

**People's Participation and the State:
A Study of the Role of Non-Government Organizations
(NGOs) in the Thai Development Process**

by

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**Unless otherwise acknowledged in the text or in the footnotes,
this thesis represents my original research.**

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the role of Thai non-government organizations (NGOs) and their use of a people participation approach in the process of economic and social development in Thailand. The thesis also provides a theoretical context for the NGOs in tackling the problems of underdevelopment.

In order to meet these aims, I define "development" in terms of the achievement not only of economic growth but also of the human values of dignity and freedom, and show that the distribution of the benefits of growth is a critical factor in development. I argue, therefore, that the state has an obligation to ensure development for all its citizens, in particular the common people (e.g. landless peasants and wage workers). I consider the role of the Thai state in the context of development planning from the early works of Phraya Suriyanuwat and Luang Pradit Manutham, through the period of economic nationalism to the more recent process, supported by the UN and World Bank in particular, of preparing Five Year Development Plans. Under this latter process, I argue, the state has pursued security objectives and supported private (and foreign) enterprises as the dominant actors in the development process despite the supposed acceptance of the World Bank and the IMF strategies of "Basic Needs (BNs)" or "Redistribution with Growth (RwG)".

I continue the investigation with an overview of development theories which are generally categorized into two schools of thought, modernization and neo-Marxist (including the dependency paradigm), and from this investigation it emerges that neither the modernization theory nor dependency paradigm is adequate to clearly explain the causes of underdevelopment or to provide the path to development. It is also noted that the debates of both schools of thought are in some respects reflected in the Thai development context and that the role of the state is an important focus particularly since Thai politics has been punctuated with military rule, coups and counter-coups. I conclude that there is a need for the democratic involvement of the people generally and for people participation in development in particular.

In discussing the concepts and methodologies used by NGOs in the development process, I argue that there is a major role for NGOs in development and support my claim with three selected case studies. These demonstrate that NGOs can play a catalytic role in the development process and can mediate between the people and the government in situations of exploitation and conflict. The case studies demonstrate

too that the NGO's role as a "bridge of hope" between the common people and the government can promote true development without threat to the security, integrity or economic wellbeing of the parties involved.

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Acronyms

ACFOA	Australian Council for Overseas Aid
ACFOD	Asian Cultural Forum on Development
ACR	Australian Catholic Relief
AI	Amnesty International
AIDAB	Australian International Development Assistance Bureau
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ALRO	Agricultural Land Reform Office
ARD	Accelerated Rural Development
ATA	Appropriate Technology Association
BAAC	Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Co-operatives
BNs	Basic Needs strategy
BoI	Board of Investment
CAA	Community Aid Abroad
CAP	Consumers' Association of Penang
CARD	Community Action Research Development
CCA	Christain Conference of Asia
CCHROT	Co-ordinating Committee of Human Rights Organizations of Thailand
CCTD	Catholic Council for Thai Development
CEBEMO	Centrale Voor Bemiddeling bij Medefinanciering van Ontwikkelingsprogrammas (an NGO, Netherlands)
CGRS	Co-ordinating Group for Religion in Society
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agencies
CPB	Crown Property Bureau
CPC	Charoen Phokhaphan Company
CPT	Communist Party of Thailand
CSOC	Communist Suppression Operations Command
CTC	Commission on Theological Concerns
CUSO	Canadian University Service Overseas
CUSRI	Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute
DISACs	Diocesan Social Action Centres
DOAE	Department of Agricultural Extension
ECAFE	Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East
ECLA	Economic Council of Latin America
EOI	Export-oriented Industrialization
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

EZE	Evangelische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FFHC	Freedom from Hunger Campaign
FIST	Federal Independent Students of Thailand
FLUT	Federation of Labour Union of Thailand
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
IBRD	International Bank for Rural Development
ICCO	Sichting Interkerkelijke Co-ördinatie Commissie Ontwikkelingsprojecten (Inter-Church Co-ordination Committee for Development Projects – an NGO, Netherlands)
ICJ	International Commission of Jurists
IDS	Interdisciplinary Studies
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISEAS	Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (Singapore)
ISI	Import-substituted Industrialization
ISOC	Internal Security Operations Command
JPPCC	Joint Public-Private Consultation Committee
LCCT	Labour Co-ordination Centre of Thailand
LDAP	Local Development Assistance Programme
MDUs	Mobile Development Units
MISEREOR	Bischofliches Hilfswerk (a German Catholic Bishop's Agency – Action Against Hunger and Disease)
MNCs	Multi-national Corporations
MOPH	Ministry of Public Health
NARC	National Administrative Reform Council
NEDB/NESDB	National Economic Development Board/ National Economic and Social Development Board
NET	Northeast Thailand Project
NICs	Newly-Industrialized Countries
NOVIB	Nederlands Organisatie voor Internatioanale Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (NGOs for International Co- operation, Netherlands)
NSCT	National Student Centre of Thailand
ODC	Overseas Development Council
PDG	People for Democracy Group
PFT	Peasant Federation of Thailand
PLRA	Phichit Land Reform Areas

PVOs	Private Voluntary Organizations
RDI/KKU	Research and Development Institute/Khon Kaen University
RUDOC	Rural Development Document Centre
RwG	Redistribution with Growth
SALs	Structural Adjustment Loans
SAP	Social Action Party
SCC	Student Christain Centre
SEATO	Southeast Asian Treaty Organization
TDSC	Thai Development Support Committee
TNCs	Transnational Corporations
TVS	Thai Volunteer Service
UCL	Union for Civil Liberty
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USOM	United States Operation Mission
VSO	Voluntary Service Organization
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

The concepts of "basic minimum needs", "people's participation" and "self-reliant development" are widely accepted among development planners as fundamental to economic and social development.¹ In practice, however, these concepts have not been well implemented as often indicated in academic research, in newspapers and in government reports. Moreover, these concepts are inseparable from the concept of "basic human rights" and can not be fully implemented unless the recognition of people's rights and self-expression are ratified politically, legally and culturally. To implement these concepts to benefit the common people requires the strengthening of people's consciousness and of their organization within the representative democratic system. Such organization will be a basis for carrying out "democratic planning, technical operation, and the creation of value change" in the development process.² The strengthening of these people's organizations is part of a long-term goal of "building the nation from the bottom up" in Thailand at the present time, when the less-advantaged still have little bargaining power and need a lot of effort from various sources to help improve their organizations.

Amidst the scepticism and debate about people's organizations and movements, the aim of this thesis is to argue that the Thai non-government organizations (NGOs) can play a significant role as catalysts to help ensure that the four key concepts mentioned above are reflected in the economic and social development process in Thailand. In support of this approach, the NGOs, which represent a conscious middle-class movement, have shown that the four concepts are already embedded in "local wisdom" and community culture.³ Moreover, the NGOs, in trying to bring those concepts to bear in targeted areas and at the same time providing two-way communication between government officials and people, can be a counterbalancing power with the government politically and legally so that the people's rights to development can be fully recognized.

1 For example National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), The Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1987-1991), Bangkok: NESDB, Office of the Prime Minister, 1987, pp. 367, 368.

2 D. Goulet, The Crucial Choice: A New Concept in the Theory of Development, New York: Atheneum, 1981, p. ix.

3 Chatthip Nartsupha, "Naeokhit Watthanatham Chumchon" [The Concept of Cultural Community], in Chakrit Chumwattana and Ukrit Patthamanan, Saithan haeng khwamkhit [The Stream of Thought], [in Thai], Bangkok: The Committee for Conducting Academic Activities to Celebrate the 60th Anniversary of Khun Warunyupha Sanidwongse Na Ayudhaya, B.E. 2532 (1989), pp. 47-72.

To achieve the aim of the study, this thesis provides an overall picture of the NGO movement since World War II emphasizing the role of the Thai NGOs in the development process; their historical background, underpinning concepts and methodologies; some case studies to show their achievements and limitations in tackling the problems of peasants and workers; as well as some discussions indicating that they are an active social force, among others, in pursuing national development. Weaving together numerous aspects of the Thai NGO movement from the early 1970s to the present, I reveal the important role that they can play, and which must be played if Thailand is to develop for the benefit of all its citizens, with the hope that this thesis may be somehow useful for the NGO audience and government parties in their future policy-making processes.

The emphasis in the thesis on the human dimensions of development is particularly important because of the failure of development to date. The evidence shows that development policies in Thailand have encouraged private enterprise, assuming this would create prosperity and development, while reducing the role of the state to that of a supporter of private enterprise development. This has led to a high rate of economic growth, modern cities and extensive transportation and communications systems on the one hand, it has also produced deep economic, social and political problems in terms of disparity of income distribution, exploitation, youth problems, crime, urbanization, the deprivation of human rights, and increasing numbers of political prisoners on the other hand. To a large extent these economic, social and political problems have resulted from the role played by the state and its emphasis, under the US and World Bank influence, on security and growth rather than the welfare of its citizens. Since the beginning of the 1980s, however, the Thai government has depolarized domestic politics and moderated its development policies in a way which now enables concerned parties, including the NGOs, to help represent the problems of the common people. The government has also adopted development concepts such as "basic minimum needs", "people's participation" and "self-reliant development" and recognized a role for non-government agencies generally in achieving these objectives.

This thesis was written by combining my personal experience and empirical observation with academic research. As a participant and observer in Thai socio-political movements, I was involved in the Student Rural Construction Group from 1972 to 1974, worked as a teacher in the Northeast and the South of Thailand from 1975 to 1980, and undertook research on Thai politics in consultation with a number of Asian Studies scholars. Before coming to study in Australia, I worked with the Union for Civil Liberty (UCL), a human rights organization, from 1985 to 1986. This background has provided me with a close understanding of socio-political aspects of

Thai society and the root causes of the problems of the majority poor (peasants and workers), and has guided my selection of data, and approaches used in this thesis. To study in Australia during the period of intense international depoliticization of issues of common concern and the lessening of tensions between East and West has also given me a wider theoretical perspective and helped me to become aware of wider views about the future direction of Third World development.

In writing this thesis, I basically use an historical approach in that events are presented in sequence and historical rigour is applied to piecing together the overall picture.⁴ However, the topic of this thesis could not be satisfactorily treated without reference to the works of scholars from other disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, political science and economics. While arguing for the development of human beings as the first priority in a national development plan, this thesis intends to argue that development ought to be concerned with the improvement of the standard of living of the majority poor and direct its attention to "basic minimum needs", "people's participation", "basic human rights" and "self-reliant development". These four basic concepts are threaded through the thesis and used to examine development theories and the general theoretical debates, the Thai national development policies and the NGO movements, and to evaluate the role of NGOs in the development process. However, this study does not intend to provide a model of development to be replicated, but rather leaves the means to be flexible and open to choice as the particular circumstance of each target area warrants.

I have been resident in Australia throughout the writing of the thesis and did not return to Thailand during this period for fieldwork or other purposes. This, to a certain extent, has determined the emphasis of the thesis and the type of information used. I have focused therefore on the conceptual development of debates rather than relying on actual participatory research. The data collection both in Thai and English was made through primary sources such as reports of meetings and seminars, annual reports, newspaper clippings, articles from various periodicals; through secondary sources such as research monographs, books and theses, and papers available in Australia in the Australian National Library, the Chifley and Menzies libraries at the Australian National University (ANU), and the libraries at the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB) and the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA). Some articles and information have been sent from Thai NGO friends and both supervisors have kindly introduced me to some books and articles not otherwise available. Through my work on the thesis, I have found that my initial hypothesis has

been reinforced – that is, even though the NGOs are small and problematic, they have contributed significantly to development, directing their attention to the majority poor as the first priority and threading the four key development concepts into their work. They are now a part of the people's historical movements both internationally and domestically.

Finally, when translating from Thai into English, I have used the Library of Congress System, with some simplifications for typographical ease, for example the difference between "ไ" and "อ" is not indicated, "æ" is given as "ae" and the macron to indicate long vowel length is not used. In addition, Thai Proper names are spelt according to the system of the Library of Congress, except where authors have been published in a variant form. For example, Pratip Sonthisuwan, who spelt his name as "Prateep Sondysuwan", has been quoted using the latter spelling. For the names of places in Thailand, I have depended on transliterations used in Thai official documents.

CHAPTER 1

Development Theories and Thai Development Context

It matters little how much information we possess about development if we have not grasped its inner meaning.

Denis Goulet, *The Cruel Choice*¹

The advantage of economic growth is not that wealth increases happiness but that it increases the range of human choice.

W.A. Lewis²

Two decades of experience with international economic co-operation have convinced many leaders in the developing countries that basic changes in their economies and social systems are more important than quantitative increases in external resource transfers. ... It is now clear that popular participation in the production process and a better distribution of domestic income are preconditions of the kind of broadly based growth that developing countries need.

Overseas Development Council Communique³

Before carrying out, in the next three chapters, a specific analysis of Thai development and the emergence of the role of Thai non-government organizations (NGOs), it is important to provide a general overview of several development issues. They are: first, the definition of development; second, a summary of development theories⁴ used to analyse and explain development in Third World countries; third, some features of the debates on theories of development; and fourth, the application of development theories and debates in the Thai development context.

Definition of "development"

The term "development" is controversial. It is widely used to distinguish between groups of countries which are thought of as "developed" and others which are variously known as "developing", "underdeveloped" or "less-developed" countries. The two groups are also referred to as North (developed) and South (underdeveloped)

1 Quoted from M.P. Todaro, Economics for a Developing World, London: Longman, 2nd. ed., 1982, p. 87.

2 Quoted from ibid., p 105.

3 Overseas Development Council (ODC), "Communique on Development Issues: Self Reliance and International Reform", World Development, Vol. 2, No. 6, June 1974, p. 54.

4 By a theory, I mean an organized, goal-directed philosophical framework used to analyse dispersed evidence and activities.

countries. Yet there is no general agreement as to what constitutes development. When some people talk about development, they have in mind an improvement in the economy as measured by indicators such as Gross National Product (GNP) and per capita incomes. Others think of non-monetary social variables such as life expectancy, literacy rates and the existence of health and education services; or in other words, they look to factors reflecting the quality of life as a measure of development. The choice of development methods and an assessment of their success or otherwise depends to a large degree therefore on the choice of definition of the term development itself. In this section, I will summarize various approaches to defining development ranging from those depending on classical monetary measures, to those adopting non-monetary measures which emphasize different priorities in achieving development.

In the first approach, development is defined in purely economic terms using economic growth as the measure. As Todaro explains, in the 1950s and 1960s development was generally seen in terms of "the capacity of a national economy, whose initial economic condition has been more or less static for a long time, to *generate and sustain* an annual increase of its gross national product at rates of perhaps 5-7 % or more" [italics as in the original].⁵ The concept of development was thus generally seen in terms of economic development in which benefits from the growth in the gross national product would "trickle down" to the majority poor in the form of jobs and other economic opportunities, and create the necessary conditions for distributing the economic and social benefits of growth.

However, the experiences from the 1950s and 1960s revealed that although a large number of developing countries did achieve satisfactory growth rates in line with UN targets, there was evidence too of increasingly inequitable income distribution and rising unemployment, and the living condition of most people, particularly the poor,

5 The "Development Decade" was designated by resolution of the United Nations General Assembly in which most member states are developing countries. Various development assistance activities have been created within the UN system such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), and World Health Organization (WHO). The General Assembly also makes resolutions on international development strategies. See G.M. Meier, Emerging From Poverty: The Economics That Really Matters, New York: Oxford University Press, 1984, pp. 42-43.

The 1960s represented the "First Development Decade" and "development" was conceived largely in terms of the attainment of a six per cent annual target growth rate of GNP. An alternative indicator which purported to combine economic and social performance was "per capita income" which was calculated by dividing GNP by the total population. While per capita income appeared to take into account the ability of the nation to expand its output at a rate faster than the growth rate of its population, it was, in fact, "biased" because it took "no account of *income distribution* and the ownership of the *assets*" which were "employed to generate part of that income" [italic as in the original] [M.P. Todaro, Economic Development in the Third World, London: Longman, 3rd. ed., 1985, pp. 83, 590].

remained unchanged or even worsened. By the end of the first UN Development Decade, it was widely accepted that the focus on economic development strategies emphasized rapid urban industrialization at the expense of agriculture and rural development, and the dependence on "trickle down" was not working.⁶

Much of the criticism of development at this time was that it failed either to meet human needs or to assist man's attempt to realize his potential by creating a just and equitable society which suits and benefits his interests. In highlighting the human aspects of development, critics often emphasized alternative social and political factors (such as ignorance, disease, political unrest) which should be developed or improved in line with economic growth.⁷ Many of the leading proponents of these views were outspoken critics of official international development strategies based on growth and modernization.⁸ The narrow definition of "development" which had supported the

6 Ibid., p. 84. See too A. Blaser who shows also that GNP is "a poor indicator of rights fulfilment" because a high GNP might result from "rights deprivation associated with overdevelopment in the high-GNP unit and underdevelopment, poverty, or dependency in others". GNP also excludes important factors which might "advance rights to employment and well-being" [A. Blaser, "Assessing Human Rights: The NGO Contribution", in V.P. Nanda, J.R. Scarritt, and G.W. Shepherd, Jr., Global Human Rights: Public Policies, Comparative Measures, and NGO Strategies, Colorado: Westview Press, 1981, p. 275].

7 Indicators are needed so that the outcomes of development can be tested against stated objectives. There are however a whole range of indicators used in relation to development theory depending often on the perspective of the users. For instance, economic indicators include in addition to GNP and per capita income (to which we have already referred), such things as, household expenditure, consumption of goods and services, and percentage of unemployment. Common social indicators are levels of health, life expectancy and mortality rates, education and literacy rates, and may include statistics on strikes, demonstrations and even court cases. Typical political indicators are the number of political prisoners, degree of civil rights and liberty, extent of freedom for the press, as well as changes of governments by coup d'état.

Not only is it necessary to choose the indicators, it is also important to be aware of the quality or validity of the data available in different situations. The collection of data may depend on social conditions within a particular country, for example, whether or not the freedom of the press and of people's opinion are restricted. In the case of a closed society, a reliable assessment with hard data may arise from analyses by country experts such as lawyers, sociologists and historians. Also some data and information may be relevant to one place and time but irrelevant to the another place and time. The complexity of socio-economic and political factors creates some difficulties for an examiner to make the right judgement in every event [Blaser, op. cit. pp. 273-278, 281-282]. See also D. Seers, "What Are We Trying to Measure?", Journal of Development Studies, Vol. 8, No. 3, April 1972, pp. 21-36.

8 For example G. Myrdal, Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations, London: Penguin Press, 1968; L.B. Pearson, Partners in Development: Report of the Commission on International Development, London: Pall Mall Press, 1970. For comment on Myrdal's work see C. Collingwood, "Reviews: Reflection on Myrdal and Underdevelopment", Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1970, pp. 92-99.

economic growth approach therefore needed to be redefined.⁹ An example of the move to adopt a wider definition of development can be seen in White's definition of development as:

"... a process of social change which 1) increases the total benefits available; 2) distributes new benefits in some inverse rates to the distribution of benefits already acquired; 3) offers some assurance of being a process that can be sustained over time".¹⁰

Of particular importance in formulating a new approach to the problems of development was the role of the International Labour Organization (ILO) which in 1969 launched the World Employment Programme, proposing the new "basic needs" and "people participation" approaches which were later recognized by the United Nations and the World Bank as fundamental concepts in economic and social development.¹¹ The basic needs concept included "certain minimum requirements of a family for private consumption: adequate food, shelter and clothing ..." and "... essential services provided by and for the community at large, such as safe drinking water, sanitation,

9 Todaro, Economic Development, p. 84. Todaro notes that as a result of this need, development during the 1970s "... came to be redefined in terms of the reduction or elimination of poverty, inequality, and unemployment within the context of a growing economy".

10 J. White, The Politics of Foreign Aid, London: The Bodley Head, 1974, p. 30. White regards development not only in the term of "economic growth" but also "a process of social change" which distributes the growth to participants. However, White does not specify which groups would benefit from the development. Todaro also redefined the term development by saying that "[D]evelopment must, therefore, be conceived as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty" (italic as in original). His redefinition of development was the same in both the 1977 and 1985 editions of his book. He maintained a three dimensional view of change: social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions, and regarded development as a "process" of change to reduce "inequality" and eradicate "absolute poverty" [Todaro, Economic Development, p. 85]. See also, Todaro, Economics for a Developing World, pp. 406-407. From a sociological point of view there was reconsideration of development as a process in terms of "interaction" between societies and "action" to bridge the gaps. See A.M.M. Hoogvelt, The Sociology of Developing Societies, London: The Macmillan Press, 2nd. ed., 1978.

11 For further information see the United Nations, Popular Participation in Decision-Making for Development, Geneva: UN Sale Publication No. E. 75. IV. 10, 1975. The World Bank supports the concepts in terms of "Redistribution with Growth" (RwG) and "Basic Needs strategy" (BNs) in the Report to the Board of Governors Annual Meeting, 1973, Nairobi. See also R.S. McNamara, The McNamara Years at the World Bank: Major Policy Addresses of R.S. McNamara 1968-1981, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1981, Ch. 12.

The concept of people's participation was introduced into the development process as follows: first, to study and identify the people's needs; second, to formulate and decide on the development programmes to overcome the needs; third, to implement those programmes; fourth, to monitor and review the progress and effects of the programmes; and fifth, to decide what future measures are needed [International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP), "Conclusions and Recommendations of the Seminar on Human Rights and Development in the Rural Areas of Southeast Asia", Rural Development and Human Rights in Southeast Asia, Report of a Seminar, Penang: CAP, 1981, p. 22].

public transport, and health and education facilities".¹² However, when implemented in development plans, the basic needs proposal goes somewhat further than its initial intention.¹³ In particular, the basic needs approach proposed by the ILO added further to the debate surrounding the definition of development by focusing on the participation of the people and including the concept of human rights in the development process:

[A] basic needs oriented policy implies the participation of the people in making the decisions which affect them. ... The satisfaction of an absolute level of basic needs as so defined should be placed within a broader framework — namely the fulfilment of basic human rights, which are not only ends in themselves but also contribute to the attainment of other goals.¹⁴

The "basic needs", "people participation", and "basic human rights" concepts are powerful but controversial. They are powerful because they impose human values on what were narrow economic development objectives so that development will be measured by its ability to bring to all people the human ability to provide for their basic necessities for life sustenance; the human dignity to be a person and not a tool to be used by others for their own ends; and the human freedom to have choice.¹⁵ These concepts thus put people and their needs at the centre of development. However, they become controversial concepts because, in different regions or countries, it is argued that there are different standards, differences in social objectives and varying problems that arise in ranking basic needs, in evaluating the role of the people and even in the perception of what are basic human rights. Scholars, however, tend to minimize such controversial problems by arguing that when the three concepts are accepted as part of national development goals, planners should, with due regard to historical sequences and social evolution, create appropriate models suitable for a particular society in order to achieve the goals.¹⁶

We may conclude in brief that when the three concepts: "basic needs", "people participation" and "basic human rights" are incorporated into the country's development approach, we may re-assess the ways in which we currently categorize human societies. Such descriptions as "First World", "Third World", "developed" and "developing" are categories which "represent only a single [facet of a] complex of human activities: the level of national income, the material standards of life, and the consumption of

12 International Labour Organization (ILO), Employment, Growth and Basic Needs: A One-World Problem, Geneva: ILO, 1976, p. 32.

13 P. Sireeten and S.J. Burki, "Basic Needs: Some Issues", World Development, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1978, pp. 411-421.

14 International Labour Organization (ILO), op. cit., p. 32.

15 Todaro, Economic Development, pp. 85-87.

16 Sireeten and Burki, op. cit., pp. 413-421.

industrial products".¹⁷ That is, a definition of development which includes not only economic values but also the human values of dignity and freedom for humanity, makes it possible to see that people of whatever "world" or category "... are people with significant histories, people who have made major contributions to the development of human societies, people who might possibly have something to contribute to the future growth of the world".¹⁸

Summary of development theories: the explanation of Third World development

Before discussing the essence of development theories, some general points relating to the use of theories should be mentioned. First, theories and practice in development may be seen from two perspectives. On the one hand we have the theoretical side where theories are debated and developed by academics and used by policy makers in governments and international institutions who turn theories into more practical proposals for action. On the other hand there are the practitioners, administrators, development workers and the people who, whatever their understanding of theory, will be guided by ideas and beliefs drawn from theories and are, to some extent, the ultimate translators of theory into practice. Referring to this distinction between theory and practice, Poulantzas says that "[T]he distance between theory and the real always persists despite the effort to fill it".¹⁹

Second, a theoretical framework is sometimes inadequately developed for dealing with particular target groups and it is often necessary for the users of theory to have some familiarity with a particular society and the problem to be addressed, or to depend on country experts.²⁰

Third, the use of a theoretical framework is often not a value-free process and the objectivity of outcome cannot be ensured irrespective of the user. Bias may occur in the use of theory simply because the user is so familiar with the problems studied, or with co-workers in the same field, that an objective outcome of study and work cannot

17 C. Wilson, "Thai and Western Approaches to the Study of Thai History: Interaction and Growth", in E.B. Ayal (ed.), The Study of Thailand: Analysis of Knowledge, Approaches and Prospects in Anthropology, Art History, Economics, History and Political Science, Ohio: Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies, 1978, pp. 174-175.

18 Ibid., pp. 174-175.

19 N. Poulantzas, State, Power, Socialism, transl. P. Camiller, London: Lowe & Brydone Printers Ltd, 1978, p. 23.

20 Blaser, op. cit., p. 266.

be guaranteed.²¹ Moreover, bias may also occur because the user chooses the theory for a specific personal or political purpose.

Fourth, there are difficulties in selecting development indicators because the choice of indicators and the way they are measured will probably reflect the actual theory under scrutiny (the theory demands certain indicators). Nevertheless for the purpose of examining the adequacy of theory, we can assert that any theory of development will be closely concerned with the questions such as who gets what, when, where, how and at whose expense; or in other words, the question of development for whom. Furthermore, reliable measures must be consistent and clear without shifts in meaning and assignment for different issues.²²

Fifth, theories themselves should be subject to debate, particularly among those who work in development, as well as among academics. It is necessary, too, for basic disagreements to be taken into account so that a wide range of groups (academics, NGO workers, common people) will be able to help provide separate, up-to-date and relevant views on development issues and contribute to the reassessment and formulation of new theory.²³

The following section aims to review problems in the use of development theories. Although most people recognize the symptoms of underdevelopment and are in agreement in their intention to "cure the disease", there are many disagreements as to the causes of underdevelopment. The breadth of this disagreement can be seen in two polarized schools of thought which, following Higgott, we can loosely term the "Neo-Marxist school and the Modernization or Diffusionist school".²⁴ These two schools of thought have different ideologies or sets of philosophical tenets. For example, the neo-Marxists claim that the modernization ideology is used for serving the dominant class

21 Even though some government officials may have a good understanding of people's problems they are tied not only by rules and regulations, but also official perspectives (or "middle-class" perspectives) which may be the real basis of theoretical analysis and possible solutions. In order to avoid bias, Amnesty International (AI), for instance, does not allow staff members to work in their own country and thus avoids potential accusations that the results of their studies are not objective.

22 D. Goldsworthy, "Analysing Theories of Development", paper presented at a seminar organized by the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, May 1977, p. 9; and Blaser, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

23 Blaser, *op. cit.*, pp. 266-270.

24 R. Higgott, "Competing Theoretical Perspectives on Development and Underdevelopment: A Recent Intellectual History", *Politics*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, May 1978, p. 26.

whereas they argue that their own ideology takes the side of the underprivileged.²⁵ However, the differences which exist within and between those theories are still debated.

Generally speaking, the period commencing from the end of World War II until the present time can be divided into three broad periods which can be identified in terms of the impact of theory on development. In the 1950s and 1960s, the first stage of development theory was dominated by the modernization theory. The second stage during the late 1960s and early 1970s, was characterized by two separate approaches: there was a period of re-assessment of modernization, which switched the analysis of underdevelopment from an emphasis on Western-oriented transformation to a political-order model; at the same time there was the emergence of the dependency paradigm (generally categorized within neo-Marxist theory) which criticized both the modernization theory and orthodox Marxism (e.g. Lenin's theory of imperialism). In the third period from the mid-1970s, there has been much theoretical debate and reassessment of earlier theoretical approaches, involving strong criticism of the modernization and dependency schools of thought, but without the formulation of any new theoretical approaches that have gained widespread support.²⁶

For simplicity, I will organize the following theoretical discussion and its relation to development practice in terms firstly of modernization, then in terms of Marxism and dependency, and finally in terms of the general issues which have emerged in theoretical debates since the late seventies. The discussion of modernization and dependency will correspond broadly to their periods of influence as outlined in the previous paragraph.

Modernization theory

During the 1950s and 1960s, the theory of development was dominated by the modernization theory which provided a planning framework for underdeveloped countries to develop following a Western pattern. Modernization theory, which had its roots in the Western view of political and social change according to the theory of

²⁵ R. Sandbrook, "The 'Crisis' in Political Development Theory", The Journal of Development Studies, Vol. 12, No. 2, January 1976, p. 168.

²⁶ R. Higgott et al., "Theories of Development and Underdevelopment: Implications for the Study of Southeast Asia", in R. Higgott and R. Robison (eds.), Southeast Asia: Essays in the Political Economy of Structural Change, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985, p. 16.

evolution and a structural-functional model of society,²⁷ held the simple view that the causes of underdevelopment lay in the backwardness of pre-capitalist societies. In order to eradicate underdevelopment and to bridge the gap between underdeveloped societies and the developed West it was considered necessary only to give the correct stimuli, whereby the pre-capitalist societies, which contained both traditional and modern elements, would be transformed into industrial societies with modern institutions as had developed in the West. The chosen stimuli to development included foreign capital, investment and technology which were considered necessary for a rapid increase in the rate of economic growth in the developing countries; foreign aid (which freed up domestic capital) was another key factor in this approach, providing a major influx of capital to facilitate building an industrial base as had been so successful in post-war Europe under the Marshall Plan;²⁸ and the transfer of (Western) political and cultural values to the underdeveloped areas to support capitalist expansion.²⁹

Modernization theory, applied in most developing countries under the guidelines of the first UN development decade, was characterized by an emphasis on economic growth, social differentiation and the evolution of political organizations.³⁰ Economically, the growth in GNP was to be achieved by the formation of industrial systems run by (foreign) private enterprises based on modern technology and by the specialization of economic roles and activities (e.g. production, consumption, marketing and labour) following an Anglo-American model of the free-market economy. Economic plans and activities were centralized under the control of national development institutions. Socially, development was also considered to be achieved by

27 The theory of evolution was derived from Darwin's definition of biological evolution of human species "in terms of random variation and natural selection" which was accepted by scientists in the nineteenth century. Social scientists, later, borrowed from Darwin's theory to explain human history in evolutionary terms. See W.F. Wertheim, Evolution and Revolution: The Rising Waves of Emancipation, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1974, p. 17; and A.A. Mazrui, "From Social Darwinism to Current Theories of Modernization", World Politics, Vol. 21, No. 1, October 1968, pp. 69-83.

The structural-functional model emphasizes social forces within (rather than outside) a society and places high development value on well-organized institutions. Thus the achievement of economic growth is seen to rely on the efficiency of political units which facilitate the acceleration and diffusion of growth to eradicate problems of underdevelopment. See Higgott, "Competing Theoretical Perspectives", p. 28.

28 J. K. Galbraith, The Nature of Mass Poverty, New York: Penguin Books, 1979, Ch. 2. Galbraith was involved in early U.S. Government deliberations on development as well as being an early development theorist at Harvard. In this chapter, he give a useful summary of the emergence of a development approach in the West.

29 Advocated by economists such as W.W. Rostow, The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd. ed., 1971.

30 S.N. Eisenstadt, Modernization: Protest and Change, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966, Ch. 1.

encouraging individual effort and enterprise and by creating organizational structures which allowed specialized roles for individuals working in the institutional sphere. In particular the separation of the individual's occupational, political, family and kinship roles and responsibilities were considered to be critical, otherwise individual effort would be lost under the weight of social obligations. Social "mobilization" involved a change of people's attitudes, values, and expectations through the agency of wider education, more effective communications and mass media.

The development of political organizations in the first stage of modernization theory was guided by the "input-output" model of scholars from the American Social Science Research Council. Based on the political models of Easton and Lasswell, Almond devised a political-development model using input and output functions. His input functions involved what he called political socialization and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation and political communication, whereas the output functions, similar to a "separation of powers" model, were composed of rule-making, rule application and rule adjudication. Almond also argued that this input-output-function model created not only the "modern" political system but also the "pattern of boundary maintenance" (political sovereignty).³¹

Western political concepts and frameworks were introduced to create "modern" nation states. In particular concepts of political groups (e.g. parties and the party system), political functions, interest and pressure groups (for increasing participation in politics by social groups throughout society), nation-state, territorial units and different forms of nationalism were introduced.³² After the period of decolonization, the Western pattern had been extensively imposed as a political model for most colonial countries, for instance, the reform of administrative practices, the establishment of taxation system to replace tributes in kind and corvées of labour, the reform of secular and codified legal systems, the encouragement of liberal economic policies, and the

³¹ G.A. Almond, "Introduction: A Functional Approach to Comparative Politics", in G.A. Almond and J.S. Coleman (eds.), The Politics of the Developing Areas, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960, pp. 14-18.

³² L.W. Pye, "The Politics of Southeast Asia", in Almond and Coleman (eds.), The Politics of the Developing Areas, pp. 81-84.

provision of Westernized educational systems.³³ The difference between modern and traditional societies was seen in that the modern society was typified by a high rate of growth in the economy, public expression through pluralistic political organizations, the growing complexity of bureaucratic organizations and mechanisms, and cultural values which emphasized the individual and respect for their initiative and efficiency.³⁴

The outcomes from the application of modernization theory during the 1950s and 1960s were not as had been hoped for. Economically, despite generally encouraging rates of growth, there was very little "trickle down" from the rich to the poor. Disparities in the standard of living and in career opportunities between urban and rural areas accelerated and caused much urban migration, unemployment and crime. The process of industrialization did not lead to "the emergence of a *politically relevant* entrepreneurial or middle class" [my emphasis], because commercial activities were largely in the hands of foreign groups.³⁵ Socially, however, the application of modernization theory resulted in most countries in the expansion of an educated "middle class" which was expected to transfer its "modernity" to the areas of traditional societies within the boundary of the state. But in many countries this middle class did not participate in economic activities and had no basis for political expression; it became frustrated with economic and social change in which it was playing only a limited role. The changes were brought into their society from outside through foreign investment, Western culture and political "pluralist" systems, and there was little scope for an "internal initiative" to function effectively in the new social structure.³⁶ Political parties, interest and pressure groups were weak and ill-developed which meant that important sources of power to counterbalance "authoritarian" rule were missing.³⁷ The middle classes soon began to doubt the application of the Western model of development to

33 Although Thailand has never been a colony, it could not avoid being heavily influenced by the West. For example, King Chulalongkorn introduced the "reformation" in which traditional aristocrats were given new roles and responsibilities as "officials" in different departments set up by advisors from various Western countries. King Vachiravudh introduced fixed and standardized taxation to replace corvée labour, and introduced university education with the foundation of Chulalongkorn University for producing public servants. He also provided support for some students to study abroad (mainly in Western countries).

34 Eisenstadt, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-19. See also J.L.S. Girling, Capital and Power: Political Economy and Social Transformation, London: Croom Helm, 1987, pp. 136-138.

35 J.S. Coleman, "Conclusion: The Political Systems of the Developing Areas", in Almond and Coleman (eds.), The Politics of the Developing Areas, p. 537.

36 Eisenstadt, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-28.

37 Pye, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116. Pye further argued that people were seeking political participation to resolve personal problems associated with their breaking from traditional systems and "there is no logic that [political behaviour under the guideline of modernization theory] can relate the specific needs of the individual to any specific goals of public policy" [*ibid.*, p. 133].

their particular stage of transition from traditional to modern society. Their doubt and frustration were soon being expressed through social demands and movements against foreign penetration and the abuse of power by domestic elites, resulting in growing political disorder at both national and international levels.³⁸

Modernization theory had no clear answer as to how to increase people's participation in political development, or how to cope with increasing social demands and opposition movements.³⁹ In the face of the growing problems of political disorder, there was a re-assessment of the modernization theory during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The re-assessment which was based on the experiences of development in the 1950s and early 1960s, retained the emphasis on economic growth but introduced the notion of political order as providing the essential context for growth to be effective. One of the reasons for adopting the political order model was the need for "effective authority" as proposed by Huntington:

They [the communist governments] may not provide liberty, but they do provide authority; they do create governments that can govern. While Americans laboriously strive to narrow the economic gap, communists offer modernizing countries a tested and proven method of bridging the political gap. Amidst the social conflict and violence that plague modernizing countries, they provide some assurance of political order.⁴⁰

The political order approach to development, which supported political stability and regime maintenance, became attractive at the ideological level among ruling elites in most Third World countries who sought to stay in power as long as possible by arguing that the extension of governments' terms were necessary for the implementation of national development policies in the crucial period of economic transformation. At the

³⁸ Eisenstadt, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-133.

³⁹ This issue was never satisfactorily resolved even though modernization theorists such as Huntington regarded people's participation in political development to be "the most fundamental aspect of political modernization" [S.P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968, p. 34].

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8. Huntington argues further that "[T]he no-party state is the natural state for a traditional society" and that the no-party state is "fragile" because modernization will lead to opposition to political parties and ultimately to instability and even military coups [*ibid.*, pp. 403-407]. It seems to me that Sarit's military regime set up under the banner "Prachathipatai baepthai" (Thai-style democracy) fits the political order model of Huntington which claims that power and authority in modernizing countries "... may be filled temporarily by charismatic leadership or by military force" [*ibid.*, p. 461]. He thus seems to give approval for any form of stability that will provide a climate for growth even if this is not representative. This sort of approach by Huntington is reinforced by his approach to corruption which he argued "... is a direct product of the rise of new groups with new resources and the efforts of these groups to make themselves effective within the political sphere. Corruption may be the means of assimilating new groups into the political system by irregular means because the system has been unable to adapt sufficiently fast to provide legitimate and acceptable means for this purpose" [*ibid.*, p. 61].

same time, social and political movements and organizations including interest and pressure groups were prohibited. The political order approach thus helped in the creation of authoritarian regimes which, often with the support of Western aid donors, saw themselves as adopting the harsh and unpopular measures necessary to confront political chaos and economic stagnation while at the same time maintaining privileges for the elite.

Without any form of opposition from political movements, growth-led industrial development in this period was greatly expanded at the expense of agricultural development. The economic development was channelled into both small and large enterprises. Investors in small enterprises sought to take advantage of the massive pools of cheap unskilled labour which resulted from the extensive migration of people to the cities from rural areas. Investors in the large enterprises, mostly foreigners, introduced modern technology with high levels of productivity which were less dependent on labour. Fitzgerald argued that the "modern" industrial and "traditional" agricultural sectors in developing areas were interrelated in such a way that the modern sector benefited from the low wage structure in the "traditional" sectors (kept low by the state to prevent consumer good prices from rising), and the use of traditional and cultural values to ensure "labour discipline" and "political quiescence".⁴¹

The results of growth-led development following the Huntington model created not only huge social problems but eventually the breakdown of authoritarian regimes in developing societies. There appeared to have developed a structural duality with industrial growth and urbanization on one hand and the stagnation of rural areas on the other. This was seen in the weakening of the self-sufficiency of rural communities, the disruption of older pattern of production and traditional occupations (e.g. handicrafts), and the diminution of traditional security through kinship assistance, the growth in unemployment, underemployment and crime, as well as social and political conflicts within societies.⁴² The structural breakdown of authoritarian regimes was often marked by the emergence of various kinds of underground movements, the expansion of "outlawed" Communist parties, demands from different groups and the inability of central governments to deal with those social and political activities.

⁴¹ F.T. Fitzgerald, "Sociologies of Development", in P. Limqueco and B. McFarlane (eds.), Neo-Marxist Theories of Development, London: Croom Helm, 1983, p. 15.

⁴² Eisenstadt, op. cit., pp. 21-25, 83, 131; see concrete evidence in the Southeast Asian region provided by P.F. Bell and S.A. Resnick, "The Contradictions of Post-War Development in Southeast Asia", Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1970, pp. 37-40.

Since the late 1970s, modernization theory has been moving towards a "public policy" approach or policy analysis which is the latest adaptation of modernization theory to cope with social and political chaos. Reacting to strong criticisms from the dependency paradigm, modernization theory changed its analysis to use a political economy approach to tackle the problems of underdevelopment. The new "political economy of development" is represented by American political scientists such as Apter, Almond and Easton who use "post-liberal theory", responding to the limitations of behavioural and liberal political theory of American liberal intellectual tradition to counter dependency and to refine modernization theory, leading to a so-called "public policy" approach to development.⁴³

The public policy approach relies on the role of elites in the policy analysis process. The effective implementation of policy occurs on the basis of greater centralization of bureaucratic and technological control.⁴⁴ Higgott claims that technocratic elites tacitly accept the existing order and points to specific weaknesses in the public policy approach. First, it fails to take into account the fact that, in developing countries, the process of policy making is often "cumbersome" and "wasteful". Often powerful groups (such as business and military groups) take part, behind the scenes, in the process of political bargaining and, as a consequence, policies are not radically changed but are merely modified, which in turn leads to stagnation in the decision-making process.⁴⁵ Secondly, it is limited in that it uses "within-system" analysis as its main methodology to analyse policy within a regime maintenance context rather than in the broader political and social context (including international). In other words, it analyses inputs and outputs within a system and often ignores the linkage with external

⁴³ R. Higgott, Political Development Theory: The Contemporary Debates, London: Croom Helm, 1983, pp. 24, 29. The "political economy of development" was the modernization theory response to Baran's "political economy of underdevelopment" thesis which was a radical structuralist analysis akin to the dependency paradigm which came later.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 33.

⁴⁵ This claim might be reversed in a positive way and national policies changed to benefit the people in general, if the government, even composed of the national bourgeoisie and military, acts as a "true" representative of the people.

factors involved and therefore has little power to change or restructure the system.⁴⁶ As a consequence, the public policy approach may be regarded by some scholars to be a "vehicle for helping ruling elites improve their position", particularly as most Third World political elites have close links with foreign powers.⁴⁷

From Marxism to Dependency

The second stage in the formulation of development theory which I outlined earlier, saw the emergence of the dependency paradigm which developed its analysis from orthodox Marxism and appeared to criticize both orthodox Marxism and modernization theory.⁴⁸ The essence of orthodox Marxism lay in its threefold analysis:

46 "Structural-functional" or "within-system" approaches are ahistorical approaches and although they can describe the phenomenon of social change, they have not enough theoretical power to understand the reasons for change going beyond the existing structure. Chatthip Nartsupha of Chulalongkorn University rejects the "within-system" approach and suggests that the study of social science should be conducted on the basis of the structure of the system, evolution of the system and contradictions within the system. He argues that social science researchers should analyse not only a particular part of the system but also the overall structure (especially in analysing the problems of Thai development). Secondly, social science researchers should emphasize the development of the system, because the study of human society comprises an understanding of historical processes of change and the application of theory. Thirdly, social science researchers should emphasize conflict within the system as the study of social conflict will lead to an understanding of wider problems (e.g. of underdevelopment). Studies along these lines, Chatthip argues, would contribute to achieving peaceful social change. See Chatthip Nartsupha, "Sangkomsat samrap prathetthai" [Social Science for Thailand], in Chatthip Nartsupha *et al.*, Setthasat kap prawatsatthai [Thai Economics and History], [in Thai], Bangkok: Samnakphim sangsan, B.E. 2524 (1980), pp. 86-97.

47 Higgott, Political Development Theory, p. 35.

48 Theotonio dos Santos gives the definition of "dependence" as "[A] conditioning situation in which the economies of one group of countries are conditioned by the development and expansion of others. A relationship of interdependence between two or more economies or between such economies and the world trading system becomes a dependent relationship when some countries can expand through self-impulsion while others, being in a dependent position, can only expand as a reflection of the expansion of the dominant countries, which may have positive or negative effects on their immediate development. In either case, the basic situation of dependence causes these countries to be both backward and exploited. Dominant countries are endowed with technological, commercial, capital and socio-political predominance over dependent countries - the form of this predominance varying according to the particular historical moment - and can therefore exploit them, and extract part of the locally produced surplus. Dependence, then, is based upon an international division of labour which allows industrial development to take place in some countries while restricting it in others, whose growth is conditioned by and subjected to the power centres of the world." Quoted from K.K. Peng, The Malaysian Economy: Structures and Dependence, Kuala Lumpur: Institut Masyarakat, 1983, p. 9.

Peng, examined Malaysia as a case study of dependence in developing countries. He argues that developing countries are dependent upon developed countries in forms of direct economic impact, trade, finance and technology. At the same time, the developed countries gain surplus transfer from the developing countries in forms of investment, trade, finance and technology. In this regard, the developing countries are "conditioned by and subjected to" the developed capitalist countries structurally and dependently so that they can "suck out" surplus from the developing countries [*ibid.*, pp. 9-10].

the labour law of value; the base/superstructure model; and the idea of "organic totality".⁴⁹ Marx's law of value derived from his recognition of the labour value of human beings as both manual and intellectual labour in the production process. When productive inputs (e.g. land, technology, money, and labour) were inserted into the production process, Marx argued that the labour outputs, in particular of the unskilled, underprivileged workers, should be appropriated justly and not to be exploited in terms of "surplus value" by those who owned "the means of production".⁵⁰

The base and superstructure model was composed of both the "economic base" (determined by the mode of production) and the political and cultural superstructure. According to this reductionist approach, the "economic base" was considered to play a pre-dominant role over socio-political ideas and institutions which conformed to the requirements of economic determinism; in other words, the political matter was subject to the economic matter.⁵¹ The third level of analysis, based on the concept of "organic totality", was composed of both the historical formation of various modes of production (including the law of value and the structural characteristic of base and superstructure models) and the development of historical process (e.g. social transformation dominated by the revolutionary means). The "organic totality" was predicted by Marx to move from one mode to another via the process of "dialectical materialism" [or to move from the present mode of production (capitalist) to the next mode (socialist)] according to the law of "historical materialism".⁵²

49 Girling, Capital and Power, Ch. 1. M. Rader, Marx's Interpretation of History, New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 3-136.

50 In the production process, Marx regards "value" and its appropriation as a central idea of Marxism in the forms of "exchange value" and "surplus value". A worker sells his labour to an owner of the means of production and receives payment which represents the "exchange value" (the amount of which is determined by social necessity). In addition to producing his "exchange value", the worker also produces the gross income of the employer by contributing "surplus value". For instance, if the worker works for eight hours, six hours may be enough to produce his exchange value (wage) while the remaining two hours represent the gross income, or "surplus value", generated for the owner. In order to extract surplus value, Rader points out, the owners of production (both foreign and domestic enterprises) require the political and legal endorsement of the state in terms of labour conditions and wages [*ibid.*, pp. 39, 202-203]. See also J. Taylor, From Modernization to Mode of Production: A Critique of the Sociologies of Development and Underdevelopment, London: The Macmillan Press, 1979, pp. 109, 111; and Girling, Capital and Power, pp. 6-7.

51 Rader argues for Marx that the reductionist approach "misrepresents the full range and complexity of Marx's thought" [Rader, *op. cit.*, p. 135].

52 To understand Marxism, it is necessary to understand basic concepts used by Marx such as the forces of production, the relations of production, mode of production, historical materialism and dialectical materialism. Rader gives a useful explanation of these concepts as follows: "[T]he 'forces of production' are the labour power, raw materials, tools, techniques, and organization of the working personnel, involved in the production of economic goods and services. The 'relations of production' are the social interactions into which human beings enter at a given level of development of the productive forces"; this relation deals directly with the division of

Orthodox Marxism is theoretically distinct from the liberal theories of human value in the modernization school. First, the labour law of value was universally argued in terms of class antagonism (e.g. between workers and the owners of production in the capitalist mode of production). It also encouraged the "proletariat" or the working class, considered to be the most advanced force in pursuing social transformation, to emancipate themselves from the oppression of capitalism. Based on orthodox Marxism, Lenin argued that capitalism, which was established on the basis of free competition (or "out of free competition"), would gradually develop to the stage called "imperialism" and lead to "the transition from the capitalist system to a higher social-economic order".⁵³ Lenin also argued that the world situation just after the first World War was "inter-imperialist" rivalry between the "imperialist countries" such as Great Britain, France, Japan and the U.S., and the socialist countries led by the Soviet Union. Both imperialist and socialist camps formed alliances to fight against the other so as to protect and expand their interests and their "spheres of influence".⁵⁴ Nonetheless, although both capitalist and socialist camps pursued their separate objectives, they both adopted the same means for achieving their economic goals,

labour, for example, the factory owners and industrial workers in the capitalist mode [*ibid.*, p. 12]. The mode of production then contains both the force of production and the relation of production and can be defined as the economic base.

In order to explain a model of social development, Marx formulated the "materialistic" interpretation of history. This concept of history "... relies on expounding the real process of production - starting from the material production of life itself - and comprehending the form of intercourse connected with and created by ... the mode of production" [*ibid.*, p. 132]. Poulantzas explains that Marx's concept of history is studied through various modes of production and social formations, and is used by Marx to predict the forms of historical transition from one social formation to another [N. Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Class, transl. T. O'Hagan, London: Lowe and Brydone Printers, 1968, p. 11]. Emphasizing the historical importance of mode of production, Marx predicted five historical stages of social development, namely, primitive community, feudalism, capitalism, socialism and communism. See details in A. Giddens, A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism, [added titles Vol. I: Power, Property and the State; Vol. II: The Nation-State and Violence], Berkeley: University of California, 1981.

'Dialectical materialism' is the Marxist philosophy or "process of thought" used to analyse the development of history (historical materialism). This "process of thought" acts as a "discipline in one single theoretical movement" which constitutes a view of the historical development process [Poulantzas, Political Power, p. 11]. From this it can be seen that history (mainly of the working class) develops from one mode to another because there is "contradiction" within society stirring people to find a better way.

- 53 V.I. Lenin, Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1947, Chs. 7, 9 and 10, p. 148. Also, according to Lenin, "permanent peace" was impossible; a peaceful period was only "a 'truce' in periods between wars" [p. 144].
- 54 See details in P. Keal, "Contemporary Understanding about Spheres of Influence", Review of International Studies, July 1983, pp. 155-172; and P. Keal, Unspoken Rules and Superpower Dominance, London: Macmillan, 1983, pp. 3-6, 16, 65-86, 90-93.

namely the expansion of heavy industrialization. (The "imperialist" camp aimed to benefit private enterprise, whereas the "socialist" camp aimed to organize the working class).

Second, Lenin's view of social transformation was adopted by revolutionary movements, in particular in the formation of revolutionary agents such as the "Bolshevik" Party, the vanguard to mobilize the masses (mainly workers).⁵⁵ Mao Tse Tung also succeeded in mobilizing the masses (mainly peasants) in the Chinese revolution of 1945 by using the guidelines of Marxism-Leninism.

Although orthodox Marxism was questioned in terms of its analysis, it had the theoretical power to challenge the social analysis of liberalism and, as we have seen, made leading scholars from the modernization school adapt their theoretical explanation to cope with social and political disorder. The challenge that Marxist ideas presented was evident in the nationalist or "anti-imperialist" movements of the 1960s and 1970s which were inspired by the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. However, orthodox Marxism itself was also subjected to challenge by the new or "neo-Marxism" (sometimes called "Revisionist Marxism").

About the 1970s, the neo-Marxists began to criticize orthodox Marxism primarily in relation to its analysis of class conflict. The neo-Marxists paid attention not only to the working class but also to the non-working classes such as the bourgeoisie (both national and petty bourgeoisie) and the peasantry as agents for social transformation. The neo-Marxists debated whether the bourgeoisie or middle class, even if created in the Western image, would be capable of promoting national development when they served the interest of those who blocked development (i.e. foreign interests).⁵⁶

Second, instead of viewing the world situation as the theatre of inter-imperialist rivalry, the neo-Marxists were interested in a country's historical and cultural experience; the relationship between developed and developing countries in particular

⁵⁵ Girling argues that these political instruments were not effectively conceptualized by Marx [Girling, *Capital and Power*, p. 2]. See also Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*, p. 252.

⁵⁶ While Frank's view was that the bourgeoisie could not support national development because they served the interests of the foreign investors, Leys argued, by examining the Kenyan Case Study, that the bourgeoisie could support development in their own interest and not solely that of the foreign interests. See C. Leys, "Capital Accumulation, Class Formation and Dependency: the Significance of the Kenyan Case", *The Socialist Register*, 1978, pp. 241-266; and A. Foster-Carter, "Neo-Marxist Approaches to Development and Underdevelopment", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol. 3, 1973, pp. 10-11, 23-24, 32-33.

issues such as trade, raw material, outlets for investment, markets for finished products and the role of multi-national corporations (MNCs).⁵⁷ Samir Amin, for instance, did not accept that there was a general law of history or of social formation which a country could follow without analysing its own historical and cultural background, even though it might be possible for "a set of scientific concepts", guided by modes of production and inter-relation between modes, to help formulate a framework applicable to a specific situation.⁵⁸ And third, relating to the above, the neo-Marxist considered that both reform and revolution could be means for social transformation, depending on the particular condition of a country.⁵⁹

Compared with orthodox Marxism, the neo-Marxist gained empirical strength but at the cost of theoretical divisiveness and weakness. The strength came from the recognition of the importance of a country's experience whereas the weakness appeared to be that the neo-Marxist did not have any overall theoretical standard to guide and evaluate social formation. For example, they had no criteria for selecting which class would be the main agent in bringing social change, or for choosing either reform or revolution as the means for social transformation in any particular situation.

Nevertheless, the neo-Marxist approach did reveal its explanatory power for the study of underdevelopment. According to I.S. Kon, it offers development analysts a macro-sociological approach to set up successful micro-sociological research. Second, it offered a dialectical model, with a focus on change, development, conflict and class struggle. Third, it had an emphasis on historical perspectives in interpreting social phenomena and as Kon argues:

[T]he faster the pace of social changes, the bigger is the scale of historical comparisons which is necessary for the interpretation of the relevant processes. ... without profound historical comparisons it is impossible to understand the nature of changes in modern society, ...⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Foster-Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 12, 25.

⁵⁸ S. Amin, Unequal Development: An Essay on the Social Formations of Peripheral Capitalism, transl. B. Pearce, Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1976, p. 363. For a critique of Amin's idea see S. Smith, "Class Analysis Versus World System: Critique of Samir Amin's Typology of Underdevelopment", in Limqueco and McFarlane (eds.), Neo-Marxist Theories of Development, pp. 73-86; and S. Smith, "The Ideas of Samir Amin: Theory or Tautology", The Journal of Development Studies, Vol. 17, No. 1, October 1980, pp. 5-21.

⁵⁹ Foster Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁶⁰ Quoted from Higgott, "Competing Theoretical Perspectives", p. 38. See also I.S. Kon, "The Crisis of Western Sociology and the 'Second Discovery' of Marxism", in T. Bottomore (ed.), Crisis and Contention in Sociology, London: Sage Publications Ltd., 1975, p. 64.

Loosely categorized as neo-Marxist, the dependency paradigm appeared briefly but influentially. Using the structuralist approach and taking the world as a single unit of analysis (the "world-system" analysis), Frank pioneered the "Development of Underdevelopment" thesis arguing that:

[A]nalogously to the relations between development and underdevelopment on the international level, the contemporary underdeveloped institutions of the so-called backward or feudal domestic areas of an underdeveloped country are no less the product of the single historical process of capitalist development than are the so-called capitalist institutions of the supposedly more progressive areas.⁶¹

Frank not only rejected the modernization thesis of "dual society"⁶² but also blamed foreign penetration in the form of "monopoly capitalism" for causing the underdevelopment of Third World countries by arguing that industrialization could not take place in developing countries because of a metropolis-satellite relation of expropriation.⁶³

⁶¹ A.G. Frank, "The Development of Underdevelopment", in C.K. Wilber (ed.), The Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment, New York: Random House, 1984, p. 100. In 1963, Raul Prebisch of the Economic Council of Latin America (ECLA) school outlined the structuralist position in the analysis of economic development and the possibility of capital and technology transfer from the developed to the developing countries. The second intellectual root of the structuralist approach to development came from Paul Baran in his work: The Political Economy of Growth, (1954). Baran, who could be called the founding father of neo-marxism, argued that conventional development theories could not tackle the problems of underdevelopment and insisted that development through a revolutionary process was necessary due to the "deep conflicts of interest between Western capitalism and the progress of underdeveloped countries". Western development itself had, he argued, "taken place at the expense of the underdeveloped countries" [Foster-Carter, op.cit., p. 19]. During the mid 1960s, Andre Gunder Frank developed the dependency paradigm using the world-system theory approach and gave an initial explanation of the causes of underdevelopment which gained public acceptance.

Frank's thesis of underdevelopment was accepted more readily than others in the Third World mainly because he argued that development could not take place in the periphery. Prebisch, on the other hand, believed that, despite world market mechanisms, development could take place in the colonial or peripheral states by the transfer of technology and the redistribution of resources. Frank claimed that Prebisch's analysis depended on conditions which could not be controlled. For example, there was no guarantee of the distribution of product between the developing and developed countries because this task would be dominated by developed countries (centres) linked to those who served the centres' interest in the peripheral states. Frank argued strongly that monopoly capitalism led to the underdevelopment of the Third World through the metropolis-satellite chain of expropriation. See R. Stewart, "Dialectic of Underdevelopment: Imperialism, Class and State in the Coffee Industries of Papua New Guinea", Ph. D. dissertation, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Arts, ANU, May 1986, pp. 7-8, 12-15.

⁶² Frank, op.cit., p. 100. Frank explains the "dual society" thesis as the belief that one part of society becomes modernized and developed because of economic relations with the "outside" capitalist world; whereas the other part of society is underdeveloped because it is isolated and therefore remains as a feudal, subsistence-based society.

⁶³ A.G. Frank, Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America, London: Monthly Review Press, 1969, pp. 6-10. He also argues that the "metropolis-satellite contradiction" or chain of expropriation exists not only between the capitalist metropolis and peripheral satellite countries

This argument can be explained in the manner by which the economic surplus was drawn out from the peripheries (developing countries) to the centres (developed countries). Frank argued that the metropolis-satellite relation was established between the foreign and domestic ruling elites in the earlier colonial period. Through this link, the surplus was "sucked out" while making peripheries dependent on centres for capital and technology, so that no fundamental change occurred in the peripheries. Since the period of decolonization after World War II, this dependent relationship has remained unaltered and continued in the form of neo-colonialism.⁶⁴ Frank therefore proposed a solution for Third World development by the eradication of capitalism as "a world system of unequal exchange relations" and replacing it with socialism.⁶⁵

Frank's analysis had sufficient influence on development thinking to make both Marxist and modernization scholars reconsider their analysis.⁶⁶ It undermined the assumptions of modernization theory by rejecting its diffusionist capability, and highlighted the uneven nature of development in capitalist societies on a global scale in terms of "unequal exchange".⁶⁷ At the same time, it explained the relationship between developed and developing countries, in terms differing not only from orthodox Marxism but also from other theories of imperialism. For example, distinct from the classical theme of Lenin's theory of "inter-imperialist rivalry", Frank argued that, in the relationship between developed and developing countries, "monopoly capitalism" determined the distribution of surplus and dominated the relationship between centres and peripheries throughout the social formation. Galtung's theory of imperialism differed from Frank's analysis in that instead of emphasizing monopoly capitalism,

at the international level but also occurs within peripheral countries between industrial cities and agricultural districts.

64 Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

65 Higgott *et al.*, "Theories of Development", p. 35.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

67 Amin, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-154, 238. I borrow Amin's term. However, although Amin and Frank have similar ideas about the causes of underdevelopment, Amin accepted the crucial importance of monopoly in shaping the peripheral economy, he did not accept that the metropolis-satellite chain of expropriation was the only mechanism that caused underdevelopment. He argued that production structured in the periphery was also directly determined by the peripheral economy's relations with the world market. Nonetheless, Amin concluded that autonomous development in the periphery was impossible because economic structures in the periphery were not highly integrated among themselves. Instead, they were integrated into the capitalist world market system.

Galtung used a structuralist approach to analyse how developed countries took advantage of developing countries economically, politically and culturally.⁶⁸

About the first half of the 1970s, the dependency analysis had a wide impact. For example, development critics argued in dependency terms that foreign penetration was creating massive external debt for Southeast Asian countries. Foreign investors were extracting surplus capital while providing little employment, effecting little technology transfer, monopolizing economic decision-making and extending foreign ownership of the productive forces. Moreover, they were creating domestic ruling groups who concentrated power and wealth in the initial stages of growth. In order to protect their capital interest, foreign investors supported the maintenance of authoritarian regimes in the Third World (most of which were military regimes) through association with domestic ruling groups. Therefore, dependency became a very potent political and ideological weapon for a host of political groups in Third World countries, even though it had a problem at the practical level in explaining how subordinate classes intervened in state affairs.⁶⁹

Some features of the development debate from the late 1970s to the present

Critique of modernization theory

The inadequate explanatory power of modernization theory is seen in several ways when it is applied in developing countries. Its concepts (including models and approaches), e.g. nation-state, political order, behaviourist approach, and public policy approach, are open to criticism. For example, the concept of nation-state which refers to state sovereignty⁷⁰ as "the most useful unit of analysis in international politics" is increasingly challenged because most Third World countries "are incapable of measuring up to the normal indicators of sovereignty".⁷¹ Because of the lack of genuine

⁶⁸ J. Galtung, "A Structural Theory of Imperialism", Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1971, pp. 81-118.

⁶⁹ Higgott et al., "Theories of Development", pp. 36-37.

⁷⁰ This concept is simply based upon the idea that every sovereign state has autonomous power in relations with other states. See H. Bull, The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics, London: Macmillan, 1982, pp. 8-9, 36-37.

⁷¹ Higgott, "Competing Theoretical Perspectives", p. 37

autonomous power, weak states such as colonial states or new states find it very difficult to compete with strong states in the international market.⁷²

Other approaches of modernization theory were also criticized. For instance, Pennock criticizes the theory of political order in that if political goods satisfy 'needs', it should not only be the needs of the state, "but human needs whose fulfilment makes the polity valuable to man and gives its justification ...".⁷³ The outputs are not merely material goods but symbolic goods also, such as the feelings of dignity, self-reliance and self-consciousness in development. Higgott argued, too, that although the public policy analysis was a logical consequence of the integration of political order and growth theories, it focused on the centralization of power and authority as a necessary factor in the modernization process.⁷⁴ With these sorts of criticisms, modernization was shown to be an inadequate model for analysing development in Third World countries.

Modernization theory does not give a clear indication of the intended beneficiaries of development. Pratt and Nafziger argue that the structural-functional model says very little about political questions such as which social groups would appropriate the productive resources, how they would be allocated and for whose specific benefit.⁷⁵ It also ignores the crucial importance of the international influence upon the internal politics of developing countries and on the historical dimensions of

⁷² R.O. Keohane and J.S. Nye, Transnational Relations and World Politics, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981, pp. ix-xxix, 371-398.

In addition, Hintze suggests that the state's structure and form depend as much on the conditions of its external-power position as on the social-structure conditions of its internal process [O. Hintze, "The State in Historical Perspective" in R. Bendix *et al.* (eds.), State and Society, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973, p. 156]. That means the maintenance and status of the boundary of new states relies relatively heavily upon external factors. The structural role played by international political and economic factors in the formation and survival of the new nation-states creates a severe analysis problem for the political developmentalists. They are unable to go beyond the boundary of the nation-state. Thus, the failure of the modernization theory is not only a mere oversight of internal historical analysis of Third World countries, but also a direct result of the limitation of the theoretical framework [Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 5].

⁷³ R. Pennock, "Political Development, Political Systems, and Political Goods", World Politics, Vol. 18, No. 3, April 1966, p. 420.

⁷⁴ Higgott *et al.*, "Theories of Development", p. 22.

⁷⁵ R.B. Pratt, "The Underdeveloped Political Science of Development", Studies in Comparative International Development, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1973, pp. 88-112; and E.W. Nafziger, "A Critique of Development Economics in the U.S.", Journal of Development Studies, Vol. 13, No. 1, October 1976, p. 20.

outside involvement.⁷⁶ Sandbrook adds that neither the Binder nor Almond models raise issues such as the great powers' involvement in constraining development through military intervention; intrusion via security and intelligence agencies; their provision of economic and military aid to dictatorships; and their penetration of national economies with foreign capital and aid; nor did they mention the unequal structures of international trade.⁷⁷

We may summarize the critique of the modernization theory by referring to Bernstein who, along with Weinberg, argued that modernization theory had some explanatory power for Western development because it was built on the ground of Western "historical and sociological factors", in particular, "on a model of the American political system". However, when modernization theory was applied outside the Western context on the assumption that the underdeveloped countries were simply at a pre-capitalist stage of development and could modernize following the Western pattern, it became "painfully obvious" that it did not work.⁷⁸

Critique of the dependency paradigm

Some criticisms of the dependency paradigm which are still debated among Marxist scholars can be seen in commentaries on Frank's work. According to Laclau, for example, Frank's concept of the mode of production was vague and he did not clearly distinguish between different modes of production which led him to conclude that any production for a market meant the existence of capitalism.⁷⁹ As an extension of this, his analysis of the metropolis-satellite relation of expropriation could be regarded as a reductionist approach which, because it was based on limited evidence of capitalist intrusion, was inadequate to analyse the complexity of Third World development. Taylor for his part argues that Frank's hypothesis failed to answer a number of fundamental problems including:

⁷⁶ Pratt, *op. cit.*, p. 94. Sandbrook, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-177.

⁷⁷ Sandbrook, *op. cit.*, p. 179. In the area of domestic politics, modernization serves the interest of ruling elites, while in the area of international politics, it serves the interest of international enterprises.

⁷⁸ H. Bernstein, "Modernization Theory and the Sociological Study of Development", *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, January 1971, pp. 143, 147, 154.

⁷⁹ E. Laclau, "Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin American", *New Left Review*, No. 67, May-June 1971, p. 28.

... the structure of non-capitalist social formation, the effect upon these of different forms of capitalist penetration, the bases for the existence of these different forms, the bases for the development of capitalist production itself, and ... the extent to which elements of the superstructures of non-capitalist social formations can continue to survive and be reproduced even when a capitalist mode of production is dominant.⁸⁰

On the issue of exploitation and how it occurred, Stewart believed, contrary to Frank, that international capital entered the periphery in various forms and types, not only in the monopoly form as Frank argued, and that there was therefore a need for dependency theory to clarify where and how exploitation occurs, whether through the external centre – periphery relations, or internally in the process of social formation via capital and labour relations. Stewart further claimed that while evidence suggested that exploitation had taken place at both levels and in both forms, post-dependency theorists had further work to do to explain the impact of external factors on internal development.⁸¹ In summary, therefore, Frank's hypothesis was merely useful to describe the general nature of exploitation between developed and developing countries, not to explain them in a concrete sense.⁸²

Leys and Warren were also critical of Frank's view that development could not take place at the periphery, arguing that in fact such development did occur, and that the national bourgeoisie in the periphery performed an historically progressive role in that development.⁸³ Leys argued further that where there was struggle between classes, each attempted to shift the boundaries of appropriation in their own favour. However, he did not show systematically how the boundary was shifted between classes inside the periphery, and how it was affected by external factors. Both Frank and Leys therefore still had theoretical problems in dealing with the connection between the internal analysis of class location (in production) and class relations across national boundaries.⁸⁴

Difficulties with class analysis and the identification of who should benefit from development also left the dependency theory open to criticism. Wallerstein argues that one of the first principles of class analysis was that:

80 J. Taylor, "Neo-Marxism and Development — A Sociological Phantasy", Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol. 13, No. 1, 1973, p. 16.

81 Stewart, op. cit., p. 20.

82 Higgott, "Competing Theoretical Perspectives", p. 34.

83 Leys, "Capital Accumulation", pp. 257-263; and B. Warren, "The Internationalization of Capital and the Nation State: A Comment", New Left Review, No. 68, July-August 1971, pp. 83-88.

84 Stewart, op. cit., p. 45.

... classes do not have some permanent reality. Rather they are formed, they consolidate themselves, they disintegrate or disaggregate, and they are re-formed. It is a process of constant movement, and the greatest barrier to understanding their action is reification. ... [t]here are patterns we can describe and which aid us to identify concrete realities and explain historical events. But the patterns themselves evolve over time, even within the historical-bound phenomenon of the modern capitalist world-economy.⁸⁵

Recognizing the complexity of class analysis, Bernstein, who worked on the analysis of class locations in the periphery and on the articulation of modes of production, concluded that "the whole range of classes has to be theorized".⁸⁶ To some extent, therefore, dependency theory could not decide who (which class) should benefit in the development process because it was still unclear about its class analysis.⁸⁷

Another major problem confronting dependency theory was in its analysis of the role of the periphery state which is considered to develop functionally in the context of class antagonism.⁸⁸ A state, in Marxist terms (remembering this to be largely the basis of dependency paradigm), is "... a complex network of class relations in which many different class interests can be registered".⁸⁹ In this view, the function of state is revealed in the extent to which different classes can gain representation in a state's institution and use that agency to make demands over and against other classes and institutions within the state machinery. The state therefore represents a consensus between classes through the creation of a binding ideology which may be defined as "an interest-based philosophy of a particular social group around which the group can be mobilized", and is varied according to which group is the dominant class at any particular time.⁹⁰ The dependency theorists, however, seem to downgrade the role of the periphery state because of domination by the centre and the impact of international class struggle (i.e. in the context of foreign enterprises and international capitalism). Hence dependency theorists did not satisfactorily explain the occurrence of autonomous

85 I. Wallerstein, "Class-Formation in the Capitalist World Economy", *Politics and Society*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1975, p. 369. Wallerstein explains the term "reification" following L. Goldmann as "the replacement of the qualitative by the quantitative, of the concrete by the abstract" and "closely tied to production for the market, notably to capitalist production ..." [*ibid.*, p. 369, fn. 3]. Stewart adds that the self-maximizing actions of classes in both centres and peripheries can be seen in two main ways – one is "by forging alliances with other classes", the other is "by developing a coherent ideological strength" to give them a dominant role over other classes. [Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 50.]

86 Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

87 Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

88 Stewart, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-93.

89 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

90 *Ibid.*, p. 88.

state policies (in the periphery) which encourage indigenous capitalism at the expense of international capitalism.⁹¹

Because dependency scholars were unclear in their view of class struggle, yet reduced the role of the peripheral state to be subject to class antagonism, their proposed solution necessitated the eradication of capitalism. As this solution was revolutionary it was not widely accepted and was criticized by most theoretical analysts. For example, Goldsworthy argues that "... revolution seems so very 'unlikely' to happen in the majority of poor countries within a medium-range time scale".⁹² Sandbrook also criticizes the radical analysts in that they "downgrade the value of stability and advocate intervention in social processes to promote certain changes ...".⁹³

Compared with modernization, dependency paid more attention to the role of people in development and their place in relation to the state, as well as to the responsibilities of the state to all its citizens. This in part draws from the Marxist view of production as involving a double relationship between people, and between people and nature, which must play a fundamental role in any explanation of social development.⁹⁴ Modernization on the other hand has the strength of proposing a practical path to development, and the proponents of modernization have claimed theoretical strength from their strong determination to use the state and political institutions, across the boundary of time and place, to put its ideology in practice. It is the role of the state which is critical to an analysis of development and I will consider it further in the following section.

The role of the state and the need for a countervailing force

One of the crucial unsolved problems in the current debate on development is the role to be given to the state when considering development goals and strategies. Poulantzas points out the weaknesses of both the Marxist reductionist approach and of

91 For example, while the dependency paradigm was able to largely explain the evidence in Latin American cases, it was not satisfactory in explaining development in East Asia (especially Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea) where the periphery states exercise autonomous power so that they, and not the foreign enterprises alone, benefited from development. See Girling, *Capital and Power*, pp. 36-37.

92 Goldsworthy, *op. cit.*, p. 28. Goldsworthy does not, however, totally reject revolutionary means, adding "At the same time, this is not to be construed as a necessarily anti-revolutionary position". See also Wertheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 17, 54-62.

93 Sandbrook, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

94 P.F. Bell, "Class Relations and Thai Development", in E.E. Boesch (ed.), *Thai Culture: Report on the Second Thai-European Research Seminar*, Socio-Psychological Research Centre on Development Planning, Saarbruecken, 1982, p. 112.

Modernization in relation to the role of the state. He criticized both the generalization of modernization theory and orthodox Marxism when he argues that there is no "general theory" of economy and of political "science" or "sociology" without considering "immutable boundaries" (which he relates to the mode of production). As he says:

It is rather the mode of production itself - that totality of economic, political and ideological determinations - which fixes the boundaries of these spaces, sketching out their fields and defining their respective elements. ... Now, the very fact that the space, field and respective concepts of the state-political and the economy (relations of production) present themselves in different ways according to the mode of production, leads to a conclusion that runs counter to all formalist theoreticism.⁹⁵

On the problems confronting Marxist analyses is the relationship between class analysis and the role of the state, he further argues that:

In the order of theoretical explanation, it makes no sense whatever to speak of a social field of class division of labour and class power existing *prior* to the State... Wherever, there is class division and thus class struggle and power, the State already exists as institutionalized political power. ... State is the heart of the exercise of political power [*italic as in original*].⁹⁶

Poulantzas puts the view that "the genuine State or real power are [here] located not on the shady side (the side of classes) but on the other, sunny side".⁹⁷ The state, he argues, has a dual nature and role. On the one hand, existing side by side with classes and the class struggle, the state has a moral obligation to protect its citizen from being harmed by intruders. On the other hand, being directly related to class and the class struggle, the state by definition is destined to be utilized by the dominant classes.

If we accept Poulantzas's argument, we can see a place for interest and pressure groups (e.g. NGOs) to counter the the full impact of the dominant class (the "shady side") and play a role in producing a state which responds to its people (the "sunny side"). In neo-Marxist terms, Third World development is constrained by both internal factors, (e.g. the "bureaucratic polity" and authoritarian regimes) and external factors, (e.g. the great powers' influence over economics and politics, and over the government

⁹⁵ Poulantzas, State, Power, Socialism, pp. 17, 19.

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 39, 258.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 13. See also Beitz's argument which raises some questions about the relationship between "state autonomy" and "individual liberty", for instance, in pointing to the moral obligation of the state to its citizen he argues that "the rights of states rest on the consent of their members" and the state not only protects "individual lives and liberties" but also its "citizens" [C. Beitz, Political Theory and International Relations, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979, pp. 76-77]. For his argument about state autonomy and domestic social justice see ibid., pp. 121-123.

and people), and a third party, especially NGOs, would be useful in the "checks and balances" process.

In practical terms, however, Third World development has been dominated by the modernization theory, in particular through the revised form of public policy approach (which I have discussed above) applied in most Third World countries,⁹⁸ and through international financial institutions — the World Bank and the IMF — which have played a leading role in manipulating the world financial system since the end of World War II.⁹⁹ In addition there is a significant role played by the international UN agencies such as UNDP, FAO, UNICEF and WHO. Together these organizations represent powerful instruments which can seriously compromise the role of the state in many Third World countries by imposing their analyses and strategies on host governments.

A counter to some extent to the domination of the Bank, the Fund and UN agencies, and to the emergence in the 1960s of significant levels of bilateral development assistance, has been the emergence of non-government organizations (NGOs) working largely to counterbalance the self-interest of the international organizations and the donor states by promoting humanitarian concerns and the welfare of the poor in Third World countries. These NGOs were founded by groups of people who saw themselves as independent of government boundaries (even though some members are government officials). From the end of World War II until the 1970s, the number of NGOs was somewhere in the vicinity of 2,500 to 3,000 (depending on the definition used) working mainly in the developed countries.¹⁰⁰ They were operating in many fields, e.g. health, economics, political science, law and technology, and began

98 Higgott, Political Development Theory, pp. 26-58.

99 C. Payer, The Debt Trap: The IMF and the Third World, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1974, pp. 215-219. In 1966, these two organizations clarified their responsibilities, whereby the Bank would serve as a "loan broker and guarantor" for development programmes and project evaluation whereas the Fund would control exchange rates, assist the country members to adjust their balance of payment and to plan for their economic advance. According to Payer, these organizations also have a close connection with the "same persons" working on both Boards of Committee and their joint publication: Finance and Development magazine aims to publicize their programmes and philosophy. However, there recently appears to have been some areas of co-operation between the World Bank and NGOs through the World Bank-NGO Committee. The World Bank-NGO Committee, which includes 21 NGOs and Bank staff, was set up in 1982 to "encourage dialogue on development policy", to "facilitate Government - NGO - Bank operational co-operation", and to "promote co-operation in development education" [Leaflet of Australian Labor Party (ALP), Third World Forum, Canberra, January 1990].

100 K. Skjelsback, "The Growth of International Non-governmental Organization in the Twentieth Century", in R.O. Keohane and J.S. Nye (eds.), Transnational Relations and World Politics, p. 71.

more and more to extend their operations to the Third World countries during the 1970s. Examples may be seen in organizations such as International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Bread for the World, Amnesty International (AI), and Dutch Organization for International Co-operation (NOVIB). More and more from the mid 1970s and the 1980s, indigenous NGOs began to emerge in developing countries performing similar activities to the NGOs from the developed countries.¹⁰¹

NGOs from developing countries as well as the developed countries pay particular attention to rural development in the Third World:

[R]ural development in the Third World is not only a life and death matter for two billion peasants, but also a problem affecting the peace and security of every nation.¹⁰²

Counter to the macro-economic plans emphasized by the World Bank and the IMF, the NGOs have attempted to implement an "alternative development" concept which involves not only the purely economic dimension of development but also the socio-political and cultural dimensions.¹⁰³ Through this strategy, NGO activities include "wide ranging skills across disciplinary line",¹⁰⁴ providing economic, social and political assistance to Third World countries in the short and medium terms while at the

101 B. Schneider, The Barefoot Revolution: A Report to the Club of Rome, transl. A.F. Villon, London: IT Publications, 1988, Ch. 7; D. Weissbrodt, "The Role of International Non-governmental Organizations in the Implementation of Human Rights", Texas International Law Journal, Vol. 12, 1977, p. 296.

102 B. Schneider, op. cit., p. xii.

103 See further explanation by P. Streeten, "The Concept of 'Alternative': Alternatives in Development", World Development, Vol. 2, No. 2, February 1974, pp. 5-6. Examples of this new concept appear in various publications such as C.I. Itty (ed.), Searching for Asian Paradigms, Bangkok: Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD), 1984; R. Crocombe, The Pacific Way: An Emerging Identity, Suva: Lotu Pasifika Productions, 1976.

104 Report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade on Canada's Official Development Assistance Policies and Programmes (The Winergard Report), For Whose Benefit?, May, 1978, p. 22.

Lipton also proposes a similar view and suggests that the development for the poor in less-developed countries requires problem-oriented analyses at both micro-level and macro-level, via an inter-disciplinary studies (IDS) approach. He argues that by comparison with developed countries, most people in developing countries are less literate, and social structures are more loosely organized and are less structuralized and functionalized. People's economic behaviour is understood in terms of social and cultural factors and therefore requires several disciplines to be integrated in the analysis of problems.

While an IDS approach has the advantage of offering a wider and stronger interaction among factors studied from various disciplines, it requires more time and effort for individual social scientists to work through various disciplines and to interact with other experts. Lipton suggests the possible way to overcome the weakness of the IDS approach would be to assign groups of problem to individual academics. See M. Lipton, "Interdisciplinary Studies in Less Developed Countries", Journal of Development Studies, Vol. 7, No. 1, October 1970, pp. 5-18.

same time providing "development education" for both donor and recipient countries in the long term.¹⁰⁵ NGOs, on the whole, also regard the principle of basic human rights to be "one of the most important conditions for a true development process".¹⁰⁶

Compared with government work (often under the influence of the World Bank etc.) NGO activities, even though conducted on a small scale, closely touch the lives of the people and thus have a direct impact on government. Most governments seem to be quite sensitive to NGO criticism of government policies, behaviour, and attitude towards the people. NGO campaigns and movements which highlight the people participation concept in development and the need for representative democratic institutions, can be the catalyst for governments to adjust development policies appropriate to people's needs, to change some decisions offensive to people and to recognize the fundamental rights of their citizens.

Development debate in the Thai context: the rationalization of the role of the state in national development

Following the discussion of the theoretical development debates above, this section aims to show that while the mainstream of development thinking in Thailand has been broadly influenced by both modernization and Marxist theories, the discussion of Thai development since the post-war period, has proved "to be much more complex than any single 'blanket' conceptualization had yet been able to show".¹⁰⁷

On the one hand, most scholars from the modernization school focus their studies on the concept of state and its role and explain them through various economic and political science theories. Thai economic development plans have followed the economic growth models of international organizations such as the World Bank and the UN development agencies, and of academics such as Muscat.¹⁰⁸ The models, which were widely accepted, stressed the role of the private sector in the process of capital

105 Development education is a program of providing information about Third World development in developed countries and of drawing attention to similar or related issues in the developed countries to change the attitudes of people in the developed countries so that they become more aware of the problems of underdevelopment and realize that they have a responsibility to help solve those problems. See A. Curtis, "Overseas Study of National Development Education Programmes", Report to the Committee for Development Co-operation, Australian Freedom from Hunger Campaign, 1988, pp. 26-27.

106 The Winergard Report, p. 33.

107 Chairat Charoensin-o-larn, "Understanding Postwar 'Reformism' in Thailand: A Reinterpretation of Rural Development", Ph.D. dissertation in Political Science, Graduate Division of the University of Hawaii, August 1985, p. viii.

108 R.J. Muscat, Development Strategy in Thailand: A Study of Economic Growth, London: Praeger Publishers, 1966.

accumulation and reduced the role of the state in the economic development process. At the same time, Thai political development has been influenced by mainly European and American sources to follow a "Western" democratic model. Thus the Thai political system has been regarded by the modernizers as an effective and neutral agency which could be transformed into Western style democratic state by the injection of appropriate inputs. The inputs they saw as necessary were political parties and interest and pressure groups in which the majority of Thai would be expected to participate actively and thereby become involved in a Western-style political system. With the proper introduction and functioning of the inputs it was expected that political outputs would emerge in the form of modern laws and policies.

During the 1960s, a number of American scholars analysed Thai political development using different political science theories. For example, Wilson, using the behavioural approach, generally found that the Thai ruling elites - in particular the military and bureaucracy after the change of 1932 - had badly lost direction and purpose leading to a decline in self-control and to a "moral ambiguity of authority". He added that he could not see a way out of the "cliquism and corruption" that had developed but hoped that there would appear an "extragovernmental power", which he did not specifically identify, to counterbalance the role of the government.¹⁰⁹ Using behavioural and institutional approaches, Riggs and Siffin characterized Thai politics as an example of the "bureaucratic polity" model (i.e. the bureaucratic dominance over politics) and explained that Thai politics had not developed far because there was a "struggle for power as an end in itself among competing cliques and factions" and "the instrumentalities for popular control" were "weak or embryonic."¹¹⁰ Jacobs put forward his "patrimonial" thesis, which was drawn from Weber, and which he claimed could explain why little real development resulted from implementing "modernization" in an "Asian-patrimonial society" like Thailand. His thesis explained the relationship between patrons and clients in terms of "power" and its relation to other factors such as personal allegiance and bureaucratic structure. He described the Thai political system in Riggs's term as "bureaucratic polity" which is "a patrimonial administrative apparatus which is its own decision maker, and which, defines and enforces its own role in the society and is beholden to no outside agent for regulation or review" and which had "...

109 D.A. Wilson, Politics in Thailand, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962, pp. 278, 281.

110 F.W. Riggs, Thailand: The Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity, Honolulu: East-West Centre Press, 1967, p. 212; and W.J. Siffin, The Thai Bureaucracy: Institutional Change and Development, Honolulu: East-West Centre Press, 1966, pp. 253-254.

first successfully blocked and subsequently thwarted the growth of outside control over and competition with the bureaucratic decision making monopoly".¹¹¹

Criticisms of the modernization approach in Thailand has grown significantly since the 1970s, particularly following the urban middle class uprising of 1973. Hewison criticizes the work of Wilson, Riggs and Siffin on the grounds that while the study of the behaviour of elites had become a central topic in their studies of Thai politics, the majority poor were regarded as unconcerned, passive, individualistic, and easily dominated by civil and military elites.¹¹² Chairat argued too that Riggs "oversimplifies the complexity of Thai politics as merely a rivalry among big bureaucrats who want to enhance their power and interests" and therefore failed to see that Sarit's achievement of political power was not just a matter of factional rivalry against the Phin-Phao and Phibun groups (see details in Chapter 2 pp. 62-63), but also a result of the economic concerns and pressures applied by the World Bank, as well as the support of the US. Wilson and Riggs also failed to foresee the rise of the "extra-bureaucratic force" and institutions outside the bureaucracy which came to counterbalance the power of the "bureaucratic polity".¹¹³ Bell and Boonsanong for their part criticized Jacobs for overlooking necessary socio-political factors in various patterns of development and argued that his thesis "denies *any* possibility of structural change due to any possible forces, internal or external or both" (italic as in original) and that his methodology ignored conflict in social change and therefore could not "capture" any social force bringing a new stage of development.¹¹⁴

In a study on the role of interest and pressure groups in Thailand, Prudhisan examined patron-client relationship between the "bureaucratic polity" and the emerging

111 N. Jacobs, Modernization Without Development: Thailand as an Asian Case Study, London: Praeger Publishers, 1971, p. 30.

112 K.J. Hewison, "The State and Capitalist Development in Thailand", in R. Higgott and R. Robison (eds.), Southeast Asia: Essays in the Political Economy of Structural Change, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985, p. 266. Historical evidence such as the 14 October 1973 uprising in Thailand can provide an outstanding example of a people's attempt to achieve a Western democratic system. Eventually, those groups (trade unions, interest groups, opposition parties) were dominated, subverted and destroyed by state intervention.

113 Chairat, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-113; see Girling, Thailand: Society and Politics, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981, pp. 11-12.

114 P.F. Bell and Boonsanong Punyodyasa, "The Sources of Social Change in Thailand: A Review Article of Norman Jacobs, Modernization Without Development: Thailand as an Asian Case Study", Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1974, pp. 212-213; see similar opinion to Bell and Boonsanong in Saneh Chamarik, " 'Reviews': Norman Jacobs, Modernization Without Development: Thailand as an Asian Case Study", The Journal of the Siam Society, Vol. 61, January 1973, pp. 327-331.

"non-elite groups" such as agricultural co-operatives, teachers' association, and workers' organizations.¹¹⁵ In particular, he explored the weakness of interest groups formed at the initiative of the bureaucracy rather than being created from an actual demand of the citizens in response to their own needs. The interest groups set up under the patronage of the "bureaucratic polity" served as part of the bureaucratic machinery albeit under the banner of popular control. Political development in this form could, Prudhisan argued, encourage the formation of popular participation in state activities but could not create "the growth of popular *control* over government" in the real sense of democratic system [*italic as in original*].¹¹⁶

According to Prudhisan it was not until the 1973 uprising that the "non-bureaucratic" groups appeared to have, at least to some extent, the autonomous power to actively represent the people's interest. These groups, which comprised mainly the middle class with the support of urban and rural populations, were the result of the economic development and expansion of education during the 1950s and 1960s. They were not dominated or initiated under the auspices of the bureaucratic system. The main activities of the non-bureaucratic groups from 1973-1976 was to encourage the creation of various kind of interest groups such as the Peasant Federation of Thailand (PFT), Federation of Labour Union of Thailand (FLUT); and of pressure groups such as the National Student Centre of Thailand (NSCT), the Federation of Independent Students of Thailand (FIST), People for Democracy Group (PDG) and Union for Civil Liberty (UCL). The ultimate aims of these "non-bureaucratic groups" were not only to encourage people to participate in state activities but also to attempt to influence the

115 Prudhisan Jumbala, "Interest and Pressure Groups", in Somsakdi Xuto (ed.), Government and Politics of Thailand, London: Oxford University Press, 1987; and Suksan Bunyakon, "Ongkon prachachon kap nganpatthana: khwamkloenwai thangkhwamkhit nai phakrathaban" [People's Organizations and Development Work: The Conceptual Movement in the Government's Sector], Thanglu'ak kanpatthana [Alternative Development Dossier], [in Thai], Vol. 2., May-June B.E. 2529 [1986], pp. 1-9. Suksan reveals that people's organizations were created under the initiatives of both the Kings and the bureaucrats following the Western pattern since the turn of the century. For example, in 1892, King Chulalongkorn made an initial experiment of the election of village leaders [Kamnan-Phuyaiban Election] at Ban Ko, Bangpa-in District, Ayudhaya Province. In 1953, Phibun initiated the village council system which he had seen during his tour around Europe and America. The people's organizations created under the government's initiatives brought little benefit to the people.

116 Prudhisan, op. cit., p. 117. In addition, Prudhisan does not totally agree with the perspective of "patron and client" relationship applied to the Thai society. He prefers to characterize the relationship between superiors and inferiors as "entourage" which means a group of people of different status who bind themselves together. Each entourage may work independently after taking an order from a leader and would be able to move from one leader to another. He argues that this kind of relationship - entourage - prevents us from looking at the pattern of Thai relationships "purely from a 'patron-client' perspective" [*ibid.*, pp. 112-113].

government's decision and policies for the benefit of the people. These groups formed the basis of the NGO movement in Thailand which I emphasize in this thesis.¹¹⁷

Marxist scholars also examined Thai society and the role of the state. They adopted political economy or structural approaches in works published both before and after World War II. Publications before the War may be traced back to the economic plans of Phraya Suriyanuwat (Koet Bunnag) and Luang Pradit Manutham (Pridi Phanomyong), both of which were influenced by Marxist analysis and which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 2. In the post-War period there have been a range of studies from the early 1950s to the present which have been summarized by Reynolds and Hong.¹¹⁸

As well as the translations, articles and summaries of Marxist socio-economic theory in periodical and weekly magazines such as Aksonsang and Piyamit, there were several publications which were influential in Thai economic and political thinking. For example, Supha Sirimanond's Capitalism, published in 1951 and 1974, presented a basic explanation of Marxist concepts such as "exchange value" and "surplus value" and was used as a textbook in the Faculty of Economic, Thammasat University. Thailand: A Semicolony, published in 1950 and 1979, was written by Udom Sisuwan (under the pen name "Aran Phomchomphu"), and characterized the Thai society from 1855 to the late 1950s as a "semi-colonial and semi-sakdina" system or a combination of Western imperialism and the sakdina system. The Real Face of Thai Feudalism [Chomna sakdinathai] written by Chit Phoumisak (under the pen name "Somsamai Srisudravarna"), was published in Nitisat 2500 (the Thammasat Law Faculty Yearbook) in 1957.¹¹⁹ In this work, Chit analyses the "sakdina" system as a system of "exploitation" over the peasants in various forms such as taxation, corvée labour, and through the implementation of legal codes and decrees.¹²⁰

More recent political economy (Marxist) studies emphasize internal and external factors in the analysis of Thai society and the state. For example, the "Chatthip school"

117 Ibid., pp. 132-162.

118 C.J. Reynolds and L. Hong, "Marxism in Thai Historical Studies", Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. XLIII, No. 1, November 1983, pp. 77-104. This article provides a comprehensive review of Marxist studies on Thailand.

119 This work was translated in English by Reynolds in C.J. Reynolds, Thai Radical Discourse: The Real Face of Thai Feudalism Today, Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Programme, 1987, pp. 43-148.

120 Chit Phumisak used the ancient Thai legal term "sakdina" as an equivalent of the Marxist term "feudalism". In modern Thai studies this new meaning of the term is widely used.

has concentrated a number of academic studies on the sakdina system as a major internal cause of underdevelopment in Thai society, following Chatthip and Suthy who argued that "[C]entralized sakdina control was an obstacle to the development of a capitalist mode of production" [underlining as in original].¹²¹ They also argue that the emergence of a national bourgeois class was restricted before 1941 because of the dependence of the "bureaucratic capitalists" on the sakdina class and of the subordination of the "compradore capitalists" to foreign enterprise.¹²² As for external influence, Chatthip and Suthy regarded the Bowring Treaty of 1855 as an important factor in bringing Thailand into the international process of the division of labour and as a consequence:

Siam had been transformed into a source of raw material supplies, a new investment outlet, and a new market for Western capitalist countries. Further expansion of dependent commodity production inevitably led to the formation of Siam as a semi-dependent economy.¹²³

Hewison also emphasized the role of the external factors in causing underdevelopment in Thailand and put the view that since Thai foreign policy became pro-American in the 1950s, Thailand, as an exporter of primary products, was tied up by the Bretton Woods agreements, "which locked Third World countries into a system of trade and finance designed by and for the advanced capitalist nations".¹²⁴

¹²¹ Chatthip Nartsupha and Suthy Prasartset, The Political Economy of Siam 1851-1910, Bangkok: The Social Science Association of Thailand, 1981, p. 31. In addition, Chatthip, Suthy and Montri show that the government, representing the landowners, domestic and foreign capitalist classes, may actively pursue a policy of raising agricultural productivity, but tends to shift the responsibility in promoting agriculture to smallholders without tackling the basic problems such as the lack of security in land rights or the need to improve the land [Chatthip Nartsupha, Suthy Prasartset and Montri Chenvidyakarn (eds.), The Political Economy of Siam 1910-1932, Bangkok: The Social Science Association of Thailand, 1981, pp. 1-2 and 4-5].

¹²² Chatthip and Suthy, op. cit., p. 34; see also Bell, "Class Relations and Thai Development", pp. 107-127.

¹²³ Chatthip and Suthy, op. cit., p. 7.

¹²⁴ In addition, Hewison claims that the military government (the Sarit regime) allowed the exploitation of Thai peasants and workers by giving facilities to the international capitalists:

"With the assistance of the United States Operations Mission (USOM) the government withdrew the 1954 Investment Promotion Act which had been criticized in the IBRD Report, and replaced it with the Promotion of Investment Act B.E. 2503 (1960), and established the BoI [Board of Investment]. Section 18 of the new Act contained two specific guarantees for private enterprise, stating that the government would neither compete with nor nationalize any private industrial activity. It also allowed for the conditional repatriation of profits, the right to land ownership, some import duty exemptions, a two-year income tax holiday, and additional benefits which could be granted by the BoI in specific cases" [Hewison, "The State and Capitalist Development in Thailand", pp. 278-279].

In 1962, the Sarit government promulgated a revised Act, providing more privileges and benefits to particular foreign investors. Hewison indicates that:

"this Act provided for duty and business tax exemption on all imported capital goods and raw materials, a five year tax holiday, wider opportunities for profit repatriations, and gave wider

Commenting on the internal and external factors, Apichai and Montri see the main feature of the Thai economy since 1957 as having been the implementation of modernization and the simultaneous increase of dependency which had resulted in a "structural crises",¹²⁵ while Grit was influenced by the dependency paradigm in his analysis which focused on the limitation of the Thai state in responding to the world capitalist domination:

the dependent capitalist development in Thailand, during the past two decades [from the 1960s to 1970s], showed a limited capacity to rationalize itself in response to the political-economic crisis, and especially in response to the economic contradictions between the accumulation needs of the capitalist class and the development of subsistant needs of the working class.¹²⁶

While orthodox and neo-Marxist analyses were well represented in Thai literature, they came under criticism from both Marxist and modernization scholars. Udom's model of "semi-colonial and semi-sakdina" society, which played a major role in determining the strategy of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), was strongly challenged by some social critics and academics.¹²⁷ Udom's model was criticized also by Reynolds and Hong who argued that it:

"... was faulted on theoretical grounds ..." and "... was not a genuine social formation or mode of production in the Marx-Engels schema but was derived from Mao's 'The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party' of 1939, and on a number of crucial points this social formation simply did not apply to Thai conditions."¹²⁸

Reynolds and Hong argued too that although Chit's thesis of Chomna sakdinathai focused on the structure of a system rather than the change in the mode of production, it

discretionary power to the BoI. The Act had the desired effect, as an increasing number of companies applied for promotional privileges" [Hewison, "The State and Capitalist Development in Thailand", p. 279]. Bell adds that "[T]he strengthening of traditional social relations did not mean that external forces were not powerful in shaping Thailand's pattern of development" [Bell, "Class Relations and Thai Development", p. 121].

125 Apichai Puntasen and Montri Chenvidyakarn, "Political Economy of Development in Thailand: Models, Strategies and Consequences", mimeo, Thammasat University, Bangkok, n.d., p. 64.

126 Grit Poemtanchit, Political Economy of Dependent Capitalist Development: Study on the Limits of the Capacity of the State to Rationalize in Thailand, Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute (CUSRI), 1982, p. 249.

127 For example, Songchai Na Yala, "Sangkhomthai mai chai sangkhom ku'ng mu'ang ku'n ku'ng sakdina" [The Thai Society is neither Semi-Colonial nor Semi-Sakdina], Parithat "Chabap sangkhomthai" [Thai Social Issues], n.d., pp. 31-35; Prachae Changtham, "Wichan thatsana Thirayut Bunmi" [The Criticism towards Thirayut Bunmi's Perspective], ibid., pp. 10-20; and Srisamai U'angsakun, "Kankhayaitua khong thunniyom nai chonnabot" [The Expansion of Capitalism in the Rural Areas], Parithatsan, "Chabap thitthang sangkhomthai" [Thai Social Directions], Vol. 11, October B.E. 2525 (1982), pp. 12-16.

128 Reynolds and Hong, op. cit., p. 82.

was able to show the role of the peasantry as a social force in class conflict resulting from the complexity in the sakdina system.¹²⁹

Criticism of the debate over whether internal or external factors predominated in forming the Thai polity was usefully summarized by Nidhi who argued that, in fact, there was an inter-relation between internal and external analysis shown in Thai society in particular as it affected the pre-Bowring and post-Bowring periods ("old Siam" and "new Siam"):

Indeed, external pressures per se cannot really determine the direction of change in any society. To understand changes in any society, attention should be given to the seeds of changes that have already existed in that very society. Without these seeds, external forces will never develop internally. Thus, to understand changes in Thai society in the mid-nineteenth century, we need to search for and then analyse these seeds of change, notably the structure of interest groups and their struggle to enhance their interests in the process of change. Therefore, the dominant static picture of the "old Siam" must be replaced by the more dynamic one, and more attention should be devoted to the study of the continuity of change from the "old Siam" to the "new Siam" (emphasis as in original).¹³⁰

At the same time, Suwinai Paranawalai of Thammasat University argued that the Marxist approaches were unable to provide an explanation of change at the micro-level, for instance in the expansion of capital, nor could it anticipate the dynamic change of capital in developing countries. Nor, according to his overview of political economy studies, could Marxist studies in Thailand provide a systematic analysis of the peasant class because of what he called their "uni-linear mode". He concluded that he would like to see "multi-linear modes" in analysing Thai society.¹³¹

The theories and approaches adopted by scholars in their analyses of Thai society have been varied but have also proved inconclusive in formulating any widely accepted explanations of development. As we have seen there has been lively debate and many issues raised. The key problem to some extent seems to be that while the modernization scholars address the question of state as fundamental to their analysis, the Marxist and neo-Marxist approaches emphasize international and national dynamics

129 *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

130 Quoted from Chairat, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

131 Suwinai Paranawalai, "Sathanaphap khong setthasat kanmu'angthai nai thotsawat thi 1980" [The Status of the Thai Political Economy in the Decade of 1980s], in Kraiyuth Thiratayakhinun (ed.), Khwaamru nak setthasatthai pi 2529 [The Knowledge of the Thai Economists in B.E. 2529 (1986)], [in Thai], Bangkok: The Economic Association of Thailand, B.E. 2530 (1987), pp. 185-230. Suwinai reviewed the use of the political economy approach in studying Thai society and maintained there were three categories: the "imported theoretical study", comparative, and empirical studies. See also Napaporn Ativanichayapong, "The Development of Political Economy Thought in Thailand, 1932-1982, M.A. Thesis (English version), Faculty of Economics, Thammasat University, 1986.

in different terms (class analysis, mode of production, dependency etc.). Nevertheless, an interesting attempt was made by a political scientist, Chai-anan Samudhavanija (who was trained in America during the 1960s), to address these issues.

To counter the Marxist uni-linear approach (i.e. following the historical materialism of various modes of production) in analysing Thai society, Chai-anan pointed out that the uni-linear approach was based on European experience and failed to analyse the sakdina society. Chai-anan argued in Sakdina kap patthanakan khong sangkhomthai [Sakdina and the Development of Thai Society], that the pre-capitalist or sakdina society was characterized by an "Asiatic mode of production" which was typified by an absence of private ownership of land and control by the king over all land which people were allowed to work on his behalf, not a "feudal mode of production" as argued by Chit who had adopted orthodox Marxism in his work: Chomna sakdina thai.¹³² The unique characteristic of the Thai sakdina system required a special supporting theoretical explanation. Chai-anan chose Wittfogel's model of "oriental despotism" (or sometimes called "hydraulic society") which described Asian society as a totalitarian society in which the top elites centralized their power by controlling water resources.¹³³ In accord with the model of "oriental despotism", he argued that the Thai sakdina had continued its superstructure role without interruption from either internal conflicts (revolt, opposition from periphery) or external powers (colonialism). Unlike the European feudal system which distributed power to hierarchical landlords, the Thai sakdina system greatly centralized power while weakening any peripheral powers which had a potential to challenge the central state power.

132 Chai-anan Samudhavanija, Sakdina kap patthanakan khong sangkhomthai [Sakdina and the Development of Thai Society], [in Thai], Bangkok: Namakson kanphim, 1976, p. 11, 15-27, Chs. 4-5. His work is based on K. Wittfogel, Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959. Chatthip commented that instead of criticizing Chit's Chomna sakdinathai, Chai-anan's thesis helped support Chit's study. For example, while Chit indicated that there was an exploitation between classes in the sakdina system, Chai-anan further argues that besides the exploitation between classes, the sakdina system caused the stagnation of economic and political change [Chatthip Nartsupha, "Sakdina kap patthanakan khong sangkhom thai: A Comment", in Chai-anan, Sakdina kap patthanakan, n.p.].

133 Following Wittfogel who argued that the central power controlled productive resources, in particular water resources, in the production process, Chai-anan claimed that Sukhothai, Ayudhaya and Bangkok after the Bowring Treaty had been "hydraulic societies". However, his analysis was later refuted because historical evidence revealed that the Thai sakdina state did not construct any irrigation work or agricultural technology for peasants' production purpose, although there were hydraulic work done for royal or official purposes such as the control of floods in the central plains. See S. Tanabe, "Historical Geography of the Canal System in the Chao Phraya River Delta from the Ayudhaya Period to the Fourth Reign of the Ratanakosin Dynasty", Journal of the Siam Society, Vol 65, No. 2, pp. 39-40.

Although there appeared to have been peasant revolts against the severe expropriation of the Absolute Monarchy or the sakdina system, their opposition was weakened and suppressed by the state's machinery.¹³⁴ For example, peasant opposition was weakened by the administrative-legal system through the Kot monthienban (legal code), or was suppressed by central military force. Reynolds and Hong noticed that Thai people under the sakdina system lived in the totalitarian regimes described by Wittfogel's model.¹³⁵ Chairat argued that Chai-anan's analysis of "oriental despotism" model came close to Chatthip's analysis and claimed that the sakdina system constrained the development of the capitalist class in Thai society.¹³⁶

Chai-anan in his second approach rightly argues that Marxists downgrade the role of the state by subjecting it to economic determinism, but he is not completely successful when he attempts to generalize the characteristics of the Thai state across time and space. In examining the characteristics of the Thai state across several centuries, he argued that the Thai state had been capable of adapting itself to survive because it has three dimensions, namely security, development, and democracy. "Development" he defined as a new method used by the state to expand its old mechanism to penetrate into various aspects of society horizontally and vertically by allowing the monarchy, religion (monks) and bureaucracy to get involved in the state's affairs. He argued that "democracy" limited the state's role by preventing these three institutions from becoming involved in politics while, at the same time, it encouraged the role of the private sector. "Security", in his terms, was the state's legitimate machinery of force to be used, for example, in case of confrontation with "communism". Even if this machinery was used to suppress "democracy", he claimed that the state had the legal power to do so.¹³⁷ Although Chai-anan supported a "representative" democratic system, he faced a similar problem to Wilson, Riggs and Siffin in that he failed to

134 See details in Chatthip Nartsupha, "The Ideology of Holy Men Revolts in North East Thailand", in A. Turton and S. Tanabe (eds.), History and Peasant Consciousness in Southeast Asia, Senri Ethnological Studies No. 13, Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 1984, pp. 111-134; and S. Tanabe, "Ideological Practice in Peasant Rebellion: Siam at the Turn of the Twentieth Century", in ibid., pp. 75-110.

135 Reynolds and Hong, op. cit., p. 89.

136 Chairat, op. cit., p. 159.

137 Chai-anan Samudhavanija, Rat [The State], [in Thai], Bangkok: The Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, B. E. 2530 [1987], pp. 149, 154, 157, 193, 197-198.

foresee the systematic development of social force outside the boundary of the state's initiative.¹³⁸

Chai-anan's analysis of the characteristics of the Thai state hardly addressed the question of development stagnation in Thailand. He assumed that economic development was blocked by causes such as the variety and inconsistency of economic sub-systems in Thai society, and the inability of capitalist economic sub-systems to expand their accumulation in other parts, for example in agricultural sectors, due to the domination of foreign enterprises and "ethnic characteristics" (referring to Chinese business leadership).¹³⁹ His answer may have been partly right but it did not strike at the heart of the underdevelopment problems because his analysis of the Thai state did not stress the responsibility of the state in pursuing development for the majority. His arguments based on this three-dimensional model of the Thai state said very little about the fundamental issues of power and wealth, and in particular, who controlled power and wealth, how it was to be used and who should benefit.

The ideas of neo-Marxism are subject to considerable debate. For example, Bell argues that the thesis of Chatthip and Suthy mainly emphasized the internal factors such as the sakdina system, whereas Chairat seems to overemphasized external factors such as the influence of the Bowring Treaty of 1855. The thesis of the "Chatthip school", in my opinion, is related to both internal and external factors by starting with the analysis of the sakdina system. Therefore, the weak point of the thesis is neither the internal nor the external emphasis but the historical fact that the sakdina system gradually changed

138 For example, he explains the failure of the Thai "bureaucratic polity" since 1932 in that "[B]efore 1932, the bureaucracy was at least accountable to the King, who was considered to represent the public. After 1932, with the ruler's loss of monarchical powers, the bureaucracy was expected to be accountable to the public in the real sense of the word, but this was not to be the case. The 'public', so essential for democratic government, has remained an unorganized, faceless, powerless mass, subject to domination by civil and military bureaucrats" [Chai-anan Samudhavanija, "Political History", in Somsakdi Xuto (ed.), Government and Politics of Thailand, p. 22]

My emphasis is put on the word systematic in analysing Chai-anan's perspective because although his works have focused on historical figure like Thianwan and events like the 1973 uprising as monuments of the representative democratic system, his point of view is still centred around the study of "superstructure" (state, state machinery, ideology etc.) and his three dimensions (security, development, democracy) are generalisations which can be applied in any time (i.e. they are a-historical). Because of this static view, Chai-anan could not predict the emergence of forces outside the state. For details about Thianwan, see Chai-anan Samudhavanija, Chiwit lae ngan khong Thianwan lae K.S.R. Kulap [Lives and Works of Thianwan and K.S.R. Kulap], [in Thai], Bangkok: Samnakphim bannakit, 2nd. ed., B.E. 2524 (1981).

139 Chai-anan, Rat., p. 167.

due to external influence, as Nidhi argues, and the Bowring Treaty of 1855 was the turning point for the change.¹⁴⁰

Marxist academics still have problems in class analysis of explaining which social forces will carry out development and how the various classes will participate in the state's affairs. Chatthip and Suthy consider Thai society as a sakdina society and argue that foreign capitalism is subordinate to the sakdina system, thereby preventing the emergence of an independent bourgeois class in Thailand. However, Hewison does not agree with this argument and claims that there is evidence of the formation of a bourgeois class in particular banking and business groups and asserts that a "powerful capitalist class has emerged in Thailand, having developed a strong, domestic accumulative base".¹⁴¹ These arguments may remain open ended until there is more concrete evidence to either prove their correctness or re-assess them.

Neither modernization nor Marxist theories provide a satisfactory analysis of power and wealth (including the international link) and are largely inadequate in analysing Thai underdevelopment. The explanation of modernization theory may be useful to understand some internal problems constraining national development but it does not have enough power to explain other important factors such as why the political parties, interest and pressure groups are still weak and ineffective,¹⁴² or how the international political and economic context obstructs development in developing countries. The study of an elite's behaviour alone cannot account for the failure of Thai democracy. Since the structural-functional model fails to assert that the benefit of development should be equally distributed to the majority poor, their argument that democracy fails in Thailand and that Thai people are apolitical individuals, politically passive and unconcerned, is weak. The simple judgement implying this reason for the failure of Thai democracy may stem from a neglect of an in-depth and continuous study

140 The ideas of Chatthip and Nithi are not contradictory. In my opinion, however, Nithi provides a useful analysis of internal change before the Bowring Treaty.

141 K.J. Hewison, "The Development of Capital, Public Policy and the Role of the State in Thailand", Ph.D. dissertation, Murdock University, 1983, pp. ii-iv, Chs. 4-5. Although Suehiro does not discuss class formation, he claims that in relation to multinational enterprises "... leadership and co-orporate control principally remain in the hands of Thai managers" [A. Suehiro, Capital Accumulation in Thailand 1855-1985, Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1989, p. 271]. In my view, Suehiro's claim could support either view as it highlights the importance of a domestic economic control which could be either sakdina or a new capitalist class.

142 Pye, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98, 84. Even though Pye claims that the modernization theory has had a great impact on Thai development through the traditional elites and Western-educated aristocrats since the Absolute Monarchy, it should be noted that after the monarchy lost its autocratic power, the power fell into the hands of the military and bureaucrats who had received a western education.

of mass movements in Thailand. Mass movements, in my opinion, express people's views of their own needs and, therefore, they are among the roots of democracy. Unless democracy and development concepts are applied, the local initiatives would not be able to promote Thai development.¹⁴³ And although the Marxist scholars put considerable emphasis on the study of mass movement, they have not yet provided a clear solution.

According to Roxborough, the nature of most developing countries is complex because they have differences in regions, language, ethnic groups and an absence of any sense of nationhood among many of the rural populations. Some radical dependency theorists, he adds, tend to have a one-sided perspective in determining the role of the world market, and have seen development within Third World countries as mere reflections of, or response to, external changes. To correct the inadequacy of development theories is by no means an easy task, but, as Roxborough suggests, a possible solution to the complexity of the Third World is to combine both internal and external factors in a single integrated theory.¹⁴⁴ In addition, Chatthip argues that, in most developing societies there has not yet been distinctive social differentiation as in the developed societies. Thus, the study of the economy cannot be detailed by the economic approach (e.g. Marxism and "liberal" economic theories) alone and has to be explained by other approaches such as anthropology and socio-economics or by combining the pure economic approach (in particular Marxism) and others as "appropriate" for any particular issue.¹⁴⁵

The key factor to emerge from the overview given in this chapter is that there is a particular place in Thai development for popular movements or interest groups - these can be seen as social forces which can counterbalance the state role and ensure

143 See the argument of "Development and Democracy" in J.L.S. Girling, The Bureaucratic Polity in Modernizing Societies: Similarities, Differences, and Prospects in the ASEAN Region, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1981, pp. 53-56.

144 I. Roxborough, Theories of Underdevelopment, London: The Macmillan Press, 1979, pp. 25, 50. Higgott also supports this idea by arguing that "[I]t is important to incorporate analysis of global exchange relationships into the reformulated theory of imperialism which has emanated from the macro-analytical approaches of dependency theory and world systems theory. The tendency to swing from macro-analytical circulation theory to micro-analytical production theory has to be avoided at all costs" [Higgott *et al.*, "Theories of Development", pp. 34-35].

145 Chatthip Nartsupha, "Kansu'ksa prawatsat setthakit" [The Study of Economic History], [in Thai], in Chatthip Nartsupha *et al.*, Setthasat kap prawatsathai [Thai Economics and History], pp. 74-75. Higgins proposes an idea that anthropologists and economists should learn from each other so that they would be able to help develop a "traditional" society to suit the people's needs. See B. Higgins, "Anthropology: Social Science, Regional Science, Development Theory - or Literature?", paper presented in the seminar, Canberra: Department of Anthropology, ANU, 10 April 1990.

democratic development. In the following chapters I will consider various functions of the state, such as the preparation and implementation of development plans, and examine the role of Thai NGOs in the Thai development process with a view to establishing whether there is a special role for them as a counterbalancing power in Thai political and economic development. The Thai NGOs, which have emerged since the mid 1970s, are, as we shall see, part of an international NGO movement which generally speaking, does not have any particular "ideology" but uses the representative-democracy concept to guide its work. They employ an "alternative development" strategy to meet the people's needs and their analysis of the problems of underdevelopment covers both macro and micro levels as well as internal and external links. This chapter provides the mainstream of development thinking within which the NGOs need to find analytical guidance to assess their work because, as Moore says:

Without being guided by some purposes and values that transcend such a narrow and technical view of disciplined inquiry into human affairs, ... social scientists will rapidly become mere technicians selling their skills to any unscrupulous power-seekers who want to manipulate society for their own ends.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ B. Moore, "The New Scholasticism and the Study of Politics", World Politics, Vol. 6, No. 1, October, 1953, p. 124.

CHAPTER 2

Historical Assessment of Thai Development Plans

Development means creating the conditions for the realization of human personality. Its evaluation must therefore take into account three linked economic criteria: whether there has been a reduction in (i) poverty; (ii) unemployment; (iii) inequality. G.N.P. can grow rapidly without any improvement on these criteria; so development must be measured more directly. The conceptual and practical problems of a number of indicators are discussed and also the implications for planning, both national and international.

D. Seers, "What Are We Trying to Measure?"¹

We have seen, in the previous chapter, the inter-relation within development thinking and debates between the international context and the Thai society. Some important questions remain for further discussion, in particular the role of the state and dynamic social forces in formulating national development policies. This chapter aims to assess the development plans proposed in 1911, 1933 and from 1961 until the present time, with a view to seeing the extent to which they have indicated the role of the state, the role of social forces and a place for the majority poor to participate in national development.² In showing some of the limitations of the state's capacity to implement development and some reactions of the majority poor towards the state's policies, this chapter also aims to establish that there is a special role for non-government organizations (NGOs) in encouraging the poor to participate in development.

Because of the different historical factors evident in such a wide ranging period, not least of all being the number of different regimes under which the Thai people have been governed, the assessment of the development plans will selectively focus on development ideas showing the attempts, in the decades before Sarit's regime (1911-1957), to extend the role of the state in development; and, after Sarit's regime (1958-present) to reduce the role of the state as a supporter in development. However, other relevant information will be discussed to clarify and show the impact of development especially on the poor.

¹ Seers, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

² As we shall see, the plans in 1911 and 1933 were not implemented for political reasons but did have some influence on later development thinking in Thailand.

To achieve the aim of this chapter, a number of factors will be addressed as follows: first, the aim of development in the Thai society; second, the development ideas and government policies before Sarit's regime (1911-1957); third, the development plans since Sarit's regime (1958-present); and fourth, the reaction of the majority poor towards development plans and the role of NGOs in the Thai development context.

The aim of "development" in Thai society

In 1974, Puey Ungpakorn, a Thai economist, expressed the following view concerning Thai national development objectives:

the important essence of development is to promote the maintenance of a suitable living standard ["*yu di kin di*"] for individual human beings, and a high quality of welfare for the human society or community. When we [government officials] understand the needs of individuals and consider those needs as being "appropriate", we would be able to comprehensively assess the responsibility of government. Presumably its duty is to provide for and respond to the "appropriate" demands of citizens, *every person and class* [my translation, italics as in original].³

He defined "appropriate" as the degree to which the government is able to achieve the demands of every person in all classes, providing always that when considering the difference between rich and poor, the priority is given to the poor. The government, he said, should stress the need for development to improve the standard of living of the poor and use tax measures and the creation of a welfare system to help the poor. Only then, he concluded, could the government take full responsibility for achieving the goal of "*yu di kin di*" for the people.⁴ In addition, he focused on the development programmes for the rural poor as the major aim of development in the Thai society. He argued that: 1) the income of the rural poor had to be satisfactorily increased; 2) the increase of income needed to be steady and stabilized; and 3) the rural poor needed to be able to help themselves and one another.⁵ Besides putting people and their needs at the centre of development, Puey also set the priorities for the state's role in development.

Sireeten and Burki argued that the development problem of the rural poor in general was "not growth as such, but the structure of ownership and power, and the policies pursued by the governments, which prevented the poor from benefiting from

3 Puey Ungpakorn, *Sia chip ya sia sin* [(Poetic) "If you (must) lose your life, do not lose your reputation"], [in Thai], Bangkok: Kletthai Publishing, B.E. 2517 (1974), pp. 105-106.

4 *Ibid.*, pp 106-107

5 Puey Ungphakorn, *Settathat* [The Economic View], [in Thai], Bangkok: The Association of Economics, Thammasat University, B.E. 2523 (1980), p. 165.

growth".⁶ The problems of the rural poor in Thailand have, especially since the 1970s, been analysed from the view not only of their economic problems but also social and political problems as well. In order to overcome the factors preventing the Thai rural poor from achieving economic growth, Turton suggests that besides increasing production, which is regarded as the basis of their livelihood, the poor need to control their production and to have power to control their own future. He also argues that "popular participation", defined as "the organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations, on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control",⁷ gives a place for the underprivileged poor to increase their power in controlling not only economic benefits but also a wider range of human and social issues such as community health and education.⁸

Like Puey and Turton, Galtung proposes the concept of "self-reliant" development which implies "a pattern of regeneration through one's own efforts, of fighting dominance by beginning to rely on oneself [autonomy], meaning the individual self and the collective Self [sic] with others in the same position".⁹ Galtung adds that the double nature of self-reliance, regarded as a part of an historical process, is to break up relations in the social structure and to build new ones. Self-reliance therefore depends on people participation because the people must be the masters of their own decisions in determining their needs and creating the solutions, not only the subject of

6 Sireeten and Burki, *op. cit.*, p. 412.

7 A. Turton, Production, Power and Participation in Rural Thailand: Experiences of Poor Farmers' Groups, Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), 1987, p. 3 [with reference to A. Pearse and M. Stiefel, Inquiry into Participation, Geneva: UNRISD, 1979]. However, Turton argues that "participation" is not a panacea for development. Villagers are regarded to be passive or unwilling to participate in a new development initiative proposed from outside. For example, at the community level, there is the overlapping of and interpenetration from politics and administration which make participation a particularly complex issue [*ibid.*, pp. 75-76 and 92-106] For further information, see N. Uphoff and E.J. Milton, Local Organization for Development in Asia, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974. I will discuss the concepts of "people participation", "basic needs", "basic human rights" and "self-reliance" in Chs. 3 and 4.

8 Turton, Production, Power and Participation, pp. 48-50. In addition, Apichai and Montri argue, following Chamlong Atikul (1981), that to satisfactorily answer the question of development for whom, three criteria need to be satisfied: first, whether those who will be affected by the economic development plan have any opportunity to participate in the planning process; second, whether the government's intention specified in the plan is consistent with the budget allocated for it; and third, the intended beneficiaries of the development plan are in fact the actual beneficiaries [Apichai and Montri, *op. cit.*, p. 50].

9 J. Galtung, "Self-Reliance: Concepts, Practice and Rationale", in J. Galtung, P. O'Brien and R. Preiswerk (eds.), Self-Reliance: A Strategy for Development, London, Bogle-d'Ouverture Publications Ltd., 1980, p. 23.

government-designed assistance and relief.¹⁰ In the Thai context, this concept can be related to the principle of "self-reliance" in Buddhist philosophy. However, this principle has been explained in conjunction with the "law of merit" which has placed an emphasis on the individual self rather than the collective self so that the Thai social structure would not be challenged.¹¹ Nevertheless, some Thai scholars (like Dr. Prawet Wasi, recipient of a Magsaysay award for public service, and Sulak Sivarak, a Thai social critic) have attempted to reassess the Buddhist principle of "self-reliance" as an aim of Thai development. If successful this could be a powerful concept in redirecting development in Thai society.

The aim of development in Thailand will be accepted in this thesis as the need to address the problems of the "common people"¹² through methods reflecting participation, self-reliance and the meeting of basic needs. However, "the evolution of a development policy and its implications cannot be analysed in complete isolation from its historical context".¹³ In the following sections therefore, I will provide an historical treatment of the various development plans which have been produced in Thailand and seek to determine to what extent they incorporate the concepts of "people participation", "basic needs" and "self-reliance" as presented in Chapter 1.¹⁴ I will consider the Thai development plans in two stages — the period before Sarit's regime (from 1911 to 1957) and the period from Sarit's regime to the present (from 1958 onward) — as the plans of the former period are "informal" plans generally characterized as representing "Economic Nationalism" or "State Capitalism" whereas, in the latter period, development plans were formal National Plans representing "industrialization" or

10 *Ibid.*, pp 26-34. Galtung adds that the self-reliance concept also has some practical problems. For instance one could ask whether there is a maximum size of a self-reliant unit (a sort of local "democracy") which would allow the meaningful participation of every individual. See details in the case study of the Phichit Experience in Ch. 4.

11 H. Phillips argues that the loose relationships of the rural Thai people may be traced to Buddhism which highlights individual action and responsibility. J. Bunnag, on the other hand, argues that the practice of Theravada Buddhism includes a certain degree of co-operation, for example, individuals assist one another, are involved in religious ceremonies together and share the burden of expenses. See details in H.P. Phillips, "Social Contract vs. Social Promise in a Siamese Village", in J.M. Potter, M.N. Dias, and G.M. Foster, *Peasant Society: A Reader*, Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1967, pp. 363-364; and J. Bunnag, "Loose Structure: Fact or Fancy? Thai Society Re-examined", in C.D. Neher (ed.), *Modern Thai Politics: From Village to Nation*, Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1976, p. 152.

12 By the "common people", I simply mean the poor peasants and wage workers. See further discussion on pp. 84-85 in the fourth section of this chapter: Problems of common people and their reaction towards the government's implementation of development policies.

13 Apichai and Montri, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

14 The concepts of "people participation", "basic needs" and "self-reliance" are inseparable from the "basic human rights" which I will discuss further in relation to the NGO concepts in Ch. 3.

"private enterprise"¹⁵ approaches influenced by world development ideas and institutions.

Development ideas and government policies before Sarit's regime

The development ideas during the pre-Sarit period can be best understood from two outstanding publications. One was Sapsat [The Science of Property], written by Phraya Suriyanuwat (Koet Bunnak) in 1911. The other was "The National Economic Plan" (also widely known as "The Draft Economic Plan") written by Luang Pradit Manutham (Pridi Phanomyong) in 1933.¹⁶ Although the plans were not implemented as such, they were influential in the development of "Economic Nationalism" in the period between 1933 and 1957.

Phraya Suriyanuwat: The Science of Property

In "The Science of Property", Phraya Suriyanuwat gave a systematic analysis of Thai economic problems and proposed some possible solutions. Unlike many other Thai thinkers at that time, he did not simply urge Thai peasants to follow the Buddhist admonition to reduce "craving" (*tanha*), but argued that the fault for lack of progress lay in both material and social factors - that is with labour, markets, money and land. Moreover, he commented that the *sakdina* system which was based on hierarchy and self-sufficient farmers, needed to be replaced by a market economy with efficient division of labour and exchange of products.

"The Science of Property", regarded as the first Thai economic text, revealed that farmers under the *sakdina* system were poor and led hard lives, that Thai society was composed of classes, and that there was oppression between classes. Phraya Suriyanuwat proposed that to resolve this situation and to achieve progress in economic development required the reformulation and establishment of new proprietary rights. He considered agriculture as the most important sector in the Thai economy, and farmers as the group who most needed help: "the progress of Siam" he said "rests upon

15 A. Suehiro, Capital Accumulation in Thailand 1855-1985, Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1989, Ch. 6. "Economic Nationalism" (or so-called "State Capitalism") will be discussed later.

16 There was a claim in the Bangkok Times Weekly Mail of 12 August 1918 that Phraya Suriyanuwat's works on political economy were a "practical translation". The article, however, did not suggest an author of the original work [personal communication]. Suehiro for his part argues that Luang Pradit's Draft Economic Plan was prepared with the help of Mangkhon Samsen (1888-1947) [Suehiro, *op.cit.*, Ch. 4, fn. 6, p. 360]. In my opinion, these claims, even if true, are not important in that they do not change the main outline of Thai History during those periods. Both Phraya Suriyanuwat and Luang Pradit had their own ideas on changing society and they were held fully responsible for their economic proposals which, in the end, ruined their futures both in terms of careers and families.

farming more than other things. The country will develop quickly or slowly depending on how much benefit farmers are allowed to retain...".¹⁷ He therefore suggested structural changes to proprietary rights (land, labour and capital), and a change of relationship in production between producers (farmers) and the owners of productive forces (landlords in the sakdina system). Moreover, he proposed an active role for the state, under the Absolute Monarchy, in the formation of capital among common people and the protection of people's proprietary rights.

In his writing against private property, inheritance and social inequality, Phraya Suriyanuwat reflected the ideas of western scholars such as David Ricardo, Saint-Simon, Robert Owen and Herbert Spencer who adopted a political economy approach. Even though he encouraged capital accumulation, he did not approve the capitalist lines of distribution. He also opposed the competitive system of the West that was then encroaching on the sakdina system in Thailand. While he considered that the sakdina system itself had to change, he rejected the emergence of a capitalist system because of what he saw as its nature of exploitation.

Phraya Suriyanuwat's idea did not find much favour with the king and even less with government officials and merchants.¹⁸ King Rama VI asked Phraya Suriyanuwat to stop writing and made his own comments on the Science of Property. He claimed that "In Thailand nobody is higher than anyone else, except the king. Everyone is equal. In Thailand we do not have super-millionaires [sic] or even millionaires as in Europe. But we also do not have the poor like in Europe either".¹⁹ The King added that Thailand could not follow western examples because:

Thai people donate things to poor relatives and friends. That is in the Dharma. We learn by being Buddhists in distributing to each other. Hence it is not necessary to teach one side to be possessive and the other side to confiscate others' property. We men do not have to be separated into different cliques and made to hate each other. Why begin?"²⁰

As a result, the "Science of Property" was banned by the King in 1926 and Phraya Suriyanuwat was forbidden to return to government. Further enforcing the opposition

¹⁷ Phraya Suriyanuwat, *Sapsat*, [The Science of Property], [in Thai], Bangkok: Pikhanet kanphim, B.E. 2518 (1975), p. 73. First published in 1911, it was subsequently banned by King Rama VI in 1926.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16. For example, already in 1906 while he was Senabodi Krasuang Pra Khlang Maha Sombat [comparable to the Minister of Finance] he cautiously nationalized the opium trade and determined to collect taxes in relation to it. Seeing their interests threatened, the officials and merchants used their strong influence at court to attack him. Eventually King Rama V asked him to resign from his position, on 15 February 1907, to avoid conflicts.

¹⁹ Quoted from Yuangrat Wedel, *Modern Thai Radical Thought: The Siamization of Marxism and its Theoretical Problems*, Thai Khadi Research Institute, Research Series No. 4, Bangkok: Thammasat University, 1982, p. 58.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

to the structural change of property rights as proposed in the "Science of Property", the new King Rama VII passed a law banning any form of economic teaching. After that few could be encouraged to write about economic theory.

Phraya Suriyanuwat's ideas did not, however, disappear from Thai society. Chatthip Nartsupha of Chulalongkorn University argues that the essence of "The Science of Property" relied upon the analysis of the Thai economy under an Absolute Monarchy and that in showing the poor conditions of Thai farmers, it explained that poverty emerged from the alienation of surplus value. Chatthip accepts Phraya Suriyanuwat's view that the farmers' poverty resulted from the unjust economic structure of property rights and adds that the "Thai economy has lacked the necessary structural change in the sixty-three years since the Sapsat was first published by Phraya Suriyanuwat" (1911-1974).²¹ Although the book was banned by the king its ideas formed one source of inspiration for the Draft Economic Plan proposed by Pridi Phanomyong, a leader of the People's Party, in 1933, twenty-two years after the first edition was published in 1911.

Luang Pradit Manutham: The Draft Economic Plan

The National Economic Policy (or Draft Economic Plan), written by Luang Pradit Manutham (Pridi Phanomyong) in 1933, was the second attempt to present a systematic economic plan. Sharing similar fundamental ideas with "the Science of Property", Luang Pradit analysed economic problems in terms of land, labour and capital.²² He argued that "all land undercultivation was controlled by individuals; undeveloped lands were not yet cleared; and 99 percent of farmers were in debt and had either mortgaged their land or given it as a security to their creditors".²³ Moreover he concluded that the economic system (in 1933) was in a stage of instability in which not only the poor but also the rich and middle classes were subject to the same uncertainties.²⁴ In order to eradicate the poverty and economic uncertainties, Luang Pradit directed his attention to the rural poor and proposed the idea of an economic administration run by the government and set up by dividing the economic system into

21 Chatthip Nartsupha, "Introduction to the Third Edition", in Phraya Suriyanuwat, *op.cit.*, p. 32.

22 Chanwit Kaset-siri (transl.), "National Economic Policy of Luang Pradit Manutham", in Thak Chaloemtiarana (ed.), *Thai Politics 1932-1957. Extracts and Documents*, Vol. 1, Bangkok: The Social Science Association of Thailand, 1978, p 117. See also K.P. Landon, *Siam in Transition: A Brief Survey of Cultural Trends in the Five Years Since the Revolution of 1932*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1968, p. 266.

23 Chanwit, "National Economic Policy", p 112; and Landon, *op.cit.*, pp. 263-264.

24 Chanwit, "National Economic Policy", pp 113-114.

co-operative associations.²⁵ He encouraged the government to secure land, labour and capital by using statutory mechanisms (rather than expropriation, force etc.) with the co-operation of the poor and the rich to accomplish the aim of eradicating economic uncertainties;²⁶ in other words, he proposed the reformation of proprietary rights.

In addition to the above proposals in the Draft Economic Plan, Luang Pradit added that the ultimate aim of the Plan was to achieve a six-point platform, namely; (economic and political) independence, internal order, economic welfare for the people, equality of rights, liberty and education.²⁷ The Plan also included a Draft Social Insurance Act²⁸ and a Draft Economic Administration Act which in particular promoted the establishment of a national bank.²⁹

Although Luang Pradit's plan was approved by the majority of the Committee set up to consider a National Economic Policy, it could not be implemented.³⁰ A struggle over the plan developed among the members of the People's Party and high-ranking government officials, in particular the Prime Minister, Phraya Manopakon Nitithada. Moreover, King Rama VII wrote a considerably unsympathetic analysis of the Plan. He pointed out what were, in his view, the economic plan's weak points; for instance, he argued against Luang Pradit's statement concerning poverty-stricken people by retorting that "not even one of our people or beggars have ever starved to death." He claimed too, citing Zimmerman's studies, that the "Thai standard of living is the highest among Asian people."³¹ Furthermore, the King claimed that the Social Insurance Act proposed exactly the same system of social security as used in Russia and would turn the people into slaves of the government, as he believed had happened in Russia.³² He therefore warned that in managing the country's economic activities the government would have to take great care not to inhibit the freedom of the people.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 110; and Landon, *op.cit.*, pp. 260, 268.

26 Landon, *op.cit.*, pp. 270-274.

27 Chanwit, "National Economic Policy", pp. 144-149.

28 *Ibid.*, pp. 150-155.

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 155-160. Landon argued that the attempt to establish the National Bank was due to the loss of capital funds because the ruling elites put their money into overseas foreign banks (e.g. in Switzerland) [Landon, *op.cit.*, pp. 64-68]. The Bank was later established and called the Bank of Thailand.

30 Chanwit Kaset-siri (transl.), "Minutes of a Meeting of a Committee to Consider a National Economic Policy at Parusakawan Palace, March 12th, 1933", in Thak (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp. 161-185. Participants included members of the State Council and the People's Assembly as well as H.S.H. Prince Sakon Warawan, adviser to the Minister of the Interior.

31 Chanwit Kaset-siri (transl.), "Report of the Commission on the Alleged Communism of Luang Pradit Manutham", in *ibid.*, pp. 193-194.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 195.

In line with the King's comment, Phraya Manopakon claimed that he himself did not approve the policy even though the majority of the Committee (in which he participated) had resolved to approve the economic policy. The policy left him in a very unfortunate position for two reasons. First, he did not feel competent to comment on economic matters. Second, although he felt the plan was inappropriate, as Prime Minister, he would have had to accept full responsibility for the principles and methods of the plan if it had been promulgated. He firmly believed that the plan could not be carried through to a successful conclusion "because we lack experts, we lack reserved funds, we lack the confidence of the people at large".³³

Even though the Committee had approved the plan and allowed it to be published under Luang Pradit's name, the Economic Plan was shelved for several reasons. First, there arose an internal conflict between those who benefited from the sakdina system and those who wanted to reform it by changing the economic system into co-operative associations run by the government (which was seen to be the true representative of the people). It was clear that these two groups represented the royalist and the non-royalist groups in Thai society at that time. The crucial point was that the King himself opposed the Plan. That made it difficult for Luang Pradit to answer his critics directly, not because he and his supporters could not respond but because Luang Pradit did not hold real political power, having little popular support from the majority poor who were bound to the sakdina system. Second, within the People's Party, there was no common ideology and while conservatives and liberals argued, the military bureaucrats preferred to play a passive role. This potential for ideological conflict not only prevented the foundations of democracy being established in Thailand at that time, but also worked against the liberals in fostering any radical changes through their politico-economic schemes. Eventually, Luang Pradit was accused of being communist and the publication of the National Economic Plan was delayed.³⁴

33 Chanwit, "Minutes of a Meeting", p. 181.

34 The Commission set up to determine whether Luang Pradit Manutham was communist found him to be not guilty. However, Phraya Mano passed an Act to suppress communist activities in 1933 and dissolved the parliament [Chanwit, "Report of the Commission", pp. 236-237].
Yuangrat Wedel, inspired by the Marxism-Leninism that was prominent in some circles in Thai society during the mid 1970s, considered Luang Pradit's plan to be naive and idealistic. She also considered Luang Pradit's knowledge and expression of Marxism was not very deep, particularly in its interpretation of the distinction between classes. For example, Luang Pradit "seemed to be trying to put peasants and aristocrats together in one class - civil servants". She argued too that Luang Pradit "did not share the Leninist concern and appreciation of the possibilities of a revolutionary party as the necessary agent of radical change," and that "he believed that the Thai labourer did not work hard or long enough (quite a contrast from Marx), therefore it should be the government's role to regulate and motivate labour." Furthermore, she criticized Luang Pradit in that "he did not seem to consider that effective employment of a labour force is something a bit more complicated than simply telling people to work". She concluded that Luang Pradit did not understand the Thai economic problems.

In terms of development, the Draft Economic Plan reflected many of the objectives of more recent development strategies. The Plan contained the notion of a basic needs approach in the provision by the government of food, clothes and housing through the Social Insurance Act; other basic benefits from the development of infrastructure such as railroads, roads, docks and canals were also envisaged. The Plan also reflected notions of human rights and self-reliance in its view that the government administration must not "reduce mankind to the level of animals"³⁵ and that the people must work with the government to advance welfare for themselves.³⁶

In summary, the rejection of the economic development proposals of Phraya Suriyanuwat and Luang Pradit Manutham meant that there was no opportunity for either of them to show whether or not they could solve the problems of the majority poor. The debate as to whether the proposals were idealistic or realistic still lingers. However, both leaders attempted to attack what they saw as the root causes of the problem — proprietary rights, land holding, and the surplus gained by the landlords through exploitation — while the majority remained poor and uncertain of their futures. But although these proposals were not accepted at that time, some of the ideas in them were later implemented. For example, both Phraya Suriyanuwat, who served the country from 1933 to 1936 as an adviser to the Phahon government, and Luang Pradit, who from 1938 to 1941 was Minister of Finance in the first Phibun government, were key persons in influencing the nationalization of enterprises affecting common people's lives in the context of a the "self-sufficient economy" policy pursued by both

It seems to me that Yuangrat's arguments are superficial. Luang Pradit's Draft Economic Plan failed neither because he did not slavishly follow Marx, Engels and Lenin in depth, nor because he failed to clearly distinguish between classes or propose the use of a revolutionary party as the tool for radical change. To be fair to Luang Pradit, I think that, as he stated in the Plan, he "borrowed elements of value from various systems" whenever he "found in them something appropriate to Siam" [Chanwit, "National Economic Policy", p. 110]. Moreover, he argued that "this plan is not COMMUNISTIC! It is a combination of capitalism and socialism" [Chanwit, "Minutes of a Meeting", p. 163]. His statement implied that he, in the first place, could see what would happen when he proposed the Plan and, therefore, tried to protect himself from being misunderstood. What can be argued against Luang Pradit, in my view, is that he was too optimistic about the role of the state, especially in regarding the government and people to be of the same institutions. See further discussion about the characteristic of the state and its obligation to citizen in Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*, pp. 1-27.

Also, Yuangrat misinterprets Luang Pradit's ideas on a number of issues such as the emphasis on the role of government in manipulating waste labour and economic infrastructure. At the present time, we can see that the government is putting much effort in creating projects of rural employment after the planting season and forming co-operatives many of which prove successful.

35 Chanwit, "National Economic Policy", pp. 134-135.

36 According to Luang Phetkasem Withisawat, Luang Pradit abolished the system of corvée labour on the basis that a person was not a tool to be used by others for their own needs ["Rawipha" (pen name), "Luang Phetkasem Withisawat: The Man Whose Name is the Name of the Thai Longest Road", *Ban-Mai-Ru-Roy*, [Everlasting Bloom Magazine], [in Thai], Vol. 6, September B.E. 2530 (1987), p. 75].

governments. In addition, the National Bank was later established as Luang Pradit had proposed and recently a Social Insurance Act was also proclaimed for the benefit of the people.³⁷ In stimulating the growth of agriculture, the government is today putting much effort into forming seasonal-employment co-operatives, a policy which recalls Luang Pradit's ideas. Many of these co-operatives have proved successful.

Economic Nationalism

After Luang Pradit's plan there were no more national plans prepared until 1961. However there were some significant changes in the Thai economic and political system in what has been referred to as the period of Economic Nationalism (or State Capitalism). The following section on economic nationalism is divided into two parts in accordance with the different aims and characteristics of economic administration in the periods before and after World War II. The period before World War II begins with the Phahon government (1933-1938) and extends to some time in the first Phibun government (1938-1944). The period after World War II extends from the second Phibun government (1948-1957) until Phibun was overthrown by the 1957 coup led by Sarit. The intervening years from 1944 to 1948 are not mentioned here because the economic policies in this period were very much in flux - in domestic politics there were ten government changes within four years and in international relations there was an increasing US influence, replacing Japanese and British influence. The growth in US involvement in Thai politics after World War II is a subject which warrants separate in-depth study.³⁸

Economic Nationalism before World War II

After the defeat of the Draft Economic Plan in 1933, the government decided to follow a moderate economic reform programme. The Phahon government (1933-1938) relieved some tax burdens on farmers, stimulated educational expansion for the poor and made some attempts at economic and political decentralization to counter the increasing tendency towards the centralization of power by the royalist groups, and the domination of the economy by foreign enterprises before 1932.³⁹ However, in addition to the problems of opposition from the old regime and of a chaotic parliamentary system (resulting from its being unfamiliar to the Thais generally), the

37 A leading figure in this issue was Nikhom Chandharawitun, the former Head of the Labour Department in the Ministry of the Interior.

38 The periods of time are worked out from Kanok Wongtra-ngan, Khumue kanmu'angthai: 2475-2525: khomun phu'nthan thang kanmu'angthai [The Manual of Thai Politics: 1932-1982: Primary Sources in Thai Politics], [in Thai], Bangkok: Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, B.E. 2526 (1983), pp. 170-171.

39 Suehiro, op. cit., Chs. 1-3.

government had to cope with financial problems such as very limited foreign exchange reserves, high inflation (partly resulting from the great depression in the 1930s), and an excessive deficit run up during the reign of King Rama VI. Moreover, most industries, trade and commerce were in the hands of the British, Chinese and Japanese. The government, therefore, adopted the policy of nationalizing some industries so that it could derive revenue for public expenditure.

Under the Phahon government, the Ministries of Defence and Economic Affairs were given responsibility for controlling and promoting industrial activities. For example, the Fuel Division, which was set up in April 1933 during the Mano government within the Ministry of Defence, was in charge of directly importing fuel from abroad, replacing two US private enterprises, namely the Asiatic Petroleum Company of Siam and Standard Vacuum Oil.⁴⁰ In 1935, the Ministry of Defence also established a spinning and weaving factory, Siam Cotton Mill, equipped with modern technology, for the purpose of supplying clothes to the military; and a paper mill, the Siam Paper Co. Ltd. (the second paper mill in Thailand). In 1936, the Ministry of Economic Affairs set up its Industrial Division and established the first state-owned sugar mill, the Thai Lampang Sugar Mill, which was soon followed by a second mill in Utaradit province.⁴¹

With the advent of the first Phibun government (1938-1944), two factors signalled that the Thai government was ready to continue to pursue a strong policy of economic nationalism. First, the unequal treaties with Western countries had been abolished in 1937 and second, Phibun appointed Pridi as Minister of Finance (1938-1941) thereby enabling the latter to re-introduce some of the programmes he had proposed in the Draft Economic Plan which had been aborted in 1933. Thus from 1938 to 1944, according to Suehiro, the government gained control of several categories of industries and business which it regarded as impacting directly on the welfare of the majority poor, namely; rice milling and related industries such as insurance and shipping services; imports; distribution of imported and domestically produced goods; commercial banking business; and manufacturing.⁴² Although the government was not

40 *Ibid.*, p. 123. Since 1953, the Fuel Division has become the Fuel Organization, a huge state enterprise under the Ministry of Defence.

41 Apichai and Montri, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

42 *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10; and Suehiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-130. Suehiro claimed that the government, under Phibun as Prime Minister (1939-1944) and Pridi as the Minister of Finance (1939-1941) produced "[S]tate control, rise of a bureaucrat capitalist class, and the alliance between Thai-national Chinese businessmen and political leaders" and that the policy benefited mostly members of "political groups which dominated the power structure, and not the Thai common people or indigenous merchants who were supposed to be promoted in its original economic programmes" [Suehiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 134, 133]. Although his argument appears to be a reasonable assessment and economic nationalism did fail, Suehiro did not take historical

able to fully accomplish its economic programmes and the Thai economy remained largely in the hands of foreign enterprises, the implementation of economic nationalism did reduced a great deal of foreign influence and allowed more Thai businessmen to enter manufacturing and commercial businesses.

Differences between the Prime Minister and his Minister of Finance became apparent when Japanese troops landed in Thailand on 8 December 1941.⁴³ Pridi was removed by Phibun from the Ministry of Finance to the pseudo-honorific position of Co-Regent (out of the cabinet) so that Phibun could co-operate freely with the Japanese, whose attention was focused on Thailand economically as well as strategically.⁴⁴ From the Japanese occupation in 1941 until Phibun was defeated in Parliament in 1944, Pridi consistently opposed Phibun's political, economic and military policies, especially in the relation to the use of the Japanese Yen in Thai markets and the role of the "Free Thai Movement" against the Japanese troops.

During the War, the Thai economic and political life suffered extensively. From 1942, Thailand's international trade was cut off for over three years, except for trade with Japan.⁴⁵ After the end of World War II, Thailand suffered several changes of government until the 1947 coup led by General Phin Chunhawan and the re-establishment of the second Phibun government.

Despite this, many scholars noted that in general from about 1933 onward, the common people in Thailand benefited, to some extent, from the governments' economic policies through a redistribution of income, expansion of education, and the encouragement of home industries and savings. In February 1943, H.G. Deignan recorded that:

circumstances into account and therefore did not, in my view, give the government credit for having tried.

For comparison, see Thuan Kangananaga, Report of National Economic Development B.E. 2482 (1943-1944), Bangkok: Sataman Publishing House, 1944.

43 In the early 1930s, Japan became interested in Thailand as an export market after the reduction of British and French influence. It also considered Thailand as a source of rice and as a strategic step in its Masterplan for East Asia. At the same time, Phibun intended to join hands with Japan to fight against Western powers. Consequently, he signed a Pact of Alliance with Japan on 21 December 1941.

44 Apichai and Montri, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

45 T.H. Silcock, "Outline of Economic Development: 1945-65", in T.H. Silcock (ed.), Thailand: Social and Economic Studies in Development, Canberra: ANU, 1967, p. 5.

During the decade just past the Government has initiated a positive program aimed at raising the standards of living of the common people and especially of the peasants who constitute the great majority. Among the means adopted have been ... the education of the farmer in livestock breeding and scientific agriculture; the establishment of agencies to enable him to obtain a fair market for his produce; the spread of public-health and medical services in far corners of the provinces. The results of this experiment had not yet become clear when the war interfered to hinder its fulfilment. The political aspect of the program leaned heavily toward economic nationalism, in an endeavour to counteract the excessive proportion of foreign capital in the country and to encourage more active participation by the Thai in the building-up of their own land.⁴⁶

Economic Nationalism after World War II

The main points of difference between the first Phibun government (1938-1944) and the second Phibun government (1948-1957) are exemplified by two main factors. First, the political struggle between groups caused a shift in the policy of economic nationalism from economic sufficiency, supposedly for the general good of the Thai people, to an emphasis on generating an economic surplus for political purposes; and second, amidst internal political divisions, the political intrusion of the United States (which perceived a threat of communist expansion in the region in the climate of the "Cold War" and following the 1949 success of the Chinese revolutionary war led by Mao Tse-tung) played an influential role in Thailand. These two factors provided the conditions for military government to gradually intensify its grip on Thailand and would shape Thai development policy from the mid-1950s.

1. The impact of domestic political struggle on economic development

The justifications for the 1947 coup led by Field Marshal Phin Chunhawan focused on the economic crisis after the War which saw high inflation, the drain of foreign exchange reserves, the lack of help for War veterans and the several changes of civilian governments which had prevented attention being given to improving economic conditions. The 1947 coup cleared the way for the military to become involved in business activities through the War Veterans Organization and Tahan Co-operation Co., Ltd organized by Phin to allegedly help the abandoned War veterans. However, Suehiro argued that it was the "silent coup" of 1951 which was the turning point for Phin to virtually gain "absolute power over the military group" and, at the same time, to break up the unity of the Phibun group into two factions.⁴⁷ One was the "Phin-Phao faction" which included influential figures in the police and military establishments who

⁴⁶ H.G. Deignan, *Siam – Land of Free Men*, Washington: Smithsonian Institution, War Background Studies, No. 8, 1943, p. 18.

⁴⁷ Suehiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-137; see also Thak Chaloemtiarana, *Thailand: the Politics of Despotic Paternalism*, Bangkok: the Social Science Association of Thailand, 1979.

also had strong family ties with Phin. These included the Police Director-General Phao Sriyanon (Phin's eldest daughter's husband); Brigadier-General Praman Adireksan (Phin's second daughter's husband) and Chatichai Chunhawan (Phin's only son). The other was the "Sarit faction" led by First Army Commander Sarit Thanarat who played a leading role in the "silent coup" of 1951. Sarit was originally in the Phin-Phao faction but later organized his own group within the army against both the Phibun and Phin-Phao groups. Eventually, the 1957 coup and the ensuing 1958 "revolution" gave Sarit "absolute power" over the army and Thai politics.⁴⁸

Although Phibun tried to pursue the same policy of economic nationalism as before World War II, namely to create employment opportunities for Thai people outside the bureaucracy, to contain the role of ethnic Chinese in commerce and industry in order to prevent them from rising to political domination, and to enlarge the economic base in order to offset the power of the royalist faction, his policies failed because he had insufficient power to control the military rivalry between the Phin-Phao and Sarit factions. In order to maintain political power, Phibun used some state enterprises and related businesses under his control to reward his supporters. The military factions did the same thing with some enterprises under their patronage. After the 1951 "silent coup", the military became widely involved in a range of industries and sectors, including banking, trading, mining and manufacturing, "largely in terms of the scope of business and the numbers of the firms concerned,"⁴⁹ with a view to exploiting and appropriating the economic surplus for political purposes. Besides the military leaders' regular income they received bonuses and other benefits but paid little attention to improving technology and expanding production capacity. At the same time, business groups could do little to develop their enterprises without military patronage.⁵⁰ Overall the industrial sector grew at a very slow pace during this period.

With regard to the agricultural sector, the Phibun government introduced a premium on rice exports as a temporary measure to keep the domestic price of rice lower than that on the world market.⁵¹ The revenue from the rice premium was

48 On Sarit's 1958 "revolution" see Thak, *Thailand*, pp. 140-152.

49 Suehiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-138. From a total of 101 firms, the Phin group "was involved in 32 firms (10 financial institutions, 15 industrial and transporting firms, and 7 trading and service firms), while the Sarit group had interests in 37 firms (12 financial institutions, 15 industrial and transporting firms, and 10 trading and service firms)". See further details of the military involved in business in *ibid.*, pp. 140-150, 169-172, 190-191, 206-207, 263-264.

50 *Ibid.*, pp. 137-152.

51 Chaiyawat explains that rice exports taxed by the government "... are subjected to two kinds of taxes: an ordinary export duty and a special tax called the "rice premium". The range of export duty, depending upon the grade of rice, has been between 3 and 7 per cent of the average export price. On the other hand, the average rate of premium, based on the ratio of the total premium to the value of exports, has ranged from 25 to 35 per cent" [Chaiyawat Wibulswasdi, "Thai

consistently high and grew from 15 per cent of total government revenue in 1951 to 18 per cent in 1955. As time passed, the government came to use the premium as a major source of revenue. The rice premium was supposedly collected from the rice exporters but, in practice the exporters made farmers pay the premium for them. As a result, the farmers were exploited without any improvement being introduced in agricultural technology.⁵²

2. The external influence on economic development

At the Southeast Asian regional level, there were "anti-colonialism" movements in a number of countries including Vietnam Cambodia, Laos and Malaysia. The communist parties rose to the fore in these movements. In 1947, the Southeast Asian League with anti-colonial policies was organized in Bangkok.⁵³ Regarding Thailand as a centre and haven for the movements, the US, as a leading power in the "Cold War" and afraid of the perceived threat of communist expansion in the region, became deeply involved in Thai affairs, strategically, politically and economically.

According to Rotter, in 1949, some American officials in the State Department (most from the embassy in Bangkok), the Policy Planning Staff and the Far Eastern Office's Division of Southeast Asian Affairs (renamed the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs) began to lobby for an increased US influence in Thailand. For example, on 29 March 1949, the Policy Planning Staff released the "United States Policy toward Southeast Asia" or "PPS-51" which advised that the US government:

... should seek to strengthen Siam [Thailand], help maintain the relative stability which its government [has] achieved, and generally cultivate that nation as a strategically located centre of stability ... in Southeast Asia [bracket as in original].⁵⁴

Rice Exports: an Analysis of its Performance in the 1960s", in Prateep Sondysuwan (ed.), Finance, Trade and Economic Development in Thailand, Bangkok: Somphong Press, 1975, p. 171].

52 Apichai and Montri, op. cit., pp. 23-25. See also Chirmsak Pinthong, "The Political Economy of Rice Policy in Thailand", paper presented at the International Conference on Thai Studies, ANU, 3-6 July 1987.

53 A. J. Rotter, The Path to Vietnam: Origins of the American Commitment to Southeast Asia, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987, pp. 75-76. Rotter said that the Laotian and Cambodian resistance movement had their headquarters in Bangkok.

54 Ibid., p. 76. Acheson also argued that the US concern with Thai affairs "would bring not only strategic advantage but also the economic advantage to the US in terms of the acquisition of new materials and new markets for the American manufacturing and agricultural products". Quoted from Apichai and Montri, op. cit., p. 16.

In August 1949, the State Department allowed an American mission to survey the natural resources in Thailand. And in the same month, Truman approved an economic assistance to Thailand of almost \$US 44 million in gold as payment for goods and services provided by Thailand during the War. At the same time, American investors increasingly paid attention to Thailand as a place for investment [Rotter, op. cit., p. 78).

The Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, in 1949, supported the above policy by arguing that Thailand was under the threat of communism both internally and externally and:

If Thailand collapsed, it was "unlikely that Malaya could be held. This would mean that from Korea to India there would be no place on the Asian mainland where the United States would have an open friend and ally". ... [i]f Thailand and Malaya fell, the United States would be denied strategic raw materials such as tungsten, tin, and rubber. It was clearly "of considerable political and economic importance to the United States to support Thailand in opposition to the forces of communism" [quotes as in original].⁵⁵

On 10 March 1950, US President Truman, allowed the State Department to give \$US 10 million military aid to Thailand in addition to military equipment. On 12 April 1950, a further \$US 11.4 million was granted as economic assistance "to supplement the military appropriation" and \$4.5 million was given "for Thai industry, especially for the extraction of exportable raw materials".⁵⁶ By the end of 1950, the government signed a technical assistance agreement with the US. Silcock said that:

from this time American assistance has not merely provided capital and technique but also influenced the character of Thai development. American influence played a considerable part in checking the trend towards state enterprise, in transferring interest from rail and river transport to highways, and in delaying the adoption of a national economic plan (at least of the indicative type favoured during the 1950s by Malaya and other countries in the Colombo Plan).⁵⁷

In relation to the Thai military split between the Phin - Phao and Sarit groups, the US chose to support the Sarit faction which proved to be the most politically acceptable to the US interest. The Phin-Phao group was not supported because Phao was distrusted for several reasons, including the brutality of political murders performed by his subordinates⁵⁸ and his excessive financial corruption. Phibun was also not favoured by the US because of his extraordinary efforts to promote his own image as a supporter of democracy. Phibun had attempted to gain popular support by passing several acts to support his new political programmes,⁵⁹ allowing the establishment of trade unions, permitting students and journalists to visit the USSR and the People's Republic of China (in the hope of balancing international relations away from the West alone) and announcing a general election in February 1957. When there

With the support of the US, Thailand became a member of both the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in the early 1949 [Silcock, *op. cit.*, p. 9].

55 Rotter, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

56 *Ibid.*, pp. 136, 195.

57 Silcock, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

58 For example, Peurifoy, an American ambassador to Thailand in 1954, was killed in an automobile accident on his way back to Bangkok from Hua Hin in August 1955. Four socialist-oriented ministers were allegedly murdered on Phao's orders.

59 Including an act for the registration of political parties.

was widespread protest against voting irregularities in this election, Sarit, supported by the US, staged a coup to overthrow both Phibun and the Phin-Phao factions on 16 September 1957.

In summary, although economic nationalism had been, to some extent, initiated with a view to attaining a self-sufficient economy for the poor, it eventually failed. Muscat (1966) and Suehiro (1989) claim that it had instead created "bureaucratic capitalism".⁶⁰ According to Suehiro, capitalist development in Thailand did not create an independent domestic capitalist class with its own political power base, but rather, businessmen (in particular Chinese) expanded their business on the basis of political connections with the military command and, in return, the military gained financial support to build their political power. For these reasons the policies of economic nationalism appears to have had little influence on the economic development of the Thai people because any gains were primarily used in the struggle between interest groups.

However, Phibun allowed the people to organize by way of trade unions and political parties primarily in order to gain support from the people and to assist him with his difficulties in controlling rivalries among senior cabinet members (particularly under Phin and Sarit). While indirectly this to a limited extent encouraged the concept of people's participation in the economy and in politics through the experience of democracy, economic and political crises within the country eventually paved the way for external involvement. The people's enjoyment of participation in national politics was ended by the coup staged by Sarit on 16 September 1957 with the support of the US. Soon after, the 1958 "revolution" changed the face of national economic development from economic nationalism to a free-enterprise economy with a limited role for the state. From the point of view of economic development what was also significant was the growing influence of the World Bank, the IMF, and UN development agencies which encouraged countries such as Thailand to prepare economic development plans.⁶¹ The First National Economic Plan for Thailand was presented by the government in 1961. This and subsequent five year plans have since formed the basis of economic development policies in Thailand.

Main directions of development plans during and after the Sarit regime

Since the end of World War II, the main directions of development in most Third World countries, including Thailand, have, more or less, been influenced by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Three broad development

⁶⁰ Muscat, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-198; Suehiro, *op. cit.*, Ch. 5.

⁶¹ These plans had to meet the approval of the international institutions if development assistance was to be given to the country concerned.

strategies have been promoted by these institutions at different times: Import-substitution Industrialization (ISI), applied during the 1960s; Basic Needs strategy (BNs) or Re-distribution with Growth (RwG), was used during the early 1970s; and Export-substitution Industrialization (EOI) with structural adjustment, since the late 1970s. In the following sections I will discuss these strategies in the context of Thai development plans and activities.

Import-Substitution Industrialization (ISI)

The World Bank's development strategy, conceptualized during the 1960s as "import-substitution industrialization" (ISI), was to encourage Third World governments to create conditions under which private enterprise, in particular foreign enterprise (through joint ventures etc.), would be able to undertake development of the country's resources in order to create national economic growth. Thus, governments would cease investing directly in state industries and, instead, assist domestic and foreign private enterprises to set up new industries by expanding the transportation, irrigation and communication infrastructure to serve the new private industrial sectors, by providing capital on special terms to support industries which produce goods for local consumption (in order to save foreign exchange), and by imposing high levels of import duties and prohibiting certain types of manufactured imports.⁶²

For Thai economic development, application of the ISI strategy was advocated by many agencies.⁶³ For example, in September 1957, the Bank sent its first economic research mission to Thailand to survey the economic problems. After one year of research, the mission presented to the Thai government a report entitled A Public Development Program for Thailand (1959) suggesting a change in the direction of Thai development from state capitalism to private enterprise.⁶⁴ At about the same time, a US investment survey team, led by G.B. Beitzel, submitted a report entitled Expanding Private Investment for Thailand's Economic Growth, (November 1959), suggested similar measures for maximizing economic growth by increasing the role of private enterprises (both domestic and foreign), reducing government participation in investment, exempting productive machinery from import duty and establishing a single

62 D. Baldwin, "The International Bank in Political Perspective", World Politics, Vol., 18 October 1965, pp. 68-81.

63 For instance, the World Bank (1960), the Bank of Thailand (1960), a United Nations mission (van Rijnberk, 1961) and the Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE, 1964). See K.J. Hewison, "National Interests and Economic Downturn: Thailand", in R. Robison, K. Hewison, and R. Higgott, Southeast Asia in the 1980s: The Politics of Economic Crisis, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987, p. 55.

64 The World Bank, Public Development Program for Thailand, Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1959, Chs. 1 and 3.

institution to oversee private investment.⁶⁵ The basic idea of this strategy, Suehiro argued, came from the US National Economic Committee, led by Rostow, which proposed the "economic development" strategy as a countermeasure against growing communist movements.⁶⁶ In applying Rostow's strategy generally in the Southeast Asian region, the US was particularly concerned with the security question. It feared the spread of communism, certainly far more so than did the Thai government. Thailand was of key strategic importance and therefore became the main aid recipient of the US in the region.⁶⁷

Even though the First Plan was not formalized until 1961, preparations had begun in the late 1950s. Sarit pre-empted much of the First Plan by putting in place a number of Revolution Party Proclamations to set the political scene for the implementation of the Plan without challenge from interest and pressure groups. These Revolution Party Proclamations aimed to legitimize the implementation of the First Plan instead of passing through the process of parliament.⁶⁸

The ISI strategy is reflected in the First National Economic Development Plan (in two phases covering 1961-1963 and 1964-1966) initiated under the Sarit regime (1958-1963) and the Second National Economic Development Plan (1967-1971) under the Thanom-Prapass regime (1963-1973). In order to "raise the standard of living of the people of Thailand" the First Plan set out to achieve an increase in GNP which it expected would be "equitably distributed ... [to] all citizens and not merely a privileged few derive benefit from it".⁶⁹ To do this, the Plan proposed to encourage economic

65 Grit, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-119. Apichai and Montri added that, following the report of US investment survey team, the Thai government revised the Investment Promotion Act in 1960 and then in 1962. As a consequence, the private investment from the US increased 34 per cent during 1960 and 1964, and 44 per cent during 1965 and 1972 [Apichai and Montri, *op. cit.*, p. 33].

66 Suehiro, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

67 For example see A. Caldwell, American Economic Aid to Thailand, Lexington: Lexington Books, 1974 and Rotter, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-79

68 For instance, the Revolutionary Party Proclamation No. 33 facilitated private and foreign investment (Royal Gazette B.E. 2501 (1958), Part 103); followed by Proclamation No. 47 to promote foreign investment (Royal Gazette B.E. 2502 (1959), Part 7); Proclamation No. 49 repealed the Limited Land Tenure Act of B.E. 2497 (1954) (Royal Gazette B.E. 2502 (1959), Part 8); Proclamation No. 19 of 30 October B.E. 2501 (1958) abolished the Labour Act of B.E. 2499 (1956) as well as the Land Code of B.E. 2497 (1954) [Kotmai Thi-din B.E. 2497]. In addition, following Beitzel, an adviser from the United States Operation Mission (USOM), the revision of the Investment Promotion Act of B.E. 2503 (1960) authorized the Board of Investment (BoI) to conduct overall industrial promotion. This act was later revised in 1962. See Apichai and Montri, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34; and Suehiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-180.

69 The National Economic (and Social) Development Board (NEDB/NESDB) The National Economic Development Plan (1961-1966): Second Phase (1964-1966), Bangkok: NEDB, Office of the Prime Minister, 1964, p. 9. The NEDB (later changed to be NESDB in 1972) was set up in 1959 for making and carrying out the development plans. It is under the

growth in the private sector supported by government programmes which would provide means and opportunities for increased production and enable the private sector to further expand on its own initiatives.⁷⁰ The Second Plan had similar aims of "... strengthening the efficiency and growth of the private sector, maintaining a stable monetary environment, and making more effective use of the substantial investment in national infrastructure under the First Plan".⁷¹ As a result of the Plans, Thailand enjoyed an increase of GNP of seven per cent per annum,⁷² one per cent more than the annual target growth rate of GNP proposed by the first UN "Development Decade" of the 1960s. The ISI strategy, which the Bank argued would help the government remedy the balance of payments and trade problems, remained the predominant strategy for Thai economic development throughout the 1960s.

However, in terms of domestic politics, the ISI strategy seemed secondary to the support of the US which satisfied both the US security concerns as well as the ambitions of the Thai military regime of Sarit to remain in power. Besides the elimination of his political enemies, especially the Phibun and Phin-Phao groups, Sarit gained military, political and economy support from the US especially through two programmes of development. One was the programme of Mobile Development Units (MDUs) to help develop the Thai army. The other was the Accelerated Rural Development (ARD) Programme to help support the civilian administration and develop the Northeast region. These two programmes were extensively financed by the US through its Operation Mission (USOM) and were continued under Thanom who became Prime Minister on Sarit's death in late 1963.⁷³

The Second Plan (1967-1971), drawn up during the Thanom-Prapass regime, also focused attention on national security in response to US advice.⁷⁴ For example,

supervision of the National Economic Development Council (NEDC) which was reorganized from the National Economic Council of 1950 [Suehiro, *op. cit.*, p. 179]. I was unable to locate the first part of the First Plan (1961-1963) in Australian libraries.

There have been six Plans to date. Subsequent references in the text and footnotes will use the short titles "First Plan", "Second Plan", "Third Plan" etc.

70 The First Plan, p. 9.

71 The National Economic (and Social) Development Board (NEDB/NESDB), The Second National Economic Development Plan (1967-1971), Bangkok: NEDB, Office of the Prime Minister, 1967, p. 2.

72 Ibid., p. 11.

73 H. Demaine, "Kanpatthana: Thai View of Development", in M. Hobart and R. H. Taylor (eds.), Context, Meaning and Power in Southeast Asia, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986, p. 98. The MDUs and ARDs carried out highway construction and village development projects with the aim of ensuring political support for the government in the zones considered to be subject to communist infiltration from Indochina. See also Thak, Thailand, Ch. 5.

74 The Second Plan, p. 23.

the Plan addressed the activities of the MDUs under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence operating with US assistance; military Civic Action groups under the Central Security Division of the Communist Suppression Headquarter; the Remote Areas Development Project (especially the southern part of the Northeast areas); and the Hill Tribes Development Project; all designed to counter insurgency in the rural areas.⁷⁵ In the educational areas, while the First Plan was mainly concerned with the expansion of primary education, the Second Plan focused on the quantitative expansion of secondary, technical, professional and teacher education so as to provide manpower required for economic development. This manpower development planning was organized under the supervision of the joint Thai-USOM preliminary study 1966-1970 and supported by SEATO technical school as stated in the First Plan.⁷⁶

The plans proposed some important projects in the agricultural sector, but were vague on implementation. The First Plan stressed a recognition of the need to expand agricultural production by improving techniques and encouraging greater self-reliance by the establishment of farmer co-operations and other associations. There was some consideration too of land tenure issues and of the need to improve the agricultural administration.⁷⁷ The Second Plan addressed land survey projects for which the Accelerated Rural Development Programme would take the responsibility, and which were to be implemented by 1988.⁷⁸

The outcome of the First and Second Plans from 1961 and 1971 were varied. Although the Second Plan stated that "the allocation of land is a major bottle-neck to successful rural development efforts" there seems to have been little real concern for rural development as the state's first priority, as industrialization grew rapidly at the expense of agriculture. For instance, the agricultural share in the GDP dropped from 37 per cent in 1961⁷⁹ to 29.8 per cent in 1971⁸⁰ whereas the industrial share in the GDP

75 *Ibid.*, p. 73. In 1965, the Communist Suppression Operations Command (CSOC) was established by Deputy Prime Minister Prapass Charusatien to co-ordinate military, police and civil counter-insurgency operations and to work in the area of community development programmes [H.U. Luther, Peasants and State in Contemporary Thailand: From Regional Revolt to National Revolution, Hamburg: Mitteilungen des Instituts für Asienkunde, 1978, p. 108]. The CSOC was later changed to be the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC).

76 *The First Plan*, p. 44.

77 *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 48, 51, 70, 71, 78, 79.

78 *The Second Plan*, p. 89.

79 *The First Plan*, p. 34.

80 Hewison, "National Interests and Economic Downturn", p. 53.

increased from 19 per cent in 1961⁸¹ to 26.2 per cent of in 1971.⁸² The relative decline of agriculture, which absorbed four-fifths of the labour force, created a great deal of problems for farmers including increasing debt and landlessness, migration from rural areas to the cities, as well as problems of urbanization. While the Plans proposed that the development of the industrial sector was intended to absorb unemployment, their success was very limited. The Board of Investment (BoI) could provide only 9,000 jobs annually whereas the labour force increased by about 2.5 million.⁸³ Suehiro pointed out that the government promoted the development of large-scale firms owned by foreigners and domestic manufacturing merchant class, but overlooked the development of the small-scale domestic firms. He also argued that the small, traditional domestic firms contributed to employment creation more than the big industries encouraged under the plans.⁸⁴

Demaine has shown, too, that the infrastructure-development programmes were undertaken without discussion with the common people and without regard for their needs. These programmes were often ill-managed and poorly co-ordinated with other development sectors and there were a number of cases in which farmers lost their lands for road construction or new industrial areas without compensation from the government. Much of the regional construction and service sector activities went to support the thirteen (some large) American military bases then set up in Thailand.⁸⁵

The aim of development as stated in the First and Second Plans to increase the standard of living of the people of Thailand failed and, instead, huge social problems emerged in various forms during this period despite the increase in GNP.⁸⁶ The failure of the development plans had much to do with the emphasis on the counter-insurgency programmes. Thak and Muscat argued that there was a constant shift of priorities for

81 The First Plan, p. 34.

82 G. Abonyi and Bunyaraks Ninsananda, Thailand: Development Planning in Turbulent Times, Toronto: University of Toronto - York University Joint Centre for Asia Pacific Studies, Asia Papers, No. 3, 1989, p. 27.

83 The National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), The Third National Economic and Social Development Plan (1972-1976), Bangkok: NESDB, Office of the Prime Minister, 1972, p. 200.

84 Suehiro, op. cit., pp. 183-186.

85 Demaine, op. cit., p. 98. Apichai and Montri argued that Sarit cancelled Phibun's Land Tenure Act of 1954 because it "had become a major obstacle for Sarit and his supporters to occupy a sizable amount of land for the construction of new roads connecting different parts of the country" [Apichai and Montri, op. cit., p. 33].

86 J.C. Ingram, Economic Change in Thailand 1850-1970, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971, p. 227. In fact, the growth came substantially from a number of foreign enterprises and as a result of the American military presence in Thailand during 1967-68.

political and military reasons,⁸⁷ no clear and concrete long-term objectives for the change in economic or social structure of the country.⁸⁸ Even the growth in GNP was not all it seemed and later dropped because the US military spending, about 10,000 million baht (\$ US 476 million) on construction and service in Thailand, declined from 1966-1968 due to the completion of US facilities to support the war in Vietnam War.⁸⁹ Moreover, development for security reasons drove the governments to suppress and alienate the people and thereby enabled the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) to expand its movement rapidly.⁹⁰

Basic Needs strategy

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, conscious of the failure of "trickle-down" development and the growing incidence of authoritarian regimes in most Third World countries, the World Bank moved its strategy away from ISI towards Redistribution with Growth (RwG) or Basic Needs strategies (BNs). This new development strategy was articulated by the then chairman of the World Bank, Robert McNamara, at the Nairobi Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors in 1973,⁹¹ four years after the ILO had formulated its strategy of the "basic human needs" in 1969. McNamara pointed to the conditions of life of Third World people who were degraded by disease, illiteracy and malnutrition, and to the structures which caused these conditions; however, his solution lay in increased aid and finance, which he believed was a moral obligation of the rich countries, but, almost incredibly, did not address the key problem of how to change the structures which produced these conditions. In order to receive development aid and assistance, therefore, the development policies of the poor countries would be required to meet criteria which took account of distribution of benefit, land reform, water supply, public service and new rural institutions designed to benefit the poor.⁹²

87 Muscat, *op. cit.*, p. 282. Muscat criticized the plans as stepping up resource exploitation, relying heavily on foreign capital, and limiting government's role in the process of development to be only a provider of an economic infrastructure.

88 Thak, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

89 *The Third Plan*, p. 6. The US had constructed large bases in Thailand to support its Vietnam operations and these were fed by roads and other infrastructure necessary to support the bases.

90 See details in D.E. Weatherbee, *The United Front in Thailand: A Documentary Analysis*, Columbia: Institute of International Studies, University of South California, 1970; R.S. Randolph and W.S. Thompson, *Thai Insurgency: Contemporary Developments*, Georgetown: The Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, 1981; and A. Turton, J. Fast and M. Caldwell (eds.), *Thailand: Roots of Conflict*, Nottingham: Bertrand Russell House, 1978.

91 McNamara, *op. cit.*, Ch. 12.

92 Although McNamara addressed the interesting problem of people's quality of life in Third World countries, his solution lay in the analysis of internal situations of each country rather than in the relations of international links (in terms of trade and aid like Brandt and Pearson

The Third Plan (1972-1976) was being drawn up since 1968 and while it incorporated approaches similar to those formulated by the ILO and later by McNamara, it did not explicitly refer to a basic needs approach. It was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)⁹³ and was designed to solve the economic and social problems which had arisen during the First and Second Plans by putting an emphasis on social aspects such as primary health and education, i.e. the expansion of non-formal, vocational and literacy education. These socio-economic problems included the fluctuation of world market prices, the decline of foreign investment, unemployment (in particular of the educated population), problems of land shortage, migration from rural areas, working condition, and decline of morality.⁹⁴ The Plan argued that these problems occurred largely because of the rapid expansion of trade and industrial activities in the private sectors. It therefore proposed that the private sector should take some responsibility to help solve problems.⁹⁵ The Plan also emphasized the land holding policy which encouraged "farmers" to own their land, to protect them from losing their ownership and to provide justice and security for those who leased land. In so doing, the government would accelerate the work of the Land Acquisition for Farmers Fund to provide land for, especially low-income "farmers".⁹⁶ While the Plan proposed many measures to improve income distribution, it also said that there would be difficulties because government officials lacked the infrastructure to prepare and implement rural development projects and co-ordination between agencies.⁹⁷

The Fourth Plan (1977-1981) had similar objectives to the Third but focused more on the distribution of income and planning for human development. It

Reports respectively). This example supports my discussion in Ch. 1 about the limitation of official perspectives; cf. p. 6, fn. 18.

However, the Bank's new approach failed to achieve 'long-term stable economic growth' for agricultural smallholders [The World Bank Annual Report, Washington D.C., The World Bank, 1978, p. 17]. McNamara set a target for Bank lending for agriculture or rural development efforts directed towards low-income farmers at \$ 4,400 million during 1974-78. This was a 40 per cent increase over the previous year and represented 20 per cent of total projected lending. To support his activities, he claimed that "without rapid progress in smallholder agriculture throughout the developing world, there is little hope either of achieving long-term stable economic growth or of significantly reducing the levels of absolute poverty." Nonetheless, the Bank claimed it could not evaluate the result of the loan projects of 1974-1978 because of the increasing rural population, limited land resources, and an inadequate supporting system to reach agricultural smallholders (*ibid.*, p. 20).

93 Demaine, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

94 The Third Plan, pp. 26-27.

95 *Ibid.*, p. 200.

96 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

97 *Ibid.*, p. 39.

emphasized land problems, noting for instance that the average land holding for agricultural purpose had been reduced from 14.7 rai in 1963 to 11.6 rai in 1975; the increasing numbers of landless peasants (more than 50 per cent of the rural population in Central Thailand);⁹⁸ the increasing land tenancy for agricultural production (40.7 per cent in Central Thailand, 18.3 per cent in the North, and 15.7 per cent in South);⁹⁹ expanding destruction of forest for agricultural purpose; and increasing conflicts over land. In addition, it claimed that the problem of insurgency was increasing in particular in the Northeast where 52.5 per cent of the population were in "sensitive areas" compared with 9.4 per cent in Central Thailand.¹⁰⁰ In order to solve these problems, the Plan proposed to create more jobs in rural areas, to provide information of the labour market and vocational training for the youth, to start new land settlement projects, and to encourage the private social welfare organizations to help solve rural problems. Significantly, the Third and Fourth Plans began to set the importance of non-government organizations, in principle, participating in the development process.

Economically, the Third and Fourth Plans adopted a strategy of industrialization by maintaining the import-substitution industrialization (ISI) in some areas such as textile and banking; at the same time, gradually moving towards the export-oriented industrialization (EOI) in other areas in order to counter the growing trade deficit.¹⁰¹ Suehiro argued that, during 1974 and 1976, the Thai economy faced two serious problems: the increase in imported value of crude oil and the decline in US military aid.¹⁰² He also claimed that Thailand would have a deficit of about 17.2 billion baht in 1976 but for a boom in the export of agricultural products which helped the Thai government to gain some 23 billion baht during 1972 and 1976. Due to this success, the government began to promote agro-business in the Fourth Plan (1977-1981) and made it the first priority in the Sixth Plan (1987-1991).¹⁰³ In addition, the Investment Promotion Act was revised in 1972 to implement the EOI strategy. Consequently, the value of manufactured exports increased from US\$40 million in 1970 to US\$270

98 The National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), The Fourth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1977-1981), Bangkok: NESDB, Office of the Prime Minister, 1977, p. 158.

99 *Ibid.*, p. 158.

100 *Ibid.*, p. 150, 157-158.

101 The EOI strategy was based on the "comparative advantage" of the nation in producing exports for the world market which I will discuss further in the next section.

102 Suehiro, *op. cit.*, p. 267. The value of crude oil imported increased from 3.1 billion baht in 1972 to 16.7 billion baht in 1976 as a result of the oil crisis, and US military aid declined after the end of the Vietnam War from 4.4 billion baht to 0.76 billion baht in 1976.

103 *Ibid.*, p. 268.

million in 1973.¹⁰⁴ As a result, the EOI strategy has been accepted among Thai planners and political leaders and endorsed by the World Bank for labour intensive, export-oriented industries. We may see, however, that the Redistribution with Growth strategy was generally dominated by either the ISI or EOI or both and was not yet the state's first priority.

Socially and politically, the Third and Fourth Plans continued to be guided by the growing security problems and government centralization. Watson observed that the Thai educational system was also used and:

"[t]hrough the text books, syllabus and curriculum content, the government exercises subtle political influence in its desire to foster a sense of nationalism and loyalty to Thai culture. In the history syllabus there is a strong propaganda bias which advocates Thai nationalism and is strongly anti-communist".¹⁰⁵

Demaine added that schools and primary health care facilities were built up extensively in the "sensitive" areas where Communist insurgency was expanding, especially in the Northeastern and Southern regions. He argued that the objectives of social development for the rural poor were not clearly defined, for instance, in terms of appropriate curriculum, standards of education to be provided, and the kinds of educational facilities to be used in rural areas.¹⁰⁶ Similar problems also appeared in the area of health care which was criticized in the World Bank Report of 1978. The Report said that although the Fourth Plan recognized the need to reduce differentials in health care between rural and urban areas, concrete rural differentials were not discussed.¹⁰⁷ In addition, the Report attacked the government's development administration for being "highly centralized", having "excessive functional duplication", and being generally short on co-operation between government departments.¹⁰⁸ The Bank's criticism was later addressed in the Fifth and Sixth Plans with the introduction of a structural adjustment strategy.

104 Hewison, "National Interests and Economic Downturn", p. 57.

105 K. Watson, Educational Development in Thailand, Hong Kong: Heinemann Asia, 1980, p. 143.

106 Demaine, op. cit., p. 101.

107 The World Bank, Thailand: Toward a Development Strategy of Full Participation, The World Bank Country Study, Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 1978, p. 108. The Fourth Plan's programmed targets for the health sector were 500 district hospitals, 5,000 health centres and 4,000 midwifery centres to be finished in 1981 [*ibid.*, p. 118], which was rather unrealistic.

There are a series of occasional World Bank country reports which are referred to in the text by the short title "Bank Report" for the designated year.

108 *Ibid.*, pp. 84-87. The Report also says that the government development administration was not only poorly distributed but also was uneven in its quality of service "which favours residents in Bangkok and urban centres generally" and therefore "the problems of rural areas simply tend to be neglected" (*ibid.*, p. 86).

We may conclude, briefly, that the failure of four development plans covering the 1960s and 1970s to address the problems of the common people, was due not only to the negligence of the government (most under the military regimes) but also to the impact of US security concerns. Buckley is right when he argues that the military-style leadership lacked any genuine commitment to the target groups (farmers and workers) and failed to correct the weaknesses of the Plans. The public expenditure for development had not been defined in terms of budgets by sectors and by sources, leading to considerable difficulties in project preparation and implementation. Only limited funds were actually disbursed on development while the expenditure on defence and internal security became higher than the development expenditure; taxation policies were not seriously assessed because the military was afraid of losing the support of rich elites.¹⁰⁹ However, Buckley did not mention the influence of the World Bank and other international institutions over Thai development plans and the US support to the Thai military regimes for pursuing US strategic interest.

The failure of development plans (from 1961-1971) under the guideline of modernization theory created various socio-economic problems. In particular the mounting problem of educated unemployed may be considered as a major cause of the political upheaval on 14 October 1973.¹¹⁰ The 1973 uprising, led by student movements [organized under the name of the National Student Centre of Thailand (NSCT)] mainly involved the urban middle class and has, to some extent, had an impact on structural change in Thailand ever since. Politically, the military-dominated regime has been weakened and gradually replaced by a parliamentary system and the increasing role of participatory institutions.¹¹¹ A new national constitution was put in place in 1978 followed by three elections (in 1979, 1983 and 1986) without successful military interruption (there were two abortive coups led by a group of "Young Turks" in April

109 M.J. Buckley, "Planning and Budgeting in Thailand: The Plight of Rural Farmer", The South East Asian Economic Review, Vol. 3, No. 1, April 1982, pp. 28-29, 32, 34, 49, 51.

110 Hoogvelt explains that social mobilization in particular through education creates social expectations. When the social expectation cannot be satisfied, the result is social frustration [Hoogvelt, op. cit., p. 143]. I think this analysis can be applied to explain the 1973 uprising in that the growth strategy created the social expectation of good jobs through education. In reality, the expectation appeared at the time of a high rate of unemployment, in particular graduate unemployment. Besides seeing the unjust behaviour of high-ranking officials, the university students were also frustrated with their uncertain future and prospects of unemployment due to the fact that the social structure was not changed.

111 Although the businessmen, military and bureaucrats have still actively participated in the parliamentary system, these groups have to follow the rules of the game, i.e. through the process of representative system which Suchit calls "open politics" and Girling calls the "bureaucratic-parliamentary system," which differs from Riggs's model of "bureaucratic polity" in that there appears an increasing role for non-bureaucratic organizations such as the NGOs.

1981 and September 1985).¹¹² Economically, the domestic capitalist groups such as banking business groups and exporters of agricultural products, were relatively reluctant to forge business links directly with the Thai political leaders because of the strict regulation of civilian government and the criticism from the press and students who, since the 1973 uprising, had greater opportunity to participate in the state's affairs.

Export-Oriented Industrialization (EOI) and structural adjustment strategies

Since the late 1970s, the World Bank and the IMF have promoted Export-Oriented Industrialization (EOI) and structural adjustment strategies which have come to play a predominant role as the guidelines for Third World development. EOI draws its support from economic growth theory and encourages industries to produce goods for export. From an economics points of view, the ISI strategy, which dominated development thinking during the 1950s and 1960s, created comparative disadvantage and protectionism. For instance, it discouraged competition between enterprises because government provided subsidies to domestic enterprises and protected them by tariffs, bans, quotas, and import licensing; these import protection measures also inhibited the growth of export-oriented industries. In addition, the industries emerging from the support of the ISI were heavily dependent on imports of capital and intermediate goods but failed to solve the problems of unemployment.¹¹³ By the mid to late 1960s, the ISI strategy began to reach "saturation point" especially in terms of consumer goods for internal use, and countries were ready to produce goods for export. In addition, the transnational corporations which had expanded since the post-war period behind the high tariffs in Third World countries, were also arguing for an EOI strategy to be implemented because it would create expansion for their own benefit.¹¹⁴

The way in which the EOI was to be achieved was through the implementation of structural adjustment policies which were designed to respond to the external economic shocks of the 1970s, especially the oil price increases of 1974 and 1979.¹¹⁵

112 Suchit Bunbongkan, "The Military in the Participant Politics of Thailand", paper presented at the International Conference on Thai Studies, ANU, 3-6 July 1987, p. 1.

113 P.G. Warr and Bandid Nijathaworn, "Thai Economic Performance: Some Thai Perspectives", *Asian Pacific Economic Literature*, Vol. 1, No. 1, May 1987, p. 66.

114 R. Robison, R. Higgott and K. Hewison, "Crisis in Economic Strategy in the 1980s: the Factors at Work", in R. Robison, K. Hewison and R. Higgott (eds.), *Southeast Asia in the 1980s: The Politics of Economic Crisis*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1987, pp. 4-5.

115 Balassa defines structural adjustment policies as "... policy responses to external shocks, carried out with the objective of regaining the pre-shock growth path of the national economy. Regaining the growth path, in turn, will necessitate improvements in the balance of payments following the adverse effects of external shocks, since a country's balance of payments position

Structural adjustment represented a public policy approach and required developing countries to put their economic houses in order by a range of measures including controlling inflation and balance of payment problems; increasing saving accounts; introducing pricing reform; improving government administration; encouraging the private sector to increase production; and cutting down public policy expenditure.¹¹⁶

Higgott, Robison and Hewison were sceptical about the implementation of the Bank's new strategies. Firstly, the emphasis was put on macro-level industrialized development without government subsidy for small factories (compared with the ISI). Governments would support large enterprises which could provide cheap goods for the international market while leaving small factories integrated in the large enterprise system. Secondly, the political institutions under the public policy approach would be regarded as subordinate to economic policy which implied a tendency to favour authoritarian regimes in order to maintain a high level of economic growth. Thirdly, there would be the impact on human development policies because public expenditure for them would be cut off.¹¹⁷

The new strategies recommended by the Bank were incorporated in the Fifth Plan (1982-1986) and Sixth Plan (1987-1991), both of which required the Thai government to adjust economic structures to raise productivity for export. The Bank Report of 1984 indicated that the growth in GNP had slowed down to average about 5 per cent per annum during 1980-82 (8 per cent in the 1960s, 7 per cent in the 1970s). The Report also noted that during the latter half of the 1970s, Thailand was already facing economic problems such as "accelerating inflation, growing dependence on foreign borrowing, large budgetary deficits".¹¹⁸ The Bank, therefore, urged the Thai

constraints its economic growth. ... A broader definition will also include adjustments to internal shocks which may find their origin in inappropriate policies ... internal shocks adversely affect economic growth and the balance of payments, requiring the application of structural adjustment policies" [B. Balassa, "Structural Adjustment Policies in Developing Economies", *World Development*, Vol. 10, No.1, 1982, pp. 23-38]. See further details of how the structural adjustment policies have been implemented by the World Bank and the IMF in H.G. Chau-Eoan, "The Debt Police", *Time*, 31 July 1989, pp. 42-48.

116 Higgott *et al.*, *op.cit.*, (1985), p. 40.

117 *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41. A similar scepticism is shown by M. Ziauddin, a Pakistani financial journalist, whose country is in the process of structural adjustment proposed by the IMF in 1988. As he says: "[C]ountries like ours tend to place the burden on the poorer people, who can least afford to suffer but do not have political clout" [Chau-Eoan, *op.cit.*, p. 44].

118 The World Bank, *Thailand: Managing Public Resources for Structural Adjustment*, The World Bank Country Study, Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 1984, pp. xix, 2

Pairoj argues that the slow-down in growth rate occurred due to many reasons: "[T]he relatively conservative fiscal monetary policy in Thailand during the 1960s is well known and documented. The turbulent world economy in the next decade (as manifested in rising inflation, high nominal interest rates and oil prices, world recession, declining world trade volume, the worsening of the terms of trade, decline in price of primary products, growing

government to reform five major areas: fiscal policy and resource mobilization; monetary policy; energy; industry; and agriculture, to achieve economic stability at both domestic and international levels. These recommendations were clearly reflected in the Fifth Plan (1982-1986). Further, in support of structural adjustment, Thailand received two special Structural Adjustment Loans (SALs) from the World Bank, the first in 1982 and the second in 1983.

The Bank Report of 1986 indicated there would be a big economic challenge for the Sixth Plan (1987-1991). For instance, national saving was very low, the trade deficit had risen to \$US 9.4 billion (equivalent to 5.3 per cent of GDP) in 1981-1985 and external debt rose to \$US 14.9 billion (long-term debt \$US 11.7 billion and short-term debt \$US 3.2 billion) in 1985 (equivalent to 39 per cent of GDP).¹¹⁹ The Bank insisted that, in the Sixth Plan, the Thai government should give a firm commitment to bring down the current deficit by a cutback in government expenditures, increase tax revenues by 15-16 per cent of GDP, improve public investment programmes, and promote export growth.¹²⁰ The structural adjustment policy, however, excluded

protectionism and foreign currency fluctuation) have severely hit the open economy of Thailand from the mid-1970s onward, ... Growth rate declined from 7.4 per cent per annum during 1976-1980 to 4.5 per cent during 1981-85. Only a 3.6 per cent growth was registered in 1986." and "the actual GDP growth rate during the Fifth Plan (1981-1986) was around 4 per cent compared with 6.6 per cent per annum in the Plan forecast" (Pairoj Vongvipanond, "Reflection upon Thailand's Economic Development", mimeo, Chulalongkorn University, n.d. pp. 7-8).

In contrast to Pairoj, Hewison argues that, in 1986, the Thai economy achieved "no-growth" budget mainly due to a huge debt and large military expenditure [Hewison, "National Interests and Economic Downturn", pp. 61, 66]. Based on Wilson, Hewison adds that between 1951 and 1967, the Thai government received military assistance from the US of over US\$ 1,000 million. When the US decreased its military spending in Thailand, the government had to fill the gap in the huge expenditure and did so by further borrowing, thus adding to the debt burden accumulated since the 1960s [*ibid.*, p. 63].

Hewison adds that Thailand was hit twice by the oil price crises – first in 1973 and the second in 1978 – and remained in a vulnerable financial position. Also the 1976 coup aftermath, to some extent, brought the military back to power. Consequently, defence expenditure rose rapidly and between 1976 and 1978 "at least US\$ 242 million was lent by various transitional banks for arms purchases at rates considerably higher than market rates and over short terms" [*ibid.*, p. 65]. By the end of the first quarter of 1983, total external debt had risen to US\$ 13,000 million [*Bangkok Post*, 27 June 1985]. In 1985, there was a decision to purchase advanced F-16 fighter aircraft and equipment from the US at the cost of 9,467 million baht amidst criticism from academics, students and people from various professions, [*Bangkok World*, 21 June 1985] protesting the policy of "guns today and rice tomorrow" [*The Nation*, 2 July 1985, p. 5]. The Thai economic status in 1986 was designated to be a low growth with 23 per cent of total expenditure going to debt servicing and 21 per cent for defence and security compared with 9 per cent for health and social service combined [*The Nation*, 3 July 1985, p. 19].

119 The World Bank, *Thailand: Growth with Stability: A Challenge for the Sixth Plan Period*, A Country Economic Report, Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 1986, Vol. 1, p. 2.

120 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

human resource development in terms of health and education, "in the medium term", because the state's priority was to increase economic investment for export.¹²¹

The Fifth Plan (1982-1986) set to "adopt a 'new line' of thinking for national development" and it was called a "policy plan" because it proposed national development objectives through "the adjustment of economic structure" rather than "economic growth".¹²² It also stressed "poverty alleviation" for people in backward rural areas because it recognized that one-fourth of the population was still living in "absolute poverty" in the rural areas, particularly in the Upper North and Northeast. The Plan's target areas covered 216 districts and 30 sub-districts in the North, Northeast and South (out of a total of some 5,000 districts in Thailand) where the people were to be raised from poverty and given an "adequate living standard" which was defined as "an education system and training relevant to their works", "good health", and the satisfaction of "daily basic needs as may be appropriate in different areas".¹²³

The Sixth Plan (1987-1991) aimed to review the role of government in national development, using "the programme system as a focus for the operations of various departments" and adjusting "the quality and quantity of government manpower". In addition, it aimed to support people participation, in terms of strengthening local organizations to achieve basic minimum needs.¹²⁴ The Plan says that:

¹²¹ The World Bank, Managing Public Resources, p. 247.

¹²² The National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), The Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1982-1986), Bangkok: NESDB, Office of the Prime Minister, 1982, pp. 2-3. It seems to me that none of the previous Plans was a "policy plan" and this was an anachronistic type of national development.

¹²³ Ibid., pp. 8, 12 and 14. The Plan clearly stated the problems when it revealed that much land holding was in the hands of a small number of people, about five per cent owning 21 per cent of land, and that the inspection of Labour Department had not yet met the requirement of the Labour Protection Act [ibid., pp. 242-248 and 343]. The Plan promised that the policies concerned with the use of land would be implemented, e. g. the enforcement of land tax and land reform policies, as well as of the Agricultural Land Rent Control Act of B.E. 2517. The Plan also said that the amendment of the Land Act, which proposed to limit the size of land holding to not more than 50 rai, was at the stage of acceptance in principle [ibid., pp. 12-13, 346]. However, there has not yet been any further progress. See also Turton, Production, Power and Participation, pp. 25-33.

¹²⁴ The National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), The Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1987-1991), Bangkok: NESDB, Office of the Prime Minister, 1987, pp. 12, 19, 107, 171-190, 338, 351 and 356.

An important principle of rural development policy is in encouraging the people to play a greater role in rural development by understanding the nature of the problems involved, finding solutions to the problems and taking the initiative in solving their own problems and those of their communities wherever possible. Meanwhile the government would play a catalytic role in forging closer co-operation between the government and the people and the private sector...¹²⁵

However, the implementation of development policy, as stated in the Sixth Plan, puts a strong emphasis on the role of the private sector in the development process, reflecting the strategy of export-oriented industrialization (EOI) in both the agricultural and industrial areas.

Both the Fifth and Sixth Plans had a number of shortcomings. For example, as Turton argued, "the dominant definition of [people] participation, which development planners such as the National Economic and Social Development Board (N.E.S.D.B.) seem to share with the World Bank (1978), primarily refers to greater involvement in a capitalist market economy".¹²⁶ In line with Turton, Helm argued that, under the Sixth Plan, the role of government would be limited to paving the way for the agro-industrial companies which the government expected to improve in managerial skill and marketing arrangements. He also argued that while the rural community might benefit from infrastructure and social services developed by the companies, at the same time, the companies' aim of maximizing their profits might leave only a small surplus for rural producers (and for the government in the form of tax), as had occurred in Latin American countries. Eventually, small-holder production might be changed to plantation production which tends to use modern machines rather than be labour intensive.¹²⁷ This direction of rural development, therefore, needed to be carefully planned if it was to take account of the huge problem of rural unemployment and under-employment accumulated since the inception of the First Plan in the 1960s.¹²⁸

With regard to the industrial sector, Bankers and academics argue against the prediction that Thailand will become a newly-industrialized country (NIC) saying that Thailand would be "a suffering tiger". The reason given is the lack of several basic factors such as a shortage of quality manpower, particularly in science, engineering,

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

¹²⁶ Turton, *Production, Power and Participation*, p. 11. Because the government put an emphasis on the private sector to manage the rural development in forms of agro-business. The new phenomena that occurred were that the agro-business companies as well as urban-based landowners purchased a large amount of land for business. The government policies towards agriculture would benefit farmers with middle and higher incomes rather than the great majority of small farmers which the plan had mentioned.

¹²⁷ F.G. Helm, "Implication of Snoh's Rural Development Policy", *Bangkok Post*, 3 April 1987, p. 5. Hewison, "National Interest and Economic Downturn", p. 78.

¹²⁸ Under-employment means that people have jobs but are not fully occupied and do little real work.

medicine, and other technological fields; as well as the need for technology transfer.¹²⁹ In addition, the government would face the problems of a huge unskilled labour force, numbering about 700,000 in 1987 and expected to increase to 800,000 in 1988; and an unemployment figure of 2.4 million in 1988, in particular among middle-level graduates.¹³⁰ Therefore the comparative advantage of having cheap labour is doubtful because most Third World countries also have cheap labour, but in any case the very role of modern technological innovation in increasing productivity tends to replace the advantage of cheap labour in the Third World. As most countries are implementing the export-led growth strategies, Thailand might also be affected by trade wars (especially between the European Community, the US and Japan) in the form of protectionism in the world market. In this regard, the government may have to re-assess the major direction of development if it is to be more suitable for the aims of Thai society.¹³¹

With regard to the structural adjustment policy applied in the public sector, Demaine was sceptical on several points. Firstly, to introduce a new policy such as the structural adjustment policy is not simply a technical change but it is a part of, and is determined by, political processes. For instance, in the private sector, the government remains dependent on the support of political interest groups, mainly businessmen, landowners, and the military, which have played a dominant role in economic growth through the formal development periods (over twenty years). For any change to occur, it "must obtain at least the tacit acceptance" of these groups.¹³² Secondly, the administrative decision-making in the public sector is highly centralized. Each

129 The educational system can produce only 2,700 engineers a year, while the market demand is running at 7,000 engineers a year [The Thai Farmers Bank, "New Government Faces Problems despite High Growth", *The Nation*, 11 August 1988, p. 18]. Kraisak Chunhawan, of Kasetsart University, supports this argument by giving an example of the Eastern Seaboard Programme to show that Thai education has not developed sufficiently to adjust to the rapidly changing needs of industry. In the long run, the Programme will require 28,000 engineers but Thailand is already short of engineers, the same problem exists in other areas of skilled labour. He also predicts that the shortage of skilled labour will lead to domination by foreign companies ["Chatichai's son talks to Mayuri Rattanawannathip", *The Nation*, 29 July 1988, p. 9]. See also Chira Hongladarom, "New Government Faces Old Labour Problems", *The Nation*, 12 August, 1988, p. 8.

Thailand has to spend money on technology costs increasing over 15 times in the past 15 years, amounting to 2 billion baht in 1988. The heavy dependence on foreign technology might bring about problems in copyrights and poor technology, resulting in the relative uncompetitiveness of Thai products on the world market.

130 The Thai Farmers Bank, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

131 Although Thailand enjoyed a high growth rate of about 10 per cent in 1987 and 1988, the fundamental problems of the common people have not yet been solved, e.g. the income differentials, the increase and guarantee of the common people's real income, unemployment and the abuse of natural resources. See further discussion in Ch. 5.

132 Demaine, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

department prefers to have "a substantial amount of independence"¹³³ in its internal affairs with a top administrator who, being the highest decision-making authority, may reward or admonish his "entourages". However, this vertical line plays a more dominant role than that of the horizontal link between departments and ministries in the Thai bureaucratic system (the horizontal link occurs on the basis of personal contact and relationship rather than being part of the system). As a consequence, the independence of each sector creates widespread duplication and overlap of responsibilities between departments and sub-departments. For instance, in the area of rural development in the 1970s, there were ten agencies involved in the construction of rural roads, six agencies providing rural water supply facilities, and six agencies responsible for various aspects of land development and settlement.¹³⁴ Under these circumstance, the public service could only be ineffective in bringing services to the people in general.

The main directions from the First Plan (1961-1966) to the Sixth Plan (1987-1991) can be summarized into two categories: economic growth and human development - but in the form of "top-down" development. Influenced by the UN's "First Development Decade" of the 1960s and US foreign policy during the early "Cold War" period, Thai development policy seen in the First and Second Plans focused on economic growth, guided by ISI and led by the private sector, along with the "national security" policy of suppression of so called "communism". Due to the increasing social problems during the implementation of the two development Plans in the 1960s and the influence of the new strategies of the UN's "Second Development Decade" announced in the early 1970s, the Third Plan (1972-1976) and the Fourth Plan (1977-1981) maintained the same growth objectives but added a concern for human development in terms especially of income distribution. Human development appears more comprehensively in terms of "poverty alleviation" in the Fifth Plan (1982-1986) and "people participation" and "basic needs" in the Sixth Plan (1987-1991). At the same time, these two later Plans saw a move from ISI to EOI and structural adjustment strategies under the guidance of the World Bank and the IMF. Thus, development strategies in Thailand were beginning to move towards serving the people as the intensity of the policy of "national security" was being reduced from the Fifth Plan onward. "Co-operation" rather than "control" has been a widely accepted principle of development in the Sixth Plan.

Nevertheless, the results of nearly three decades of development plans have not lived up to expectation. A huge number of problems are waiting to be remedied by the

133 *Ibid.*, p. 106. Demaine argued following the World Bank, Toward a Development Strategy, pp. 84-87.

134 The World Bank, Toward a Development Strategy, p. 87.

government and concerned parties. For instance, the agro-business approach in agriculture (as well as government's support of infrastructure) has resulted in the concentration of land ownership among big landowners at the expense of small farmers, who have had to sell their lands and become landless tenants. Their options are then either to move away to grow crops in the forest areas (with serious environmental consequences) or to go to the big towns to sell their labour.¹³⁵ The failure to sustain people's standard of living as an ultimate aim of development plans has been due not only, as Heim argues, to "the inability of the Government to organize effective extension work", but also to the absence of a political will to address the issue.¹³⁶ Unless development programmes address not only the increase of economic growth but also concrete solutions to the problems of poverty, unemployment, and inequitable incomes for the common people, then true development in Thailand will continue to fail.

Problems of common people and their reaction towards the government's implementation of development policies

The common people and their problems

It is widely recognized that the agricultural sector must be a major focus of Thai national economic and social development. The reasons are self-evident: first, although the agricultural sector has gradually declined, agricultural production still plays the most important single role in the Thai economy and in 1983 represented 23.5 per cent or almost one fourth of the total GDP.¹³⁷ Second, 71.4 per cent of the labour force is involved in the agricultural sector and amounts to about 13 million people from an

135 An other reason is that the smallholders cannot afford to buy fertilizer which is very expensive. Compared to Indonesia which has roughly a two to one ratio of fertilizer price to paddy price, Thailand's ratio was as high as seven to one [See Buckley, *op. cit.*, p. 37].

136 F.G. Heim, Akin Rabibhadana and Chirmsak Pinthong, How to Work with Farmers: A Manual For Field Workers; Khon Kaen: The Research and Development Institute (RDI), Khon Kaen University, 1983, p. 1.

137 Although the proportion of agricultural production has been reduced over 20 years as a result of the emphasis on the industrial development, the agricultural sector is still the most important sector in Thai economy. Its share of GDP declined from 39.8 per cent in 1960 to 29.8 per cent in 1971, 24.9 per cent in 1980 and 23.5 per cent in 1983 [Hewison, "National Interests and Economic Downturn", p. 54].

In addition, Suehiro argued that agricultural exports (mainly rice and rubber) supported the industrial development of the Thai economy in many ways. For example, first, it raised cash income for farmers and local merchants in order to keep and enlarge domestic markets of "import-substitution industries" such as textiles, automobiles and electrical goods. Second, the increase of agricultural exports helped these industries import capital goods for their purpose. Suehiro also added that "[I]f agriculture had not increased its export share after the 1960s, it is very doubtful that the industrial sector could have enjoyed such high growth rates". Third, rice export taxes and rice premiums contributed about five to fifteen per cent of total revenue to government revenue throughout the 1960s. Fourth, although the agricultural sector had been gradually moved towards agro-business industry, the Thai economy still mainly gained benefit from agricultural products [Suehiro, *op. cit.*, p. 267].

overall workforce population of some 19 million people.¹³⁸ Third, due to the declining agricultural sector, there has been an increasingly high number of urban migrants who come from an agricultural background to be wage workers in big cities. This enables us to see a close relationship between rural peasants and urban wage workers. Surveys carried out by Thai and foreign researchers reveal that a high proportion of urban workers need to earn money to sustain rural families and relatives, as well as themselves and although they often want to go back to work in their home villages, this is not feasible.¹³⁹ The mass of "small farmers" (including poor peasants) as well as the landless peasants, and wage workers (who retain strong links with their agricultural background and families), represent the very fabric of the country socially, economically and politically and, in this thesis, they constitute together the group that I refer to as the "common people".

Amidst the relative success of the Thai economy in terms of the classical measure of economic development, the common people have yet to enjoy the full benefits of economic growth, even though there has been an overall reduction in the incidence of poverty.¹⁴⁰ The incidence of poverty in 1962/63 was 57 per cent of the population (about 16 million people). By 1975/76 that percentage was down to 31.7 per cent (about 13 million) and by 1981 had reached 23.9 per cent (about 11 million).¹⁴¹ But, as noted by Medhi, there are interesting regional differences. In the Lower South poverty fell from 55 percent in 1975/76 to 19 percent in 1981; in the

138 Hewison, "National Interests and Economic Downturn", p. 54. By comparison there are two million people, or about 11 per cent, working in industrial sectors, mostly in menial jobs, and 3.4 million people, or about 18 per cent, in the service sectors which include government officers, businessmen and large numbers of semi-skilled workers.

139 P. Limqueco, B. McFarlane and J. Odhnoff, Labour and Industry in ASEAN, Manila: Journal of Contemporary Asia Publishers, 1989, pp. 36, 39, 40-41. The survey was conducted from November 1982 to February 1983 by three teams of students from Chulalongkorn University under the supervision of Chatthip Nartsupha of the Economics Faculty, Chulalongkorn University. Eighty workers were sampled from three sites of industry: Rangsit, Nontha Buri Province; Prapadaeng, Samut Prakan Province; and Omnoi, Samut Sakhon Province. The ratio between male and female workers was 55:45 of the total Thai workforce.

140 For instance, the GDP has increased from 60,000 million baht (about US\$ 2,857 million) in 1961 to 817,000 million baht (about US\$ 38,905 million) in 1981, or in other words, by a factor of 14 in 20 years. During this period, the yearly per capita income increased from 2,200 baht (about US\$ 105) to 17,200 baht (US\$ 810), a factor of 8. Performance in the export and the service sectors accelerated from 9,900 million baht (about US\$ 471 million) in 1961 to 163,000 million baht (US\$ 7,762 million) or 16 times in 1981 [The Fifth Plan, p. 1]. See also Kroekkiat Phiphatseritham, "Khongsang kankrachai raidai khong rabop setthakitthai", [The structure of the Distributive Income of Thai Economic System], Journal of Political Economy, [in Thai], Vol. 2, B.E. 2525 (1982), p. 9. The exchange rate used at that time was US\$ 1 = 21 baht.

141 Medhi Krongkaew, "The Current State of Poverty and Income Distribution in Thailand", paper presented at the International Conference on Thai Studies, ANU, 3-6 July 1987, pp. 4 and 26. Pairoj op. cit., p. 9. See also the detail in The World Bank, Income Growth and Poverty Alleviation in Thailand, The World Bank Country Study, Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 1980.

Central regions there was only small reduction; while in the Northeast a reduction from about 47 percent in 1975/76 still left some 36 percent in poverty. From 1962/63 to the present, the poor in urban areas (with about 14 percent of the population) have represented around 10 per cent of the total. Within the classification of the poor, Medhi also found the poor in the Northeast were "more poor" than people in other regions (the "least poor" being in Bangkok). By occupation, farm and general labourers had the highest incidence of poverty followed by farm operators (i.e. those working their own or rented or land). Medhi's study showed that there was a worsening gap in income distribution regionally and "the standard of well-being between the urban and rural areas appeared to be drifting apart". In conclusion Medhi argued:

if Thailand continues its development path and patterns as in the last 20 years, the poverty level should also continue to go down, and for some time yet, the distribution will be more unequal. Whether this problem will receive adequate attention from the Government depends on the perception of the State whether this problem would become politicized or not, or whether the total benefits could be trickled down sufficiently to obviate the need to rectify income inequality. Realistically, the concern for income distribution remains the long-run perspective of the Government.¹⁴²

Other scholars, like Udom (1975), Kroekkiat (1982), and Islam (1984) have expressed the same concern that economic development has clustered around urban agglomerations rather than in the rural sector, and although economic growth in Thailand has accelerated, the distribution of growth has remained uneven and a tremendous gap between the urban and rural areas, especially the North and Northeast, has persisted.¹⁴³

At the same time, the pattern of ownership and control of the productive forces remained very much in the hands of a minority of landowners and business groups.¹⁴⁴ According to Kroekkiat of Thammasat University, a survey of 50 districts in 22 provinces revealed that about six per cent of the landowners (27,019 landowners)

¹⁴² Medhi, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.

¹⁴³ Udom Koedphibun, "Distribution of Income and Wealth in Thailand", in Prateep Sondysuvan (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 279-316; and Kroekkiat, "Khongsang kankrachai raidai", pp. 11-12; R. Islam, "Poverty, Income Distribution and Growth" in A.R. Khan and E. Lee (eds.), *Poverty in Rural Asia*, Bangkok: ILO-ARTEP, 1984, pp. 205-229.

In addition, Medhi, Islam and Pairoj were critical of Oey Meesook's study of poverty for the World Bank, using household expenditure surveys and concluding that "there is no trade-off between growth and equity during the 1960s and mid-1970s" [Pairoj, *op. cit.*, p. 9; and Medhi, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3]. See also Oey Astra Meesook, *Income, Consumption and Poverty in Thailand, 1962/63 to 1975/76*, The World Bank Staff Working Paper, Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1979.

¹⁴⁴ Kroekkiat Phiphatseritham, *Wikhro laksana kanpenchaokhong thurakit khanatyai nai prathetthai* [The Distribution of Ownership in the Thai Big Business (translation as in original)], Thai Khadhi Research Institute, Research Document No. 14, Bangkok: Thammasat University, B.E. 2525 (1982); and Paisal Sricharatchanya, "The Jewels of the Crown", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 30 June 1988, pp. 60-63.

possessed 31 per cent of land (8,306,694 rai). Of these, the top one per cent of the landowners (5,434 landowners) possessed an average of about 641 rai each; the next five percent an average of 223 rai each. Of the remaining 94 per cent of landowners (404,725 landowners), 25 per cent (100,396 landowners) possessed from 20 to 50 rai; and 69 per cent (or 304,329 landowners) possessed less than 20 rai.¹⁴⁵

Very few people would argue that the ownership of agricultural land in Thai rural areas is not the single most significant factor in the well-being of the common people. But since the Limited Land Tenure Act of B.E. 2497 (1954) was abolished by Sarit's Revolutionary Party Proclamation No. 49, farmers had been losing their lands through selling (of their own free will or by being forced), and resumption by the state for the construction of roads, dams, forestry schemes and "public works", with little or sometimes no compensation.¹⁴⁶

It could be said that, with the support of government development policies during the past two decades, big landowners, domestic and foreign enterprises or the so called "the tripod structure of dominant capitalist groups" controlled most of the productive resources (e.g. land, capital and labour) in the Thai economy.¹⁴⁷ As a consequence, this concentration created an unequal distribution of income which has a great impact upon the poor living condition of the common people and has determined the continuing structure of underdevelopment of the country, socially, economically and politically.¹⁴⁸

145 Kroekkiat, "Khongsang kankrachai raidai", pp. 7-8, 13. Kroekkiat uses as his primary source the Office of Land Reformation for Agriculture, Statistic Document no. 4036. The government officers explored fifty districts within 22 provinces to study land reformation and found many problems in terms of land monopoly. See also A. Turton, "The Current Situation in the Thai Countryside", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1978, pp. 110-112. Turton argues that in one district of a Northern province, the land tax records for 3,430 owners in 1974 revealed that only 1.4 per cent of landowners (48 landowners) possess land from 45 rai to 1,600 rai whereas 56.3 per cent (or 1,932 small landowners) have land 5-10 rai. According to Paisal, the land holding by the Crown Property Bureau (CPB) which is owned by the King, and which, the article claimed, was "the wealthiest institution in Thailand", was estimated at about 40,000 acres in up-country and at roughly 13,300 acres in Bangkok [Paisal, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61].

146 Chai-anan and Morell argue that besides the corruption scandal in the Irrigation Department, in 1969, "large dams produced electricity for the cities, rather than serving the needs of small farmers." In addition, "[R]oad building became a top priority in the development plans. While the government claimed that these roads were of great economic importance to the farmers, some critics argued that the road construction program had little effect on agricultural output" [D. Morell and Chai-anan Samudhavanija, *Political Conflict in Thailand: Reform, Reaction, Revolution*, Cambridge: Gunn & Hain Publishers Inc., 1981, p. 208]. According to Jacobs, most roads were built to serve strategic purposes in "the event of an international conflict in Southeast Asia" [Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 145].

147 See explanation in Suehiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 275-286.

148 *Ibid.*, Ch. 8.

Analysing the distribution of ownership of the Thai big business during two development decades (1960s and 1970s) using first-hand data and information¹⁴⁹ from the Ministry of Commerce, Kroekkiat found that "the degree of concentration in all major business sectors are very high and the foreign companies have played an important role in the Thai economy, particularly in the industrial sector" and "the government's economic policies in the past two decades have also promoted high business concentration and high degree of monopoly power".¹⁵⁰ Kroekkiat argued that the financial business (e.g. banking) had more influence than others (e.g. import, export, manufacturing and agricultural businesses) in the use of capital, of social resources, the promotion and expansion of big business as well as the control of economic change. Although agriculture was a fundamental sector in Thai economic system in which most people were involved, it played only a minor role in the control and change of Thai economy.¹⁵¹ Kroekkiat also considered the increasing role of foreign enterprises on which the Thai economy was dependent in terms of capital investment, technology and trading and said that the trend towards dependency was advancing.¹⁵²

Besides the lack of productive resources (e.g. land and capital), the small farmers' poverty and landlessness comes from their indebtedness and inability to pay rents and high interest rates on borrowing.¹⁵³ They also suffer from natural conditions such as the fluctuation of climate and low productivity, and human exploitation through low market price depressed further by pre-harvest contract sales or immediate post-

149 For example, the financial statements and lists of shareholders of about one thousand limited companies belonging to the major business groups in 1978 and 1979.

150 Kroekkiat, *Wikhro laksana kanpenchaokhong*, p. 10.

151 The pattern of ownership (e.g. the shareholding in companies) was concentrated in a small clique of family businesses. For instance, three quarters of the financial businesses were under the control of five commercial banking (family) groups, namely Sophonphanich, Techaphaiboon, Lumsum, Rattanak and Nanthaphiwat families. About 90 per cent of financial resources (altogether 500,000 million baht during 1978-1979) were in the hands of 30 big business groups; and about 70 per cent of that amount of financial resources belonged to only 12 commercial banking groups and large industrial groups.

152 *Ibid.*, pp. 360-364, 367-369.

153 Chai-anan says that in the North and Northeast regions about 20 per cent of the peasants have no buffalo to work in the rice field. Farmers therefore have to rent buffaloes at a costs of 50-100 tang of paddy rice for only one planting season, whereas they can gain by average only 28 tangs [280 kilograms] per rai [Chai-anan Samudavanija, "The Farmers' Movement in Modern Thai Politics", paper presented at the Thai-European Seminar on Social Change in Contemporary Thailand, Anthropological-Sociological Centre, University of Amsterdam, 28-30 May 1980, p. 14; and Morell and Chai-anan, *op. cit.*, p. 211]. See also Kosit Punpiumrat, "Kanpatthana Chonnabot yakchon nai raya khu'ng phan patthana chabap thi ha lae thitthang kanpatthana nai phan patthana chabap thi hok" [The Development of Poor-Rural Areas Half-Way through the Fifth National Economic and Social Plan and the Direction of the Sixth National Economic and Social Plan], in The National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), *Chonnabotthai*, [Thai Rural Areas], [in Thai], Bangkok: NESDB, Office of the Prime Minister, B.E., 2527 (1984), p. 14.

harvest sale, high rents and the imposition of fines for delayed payment. Even though the Agricultural Land Rent Control Act of 1974 fixed a maximum rent of one-third of the crop, it has been ignored by officials and landowners. After the "parliamentary period" ended in 1976, the landowners seized any opportunity to evict tenants and to re-negotiate new tenancies with various forms of cash rent in advance. The Agricultural Land Reform Office has achieved very little in implementing the policies of the 1975 Agricultural Land Reform Act for the benefit of the tenants and, according to Turton, from 1975 to 1981 "only 30,000 ha of land in the Reform Areas had been purchased from private owners ... this benefited less than 3 % of tenant households."¹⁵⁴ At the same time there has been considerable land fragmentation and subdivision and also a shortfall in land development for agriculture.

Furthermore, illness and illiteracy are serious problems among small farmers. For instance, in the mid-1980s, 63 per cent of the poor in the rural areas, in particular the Northeast region, were subject to parasitic illnesses and 90 per cent on average had anaemia.¹⁵⁵ The causes of illness are malnutrition, poor living condition and hard physical labour, especially in new forest-fringe areas which present particular health hazards such as virulent types of malaria. In 1981, 14.5 per cent of the population of that region was uneducated and lacked the basic knowledge necessary to prevent themselves from getting diseases.¹⁵⁶ In addition, illiterate farmers were sometimes simply cheated by landowners and money lenders and eventually they lost their lands.¹⁵⁷

At the same time, the poverty of urban workers has been exacerbated by low wages and a high rate of unemployment. For example, in 1981, the government declared the average wage for the workers in Bangkok to be 61 baht (about US\$ 2.9) per day. While this is appreciably higher than in 1973 when the average wage was only 12 baht (US\$ 0.57), the workers in the nearby provinces such as Samut Sakhon and Samut Songkhram earn even less than those who worked in Bangkok. Moreover, according to the NESDB's statistical data, there were 286,000 unemployed workers in 1980 and the estimated figure for unemployed was expected to rise to 552,000 in 1990.¹⁵⁸

154 Turton, Production, Power and Participation, pp. 22-23.

155 Kosit, op. cit., p. 14.

156 Ibid., p. 14.

157 Morell and Chai-anan, op. cit., pp. 211-212.

158 Kroekkiat, "Khongsang kankrachai raidai", pp. 17-19.

It is clear that without power and any effective voice in government, the common people have been ignored and successive governments have supported narrow elites in agriculture, in business and in social development at the expense of the common people.

People's reaction towards the government's implementation of development policies

The government has achieved very little in solving social problems which have been growing since at least the 1930s. The people express their frustration in unproductive ways such as drinking, gambling and committing crime, which the government regards as problems of individual behaviour rather than as wider social problems.¹⁵⁹ Common attitudes towards the government officials are quoted in Demaine and Seri:

These people who came to us, whom in general we called "town people," counted on and respected only educated or rich persons, or somebody of high rank; no matter how young, how stupid, how ignorant they were, age meant nothing to them. ... But we knew that they expected us to respect them because they were educated and they were government people too. So we did as they wanted by acting humble. But it would also [have] hurt them awfully if they ever knew that we counted them as what we thought they really were. ... Sometimes we even called some of them stupid asses.¹⁶⁰

You are the one[s] who plans thing for us. But you never take any responsibility when the plans fail. We farmers have to find our way out by ourselves.¹⁶¹

Chai-anan, Chirmsak and Davis argue that one of the main reasons for these outpourings of frustration is that the poor have not been able to bring meaningful political pressure upon the government. Most Thai poor tend to accept their misfortune and poverty as their inescapable "karma" and the people's apparent passiveness may derive from the fact that no strong grass roots movement has been formed.¹⁶² Because the common people are not organized and do not present a direct threat to government security, the government has not made any serious effort to take their problems into account or attempted to really improve the economic welfare of the people.¹⁶³ Where

159 For instance, the Fifth Plan reveals that the crime rate rose from 20 cases per 100,000 person in 1959 to 40 cases per 100,000 persons in 1976 [The Fifth Plan, p. 7].

160 Demaine, op. cit., p. 110.

161 Wibun Khemchaloem, quoted by Seri Phongphit (ed.), Back to the Roots: Village and Self-Reliance in a Thai Context, Bangkok: Rural Development Document Centre (RUDOC), 1986, p. 15.

162 Chai-anan explains "karma" as "the degree to which the present status is determined by past lives" [Chai-anan, "The Farmers' Movement", p. 6].

163 Chirmsak makes a comment on government policies concerned with farmer organizations that "farmers' organizations have been much discouraged and destroyed in the past two decades while business and industrial interests promoted and consolidated" [Chirmsak, op. cit., p. 20]. See also R. Davis, "Little Change in a Northern Thai Village", in B.J. Terwiel (ed.), Seven Probes

security has been a perceived problem, however, the government has not been slow to bring force to bear with little concern for eliminating the economic conditions which produced opposition in the first place.

Wherever there were grass roots movements, the government reacted.¹⁶⁴ During 1973 and 1976, the peasant and worker movements became better organized than ever before in the Peasant Federation of Thailand (PFT) and Labour Unions of Thailand (FLUT), and in particular when they co-operated with the student movements. The so-called "Sam-pra-san" or "Tri-Co-operation" between farmers, workers and students, voiced the grievances of the common people and put strong political pressure on the government. The ruling elite felt threatened and consequently tried many ways to destroy the emergent co-operative organization of workers, farmers and students, eventually achieving this objective with the 1976 coup. Moreover, the government felt even more threatened when large numbers of students, workers and farmers fled to join the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) with the declared intention of taking up arms to fight against the government.¹⁶⁵

At that time, the political-oriented people's movements wished to devise development strategies to attack the root causes of problems concerned mainly with land ownership and an unfair labour system (e.g. the minimum wage), by influencing the government, or if necessary, by campaigning against it. The people organizations stated that they aimed to achieve their struggle by peaceful means and were initially far from the influence of the CPT. As Srithorn Yotkantha, President of the Northern Region PFT said in an interview in September 1976 just before the October 1976 coup:

in Rural South East Asia, Bihar (India): The Centre for South East Asian Studies, 1979, pp. 20-22.

164 There had been peasant movements in various forms operating for many years more or less against state suppression and exploitation, especially in the North and Northeast regions. The worker movements were very recent by comparison. For the peasant movements, see further details from Chatthip Nartsupha, "The Ideology of Holy Men Revolts", pp. 111-134. For the state suppression and exploitation, see Somsamai Srisudravarna (pen name of Chit Poumisak), Chomna sakdinathai, pp. 43-148. For the peasant movements in the 1970s, see Luther, Peasants and State in Contemporary Thailand; and Turton, Production, Power and Participation, Ch. 3. For the labour movement, see Morell and Chai-anan, op. cit., pp. 181-204, Chs. 6, 7, 8; and Girling, Thailand, Chs. 4 and 5.

165 See further details in Turton, Fast and Caldwell (eds.) op. cit.; P. de Beer, "History and Policy of the Communist Party of Thailand", Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1978, pp. 143-157; Girling, Thailand, Ch. 7; and A. Tandrup, "The CPT's Mobilization Policy at the Village level", paper presented at the Thai-European Seminar on Social Change in Contemporary Thailand, Anthropological-Sociological Centre, University of Amsterdam, 28-30 May 1980.

We will fight peacefully even though the small minority against whose interests we fight may seek to use violence; even when a large number of our peasant leaders up and down the country have been beaten or killed. Any amount of beating, killing or suffering will not be able to break our resolve, because in the past all we have known is hardship and suffering.¹⁶⁶

And Arom Pongpa-ngan, the President of the Labour Union of the Metropolitan Waterworks Authority in an interview in The Nation on 11 January 1976 expressed a similar position: "I don't want to reject the present government. I just want to change its ways to work more for the poor people".¹⁶⁷

But the government's response to any kind of counterbalancing activities, criticism and presentation of alternatives, was to label such activities as "communist", something which it regarded to be "un-Thai". In order to control the growth and expansion of such activities, the governments used the "counter-insurgency" measures and the Anti-Communist Act to suppress the so-called "insurgency."¹⁶⁸ Because of this, "national development" and "counter-insurgency" measures [political (non-violent) and military (violent) means] became closely linked and the outcome was to create additional social and political problems rather than to bring benefit to the common people.

With regard to the root causes of the problems, which most scholars agree are most serious in the state of rural development, Davis argues that only vague conceptions of development and democracy have been transmitted to the common people by government officials. The relationship between common people and officials could well be an indication as to whether these concepts were successfully understood and implemented.¹⁶⁹ The 1973 uprising proves the fact that these two concepts (development and democracy) are inseparable, and to attempt to increase economic growth by suppressing people's rights and freedom is a contradiction and must fail.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ Turton, Production, Power and Participation, p. 41.

¹⁶⁷ Quoted from Girling, Thailand, pp. 201-202.

¹⁶⁸ This Act was enforced on 2 April 1933 and initially used against Luang Pradit and the Draft Economic Plan. It was changed many times, being amended in 1935, revoked in 1946 and again enforced in November 1952 after the arrest of the "Peace Rebellion" group, who protested against the Phibun government sending soldiers to fight in the Korean War [Thongbai Thongpao, "Preventive Detention", UCL Newsletter, January-June, 1986, pp. 6-7]. For the current debate on this Act, see Far Eastern Economic Review Asia Yearbook, 1990, p. 236.

¹⁶⁹ However, since Davis' observation in 1979, economic development programmes have not emphasized developing an effective official-peasant relationships. Instead, emphasis has been on altering the physical landscape, construction of roads, irrigation works, etc.; or on material development which people often misconceive as the sole aim of national development.

¹⁷⁰ However, the process of sorting out a consensus between classes have not yet become part of Thai political culture or part of the administration system in Thailand. More often than not, the consensus achieved by the government tends to be imposed by the elites and therefore tends to prevent the occurrence of open conflict between classes (it becomes a hidden agenda).

Within the "representative" democratic society, it is necessary to have the expression of ideas and opinions from the majority; this is fundamental to development.

People organizations create an opportunity for the common people to have a more relevant role and a wider choice in Thai society, even if their condition remains far removed from the aims of development.¹⁷¹ As Heim, Akin and Chirmsak say, these "self-help" organizations are needed to become a formal channel not only for the two-way communications between the government and people (i.e., spreading new agricultural, industrial techniques and information as well as understanding the needs of common people), but also the avenue (or power base) for bargaining in the economic, social and political areas.¹⁷²

As to whether the peasants resisted change and development, Davis confirmed that study after study of peasant economies had demonstrated that peasants were not resistant to change and would increase their productivity given the appropriate conditions. He defined the peasants as:

small-scale rural producers who stand in a subordinate position in their relations with the holders of political and economic power. ... Peasants are linked to the national community and to the world community in two ways: economically and politically through their role in a market system and through their relationship to the state; and culturally, by their subordinate status in relation to the Great Traditions of national religions and literatures and to the technological and ideological innovations of urban elites.¹⁷³

The subordinate and unstable position of the peasants in the wider society, Davis argued, was an important factor which made them look as if they resisted change. In fact, the peasants did not resist any change which would increase their productivity with minimum risk in the event of failure. They tended to adopt a strategy "wait and see if it works" before trying by themselves because they could not afford risking their limited resource and capital. More often, their demands were ignored by the government unless they became a threat to the government's status quo.¹⁷⁴

Lessons learnt from past development failures tell us that the development process is too complex a phenomenon to be satisfied by a single approach that is applicable to all cases. The achievement of "people participation", "basic minimum needs", "basic human rights" and "self-reliant development" concepts will be difficult

¹⁷¹ However some people realized that their problems were not only personal problems (e.g. individualism, conservatism and the misfortune resulting from the law of karma) but also structural ones (the monopoly of land ownership, of productive resources, and unjust relations of production between the owner of the productive force and labourers).

¹⁷² Heim, Akin and Chirmsak, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

¹⁷³ Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-22.

unless there is considerable re-assessment of development direction and the involvement of concerned parties (including government) to carry out the plans.¹⁷⁵ Since the Kriangsak government (1977-1980), the former policy of suppression has been softened considerably as seen in the 1978 constitution and Prime Ministerial Order Nos. 66/2523, 65/2525 and 47/2529.¹⁷⁶ In this way, the political situation is known among the Thai people as the "semi-leaf democracy", which means the government allows the people to express political opinion to the extent that it would be able to control any political situation which might emerge from the people's struggle. Meanwhile the common people have little bargaining power and weak organizations. This could be improved if the non-government organizations (NGOs) become an active agency to bridge the gap between the people and the government. Here may be a special role for the Thai NGOs in development, a matter which will be discussed in the next chapter.

175 As Jose W. Diokno argues in a lecture presented to the International Council of Amnesty International, Cambridge, on 21 September 1978: "Development is not just providing people with adequate food, clothing, and shelter; many prisons do as much. Development is also people deciding what food, clothing and shelter are adequate, and how they are to be provided" [quoted from P. Alston, "Development and the Rule of Law: Prevention Versus Cure as a Human Rights Strategy", the Basis Working Paper in International Council of Jurists (ICJ), Development, Human Rights and the Rule of Law, Report of a Conference held in the Hague, the Netherlands on 27 April-1 May 1981, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1981, p. 54].

176 Suchit and Kanala explain that "[T]he order no. 66/2523 was issued in 1980 to be a policy to suppress the communist guerilla warfare; the subsequent order no. 65/2525 was issued in 1982 to be a detailed implementation plan of the policy appeared in the first order". In so doing, the orders suggest that the Army has to use "political policies leading military operations to suppress the CPT", meaning that, in order to beat the CPT, the political activities have to work "hand in hand with the military operations" [Suchit Bunbongkarn and Kanala Sukhapanij-Khantaprab, "National Security and the Contemporary Political Role of the Thai Military", mimeo, Department of Government, Chulalongkorn University, n.d., pp. 6-8]. The Prime Ministerial Order No. 47/2529, announced in March 1986, was designed for the Army to deal with the "united front of the CPT" or CPT supporters [Suchit, "The Military in the Participant Politics of Thailand", p. 13].

CHAPTER 3

Historical Analysis of the Role of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in Thailand.

A lone bamboo cannot make a fence; if people do not agree, no prosperous city can be built.

A saying in the Northeastern part of Thailand¹

At the present time, most Thai people realize that any kind of regime which does not recognize and promote civil rights and liberty provides an opportunity for the creation of corrupt and ineffective government administration, leading to difficulties and misery for the people. Such a regime consequently undermines the stability and progress both of the people and of the nation.

Introduction of the Constitution of the Union for Civil Liberty (UCL), Thailand²

In the previous chapter we have seen the main concepts of government development policies which more or less attempt to tackle problems of the common people. However, there is still a gap in participatory development between the government and the people. This chapter aims to review the history of non-government organizations (NGOs) in Thailand, in particular those founded after the 1973 uprising, in order to analyse their role in participatory development. It also aims to analyse concepts and methodologies which are used by those NGOs to tackle problems of underdevelopment. This chapter will give examples of NGOs and their adoption of the concepts of "people participation", "basic needs", "basic human rights", and "self-reliant development", as well as focusing on the ways they can act as a counterbalancing power with the government sector in order to work towards a new consensus, and to develop rules so that there will be greater opportunity for the people to participate in development.

While I wish to focus on NGOs after 1973, it is important to give some overview of the nature and activities of NGOs in Thailand before that time. Some social

¹ Adapted from Koson Srisang, "Cultural Heritage and Political Vision: A Northeastern Thai Perspective on Political Ethics", Commission on Theological Concerns (CTC) and Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) (eds.), Towards the Sovereignty of the People: A Search for an Alternative Form of Democratic Politics in Asia - A Christian Discussion, Singapore: CCA, 1983, p. 153.

² Translated from the Union for Civil Liberty (UCL), Prawat sip pi khong samakhom siithi seriphap khong prachachon [The Ten-Year History of the Union for Civil Liberty], [in Thai], Bangkok: Prayunwong Company, n.d., p. 2. The UCL was initially founded on 24 November 1973, forty-one days after the 14 October 1973 uprising. It was closed down following the 6 October 1976 coup, re-organized in 1978 and registered as an association on 8 February 1983.

activities have been performed by private institutions and individuals since the reform period of King Rama V (from 1873 to 1910) in the fields of charity and social welfare.³ For example, in 1890, Kromphra Suthasininat gave her own money to build a house for orphans at Suan Mali Sub-District, Bamrungmuang Street, Bangkok,⁴ in 1920, Queen Sripacharintra founded the Red Cross Society of Thailand to help wounded soldiers with the assistance of volunteers, mainly ladies of rank and wives of public servants.⁵ In a general sense these were fairly straight forward voluntary, non-profit organizations providing social welfare based on charity. They did not enunciate development roles for themselves or become involved in political activities aimed at generally bettering the lot of their target groups.

Later, when the government began to become involved in social development during the 1950s and 1960s, the National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand under the Patronage of H.M. the King, and the National Council of Women of Thailand under the Royal Patronage of H.M. the Queen, were founded.⁶

Not until the late 1960s did NGOs begin to emerge in Thailand with broader perspectives of a community development role, to some extent influenced by the re-assessment of the first UN "Development Decade". The Rural Reconstruction Foundation of Thailand, which was founded in 1968, played a significant role in advocating community development in rural areas and encouraging people to participate in social and economic development.⁷ Later, two other organizations also pioneering

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- 3 R. Prizzia and Narong Sinsawasdi, "History of Student Activism in Thailand", in R. Prizzia and Narong Sinsawasdi (eds.), Thailand: Student Activism and Political Change, Bangkok: Samnukphim Duangkamol, 1974, p. 16. The reform involved adopting western style administrative institutions and education. Prizzia and Narong suggest that social welfare groups were based on western ideals influential at that time. For a brief outline of the reform, see Prudhisun Jumbala, "Political System and Nation-Building in Thailand", Research Paper presented to the workshop on Political System and Nation-Building in ASEAN, organized by the Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore, 23-25 January 1986.
 - 4 Phumtham Wechayachai, "Ongkan patthana ekachon nai prathetthai: sathanaphap botbat lae panha" [Non-Government Organizations in Thailand: Status, Role and Problems], Patthana Sangkhom [Social Development], [in Thai], Bangkok: NGO Dissemination Week Committee, November B.E. 2527 (1984), p. 25.
 - 5 Uthumphon Wirawaithaya, "Praratchaprawat chiwit suanpra-ong Somdetpra Sripacharintra boromrachininat: Praboromrachonni Panpiluang" [The Biography of the Queen Sripacharintra], [in Thai], Bangkok: Praepitthaya, B.E. 2509 (1966), p. 113.
 - 6 Yupa Wongchai, "The Study of a Model Non-Government Co-ordinating Organization: the Case Study of National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand, the National Council of Women of Thailand and the Thai Volunteer Service", Research Report, Bangkok: Faculty of Social Administration, Thammasat University, 1988, p. 1. The National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand under the Patronage of H.M. the King aims to be a central organization for co-operating among private charity and social welfare organizations.
 - 7 The Foundation was influenced by the community approach promoted by Y.C. Yen, a Chinese-American scholar, through Puey Ungphakorn. Phumtham Wechayachai, "Self-Reliance in Thai Society: Viewpoints and Experiences from the Non-Government Sector", [in Thai], Research Report, Pridi Phanomyong Institute, B.E. 2530 (1987), pp. 15-17. Later on,

community development were set up. One, the Komol Keemthong Foundation set up in 1971 with the help of Sulak Sivarak, was an umbrella for young idealists to promote social consciousness and create a moral community following the ideas of the late Komol.⁸ The other was the Catholic Council of Thailand for Development (CCTD), founded in 1972,⁹ which placed its emphasis on "conscientization" - an educational activity which motivates and empowers people to get together and make their own decisions for the betterment of the community.¹⁰

The characteristics of the early NGO activities were their involvement in social welfare work while preserving the status quo. Most activities were conducted by volunteers rather than professionals and either supported or substituted for government activities by "giving" something to the people in a "top-down" approach. They regarded their activities as charity and sacrifice, and could be seen to have been influenced by religion. During the 1960s however, the NGOs' stated aims began to shift towards more definite social and economic goals including social and economic change and development and by 1970, there were eleven such NGOs addressing development issues.¹¹ They did not as yet articulate political concerns but this was to come largely as a result of the influence of the student movements.

Since 1933 students have been involved in protest against injustice and the abuse of power, albeit limited by authoritarian government controls.¹² As we have

the Foundation adapted Yen's approach to make it more suitable for the Thai social context (*ibid.*, pp. 22-25). The integrated program relied on the notion that any one problem is not isolated from but related to others. In solving the problem in a village, the Foundation workers therefore place an emphasize on looking at all the problems to identify the core problem.

- 8 This Foundation is named after the late Komol Keemthong, a graduate from the Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, who went to be a teacher in Surat Thani, a Southern province of Thailand, using his educational ideals to help create social development through education. Eventually, he was shot dead by an unknown person.
- 9 The Catholic Council of Thailand for Development (CCTD) evolved from the Social Welfare Committee by the Bishops' Conference of Thailand in order to reorganize and strengthen its activities in social development. In 1975, CCTD decentralized its administration into ten dioceses or regions throughout the country, acting as diocesan social action centres (DISACs). At the present time, CCTD is composed of 10 DISACS and 25 Catholic member organizations.
- 10 See further information in P. Freire, The Politics of Education: Culture Power and Liberation, transl. D. Macedo, Massachusetts: Bergin & Garvey Publishers Inc., 1985, Ch. 7.
- 11 Noriko Sakamoto, "Grass-roots Movement towards Social Development through Strengthening the Roles and Activities of Non-Government Organizations Working on the Promotion of Development in Thailand", paper presented at the International Conference on Thai Studies, ANU, 3-6 July 1987, p. 6.
- 12 Prizzia and Narong, *op. cit.*, pp.16-44; Chaichana Ingavata, "Students as an Agent of Social Change: A Case of the Thai Student Movement during the Years 1973-1976: A Critical Political Analysis", Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Government-Comparative Politics, Florida State University, 1981, pp. 63-82.

seen, during the 1970s Thai studies began to be influenced by a political economy approach which analysed structural links between developed and developing countries as well as within countries to explain the political and economic conditions, especially from the Bowring Treaty in 1855 to the present. Students began to use these ideas to rethink the causes of underdevelopment in Thailand. At the same time, books, roneo papers and leaflets were secretly distributed among university students; groups, clubs and organizations set up both inside and outside universities to analyse government policies and the political system, to criticize and propose alternatives for the country, such as a self-sufficient economy and political "non-alignment". These underground social and political activities had emerged gradually during the Sarit period when "blanket" arrests of students, MPs and others involved in political activities were common (between October 1958 and June 1963), and became more open after Sarit's death in 1963.¹³

In the early 1970s several independent groups with about 20-50 members were organized, both on and off campus, with a view to formulating ideas and methods of appropriate social, political and economic development. These independent groups included "Sapha Kafae" of Kasetsart University; "Sapha Na Dome" and "Setthatham" of Thammasat University; "Khum Phra Chan Sieo" [the Eclipsed Moon Group] of Silpakorn University; "New SOTUS" and a Political Studies Group of Chulalongkorn University; and the "Khum Nisit Naksueksa Burana Chonnabot" [the Student Group for Rural Reconstruction] in which some students from different universities came together off campus, studying and discussing problems both inside and outside universities.¹⁴

Following the 14 October 1973 incident, there was a upsurge of NGO activity and consolidation of their aims, objectives and methods into a more coherent and united

13 For example the book Nitisat 2500, [in Thai] published by the Law Club of Thammasat University in 1957 was redistributed. It contained articles like "The Real Face of the Thai Sakdina", "The Face of Imperialism" written by Somsamai Srisudravarna (Chit Poumisak); and "The Survival Path for Thailand" written by Pueang Wannasri who later joined the CPT. See also the journal Sangkomsat Paritat [The Social Science Review] during 1963-1973, which was encouraged by Sulak Sivarak, a Thai social critic, and Suchat Sawasdhisri, an editor. Further details are contained in the interview with Suchat Sawasdhisri in the tape recordings collection of the Thai Studies Programme, Chulalongkorn University, 1984.

14 Student groups produced social activists such as Suphap Pas-ong from "Sapha Kafae" ("coffee council" meeting group) of Kasetsart University, Seksan Prasotkul from "Sapha Na Dome" (Council of the Dome-shaped Building) of Thammasat University. SOTUS stands for "Seniority, Order, Tradition, Unity and Spirit", which is the motto of Chulalongkorn University. The "New SOTUS" group emerged to reform the SOTUS in the University. The last group, the Student Group for Rural Reconstruction, played a very active role when social activities in the universities were prohibited. Using the Student Christian Centre (SCC) as a base for meeting and other activities, this group acted as a "thinktank" for student activists in different universities.

strategy. Some ninety NGOs were founded by the mid 1980s.¹⁵ This chapter will look more closely at the NGOs from 1973 to the present. To do this it will be necessary to look at a number of issues: first, the definition or characteristics of NGOs promoting development and social and political change and their aims in the Thai development context; second, the Thai NGO movement after the 1973 uprising and their role in development; third, the discussion of concepts and methodologies which they use to tackle the structural problems of underdevelopment.

Definition of an "NGO"

The Vice President of the Asian Development Bank, in his keynote speech at the World NGO symposium in 1987, defined NGOs as:

(all) characterized by being organized on a private and non-profit basis obtaining their resources, by and large, from voluntary private contribution and providing socio-economic assistance - material, financial and technical - especially targeted towards the poor, underprivileged and disadvantaged groups in society and at the community level within the broader framework of national development goals.¹⁶

This is similar to the definition chosen by Lissner (who elected to use the term "voluntary agency" rather than NGO in his study):

a "voluntary agency" is a non-governmental, autonomous, non-profit organization, supported mainly by voluntary contribution in cash and kind from the general public, or certain elements thereof, in high-income countries, specialized to carry out a number of functions related to development aid and emergency relief primarily but not exclusively in the low-income countries.¹⁷

In coming to these definitions, Lissner in particular points to the difficulties in defining NGOs due to their diversity in organization, mode and fields of operation. NGOs include organizations involved in activities such as welfare, refugee services, disaster relief, agricultural development, health services, community education, research and networking. At the same time there are considerable differences in the way they approach their tasks, some operating on the basis of charity, others involving people in

15 Sakamoto, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

16 M. Narasimham, "Keynote Speech" in World NGO Symposium: Nagoya Congress, Nagoya International Centre, 5-8 October 1987, p. 1. As for the term "non-government organization", Kuhn argues that he likes to describe an organization with an affirmative word like "voluntary agency" rather than with negative term like "non-government organization" [H. Kuhn, "Development Education and What are Effective Approaches to Motivate People's Participation", in World NGO Symposium: Nagoya Congress, p. 9]. Lissner prefers as he says this term is well established and widely used in American, Canadian and British governmental language.

17 J. Lissner, The Politics of Altruism: A Study of the Political Behaviour of Voluntary Development Agencies, Geneva: Department of Studies, 1979, p. 23. He defines the "voluntary agency" in similar context to Narasimham as giving social welfare to the poor but more independent from the government sector and with wider links to other foreign NGOs.

the programs and projects prepared for them in accordance with the NGOs view of development, while still others operate from a basis of the self-expressed needs of the people they are helping.

Compared with the above definitions, research done by the Canadian voluntary organizations based on the NGOs' own perceptions of their roles and characteristics, shows that NGOs generally see their role not only as separate from the government and private sectors but also co-operating with them as partners in national development while at the same time working essentially in the interest of the common people. The NGOs described themselves in terms of five characteristics as follows:

Altruism: "NGOs respond to local needs rather than imposing their own solutions"

Autonomy: "NGOs can reach needy groups which are not accessible through official channels."

Participation: "NGOs aim to increase ... [people's] awareness of development issues, by providing factual information on the basis of which people can form their own opinions."

Efficiency: "NGOs are cost-effective, and can achieve results at much less cost than official aid agencies."

Co-operation: "NGOs break patterns of dependency by helping people to help themselves."¹⁸

Of the definitions given, the first includes a role for NGOs in helping the government to achieve development on the basis of providing "assistance" to the people and reflects a social-welfare approach. The second is not concerned with methods but only the nature of the organization and its objectives while the view that NGOs have of themselves is very specific on the question of method, i.e. participation of the people in their own development.

The above definitions and characteristics are of course intended to distinguish NGOs in rich countries, i.e. those organizations whose activities are directed externally to Third World countries, nevertheless they can be applied in the Thai context to distinguish a similar group of organizations with a similar diversity of operations. However there is a fundamental difference which I wish to explore in this thesis and that is that in the Thai context, the organizations are largely indigenous and working within the the national context (rather than providing external assistance). Therefore, Thai NGOs are more immersed in the social and political life of the country and are active participants in that life - not external to it. While there are, as we have seen in the previous section, some welfare type organizations, I wish to focus my attention on the emergence of the indigenous Thai organizations which emphasize participation of the

18 T. Brodhead, B. Herbert-Copley and A. Lambert, Bridges of Hope?: Canadian Voluntary Agencies and the Third World, Ottawa: The North-South Institute, 1988, pp. 29-30.

target groups in their own development. This is the special relationship between the NGO and the people which is advocated by the Canadian study, but which is not usually possible for the donor NGOs from the rich countries.

The broad aims of all the Thai groups is to see Thai society adopt a more representative system and provide greater happiness, moral standards and justice than is evident at the present time. Their target is the common people, disadvantaged groups of the poor in rural and urban areas, such as landless peasants and unorganized workers. Their method is to empower the common people so that they would be able to gain self-confidence to solve their own problems and, moreover, develop the society in ways to serve their own interests. These Thai NGOs also play an important role in bridging the gap between classes in the society by widely disseminating information relating to disadvantaged groups to other groups, especially to the well-off middle class, to help them understand the problems of the poor on the basis of respect for the rights of others, and to find ways of reducing the gap between the rich and the poor in society by enabling the poor to participate in developing Thai society.

The Thai NGOs prefer characterizing their movement as representative democracy, but not binding themselves to any particular political ideology and encouraging people to exercise free will in selecting their own political choices.¹⁹ NGO workers broadly believe that human betterment would be achieved when people in all areas become involved, for instance, in exchanging information, opinions and experiences, and co-operating to search for an "alternative development" addressing not only the purely economic dimensions of development, but also the socio-political and cultural dimension, and focusing on remedying the problems of the common people. This democratic approach, they hope, would help people improve and develop their own self-consciousness and self-reliance, as well as produce political and legal reform appropriate to their interest. On the other hand they believe a more narrow political approach would mobilize the people only in relation to a specific political purpose for a short period of time.

In the following pages therefore, the NGOs under study are non-governmental, autonomous, non-profit organizations whose assistance is targeted towards the common people, and who conduct their activities through the participation of people, not just through "giving".²⁰ To a large extent, as we shall see, this includes relatively informal

19 Jon Ungphakorn, "Khabuankan ongkan patthana ekachon nai prathetthai" [The Movement of the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in Thailand], *Pacharayasan*, [in Thai], Vol.13, No. 5, November-December B.E. 2529 (1986), p. 15.

20 By the word "giving", I mean to give not only material resources - money, technical resources - but also ideas or ready-made solutions as forms of domination of the people. In this case, the

groups which have been involved in experimentation with participation in the Thai context throughout the 1970s as well as the more formal organizations which have emerged from these (often very political) activities.

The Thai NGO movement after 1973

The October 1973 uprising had a great impact on the Thai NGO movement. For example, in 1974, through the support of the interim civilian government under Prime Minister Sanya Thammasak, groups of students (about 3,500 students) and scholars went out to discover the problems of the common people in rural and urban areas. The Government supported the student activities with a budget of three million baht as part of a "Propagation of Democracy Programme". Some students, however, brought with them an analysis of the causes of underdevelopment problems born out of their experience of military oppression during the events of 1973 and their involvement in mobilizations and demonstrations against the "influence groups" [klum itthiphon] in rural areas.²¹ At the same time the concept of development in terms of social welfare and service approaches were intensively reviewed and factors that created the dependency of the people identified.²² Most of these activities relied on "trial and error" in the people participation approach in the area of development.

In the rural areas there were two general approaches: socio-economic programmes and political mobilization. Socio-economic oriented groups aimed to increase villagers' income and productivity through organization of the people in forms of co-operatives or farmers' organizations, while political-oriented groups considered that the reasons why the poor stayed poor was because they were exploited, they therefore concentrated on political mobilization and on the development of people's

NGO workers regard the people as followers to achieve the determined projects, not as the owners of the projects to serve their own interests.

- 21 Before the 1973 incidents, some students went as volunteers to the countryside to help analyse the problems being faced by the farmers. See further information in Morell and Chai-nan, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-154; and Turton, *Production, Power and Participation*, pp. 36-37. The "influence groups" are referred to the groups whose exclusive circles of socialization dominate other groups in terms of decision-making, and the encouragement of other groups to follow the rule made by the dominating groups [See details in A. Turton, "Limits of Ideological Domination and the Formation of Social Consciousness", in Turton and Tanabe (eds.), *History and Peasant Consciousness in South East Asia*, p. 31].
- 22 Phumtham Wechayachai, "Ongkan pattana ekachon: adit, patchubun, anakhot: raw cha pai thang nai kan" [The Non-Government Organizations: Past, Present, Future: Which way to go?], *Pacharayasan*, [in Thai], Vol. 13, No. 5, November-December B.E. 2529 (1986), p. 22; and Phra Phisal Wisalo, "Ngan patthana ekachon thai chak 14 tulakhom 2516 thueng 6 tulakhom 2519" [Thai Non-Government Work: From 14 October 1973 to 6 October 1976], *Patthana Sangkhom* [Social Development], [in Thai], Bangkok: NGO Dissemination Week Committee, November B.E. 2527 (1984), p. 13.

consciousness at the same time as they undertook the more conventional economic project activities.²³

In addition there grew up in the 1973-76 period a great deal of activity in terms of protest and demonstration on a wide range of issues such as wages, unemployment, the constitution, land, produce prices, rural debt, corruption and the abuse of power. To a large degree these protests and demonstrations were influenced by the involvement of students and the NGOs, especially in the rural areas. Some were moderate in their approach and saw the possibility for reform; others were (or became) more radical in the face of violent repression by the authorities and were moved to advocate violent means to achieve better conditions for the workers and farmers. The CPT, which had overlooked the urban uprising and was caught napping during the 1973 uprising, then became an attractive proposition for many of the more radical elements and indeed was later able to lead the "violent" approach.

Examples of groups which took the socio-economic approach were the Co-operative Village Development Project in Mae Taman village (Git Chang Sub-District, Mae Taeng District, Chiang Mai Province) run by a youth group with the co-operation of the Komol Keemthong Foundation (between 1974 and 1976); the Mae Klong Rural Development Project (between 1974 and 1976); the Health Care Projects of Dr. Wichai Chokwiwat (between 1973-1976) in Phayakkhaphum Phisai District, Maha Sarakham Province and of Dr. Apichet Naklekha (between 1974 and 1975) in Phrao District, Chiang Mai. These activities were conducted as small integrated projects involving health care, agriculture and education projects, integrated into one programme.

Examples of political-oriented groups were Somkhit Singsong's rural development work (with his friend, Prasoet Chundum) in Sap Daeng, Mancha Khiri District, Khon Kaen Province (between 1973 and 1976). Their idea was to encourage organized groups of people to achieve a "self-reliant" development not only through an increase in productivity but also by the mobilization of people's political consciousness to fight against the abuse of power by local authorities through "influence groups" in rural areas.²⁴ In addition, the Peasant Federation of Thailand (PFT) was founded in

23 One may see socio-economic and political activities are inseparable. But in the case of Thai NGOs, the socio-economic oriented groups tried to limit their activities not to be concerned with politics. This could happen too in other places where some NGOs avoided facing a political conflict with the state. However, for the difference between co-operatives organized by the NGOs and co-operatives organized by the kings (under the Absolute Monarchy) as well as by the government. See Prudhisan, "Interest and Pressure Groups", in Somsakdi Xuto (ed.), *op. cit.*, (1987), pp.123-132.

24 Somkhit Singsong was born in Sap Daeng Village. He discontinued his course at the Faculty of Mass Communications, Thammasat University following the 14 October 1973 uprising, and went back to develop his home village. He had no formal linkage to any institution. At

1974 to protect peasant interests, to examine all forms of hardship and to inform the peasants of their rights under the law, especially the Agricultural Land Rent Control Act and the Agricultural Land Reform Act of 1974.

While these were clearly NGO type activities, they were not all formally established NGOs in terms of the definitions above, but rather small groups of individuals who came together in a common cause and went together to the countryside and set up a development operations in contact with the common people. In a sense they represented an organization (or NGO) only in the context of the actual projects or programmes they were involved in. This early stage of NGO development was basically experimental in nature, many had a short life of two or three years as indicated, due in particular to the political turmoil of the 1976 coup.

The groups which began operating in urban areas targeted workers and slum dwellers through education and group organizing. These programmes focused on increasing the literacy of slum dwellers and workers. Examples of educational groups were the Community School of Khru Prathip Ungsongtham, in Klongtoei slum, Bangkok,²⁵ and the voluntary group from the Student Group for Rural Reconstruction which helped teach the workers in Prapadaeng site (Samut Prakan Province) how to read and write. Another group was the legal training group of Suphap Pas-ong helping organize worker groups at the Omnoi industrial site, Samut Sakhon Province, so that they would be able to protect their rights.²⁶ Seeing that most of the people had migrated from rural areas and were having difficulties adjusting to an urban setting, other groups organized training to help the people to be able to maintain their own cultural virtue of helping one another as occurred in the traditional community. As in the rural areas, these urban groups were often autonomous, experimental in nature and short-lived.

At the same time organizations were formed to protect the rights and freedom of workers and people in general. For example, an interest group like the Federation of

the present time, he believes that national development processes should include the government and private sectors as well as the communities [Phumtham, "Self-Reliance in Thai Society", p. 66].

25 Prathip Ungsongtham was born in Klongtoei slum, Bangkok. Around 1973, she started a project called "Rongrian wanlabat" [one baht per day school] to teach slum children how to read and write. In 1978, she received the Magsaysay Award for Public Service for her initiatives and development service in the slum and then founded the Duang Prathip Foundation to conduct further social development activities for the slum community.

26 Suphap Pas-ong, an active member of "Sapha Kafae", graduated from Kasetsart University. While working as a news reporter, he assisted workers by giving legal advice. On 30 March 1976, he was arrested with five colleagues on the charge of involvement in communist activities. See further details in the Co-ordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS), Khammakhon omnoi lae panha siythi manutsayachon [The Omnoi Workers and Problems of Human Rights], [in Thai], Bangkok: Ammarin Kanphim, B.E. 2521 (1978).

Labour Unions of Thailand (FLUT) was founded in early 1976, representing the majority of workers at that time in negotiating the minimum wage and other social welfare issues.²⁷ Other pressure group attempting to protect the rights and freedom of people in general were, for instance, the Union for Civil Liberty (UCL) founded by a group of [upper] middle-class intellectuals (Saneh Chamarik, Gothom Arya and Prudhisan Jumbala and others),²⁸ and the People for Democracy Group (PDG), led by Thirayut Bunmi, the former President of the National Student Centre of Thailand (NSCT). While FLUT is more correctly a trade union rather than an NGO it was closely associated with the NGO activities.

NGO activities from 1973 to 1976 were primarily devoted to integrated socio-economic programmes and political mobilization with the most important characteristic being their attempt to develop their work from the bottom-up on "trial and error" basis. While many of the NGOs and their workers learned a great deal from their activities, and while some achieved a lot in terms of their objectives and received strong inspiration and support from the people, many also experienced difficulties and were ineffective. However, most were forced to close down in 1976.

The causes for closing down organizations can be brought back to several factors. First, most students, some government officials and NGO workers who wished to see social development, lacked experience in understanding the nature of village and community situations in which they chose to work. While in principle they respected the concept of people's participation, in practice many of them made decisions and carried out all kinds of activity in ways which represented forms of "domination" over the common people who acted as followers. These activities sometimes created conflicts rather than solve problems and eventually saw the altruistic NGO workers rejected by the people who began to regard them as outsiders. While such shortcomings could have been overcome in time, more critical to the future of the NGOs was that the authorities began increasingly to see them as agitators and communist suspects. Because of this, workers, farmers and student leaders and others began to be harassed to the extent that threats were made to their lives. For example, "authorities" and the "Right" gangs attempted to assassinate Somkit Singsong, a leader of Muban Subdaeng and Dr. Apichet Naklekha's life was threatened because of his Health Care

27 The other leading labour organization was the Labour Co-ordination Centre of Thailand (LCCT), led by Prasit Chaiyo and Thloedphum Chaidi, linking closely with radical elements of the National Student Centre of Thailand (NSCT) and the Federation of Independent Students of Thailand (FIST). Morell and Chai-anan argue that the LCCT radicals represented about two to five per cent of the overall labour movement and the leaders did not believe that the labour movement would achieve any effective bargaining power if it continued working solely within the framework of labour laws [Morell and Chai-anan, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-193].

28 The Union for Civil Liberty (UCL), *op. cit.*, pp. 2-15.

activities, with the result that he had to flee from the village to save his life. This was part of a changing political climate and after the 6 October 1976 coup was staged, most political oriented organizations were closed down and only educational and children's organizations which were not directly involved with political movements, could continue their activities without harassment from the authorities.

The NGO movement from 1976 to 1979: Re-orientation

The re-orientation of NGO activities was necessary in the climate of political polarization from 1976-1979 during the right-wing government of Thanin Kraivixian (1976-1977) and the preparation for democracy during the period of Kriangsak Chamanand (1977-1980). Under Thanin's government, the political climate was repressive. For instance, Article 21 of the National Administrative Reform Council (NARC) replicated Sarit's Article 17, giving the Prime Minister wide-ranging powers of suppression.²⁹ Moreover, the Anti-communist Act was re-enforced and its power expanded by NARC Order No. 22, giving authorities the rights to detain "whoever is regarded to be dangerous to society" for up to six months without trial.³⁰ The result was that under Thanin's regime:

Thousands were arrested ... Such purges drove some 3,000 students into the hands of the Communist Party of Thailand, pushed many intellectuals into exile abroad, and silenced most other liberals."³¹

Inevitably, most political-oriented NGOs were banned or had their activities prohibited. Some students, officials and NGO workers were arrested, while others were among those who fled to join the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) in the jungle. At the same time the NGOs working in the countryside and in the cities began to lose popular support for a number of other reasons. In particular, most common people did not understand the overall picture of political antagonism between the Right and Left forces which saw the Right (such as "Nawaphon") attempt to use technical students, "Red Gaur" [wild buffalos] movement and Village Scouts [luksu'a chaoban]³² to harass the (generally) university student led NGOs. Seeing the fighting

29 The Prime Minister has autonomous power to give a sentence of death to any prisoner whom he considers undermined the "security within the kingdom of Thailand". There is no clear-cut definition and scope of the "security" and this power could be easily abused.

30 The Government used the military tribunal, as in war time, to replace the civil courts. Under the sentence of the military tribunal, the accused has no rights of appeal to a higher tribunal. Up to the present time, the military tribunal is still used for trials involving communist suspects.

31 Prudhisan, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

32 They can be categorized as a kind of pseudo-NGO used by the government as an offensive against the NGOs which worked for the interest of the people. The "Red Gaur" [Krathing daeng] were paramilitary units directly used for repression. They were initially mobilized and

which sometimes resulted, the common people were reluctant to become involved in NGO activities, even in straight forward NGO economic development activities. In effect the NGO movement was paralysed.

After overthrowing the Thanin government by coup in 1977, General Kriangsak Chomanand neutralized the political climate, allegedly to prepare for political stability and democracy.³³ However, the common people still received little benefit from economic policies and there was little government attention given to the farmers or to land reform in particular. The farmers no longer had any organization of their own to defend their interests, and solidarity within labour movements had been severely weakened through government manipulation, trade union disputes and personal rivalries.³⁴ Compared with the period prior to 6 October 1976, when students served as a link between farmers and the government and had frequently voiced farmers' grievances and some NGO workers and human rights lawyers had helped organize worker groups as well as provide legal assistance, contact between students, farmers and workers continued to be viewed with suspicion by the government.

Kriangsak did however reduce tension with the communists and broadened his political support through overtures to the Centre and the Left, and finally, in 1979, granted an amnesty to those involved in the October 1976 coup, both Left and Right factions. Students and others who had been arrested and were awaiting military tribunals were released in swarms. "The olive branch was also extended to those who

politically used by the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) after the 1973 uprising. Their duty was to fight against communist suspects in both towns and villages.

The Village Scouts were loosely-organized groups of the paramilitary type organized by the military and officials at the community levels both in villages and in towns. These groups were founded in 1971 by the Border Patrol Police and were administered by them in co-operation with the Ministries of Interior and of Education. They have the slogan: "nation, religion, monarchy" [chat, satsana, phramahakasat]. Since 1972 they have been under royal patronage and are funded by royal grant, private organizations and local administrative and rural development funds. They are supported by of all kinds of government officials, local landowners, traders, bankers and politicians; or in a word, the support from "local power structure". The number of Village Scouts for the first five years was about 500,000 and then in 1976, increasing to be over 1,000,000 in a single year. The Village Scout aims were to fight communist insurgency and gather information about people who "intend harm to the country". During the 6 October 1976 coup, the Village Scouts were mobilized by the Border Patrol Police, to join with the "Red Gaur" units to attack students within and outside Thammasat University [Turton, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54, 56].

33 In June 1977, a group of colonels, later known as the "Young Turks", pressured Army Chief Soem Na Nakhon to overthrow the Thanin government which they argued was leading the country towards disaster. See Chai-anan Samudavanija, *The Thai Young Turks*, Singapore: The Institute of South East Asian Studies, 1982, pp. 30-38. The coup group appointed the Supreme Commander Gen. Kriangsak Chomanand to be a leader of the new government. For further details see Girling, *Thailand*, pp. 206-228.

34 Girling, *Thailand*, pp. 221-222.

had gone to the hills and allied themselves with the CPT..."³⁵ As a consequence of the political climate after 1977, the NGO workers needed to rethink their strategies to gain popular support and to receive those who came back from the hills. This involved much soul-searching and there were new developments in student and NGO movements during this period of reconciliation, as NGOs re-oriented their strategy to a non-violent approach and continued their pursuit of economic and social development.

The re-orientation was based largely on the work of a few "moderate" NGOs which had been able to maintain a role for themselves through the period of turmoil, avoiding government suppression and at the same time retaining popular support for their activities. These organizations had been largely ignored by the more radical NGOs in the period of protest and demonstration, but came to be recognized for the work they were doing in economic development and for the approaches they had adopted to solve the social problems they had discovered about them. To some extent the period of political turmoil had opened their eyes to the real issues and forced them to find more appropriate responses.

The NGO movement into the 1980s - the consolidation of NGOs.

In the late 1970s, a variety of NGOs found a common objective in promoting local self-help organizations which were representative of the community and the country moved into the 1980s, there was a firm basis for the growth and strengthening of the NGO movement for a number of reasons.

First, the concept of people's participation had become widely accepted among NGOs in Thailand since the ILO launched the concepts of "basic minimum needs" and "people participation" in 1969. These approaches had been endorsed by the UN and the World Bank and, during the 1970s, there had been significant movements of international NGOs and donor agencies engaging in intensive discussion of underdevelopment in Third World countries and adopting the ILO strategies in their work. These had in turn influenced the Thai NGOs. The impact of the international NGOs, and in particular the World Bank influence on Thai development context during the late 1970s, encouraged a wide acceptance of the people's participation concept not only in non-government circles but also in government sectors. This led to a change in direction of development to emphasize more human aspects rather than solely economic measure and to a recognition of the important role of non-government agencies.

³⁵ Prudhisan, "Political System", p. 54.

Second, the co-operative role of NGOs received wider general acceptance in the development context. As we saw in Chapter 2, past development policies of the government had created economic and social problems such as the inequitable distribution of resources, problems of urbanization and lack of rural development. As these problems became more serious, the bureaucratic system was too slow to react and the gap between officials and people became more evident despite the fact that the concept of people participation was emphasized in the national development Plans. The bureaucracy itself began to look to the NGOs as a means of support and co-operation in some activities.

Third, the NGOs realized their catalytic role in promoting the people's participation concept. They organized meetings, seminars, and discussions to exchange ideas, experiences to promote a new direction of people's participation using a structural analysis for Thai development organizations, and to persuade NGO colleague not to work only in a charity role. For example, in November 1978, NGOs working in slums and rural areas held a meeting called "The Charity Agencies and Foundations in Development: Problems and Obstacles" involving 33 participants from 20 organizations. In May 1979, a meeting on "The Role of Charity Agencies and Foundations in Social Welfare and Development" attracted 26 participants from 15 organizations. In April 1980, a meeting on "The Role of the NGO Workers in Solving Problems of Rural Development" was held in Chainat Province and was attended by 34 participants from 19 organizations. In addition, representatives of 19 NGOs held regular meetings to consider the directions of NGO co-operation in improving the effectiveness of the NGOs in the field of development.³⁶

Fourth, there was in this period strong support available from a variety of overseas funding agencies. Over the years of political turmoil and suppression of student activities there had developed considerable solidarity with Western NGOs and, in the period of redevelopment of the NGOs in Thailand, there was interest from the outside agencies which brought some of the ideas and experiences of other countries to the attention of the Thai NGOs. At the same time, Western NGOs were beginning to receive larger and larger amounts of funding from their governments and were seeking new programmes to support.³⁷

³⁶ Phumtham, "Ongkan patthana ekachon: adit, patchubun, anakhot", p. 27.

³⁷ The flow of official aid funds to the NGOs was based on the belief that they were more efficient and cost effective in small scale development programmes, and in particular in their ability to bring real help to those most in need. The flow of AIDAB money to Australian NGOs has grown from less than \$A 1 million in 1976-77 to over \$ 20 million in 1986-1987 [Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB), AIDAB/NGO Co-operation Program Annual Report (1986/87), Canberra: AIDAB, 1987, p. 11].

Over the decade the NGO movement has grown in Thailand so that there are today some 150 NGOs in Thailand which are involved in participatory development activities. They are involved in a range of overlapping activities and it is difficult to classify them simply into particular types. Nevertheless, the Thai Volunteer Service (TVS) has attempted to group the NGOs according to their areas of involvement such as rural and urban development; their target groups, such as children and youth groups; their activity, such as public health service, appropriate technology, networking and promotion; and following concepts, such as human rights.³⁸ Here I will simply summarize the NGOs into three categories: those involved in rural community development activities, urban community development activities and networking and promotion.

Consistent with the fact that the major problems of underdevelopment in Thailand are in the countryside, TVS reported that there were 103 NGOs active in rural community development. Apart from the NGOs previously mentioned, there were, for instance, the Thai NGO Committee on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, the Appropriate Technology Association (ATA), Primary Health Care Groups (very active in Korat and in Khon Kaen), the Northeast Human Rights Group of the UCL, and the Towards Self-Reliance in Northeast Thailand Project (NET).³⁹

About thirty NGOs were active in urban community development for the urban poor (slum dwellers and workers) and urban middle class. For the poor, NGO activities were directed towards finding ways to encourage self-development in their own community and helping rural migrants to adjust to life in the big cities. With the middle class, NGO activities were designed to encourage an awareness of the plight of the poor and to gain their support. The NGOs involved included the Union for Civil Liberty (UCL), the Foundation for Slum Child Care, the Foundation for Children Development, and the Health Development Foundation.

Another group of about ten NGOs provided co-ordination and promotion activities among NGOs both in rural and urban areas. These were the "nurse maids" of the small participatory NGOs in Thailand and provide all sorts of assistance. Their activities included the dissemination of information about funding agencies, networks both inside and outside the country, personnel resources, and the promotion of co-operation among NGOs. Examples of this category were the Thai Volunteer Service

38 Thai Volunteer Service (TVS), The Directory of Thai Non-Government Organizations, Bangkok: Samakkhisan Co. Ltd., B.E. 2529 (1986).

39 The NET Project, supported by the Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO) and Canadian International Development Agencies (CIDA), is helping reconstruct the Northeast villages severely disrupted by natural disaster and by war along Thai-Kampuchean border.

(TVS), the Thai Development Support Committee (TDSC), and the Rural Development Documentation Centre (RUDOC). On a more casual basis one could include "committees" which worked to exchange ideas and to bring together NGOs working in the same areas such as the NET Project; co-operation with fieldwork such as occurred with the Northeast Development Worker Group; the Working Committee for Children, and the Co-ordinating Committee of Human Rights Organizations in Thailand (CCHROT).

The catalytic role of NGOs: a concerned party and a countervailing power.

In creating development "from the bottom up", the NGOs work closely and widely with the common people and concerned academics to develop their understanding of situations and to consider appropriate responses. To counteract the often inhumane results of official programmes emphasizing macro-level industrialized development, the NGOs insist on the need for self-reliant development and a people participation approach. Together with some academics, their activities include reviews, publications, commentaries, and discussions covering, for instance, the works of Phraya Suriyanuwat, the Economic Draft of Pridi Phanomyong and many practical NGO reports. They address in particular the economic, social and political problems of the poor such as the low price for paddy and uncertain prices for other cash crops, the condition of slums dwellers, the exploitation of child labour and child prostitution as well as the political and legal disadvantages suffered by the poor. The ultimate aims of the NGOs are not only to combat suffering but also to raise peoples' consciousness and to propose political and legal reform through social-welfare and structural-analysis approaches. Their activities include the distribution of goods and income to the poor; assistance in the control of productivity, and help for the people to gain power to determine their own destiny.

From their practical grass roots awareness of the predicaments and development needs of the common people, the NGOs are well placed to play an important representational role on behalf of the poor. This they do on three main fronts which I will consider below: first, they publicize the grievances of the poor; second, they lobby government to review development policies and to reduce dependency on the West; and thirdly, they urge the government to guarantee participation for all in a law-based society.

1. Publicizing the predicament and grievances of the poor.

The NGOs' aim of publicizing the predicament and grievances of the poor is mainly to make the urban middle class understand and realize the problems of the common people so that they will urge the government to adequately address the problems. There are many reports and studies produced by academics and NGO workers which reveal the extent of social problems.

For example, Sayamol Kraiyurawong, a Thai NGO worker with the Union for Civil Liberty (UCL) and Jenny Marshall, a former British volunteer working with the Thai Development Supporting Committee (TDSC) staff, reported the problems of land ownership in the Northern part of Thailand.⁴⁰ Sayamol shows that according to Sarit's Revolution Decree No. 49 dated 1 January 1954, people who possessed over 50 rai of land had to release land to the government and investors. The reasons for the transfer of land was to implement infrastructure development such as roads and dams to fuel economic growth as proposed in the national economic plan.⁴¹ Since the First Plan (1961-1966), the government had begun surveying and granting land titles. Out of a total cultivated area of 152 million rai, only 23.7 million had full title deeds, another 70.9 million had certificates of utilization, and the rest was unregistered. This poor achievement had resulted from limited experience in land registration as well as pressure from interest groups. At the same time, with fourteen government agencies involved in one way or another with land allocation reform, Marshall said that it was not surprising that farmers had found the rules and regulations confusing and had not been encouraged to complete their land registration.⁴²

Inaction had led to other problems. Chak Patcharaphatanachai of Community Action Research on Development (CARD) noted that in the North, as in other places, there had been an increase in land speculation both by large companies and wealthy individuals who bought land when farmers were under threat of eviction. The rich exploited the predicament of the poor to get lands at a cheap price when the farmers desperately needed instant cash. As a result, farmers often had to move off their land

40 J. Marshall, "Shelter under Pressure: A View from the North", Thai Development Newsletter, No. 13, 1987, pp. 20-23; and Sayamol Kraiyurawong, "Land Problems in the Highlands in the Far North", UCL Newsletter, July-September 1987, pp. 16-19.

41 Sayamol says that the Decree was dated in 1959. Sayamol, op. cit., p. 17.

42 Marshall, op. cit., p. 21. Moreover, The World Bank had noted this problem as early as 1978 and observed that the Agricultural Land Reform Office (ALRO), which was responsible for land development for agricultural use, had no previous experience with broad programmes to plan the use of land, develop technical packages for sustained cultivation, provide infrastructure and supporting services as well as surveying and registering [The World Bank, Toward a Development Strategy, p. 92].

receiving only a small amount of compensation.⁴³ There was also the "invasion" by villagers into national forest reserves to grow food crops because the rich had taken their traditional land through loopholes in legal interpretation, and abuse of power by the authorities.⁴⁴

As for community development activities in the slums, Pitthaya Vongkule, a TDSC staff member, and Somchai Chuaiklieng, the co-ordinator of the Co-ordinating Committee on Slum Development, reported on the difficult conditions in Bangkok. For instance, the slum dwellers were facing problems including a lack of land ownership, a difficult economic situation, poor health care, insufficient education, drug abuse and the threat of eviction.⁴⁵ Yuli Ismartono, in the UNICEF News Quarterly, argued that "[I]n Bangkok's slums, it is not the absence of health facilities, medicines or even food that causes sickness and malnutrition. It is a combination of poverty and poor understanding".⁴⁶

In the industrial arena, Songsak Bunkawinapanon, Karawik Marmichai, Somyot Prueksakasemsuk, Phichet Phichairat, and Chalit Misit, all UCL staff members, reported regularly on the problems faced by workers and covered issues such as unemployment, the effect of the minimum wage, lay-offs and legal loopholes affecting workers' legal cases.⁴⁷

There has been a great deal of experience gained from these approaches and articles such as those of Bamrung Bunpanya and Aphichat Thongyu present the

43 Marshall, "Shelter under Pressure", p. 22.

44 Banlue Kongchan, "Panha kophiphat ru'ang sitthi phonprayot nai khet pa sa-nguanhaengchat kap naewthang kaekhaipanha lae kanhaikhwamchuaillue prachachon phuprasop khwamdu'atron" [Problems of Disputes Concerning Rights and Interest in National Reserved Forest and the Direction to Solve Problems and the Help for Suffering People], in Raingan kanwichai: Kanhai khwamchuaillu'a prachachon thang kotmai kap ngansongsoem sitthi manutsayachon nai prathetthai [Report of the Seminar on Legal Assistance for People and the Promotion of Human Rights in Thailand], [in Thai], Bangkok: the Law Centre, Thammasat University, B.E. 2529 (1986), p.11.

45 Pitthaya Vongkule, "Face-Lifting of the Slums", Thai Development Newsletter, No. 13, 1987, pp. 26-29; Somchai Chuaiklieng, "Background of the Bangkok Slums", ibid., pp. 6-9; and Jamnong Jitniratana, "Violence in Slum Eviction", ibid., pp. 12-15.

46 Quoted from ibid., p. 19.

47 Songsak Bunkawinapanon, "Thailand's Labour Problems", Thai Development Newsletter, No. 12, 1986, pp. 35-6; Karawik Marmichai, "The State of Human Rights in Thailand", UCL Newsletter, July-December 1986, pp. 24-9; Somyot Pru'ksakasemsuk, "Labour Problem in Thailand 1987", UCL Newsletter, January-June 1987, pp. 14-20; Wichet Phichairat, "Panha raengngan kap botbat kanhai khwamchuaillu'a thang kotmai khong rat lae ekachon" [Labour Problems and the Role of Government and Private Organizations in Legal Assistance], in Raingan kanwichai: Kanhai khwamchuaillu'a, pp.166-175; and Chalit Misit, "Kotmai raengngan kap kankhumkhong sitthi khong phuchai raengngan" [The Labour Law and the Protection of the Workers' Rights], in ibid., pp. 146-65.

experiences of NGO workers in approaching the people to participate in development.⁴⁸ Bamrung reflected that the people's ways of thinking differ from Western-educated town people and concludes that the villagers have their own norms and autonomous society. Apichat analysed past village and community activities which used the people's participation concept and concludes that:

Development workers have to work hard and seriously in order to make their analysis conclusion [sic] more effective, practicable, and responsive to further actions of development within the village for the better [sic] by people's co-operative effort and full participation.

and that:

From analysis conclusion [sic], development workers will understand in detail the village structure, functional relations among people and the valuable socio-cultural values existing there. Such understanding will be useful to be presented to the people for mutual learning and planning their development strategies for the community.⁴⁹

2. Encouraging the government to review development directions and implementation to reduce dependence upon the West.

Many concerned academics and NGO workers have analysed government plans and attitudes as well as the bureaucratic system and as a result urged the government to reassess its plans in terms of self-reliant development. For example, Rangsan Thanaponpan of Thammasat University claims that the Thai government has made a mistake in opening its economy too widely to the outside world in attempting to follow the path of the industrializing "Gang of Four" - Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Singapore - at an inappropriate period in Thai history. This mistake, he argued, has been exacerbated by a neglect of the agricultural sector.⁵⁰

From an NGO perspective, the relative failure of government economic development to reach the Thai farmers is emphasized by the low selling price of agricultural products combined with a high cost of investment which has forced them into debt, to lose their lands and to migrate into towns where they fall into illegal employment relations and are exploited as cheap labour. Most Thai NGOs consider that a major cause of this lies in the fact that farmers depend on external facilities outside their control, in particular on modern technology with its emphasis on commercial profits which are guided by the government's plans.

48 Bamrung Bunpanya, "Two Ways of Thinking", in Seri Phongphit (ed.), Back to the Roots, pp. 89-99; and Apichat Thongyu, "Village: Autonomous Society", in *ibid.*, pp. 45-88.

49 Apichat, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

50 Reported by Larry Lohmann, a Thai Volunteer Service staff member, in "Alternative Thai Ways to National Development", Thai Development Newsletter, No. 12, December, 1986, p. 12.

Decha Siriphat a senior NGO worker, criticizes the development plans and attitudes of officials towards development.⁵¹ He says that the Master Plan for Solutions to Poverty Problems, consisting of four principal projects: 1) the Rural Employment Creation Project, 2) the Village Activities Promotion Project, 3) the Basic Service Provision Project and 4) the Production Project, which were implemented in 1986, and that these did not lead to improve living conditions for the farmers. On the contrary, he found that the farmers have been getting more into debt than ever before, to the extent that it is becoming a major economic and social crisis. This crisis has not yet been taken into consideration by the government.⁵²

Government officials appear to work under the unofficial assumption, widely held among officials responsible for the elimination of rural poverty, namely that all the problems come from the farmers themselves who, they assume, lack skills in production, planning and marketing, in addition to being lazy and having bad habits such as drinking and gambling. Decha argues that many government projects which aim to eradicate rural poverty reflect this "shallow opinion" of officials which induces them to think of training courses and campaign activities that would lead people out of bad habits. Some examples are the "Land of Dhamma, the Land of Prosperity" Projects, set up to encourage people to make a prosperous living by following religious principles in their lives; and the Family, Temple and School Project, set up to urge these three institutions to join hands in getting rid of the so-called bad habits among villagers.⁵³

NGOs claim that the failure of economic development has been caused by inefficient management by the government both in terms of the production process and the discontinuous marketing strategy. To tackle these, the government has proposed in the Sixth Plan (1987-1991) a "complete cycle of agriculture" [Kasetkham khop wongchon], designed to integrate both the production and the marketing techniques into

51 Decha Siriphat, who graduated from the Faculty of Agricultural Science, Kasetsart University, worked as a government official in the Agricultural Centre, Chainat province for four years. After resigning from government work, he became a farmer for ten years. He has suffered a great loss from being a farmer in the "complete cycle of agriculture" introduced by government officials because the benefit is mostly gained by middlemen. He now works as a technical adviser with the NGO, "Appropriate Technology Association (ATA)" [Decha Siriphat, "Rural Poverty: Blame it on the Farmers", *Thai Development Newsletter*, No. 15, 1987, p. 9].

52 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 9. Decha argues that the government's figure of farmers' total debt throughout the country merely amounts to 20,000 million baht (about \$US 740,000) is inaccurate, while the figures obtained from reliable academics working closely with farmers confirm that the real amount is more likely to be some 100,000 million baht (about \$US 3,700,000).

the same system (an agro-business approach).⁵⁴ The principle of this system is that the government will support and promote the private sector to take up the role of managing the production process and production facilities as well as marketing the products.⁵⁵ The NGOs argue that an example of the "complete cycle of agriculture" can be seen in the case of Charoen Phokapan Company (CPC) an agro-business company in Kanchanaburi province. In this cycle, the CPC acts as a manager; the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Co-operatives (BAAC) becomes a financial resource; the Department of Royal Irrigation operates the water supply; while the farmers are land owners, labourers in the production process, and debtors of the Bank (with Company help to guarantee financial loans).

The complete cycle, from the government's point of view, is conducted as follows. The Company, as a marketing manager, takes a loan from the Bank in order to support farmers in raising rice productivity or to pay for production facilities such as machines, fertilizer, insecticide and seeds. The Company is urged (by the government) to play an important role because most farmers themselves do not have the security to take a loan from the Bank. Eventually, farmers gain their income from selling rice to the Company after the deduction of the cost of the Company's inputs and Bank interest. In fact, the real income which the farmer gains is small and in this system, the NGOs argue, the Company and the Bank make the major profits and the farmers are exploited, being only the debtors and labourers.⁵⁶

Taking the case of Wibun Khemchaloem of Huay Hin Village, Chachoengsao province as an example, the "reward" gained from his hard work of producing and selling produce in the "complete cycle of agriculture" according to the government's policies, was a 300,000 baht debt (about \$US 12,000). Most farmers have got into debt in this way because they have to borrow money from the money lenders or the banks to buy fertilizers or hire tractors, or to utilize other technical facilities to raise productivity. However, the farmers get less than they invest due to the low price for paddy and uncertain prices for other cash crops. Wibun's problem is a case in point. He has, therefore, turned away from producing for the market, as had been promoted by officials, towards production for consumption through a "self-reliance" development. The term "self-reliance" for him does not mean doing everything by himself, but rather it means trying to reduce dependence on unnecessary external input as much as possible.

54 Thai Development Support Committee (TDSC), "Alternatives to Farmers' Problems: from the NGO's Perspective" [*ibid.*, p. 15].

55 *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

56 *Ibid.*, p. 16. See further information in Suehiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-272.

In his book Chiwit Plian or "Changing Life", Wibun makes a sharp criticism of the government's agricultural policies:

Talking about the complete cycle of agriculture in practice, I would propose that the issue must be discussed by farmers themselves especially on the point of how to operate it. But what we have heard now is from the mouths of either academics or merchants or even the government. So I conclude that whenever somebody is talking about the 'complete cycle' one should make an enquiry as to who it is for; i.e., if it is proposed by merchants, it must be called the complete cycle of business.⁵⁷

and:

It is obvious that these business enterprises made every attempt to push the idea for the Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plan commencing in 1987 especially in the areas where good irrigation system have already been established. Even more frightening is that the idea has been launched for rice farming as well. The farmers are supposed to sell rice to the rice mill, being a branch office of the Company. This is not a complete agricultural cycle but a complete industrial cycle. ...⁵⁸

Another survey of the integrated farming in terms of self-reliant development refers to the methods of Maha Yoo Sunthornthai, a former monk of Surin Province who claims to base his method on self-reliant farming which he defines as "producing for self-consumption as much as possible and buying as little as possible thereby reducing dependence on external factors as much as possible". Maha Yoo criticizes the models of rice production in Thailand guided by the government plan at the present time in that, if farmers engage in rice farming for marketing, they are forced to do it in a commercial way which traps them into large amounts of debt. However, the alternative way of production, he argues, is for the farmers to produce rice for their own consumption as the first priority and, if there is any left, to sell it themselves; or in short to counteract the government plan by using self-reliant development concept.⁵⁹

In reviewing development implementation by officials, Kanchana and Kanoksak claimed that the local people had benefited little from government projects in many respects. First, the officials had often not worked as they had said, for instance, when they promised to give training activities to the people but they did not come; or when they built a rice barn for the people but it was not the right size as promised. Second, most projects were determined by the officials and not by the local people's needs and emphasized only economic development or welfare projects rather than people-

57 Wibun Khemchaloem, "A Complete Agricultural Cycle: A System Set for Whom?", Thai Development Newsletter, No. 15, 1987, pp. 16-17.

58 Ibid., p. 17.

59 TDSC, "The Case Study: Integrated Farming in the Style of Maha Yoo Sunthornthai", Thai Development Newsletter, No. 16, 1988/89, pp. 25-29. Maha Yoo encouraged the farmers to negotiate their own price and thereby assume control over their own lives.

participation projects. Third, the officials often lacked approaches to systematic evaluation and depended only on the local mechanism such as village leaders (Phuyaiban and Kamnan). Fourth, the bureaucratic rules and regulations were restrictive and made the local people afraid of joining government activities.⁶⁰

However, there are a number of academics both Thai and foreign who support, by their writing, the possibility of creating a self-reliant economy independent of external factors. Girling concludes in his study of small-holder cultivation that it is "viable" to preserve the small-holder cultivation from being centralized by capitalism and collectivized by the state. He argues that there are three prerequisites. They are 1) the development of pluralist institutions; 2) the leadership and organization of the people in the cities and villages, in particular, the poor and landless; and 3) the strengthening of the political will to carry out agreed-upon programmes against the opposition of vested interests.⁶¹

3. Encouraging the government to guarantee the participation of concerned parties by reforms respecting the law-based society.

Although Prime Ministerial Order No. 66/B.E. 2523 (1980) was reputedly designed to encourage and develop democracy, a number of old revolutionary orders dating from the Sarit regime are still in effect. In particular there are the Revolutionary Order of 1952; the Anti-Communist Act; and the Revolutionary Order No. 12 of 1957 which says that any prosecution for political crimes and offences under the Anti-Communist Act must be brought into a military court under the administration of the Defence Ministry (not the Justice Ministry). These old revolutionary decrees are directly contradictory to the Prime Ministerial Orders and provide the basis for the abuse of power by the authorities.

In a regime where the political climate is not favourable for the people's participation in the state's affairs, the people are deprived of their political rights, their freedom of expression, their rights to information and their rights to development. Without the people's rights to information and development, government officials can easily slip into corrupt practices by receiving bribes and joining hands with interest groups, both local and multi-national, in destroying the environment and natural

60 Kanchana and Kanoksak Kaeothep, "The Promotion of Economic Activities in Rural Areas Through Self-Help Organizations", paper presented at the National Seminar on Self-Reliant Development organized by the CCTD, Sawangkaniwat, Samut Prakan Province, 3-4 March B.E. 2529 (1986), pp. 47-49.

61 J.L.S. Girling, "Is Small-Holder Cultivation Viable? A Question of Political Economy with Reference to Thailand", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 2, Summer 1986, pp. 189-213.

resources.⁶² In addition, the legal system is prejudiced in favour of the rich against the poor.

The human rights NGOs, along with academics and some government (legal) sections, play an important role in the legal training programmes of organizations such as the UCL, CGRS and the Friends of Women. In legal training processes the NGOs try to understand the people's way of thought and inform them about the government system.⁶³ In addition, the human rights organizations try to co-operate with the "like-minded" organizations, both regional and international, in encouraging the government to guarantee the people's rights to development by reforming and respecting the law-based society – meaning a society which every citizen performs activity following the rules of game.⁶⁴

NGO concept and methodology: the contribution to a development model of structural analysis.

The concepts of self-reliant development and basic minimum needs have now been widely accepted by government sectors and most NGOs. Development activities emphasize assistance to people's self-help organizations to satisfy basic minimum needs through an increase in rural income and productivity, promoting agricultural technology and improving marketing skills as well as attending to health and education. This direction was already evident in the projects of NGOs such as the Foundation for Rural Reconstruction Movement (1968-76) and the Mae Klong Rural Development Project (1974-76) but, according to Anake Nakhabutr, an NGO worker who has been involved in rural development activities for over ten years, NGOs have only learnt to understand self-reliant development (production) methods from rural community leaders in the past few years. Previously, they either concentrated on abstract terms and ideas and the promotion of ideological awareness through organizing the people. Changes have occurred too in that NGOs have more understanding of the integrated farming approach

⁶² Karawik Mamichai and Songporn Isrowuthakul, "Human Rights and Environment", UCL Newsletter, July-September 1987, p. 12.

⁶³ Chatchawal, an NGO worker of the Northern Development Workers' Association, Chiang Mai, explains that the villagers do not understand the government's legal system as they have their own form of culture and family law which is sometimes at odds with the government system [J. Marshall, "Legal Training for Village and Slum Communities", Thai Development Newsletter, No. 12, 1986, p. 38].

⁶⁴ See details in Anuraj Manibhandu, "A Beacon of Hope for Human Rights", UCL Newsletter, October-December 1987, pp. 14-17. This article was also published in Bangkok Post, 2 October 1987.

which liberates rural people from the market system and brings them out of dependency.⁶⁵

Anake argues that two factors brought about the changes. Firstly, NGO workers have learned from local-village intellectuals such as Wibun Khemchaloem of Huay Hin Village in Chachoengsao province, [Maha] Yoo Sunthornthai of Trabaek Village in Surin province, and Chalee Marasaeng of Kudsuay-Noanmuang Village in Ubon Ratchathani, whose local wisdom led them to find practical solutions for many village problems and who provide proof that concrete answers to difficulties can be found in the villages by the villagers themselves. Second, the NGOs have constantly reviewed their activities and set new roles for themselves throughout the periods of political change in Thailand. The Mae Klong project mentioned above was a case where an NGO studied rural development through the interdisciplinary studies in co-operation with three universities: Kasetsat University (agricultural issues), Mahidol University (primary health care) and Thammasat University (social development) to continually review its work.⁶⁶

Although the self-reliant development and basic minimum needs concepts have been accepted, problems have always occurred at the stage of implementation (which I will discuss further under the methodology section). In the following sections I will go beyond these concepts to consider what I believe to be two even more fundamental aspects of development - human rights and participation - without which economic development alone cannot bring betterment to the common people.

Human rights and people participation concepts

Human rights and people participation are inseparable concepts. To justify the use of a human rights concept in development, I begin by asking why the common people have so far participated little in the development process and in achieving the advancement of their own interests. The answer appears to be found as much in people's attitudes and values as in the realities of the legal and political structure which have effectively stifled their efforts toward participation.⁶⁷ I will argue that if in the process of development people are to overcome their poverty and apathy, it is

⁶⁵ Thai Development Support Committee (TDSC), "Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Involved in Rural Development", Thai Development Newsletter, No. 15, 1987, pp. 26-29.

⁶⁶ Puey Ungphakorn was the Director of the Project with three Deputy-Directors from the three universities.

⁶⁷ International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP), "Conclusions and Recommendations of the Seminar on Human Rights and Development in the Rural Areas of Southeast Asia", Rural Development and Human Rights in Southeast Asia, Report of a Seminar: CAP, 1981, p. 21.

necessary, firstly, that they overcome their lack of self-confidence and their feeling of being underrated, and become consciousness of their own rights to development. For this to happen, there is a need to establish strong independent and self-reliant organizations which encourage conscientization and protect the people from the authorities' abuse of power, thereby enabling the practice of people's participation to take root in society. Secondly, the political structure needs to be improved to facilitate people's participation. A representative regime is not only the goal but also the means for the people to achieve a better and peaceful society; or in other words, to achieve development. Thirdly, the legal structure needs to be amended to provide a guarantee that all citizens can participate through the government in setting fair rules of the political game to give all people bargaining power and full rights thereby limiting the authorities' misuse of power. In Thai society, those three conditions are unlikely to occur easily and therefore there are formidable obstacles to the implementation of people's participation.

1. The recognition of human rights concept and implementation in the Thai development context.

The concept of human rights embraces the principle that human beings have the potential for free action and self-development, but for this to occur there must be an environment which is conducive to the exercise of that potential. At the same time, as citizens of states, people have rights as well as a duty to express themselves and assist in making decisions for the benefit of society as a whole.⁶⁸ The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states in Article 2 that:

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set out in this Declaration without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.⁶⁹

Nonetheless, the concept of human rights is not always fully recognized by states. To clarify this statement one should examine a couple of points relating to, first, the development of human rights concept; and second, the relationship between concepts of human rights and state.

68 A. Linklater, "Men and Citizens in International Relations", Review of International Studies, Vol. 7, 1981, p. 34.

69 United Nations, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Wellington: Department of External Affairs, 1951, p. 7. It seems to me that the Declaration of 1948 does not separate any kind of belief or political opinion and therefore endorses a fundamental issue of human rights much clearer than the two covenants, namely the International Covenant of Political Rights and the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which separate political rights and economic rights from each other. They are, in my opinion, contradictory to the Declaration of 1948. If there is agreement with the argument that political and economic rights are inseparable, I think the two UN covenants should be reviewed.

First, the development of the human rights concept is, in itself, a problem. The definition and guarantee of human rights may be approached via the basic disciplines of philosophy, law and political science. In terms of philosophy, it is argued that human rights is a "natural right" to which a person is entitled from birth. A legal framework is then formulated to enforce the natural rights and political forces are organized to protect human rights from being violated.⁷⁰ The term "natural rights" is understood to include all those rights enjoyed by individuals to which they are morally entitled, whether or not they are accorded such rights by positive legal instruments. Citizens have argued that "natural rights" morally entitled them to resist oppression by fighting against the state and demanding that the state establish a legal system and political institutions to endorse their rights and to preserve their interests. In arguing, thus human rights activists rely on philosophy (natural rights), law (legal system) and political science (political institutions and/or structures). However, most people recognize human rights only in terms of political science and this has meant that the human rights concept has not been treated in its full sense.⁷¹

Second, there is a conflict between concepts of human rights and the state. While the concept of human rights expresses a concern for the self-development of individuals, the concept of the state inevitably involves the implementation of sovereignty through political institutions (e.g., governmental organizations). In the relations between states, the state also enjoys its own "autonomy" (e.g. domestic laws, decrees, rules and even regulations) which is "immune from the scrutiny and intervention of other states in its internal affairs".⁷² The concept of state can therefore

70 For example, the American Declaration of 1776 and the French Declaration of 1789 were drawn up to endorse the "natural rights" of the citizens.

71 H. Bull, "Human Rights and World Politics", in R. Pettman (ed.), Moral Claims in World Affairs, Canberra: ANU Press, 1979, pp. 82-85. Human rights is a much more controversial issue, in particular, when it is used as a moral claim in the competition between the West and the East. This is due to the fact that there is a great gap between the proclaimed standards of actual human rights in various parts of the world. There is a tendency in the West to put civil and political rights in the first priority, economic and social rights in the second, and "collective rights" in the third. (The collective rights means the right to organize to fight for the common interest as, for instance, some Third World countries claimed the rights to independence against imperialism). On the same ground, economic and social rights are put on the top of the socialist bloc list; and the Third World prefers the collective rights as its top priority. Human rights become a politically controversial issue when one tries to use its influence to bring others into line with its interpretation of human rights. Yet, in this regard, it should not be a question of lumping sets of rights together and announcing that one set is superior to another according to a stand-point which is entirely arbitrary. I agree with Vincent when he argues that "there should rather be a recognition that there are rights of varying importance within each of the divisions", and that "therefore the problem of priority in human rights cannot be construed as one of deciding between groups of rights" [R.J., Vincent, "Human Rights and Foreign Policy", Australian Outlook, Vol. 36, No. 3, December 1982, p. 2].

72 T. Nardin, Law, Morality and the Relations of States, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983, p. 53.

come into conflict with the concept of human rights because states pursue national affairs according to policies established and implemented by dominant groups which may find it profitable to violate the rights of individuals.

Since the interests of the state and those of individuals may be contradictory, especially with non-democratic regimes, a state's legal system is often inadequate to correct violations and even less able to protect against human rights violations in the first place. Human rights issues are often seen as a measure of a state's treatment of its people and of the adequacies or otherwise of its legal and political systems. Too often state bureaucracies see human rights issues as a nuisance rather than as a challenge to which solutions may be found.⁷³ Often human rights organizations are seen as trouble-makers which want to control human rights activities in areas which deal directly with the state's interest and reputation. The ways in which states can threaten or control such organization inevitably depends on political circumstances and on the degree of popular support each group can command. The measures can range from simple warnings, to the banning of organizations and even arresting human rights workers, through to more violent suppression depending on the countries involved. Although it can be argued that the human rights concept can be equated with the Buddhist philosophy of self-development,⁷⁴ the state bureaucrats in Thailand, nevertheless, seem to tolerate what they call "trouble-makers" promoting human rights activities only because in the first place they feel that they can control the situation, and secondly, they can gain a good reputation internationally for being a democratic regime by permitting such activities. This sort of official attitude is criticised by political opponents as window dressing.

By comparison with the situation in Western societies, Thai human rights activists are often accused, as Turton says, of "threatening the government". Besides the general conflicts between the state and human rights concepts as discussed above, there is a particular nature and historical development of Thai society and the Thai state. This has led to a situation where, apart from the state, the "civil society"⁷⁵ (composed of the common people organizations and other interest and pressure groups) is relatively weak, meanwhile the military play a dominant role, and the state ideology (e.g., state, religion and monarchy) is very active. Also, the "separation of power" between legislative, executive, and judicial institutions is not well developed. It is difficult to

73 R.J. Vincent, Human Rights and International Relations, London: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 137.

74 Saneh Chamarik, Buddhism and Human Rights, Thai Khadi Research Institution, Paper No. 12, Bangkok: Thammasat University, 1982.

75 J. Urry, The Autonomy of Capitalist Societies: The Economy, Civil Society and the State, London: The Macmillan Press, 1981, p. 72.

implement people participation in these circumstances because, in the participatory process, there will certainly be a conflict of interests between different groups.⁷⁶

In summary, the basis of the human rights concept is the recognition of the value of the individual, each of whom has the potential and capability for self-development, to promote and preserve separate individual ends, as well as the capacity for making decisions in the development process. There are conflicts between the concepts of human rights and of the state. The development of the human rights concept is still debated in terms of political and civil rights on one hand, and of economic, social and cultural rights on the other. The concept of human rights is generally used from the perspective of political science rather than the perspectives of law and philosophy. This means that the human rights concept is complex and its implementation very difficult. However, the fundamental issue remains that human rights, in practice, require the acknowledgment and the respect of the state to be effective and, as the people participation concept has been announced in the Thai development plans, the human rights concept must also form part of the development process as I mention in the following sub-section.

2. The recognition of people's participation concept in political development.

There are at least two fashionable justifications for the maintenance of authoritarian regimes in Asian developing countries.

One is that Asian societies are authoritarian and paternalistic and so need governments that are also authoritarian and paternalistic; that Asia's hungry masses are too concerned with providing their families with food, clothing, and shelter, to concern themselves with civil liberties and political freedom; that the Asian conception of freedom differs from that of the West; that, in short, Asians are not fit for democracy. Another is that developing countries must sacrifice freedom temporarily to achieve the rapid economic development that their exploding populations and rising expectations demand; that, in short, government must be authoritarian to promote development.⁷⁷

Both these arguments are used by authoritarian regimes to legitimize their existence. In the case of Thailand the government also argues that the political rights are a luxury that the Thais cannot afford while attention is focused on eradicating poverty. According to a simplistic view of traditional Thai values, the rulers argue that the people should simply carry on their livelihood and leave the affairs of the state to them.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Turton, *Production, Power and Participation*, pp. 14-15.

⁷⁷ These views are expressed by a former Philippines Senator. Quoted from Alston, "The Basis Working Paper: Development and the Rule of Law", p. 53.

⁷⁸ Likhit Dhiravegin, "Social Change and Contemporary Thai Politics: An Analysis of the Inter-Relationship between the Society and the Polity", paper presented at the Thai-European

If, however, development is being provided for the people and, the chosen method involves people's participation, this must go hand in hand with the concept of democracy (i.e., the recognition of ideas and opinions of the majority). In Thailand, since 1932, there have been attempts to found a representative system by many groups, both within and outside the parliament, such as the People's Party led by Phraya Phahon and Luang Pradit and, after the 14 October 1973 uprising, groups of students and common people. However, the representative system largely failed because of resistance from the royalist and military as well as the strong influence from monopolistic business groups.⁷⁹ The interference of these groups in the political development process has obstructed the development of representative systems in Thailand and leads to the common prejudice that the Thais are not ready for democracy.

In fact, it is not a question of whether Thai people are ready for democracy or not. It is rather a question of whether the ruling groups are competent to establish the rules of a representative political process which allows for everyone to participate.⁸⁰ When governments fails to provide for participation, the so-called democratic system is merely a system which the minority elite uses to govern the majority of the people by arguing that it is for the benefit of people generally. When the people have no rights to express their opinion and to help make decisions on what and how their own future will be, development for the people's interest becomes merely empty rhetoric. Thus, where there is no democracy, there is no development in terms of people's interest, and in particular, in terms of the people's participation concept.

Second, there is no economic development without the guarantee of political rights. Economic development deals not only with the increase in GNP or per capita income, but also with the distribution of wealth - with questions such as who gains? who loses? how? and why? Therefore, it is vitally concerned with justice and politics.⁸¹ Meanwhile the power of decision making is dominated by the oligarchy and the distribution of wealth is also in the hand of that minority ruling group, not of the

Seminar on Social Change in Contemporary Thailand, Anthropological-Sociological Centre, University of Amsterdam, 28-30 May 1980, p. 24.

79 Suehiro, *op. cit.*, p. 275. The business groups included State owned public enterprises, private firms (ethnic Chinese owned) and foreign owned firms.

80 Saneh Chamarik, "Patthanakan sitthi manutsayachon nai prathetthai" [The Development of Human Rights in Thailand], paper presented at the National Seminar on the Teaching of Human Rights, Faculty of Law and Thai Khadi Research Institute, Thammasat University, 20 March 1987, p. 5. See also Vithit Muntrabhorn, "Human Rights", paper presented at the National Seminar on the Teaching of Human Rights, Faculty of Law and Thai Khadi Research Institute, Thammasat University, 20 March 1987, p. 9.

81 Saneh, "Patthanakan sitthi manutsayachon", p. 9.

people. An increase in GNP does not indicate the development of the country while the majority remains in want and misery.

Economic and political factors are, therefore, related to each other like two sides of one and the same coin. When people have no rights to organize, to have bargaining power and to argue their interests, substantial sections of the population may not be able to improve their conditions. There may be an argument in the short term requiring the people to "sacrifice freedom" and to allow the government to "promote development"; but in the longer term, the mass of the people will not be satisfied with the loss of freedom. Indeed, it would appear that the recognition of people's participation in political development requires a good measure of decentralization of power to local areas.

3. The recognition of people's participation concept in legal development.

To combat absolute poverty by the implementation of the people's participation, the common people need concrete definitions which describe the goals of the state, development policies and the levels of participation. Participation is the manner in which people express or act out their own will and help create their appropriate society. It will also involve a continually changing process in eradicating absolute poverty. Through participation, people assert their rights to production resources, their rights to information and education, their rights to organization and, above all, "their right to know their own rights".⁸² All this seems to be essential for combating poverty.

The law can function both to define legitimate areas of conflict and its resolution and to provide a more general structure within which people and groups can attempt to find ways of expressing their own problems, and seeking solutions. Participation and law are complementary factors in the context of development. Emrich gives two reasons in support of this statement. First, participation is inevitably associated with conflicts because it involves changes in the distribution of political and economic power. The promotion of participation is the promotion of new kinds of conflicts which the common people need to confront to achieve not only the increase of productivity but also the control of their livelihood, security and dignity (or development values). Some kinds of conflicts may be reduced or eliminated whereas new kinds may occasionally emerge which will need to be resolved through new forms

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H. Yamane, "Approaches to Rural Development and their Implications for Human Rights", in ICJ & CAP, Rural Development and Human Rights, p. 167.

of co-operation and concrete standards of law to interpret those conflicts.⁸³ Second, both participation and law, in the context of general change, seem to demand "situation-specific case-by-case approaches".⁸⁴ That means there is no single legal provision to cover all problems. Participation is, therefore, necessary in relation to problems where the administrative system cannot cope in deciding appropriate solutions. In this case, the law may help guarantee not only participation in the formulation and implementation of developmental programmes, but also evaluation and determination of the accountability of those who administer them.⁸⁵

Commonly, in most Third World countries, "legal systems are structured in favour of the powerful and wealthy".⁸⁶ In the case of Thailand, the achievement of economic growth within the past two decades, as the government argues, also involved a skewing of the legal system enabling the state to abuse power in denying the people's rights to organization. For example, in order to invite foreign investment, the Sarit Proclamation No. 19 of 30 December B.E. 2501 forbade the people to organize in any form. When the concepts of people participation, self-reliant development and basic minimum needs have been included in the development plans, it is also necessary for the government to enshrine, for the people, the legal freedom to participate in development.

NGO methodology: co-operating and counterbalancing with the concerned parties.

As argued in Chapter 2, the common people need to have their own interest groups so that they would be able to achieve a better standard of living and development of human values. We can propose participants in the development process, namely local organizations, governmental and domestic non-governmental organizations, as well as regional and international governmental and non-governmental organizations. At the infant stage of people's organization, the help and support from both government and non-government sectors is required. An analysis using a political-economy approach at both community level (micro level) and national level (macro level) should be taken into account.

83 E.R. Emrich, "Law, Participation and Development: An ESCAP Programme", in *ibid.*, p. 250. See also Turton, Production, Power and Participation, p. 14.

84 Emrich, op. cit., p. 250.

85 C.J. Dias, "Realizing the Right To Development: the Importance of Legal Resources", in ICJ, Development, Human Rights and the Rule of Law, p. 191.

86 Cited from *ibid.*, p. 193.

In practice, the catalytic role of NGOs is defined in two areas. One is in co-operation with the government in helping common people increase economic productivity - which the government favours while seeing the role for the NGOs as operating within the framework of national development. The other is as a counterbalancing power with the government in sorting out a new consensus and setting the rules of the development game politically and legally - a role the government does not favour and regards as "threatening the government" or challenging the government system.

With regard to the current situation of co-operation between the government and NGOs, the NESDB proposed a meeting with NGOs working directly in rural development in 1984. The aim of the meeting, it said, was to collect ideas and opinions for drafting the Sixth Plan (1987-1991) and to ask NGOs to present suitable ways of co-operation with the government. When the NGOs proposed co-operation with the NESDB on the grounds of co-partnership, in which the NGOs would have autonomous power in working as equal partner with government, the NESDB faltered and, as Phumtham noted, the NESDB therefore delayed the meeting until 1985.

Phumtham went on to argue that the NESDB wanted to have NGO co-operation in rural development for the following reasons.⁸⁷ First, the economic reason, in particular, was to support the "rural development fund" for which the NESDB expected to get foreign aid under the name of government - NGO co-operation.⁸⁸ The other was the human development reason whereby the NESDB expected the NGOs to help improve people's capabilities through vocational training.

Phumtham criticizes the co-operation between the government and non-government organizations. First, although the government tends to recognize the importance of NGOs in development, the government still maintains its centralized decision making whereas the NGOs need to have decentralized decision making. In fact, the decision to co-operate with the NGOs is an initiative of the NESDB only, and it is not clear that other government organizations will agree with this decision. Second, the concept of development itself differs for government and non-government

87 Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute (CUSRI), "Wipak ... thitthang phan patthana chabapthi 6" [Critique ... the Direction of the Sixth Plans (1987-1991)], in Thitthang phan maebot kanpatthana sangkhom phu'a kanpu'ngtoneng kap ngan patthana phak ekachon [The Main Direction of Social Development for Self-Reliance and the Development Work of the Private Sectors], Report of an academic assembly, 27-28 December 1985, Bangkok: CUSRI, B.E. 2528 (1985), p. 49.

88 Phumtham argues that the NESDB wants to withdraw the budget from the local organization K.S.C. to put it in the "rural development fund" because of its weak administration, *ibid.*, p. 49.

organizations. The government emphasizes the macro-economic, industrialized development and regards the common people as a pool of cheap labour, whereas the NGOs put human development at the centre of development and try to develop people's organizations, to distribute wealth and benefits to the disadvantaged poor. Third, there is a major problem of co-operation in that government wants the NGOs to participate in development to support the government's work, while the NGOs for their part want to co-operate with the government as equal partner in national development. The government seems to expect the NGOs to follow the system laid down by the government. At the same time, the NGOs do not want to become a part of government bureaucratic system and under government control. They would prefer to receive a clear statement of government policies in relation to NGOs and their independent role in social development.⁸⁹ At present, co-operation between government and non-government organizations is still discussed seriously but as yet without conclusion.

In summary, the Thai NGO movement is an outcome of Thai development history. The depolarization of ideology gave more room for them to evaluate the mistake in the past and mobilize development resources to achieve the goal of development with various approaches. Governments [from 1973 to the present, except the Thanin government (1976-1977)] seemed to have encouraged people's endeavours to search for ideas and trends to serve their interests in development. Some government officials, like Dr. Apichet, Dr. Wichai and other government officials tried to prove that the officials did not obstruct social development but created good conditions for working with local people through sacrifice and hard work. Although the government now accepts the concepts of self-reliant development, basic minimum needs and people participation, these concepts are inseparable from the recognition of human rights concept and the catalytic role of NGOs in the co-operation with government will be incomplete unless the counterbalancing role is fully recognized by the government. The case studies in Chapter 4 will show the Thai structural problems and NGO use of concepts and methodologies in tackling the problems of underdevelopment.

⁸⁹ Jon Ungphakorn, "A View: The Co-operation between the Government and NGOs in Development", Thai Development Newsletter, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1986, p. 24.

CHAPTER 4

People's Rights to Development: Case Studies

True development must place the development of the human being as the first priority.¹ Only in the growth of the human attributes will further appropriate development take place in the economy and society. ... Rural development [for example] will be best achieved by developing the capacity of the rural poor to be able to set up their own organizations, to analyse their own concerns, to plan, to make their own decision and to solve their own problems. Not only will this approach create change but will make people more responsive to future change. ... The government must promote people's autonomous organizations and make them legally independent [my translation].

Prawet Wasi²

This chapter aims to illustrate the structural problems in the Thai development context and to show how the NGOs use concepts and methodologies to tackle the problems of underdevelopment. It also emphasizes a counterbalancing role of NGOs between government and people as they seek a consensus on rules of operation. At the same time it indicates some limitations in both government and non-government sectors. These limitations would be reduced if there were better co-operation between the sectors. The issues involved will be addressed through the consideration of case studies. First, an outline of the considerations in selecting the case studies is given; second, a case study of "the Phichit Experience" in rural development is detailed; third, a case study of the land dispute case of the Non Lan Peasants is provided; fourth, a case study of women workers of the Srikao Company strike in their demand for the minimum wage is presented. These case studies will illustrate the limitations of both government and non-government organizations in Thai development process. However, this process would be facilitated where there is co-operation between both sectors.

Some considerations for selecting case studies

To approach the root causes of problems in Thai development, Strong's argument from development experience in Africa is relevant:

1 The development of the "human being" here includes the individual elements of dignity, awareness of society and of nature, and of man's capacity to change his environment.

2 Quoted from "Nu'ng pi rattaban Chatchai nai saita khong mo Magsaysay" [One Year of the Chatchai Government from the Point of View of a Magsaysay-award Doctor], *Siamrat* [Thai State Weekly Magazine], [in Thai], Vol. 10, 20 August B.E. 2532 (1989), pp.19-20.

the root causes of the crisis are essentially systemic in nature. That is to say the cause and effect relationships take place within a complex system of interactions in which no single element can be isolated from the whole. Ignoring this simple truth is, in my view, one of the principal root causes of the failures of past development that have produced the current crisis.³

The structural problems of Thai development are systematically concerned with distribution of economic growth, decentralization of decision-making, and the political and legal recognition of people's rights to development. When the government introduced development concepts of "basic minimum needs", "self-reliance" and "people participation", these concepts were inseparable from the human rights concept (regarded as a fundamental issue of basic human rights in achieving the standard of living of common people). Ignoring the people's basic rights to development had created social and political problems as experienced in past Thai development. However, these four concepts, in particular the human rights and people's participation concepts, require the recognition and protection of a law-based society.⁴

Considering the creation of the law-based society, the rules of the game are still more or less enforced by the Thai government in favour of the "haves" rather than of the "have-nots", because the common people have weak bargaining power in the political process. In order to achieve an improvement in the standard of living of the common people, it is better to solve problems at the starting point rather than attempt to cure the symptoms of the disease by social welfare handouts.

There is much discussion in Thailand about the problems of the legal system. For example, most government officials seem to expect every Thai citizen to understand the laws. However, the common people find the laws, legal terms and processes to be very complex and difficult to understand and therefore need lawyers to interpret the details for them; but they cannot afford lawyer's fees and so simply avoid dealing with legal issues. Sometimes too, the people can break the laws through ignorance, misunderstanding, or bias if they consider that the laws favour the well-off people more than themselves. When the laws are no longer respected by the people, both government and people have to waste time and money to correct the problems. The failure of a legal system can be seen as a major detriment to any country.

3 M. Strong, "Increase in Government Reliance on Voluntary Action: Crisis or Challenge?", address to the INTERPHIL II Conference, Venice, Italy, 26 September 1985, quoted in Brodhead, Herbert-Copley and Lambert, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

4 The idea that the human rights concept is totally a Western import to Third World countries is, in my opinion, not totally correct because any representative society, customary or otherwise, has a basis for individual rights such as the expression of idea and opinion or "participation" and must express the concept in its own historical context. In any case it is my view that human rights must be recognized as a fundamental concept of development.

At the same time, some NGO workers argue that Thai society is characterized as a customary society, whereas the present legal system is heavily influenced by western ideas which may not be appropriate to Thai society.⁵ While this argument is partly correct, it does not mean that the laws should be abolished. Instead, they have to be improved, to be made more suitable to the Thais and to facilitate the participation of the people in codifying the rules of society. Some human rights and development NGOs such as UCL, CGRS, Friends of Women and the Centre for the Protection of Children's Rights, have attempted to work against unjust laws and enforcement which undermine the legitimacy of the legal system. At the same time, these organizations try to convince the government to correct legal problems in a way appropriate to the interests of the common people.

The case studies have been selected to demonstrate a number of issues and situations. First, they reflect that problems are linked together economically and politically, at the community and at the national levels; second, they show an NGO contribution to a development model in terms of both concepts and methodology; and third, they show some limitations of both the government and non-government sectors which require their mutual co-operation if development problems are to be solved.

Case Study I: "The Phichit Experience" in rural development

This case study explores the role of a local Thai NGO working as an important project component, as intermediary between local communities, the Thai government officials and Australian funding agencies.⁶ The case study refers to the Community Self-Reliance Sub-project which is a part of the Phichit Land Reform Area Development Support Project - a five-year (1984-1989) bilateral development assistance project funded by the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB) to the Thai government. The bilateral project area is a former forest reserve area (Bang Narang Forest), settled by people who migrated from the Central and Northeastern regions where there had been insufficient farmland. The new settlers cleared the forest and established their own farms, paddy fields, upland fields and village settlements. This area was proclaimed a land reform area in 1978 under the responsibility of the Agricultural Land Reform Office (ALRO), Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives.

⁵ Marshall, "Legal Training", p. 38.

⁶ The funding agencies were both the Australian government and an Australian NGO, however, I have adopted the convention in this thesis of using NGO to refer only to the Thai organizations and not to western funding non-government agencies such as Community Aid Abroad (CAA). CAA is an Australian funding NGO which has close links with Oxfam (UK) and gives strong support to the principles of participation in development.

The bilateral assistance project between AIDAB and the Thai government to develop this area includes activities such as, groundwater research and development, farming system research, agricultural extension, flood control, health, education and community water supply. Besides the village communities, the parties concerned in the development project were the NGOs [the Phichit NGO Volunteer Group, Thai Volunteer Service (TVS)], the Thai government [Agricultural Land Reform Office (ALRO) and the Research Development Institute/Khon Kaen University (RDI/KKU)] and funding agencies (AIDAB and CAA).⁷

Initially in 1984, the Community Self-Reliant Sub-project was an NGO community development activity funded by CAA and had a positive working relationship with the ALRO. In 1986, the AIDAB Project Review Team which made follow-up investigations on the Project Feasibility Study of 1983, saw many positive aspects in the local NGO operation with village-based community development workers assisting the implementation of small-scale development activities based on villager needs identified by the villagers. The Review Team therefore formalized and elevated the status of these activities to an NGO sub-project under the umbrella of the five-year bilateral project. The sub-project was given the task of providing two-way communication, of giving up-to-date information on the current socio-economic situation in the villages relevant to the decision making process of the Project, and acting as a linkage mechanism between the villagers from target communities and the sub-projects within the bilateral project; or in short, acting "as the eyes and ears for the project at the village level".⁸

The role of the NGO team in the Phichit Land Reform Areas Project

The Phichit NGO Volunteer Group, composed of one Project Co-ordinator and six volunteers, undertook a six month process of community study and preparation for the project. In the first place, they generally built relationships with villagers by living in the target areas and participating in village activities. At the same time, they studied the economic, social and cultural conditions in the targeted areas. They identified conflicts between the pioneer generations and recent settlers (notably land disputes and ethnic division), the high crime rate caused by theft, high levels of alcoholism and drug addiction, in particular among the youth, all of which contributed to the lack of co-

⁷ Community Aid Abroad (CAA), Case Study: Strategies in Government and Non-Government Co-operation: The Phichit Experience, Report to the Development Committee members of CAA, AIDAB, the Australian Consultant Team, and ACFOA, Canberra: CAA, 1988, pp. ix, 23 and Appendix 3, p. 4.

⁸ Ibid., p. ix and 26.

operative problem solving. They also helped the villagers understand the aim of the main project and the responsibility of the fieldworkers, building mutual trust and encouraging the leaders as well as the villagers to participate in development activities.⁹

The NGO sub-project team then formulated criteria for selecting target villages for people participation development work. Briefly, the villages were to be of a moderate size (about 100-200 households); the economic conditions of the village were to be relatively poor with limited assistance from government sectors; village leaders and groups were to agree to actively facilitate the sub-project activities; and the villages were to be centres from which the activities would be easily communicated and expanded in the future. The NGO team expected that after the sub-project period finished by the end of 1989 and the NGO team had completely withdrawn from the target areas, the leaders of target community groups would be able to take over the community development activities by themselves.¹⁰ Finally, eight villages in three districts were selected.¹¹

The NGO team found that the rural poor in target areas were facing a number of problems in achieving basic minimum needs in terms of productivity and income. For example, among the agricultural problems it was found that there was insufficient natural supply of water in the upland rice farming areas and there was flooding in the lowland areas. There were also problems relating to the change to new production processes using modern technology such as large and small tractors, chemical fertilizers and pesticides to increase yields, and the fact that these new methods required borrowing to meet the increasing investment needed, which in turn led to debt problems in many farming households.

Lacking access to soft loans in the formal sector, e.g. the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Co-operatives (BAAC), the poor peasants inevitably borrowed money in the informal sector from merchants and well-off villagers to whom the peasants paid higher than the Bank interest rates. At the same time, they were bound to sell their product to the money lenders who typically gave a lower price for their produce after the deduction of interest and transportation costs. In such circumstances, since the bargaining power of peasants was relatively weak, they were often forced into a

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4, 18.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

¹¹ They were four villages in Sam Ngam District: Map Fang (village 13 of Ban Na Sub-District), Phetchalukan (village 17 of Ban Na Sub-District), Laem Chedi cluster (village 5 of Nong Pho Sub-District), Nong Chik cluster (village 5 of Nong Son Sub-District); three villages in Pho Thale District: Thung Fak (village 12 of Bung Narang Sub-District), Nong Wai and Bang Pling (village 7 and 8 of Pho Sai Ngam Sub-District); and one village in Pho Prathap Chang District: Ko Kaeo (village 11 of Phai Rop Sub-District).

situation of exploitation. The target areas in which a high level of indebtedness appeared were Nong Wai, Leam Chedi, Nong Chik and Phetchalukan.

The use of intensive modern technology also led to debt as the peasants, who could not afford the high-cost investment, rented their land cheaply to rich individuals outside the village. The villagers of Bang Pling and Nong Wai, for example, rented their lands to the owner of a sugar company for three years. As a result, the fertile lands for rice farming were adapted for sugar production and the owners of the lands became employed as cane-cutters on their own lands for minimal wages. This situation did not provide a bright future for the small-scale farmers.

In addition, the NGO team discovered a number of social and cultural problems which retarded development activities. For example, conflicts among villagers arose from land disputes between the former inhabitants and later migrants; basic cultural differences between Thai and Lao people in Thung Fak and Petchalukan; and between the Lao Song and Lao Wiang ethnic groups. Problems also arose from the lack of trust and respect for "formal" leaders who bought votes in elections in Nong Wai, Bang Pling and Petchalukan;¹² drug addiction of the village headman of Petchalukan and some official leaders as well as among the young; high crime rates (in particular thefts).

After attempting to understand local conditions and to win the confidence of villagers through the six-month process of community study and preparation, the NGO team conducted activities to help address the people's problems and to help them relate to the bilateral project as well as addressing the lack of collective power in solving community problems. For instance, activities were arranged to improve the quality of leadership, to reduce economic problems, and to promote community self-reliant organizations. The NGO team started analysing the different types of village leadership such as religious leaders, economic leaders, elders whose roles and experience were respected by villagers, as well as the formal leaders mentioned above. The NGO team was relatively successful in helping village leaders who were willing to participate in development through various forms of activities such as informal group discussions and meetings, talks by resource persons and observation tours of participatory development work in other provinces (Chainat, Uthai Thani, Khon Kaen, Roi Et, and Surin). Eventually, the leaders were able to analyse local conditions and problems and to lead villagers in solving their current community problems.¹³

¹² Most of them hold official positions appointed by government, not by the villagers, such as "Kamnan" (Sub-District headman), "Phuyaiban" (Village headman), village committee members.

¹³ Community Aid Abroad (CAA), *op. cit.*, pp. 18-20.

Considering long-term economic development problem like indebtedness and food shortages, the NGO team helped reduce some burden through the increase of productivity and skill training with the participation of most villagers. Examples of project activities included rice banks in five villages, namely Nong Wai, Map Fang, Laem Chedi, Ko Kaeo, Petchalukan; co-operative stores in Nong Chik and Thung Fak; and a medicine fund in Bang Pling.¹⁴ In addition, community resources such as the housewives' and youth groups were mobilized by the NGO team to participate in development activities.

In relation to the bilateral project, there was a positive impact from the NGO activities. The NGO team were effective in providing up-to-date information of the socio-economic situation in the village which guided the Project to select specific inputs suitable for the local needs and to plan the timing of the inputs. For example, an irrigation component in the bilateral project was designed to increase groundwater utilization. The NGO team alerted the Project about the villagers' concerns with the initial proposal and consequently the Project was able to determine better how technologies could be allocated in a way which ensure sustainable utilization by the villagers and at the same time reduce the cost of technology. Likewise, the proposal to construct secondary canals was criticized by many of villagers on the grounds that benefits would go to an influential minority whereas serious disadvantages would fall on the villagers along the line of the planned secondary canals. Thus, the Project team re-assessed the technical and social aspects and changed the placement of drainage canals. As a result, the NGO team helped reduce high cost areas of the Project, such as groundwater and drainage components, which accounted for approximately half of the Project expenditure. The NGO team itself absorbed only 0.5 per cent of the Project budget.¹⁵

Generally speaking, the NGO team had a good working relationship with official development partners as well as with the Australian consultants and funding agency staff members. For instance, with the officials from the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), the NGO workers assisted the rehabilitation of village medicine funds in six communities as well as providing training in the management of the funds, while

14 The rice bank activity aims to solve problems of rice shortage and then alleviate the debt cycle that arises from food shortage. The co-operative store seeks to provide cheap goods for villagers and develop bargaining awareness.

15 Community Aid Abroad (CAA), *op. cit.*, pp. x-xi. The Australian government gives economic assistance to the Thai government for the five-year bilateral project (1985-1989), including approximately \$A 2.5 million for the Groundwater Investment and Groundwater Development component; and \$A 1.8 million for the Drainage component which involved construction of 44 km. of main drains and 66 km. of secondary drains as well as culverts, weirs and control gates. The Drainage component would reduce flooding problems over 22,000 rai of agricultural land [*ibid.*, pp. 9, 11].

the officials helped broaden NGO work by inviting the team to participate in MOPH sponsored workshops with local government officials. With the co-operation of the Non-Formal Education Department of the Ministry of Education and the Phichit Agricultural College, NGO workers helped develop occupational skills suitable for local community work and informally assisted villagers with literacy programmes, while the two government sectors provided resource persons and technical assistance to the NGOs. The NGO team worked hand in hand with the ALRO officials in both the bilateral project and other sub-projects such as road construction, while the ALRO provided an umbrella to protect the team from suspicions of being connected with government security officers (Internal Security Operation Command - ISOC). The NGO team helped create a community self-reliance development model of the "bottom up" development, while the funding agencies gave to the NGO team not only a financial support but also facilitated a close co-operation between government officials and NGOs who had, since 1976, generally viewed each other with antagonism, suspicion and mistrust.

The evaluation of NGO work: perspectives from concerned parties

From the villagers' perspective, the NGO team was the de facto representative of the poor. As some villagers explained:

NGOs are like our equals. They live with us. When we ask a question, we know we'll get an immediate response. Extension agents, project or other government personnel come and go. They do experiments on our land, but don't know when or if it will come. The NGO took us to look at things, they never told us what to do. In some cases they even tried to discourage us from rushing into new activities without thinking about the consequence.¹⁶

NGO activities were well recognized and participated in by most villagers in the target areas. For example, in Nong Wai village where the total number of registered households was 86 (about 200 adults), there were 72 villagers involved in the rice bank activity; 50 in co-operative dry season rice planting; and 42 in fuel co-operative funds. Some farmers expressed the following opinion about NGO work:

There is a difference in style. Government puts in more resources, but doesn't always get at the problem. The NGO investment is small, but they always get at the problem.¹⁷

From the government perspective, five of the twenty government officials (three from ALRO, one from a provincial public health section, and one from the Department of Agricultural Extension) who had direct experience working with NGOs, were of the view that:

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

NGOs are flexible, and can respond to local circumstances. The examples of drilling technology and irrigation canals were cited. Government officials recognized that rigid bureaucratic regulations and obstacles to communication between villagers and government made it difficult for government agencies to be this flexible. NGOs can provide important micro-level analysis, to enable appropriate project planning and implementation. Sustainability at the village level is enhanced because NGOs encourage local leadership to emerge. ... NGOs can draw in external resources (other than government) to support village-based development activities. In the PLRA Project, the NGO team co-operated with the Agricultural Development Foundation, another NGO working in the area and also the Pichit [sic] Agricultural College.¹⁸

Some criticism of NGO work and attitude was however also drawn from some officials. For the government security officials (ISOC), the NGOs were generally regarded to be "a fifth column front movement of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT)".¹⁹ For some officers of the Development Office of Agricultural Extension (DOAE), the NGO work with ALRO was claimed to overlap their own extension activities. For others, the NGO workers "were young and lacked experience necessary to be effective in the highly complex environment of a bilateral project".²⁰ This inexperience, they said, reflected in a tendency to use a "dogmatic" approach to development, an example of which was that some workers took ideas from a brief pre-service training course and tried to impose them and make them work directly in the local area.

From the Australian Consultant Team's perspective, the role of NGO team in the PLRA Project was summarized as follows:

What we learned is that in future we should set some broad objectives, and let the NGOs take the lead, with the technicians following behind. First we have to listen to what the farmers want. We took six months to let the NGOs work in the village. People kept saying: 'Well, when are you going to do something?' After six months the NGOs came up with ten times the number of ideas we'd anticipated initially, and it grew exponentially. For the same amount of financial input, we achieved five times what we'd been averaging before the NGO came.²¹

From the funding agencies' (AIDAB and CAA) perspectives, there was uneven understanding about the NGO role in development among funding agency staff members. CAA seems to have understood quite well about the NGO contribution and the report suggested that:

18 Ibid., p. 24.

19 Ibid., p. 23.

20 Ibid., p. 25. The NGO and ALRO teams solved these problems with DOAE by pointing out that the interest of the people were the main principle for government activities and there was room for co-operation.

21 Ibid., pp. 14 , 27.

the future collaboration would be well-advised to allow for a much longer initial period of social preparation; i.e., extended community consultation (as an operational phase of the Project) where NGOs could assist in design and planning, in order to ensure a studied and appropriate response to actual rather than perceived community needs.²²

However, due to the fact that the NGO sub-project was created upon the Australian Consultant Team's advice, and was not in the original project design document, most AIDAB representatives somehow understood the role of NGOs in different terms. Some said that they "... never really understood the role of the NGO". They knew what "it was supposed to be on paper, but not in practice".²³ Some proposed that in future projects:

If AIDAB maintains a social development perspective, there will be a role for NGOs to fill in for deficits in the [host] government system for the community development aspect.²⁴

As for the NGO team, they evaluated their role in the PLRA Project in the following terms:

The NGO is a neutral body which, together with villagers, is involved in the process of group formation, co-operative problem solving, communicating and co-ordinating with external agencies which strengthen the capacity and knowledge of villagers to solve their own problems using both their own and appropriate external resources. Because the fieldworkers are village based, they can engage in a dialogue with villagers, and undertake activities using approaches and achieving outcomes which may be impossible for government (i.e. because of bureaucratic, time or resource constraints).²⁵

However, the NGO team concluded that problems still remained for future development. For example, many economic problems demanded long-term problem solving and while the NGO team helped reduce some economic burdens, many problems were beyond the realistic capability of the NGO team to solve within the timeframe of the sub-project. Second, the majority of leaders came from the middle-income group who had time for community development, whereas the poor peasants were more bound by immediate economic problems and could not participate fully in some development work such as group meetings and discussion. Third, the promotion of village organizations was still incomplete. Among target leader groups, Map Fang group was the only one which proved capable of running community activities. In

22 *Ibid.*, p. 32.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 31. It seems to me that some AIDAB officers still regard the NGOs in the framework of national development as more or less part of official structures, whereas the Australian Consultant Team recognized an independent status for the NGOs to work equally with other concerned parties.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 28. It is inaccurate for the NGO team to describe itself as "neutral" when what follows is a positive activist role in economic, social and political development – especially in terms of relations between the villagers and the government agencies.

other places, the leaders were not sufficiently independent or creative to carry on the community development work.

In summary, the Community Self-Reliance sub-project explores the catalytic role of the Phichit Volunteer Group in many aspects. First, the NGO team helped create a model of community self-reliant development. They reduced some of the problems occurring at the community level such as some economic burdens, drug addiction among the youth and some leaders, and conflicts between leaders. At the same time, they improved the quality of leadership, promoted the village organization and encouraged people to participate in community self-reliant development within the timeframe of the Sub-project. Second, the NGO team co-operated with the government and Australian funding agencies as an equally independent partner. For example, the NGOs assisted in implementing small-scale development activities based on the needs identified by the local poor. The government provided infrastructure and technical assistance through its bureaucratic system and an umbrella of protection which minimized misunderstanding and suspicion about the NGO activities. The funding agencies helped not only to provide resources for the community development project, but also to improve the relationships between the government and NGOs.

Nonetheless, one questions to arise from the sub-project is whether or not the Phichit experience in rural development can be a model for future development work. According to the report, the NGOs are characterized as being flexible, using micro-level analysis, stimulating local partnership, and co-ordinating with external agencies. They also used a "bottom up" approach involving "empowerment" and "participation".²⁶ In practice these characteristics and approaches of NGOs, such as the giving of power to the poor, may "give a direct challenge to not only the top-down decision making structure of the bureaucracy but also to a number of the concepts which legitimize those structure".²⁷ Thus the model requires three equal independent partnerships and it may be very difficult, especially for the government, to adopt a general policy which would elevate the NGO status to equal partnership in development.

Another question concerns what will happen when the NGOs leave the target areas and the people propose new ideas and solutions to their problems to the government. This may require the government to recognize people's rights to development in a much more definite way than at present by providing, for example, a political and legal framework within which the people have the right to participate in their own development. The two following case studies will explore in more detail the

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 28.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

role of law as the basis of people's rights and the manner in which people can be exploited by inappropriate or unenforced legal and political structures. In both cases conflict arises and it is the involvement of NGOs, acting as the counterbalancing power between the government and the people in helping to resolve conflicts.

Case Study II: the land dispute case of the Non Lan peasants

This case study illustrates a land dispute case between the Non Lan peasants and the private Charoensap Uthumphon Borikan Company. The land dispute was caused by government officials permitting the company to conduct forestry activities in areas which were used by peasants for household cultivation. The area of the land in dispute was in the Non Lan National Park, Uthumphonphisai District, Si Sa Ket Province.

Non Lan National Park is about 16,000 rai (7,263 acres) and although some parts of the area had already been destroyed, an area of about 1,400 rai, in Siao Sub-District, was still fertile forest from which the local people from several surrounding villages had helped sustain their lives for a long time.²⁸ For example, they gathered firewood, vegetables, herbs, sweet potatoes and taros not only for consumption but also barter or sale for rice. About 2,000 cattle were also fed there, particularly in the rainy season when surrounding land was all taken up with rice fields and only the Non Lan forest had pastures. In addition, the villagers from Ban Talat and Ban Nong Rua did not have their own lands and their total sustenance was gained by using the natural resources of the forest.

The Non Lan peasants had protected the forest lands from being destroyed. For example, between 1947 and 1953 periods of severe drought occurred because some villagers had destroyed part of the forest for growing cotton and sugar cane in response to the government policy and advice to grow cash crops. In order to solve the drought problem, the peasants called a meeting among villages and decided to give up growing cash crops in the Non Lan area so that the fertility of this forest would be maintained for future generations. Since then, the Non Lan villagers claimed that the forest areas had

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The soil condition is fertile and humid, suitable for valuable woods such as red wood, timber and mixed forest. Several marshes run around the forest; e.g., "Nong Ma", "Nong Yai", "Nong Ku" ("Nong" in Thai means a swamp). In addition, a stream, "Huai Tup Kan", waters an area in the West of the forest [UCL Human Rights Promotion Project (Northeastern Branch), "Korani pipat kan anuyat hai ekachon pluk sang suan pa thi pa Non Lan Amphoe Uthumphonphisai, Chagwat Si Sa Ket" [Land Dispute Case Concerning the Granting of Permission for Afforestation in the Non Lan Forest Area, Uthumphonphisai District, Si Sa Ket Province, to a Private Company], in *Raingan kanwichai: Kanhai khwamchualu'a*, pp. 27-28].

not suffered drought condition because of the maintenance of the forest and decided to protect the remainder of the forest from further destruction.²⁹

Although the villagers had settled in the Non Lan area for over a hundred years, they had no land title deeds to declare their rights over the lands. Some villagers had "S.K. 1" documents (Sithi Krop Krong Thi Din, Form No. 1) giving the rights to own the land which they have received from the local government since 1954; others had "P.T.B. 5" (Phasi Bamrung Thongthi, Form No. 5) which was a land tax receipt. Even though these documents were not allowed as evidence of land ownership or be used to argue for land rights, they were official documents showing the long term claim to the land along with continual use for subsistence before the declaration of the Non Lan National Park was enforced in 1971 by the rule of the Ministry of Interior, Vol. 436 B.E. 2524 (1971).

The Forestry Department generally reserving lands by declaring the ministerial rule in the royal gazette and through local officials.³⁰ The central Forestry officials need not even assess the number of people and families living in the area, or find out the prior occupancy and the use of land before the laws are issued. They leave it up to the people to argue for their rights over the land by presenting their land title deeds to local officials after the ministerial rule has been issued. If there is nobody who lays suitable claim to the rights over the land within the timeframe of the declaration, the officials automatically assume that the ministerial rule will be fully enforced. The process of declaration of National Parks often causes land dispute problem between the government and people.³¹

The Non Lan declaration was a case in point. The peasants insisted that they did not know when the declaration of the Non Lan National Park was made until the local authorities started placing marking stones which overlapped their cultivated lands. As a consequence, the peasants ignored the rule of the Ministry of Interior that declared the

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 27-29.

30 Banlue Kongchan, "Panha khophiphat ru'ang sitthi phonprayot nai khet pa sa-nguanhaengchat kap naeothang kaekhaipanha lae kanhai khwamchuilu'a prachachon phuprasop khwamdu'atron" [Problems of Disputes Concerning Rights and Interest in National Reserved Forest and the Direction for Solving the Problems and Helping the Affected People], in *Raingan kanwichai: Kanhai khwamchuilu'a*, p. 2.

31 *Ibid.*, pp. 1-13. See also Banlue Kongchan, "Khophipat kiao kap sitthi nai thi din pai nai anakhet su'ng thang ratchakan sa-nguan huang ham phu'a chai pen tamle liangsat satharana prayot ruam kan khong ratsadon kap thang lu'ak nai kan kaekhai panha lae kanhai khwamchuilu'a prachachon phu dai rap khwamdu'atron" [Land Dispute Case in the Area Reserved by the Government for Official Purposes and for Public Pastures and the Direction for Solving the Problems and Helping the Affected People], in *Raingan kanwichai: Kanhai khwamchuilu'a*, pp. 60-86.

Non Lan forest as a reserved National Park and continued to use the land for cultivation and for cattle pasture.³²

The cause of the Non Lan land dispute

Citing Article No.16 of the National Reserved Forest Act, B.E. 2507 (1964), the Charoensap Uthumphon Borikan Company tendered a proposal to the local authorities of Uthumphonphisai District for an afforestation project covering 500 rai of the 1,400 rai in the fertile Non Lan forest area. The Si Sa Ket provincial Forestry Office consequently presented the proposal to the central Forestry Department in Bangkok.

The central Forestry Department gave permission to the Company on the basis of a report that the Non Lan Forest was "ruined forest" according to the rule for Permission for Afforestation in Reserved National Park, (Vol. 1), B.E. 2522 (1979), of the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives. "Ruined forest" was defined as a forest where there were old destroyed fields, or grass fields, valueless forest, or valuable forest in which most trees had been destroyed and which would be difficult to restore to natural forest.³³ The decision of the central Forestry Department was based on the regulations of the Forestry Department Vol. 3, B.E. 2524 (1981), allowing people temporary access and urging the private sector to grow forest in "ruined" areas.

A decision even higher up was taken by the Minister of Agriculture and Co-operative following Article 16 of the National Reserved Forest B.E. 2507 (1964) and the Ministerial Rule Vol. 983, B.E. 2525 (1983), allowing the Company to grow 500-rai of forest (eucalyptus and acacia) within fifteen years and paying 10 baht per rai per annum compensation. The final authorization passed down from the Minister (through the central Department) to the provincial forestry authorities of Si Sa Ket Province authorizing the Company to grow 500-rai forest of eucalyptus and acacia for 15 years via the letter vol. 1/07, dated 1 March B.E. 2528 (1985).

The Non Lan peasants had protested against the forest concession before the Project was approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives. The Siao Sub-District Council submitted a letter of protest, through Piyanat Watcharaphon, the Si Sa Ket MP ("Chat Thai" Party), to the Ministry dated 9 November 1984 (about four

32 The forest marking stones were put down on the village lands of Ban Talat, Ban Ma Chok, Ban Nong Hu, Ban Nong No, Ban Pae, Ban Nong Nuk, Ban I Sei and Ban Phra. In addition the forest marking stones intruded upon the area of a temple, a school, a graveyard, and even the government's own Ratanaburi [District]- Si Sa Ket road. The villagers insisted that they had lived on and owned the land for more than a hundred years.

33 UCL Human Rights Promotion Project (Northeastern Branch), *op. cit.*, p. 35.

months before the Minister's decision was made) and signed by 1,000 villagers. The letter of protest argued that the concession area was not "ruined" forest but was instead full of very valuable natural resources and that the Non Lan people would suffer from a concession because the permit area would overlap land used for household cultivation. The letter of protest requested the Minister not to give permission to the private company. From February to September 1985, the Non Lan peasants kept explaining their troubles to government officials but instead of taking this into account, the government officials insisted on upholding their decision to grant the concession to the private company.

The antagonism between the Company and Non Lan peasants began when the Company encroached on lands used by the peasants. For instance, it used a tractor to dig up peasant gardens without giving any compensation and forbade the peasants to enter the concession area. It also used guns to harass any villager who took cattle to feed in that area. At the same time, the villagers themselves started responding with violence. For example, on 13 September 1985, hundreds of peasants from villages nearby invaded the concession area, pulled up small eucalyptus plants and burnt and destroyed shelters of the Company workers. As a consequence, on 21 September 1985, four village leaders were arrested. These were later bailed out by the Si Sa Ket MP, Piyanat Watcharaphon.

The co-operation between government and NGOs to solve the problem of Non Lan peasants

Government officials and NGOs worked together to help solve the land dispute problem of the Non Lan peasants. On 26 September 1985, the four villagers who had been arrested went to Ubon Ratchathani Province to ask the Union for Civil Liberty (UCL) for a lawyer to help conduct their case in the court. In co-operation with Piyanat, the UCL lawyer defended the villagers. The case ran from September 1985 to March 1987 and became a focal point in the land dispute with the Company and the villagers protest against the concession.

From December 1985, students from the Forestry Club, Kasetsart University, and representatives from the Conservation and Environmental Committee (composed of 15 institutions) and the Appropriate Technology Association (ATA) explored the Non Lan Forest with the peasants. They prepared a report in December 1986 showing that 66 per cent of Non Lan was completely natural forest, 15 per cent was ruined forest and the rest was agricultural land, and proposed that the government should withdraw the area of natural forest from the concession. Therefore, in March 1987, peasant representatives, NGO workers, students from the above organizations and Piyanat

agreed to submit a second letter of protest including the report to the Minister of Agriculture and Co-operative as well as to the mass media which reported the case nationally.

The court procedures against the four villagers highlighted issues in the land dispute and the Company tried many ways to put an end to the dispute. It proposed hiring villagers worker in forest planting on the one hand, and threatened anyone who protested against the concession with death on the other. The peasants refused the offers and ignored the threats deciding to continue to pursue the protest against the concession granted to the Company.

Due to the prolonged struggle of the Non Lan peasants, the government officials eventually accepted that the Non Lan Forest was natural forest and in accordance with a letter from the Minister of Agriculture and Co-operatives dated 9 April 1987, the newly appointed Assistant Forestry Officer of Si Sa Ket Province called a meeting among villagers and informed them that the Provincial Forestry Department had decided to end the land dispute by moving the concession areas from the Non Lan Forest to another place in the same district within two months. Furthermore, in mid-May 1987 the case of the four villagers was quashed by the Primary Court.

In summary, the case study of Non Lan peasants illustrated the structural problems in Thai development context in which problems are linked to one another economically, politically and legally at both community and national levels. In order to achieve the basic minimum needs and self-reliant development, the Non Lan peasants needed to have state recognition of their rights to subsistence and development; i.e., the recognition of their rights over their lands and their control over the use of it. This land dispute arose between the Non Lan peasants and the private company primarily because of the official assumption that every Thai citizen knows the laws, regulations and decrees which govern the rights and processes which affect their everyday lives. In fact this was a wrong assumption, and the villagers only became aware of the concession after the company began to work in the area. Other contributing factors were the centralization of power and the implementation of laws and rules without consultation with affected parties and regardless of the facts. Such a process was also biased in favour of the private company. This case study showed that when there was co-operation between government and non-government organizations with the participation of the people a solution to the problem could be found. Had such co-operation existed before the granting of the concession the problem would have been averted. From a development point of view, the company too has lost money and resources, as well as the nation which is trying to implement effectively rural development.

Case Study III: the women workers of Srikao Company strike for minimum wage

In order to better understand the problems of the Thai workers presented by the case study in this section, I will commence by giving a general background to the industrial conditions and problems the workers face, the loopholes in labour laws and the negligence of officials. The case study itself will consider the issues in a strike by women for the minimum wage.

Industrial conditions and problems facing the workers.

According to Suehiro, most Thai businesses dealing with labour employment are in the small-scale sector and are generally family businesses owned by Sino-Thai families. The relationship between employers and employees can be characterized to some extent as a patron-client relationship which means that an owner will have a strong feeling of superiority vis-a-vis his workers and behave like a father in a traditional Thai family who holds absolute power in his family. This paternalism demands workers' obeisance, and protests or strikes would be viewed as acts of disobedience and, thus, unacceptable because such conduct would cause the patron to lose face. Although the enforcement of labour laws and the expansion of modern industry structures are becoming more wide-spread, and labour relationship are beginning to change, the paternalistic attitudes still persist.³⁴

Raising the minimum wage and improving working conditions through collective bargaining power is regarded as a strategy for achieving improved standards of living for the workers. According to Narong Phetprasoet of Chulalongkorn University however, the Thai workers who are becoming involved in labour movements are primarily those who are in the large formal sectors such as state and private enterprises, and the more the formal sector has grown, the more the labour movement has been strengthened within it. This finding is confirmed by research on the "Industrialization and the Labour Process in Thailand" by Jan Odnoff and colleagues which reveals that:

[T]he degree of unionization is relatively lowest at the small-scale Thai-Chinese owned Omnoi site [Samut Sakhon Province] and highest at Rangsit site [Pathum Thani Province, near Bangkok] with its modern technology and joint Thai-multinational ownership.³⁵

34 Narong Phetprasoet, "The Effects of Japanese TNCs on Thai Labour Movement and Industrial Relations", in Report of the Conference on Transnational Corporations (TNCs) in Economic Development: A Comparative Study of Experiences between Japan and Thailand, Pattaya, 2-4 December 1983, p. 235.

35 Quoted from *ibid.*, p. 238.

It takes a great effort to organize workers from the informal sector and encourage them to take action in the labour movement. Some of the reasons are to be found in the following considerations. Firstly, each group is composed of a small number of workers (30-60 workers) and scattered over various factories without easy communication between groups. Secondly, most are uneducated and unskilled workers who lack information and general knowledge about labour movements and organization. Thirdly, most businesses are small-family businesses in which employers have strong patron-client attitudes and consequently try to keep workers in isolation, sometimes using the threat of dismissal and censorship of information, to prevent them from contacting organized workers.

The Omnoi-Omyai industrial site is a case in point. This area is located between Samut Sakhon and Nakhon Prathom Provinces, to the Southwest of Bangkok. It consists mainly of small and medium-sized industries producing garments and metal, rubber and ceramic goods. There are a few foreign investment companies in the area but for the most part, most industries are Sino-Thai, having been built up from small, low budget enterprises, originally handled and operated by family groups. The workers in this area are composed of migrants from the North and Northeastern regions and some provinces adjacent to Bangkok. Eighty per cent of the workers had poor schooling and completed only primary education. This situation often results in widespread exploitation by employers.

Receiving wages equal to or, sometimes, below the minimum wage declared by the Labour Protection Law (about 70 baht per day in Bangkok area but about 65 baht in other provinces), most workers have to look for extra income to survive. For instance, some workers have to work two eight-hour shifts in order to earn enough money for the family. Some of them take out loans from supervisory staff, who earn fixed salaries, and have to pay back a very high interest rate of 15 to 20 baht per day. Some use "chit funds" in which individual workers purchase "shares" and take turns at borrowing amounts from the fund, depending on the capital sum and the interest accrued. Low wages also result in workers adopting other means to gain access to their needs such as purchasing goods in credit or playing illegal lotteries and gambling.³⁶

In addition, many workers suffer from bad health directly related to poor working conditions. For instance, they often suffer from gastric problems and weakness due to infrequent meals and the inconvenience of the shift system. Some female workers have become sterile as a result of using laser techniques in the

³⁶ Wichet Pichairatana, "Problems Facing Workers at the Omnoi-Omyai Industrial Area", UCL Newsletter, January-June 1987, p. 22.

production of rubber teats. There are cases of workers having convulsions as a result of working closely with glues and thinners. Most factories have poor working environments with insufficient lighting, loud noise, crowded dormitories, and high dust levels – some originating from chemical sources.³⁷

A high rate of dismissal is another problem. Due to weak bargaining power of workers, most factory owners disregard the Labour Laws. For example, in 1986, most workers were employed on a fixed contract system of three to six months period at a time. When the contract was finished, the workers had to re-apply for their jobs. The owners then have an option to pay less than the minimum wage indicated by the Law or to refuse to re-employ workers if they disobeyed or dissatisfied the owners. Workers are clearly left open to abuse in this system.

Loopholes in labour laws and negligence of officials

Labour Laws have only existed on a permanent basis in Thailand for the past sixteen years and have been regarded to be public laws aiming to keep peace and order within society rather than protecting workers' rights.³⁸ The Labour Laws began with the Ministry of Interior declaration of Labour Protection dated 16 April 2515 (1972), followed by the Labour Relations Act B.E. 2518 (1975), and finally by the Act of Establishment of Labour Courts and the Proceedings of Labour Case Considerations B.E. 2522 (1979).

The government enacted the Labour Protection Law to set the minimum wage for workers as well as indicate punishment for those who break the law. In addition, the Labour Relations Act aims to establish an equilibrium in negotiation between employers and employees. It determines the condition whereby the state can intervene in labour disputes and sets up standards of labour protection. The Establishment of Labour Courts and the Proceedings of Labour Case Consideration Acts are examples of government attempts to form an official administrative machinery to achieve the protection of worker rights. Furthermore, some official institutions set up for this purpose are the Labour Inspector Bureau, the Labour Protection Bureau, the Bureau of Labour Protection for Women and Children, the Provincial Labour Office under the auspices of the Labour Department (Ministry of Interior), the Labour Relations

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³⁸ Prudhisan, "Interest and Pressure Groups", pp. 129-132; see also B.D. Mabry, The Development of Labour Institutions in Thailand, Data Paper No. 112, Southeast Asia Programme, Department of Asian Studies, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, April 1979, Chs. 4-5.

Committee, the Compensation Fund Committee, the Labour Primary Court and the Labour Supreme Court.³⁹

Notwithstanding these state institutions, the workers' rights have been ineffectively protected in Thai society. While the country is expanding in the industrial and commercial sectors, the workers are often undereducated, unhealthy, insecure and living miserable lives without any social security system. The ineffectiveness of the government bureaus can be shown in the widespread illegal practices used by employers and, when labour disputes between employers and employees do occur, the failure of the state machinery to achieve equitable solutions.

The following sections illustrate examples where the Labour Laws are ignored. These examples were collected by the staff of both the Legal Aid and Workers' Rights Projects of the Union for Civil Liberty (UCL). After working with unorganized workers in the Omnoi-Omyai area for over five years, UCL staff have examined many problems confronted by workers; for instance, problems resulting from employers avoiding the Labour Protection Law in terms of the payment of the minimum wage and the termination of employment without compensation. They have also examined the implementation of Labour Relations Law by government officials. Besides indicating loopholes in the Labour Laws, the UCL staff have on occasion prompted the government to intervene in some non-negotiable labour disputes and re-assess the implementation of Labour Laws.

Most small and middle-scale companies fail to comply with the Declaration of the Minimum Wage by the Minister of Interior. Employers often claim that they cannot afford to pay employees their legal entitlement because of general economic hardship and use many schemes to avoid paying the minimum wage, for instance, putting the workers on the contract system as mentioned above, or sometimes keeping the workers on "probation" rather than employing them as permanent workers because temporary workers have no right to receive the minimum wage. A labour survey in Bangkok and nearby provinces revealed that in mid-1985, of 11,244 factories with 459,716

39 UCL Legal Aid Project, "Botraingan ru'ang panha kanbangkhap chai kotmai dan raengngan" [Report on the Problems of Enforcing Labour Laws], Paper presented at the seminar: "Lakprakan khong sitthi ratsadon nai krabuankan kanbangkhap chai kotmai", [The Guarantee of Civil Rights in Legal Enforcement Procedures], [in Thai], Thammasat University, 7 December B.E. 2528 (1985), p. K 1; see also Nikhom Chantarawitun, Raengngan lae kotmaithai [Thai Labour and Laws], [in Thai], Bangkok: Thaiwatthanaphanich B.E. 2526 (1983).

employees, there were 5,349 factories or 47.6 per cent failing to pay the indicated minimum wage [about 70 baht per day].⁴⁰

At the same time, the government did not have either the political will or practical and efficient means to enforce its labour laws and decrees. For example, according to the data from Labour Department, for 42,887 factories with 835,581 employees in Bangkok in 1983, there were only 82 labour inspectors (i.e. one person per 523 factories or per 10,190 employees), reflecting the inadequacy of labour inspection. This was also recognized by the Head of the Labour Department who attempted to improve the labour-inspection mechanism and to clarify the policies in 1985.⁴¹

The avoidance of paying the minimum wage, by whatever means, has gradually become widely accepted in practice which makes this problem difficult to correct. Although the Revolutionary Announcement No. 103 authorised officials to punish employers who fail to comply with the rules of minimum wage, there is no record of any penalty being imposed on any employer.⁴² In addition, labour administration procedure is cumbersome and ineffective. For example, if a labour inspector discovers a case where workers are underpaid, he has to file a report through a long administrative process in which a company will be advised, warned and then formally charged by the Head of Labour Department before the fine can be imposed. At the same time, employees have no legal guarantee whether or not their situation will be positively addressed. The other difficulty is that if employees file a complaint against their employers to the Labour Department via the Provincial Labour Office, it is most likely that the employers would find various ways to terminate their employment as soon as the case was finished (usually one to two months). The chance of employees being protected by the Labour Protection Law is therefore very slim while the authorities do not have effective means and standards to penalize employers who break the law.

With regard to the problem of the termination of employment without compensation, the Labour Protection Law defines some legal terms used as a standard for implementation. For instance, termination of employment means a forced resignation, removal, or dismissal from the job. This may be done by employers by a formal or informal declaration (i.e. either written or verbal). It also covers conditions that permanent employees not be required to work for seven days consecutively.

40 UCL Legal Aid Project, *op. cit.*, pp. K 2-3. See further details in Chalit Misit, "Kotmai raengngan kap kanklumkrong sithi khong phuchiraengngan" [Labout Laws and Protection of the Rights of the Workers], in *Raingan kanwichai: Kanhai khwamchualu'a*, pp. 146-165.

41 UCL Legal Aid Project, *op. cit.*, p. K 3.

42 Chalit, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

Relating to the termination of employment, the employer has the right not to pay compensation in various circumstances such as when an employer is proved to be dishonest in work, intentionally committing an offence against an employer, intending to make a loss against an employer, breaking rules and regulations of the company, leaving the job for three days without an appropriate reason, being careless in work so that an employer's property is seriously damaged, and being sentenced to imprisonment.⁴³ Termination of employment without compensation frequently occurs. According to statistical data of the Central Labour Court, in 1982, 1983 and 1984, respectively there were 2,222, 1,871 and 2,765 complaints from employees seeking compensation.⁴⁴

The Labour Court is ineffective in satisfying complaints often because employers used deliberate tactics to avoid the Labour Protection Law. For example, the employers used the tactic of, firstly, asking employees to fill in a form of resignation on the same day that they fill in an application form. If the employees do not meet the employers' demand, they can be fired at any time. Secondly, they use a loophole in the law, e.g. giving notices to any employee without giving the required amount of time or pre-dating the notices. The employee has no chance to argue against this claim because they are not asked to attach his signature to accept such a notice. Thirdly they used a tactic of asking an unauthorized person to terminate any employee, e.g. the head of a section or the manager ordering the employee not to work for three days continuously. Then the employer claims that the employee has left the job without a proper reason.

The legal procedure also discourages workers from launching any claims in the Labour Court. First, most employees have a great deal of difficulties in presenting either documentary or verbal evidence to the Court. When a labour dispute occurs, few workers would volunteer to be a witness because they would be afraid of their own employment being terminated. Second, the Labour Court procedure usually takes a long time to finalize, up to a year or two, and in the meanwhile the employee would be struggling for his daily upkeep. Therefore, when the employer proposes to pay compensation to the employee less than that of the rate indicated by the Law, the employee tends to give up presenting the case in the Court.

43 Considering the rates of compensation prescribed by law, a permanent employee who has worked for more than 120 days but not exceeding one year, has rights to receive compensation equal to the latest rate of wage for 30 days; a permanent employee, who has worked for over one year but not exceeding three years, has the right to receive compensation equal to the latest rate of wage for 90 days; a permanent employee, who has worked for more than three years, has the right to receive compensation equal to the latest rate of wage for 180 days. An exception is made for an employee for whom a trade union submits his/her complaint or makes an agreement with the employer on his or her behalf. In this case, the employee might receive a higher rate of wage than the law suggests.

44 The UCL Legal Aid Project, *op. cit.*, p. K 5.

During 1980 and 1981, many workers were disadvantaged in cases of dismissal. Often they received only half of the compensation entitlement only because the Court can not find evidence to refute the employer's arguments. In addition, the employers find ways to pay the least compensation possible such as one-half or one-third or even one-quarter of the legal compensation depending on how much the employee understands the legal provisions. The employee has to accept the amount of money offered because he is unsure whether or not he would get the full amount, or indeed any, compensation according to the Law if he launched a complaint. Furthermore, the workers generally have few representatives or organizations working on their behalf.

Third there seems to be a large gap between legal standards and reality in the interpretation of disputes by the Labour Court. For example, the Court interprets that, based on the assumption that everybody knows the Law, an authorized person who has the right to sack an employee is the only one whom the Law recognizes. In fact, small and medium-size factories have an informal management or family structure with an unclear administrative system and management responsibility. Often an authorized person's relatives such as an employer's wife or brother can become involved in the family business and issue an instruction to a worker. If such persons actually ask the worker to give up working in the factory, when the dismissal case is presented to the Court, the judge will follow the Law. In such a case, the Court will interpret that the relatives are not authorized by the Law to terminate anybody's employment but that the employee himself makes a mistake if he takes the unauthorized person's order into account. As a consequence, when the employee leaves the job for three days upon the instruction of an unauthorized person, he will not be legally allowed to receive compensation.⁴⁵

Fourth, there is very little chance of having evidence or proof against the will of a factory owner. For example, by arguing economic hardship, the factory owner stands down employees without stating the duration of time or severance payment. Nobody knows whether or not the owner intends to sack the employee. When the employee argues to the court that he was dismissed, the Court can rule that the employer temporarily stands down the workers because of economic hardship, and that there was no dismissal.⁴⁶ According to the Labour Law, the employer can present various kinds of documents concerning economic and production problems but for the worker, on the contrary, it is quite difficult to collect evidence against an employer.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. K 7.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. K 7-8.

The Labour Relations Law is the other important labour law. It is drawn up to be a legal standard for negotiation in labour dispute cases and guarantees the rights of workers to organize, to choose representatives and to affiliate with trade unions. It also protects the rights of trade union members and organization when they protest legally against an employer. When a case occurs, workers are able to submit a complaint to a Labour Relations Committee within sixty days (but not directly to the Labour Court).

There are often problems for workers in following the strict requirements of the bureaucratic procedures associated with the Labour Relations Law which can act against the spirit of Law. For example, workers sometimes submit a complaint to the wrong administrative body or direct to the Labour Court and waste the sixty day period, without being advised of the correct procedure by bureaucrats who care only about the legal procedure, rather than the spirit of the Law which ought to help to protect the rights of workers. There are many difficulties of evidence for the workers in attempting to use the Law and it is difficult to refute the claims of an employer who argues economic hardship, the factories' indebtedness or bankruptcy which are accepted by the Committee. Statistical data of the Committee work in 1985 and 1986 showed that the Committee dismissed 35 and 40 workers' complaints respectively, while only two cases were upheld.⁴⁷ As a consequence, workers are discouraged from using the Law to seek their rights and feel that the Law favours the interests of employers.

Although the Labour Relations Law provides rights for workers to organize, in practice the workers have great difficulties in getting organized, let alone being effective in the protection of their rights. When workers demand their rights and attempt to form a union, they are dismissed on a pretext. Poor social and economic conditions have created an opportunity for employers to ignore the Labour Laws because of a large pool of cheap labour as more and more poor farmers are leaving their farms to work in urban factories. This situation will exist as long as the responsible parties get away with neglecting their legal obligations.

The women workers of Srikao Company strike for minimum wage

This case study is drawn up to show a typical example of workers' problems relating to industrial conditions, loopholes of the Labour Law and the negligence of officials as discussed above. It also shows the counterbalancing role of NGOs between the government and people to help sort out a new consensus for ending a strike; the relationship between legal implementation by the state and the people participation concept; and the co-operation between the government and NGOs in settling the strike.

47

Ibid., p. K 14.

Srikao Textile factory is a middle-size factory, located in the Omnoi industrial area (where there are about 700 factories with over 30,000 workers). UCL staff from the Workers' Rights Section have been working in this areas for over five years. They find that most workers in this factory are women receiving less than the minimum wage, working in poor condition, and having no organization to protect their interest. The Srikao strike lasted 110 days from the end of March until the beginning of August, 1987 and about 4,000 workers from the industrial zones around Bangkok became involved.

The cause of the strike was that when a large number of women workers demanded higher wages and fringe benefits from the factory, they were instead dismissed in groups of 117 and 36 workers respectively in March and July 1987. During the long dispute that followed, a total of 153 workers were laid off on various charges such as instigating a strike, submitting false certificates of sickness, terminating contracts and even for refusing to speak to the manager.⁴⁸

After the failure of their demands in their own factory for over two months, the Srikao workers extended the strike and moved to demonstrate in front of Government House on 8 July 1987. Living without work and pay for more than two months, they hoped desperately for the government to hear their grievance and to intervene in this dispute. They submitted a letter of complaint to Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda, urging his government to exercise the power granted by the Article 35 of the Labour Relations Act B.E. 2528 (1985), to force the factory owner to re-open the factory and to re-instate the laid-off workers. However, the government did not consider their demands and on 18 July 1987, a group of riot police chased the women workers away from Government House.

When the authorities used violent means to suppress the women workers, the women gained a great deal of sympathy and support from concerned parties including the Student Federation of Thailand, Union for Civil Liberty, some labour leaders from the Thai Trade Union Congress, and from workers federations such as the Textile and Paper Products, Food and Beverage, as well as the mass media. These NGOs helped support the worker strike by putting pressure on the government to intervene in the non-negotiable dispute in many ways such as helping them clarify legal issues to protect their rights, writing letters of petition, co-operating with the MPs in the Commission of Labour Affairs (in the parliament), disseminating facts and information to the MPs and public through mass media.

⁴⁸ Somyot Pru'ksakasemsuk, "The Lessons of the 110-Day Srikao Workers Struggle", UCL Newsletter, July–September 1987, p. 20.

The intensification of the protest became more tense when the last batch of 36 workers were dismissed on 29 July 1987. For example, on 4 August 1987, the protesting workers along with a number of unionists and student activists marched to Government House and submitted a petition (the second one) to the Prime Minister. On 7 August, eight workers - six of them female - and a student activist had their heads shaved and dressed up in white to draw attention to the plight of the workers. This action produced a great deal of emotion among young women workers and on the following day about 4,000 workers from industrial zones around Bangkok rallied to the "Sanam Luang" (Pramen ground) in the heart of Bangkok to protest against the government's failure to settle the labour dispute. On 9 August, the protest became more tense when four female workers declared they would write their next petition to the Prime Minister in blood. Eventually, they were stopped by a policeman and a couple of the MPs who were on the Committee of Labour Affairs in the parliament.⁴⁹

Belatedly, the government intervened in the labour dispute between the owner of Srikao Textile Factory and the women workers. On 10 August, the Minister of Interior ordered the company to re-instate 65 of the laid-off workers on the following day or else face the penalty according to the Article 35 of the Labour Relations Law whereby the Minister had the power to make decisions when any labour dispute jeopardized economic and political stability or public peace and order. Under the Law, the Minister could also order the Committee on Labour Relations to make a decision concerning labour disputes and because the Deputy Minister of Interior considered that Article 35 did not cover the rest of the laid-off workers, the Committee on Labour Relations promised to consider their cases as soon as possible after receiving a letter of complaint from the workers.⁵⁰

In summary, the case study of the women workers of Srikao Textile Factory strike for the payment of the minimum wage represented a typical example of Thai workers' problem in maintaining their basic standard of living. It showed that the achievement of the basic minimum needs are closely related to the state's political and legal system and how important it is to encourage people to seek their rights through these systems if they are to achieve development. While the government officials were reluctant to settle the labour dispute, the NGOs played an active role as a mediating power to help clarify the dispute, to give support to the workers and at the same time to encourage the government to exercise its power in upholding the Law. The Srikao

49 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

dispute was ended peacefully primarily by the co-operation between the government and NGOs in helping to solve the dispute.

Government and NGOs have much to learn from each other through co-operation in solving problems on the basis of the political and legal systems and promoting development education for the common people. Both have limitations in making a diagnosis of the people's problems and in reaching consensus and it is important how they compromise with respect to each other's role and autonomy. There might not be any general solution to the compromise but one practical solution would be to work on a case-by-case basis through democratic means. If the government has the political will to create a law-based society, there would be a possible solution in the co-operation between the government and NGOs in addressing the root causes of the problem, enhancing the role of the people in the day-to-day affairs which affect them, and at the same time improving the economic situation of the people. The other important task for both sectors is development education for common people. In order to enhance the participation of people in development, the people need to learn, not only the development aims and principles, but also from various experiences as a result of action in development. Therefore, the co-operation between two sectors to enhance the people's better standard of living through the development education is an important point which I emphasize in this thesis.

CHAPTER 5

The Role of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) as a Catalyst in the Thai Development Process

To be effective in its [sic] catalytic role, NGOs must formulate and implement programmes that strategically promote and support long-term changes that have large scale development multiplier efforts.

L.D. Brown, "Organizational Barriers to NGO Strategic Action"¹

NGOs ought to improve themselves too. ... Or else their community work won't achieve its goals, aiming to train community leaders and disseminate their activities and ideas. To be able to do so, NGOs have to co-ordinate more closely in sharing their primary information and spreading it out to their various target groups. ... Otherwise they'll wind up being another group of bureaucrats!

Saneh Chamarik²

As discussed in the previous chapters, we have seen a number of useful practical approaches drawn up in area of development. For example, amidst the influx of development plans and ideas influenced by both domestic and international politics and processes, some development concepts such as "basic minimum needs", "people participation", "self-reliant development" and "basic human rights" have emerged since the 1970s, to provide a place for the common people to participate in development.³ A part of the whole complex problem is pointed to by Davis and Demaine who argue that whether the development concepts are well implemented or not, depends largely on the relationship between people and the officials who are carrying those concepts to the people.⁴ The Phichit case study shows that both government officials and NGO workers can work to create self-reliant development, particularly in terms of providing the infrastructure, for enhancing overall economic development. However, as shown in the land dispute case of the Non Lan Peasants and the strike by the women workers of the Srikao Company, both officials and NGO workers found themselves having

¹ L.D. Brown, "Organizational Barriers to NGO Strategic Action", Lok Niti: The Journal of the Asian NGO Coalition, Vol. 5, No. 4, n.d., p. 12. This paper was prepared for the Regional Workshop on NGO Strategic Management in Asia, Bangkok, Thailand, 18-23 March 1988.

² Quoted by a staff member in Thai Development Newsletter, No. 15, 1987. pp. 26-27.

³ My recognition is also given to the "unofficial plans" of Phraya Suriyanuwat and Luang Pradit as attempts to create a place for the common people to participate in development.

⁴ Davis, op. cit., p. 20; and Demaine, op. cit., p. 104. Their arguments, in my opinion, are practical rather than reductionist approaches.

difficulties in the areas of political and legal concern. Eventually, these difficulties were relieved by the effective co-operation between government officials, NGO workers and the people.

Although Thai NGOs have been playing an important role in promoting national development since the mid 1970s, they have faced considerable difficulties. For example, from the points of view of some officials, in the "highly complex environment" of the Australian-Thai bilateral project in the Phichit land reform areas, the NGOs lacked the experience necessary to be effective and tended to use a "dogmatic" approach to development. The NGOs also see themselves facing many immediate problems such as a shortage of experienced man-power with adequate self-development and learning through experience, irregular financial support and a difficult domestic political climate.⁵ Some NGO workers feel too that they lack a long-term strategy for development, an intimate understanding of social structure, and they cannot play an effective role in correcting the state's machinery. For instance, many NGO workers, other than the few who have a personal contact with politicians or government officials, who get involved in the child-care areas are often unable to find the means to attempt to correct existing laws and policies to better favour the children.⁶ Some NGO workers say that although the NGOs have direct experiences working with people, they are not able to find strong theoretical support.⁷ Some NGOs attempt to limit their activities to avoid involvement in political areas. Human rights NGOs, for example, may underestimate and limit their role (not wishing to be seen simply as agitators, and out of fear of the authorities) and as a result can underestimate their role and are unable to see the impact of their work and whether they contribute to the society as a whole.

This chapter aims to discuss the important role of NGOs as a catalyst in the Thai development process. The discussion will be drawn from the arguments and examples of previous chapters and include relevant experience from government and non-government sectors. In doing this, a number of issues will be addressed as follows: first, the limitation of government officials in implementing national development plans

5 Jon Ungphakhon, "A Summary of the Situation and Problems of Thai Development NGOs", Culture and Religion, November-December, 1984, p. 11.

6 Sapphasit Khumpraphan, interviewed by Niphatphon Phengkaeo, "Maruchak bang ngaemum khong khon chue Sapphasit Kumpraphan" [Getting to Know Some Points of View of Sapphasit Kumpraphan], Pacharayasan, Vol. 5, November-December B.E. 2529 (1986), p. 98.

7 The Pacharayasan editorial staff, "Interview: Anake Nakhabutr", *ibid.*, p. 63; Witun Phoemphongsacharoen, "Senthang patthanakan naeokhwamkhit kanpatthana chonnabot khong onkan patthana ekachonthai naithotsawat B.E. 2520" [The Direction of Formulation of the Rural Development Concepts by Thai NGOs in the late 1970s], *ibid.*, pp. 34-35; and Bamrung Bunpunya, "Laoru'ang prasopkan nganpatthana choengwatthanatham" [Telling about an Experience in Cultural Development], *ibid.*, p. 41.

in the interests of the common people; second, the positive aspects of NGOs which enhances their capability to fill the gap in the relationship between government officials and the people; third, the limitation of the NGOs which reduces their effectiveness in bringing development to the common people; and fourth, the assessment of NGO efficiency.

Limitation of government officials in national development

Following Riggs's model of "bureaucratic polity", Prudhisan argues that the bureaucracy has played a dominant role over Thai politics and developed itself without the interruption of domestic politics since 1932 because it has consolidated power through its administration of laws and regulations.⁸ Bureaucratic decision-making does not take account of any external forces such as political parties, interest and pressure groups. Most of their decisions reflect blind implementation of national policies following rules and regulations rather than reviewing them in operation and proposing amendment to those which are inappropriate and fail to benefit the people. The administration is vertically centralized through traditional authority rather than through groups based on similar attributes, e.g. class and occupation. At the same time, its isolation from the society prevents it from achieving long-term commitment and participation from the people.⁹ Although the bureaucratic power is still strong, there is an increasing challenge from non-bureaucratic groups such as commercial interest groups, political parties and even pressure groups like NGOs.

The implementation of national policies is still clouded by domestic-power struggles among elite groups and the constraints imposed by international economic and political considerations. Domestic politics, in particular after the 1973 uprising, was characterized by Girling as a "bureaucratic-parliamentary compromise" model, and by Suchit as an "open politics system".¹⁰ This was because both local and urban business groups, which used to attach themselves to and enhance their benefit under military patronage, had begun separately to seek to participate in political activities and to gain political positions through the formalization of political parties and the extension of local politics in order to protect their own interest. However, most business groups still maintain a good relation with the military. During 1973 and 1976, several political parties based on business groups were formed and included the Social Action Party

8 The military may be regarded as a part of the bureaucracy ("kharatchakan pracham" or permanent officials). In most Third World countries, they seek power not only through the hierarchical line of administration but also through military means such as coup d'état.

9 Prudhisan, "Interest and Pressure Groups", p. 116.

10 J.L.S. Girling, "Development and Democracy in Southeast Asia", *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1988, p. 335; and Suchit, "The Military in the Participant Politics", p. 1.

(SAP) (banking and beverage-company groups) and Chat Thai Party (textile industry groups). Suchit argues that the number of MPs associated with business groups is increasing and shows that while 93 businessmen (34.6 per cent of total MPs) were elected in January 1975 and 122 (37.2 per cent) were successful in the election of 1979, at the same time, there were others elected who did not declare their occupations as businessmen.¹¹ Many local businessmen in regional areas are also seeking political positions in local areas so that they will have an opportunity to either form links with politicians at the national level or become elected to the national parliament. Furthermore, business associations, which were formerly prohibited from involvement in politics, have been increasingly accepted by the government. The government now allows the banking association to play a role in planning national economic and trading policies. The Prem government had also formulated a system, in the form of the Joint Public-Private Consultative Committee (JPPCC), through which the private commercial sectors and business association were able to present ideas to the Government for solving economic problems independent of the political parties. The traditional bureaucratic groups, namely military and public servants, are however apprehensive of the growing role of business groups in domestic politics and are afraid that the business groups might increase their power and political influence.¹²

Among bureaucratic groups, the military is taking a more active role than others in political areas. One example of this is the establishment of a political party, the "Rasadon Party" (People Party), by former military leaders including Generals Thienchai Sirisamphan and Mana Ratanakoset, which shows that some military leaders want to play the political game by the rules as well.¹³ On the other hand, some military argue that their direct participation in political activities is endorsed by the Prime Ministerial Order Nos. 66/2523, 65/2525 and 47/2529.¹⁴ In particular, the Prime Ministerial Order No. 47/2529, announced in March 1986, was designed for the army to deal with the "united fronts of the CPT". While the CPT's armed forces were defeated and disintegrated some years ago and the CPT is no longer a threat to national security, the army argued that the "front organizations" remain in the form of "capitalist, undemocratic" groups and people who create and aggravate social problems.¹⁵ Acting

11 Suchit Bunbongkarn, "Kanpatthana thang kanmu'ang khongthai: patisanpan rawang tahan sathaban thang kanmu'ang lae kanmisuanruam thang kanmu'ang khong prachachon" [The Thai Political Development: The Interaction between Military, Political Institutions and Political Participation of the People], [in Thai], Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Publishing, B.E. 2531, (1988), p. 209.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 212, 214, 215.

13 Suchit, "The Military in the Participant Politics", p. 6.

14 *Ibid.*, pp. 3-6. The anti-communist orders referred to previously.

15 *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

under this Order, the army proposes mobilizing mass participation to confront the "front people whether they are in business, national politics or in local government."¹⁶ In this way, the military consider it necessary to become involved in politics, development and even a psychological campaign aimed at defending "national security".¹⁷ According to Suchit, the mass mobilization by the military is mainly set up to organize villagers to be para-military troops in organizations such as the Military Reservists for National Security, "santi-nimit" unit ("Dream of Peace unit").¹⁸ The activities are focused on military training, information seeking methods, and reinforcing the perceived threat of communism, but is in no way concerned with the concept of representative democratic systems. The military seek to extend their mass-mobilization base to support them rather than to encourage popular political participation which would enhance the political legitimacy and power of civilian politicians and, therefore, threaten the political status of the military.¹⁹ Recently the Commander-in-Chief, General Chavalit Yongchaiyut, proposed a new wider-scope "security law" to replace the Anti-Communist Act of B.E. 2495. Academics, politicians and NGO workers alike have opposed this proposal for fear that the proposed law would nullify the gradual increase in pluralism seen especially in the activities of interest and pressure groups in Thai society.²⁰

However, "power politics" among elite (mainly between business and military) groups do not give much direct benefit to the common people. Although the rate of growth of GDP reached 11 per cent in 1988 and was 10 per cent in 1989, problems carrying over from previous years include reducing natural resources; growing unemployment; stagnant public administration and social welfare systems; and an income distribution pattern which is still very uneven and resulting in a wider and wider gap between the rich and the poor.²¹

16 Ibid., p. 14.

17 Ibid., p. 15.

18 Ibid., pp. 15-16. The "Dream of Peace unit" was established in 1982 under the auspices of Prime Ministerial Order No. 66/2523. The unit aimed to operate political campaigns against communist insurgents by being organized in a small mobile group, spending some times in a village before moving to another villages. The unit also performed political activities such as mass psychology and entertainment such as music and shows. Several MPs complained that the army used the unit to campaign against them during election campaigns.

19 Suchit and Kanala argue that while the military accept political participation in principle, "political freedom, voluntary popular participation in the political process, and the necessity of participatory institutions are not given much attention by the military leaders" who "prefer mass mobilization to voluntary participation" arguing that Army-directed "mass mobilization is essential for political stability" and that popular participation destabilizes the status quo and lessens the economic, social and political status of the Army [Suchit and Kanala, op. cit., pp. 10-11].

20 Far Eastern Economic Review: Asia Year Book 1990, p. 236.

21 Ibid., p. 238; and N.C. Bruce, "Benefits of Boom not Being Spread Around", Canberra Times, 7 January 1990.

In addition to domestic politics, official planners feel constrained with the uncertainty of the international environment. As suggested by the World Bank for the Sixth Plan, because of the decline of real incomes of the common people, the increase of poverty and external dependency, the immediate problem facing Thailand was to raise domestic saving in both the public and private sectors while sustaining economic growth. To solve the problem, the World Bank wanted the government to stimulate domestic saving by reforming the tax structure (e.g. rationalizing direct tax exemptions, broadening the indirect tax base, improving tax administration, and increasing tax revenue to 15.5 - 16 per cent of GDP); cutting back government public expenditure; controlling foreign borrowing; and finally by promoting an export-led growth strategy.²² The difficulties confronting Thai development planners in achieving the Bank's suggestion, included predicting the consequences of decisions and actions in the increasingly complex international environment, especially in key areas of global financial systems, trade and marketing (which can change rapidly and alter the nature of competition), and the need to control the increasing debt problem. Moreover, a cutback in public expenditure would certainly affect social issues particularly public health and education for the common people. To cope with these difficulties and the turbulence which could result if they are not solved, the government requires multiple perspectives and wide participation in the planning and implementation process.

With regard to the bureaucratic system itself, we can see some factors which constrain national development. In the first instance there are the official perspectives and attitudes towards development issues and people whereby some technocrats express their professional capacity by emphasizing the methodology of drawing up development plans and yet overlook the essential theme of whom the development is for. While some officials express a good understanding of the people's problems, their solutions often do not go directly at the problems. We have seen this in the Phichit study where the people's views were initially ignored. Also, as Wichet, a UCL staff member who works in Omnoi-Omyai areas points out, some government lawyers find difficulties in understand problems from the worker's or other perspectives and often misinterpret the facts in cases involving workers and farmers. This makes them unable to provide effective and precise legal representation for the workers and farmers in the court.²³

22 The World Bank, Growth with Stability, pp. iii, 8, 9, 10; see also Abonyi and Bunyaraks, op. cit., p. 39.

23 Wichet Pichairatana, "Panha raengngan kap botbat khongrat lae ongkhon patthana ekachon nai kanchuailu'a thang kotmai" [Labour Problems and the Role of the Governmental and Non-Governmental Sectors in Legal Assistance], in Raingan kanwichai: Kanhai khwamchuailu'a, p. 170.

The different perspectives between officials and the common people may be analysed via socio-economic and educational backgrounds.

Secondly, government officials are bound by rules, regulations and the centralized bureaucratic system which do not allow them the flexibility to respond to particular circumstances. The Phichit experience is obviously a case in point that the NGO workers, after spending at least six months with the people in the targeted areas, could indentify the people's immediate needs and help adapt the development projects to suit the people's interest. The land dispute of the Non Lan peasants also shows the result of insensitive centralized decision-making which aggravated the local response. Working for almost two years in the Omnoi-Omyai areas, Wichet also discovers that government lawyers are unable to argue any legal case against the government because they are themselves government officials.²⁴

Thirdly, some officials are not in a place which enable them to help correct the people's problems. Government Law Faculties as well as groups and clubs within universities are relatively impartial in considering the common people's problems. They do not necessarily accept totally the government's point of view but try to approach the facts on their merits. They often help the people to handle the basic procedures necessary to bring grievances to the courts. Nonetheless, the limitation is that they are not in a position to legally represent the people.

The positive aspects of NGOs in development

NGOs have a positive contribution to make in correcting government inefficiency to benefit the common people. First, the NGOs use a people's problem approach. As shown in the Phichit case study, the NGOs initiate new, small pilot projects such as rice banks, buffalo banks, co-operative store and medicine funds which concentrate on the main problems of a targeted community which are identified by the community itself. NGO projects rely on the capability of people to make decision and solve problems by themselves. Their objectives are broadly to expand economic opportunity and productivity; to increase equitable distribution of resources; to enhance local authority and self-reliance in community development; or in short, to "promote wider choices for poor and powerless populations".²⁵

24 *Ibid.*, p. 170.

25 Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 12. This is supported by the research of Werachai and Tips who examined project identification, formulation and start up by the Thai NGOs working in the rural development areas and found that most NGOs under investigation used a people-centered approach. Important factors in the NGO methods were that 95.5 per cent of NGOs initiated a project by collecting social, economic, demographic information on sites, resources and people; 85.1 per cent set objectives and targets before collecting information; and 77.6 per cent

Second, the NGOs are much better situated in working with the common people due to their independence. As shown in the cases of the land dispute and the women worker's strike, the NGOs are not obliged to the government sector and more likely to be impartial in considering the facts on their own merits and in considering a dispute from the standpoint of the workers and farmers as well as recognising the rights of employers and businesses. They are also able to present the legal cases of farmers and workers in court, to protest against unjust laws and against the behaviour of government bureaucrats and to campaign for public support to change laws inappropriate to the people's interest. Brodhead supports this independent role of NGOs saying that:

Their freedom to function (institutional interests) implies that NGOs can do what governments cannot, ought not, or will not do - supporting human rights for example, or working in politically 'difficult' areas, or asking questions about the impact of large-scale projects on the environment, and so on. [T]he will to do so derives from a vision of development rooted in values and choices. It is this willingness to explore alternatives and to experiment with new initiatives which makes NGO autonomy [independence] valuable and worth protecting.²⁶

Third, the NGOs have flexibility which is shown in their ability to adapt development projects appropriate to local needs, to operate with limited resources and to respond to the changing economic and political situation in target areas which may arise during and after the implementation of development projects. Their flexibility enables them to solve problems beyond organizational boundaries. The NGO flexibility derives from their relatively small, loose and informal structure which allows the participatory concept to be implemented with equity and all staff members are, for instance, generally in a position to know the whole working process and participate in determining the organizational strategies.²⁷ Flexibility is also evident in the NGO's having a clear understanding of different development contexts and of long-term strategies which they can apply to identify the people's needs, to choose well-timed intervention and to

use an organizational ideology as a guideline. Both small and large NGOs rank the expected outcomes, firstly, as fostering people's self-reliance; secondly, as developing human resources, leadership and people's organizations; and thirdly, as developing the people's quality of life [Werachai Narkwiboonwong and W.E.J. Tips, "Project Identification, Formulation and Start-up by Voluntary Organizations (NGOs) in Thailand's Rural Development", Public Administration and Development, Vol. 9, 1989, pp. 205, 208]. In addition, some NGOs are more familiar with local circumstance than are the officials and have more experiences in micro-level planning of development activities. For instance, Werachai and Tips' analysis shows that 82 per cent of small NGOs use personal ideas and experiences whereas 76 percent use an organizational ideology to plan the activities while in the case of larger NGOs 94 per cent use an organizational ideology and 76 per cent use personal ideas and experience to guide their activities [*ibid.*, p. 206].

26 Brodhead, Herbert-Copley and Lambert, *op. cit.*, p. 70

27 Even then, the small NGOs are likely to be less bureaucratized and more responsive to development problems than the large NGOs.

support their staff or an institution or group in the field or even soften rigid values and ideologies.²⁸

Fourth, the NGOs have a wide range of co-operation with common people,²⁹ government officials and both domestic and international NGOs. To enhance the local people's interest, the NGOs offer rich experiences in micro-level development planning. At the national level, the NGOs can not only promote the people's self-identified needs but also lobby the government in favour of the common people; and in some cases convince the government to take specific urgent measures in development to cease the disputes as shown in the case studies. At the regional level, the NGOs co-operate with like-minded organizations to establish networking, for moral support, meetings, conferences and exchange of ideas and experiences. The NGOs make contact at the international level for reasons similar to those at the regional level and also for financial support.

The principle of co-operation is "autonomy through partnership".³⁰ That is to say the co-operation relies upon a basis of equal partnership in development. The Phichit case study shows that the NGOs can be agents for bringing government plans to the people, identifying people's needs in targeted areas, providing information for the design of development plans, and associating with government officials and funding agencies in the formalization of policies and implementation and monitoring of programmes of rural development and agrarian reform. This case study demonstrate that the activity of each organization has an "autonomy through partnership" aspect in that government officials contribute the infrastructure service, the donors facilitate the transfer of resources and the NGOs offer expertise in mobilizing human resource development.

28 K. Bysouth, "Inducing Positive Development: Finding New Ways to Turn Constraints into Opportunities", Lok Niti: The Journal of the Asian NGO Coalition, Vol. 5, No. 4 (n.d.), pp. 23-26.

29 Decha Siriphat interviewed seven peasants of Fang Village (Non Thong Sub-district, Nong Ru'a District, Khon Kaen Province), on 10 November 1986. The peasants said that they needed NGO workers to help advise and give examples of how to solve problems on their behalf. For the peasants themselves, they found it difficult to think in the framework of change and could not think on their own – "khit yak, khit mai-ok, mai mi tuayang khit yon khong mai dai" [Decha Siriphat, "Waduai thatsana chaoban to kan damnoen-ngan khong ongan patthana ekachon" [Dealing with the Villagers' Points of View about the NGOs], Pacharayasan, pp. 76-79].

30 D.L. Umali, "An Agenda of Future Tasks for NGOs Towards International Development Co-operation", Lok Niti: The Journal of the Asian NGO Coalition, Vol. 5, No. 4, n.d., p. 7. Paper prepared for the Second World NGO Symposium held from 6-8 October 1987 in Nagoya, Japan on "Development to the 21st Century - Challenge to NGOs".

Co-operation allows NGOs to maximize their efficiency as well as to increase people's participation. They can avoid duplication of effort and expenditure; they have the opportunity to learn, to exchange information and experiences with each other; pool resources; and increase specialization through joint programming. The NGOs raise local self-confidence and self-consciousness through co-operative activities between NGOs and local people. As such NGOs effectively broaden the base of people's participation in the development process. Leger supports an effective role for NGOs arguing that:

To be effective as agents of change, it is not the size of an organization, nor the budget that matters. It is rather the definition of a clear purpose and the planning of long-term strategies that take into account the relevant area of action. It also involves foresight, motivating special talents, networking with other like-minded institutions, and searching for ways to attract the "unconverted".³¹

Limitation of NGOs reducing their effectiveness

NGOs are not without their limitations and there are traps which can reduce their effectiveness: first, while NGOs hope to alleviate the suffering of the poor, they may be excessively single-minded, and mistaken in their "altruism".³² Brodhead says that the altruism can be both a strength and a weakness of NGOs:

A strength because it draws upon the tremendous energy inherent in the noblest of human urges for justice, compassion, and service; a weakness because it seems somehow to place such organizations above critical assessment of their own motivation and operations.³³

In addition, the NGO objective may be unclear because they derive from ill-defined target groups and vice versa. Some NGOs might purportedly shift their objectives from supporting the rural poor to promoting their organization's interest.³⁴ This can be a fairly common problem for agencies which depend on short term funding from donors who have their own objectives which may not always coincide with those of the recipient NGO.

Second, the NGO independence is like a two-edged sword. The NGOs which place independence above their objectives may reduce their potential for co-operation with other NGOs and the government. At the same time a lack of independence may

31 R. Leger, "Agents of Change in International Co-operation: Challenges to New Partnerships between Funders and NGOs", *Lok Niti: The Journal of the Asian NGO Coalition*, Vol. 5, No. 4, n.d., p. 11. This article contains excerpts from the address of Ronald Leger, Director, International NGO Division, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), to the World Congress on Philanthropy Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, Canada, 27 May 1988.

32 Brodhead, Herbert-Copley and Lambert, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-46. See also Lissner, *op. cit.*, Ch. 6.

33 Brodhead, Herbert-Copley and Lambert, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

34 Schneider, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-209.

cause problems of co-operation. For example, an NGO might undermine its bargaining power as an equal partner in a co-operative arrangement due to a lack of independence or having an unclear concept of independence.³⁵

Third, although the NGO flexibility which derives from a loosely and informally organized structure helps an organization be responsive to different situations, too much flexibility can weaken the organization. For instance, some NGOs lack concrete organizational goals and measures for making an assessment of their progress and identifying mistakes. They are consequently unable to achieve self-development by learning from experiences. Some may find it difficult to establish priorities or to focus resources on key areas because they do not adequately identify problems. Some may have difficulties in day-to-day administration and expansion due to their lack of rules and regulations, which they regard as "bureaucratic" and therefore unacceptable. In these circumstances, newcomers perhaps find it hard to fit in to an agency where they do not know the appropriate procedure and "can violate core norms and values with the best of intentions" and then have "difficulty recovering from the initial mistake."³⁶

Fourth, some constraints come from leadership. For example, a charismatic leader whose strength lies in contact with the people might be overwhelmed by the demands of administration until he or she cannot fulfil the provision of service to the people. At the same time, some NGO workers led by the charismatic leader might get used to being so dependent on the leader that they lose creativity and ability to challenge their own ideas. This can undermine the development of organization.³⁷ On the other hand a power struggle can sometimes emerge between competing factions in an organization. This may result in an NGO becoming "organizationally fragmented, subject to ideological and territorial dispute".³⁸ Such a struggle bogs down decision making and makes the organization ineffective. The struggle might end with the departure of officers from the organization.³⁹

Fifth, most NGOs are vulnerable to irregular financial support. NGO financial resources often come through informal personal contact. Financial support from international funding agencies is short-term support, from one to three years and this discourages the NGOs from establishing long-term strategies and administration. As a

35 Brodhead, Herbert-Copley and Lambert, *op.cit.*, pp. 46-70.

36 Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

38 K. Bysouth, "Non-Government Organizations", in P. Eldridge, D. Forbes and D. Porter (eds.), *Australian Overseas Aid: Future Direction*, London: Croom Helm, 1986, p. 224.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 14. In addition, the NGOs cannot afford to have long-term conflict due to financial constraints which make donors wary of unstable organizations.

consequence of being financially vulnerable, some NGOs might unwittingly shift organizational objectives from helping the poor to promoting their own organization, as mentioned above, and might be easily manipulated by other institutions such as political parties and the bureaucracy. Insecure finances can also mean that the NGOs can often not afford to pay experienced and skilled professional workers and therefore, while NGOs may have strong intentions to do something good for society, many of their staff will be young unskilled and inexperienced workers.

However, an NGO which receives large and continuous financial support from a single source may face donor expectation which it would not be able to fulfil. Even where an NGO receives grants from more than one donor its executives may feel uneasy when they face different donor expectations. In these circumstances recipient NGOs may sometimes avoid reporting detailed evaluation of projects, providing more simple and favourable reports acceptable to the donors in order to reduce the potential for conflict occurring with the donors. If the donors are not satisfied, the NGO might find that donors demand more control over the funding which may effectively limit the NGO's work.⁴⁰

On occasion governments might intervene in the affairs of recipient NGOs by putting pressure on a foreign government not to support certain types of NGOs which work in politically sensitive areas. It is often indicated in the official financial contracts that local NGOs must not to disturb the relations between states, otherwise the government-linked donor funding agencies have the right to withdraw the money from the projects supported. Human rights organizations can therefore have a lot of difficulties gaining support from such government-linked funding agencies due to the fact that they sometimes deal with politically complex issues which might be regarded as disturbing the principle of non-intervention between states.

Sixth, while the NGOs are assumed by many to be a bridge for peaceful social change through the support of concerned development parties such as local people's groups, government and non-government organizations, the process of co-operation necessary to achieve change is a very difficult task in many ways.

In co-operation with local people's groups, there may be resistance of villagers to various aspects due to the NGO's lack of understanding of the local social environment, lack of sensitivity and basic motivation as well as a lack of belief in the NGO's work by the local people who are involved in the projects. The NGOs may intervene in some projects without consideration for the feeling of people concerned.

40 Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

On the other hand, the success of creating self-reliant organizations may create problem for NGOs. The authorization of local groups and the building of strong people's organizations may create new challenges towards the NGOs in such a way that the NGO values and ideologies would be investigated and their activities would be examined by people's organizations.

Working primarily with a local people's organization, even if there is regular contact with the government, may create a problem, if for instance, the NGOs might be accused by the government of being agitators because the government has to face "new demands from previously quiescent local groups".⁴¹ Moreover, when the domestic political climate is in a crucial condition, the people might be mobilised by the authorities to resist NGO activities and the organization may be banned by the government as happened in Thailand to the UCL, and other politically oriented organizations, after the bloody coup in October 1976. In co-operation with the government, the NGOs might have to be careful in organising their activities.

Considering the problems of co-operation between local people's groups, government and non-government organizations, we can see that the interest of people's groups and NGOs are less contradictory than those between NGOs and the state (or government) as mentioned in Chapter 3. When problems of co-operation between people and NGOs occur they may be corrected by adapting values and activities to practical requirements. Nonetheless, when conflicts between the government and NGOs occur, the former has power to avoid the problems by closing down the organization or threatening the NGO workers.

In co-operation with funding agencies, the question of efficiency becomes important. NGO efficiency is difficult to evaluate because the NGO projects are to some extent subject to uncertainty which may occur on the ground of funding support. Canadian researchers indicate that the traditional method of cost-benefit analysis is not an appropriate tool for measuring NGO efficiency because it pays "little attention to the dynamic long-term effects of a development intervention"; and note that "conventional tools of economic analysis are not well adapted to the needs of small projects".⁴² However, there are still difficulties in deciding appropriate methods for evaluating NGO efficiency.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

42 Brodhead, Herbert-Copley and Lambert, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-103.

Assessing NGO Efficiency

Although NGOs are extremely difficult agencies to organise and to lead,⁴³ they have a great potential for encouraging constructive social change if they can overcome their weaknesses. Canadian researchers propose the use of three factors for assessing NGO efficiency, taking into account the roles of NGOs, government sectors and funding agencies in contributing to an "indigeneous" development. The three factors are 1) the ability of NGOs to mobilise resources; 2) the long-term impact of their projects; 3) the extent of NGO co-operation.⁴⁴

1. The ability of NGOs to mobilise resources

The mobilization of resources is an important part of NGO effort. Some NGOs such as NOVIB and ICCO (the Netherlands), CAA, ACR and FFHC (Australia) attempt to combine fundraising and development education activities together in their approaches to the public.⁴⁵ At the same time, donor NGOs attempt to encourage recipient NGOs to mobilise local contributions in the form of voluntary worker and use of locally available materials as well as monetary donation. The level of local contribution indicates the ability of NGOs to establish strong links with the community and to promote local participation in development activities.⁴⁶ The human rights organization, UCL, for example, adopts the approach that 20 per cent of the total budget must come from local contribution (membership fee, legal-assistance fee and public donation).

There is now widespread support for NGOs to tap official government and international development resources. It is argued that, with independent action, NGOs should be able to tap large-scale, capital intensive programmes of government-to-government assistance and to integrate some NGO activities into national development plans.⁴⁷ This idea is good and worth trying. However, this idea may not be easily implemented because many western donor NGOs, such as in the US and even Australia, receive grants from their governments under conditions which effectively make the aid a tool of their foreign policies and national interests. A Report of the US Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs), for example, reveals that:

43 Brown, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

44 Brodhead, Herbert-Copley and Lambert, *op.cit.*, pp. 99-156; Brown, *op.cit.*, pp. 15-17; and P. Campbell, "Improving Organizational Effectiveness of NGOs", *Lok Niti: The Journal of the Asian NGO Coalition*, Vol. 5, No. 4, n.d., pp. 18-22.

45 Community Aid Abroad (CAA), Australian Catholic Relief (ACR) and From from Hunger Campaign (FFHC).

46 Brodhead, Herbert-Copley and Lambert, *op.cit.*, p. 105.

47 *Ibid.*, pp. 152-153.

[A]ll AID-related development activities occur within the framework of the United States Foreign Assistance Act of 1961,... the central purpose of the Act is... [T]o promote the foreign policy, security and general welfare of the United States by assisting peoples of the world in their efforts toward economic development and internal and external security, and for other purpose.⁴⁸

This instruction applies to funds given to the US voluntary agencies and therefore limits the conditions under which they in turn can support NGOs in developing countries. The Report further criticises the relationship between aid and US government foreign policies in that:

The fundamental barrier to the promotion of true development lies in the purpose of the Foreign Assistance Act. Quite simply, the purpose of the Act is to promote U.S. foreign policy, U.S. national security, and the welfare of the American people. The development of the Third World is only a secondary aspect of the legislation-- a means to the ultimate objective.⁴⁹

As an instrument of the US government foreign policies, the Report argues, development assistance programmes are hindered by numerous political and economic constraints. For example, the Act refers to a list of countries that may not be assisted because they are ruled by "communist" governments. In the light of the above, it is clearly important for recipient Thai NGOs to discuss further about their sources of development assistance from Western NGO donors.

Australian government development assistance is also linked to the so called national interest. Quinn (1982), Australian Council for Overseas Aid (1983), Community Aid Abroad Press Release (1984), and Eldridge (1986), all note that Australian development assistance is closely linked with the country's foreign policy, strategic and economic interests.⁵⁰ In particular in relation to Australian NGOs this can be seen in the official funding support for NGO programmes in Vietnam and Kampuchea where official bilateral aid has been curtailed by UN resolutions (i.e. non-recognition of the Phnom Penh government). Eldridge too makes the point in his criticism of the Jackson Report of 1984, which he notes takes a similar view to the Harries Report of 1979, that "Australian aid policy has sought to serve several

48 E. Schmidt, J. Blewett and P. Henriot, Religious Private Voluntary Organizations and the Question of Government Funding. Final Report, New York: Probe Third World Studies, 1981, p. 19.

49 Ibid., p. 21.

50 P.T. Quinn, "An Analysis of Australian Non-Government Aid Agency Programmes: 1979-80", Australian Outlook, Vol. 36, No. 3, December 1982, pp. 19-25; Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA), Crisis in Overseas Aid, Canberra: ACFOA, March 1983; Community Aid Abroad (CAA), "Jackson Report Fails to Address Basic Faults in Aid Programme", Press Release, Canberra, 18 June 1984; and P. Eldridge, "Philosophy and Strategy of the Jackson Report: Towards an Alternative Perspective" in P. Eldridge, D. Forbes and D. Porter (eds.), Australian Overseas Aid: Future Directions, pp. 3-23.

objectives, notably strategic, diplomatic, trade, employment of Australian expertise and institutional resources as well as humanitarian purposes" without considering the priority of development over other goals.⁵¹ The official aid policy interprets co-operation with NGOs in such a way that the role of NGOs is "seen as one of complementing official 'development-oriented' programmes and filling in gaps with small-scale local programmes for disadvantaged groups plus disaster relief".⁵²

However, some American and Australian NGOs are aware of the obstacles to creating self-reliant development, which can result from these forms of "tied" official aid being channelled through them, and encourage their development partners to consider an European model of development aid as an alternative. American NGOs argue that despite the official sources of funding, German and Dutch development aid can truly support self-reliant development in Third World countries because the governments disburse funds to church agencies which then make grants to NGOs. Taxes collected from Catholic citizens are distributed to the Catholic church agencies such as MISEREOR in Germany, CEBEMO in the Netherlands. Those collected from Protestant citizens are distributed to the Protestant church agencies such as EZE in Germany, ICCO in the Netherlands.⁵³ Thus the government is not involved in project selection, or any administration. In this funding model, the church agencies serve as a buffer between the state and the non-governmental organizations, neutralizing some of the political and strategic implications of government funding. American NGOs argue that European NGOs feel much more secure in pursuing indigenous development because:

Some PVOs – rightly or wrongly – place their faith in these agencies [the churches], assuming that they will know when they are being used and when Christian principles are being compromised. The PVOs feel that the agencies will know when to reject government funds, promoting the PVOs from potentially compromising situations.⁵⁴

The source of aid can also predetermined the type of aid. According to several American and Australian NGOs, European funding agencies normally support projects that focus on structural change such as land redistribution, the elimination of marketing intermediaries, political and legal reform. Government aid, on the other hand, goes to projects that concentrate on increases in production or the acquisition of skills, but do not change fundamental economic and political structures. These NGOs claim that "European-funded projects tend to attack a problem at its roots, effecting long-term

51 Eldridge, "Philosophy and Strategy", p. 5. For commentary on the Harries Report see H. Bull, "The Harries Report and the Third World", *Quadrant*, July 1980, pp. 48-53.

52 Eldridge, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

53 Schmidt, Blewett and Henriot, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 104.

change"; whereas the governments's aid "makes the status quo more bearable, ameliorating the present situation without challenging the system that causes poverty and hunger in the first place."⁵⁵ In relations between the source of aid and type of aid, indigenous development can be created on the ground of co-operation between government and non-government organizations which have common aims in development and which are not constrained by political considerations between countries. In the case of Germany it is because church and state activities have been linked historically that the government has been less sceptical of church involvement in development work. In contrast to the US government view and its relationship with aid agencies, the German government considers the problems of the poor in developing countries to be a normal and appropriate task of the church. As a consequence, many NGOs are ensured that their indigenous development projects have been facilitated. One American NGO claims also in a similar vein that "[T]he Dutch government and (Dutch) non-government organizations are much more liberal thinkers, more radical in their analysis" than the US (and I believe Australian, government-controlled funding agencies). They are more willing to trust people on the local level, even taking a grater risk, to carry out their own self-reliant development projects.⁵⁶

However, some NGOs who want to see indigenous development occur at the grass roots attempt to encourage their national NGOs to reassess their development assistant policies. Quinn, an ex-ACFOA research officer, analysed the Australian non-government aid agency programmes in 1979 and 1980 and found that:

Unfortunately, far greater emphasis is placed on the humanitarian aspect of their work and the unarguable contention that therefore such projects are "good", than on any real assessment of whether the objectives such as self-help, basic needs and sustained economic benefit are being achieved.⁵⁷

Quinn also encouraged the Australian NGOs to reassess the practical implementation of their development efforts and to conduct appropriate project evaluation which, he argued, "needs to be more than a study of cost-effectiveness", in particular, an evaluation using participatory approaches with recipient NGOs and people. Eventually, he hoped his analysis would "stimulate some interest in NGO aid and prompt serious attempts to develop the methodologies necessary to implement such participatory evaluations".⁵⁸

55 *Ibid.*, p. 105.

56 *Ibid.*, p. 105, 106.

57 Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 25.

2. The long-term impact of NGO projects

The long-term impact of NGO projects is seen in terms of sustainability and replication. Sustainability means an NGO ability to support the non-profit, independent activities as long as possible. In many instances when funding agencies stop their financial support, the recipient NGOs simply assume they have to stop their activities. However the Canadian researchers argue that this represents a crucial weakness of a static cost-benefit analysis approach. They argue further that since funding support is limited, NGOs should only begin projects which they would be able to sustain with local resources.⁵⁹

There were some meetings discussing about the sustainability of self-reliant development. For example, on 22-23 June 1983, at the Xavier Hall, Bangkok, CCTD, CGRS, TVS and several other NGOs co-operated to hold a seminar on "The mobilization of domestic contribution for development". Fifty participants from various types of NGOs such as Catholic, Buddhist, urban and rural NGOs were involved. This seminar discussed ideas and methods of using traditional ceremonies of both Christians and Buddhists as a means of encouraging people to participate in development.⁶⁰ On 5 July 1984, in Bangkok, the TDSC and TVS joined hands to arrange a seminar on "The Activities for the Economic Self-Reliance of the NGOs". This seminar extended the mobilization of resources by talking about the possibility of trading handicraft and agricultural products.⁶¹ In addition, the NGO workers exchanged experiences in mobilising resources with foreign NGO representatives. For example, on 4 September 1984, in Bangkok, TVS conducted talks with Martin Fiyer and Valerie Keady of the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO). Both gave some basic ideas and methods to mobilize resources, i.e. the NGOs need to make a positive effort to explain their work, to give reliable facts and information, to ensure people of all walks of life are able to support important, useful public activities. The methods include writing letters to people, companies, charity organizations; conducting activities (sport, music, charity walk) in which local people participate, collecting membership fees and selling goods.⁶² On 7-9 November 1986, in Korat, RUDOC conducted a seminar under the theme: "Problems of the self-reliance of Thai rural NGOs" involving more than 30

59 Brodhead, Herbert-Copley and Lambert, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

60 Thai Volunteer Service (TVS) and Thai Development Support Committee (TDSC), "Khosarup bangton chak kansammanna kanradomthun painaiprathet pu'a kanpatthana" [A Basic Assumption from the Seminar on the Mobilization of Domestic Contributions for Development], Seminar Paper, Xavier Hall, Bangkok, 5 July B.E. 2527 (1984), pp. 1-12.

61 CAA (Australia) is successful in this kind of activities by trading handicrafts and goods from various Third World countries.

62 TDSC and TVS, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-4.

representatives from funding agencies such as CEBEMO (the Netherlands), MISERIOR (Germany), LDAP (Canada) and various NGOs. The objective was to exchange experiences in sustaining the self-reliant development in rural areas. Drawing on successful working experiences with the peasants from Khon Kaen, Surin, Phichit and Chainat, the NGOs concluded that the close relationship among villagers, development officials and NGO workers both within and outside the country would enhance the self-reliant development.⁶³

Furthermore, NGOs have the ability to pioneer innovative activities and approaches which can be replicated by government planners and funding supporters. The replication of NGO projects is the most important measure of NGO cost-effectiveness because it introduces successful new tools, techniques or approaches to a wider area and population. In addition, it introduces new forms of working relationships, new approaches to project designs, and new forms of co-operation to achieve design results.⁶⁴ The technical feasibility of reproducing past successes relies upon the quality and availability of NGO information about successful projects. This task of being a development pioneer is given to the NGOs.

However, many NGOs are weak in evaluating and documenting the results of successful development projects as well as lacking effective communication with other NGOs and sometimes with funding agencies. This may be because, for instance, they have bias against the bureaucratic system, their working process is not established and, in particular, they need to be guided by a people-concerned development theory which they have not yet achieved. As discussed in relation to the potential development theories in Chapter 1, we found that the present theories are wanting. As Alliband, an Assistant Professor of Community Development at Southern Illinois University, discovers, the most difficult task in teaching the community development course is that:

63 Tawikiat Prasoecharoensuk, "Khokhithen ruang kanphuangtoneng khong ongkon ekachon patthana chonnabot" [An Opinion Concerning about the Self-Reliance of Rural Development NGOs], *Pacharayanan*, Vol. 5, November-December B.E. 2529 (1986), pp. 42-50; and Seri Phongphit, "The Quest for Self-Reliance of Thai NGOs", *RUDOC News*, Vol. 1, No. 2, October-December 1986, pp. 1-4.

64 Brodhead, Herbert-Copley and Lambert, *op. cit.*, p. 111. The authors argue that the replication does not occur at a project-by-project basis but it somehow influences on local government policies.

"there is no tested corpus of scientific laws or well-grounded theories. Instead, field practitioners often operationalize a set of key community development concepts and values including self-reliance, locally felt needs, citizen participation, decentralization of key resources, and grassroots problem-solving. The shape and substance of any given programme built upon these principles may differ markedly from one case to the next. ... the essence of community development is the quest for *community self-expression*. That is, there can be no magic formula or standardized model for successful community development work, each case will be idiosyncratic, unique, and particularistic [*italic as in original*]."⁶⁵

From his direct experience in working with the NGOs in India, Alliband also argues that the "community development" approach pioneered and carried out by the NGOs is "inherently political in nature" because its objectives and successful outcomes result in "the redistribution of power within a community or society" or "an expression of 'democracy in action'".⁶⁶

3. The extent of co-operation

The most difficult part of NGO activities, according to the Canadian researchers, is to bridge the gap between development partners, because a wide variety of activities, views and ideologies may confuse and frustrate co-operative development efforts.⁶⁷ The researchers, however, suggest a possible strategy of co-operation with the government and funding agencies on an *ad hoc* basis, using the principle of independence through partnership. They argue that NGOs play an important role in indigenous development as equals with other parties such as government agencies and donors. Regardless of the principle of independence through partnership in co-operating with government, there is a risk that the NGOs may become simply "mini-aid agencies in the mold of official agencies".⁶⁸ Then, the funding agencies may regard the NGOs as channels for achieving their own style of financial development projects.

There is an increasing role for Thai NGOs accepted by the government sectors and international agencies. For example, on 14-16 June 1988, in Bangkok, the ESCAP-NGO Regional Symposium on Co-operation for Economic and Social Development was held. The symposium report promoted the role of NGOs as "a catalytic and participatory role" in "promoting development"⁶⁹ as accepted by the Thai government, the UN (in General Assembly resolution 41/171) and the UN family of

65 T. Alliband, *Catalysts of Development: Voluntary Agencies in India*, West Hartford (Connecticut): Kumarian Press, 1983, p. ix.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

67 Brodhead, Herbert-Copley and Lambert, *op. cit.*, p. 115

68 *Ibid.*, p. 150. See also Eldridge, *op. cit.*, p. 7

69 Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), "Report of the ESCAP-NGO Regional Symposium on Co-operation for Economic and Social Development", Bangkok, 14-16 June 1988, p. 2

agencies such as the UNDP, FAO, WHO etc. as well as regional organizations such as ESCAP. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP noted some interesting points about the characteristics of NGOs:

Usually at the forefront of public debate on crucial development issues, NGOs were no less active in upholding the rights of disadvantaged groups, articulating popular interests and promoting equitable development strategies, monitoring the actions of governmental and private holders of power, and campaigning to help right specific wrongs. Along the way, NGOs had built an admirable reputation for cost-effectiveness, innovation, flexibility and the ability to get the job done at the grass-roots level.⁷⁰

However, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP also pointed out some weaknesses of the NGOs:

But for NGOs an adequate means of learning what each other was doing, avoiding duplication or mistakes, was sorely lacking... For example, today one could hardly hold a clear or conclusive discussion on how many, what type and in what particular fields NGOs were active because available data were imprecise. ... Thus, there was a clear need for developing, if not a co-ordinating mechanism at the current stage, some type of networking arrangement for exchanging information and making it available to interested members of the NGO community. ... NGOs wouldn't restrict their attention to intra-NGO concerns, and would provide suggestions for increased interaction with the wider spectrum of governmental and intergovernmental organizations ...⁷¹

To be an effective catalyst in development, the NGOs need to improve their work in many ways such as in expanding their ideas of development, increasing their involvement in development education and improving their administration. Some NGOs, for instance, seem to understand management in terms of hierarchy and technocratic efficiency and fail to distinguish between weak and strong but flexible management. For the very important task of providing a systematic analysis of development, NGOs generally need to be more professional. By professional I mean in the way defined by Canadian researchers who have argued that "professionalism" for NGOs means the ability to "promote effectiveness and efficiency and at the same time enhances participation, the sharing of information, and flexibility".⁷²

70 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

72 Brodhead, Herbert-Copley and Lambert, *op. cit.*, p. 153; and ESCAP, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This thesis begins from the premise that the Thai NGOs have been able to combine the four significant concepts of "basic minimum needs", "people's participation", "basic human rights" and "self-reliant development" for effective implementation in the development process. In examining this argument, I adopted a definition of development which requires the achievement not only of economic growth but also of human values of dignity and freedom for people. In order to achieve the human values in development, the state, which plays a crucial role in development, must guarantee the standard of living for its citizens through the economic, political and legal systems. The definition of development in this context was used to test the achievements of development in Thailand by posing the questions of who gained in the development process, who lost, and under what conditions. In addition, human values were considered to apply generally regardless of the separation between developed and developing sectors in societies.

After defining the term development and assessing something of the failures of development in the 1960s and 1970s to achieve overall benefits for the people despite the improvements in economic growth rate, I provided an overview of the development theories used to explain the problems of underdevelopment in the Third World. Generally speaking, the theories were characterized into two schools of thought: the modernization and neo-Marxist theories. Both theories recognized the existing problems of underdevelopment but had different perspectives as to the causes of these problems. Modernization theory considered that underdevelopment occurred within a country and proposed a succession of approaches to cure the problems, all of which proposed internal remedies based on theoretical approaches such as structural-functionalism, behaviourism, institutionalization, and, more recently, public policy analysis. On the contrary, neo-Marxism analysed the problems of underdevelopment through the class-analysis approach which investigated not only conditions within the country but also in the broader relations or links with other countries (the international system). In terms of the definition of development chosen at the outset, neo-Marxism gave more significance than modernization to the conditions of the common people and their place in the broader development context, and in this way came closer to our definition of development.

The neo-Marxist analysis of class has not not been satisfactorily resolved. The role of the state in development was found to be better developed but still not adequate, although it did recognize that the state had an obligation to bring prosperity to its own citizens through development. In practice, however, most development programmes in Third World countries like Thailand were shown to be influenced by the modernization theory which emphasized macro-economic growth and up-to-date sophisticated technology at the expense of human development. Under the guideline of this theory, the role of the state was reduced to supporting the development of private enterprise in national development. The state could not at the same time extend its role to provide development opportunities and services to the common people (the landless, small peasants and wage workers) in Thailand without the consent of the dominant ruling elites, as in most developing countries. More importantly, the state could not provide even a place for an nucleus of "indigenous" people organizations to grow because of its adherence to growth and security. Even though the state set up a form of people's organizations such as farmer's organizations and worker's organizations, they did not represent the political and legal interest of common people and were little more than extensions of the bureaucracy.

Applying modernization in the Thai development context has shown that Thai development followed a similar pattern to the international one. The social discourse between the modernizing pattern and socialist-oriented ideas has been apparent since the "Great Reform" of the King Rama V (from 1873 to 1910). Pye, an American scholar, noted that a modernizing pattern had long been relevant in the Thai society in that westernizing reform had been advocated and applied by the Anglo-American school through a number of Western consultants. He also accepted that the modernizing process could not achieve the establishment of domestic interest and pressure groups (from which people's organizations would emerge). At the same time, socialist-oriented ideas also appeared to oppose the domination of the westernizing approach, for example, Phraya Suriyanuwat's The Science of Property. After the Thai political change from the Absolute Monarchy to Constitutional Monarchy in 1932, another attempt was made by Luang Pradit Manutham who proposed a similar idea in the form of the Draft National Economic Plan to counter the modernizing mainstream by extending the role of the state to give service and benefit to the common people. Although both attempts failed to be fully implemented as a national economic plan, some of their ideas were accepted in the economic policies of later governments.

After the end of World War II, modernization theory came to play a dominant role in the world economy. Modernization was seen to be economically successful in the form of the Marshall Plan in reconstructing Western Europe and in politically

constraining Communist expansion. On both fronts modernization was to be important internationally. Thailand was regarded as one of the targets of the Communist movement in the Southeast Asian region and particular domestic conditions such as the political struggle among groups and economic difficulties after the War paved a way for the modernization approach to be introduced in the Thai economy, through the influence of the World Bank and IMF, and the US economic survey team, to replace the policy of Economic Nationalism. The first Thai national economic plans were formulated under the guideline of the modernization theory and with support from the US. One consequence of development under the guideline of this theory, however, was the upsurge of social and political disorder in various parts of the world among those adversely affected; in the face of criticism and reassessment of the modernization theory by some academics and human development organizations, the ILO launched the basic needs strategy to cure the problems of underdevelopment. However, this strategy extended the discussion to people's participation in development process and to the recognition of the basic human rights concept in development. The changes in the Thai development context from the 1960s to the early 1970s should therefore not be considered in isolation from the international theoretical debates.

While the common people were in a weak position economically, socially and politically, the NGOs created by active community interest groups in Thailand played a catalytic role, not only to encourage the common people to participate in the state's affairs, but also to attempt to assume the power to influence the state's affairs. They were acting as a counterbalancing power while narrowing the gap between the people's participation and the state. They were different from the government-led organizations in that they use a people's participation approach to tackle the problems of underdevelopment rather than simply attempt to cure the symptoms of poverty by providing social welfare handouts.

After establishing a place for the NGOs and presenting a brief history of the Thai NGOs, I investigated their catalytic roles in the development process. In the first place, the NGOs implemented the people's participation approach very much on a "trial and error" basis and, understandably in terms of the many factors involved, they did not make any great achievements. In particular, there were new altruistic movements emerging at a time of political polarization between the Left and Right in Thailand during the mid 1970s. They were effectively suppressed by intolerant "anti-communist" governments which were especially hard on the NGOs whose activities were related to political-oriented issues, but after the moves to depoliticize the debates on the future of the Thai society, there was a reconsolidation of the NGOs with the financial support of various international NGOs. The Thai NGOs then played a

catalytic role in voicing the grievances of the common people, encouraging the government to reassess the direction of development, to distribute the benefits of economic growth to the common people and to depend less on the guideline of modernization theory, and to encourage the government to recognize and improve the law-based society in Thailand.

In so doing, the NGOs gradually came to apply the four development concepts of "basic minimum needs", "people's participation", "self-reliant development" and "basic human rights" and drew on "local wisdom" to help strengthen the common people's organizations. In order to sustain the standard of living, it was found that the common people had to improve their production, to control their production and to obtain the bargaining power to determine what was good for improving their production and increasing their income. The maintenance of living standard had to be carried out by their own interest groups such as "indigenous" peasant and worker organizations. The state and NGOs had an obligation to help support them. While the government announced the development plans to implement the people participation and self-reliant development approaches and to guarantee the basic minimum needs for the common people, I argued that people participation and self-reliant development could not be fully implemented unless the basic human rights concept was recognized. The basic human rights concept itself guarantees the development of human dignity and freedom, the recognition of political decentralization and the recognition of legal development as well as the strengthening of the law-based society.

In order to work on behalf of the common people, I argued that the NGOs had to play the role of a counterbalancing power with the government and that they should be an autonomous partner in the development process. This autonomy was also applied to co-operation with the funding agencies, otherwise the NGOs would fall into the category of a government organization or be regarded as a branch agency of funding organizations.

Three selected case studies proved that the NGOs would be able to play an important role economically, politically and, to a certain extent, legally, on behalf of the common people. The Phichit experience showed the potential for the people participation approach to create self-reliant development and co-operation between the NGO workers, government officials, and funding agency teams. The Non Lan peasants' land dispute case indicated the problems of peasants in rural areas and the protection of their land rights through political and legal means. The case of the women workers of Srikao Company illustrated the problems of wage labourers in cities, the loopholes in the labour laws and the need to guarantee a standard of living through the

political and legal schemes. These three case studies demonstrated that economic growth was inseparable from political and legal development; or in other words, development for the common people is vitally linked with the representative democratic system. The case studies also indicated the limitation of both government and non-government sectors in correcting the common people's problems in isolation from each other, and highlighted the benefits which could come from co-operation between the two sectors.

Without the guideline of any particular development theory, I argued that the NGOs had to carry on their catalytic role in the Thai development process more or less on a "trial and error" basis. Their goals could better be achieved through structural analysis of people's problems and "alternative development" approaches. This would be supported by the positive characteristics of NGOs such as independence, flexibility and co-operation with the common people, government officials and funding agencies. However, to increase NGO efficiency it would be necessary to reduce negative characteristics such as the misconception of altruism, and to ensure that independence and flexibility were maintained in the face of dependence on financial support from various parties. The "trial and error" of NGOs would be minimized when they would be able to discover an appropriate development model which could be replicated in other areas.

Finally, I found that the four development concepts were directly concerned with the political economy approach; and other approaches such as cultural community, appropriate technology and religious approaches could be considered as part of the structural analysis of political economy approach. A further study in the interest of the common people, from my point of view, should be carried out using the same framework, for example, the creation and strengthening of people's organizations, the model of political decentralization, the study of social history,¹ and even the creation of a theory of civil society.² The NGOs are an important movement which respects the laws and is peaceful in its approach to solving the problems of the common people.

1 C.J. Reynolds, What is Social History?, Thai Khadi Research Institute, Paper No. 8, Bangkok: Thammasat University, 1979.

2 By 'civil society' I mean the theory of autonomous governed classes who have an obligation as citizens of the state. At the same time, they seek to have an autonomous power to control the state's affairs (democratization). Thus, in my opinion, the theory of civil society should be defined as the theory of the governed in the representative democratic system, independent from the theory of the state. However, both theories are related in terms of the balance of power. Otherwise, the term 'civil society' will be subsumed within the framework of the theory of the state.

This is not to say the NGOs do not involve themselves in politics, for such involvement is in fact an important technique as seen in the case studies. It does mean that by emphasizing the legal basis for the people's right to development they emphasize the essentially political responsibility of governments to guarantee development to all citizens.

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