chiang Mai city is shaped like a spider web. The inner city in the middle square is surrounded by a moat dating back to the old Lanna. Roads stretched out from the centre square to the surrounding districts. Three ring roads connect the main roads together. This road network, together with the rapid economic growth of Thailand as a whole, will determine the direction of physical growth of Chiang Mai. These main roads have been built by the central government as part of the overall growth plan for Chiang Mai. The local sub-district authorities are mainly responsible for improvement of small roads in the villages.

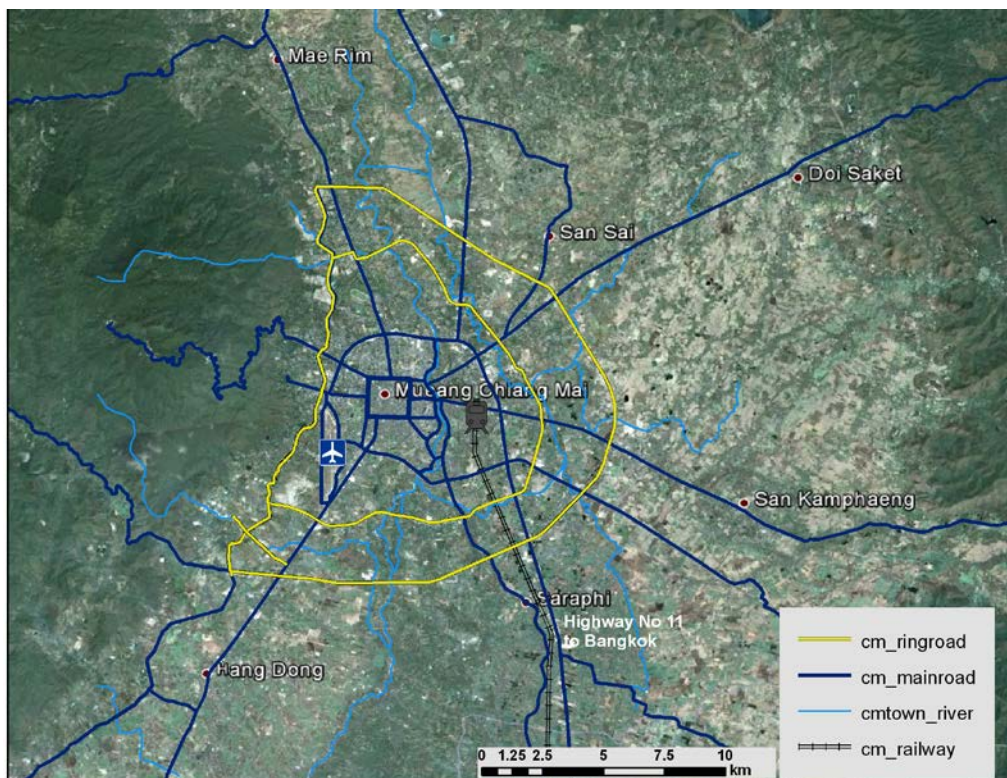


Figure 3.6: Map of main roads and ring roads in peri-urban Chiang Mai

Before Chiang Mai was annexed by Bangkok, there was already a road connecting the northern and central regions. This two-lane road, which stretched from the central part to Myanmar, was built in 1895. The northern national highway (Road No. 11) reached Chiang Mai in 1968. At that time, the only main roads connecting Chiang Mai city and its surrounding districts and neighbouring provinces

were in basic condition. These old routes to Bangkok in the south were linked to the road to Mae Hong Son Province and Myanmar. The road to the west led to Samoeng District; the road to Fang District in the northwest; the road to Chiang Rai Province in the northeast; and, the road to San Kamphaeng District in the east. These main roads were gradually improved, became paved and were expanded to accommodate more lanes from the late-1900s onward.

Later ring roads were steadily developed. A Provincial Highway official explains a common process of road planning, that the Chiang Mai Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning (DPT), sets a rough plan for the physical development direction of the town such as zoning for commercial, industrial, residential, agricultural, and conservation areas, and to include tentative new roads in the plan as a guideline. The DPT sends this plan to all of the relevant provincial government ministries. Regarding transportation development, the Ministry of Transportation, when requested by the province, will consider the possibility and construct the road. The road line follows the DPT's guideline but has to adjust and negotiate within the expropriation process at ground level. Agricultural areas are more likely to be converted as they are cheaper than business or residential areas. Land owners will receive money according to official rate of each land type, which is updated every few years. However, because the official rate is lower than the market rate, negotiation can take a long time and affect its cost, shape and continuity (Somchai Ingkatirawat 2012).

To date, there are three ring roads in Chiang Mai which were built at different times. The inner one, which is about 7 kilometres in length, was built to connect with the main highway (Road No. 11) and completed in 1977. It is within a radius of approximately two to three kilometres from the inner city. The middle ring road which comes under the Department of Rural Roads is 26 kilometres in length. The outer ring roads are 32 kilometres long and come under the Department of Highways. The middle and outer ring roads come within a radius of approximately 3-7 and 7-10 kilometres from the inner city, respectively.

Both the Provincial Bureau of Highways and the Provincial Department of Rural Roads, which were jointly in charge of the construction of these roads, received their budgets at the same time in 1993. However, they took approximately a decade to complete (2005). The middle ring road was built continuously section by section, starting from the north, then to the east and finally to the south. The outer ring road, on the other hand, started in the south and continued to the north, being constructed in somewhat patchy style. This was because some sections required long negotiation for land expropriation. In addition, the outer ring road was first built temporarily from asphalt and without road shoulders. The shoulders expansion and surface improvement were completed later. The development around both of the ring roads occurred in directions related to their different locations of road completion.

Both the middle and outer ring roads have an irrigation canal road that joins them together. The canal road runs north to south from Mae Rim District in the north, through Mueang and Hang Dong districts, and ends at San Patong District. This road was developed from the old two-lane road into four lanes in two sections. The upper part connects Chiang Mai city with the sporting complex built for the SEA Games (Southeast Asian Games) held in Chiang Mai in 1995. Then in 2004, the lower section, from Suthep Road to the outer ring road at the intersection with the road to Samoeng District in the west, was extended from a one-sided two-lane road at the city side to four-lane roads on both sides of the canal. This was to facilitate the government's Night Safari project and a vast national Royal Flora Expo that opened in 2006. Having these mega projects in the area also brought transportation and rapid development to the area. The road along the canal at the last section has been improved on one side of the canal to the city further down to San Patong District in the south. The road on the other side of the canal in this section is already subject to planning. During my interview with a Chiang Mai Highways official in early 2012, he revealed that a discussion of initiating the new fourth and fifth ring roads had started during a visit by the cabinet. These ring roads would be approximately two to five kilometres from each other. However, as yet there has been no official announcement; but, this news has already increased interest in the land market.

At the time of this research, the area along the long-established main roads connecting Chiang Mai to other districts and provinces had been completely occupied by business groups and some housing estates. The newer ring roads and the canal road are mainly dominated by recently completed residential estates and diverse commercial business buildings. Businesses include shops, restaurants, garages, entertainment facilities and schools designed to serve the new residents. However, these ring roads took a decade to be completed; so, there is still some temporary use of areas along the road, especially those located far from intersections, communities and markets. These businesses take the form of small, temporary thatched roof stalls such as plant shops, small local food outlets, karaoke bars and local drinking kiosks rented out from the real owners, who have occupied the land but do not as yet have an urgent development plan. These small stalls are somewhat characteristic of new road development in Thailand. When the area becomes more crowded, these temporary stalls will gradually be replaced with permanent low-rise commercial buildings.



Figure 3.7: Temporary shops along the ring road (2013)

In this picture, they are small restaurants and behind there are houses in one gated community.



Figure 3.8: Temporary shops along the ring road (2013)

In this picture, they are karaoke, car care, and small accommodation.

As regards the zones located away from the main and ring roads, including areas around the local communities, the continued existence of disused or remaining active agricultural field was noted. However, there is a strong likelihood that most of these remaining agricultural fields have already been bought and belong to outsiders. With reference to the existing active rice fields, normally it is the case that the land is below road level, and, because the owners have yet to fill it up, they rent it out to local landless farmers, many of whom are ethnic minorities.

In cases of land development in newly-developed areas, the usual process is that business groups are already aware of impending development of transportation routes through their connections with local politicians and officials during the planning phase. Meanwhile other groups, including the local people, tend to hear by word of mouth or when they are faced with the actual construction, and even then, the details remain unclear. Business groups, especially the housing estates, usually aim for a large area. This means that many small pieces of land, mostly agricultural fields, are compiled as one whole section, large enough to accommodate a housing estate

project. However, due to the nature of the valleys in the north, the household holding size of farming land is quite small; therefore, buyers need to recruit local agents so that they do not have to cope with complications such as price negotiation or unwilling land owners. There are many cases where some land owners, especially those whose lands are in the middle of other pieces of land owned by persons keen to sell, want to keep the lands but their neighbours and or the local land agents encourage or sometimes force them to sell and in this way everyone receives money. The shape of the gated communities is hardly a neat straight line; it is rather a zigzag pattern following the shape of the rice fields formed by water channels following land contours. Most of the housing estate groups obtain permission from the province, then fill up their lands and start construction. Some owners have kept their land for a while and rent it out to local or landless ethnic minority farmers. Then again, there are cases of individual buyers who buy land for speculation. Some sell the land quickly while others keep it as a long term investment. They rent out the land for some years until the land price reaches their expectations.

However, the construction of ring roads was not the sole reason why outsiders bought land in this zone. An earlier, substantial number of outsiders bought land in the area during the national economic boom. When the cold war in the region ended, Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan (1998-1991) announced his leading regional economic policy to transform mainland Southeast Asia from the battlefield to the marketplace. Several infrastructure projects were approved as Thailand became the fifth Asian tiger, along with South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan. Land speculation occurred country-wide but more heavily in well-developed provinces and cities like Chiang Mai, especially around the peri-urban zone. At the time, only main roads connected the city to the districts, but people believed that Chiang Mai would grow rapidly. From interviews with several local authorities, they recalled that a number of business groups, and middle class people from big cities like Bangkok and Chiang Mai, bought considerable amounts of land at the time. Business groups procured big plot of land mainly for housing estate development. Some were gradually built and some are now abandoned land or active rice fields.

There was another type of land trading at that time. Several land agents would organise affordable land plots and sell them to individual middle class urbanites. They developed land by buying plots from villagers, cleared and filled the land up, then divided it into smaller sizes with proper shapes rendering them both practical and affordable for individual buyers. Most individual buying at that time was for investment. Some buyers, especially those from other cities, had not even seen the land when they bought it. Some of this land was later sold. Some still lies abandoned and has become a problem for local administrative organisations when there are cases of fire and garbage dumping. Some of the individual buyers include officials or lecturers in Chiang Mai who aim to make them their own residences after their retirement.

3.4.2 Demographic changes

As a result of road development in peri-urban Chiang Mai, residential areas and urbanity have expanded rapidly. This is evidenced in the demographic change which shows close relations with periods of road development. In addition, as the urban areas have been expanded, household sizes have changed drastically.

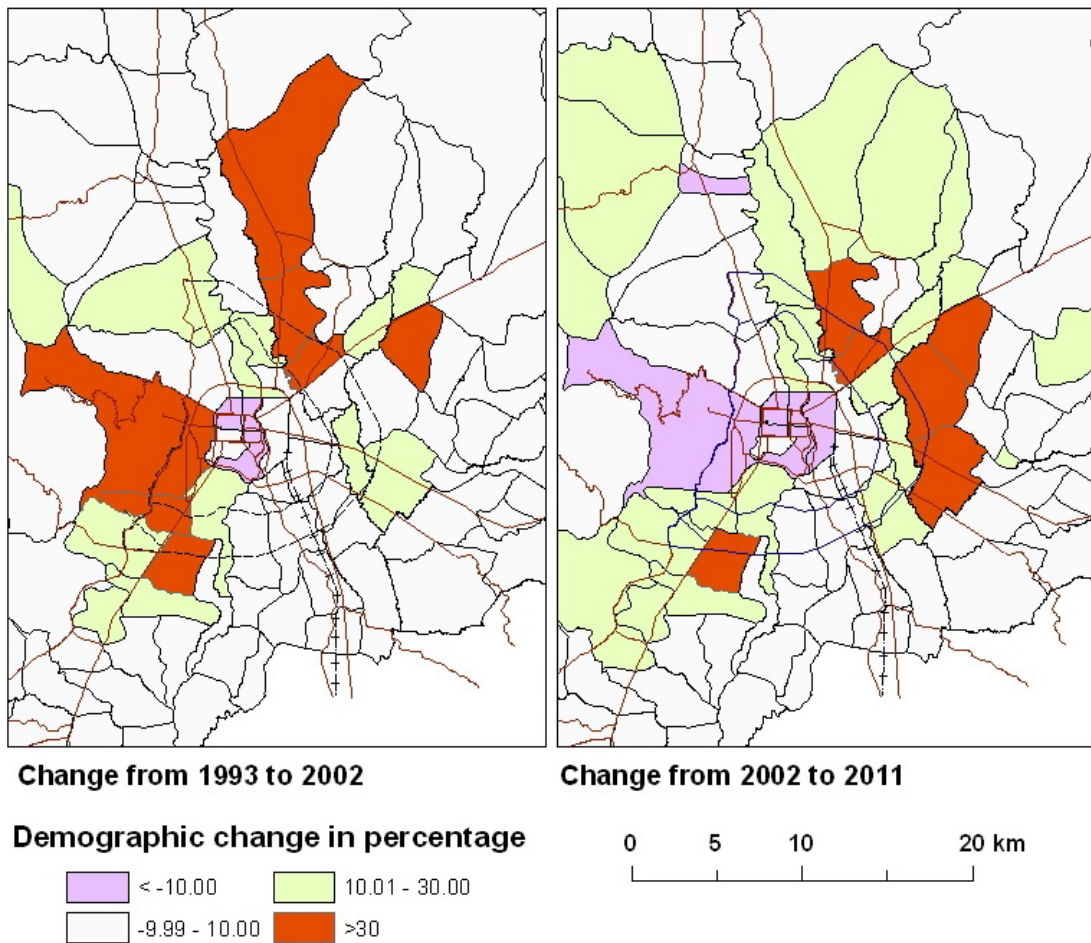


Figure 3.9: Map of demographic change in each sub-district

From the above maps, it may be seen from that demographic change occurred between from 1993 and 2002, before the middle and outer ring roads were completed. The area the main roads in the north and in areas in the west, especially near the urban and south areas, increased more than 30% while population in the inner city or urban zone decreased in some parts. Then, in 2011, when the ring roads were finally completed (2005), the peri-urban area on the east, which marked the final section of ring road construction, increased significantly while population growth in the earlier high growth areas (in 2002) was slowing down. This high population growth section in the east and northeast in San Sai has so many housing estate projects under construction that population growth is rapidly burgeoning.

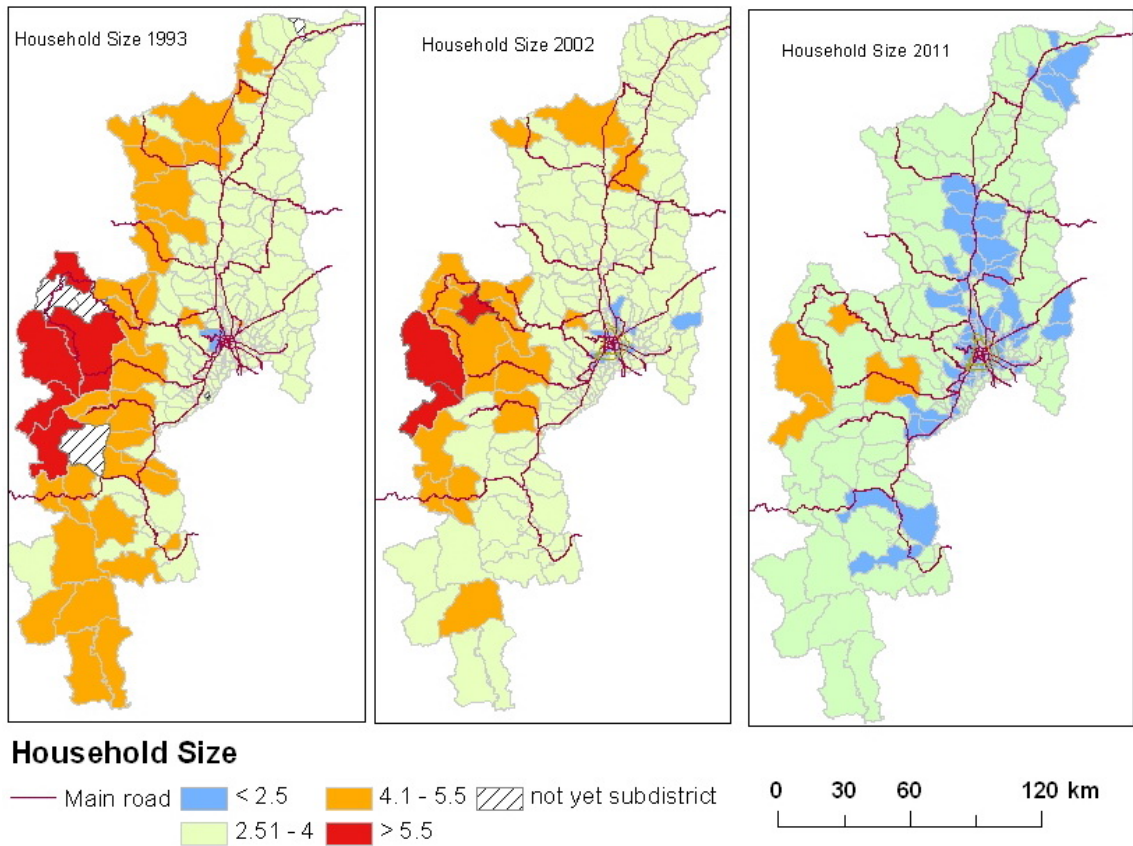


Figure 3.10: Maps show changing household size in each sub-district

It is clear from the above map that household sizes for almost the whole province are getting smaller (marked by the lighter colours, especially the areas in the urban, peri-urban zones and the area along the main road in the north). This may imply that ways of living and occupations have changed. Agriculture is less labour intensive; and former farmers or their children are changing their occupations to off-farm activities. Regarding the urban and peri-urban areas, there is an additional important factor of the high rate of in-migration. Urban dwellers tend to have smaller sized households than farmers. Many couples do not have a child and some dwellers remain single. This point will be discussed further in the case study in the following chapter.

3.4.3 Physical characteristics and conditions of peri-urban area

Apart from the transportation networks that heavily influence demographic change in the peri-urban zone, each particular area in peri-urban Chiang Mai has some distinct physical characteristics and conditions that determine the decision-making of certain groups of newcomers who migrate into the area.

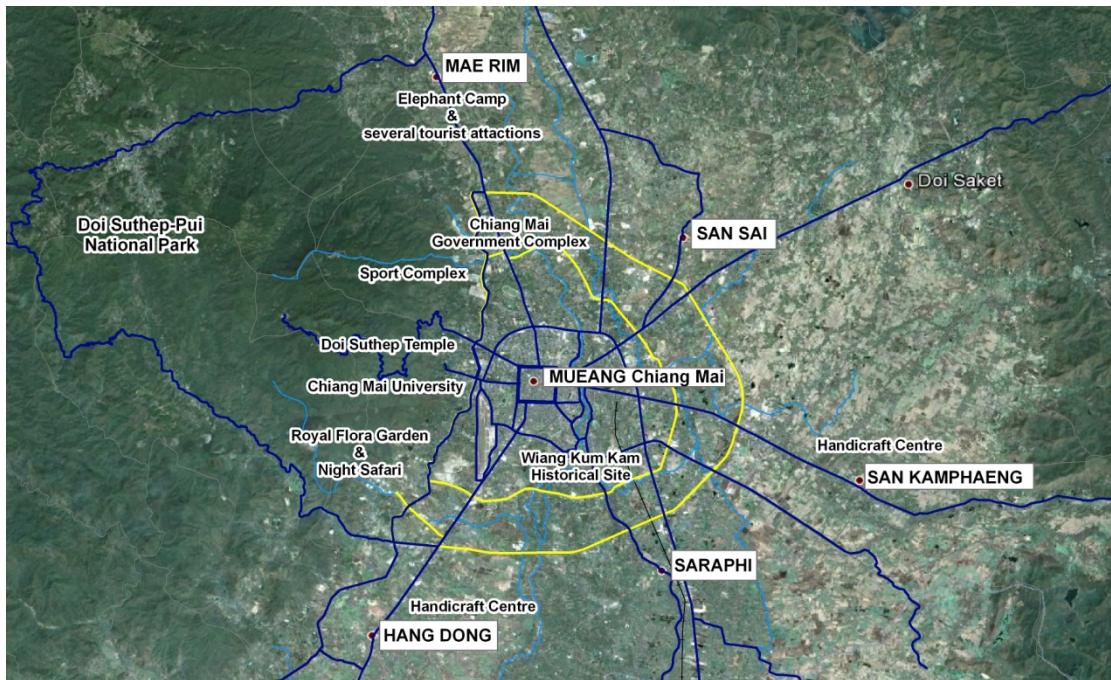


Figure 3.11: Physical landscape and important attractions in peri-urban Chiang Mai

The above topographical map shows the physical landscape and important attractions of urban and peri-urban zones. The inner city is located in the plains area, very much to the west near the foothills of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park. Several important places including Provincial Government Complex, Doi Suthep Temple, Chiang Mai University, Royal Flora Garden, Night Safari and the airport are also located on the west side of the city, making the west of Chiang Mai more crowded than other parts of the plains area.

Local administrative authorities confirmed in interviews that not only in the peri-urban zone, but also in another 3 northern sub-districts of Mae Rim District,

areas in valleys at the edge and foothills of Doi Suthep-Pui ranges, and the rivers that flow through the areas, provide a very attractive landscape for more affluent people undertaking lifestyle in-migration. The National Park in the above Figure, which is surrounded by road, is located in the north of Mae Rim District and extends to the west, and down in a circle to Hang Dong District in the south. Some ethnic minority villages are located here. The area is hilly and cooler than lowland Chiang Mai, and several Royal Projects are helping the villagers to grow different varieties of winter fruit and vegetables. There are also several tourist attractions, elephant camps, gardens, attractive resorts, restaurants and coffee shops dispersedly throughout the area. Urban upper to middle class groups and foreigners, often from Bangkok, have established second homes here. They come to stay, albeit only sometimes during the winter each year. Some retired urban middle class families, who can work from home such as artists and writers and do not need to travel to town very often, prefer to have their houses far from town and closer to nature.

Regarding the area in the peri-urban zone located at the foothills of Mae Rim District, it was noted that this area, along with part of Don Kaeo sub-district and the whole of Chang Phueak TAO, belong to the Army and the Treasury Department and are mainly used either as government offices or residences for their officials. Therefore, there are no business projects or housing estate developments in this area. In addition, the upper hill area of Chang Phueak sub-district is in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park. Hmong communities lived there before the government declared it a national park. This area has been negotiated between the state and the local communities and land use here is strictly for expansion.

Parts of Mae Rim District, Don Kaeo, and San Phi Suea and Chang Phueak sub-districts in Mueang District of the peri-urban zone are also located in this attractive landscape and in close distance to the city and Chiang Mai University. From some areas around the Ping River and its streams one has a beautiful view of mountains and river. The areas attracted many urban middle class people, among them university lecturers, of whom have now retired and live in the area.

In the town area of this zone, several budget dormitories are available for working class groups who work in the area or commute to the city. In the mid-2000s, a business group from Bangkok bought a huge piece of land in the area; but, as yet it has not been developed so it has been rented out for farming. In addition, in 1990, the provincial centre was moved from the inner city to Don Kaeo, and later the border was re-demarcated to come under the Chang Phueak sub-district. Therefore, a number of officials reside in the area. The local authority also suggested that residential areas have replaced approximately 60% of rice fields in the past and that now there is only 2% of rice field left. This change happened steadily but was significant approximately 10-15 years ago. The first generation of housing estate in Don Kaeo, which appeared in the mid-1970s, was mostly for officials and teachers who worked in the city. This housing estate development started prior to other areas in the peri-urban zone as it was located very close to the city. Construction became widespread in the late-1990s. The authority estimated that approximately half of those living in the area now are outsiders.

In the northeast and east of the peri-urban zone (Nong Chom, San Sai Luang, and San Phranet sub-districts) is San Sai District, a vast plains area with a good irrigation system for rice farming. Some of its areas can grow two seasonal rice crops each year. The ring roads in this area were part of the late section of development, and for this reason, the area has undergone considerable large-scale change. San Sai District's agricultural fields have now been converted into several real estate projects. The mountains can be seen from this area, but as they are some distance away, the area does not attract many upper middle class people. However, there have been a few cases where middle class families have bought rice fields that have been partly

filled in, and built houses and made gardens. In addition, they have rented out some rice fields to enjoy them as views.

San Kamphaeng District in the east is an old community area with a long-established road network from the city. The district town is well known as a tourist attraction, including for its various handicraft factories, its ceramics, silk, silverwares and wooden furniture. The district is urban, peri-urban and rural as some of its sub-districts are agricultural. San Klang sub-district is more urban, with only small areas of rice fields. It has 7 large to medium scale handicraft factories and 2 small factories. Most of the local people are wage labourers. They work in the local factories, in the service or tourist sections in the area, and in Chiang Mai city. Most of the housing estates were constructed after the middle ring road in this area was completed in 2000. The rice fields rapidly disappeared few years later. The rice fields that remain in the area mainly belong to local well off families who have sold parts of their land. Large numbers of dormitories serve the workers in the area.

Saraphi District is a long established area with old road connections. It is located in the southeast and is a border between Chiang Mai and Lamphun province where Lamphun contains a big industrial estate in the north. Therefore, numbers of workers from both provinces travel to work there. This zone is also well known for its longan orchards. In Nong Phueng sub-district, 70% of the total agricultural land in the area is in longan orchards and 30% in rice fields. This is because the area lacks an irrigation system so it is not suitable for rice farming. During the period of high land selling and buying rates, many of its Longan trees were cut down. In the Tha Wang Tan and Nong Phueng sub-districts, an archaeological site called Wiang Kum Kam is subjected to ministerial orders that limit the types of business and the height of its buildings. The area around the archaeological site in Nong Phueng sub-district in particular, is adjacent to Nong Hoi, an old crowded urban area along the Chiang Mai-Lamphun road. Nong Phueng has become an extension of Chiang Mai city. Small factories, shops and additional residential places have been built for people who commute to work in both Chiang Mai city and Lamphun. Chaiya Sathan sub-district has 4 main roads surrounding the area; the national highway No. 11 Chiang Mai-

Lampang, Chiang Mai-San Kam Phaeng Road, and two ring roads. Nowadays, the area is being rapidly developed. Regarding landownership, it is estimated that approximately 30%-40% of land in Chaiya Sathan is sold to outsiders.

San Phak Wan and Nong Khwai sub-districts in Hang Dong District are located to the south of Chiang Mai city. This area does not have an efficient irrigation scheme as lots of water is extracted by resort and tourist businesses upstream. Farmers depend mostly on rain fed agriculture. This zone has a nice scenic view of mountains, in particular Doi Suthep temple, which stands on top of a hill. In addition, it is very convenient in transportation from 2 main roads in parallel, Chiang Mai-Hangdong road and the canal road. Moreover, the canal road from Nong Khwai to San Patong District in the south has recently been completed, attracting more housing estates into the area. The canal road that was improved in 2005 to serve mega projects of Royal Flora Garden and Night Safari has been a key factor of land development. The case study is also located in this zone.

In sum, apart from road access, the particular locations and physical landscapes of each of the above areas have been crucial in determining how each social group has established itself in places or have opted to reside. For example, areas around the National Park in the north and west to southwest, which are hilly and have attractive views where road development is advanced, have drawn and been occupied by more affluent groups. The new road development areas in the east, and the mega projects that have followed, have also attracted in-migration by both residents and workers.

3.4.4 Patterns of development and change in peri-urban Chiang Mai

Interviews with local authorities and observation of the above areas have revealed some common patterns of how the peri-urban zone has been transformed. Road connections and mega development projects have been the key conditions. Before the ring roads were constructed (between the mid-1990s and 2005), the main roads connecting Chiang Mai and its neighbouring districts were the main routes of

transportation. A few dirt roads were used to commute between the areas. While areas along the main roads were developed, other areas remained rural. Gray, who undertook a study of peri-urban Chiang Mai in 1990, before the middle and outer ring roads were built, described the area as ‘mainly agricultural’. She noted field of rice and orchards. In areas that had good irrigation, people grew two crops of rice; in the dry season, some grew soybean. In addition, people worked as wage labourers in the fields and in service sector jobs such as construction, shops and garages. Groups of young workers commuted to work on the Lamphun industrial estate (Gray 1990).

The ring roads brought major changes to peri-urban Chiang Mai, changing its rural economy from an agriculture-based to an increasingly urban-oriented economy depending mainly on manufacturing, trade, and especially the service sector. Many local administrative organisation authorities said that they could approximately calculate when the rice fields disappeared and were replaced by housing estate projects in the area. Nowadays, they estimate that only approximately 10% of the remaining rice fields are owned by local people.

The large remaining rice fields in the peri-urban zone are in part owned by a few affluent families; but, most are owned by outside business people who bought the lands on speculation or for future housing estate development. These paddy fields are farmed annually by villagers who are mostly from outside, including landless ethnic minorities from areas located approximately 20-50 kilometres from the fields. These farmers pay a small rental fee of 500-1000 baht or 10 thang⁷ per rai, perhaps nothing at all in a few cases. This is also in the interests of the owner to have their lands cleared annually. There are cases where Hmong families travel approximately 150 kilometres from the hills to rent rice fields in San Phak Wan, suggesting that agriculture has become minimal vis-a-vis the local economy. However, recently the price of rice has been increasing, resulting in fierce competition in some cases. Local farmers living near the area have become re-interested in farming and are replacing some of the ethnic minority farmers.

⁷ one thang is equivalent to 20 litres of rice



Figure 3.12: Sign for selling a big plot of rice fields (approximately 11.50 hectares) along the canal road (2013).

Hmong farmers from Khun Wang (110 kilometres from Chiang Mai town) have farmed here for almost ten years.



Figure 3.13: Hmong farmers transplanting rice in a field along the outer ring road (2012)

Local authorities state that local people do not have a problem with people selling the land and not continuing their farming. In fact, a number of locals plan to sell their lands to outsiders but are waiting to get a better price. During a period of extensive land selling and buying, there was a popular saying: "*kon meuang khai din seu lhek* (steel), *jek* (Chinese Thai or people from other provinces) *khai lhek seu din*" meaning villagers sell land to buy cars while other people sell steel or construction materials. In other words, urban people buy land. Almost every farmer still farming is old now and farms mainly for domestic consumption. The authorities estimate that ten years from now, there will be no more rice farmers in this area.

The younger generation are better educated than previously, so they have more diverse options for occupations that are less tiring and bring a regular income to families. Thus, they are less inclined to work on farms. Off-farm workers have been supporting their older family members and keep farming activities viable.

Interviews with local authorities suggested that generation, education and jobs are highly relevant. People in their 50s, who have only basic primary school education, run private businesses at home such as small grocery stores or dormitories for rent. In the villages, many get money from selling their lands. People in their 40s, who mostly have attained high school education level, often work in the manufacturing or service sectors in town. Some sew garments at home and others become involved in trading. Increasingly, young people in their 30s (or less) are university educated and able to obtain work with regular salaries.

In the past, parents, especially those in the countryside, saw no future in being farmers. Their incomes were not secure and farming had natural risks. In addition, as there was welfare, farmers had no option but to stand on their own two feet. Therefore, where possible, they try to support their children's higher education. Frequently, parents sell their land to fund their offspring's education with the expectation that the latter will become government officials with secure jobs and status that will support both themselves and their parents. At present, the state is providing better welfare for peoples of all classes. However, the return from

agriculture is not as encouraging as the rapidly increasing price of land. People see that the peri-urban zone will gradually become urban both in appearance and socially, whereas the local communities will continue to be rural until the old generation has gone. Given the importance of ‘rurality’ to Thai identity discussed in earlier chapters, this point is crucial and will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

3.5 Residential categories of in-migration

Since the area has been developed and has a good transportation network, the rate of out-migration is decreasing while the in-migration is increasing. This is because development has expanded to include good public facilities and created diverse job opportunities. A number of urban middle class people have moved to residences outside of the city. Some have opted for gated communities while others prefer to live in non-urban areas. Some have bought land and built houses in the local villages. Apart from urban middle class in-migrants, the peri-urban zone has also attracted workers from outside areas. In-migrants can roughly be divided into two main groups: homogenous residents who live in the housing estates and in-filling groups who live in the local communities. The in-filling groups are further divided to two groups: the urban middle class, who build houses in the villages, and workers who live in budget dormitories in the villages.

3.5.1 Homogenous residents

Housing estates may be considered homogenous residences as they are determined by filtering factors such as location, price, and style of the estate. Therefore, people who share similar statuses, tastes and living lifestyles tend to select similar residences. There are various types of housing estates in Chiang Mai. The most common form in Chiang Mai is the gated community, a residential community equipped with a gate and a guard to restrict the entrance of outsiders. Condominiums are only found in the urban zones where land is expensive. They have become popular among single, younger people such as university students and those in the early stage of their careers. This is rather different from the case of gated

communities. Initially, they were widespread in the urban areas, especially in the last decade, along the ring roads in the peri-urban zone. When lands in the city became unaffordable and lands in the peri-urban zone are accessible, the gated communities have expanded their projects in this area.

The idea of gated community in Chiang Mai is not based as much on fear of serious crime as is the case in other parts of the world (Brazil, South Africa and Mexico), where high rate of violence is a key to gating in order to protect the residents from the crime outside. In the Thai context, gates and guards at the entrances of the housing estates are more for the purpose of privacy as outsiders and commercial vehicles are restricted, and also partly to represent ‘class’ of the residents.



Figure 3.14: Gated communities in San Sai Noi. (Imagery date 2010)

They are located between the ring roads, which agricultural fields around the estate can still be seen.



Figure 3.15: At the front of a gated community in peri-urban Chiang Mai. The advertising sign is in both the Thai and English languages.



Figure 3.16: The very grand entrance of a new gated community. Seewalee Choeng Doi (Seewalee at the foothills) on the middle ring road
Source: The gated communities' web sites.

Gated communities vary in size; they can be big projects with more than 2500 units or small projects with 10 units. Land releasing for ten units up has first to get the permission of the Provincial Land Department. There is also a wide range of gated communities from the low-end of less than 1 million baht to the high-end of more than 20 million baht per unit, depending upon the quality, size of land, and location. Significant numbers of high-end gated communities are located near the foothills. They have a pleasant view of the mountain. Gated communities in newly developed areas are mostly in the middle range and for people who are in their early working careers.





Figure 3.17: Gated communities with houses priced around 1 million baht (above); and 20 million baht (below).

Source: the gated communities' web sites

Several gated communities advertise their projects for their unique landscape designs, house styles, and projects' names in association with nature and classy lifestyles in order to attract their middle-class customers who search for modernised convenient living surrounded by nature.



Figure 3.18: Picture from the gated community facebook advertising for house styles of English country in Chiang Mai



Figure 3.19: Advertising sign of Seewalee Choeng Doi (foothills), 2013.

The mountain is Doi Suthep and the big lake is man made, converted from rice fields

Table 3.7 below shows the density of area and units of houses of housing estates as percentage of the total area and number of houses in each sub-district.

Table 3.7: Population and gated communities in each peri-urban sub-district (December 2011)

Sub –districts	Sub-district Area (km ²)	Number of Houses	Number of Population	Housing estate Area (km ²)	Housing estate Unit	Housing estate area in %	Housing estate unit in %
San Phi Suea	6.35	6343	9853	0.48	971	7.56	15.31
Don Kaeo	35.22	6277	14788	0.21	453	0.60	7.22
Nong Chom	13.46	7812	16181	1.76	3792	13.08	48.54
San Sai Luang	11.07	2652	6729	0.05	141	0.45	5.32
San Sai Noi	6.59	8234	16933	0.86	2470	13.05	30.00
San Phranet	6.71	2940	6725	0.27	584	4.02	19.86
San Klang	6.77	3623	6984	0.06	168	0.89	4.64
Chaiya Sathan	5.27	2520	5156	1.89	1117	35.86	44.33
Nong Phueng	11.68	5854	12220	0.48	1368	4.11	23.37
Tha Wang Tan	12.90	4266	9864	0.14	298	1.09	6.99
San Phak Wan	9.39	5958	11363	1.23	3498	13.10	58.71
Nong Khwai	16.67	6826	9800	1.16	1642	6.96	24.06
Total	165.08	65,501	128,962	8.57	16,497	5.19	26.06

Source: The areas were calculated from the DPT's GIS map; data of registered population and houses are official data from the Department of Provincial Administration (The Bureau of Registration Administration 2012).

Note: Chang Phueak TAO does not have any housing estates because the whole area is under government authority.

The last 2 columns of the above Table (3.8) present the percentage of gated communities in each sub-district, both in area and in house unit. For the house units of gated communities, the numbers are shown in accordance with the land releasing permit; and, there are several housing estates under construction. Therefore, these data are not applicable to the current situation but to the 'soon to be'. The densest gated community concentration in the area is in Chaiya Sathan sub-district with 35.86% of the area converted to housing estates due to roads cutting across the sub-district. Chaiya Sathan has attracted several housing estates. It is important to note that the density of house units in the gated communities of several sub-districts of Nong Chom and Chaiya Sathan and San Phak Wan is more than half of the total households in the areas. This means that there are large numbers of urban middle class people living in the area. In the overall peri-urban zone, approximately a quarter of households are in housing estates; thus, there is a significant mixture of social classes in the area.

The maps below show the density of housing estates in the areas. Similar to the previous Table (3.8), the second column from the last illustrates how the gated communities have expanded over time in 1984, 1993, 2002 and 2011 in the area following the road development. Before the ring roads were concentrated, most of the gated communities were adjacent to the main roads and were quite crowded in some sub-districts (see darker colour in the maps). Then, when the ring roads were constructed, the gated communities gradually expanded into those areas. The last map shows that when the ring roads were completed (2005), the gated communities extended out further in all directions. Some sub-districts marked in black indicate high density of increasing gated communities.



Figure 3.20: Maps of housing estate density in specific areas for each period of time

According to the available data, the early period of gated communities occurred in the urban zone. This was because good road networks were still limited to the inner area, and the demand for residential properties was not yet high at that time. The housing estates in Chiang Mai became popular in the 1990s concomitant with economic boom; but, their numbers sharply decreased from 1997 to 2001 during

the economic crisis that impacted on the region. No projects were undertaken in 4 districts of the peri-urban zone: Mae Rim, San Sai, San Kamphaeng, and Saraphi. From 2002 on, the housing estate business has grown back again and growth as been continued until the present.

Many sub-districts have gained substantial incomes from converting (or trading) former rural fields into estates. Thai local administrative organisations gain income from various sources such as allocation from the government, tax from services in the area, and particularly significant sources are the fee and taxes that accrue from land trading that the Provincial Land Department transfers to local administrative organisations. In several sub-districts, this income is the highest among their overall sources of income. The TAO and municipalities' incomes are spent for development in the area. Some authorities say that sub-districts that still have a lot of agricultural land (San Sai Noi, Nong Chom, Chaiya Sathan, Nong Khwai, San Phak Wan) have the potential for further development. However, the sub-districts that are already crowded are not able to compete with others and their development has had to be slowed down.

Table 3.8: TAO and Municipalities' incomes from land sales fees (million baht)

Year	San Phi Suea	Don Kaeo	Nong Chom	San Sai Luang	San Phranet	San Klang	Chaiya Sathan	Nong Phueng	Tha Wang Tan	San Phak Wan	Nong Khwai
1996	n/a	5.12	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	16.20	n/a	n/a	n/a
1997	n/a	3.94	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8.74	n/a	n/a	n/a
1998	n/a	2.17	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.78	n/a	n/a	3.85
1999	n/a	1.78	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.79	n/a	n/a	3.87
2000	n/a	2.27	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.28	n/a	n/a	4.39
2001	7.69	2.22	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.95	n/a	3.11	3.58
2002	7.81	3.46	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.92	n/a	3.58	5.07
2003	8.23	3.62	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.66	n/a	8.20	6.17
2004	14.76	11.43	17.33	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.54	n/a	9.73	10.23
2005	17.28	6.60	18.63	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6.01	6.37	10.80	14.40
2006	14.52	9.94	17.15	n/a	n/a	1.37	n/a	6.87	5.25	9.70	15.02
2007	16.54	6.88	18.07	18.67	n/a	7.85	n/a	6.78	7.33	7.66	12.70
2008	14.31	5.06	11.33	14.35	n/a	4.19	4.28	6.03	8.20	n/a	8.87
2009	7.25	2.69	6.47	7.62	2.15	3.60	2.28	5.73	5.58	5.30	5.96
2010	11.02	6.00	10.55	9.64	2.08	5.06	4.98	6.58	5.67	7.22	5.98
2011	16.00	7.26	23.50	23.36	6.09	10.52	12.54	11.52	8.65	14.34	13.76

Source: Interviews with local administrative organisations.

This Table shows the annual recipients of each sub-district's fees and taxes from land trading in their areas. Clearly their incomes in this category are gradually increasing, especially in 2011. Between 2008 and 2010, the government of that time introduced a policy of reducing fees in order to stimulate the local economies during the 'slow down' period; thus, this category of income was very low.

A large part of the development in the area was attributable to land trading, which was also a large part of the gated communities' development. In addition, the increasing population attracted shops and services such as schools, health care and restaurants to the area, opening up more jobs and facilities that local people from rural

backgrounds could benefit from. Conversely, the large numbers of gated communities in the rural areas created several problems for the rest of the farmers, especially for the rice fields. The waterways became blocked and several areas of rice fields had to be converted into orchards. Other were abandoned or had to be sold. Therefore, the numbers of rice fields decreased in this development expansion zone.

There is a paucity of studies on who constitute the residents in the gated communities in Chiang Mai. However, from interviews with the owner of one gated community, who started his housing estate business two decades ago, and from interviews with local authorities, I ascertained that most of the people who live in gated communities already lived and worked in Chiang Mai. However, they might rent a place until they can afford to buy a house in the gated community. Small but noticeable numbers of male foreigners live with Thai partners. Thai law only allows foreigners to buy property in the form of apartments or condominiums, not houses with land. With the low cost of living in Thailand, foreigners can afford better than average housing and to live comfortable lifestyles. There are some cases of second homes, where urban middle class people built houses mainly in the more attractive zones for seasonal leisure visits. Even though their numbers are small, their land area and house styles are significant in the area. As for gated communities' buyers, if they are Chiang Mai people, they consider location of the estate vis-a-vis convenience of commuting more than the natural landscape of the area. On the other hand, if the buyers are not from Chiang Mai, they may be seeking a beautiful prospect; but location is still a priority especially for the middle-range gated community. There are also increasing numbers of people who buy houses in gated communities for rental purposes and for investment to sell in the future.

Why do people opt for gated communities where every house is the same instead of buying land and building their own styles of houses? In answer to this question, a housing estate owner whom I interviewed explained that the majority of people prefer to live in gated communities because they have good security systems and are well managed. Residents do not have to cope personally with builders and often problematic facilities. Some gated communities have several house styles, so

their customers can select to match their personal preferences. Residents will live in a community with similar groups of people, such as working age, demand for privacy, and economic and social status. He stated that “living in a good gated community is also a sign of being modernised”, a notion which has also become popular with the new generation of villagers, especially with the ones who work outside of the village and prefer privacy.

The prices of the houses in each gated community can define the group very well. For example, take a house costing 3 million baht. If the prospective owners borrow money from the bank, they have to pay a 20,000 – 30,000 baht monthly mortgage. This means that a family has to have at least a 50,000 baht income. To be able to pay for a house, residents are likely to be a couple around 30-40 years old; both will be working; and, many couples these days do not have children. They may be intellectuals, officials, and or company workers. If the house costs ten million baht, they are rich business people, a more mature generation with many working from home. Furthermore, gated community living is quieter and cleaner than living in the village. Unlike the local villages, where outsiders and commercial vehicles can drive through freely, the gated communities have restriction for the outsiders. In addition, most of the people are working and no one wants to know too much about his or her neighbours. The housing estate owner accepts that it is not 100% secure in the gated community. However, the village is in fact not entirely safe and urban people who live there have to be aware of security as well. Because urban middle class houses are very different from local residences, they have become a good target for thieves.

3.5.2 In-filling groups of people

The villages in the peri-urban area have changed a great deal. Almost every village in the peri-urban zone has newcomers residing in the village. This is vastly different from the rural communities in Thailand that only have out migration of villagers. Scrutiny of the villages in this area reveals different house styles such as houses of long-standing local residents who have re-styled their houses, replacing

wood with concrete, leaving little wooden material. Nowadays, there is little evidence of rice barns and farming gear in the area. There are several low budget dormitories owned by villagers. Not too far from the local houses and dormitories, new and distinct houses with proper fences are appearing, indicative of the in-migration into the local villages. In-migration in this case, does not mean people who have married into or have relatives in the village; rather, it means people from outside who have become residents in the community.

These in-filling groups of people can be divided into two main groups according to their backgrounds and reasons for moving into the area. They include: (1) urban middle class newcomers who buy land and build houses; and, (2) the workers who live in dormitories in the village. In the next section I discuss who they are and what they do.

1) Urban middle class newcomers

There is no specific statistical data about urban middle class newcomers at every level. However, some pictures and understandings could be formed from interviews with local authorities and from the case study. As suggested above, physical landscape, location, and price of land were crucial to decision-making. The area with a pleasant view, especially near the river, is more expensive and was occupied by the higher class group. Location and facilities in the area, especially the internet were important factors.

Newcomers have bought land in the village mainly through local agents, who could be local leaders or others in the village. The more affluent urban middle class tend to buy bigger pieces of land, 1-3 rai, while the average urban middle class group bought less than one rai. In cases where they bought abandoned rice fields, if the size was too big, they formed a group and bought the land together and divided it later. However, even though their houses were in the village, they opted not to locate in the middle of the community and mix with the local villagers; rather, they chose the edge or near the agricultural fields for reasons of privacy. They were in their late 30s and

had clear individual identities. Among them were university lecturers, Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) development workers, artists, writers, retired officials and foreigners with Thai partners. Local officials mentioned that most of foreigners' Thai partners came from other provinces. Some local land agents noted that several foreigners occupy big houses at the fringe of the forest conservation area where there is no land title. This group had opted for a nice, quiet corner. They were individualistic and did not maintain contact with their local neighbours.

2) Workers

Budget dormitories are common in the peri-urban zone due to development and the increase in numbers of new jobs available in the area. For many, it was easier and cheaper to live in the village and commute to work in the city. They are budget rooms costing about 800-1200 baht per month. Those who stay in this type of residence are mostly young, between 20 and 30, and are from the more remote areas of neighbouring districts and provinces. Many of them are ethnic minorities: some work in the city and some work on the project sites in areas nearby. These dormitories are often located in the middle of the village where the local owners have divided their land to build dormitories.

Migrant workers in Chiang Mai, who mostly are from Myanmar, constitute another group of workers residing in the village. In the whole of Chiang Mai in 2010, there are 68,371 recorded migrant workers (Office of Foreign Workers Administration 2011). Almost half of these work in the construction sector, then the agriculture sector and the service sector respectively (Chiang Mai Province n.d.). Many workers stay in temporary sheds following the construction sites. Some stay in working camps organised by the local construction contractors and some in dormitories if their work is more permanent.

Table 3.9: Number of owners and dormitory rooms in each local administration

Number of	San Phi Suea	Don Kaeo	Nong Chom	San Sai Luang	San Phranet	San Klang	Chaiya Sathan	Nong Phueng	Tha Wang Tan	San Phak Wan	Nong Khwai
Owner	197	100	115	173	55	51	79	65	45	59	190
Room	971	460	1,031	1,567	516	382	643	950	321	467	792

Source: Data collected from each administrative organisation during December 2011 – September 2012

Table 3.9 shows the numbers of local owners of dormitories and of rooms in each local administration. Clearly, areas near the city - San Phi Suea, Nong Chom, San Sai Luang, Nong Phueng and where there are mega projects in Nong Khwai have more dormitories than in the other areas. Numbers of owners appertain to local villagers who were once farmers and may have sold land and built dormitories for investment and long term benefit.

3.6 Conclusion

Chiang Mai has provided an alternative to Bangkok in terms of degree of development, modern facilities and job opportunities. It is considered pleasant due to its nature and culture. These characteristics attract numbers of in-migrants of different social groups, who move to Chiang Mai for different purposes.

For the urban middle class group, people can enjoy working there while at the same time enjoying a comfortable lifestyle. Its attractiveness and attraction have led to urban expansion. This results in the incorporation of rural areas into the peri-urban area, mostly for residential purposes. Large numbers of newcomers from various social groups have moved into the area. Residential areas like gated communities have constrained similar groups of people to live together on the same housing estates. In this way, they do not have to encounter socio-ethnic differences. The situation in the villages, which are the focus of this study, is vastly different due to the diverse social classes and in-filling groups living in proximity to one another.

For in-migrant workers, urban and peri-urban Chiang Mai have seen rapid

development from construction of road networks, mega projects and a number of tourist attractions, all of which pull people from remote areas where job opportunities and incomes are more limited. This group of migrants is mostly of a young working generation. They live in budget temporary residences in order to make their living and save money.

In the peri-urban villages, where farming lands have been bought and converted into residential areas, local people have had to make a series of adjustments. The change from agrarian activities to working in the urban service sector improves their economic and social status. This juxtaposition of cosmopolitan lifestyle and locality has contributed to a complex mix of urbanity and changing rurality of the physical and social landscapes of peri-urban Chiang Mai. Class mobility is significant among villagers as different households have adapted differently to various aspects of development; and with in-migration of different social classes into the village. The issues of agrarian transformation and class mobility at the community level will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RURAL FRONTIER: MIGRATION AND CLASS IN NAM JAM

4.1 Introduction

Nam Jam is a former agrarian community whose physical landscape and social composition have been changing rapidly and started to transform recently from in-migration. The village is located some ten kilometres southwest of Chiang Mai city. This chapter has two central aims. The first is to explore and understand the transformation of place and community in peri-urban Chiang Mai at the micro level through a case study of Nam Jam, now a peri-urban village which in fact is a rural frontier between urbanity and rurality. This builds on Chapter 3 which investigated the interpenetration process between the urban and rural zones that lie behind demographic and land use change in the peri-urban zone at the macro level. This chapter takes the investigation to a deeper and more detailed level. It presents how the agricultural frontier has been shifted as a result of the outside factors and how local people perceive and adapt to the changes at the village level. In addition, it discusses the economic and social implications in the village that stimulate the changes and how they have evolved through generations.

Particular focus is on the village background and its transformation, both in physical and social dimensions, and how it has changed from an agrarian to a post-agrarian setting. This also involves change from an area in which the social relations and landscapes have moved beyond being shaped by production towards being determined by consumption-based values in a period of less than 40 years, or in one generation. The above changes include infrastructure improvement, land use, occupation, migration and importantly, changes in class composition. A new class composition has emerged, due both to the in-migration of different social classes into the village and to class mobility driven by agrarian transformation. The peri-urban location of Nam Jam has greatly influenced this rapid and complex change. In

addition, the area is still undergoing rapid transition, so that I am only able to trace the past and grab just a moment of the changes.

Secondly, I aim to present a micro-geography of how different social groups reside, situate themselves and interact with each other in the village landscape. This will lay the foundation for the next chapter in which I will examine the interaction between groups that leads to class encounters and accommodation based on each group's status and expectations.

The selected community is Nam Jam, which has transformed into a melting pot of diverse groups of people who have moved into the area. Following a discussion of methodology, this chapter commences an overview of the village including household structures, people's backgrounds, migration, class composition, and micro-geographies of the physical and social landscapes of the different social groups in the village. The location of the houses and the different lifestyles people pursue influences the interactions between them.

4.2 Methodology

Nam Jam was selected as a case study for two significant reasons. First, the community is located in a peri-urban zone and is home to diverse social groups, a result of in-migration which is a core focus of this study. Second, the researcher has lived in Nam Jam since 2007 and is aware of the advantages and disadvantages of being part of the studied community. This issue will be discussed in more detail in the methodology section of Chapter 5, which deals with class encounters and accommodation.

A larger unit of administrative village was also selected as it is the smallest unit in the Thai local administration. As well, it has an elected village leader, who is recognised by the villagers. Different from TAO and a municipality, the village shares with other villages in the sub-district a leader who manages administration and development in the sub-district. Village leaders and sub-district leaders deal more

with political and security aspects. Each village in a sub-district has a number and name.

Nam Jam is one of the three clusters (Nong Khwai, Hua Thung and Nam Jam) in Mu 5 (administrative village 5) which is called Nong Khwai. Mu 5 is one of the twelve villages in Nong Khwai sub-district in Hang Dong district. Nong Khwai sub-district has total area of 17.40 square kilometres or 10,875 rai. Approximately 30% of its land is in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, and 10% in the Treasury Department, Ministry of Finance. Thus, approximately 60% of the total land (10.44 square kilometres or 6,525 rai) is left for private ownership and public land such as administrative offices and temples (Apirak Kadchumsaeng 2012). Nong Khwai village (Mu 5) has 1.26 square kilometres or 787.5 rai. Each village may have clusters in it. In Mu 5, Nong Khwai cluster is the first community, expanded to include the clusters of Hua Thung and Nam Jam. Each cluster could be its own village in terms of civic affairs and tied networks. However, as they are too small, they still share the same administrative village. For the purpose of this study, in order to gain valuable insight into the interaction between groups, Nam Jam is paid more attention as it is the cluster in which the researcher resides and has close relationships with the people living there. Some data and statistics will pertain to Mu 5, the village as a whole in order to give a wider picture of the village.

Nam Jam has 40 households of permanent residents, consisting of 29 long-term local households and eleven urban middle-class newcomers (three are foreigners married to Thais and the eight remaining are Thai families). In addition, there are five dormitories and two working camps with a total of 56 rooms. For the purpose of this research, each of the 29 long-term local households, eight out of eleven urban middle class newcomers, 16 residents living in dormitories and working camps, four seamstresses (two live in dormitories and two are commuters) and two commuting Hmong farmers were interviewed. The three remaining middle class families were not comprehensively interviewed due to their busy schedules; and, two families do not live there on a regular basis. Notwithstanding, I managed to collect most of the basic data. In Nong Khwai and Hua Thung, all of the urban middle class newcomers

were contacted and six out of 13 were interviewed. In addition, six long-term local villagers that had significant issues such as local land agents, one who used to work abroad, and village elders were interviewed. The details of the total number of families and families in each social group interviewed appear in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Total number of total families and number of families interviewed in different social groups

Village clusters (number of families in different social groups)	Nong Khwai		Hua Thung		Nam Jam	
	total	data	total	Data	total	data
Local families	160	0	32	0	29	29
Thai urban middle class	2	0	3	2	8	5
Foreign families	1	1	7	4	3	3
Budget dormitories	46	0	13	0	44	13
Tai Yai working camps	0	0	0	0	12	3
Gated community	24	0	0	0	0	0
Seamstresses	n/a	0	0	0	13	4
Commuting Hmong farmers	2	1	0	0	1	1

There are different ways of getting to know and interviewing different social groups in a village. As regards the long-term local residents of Nam Jam, the people see and know each other. Therefore, I introduced my research topic and requested interviews. In the cases of residents living in dormitories and working camps, the residence owners' assistance was sought. As for the urban middle class newcomers to Nong Khwai and Hua Thung, official letters from Chiang Mai University requesting interviews were sent to prospective participants. In some cases, long-term local villagers introduced me; however, not everyone agreed to be interviewed.

Various methods of research were employed to gain information at the various levels. At the basic level, statistical data and semi-structured interviews with Nong Khwai TAO and village leaders were applied. At the household level, households were roughly divided into three main groups, long-term local residents, urban middle

class newcomers, and in-migrant workers. A basic questionnaire was designed to gain information on household structures and participants' backgrounds. The sets of questions differed slightly to match each group's state of living. Most of the workers were interviewed in the evening when they returned from work. The urban middle class group mostly agreed to be interviewed during the weekends. Group discussions also applied, but only on appropriate occasions on site such as ceremonies, festivals and meetings. However, data collection was not confined to one interview only or to questionnaires. It extended to casual walks in the village, sometimes buying things from the shops, getting my clothes repaired at sewing places, having meals at small food vendors and chance informal talks with people I met in the course of my walks. There was also a spatial bias in this casual talk. This is because some families' houses were located deep in the small lanes off the main roads in the village, I did not have the same opportunities to talk to them and observe their everyday activities.

Apart from conducting face-to-face interviews with all of my informants, and personal observation of different events, long distance communication also applied, particularly when I was away from the village. It involves my writing in particular, mostly to complete the few gaps in my data collection. Emails, telephone calls and facebook sessions were employed, depending on which proved the most appropriate channel for each key informant. Some villagers accessed facebook and some of the middle class newcomers were close friends; so, it was relatively easy to update my information about the events in the village.

The studied community proved quite complex, given that it was in a state of transition. I will now specify the terms I use to identify each group from this chapter onward. 'Villager' means long-term local resident; 'urban middle class' applies to every urban middle class newcomer, even though he/she may have lived in the village more than a decade; 'foreign family' means any western family in which the person's partner is Thai; 'temporary residents' include people who live in dormitories and Burmese migrant workers living temporarily under tin roofs and in simple building construction. Even though Burmese migrant workers are foreigners, and some have lived in this village for more than a decade (or longer than the urban middle class

group), this group is respected as both non-community members and temporary residents. In addition, as the name of the village, Nong Khwai is still regarded as a cluster, while Mu 5 will be used to identify entire the village. Nong Khwai, Hua Thung, and Nam Jam mean individual cluster.

As the village is in a state of rapid transition, I deem it useful to state how recently the data were collected. Most of the data and statistics appertaining to Mu 5 were collected until the end of 2011. The data on Nam Jam is more recent (2012) as I have been updated by informants during my writing. Figures and tables shown in this chapter are from interviews and survey unless indicated.

4.3 Nam Jam: from an agrarian based to a peri-urbanised community

Nam Jam is located to the southwest of Chiang Mai inner city along the canal road. Several adjacent influential places have affected both its development and immigration into the area. From the village, one to two kilometres along the canal road to the north, one finds the Royal Flora Gardens and Night Safari. Chiang Mai University and the inner city are located ten to twelve kilometres from the village respectively. The airport, which is on the same side of the city, is located ten kilometres to the northeast. Six kilometres south of the village, one finds Ban Tawai, a wooden handicraft centre. Hang Dong District Office and the district hospital are located seven kilometres from the village. To the west is the old, hilly route to Samoeng District. One sees several resorts and tourist attractions along the way. Half way to Samoeng is a circle road, with attractive views from Doi Suthep-Pui National Park to Mae Rim District. There are four mega malls (black pentagons near the airport in Figure 4.1) in a radius of five to ten kilometres, and two alternate-day local markets are each one kilometre from the village. Several local ‘*wats*’ (Buddhist temples) surround the village. Their close proximity has proven very convenient for those residents who frequently attend them. Besides, because the area is elevated, it is not subjected to flooding. In addition, there are pleasant views of the ‘*doi*’ (mountain), including Wat Doi Kham, and Wat Doi Suthep (in triangles), landmarks of Chiang Mai.

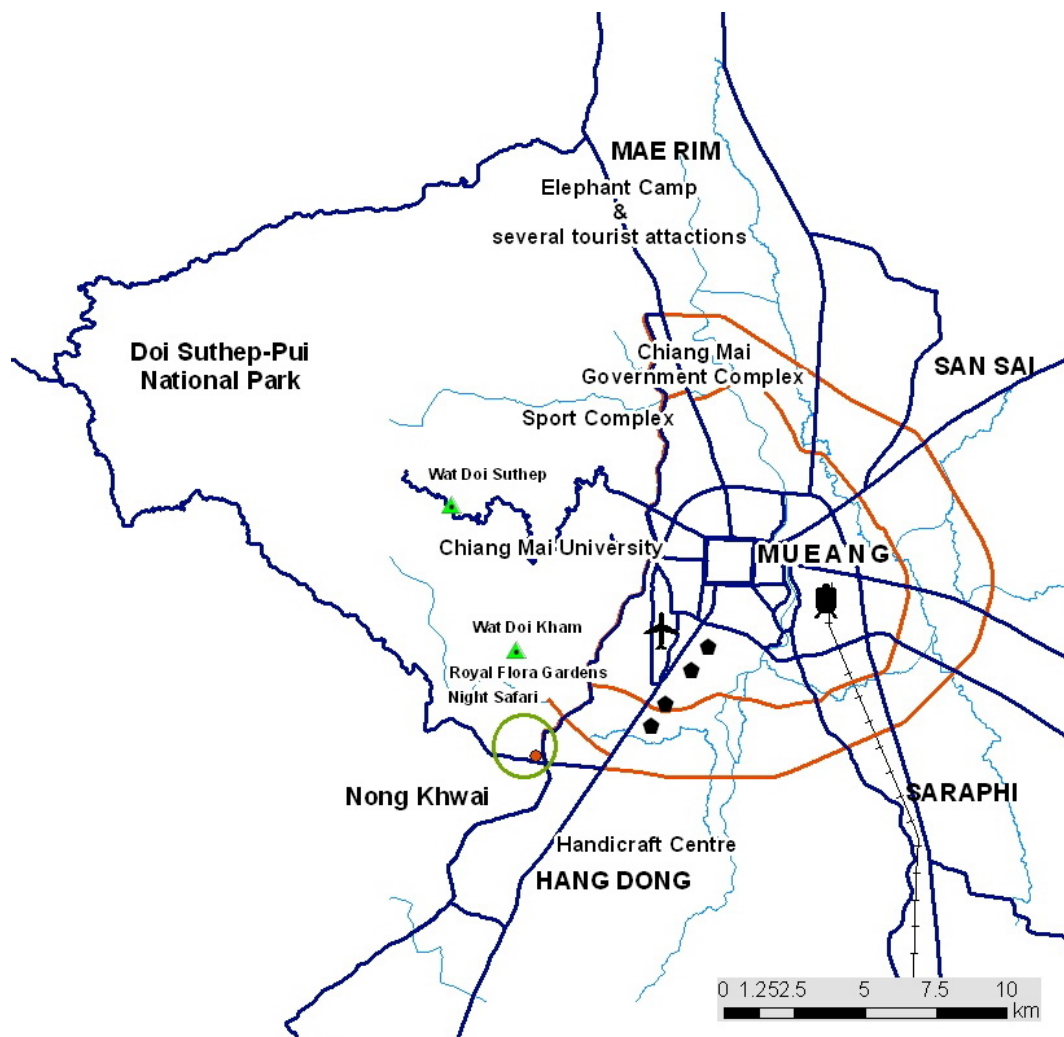


Figure 4.1: Map of area around Nong Khwai

Source: Map produced by author based on Google Earth

Figure 4.2 shows the land use map of Mu 5 (image 2010). The map shows the active rice fields in the middle of the three clusters. The black line shows the village boundary of Mu 5 and the estimated division of the three community clusters. The yellow polygons are rice fields; the green are longan orchards; and, the pink are for business purposes. However, many of the rice fields shown in the map are owned by urban middle class business people. One is a new resident in Nam Jam and a few others are gated community business groups in Chiang Mai.

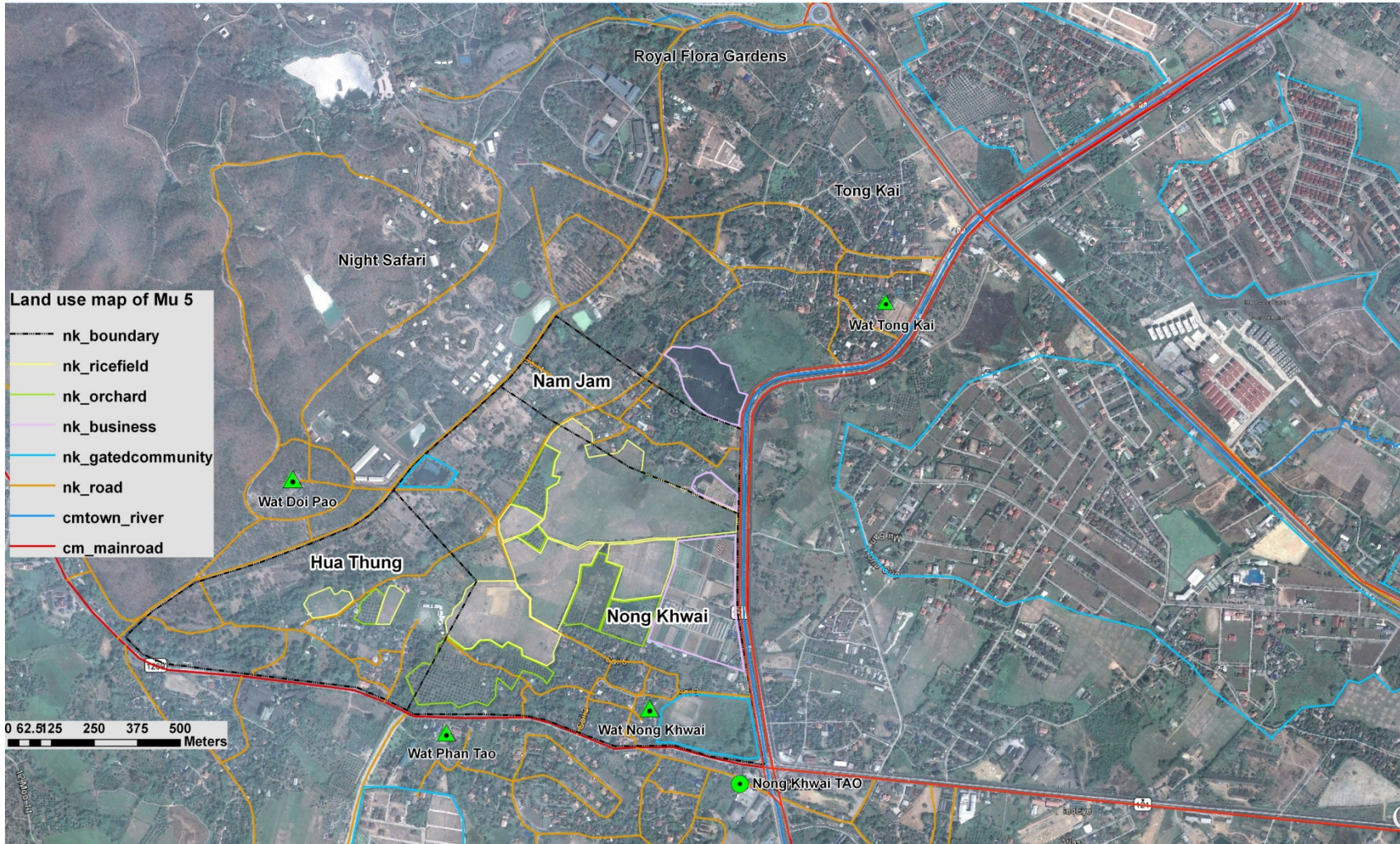


Figure 4.2: Land use map and estimated borders of the three clusters in Mu 5



Figure 4.3: Rice field in the middle of Mu 5 between Nong Khwai and Nam Jam at the far end, after harvesting (October 2012)



Figure 4.4: Rice field in the middle of Mu 5 between Nong Khwai and Nam Jam at the far end (January 2013)

The registered population of Mu 5 at the end of 2011 totalled 749 people living in 317 houses. However, the data from the village head recorded 241 households in Mu 5 and the remaining 76 houses were empty houses. According to the village head, in terms of administration, these registered houses do not have members who vote in elections. The simple fact is that there is not really anyone occupying them. The elders often move to live with their children or they pass away but the house numbers are not removed by the district office. Another case is of urban middle class newcomers, who have houses and occupy them, but their names are still registered at the former houses. Among the total 241 households, 163 are in Nong Khwai, 42 in Hua Thung and 36 in Nam Jam. However, according to my data collection at the end of 2011, Nam Jam had 40 permanent families. Four urban middle class families had not registered their names in this village.

In all three clusters, I found diverse social groups of slightly different composition. One significant group of newcomers was temporary residents in dormitories, a category dependent upon characteristics of the area and its location. At the end of 2011, a 24 unit gated community project was under construction in Nong Khwai (the pink polygon on the west in Figure 4.2). Several urban middle class houses were also being constructed in 2012.

Figure 4.5 below shows the composition of social groups in each cluster of Mu 5 as of the end of 2011. There were 245 permanent families; almost half as many again (115 families) were temporary families who lived in dormitories and working camps. This figure did not include 24 units in the gated community that are under construction and another newly started project that just began clearing the land in front of Wat Nong Khwai at the end of 2012. Figure 4.5 shows the diversity of the social groups.

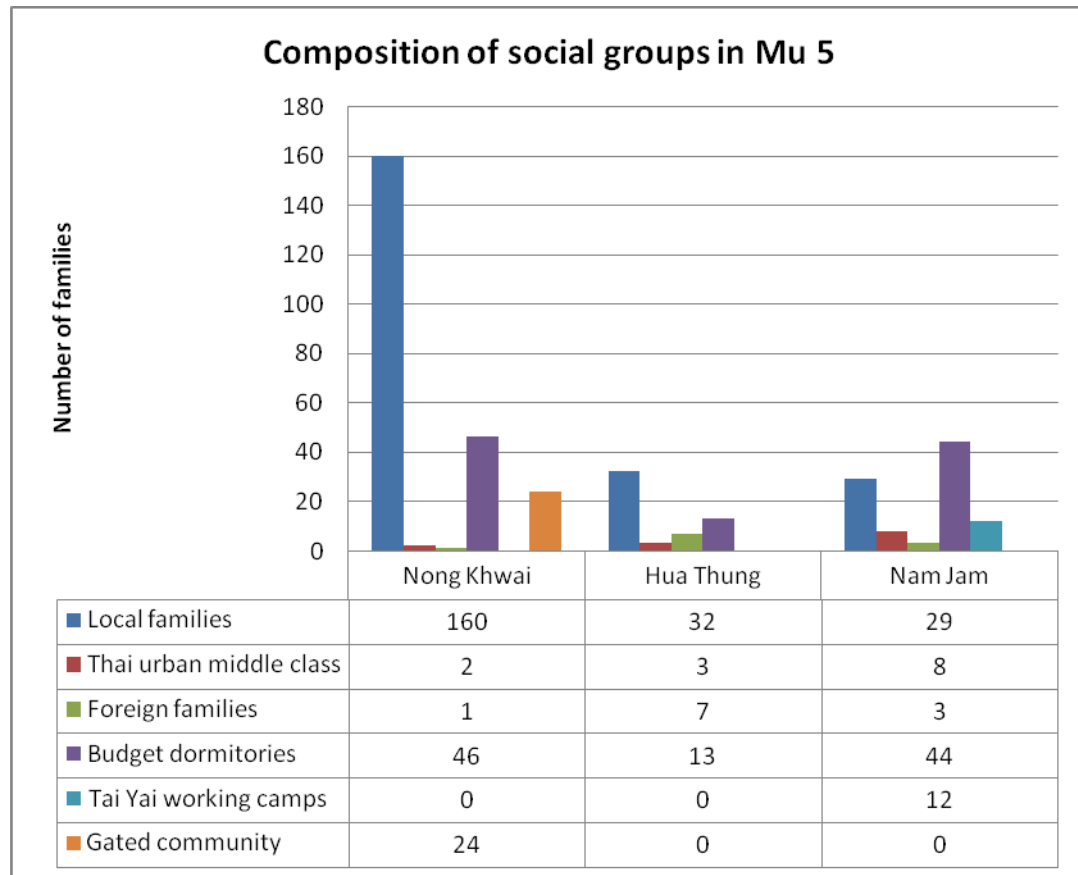


Figure 4.5: Composition of social groups in Mu 5

Source: Interviews with local leaders and residence owners

Nam Jam, in particular, has a distinctive class composition. It has more temporary residents (56 families of 44 dormitories families and twelve Tai Yai families) than permanent residents (40 families of 29 local village families and 11 in-migrated urban middle class families, both Thai and foreigners). Moreover, among the residents in dormitories, there are several different ethnic minorities. All of these groups have different backgrounds, economic and social capitals. They live in close proximity in a small community and have thus created a significant new class composition, a phenomenon that has occurred only recently.

In the past, Nam Jam was a typical agrarian community. The villagers based their incomes around agriculture and their class relations on their means of production. Nowadays, their relations have become decreasingly linked to production and increasingly tied to consumption and more contemporary ways of living. In the

following section, I will discuss the agrarian transformation of Mu 5 in general, with emphasis on Nam Jam in particular. This transformation has occurred over a period constituting one generation.

Background of Nam Jam: diversity and complexity from inside out

In the Thai language, Nong Khwai means ‘buffalo swamp’. It is a long established community. Wat Nong Khwai is at least 350 years old. The village first had an official leader in 1892, during the period of feudal Lanna. Approximately 120 years ago, when Nong Khwai started to become crowded, some families expanded out to Hua Thung and later to Nam Jam, whose settlements are at least 100 years old.

The name of Nam Jam, the focus community, means ‘place with a swamp’, an appropriate appellation given that some areas near the current canal road were never dry. A 50 year old man from Nam Jam said that his grandfather was one of the four families that founded the community, of which three were from Nong Khwai and one from Tong Kai, an adjacent community to the north. They were all from different family groups and aimed to open up new paddy land and to build houses. Approximately 30 years later, two families from Mae Kanin, Ban Pong sub-district, Hang Dong district, which is approximately 20 kilometres away in an adjacent sub-district to the west were invited to move to Nam Jam. Then families have all expanded and intermarriage among the family groups has ensured that they are all inter-related.

Infrastructure in the area has been developed slowly in the past and very rapidly in the last decade. Electricity reached the village in the mid 1970s. Tap water became available in late 1980s, replacing the family dug wells. Before the early 1970s, the village connected to Chiang Mai town by an old road from Chiang Mai-Hot Road to Samoeng District. It took people almost a whole day’s return trip walking from the village to Chiang Mai-Hot Road then took a pick-up truck to Chiang Mai town. In 1973, the canal road was developed together with the irrigation canal but was still in bad condition. It is only ten kilometres from Nam Jam to Chiang Mai

University along the canal road to the north but at that time there was no market there and with the bad road people rather used the Chiang Mai-Hot Road. It was not until the 1990s that it was properly paved and then in the mid 2000s a road at the village side of the canal was cut and the earlier road at the other side also was expanded. It was the same time that the outer and the middle ring roads were completed.

Before 1980, there were two lower primary schools (grade one to four), one in San Pasak, (established since 1921) three kilometres or almost an hour's walk southeast and the other one in Ton Kwen, the neighbouring village in the south of Nam Jam. The higher primary school (grade five to seven) was expanded only at San Pasak in 1982. At that time, the well-off families sent their children to San Pasak as it was regarded as a better school where teachers came from the city and Ton Kwen was for children from ordinary families. Only a few well-off families sent their children for secondary school either in Chiang Mai town or to Hang Dong District about ten kilometres away to the north and the south of Nam Jam respectively. The school at Ton Kwen was dissolved to be combined with a school at Ban Fon, two kilometres southwest of Nam Jam in 2003. In 2005, a completed primary school (grade one to six) was established in Tongkai, an adjacent village to the north, while most well off families send their children to study in town while most students in Tongkai there are children of Thai and Burmese workers in the area. Therefore, most of the old generation older than 40 have education at the primary level and the younger have higher levels of education.

Many people suggested that considerable change started in the village when the road along the irrigation canal was completed in 1973 and the village was electrified in 1975. Those who have experienced this change are now beyond 50 years of age. Three periods of change are identified, as: 1) before the 1970s, 2) big land sales in the late-1980s, 3) peri-urbanised from the 2000s onward.

4.3.1 Before electricity came into the village in the 1970s

Before the 1970s, the nearest main road to Chiang Mai town was Chiang Mai - Hot Road, via a road that connects Samoeng district to Nong Khwai. At the time, the closest market to Nam Jam was in San Pasak, approximately three kilometres away along the Chiang Mai – Hot Road. It took the villagers almost an hour to walk there. The main vehicles used by the villagers were bicycles. There was only one old pickup truck belonging to a teacher from Chiang Mai town who taught at Tong Kai School and married a woman from Nam Jam. When people wanted to go to Chiang Mai town, which was not often, they had to walk approximately two kilometres to the main road and then take a bus that did not come often. Some either used a dirt track along the canal by walking or cycling to town. The transport routes in the village were dirt tracks and very narrow. Understandably, at that time, people rarely went to the city.

During this time, the rice fields could be cultivated almost all year round. In the rainy season, the villagers use Mae Taa Chang River as the source of water for a traditional irrigation scheme; and, because they grew tobacco alternately with soy bean in the dry season, they did not need so much water. There used to be a tobacco kiln near the airport. The owner, who also owned several plots of fields in the area feeding it, or in the southern area of the current peri-urban zone including some areas in Nong Khwai, rented out the land to villagers. In the rainy season, his tenants invested everything they had and the land owner collected rice as a form of rent. In the dry season, however, growing tobacco required more investment. The kiln owners provided everything such as fertiliser and pesticides for farmers. Then, the kiln owners were entitled to the products at the end of the harvest, and all expenses were deducted from the total sale. The remainder of the expenses then became income for the farmers or the cost of their labour.

Approximately half of families in Nam Jam who were original local residents had occupied all the rice fields in the area and each family had three to six rai. The newcomers from Mae Kanin were landless families. Rice fields were limited and

precious and no one sold the land, thus the newcomers had no chance to own rice fields unless they married the original residents and later got rice fields for inheritance.

The landless families, especially the women, either worked as labourers or rented rice fields from families who had land. A female villager in her early 50 years told me that when she was a teenager (1970s – 1980s), landless women would group three to five people together and seek work in the rice fields such as transplanting and harvesting. These types of activity were similar to those of their parents' generation. They would start before the sun rose so they could work longer before the weather got too hot. If they could finish the work early, they would be paid quickly. Then they could seek work in other rice fields. The furthest they travelled for work in the rice fields was to areas near the airport and near Chiang Mai University. Work in the rice fields was mostly done by women. My informant explained that the land owners preferred women as they started work earlier and worked longer so the tasks were finished quickly. In the dry season, these women rented the rice fields for growing tobacco and soy beans. The women worked in the field almost all year round.

In the past, rice farming was labour intensive and wages and rent were paid mostly in rice. Rent used to be as high as half of the harvest, and in the bad years they may not have enough rice for household consumption. Some land owners said that in cases where they did not have cows, buffaloes or labour, it was easier to rent the land out and collect the rent at the end of the harvest. In 1980, buffaloes were completely replaced by hand tractors that allowed the land owners to manage their fields more easily. The rent was later, and remains until now, reduced to one third of the harvest subsequent to legislation pressed by the student uprising and mobilisation of the leftist movement in Thailand in the mid 1970s. The student leaders in this area mobilised the farmers to negotiate with the land owners for lower rent.

Before the 1970s, the people of Nam Jam were steeped in poverty in terms of food security, especially the landless people. Not every family had enough rice for annual consumption. Most of the farmers who had rice fields could only produce rice

for household consumption; so, life was difficult for landless families as food supplies were quite limited. People had to collect food from the rice fields and forest such as frogs, fish, crabs, mushrooms, bamboo shoots and insects. Although they may have been plentiful, they were only seasonal. When they could collect a lot of food, they could not trade it locally as their fellow villagers collected similar food. At that time, houses were made mainly with temporary materials that could be found in the area such as wood and bamboo. Thatched roofs were for the poor or the new families while better off families used handmade clay tiles. Notwithstanding of their harsh lives, people had some good memories of collecting food from forest and rice fields, their play areas in the village, and fun local festivals that the whole village would join.

The main obstacle was that at that time, the area was still remote. Market access was difficult due to difficulties of transportation; thus, people could not trade with outsiders. Using money was not so common. One of the bigger expenses for people at the time was debt incurred that occurred when family members became ill. Some had to sell cattle, land or borrow money from the rich with a high interest rate in order to meet the medical expenses.

Even as far back as 50 years ago when the area was still in a very rural context and forests nearby were abundant with teak, people in Nam Jam could hardly base their living on agriculture alone. Most villagers had to undertake extra work outside of the village. Many men from the villages around here worked as wood turners in the forests around the area for a long time. Mae Kanin was one of a few forest areas where Nam Jam people went to work. A 70 year old man said that when he was born (1940s), he already saw his father doing the wood turning. Workers usually stayed in the forests for a few months at a time, especially in the dry season. Men who had rice fields came to help their families during the farming and harvesting seasons. Their wives sent them food and sometimes carried handicraft wood to traders, who came to collect it in the village. People in their 50s still remember seeing people using elephants to work in the forest in their childhoods. It was from being wood turners in Mae Kanin that Nam Jam people invited their friends from Mae Kanin who

were wood turners to move to Nam Jam and live with them so that the community would not be too isolated.

Around the late-1970s when the quantities of teak were significantly decreasing, restrictions were introduced on the cutting of teak in the forests. Therefore, these men had to leave the forests and look for other work. Some continued to work as wood turners at home using other types of wood. Several men started to work in Chiang Mai city as construction workers and in other labouring jobs. In a longitudinal study undertaken during 1966-1996 in Mae Sa, 13 kilometres to the north of Chiang Mai city, Anchalee Singhanetra-Renard (1999) found that the villagers were no longer self sufficient. People commonly migrated to work outside of their farming activities in the village. They had to make a living and the local economy was limited. These realities of the local people's livelihoods rarely appear in popular media, nor are they the concern of the country's middle class urbanites.

The forests were closed in the same decade of completion of the irrigation canal (1967 in Nong Khwai section) with a narrow two-lane road on the east of the canal and the arrival of electricity respectively. This irrigation scheme enabled water for rice farming to be sent from Mae Taeng in the north to Mae Rim, Mueang, Hang Dong and San Patong districts in the south, a distance of 75 kilometres. However, this irrigation scheme does not benefit Mu 5 as it is in a higher area than the canal. The road attached to the irrigation canal was more important for changes in the village as it connected the village and the city more closely than taking the Chiang Mai-Hot Road. However, the canal road was narrow and not in good condition for decades so the connection to the city was still difficult until the expansion to a four-lane road on both sides of the canal, which was only constructed and completed in 2004 to serve two mega projects.

The village was electrified in 1976, courtesy of "the revolving fund program" introduced when Kuekrij Pramoj was prime minister. This was during the cold war and communist uprising in Thailand. The Thai government, supported by the United States, introduced a number of development projects. Substantial budgets went to the

rural regions to weaken the communist movement. Electricity not only brought big changes to the village, but also inspired the villagers. After the village was electrified, a teacher who had a car bought the first TV set. Every evening, all of the villagers went to his house to watch the programs on television. Several people said that now they could see what the city looked like and how city people lived so comfortably. This was the local villagers' first significant visual connection to the civilised urbanity and the capital city of Bangkok. Subsequently, the people reported that they aimed to work harder and to improve their material standard of living. This was also the same period (1977) when land in Nam Jam started being legalised and title deeds were issued to individual land owners.

4.3.2 Big land sales during the economic boom of the late-1980s

The first time an outsider bought land was during the same period when the village gained electricity in 1976. A lecturer at Chiang Mai University rode a bicycle and found a tract of bush at the back of Nam Jam village. At the time, the price was 25,000 baht per rai. The villagers became excited, for it was not farming land and was by no means productive. This university lecturer bought this land for self sufficient agriculture such as growing vegetables and raising chickens and to live here when he retired. People thought how strange it was that a city lecturer would want to live in a rural village like Nam Jam. In the late-1990s, he moved to live in the village.

The most important point on the village timeline that transformed the village was around the late-1980s to the early-1990s during Chatichai Choonhavan's period as prime minister. It was the end of the Cold War and the government announced a policy to transform the former battlefields of mainland Southeast Asia into a trading zone. This bolstered an economic boom. Land speculation became widespread throughout the country, particularly in the big cities. People from Chiang Mai and the big cities - and especially from Bangkok - came to buy land in the peri-urban zone.

In Nam Jam, both individuals and gated community business buyers bought large tracts of land close to the roads, which mostly were rice fields. Nowadays, no

villager in Nam Jam owns any rice fields. All of the lands they own are residential lands, with some small plots of dry land that can only be developed for housing. In addition, the rice fields in the area became drier as there was not enough water in the Mae Taa Chang River to irrigate the dry season crop. This was partly due to excessive uses of water upstream by several new tourist places and resorts. In addition, as the irrigation canal was much lower than the rice fields in the area, it drained the water from both sides, blocking the supply to the rice fields in the area. Thus, irrigation did not benefit rice fields in the area, and also impacted on them. Since its construction in the early-1970s, farming land has only been cultivated in the wet season.

A 60 years old villager, who sold his land during that time, explained that in fact he wanted to keep his land; but, the land around his had already been sold to a gated community developer so he had no alternative. A woman sold her rice field along the irrigation canal because it could not hold water during farming as before. She said it was because of the different levels of her rice fields and the canal. In addition, the land price she was offered by a lecturer from Chiang Mai University was quite high, and she had never expected to get this price for her land. She eventually sold her fields for 240,000 baht per rai in 1989, also to a lecturer from Chiang Mai University. Later, land prices increased a great deal. A few months later, in 1990, her neighbour in Nam Jam sold her land to yet another Chiang Mai University lecturer for 500,000 baht per rai. Understandably, large areas of land have been sold not only in Nam Jam but throughout the peri-urban zone of Chiang Mai.

A study undertaken in 1993 of the urbanisation of Chiang Mai into agricultural areas which included the establishment of a gated community project in Nong Khwai sub-district showed that land sales were widespread during this time. The most important reason for selling their land was because the price was convincing (56%). The second and third reasons for deciding to sell were because they saw their neighbours sell their lands (27%) and that the land condition was no longer good for agriculture (26%) respectively. In addition, regarding the question of how people pitied some of those who sold their lands, 70% said they felt pity because they had

sold the land too cheaply (Samphan Chaiya 1993). These answers were similar to those of the Nam Jam people, who thought about selling their land during that time.

In the course of the land boom, several rice fields, including lands that used to belong to the kiln owner were sold to outsiders. The villagers thought that in part it was because the area no longer had good water. Some villagers said that the kiln owner's children would not inherit their father's business. Later, his children sold the land to two people in Nong Khwai. This was likely because the land in the area had become expensive. It was better to sell than to continue farming. Two gated community business persons bought land in Nam Jam during this time. The land was still rented out for rice farming to local people and landless Hmong families. This had a big impact on the landless women, who used to work in groups in the fields or rent the land. They had to search for other work outside the village. Thus, this incident affected all of the villagers.

Construction work became the most common way for villagers (both men and women, especially who are now in their 50s) to earn a living at the time. Many people said that it was difficult to find anyone at this age who had never carried a sack of cement. Working outside of the village's agrarian sphere contributed greatly to the people's lives today. The first villager who out-migrated to work was a woman in the mid-1960s (before the arrival of electricity) went to Bangkok. A man from the southern part of the country, who worked as a construction sub-contractor in Bangkok, visited Chiang Mai and met this young woman. They married and went to work together.

At the time, several young single villagers, i.e., men and women in their early 20s, worked in Chiang Mai town where the construction business had started to burgeon. Some worked as guards and for several types of paid work in companies and government offices in Chiang Mai city. Some went to Bangkok, following their friends or relatives who had gone there earlier, the reason being that was that they could gain a higher wage rate in Bangkok than by working in Chiang Mai. Later, several men mostly in their mid to late 20s married women they had met from

working in Bangkok, and some were from the village. Then, when they began to have children, working in Bangkok was no longer viable as they had to move with the construction sites. Therefore, they moved back to the village but continued to work on construction in Chiang Mai. It was around the late-1990s when construction in Chiang Mai was expanding greatly. These men, some of whom worked in Bangkok from one to five years, said it was very much about their ages. Before starting their families, they could work far from their hometowns. All of them had worked as daily wage labourers when they were young. When they returned to Chiang Mai, five became sub-contractors and employed their neighbours and relatives to work with them. Later, some sub-contractors started to hire Tai Yai (Shan) who crossed the border from Myanmar to northern Thailand to work for them.

At the end of this period, ten men from Nam Jam were able to develop themselves and become construction sub-contractors. Among them, five used to work in Bangkok, one had permanently established his family in Bangkok, and five worked in Chiang Mai and in other provinces in the north. The nine sub-contractors continued their work in Chiang Mai. Also in this period, two villagers among these sub-contractors from Nam Jam went to work as construction workers in Saudi Arabia for a few years (around mid 1980s). They had to borrow money from relatives and offer their land titles as guarantees in order to travel there. One came back with savings but the other one had little left and had to start his construction business back in the village.

Women who went to Bangkok mostly worked in the domestic fields such as baby and elder sitters, house cleaners, maids and as staff at small shops. According to my interviews, two female villagers, who at the time were teenagers said that they wanted to see how Bangkok looked as they had seen it on television. However, the women did not stay in Bangkok as long as the men partly due to gender and Thai cultural sensitivity. After a few years, all of them returned to their village working as wage labourers in various places such as in construction, in nearby government offices, in handicraft factories, and for Chia Tai, an agricultural business group that bought land and opened a centre for seed improvement in Nong Khwai in the mid-

1980s. In 1990, some women started taking garments from sub-contractors outside of the village to sew at home, an occupation that later became widespread. However, most of the women did not go to work in Bangkok; indeed, many have still never been there.

During this period, people saw significant improvements in economic condition and their livelihoods were improved from working in off-farm activities outside of the village. Their houses were improved using more permanent materials such as concrete and factory-roof tiles. Markets had widely expanded, two local markets were established in neighbouring villages, and transportation became more readily available. Working for money to buy food became an essential part of their lived reality. The availability of food was no longer a problem for them. Collecting food from the forest became more of a seasonal hobby, a source of joy and relief from their routine work.

After working outside of the village for some time, people could afford to buy their own vehicles. All of the sub-contractors had second hand pick-up trucks for their work and a few had red plate (new) cars. Workers, including other families at this time owned at least a motorcycle. Some put down a deposit and paid off the balance in instalments. Household electric appliances, such as television sets, rice cookers and washing machines were commonly used by families at all levels of economic status. Being in debt also became common, with amounts for each family dependent upon their capacity to return the money. Families who had businesses had more debts than wage labouring families. However, people's livelihoods in general were much more prosperous than before.

4.3.3 Peri-urbanisation of the area from road networks since 2000

The latest significant change in the area became evident when the ring roads started developing in this area between the late-1990s and the early-2000s; a few years later the canal road was improved and expanded to the mountain side to serve the two mega projects initiated at the time. The area started to become more urban

due to increasing in-migration of various social groups that became significant. Gated communities, schools, restaurants and various services were gradually constructed and offered. Consequently, the farming fields disappeared.

The villagers have benefited in various ways from this development. The construction business reached its peak in the 2000s. At the time, one of the sub-contractors in the village employed almost a hundred workers, a mix of local villagers and Tai Yai workers. The dormitories for workers business also benefited from development in the area, which was good for the local grocery shops. Later, there were so many competitors and construction businesses that a few lost their businesses. In 2012, there were six construction sub-contractors in Nam Jam, three were new young sub-contractors, who started working on electricity and painting in 2010. The other six men stopped working in this field as they grew old: one married a woman from another village and moved out; one passed away; and, one was in debt due to a failed business. He decided to do wood turning again.

Apart from the construction work in which that most of villagers in Nam Jam were involved, opening grocery shops, building dormitories and garment sewing became significant activities in the village. Families who were able to open grocery shops or to own dormitories were relatively well off. Most had sold land or obtained a share from their parents, who had sold land in the past. One earned money as a land agent: he planned to open a grocery store. Only one who had worked and saved from sewing garments was able to build a five-unit dormitory. Garment sewing is a significant activity in the village nowadays. The two local sub-contractors employ approximately 20 seamstresses, some of whom are from nearby villages.

People's livelihoods in general have improved greatly and every old run down wooden house was renovated to concrete. However, debt has become common and almost every family is in debt. The sub-contractors have debts associated with their revolving investment in their businesses. Some other important sources of debt are the costs that the better-off families have to meet for their children's education. In addition, there are the daily expenses for livelihoods for wage labouring families. The

few well off families in the village lend money; but, because they charge a high rate of interest, some villagers become even worse off. They lose their lands from trying to pay their mortgages.

In the early-2000s, the government policy of “the village one million baht fund”, initiated by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, enabled people to borrow money at a low interest rate from this fund. A majority of local families, both sub-contractors and the poor, are members of this fund. Each can borrow from 15,000 to 30,000 baht per year if they are able to return the money from the previous year. The aim of this fund is to support villagers’ occupations; however, in reality, the money is used to pay back their local lenders and to ease their revolving debts (which undoubtedly helps a lot). Another remarkable policy introduced by Thaksin government was the ‘30 baht health care scheme’, which allowed people to receive treatment from government health centres and hospitals. This guaranteed urgent and expensive health care for the poor. Most villagers admire Thaksin for these policies. Later, when his government was dissolved following a coup d’ etat in 2006, Thailand became significantly divided into forces pro and against Thaksin, a division which has partly influenced interaction between the different social groups and classes in the village as they have become more distinct. This issue will be discussed in Chapter 5.

It may be seen that people of Nam Jam have engaged in off-farm activities, especially construction work, for a long time, perhaps since the economic boom of the late-1980s during which many rice fields in the area were sold. People did not have much farming land at first; then, subsequent to a period of high land trading, not a villager in Nam Jam owned a rice field. The rice fields in the middle of Mu 5 shown in the earlier maps belonged to the few well-off families in Nong Khwai who worked in other occupations such as a physician and a garage owner. The remainder were owned by outsiders who have yet to develop the land. They rent it out to local landless farmers, some of whom are Hmong. These changes in the area have influenced differently the transformation of people’s livelihoods in each generation.

Since this period, Chiang Mai has grown rapidly. The area has become a peri-urban zone accommodating the expansion of Chiang Mai city; in particular, the development of the residential area has opened up a wide range of job opportunities. This has seen the end of villagers' out-migration for working outside and started the in-migration of different social groups into the village. At this time, newcomers started moving into the area. They were urban middle class group, the workers from nearby districts and provinces that came to find jobs around the area and migrant workers from Myanmar. Apart from these, there were three local families from nearby districts who moved to live in Nam Jam as its location is closer to town and markets. One of them sells chicken in the local markets; one is a plumber and has a small trading business; and the third is a university student whose mother used to be a worker in the fields and just passed away, and who is supported by her aunt in Bangkok.

4.4 A diverse and dynamic community

The transformation of the village resulted in class mobility among the local villagers and the in-filling groups. The local villagers experience varies across generations. As for the in-filling groups, they can be divided into three groups, 1) urban middle class newcomers including Thai and foreign families; 2) temporary residents including people who live in dormitories and Tai Yai migrant workers; and 3) commuting workers include seamstresses and Hmong farmers.

4.4.1 Long-term local residents

Villagers of different generations have experienced different life trajectories that have influenced their current livelihoods and class stratification. Much has depended upon changing agrarian and economic contexts of the village and the levels of education that the villagers have achieved. Nam Jam has 29 long-term local families comprising 104 people.

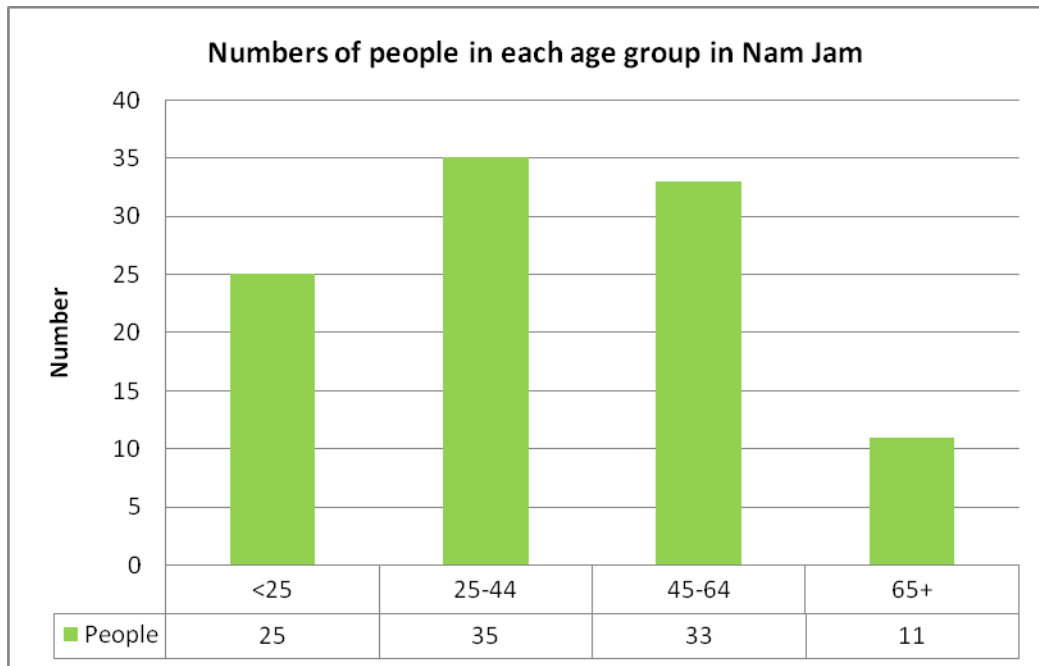


Figure 4.6: Numbers of each age group in Nam Jam

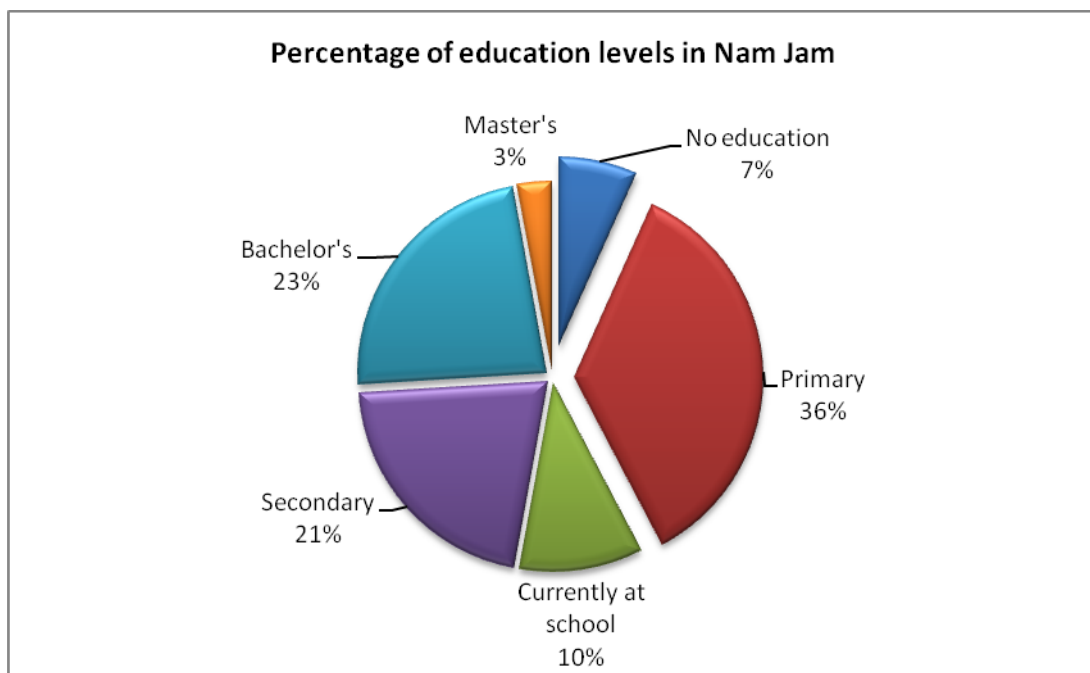


Figure 4.7: Current percentage of education levels in Nam Jam

Note: 'Currently at school' means children studying at primary and secondary schools. Bachelor's and Master's refer to those who are studying or completed at these levels. The remaining groups are those who finished their schooling at these levels.

The age ranges are directly linked to the villagers' education levels (Figure 4.6 and 4.7 above). I have divided the villagers into four generational groups, represented in Figure 4.7. They are less than 25 years of age, 25-44, 45-64, and older group of villagers over 65 years of age. Figure 4.7 shows the percentages of education levels of the people in Nam Jam. It may be generalised that the young generation has improved their education level much further than their parents' and grandparents' generations.

The four generations are constituted as follow:

(1) *The older generation* (24%): the over 65 years age group who no longer work full time. Some were educated to grade four level in primary school: most of the women were not educated because education was limited at that time and women were not encouraged to study. It was assumed that they would marry and were not likely to work outside of the village. There are eleven people from eight families in this group of who seven people or 7% of total long-term local residents did not have any education (Figure 4.7).

Four people in the 65+ age group were still working, doing light activities such as handicrafts, growing vegetables for sale in the village, and as light wage labour in the local garment business. Only one is still actively working as a wood turner. This group was very attached to the rural community. Only one man had visited Bangkok: others only visited neighbouring provinces to attend Buddhist festivals or ceremonies involving relatives living in the village. These people experienced the earlier period of poverty in terms of minimal food security and living conditions that were basic at best. Few families in this group had land to sell in the past: few parents divided their money among their children; and, none was ever able to buy new land. Villagers in this generation have gradually passed away. Since 2007, four elders have died and three are now in their 80s.

(2) *The 45-64 years generation* (34%): this group of people has established their families and are still of working age. Thirty three people from 23 families had grown up children whose work tended to be permanent. Everyone in this

group, 36% of the total local villagers, including the women, had primary education, mostly to grade four. This level of education allowed them to read and write. Three men in this age group had attended high school. Of the three men, two were outsiders who married and moved to live in Nam Jam and had reached junior high school. Only one 50 year old man in the village had finished senior high school. He had worked hard to convince his parents, even arguing with his brothers and sisters to support him at school because the family could not afford to lose his labour in the field. His family sold a small plot of land to fund his education. At that time, all of the rural families need their children's labour. Education, they argued, did not help with farming or working in the forest. Therefore, few if any sent their children for further education, after they finished primary school.

This generation was the most dynamic among all of those who experienced the main transformation period of the village; that is when the economy was booming, farm land in the area was being sold, and they ceased having to work in the forests. This group abandoned the rural context for urban construction work and more profitable other activities in the city. In general, the majority of people of this generation experienced better conditions: many improved their livelihoods significantly. Two families opened small grocery stores in the village; and another four families invested in building dormitories and earning their living from the rents. Three families were doing well as pork and chicken traders in the local markets. In addition, many invested in their children's education to university level. Few were able to buy land in outer locations. They could afford the prices but were living in the future development zone. They intended to look for land that had potential for investment, for example, many bought orchard land. It was considered easier to sell than the rice fields, and it did not require much expense to level the land, in addition, the land looks nicer with trees making it easier to sell and they could collect produce before the land is sold. This type of land speculation frequently accompanies rapid urban expansion.

However, there were two families that were clearly worse off in terms of residential security. They had sold their residential lands to pay their debts and now

had to rent their own homes. Most of them were still wage labourers: they could not depend on their children as the latter only had education to junior high school level and did not have secure or well paid jobs.

(3) *The 25-44 year generation (32%)*: many had completed their college education and started work: some had married and had small children. There were 35 people in 19 families. Transportation in the area was in a much better condition: each family at least had a motorcycle; and, some had cars. Villagers of this generation could access education more easily. All had reached junior high school level. Among them, 24 had vocational and Bachelor's degrees and three had Master's degrees. This number included current students at each level.

This group had never experienced farming. They did not know how to grow rice due to the socio-economic changes in the village. Education was much more important to this generation than it had been for their parents. Their levels of education influenced their work opportunities which were the most diverse of all of the generations in the village. Some of them were still studying. Most of those with university degrees secured work in diverse offices, either in Chiang Mai town or nearby. One girl in this age group, a daughter of one of the construction sub-contractors, had a Bachelor's degree in Mandarin Chinese. She had studied at a Thai university that has a program of sending Thai students to study in China. After she returned from China, she taught Mandarin Chinese for a while. Recently, she married a British man she met while holidaying in the south of Thailand. Now they are living in Nam Jam, and both aim to extend her father's business as they anticipated more foreign customers. Her success is due to her education and to her mobility that has widened her opportunities.

Those who do not have university degrees struggle hard to earn a living and to improve their livelihoods. Many work as indoor labourers, either garment sewing, or as assistants to traders in local markets. One garment sewing sub-contractor of this generation, whose earlier activities failed such as her job in a factory in Lamphun, trading at local weekend markets and several other jobs, started sewing garments. By

2005, she owned a sewing machine and eventually became a sub-contractor with ten workers. She owns two cars and recently was able to buy a plot of residential land next to hers. Two people in this group work on mixed activities such as direct sales, insurance agents, satellite dish dealers and trading. One, who started as an assistant in a garage, recently opened his own small garage in the village.

(4) *The lower than 25 year age group* (11%). Most of this group are still studying and dependent upon their parents (25 people of 17 families). The parents of these students are likely to support their children to gain university degrees. Several of their parents said that because they have few assets to give them, they can only give them education. Their success will depend on themselves and, if possible, they will take care of their parents in the future. Among these, 6 have already worked and two have recently started families.

As of 2012, the people in Nam Jam pursue diverse careers, more so than in the past (see Figure 4.8 below). Some have embarked on more than one career.



Figure 4.8: Current numbers of people and families in each occupation in Nam Jam

Of the people involved in agriculture, two were elders and one was combining it with other activities. All sell their produce locally. Wage labourers earn no more than 300 baht per day. They do not have secure jobs, and this problem will become exacerbated as they grow old. Four of the 19 labourers were middle-aged and worked as cleaners, some at villagers' relatives' houses and some at urban middle class houses. Sewing affords them a better income depending upon the pieces of work they can do. Some who have experience and can work quickly can earn more than 10,000 baht per month. This is quite a good income; but, they have to work hard. Five people (three families) who are traders, sell pork and chicken at the local markets. Their incomes are good and they feel secure. Two families have been able to buy land in more distant areas. Freelance work involves selling products on commission, such as insurance and satellite dishes. However, commission workers' incomes are not consistent; but, they are a good complement to their partners or families.

Wood turning has been a popular activity for several villages in the area for many decades. It can provide a good income, meeting demands from both local and international markets. Wood work goes through many steps before the product is finished. Wood turners in this village make wood into product forms which are then sent to other villages for detailed work and for sale at the woodcraft centre in Ban Tawai, Hang Dong district.



Figure 4.9: Wood turning in Nam Jam (May 2009)

Privately-owned businesses include two grocery shops, one small food store, one garage and four dormitories (the fifth is owned by a family in Tong Kai, a neighbouring village to the north). Sub-contractors include two families of garment seamstresses and five families working in construction. They all seem to be good businesses. These people have developed their livelihoods to become new small entrepreneurs in the village. The term ‘salary’ refers to work with secure salaries: this applies in the main to educated people in the village.



Figure 4.10: One of the two grocery shops in Nam Jam (May 2009)



Figure 4.11: One of the two main seamstress groups in Nam Jam (June 2013)



Figure 4.12: One of the five budget dormitories in Nam Jam (May 2009)

4.4.2 The in-filling groups

The term ‘in-filling groups’ refers to all newcomers who are neither family nor friends of local villagers whom they might marry or used to work with. They can be divided into two main groups: (1) those who live in their own permanent houses, i.e., urban middle class newcomers, both Thai and foreign; and, (2) those who rent rooms in dormitories and working camps. Both groups have moved into the village with different prospects in mind and for different purposes. The number of the entire in-filling groups has increased, most significantly after the completion of the canal road extension, the ring roads (2005), and the two mega projects Night Safari and Royal Flora Garden (2006).

The numbers of in-migrants are gradually growing. During the time of my data collection, there was on-going construction of both urban middle class newcomers' houses and new additional dormitory rooms. Some village families stated that they may build dormitories in the near future when they have enough

money. However, one foreign family wants to sell their house as they now spend little time in Thailand.

Each cluster of Mu 5 has different compositions of social groups. Of the three clusters, Nong Khwai was the first established community; so, it has the most crowded, long-term local resident households. The communities of Hua Thung and Nam Jam are not as crowded as those of Nong Khwai; thus, they have available space for in-filling groups of urban middle class newcomers and dormitories for temporary residents. The end of 2012 saw the start of a 24 unit housing estate project in Nong Khwai.

This section illustrates the diversity of social groups in a small community and the patterns of in-filling groups' in-migration. Most of the statistics for each cluster have been divided into: Nong Khwai, Hua Thung and Nam Jam in Mu 5 respectively. They were drawn from Hangdong district's registered records and interviews undertaken with the majority of urban middle class newcomers and local leaders. My aim was to capture the big picture of the whole village. However, the detailed data pertain more to Nam Jam. This will link to class mobility in the next section and class interaction in the following chapter.

1) Urban middle class newcomers

The urban middle class newcomers to Mu 5 started to move into the village in 2000 and increasingly significantly from 2007 onward when the road networks in the area were completed and facilities such as restaurants, schools and shops first became established. In Nam Jam, there are some cases of lecturers from Chiang Mai University who bought land in the 1990s for their retirement when there were only dirt roads in the village but only recently built houses on their land. There are still three urban middle class families who bought land at that time but have not yet built their houses.

It is clear from Figure 4.13 below that Hua Thung and Nam Jam have

accommodated considerably more urban middle class newcomers than Nong Khwai, where the numbers of urban middle class newcomers are steadily increasing. During the time of data collection, there was on-going house construction in all three clusters.

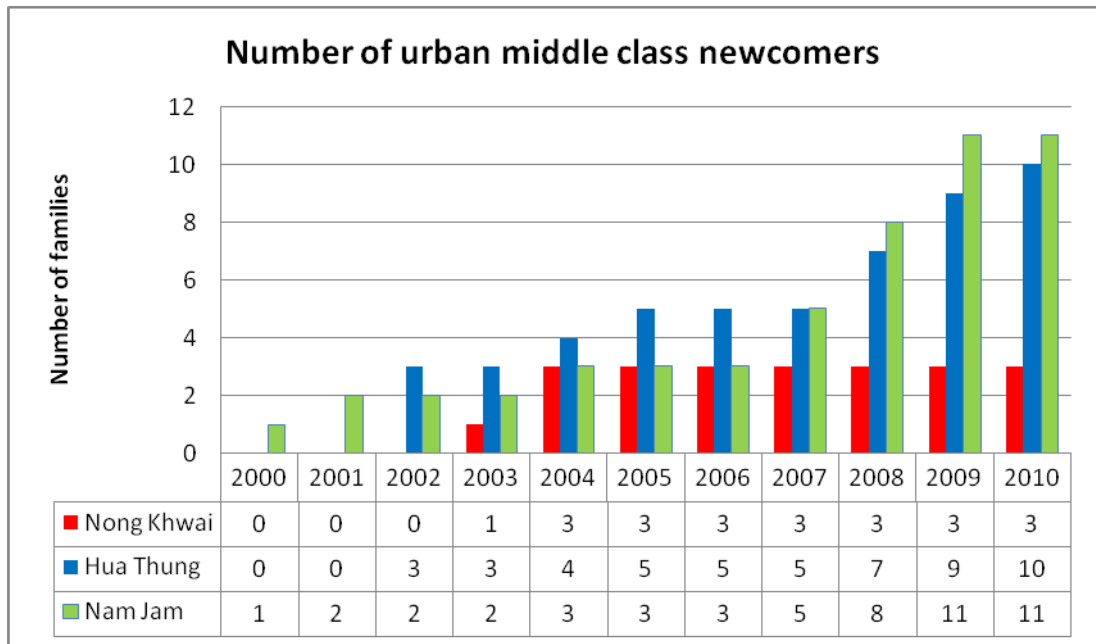


Figure 4.13: Number of in-migrated urban middle class families

There are some differences in the three clusters regarding the atmosphere and the land types that are available. Nong Khwai is the most crowded community among the three clusters; so, most of the available land for sale to the newcomers is rice fields. There are a few small plots located in the middle of community for sale but they are not the middle class newcomers' choice. In the case of Nam Jam, and especially Hua Thung, some areas still remain wooded bush, with big trees. However, because these areas are less crowded, they are more pleasant to live in. In addition, there are still small plots of bush, orchard and rice fields available for the newcomers to buy.

Every urban middle class family in Mu 5 stated clearly that they preferred living in the village to the 'muu-baan jad-san' (housing estate), gated community, and the reasons varied. Most of them said they did not want to live in an area where their houses look like everyone else's. Some said they wanted to design their own houses

to fit their lifestyles. Some wanted bigger areas as land in the village is cheaper than in the gated community. Some would like to enjoy the greenery in the village. Some indicated clearly that they chose to live in the village because they do not like the individualism and social isolation of the gated community, where people tend to move to live in more private lives. Therefore, living in 'muu-baan', the real village would provide them a sense of being part of the community where 'chao-baan' (villagers) know one another, are considerate and help each other. 'Muu-baan' in Thai gives a metaphorical sense of an ideal traditional village (Rigg 1994) with tied community. The 24-unit gated community in Nong Khwai is named 'Suk Samran (contentment) in Nature'. An employee of the project said it targeted urban people who worked in Chiang Mai city or from other cities that wanted to have a second home in Chiang Mai and prefer living in peaceful environment near a rural community.

Most of the urban middle class newcomers bought land individually. They generally preferred medium-sized land (approximately half to two rai) which is a good size for building a house with a garden and private space for their families. For this reason, they tended to search for orchard land that was smaller and likely to be at a good height. In earlier times, the rice fields used to be quite big and at the lower level to enable irrigation for farming. In addition, interviews with several urban middle class newcomers, supported by comments by the village head, suggested that the latter preferred land and areas at the edge of the village, some distance from the others, especially areas with big trees or where they could enjoy pleasant views of the rice fields and mountains. Most of the urban middle class newcomers were not averse to dirt roads as long as they were well maintained. Some even liked them better than concrete roads as they reflected the rural area. They added that with good roads, cars run faster and are noisier.

There were some types of land and areas that the middle class newcomers did not prefer, for example rice fields that were mostly big plots of land located at a level much lower than the road for the purposes of accessing water during production. The rice field levels could be very low, from 0.3 to one metre below the road in some places. Buyers had to invest considerable money and time in filling up the land

before they could start to build a house. While some active rice fields in Hua Thung are located in pleasant areas, they are at least one meter deep. Some villagers suggested that this would make it difficult to sell at a price as high as the others. Another type of land that has proven unpopular is land surrounded by villagers' houses. Newcomers feel that they will lack privacy.

There was one case of a foreign family who bought 6 rai of rice field in Hua Thung. They wanted to buy only one third or half of this big plot; but, the two local owners, who were brothers, wanted to sell the whole plot. The foreign buyers considered the land price reasonable and noted that it was in a quiet corner of the village so they bought it. There has been only one case recorded in Nam Jam where a group of people bought a big plot of abandoned rice field and divided it into smaller plots. However, since mid 2012, rice fields in Nong Khwai are being converted into new urban middle class houses. Therefore, one may assume that the statistical ratios in Figure 4.13 could change over time depending upon new conditions that may arise.



Figure 4.14: A group of urban middle class houses at the edge of rice field in Nam Jam (November 2009)



Figure 4.15: A foreigner's house in Hua Thung, the rice field is in Nong Khwai cluster (November 2009)



Figure 4.16: Sign of land sale written in both Thai and English.

Photo was taken at the same location to the above picture, Figure 4.15 (October 2012)



Figure 4.17: Expansion of middle class houses construction on the rice field, Nong Khwai cluster (January 2013)

There were a couple of ways in which urban middle class newcomers searched for residential land. All of them gave the same reason for buying land: the location was a key determining issue; and, it was not too far from the inner city given that they still had to work in town. Another important reason was the land price. In 2004, when I personally bought land in Nam Jam, the price for one rai was 800,000 baht; by 2012, it was four million baht. At the current price, only outsiders can afford to buy land. The price has never decreased since I bought my land. The urban middle class families who bought land recently built houses soon after.

My research revealed other purposes for buying land. For example, big plots of rice fields that were bought by a housing estate business group a few decades ago have yet to be developed. These lands are likely to be converted to gated communities in the future similar to the recent two gated community projects in Nong Khwai. The land has been rented out to landless local farmers. One urban middle class family gradually bought land around this area and in other places over a period of decades. Some local villagers estimate that they might now own a few hundred rai of land. In addition, some plots of land were bought as an investment to be sold later at higher prices.

Many of the buyers, especially those seeking to buy land for their residences, simply drove their cars or motorcycles around the area, enquiring at random from people they met. Some received information from their friends, who either lived in the area or nearby: some knew the local agent through friends. Ultimately, all of them contacted the local agents, mainly local leaders or villagers, who had wide networks; then, they met with the land owners to negotiate the price. Local agents normally receive commission, approximately 3-5% of the land price. Local agents were often not by profession but ordinary people who happened to connect the buyers and the land owners. There were a few cases where the local agents raised the price by themselves and took the difference as their profit. However, land owners did not prefer this practice as the price was often exaggerated so that the sale could be delayed. Some local agents extended their networks through the urban middle class newcomers, sometimes leaving photocopies of proposed land titles with them so that they would invite their friends to buy land. I was personally offered commission by a few local agents if I could get my friends to buy land from them. Unfortunately, I did not know anyone who would buy land in the village at the prices the owners requested!

Apart from in this village, I was also contacted by local agents to buy or invite others to buy land further afield, especially at the edge of the Doi Suthep-Pui National Park where there was not full land title. The local agents explained that these lands were about to get full title as people had been living on and using the land for a long period of time. Now, the Department of Forestry has issued documents to the users; so, if outsiders buy the land, they will benefit because the land price is still not high and it will be easier to change to the buyers' names when the government converts the land to full title. Moreover, the local agents said that even though the access roads are dirt roads, several urban middle class people including foreigners with Thai partners have bought land and built houses there already. These areas still have an abundance of trees, something this group prefers. They can buy bigger plots of land and preserve their privacy. The village head told me that the elders often spoke of the differences between the urban and rural people, saying that urban people want to live in the forest while villagers prefer to live in the city. I visited some of these areas; they were very

pleasant, and there were several families living there, their rough fences and fruit trees demarcating their ownership. However, as a newcomer, I did not want to risk buying land without full title.

In Mu 5, of the total 245 permanent families, there were 24 urban middle class families, counting of 13 Thai families and 11 foreign families. Of the 13 Thai urban middle class families (two in Nong Khwai, three in Hua Thung and eight in Nam Jam), three were from Chiang Mai, two were from other provinces in the North, and eight were from Bangkok. The latter may not have been born there, but had spent a major part of their lives in Bangkok.

Among the eleven foreign families in Mu 5 (one in Nong Khwai, seven in Hua Thung and three in Nam Jam), three were from UK, two from Australia, and one each from Norway, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the United States and New Zealand. Ten of the eleven families had Thai partners: one family was a British brother and sister. Nine of the foreign partners in the mixed families were male: one was female. Regarding their Thai partners, four were from the northeast, three from the north, and three from the central part of the country. None of the Thai partners met his/her their partners in their home towns: they met in the provinces they worked in or visited, mostly in Chiang Mai.

The majority of all urban middle class families, both Thai and foreign was in their mid 30s to 60s when they moved to live here and their families were very small. Among the 24 families, five families are single; four did not have any children; seven families have one child; four had two children; and, one had three children. There were no data for the remaining three families.

Most of the urban middle class (both Thai and foreign) families had high university education level. Seven people (six Thais and one foreigner) in five families had or were studying toward PhDs. Four people in the four foreign families (one male foreigner and three Thai female partners) were educated to high school level. In late 2012, Two Thai urban middle class families who were lecturers at Chiang Mai

University moved into Nam Jam, among whom three members also had PhDs (this data is not in the statistics used in this thesis).

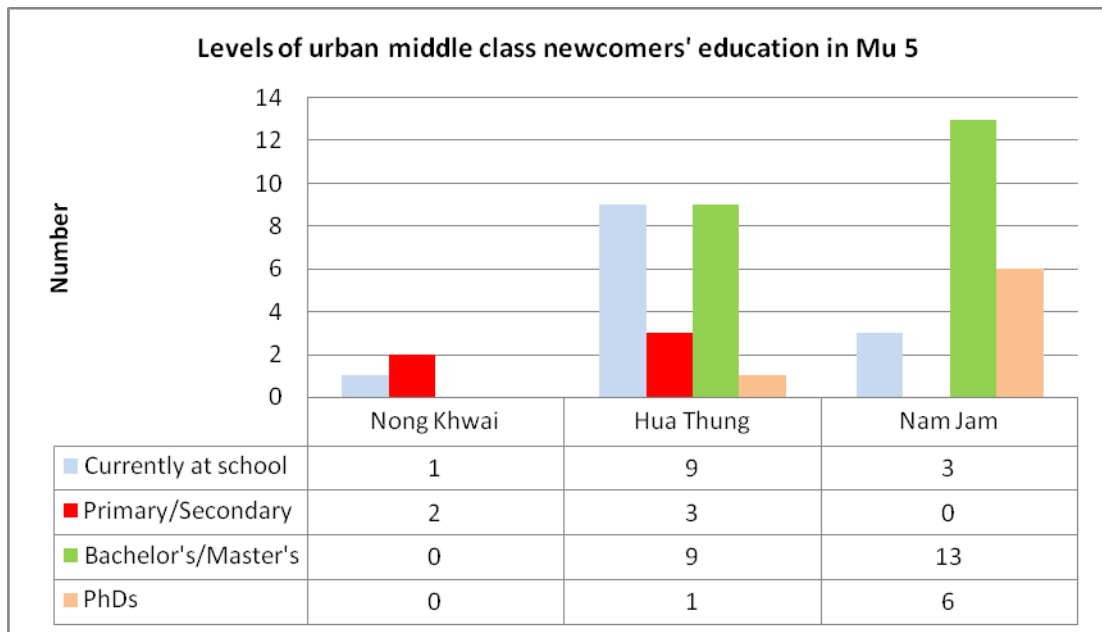


Figure 4.18: Levels of urban middle class newcomers' education in Mu 5

Note: The data were from families who were interviewed and should be considered with the total numbers of families and numbers of families interviewed in Table 4.1 above.

The occupations of the 13 Thai urban middle class families in Mu 5 were varied. Approximately half were university lecturers and the remainder were officials, in private business, tourism and publishing. Regarding the eleven foreign families, five had private businesses such as import and export of handicrafts and restaurants. Six (four families) worked in education, one for a foreign organisation, one in publishing, and there was no data for one case. The majority of the Thai partners' parents had farming backgrounds in the countryside: only a few worked in the private sector and education. When they met their foreign partners, several were working in the service sector, some in education and one worked in tourism.

In Nam Jam in particular, among the 40 permanent families, there were 29 local families and eleven urban middle class newcomer families (eight Thai families and three foreigners with Thai partners). Among the eight Thai families, only one

was from Chiang Mai; one was from another province in the north but had worked in Chiang Mai so they bought land here; and the other one was from the northeast. The five remainders were either from Bangkok or had lived in Bangkok for some time. Then, they moved to live in Chiang Mai. Among the three foreign families in Nam Jam, one was from the United States, one from Australia and one from Norway. Their Thai partners were from the northeast, central region of Thailand, and from Bangkok. The six PhDs (in four families) among them worked in education and the rest were officials, foreign development workers, in the publishing business, and in private business.

2) “Temporary” residents

There were two groups of “temporary” residents: residents of dormitories and residents of working camps. Some had sojourned in the village longer than the permanent urban middle class group.

2.1) Dormitory residents

The dormitories for temporary residents started in Mu 5 in the early-2000s. The first dormitory was established in Nong Khwai to serve early development in the area. Then, in 2006 onward when the two mega projects commenced, the numbers of dormitories increased considerably.



Figure 4.19: The most recent 5 unit dormitory in Nam Jam, 2011 (July 2013)

Figure 4.20 below shows the units of dormitory rooms in three community clusters of Mu 5 from 2004 to 2011. Nong Khwai had the highest number of dormitory rooms, followed closely by Nam Jam. However, if the two Tai Yai (Shan) working camps are included in these statistics, and the proportion of permanent residents is considered, Nam Jam had more temporary residents than permanent residents.

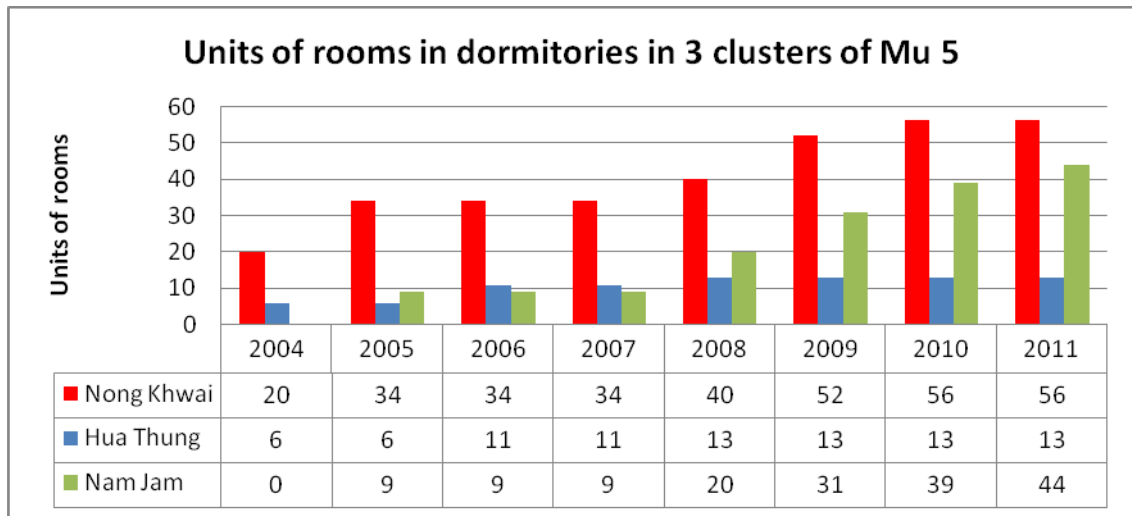


Figure 4.20: Units of dormitory rooms in three clusters of Mu 5

Source: Statistics from Nong Khwai TAO and interviews with Nam Jam dormitory owners

Note: This diagram does not include two Tai Yai working camps in Nam Jam

In Nam Jam in particular, the numbers of temporary families are more significant. The temporary families (56) number more than the permanent families (40). Among the temporary residents, 44 families live in six dormitories and twelve families live in two construction-working camps for migrant Tai Yai workers or Shan⁸ from Myanmar. Figure 4.21 below shows the ratio of the different social groups in Nam Jam.

⁸ Shan is one of the large ethnic groups in northeast Myanmar. In Thailand, they are called Tai Yai.

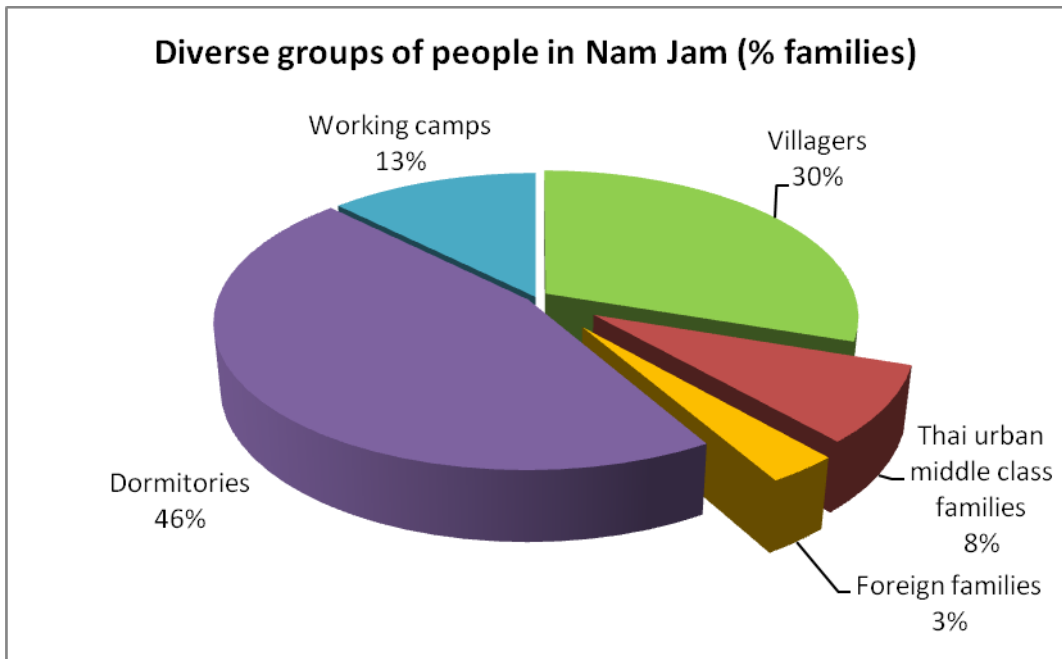


Figure 4.21: Diverse groups of people in Nam Jam

In addition, among the temporary residents of Nam Jam, there were diverse ethnicities. Figure 4.22 below shows the main groups: Thai, Tai Yai, Hmong, Karen, Lahu and Akha. The Tai Yai are from Myanmar: the remainder, who have Thai nationality, are from nearby districts including Mae Chaem, Mae Wang, Hot, Doi Lo and Mae Rim in Chiang Mai; and other provinces such as Mae Hongson and Chiang Rai.

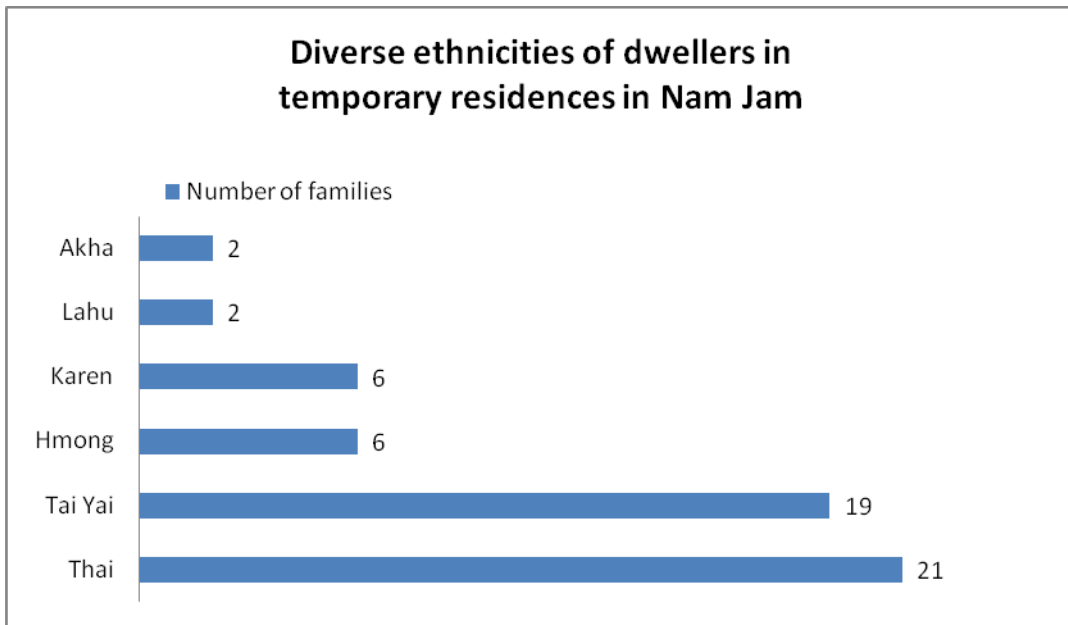


Figure 4.22: Diverse ethnicities of dwellers in temporary residences in Nam Jam

According to Table 4.2 below, the 8 temporary residences in Nam Jam include six dormitories and two working camps (the last two columns before the Total, GB 1997 and HB 1999). The cost of dormitory accommodation in Nam Jam ranges from 1,000 to 1,200 baht per month. The room size is approximately three by five metres: They are unfurnished with attached bathroom and separate water and electricity bills. The 1,200 baht dormitory has a parking space for cars. Most of its dwellers are office workers from nearby areas.

Table 4.2: Diverse ethnicities in temporary residences and established years of residence in Nam Jam (unit: household)

Ethnicities	A 2005	B 2008	C 2008	D 2009	E 2010	F 2011	GB 1997	HB 1999	Total
Thai	1	3	4	5	8				21
Hmong	3	2		1					6
Karen	3		1	2					6
Lahu	1			1					2
Akha	1	1							2
Tai Yai (Shan)				2		5	7	5	19
Total HH	9	6	5	11	8	5	7	5	56

Source: Interviews with residence owners.

Note: A to F are six dormitories; GB and HB are the two working camps for Tai Yai migrant workers.

The first dormitory in Nam Jam was established in 2005 to serve the two mega projects of Night Safari and Royal Flora Gardens in the area that both commenced operation in 2006. Building dormitories became very popular among local villagers as it enabled them to gain a regular income from their small plots of land. Thus, several dormitories were established, especially in Nam Jam, which constituted the closest location to the mega projects among the three clusters, and most residents worked at these projects. Other villages in this area also have several budget dormitories accommodating workers for rapid urban development, see Figure 4.23 below.

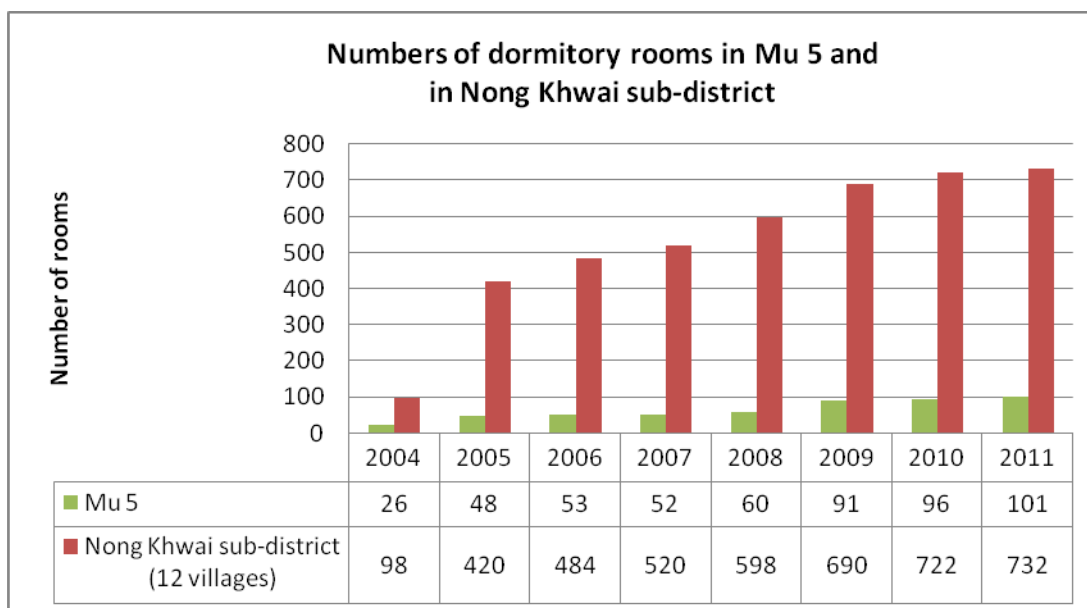


Figure 4.23: Numbers of dormitory rooms in Mu 5 and in Nong Khwai sub-district

Source: Data from Nong Khwai TAO's record

Almost all of the temporary residents are young couples approximately 20 to 35 years of age. Only a few people occupy units alone. Some couples have small babies: thus, mothers have to leave their jobs to take care of their children. A few families invite relatives from their hometowns to take care of the children so that both husband and wife can go to work. Some families have older children who attend the local primary school in the neighbouring village. A few Tai Yai families have children at secondary level: they undertake their study in town.

Most of the dormitory residents have high school degrees. Many work in town and this requires at least grade 9, which is also the national compulsory educational level (Office of the Basic Education Commission 2002). The majority of them work on the two mega projects Royal Flora Gardens and Night Safari as gardeners, animal carers and guards. The remainder work in various sectors such as TAO, small private trading and companies nearby in an approximate one to five kilometres radius.

The residents' duration of stay in these dormitories is not long. Many stay for less than a year. Some change their work or move to live in more convenient places;

conversely, some stay for a few years. As regards the Tai Yai construction workers, some have stayed for ten years. They tend to stay in one place longer than the dormitory residents due to Thailand's strict working conditions that limits their mobility.

Interviews with some dormitory residents revealed that they came from farming family backgrounds in neighbouring districts and provinces. They formerly worked in the fields with their parents, who are still farming. Only one or two children, sometimes even none, worked on the farm with them. Their other children worked in off-farm activities. Most of them stated clearly that they did not want to work as wage labourers forever. However, they wanted to save money for a few years so that they could invest in small businesses in the near future.

There was one case of particular interest. A Karen man, who had a vocational degree in veterinary science, was working as the supervisor of the animal feeding section in the Night Safari. He had a wife and one small child. His wife had to leave her job as a clerk to take care of their one year-old child. They said that when their child reached two and a half, they would put her in a nursery so that the mother could work to earn more income for the family. However, the family was able to buy a small plot of land in a neighbouring village out of their savings. They planned to build a small house and live in the area, instead of working on a remote farm with their parents.

Another case was a family in which both husband (Karen) and wife (Hmong) worked as gardeners at the Royal Flora Gardens. Each earned 7,500 baht per month, worked six days per week, but without welfare. The wife recently gave birth to their second child. She had to stop working for three months without pay while their four year-old child was at a kindergarten in a neighbouring village. The wife asked her mother from a rural village in another district of Chiang Mai to stay with them and take care of the baby. Her mother's maize field was taken care of by another of her children. They rented a small house in the village with two small bedrooms at 1,500 baht per month. To save money, they asked her husband's two brothers to come to

work in the same place. They stay in one room and share the cost.

2.2) Tai Yai (Shan) working camps

These two working camps were set up during a similar period in the late 1990s, before the start of the dormitories. The residents were Tai Yai construction workers, who worked with local sub-contractors or builders in the village. In early 2012, there were twelve families (22 adults) in these two working camps and some workers' children. I interviewed three Tai Yai, two of whom had lived in Nam Jam since the late-1990s, longer than the urban middle class newcomers. The third had lived here for three years, following her friend who was here earlier. Some of them started living here when they were single. Now they have children studying in high school in Chiang Mai. It is revealing of class-based attitudes in Nam Jam that long-term residents categorise this group as temporary residents even though they were the first in-filling group in the village and have lived here for a significant length of time. The data I collected were not only about their family lives but also about the background of other Tai Yai workers. In addition, a number of sub-contractors, their employers, were also interviewed.

Working camps tend to be temporary residences. The workers build their own sheds on the local builders' lands. Most of the materials used are recycled tin sheets and plywood left over from construction. They share bathrooms, are provided with water, but have separate electricity bills. Each family pays a small rent, approximately half of the rent of the dormitory. Also there are some workers who do not work with the sub-contractor. They rent the place temporarily while searching for jobs. They normally do not stay in the camps for long.



Figure 4.24: Housing of Tai Yai workers (July 2013)

Most of the Tai Yai workers entered Thailand through neighbouring provinces, either Chiang Rai or Mae Hong Son. They have migrated to work in the border towns for the past few decades, especially on construction sites but, it was illegal migration. One of the construction sub-contractors, who had employed Tai Yai workers since 1997, said that in the past the authority was not so strict. However, sometimes he had to give a bribe to the police. In 2004, the province announced a survey and registration of all migrant workers. They had to report to the Provincial Employment Office regularly and could not travel freely. They had to stay in registered locations and work for registered employers only. Then, in 2011, the Provincial Employment Officer announced a further step of legalising Burmese workers in Thailand by issuing them documents with work permits for one to two years that could be extended. Legal migrant workers still have to ask their employers to register them and to apply for work permits for them. However, they can travel freely. In addition, these workers have restrictions on their work.

In one case, a Thai employer in Nam Jam acted as a local agent obtaining work permits for Tai Yai workers for extra fees. This was not only for his own workers but also for Tai Yai who lived and worked with the others or worked on

something outside of construction. For example, a female Tai Yai worker is working on garment sewing in the village. This proved beneficial for both sides. It was convenient for small employers, who did not want to bother with documents and the long process of registration each time. As regards the local agent, as he had to manage registration for his own workers, gaining additional income from other workers seemed profitable. However, he only handled registration for workers he knew and trusted. There may have been legal issues had the workers disappeared or created problems. After becoming legalised workers, one family that recently had a baby, stayed in a dormitory in the village instead of in the work camp, hoping for more comfort. The husband worked as a painter and the wife as seamstress. Both worked with sub-contractors in Nam Jam. The Tai Yai workers did not change their jobs and places of residence often, despite the fact that their mobility had become easier. However, to find good employers, who would be fair and keen to manage their work permits, remained a concern.

These workers were in their early 20s to late 30s. Most of them had families and some had small children. There were only a few single workers. One female worker explained that their parents were worried, especially about their daughters. If they married and went with their husbands, they would be of less concern. From the interviews, I learned that most of Tai Yai workers had farming backgrounds and had rice fields. They were not particularly poor families; otherwise, they could not afford their trips to work in Thailand. They said that because so many young people in the village went to Thailand for work, only old people and children remained in the village. They did not visit their home village often as it cost a lot of money, so they might visit once every few years. However, they regularly send money back home.

When they first arrived illegally in Thailand, they worked at various jobs such as washing cars, in garages, gas stations and in stores or maids in the houses. They could not negotiate much, so their wages were low and they changed jobs quite often to earn a living. Construction work provided a good income if workers were skilful. Normally they will get from 250-500 baht per day depending on their skills and work. Several of them become small sub-contractors: some worked only on certain jobs

such as brick and tile laying, plumbing and plastering, for which they earn more than daily wages. One worker I interviewed was a small sub-contractor. He used his second hand pickup truck (registered in the landlord's name) to transport his workers, who were mostly his family members and relatives. Apart from being construction workers, they sometimes are hired by people in the village for jobs such as cutting tree branches and by Hmong farmers when labour is required urgently in a short period of time. They would be paid by amount of work for which they often gain more, such as 800-1,000 baht for rice transplanting in a day, and this work could be finished in a few days so that it would not affect their routine work. These Tai Yai workers are farmers in their country so this work is common for them. It is shown that through the high mobility of different groups, it allows flow of labour to be filled in where they are needed. At the same time, it is also interesting in class terms that no local villagers do this work even though they could gain higher than their daily wage.

Their landlords, who are sub-contractors in the village, told me that most Tai Yai workers work very hard and save a lot of money, more so than Thai workers. Some invested in their children's education in Chiang Mai: some bought motorcycles (using their Thai employers' names); some aimed or managed to buy plots of land near the border using the names of their relatives (who had Thai identification cards). They had lived in Thailand a long time and settled their families there. Three workers told me that they did not see themselves as construction workers forever. They had to work hard now because when they grow old, construction work becomes impossible. One female worker explained that her family would work here until their children finished college so that the latter can get good jobs and support their parents. Then they can retire and perhaps run a small grocery shop back home. Thai education policy provides education for anyone in Thailand to at least the high school level, including children of migrant workers from Myanmar.

4.4.3 Commuting workers

Along with the temporary residents, there were two commuting groups working in the village, seamstresses and farmers.

1) Landless Hmong farmers

Three landless Hmong families who rented rice fields in Mu 5 come to stay and farm in the area during the land preparation, young rice planting, transplanting and harvesting periods in August, September and December respectively. They normally spend from a few days to a few weeks in each period of farming, erecting temporary sheds next to the field. They came from a village in a neighbouring district to the west approximately 20 kilometres from the village. The rent varied from 1,000 baht per rai (1,600 square metre) in one case and ten thang (one thang is equivalent of 20 litres) of rice per rai in the other two cases of the land owner from outside. Labour is from family members and relatives in the form of reciprocity. However, sometimes they hire Tai Yai workers in the village when labourers are hard to find from doing other works. As for the Tai Yai workers, they prefer working by amount of work as each could gain 800-1,000 baht a day instead of construction work for which they get a daily rate of 250-500 baht depending on their skills. These landless Hmong farmers engaged in some small trading of local agricultural produce. Some bought seasonal produce from their villages to sell at the local markets in the peri-urban zone, and some traded clothes or worked in construction when there was no agricultural produce.



Figure 4.25: A Hmong family prepares for rice transplanting, Nam Jam (September 2011)



Figure 4.26: A temporary shed of a Hmong family, Nam Jam (September 2011)

A further interesting point in terms of being part of farming in the rural area was the traditional irrigation system. Each year, the Hmong farmers have to participate in maintaining the village irrigation system along with the other farmers. This involves clearing the irrigation channels. This is a well known traditional water management system, especially in the north where farming communities mobilise all farmers to maintain the system in order to secure flow and fairness of water sharing. In the past, when everyone was farming and there was no assistance from the authorities, all of the farmers were strictly obliged to contribute their labour by collecting local materials such as wood and stones to make or repair a weir and clear the water channels. Moreover, all of the farmers had to pay their respects to the water spirit before the start of the farming season and the maintenance of the irrigation system. This event, along with the annual village Buddhist festivals and local ceremonies, tied the people in the community together. Later, when the rice fields were sold to outsiders, the remaining farmers kept busy with various off-farm activities and new tenants from outside. As a result, the sacred ritual ceremony declined. Nowadays, it is supported by the TAO rather than by a purely local contribution. Farmers, who are too busy with other activities, sometimes hire labour from outside or Tai Yai workers to clear the irrigation channels. Therefore, important parts of community building have disappeared.

2) Garment seamstresses

Female garment sewing workers constitute the other commuting group. Garment sewing has been a feature of Nam Jam for at least two decades in some individual households; but, it has been a group activity since the early-2000s until now. Two local sub-contractors in Nam Jam provide the sewing machines and working orders for the workers. Twelve workers come from nearby villages or districts and eight are local villagers. The workers earn their income from piece work. These seamstresses commute to use sewing machines that the sub-contractors provide. Some who have their own sewing machines can collect the garments and thread from the local sub-contractors and work at home. There are no particular holidays so most of them have come to work almost every day.

In sum, it may be seen that the village has passed through a transformation in a few decades. The composition of the people in this small community has become diverse as a result of in-migration by various social classes. Physically, the area is still agrarian but people's activities have long been urban oriented. Class relations have also been influenced by these demographic changes.

4.5 Class mobility and class stratification

The term 'class mobility' in this study refers to the movement between social strata, which can be both upwardly and downwardly mobile. Class is indicative of social relations and the class mobility of each social group depends upon several factors that may change with time along with the transformation of people's lives and relations with different social groups. Nam Jam has changed from the rural village it was in the past into the peri-urbanised community it is today. Class relations in the village have changed from a relatively homogenous characterization built around production, specifically in the field of agrarian relations, when people's livelihoods were overwhelmingly rooted in homogeneous agrarian relations into an increasingly heterogeneous society based on urban consumption and lifestyles. The conditions in each period have been determined by economic capital and invariably gender has determined people's ability to achieve upward class mobility.

In the rural past, class relations in Nam Jam were clearly tied to agricultural means of production. People had similar backgrounds, activities, education level and they had little connection with the outside. Families that owned several tracts of land were obviously more economically viable than those who had no land or had to work at wood turning in the forest. So, local class relations were mostly based around access to land as a key factor of production. Through agrarian transformation, villagers have been able to develop themselves and accumulate capital, albeit differently. Therefore, occupations and class have become diversified. In addition,

in-migration, class mobility and stratification have rendered Nam Jam even more complex and dynamic.

When Nam Jam's socio-economic and demographic situation changed, farming land in the village was sold and many people migrated to work outside of the village. As a result, people's activities and livelihoods gradually became diverse. Land was not only an indicator of wealth and class but also a source of income and allowed people to improve their livelihoods. In Nam Jam, working outside of the village clearly influenced people's class mobility. In the 1980s, young and male villagers opted to move further afield, some to Bangkok, while the elderly and females generally worked in Chiang Mai township. Two men from the better off families mortgaged their land and left to work in Saudi Arabia. Only two women moved to Bangkok. The first married a construction sub-contractor; then, with her new connections, she invited her younger sister to work in Bangkok as an elder sitter but only for a short period of time. Those who went to Bangkok usually earned more money, renovated their houses, bought pickup trucks and motorcycles, and developed their careers more effectively than those who worked in Chiang Mai. Having good economic capital at the outset also made a difference. People who had land or whose parents had land to sell shared the benefits. They could use their money to start small businesses. Most of this group now own small grocery stores and dormitories.

Livelihood improvement also depended on hard work and villagers' ability to save money. However, in some cases, those who worked in Bangkok could not save much money. Two families that worked in Chiang Mai upgraded their economic status by working as two sewing sub-contractors. People who sold their land or received land from their parents but could not invest well could fall into debt. People who failed to become financially and economically viable remained locked in their status of being worse off than others. However, today in Nam Jam, as a result of transition, every family at least has a permanent houses and basic means of transportation.

Within this small community, local villagers know the backgrounds, status, assets and debts of their fellow villagers well. Economic capital is still the most important aspect of class stratification. Nowadays, apart from their backgrounds, and the wealth that their parents' generation accumulated that seems to have remained unchanged, younger generation's levels of education and their job prospects appear to outsiders like me to indicate class difference. Studying engineering, architecture and medicine is considered better than studying languages and the humanities. Parents often talked about their children's education in comparison with their own education. One single father aged 47 said that he had reached Grade 12, which was quite good for his generation. His sisters only reached Grade 4. He had been working as a security guard at one of the forestry offices in Chiang Mai for 22 years. He modestly said that while his position is quite low, it was an official position, secure, and allowed him all of the welfare benefits. In addition, he could afford to send his son to the Engineering Faculty, Chiang Mai University, the most well known university in the North. He never personally had a chance. He was very proud that his son had received a scholarship for a Master's degree in Bangkok. One poor family complained that their two children had not at least finished the high school like the others. They had to work as wage labourers and would find it difficult to support their parents who were also wage labourers. Villagers also noted and discussed the new assets of other villagers such as when someone in the village bought a new car.

The series of in-migrations of diverse social classes into the village created wider scopes of social relations for the local villagers. At the same time, it shaped new forms of class relations for both the villagers and the newcomers. As regards the villagers, new social groups, both temporary residents and urban middle class newcomers, became included in class stratification. Regarding the newcomers, their class position in their place of origin was transformed into relations with people in the new community in which they found themselves.

The Tai Yai workers were not the poorest group in their villages in Myanmar, but they are in Nam Jam. Among the workers in dormitories, many have land in their villages but when compared with the villagers and urban middle class newcomers,

they are a lower class due to their conditions of residence, backgrounds and ethnicity. Some urban middle class newcomers, including foreigners, have farming backgrounds. At the same time, some have education lower than university level, but they are assessed as urban middle class in Nam Jam based on their large houses and occupations. Class is thus geographically contingent rather than fixed in an individual.

Since class is a social relation rather than an isolated characteristic of an individual or household, class mobility, and the nature of class stratification, can shift when people develop themselves and when new social groups migrate into a community. In addition, units of class stratification can become complex. In one household, different generations may have different levels of education and pursue different lifestyles, thus social class cannot be easily defined within the limits of a family unit. Class is more fluid than in the past. These issues will be discussed further in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

4.6 Micro-geography of social classes in everyday life

The term ‘micro-geography of social classes’ refers to the relations that obtain between the locations, characteristics, lifestyles and everyday life activities of the three main social groups in the community through proximity of long-term local residents, urban middle class newcomers and temporary residents, relations that are significant when determining social interaction and emphasising class difference.

4.6.1 Location

As suggested earlier, each social group tends to have its own location. Figure 4.27 shows that local villagers’ houses (green spots) are located quite near each other. Close relatives often live in groups and they gradually divide their large tracts of land for housing among parents, children, brothers and sisters. The working camps and dormitory residences (yellow and brown spots) are located on tracts of land belonging

to local owners, thus they are often established in the middle of the community. Urban middle class newcomers (purple spots) were able to choose land at the edge of the community where they could have privacy and not be close to the main roads. The crowded clusters of urban middle class newcomers in Nam Jam and Hua Thung are increasing (light purple spots), and they constitute only one family in Nong Khwai. Urban middle class newcomers have started to build houses on one of the largest plots of rice fields in Nong Khwai.

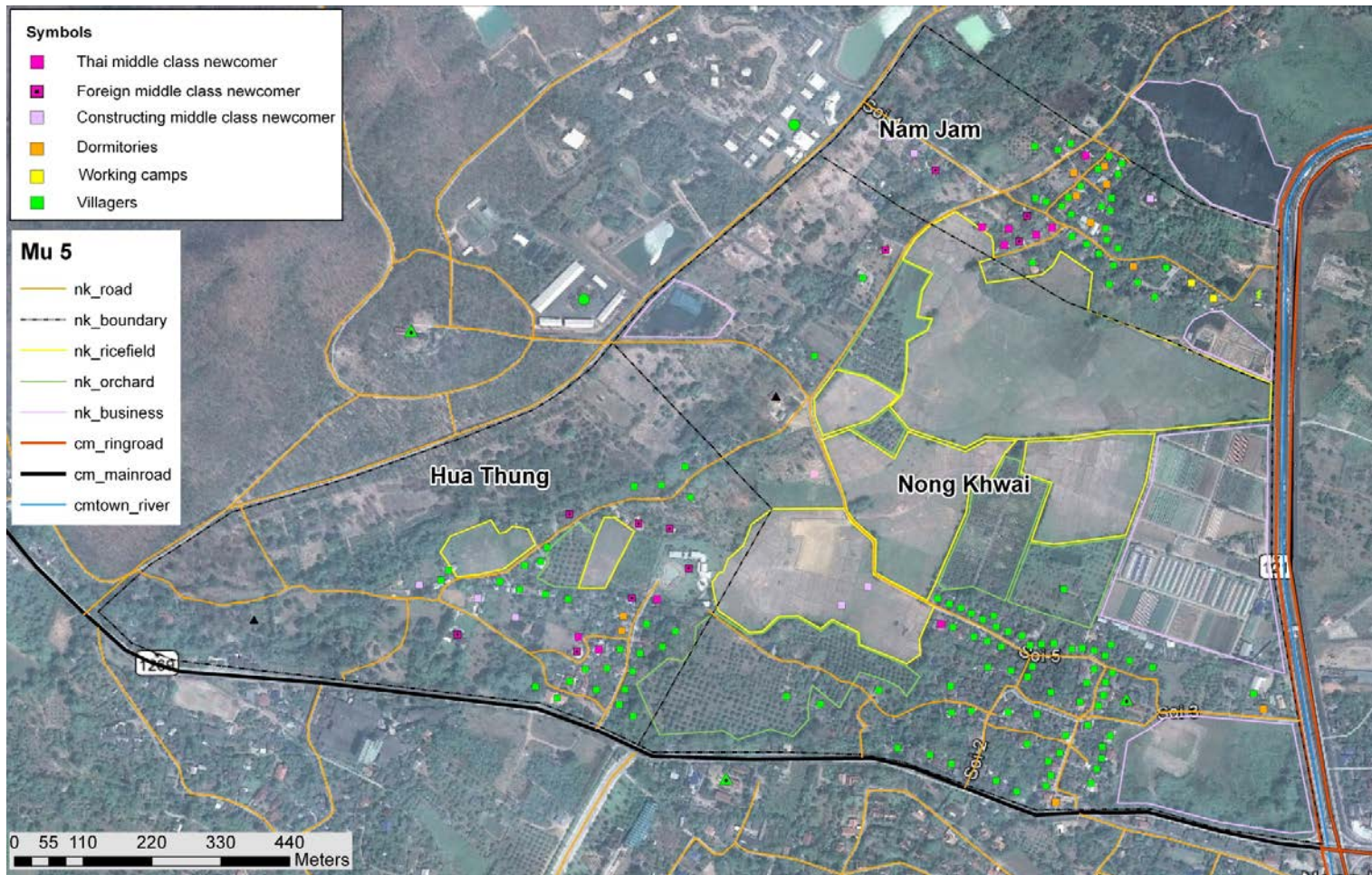


Figure 4.27: Residences of different social groups and land uses in Mu 5

Note: the white spots on the top left are parts of Night Safari

4.6.2 Physical characteristics

Physical characteristics of housing can clearly differentiate social groups. In Nam Jam, the villagers' houses are of mixed styles and are mainly built from concrete. Many have new additions to the main house such as wood on the second floor and cement walls on the first floor. It is hard to find a local wooden house in this area now. Villagers' residential lands are small and the houses occupy almost all of the land plot so there is little or even no space for gardens. Villagers' houses had fences since I first moved here in 2007, but the gates have been gradually installed until there are only a few houses that do not yet have gates. Villagers' gates are open during the day and closed at night. Most of these fences are not so high and made from barbed wire covered with plants, often of edible type. Many of the well-off families have air-conditioners. Most families have basic household appliances such as televisions and washing machines. The majority of people use gas for cooking, but some of the worse off families still use firewood as a complement.

Contrary to the villagers' houses, the urban middle class lands and houses are bigger with creative unique house styles and well maintained gardens. These houses often feature old teak wood as part of their building and decoration. Most have high fences above eye level for privacy. Many are made from barbed wire covered with thick beautiful plants and some have solid fences. Their gates are mainly closed day and night so people from outside hardly see things beyond the fences.

Temporary residences, as explained earlier, are small and just the rooms with toilets. The working camps have the worst housing conditions of all in the village. They are constructed from temporary materials and the people have to share the toilets. As their places are small, their clothes are often found hanging outside their rooms during the daytime. People who live in the dormitories and working camps use their places mainly for sleeping, not for recreation.

4.6.3 Micro-geography of everyday life

Each social group has its different lifestyle and everyday activities that determine the types and levels of interaction among and between groups. The data in this section is mostly based on my observations in Nam Jam. Most local villager families have at least one or two members at home all of the time. Some are elders and some work from home such as wood turning, garment sewing, food stores and in grocery shops. The younger generations either go to work or study during the day.

Nam Jam is now a diverse village, and it is difficult to talk of it in simple terms as “a community”. Nevertheless, continuing relations among families of longstanding residents bind people together in a range of ongoing, but nevertheless changing, sets of social relationships. The villagers know each other very well and most are related through marriage. They engage in several everyday activities; for example, a few families grow vegetables and corn for consumption, some produce is given away to relatives and neighbours, and two families sell their produce locally. One elderly woman makes a traditional northern seasoning paste, fermented peanut wrapped in banana leaves, for sale locally. People still share food and vegetables with their relatives from time to time. Vegetables that grow along people’s fences are for collection by anyone. Some families have dogs, cats and a few have chickens which roam unrestrained.

Some people stay mainly in the village, especially the elders, and one of the regular activities of those who remain in the village, especially the elders, is sweeping the dried leaves and small garbage from their yards and burning it either in the morning or in the late afternoon. In the evening, after they finish their work for the day, the women prepare dinner while some men go for drinks at the local grocery shops before dinner. The old men enjoy rice whisky, the young men drink beer. The local shops become the places for people to meet casually and socialise in the evening. The 1st and the 16th of each month are underground lottery days. A few female villagers become local agents and will walk around the community collecting people’s numbers. Almost every long-term resident family in the village buys

numbers in these lotteries hoping for luck. This is also a time when people chat and update their stories. Usually, people go to the local markets for food every second day. Those who have cars shop for convenience goods at nearby mega stores once a month or every two months.

Buddhist ritual ceremonies are among the events that draw people together in groups. There are four local temples (*wat*), two in Mu 5, (Wat Nong Khwai and Wat Doi Pao) and two in adjacent villages (Wat Tong Kai and Wat Phan Tao). Villagers usually go to the nearby temple. People in Hua Thung go to Wat Phan Tao as it is closer than the others and their parents used to go there. Wat Doi Pao is located at the edge of the national park near Nam Jam so many people from Nam Jam usually go there. Wat Nong Khwai is located in the Nong Khwai cluster, so most people in Nong Khwai go there. Some Nam Jam villagers go to Wat Nong Khwai and Wat Tong Kai as their parents usually did before them. People have their own small socialised groups. Nowadays, the one event that draws most villagers together is a funeral. Relatives and friends of the bereaved family come together from all areas. Funerals are still organised by families. They can last from a few days to almost a week, depending upon the status of the deceased and his/her family. The relatives prepare the food themselves with help from other relatives and neighbours. This is a time when people socialise in large groups. However, the younger generations do not participate as much as their parents' generation because often they do not know their relatives in other villages. They tend to work or study outside the village and maintain fewer social relations with their peers in Nam Jam (Gray 1990). Therefore, in time, this form of communal participation may gradually disappear. Other ceremonies such as house warmings and weddings have also undergone change, so that nowadays instead of cooking in the village for events such as a funeral, people prefer ordering food from restaurants. The annual village spirit worshipping in May has been continued but the young generation does not participate.

As suggested earlier, in the past, before people engaged in farming, everyone had to help maintain the weir and water channels. During this time, people communicated and planned for their livelihoods. Now, people are busy with their

individual activities. When the village head, the TAO or the district authorities want to announce news or communicate with the people, they use communal speakers in each community instead of calling for face to face meetings organised monthly. One communal activity that can be counted on is village development day, which is held once or twice a year to clear the grass and tree branches that obstruct the village roads and communal places. One person from each family is expected to participate but there are cases where people are too busy with their own activities. They prefer to take the option of paying a 100 baht fee or buy drinks for the group, rather than participate.



Figure 4.28: Village communal work on the development day in Nam Jam (November 2011).

The open community area before there was a community building. The small building at the right corner is a community spirit house and the house behind big tree belongs to an urban middle class family.



Figure 4.29: Village communal work on the development day, Nam Jam (May 2012)



Figure 4.30: Villagers were waiting at the community area after offering food at the spirit house (May 2012).

The building at the back is for storing community assets, on the right hand side is the new building built in 2012. The area has been fenced and the ground was paved by gravel. The house behind the big tamarind tree is my house. This tamarind tree was felled in late 2012 to make space for a new *sala*.



Figure 4.31: The new *sala* in the community area. (July 2013)



Figure 4.32: Village annual spirit worshipping day at the spirit house, Nam Jam (May 2012)

As regards the dormitory residents and the Tai Yai construction workers, they work mostly from eight o'clock in the morning to five o'clock in the afternoon. Once a week they take turns to have a break. They normally leave the village around 7.30 a.m. with a packed lunch and return around 5.30 p.m. At those times, one hears the noise of pickup trucks transporting construction workers to the sites and the motorcycles of many people working at Royal Flora Gardens and Night Safari. When they return, they often buy goods from the local shops. Not everyone knows their neighbours in the dormitory in which they live. Only the few who enjoy talking get to know others. Residents, who are ethnic minorities, are fond of speaking in their mother tongue so they rarely group together with the others. Some still do not know others of the same ethnicity, similar to the Tai Yai workers. Many dormitory residents said that they are so tired after work that they rarely socialise with others.

The commuting garment sewing people, who come to work in the village, mostly spend time at their work. On occasion, they buy their lunches or goods from the local shops. It is the same with the landless Hmong farmers. They interact only with the people around them.

In the case of the urban middle class newcomers, most are still working, even though some have reached retirement age (60 years). Many of them work in town, often teaching at the universities. Every house has at least one car. Some work from home using the internet for communication. Some stay at home to take care of their small children. Most of the newcomers have cleaners to take care of the house at least once a week. These are often villagers in the village. One foreign family has a family stay with them to do the cleaning and the gardening. Two families have pure-bred dogs. The occupants of one house often listen to classical music in the morning and many others play different types of English music. In general, they do not attend the local temple regularly. Only for special Buddhist events, they often visit the well known temples in town or nearby forest temples. Most of the middle class people prefer organic food and enjoy shopping for food in the local markets. They tend to eat out more often than the other social groups and sometimes invite friends along for dinner.

They do not regularly participate at full level in communal activities. They rarely attend meetings or village development days. However, they often briefly join in the community ceremonies such as funerals and weddings as guests if they are invited. As with other villagers, they also give an envelope with money to the host of those ceremonies. The Thai urban middle class newcomers join in these events more than the foreign families. Also, when there is a requirement for financial support for development activities in the village, they readily contribute. There are a few exceptions of Thai members, who are happy to join in local events as members or hosts of events. These few people have local backgrounds that stem from their parents and their work.

Most of the urban middle class newcomers are quite individualistic and private. They do not socialise much among the newcomer families and only associate with the villagers who are their close neighbours. When they first started building their houses until their first year of living in the village, they tended to interact more with the local villagers and other middle class newcomers around them. However, the interaction gradually decreased as each family privately does activity on their own in their houses. When they want to do things outside the village, they just drive cars with closed windows. Their solid, high fences and closed gates, especially of the houses located inside the small lanes, physically prevents social interaction with others. Their residences are in the village but their real communities and friends are outside of the village.

It may be seen from each social group's working activities and lifestyles that they rarely interact with each other. The temporary residents only know people such as grocery shops owners and some villagers who live nearby. They have little chance to meet with members of the urban middle class group. The workers said they occasionally see their faces, and are vaguely aware that they live in large houses in the village. As regards the urban middle class newcomers, they know few people in the village apart from their close neighbours. Some villagers said that the only visit they had to the urban middle class newcomers' houses was when the houses were

under construction. After that, they felt reluctant to approach the houses. Even though different social groups live in proximity to one another, each has its own groups and lifestyles. Therefore, they hardly mix and interact.

4.7 Conclusion

The agrarian frontier of Nam Jam has been shifted a great deal in the last 40 years from full agrarian context to mixed physical landscape with diverse social groups living in proximity to one another as a result of recent rapid development in the area. Large areas of agricultural land in the village have been bought mostly for the outsiders' residences by both businesses and individual people as a result of urbanisation.

Diverse migrations in the village have occurred, from out-migration of the local villagers to improve their standard of living during the 1980s to in-migration of different social groups from the early-2000s onward. Through a series of migrations, social context and class relations in the village have changed significantly. Class mobility has occurred among the long-term villagers and in relations to the other in-migrated social groups through migrations, backgrounds, changes in occupations, levels of education and lifestyles.

Agricultural production and values from the agrarian period are gradually decreasing through the generations but have not completely disappeared. At the same time, urban-oriented ways of living and values are steadily increasing. Rurality and urbanity are interpenetrated in the physical and social landscapes. This process has happened from the outside urbanisation and people striving for development from the inside.

Currently, in-migration, in particular, has brought different social groups that usually are at a distance from one another to live in proximity. In consequence, a new class composition and class encounters have occurred. Interactions of different social classes are now practiced in everyday life, which differs from what each group may

have anticipated. In this rapidly changing village with diverse social groups, such encounters and interactions have the potential to lead to a new pattern of class conflict, shifting from problems around traditional means of production to struggling to deal with different values and lifestyles. The next chapter will discuss how the rural frontier has been negotiated and shaped through everyday interactions within this new class composition.

CHAPTER 5

PROXIMATE SOCIAL RELATIONS AND CLASS ENCOUNTERS

5.1 Introduction

The rural frontier of the peri-urban zone is defined by a rapid shift of urbanity over rurality. It is evident in both the physical changes and dynamic adjustments in the social landscape of class composition, and in their interaction. The social landscape in this rural frontier is particularly complex. It is full of contestation and tension regarding various matters of urbanity and rurality, and modernity and tradition. Some are obvious and some are subtle. In order to understand the place of the peri-urban community, one first has to realise that changes in the physical landscape alone do not provide a complete picture of place. Class relations must also be considered. In Chapter 4, I explored the shifting rural frontier and new class composition resulting from urban expansion at the community level of Nam Jam and Mu 5. In this chapter I dig more deeply into relations, encounters and attitudes between social classes in order to provide texture to the making of a peri-urban place.

In general, each social group exists in its own space with little relation to others. In-migration has brought different classes together to live in close proximity as neighbours in communities in which they share space and encounter each other in everyday life. Therefore, clearly place matters. Over the last decade, when Burmese workers, dormitory residents and urban middle-class newcomers commenced residence in the village, class relations have become more complex. Class differentiation among long-term villagers in Nam Jam has increasingly become based on economic status, consumption and lifestyles, and decreasingly on direct production. Furthermore, class is not fixed in the individual, rather it is geographically contingent as space and location shape social relations. In order to understand a social landscape, it is imperative to look not only at the individuals in each group, but also at the interaction among and across social groups. One important question to be considered in this chapter is whether social groups after

drawing closer in distance, develop a closer understanding. Do their classes also become closer? Or do class divisions become more sharply delineated?

As one of the urban middle-class newcomers in the community since 2007, I have come to realise both the advantages and disadvantages of studying social interaction. There are several levels of social interaction, and not all are able to be observed during a short-term research period or occasional visits to the site. In addition, some intimate aspects have to be excluded. This chapter will discuss how data were collected via my multiple positions in the community. Relevant direct and indirect stories, gossip and incidents I experienced will be selectively raised in relation to class-based issues.

The structure of this chapter will commence with the methodology, which is different from that employed in the previous chapters. The main focus of the chapter is on the dynamism of class difference through migration, and social interaction between classes and in some cases between people of the same class. Particular focus will be on two social groups, comprising long-term local residents and urban middle-class newcomers due to their living status as permanent residents and neighbours.

5.2 Methodology

Physical landscapes can be investigated through heterogeneity of land use, land ownership, and the different house styles in a community. Interpretation of social landscape, on the other hand, requires understanding people's interactions which are often complicated and difficult to collect and observe. In 2005, I, along with five other people, all of whom worked in education (the majority were university lecturers) bought an almost five rai-plot of abandoned rice field in Nam Jam. We divided it into small plots, among which I own half rai of land. A year later, I built my house and have lived there since early 2007. I subsequently became interested in the social interaction that occurred between people, especially people from different social groups. To this end, I selected my own community for the research. This chapter explores the social interaction of different classes. It consists of data drawn

from various sources and employs multiple methods.

Regarding the study of social interaction, being a researcher in my own community, positioning myself as researcher with each informant was a crucial ethical issue that influenced the quality and direction of the data. I functioned as both an insider and an outsider in different contexts throughout this part of the research. The data were gained from various sources and situations that evolved. Therefore, my positioning, far from being rigid, has shifted according to my study. The term "class" (or *chon-chan* in Thai) is a sensitive word in Thai society. Discussion of the term is acceptable in the academic sphere but tends to be impolite and awkward when conversing in everyday life. Thai culture has always been hierarchical at all levels, both in the past and up until the present day. It has determining characteristics that specify people's positioning of oneself with others constantly. This positioning goes along with Thai language which is also often hierarchical in the context of Thai culture. Several means are used such as age, sex, occupation, rank, work position, status, ethnicity and many other subtle signs of positioning social relations in everyday life.

One clear example of social positioning is how each person addresses the other and him/herself. Address via appellations is very common in the Thai context. It is regarded as both polite and as paying respect to others, especially those who are in higher position which can be age or other defining positions. Terms commonly used include *phii* (older brother or sister), *naawng* (younger brother or sister), *loong*, *bpaa* (an uncle or aunt who is older than one's parents), *naa*, *aa* (an aunt or uncle younger than one's parents), and *uy* (northern term for elders or grandparents). These basic titles in the Thai context have hierarchical implications given that they determine the social positions between people. Another example is addressing others using the name of their occupations which are often occupations that have good status. In this context, the most common terms found in the case study were *aa-jaan* (university lecturer) and *maaw* (physician doctor). In addition, there is also meaning in the physical ways in which people react to each other. Thais normally pay respect

to others who are more senior by *wai*⁹; lowering their bodies when walking past older people; not touching older people's heads. Addressing people using their titles and proper physical actions signals politeness towards each other. This in fact, using appropriate forms of address determine the hierarchical positions of people and, by extension, shape their expected social behaviours.

Usually, when I talk to groups of people I use titles based mainly on age differences. I refer to myself as *phoe* (elder sister) when interacting with Burmese workers and dormitory residents as they are all of young working age. As regards the remainder who are of various generations, I either call myself *phoe* when talking to younger persons or use my name when conversing with older. I also address them according to their ages and positions such as *phaaw-luaang* (village head) or *aa-jaan* when talking to university lecturers with whom I am not familiar. I also *wai* to everyone who is older than me irrespective of class. The gender of the researcher is another noticeable social position in this study. When discussing class relations and social interaction, the fact of being a woman helped me to align myself closer to my female informants when discussing private issues. As well, my male informants could feel relaxed when talking to me.

These multiple layers of social stratification, and the researcher's position in relation to my informants and research issues affected the outcomes of the data. The reflexivity of my position and clarification of the contexts will be stated throughout this chapter. I was aware that my position in this research would influence informants' acceptances, assessments and certain of the information provided. Therefore, for the purpose of this chapter, the data I obtained from Mu 5, and Nam Jam in particular, are treated as informants' intentions to re-present their stories to "me", the researcher, a neighbour who lives in the same community, someone they

⁹ The act of *wai* involves putting one's palms together on one's chest with the tips of the fingers resting against one's nose or forehead. It is a typical Thai gesture and also a good manner of paying respect to people who are higher, either by seniority or position. It is not an ordinary act for greeting, goodbye, thanks because it is only the junior people who do to the senior people. In other words, *wai* is explicit but at the same time subtle for class positioning in Thai culture.

meet occasionally. In other words, I am not an ordinary researcher whom they may never meet again once the research was completed.

The most basic practice I undertook during my research in the village was informing all of those since the first time of meeting about my research topic. I explained the topic of my PhD research as a study on physical and social change in a community in a peri-urban area. In particular, I specifically delineated that it was about migration and social interaction and how they impacted on the various groups in the village (with class relations in mind), the local villagers, and the different groups of newcomers. Later, I engaged in informal conversations with them on diverse occasions. The quantity of the interviews depended upon certain issues and information that each social group provided, the willingness of the informants, and the opportunities to meet them especially for ad hoc meetings. The depth of the data depended on the quality of the relationship between myself and each informant, that is, how dynamic it was and how it evolved. Both quantity and quality of the data tentatively depend on my hierarchical positions in relation to the interviewees. The Tai Yai workers, dormitory residents, and villagers are rather more welcome and provide more time to talk with me than the middle class which partly could be their differences in lifestyle.

Nam Jam provided the biggest part of the data. This is because I live there, the Nam Jam people were interviewed more often than informants from other communities. In particular, I explored the social interaction among and between the various social classes in the community. I spoke to every group in Nam Jam, focusing on the permanent households of local and urban middle-class groups who live alongside each other as neighbours. Other groups including dormitory residents, migrant workers from Myanmar, and commuting workers in the village were also explored but focus was more on their interaction with the permanent households in the village.

Most of the Nam Jam data was drawn from my interviews and talks with different groups of people during the period I lived in the village. In addition, I had

the chance to observe particular incidents that happened and to listen to different social groups' explanations vis-a-vis when the incidents occurred and how they unfolded. Moreover, I had several direct experiences of social interaction with all social groups. My position and my relationship with the Nam Jam people varied according to the different groups. However, I developed a much closer relationship with the people of Nam Jam than with the other people in other areas.

A considerable body of data accrued from my interviews with every available urban middle-class newcomer to Hua Thung and Nong Khwai, from information about their household structures and personal backgrounds. At the conclusion of the interviews, I asked about their feelings, their experiences of living in the village, and how they deal with and explain their actions. In addition, several key long-term local residents were interviewed, mostly about issues concerning the newcomers and how they could be explained. As discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter 4), I only had one chance to talk to the urban middle-class newcomers in both clusters due to their claims to privacy. My position when interviewing them was purely as an outside researcher in that I had no other relationship with them. With the local leaders and long-term local key informants, I talked to them on various community occasions such as community meetings, the monthly collection of money for the village revolving funds, and at several funerals in the village. My position and title as far as the villagers and leaders of Mu 5 were concerned was *aa-jaan*, linking me with the group along with whom I bought the land. Even though I told them that I did not have a position in a university, and that I was simply a PhD researcher living in the village, the appellation *aa-jaan* seemed an easy form of address for the villagers of Mu 5. The term *aa-jaan* infers an occupation regarded as a high position by the villagers due to the different levels of education between the villagers and lecturers with PhDs. Another title that some people use is *khun* (for both men and women, a polite form of address similar to Mister and Miss). These terms showed respect with some distance. As regards the urban middle-class newcomers to Mu 5, I was a researcher who lived in the neighbouring community. The distance was wider than my relations with the villagers.

I also had the opportunity to gather some data on the social interaction of other communities from interviewing the local authorities, TAOs and municipalities, in the peri-urban zone of Chiang Mai, when I was collecting the macro level data. Most of the data from this group were second hand data, reports received from people in their official positions. My position for this group was as a researcher who did not have any link with them.

Apart from collecting this data, I also collected stories about social interaction from friends who are urban middle-class residents of peri-urban Chiang Mai who had experiences to share. The contexts in which I talked with friends were casual and informal. They all knew that I was conducting research on the topic. Some stories were about informants' direct experiences, others were based on what informants had heard.

However, I do not plan to discuss every story I heard as some of them were sensitive and could impact on others in the community. For this reason, the names and exact locations of some stories are omitted. Again, in some cases, social groups and contexts are given only to the level of understanding the cases, in order that they will not provoke harsh relationships between groups. In effect, these stories are examples of particular forms of social interaction between groups that should not be generalised but reflect some understanding of the gaps between classes.

5.3 Implications of migration and class positioning

Class is relational. It can link people through various means such as production, economically and socially. Class relations based on agricultural production, for example, ended in Nam Jam few decades ago. A more dominant means of social relations is based on new economic and cultural capitals. Cultural capital includes education and other means by which people are able to assert their place in society both in terms of employment and in social life. It can also be taken to include manners, accent and other aspects of upbringing that bring social advantage. In addition, class is not rigid but it is dynamic given that social groups are related in a

certain place and time. In one place, people occupy class positions that can be mobile, either upwardly or downwardly mobile. Their class positions are dependent upon others' class mobility. Migration brings together new diverse social groups of people from different backgrounds, economic statuses and cultural capital to live in close proximity to each other. This creates complex class relations across social groups. In addition, there is another layer for migrant peoples. Their social classes become fluid depending upon the places and communities to which they are related. In addition, while these people do not sever their ties, their original communities, their class status in their hometowns could differ from their class in their new habitats. Class is, therefore, place-related and migration and location influence class positioning. In Nam Jam, the migrant groups were from a wide range of social class strata, and these strata shaped the new class composition in the village.

Class relations in peri-urban villages such as Nam Jam do not link people directly in economic terms, unlike in their former agrarian societies in which there were landlords and tenants. Nevertheless, there are cases of individuals who have direct economic relations, for example, employers and workers or money lenders and debtors. Some affluent local villagers and urban middle-class families hire or in a few cases lend money to the Tai Yai, dormitory residents, and some of the less affluent villagers. Work opportunities for the less privileged include house cleaning, gardening and painting. Such economic relations are obvious in class terms.

However, as regards people who are not directly related such as those who just live in close proximity, they tend to stratify themselves in relation to those around them, but increasingly more upon an indirect economic and social basis, specifying class relations in a more general sense. Class positioning is perhaps the most basic way in which people consciously or unconsciously define themselves in relation to others so that they may interact accordingly. This means that, since class position is defined in relation to others, it can also change with context as people find themselves in new social and geographical circumstances, and therefore with different points of reference against which to position themselves. This generally happens in hierarchical societies like Thailand where there is no need for stratification, only simple

categorisation. It can occur in several forms and at different times, often from a general understanding of the other's culture prior to meeting or when they first come into contact with each other. It can be slightly fluid at individual level but less so at the class level.

5.3.1 Class positioning from categorisation of social groups

The categorisation of people underpins basic class positioning. From the villagers' points of view, there are four main social groups in Nam Jam and each group has been subdivided in particular ways. They are long-term local residents, urban middle-class newcomers, workers who live in dormitories, and migrant workers from Myanmar. This categorisation already sets class differences from the bottom to the top, which could be Tai Yai migrant workers, dormitory residents, *chaao-baan* (long-term local villagers), and urban middle-class newcomers. It can be objectively simplified by their social strata, and from the noticeable differences in their quality of living within the community such as size and style of house, types of vehicle, and other less obvious but equally important indicators such as ethnicity, education, and occupation. However, subjective categorisation can vary depending on whose viewpoint is being expressed and the amount of information regarding a person or the group. In addition, each social group can be objectively and subjectively stratified further.



Figure 5.1: Different scales and styles of houses.

On the left is a poor local villager's house and opposite is my house.

The cases I aim to present are representative of three in-migrant groups include Tai Yai, dormitory residents and urban middle-class newcomers, and their social interaction with other social groups. The long-term local villager group is not examined separately here as I have already discussed at length about this group in Chapter 4. However, the term *chaao-baan* will be discussed to show its influential meaning in the Thai context. Regarding the above groups' social interaction, this will be addressed when I discuss the three in-migrant groups. Social groups will be specified, but no names will be mentioned for ethical reasons. However, additional detail might be provided in cases that will not affect my sources. Regarding my own stories, I will clearly elucidate them but not mention others' names.

1) **Chaao-baan**

The term *chaao-baan* refers to people in or of the village. The villagers and members of the other three social groups call themselves *chaao-baan*, which means

that 'others' will never be *chaao-baan* like them, never belong to the same group as them. It also conveys an impression that they are the original inhabitants of the village and the hosts. The in-migrants can only be considered as temporary residents, newcomers, or guests.

2) Tai Yai

The Tai Yai workers group is categorised as the lowest strata due to their residential status as migrant workers, their temporary housing, their ethnicity, and their work as labourers. Most people do not know each other, and only their employers know their workers. From the outsider's viewpoint, they are very much the same as their living and work practices are similar. The local people call them *khohn-ngaan pha-maa* (Burmese workers) reflecting their country of origin rather than their ethnicity. It implies that they are migrant labourers, and, in Thai society, migrants from neighbouring countries are considered to be of low status. The Tai Yai workers do not join in any activities in the village, the only exception being when their employers arrange ceremonies. Then the men help to organise the place while the women work in the kitchen. With the exception of their employers and the local grocery shop owners, other social groups in Nam Jam do not recognise them. Some urban middle-class newcomers even are not even aware that they are Burmese workers.

When I first arranged an interview with them through their employers, I have to confess that before talking with them I felt a little uneasy as I did not know them. However, when I talked to them, I felt relaxed somehow and it was easier than talking to the middle-class group. The first case I dealt with was a family who came to live and work in Nam Jam about ten years earlier (this family has lived in Chiang Mai for some time before moving to Nam Jam). I asked them who in the village they knew. They said they only knew families around the camp and the local grocery shop owners. I asked further who from among the urban middle-class newcomers they knew. They replied that they were familiar with a few faces but were not sure which houses belonged to whom. They explained and joked that others might not be

interested to know them. Regarding the second case, I planned to visit them at their residences but their employer organised the interview at his house. He explained that the workers did not feel comfortable receiving guests. In other words, they felt embarrassed about their temporary basis and their untidy shelters while others had such different housing conditions. This time, I talked with a group of four women, one of whom was obviously bright and shone out. I asked if they interacted much with the middle-class group. The bright woman said:

"I am very happy when I see the others (the richer who live in bigger houses and work in high status occupations) smile at me as it is a sign of acceptance and I am more than happy if they want to talk with me. But I have never thought of going to talk or even linking them with me as it might bring them down".

I invited them to visit me at my house sometimes. One woman in the group said they did not dare to walk close to or enter my house by themselves as others might think they were going to steal something. I told her that she and I were similar as both of us had migrated to live in this village. The bright woman answered

"No, my status and *phee* (elder sister) Tubtim's status are different. I came here to work but *phee* and the other middle-class newcomers came here to enjoy life. *Phee* (and the others) has a big house with nice gardens and are accepted in the village much better than us."

She said that living in her village in Myanmar is more comfortable and less tiring but there is limited opportunity to earn money so most young people in her village come to work in Thailand. During our conversation, she was happier talking about her children than about herself. Her children are studying in high school and she wants them to get better jobs than hers, to live in Thailand, and to take care of their parents.

Another case of social interaction between the Burmese workers and the other groups in the village occurred when one family with a one month old baby planned to

organise a feast, as was their tradition. This family lived in a dormitory but they longed for a more comfortable life for their new born baby. The husband worked as a housepainter and his wife worked as a seamstress with the local entrepreneurs. They organised Tai Yai noodles and soft drinks for dinner, using the middle courtyard of the dormitory. The tables and chairs were borrowed from Nam Jam's communal assets. Their couple's guests numbered more than hundred people. Most of them were Burmese workers sojourning in Nam Jam and from nearby peri-urban Chiang Mai where their relatives lived. I was invited when I met them moving tables and chairs past my house. When I went to join the event I found that the villagers had set aside one table for Nam Jam villagers who were their employers, their dormitory owner, a few neighbouring villagers, their village co-workers and me. I asked who they (the hosts) had invited apart from their relatives and friends. They said that while they welcomed everyone, they had only invited or informed people they were familiar with. As regards the middle-class group, they did not dare to go to each house issuing invitations but if they met anyone by chance, they would be invited. Finally, the only two middle-class people who came were myself (as I knew them earlier from my interview) and the lady who lived in the house next to mine. She teaches at the Faculty of Medicine and the host family used to consult her about their health.

3) Dormitory residents

The budget dormitory residents group ranked second from the bottom of the class strata. Dormitory residents were called *phuaak yuu haaw-phak* (people who stay in the dormitories), a term implying that they stayed in a lower standard of housing and were not bona fide members of the community. Most of them worked at the Royal Flora Gardens and the Night Safari. They were better off because they lived in better residences and were Thai, even though in some cases they earn lower wages than the Tai Yai workers. Among the dormitory residents, some paid a slightly higher rent than others (1,200 baht per month while others paid 1,000 baht per month). Some of the residents owned cars and some had clerical jobs. These dormitory residents were considered a better-off group, and in some contexts they

were better-off than the poor in the local villagers' group.

Many dormitory residents were ethnic minorities from the north and their ethnicities determined their class positions. In the Thai context, ethnic minorities tend to be marginalised, each being referred to by the local villagers in a somewhat derogatory sense. For example, many lowland people including the local villagers commonly referred to the Hmong¹⁰ as Meo (pronounced *maeo*) and *khae*, and to the Karen¹¹ as Yang. I was told by my Hmong and Karen friends that these names were primarily used to establish them as 'others', not in a strata sense. Later, these names were extended to include some negative factors, mainly their undeveloped condition in their remote home villages. Some had connotations of dirtiness when comparing them to the lowlanders. Under ordinary circumstances, the villagers call them by these names with the unintentional view to stratify them. However, they do not like others calling them by these names. When the lowlanders meet and talk with them, it is not necessary to use these terms except when there is a dispute. Then, the terms are used in anger or humour, ostensibly to 'put them down'. Sometimes the address the lowlanders use these terms to talk about ethnic minorities disparagingly in everyday humour.

There was a case of a small Nam Jam New Year party held in a communal area next to my house. The guests who attended the party were mostly women from the housewife group with their husbands. The younger generation did not join in and only a few of them stopped by. Three urban middle-class newcomers attended the party including me and my husband. There was one other urban middle-class newcomer but she was only there briefly. At the party, there were barbecue, some deep fried nibbles, and some beer. Expenses were met by a communal fund and some drinks were provided by some families. One female villager asked me to invite other people to join the celebration, suggesting that I use the village speaker at the

¹⁰ The Hmong are an ethnic group who reside in the mountainous regions of China, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam

¹¹ The Karen, an ethnic group, live mainly along the of Myanmar and Thailand border.

community building that was used for regular announcements. I then through the microphone invited each social group, one by one, including the dormitory residents and the Burmese workers. I noticed the look of surprise on the faces of the villagers. A few villagers came to the party. Then, less than an hour later, a female Hmong dormitory resident, along with her 6 year old son and baby girl, came to the fence of the community area. I told her to come in, sit with the group, and I brought her some food. Some of the villagers looked at her, wondering who she was and how I knew her. One female villager asked where she lived, how long she had been there, and what she did for a living. She replied that she had lived at the *baan naa-suk* (house of uncle Suk - name of the dormitory owner) for a year and worked at the Royal Flora Gardens. I confirmed that I knew her from my research interviews. After the villagers were satisfied with her information and mine, everyone seemed to feel comfortable. The female villager who asked the question then brought her a soft drink. I asked why the others (from the dormitory) had not come and about her husband (an ethnic Karen). She replied that they had all heard my invitation through the community speaker but did not dare to come because they felt *aai* (embarrassed because their status was lower than the others at the party and that they did not know the other villagers well). She explained that at first she did not want to come but when her son heard my announcement, he ran to check the party and then returned to persuade her to come. This Hmong woman had quite good confidence. Few of the villagers knew the temporary residents' names. The urban middle-class newcomers did not know the temporary residents at all and some even did not realise that they lived in the same village.

Another case involved a young Hmong couple, in their early 20s who worked at the Royal Flora Gardens. I asked them how they felt when people called them Meo instead of Hmong. The woman said it did not bother her as her generation were generally fairly well educated (high school level). They regarded people as equal and knew who they were. I asked them whether it occurred to them to ask others to address them correctly. They said that it might not help as people were used to calling them Meo, so they might not understand the difference. I was impressed by their rational views. They said that their parents' generation was different. Some,

especially the women, were illiterate and felt inferior to the *kon-mueang* (towns people or lowlanders). The woman explained further that her family and brothers had maize fields but her father had an accident and required money. Therefore, she had to work harder to send money back home. I learned from my interviews with several ethnic minority residents in the dormitories that only a few felt the same as she did.

I also talked to two sets of dormitory residents staying in a higher rent dormitory. The rooms were little different from those in the cheaper dormitories, and only the furniture was slightly better. One of the residents, a Nong Khwai TAO staff member, lived with her partner who worked in his own satellite shop. The other couple worked for nearby companies. The husband was a gardening adviser at a gated community in Hang Dong District and his wife was an accountant for an import-export company located near the airport. Both families rarely interacted with the other residents as they were too tired after working. They did not know all of the tenants in their residence. They only knew the dormitory's owner family and the local grocery shopkeepers. They said they never experienced any uneasiness with anyone here due to their limited interaction with the others. On the other hand, some of the villagers asked them for assistance from time to time. I hired the man who worked at the gated community to take care of my garden for several months. Eventually, they moved back to their hometown of Chiang Rai Province, north of Chiang Mai. Dormitory residents do not stay in one place for long as they keep searching for better paid jobs.

Clearly the Tai Yai workers and the low-end dormitory residents were almost invisible in the village. They are considered outsiders by the villagers who said that one day they would move out, even though many of them, some Tai Yai in particular, had stayed in the village longer than many of the other in-migrants. Some of my friends who came to visit me did not notice the working camps as they entered the village. They said they only saw the rice fields, and the villagers' and the newcomers' big houses. They did not notice the working camps. This was interesting. My friends explained that they did not think that a rural village that had rice fields would have Burmese working camps and dormitories.

4) **Commuting workers**

The seamstresses and Hmong farmers have not been in the interest by the village residents as they are small groups and do not live in the village, except Hmong farmers who only come during the farming period and have temporary shelters at the rice fields. However, these two groups have the clearest class relation in production terms. The seamstresses work for the local garment sub-contractors while the Hmong farmers are the tenants of local villagers in Nong Khwai. For Hmong farmers, there is another layer of class relation in that they hire Tai Yai workers in the village to work for them periodically. Apart from class relations in production terms, they all are also part of class relations in a social capital basis with the other groups in the village.

5) **Urban middle-class newcomers**

The urban middle-class newcomers enjoyed top strata status due to their big houses, urban lifestyles, high levels of education and respected occupations. There are several cases where the middle-class group was positioned by the villagers. The titles that the different groups of people allocated to me and to others were altered. This depended very much on the length and frequency of time I spent with them. When I first lived in the village, most of the villagers addressed me as *aa-jaan* (university lecturer). This was because I bought the land with a group of PhD university lecturers. So, I was seen as a lecturer along with the others in my group. The villagers found *aa-jaan* an easy form of address when they first met me. We in fact identified ourselves as newcomers as not everyone was *aa-jaan*. Now we have lived here for several years and there is a new group of newcomers. Some in our group have started to call the new group “newer comers”.

Recently I was afforded the new title as *khun-naai* (madam) by some middle-aged female villagers. They did not extend this title to any other urban middle-class newcomers. These women are older than me and lived nearby. I had spent a lot of time with them and felt close to them. *Khun-naai* in general means a female with a

high economic social status and lifestyle, implying also a life of leisure. The villagers also call female land buyers from the south (of Chiang Mai) or the city *khun-naai*. However, it can be used satirically, in a negative sense, or when just teasing in a friendly sense. In my case, when I first heard this form of address, I became alarmed, afraid that I might have done something to upset or differentiate the villagers. After I observed for a while, I asked the persons who used this form of address directly but they laughed and did not tell me much. Then, I asked their daughters and they explained that they were just teasing me as I enjoyed a better economic status than the villagers while they felt close to me. Otherwise, they would not address me openly like this. I was relieved. As regards the urban middle-class newcomers in Nam Jam, my position did not change. I was their neighbour with a similar level of status.

While I was in the village, when there were village meetings, I attended them either in Nam Jam or in Mu 5. Each time I was treated with respect differently from the way they treated their local neighbours. The people, especially those in Mu 5 greeted me respectfully. Although they knew my face and house, they were not very familiar with me as a person. On one occasion when my foreign husband joined in a meeting at Mu 5 he was served a glass of water. The local villagers always had to find their own water. I had never seen this courtesy offered before. It was a subtle form of class positioning reflecting a different status of the western foreigner to the Thai urban middle-class group.

During village ceremonies, for example, most of the middle-class families in Nam Jam join in and are treated like guests who are of higher status than their neighbours in the village. Regarding cremations, the local leaders in Nam Jam check with the middle-class to see if families are available to participate in the ceremony. If so, the funeral host will honour the middle-class group along with the other village leaders and respected elders by arranging robes for the middle-class people to offer to the monks. I asked a village elder (who was also a local grocery shop owner) why he included the middle-class group even though they did not have a direct relationship with the host family. He explained that it was to show respect, that they were *aa-jaan* (implying people with higher education and a higher position) in the community. One

mid thirties female villager told me that she and others in the village were proud that their rural and *baan-naawk* (a rustic) village had several doctors (PhDs) and *farang* (foreigners) as village members. I sensed that she was implying that the village had particular features that attracted such people to move in, unlike other ordinary rural Thai villages. The term *farang* used by villagers also referred to another group of newcomers whom villagers felt were far different and of higher social status. However, it was likely that very soon other villages in the vicinity would experience comprehensive migration of urban middle-class people through the urbanisation of Chiang Mai town. The new road extending along the canal on the mountain side from the Nong Khwai intersection to other districts in a southerly direction would facilitate such migration.

For the local villagers, however, this deferential attitude toward the middle-class group as newcomers or guests is all-pervasive. This has been evident on several occasions when villagers have opted not to invite newcomers to attend village meetings, or to participate in local development activities such as clearing roads or cleaning the communal areas unless the newcomers themselves had already expressed interest in participating. In addition, while the middle class are not obliged to participate, local villagers who miss these labour activities often have to pay a fine which sometimes can be drink, fruit or ice cream.

One middle-class man who moved from Bangkok because he became bored with his busy urban life, decided to move to Chiang Mai, had a job, and he chose to build a house and lived in the village. Although it was a rural area, at the same time there is internet and it is not far from the city where he worked. He was very happy living in the village surrounded by neighbours who knew each other. He said that he did not want to think of his relationship with the villagers as based on class. He emphasised that the more people – especially the higher social group – alluded to relationships in class terms, the greater the difference would become. He preferred to see the different groups enjoy equal status as neighbours. However, he conceded that there might be some gaps between the two groups. The villagers always addressed him as *khun*. The term *chon-chan* (class) is not used in everyday Thai language,

however an invisible hierarchical relationship persists.

All the cases of class positioning presented above are based on knowledge people have from living in close proximity with one another. But class can also be based on perceptions at initial encounter. I experienced this myself early during my residence in Nam Jam. Soon after my house construction was finished and the trees had not yet grown, people could see the house located along the road that stood out clearly as different from the other village houses. Several times, people from outside who drove past and saw the house would stop and ask for visits. One morning, when I was wearing a sarong and a big hat and was sweeping leaves in the garden near the fence, an expensive BMW drove by slowly and parked in front of my house. A middle-aged man got out of the car and asked me from the fence, “*naawng naawng* (younger sister), is the owner home? The house style is very nice. Is the owner a foreigner? Can I come in and have a look?” I paused to think for a few seconds and replied, “The lady of the house is Thai and she is still abroad so it is not really convenient to let anyone in.” He left without saying anything or looking at me. This man did not have any information about me, so he positioned my class from what I wore and did, assuming that I was a housemaid. His manner was far different to my village and even middle-class neighbours.

It becomes clear that the social hierarchy in the village is influenced not only by the society as a whole but by each social class group as well. In the Thai context, it is obvious in the living conditions and in the people’s backgrounds. Categorisation and titles are the basic differentiations that position people on the hierarchical ladder. Each group consciously realises this hierarchy and positions itself accordingly to the extant social classes. The Burmese workers position themselves lowest in the village. However, some individuals who have more confidence may be able to assume a more comfortable position than others in their groups. In addition, it is lauded if the higher class participate in lower class activities but not the other way around. While class positioning sounds stratified, at the same time it is subtle in everyday practice. People unconsciously conform to Thai practices of hierarchical class differentiation.

5.3.2 Complex class relations arising from migration

The in-migrants to Nam Jam, both the temporary and permanent residents, still maintain relations with their original societies, a practice that results in complex class relations. However, the backgrounds of each group in the village are not of particular interest to their fellow villagers. The migrant workers from Myanmar, for example, come from a middle range socio-economic group in their home villages where that many own agricultural land. They say that the poor do not have enough money to cross the border to Thailand. Similar to the dormitory residents I interviewed, they were not the poorest group in their villages. Many of their families had farming land and they had reached at least grade nine in education whereas several others of their neighbours were landless and had a lower level of education. Notwithstanding, in Nam Jam, they were among and most invisible groups due to their status as temporary residents and to the remote locations from whence they had come.

As regards the urban middle-class newcomers, most were from middle-class backgrounds. Many were *aa-jaan* (university lecturers) and the remainder were privately owned business people whose parents came from a similar class background. I was the only one from an agricultural and rural background. My hometown is in Samutprakan, a province adjacent to Bangkok where the Suvarnabhumi International Airport is located. My parents have been farmers all of their lives. When I was born, there was no electricity. My parents, who were rice farmers, later converted their rice fields into prawn farms. However, they did not want any of their children to work as farmers. They ensured that all four of their children were educated. Four of us have graduated with at least a Bachelor's Degree and I will be the first one who has a PhD in that village. In Nam Jam, my rural class background does not affect my middle-class position. When I took up residence in the village I enjoyed good living conditions and a good lifestyle. I built a big house, hired people to do house cleaning once a week, and to water the garden every day. I am currently undertaking a doctoral thesis, thus people position me as middle class. Moreover, recently I married an *aa-jaan farang* (western foreign university lecturer) who speaks fluent Thai. For these reasons, my position has been reinforced

regardless of my parents' rural background. In fact, having a rural background has proven an advantage. It has really helped me to become acquainted with different classes more easily. One *aa-jaan* who also lives here said that she could not act, talk or be close to the villagers as her background was different from theirs. Unlike me, she found it difficult to assimilate with them.

There have been other cases similar to mine. Several Thai women from rural backgrounds who also married western foreigners enjoy very good living conditions in the village despite having no more than high school level education. The villagers tend to regard them slightly differently from my case. Their level of education and manners are taken into consideration for class positioning. The locals feel much less distance from women who enjoy good relationships with the villagers. However, in the case of those who do not relate well to the villagers or show disrespect, gossip surrounds their class backgrounds. Another case was an urban middle-class woman who had a house in Nam Jam and, married a *farang*. She went to live abroad with her husband and worked in a factory. Her class status shifted between middle-class resident in Nam Jam and factory worker abroad. However, level of class differences in these two cultures may differ.

As regards the local villagers, the arrival of different in-migrant groups has resulted in another layer of class positioning. When I first lived in the village, I asked my house cleaner (my local neighbour across the road) who were the local richest and poorest in the community. She mentioned a few names of some rich people, some of whom I had guessed from interviewing them but not from outside evidence. Apropos of the poor, she mentioned a few names, people who were deep in debt and did not have any assets. Later, when I talked to her again, she said she was the poorest person in the village. I knew about her economic difficulties. She was in her 50s, her husband was in his 70s, and she had two sons in their 20s. All of the family members worked as wage labourers. Her eldest son and his wife had two children, so they had many expenses and could no longer support their parents. Recently, this son moved away to live in his wife's home village. She explained that she was in debt because she had her house renovated. Her house used to have rain come in through the roof

and because of the poor condition of her house she was embarrassed in front of the other villagers. This implies that even if the poor do not have enough to eat, no one will bother about their condition. But if anyone does not perform properly to the guests, people will pity and look down on them. Now she was living much better but was also badly in debt. Eventually, she had to sell her residential land to an affluent local family in the village to meet her accumulating debt. Now she has to pay 1,000 baht per month rent to stay in the house she used to own. She was extremely saddened by the situation and became sensitive when she was teased – or it was mentioned – by the other villagers in reference to her economic problems or how she spent her money. I thought of a Northern Thai proverb a villager told me, *took baaw dai gin phai baaw dai dtaam fai saawng taawng, took baaw dai noong dai yawng phee naawang duu khlaaen* (Nobody sees into our stomachs that we are hungry. They just see what we wear and have).

Among the richest local families were some small entrepreneurs who were debt-free and had good secure incomes. A few of them owned tracts of land. One of the few rich families in the village bought my house cleaner's residential land. These local rich families are still living in modest housing. Outsiders are not able to distinguish whether those living in the bigger houses are the richest in the villagers' views. Some families living in the better housing areas look as though they are well off but in fact are deep in debt. Debt is acceptable if people have secure jobs and incomes to manage it.

The villagers stratify who are higher and lower from an economic perspective. It is different for the newcomers as others including the newcomers do not know much about the villagers' economic circumstances and backgrounds. Thus, visual indicators like housing, land, their work and standard of education are important in this respect. When new in-migrants arrive in the village, class differentiation changes. The poor among the long-term local families still enjoy a better social status than the Burmese workers and ethnic minority residents of the dormitories, even though their economic status is lower in some cases. The richest local families may be accorded lower status than the urban middle-class newcomers. When one does not

know their economic statuses and backgrounds, social conditions become more important. The class positions of all of the local families have shifted.

Addressing others using certain titles or categorising them may lead to class positioning, which is particularly understood in each cultural context and in the Thais' perception in this case. In addition, apart from class mobility among the local villagers, migration creates another complex layer of class positioning and class mobility of all social groups in the community. Social positioning of this new class composition creates and reinforces the perceptions and expectations that each group has towards the other.

5.3.3 Distance between classes

As discussed in the literature review vis-a-vis mainstream perceptions and understandings of rural Thai villages and the nature of class distinction between *chaao-baan* and middle-class newcomers, there are cases showing distance between classes, both in the physical and perceptive sphere. There are also clear differences in lifestyles and values between classes.

Apart from class positioning according to Thai social perceptions, the interaction that occurs between different classes of individuals determines class distance and reinforces class positions. In this section, I will discuss the interaction between the local villagers and the urban middle-class families as these two groups are not only permanent residents of the village but are also neighbours. The Burmese workers and dormitory residents will be omitted because the villagers and the urban middle class do not pay much attention to them. In addition, neither the locals nor the middle class feel that they are bona fide community members.

1) Different ways of living

Interaction between the classes depends upon both available occasions for interaction and the intentions of each individual. In peri-urban villages like Nam Jam,

each group has its own activities. Thus, there are limited communal occasions during which different social classes can interact. Communal activities include community meetings and ceremonies. However, these two activities are not often held and the villagers constitute the main group involved.

Nam Jam has had communal speaker systems since the late-1990s. This means that the village head from Nong Khwai can use the speaker to convey information to everyone without having to meet people in person. On occasion, the Nam Jam cluster arranges meetings at which they discuss its communal activities. I attend every meeting when I am in the village. I find that there are always the same faces (approximately 10-15 people) of villagers and two urban middle-class newcomers (myself and other lady whose house is located at the main road in the village). She interacts with her local neighbours regularly. However, if the meeting is held in Nong Khwai, she does not join in. Some middle-class residents told me that they were happy to contribute to community activities if they were asked but they did not feel productive attending the village meetings, partly due to the style of speaking. The speeches were often long, repetitive, and largely irrelevant to them. They believed that the villagers had a certain mindset and agenda and that they could not make any difference.

Regarding ceremonies, common ceremonies held in Thai rural villages include weddings, house warmings and funerals. The villagers generally help to prepare these and also put some money in an envelope (a donation to the host). Guests from outside, if they are not close relatives, only join the ceremonies. They too put some money in an envelope for the host families. People told me that increasingly people prefer to have caterers prepare the food for the house warmings and weddings. They said that it saves time and is cheaper than cooking themselves. The exception here is funerals. The villagers still organise the food themselves as it is hard to estimate the number of guests and they arrive at different times and should be offered food. This way, food is always available, unlike catering that serves only at ordered numbers and at certain times.

In case of house warmings and wedding ceremonies, the host villagers set the dates and invite every local neighbour in the village, along with their relatives and friends, ahead of time. Urban middle-class newcomers are also invited except for a few families who have never socialised with the villagers. Funerals are different. There are no individual invitations as villagers are notified by word of mouth and help with the preparations for the ceremony. Funerals involve the whole community and people manage or skip their working time to participate. Most urban middle-class people bring an envelope containing a monetary donation for the host family and many join in the funeral events. There are a few urban middle-class families who are not interested in any activities in the village. However, some urban middle-class families, whose their houses are located outside those of the local community, may not have heard of the death and thus do not join in activities.



Figure 5.2: Collective work at the cremation ground, during a funeral in Nam Jam
Photo by Wilaikun Punyaprom



Figure 5.3: Scene during lunch time of a funeral in the village.
This picture shows numbers of guests from within and outside the village.
Photo by Wilaikun Punyaprom



Figure 5.4: Behind the scenes at a funeral.
The host family being helped by neighbours, relatives, and me to prepare food.
Photo by Wilaikun Punyaprom.

Regarding urban middle-class newcomers' ceremonies, not every family invites the local villagers. A lot depends on relationships between them. In Nam Jam, every family invites villagers to join in ceremonies if they are organised in the village. Villagers bring tables and chairs from community assets, then tidy the place when the ceremony finishes. However, if the ceremony is held outside of the village or in a place they are not familiar with, they will not join in. One family wedding was held at a hotel in Chiang Mai city. Only the guests and neighbouring urban middle-class people attended because although the villagers were invited, they were too shy to join in. Some said they did not have the proper dress and did not know urban middle-class traditions and norms. They feared they might do something embarrassing. Thus, clearly hotels and urban middle-class society were not their usual comfort zone. For the villagers, place and class interaction become a matter of class positioning and class distance.

Helping each other in these ceremonies is a collective activity. It has remained one in only a few reciprocal activities in Thai rural society despite the fact that farming ended some time ago. The middle-class newcomers admire this particular aspect of village life as *nam-jai* (kindness). People help each other because they are friends, relatives and especially when they need others to help them in return. However, such traditions may not endure when the older generation has gone. Members of the young generation often do not know their relatives very well. They rarely join in ceremonies with their parents outside of the village. As regards the middle-class newcomers, there is no reciprocal activity between their group and the local villagers. The latter help the former to organise ceremonies but not at the level at which they help each other. The envelope the middle class give villagers in ceremonies is a small part of the system. The more important aspects of the reciprocity are the consistency of time and labour the villagers provide, which the middle class do not. The reality is that the middle-class families do not need the amount of assistance required by the villagers. They can afford to hire almost everything such as catering and help to organise events outside.

There was a case of a foreign family who told me that when they had a house warming ceremony, they did not invite their village neighbours as they thought that the villagers might not feel comfortable attending. Their guests were from the academic group of the wife and many foreign friends of the husband. So, there may have been a communication barrier which would have created awkwardness for the villagers. Another foreign family said that they did not bother to organise a formal house warming ceremony. They just had an informal party for their friends and relatives (excluding the villagers). Some villagers told me that *chaao-baan* only have chances to enter the urban middle-class' houses when they are under construction or when they are invited to attend house warming ceremonies.

In general, urban middle-class newcomers rarely know every local family but all of the villagers know all the middle-class newcomers, which houses they live in, and some know their names. The urban middle-class newcomers in the village have varied levels of intention to relate to the local villagers. They can roughly be divided into three groups. (1): The majority is the group of friendly urban middle-class people. They chat and smile when they meet the villagers, for example in the community and in the local market, if they know each other. However, they do not have regular everyday interaction with each other. Most of them spend their time either in their houses or outside of the village working or enjoying leisure. They drive in and out of their house gateways and do not walk much in the village. Therefore, they do not develop the same types of close relationships with the villagers that they have with their friends and with relatives living outside of the village. On occasion, they might visit their local next door neighbours for a chat, but the villagers do not visit them at their houses. This may be attributable to two factors. It may be that the urban middle-class people do not invite them, or that the villagers do not feel comfortable entering a perceived higher class sphere. Thus, casual interaction between the two groups is limited.

(2) A small group of Thais. These people try hard to participate in all of the villagers' activities with villagers and offer assistance if they are required so that they will be accepted as part of the community. They make an effort to get close to the

villagers through regular chatting, sharing stories and food, and by joining in the communal activities, both at the village administration level and at ceremonies. This form of relationship building extends only to the villagers, not to the dormitory residents or the Tai Yai workers because there is no occasion for interaction. However, being individualistic, they set their comfortable distance and engage in selected activities that they find interesting. To date, I have not found a foreigner making a substantial effort to participate in community activities. This may in part be due to communication problems. The villagers feel relatively comfortable talking to this enthusiastic group but there are still some barriers. I am part of this group, and this research has provided me with a good opportunity to know and talk to all social groups. Otherwise, my interaction with the others would have been minimal too.

(3) The few who prefer to either avoid or have minimum interaction with others. Their lives and society are confined within their fences. They drive outside to engage in activities outside of the village. Some foreign families have not spoken to 'others' in the village especially villagers. They only interact with a few middle-class neighbours and with villagers when necessary if they have to deal with the village head, the TAO, or if there is some urgent need such as a broken water pipe that needs fixing from the village. One middle-class woman said that she had suffered a bad experience where she moved from. She did not tell me what the exact problem was. She did not want it to happen again. She added that "The more people, the more trouble could occur". Therefore, she rather limited her family's relations especially to the local villagers. The villagers, in turn, do not communicate with them. Some villagers complained but restricted their complaints to others. All of the above suggests that this peri-urban community is becoming more individualistic and that the local villagers are adapting.

As I intimated in Chapter 4, the micro-geography determines the distance between different groups. From my observations, and from talking to the middle-class neighbouring villagers, I learned that micro-geography of house location, physical aspects and their house designs, and different lifestyles are barriers impeding their interaction. The huge and unique house styles that have the fences and closed

gates prevent outsiders – especially *chaao-baan* – from visiting. The majority of middle-class houses in Mu 5 have their gates closed at all times. However, there are four to five families that leave their gates open during the day. Among this group, two do not have a front fence. They explained that they live in the village, so they want to do as other *chaao-baan* do. All of their houses are located in small lanes in the village and some are accessed through lanes that other people hardly use. In addition, most of the residents leave their gates open, family members rarely engage in activities outside or in front of the houses. Two of these houses with gates open are foreigners who had big plots of land, and looking from the front gate the houses were located at the other end of the plots, leaving a big space between the gates and the houses. Although they left the gates open during the day, the villagers would rarely contemplate a casual visit.

When I asked whether villagers visited them sometimes, they said that people hardly ever came. They thought that it was partly because they were often inside the house and the villagers thought there was no one home. Thus, they dared not enter. One said that sometimes small children from the village came inside to play. They would run around and sometimes ran into his garden and then they left. Another one said having gate open would be easier for people to notice if there was something happened such as a burglary. The houses of middle-class families located along the main road have their gates closed, including my house because there are people from outside passing by all the time. I used to open the gate but dogs came inside and damaged my garden. So, now I only leave a small gate open.

I asked some *chaao-baan* who lived near the middle class families why they were reluctant to visit these particular houses. The villagers who had to collect statistical household data in the village said they rarely approached these houses because these houses looked huge and some were completely closed. One villager replied that "I do not dare to get inside (the gate) because their houses are huge with high fences. Even though some leave their gates opened, I am afraid that the house owners might think I trespass". One said she was concerned that the owner might think *chaao-baan* did not have good manners. Another said, "I and other *chaao-baan*

are not that close with those *aa-jaan* so we do not know how to talk with them." Some said, "I do not have matters to visit and talk with them apart from ordinary greeting when we meet."

The above limitations suggest that there are both obvious and subtle barriers that keep different social groups at a distance. Fences are concrete signs of borders between people and classes that restrict social interaction. Apart from this, the micro-geography in the area, house styles, characteristics of space, and class differences in their lifestyles are significant barriers.

2) Privacy

All of the urban middle-class people live in the village as individual families. Therefore, the levels of privacy – and their relationships with others in the village – are significantly different from those of the local villagers. One family of retirement age revealed that even though they lived in the village, they kept their fence and gate closed because they preferred privacy and wanted their house to be a restful place. They said that in the public sphere they had good relationship with the villagers but when they were at home, they wanted privacy. Another Thai middle-class family also preferred privacy. Their house was located at the edge of the village. Only one local family, their gardeners, entered their house area. They had several fruit trees and an abundance of edible plants. They could not consume all of these fruits and plants in the bearing season so instead of having a trader collect the produce and sell it like the villagers did, they gave some away to their friends. They allowed their local gardeners to collect the rest of the fruit, otherwise it dropped to the ground. They were not proprietary regarding their fruit and plants. They simply insisted on their privacy. They did not want anyone they did not know entering their grounds.

Some of the middle-class families made good friends among their group in the village but they were unlikely to have close relationships with the other social groups. My interview showed that they preferred to live in privacy. Their close friends lived outside of the village, people in their hometown or workplace. Therefore, their

friends in the village were likely to be just acquaintances. For example, when they had parties or had meals with their friends, most of the invited guests were their friends from outside of the village, not their immediate neighbours. This was different from the local villagers' practices. Most of the villagers were effectively tied together. As well, the local villagers' level of privacy was significantly less than that of the middle-class group.

However, there was also a difference of class distance between the generations of the villagers. The younger generation interact with the urban middle-members more easily. When I invited villagers to my house, I noticed that the older generation preferred to sit outside or if they sat inside, they would not walk around in the house. Conversely, the younger generation seemed to feel relaxed and more comfortable than their elders when it came to sitting inside and walking around. This was possibly because the younger generation has already socialised with outsiders from various social groups, thus they were in a better position to have more confidence than their parents. Some female villagers around the age of 50 years whom I interviewed rarely went to Chiang Mai town. They were mindful of their interaction with the middle-class newcomers, especially when inside middle-class people's fences.

In time, a few *chaao-baan* have started to prefer more privacy from their relatives and neighbours. One, an entrepreneur, said "Now everyone in my family works hard through the day and often comes back home late so sometimes we want to wake up late but *chaao-baan* (in fact the person was his relative) just come and shout without feeling *kreng-jai* (afraid to bother the other). We have to wake up to talk with them which most of the time is nothing important at all, for example, they shout what we will have for breakfast." Concomitant with the development of the area, the villagers' lifestyles are changing and they are becoming busier, thus increasing individualistic.

3) Interests and ambivalent issues

During conversations between the two groups, I often heard (and also from middle-class people in other villages) that the villagers discuss many topics with the middle class. From time to time they mentioned – or teased them about – personal issues (in the middle-class people's views), such as their salaries, their pensions, and prices of items they own. Some villagers who were workers of the middle-class families also asked to borrow money from their employers. These questions were asked only after they have known each other for some time. On another occasion, I was talking and joking to two female villagers who asked these types of question. They explained that they were curious because *chaao-baan* had no experience of things such as large house building costs, new red plate cars and the salaries of their career positions. This aspect of the villagers' interest often made the urban middle-class people feel ambivalent. Some felt they wanted to distance themselves from the villagers. This tended to reinforce the unwritten boundaries that limit interaction between urban middle class newcomers and villagers. On the other hand, newcomers of lower social status have few boundaries, either physical or social.

Regarding the latter, they saw these material aspects as a form of success. Some women joked that “It is too bad that I did not make enough merit in the past life otherwise I would be rich and a have big house like you.” I was laughing and suggested that we make merit tomorrow. This type of comment was to give reason why they were poorer or unluckier than the others. From my observations, casual talks, jokes, and interviews, I learned that many families were proud to talk about their children's progress, if they earned high salaries, gained good marks for their studies, got a scholarship, or had good careers. They also talked to their neighbours who were often their relatives. The younger generation, however, opted not to talk about such issues. It may have been because their parents' generation had similar background. People observed the changes in each other easily so they expressed their pride through their children, who were now increasingly detaching their social lives from the village. I also noticed that when the topic of conversation was about their own (parents' generation) progress, incomes, debts and assets, the poor seemed to

find it easier to answer than the more affluent. One poor woman explained her situation in detail. Neither she nor her husband was well educated (they only finished grade four). She was disappointed because her two children did not finish high school. For these reasons, her family was in a poor condition now. In this case, the poor woman spoke upfront about her difficulties to explain why she could not improve her family's lot like the others in a village. I understood that for the poor (such as her) living in the village where there was rapid mobility, in order to explain the widening gap between classes, she had to be able to give reasons to outsiders like me and to herself. Only in this way could her class position in the village be understood.

Regarding information flows in the village, when something new happened in the village, information is shared quite quickly among the villagers. When I talked to the housewives, I gathered information about day to day activities, families, some intimate topics, and feeling. Talking to men, I learned about more serious issues such as their work, changes in the community, and their ideas on community development. Every time when I came back to the village (I studied in two places between Chiang Mai and Sydney), I would visit a few of my key informant neighbours to update information on what happened in the village while I was away. Most of the time, I heard stories about several local families, their daily lives, their joys and difficulties, but little about the urban middle-class people. They said that they did not have many chances to talk to the latter so they knew very little about them. The urban middle-class people were aware of this distancing of the two social groups. Some middle-class people said that they did not like the *chaao-baan* to talk about them so they were careful regarding topics and details of their conversations. If the pieces of information they gleaned were private, negative and or combined with criticism, they became gossip. In addition, the urban middle-class people did not often dwell upon personal issues appertaining to themselves, their neighbours, members of the same social group and the villagers. They were comfortable discussing work, education and the news. Apropos of community matters in the village, they tended to be interested in issues that related to them directly such as development activities. Their interests in fact went along well with male villagers but most men worked outside the

village so they had less opportunity to meet if they did not make an effort. In the final analysis, matters of information and appreciation of information sharing between them were different. Unlike the villagers, for whom knowing about each other meant close relationships, the urban middle-class people were not comfortable talking about their private business.

Due to these different approaches to living, privacy and the interests of social groups, the two groups could not blend together easily. A certain distance existed between the classes. As a consequence, their backgrounds and varied understandings of rural village life created certain class-based expectations of each other that could ultimately lead to encounters and a new form of class conflict.

5.4 Class encounters between post-agrarian villagers and urban middle-class migrants

When different social groups share close proximity as neighbours in a village, on occasion they may interact, encounter and sometimes confront each other. Due to their differences of background and in the lifestyles of social groups, each has certain understandings and expectations of the others around them. The following cases and stories presented in this section were drawn from various places and people. They were not particularly confined to Nam Jam. There were more examples of middle-class people's encounters with villagers than of villagers' expectations of – and thoughts about – the urban middle-class newcomers. This is because the middle-class people, as newcomers, had greater expectations vis-a-vis the new place they had moved into. So, when they experience events they had not expected before, there were obvious reactions.

5.4.1 Ideal type of local community

When I first bought the land, some in our group thought of living like a “community”. At the time most of us were single and our work involved travels. The proposed ideas were that we would all have one-storey houses with low fences

between our houses so that we could walk across, share food, look after the houses while others are away, and help to take care of each other like the villagers. It seemed ideal and among ourselves we were very individualistic. We had been so busy with our own activities that those ideas had never happened.

The middle-class newcomers who decided to live in the rural village had a certain mindset regarding the village and the villagers. At least they and their lifestyles must be better than those in the city where they had moved from. Several situations occurred ranging from individual to communal that engendered in the middle-class newcomers with a variety of feelings from shame to disappointment regarding various activities they experienced in the village.

1) Egalitarian and homogeneous community

The urban middle class nurtured perceptions of rural Thai villages as united and egalitarian communities. In the small community of Nam Jam, which comprised 40 permanent households (29 long-term resident families and 11 urban middle-class newcomers), the villagers were neither homogeneous nor egalitarian. A few local leaders, who did not have official positions, always initiated, managed, and facilitated all community activities, leaving the other villagers little option but to follow the leaders. Even though the members of almost every local household are related through inter-marriage, there were still disagreements in the village. The majority of villagers enjoyed their non-involvement in community business as they did not have to invest their time and effort away from their own work. They were willing to participate if the leaders told them to. A few were obvious, many were subtle, and none wanted to oppose the leaders. This context does not just happen. In the past, when the area was agrarian local political affairs were always hierarchical and conflict between people was common.

On one occasion, there was talk of constructing a new proper building next to an old existing storage building (for community assets such as tables, chairs, cooking tools) in the community area (next to my house). Some villagers wanted this building

for organising community activities such as meetings and ceremonies. Most money came from the TAO but it was not enough. Therefore, villagers organised an event to collect money, which involved Buddhist ritual activities, selling food and drink, singing, drawing lotteries, and mobilising people from nearby communities for donation. This event showcased the diverse groups in the village and how decisions were made. Among the villagers, there were three groups of people; local leaders, a group of active villagers, and a group who rarely took part in any decision making of the communal activities. The local leaders were in the 50-60 year age group. They were from average to well off families but more importantly, they had time to spare and were keen to contribute to the community. The temporary residents were not involved in village matters. As regards the urban middle-class newcomers, only a few actively participated in village events while the remainder were not involved at all. Each group in the community had different political statuses and roles in the community.



Figure 5.5: Villagers were organising a *boun* to mobilise money for construction of the new community building (October 2012)

In cases of mobilising communal events nowadays, not every villager is enthusiastic about community activities. In Nam Jam, some villagers simply did not want to participate. They thought it would take their time and money and they were already busy with their work and felt they might not benefit directly from these communal facilities. However, a group of local leaders insisted on making it happen. There was a series of meetings, but the people who always talked or set out the directions were the same few local leaders. Villagers who did not agree were left to complain among themselves. A few urban middle-class newcomers alluded to the cost and benefit of these projects but nothing changed. One of the local leaders said that

“Nowadays the *chaao-baan* were busy. No one wanted to engage in collective activities for the community so if they did not initiate new projects, nothing in the way of development would happen in the village. Each *chaao-baan* would do his or her own things. We had this plan since 2007 and the big part of the budget for the building was already available from the TAO so *chaao-baan* should make an attempt.”

The building went ahead and was finished in early 2012, for which they also had to ask for donation from village members and some middle-class families after the ritual ceremony. Nowadays it is used mainly for storing amplifiers and stereo equipment, tables and chairs. It was once used for a community meeting and once for a funeral as the bereaved house was small and could not host the number of guests. The community area that was originally open so that children could play sport in the evenings is now closed as they are afraid of thieves. Several people, including the middle-class newcomers, disagreed with closing the fence at the community area. When people tried to ask why, the answer came back, who will be responsible if the area is left open and something is stolen? After that, the people kept quiet but some still complained among themselves.

In addition, the same local leaders initiated the felling of a tall, old tamarind tree in the community area. They claimed that the tree obstructed the constructing of a new *sala*, a building that has only a roof and no walls, that functions as a shelter for villagers working during communal events such as village ceremonies and festivals. At a meeting, it was agreed that the *sala* could be moved a little so that the tree could be kept. The people agreed that this tree had stood in the village for several decades and that if it was felled, they would not be able to grow another one to this size in their lifetimes. This tree was next to my fence and before I travelled, I emphasised to the village leaders not to fell it as agreed. A few days later, the tree was completely cut to the ground. Some of the villagers were outraged and shouted their objections on the road but no one said anything directly to the local leaders. One woman joked with me when I came back that they waited for me to leave and cut the tree, otherwise I would oppose them. The villagers wondered why the leaders had not adhered to the decision reached at the meeting. I asked the villagers why they did not talk directly to the leaders. They replied that they did not want to exacerbate the problem and that if they argued further, the leaders might say "then you should do it next time", stressing lack of participation in decision-making. Later, I met the local leaders and they just smiled and tried to explain how it was necessary to fell the tree. I said to them hope we do not have to cut another tree. I also met a woman to whom the village sold the wood to. She said to me that she did not want to cut it. They (leaders) just told her to buy the wood and cut it for the community. These trees, if they are big, they could sell for furniture but if they are small, they would be for firewood in brick making. This local buyer used the wood for a brick factory in another village.

Another similar case involved another old, tall tamarind tree in the same area and again the community leaders planned to fell it. I experienced this case directly as I was in my house when I heard the sound of a chain saw. I went outside to have a look, I saw two men up the tree, starting to cut its small branches. I asked why they had to cut the tree. They said the tree had already been sold to a person in Nong Khwai and they had just come to 'cut' it. I asked them, "Please stop. I want to talk to villagers here first". One of the workers made a phone call, asking the person to clear this issue with me so that they could continue their work. A few minutes later,

one of the local leaders came and explained that the village had agreed to fell the tree because its branches were close to the electrical lines and they might cause damage, especially if there was a storm like one that happened in 2011, when the big tree next to this one fell and damaged a fence of one foreigner's house. They sold this tree for 1,500 baht since that time. He said that the community had already received the money from the buyer. The two workers also complained that it was difficult to cut the branches as they were close to the electrical lines. So, they said they would not proceed and suggested we finalise the agreement and let them know when this was done.

I subsequently tried to talk to a few female villagers in the area. They agreed with me that this was the last tall tree left in the village. Some of them were born when this tree was already grown and had a good memory of it so they wanted to keep it. They thought that the branches of the tamarind tree would not be broken easily. I encouraged them to get together and discuss it with the leaders but no one wanted to argue. They forecasted that the leaders would say, "If the tree falls and damages the electrical lines, will you be responsible?" Some suggested that I would be the best person to bring this up as I knew and could talk to everyone very well and they *kreng-jai*¹² me. So, I would be in a better position than villagers. One woman said that the tree had been there since she was a little girl. She offered to share the cost with me, then the 1,500 baht could be returned to the buyer whom I knew from an earlier interview. We agreed that it would be easier not to get the community involved in returning the money. I talked to the local leaders but they only gave me the same reason and said they would discuss it again. A few days later, almost every villager in Nam Jam (excluding the urban middle-class newcomers) had heard about this and questioned me about the problem. Then, I met the buyer in Nong Khwai. As usual, I made a *wai* (for greeting with respect), then asked him about the tree and my intention to pay the money back to him. He said that he would not accept the money back but would make merit for Nam Jam instead. I smiled broadly, made another *wai*

¹² *krengjai* has slightly diverse meanings in different contexts. Mainly, it implies that one tries to do or not to do something in order to keep the other happy or not to feel uneasy. In this case, it means they listened to a person out of respect.

and said 'thanks' to him. In my mind, this was for thanking and for him to feel he was highly respected from doing a good thing. That tamarind is still standing. Later, the leaders managed to lop one of the big branches near the electrical line.

The above cases of communal buildings and the felling of big trees show clearly that power in the village is hierarchical. The leaders are dominant. They take the lead and while the villagers tend to follow, even though some do not agree with certain activities. The ultimate reason was about responsibility for the work and the damage that could ensue. This prevented the villagers from challenging the leaders as they also sought to avoid making trouble for themselves. In addition, whereas the more affluent people in the village had a stronger voice in decision making in the agrarian society, the case of a peri-urban village is different. The urban middle-class group (the more affluent in this village) do not have a role in this partly because they do not seriously commit themselves to community activities. They appear not to feel included in these activities. Apart from this, the villagers do not regard them as full members of the community. The leaders are still drawn from the same group of a few people and disagreement persists. The people might collaborate well together when observing traditional ceremonies but as far as being a united, egalitarian, and homogenous Thai rural community, there is little evidence of this in other areas, especially in political affairs. From involving myself to these political affairs, I gradually stepped closer to being part of the community and at the same time I have made my own place in the community sphere too.

Sense of place for different social groups means different things. For local people who are the original "place-makers" of Nam Jam, there is a sense of ownership of the locality. Urban middle class residents now consider themselves permanent in the village (*mu-ban*) but their contribution to, or investment in, place-making differs qualitatively from that of long-term residents. They remain outside most spheres of decision making relevant to the public space of the village, village events and so on.

2) Sufficiency economy

Another ideal typology for many urban outsiders – including middle-class newcomers and some better-off villagers – is their expectation of the rural villagers' sufficiency economy (*sethakid phorphiang*). As I suggest in the literature review chapter, sufficiency economy has been the main discourse in the mass media and in the government development schemes. It fits well with the ideal notion of the traditional village that is self-sufficiency. It has become generalised, an expectation of the non-villagers, particularly of those in the higher class. However, in the everyday discourse of villagers, the term that people use is “*phorphiang*”, referring to the idea that people should not live beyond their means.

There are the particular scenarios in the villages that have drawn the attention of some middle-class newcomers in Mu 5 and also in other areas of the peri-urban zone. Comments about *chaao-baan* included disappointment that they were not self-sufficient. The first example is drinking. Some villagers, and workers who live in dormitories, often drink beer or and rice whisky at the local grocery shop in the evenings. Second, the villagers, including the poor, regularly buy underground lottery tickets, twice a month on the first and the sixteenth of the month. They buy the lottery from the local agents ranging from ten baht to a few thousand baht. Most of the time, they lose. Third, the ceremonies organised in the villages are not always in accord with the hosts' statuses. These examples were often raised by the middle-class newcomers when they commented among themselves on the villagers' lack of self-sufficiency and non economical behaviour. Their thought was that if the villagers could save this money, it would be a substantial saving.

The villagers offered some explanations (not that I asked them directly what they thought of these comments but more about how they see themselves doing these actions). In general, drinking is part of the festival and ceremony traditions in rural villages. The villagers I interviewed said they did not drink to get drunk but just to relax at the end of the day. Certainly some villagers were addicted to alcohol but many were just casual drinkers. They drank to socialise with others in the village.

When I conducted some interviews at one of the local grocery shops, my interviews included a few men and women who were dormitory residents and local villagers. One local male villager asked me whether it was possible to invite some of the newcomers (middle-class men) to drink with *chaao-baan* sometimes. This was an example of the *chaao-baan* attempting to make friends with the middle-class newcomers. They contemplated using drinking as a way of breaking down the barrier between the classes.

Regarding the lottery, I observed that the people enjoyed gambling. They joked when they lost and laughed when they won, irrespective of whether the win was small or big. Before the lottery day, people tried to guess the numbers based on several events, for example, the number plate of a car involved in a recent accident, the age of someone who had recently died, or on interpretations of their dreams. I asked some women how often they had won. They said 'not often' but it was exciting to hope. I asked about the perceived squandering of the money rather than saving it. They responded that if they did not buy the lottery, they would spend the money on something else anyway. It was not a lot of money so if they saved it, they could not do much with it anyway.

Apropos of non-economical rituals and ceremonies, there was a case of a poor mother who organised a ritual ceremony for her son before he was conscripted for two years. Some of the more affluent villagers disagreed with her actions, saying to others that because the woman did not have enough money she had to borrow from others to fund the ritual. This did not make sense, they claimed. The mother, after hearing such comments was angry and upset. She cried as she talked to me saying that she was afraid that her son would be sent to a base in the south where there was serious fighting. Many soldiers had died. She consulted a fortune teller who suggested that she should conduct a ritual. Therefore, she decided to organise a ritual ceremony and to invite people to bless her son. She ordered food and served it with music, which cost a lot of money for her. She said that she was poor and she did not know what would happen to her son, but if he died, at least she would not feel regret. Had she not done anything, it might have contributed to the outcome. In addition, had she not

invited the others to the ritual and not provided proper food and appropriate ceremony, people might have gossiped. She added that she knew she was poor but she hated people looking down on her. If she had a debt, she would manage it herself. People should not intervene. She said the affluent people never knew how the poor felt. I sensed that even though she was poor, she had pride in herself, albeit in her own way.

5.4.2 Development and modernity in the rural village

With respect to community development, there were cases where individual urban middle-class families had problems or concerns with changes in the village. The village has undergone rapid change since I moved to live there in 2007. Several plots of lands have been sold, and new middle-class houses have been built. Dirt roads in the village have gradually been paved and there are more vehicles – both from village residents and outsiders – passing through the village at a noticeably faster speed. The village has become increasingly busy.

I will address the first extension of road access, a case adjusted from my article published in the *Critical Asian Studies* in 2012 (Tubtim Tubtim 2012). A local farmland owner sought access from the village's main road to his land. He had inherited this land from his parents, who divided their land between him and his siblings. It used to be a big rice field, but after they stop farming and the land was divided, some inner sections had no road access. The proposed road would have to be laid over the old communal water channel that people previously used to irrigate their rice farms. However, since there is very little farming now, the channel's function has changed. Nowadays it serves as a drainage ditch for the community. His plan was to lay pipes, fill the ditch with crushed rock, and create a road. The Nong Khwai TAO agreed to partly support the construction.

The problem occurred when large clumps of bamboo and some big trees along the channel dike, which was located right in front of a middle-class newcomer's house, were cut down without first consulting the newcomers. This group of trees had

provided the house and area with shade and pleasant green atmosphere. When the TAO started measuring the area and felling some trees to clear the way for the road, an argument ensued between both sides. The middle-class family asked for the approved plan from the authority with details of the construction. In the meantime, the work had to stop. Later, both sides started to talk. Construction was completed and the road passed through a couple of pieces of land that previously had no road access. The trees and clumps of bamboo were felled at the level of necessity.

There were explanations from both sides. The local family, villagers and the TAO claimed that on several occasions they had constructed roads on irrigation channels following requests from local villagers and had never had a problem. They questioned why the city people (middle-class) were opposed to "progress" and "development". In response, the middle-class family argued that the villagers customarily gave priority to development with little consideration for the "environment". They also suspected that the land owner wanted road access to his land so that he could sell it in the future. A further concern was that having a road like this would create a busy and noisy route passing through the area. They started investigating legal options and discovered that the water channel could not be changed unless there was agreement among the people in the community. In this case, they had only discussed the construction with local families nearby, not with the middle-class family who lived adjacent to the land.

The point to make here is that it was not a judgement of right or wrong rather, it was concerned with an encounter between different attitudes toward modernity on the parts of the local villagers and the middle-class newcomers. For the local villagers, having a good road provided convenience, and roads are part of a development discourse associated with modernity. The middle-class people on the other hand, regarded too much construction or development as spoiling nature. While the newcomers viewed the nature as an aesthetic 'good', it was a source of livelihood for the local villagers. I also noted that the different social classes employed different approaches to achieve their goals. The local villagers used their social capitals of connections among relatives in the village and with the TAO and showed little

consideration vis-a-vis consulting the newcomers. Feeling aggrieved over not being consulted, the middle-class residents felt that they had to use external lines of regulation and legal argument as they neither had an informal network in the community nor a role in the TAO. Ultimately, local connections and customary practice proved successful in the village sphere.

Another small case highlighting the development of roads in the village was that several dirt roads have been paved, an event eagerly awaited by the villagers for reasons of dust. Some of the middle-class families who lived in the area preferred dirt roads, claiming that if the roads were paved, cars and motorcycles would speed along them making noise and possibly creating accidents. In addition, one newcomer said that he elected to live in the village because he wanted to live in a real rural village, and that unpaved roads with grass along both sides give a good sense of rurality. In comparison to 2007 when I first started living in the village, nowadays approximately half of all dirt roads in the villages are paved. In 2013, there were only a few dirt roads left. The TAO plans to improve them in the near future. But, the good roads have really increased the volume of traffic in the village. Sometimes, outsiders' cars and the Night Safari's big trucks use the village roads as a short cut. Therefore, the roads are becoming busier and noisier. The middle-class families experienced more problems than the villagers. Some of the villagers I interviewed regarded it simply as part of development. They noticed the changes but accepted them more readily than the middle-class newcomers. This was likely due to the fact that both had different backgrounds and expectations from this development. The villagers had lived with undeveloped roads for a long time and many among the middle-class group had opted for village life to get away from city-style development. Thus, both reacted to these changes differently.

5.4.3 Green and peaceful rural villages

In the urban middle-class mind, the rural village appeared green, clean, and peaceful, a better place to live in than the urban areas. Several small cases revealed this view. I will now demonstrate how these cases emerged and how each class

interacted with ‘others’ in each particular incident.

1) **Smoke**

At the regional level, Chiang Mai and other provinces in the north are well known for their air pollution. Between February and April every year, the fields are burned to prepare for the new farming season on the mountains. In areas where there are valleys, the smoke stays near the ground all summer causing significant air pollution and health problems for people in the whole area (covering several provinces). And, the situation becomes more serious each year. The provincial authorities banned burning in crowded community areas including towns and peri-urban zones. Reports of burning could result in arrests if reported. At the village level, the TAO announced strict regulation of burning and sought the villagers’ collaboration (which most villagers followed). However, even after the burning season ended when the rains came and the smoke problem in the towns disappeared, small burnings continued in the village.

The villagers of Nam Jam, especially the elderly who spend most of their time at home, customarily sweep their yards and burn leaves regularly all year round. This causes smoke and ash to flow across the area, an action not appreciated by the urban middle-class newcomers. Burning leaves is easy in terms of labour. There are no costs associated with getting rid of fallen leaves in their yards (and gardens and sometimes garbage such as paper and plastic bags). The TAO collects the garbage in bags bought from the TAO and this has a cost. In addition, TAO garbage trucks do not accept tree branches, so the problem persists. Middle-class newcomers employ gardeners to dispose of leaves and other unwanted objects from their gardens.

There were cases ranging from interaction, direct confrontation, argument, to just complaining among the middle-class group. Some complained amongst themselves that pure air should not be polluted. They had moved to live in the village to enjoy its freshness, only to be disappointed. One middle-class resident in the gated community said she genuinely wanted to live in the village but she could not tolerate

the villagers burning leaves. Some tried to send a signal to the villagers, raising concern about the latter's health.

I heard from a staff member of one TAO that he had received a report from a middle-class newcomer of one village about a problem with burning leaves in the village where he lived complaining that *chaao-baan* had never been concerned about other people's health. The TAO staff member said that one particular local family burned leaves every day and it affected the middle-class family. The newcomers first asked the elderly villager not to burn leaves and garbage near their house. The old villager responded that "If it is a big problem, move to live somewhere else. *Chaao-baan* have been doing this for generations and it has become tradition. If you do not like me doing this, just report to the police to arrest me." Then, the newcomer reported to the TAO. The TAO sent a staff member to talk to the local family. The TAO preferred not to deal with the problem because the TAO staff and local villagers knew each other well. Some were even relatives. The staff member only made one visit. He informed the local family that there was a complaint and asked them to reduce their burning. However, nothing changed and the villagers still burn their leaves as usual. The middle-class family could not resolve the problem. They just had to close their doors and windows and turn on the air-conditioner. The relationship between these two families is silent.

Another similar case happened to a foreign family in which the Thai wife was from a rural village. One family of their neighbours often burned leaves and sometimes plastic bags. The resultant smoke annoyed the family so the foreign husband, who could not speak Thai, told his Thai wife to talk to the villager, to tell them that the smoke, especially from the burning plastic, was bad not only for their health but for everyone's health. His wife refused, saying that she did not want to complain to the villager as she was afraid of offending them. The foreign husband said to me that he did not understand why his wife would not talk to the neighbour directly. The wife told me that in her home town, the villagers and her relatives observed similar practices to the villagers here. They had been doing this for a long time so why would they listen to her now. These examples of conflict between the

middle-class newcomers and the villagers showed that the former tended to approach problems with neighbours more directly, whereas the Thai wife, who came from a rural background, shared similar activities with villagers. So, she tried to avoid confronting them.

Not every villager, however, evinced a strong opinion regarding the middle-class families' complaints about burning. The younger generation seemed to understand the problem of the middle-class residents more than the village elders. Some villagers felt *kreng-jai* (afraid of bothering the others) when they burned leaves in their yards. They would say to the middle-class people upfront if they met that they were just burning the leaves to clear their gardens and the smoke would be finished soon. The middle-class people accepted this approach better as it showed that burning was not a regular activity and that the villagers respected their feelings. However, I personally observed that villagers who set the fires only focused on getting rid of the dry leaves and garbage. They showed little concern for others as creating smoke had never been an issue among the villagers before.

As regards the urban middle-class people, who had tried to escape urban pollution in their search for fresh air in the rural village, they were sensitive to pollution and did not anticipate such problems in the countryside. The subject of health is often raised by the middle-class newcomers. This is not a denial of the health issues. However, I suspected that their personal discomfort could come before the health issues of others. In general, it sounded better talking in public, similar to the way the villagers referred to tradition. These claims, while assuming acceptance by the public, limited open discussion, negotiation, and problem solving.

2) Sound

Some people from the city moved to live in the countryside for peace and quiet. However, they did not always find it. One middle-class couple said they moved from suburban Chiang Mai because the area became crowded. The speaker system was very annoying, as was the noise from the traffic. However, after living in

the village for few years, they started to complain. From time to time, they could hear music at night, sometimes from community ceremonies. Sometimes they heard people talking loudly and they thought it may come from karaoke. The middle-class man, a self-employed artist, normally worked late at night so noise really disturbed him. He said that he sometimes went out on his motorbike at night to follow the music, to see where it came from. But, he was never able to trace it. Sound travels across the area so it is hard to locate the source and to negotiate with people to solve the problem. In addition, this family and nearby families had a problem with a new garage. The owner made a loud noise every morning revving the car engines in his garage. Sometimes they emitted bad smoke from their exhaust pipes. I asked one local family who lived nearby if they experienced the problem. They said that the dust raised by the cars driving of the garage caused a greater problem for them as the dust went into their houses which stood low on the road. I asked whether they had talked to the garage owner as they are neighbours and some were relatives. They told me that they could not complain as it might be only their family that was impacted. Moreover, the garage owner conducted the business for his "living", not for entertainment. If they complained, it might imply they did not want others (*chaao-baan*) to improve their living. Therefore, they had to tolerate this discomfort so they just water the road during the day to prevent the dust to enter their house. The middle-class people were very concerned with things around their houses, for example, people changed careers like garages or karaoke and/or empty land ownership that might be turned into dormitories. However, such changes were difficult to control, especially when the area itself changed rapidly.

Another case of noise problem involved a new set of speakers provided with the support of the TAO. This set of speakers was moved from the main road in the middle of the village to the community area next to my house. There were five speakers and they were attached to a tall post so that all of the villagers could hear them. The announcements were usually made in the morning around seven o'clock so that villagers could receive information before they left for work. The problem was that the sound was very loud. It started with a local northern style song before the pieces of information were announced. So, it made an announcement longer than

necessary; and, the sound was often bad because the stereo and amplifier were old. One speaker directly faced my bedroom on the second floor. As I am often still asleep at as is for a few middle-class families who tend to work longer at night, I asked the local leaders if the song was necessary. They said that it was included to make the villagers aware of the information that followed. Regarding the type of song, I teased them suggesting they play English music instead. They laughed and told me to try. So, I tried, but the village head brought his own CDs to play. However, I successfully asked the village leaders to remove one speaker that faced my bedroom. Now it is just a bit less alarming than before, but I feel better that I could negotiate something in the village.

There were two similar cases involving foreign newcomers. I heard from different TAOs that arguments arose when there was one case of a family ceremony and another case of a community festival at one temple. Loud speakers were used several times a day and sometimes over a few days. In retaliation, foreigners bought their own speakers, turned the volume up, directed them at the temple, to the ceremony, and played very loud music to compete with the locals. In the case of the community festival, the foreigner even spoke through the microphone, "My name is Jack and I live in this village. Your festival is very loud and you should think of the others who are much disturbed by it." The TAO staff treated the incidents as a joke and nothing changed, and the villagers just laughed at the foreigners. The TAO staff explained that loud sound was necessary because it facilitated announcements by the monks at the temples or people inviting other villagers in the area to join the festivals and ceremonies as a community.

There was also a case of noise disturbance between the villagers and house rental residents. This particular house was rented by a family who baked local cakes for wholesale disposal in the market. Approximately five young workers lived there and all day they played loud teenager-style songs while they were working. One villager who lived next to this house felt very annoyed. She did not talk to them directly – to tell them to turn the volume down but instead she turned on her radio very loud and faced it towards their house. This reflected the fact that every group

can have problems with noise if it does not match the other's tastes and occurs at the wrong time. A few middle-class people suggested that had they known that it would be a noisy environment, they would have bought land elsewhere.

Ever since I have lived in Nam Jam, a *boun* (local festival) has been held along with the Buddhist rituals during the New Year. The villagers organise the *boun* with food, drink, singing and dancing and they invite people from nearby villages to join in. The aim is to sell food and drink to gain some communal money for community building. During the *boun*, I asked one 50 year old villager in Nam Jam why local festivals were still important these days when people could enjoy various modern entertainments in town or from cable television programs that every house had. He explained that these local festivals were loved by the people, especially by women in his age group because they rarely go outside of the village to visit places where they enjoyed their lives when they were young. Even today, if their husbands or their children do not accompany them, they would not go by themselves. In addition, there are limited entertainment places that they could enjoy. I noticed the couples on the dance floor. They were mainly women and a few men enjoying themselves. On stage, a similarly aged singer from the village was singing happily. The younger generation only visited the party briefly, then they left. It became clear that only the older generation villagers were still attached to the music and festivals.

3) **Animals**

In the countryside, people keep pets and raise animals, and some urban middle-class newcomers also have some pets too. However, their ways of living are different and can cause fractious encounters and confrontations. For example, some local families raise chickens. A few of these families let their chickens wander freely in search of food and sometimes the chickens cross the fences to the middle class houses. Some residents complained, saying that the chickens left their poo on their balconies and damaged their gardens. One was concerned about bird flu. The middle-class families told one chicken owner about their problems and asked him to cage the chicken several times. But, this strategy did not work. The chicken owner

explained the situation to me, saying that the urban people did not like animals. He said that if it was a really big problem, they should get rid of (kill) the chickens themselves. He would not mind. The chickens sometimes created problems for the local families as well but as there was usually someone home to chase the chickens away they tended to go to the middle-class families' houses where there was often no one home.

Another case is about dogs. The locals and the middle class raise different breeds of dog. Local dogs usually wander freely in the villages. On some occasions, dogs of both groups met and they barked loudly and sometimes fought. Some middle-class foreigners who raised expensive foreign-bred dogs complained to local dogs' owners that villagers should keep their dogs in their houses so they would not come out and bother their dogs. I heard of one case in which a foreigner threatened a local dog's owner that if anything happened (poisoning) to the local dog, he would not take responsibility. Some Thai middle-class neighbours and also *chaao-baan* mentioned that these foreigners did not respect the local people and the place they moved into. One even said these troubled foreigners just had money but had no manners. One male villager said that nothing serious had happened yet but if there was, *chaao-baan* would have to do something. A similar case happened to a middle class cat's owner. Their cats disappeared, and they suspected that some local villagers might have poisoned the cats as there had been cases of complaints earlier that the cats troubled the villagers' chickens or stole food from people's tables. Other cases were cats and chickens of villagers that came into the middle-class houses and got killed by their dogs. There were also some similar conflicts between the same social groups of the middle-class and the village families.

Cases associated with domestic animals thus reflect different ways of living and lifestyles of the two groups that cause conflict through encounters, and which are often based on class differences associated with lifestyle patterns and tastes. However, in some cases, they are more about individuals.

5.4.4 Aesthetics and utility

The urban middle-class people appreciate a green and pleasant view. They grow many varieties of trees and flowers in their own gardens. At the same time, when they leave their houses to go outside, they prefer to see trees and plants in the village. However, villagers and their tastes, priorities and lifestyles are markedly different and this can cause interesting class encounters.

1) Different Tastes

A newcomer bought a plot of land from a woman in the village, his plan being to construct a house. This piece of land was located in the middle of community. It used to be a longan orchard attached to the owner's house. A few days after he paid the land owner, the newcomer found that she had cleared away the hedge fence that separated the plot from the owner's remaining land and replaced it with a solid cement wall. The newcomer said he did not understand why she went to the expense of replacing a natural boundary marker with something as ugly as a concrete fence.

The villager explained to me that her previous hedge was neither strong nor permanent. With the increasing numbers of newcomers, the good road, and the availability of low rent dormitories for workers, it had become difficult to know who was entering the village. Among people of this village, she said, there is no problem, but there are no guarantees regarding people from outside. She had recently heard of a robbery in a neighbouring village. The problem was resolved when she agreed to plant some vines over the cement fence to create a nicer prospect. This case illustrates another example of villagers putting practicality before beauty, perhaps articulating their own sense or taste or of what constitutes beauty.

2) Banana leaves

Differences in lifestyles and values have led to groups different expectations of each other. A personal experience of my own illustrates this point. The villagers

traditionally use banana leaves and fruit for cooking purposes whereas the middle-class groups plant bananas for fruit for eating and they like to keep the green leaves for aesthetic purposes. An old lady in the village who makes fermented soybean patty uses banana leaves for wrapping the beans. Usually she asks me for leaves from my garden but sometimes she asked some other villagers and middle-class people she feels close to. The following case happened to me. One morning, I had just returned early from a trip abroad and nobody had noticed my arrival. I noticed that an old man from the village, whom I hired to water my garden, had cut a bunch of ripe bananas next to my fence. He laid nine bunches on my front balcony and, without asking me, took one bunch back to his house. I thought it is good that he felt close enough to me to take that bunch of bananas.

The key point of the case was a few minutes later when the old lady came to my house. I watched her pushing her trolley through the open gate, cutting banana leaves, not only from the banana tree that bare the fruit that was taken but also from the other trees, and casually pick banana leaves to fill her trolley. I came out with an uneasy feeling. I greeted the old lady and asked why she had come to take the leaves now. The old lady said (looking slightly surprised) that she did not know that anyone was home. She said she had noticed that the bananas had been taken, adding that because banana trees bear fruit only once, the trees were no longer useful. She continued taking leaves, mostly the nice green ones. I then kindly told her to leave the green leaves as they were still beautiful and to cut only the yellow leaves. The old lady paused for a few seconds, laughed a bit, then followed my request. She kept insisting that the bananas would not give any more fruit so why worry? Then she laughed again. I joked with her, told her that next time I would tell her myself to collect the leaves and gave her a bunch of bananas, hoping she would not feel upset.

I have cited this case to demonstrate the differences in values that persist between the villagers and the middle class. The villagers view bananas as having functional usage while a middle-class newcomer like myself valued the bananas not only as fruit but perhaps more for decoration in the garden. Another issue is that this old lady had crossed the private border of my house without asking permission. This

kindled ambivalent feelings in me. I would not have minded had I been informed. I enjoy being a member of the community and my good relationships with the people here, but with my particular values and lifestyle, I still prefer my privacy, keeping some distance, and their respect for my rights over my property.

5.4.5 Local villagers' attitudes towards urban middle-class newcomers

The middle-class families were obviously distinct from the local villagers, especially as far as their housing and occupations were concerned. They reflected better economic capital than that of the villagers. In general, the villagers did not approach the middle-class families casually if the middle-class had not earlier expressed their intention to associate with the villagers. The villagers approached the middle-class families directly only when there were some formal activities to be undertaken such as collecting statistics or when they sought their collaboration in community activities, donations for development projects in particular. Villagers expected larger amounts of money (500 - 1,000 baht or more) from the newcomers than those from the villagers (50 - 500 baht or more depending on their status). The middle-class families were in the main happy to donate this way as it was not often and they felt that they should do something for the place in which they lived. In return, they were not expected to become involved in labour like the villagers.

The amount of money given in envelopes in the local ceremonies is an issue. The middle-class families were expected to put in an appropriate amount of money. I learned from some female villagers that at least 100 - 300 baht would be appropriate. This was much less than in my hometown in the central part of the country where the amount of money in the envelope is systematically monitored and calculated. The villagers of Nam Jam usually put at least between 50 baht to a few hundred baht in their envelopes. Their contributions depended on their status and level of their relationship with the host. A few times I heard villagers comment on the inappropriate amount that some middle-class families put in their envelopes. The villagers compared what villagers usually contributed to that given by the middle-class. They said with joke that if the latter could not donate appropriately, it would be

better not to give the envelope to the host at all.

In sum, the middle class' expectations towards the villagers and rural community are more on the ideal rural tradition of the Thai village of its unity, egalitarianism, reciprocity, self sufficiency, peace, and aesthetics. When they experienced unexpected cases, some of them react differently. Some confronted their problems directly and right away while some used a roundabout way, and some just had to accommodate them and continue their lives quietly. Some wished they could move to live somewhere else. Some thought that *chaao-baan* were changed and the rural villages that used to be quiet and peaceful had also changed. They suspect the causes were from the place being too urbanised and people becoming too involved in capitalism. Some said the 'traditional' kind *chaao-baan* and the pleasant rural villages that they knew were further away where they were still 'rural'. One family said if they did not have to work in the city, they would go to build a house in another district further away.

As regards the villagers' views and expectations towards the urban middle-class newcomers, they are mostly about material economic capitals of their incomes and status. In consequence, when the middle class contributed, appropriated amounts were expected. When there were encounters between the two groups, being *chaao-baan* in the village maintained better positions than the newcomers in their well established social capitals and tied local networks even though they were not homogeneous. On the other hand, the middle class, despite their affluence, were more individualistic so they were not able to and partly did not intend to make influential voices in the village.

5.5 Conclusion

Nam Jam is being constantly remade not only by the urban expansion evident in the physical landscape, but also modified in terms of social composition and relations that define particular places. In this chapter, I have used the concept of class

to examine the social dimension of place, both in the traditional means of economic capital and in the social and cultural capitals of values and lifestyles experienced in everyday practice. Class mobility is part of the dynamic of place-making, and migration contributes to the complexity of ongoing class mobility in the village. This in part stems from the role of migration in forging physical proximity that brings different social groups of people to live together as neighbours.

While 'class' is a sensitive term to be discussed in Thai culture and seems to have fallen out of fashion as a scholarly construct, it continues to serve as an important hermeneutic category for analysis of the dynamic hierarchical positioning that persists in Thailand. Class differences are manifested both in observable concrete forms such as housing, and through very subtle mores such as ways in which people address or categorise each other. Each social class has different backgrounds and life experiences which have come together to form the characteristics of their values and lifestyles. They have reified certain perceptions and understandings of the other. For example, urban middle class understandings of what the rural village and villagers should be like have given rise to certain expectations. Thus, when the reality experienced in the village does not match their expectations, class encounters are manifest in conflict based on different norms. These class encounters, which are managed and perceived differently, ultimately affect class relations.

In the next chapter, I will synthesise the remaking of peri-urban Chiang Mai as a particular kind of physical and social space, returning to some of the broader themes covered in Chapter two. The peri-urban zone is a kind of crossroads, a set of places in transition between traditional and modern, countryside and city. However, it is also a zone wherein the landscapes of physical area and social relations based on new class composition are complex and dynamically negotiated to create a particular type of place in its own right.

CHAPTER 6

REMAKING THE PERI-URBAN

6.1 Introduction

The peri-urban area has a clear mixture of both urbanity and rurality. It continues to undergo even more rapid physical and social change than urban and rural areas of Thailand. The peri-urban is the urban-rural frontier where urbanity is encroaching on rural space. Its landscape, groups of people, their activities, social relations, values and lifestyles are highly dynamic. Peri-urban Chiang Mai reflects shifting frontiers in several dimensions and directions. Explanations about the area depends very much on who is looking at it and through what lens, because people's classes, backgrounds and experiences frame what they search for and expect from the place. If urban people drive their cars through the area, they will see rice fields. On the other hand, if people from rural areas pass through the area, they will notice urban facilities, commercial and new styles of houses and other buildings. This chapter aims to put together the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle that comprise peri-urban Chiang Mai to show how the place has been made and remade through social interactions of people from different classes in the transitional context of increasing urban expansion and decreasing agrarianism, where people's values and understandings about the place and about other social groups sharing the peri-urban space are significant in shaping social relations.

In the remaking of peri-urban Chiang Mai, an understanding of new formation of class relations is crucial. Development in the area leads to in-migration of people from different social groups, thus the peri-urban becomes a place for interactions between classes who used to be in their own places and social groups. Class difference has continued not through understanding at a distance like in the past, but through everyday interaction when people of different backgrounds live in proximity to one another. Class is relational, so it is not static and class differentiation in everyday practices in modern society is leaning more towards a cultural base than a

production base, so that it is how people subjectively position themselves in relation to others within the cultural context of a rapidly changing society that sets the frame of hierarchy.

In this case study, place becomes a significant concept, as place is a stage that shapes activities and social relations between people from different classes. In consequence, place is a social product from people's interactions. All these conditions are continuously forming the nature of place in the peri-urban area. I explain the peri-urban from two angles: social science for a new class formation and geographical in terms of how the place is being made and remade. Study of peri-urban Chiang Mai as a place under the context of rapid agrarian transformation towards increasing post-agrarianism illustrates a landscape of encounters, contestation, and accommodation of people from different backgrounds, values, and classes who each make and remake their places within a shared peri-urban space. Shared borders of each individual's place making are sometimes abstract and often overlap with others, depending on their understandings and expectations of the shared space in which they live. Each social group has its own understanding towards the place, often based on selective representations that they have received. These representations are sometimes challenged by their new experiences and hence may influence their understandings and social interactions in the place.

6.2 Peri-urban Chiang Mai as an urban-rural frontier

Peri-urban Chiang Mai reflects a spatial frontier in the sense that urban expansion is pushing the outer urban border over the countryside. This alternative locus of frontier is more complex than the conventional farm-forest boundary. Peri-urban frontier change leads to interpenetration of urbanity and rurality in several dimensions. Peri-urban Chiang Mai does not change only from the phenomenon of urban expansion, but is also subject to *in situ* agrarian transition that has played a crucial part in forming the area as it exists nowadays. The urban-rural frontier is thus a stage of interactions of diverse materials, people, and values. The visible physical landscape does not reveal all the less obvious activities, social groups, and their social

relations. These nuanced implications of peri-urban change tend to get neglected, and understandings of the Thai countryside continue to be shaped in as a duality with the urban.

6.2.1 Place of transition

Peri-urban Chiang Mai was formerly a largely agrarian countryside. In a given peri-urban location the new context has been evolving rapidly. The transition from rural agrarian circumstances to the peri-urban condition of today has happened in only a single generation, thus today's residents have observed and can clearly remember the changes. These changes can be discussed in diverse aspects, including land uses, demography, migrations, combinations of social groups, and class formation. In the past, categorisation of urban and rural areas was possible, but it has been increasingly hard to completely separate a society into dual boxes of urban or rural, middle class or farmers, manufacturing- or agriculture-based livelihoods, and modern or traditional attributes. All of these characteristics are mixed, inter-linked and also continuously altering both materially and in terms of values. Furthermore, the changes are not necessarily linear. If understood simply in terms of its geographical location between town and countryside, the term 'peri-urban' is quite limited in connoting these complex characteristics, but as a place of transition within frontier space a more nuanced understanding can be achieved.

Physically, driving through the peri-urban Chiang Mai along the ring roads, we will observe mixed land uses of new good road condition, large rice fields juxtaposed with new mainly residential buildings. The newly visible built environment is dominated by gated communities and a few small apartments and commercial facilities such as restaurants, garages, salons, and guest houses. Behind these ring roads, they are some rice fields, local communities, small local markets, and diverse types of housing, ranging from local houses, various unique styles of larger residences, some small gated communities, and many budget dormitories.

The transition of the peri-urban areas seen in physical appearances as mentioned above is associated with new formations of social landscape shaped by occupation, education, standard of living, and class differentiation that both reflects and influences lifestyles and values of people in these areas. The transition of the areas from undeveloped agrarian landscape has gradually occurred since the area started having connections with the city during the 1970s-1980s until the take-off period when the areas become developed by being annexed to the urban areas via the physical infrastructure of ring roads and some mega projects such as recreation parks and department stores since the early 2000s. This means that the transition of peri-urban Chiang Mai is a result of material development and connections to the city. Nong Khwai is a good example, being located only ten kilometres from the city, but because road development came later than other areas even though the latter are located further from the city, people's migration and changes in occupation in Nong Khwai occurred later than in other cases of peri-urban villages such as in Gray's study (Gray 1990). Therefore, the peri-urban zone is not only about absolute distance, but more importantly is shaped by the road access connecting the area to the city.

The increasing urban characteristics of the built environment that we observe now are located in areas that were largely areas of rice fields in the recent past. The remaining rice fields are mostly owned by outside business people and only some parts owned by a few better-off families in the local communities. In addition, these paddy fields are farmed by landless farmers, especially ethnic minorities from more distant rural areas. Some local small farmers, many of whom are affluent, continue to exist, but the mainly produce rice as a minor supplement for domestic consumption.

The transition of local people's occupations connects closely with migration, which leads to demographic change. When the areas started to become more connected with the outside, young people migrated to work, mainly for construction jobs in urban areas, for better income and to send money to their families in the villages. This situation is similar to other rural areas in Thailand, where the main income of people comes from working the urban areas. As the areas developed, more local working opportunities become diverse and more available, attracting some

young people back to work locally and live back in the villages. In fact, while agriculture may have been people's major activity in the past, it has never been a singular occupation or sole source of income in the countryside. People have worked in diverse off-farm activities to supplement their living circumstance for a long time. The move to off-farm employment is thus a matter of degree rather than a completely new phenomenon. Meanwhile, the younger generation has also had a much better opportunity than their parents in education and thus also in more skilled job opportunities. Urban expansion and connectivity with the countryside has in some places thus led to reconnection of family members again (Rigg 2010: from presentation at SEAGA).

The peri-urban zone today sees a reverse migration, whereby people in the areas have reduced out-migration. In contrast to the past, it has a high rate of in-migration from diverse groups of people and from different directions. The demography of peri-urban Chiang Mai has changed significantly. The population is increasing rapidly, but it has smaller household size than previously and than more remote rural areas. Two major categories of immigrants are urban middle class groups who are both Thai and foreigners searching for residence nearby their work places or urban facilities in towns. The majority of this group lives in gated communities, while some buy land and live in the local communities. Another category is groups of workers from further rural areas and from the neighbouring country of Myanmar searching for work created by urban expansion. They live in budget residences in the village such as dormitories and working camps for Burmese migrant workers, in particular. These workers replace low-paid jobs such as construction that the local people now reject in favour of work in better-paid and higher skill jobs.

The development in the peri-urban area attracts in-migrations which in turn have created a new social landscape. The more pleasant places with good urban facilities have been reserved earlier by wealthy people for their residences. Chiang Mai does not have good controls for city planning and zoning, thus urban expansion has spread out almost unrestricted along the roads. This results in several problems

and conflicts on land use. In general, these new social groups and the local people share the space and public facilities, but at the same time they do not have much social interaction with one other, especially in the case of large residential areas. At the village level, they live in the proximity of local communities, and this both causes and enables them to have more interaction.

Peri-urban areas have thus changed rapidly in the last decade. The areas have become increasingly urbanised and modernised. However, the speed of transition associated with increasing modernity and new social groups are happening at a different speed to shifts in rural values, practices and rules, which remain significant in the peri-urban village areas. These changes have just occurred in a few decades, while many local people especially at the most socially influential age (40s-60s) still have rural backgrounds and at the same time, while at the same time are not purely rural as they have gained experiences and values through migrations in the past.

In sum, transition in the peri-urban zone from agricultural practices and values from production to consumption caused by urban expansion helps explain both the physical changes and emerging patterns of social relations. The areas become developed and hence attract both residents and workers that have replaced local people who are now in a better position. Through migrations of all social groups, this results in new modes of class formation and class mobility within each group in the diverse and complex new social landscape. While certain generalisations can be made of the peri-urban as a type of social landscape, these issues can be understood most clearly when they are analysed in a context of social relations among different groups in a particular place.

6.2.2 Reflections on three frontier shifts

Taking the concept of frontier to understand the interaction between urbanity and rurality, there are three key aspects of the case study examined in this thesis that can be reflected upon in terms of shifts associated with the frontier. These aspects demonstrate Thailand's dynamic spatial transitions and boundary interactions between

core and periphery in terms of urban, rural, and forest zones that have resulted from government policies and development in different transitional areas over different periods of time.

First, it is shift of interest in location by scholars who use the concept of frontier to explain the changes in rural areas and rural people's livelihood strategies. In the traditional pattern of agricultural frontier studies in Thailand during the 1960s – 1980s, scholars looked at the area between countryside and forest in terms of how rural people expanded their farmlands, both for rice and cash crops, into the forest area in order to secure their livelihoods and also to produce commercial crops in response to world market demand for certain agricultural commodities. After the 1980s, the forest frontier was more or less closed; environmental concern was raised with accompanying territorialisation that restricted further forest encroachment and attempted to reverse some of that which had already taken place; and land holding became formalised so that rural people could not expand their farm lands further. Thus, in order to ensure their livelihoods, people have turned around from the previous outlet of forest clearance and settlement, heading in the opposite direction to seek employment in urban areas, which also include peri-urban zone. Through this transition, some scholars have also switched their focuses on the frontier to the new zone of peri-urban areas where urban expansion has been rapidly encroaching into the countryside. Peri-urban areas become an alternative 'safety valve' not only for urban residents seeking available and affordable land for housing, but also for workers from the further rural areas who search for work and especially for local people in the peri-urban areas who have gained considerable opportunities for improving their livelihoods through the wealth and economic activity brought about through urban expansion.

The second shift is in the direction of migration in the locales that now constitute peri-urban areas. The former condition of peri-urban Chiang Mai until the last few decades was like other rural areas in Thailand, where people migrated out to work in the city. However, since the city has been expanded and the area has been developed and connected with good roads and urban facilities, local people now have

largely stopped out-migration and the younger generation can get local work benefiting from the proximity to urban areas. Significantly, the peri-urban areas now have to accommodate heavy in-migration of diverse groups. Unlike other rural areas, these shifting directions of migration in the peri-urban zone happen because of its location next to the city and the speed of development in these areas. People's mobility and migrations have been important activities for people of all groups who search to improve their livelihoods, either for working temporarily in order to gain better pay or for permanent residence and better lifestyle. The motivation for migration varies from social groups, economic and social status, purposes, periods of life, and contexts in both the places they move from and places they move to. Ages and economic statuses of people are relevant to purposes of their in-migrations. Most of the young generation and less affluent migrate into the area for work. Meanwhile, most of mature generation often have stable economic status and migrate to search for an extra-urban environment in which to construct their residences, in particular the group who build houses in the local villages rather than in gated communities. This migration shift shares features with the better studied rural post-productivist context in developed societies. Migrations allow newcomers to gain experiences and bring with them lifestyles and values from where they migrated to the places they now live, which then influence social interaction in the new place.

Migrations can create class mobility in both downward and upward directions. This class mobility can be studied by following certain social groups to places to which have moved, as in the case of middle class Filipinos who become downwardly class mobile when they are immigrants in Canada (Kelly 2012). Another way to explore this phenomenon is to take one place and study class relations of different social groups that migrate to live in the place, as in the present case study which can trace each group's class status in their home places and how their class identities have shifted in the place to which they have moved. Place becomes a stage for class performance, which can be observed through various practices, encounters and interactions. Significantly, because of migrations, diverse social groups have come to live in proximity with one another, which in this case is as neighbours in a peri-urban community. Their status as neighbours and the proximity facilitates and forces them

to interact, and for cultural aspects of class as a social relation to become more apparent than when different groups lived separately from one another.

The third frontier shift is that of the urban boundary into the countryside. This creates a peri-urban area, a moving zone of mixed urban and rural land uses and occupations where the urban is gradually expanding over the adjacent countryside and consolidating its urban features over time. The urban has shifted its boundary most materially through expanding road connections. In the case of Chiang Mai, the urban boundary has changed the wider urban form according to the shapes of the road networks linking the city with its surrounding countryside. Before the mid 1970s when Chiang Mai city only had roads to connect with districts in the further areas, the urban boundary was confined to the inner city around the ancient moat, while roads that connected between the city and different districts were just to connect the city and showed some signs of narrow ribbon development along the main roads and at the district towns, but not extending to the areas far from the main roads. When the first inner ring road of Chiang Mai, two to three kilometres from the moat, was completed in the late 1970s, the radius of the physical urban boundary started to expand around the ring road.

Then, when the middle and the outer ring roads were initiated and completed during 1993-2005, 10-12 kilometres from the inner city, together with widespread development in the countryside, this time all dimensions of the urban boundary have flourished and interpenetrated densely into the countryside. Physically, the urban boundary has expanded with the radius of the main roads in a form of spider web. However, some other urban aspects go much further away from the peri-urban zone and can be found in several spots of urban characteristics scattering into the countryside, such as pleasant areas with the mountain views where some urban middle class have moved to live. However, the degree of urbanity in each area may be different depending on distance to the larger centres. The main centre is at the Chiang Mai city and the sub-centres are at district towns.

These frontier shifts of interest in location, direction of migration, and urban boundary clearly arise through the transitions of urban and the rural areas. The concept of frontier implies the more dominant side, in this case the urban, encroaching over the subordinated countryside. It is not used to explain the case that rural people have expanded their livelihood frontier to the urban zone. This is perhaps because rural people are not considered as a core phenomenon in the analysis of the frontier. They are not the dominant group in the place where they move to, even though they are essential to urban development. On the contrary, they are a rural subordinate class in urban areas and perhaps hardly become recognised as urban people even if they permanently move to live there.

6.2.3 Interpenetration and confrontation of urbanity and rurality

The peri-urban zone is a place of a mixture of urbanity and rurality in both physical and social landscapes. The changes in the urban and rural areas are interrelated. Through development of the areas and diverse migrations of both rural and urban people, these have brought urbanity and rurality closer to one another, and they interpenetrate in various dimensions so that the borders between the two are increasingly unclear. For this study, four inter-related dimensions of interpenetration between urbanity and rurality in the peri-urban zone will be discussed: physical, economic, social groups, and values. The interpenetration of urbanity and rurality is not always smooth. Some urban attributes have been accommodated well with desire of the locals, while some are marked by confrontation and contestation. Degrees of interpenetration depend on various aspects including length of period of interaction, places of interactions, and the nature of each interaction also influences the smoothness or brittleness of outcomes.

1) Physical interpenetration

Peri-urban Chiang Mai has changed in the past few decades and has become properly annexed to the urban areas following the completion of the ring roads in 2005. Therefore, the interpenetration is fresh and easily observed. Physically, there

are several increasing urban features of landscape and facilities in the area such as good roads, new styles of buildings, with new materials replacing agricultural fields and local style housing. Land holders have been changed from local people to outsiders since the late 1980s, when the national economy was booming and current peri-urban Chiang Mai was a target for new areas of urban expansion. Land use has been converted extensively from farming fields to residential areas. If we observe types of building in the area, they are a mix of large similar house styles of gated communities and commercial buildings along the main roads. Meanwhile, there are new unique house styles with good size of land scattered in the local villages together with densely constructed dormitories in close proximity. There are still some agricultural lands which are both actively farmed and abandoned, but most now belong to outside business people. These features demonstrate the most visible urban interpenetration into rural peri-urban space.

2) **Economic**

Most economic activities and incomes in the peri-urban areas are now from urban-type occupations. These are results from the agrarian transition in the area in which agriculture did not give much return, thus land has been transferred to outsiders and out-migration to work in the urban areas became the preferred option. Urban work and better education for the younger generation has helped local people accumulate some capital, and together with urban expansion in recent years many of them could improve their livelihoods to the point of owning local businesses such as grocery shops, garment sewing, dormitories, construction contracting, while some do trading, and many in the young generation have salary-based work in town. Some farming that remains in the area is mostly done by landless farmers from outside, or if the local farmers do exist, they only farm for supplementary purposes, mainly to grow their own rice and vegetables. In some cases, rice fields are bought by urban middle class newcomers to function as their private countryside view. There are some small scale farmers such as horticulturalists or poultry farmers, but this also serves only as supplementary opportunities for selling in local markets or for domestic consumption.

3) Social

Socially, peri-urban Chiang Mai has a new class formation and a set of social relations which has changed fundamentally from the last four decades when the areas were completely in rural circumstances. Two main patterns of class formation in the areas are the gated communities and the local villages. For the gated communities, most people tend to come from similar social groups based on their economic status and lifestyles. Regarding the local villages, since there are in-migrations of diverse social groups from various locations by the Burmese migrant workers, Thai workers from further rural areas, to the Thai urban middle class, and foreigners, all in concert with class mobility of local people, class structure in the peri-urban villages has evolved into a new complex formation.

This has altered social class structure of the Thai peri-urban village in both physical and social spaces. In the physical space, by having diverse social groups in the former rural village, class composition and class mobility becomes much more prominent. Understanding of class differentiation through agrarian means of production has been replaced by class distinction based on consumption instead. Moreover, as each group also comes from diverse backgrounds, their class identities are thus fluid. Regarding the social space, even though each social group lives in physical proximity with others, they hardly interact or share the social field. Therefore, the peri-urban villages are a mixture of untied diverse social groups living in proximity. The aspects of social field and class differentiation will be discussed further in the next section on class difference.

4) Values

Through urban interpenetration, values of people have been shaped by and further determine people's activities and their ways of thinking. The peri-urban zone has been influenced from two-directional urbanity, urban expansion from the city and from the rural areas as a feature of the agrarian transition with local people's aspirations for modernised urban lifestyle and consumption. The new urban values

have been gradually replacing traditional rural practices, which can be observed from ceremonies, social relations, and lifestyles. Several local ceremonies have been adapted to become simpler and some have faded away due to their busy urban way of living and working regime that means people have less time to participate. Several reciprocal activities that used to be established through farming activities have disappeared, and calling for time contribution to community work is getting more difficult. Urban facilities such as catering have become popular replacing collective cooking in several traditional events (cf Thompson 2004). Social relations between people thus are increasingly individualistic, especially among the young generation, like people in urban areas. Many aspects of rural social relations are confined among relatives and in their parents' generation. Therefore, among the local villagers there is a growing gap between generations.

The urban values have influenced rural areas not only when they become peri-urban or there are in-migrations, but since the local people have interacted with the urbanity through TV since 1970s, education, and friends or relatives who experienced and benefited from urban living. The younger generation has accommodated urban values more than their parents, since they were born with less rural and more urban circumstances. Thai education is centralised and functions as a systematic tool facilitating quick and deep imposition of urban values onto people in the rural areas. Education has been expanded into such areas following development and thus has different implications through generations. Education also gives new networks of social groups and is an important element in building their values and habitus. However, even though the local people's values have changed a lot towards modernity, the urban interpenetration is not complete, and there are some existing rural values and practices that may be different through generations.

The urban values that have been brought in by the newcomers, especially the urban middle class migrants, include lifestyles and ways of thinking about how they position themselves in these areas and also how they understand - and what they expect from - the places into which they have moved. There are certain urban middle class values, particularly the preference for traditional signs of rurality, that conflict

with agrarian transition in the area. Apart from this, each social group is not a single unity, and their values can be diverse based on generational considerations and their accumulated capitals or habitus. Therefore, speeds of observed physical changes and local people's values might not be the same, and their values and practices may conflict with one another, leading to confrontation when proximity requires or enables them to interact.

In sum, the areas under discussion have transformed from the countryside to the peri-urban when the urban frontier has interpenetrated in numerous aspects, resulting both from urban expansion and from the rural transition within such areas. Being peri-urban opens these areas for development and urban work opportunities, thus the out-migration slows or reverses, and we instead see in-migration of diverse social groups replacing rural space for urban purposes. However, the urbanity has not yet completely turned the former rural areas of the peri-urban into the urban. Local people in the peri-urban areas still carry some rural values, practices and habitus, which can lead to confrontations between diverse classes that have different values and lifestyles the shared space of the village.

6.3 Class in the remade peri-urban village: difference, deference and indifference

Class is a social relation and is constructed in part through everyday practices, which means that it is formed incrementally and in a relational way. Fluidity in the current complex social structure that exists in a zone of transition such as peri-urban Chiang Mai means that people do not relate to other social groups solely or mainly through differential control over means of production, so we cannot simply employ Marxism to explain general class structure based on such economic power. Instead, class is fluid in relation to places and the combination of capitals that they possess. A set of different capitals and people's consumption, values, and lifestyles should be considered as the basis for class distinction in everyday practices. Class can be treated as both subjective and objective entities. Outside the context of the peri-urban melting pot, each social group lives in its respective location and has little interaction

with the residential space of other groups. In contrast, the peri-urban is a zone where different social groups reside in close proximity to one another within village settings that gear people to have closer interactions. The peri-urban village thus also functions as a stage for performative acts between social groups to construct their identities and communicate such identities to others. Social groups in the peri-urban village are diverse, and class differentiation can be reflected through the proximity that requires social interaction. This synthesis on class will thus focus on the village level where diverse social groups live in close proximity to one another. For each gated community, most people come from within a similar social group, hence they are not the main locus for consideration of class interaction in this study.

Class in peri-urban areas can be understood in different ways, and it is positioned both objectively and subjectively. In this section, I start by considering class in terms of the diversity of groups living in peri-urban areas (difference). I then consider the extent to which these groups can be structured in term of hierarchy, showing that while class is indeed associated with economic and cultural status, it is also complex and related to social capital through the connection with place, so that deference is not a simple case of “lower” deferring to “higher” status groups. Finally, I show that proximity helps reshape class relations but does not necessarily involve close interaction between different groups, resulting in a considerable degree of indifference between groups whose redefined class position is in part based on the spatial proximity in which they find themselves. All these aspects reshape class formation in the remade peri-urban village.

Differences between the diverse social groups in the peri-urban villages matter in the sense that members of each social group have carried with them their habitus and capitals forming their views toward the places where they have settled, and this informs their relations to other social groups. The three main social groups in the peri-urban villages are local villagers, urban middle class newcomers, and migrant workers, while there are also differences within each social group. The class distinctions between the social groups are simpler to identify, while they can get more complicated when they exist within the same social group. The differences are shown

in their status and different capitals recognised by that society; reactions between the social groups; lifestyles; consumption; values; and between the individuals in their manners, character and contribution into certain social groups or into the place which in this case is the peri-urban village. All these differences form class differences and shape social relations among and within different groups.

In the peri-urban Chiang Mai village, class dynamics are shaped by both inter and intra class relations. While class difference has become obvious when there are inward migrations from both higher and lower social groups compared to the local villagers, there is also class mobility among the villagers themselves. Peri-urban Chiang Mai has changed rapidly; local villagers have diverse occupations outside agriculture; many of the young generation have accessed higher education as a means for class reproduction to secure income and status similar to urban people. People have experienced different occupations and lifestyle consumption. Younger people who have higher education in particular sit in between societies and social groups, conducting a big part of their lives outside the village. Therefore, class division cannot be simply made using the household as unit of analysis. However, their children have absorbed at least some lifestyle and values from their parents through their upbringing (*habitus*). While this partly resembles the longer term changes found in industrial society contexts, in this case study the changes have occurred very recently but also very rapidly. These families are still a majority in the community. Hence, the rural background of this younger generation could still partly influence their views and values. These implications reflect a changing basis for class relations from the former agrarian society where people were linked through agricultural production, into a new complex basis for class distinction with multiple layers of conditions that define class among each group.

Class distinction is composed of a combination of capitals and social relations in a particular place. The more social acquaintance people have with others and information about their capitals, the more they could distinguish their class positions from one another. Each social group has different scales of various capitals and different levels of social relation. This affects their class positioning. For the local

villagers, they know each other in their group very well. They share similar agrarian backgrounds, and they have mostly made great efforts to improve their livelihoods through various urban works. Among them, economic capital is a more important class marker than other capitals such as types of occupation and lifestyles. This is because there are obvious economic gaps between them based on their incomes and assets. Even though urban expansion allows opportunities for local people to gain economic capital and with mass production they can afford more comfortable lifestyles than before, not everyone has the same capitals to benefit from such opportunities. Therefore, economic capital is still their priority in achieving upward class mobility and class positioning.

Regarding the urban middle class group of newcomers, the villagers view this whole group as holding a higher class position than themselves. This is despite the fact that a few of these households may have less economic capital than better off villagers, and some have similar agrarian backgrounds prior to receiving an education and conducting professional careers. Villagers understand that these urban middle class newcomers have good economic status and definitely superior cultural capital in terms of education and occupations. Cultural capital thus becomes more significant for class distinction in relation to this group. Among the urban middle class newcomers, each is rather individualistic with little interaction among them within the village. Therefore, there is not much class positioning within this group.

Among the same social groups, each has its own characteristics of social relations. The local villager group has the most closely bound relations through relatives and intermarriage, but the young generation is increasingly individualistic like the urban people. The urban middle class newcomers know each other but not at a close level. The migrant workers, both Thai and Burmese, do not know each other much. Each social group is fragmented and has its own social interaction outside the village, such as their relatives from hometowns and friends from work, and they also tend not to interact much across the social groups. Many of them only greet others when they meet, but do not know who they are. They have different lifestyles and thus there is no common activity that all groups comfortably join. This means that

social interpretation which happens in the peri-urban village is more about physical presence of different groups in the place but does not include as much social interaction as in rural communities. Thus, their sense of belonging in, and the ownership of, the place are also different.

For class differentiation, there are multiple markers of class. However, each marker often functions in relation with other markers and has significance within the context of class relations and place. There are explicit and implicit markers that mean that the more you know about the person and the place, the more you are able to distinguish their class position. The most obvious and basic marker of class is the basic categorisation of the social groups that comes with a set of understandings lying behind those categorisations. The set of understandings is comprised of a combination of multiple capitals understood in the Thai society. Explicit material consumption, such as house styles, car models, and clothing show economic and cultural capitals. For example, newly built wooden houses are marked as owned by the more affluent middle class people as wood is now expensive and requires high maintenance. Apart from the house styles, gardens are easily differentiated between social groups – unique temporary villa style with neat beautiful gardens with lawn in a big space for the urban middle class newcomers; smaller space with old materials and lower ceiling houses, and untidy small garden of more edible plants and trees for the local villagers; budget dormitories; and the work camps for the workers. Other implicit class markers are their cultural capitals of education, occupation, ranking, consumption lifestyles, and race or place of origin. Consumption gives power to people to present themselves to outsiders, but may not be so effective for the members of their own group who know their backgrounds more completely.

For outsiders or newcomers to the place, explicit material consumption is the only evidence of status, but for the community members who may know other implicit cultural capitals, their basis for class differentiation will be more complex. In the Thai context, level of education is very important. This is due to a big existing gap of educational differences between rural and urban people and between generations. Lately, rural people have had much better chances than their parents'

generation to extend their studies to higher education through the increasing number of universities in the provinces beyond Bangkok. However, the standing of each academic institution sometimes becomes a marker of distinction in that most students from the village graduated from former technical colleges in the provinces that have been upgraded to universities, or from some new and small universities in the area. In contrast, the urban middle class newcomers graduated from well known and long established institutions from abroad, Bangkok, and the regions.

Type of occupation is an objective entity that can be regarded as a class distinction. University lecturer or '*achaan*' is clearly categorised in the Thai culture, especially for the local villagers as membership of an intellectual group that has high education and is responsible for instructing university students, the highest aspiration that villagers have for education of their children. In the past, teacher or '*khruu*' was recognised as a respectful social group for people in the countryside as they hardly entered education, but since education has expanded so that some local people are teachers, so it has become common and less consequential. Other occupations that gain much higher economic income such as business and trading may show better economic capital, but they have less cultural capital or respect in comparison to the university lecturers.

Other significant markers are race and places of origin that determine how different groups position themselves and react to others. Race and place of origin can be explicit markers of class distinction in the case of the white westerners (*farang*), as Thai people have a perception that westerners are more developed and superior. Most westerners in the village reveal little about their jobs, so villagers assume they have pensions or have valuable businesses somewhere ensuring that they can stay comfortably in the village without going to work according to the clock. In contrast, Burmese migrant workers who are also foreigners but from the neighbouring country are perceived as the lowest class in the village who live in temporary work camps and have less economic and cultural capitals than the Thai. Besides, Thai ethnic minorities from the further rural mountainous areas reflect both races and places of origin so that the lowland Thai perceive them as a subordinate class in the village, but

still better than the poorer Burmese workers. From having a wide range of social groups in proximity, the poor local villagers who could otherwise be the lowest group in the village then have other subordinate classes of the Thai and Burmese workers as comparative points of reference. Race and place of origin are dominant class markers over other attributes of their economic status, education and occupations.

Moreover, among the Thai lowlanders, place of origin such as the northeast, north, south, and the central region respectively are implicitly classified as *baan nawk*, up country in relation to distance from the civilised and also centralised capital city of Bangkok (Thongchai Winichakul 2000). The distance from the civilisation implies different levels of education, knowledge, types of occupation, and of development. This is in fact the hierarchical set of perceptions that those in higher class positions and of urban background have toward rural people. This regional distinction is readily revealed when there are disputes between the different social groups.

Since the latest coup d'état in Thailand in 2006, there have been political difficulties that are increasingly perceived as a political and social class struggle between the well-educated urban middle class group, especially from the central region using Yellow Shirt as a symbol, and the poor and uneducated rural people using Red Shirt as their symbol. Both Yellow and Red Shirts have mixed social classes, but their majorities are as claimed. The Red Shirts fight for former Prime Minister Thaksin's parties that first introduced policies distributing clear benefits to rural areas. In the past, most development was narrowly centralised in urban areas, especially Bangkok. However, a number of the Yellow Shirts believe that the rural Red Shirts are naive so they are easily cheated and bought by Thaksin's populist policy and needed to be educated, a view which came out clearly in the social media and during protests (Fuller 2013; Lefevre and Temphairojana 2013; Marshall 2013).

In 2010, when the Red Shirt protested at the core area of Bangkok where the most high end shopping stores are located, some urban middle class people explained about the Red Shirt that they looked untidy, uncivilised, and *pa-thuan* (wild) that the

urban felt frightened which Thai public media who are also urban middle class well distributed this piece of news. On 19 May 2010, the Red Shirt was under armed attack to leave and from this incident, almost hundred of the Red Shirt died and about 2,000 got injured. There was little sympathy from the urban people in that area and on the following day, the government with Bangkok governor invited people to join a big cleaning day. Various generations of Bangkok people happily and voluntarily came out to sweep and spray all the blood and mess from the protest (of the rural Red) and bring back clean Bangkok (of the urban) again. Thongchai Winichkul explains this incident that the middle class Bangkok people have perception of the Red Shirts as germs (2010) who were out of place and should be sterilised. This situation has become stereotype and leaves some traces about the rural and the urban in several urban and rural people's minds. The term *chon-chan* or class that people do not normally use in everyday life is then repeated as a discourse in the political debate during the past decade by all groups to position and discredit each other.

In the village during the 2010 red shirt protests, the majority of villagers who supported the Red Shirts talked among themselves and some showed their frustration toward the urban people. Most of the urban middle class migrants in the village do not like Thaksin, and some strongly supported the Yellow Shirts. I could notice a silent distance between the social groups and even among the villagers from the different political reference points for awhile. There is no direct confrontation or argument, but local villagers instead use gossip and teasing to deal with differences. Even some of the teasing is good-natured, and the case of Nam Jam is thereby a small-scale example that shows how different affiliations tend to be accommodated among neighbours who continue to show goodwill to one another in everyday dealings.

In everyday life, these differences in regional classification, values, lifestyles, and political preferences are unnoticeable. However, when there is a conflict between individuals, it can be employed and sometimes expanded referring to the whole social group. People of different class positions may use these attributes to explain the

behaviours of the other groups in order to maintain and sometimes adjust their class positions and social relations between each other in the place.

Class is fluid along with territorial places as people travel, migrate, and have relations with diverse social groups in diverse places. Migration creates class mobility which can be upwardly and downwardly mobile depending on social context and places they associate with. Using the place of the peri-urban village for analysis, the newcomers have more class fluidity than the local as they are now living in a new place associating with a new society. Meanwhile, the local villagers also have class mobility from their livelihood development and from the in-migration of the new social groups. Some middle class newcomers in the village have agrarian backgrounds and some westerners have low education and were farmers or workers in their countries, but they are belonged to a higher class in the Thai village. Meanwhile, the Burmese migrants and Thai ethnic minorities are associated with lower class working as wage labourers. This is because their representations and reputations are closely linked with their places of origin as understood in the new place. Therefore, these stigmas of social groups are as significant in people's perception as their combined capitals.

Class is formed in a relational way involving multiple capitals evident at both individual and household levels. In addition, class is linked closely with the place where the relations occur. Therefore, there are complex attributes that affect perception and relations between and even among the social groups. Materially, some people may be perceived as holding one class position, but they might be different in social identification. In the households of the foreigners that villagers see as having a better economic capital than the Thai urban middle class group, some villagers see some of their Thai partners as lower groups, especially when there are some interactions in which they do not behave according to what villagers have expected such as not being friendly. Then, their place of origin, education, and the way people refer to them might be used to explain such behaviour.

Class is performance and the peri-urban village is a performative stage for people to construct and communicate their identity and class position to others. Consumption and lifestyle are ways to consciously and unconsciously construct and communicate their class positions. In the context of a peri-urban village where different social groups and classes share live in proximity as neighbours, the local villagers know people in their groups well, and some also know the other groups too. In contrast, the other groups of newcomers have little knowledge about their group and about the other groups. They rather live more individualistically in ways increasingly followed by some members of the young generation of local villagers.

Modernity is an important value associated with class position. Modernity and urbanity do not only occur from the desire from within, but also from urban middle class newcomers migrating into the village. However, modernity can mean different things to different social groups. Modern or *than-sa-may* in Thai often implies diverse dimensions to different social classes. Villagers and workers' perception of modernity is more about economic desire and modern material development for their comfortable urban lifestyle and consumption, or modernisation in other words. As for the urban middle class group, their perception on modernity is different. Their lifestyle is materially comfortable, therefore from migrating to live in the non-urban village, they search for differences, another level of modernity by consuming authenticity and aesthetics of rurality – both in the physical and social landscapes. This sometimes leads to conflicts with what local villagers pursue for their modern lifestyles and place development. There are questions from the urban middle class newcomers towards the local villagers about their unnecessary consumption such as cases of drinking and spending money for unnecessary purposes, while newcomers wish to see people employ ideas of sufficiency economy. This particular idea or rationale is suggested by the higher class group who are economically well off to the local villagers, implying determination and hierarchy of knowledge and values.

Apart from this, there are differences based on lifestyles and space management associate with class. Even though the area has changed in accordance with the peri-urban circumstances, apart from their occupations, the way the local

villagers use space and their lifestyles have not changed much. This can bring differences to the fore when newcomers cannot blend in and in some cases leads to conflict and ambivalence among the different social groups. There are several good examples, such as smoke from burning grasses and leaves, noises from radios, speakers, and festivals, free ranging animals, forms of visual aesthetic such as fences, road development, management of communal space such as felling big trees, and taking something from the private space that locals consider are no longer even though the owners of that private space may value such items aesthetically. These examples show different lifestyles and perceptions between social groups and how activities done in private or public space can cause irritation to the other higher social groups, especially the urban middle class newcomers. Therefore, even though different groups do not interact much, there are still some effects in the views of the other social groups because of the proximity in which they are living.

The speeds of transition from tradition to modernity or from rurality to urbanity are not even, and they vary by generation. While the village and surrounding areas are now physically developed as peri-urban areas with a significant number of urban middle class people residing in the area, local affairs are still governed by local custom that may not follow clear sets of rules for management of the shared place. There are some laws in relation to this matter, but in reality they are not used easily as personal networks and negotiation between individuals and groups are still important, and these are modes of conducting public affairs in which the local majority is dominant. As for local villagers, even though several families have been able to become upwardly class mobile from farmer to new entrepreneurs and their younger generation's identity is increasingly changed to more urban middle class, their habitus and some values remain in rural society (Devine and Savage 2005).

In addition, in the case of public space management, even though the urban middle class newcomers are the higher class position based on their economic and cultural capitals, their voices could not compete with what local villagers have decided. Public spaces such as the community area, community hall and adjacent village spirit shrine are almost exclusively used by longstanding villagers, with only

occasional visits by newcomers during special events such as the annual New Year party. Middle class groups tend to stick to their private house spaces and only experience public space as scenery in a passive sense. Dormitory and working camp residents have very little engagement with or interest in the public space of the village, other than the road along which they travel to work. This shows that association with place or social capital is more significant in decision making in that place. The urban middle class newcomers do not have much social capital even among their own social group in the village, and they also do not make much attempt to build it up, since it requires a lot of effort and time. This is due to their individualism, distinct interests, different lifestyles, values, ways of dealing with disputes, and all groups maintain their own societies out of the village space so they are not easy to blend in. The positions of the newcomers in the village hence are “in the village but not of the village” (Rigg 2010: from presentation at SEAGA). In this case, those of otherwise higher status defer to those with claims of ownership based on locality.

There is a simple mechanism used by all classes to reinforce, adjust class positions, and define otherness through a more nuanced categorisation of persons into particular groups. These categorisations are in Thai and they have both denotations and connotations with implications based on their understandings and expectations towards those classes’ performances as understood in society. The terms include *phuak Tai Yai*, *phuak Pha-ma* (Burmese migrant workers), *meo* (Hmong), *yang* (Karen), *kon i-san* (people from northeast Thailand), *kon baan-hao* (people from northern area), *phuak chaao-baan* (local villager group), *mia farang* (foreigners’ Thai wives), and *khun-naai* (madam). These terms are used among one social group towards other groups. Sometimes these terms especially about races and places of origin are used unconsciously, but they often carry a tone of lowering the class position. When there are issues, disputes and unexpected class performances, all these terms are used with judgemental tone. Even though there are rarely cases of confrontation between different social groups, there is an obvious distance between them.

Most disputes are not big issues, but rather just complaints about each other's activities. Many are very subtle such as behaviours and manners that could only be observed in people's everyday life. However, this possibly leads to conflict, not only between individuals but also between social groups when each social group explains the problem in reference to the social group in general. In addition, these social groups then accumulate their experiences and form their perceptions towards other social groups often similar to their original understandings and thus maintain distance between classes.

In sum, we can understand the making of class in the re-made peri-urban village through the triple lenses of difference, deference and indifference. Class differences in the modern society are not simply divided by a single capital but rather by a set of combined capitals in relation to other social groups and to the places in which class relations are manifest. Different social groups have different hierarchical social positions, and individuals have become significant in class analysis but they are still embedded in the class structure. In addition, class mobility has become easier from globalisation, and from development expansion into the rural areas that gives people wider opportunities to gain economic capital and develop themselves in the commercial economy. In consequence, other types of capital have become significant in class distinction, especially cultural capital through education and consumption lifestyles embedded in society and social capital through networks in particular places. Lack of interaction and categorisations of particular social groups reflect a clear distance between them.

Meanwhile, deference is often subtly hidden in the Thai cultural context and follows what are regarded as proper manners. Thailand is a hierarchical society and deference is expected by those in higher social class positions from the lower class group that has awareness of the expectation that they need to perform respectfully to the higher class group in order to be regarded as having good culture. For example, in Chapter 5, I discussed the cases of Burmese migrant workers feeling *kreng jai* (does not want to bother) to visit the urban middle class newcomer's house. In addition, deference also reflects the distance between classes that leads the lower class groups

to perform carefully in order to make impressions from the front stage of interactions (Goffman 1959), especially in front of higher class newcomers, as shown in the earlier-mentioned case of a villager who brought a glass of water to a foreigner who joined a village meeting. The lower class groups do not feel comfortable if the middle class newcomers enter the back stage that is their real life in concern with livelihoods that may be seen as uncouth that they feel shy to reveal to the higher class people. As for the middle class group, there is a subtle performance of modesty in deference to those of lower social rank following the proper Thai culture of being modest and down to earth, not showing off their material affluence but nevertheless demonstrating their refinement through their aesthetic taste. These cases show that in the peri-urban village different social groups do not have direct links to one another, but culturally people still feel deference to the ones above. Being insiders in the community requires consistent contribution and time, which is very difficult with the current different values and lifestyles of each social group, so outsiders do not expect to join community work obligations. Local villagers prefer to maintain this social distance, in part out of deference, and in part to keep their own social space. It is also expected that newcomers of all social strata defer to local villagers in managing community affairs.

Finally, despite the proximity of living space and the implications this has for class, we also see a considerable degree of indifference between groups in their everyday lives. Even though different social groups are neighbours, they hardly interact. The temporary migrant workers do not know everyone in their group. As for the permanent residents, villagers know urban middle class newcomers by faces and names, but most urban middle class newcomers do not know every local villager and many only recognise their faces but not their names. Moreover, urban middle class newcomers do not know any temporary residents in the village, and some even do not differentiate those Burmese and Thai ethnic minorities from the migrant workers in general. Individuals in these social groups become invisible for higher social class groups in this small community. People do not count these groups as community members. However, people rather notice the existence of these subordinate groups from their temporary residences and some activities when people

drive cars past their rudimentary homes. As for the visitors from outside, some of them do not even notice these groups as they do not expect their dwellings in the village.

These aspects of proximity and different natures of each social class residing as neighbours reshape class formation in the remade peri-urban village. Despite their differences in values, lifestyles, and few relations among and between the social groups, they still have to interact. Class encounters have occurred all the time when they interact, which sometimes result in clashes and sometimes in accommodations. These processes of encounter and accommodation can also be considered as place making by each social group, each of which sometimes overlaps with and sometimes conflicts with others' ideas of place, so that they then have to readjust their expectations even though class-based norms of place persist.

6.4 De-cropping the Thai countryside: remaking and rethinking place

Most recent academic studies of rural Thailand emphasise the dramatic transitions from subsistence to market, agricultural to diverse livelihoods where farming brings in an every smaller part of villagers' income, and experiences and world views that are less and less constrained by the local. In a material sense, therefore, we can say that the wider Thai countryside, and far more in the case of peri-urban areas, has been "de-cropped", not just by reduction in cultivated area, but rather in the progressive relative decline in traditional farming as the basis for livelihood, social relations and cultural outlook. Nevertheless, in the wider social milieu of Thailand, images of rustic, subsistence-oriented rural livelihoods persist, associated with widely purveyed and consumed concepts such as "sufficiency economy". Such images are both understandings and norms of what rural Thailand is and should be. In this sense, there is still a highly "cropped" picture of rural Thailand among those who experience it indirectly through the textbook, media, tourism and images of rural life associated with assistance programs such as the Royal Project.

This section, therefore, employs the twin sense of “de-cropping” to summarise the key elements of a de-agrarianised peri-urban zone and the implications of the arrival of newcomers to this zone who carry with them the “cropped” image of rural Thailand. Of course, these are not absolutes: peri-urban Chiang Mai maintains a significant cultivated area, and newcomers are not completely naïve about the village society into which they move. Nevertheless, the tensions of this de-cropping paradox are an interesting aspect of the dynamics surrounding social relations in the peri-urban village.

6.4.1 A de-cropped peri-urban countryside

The most obvious, literal and visible “de-cropping” of the peri-urban countryside around Chiang Mai is the replacement of rice fields by other land uses, notably housing. Chapter 3 showed the extent of urban expansion, and the different patterns of housing development in gated communities and in infilling within existing villages. In both cases, significant areas of agricultural land have been filled in and are no longer available for cropping. However, in the in-filled villages, rice fields remain; the de-cropping has been far from complete. Nevertheless, ownership, labour arrangements and other less visible features of this remaining cropland have changed rapidly, in ways that have progressively separated cultivation from the mainstay of village economy and society.

One way in which farmland has been separated from the core place it once held in the village communities that now find themselves in peri-urban locations is change in land ownership. Land has been sold by local people to urban middle class migrants, urban business groups and other investors. Some remaining rice fields belong to urban people, a fact not immediately obvious to visitors from outside these areas. Local villagers have not remained sentimentally attached to their farming lands when agriculture does not give a good return, while the lands in peri-urban areas fetch very high prices from urban buyers. Villagers only feel regretful when the land price increases many times beyond what they sold it when the land was cheap. They sell land to invest in their urban and peri-urban economic activities such as construction or

for their children's education that will give them better economic gains and status in the future (economic and cultural capital).

The patterns of agrarian relations associated with the remaining farmland have changed considerably. Most of the farmers are outsiders who rent the land, growing rice for consumption and selling the surplus. Many of these are landless Hmong families who still live most of the time in upland villages but come down to rent rice land in the peri-urban zone. The village- or urban-based owners rent it out cheaply in part for the rent, but largely to keep land cleared. There are a very few cases of lowland villagers continuing to rent and farm land owned by outsiders. For example, in Nam Jam one wife of a construction business owner rents land and employs her husband's labourers, who come from rural Myanmar, to work the land. A very few elderly villagers continue to farm, but no young people farm rice as they have been engaging in other occupations since leaving school and no longer have the farming skills or desire to continue in agriculture.

The change in occupation from farming to non-farm work is not entirely a recent phenomenon. Even in the past when village areas were largely agricultural and villagers spent much of their time farming, people already also had other occupations such as wood-turning. The land available for farming was quite limited, and farm work largely provided just enough for subsistence, so people looked to urban work to supplement their incomes.

The key change over the past generation or so among lowland villagers has been the leaving behind of agricultural advancement as a significant aspiration, and associated shifts in world views as villagers look beyond the locality for advancement of themselves and their children. Villagers want to improve their livelihood circumstances, but not through agriculture. People have gained their working knowledge and expanded world views from their migration to urban areas, but also from media and education. They largely have aspirations for comfortable urban lifestyles.

6.4.2 Beyond the cropped rural image

In contrast to the increasingly de-cropped countryside, the rustic image of rural life persists and, if anything, is becoming further entrenched. The reasons for this “cropped” image of the countryside are complex, and they reveal long entrenched values and understandings that have been derived from textbooks, the media, films and television drama, tourist portrayals and so on. While people living in rural areas tend to see such images as drama that has little relation to the reality of their own lives, people who have spent most or all of their lives removed from the countryside tend to absorb such images into a highly selective and romanticised understanding of rurality.

Chapter 2 showed how textbooks and drama have contributed to the cropped rural image. Non-governmental organisations, and increasingly government programs – notably those drawing on discourse of sufficiency economy - have further entrenched the image, not only in a descriptive but also in a normative and even prescriptive way. Some key luminary scholars and other public intellectuals, such as Chatthip Nartsupha and Prawase Wasi, have had a big influence in idealising the past and transposing it onto the right way to future development in rural Thailand. Key NGO workers such as Decha Siriphat have attracted a large middle-class following for their critique of modernity and their idealising of the pure values of the rural peasantry and the purity of the natural environment, organic practices and so on, often linking such purity with an idealised Buddhism. Even those who have written about rural change have, on occasion, taken an essentialist approach to rural people, seeing them as a category of people for whom avarice, debt and other social problems are an unfortunate imposition from outside – and notably from the evils of capitalism and urbanity.

The peri-urban village is a place where such understandings meet the reality of a materially and socially de-cropped countryside, raising the question of how social relations develop between groups previously separated in their living spaces. Chapter 5 used the notion of “encounters” to explore the significance of what were termed

“proximate social relations”, employing the concept of class to do so. Class in this sense has more to do with Bourdieu’s habitus than with neo-Marxist relations based on access to means of production.

The encounters described in detail in Chapter 5 show that middle class newcomers with urban backgrounds have faced a number of disappointments. Many of these disappointments are a result of expectations of a quite different physical and social landscape to that in which they now find themselves. Perhaps surprisingly, this does not necessarily change the norms and expectations of these educated groups about rural people and the rural landscape. For some, there is a sense that their idealised “cropped” image still has currency, but that these days it is necessary to go further afield to find a reality that matches the image.

Newcomers for whom peri-urban village living is a novelty have previously had relatively little interaction with villagers. This means that class relations based on habitus has not been an issue shaping their lives. With the move to proximate living, habitus-based class difference becomes a reality of their lived experience. This has two key geographical implications. First, a key dimension of emerging class relations is based on location. Second, the interaction between people of diverse backgrounds is part of the place making of the peri-urban community.

Of course, this rather generalised synthesis also masks certain exceptions and accommodations. On the one hand, rural nostalgia is not a prerogative of the urban elite. In Chapter 4 and 5 we saw examples of ways in which villagers talk about the past in a wistful manner. On the other hand, everyday and friendly interactions occur between neighbours of different class background, and these in some ways bring newcomers down to earth in their interactions with individual villagers, even if they maintain generalised images that are deeply rooted in their education and normative world views.

6.5 Conclusion

Peri-urban areas are a meeting place of diverse social groups and ethnicities, values, land uses, occupations and ways of life. They have been under-studied. In this chapter, I have used three main concepts to synthesise and interpret the data presented in the previous chapters and in the literature review. Peri-urban Chiang Mai as a new type of frontier has helped to make the case for attention to this zone as one of dynamism and encounter, which gives it meaning beyond the geographical location that defines it. Class and its changing meanings and significance for the experience of people living in urban, rural and especially peri-urban areas helps to show the social dimension of place making in this dynamic arena of interaction. Finally, the tension between a materially de-cropped countryside, on the one hand, and on the other the cropped image held by newcomers that departs radically from the lived reality of their new neighbours, helps to define emergent social relations and encounters in the peri-urban village.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the making and remaking of peri-urban Chiang Mai through a focus on the social as well as physical landscape, notably in terms of migration and associated class dynamics. The overall research question set for the study was that of how social and physical landscape characteristics of the village in peri-urban Chiang Mai are shaped by class encounters resulting from diverse migrations. The study thus gives importance to the changing physical and social character of place in its transition from location within rural to peri-urban space. More specifically, the study pays attention to people and their built environment in specific places through a focus on class formation and encounters between social groups who are brought together by migrations within the twin contexts of agrarian change and urban expansion.

In this concluding chapter I return to the subsidiary research questions set out in the introductory chapter as a means to summarise the main findings of the study. I then turn to the “so what” question, summarising the main theoretical and methodological implications of the study. Finally, I set out the key limitations of the thesis and suggest directions for further study of the peri-urban change that is bound to continue and even accelerate in Thailand’s foreseeable future.

7.1 Summary of findings

Findings are summarised below in the form of answers to the research questions set out in the introductory chapter. These findings are based on a mixed-methods approach to research, including direct interviews, many conversations in mainly informal settings, observations of everyday life, and my own interpretations based on my increasing familiarity with the place as my own home. The

methodology specific to each scale and topic has been explained within each of the relevant chapters.

1. How are the meanings of rurality - as countryside and community - represented and understood by different groups of local people and newcomers in the peri-urban village, and more broadly in the public media?

The term 'rurality' or *khwaam-pen-chon-na-bod* in Thai has different meanings to different groups of people. Local villagers in the peri-urban area that until quite recently was in a rural condition refer to rurality as *ban-nawk*, marked by little development. This is the condition that people remember from their own village in the past, one out of which they would like to develop and move toward a modern (*tan-sa-may*) village environment and set of consumption lifestyles. They do not consider their current condition as *ban-nawk* any more, especially since the road access has been developed with mega projects nearby. However, they still call themselves *chaao-baan* or villagers.

As for the newcomers, especially the urban middle class group, this place or the village is not *ban-nawk* or totally *chon-na-bod* (countryside) but is still an un-urban place with a sense of a community that conforms with their expectations of what a Thai village should be. For this group, the idea of rurality extends to a normative set of expectations regarding the character of rural people as frugal in line with their limited incomes, traditional in their outlooks, agricultural in their livelihood orientation, concerned for their local environment, community-minded in their inter-relations with one another, including ideals of mutual assistance and reciprocity, and local in their outlook and world views. In terms of landscape, rurality for urban middle class newcomers means a clean, green and pleasant environment, rice fields, and housing and fences built of local materials. While this group is well aware of the peri-urban rather than completely rural context of the village, there is still a nostalgia when markers of such a rurality seem to be increasingly absent.

Public media representations of rurality through textbooks, films, drama, tourism and sufficiency economy discourse from government – especially those associated with royal initiatives – are still overwhelmingly dichotomous in contrasting the idealised countryside with urbanity and modernity. This leads to representations either of a pitiful countryside in need of assistance, or of a romanticised countryside of contented peasant farmers living in tight communities. There is a strong sense that problematic phenomena in rural society, such as debt, result from exploitation by outsiders and are the product of evils of capitalism and urban values that undermine the purer essence of rurality. When the media reports on farmer mobilisation for higher rice, rubber and other commodity prices, there is a sense that these claimants do not match the idealised picture of rural people with limited wants and levels of material affluence. While it is impossible to assess to what extent newcomers' normative expectations of rurality derive from these representations, we can say with confidence that these have previously been the main channels through which urban people “know” the countryside.

2. What are the patterns of migration in peri-urban Chiang Mai, and what are the desires of each social group?

Migrations have happened in the area since the early 1970s with the out-migration for urban work in Bangkok. Some time later, during the 1980s, a few villagers went to the Middle East for temporary work. However, the out-migration has declined since this area started to develop with good road access connecting it with Chiang Mai city. There has thus been a partial reversal of direction of migration by local villagers, most notably of young people.

At the same time as locals have reduced their change of residence away from the village while they continue to access jobs in the city and peri-urban areas, there has been another set of migrations into the peri-urban village. These migrations are diverse. Wealthier urban people have moved into the village for lifestyle reasons, seeking an extra-urban living space while continuing to maintain the amenities and, in some cases, continuing employment circumstances in nearby Chiang Mai.

Meanwhile, workers have moved into the village from Myanmar and from more remote rural parts of northern Thailand in order to take advantage of work and other opportunities that come with proximity of urban and peri-urban areas. These include schooling, health and other facilities.

Despite the significant demographic change in the peri-urban zone arising from such migration, this remains an understudied phenomenon. It required very painstaking and detailed searching and pooling together of data from many local authorities to build up the picture of change that was presented in Chapter 4. This required both detailed numeric data collection along with narrative-based interviews in each locality of peri-urban Chiang Mai. At the micro-scale, it relied on comprehensive interviews with every household among the diverse groups who now inhabit Nam Jam.

The desires of these groups are quite different from one another, and they also differ between different generations. In the past, local villagers moved away in order to gain income that could not be achieved through farming their limited areas of rice land. Their desire was to improve their material standard of living and to educate their children, in part because they foresaw that land would be insufficient to maintain a reasonably secure standard of living, but more in order to keep up with changing aspirations of Thailand's modernising society. Such desires can now be met without the need to live away from the home village. For the younger generation whose parents successfully put them through higher education, desires have extended to the wish for good social status beyond the village.

The desires of urban middle class migrants are complex. On the one hand, they enjoy the standard of living that comes with urban professional or business employment. On the other, they desire a peaceful and uncrowded residential existence that can be found more easily in the peri-urban than the urban context. For those who have deliberately chosen to build houses in existing villages rather than in gated communities, the desire is one of distinction in terms of building their own styles of house and living in a non-mass built environment that has a greater sense of

rurality than found in gated communities. There is also a desire to feel part of community, based partly if not entirely on the idealised representations referred to above.

The desires of migrant workers are less complex. They come to work for a defined period of their lives in order to improve the economic fortunes of themselves and their children. Some have aspirations to return to their home villages, while others see their futures in longer-term residence in the urban or peri-urban areas of Chiang Mai. For the most part they feel socially quite separate from the community within which they are located physically, in terms of class difference and also in relation to their primary employment purpose of living here.

3. When migration brings different classes to live in close proximity, what are the value-based encounters between newcomers and locals?

Each social group has its own habitus and expectation of what the place of the peri-urban community should be. While the private space of each can to some extent be managed individually and separately, this study has found many aspects of shared physical and social space arising from proximate living that have created or necessitated encounters. The more conflictual encounters have a base in the different sets of values, norms and expectations of different groups.

In Chapter 5, we saw many examples of such encounters. Some of these are based on the disappearance of markers of rurality (trees, roads, fences made of local materials) that are regretted by newcomers while being appreciated by local villagers. Others have to do with noise (for example from loudspeakers, karaoke, ceremonies, new car workshops), smells, smoke, animals, gossip and other aspects of rural living that offend newcomers' sense that they should not be impacted by their neighbours' practices. On the other hand local villagers' way of life has been less individualistic, with less sense of private space or concern over encroachment on others' boundaries. In this sense, newcomers' highly selective prior understanding of rurality misses those dimensions with which they find it difficult to co-exist.

To get at these encounters, it has been important to observe them and to talk about them with those involved in an immediate sense. These sorts of events and interactions are very difficult to pick up or talk about through interviews some time later. It is here that detailed ethnography and continuous residence in the village has been most important for understanding the making of place through encounters between different groups.

4. How is class manifested in the increasing post-agrarian context of peri-urban Chiang Mai?

Migration has brought together diverse social groups into a shared living space in the peri-urban community. Difference now marks this community in more complex ways than when it was largely agricultural and less ambiguously rural. With such diversity comes a shift in the class composition of the community, but in a highly dynamic context. Furthermore, as class is defined relationally in terms of consumption, habitus and values, rather than primarily by production-based economic relations, new class relations emerge in part from the proximity of living in such a diverse peri-urban space.

Local villagers have a history of class differentiation based on access to land and other means of production. As livelihood orientation has changed away from farming, this earlier differentiation has served as a base from which new types of class relations emerge, particularly as those who have done well have been able to provide education for their children, while others remain relatively unskilled. Even among local villagers, therefore, class differentiation and mobility is significant, but it takes on quite different forms from those of the agrarian past.

With in-migration of both “lower” and “higher” status groups, we see class manifested in terms of lifestyle. Groups who previously lived separately from one another now interact, albeit to a limited extent. If the melting pot metaphor is used, it could be said that there has been rather little “melting”, as discussed in the previous

chapter in terms of indifference. Class relations are more referential – people sense their class position with reference to others’ house styles, car brands, ways of dressing and talking, jobs, levels of education and other markers of social and economic status. A degree of deference results from such sense of relative position. In the relatively homogeneous peri-urban space of gated communities, such differences are unlikely to be felt or apparent. In the peri-urban village, however, they are a defining aspect of social relations and sense of class position.

5. How do different classes accommodate different values? How does the changing class formation shape social relations in the peri-urban countryside?

The encounters described in Chapter 5 rarely result in serious confrontations or bitter conflict. Rather, we see certain accommodations over time as the peri-urban village adjusts to its new social configuration, in contrast to gated communities that are much more homogeneous and do not involve encounters between locals and newcomers. Early on, newcomers’ ways of dealing with differences behind some encounters was quite alien to local ways of managing difference and conflict, for example using formal and sometimes legal recourse rather than going through local and more informal intermediaries. When such attempts have been unsuccessful, newcomers’ responses have in part been to withdraw into the private space of their house compounds and to have less to do with local villagers than might have been their original intention. In other cases, newcomers have deferred to local villagers’ decision making on things like cutting trees and other aspects of the public realm where being local (*khon baan hao*) still trumps economic and educational status. Relations tend to be closer between the more educated younger villagers and newcomers, who share certain world views, than between the older local residents and urban middle class migrants.

Social relations in the peri-urban village are shaped by its new and complex class formation in various ways. While the emphasis in this study has been to look at aspects of class that have much less to do with economic relations than would have been the case in the agrarian village, there are nevertheless some class-based relations

that take on employer-employee forms. Most urban middle class newcomers employ villagers for cleaning, gardening and odd jobs including construction and repairs. This puts them into a more conventional class-based relationship, and in some cases binds newcomers and villagers into longer-term relations of mutual obligation, albeit unequal in a class sense. We therefore see elements of social hierarchies being produced and reproduced in Nam Jam based on these sorts of economic relations. Furthermore, the more values-based class associations discussed above also have an implicit social hierarchy, given that they are associated with education, occupation and other social differentiators that are associated with social rank in the wider Thai society.

In a larger sense, however, social relations in the peri-urban countryside are governed by a paradox of proximate living, on the one hand, with all its comparative referential implications and impacts of mutually incompatible lifestyles and values, and on the other hand by continuing social distance and indifference that renders certain groups less visible and sees parallel rather than inter-mingled ways of life in the same community. Whereas in the past kinship and agrarian relations produced social mixing on an everyday level, now mixing tends to happen on specific occasions such as village ceremonies, new year parties, housewarming and funeral ceremonies (by invitation), and sometimes when a few of the newcomers join community work days, but in an everyday sense the contents of the pot that is the peri-urban village are far from melted. This maintenance of a distance between social groups is not unexpected; however, as we have seen, there are many interactions that occur as a result of proximate living, irrespective of the degree of social mixing.

7.2 Implications of the study

7.2.1 Theoretical implications

The component areas of the subject matter of this thesis have all been well studied: migration, class, place and peri-urban change. Each is associated with a considerable body of existing theory, as explained in Chapter 2. However, this study

has used the case of peri-urban Chiang Mai to shed new light on each of these fields. These contributions are set out briefly below.

A review of the migration literature reveals that this is the first study on counter-urbanisation in Thailand, and one of very few in the developing world. Counter-urbanisation has been a focus of rural studies in industrialised and post-industrial societies, especially in Europe, North America, and Australia for several decades. Of course, counter-urbanisation is about more than migration from urban to rural areas. It also includes situated within particular policy and value contexts (Wilson and Rigg 2003). However, it has not attracted the interest of scholarship in countries where the main focus on migration has been in the other direction (rural to urban), even though counter-urbanisation must be an increasingly common phenomenon in the current contexts of rapid urban expansion and growth in urban-based middle classes with changing value systems, most notably in middle-income countries such as Thailand. This study has shown how the concept of counter-urbanisation travels from a specifically European/North American context to that of the global South or middle income countries where previous studies have been almost exclusively of rural to urban migration.

Studies of migration based either in urban or rural areas have tended to focus on one-way migration, or if it is two-way the emphasis is mainly on rural returnees. In the context of the peri-urban area, the reverse direction of migration is a result of the changing contexts of the place. It is in part a reversal of the out-migration to search for work in the urban zone when the area was less developed in the past to the return of local villagers, and this is combined with heavy in-migration of various social groups into the area for different purposes when the area has become increasingly connected with the city, attracting the different groups of in-migrants for their different purposes of settling here.

This study reveals the complex and place-bound notions of class that emerge in the context of diversity in the peri-urban village. The complexity and diversity is enhanced by the migration of different groups into the social and physical space of the

village. The meaning of class has changed from the neo-Marxist concept of social relations based in access to means of production, which shaped earlier agrarian studies, toward class as a set of social relations based in a set of combined capitals recognised in a particular society. Bourdieu (1997) developed this approach to class through his study of high society and emphasised cultural capital as the most important one among all the capitals for his notion of class distinction. However, when it is employed in other contexts involving diverse classes, other types of capitals may become more important indicators for marking power and influence, and we see this clearly in the peri-urban village where social capital remains highly consequential.

In addition, class differentiation has both objective and subjective elements, which do not always go together. Each social group, or even individuals within each, might subjectively give different degrees of importance to each capital and differ with the emphasis given by others. Therefore, subjective recognition of class differentiation is significant in positioning people's social relations with others. It is also shaped by association of particular groups of people, such as Burmese workers, with particular occupations and hence with an associated class status. Within what Kelly (Kelly 2012: 154) refers to as the "bounded territorial space" of the peri-urban village, therefore, to be Burmese means to be of the unskilled working class, whereas to be western in origin, irrespective of previous occupation, means to be of higher class status. Kelly (*ibid.*: 176) refers to this as "class embodiment". Subjectivity is therefore especially the case when the diversity of characteristics includes dimensions such as race, national background, lifestyle preferences, education and other less visible and material markers of class than would have been the case in a more self-contained rural agrarian community.

This case study of a peri-urban village in Chiang Mai demonstrates that even though the urban middle class newcomers have better cultural and also economic capitals than the local villagers, they could not challenge decision making and communal matters in the village very much. This is due to the significant social capital through collective connections in the community of the local villagers in the

place that the newcomers do not have. Therefore, bounded territory and level of people's association with the place influence and alter power relations between social groups that may differ when the place changes.

Class conflict does not necessarily occur just or mainly from exploitation of one dominant class over the other in the neo-Marxist sense. In complex society of the peri-urban village and in everyday class encounters, people are not very much related through means of production. Differences in their consumption lifestyles and values more easily lead to conflict between classes especially when different classes live in close proximity to one another.

Class is also a performance to communicate to others in order to construct and maintain class identity, so that society and audiences are part of the class construction. While Goffman (1959) did not address performance as a part of a class analysis, the front and back stages quite relevant in interpreting class identity as previously distant groups now live and perform their lives in mutual proximity. People may have multiple identities, and class becomes fluid in a situation of migration. Since people's sense of their own and others' class position is in part referential with respect to their neighbours, co-workers and others with whom they interact socially, a move to a new residential and employment context can change the sense of class position.

This study also engages with and contributes to meanings of place. It takes the peri-urban village not just as a context in which to study migration and class dynamics, but also explores the making and re-making of place through the interactions between groups of different backgrounds and different value systems, each of whom has expectations about the place in which they now live together. Sense of place is important in the understandings and expectations of different groups, but the sense is group-specific. Urban middle class newcomers tend to idealise the village as "*mu-ban*" in the sense of a harmonious community, while long-term residents on the one hand see it as "their" place, but on the other hand they do not carry the idealised and rather static notion of community into their own sense of place and rootedness. This analysis is very much in line with Massey's (2005) concept of

place as something always under construction socially as well as physically, and it also tends to contradict Harvey's (Harvey 1996) notion of place-making as an object of fixity to resist against global capitalism (Cresswell 2004). Meanwhile, people's expectations are shaped not just by their lived experiences but also by background, habitus, education, class, and continuously represented images.

Past studies have explored interactions, inter-penetration and other dimensions of interaction between rural and urban, but these have mainly been done either in urban or rural contexts. Jonathan Rigg (1998) and Eric Thompson (2004) have examined the urban in the rural and the rural in the urban. This study moves beyond these to explore the particular characteristics of the peri-urban as a crossroads, a meeting place of multiple values whose coming together creates a particular set of social and physical characteristics of the place concerned. This place making does not mainly happen through dramatic confrontations or sudden shifts. Rather, the frontier shifts referred to in the previous chapter are part of an incremental set of everyday encounters that are easily overlooked both by scholars and at the level of popular understanding.

Finally, then, this study contributes to our understanding of the peri-urban. Earlier studies associated with Terry McGee's (1991) seminal work on peri-urban Southeast Asia were mainly metropolitan in focus, looked at mixed land use and social characteristics, but had little to say on the social encounters or the processes of place-making and diverse migrations that were behind new forms of class formation. In this study, the peri-urban is examined as a performative stage for all classes in their actual interactions as neighbours in a village. This also shows the significance of the peri-urban as an arena that brings people together who do not otherwise have actual experience of each other in the bigger imagined society. The bounded territory of the peri-urban village hence shapes and also adjusts social relations between social groups at a closer distance than previously, from vertical hierarchy to a more horizontal relation in some situations, defined in part by the micro-geography of the peri-urban village. Seen in this way, the study provides nuance and detail to the concept of the peri-urban as frontier (Hirsch 2009), showing how as transitional space

the peri-urban village is fundamentally remade socially as well as physically through the encounters described.

7.2.2 Methodological implications

The most basic methodological implication of this study is the need for and relevance of moving beyond the rural-urban dichotomy in locality studies in Thailand and other rapidly changing middle-income countries. The peri-urban zone is a new area of study in Thailand, and one which can be examined through micro-studies of discrete communities employing ethnographic methods.

This research is a study of class relations as evident in in everyday interactions, similar to the study of Scott on “Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance” (1985), which was in part a self critique of the earlier work on conditions of peasant rebellion in his classic “The Moral Economy of the Peasant” (1976). Scott showed that in fact peasants do not in most cases rebel but rather perform their acts of resistance on an everyday basis. The methodology of class and place formation through examination of everyday events and interactions similarly provides opportunities for understanding processes through observation and interpretation of the minutiae of everyday life.

The data collection of this research contributes both in quantitative and qualitative dimensions. The quantitative data collection on urban expansion by showing demographic change and growth of gated communities is the first time that scattered hard data from various sources and formats have been retrieved and pulled together into visual forms of tables and maps for description and analysis of Chiang Mai’s peri-urban growth.

In terms of qualitative data collection, a key feature of this study is auto-ethnography in which the researcher resides in the case study area and is part of the events recounted by key informants. In addition, I as the researcher have seen a personal trajectory of class fluidity between rural agrarian background from my

parents and yet am categorised as one of the middle class group though my education and consumption lifestyle when I migrated to live in the village. This has assisted me in understanding different social groups' perceptions. Such habitus-based advantage notwithstanding, I still had to interpret all the data not only through my experiences and point of view but also by seeking to understand diverse residents' point of view from their own perspectives. Of course there are also certain potential limits to auto-ethnography, both because of risks of missing things that are too close or everyday in nature to pick up as significant, and because as a person with a defined class position within the village people are bound to interact with me in certain ways.

This study aims to understand class relations in everyday encounters, when several cases were happening right in front of me so that cases were fresh and not yet settled. Therefore, data was presented with emotion and mood of the moment, which might change when time passed. Hence a continuous presence at the site of research over a period of time cannot be substituted by short, targeted information gathering activities such as interviews and questionnaire surveys to obtain similar data. Study of everyday class encounters requires continuous observations and repeated visits to all social groups. There is also an important element of familiarity and trust building that is required to gain insights in areas of sensitivity and that encroach on people's otherwise private realms.

Timing of the study is very important. In this research, the study area of the peri-urban area is in a rapid change (take off) phase since I bought a piece of land here in 2003 and began living here in 2007 until now. Therefore, I could observe the changes myself and get familiar with all social groups while I have been residing in the area. The moment of change is a key part of any frontier study, where time as well as place is highly significant in pinpointing the key moments as well as places of transition.

7.3 Limitations of the study and ideas for further research

7.3.1 Limitations

A study such as this is necessarily limited in scope, both because of the constraints of time and the necessity to confine it to a particular place (and time) in order to achieve the level of detailed insight required to understand everyday phenomena. The key limitations are as follows.

First, Chiang Mai is not fully representative of other secondary cities in Thailand or similar countries. While it provides a good context to explore peri-urban place making associated with in-migration, given its popularity as a place of alternative living as well as its rapid expansion, these characteristics also suggest a degree of uniqueness that makes it difficult to generalise the study's findings beyond the case in hand. On the other hand, it does provide an opportunity to explore peri-urban areas of other secondary cities in Thailand for similar or different patterns of peri-urban social and landscape change.

Second, the study was limited in its detailed analysis to the village context, without going into the same level of detail of social change associated with gated communities. In part this has been a time limitation and the consequent need to scope the study more specifically, in part it has resulted from the auto-ethnographical approach taken by the researcher who lives in such a village context, but in part it is also a result of the difficulties of limited access to residents in gated communities.

Finally, it has been quite difficult to establish precisely how the urban middle class think about the place/rurality. In discussions and interviews, respondents did not speak directly about rurality or their expectations of place. Rather, I have had to interpolate their values and expectations from many bits of discussions, overheard conversation as well as more structured interviews and interpret these by myself in order to assemble a composite picture of ways in which the middle class people think of and respond to their new place of residence.

7.3.2 Further study

The field of peri-urban studies remains quite wide open in Thailand and many other middle-income countries where urban expansion and agrarian change are influencing place making in the countryside nearby regional as well as metropolitan urban centres. A few suggestions for new directions in this field conclude my study.

First, there is a need to study the expansion of gated communities in the peri-urban area from a number of angles. Their social and environmental footprint on the peri-urban landscape is very large. Processes of land acquisition, their ways of getting around zoning regulations, the demands that private schemes place on public infrastructure, and many other aspects of gated community expansion need urgent attention. Class composition and social relations within these communities is also an interesting area of potential study, albeit one that is made difficult by the access restrictions referred to above.

Another potential area for further study is to take the approach to areas beyond the immediately peri-urban to study class relations and the role of middle class immigration in areas further afield that have started to attract such migrants because of their landscape values. Chiang Dao, about 60 kilometres north of Chiang Mai City, is one such example.

A final suggestion is to build on the current study for comparative peri-urban studies in other Southeast Asian countries and in other middle-income countries around the world. Much can be gained from familiarity with the counter-urbanisation literature based on studies in Europe, North America and Australia, but as this study has shown, the more specific making of peri-urban places suggests a phenomenon that deserves attention as a relatively new field of study in its own right.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

DPT	The Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning
SEA Games	Southeast Asian Games
GMS	Greater Mekong Sub-region
TAO	Tambon (sub-district) Administrative Organisation
NESDB	National Economic and Social Development Board
Municipality	Sub-district municipality
BORA	Bureau of Registration Administration
DOPA	Department of Provincial Administration
DOH	Department of Highways
DRR	Department of Rural Roads
	Bureau of Rural Roads 10 Chiang Mai

Thai Terms

rai	unit of land in Thailand, 1 rai is equal to 1600 square metre, 0.4 acres, and 6.25 rai is equivalent to 1 hectare
Thang	1 thang is equivalent to 20 litres of rice
Wat	Thai temple

Currency Equivalents (November 2013)

1 USD	approximately 30 Thai Baht
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CURRICULUM VITAE

Name	Ms. Tubtim Tubtim
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