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Urban Life and Urban People in Transition, Synthesis Report Volume II

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WHO GETS WHAT AND HOW?: CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Synthesis Papers Vol. II

Urban Life and Urban People in Transition

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P.C.K.
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Executive Summary

This report presents a synthesis of documentary and case studies on the various aspects of socio-cultural changes in the ways of life of the people of Bangkok from the Second World War to the present. Its focus is on how the form and nature of personal relationships have been transformed in this period.

In postwar Bangkok, the social system was composed of a small aristocratic elite, incorporating a section of government officials and merchants, with a larger middle and lower middle-class of petty traders, then a broad stratum comprising craftsmen, labourers, fruit and vegetable cultivators and paddy farmers. Control of urban resources, land and access to the civil service which was a source of wealth and prestige was in the hands of the small elite. Thus, despite the heterogeneous nature of ways of earning a living, in general it may be said that forming a relationship with people in control of these resources was a necessary means to survive. So the relationship of superordinate and a subordinate was fundamental in social life. The underlying principle of this relationship was reciprocity, in the form of exchange between people with different levels of status and wealth. In that period urban life was comparatively locality-based, due to the pattern of combining work and living in the same place and low volume of travelling. The units of social organisation in which urban relationships were operational were the household and the community where relations between parents-children and kinsmen and master-apprentice were the models of such reciprocal relationship.

The modernisation programmes starting in the early 1960's had far-reaching consequences on the life of these urban groups. On the way to modernity, they have been subjected to many levels of rapid relocation, physical-spatial, social and cultural. New forms of wealth, some induced by foreign capital, from commerce, banking, manufacturing industry or the tourism industry, become new resources to be controlled and shared by new groups of people. These new social groups have since emerged and become new actors in the social

system. They can be grouped as the business elites, the middle class and the broad category of those less advantaged in the urban order, comprising slum dwellers, workers, and migrants.

New systems of work, mobility, and new patterns of land use all contribute to the reconfiguration of the units of social organisation. Household and community in the past were units based on a specific locality whereas by contrast the tendency in modern life is for interaction to be less and less space-bound. Urban people interact at home, workplace, shopping centres, rural villages, etc. as well as across space by means of communication technology. Thus units of social organisation, where relationships are experienced in a person's life, become more fragmented, and within each one the trend is for relationships to become less personal, more specialised and instant. But transition to modernity is a continuing process and both traditional and modern ways coexist. The new and emerging social groups are continually adjusting to the changing environment and make use of traditional practices for their benefits.

As Thailand moves rapidly into a phase of an advanced capitalist economy, what is experienced by urban people may be described as a set of dilemmas posed by conflicting values. In the traditional social system, based on small scale society and feudal control over resources, the superordinate-subordinate relationship is commonly understood and accepted as a means of building trust and long-term reciprocity between persons which resulted in system of resource distribution. In a new environment, when new forms of wealth and opportunity are open to new groups of actors, the cultural values and meanings of such a relationship are ambiguous. For some, whose chance of capital accumulation is limited and whose place in the economic structure is insecure, the superordinate-subordinate relationship offers livelihood and welfare. Ironically for those who are in control of power and resources, it too can be means of securing more. For those whose place in the economic structure is more secure by virtue of their specialisation, it may be regarded as a form of nepotism destructive to fair competition.

Meanwhile pluralism and complexity in the urban system have necessarily given rise to a whole host of secondary relationships and corporate and bureaucratic interfaces that mediate between groups or facilitate activities and services. This has been inevitable and there is little doubt that such a process will continue.

Coupled with the widening gap in terms of income, opportunity, and security among urban groups, the challenge for government, agencies, communities and individuals will be to maintain some sort of balance between the necessities of change, the inevitability of larger scale management of conflicts in the interests of equity in the urban and national arena, and the maintenance of a sense of cultural continuity and meaning.

บทสรุปสำหรับผู้บริหาร

รายงานเรื่องนี้เป็นการสรุปและสังเคราะห์จากการศึกษาทั้งทางด้านเอกสารและการศึกษาข้อมูลจากภาคสนามในโครงการ 2010 ว่าด้วยความเปลี่ยนแปลงที่เกิดขึ้นกับวิถีชีวิตของคนในเมืองกรุงเทพฯ ในช่วงเวลาระหว่างสงครามโลกครั้งที่สองจนถึงปัจจุบัน ประเด็นที่เป็นแกนของเรื่องคือการพิจารณาว่ารูปแบบและลักษณะของความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างบุคคลนั้นได้รับการเปลี่ยนแปลงไปอย่างไรบ้าง

กรุงเทพฯ หลังสงครามประกอบด้วยคน 3 กลุ่มอย่างกว้าง ๆ ตามฐานะทางสังคม กลุ่มแรกเป็นชนชั้นสูง ข้าราชการชั้นสูง พ่อค้าระดับนำ ทั้งหมดนี้มีจำนวนไม่มาก กลุ่มถัดมาคือกลุ่มคนระดับกลางซึ่งมีจำนวนมากกว่า ได้แก่ ข้าราชการระดับกลาง ๆ ไปจนถึงล่าง พ่อค้า และกลุ่มใหญ่สุดคือคนงาน ช่าง เกษตรกรปลูกผักผลไม้ และชาวนา กลุ่มชนชั้นสูงเป็นผู้ที่ควบคุมการเข้าถึงทรัพยากรที่สำคัญของเมืองขณะนั้น ได้แก่ ที่ดิน และตำแหน่งในราชการ อันจะนำมาซึ่งทรัพย์สมบัติและความมีเกียรติในสังคม ในสภาพเช่นนี้การผูกสัมพันธ์กับผู้ที่อยู่ในฐานะอำนาจสูงจึงเป็นสิ่งที่สำคัญ ดังนั้น ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างผู้ที่มีฐานะอำนาจสูงกับผู้ที่มีฐานะอำนาจด้อยกว่า จึงเป็นลักษณะเด่นทางสังคมในยุคนั้น ความสัมพันธ์เช่นนี้ทำให้เกิดการแลกเปลี่ยนกันระหว่างทั้ง สองฝ่าย ในชีวิตจริง คนในเมืองจะเข้าใจความสัมพันธ์และการแลกเปลี่ยนเช่นนี้ จากประสบการณ์ที่เกิดขึ้นในบ้านและในย่านที่อยู่อาศัย ทั้งสองอย่างนี้เป็นหน่วยทางสังคมที่สำคัญต่อการมีชีวิตอยู่ของคนในเมืองจำนวนมาก เนื่องจากในสมัยนั้น ที่อยู่กับที่ทำงานยังไม่ได้แยกจากกันเด็ดขาด และการเดินทางก็ยังมีปริมาณไม่สูงมาก ความสัมพันธ์ภายในครอบครัวระหว่างคนที่เป็นญาติกัน หรือนับถือกันเสมือนญาติ ที่อยู่ด้วยกันและช่วยกันทำมาหากินจึงเป็นเรื่องสำคัญในชีวิตของคนคนหนึ่ง ความสัมพันธ์แบบนี้สร้างความไว้วางใจ และพันธะที่จะต้องเกื้อกูลกันไปตลอดชีวิต นอกจากนั้นยัง มีการขยายความสัมพันธ์เช่นนี้ไปยังผู้อื่นที่ไม่ใช่ญาติ แต่อยู่ในละแวกพื้นที่เดียวกัน

การนำประเทศไปสู่ความทันสมัยในต้นพุทธศตวรรษที่ 26 ได้ก่อให้เกิดความเปลี่ยนแปลงต่อชีวิตของคนเมืองทุกกลุ่ม คนเหล่านี้ต้องพบกับการเคลื่อนที่โยกย้ายในหลายรูปแบบ ทั้งทางด้านพื้นที่และด้านสังคม การเกิดแหล่งที่มาของความมั่งคั่งใหม่ เช่น อุตสาหกรรม การเงินการธนาคาร การท่องเที่ยว ซึ่งส่วนมากเกิดจาก

ทุนจากภายนอก ได้ทำให้เกิดคนกลุ่มใหม่ ๆ ขึ้นมา ตัวละครใหม่นี้อาจจะจัดได้กว้าง ๆ ว่าประกอบด้วยผู้นำทางธุรกิจ คนชั้นกลาง และกลุ่มผู้ที่ด้อยโอกาสกว่า เช่น ชาวสลัม คนงานโรงงาน หรือชาวชนบทที่มาหากินในเมือง

ระบบการทำงานแบบใหม่ การเคลื่อนย้ายแบบแผนการใช้ที่ดินใหม่ ได้ช่วยกันทำให้ระเบียบทางสังคมแบบเดิมไม่สามารถจะดำรงอยู่ได้ โดยเฉพาะในพื้นที่ย่านใหม่ ๆ ที่เกิดขึ้น ชีวิตของคนในเมืองสมัยใหม่มีแนวโน้มว่าจะไม่ได้ผูกยึดอยู่กับพื้นที่ทางกายภาพแห่งใดแห่งหนึ่ง ชีวิตของเขาเป็นชีวิตที่เต็มไปด้วยการเดินทางอันไม่มีที่สิ้นสุดระหว่างที่อยู่ ที่ทำงาน ร้านค้า สำหรับผู้อพยพจะเป็นการเดินทางระหว่างเมืองกับชนบท และสำหรับผู้นำทางธุรกิจจะเป็นการเดินทางไปทั่วทุกมุมโลก นอกจากไม่มีความผูกพันที่ยั่งยืนกับที่ใดที่หนึ่งแล้ว ก็ยังไม่มีความผูกพันกับคนกลุ่มใดกลุ่มหนึ่งอย่างลึกซึ้งและยาวนาน ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างบุคคลจึงมักมีลักษณะที่เป็นการรู้จักกันเฉพาะด้านหรือเฉพาะเรื่องที่ต้องติดต่อกัน แต่เราก็พบเช่นเดียวกันว่าการพยายามสร้างความสัมพันธ์ส่วนตัวระหว่างบุคคล และความคิดว่าเป็นสิ่งที่มีคุณค่า ก็ยังคงมีในสถานการณ์หรือเงื่อนไขบางอย่างอยู่

ยิ่งสังคมไทยก้าวเข้าสู่ระบบเศรษฐกิจทุนนิยมเต็มขั้นยิ่งขึ้น ประสบการณ์การมีชีวิตอยู่ของคนในเมืองก็จะยิ่งเต็มไปด้วยความขัดแย้งกัน ระหว่างการให้น้ำหนักและคุณค่ากับความสัมพันธ์แบบเก่าและแบบใหม่ ในระบบสังคมแบบเดิมเป็นที่เข้าใจกันว่าการผูกสัมพันธ์ระหว่างเจ้านายกับลูกน้อง หรือผู้สูงศักดิ์กับผู้ต่ำศักดิ์ คือหนทางที่จะสร้างความไว้วางใจที่จะแลกเปลี่ยนทรัพยากรบางอย่างกันเป็นเวลายาวนาน แต่ในระบบสังคมที่แหล่งอำนาจและโอกาสที่จะแสวงหาความมั่งคั่งเปิดให้กับคนกลุ่มใหม่ การให้คุณค่าและความหมายกับความสัมพันธ์เชิงอุปถัมภ์จะเปลี่ยนแปลงไป และมีความหมายได้หลายนัย สำหรับกลุ่มคนที่โอกาสทางเศรษฐกิจไม่มั่นคง การผูกสัมพันธ์เป็นส่วนตัวกับผู้มีอำนาจยังคงเป็นวิถีทางที่จำเป็นในการเลี้ยงชีพ หรือกลุ่มผู้ที่ควบคุมทรัพยากรทางเศรษฐกิจก็ยังคงใช้วิธีนี้เสริมสร้างฐานะของตนต่อไปได้อีก ส่วนผู้ที่มีตำแหน่งการงานและรายได้ด้วยทักษะเฉพาะของตน ก็สามารถจะมองความสัมพันธ์เช่นนี้ว่าเป็นการเล่นพรรคเล่นพวก

ในขณะเดียวกัน ความซับซ้อนของโครงสร้างระดับมหภาคของเมืองได้ก่อให้เกิดองค์กรขนาดใหญ่ และระบบงานที่ทำให้เกิดกลุ่มและการรวมตัวของคนที่ไม่เกี่ยวข้องกับความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างบุคคล แต่เป็นการรวมกลุ่มทางสาขาอาชีพ หรือผลประโยชน์เฉพาะด้านบางอย่าง กระบวนการเช่นนี้มีแนวโน้มว่าจะพัฒนาต่อไปอีกในอนาคตอย่างแน่นอน นอกจากนั้น ความเหลื่อมล้ำของโอกาสทางเศรษฐกิจของคนกลุ่มต่าง ๆ ในเมือง เป็นสิ่งที่เห็นได้อย่างชัดเจน

ดังนั้น สิ่งที่คนที่มีชีวิตอยู่ในเมือง หน่วยงานของรัฐ และหน่วยงานอื่น ๆ จะต้องเผชิญ คือ จะต้องหาวิถีทางที่จะสามารถจัดการกับความขัดแย้งระหว่างกลุ่มต่าง ๆ ที่มีผลประโยชน์ขัดกัน ความหวังที่จะกลับไปสู่ชีวิตแบบชุมชนเล็ก ๆ ในอุดมคติ คงจะไม่มีพลังเพียงพอที่จะจัดการกับปัญหาของเมืองที่มีขนาดมหึมา เช่น กรุงเทพฯ ในปัจจุบัน ซึ่งจำเป็นต้องอาศัยการจัดการในระดับมหภาค ทางออกน่าจะเป็นการแสวงหา หรือพัฒนา

รูปแบบอื่นของความสัมพันธ์ที่คนที่มีชีวิตร่วมกันในสังคมขนาดใหญ่พึงมีต่อกัน และจะทำให้คนที่มีวิถีชีวิตและความต้องการที่ขัดแย้งกัน สามารถใช้พื้นที่และโอกาสของเมืองร่วมกันได้อย่างเป็นธรรม

Urban Life and Urban People in Transition

Introduction

In the past four decades since the Second World War, the capital city of Thailand has experienced a series of significant social and cultural transformations. This report attempts to outline the social changes characterising the recent history of Bangkok from a sociological-anthropological point of view by concentrating on the theme of social relationships. Relations between persons, and the values associated with them are seen as arising out of the ways of life of urban people. Once old ways of life break down, largely as a result of economic development and modernisation, old personal relations and values cannot withstand the forces of change and they become incompatible with new situations. At present such relationships are in the process of transition.

The report comprises eight sections. Section One summarizes major economic trends from pre-war years to around 1990 and the consequent physical and spatial transformations that have occurred in Bangkok during these four decades. Section Two sets out the fundamental patterns of social organisation, namely household and community, and the long-term reciprocity between people. Section Three describes the process of migration and change in the occupational structure of urban people which has had far reaching consequences for urban life. Section Four describes how old communities and ways of life have been undercut by a series of events and forces. Section Five introduces new actors on the urban stage, namely the business elites and the middle class, both being the urban-based groups that have enjoyed the fruits of economic development. Section Six then deals with other groups in a less advantaged position. Section Seven concludes the report.

1. Urban Change: Modernisation and Uneven Development[1]

Economic and physical development can be seen as falling into four periods which are based largely on ten-year periods coinciding roughly with clusters of events, decisions or processes. Though they correspond with development plans, causal relations between processes and plans are not implied.

1945-1957

Thailand's economic structure in the post-war period saw an overwhelming reliance on the export of agricultural products and a tiny industrial sector. Bangkok maintained its traditional hold on trade, with the overwhelming percentage of imported and exported goods being processed, handled and distributed through the city, principally via the Chinese merchants of Sampheng.

A number of significant trends were evident during this period. Foreign economic assistance beginning in 1950 was directed towards development projects aiming at increasing and diversifying production. At the same time imports into the kingdom almost doubled between 1951-1956. The renewed trading activity boosted the strength of the Bangkok's entrepreneurial class. As well as trade, the Chinese entrepreneurs diversified their fields into commercial banking and insurance. Growth during this period was due largely to the expansion of the services sectors, particularly trading and banking.

Bangkok in this period had a population of around 1 million. The urbanized area was concentrated within the inner city. During the war some of the major roads which were to become the arteries of suburbanization in later period such as Phahonyothin road, Ladphrao road were improved or constructed. Sukhumvit road was also upgraded and extended during period.

1958-1971

The accession to power of Field Marshall Sarit marked a new phase of economic development. Committed to a program of economic and social modernization, his

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1 This section comprises a summary and extracts from: Marc Askew, The Making of Modern Bangkok:State, Market and People in the Shaping of the Thai Metropolis. Background Report, TDRI 1993 Year-End Conference. Who Gets What and How? Challenges for the Future. For further details and full citation see the original report.

administration sought to establish a climate conducive to increased overseas aid and private investment. The NESDB and the BOI were established to further planned growth and diversification in the national economy.

Investment in manufacturing from the early 1960's, particularly from overseas, expanded Bangkok's manufacturing base considerably and built on the existing concentration of industries in the southern districts of the metropolis. A strong concentration of industry stretched along the riverside in Yannawa, Thonburi, the western edge of Phrakhanong and particularly Samut Prakan.

In 1960 the characteristic manufacturing unit in Bangkok was small, with an average employment of just 8.5 employees. The largest employers were in those industries in traditional sectors such as hardware, printing, saw milling, rice milling and weaving. At the end of the decade, however, with new factories established under the government's incentive schemes for foreign capitalists and joint-venture schemes, the character of manufacturing began to change. By 1970, the proportion of manufacturing establishments employing 100 people or more grew from 47% in 1963 to 72% in 1970, with the average number of workers per firm growing to 66. The period saw the rapid growth of promoted industries, in accordance with the policy of import substitution, including car-assembly, textiles, electrical appliances and food processing.

Besides manufacturing industries, the expansion of tourism over the decade and the presence of US military personnel fuelled substantial growth in the service sector of Bangkok, particularly the accommodation and the entertainment sector. The number of hotel rooms increased from 2,041 in 1964 to 8,763 in 1970. The entertainment precinct which tended to concentrate in the area around Silom Road, south of the old city, began to spread north and northeasterly. Bangkok's notorious red light district of Pat Pong and clubs and bars along the new Petchburi road were products of this period.

Economic growth had consequences for the spatial character of Bangkok. According to the Litchfield report, by 1960 Bangkok was already a road-based city: a large number of old canals had been filled in and roads constructed in their place. The report emphasized the lack of clear functional zonal organization in the city, with little distinctive separation of industrial, commercial and residential uses. At this time, Bangkok remained a compact city. In 1947 the Bangkok and Thonburi municipalities housed little over a million people in an area of between 60 to 67 square kilometres. In 1956 the built-up area

had increased to some 90 square kilometres. In 1960 the population of Bangkok-Thonburi was just over 2 million.

The most significant functional and spatial trend of this period was the development of the port of Klong Toey, which was completed in 1954. By the late 1950s, industries were locating close to the port on both sides of the Chao Phraya River. This had a strong influence on development in the adjacent area of Samut Prakan, which by 1960 was yet a small isolated community.

The trend of urban population expansion had already begun in this decade for a number of reasons. By virtue of the historical concentration of administration and business in Bangkok, compounded by 10 years of urban-biassed development, three quarters of Thailand's university graduates (boosted considerably in numbers by overseas scholarship schemes during the period) resided in the metropolis. The establishment of new universities in Bangkok also added to the process of attraction which drew students from the provinces to Bangkok. This served to concentrate consumption power in the metropolis, a power reflected in the growing disparities in per capita income between the Bangkok Metropolitan Area and the other regions of the Kingdom. Between 1960 and 1970, per capita income in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area grew at a rate higher than Thailand's average, with income for the metropolis averaging 11,234 Baht in 1970, compared with 3,849 for Thailand as a whole. Bangkok was the centre of consumption for the expanding Thai middle-class.

As well as being the centre of consumption in western-oriented style, the metropolis also became the centre of overcrowded areas and slum dwellings. Litchfield's team reported in 1960 that there were an estimated 740,000 people living in overcrowded areas in Bangkok. Such areas, however, may not necessarily deserve the title of slums. Later surveys in the decade place the estimate of slum dwellers at approximately 150,000 people. The trend was for migrants to Bangkok to move into the central, crowded areas, while former residents moved to adjacent outer areas of the expanding city. The older slums of Bangkok were already well-established communities with strong links to local economies and employers. They tended to be small in size, with most of their inhabitants either born in the area or long-term residents.[2] But the newer squatter slums were composed almost

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2 Akin Rabibhadana, Rise and Fall of a Bangkok Slum. Thai Khadi Research Institute, Bangkok: Thammasat University. 1978.

entirely of rural urban migrants and were, in the case of Klong Toey, extremely large. The Klong Toey slum comprised over 25,000 people and covered 325 acres of land owned by the Port Authority of Thailand. Its development was tied to the nature of labour requirements near the port and the chronic shortage of alternative housing for the urban poor.

The majority of squatter settlements occupied land in the inner and middle ring areas of the city, because of such key factors as accessibility to work and the fact that much of the unused government of institutional land was located there. Other settlements formed on private plots of land. Such settlements often grew on areas unsuitable for other development, such as on the banks of the klongs. The ecology of urban settlement in Bangkok at this time revealed much about the principal inequalities which had developed in the city.

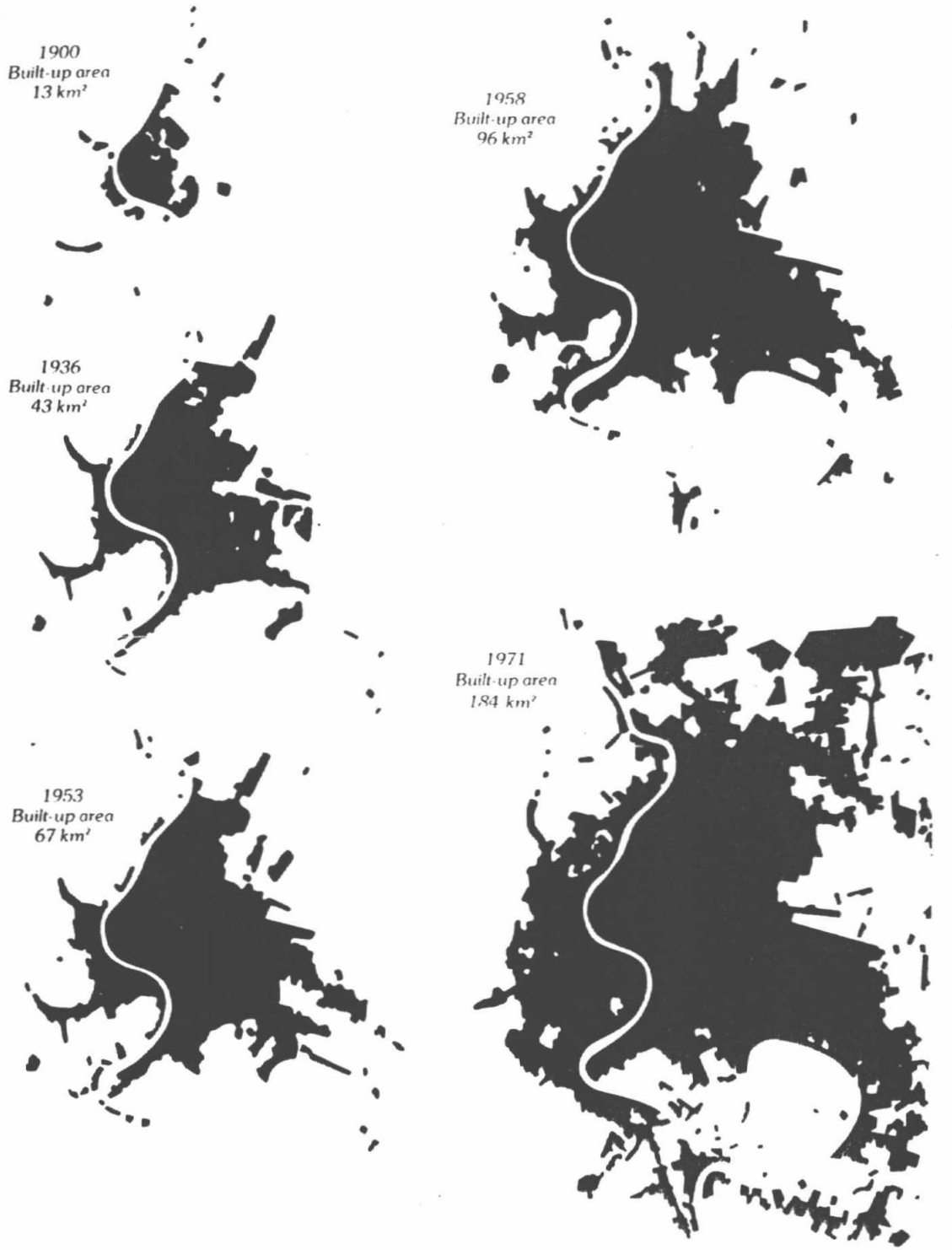
1971-1981

In 1971 Bangkok's population exceeded 3 million people and the urban area was almost double the size it had been twelve years before. Its manifold problems were confirmed by numerous reports, plans and analyses produced by government agencies and researchers.

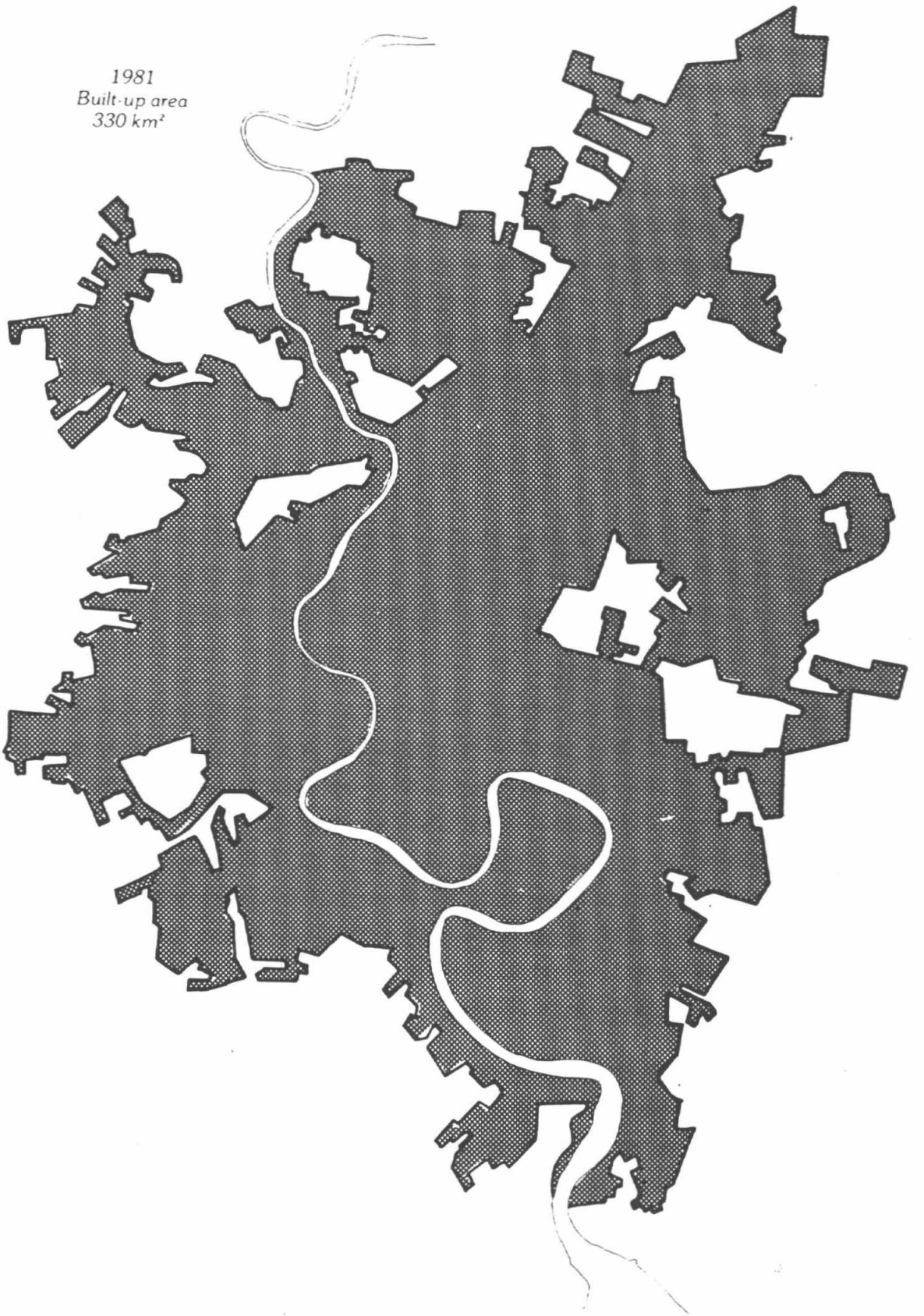
The early years of the decade saw the reconstruction of urban administration in the form of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, the formation of the National Housing Authority to co-ordinate public housing provision, and the creation of other agencies, such as the Expressway and Mass Transit Authority to improve transport and communication infrastructure. Studies in the years before had urged the adoption of an urban decentralization policy and a polycentric model of metropolitan urban development. This was embodied in the Greater Bangkok Plan 2000 prepared by the Department of Town and Country Planning. It was a reflection of the great power of the city's property interests that the plan, together with its zoning provisions, was rejected in 1978.

By the early 1970's the broad pattern of urban expansion followed the spatial trends evident in the previous decade, but at a much accelerated pace. Mixed commercial and residential development extended some 15 km. along Sukhumvit Road, a focus of the thrust of development into Phrakhanong. The Phrakhanong/Bangkapi area bordering

Map 1 Urbanised Areas of Bangkok[3]



3 Larry Sternstein: Portrait of Bangkok. Bangkok: Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. 1981. p.90-91.


1981
Built-up area
330 km²

Sukhumvit showed the highest concentration of new development by 1971. Mixed commercial-residential development also stretched north along the Phahonyothin Highway and southwest along the Phetchkasem highway.

Bangkok's development created a polycentric city with multiple nuclei - with business districts developing around Pratunam, Ratcha Prasong, Siam Square, Silom and Surawong. Since the 1970's further areas have developed, notably along Sukhumvit Road, with a strong concentration along Soi Asoke. The older hierarchy of markets, both food and goods, expanded with settlement, forming around important transport or community nodal points.

Retail food markets expanded and dispersed following population growth and settlement trends. Such markets persisted and continued to act as focal points of activity in Bangkok's neighbourhoods for a number of reasons: the established patterns of household food buying, the need for easy and regular access by lower income groups, and the relative ease of access into petty trading occupations.

The retailing patterns for other goods in Bangkok have undergone substantial change over the past thirty years, reflecting changes in production patterns as well as consumer tastes. The department stores, which first appeared in the 1930's in Bangkok, expanded considerably after WW II, in response to western retailing patterns as well as the increasing purchasing power of urban consumers, with tastes for imported products. The first stores were introduced by Chinese merchants and located in the Chinese district of Yaowarat. The trend of the 1950s was for the stores to move towards the Surawong-Silom area. By the mid-1960's another cluster of department stores had clustered in the Ratchaprasong and New Petchburi area. The next phase saw the emergence of the trade centres, such as the Indra Trade Centre (1969), and Ploenchit Arcade (1970), which focussed activity around the nodes formed by hotels and other services. Such centres were deliberately designed to attract people through the provision of a variety of attractions, including supermarkets and theatres. The complexes developed during this period became very popular with the younger generation of Bangkokians.

Expanding incomes among the growing white-collar work force (public and private sector) encouraged changes in traditional patterns of consumption, while changes in the rhythm of urban life and the development of the suburbs encouraged the trend towards "convenience" or "one-stop" shopping. The shopping complexes, comprising department

stores, supermarkets, offices, restaurants and entertainment centres expanded in number from the late 1970's. But most of the largest complexes date from the early 1980's, including the larger branches of Central, Robinson, New World and Mahboonkhrong Centre. While these stores multiplied their branches in the existing retailing districts, a developing trend from around 1983 was for branches to expand into the suburbs.

Housing for the low-income groups remain a problem throughout. By 1978 the NHA had abandoned its former reliance on a single policy of subsidized housing provision and adopted a multiple strategies approach which incorporated slum upgrading and sites and services projects on slum sites. The policy of slum upgrading acknowledged the fact that relocation of slum dwellers to new housing would often be at the expense of the people's livelihood. By the mid-1980's the government's housing policy subcommittee proposed the creation of 'employment sites' along with housing sites. Such a proposal fitted with the trend of thinking towards decentralized growth.

For the residents of the squatter slums however, the projects of the NHA could not alleviate the problem of eviction pressure, which was mounting under the impact of land development. In 1975 the NHA conducted its first survey of housing based on aerial photographs, judging that there 108 slum sites and an estimated 26,739 families. Two years later the estimate increased to 250 sites with 70,000 families. At this time 84 of the slum settlements were under eviction. A further assessment in 1982 estimates 410 slum sites with 90 under eviction. The slum eviction problem was addressed in a number of ways by concerned public agencies. For settlements on private land importance was placed on organizing the slum communities from within. Negotiation of understandings on tenure have tended to be more successful with public agencies.

1982-1991

In 1980 Bangkok's population topped 5 million people, with the urbanized area having grown 30% in the preceding decade to 239 square kilometres. Bangkok's level of urban centres of Thailand rose from 33 times larger than the next city in 1970 to 51 times in 1980. The influence of metropolitan activity in the central region was far wider than the statistics of urban growth suggested, and limiting the city's rate and extent of growth became the priority for planners. Planning agencies had turned their attention to Bangkok's urgent problems from the middle 1970's, and the fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan reflected such changes. The national plan aimed to establish a

balance in growth distribution between the country's regions and this mirrored the strategies embodies in the metropolitan plan of the Department of Town and Country Planning which stressed decentralized metropolitan growth, conservation of the rapidly depleting agricultural fringe land, decentralized commercial districts, and the limitation of private transport and traffic congestion .

In the 1980's, Bangkok's service sector has been increasingly geared to the reception of overseas visitors, as well as Thai tourists. In the 1980's tourism became the country's largest revenue earner. In 1984, Bangkok's larger hotels provided nearly 19,000 rooms, over 3 times the number in the country's second largest city of Chiangmai. From the early 1980's, despite the low occupancy ratios of hotels (largely due to the international recession) the decade saw many new hotels constructed in the central areas of the city. Between 1986 and 1990 , large establishments grew in number from 97 to 131.

In the national economy as a whole, agriculture's contribution to economic growth continued to dwindle and manufacturing continued to increase. Growth in the industrial sector, now in the direction of export products rather than import substitution, overwhelmingly favoured the Bangkok area, and new industries continued to locate near those services most important for supply and export. By the early 1980's there were some clear locational patterns in certain industrial sectors; for example plants manufacturing wearing apparel tended to concentrate in Klong San, Thonburi and Yannawa, with smaller concentrations in Phrakhanong and Samphanthawong. The majority of textile plants were heavily concentrated in the intermediate districts, including Ratburana, Bang Khun Thian, Phasi Charoen and Phrakhanong. For many other firms, however, there was a wide pattern of dispersal across the city. As with other aspects of planning, manufacturing land-use planning had been largely ineffective in concentrating industries in districts. although the unorganized character of industrial dispersal remained by the close of the 1980's, distinct precincts had emerged in the neighbouring provinces of Phathum Thani and Nonthaburi.

As for the pattern of residential development, the bulk of residential construction was undertaken by the private sector. Increasing suburban land prices have influenced the trend to more concentrated patterns of residential land development. Multi-storeyed condominium blocks are now supplying the middle and high-income market. Townhouses and detached houses are affordable only by higher income groups, in contrast to a few

years ago, when cheaper land on the outer suburbs kept prices within reach of Bangkokians with modest incomes.

For the least privileged sector of the population the early 1980's were not promising. The severe floods of 1983 highlighted the plight of people living in the worst-drained and serviced areas- namely the slum dwellers and squatters. The likelihood of eviction for slum settlements along the canals increased with the advent of the BMA's flood control measures. A study later showed that such could lead to a loss of 5,000 houses. New forms of housing - high-rise tenements, factory dormitories, construction site lodgings, many of which offered inferior accommodation to the slums are likely to increase too.

The suburban expansion of Bangkok, accelerating from the early 1970s, increasing industrialization and a booming service industry, have generated a sprawling city which exhibits a number of contrasting characteristics. In demographic terms it's fringe areas are the growth areas. The older inner city continues to lose population although it maintains many of the multiple business, small industry and residential functions of former days. The suburban landscape sprawls ever outwards, encouraged in the west by new roads and recently constructed bridges across the Chao Phraya River. To the eastward at LatKrabang and beyond, housing estates mix with new foreign-funded industrial complexes, describing the new sources of employment which continue to draw the rural population into the city and the lower-middle class out of the middle ring districts to the periphery. The socio-cultural characteristics of Bangkok's people and the social processes which have accompanied this generally unregulated urban explosion of Bangkok will now be discussed.[4]

2 Household, Community and Reciprocity

Bangkok was by the end of the Second World War a compact city with a small population. The boundaries of its urbanised area as perceived by the average Bangkokian, extended no further than the river Chaophraya to the west, Dusit to the north, Phadum-Krungkasem canal to the east and Sampheng to the south. The city, however, was

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4 For further details of urban problems and spatial developments, see Askew, The Making of Modern Bangkok.

extending eastwards and houses belonging to noblemen and wealthy people spread along Witthayu Road, Phyathai Road, and Silom Road. Nevertheless they were considered to be on the fringes of the city, convenient only for those with the wealth to afford the private transportation into the heart of the city to engage in their business.

By today's standards, Bangkok was a small city, with slow and limited means of transportation. The bases of wealtholding were landownership and to a lesser extent, trade. Status and wealth were to a large extent determined by birth and position in the civil and military services , with the groups enjoying these positions forming a very small majority of the population. Professionals - teachers, doctors, nurses and journalists, formed a small section of the workforce, only 3%. The bulk of the city workforce was made up of three large groups, entrepreneurs and traders (30%) a large number of whom were of Chinese origin; craftsmen and hired labourers (25%); fishermen, farmers (21%)[5].

In terms of social stratification and ranking, one contemporary observer saw Bangkok society as composed of these major subgroups: the **aristocracy**, consisting of members of the royal family and the old nobility; the **elite,** consisting of manufacturers, high military officers, high government officials, and professional men; the **upper middle class**, consisting of clerks, teachers, small businessmen, low government officials; the **lower middle class** consisting of skilled laborers, lowest government employees; and lastly the **lower class** consisting of unskilled labourers, peddlers, farmers, and fishermen.[6] These formed a pyramid, with very few members of the aristocracy, who were mainly land and property owners, at the top, and the bulk of labourers and farmers at the bottom. Though this picture may be an oversimplification, it serves to illustrate the basic status configuration of Bangkok's residents, a configuration which changed in content and scale in later years.

In this environment, the units of social organisation that featured in the daily experience of urban people centred first on household and kinship networks and secondly on community. The nature of relationships between individuals developed in these two social clusters was based on face-to-face, personal, mutual exchange. The predominant

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5 These are simplified from the 1947 census. See: Kan Samruat Sammano Khrua Thua Ratcha-anachak Thai B.E. 2490. Ministry of the Interior.

6 After the observation made by Wendell Blanchard, Thailand: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture. New Haven: HRAF Press 1958, p.410.

relationship, conceptualised as a fundamental unit comprising two people as a pair, was that between a superordinate and a subordinate who command different levels of power, status and wealth. The reciprocity between partners was expected to be long-term, characterised by mutual trust, and unspecialised, the latter meaning that the relationship encompassed all matters affecting the individual's life and concerns. The following discussion illustrates this pattern.

The Household and Kinship Network

It may be useful to take Blanchard's contemporary description of families in Bangkok in the 1950s as a starting point [7]. Blanchard identified two major types of family, (1) the aristocrat, upper-class, elite family, and (2) the middle and low-class family. Upper-class families lived in modified extended families in which married children built separate houses within the residential compound of the parents.

As for the middle and low-class families, these were not so much different from those of the rural areas. Blanchard suggested that the influence of the countryside in the city was present because of the mixed pattern of land use which allowed pockets of rural-style houses to mix with urban houses and shophouses. Among the Chinese, because they were not allowed to own land, the common land ownership which formed the basis of the extended family organisation was weakened. Nevertheless, much of the Chinese tradition of family control of its members and responsibility probably survived.

The results of our interviews appear to confirm the description by Blanchard of upper class households in that period. For example, the following account was given by one informant who is the grandson of a high-ranking civil servant of the rank of phraya who had a house in Phloenchit. The compound had three principal houses, each with a separate kitchen and a servant quarter. The owners were two brothers and one sister, their spouses and children. Servants were employed and their families lived in the compound too.

Compounds such as this one were numerous (forming an estimated 31% of total housing in Bangkok in the late 1950s), although details of the number of people living each compound and their actual kinship connections might differ from one another. Despite

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7 Blanchard, Op.cit.

these variations, the major relationships within the compound remained those between kinsmen and those between the owner of the house and his dependents. Both emphasize relationships between unequals, either by age or by status and wealth.

In many ways these relationships share the formal characteristics of the earlier relationships between *nai* and *phrai* (master and serfs) of the early Bangkok period.[8] Thus among kinsmen and family members, parents were expected to take full responsibility for raising their children who in return were expected to be grateful and take care of them in old age. The reciprocal exchanges were extended to kinsmen too. Kinsmen were expected to help one another, the older one taking care of the younger one who was expected to show respect, obedience and gratitude in return. Similarly a householder was seen as a man of high social status who was able to provide shelter and food, as well as opportunity for education or jobs for dependents who rendered their services in return. A memoir of a lady from an aristocratic family[9] describes her grandmother's house where she grew up as full of people, but half of them were either too young or too old to work. These dependents were fed, clothed and taken care of in time of sickness. On the other hand some servants served from the master's generation to that of his grandchildren. Such a relationship of service was expected to last from cradle to grave.

Turning from households of the upper class to less prestigious families - those of middle ranking and minor officials, traders, or self-employed artisans - we also find that the relationships of dependence were an important means to gain access to welfare and economic opportunity.

One well known writer[10] has described the household where he lived as a child in Tanao Road as being made up of five adjacent shophouses which his dentist uncle (his father's younger brother) rented from a prince. It housed his uncle's family (uncle, wife, two children, himself), his paternal grandmother, a divorced aunt, an unmarried uncle, and three families of dependents (the household heads being a horse carriage driver, a tram driver and a policeman). The author's father had his own house in Thonburi which was at

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8 See Akin Rabibhadana, The Organization of Thai Society in the Early Bangkok Period, 1782-1873. Data Paper no.74. Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program. 1969.

9 Pimsai (Svasti) Amaranand Cremation Volume

10 Khun Vichitmatra: Bangkok 70 Years Ago (in Thai). Bangkok: Ruangsin Press 1977.

that time an area of fruit gardens and thus too far away from his school. So he was sent to live with his uncle in the city.

In the case study of the Chinese district of Sampheng,[11] a similar pattern of relationships between shophouse owners and their apprentices can be noted. Shops in those days were places to conduct business as well as to live. The household was both an economic and a social unit where children were brought up, socialized, and learned about the management of the shop and trade practices. In the decade after the war, Chinese immigrants who settled in Bangkok still had close contact with their overseas family and relatives. According to some informants, the typical pattern was for young men who were born and grew up in Thailand to return to China and marry a Chinese wife. The marriage was arranged for them by the parents. The men came back leaving the wives in China and later visited them occasionally. When they managed to set up or carry on family business, they often received young immigrants into their shops as employees-cum-apprentices. The immigrants were introduced to them through a variety of channels such as family connections or membership of the same village. Uneducated and unskilled at first, the young apprentices began as domestic helpers doing household chores and other minor tasks in the shop. As years passed they acquired more experience and progressed to become shop managers. Some even managed to set up their own shops, often with the help of their patrons. The life history of one shop-owner who now sells Buddha images and Buddhist rite paraphernalia in Wanit Road, follows this path. His father migrated from China and began working in a shop dealing with Buddha images in Saphan Han. After several years he was promoted to the rank of *long chu* or manager. He then married the daughter of the shop-owner. In the mid 1930's, some nine years after he arrived in Bangkok, he set up his own shop a few yards away from that of his father in law. His children (our informants) carried on the trade to this day. This is just one example of the often repeated story of those we interviewed in Sampheng. Some of the older people in Sampheng also noted that in those days, it was considered a norm that newcomers should not set up a shop selling the same goods as those sold in existing shops. The exception was for children or apprentices who were seen as setting up branches of the old shop rather than competing with it. Thus apprentices who showed potential in business were treated as if they were the children of

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11 For details see Vimala Siriphong, "Changes among the Chinese Community of Sampheng" (in Thai), unpublished report submitted to the Socio-cultural Change and Political Development Project, TDRI. 1993

the shop-owner and the social relationships that they had with the shop-owners functioned as an access to economic resources and opportunity otherwise unavailable to them.

The household unit was, and still is for many, central to economic survival. Cultural ideals about family structure and family organization stressed that the interest of the collective unit was over and above that of individual members. The unit was represented by the head of household who was a male. Such ideals are upheld strongly and persist as long as the household remain a crucial economic unit. In the mid 1970's Juree's study of the Chinese of Talad Klang[12] confirms this point. Her study made a comparison between a group of public enterprise employees (SRT State Railway of Thailand) and a group of Chinese shopkeepers. Among the SRT employee community, the most prevalent form of family is the modified nuclear family, ie. two-generation family with bilateral kinsmen staying in the household. There were also families of three generations, childless couples (with dogs functioning as child-substitutes), and divorce parent with children. The common phenomenon of coopting bilateral kinsmen, adopting nephews and nieces was explained as a function of the rural origin of many householders whose STR position gave them high esteem in the eyes of their rural relatives and they thus had a special obligation to care for them.

Juree's study also confirms that reciprocity is a major principle determining family and household arrangement. Each individual is socialised in such a way as to recognise the values of kinship ties and kinship obligations. The more successful a person becomes, the more obligations he has towards helping his kin. Dependents who stay in the household are expected to make themselves useful and their rural parents often bring gifts in the form of food on their visits.

The family functioned as an economic unit. Some wives took professional jobs while many combined their home sites with commercial activities. Active transactions such as selling sweets and other edibles went on in the community. SRT men actively participated in the household chores such as washing, ironing, wiping the floor etc. The bulk of a man's monthly income was given to his wife to be administered by her.

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12 Juree Namsirichai Vichit-Vadakan: "Not Too High and Not Too Low: A Comparative Study of Thai and Chinese Middle-Class in Bangkok, Thailand." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley. 1979.

Among the Chinese shopkeepers, extended families (three generation family living under the formal leadership and authority of the eldest male) and modified extended families (authority rest with the eldest male in the second generation who shared it with his widowed mother) were the most common ones. The extended family was the ideal form , the persistence of which was viewed as a validation of the family's wealth, prestige, success, status vis-a-vis others in society. But Juree noted that wealth was the most important factor in contributing to the existence of an extended family.

Talad Klang Chinese by the mid 1970s were the staunchest upholders of traditional Chinese values and practices but it was also noted that a great number of so-called "Chinese" did not conform to such traditional pattern of values.

So comparing what informants reported about the pattern in Sampheng 40-50 years ago with Juree's more recent study of the Chinese shopkeepers and Thai employees, we can say that the pattern of reciprocal relationships in a household existed then and persisted through to a later period. Apart from the parent-child bond where reciprocity forms the basis of duties and obligations, it also underpins the relationships between householders and their rural relatives in the SRT case and shopkeepers and apprentices in the Chinese case.

The third group that formed another major subgroup of the urban population was the low-income group. After WW II the pattern of large slum settlement had not yet developed. The term "slum" itself was introduced later, in the 1960's. Descriptions of the life of slum dwellers or residents in overcrowded areas in that period are not available, but Akin's study of slum dwellers in Saphan Khao in the early 1970's[13] showed some characteristics of a long-established settlement typical of the earlier period.

The household and family organisation had a complicated arrangement, related to the facts that most slum dwellers had to make do with limited resources. Space was limited, a household frequently consisted of one rented room and there were, on average, 6-7 people living in one such room. In this situation it was a more plausible option to have another room built as an extension of an existing house in order to accommodate a couple of married children or relatives rather than seeking separate accommodation for them. In

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13 See Akin Rabibhadana: Bangkok Slum: Aspect of Social Organization. Ph.D. Thesis. Cornell University. 1985.

this way it is common to find a large proportion of stem families (3 generation family consisting of grandparent/s, parent/s, children) and extended families (up to 4 couples, related by blood and marriage usually through female connections, sharing the same household).

Limited space shaped the physical aspect of the household as well as family form, but according to Akin, another crucial factor was at play too, namely reciprocity. This is a principle of social organisation manifested in such values as *bun khun*, and *katanyu* which cement ties between parents and children, superordinate and subordinate (*luk phi* and *luk nong*). Significant behavioural patterns, real or expected, characteristic of relations in family and neighbourhood can be seen in this light. Aging parents in this slum community were invariably supported by their children, big men adopted children of relatives and friends upcountry and trained them in certain skills to make a living, neighbours who were not related by blood or marriage formed a patron-client relationship and used kinship idioms in their speech to strengthen ties even further. In this way, it is not surprising to find that slum households tended to grow. The expansion was not due to natural causes alone but to cooption of relatives and friends with whom reciprocal relationship had existed in the past, and hopefully would continue in the future. Patrons also played a key role as the protective interface between households and individuals with limited influence, and institutions and power holders outside the slum (police, for example) in the wider metropolitan urban socio-political order.

Community

Another aspect of life in old Bangkok that should be considered here concerns communal institutions and activities. While the term 'community' in an urban context for the sake of convenience, it should be pointed out that urban communities differ from the stereotype of rural communities. According to Jack Potter[14] a rural village is a localised unit whose members are related by kinship ties, as well as the necessity to cooperate and exchange labour at various stages of rice cultivation. Urban communities do not conform to such an ideal image. The exception may be found among rice-growing villages which could still be found on the periphery of Bangkok in the postwar years. One such community, Bang Chan, in Minburi, now a northeastern district of the Bangkok

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14 Jack Potter: Thai Peasant Social Structure. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1976.

Metropolitan Area, was studied by a group of American anthropologists in the 1950s[15]. It was found that neighbourhood was an important aspect of social organisation. Neighbours whose rice fields were next to each other went to their fields as a group. They assisted each other in regulating water, exchanging labour, and contributing to household ceremonies. When Bang Chan became urbanized and residents turned from rice growing to working to factories, neighbourhood ties declined.

As for communities in urban areas proper, though neighbourhood did not function in the same way, there existed institutions and activities which might be seen as communal-oriented. Such institutions were religious - Buddhist temples, Muslim mosques or shrines.

Theravada Buddhism, closely linked with the monarchy and the nation, has been the corner stone of Thai Society. It has provided a source of political ideology and an encompassing worldview giving meanings to human actions in the Thai state for many centuries. In the traditional urban context, its significance can be seen in three ways. First it functioned as a symbol of civilization which marked an urban centre out of its surrounding[16]. As in many traditional Southeast Asian states, a city was identified with its relic or image, for example in the case of Bangkok, the Emerald Buddha. Secondly, major temples functioned as channels through which young males from upcountry could come and stay in the city and were educated. A large number of novices and monks from provincial wats came to Bangkok for education and once they obtained their Buddhist university degree, the general pattern was for them to leave the monkhood and get a job in the government departments[17]. Another pattern was for boys to come to stay in Bangkok as temple boys, and received formal and informal education. There has also been a pattern for temporary migrants to stay in temples during their stay in Bangkok[18].

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15 See discussion and full references in Potter, Op.cit.

16 \ Takashi Tomosugi: "A Historical Perspective of Urbanism in Bangkok: from the viewpoint of the relationship between rural villages and Bangkok. Introduction: urbanism-being open to another world" in Takashi Tomosugi, Rethinking the Substantive Economy in Southeast Asia: On the Margins between Utilities and Meanings. Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo. 1991.

17 S.J.Tambiah: World Conqueror & World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1976.

18 Charles F. Keyes: Thailand: Buddhist Kingdom as Modern State Nation. Bangkok: Duang Kamol. 1989.

Thirdly, on a community level, temples functioned as a multidimensional centre of urban Thai communities[19]. In the past the abbot and the lay patron of a temple had far greater personal authority over the distribution of its resources, the major forms being its land and revenues. In this way the temple was administered by local people and poorer members of the community benefited from such things as renting temple land at a minimal cost. The local patrons were willing to support the temple as they earned prestige from it. The local temple thus functioned as a channel through which resources could be distributed to the poorer members of the community.

Aside from taking care of the welfare of the poor and migrants, activities organised on the temple grounds such as sermons, annual merit making occasions, or temple fairs, offered an opportunity for people of different wealth and social status to meet, interact and participate in collective activities. Some temple fairs such as the Wat Saket 'golden mountain' celebration have been a major event full of shows attracting both city and country people. On a smaller scale, temple celebrations have often involved traditional performances such as *Likey*, *Lakhon Chatri*, or *Lamtad*. It is to be noted that as urban communities experience transformations, the trend is for the form of entertainment to be less and less communal.

Urban communities then, were marked by the existence of a centre in the form of a religious institution which had land and revenues that were managed by members of the local communities. Such institutions provided a platform for collective activities.

Relationship of Long-term Reciprocity

Old Bangkok from the sociological point of view, can be seen as being made up of a set of relationships based on long term reciprocity between persons. Such relationships may be found among aristocrats and dependents, shopkeepers and apprentices, and slum big men and all their followers. These kinds of relationship provided a channel through which a person can have access to economic resources which took the forms of a position in the civil service, an opportunity for setting up one's own business, or an employment. It can be seen as a means of distributing resources and insuring personal welfare in a society where resources were unevenly allocated.

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19 Richard O'Connor, "Urbanism and Religion: Community, Hierarchy and Sanctity in Urban Thai Buddhist Temples". Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University. 1978.

But the significance of such relationship was not simply economic since it had established itself as the basis of cultural values in Thai culture. The cultural expressions based on kinship relations such as the moral obligations to reciprocate (*katanyu*, *bunkhun*) became a model for personal relationships with others who are non-kin. This is supported by the type of organisation which placed importance on households as both economic and social units, with activities that strengthened ties among kin and members of the households.

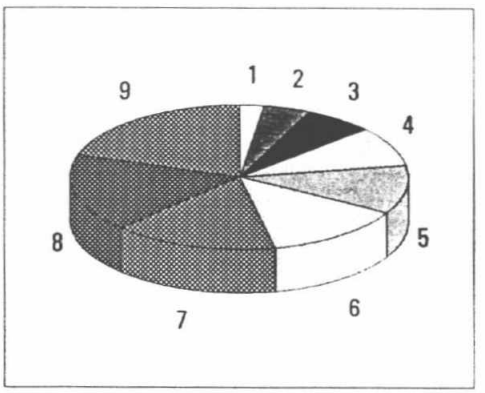
As a series of changes unfolded from WW II, these relationships began to break down. Factors such as mass migration into the city, uncoordinated urban expansion, inadequate provision of public services, changes in the occupational structure, the rise of the modern urban middle class, all worked and continue to work to undercut the social fabric which has made the long-term reciprocal relationships of traditional Thai society - and urban society as a subset of this - possible.

3 Population, Occupation and Migration

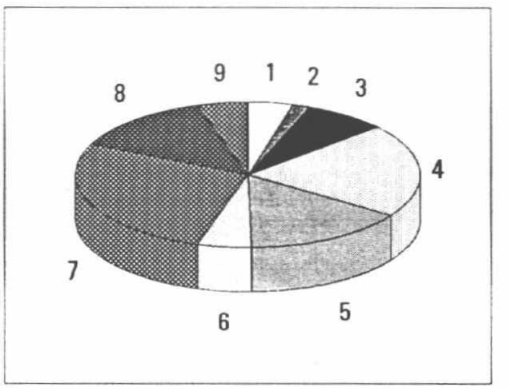
The survey of economic change in Section 1 shows that the economic basis of Bangkok over the past 40 years has changed from an economy based on the export of agricultural products, trade and small-scale industry, to manufacturing industry, tourism, and services related to both in formal and informal sectors and a massive urban consumer market. Coupled with rapid and uncoordinated urbanization, such changes were accompanied by a series social transformations. Here we will discuss two broad processes which have had significant affects on urban life, namely the change in the occupational structure of the urban workforce and rural-urban migration.

Occupational Change

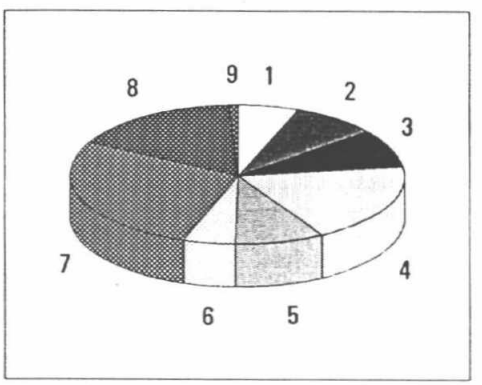
Figure 1 Bangkok Working Population, Classified by Occupation 1947-1989[20]



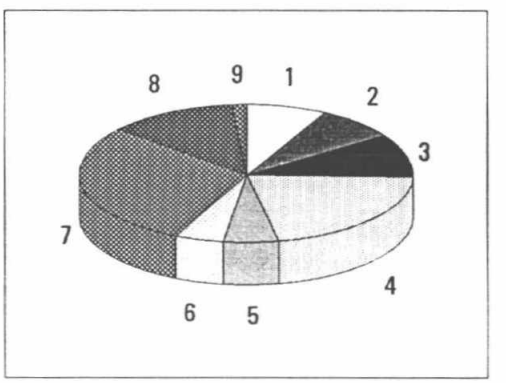
1947



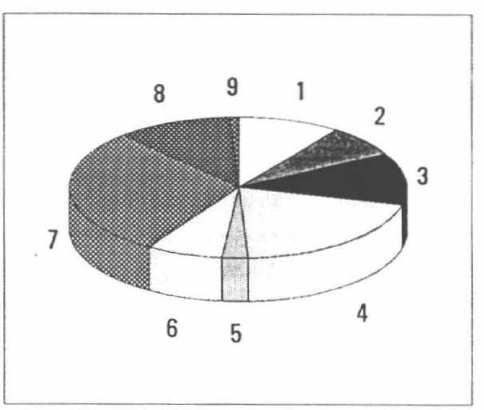
1960



1970



1980



1989

Occupation

1. Professional/Technical
2. Adminstrative, Executive, Managerial
3. Clerical
4. Sales
5. Farmers, Fishermen, Hunters, Loggers, etc.
6. Transport and Communication
7. Craftsmen, Production process, Labourers
8. Service, Sports and Recreational
9. Unclassifiable

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20 Sources: The Royal Thai Kingdom Population Census 1947. Registry Office, Interiors Ministry. Thailand Population Census 1960. Central Statistical Office, National Economic Development Board. Thailand Population and Housing Census 1970. Central Statistical Office, Office of the Prime Minister. Thailand Population and Housing Census 1980. Central Statistical Office, Office of the Prime Menister. First Round Labour Report, February 1989. Central Statistical Office, Office of the Prime Minister.

According to the census classifications, by 1950 the population of Bangkok comprised four main occupational groups: government employees, commercial entrepreneurs, craftsmen and labourers, and agricultural workers. Government employees ranged from professionals such as doctors, nurses, university professors, schoolteachers, members of the armed and police forces, to clerks, drivers and caretakers. Occupational categories which more or less represented government employees, make up about 12% of the working population of Bangkok.

Those engaged in commercial activities, comprising businessmen, shopkeepers and traders, the majority of whom were Chinese, made up about 30%. The agricultural sector included paddy farmers, fishermen, vegetable and fruit growers, the majority of them were Thai, and contributed about 21%. The last groups consisted of *chang* (craftsmen, skilled workers) of several kinds, including carpenters, bricklayers, goldsmiths, jewelry makers, electrical repairmen, mechanics, shoemakers, tailors, dressmakers, barbers etc. Unskilled labourers were also counted within this group and together these groups of skilled and unskilled manual workers made up 25% of the working population.

Since the mid 1950s it is clear that there has been a steady growth in the professional sector. Demands for medical, legal, educational and technical expertise increased in response to social, economic and technological changes, changing standards and expectations. Doctors, engineers, architects, nurses, university professors, school teachers, lawyers, accountants, professional performers, accountants are the groups that expanded significantly. These occupations required university education and preferably from abroad. The proportion of women entering these occupations increased. In 1947 the ratio of male to female professionals was 69:31, while in 1980 it was reversed to 44:56. Among the clerical workers the ratio was 82:18 in 1947, and 51:49 in 1989. Figures for sales workers also show the same trend.

Occupational groups which can be broadly classified as white-collar, such as managerial, clerical and office workers of different kinds, also grew rapidly. The economic boom since the mid 50s resulted in the growth of banking and financial institutions and business corporations, all of which needed an army of secretaries, typists, bookkeepers, telephone operators and the like. Since the 1980s in particular, the growth of information processing technology also opened up jobs like computer technicians and programmers.

New forms and practices in commercial activities also created new kinds of job. The majority of Chinese merchants up until WW II were small scale traders who were shop-owners and operators. After the war, wholesale merchants began to employ salesmen. The biography of Thiem Chokewatana, the founder of Saha-phatthanaphibul, one of the largest dealers of consumer goods[21], tells of how he successfully introduced the use of salesmen to advertise new goods to upcountry people. Changes in the retail goods trade towards department stores and then large shopping complexes in the 1970's, introduced shop assistants as a significant group into the labour market. Salesmen and shop assistants increased from 7,504 (1.98%) in 1947 to 165, 723 (8.83%) in 1980.

The broad category of the service sector which covered a wide selection of occupations also expanded from the share of 6% of total working force in 1947 to 11% in 1990. It should be noted that in 1947, service occupations involved domestic services (laundry workers, cooks, maids, gardeners, chauffeurs) and services in institutions (nightswatchmen, hairdressers, waitresses, midwives, traditional-styled masseuses and doctors). The old-style activities such as midwives and herbal doctors were replaced by modern professionals. The boom in tourist related business: hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, transport for tourists, added new jobs such as airline hostesses, guides, souvenir shop assistants, as well as prostitutes of various forms. These positions are occupied largely by rural-urban migrants and particularly women. The growth of the urban population gave rise to physical expansion of the city, push the boundary of Bangkok further and further. Combined with the urban rhythm of fixed working hours, these conditions generated needs for the services of bus drivers, ticket collectors, taxi drivers, motorcycle riders, food vendors, stall operators, and various other formal and informal service activities.

The rapid transformation of agricultural land into suburban areas of the city, which began in the 1950s and accelerated in the 1960s, turned the landscape of Bangkok into one of sprawling shophouses and housing estates. With it came the sharp decline in agriculture-related occupations from 20.6% of the total workforce in 1947 to 2.52% in 1989. In the early period some agricultural workers transferred to low-skilled or service jobs in the city. When manufacturing industries sprang up in the outlying areas of Samut

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21 Somchai Wiriyabanditkun: *Sahaphatthana: To Laew Taek: Taek Laew To*. Bangkok: Phu Chat Kan. 1990.

Prakan, and later Prathumthani and Samut Sakhon, a large number of these workers were absorbed into factory work. Bang Chan in Minburi, for example. has been turned into a suburb of Bangkok with the establishment of Bang Chan industrial estate and numerous private housing development schemes. Some of the local rice growing families who remain there now work in factories in the estate, some work as gardeners, or security guards in the new housing estates (*muban jat san*).

In sum, the general trends of change in Bangkok's occupational structure over the past 40 years have been the steady decline of the agricultural sector, the growth of professional and white collar workers, and the increase of jobs in the service sector. Though by WW II the occupational structure of Bangkok was far from homogeneous, it has become increasingly pluralistic, involving greater differentiation of jobs which are filled by people who have moved to Bangkok from various regions, and from different background.

Population and Migration

After four decades of urban-biassed development, the status of Bangkok as a primate city has been strongly reinforced. Its primacy can be measured as the ratio between the Bangkok population and the second most populous centre in Thailand. Around the turn of the century, Bangkok's population was 11 times that of Chiangmai, in 1960 and 1980 it was 35 and 55 times respectively [22]. The share of Bangkok population has also increased from 8.1% of the total population of Thailand in 1960 to 11% in 1990.[23]

In terms of the actual number of people, the size of Bangkok's population (including Thonburi) went up from just over 1m. people in 1947 to around 6m. in 1989. Unofficial estimates put the figure up even higher to 7m. in 1990 . Considering that Bangkok had expanded to cover adjacent provinces, the population of BMR (Bangkok, Thonburi, Nonthaburi, Pathumthani, Samut Prakan, Samut Sakhon, Nakhon Pathom) approached 9m. in 1990[24]. Further, the different basis of calculation yield varying

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22 Larry Sternstein, Op.cit.

23 National Statistical Office (NSO), Population and Housing Census. Calculated by Charles Setchell,"The Emerging Crisis in Bangkok: Thailand's Next "Boom". A report submitted to the Thailand Development Research Institute Foundation. 1991. p. A-7.

24 NSO, Op.cit.

estimates of total population. The timing of the census enumerations often understate the number of upcountry people working at seasonal employment; while calculations based on house registration data also underestimate the resident population considerably.

The rate of population growth of Bangkok began to outpace that for the country as a whole from the mid-19th century. This increasing rate has been attributed to two factors: natural increase and in-migration, which affected Bangkok differently from the rest of the country. During the first decades of this century, the population of Thailand grew hugely largely as a consequence of rapidly declining mortality coupled with sustained high fertility. In the 40's and 50's the rate of population growth was accelerated by natural increase. Later in the 1950s and 1960s there was a significant upturn in net rural to urban in-migration, though the trend was offset by a downturn in fertility rates which began earlier in the capital. In-migration continued to account for population growth in the 1970s.

Although in-migration is not an entirely new phenomenon for Bangkok (immigrants, war refugees, war prisoners, dependants of princes and noblemen, had all settled in the capital city ever since its foundation), the streams of modern migrants that began to reach Bangkok in the 60's have to be seen in a different context. These were rural-urban migrants who mainly came to seek employment; a large number of them were young and single women, and many expected their stay in Bangkok to be only temporary.

Studies of migration to-date are numerous, and yet confusing.[25] It may be concluded from a review by Goldstein[26], an authority on migration study in Thailand, that in the last 40 years Bangkok attracted migrants more and faster than any other region. From 1960-1980 there were steady increases in the actual numbers of migrants and growth rate of migration into Bangkok. It was only by 1980 that peripheral areas of Bangkok such as Nonthaburi, Phathumthani and Samut Prakan began to show a faster rate.

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25 See an extensive and critical review which points out several gaps in the existing literature and concludes that in fact there is no comprehensive study of migration to Bangkok in Somboon Siriprachai, Migrants from rural areas into Bangkok. (in Thai) Research Report. Thammasat University, Thai Khadi Research Institute. 1985.

26 Sidney Goldstein and Alice Goldstein: Migration in Thailand: A Twenty-five-year Review. Papers of the East-West Population Institute. Number 100, July 1986. Hawaii: East-West Center, Honolulu. Subsequent figures on migration are quoted from this paper.

Literature on migration in general divides migrants into two categories: life-time migrants and five-year (or recent) migrants, following the questions introduced since the 1960 Census. The former are those whose place of birth differ from their present place of residence and the latter are those whose place of residence in the preceding five years differ from their present one. As far as life-time migration is concerned, in 1960 Bangkok contained a far higher percentage of life-time migrants in its population than any other region - ie. 22.8% in Bangkok as against 7.7-10.9% in other regions. By 1970 life-time migration all over the country increased as a whole (13.1%) yet the percentage in Bangkok rose to 27%, suggesting that population growth in Bangkok in 1960-1970 was largely due to such migration.

It is hard to pin down just when the influx of migrants started reaching Bangkok and impacting significantly on its population growth. The census figures suggest 1960-1970 but this periodization is conditioned by the years when the censuses were taken. Another rough calculation is to consider that the worldwide baby boom trend began after the WW II, and assuming that these post-war babies began entering the labour market at the age of 15, the date when this new generation entering the labour force would be around 1960. It is likely then that the influx of migrants began in the early 60's.

By 1980 however, the movement to Bangkok appeared to have slowed down. Inter-regional movement rose during 1970-1980 but in 1980 only 36% of inter-regional lifetime moves were to Bangkok in comparison with 42% in 1970. At the same time movement to the Central Region rose significantly. Goldstein suggests that such increase may reflect the spill over from Bangkok.

As for recent migration, the total number increased from 131,370 in 1955-60 to 298,791 in 1965-70 and 340,792 in 1975-80. Recent or five-year migration appeared to have increased significantly in 1960s as well. Its percentages as a proportion of the capital's population are as follows: 1960: 7.3%, 1970:11%, 1980: 8%. It is noted that the central region also experienced a sharp increase (4% in 1955-60 to 7% in 1965-70) and this may reflect the growing metropolitanisation of Bangkok in that the capital's functional population overflowed into the adjoining provinces of the central region. Recent migration at the nationwide level dropped in 1975-80, and Goldstein suggests from this trend that the most dramatic economic and social changes seemed to have occurred through the 1960s. Nevertheless when large streams (over 5,000 people) of interprovincial movements are identified, it is found that the destination of the majority of these streams is Bangkok and

this pattern continued well into the 60's, suggesting that while recent migration all over the country dropped in the 1970s, recent migration into Bangkok continued to grow.

The majority of migrants to Bangkok were from the Central Region throughout the period 1955-1980. The percentage however declined steadily from 61.82% (of total migrants) in 1955-60 to 42.37% in 1975-80, while by contrast the percentage of migrants from the northeast shows a steady increase from 20.35% to 35.11% during the same periods. A significant rise of northeasterners appeared in the data on migrants to Bangkok during 1975-1980.

Seeking work is the predominant reason given for migration all through the period for both males and females in the enumerations. Education is another major factor. The census data have a number of serious limitations. Temporary movement is an important phenomenon that is difficult to measure. Goldstein notes that a growing body of evidence suggests that this movement is circular, consisting of migrants who return to rural areas on a regular basis, and recent studies confirm this supposition.[27] Such movement has important social implications since it plays a key role in the adjustment of strategies of individuals and households at origin and destination. The recent BMA/TDRI report (1991) estimates that each year, over 2 million migrants move to Bangkok in the dry season.

Rural - Urban Disparity

Migration reflects the lop-sided relationship between urban and rural areas as it is a consequence of the interaction of the push factors (unfavourable conditions such as rural poverty, fluctuating prices of agricultural produce) and pull factors (urban attractions such as job opportunities, educational institutions, entertainment and lifestyle attractions). An early study of Bangkok pedicab drivers exemplifies this model. Bangkok in the late 50's offered ample opportunity for unskilled and semi-skilled workers to get well paid jobs of which Samlor driving was one, with earnings 3-times that of construction workers, or gardeners. A survey of 500 pedicab drivers showed that shortage of water put pressure on agriculture back in the villages while the city offered good economic prospects, as well as adventure, experience and prestige for those moving from country to city.

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27 Kritaya Archavanitkul et. al, "Sources of Data on Migration and Urbanization in Thailand: Reflections on Data Collection Techniques, Definitions, and Results". Paper presented at the Workshop on Migration and Urbanization Policy in Thailand: Review of Existing Data and required Areas of Research. Bangkok, 19 April 1993.

Klausner's study of Isan migrants in Bangkok in the late 1950s identified 6 factors which account for migration [28]: (1) Owing to financial aids from USA and international agencies, industrial development projects were launched and gave rise to a need for cheap labour in and around Bangkok. (2) In the previous 4-5 years the northeast suffered from severe draughts. (3) Communication and transportation systems were improved. (4) Villagers became more exposed to city life, especially Bangkok. (5) Young men and women had a strong desire to see the civilized 'City of Angels'. (6) There were already a sizeable number of Isan monks living in Bangkok who could assist newcomers. He further noted that Isan migrants were bound by family ties and obligations to send remittances of money in order to support their families and particularly younger siblings.

As time went by, the list of push and pull factors became longer, but it is interesting to note that different periods place an emphasis on different factors. Sternstein's study[29] of 2,178 migrants in Bangkok in 1970 found that the majority came to Bangkok to further their education and to get a job in the civil service. Only a minority of migrants cited crop failure or natural disaster as a push factor. Another interesting pattern appeared in the breakdown according to sex and region of origin. It was only among male migrants from non-municipal areas that finding a job was a predominant reason; for the rest the main reason was education. Among female migrants, family-related reasons such as accompanying a spouse or relatives and households, showed a higher percentage than among their male counterparts. Such reasons highlight the dependent nature of women's position in decision making for migration at this time.

In the 80's Suchart's study raised yet a different set of factors[30]. (1) Increasing landlessness caused by uncontrolled patterns of landholding and absentee landlordism. Farmers became tenant farmers and landless labourers and finally migrated. (2) Population growth had gone beyond the limit that could be supported by rural resources. (3) New technology led to unemployment in certain processes of production. (4) Differential economic opportunity between regions encouraged people to seek higher income. (5) High crime rates in rural areas was another important push factor cited. (6) Good transportation systems facilitated migration. The fifth factor appears to be a new finding though it is not

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28 Klausner 1961, quoted in Somboon, Op. cit. p.358.

29 Sternstein 1975, quoted in Somboon, Op.cit. p.406.

30 Suchart 1983, quoted in Somboon, Op.cit. p.431.

clear if crime rates in rural areas has always been high or whether it was a consequence of some other changes. It is also doubtful if urban crime rate is lower, or if migrants feel more secure in the urban environment of a large city. Finally, Rangsan (1983) suggested that the pull factor was the concentration of manufacturing industries in and around Bangkok, while poverty and unemployment constituted the major push factors.

More recent studies follow the model of unequal development of centre and periphery, which explains the growth of the so-called "primate city" in third world countries. Development of capitalism in these societies was conditioned by the expanding world economic system which developed in such a way as to benefit the centre. At the level of each country, vast gaps develop between urban and rural areas in terms of resources, income, opportunities. Migrants leave villages to serve as cheap labourers in towns and especially the primate cities. These migrants, contrary to other views, do not enjoy the benefits of employment opportunity but suffer from low income, poor living conditions and low social mobility. Instead of being rational enterprising individuals, they are the victims of development.

Douglass's study can serve as an example that follows this framework[31]. He described the poor conditions of migrants who form the slum population in the late 70's: job insecurity, only 8% owned land, irregular income, even the semi-skilled earned on a daily basis, and their chance of getting a job depended on local entrepreneurs. The migrants tried to adopt a strategy of 'sacrifice-for-children's education' but this was not possible because of limited circumstances such as poor access to school caused by lack of official registrations, and the need for children to work to supplement the family income. So migrants in fact experienced low social and occupational mobility. "Contrary to much conventional wisdom on the subject of rural-urban migration...., they do not become petty entrepreneurs in the so-called informal sector. They enter directly into unskilled wage work in small and large firms alike. The occupations into which they enter comprise the categories of poverty in the metropolis."[32].

By mid 1970s unemployment among rural-Bangkok migrants became even higher with sharper competition for jobs which required higher skill and training, resulting in

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31 Mike Douglass: Regional Integration on the Capitalist Periphery: The Central Plains of Thailand. The Hague: Institute of Social Studies.

32 Op.cit. p.150.

77.3% living below the poverty line. Douglass also noted that the proportion of migrants going into unskilled jobs was twice higher than that of the Bangkok-born. Men went into small to medium-sized factories while women went to large-scale, foreign owned firms[33]

As well showing economic disparity, the migration phenomenon also points to the cultural domination of the city in the eyes of rural people. It has been observed that economic motivation alone cannot fully explain the phenomenon[34]. What attracts migrants to Bangkok is not a promise of a job alone, so much as a complex social and cultural process. Particular attention should be paid to sojourners, or temporary migrants, who move in a circular pattern between Bangkok and other provinces. Sojourners are mostly young men and women, often single. Their journeys can be explained by these factors. First, country people have become more and more exposed to urban culture via improved system of communications. Television presents images of the elegant or more fashionable way of life, superior patterns of consumption which make their own lives appear wretched and tedious. The discrepancy between the city and the country is further reinforced when friends and relatives return home in fine clothes. The magic spell of Bangkok is cast.

Secondly, the culture of *pai thieao* (going away on an outing, taking a holiday) is already an integral part of Thai life. Because the journey is thought to be temporary only, it becomes easier to make a decision to go away from home. Besides, it also helps migrants tolerate the low wages and poor conditions of living in the city. Thirdly, migrants, especially from the northeast, are able to survive and adjust themselves to life in the city because they rely on a network of relatives and friends to find accommodation, jobs, or even to set up their own business in some cases. And finally, the middle class city households are always in need of domestic helpers and create jobs suitable for temporary migrants. For males, the work on construction sites, or work as security guards for apartments, condominiums, hotels and businesses are options.

In the worldview of people in the provinces, then, Bangkok occupies a very special cultural position. The capital has always been a symbol of the centre of the world outside their little villages. Through time, the force and attraction of this centre have changed in

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33 Op.cit. p.138-140.

34 Juree Vichit-Vadakan "Small Towns and Regional Urban Centres: Reflections on Diverting Bangkok-bound Migration", Thai Journal of Development Administration. Vol. 23, No. 1, January 1983. pp.79-99.

content from Buddhism and the monarchy in the traditional era to the centre of development and consumption in the present age of modernisation.

4 The Waning of the Old Ways of Life

The dissolution of the aristocrat and noblemen's large compounds had begun before the Second World War. In many cases, this breaking up was a normal part in the course of the domestic cycle, a compound was sold after the death of the owner or the demise, dispersal or movement of the descendants of the family line. In the case of Kromluang Sapphasat's palace on Tanao Road, shortly after the death of the prince, the compound was sold and the palace pulled down, leaving only the name to the locality now known as Sapphasat junction. Nevertheless the process was accelerated by another factor: rapidly changing patterns of land use in the inner city. Since the WW II, much of the residential land within the inner city was quickly turned into commercial use while new suburban frontiers were being opened up for residential use.

For the description of how old communities transformed on the ground, we will present extracts from two case studies in the inner city, one in Banglamphu and the other in Sampheng.

In the Banglamphu case[35] we can note the following processes: (1) the decline of the pattern of coexistence among subgroups, some wealthier, some poorer, in the same locality, (2) the change in the attitude of the local institutions that used to tolerate use of land by groups in the community, and (3) the differential strength of each community in withstanding pressures from outside.

Banglamphu

The period after WW II marks a turning point in the history of the Banglamphu area. As shown in Section 1 and Section 3 above, the population rose dramatically after the war while there was also a movement of the wealthier people away from the area. Local people identify this time as the period of the coming of 'the strangers' to their

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35 This section comprises summary and extracts from Marc Askew, The Banglamphu District: A Portrait of Change in Inner Bangkok. Background Report, TDRI 1993 Year-End Conference. Who Gets What and How? Challenges for the Future. For further details and full citation see the original report.

communities. But the transformation was also economic and marked the beginning of irreversible changes to the lives of the people.

Until some thirty five years ago, Ban Phan Thom, on the northern side of the Banglamphu canal opposite Wat Bowoniwet, was still distinctive for the craftsmen who made bowls. The identity of the area is recognised by the livelihoods of its inhabitants, like many other parts of Bangkok. The processes which destroyed the identity of Ban Phan Thom are both economic, social and physical. In the post WW II years the advent of machinery and materials to produce cheaper bowls undercut the livelihood of the families of the area. By this time the production of bowls took place in workshops attached to the homes of families which followed a variety of occupations, but particularly the highly favoured government service.

While the competition from the automated factories reduced the number of workshops in Bang Pan Thom, other pressures were affecting the craftspeople. Reduced in number and suffering reduced income, these people were increasingly forced to leave the area as land changed hands. Since many of the workers rented their homes, they were vulnerable when traditional owners left Ban Pan Thom. This was increasingly the case in the post WW II period, when families of the old Phraya, Phra and Luang moved away, selling the old Durian gardens and banana plantations for the attractions of the northern or eastern suburban areas of Bangkok. Phraya Phipit was a major landowner in the area. At his death, his land was sold and subdivided.

In another neighbourhood, Trok Bowon Rangsi, insecurity of land tenure was experienced in another way. Until the 1950's this area comprised relatively large wooden houses with Thai families of long standing, most of them working in the government service with all the status and stability that these positions conferred. Most of the male household heads worked for the government in some capacity. The land was rented from Wat Bowoniwet on long leases, the houses themselves were built by their ancestors who were the first leaseholders. Changes in the trok began occurring after WW II when numbers of older residents moved away and let their homes to tenants from upcountry. Increasingly, and with the wat showing little concern, the area became congested with the new houses built by leaseholders to house immigrants from the country, especially Isan. As long as the tenure pattern persisted, however, this neighbourhood could survive, even in its altered state, because many of the older residents still remained in the area. They were either the poorer ones who could not afford to move their homes elsewhere, or they

preferred to stay in the area where they had grown up. Pa Daeng, 68, came as a child from Ayutthaya to live with her grandfather who had built his compound house in Trok Bowon Rangsi on land he rented from the wat. Up until three years ago, when a new brick fence had been built facing the trok, Pa Daeng's house featured an imposing old wooden entrance archway. The lower floor of this Thai-style house was covered in by concrete walls to accommodate Pa Daeng's granddaughter. This house was passed on to her when her grandfather died. People asked Pa Daeng many times to rent the house from her in order to sublet rooms to workers. Owners could receive as much as 1000 baht in rent per month. But she did not want to leave the neighbourhood.

Changes in institutional attitudes have affected the once-customary security of tenure, which was based not on contract, but common understandings between the wat and community. In the past, community and wat co-existed in the urban environment of the basis of common assumptions of long-term coexistence. However circumstances in the changing environment of Bangkok are rendering these older understandings obsolete. Land is now too precious for the wats, and demands for the uses of that land are gradually pressuring older communities. Two years ago there was a fire in Bowon Rangsi which destroyed over 20 houses and left many people without homes, including Pa Daeng. The wat seized this opportunity to prevent the rebuilding of houses, choosing to wait for existing leases to lapse and then implement plans to extend the grounds of the secondary school adjacent to the wat. While homeowners comprised the minority of dwellers in Bowon Rangsi, their houses were in most cases their only capital asset. They were impossible to insure because of the crowded and fire prone conditions of the neighbourhood. The Trok was so narrow that the fire trucks could not get through to the site of the fire. Pa Daeng, like her nine neighbours who were resident owners (unlike the absentee owners), lost everything. With their houses and other belongings destroyed, former home owners could not accept the offer of the district office of alternative accommodation at housing estates in the suburbs, which involved substantial deposits and payment by installment. This neighbourhood, earmarked by the wat's plan for demolition and the extension of the wat school, will disappear soon, including all the people and their buildings in the trok whose land is owned by the wat. The monks of Wat Bowoniwet who every morning pass through Trek Bowon Rangsi for their alms, show no interest in the people's plight. Some people are angry at the wat for its indifference to their plight. Others are incapable of feeling hostility, accustomed as they are to showing a reverent

respect for religious institutions, and unused to thinking of a wat as a corporate organization making business-like decisions regarding its land.

By contrast with Trok Bowon Rangsi, the land of Ban Deuk Din is privately owned by its Muslim community. This assures the persistence of the community's territory. After a disastrous fire which destroyed over fifty of the neighbourhood's old wooden houses a number of years ago, the owners, supported by the Islamic communities of Bangkok, were able to recover and rebuild their homes, most of them in brick. Unlike Bowon Rangsi, which did not have any leadership structure in the neighbourhood, the people of Ban Deuk Din already enjoyed a high level of organization through their mosque. The experience of the fire indeed helped to galvanize the community of Ban Deuk Din, whereas by contrast it demoralized the people of Bowon Rangsi. Security of tenure in addition to communal coherence through religious traditions underlie the persistence of Ban Deuk Din.

Ban Deuk Din was once known for its goldsmiths and gold-leaf makers. Today only two male household heads carry on this craft, while an elderly woman carries on the production of gold-leaf on a part-time basis. Younger members of the families are in professions or businesses unconnected with gold crafts. Nevertheless neighbourhood identity through continuity of residence has been maintained. But ownership of land is not enough to resist the pressures of change in the urban environment. In a short time the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration aims to cut a bypass connection Dinso Road with Tanao Road on land which the BMA owns or has bought. This will destroy the seclusion of the mosque and community. Local people are angry but they can do nothing to prevent this development. The original Ban Deuk Din was cut in half by Rajdamnoen Avenue one hundred years ago by King Rama V in the name of modernization and now the remains of that old 'ban' settlement will again be carved up, but this time by the BMA in the name of efficient urban management.

Sampheng

Sampheng has enjoyed continuity and identity as a Chinese trading district for over 200 years. Although it is known as the 'China Town' of Bangkok, at the end of WW II, the area was a mixed settlement of both Chinese, Indians, and ethnic Thai. Similar to Banglamphu, the wealthy people began to move out to new suburbs in that period. The old compounds were rented or sold up. The Sinhaseni family, for example, used to live in a

compound on the bank of the Chaophraya River, close to Wat Chakkrawat. The last owner sold it to a property developer who is turning it into a condominium tower. The shopkeepers who did well in their business began to move out too, resulting in many shops being turned into offices that open during the office-hours only. The owners come in the morning in their cars. As the roads in Sampheng are very narrow and cars are not allowed in during daytime, some of the temple grounds have been turned into car parks.

Nowadays Sampheng comes alive around 10 am., becomes busy and crowded at lunch time and in the early afternoon, and becomes quiet again around 4-5 pm. After 5 pm., most of the shops will be closed. Older shopkeepers remember that it was not like this forty years ago. In those days activities started in the early morning. Shopkeepers and their family slept upstairs, as soon as they got up the shops were open and they remained so until 8 or 9 in the evening. As they no longer live on the premises, working hours have become shorter. Even those who still live there have adopted this new pattern. One goldsmith explains that the place is deserted when others leave their offices, so he feels it is not safe to continue open until late.

The system of apprenticeship too has disappeared as political and economic conditions have altered. After the Communist takeover in China, migration from the mainland was prohibited. The streams of young men who had some connections with the shopkeepers were thus discontinued while Sampheng business had to go on. One solution was to recruit employees from rural migrants. Some of these were Chinese descendents, or recommended by friends and relatives, but a large number were young men from upcountry. Gradually a new method appeared in the form of informal employment offices, the well known one of which is located in a coffee shop on the corner of Phat Sai Road. Yet the new employees cannot replace overseas migrants entirely. They do not see their employment as a life-time career. The usual pattern is for them to return to their rural villages at least once a year and upon their return to Bangkok they often seek a new employment. As has been described earlier, migration has complex roots, both economic and cultural. Rural migrants change jobs to seek better payment, new opportunities or new experiences. Many go where their friends do. From the point of view of the shopkeepers, the new type of employees are only a temporary labour force. They also come from a different cultural backgrounds, eat different food, speak a different language. These circumstances do not allow both sides to enter a life-long relationship as masters and apprentices did in the past.

The modern economy also creates demands for another group of employees. For many shops which turned themselves into larger scale companies, employees with specialised skills in accountancy, marketing, personnel management and computer programming are needed. These people are employed on a contractual and formal basis. Details of wages, job descriptions, working hours, holidays, bonuses need to be spelled out.

While the trends are for Sampheng to adopt more modern and formal practices, in reality tradition persists in some shops and shophouses. A survey of Sampheng shows that from both commercial and social points of view, there exist at least four types of business establishments.

First, the traditional style. Examples are shops selling objects related to Buddhist ceremonies such as incense, candles, artificial flowers and garlands, gifts for monks; those selling old-style sarongs; tea leaves; lanterns and Chinese funerary objects. Some fabric shops can also be included. Present shopkeepers are children of, or related to the previous ones and carry on the business. They need special skill for producing the goods, as in the case of lanterns or artificial garlands, or years of experience as in the case of tea leaves, sarongs or fabrics. These goods have a very special niche in the market. Daily management is carried out by the craftsmen/shopkeepers themselves with the help of their spouse, a relative or an employee who live in the shophouses. But this pattern may soon have to go too, as none can pass it on to the next generation. Their children all have a modern education and already have a job of their own outside the community. Moreover, none shows any interest in running the shop. The owner of the Buddhist items shop says that when she goes, the shop goes with her.

Second, shops in transition. These are shops such as the herbal medicine dispensary, the distributor of oil lamps (used by fishermen and chicken farmers) and a special brand of haircream, and a knitwear shop. These shops appear to be run by an employee with long years of service whom the owner who lives elsewhere and has another job or business can trust. Similar to the first type, their goods have a secure place in the market and they have a group of regular customers.

Third, the formal, modern type. These establishments take the form of companies, limited liability or partnerships. But aside from moving into the formal legal transactions, they also adopt different appearance and form of management. Examples are shops such as

a souvenir shop and gift shops, or the office of a distributor of glasswear from Europe. Employees are classified according to the job description. Shop employees wear shop uniforms and have definite working hours. The shops function as a place where goods are displayed in air-conditioned, glass showrooms. Gift and souvenirs shops are recent phenomena in Sampheng which have flourished in the last five years and a few of them have adopted the new appearance. Their goods: dolls, hair clips, bags, purses, slippers, and other kitsches which have popular appeal, particularly among teenage girls, are distributed to department stores where prices will be marked up tremendously. Other shopkeepers are not happy with trade practices of these new shops, saying that some of them have violated the commonly understood ethics of traders in Sampheng. For example, other shops normally give 10-15 days credit to their customers while some gift shops offer one month credit, amounting to price cutting. Unlike the old-style shops there is no personal contact between customers and shopowners who very often are not present in the shops.

Lastly, the "Mini Plaza", the "Wholesale Centre". This is the latest form of establishment in Sampheng. The "Sampheng Wholesale Centre" was opened in 1991 in a three-storey building covering three adjacent shops. The space inside is divided into small booths. Then came "Sampheng Plaza" which is larger and equipped with central air-conditioning, escalators and lifts. Both place their advertisements in newspapers, inviting anyone to rent their booths. Present booth operators are people from outside Sampheng who have no connections with the residents here. Centres such as these are seen as the most profitable way of using the already congested space of Sampheng and are becoming so popular that smaller shop-owners decide to sell their shops and move outside. The paper lantern shop, symbol of the Trok Rong Khom (Lanterns Lane) for over a hundred years, has already gone. A few more are likely to follow suit.

In different ways, demands for more profitable land use in the inner city, modern form of transactions, mobility of old residents to suburban areas and of newcomers into the communities, all have all contributed to the breaking down of both the physical and social environments conducive to the old form of public life and personal relations. The employer-employee relationships are progressively replacing those of the master-apprentice.

5 Rise of the Business Elites and the Middle Class

This section examines two groups of urban people who emerged and asserted themselves after WW II, namely the business elites and the middle class.

Development and Strategies of the Business Elites[36]

By the time the contemporary industrial promotion regime was laid in place in the early 1960s, the predominantly Sino-Thai commercial elite had diversified from a base in rice milling and exporting into finance and light manufacturing. Already by 1952 there were 19 commercial banks in Thailand, and 14 of these had been founded in the decade since 1942. Several of these banks were created by the great rice milling and exporting families who had prospered prior to the War, for example the Thai Farmers Bank and the Nakornthon Bank. But others, such as the Bangkok Bank, were established by entrepreneurs who pursued professions solely in financing the commodity export boom and the early development of the manufacturing sector in the 1950s. The industrial promotion policies instituted after 1960 encouraged large investments in import-substitution industries, including automobiles, steel, light consumer electronics, and fertilizers and chemicals, in addition to the export-oriented light manufactures such as textiles and food processing, both of which find their origins well before the War. With very few exceptions, all the these industries were created and run by Bangkok Sino-Thai families.

Studies of strategies of this group in the post war years point to personal alliances by means of intermarriages. According to one study[37], in the 1970s, at least 54 business families were connected by marriage. Large business families such as Techaphaibun, Sophonphanich, Sarasin, Bunsoong, Lam Sam, functioned as central nodes in the network of marriage alliances. The military families of Kittikhachon, Charusathien, Chunhawan, too, were married into the network. The business elite in this early phase was seen as a pariah elite. As most of them were immigrants, they were ethnic outcasts in a foreign land and were compelled to become dependent on ruling bureaucratic and military elites for patronage in the form of business favors, contracts, licenses, trade quotas, and so on.

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36 This section comprises extracts from: Scott R. Christensen, Business Elites, Entrepreneurship and Corporate Behavior. Background Report for the Socio-Cultural Change and Political Development Project, TDRI, 1992.

37 Krirk-kiat Phiphatseritham, Analysis of Pattern of Ownership of Business Corporations in Thailand (in Thai). Research Paper no. 14. Thai Khadi Research Institute. Thammasat University. 1981.

Particularistic relationships with their ethnic Thai political masters were seen to be the primary vehicles for accumulation and social mobility for these immigrants.

Later studies depart from this view and explain the success of the Sino-Thai industrial enterprises in terms of business strategy. Three components have been singled out. First, the formation of conglomerates, or the expansion of many business enterprises into multiple stages of production. This strategy of integrated business operations has helped to reduce transaction costs and achieve economies of scale. By the 1970s, partially-integrated business groups had emerged in a number of export-oriented and Import Substitution industries. These groups often managed multiple stages of production. For example, in textiles there was a trend toward integration of spinning/weaving and garment manufacture, in agribusiness the largest animal feed companies were rapidly developing livestock ventures and their own marketing operations. However, in more technologically advanced industries such as the automobile industry, there was a trend toward sub-contracting.

Secondly, corporatization of management, in other words a marked trend toward more professional management. It has been argued, on the basis of firms of the US and UK, that the degree to which capitalists have handed over the operations of their firms to professional managers helped to determine the firms capacities for taking advantage of new technologies. Most of Bangkoks Sino-Thai firms were, and still are, dominated by their founding families. Many are listed on the Securities Exchange of Thailand, and for many firms the owner-families still own a majority of shares. Members of the owner-families occupy the senior board and managerial positions of most of Thailands largest firms. But Thai firms have also made great strides toward professionalization, measured by such criteria as the degree to which operations are put in the hands of a team of managers, and the willingness of a firm to go public on the securities exchange. Many firms are now run by teams of professional managers, albeit managers who work closely with the firms leading family members. To generalize, Bangkoks Sino-Thai firms are still predominantly familial enterprises, but there is a clear trend toward corporatization by the 1980s. Corporatized familialism in Thailand has permitted the creation of bureaucratic structures which have proven competent in responding to market signals and taking advantage of some technological advances. The trends began in the banking sector and were followed by the Charoen Pokphand group and other leading manufacturing firms such as the Saha Union Group and the Sahaviriya Group.

Thirdly, inter-family and personal-based business and credit networks. This refers to the reliance on ethnic or community networks among the business elite to facilitate financing, contract enforcement, and the building of trust in contractual relationships. The cultural relationships are important organizational factors whose function is to overcome market imperfections. Examples include the long-term relationship between the Bangkok Bank and leading textile firms; between the Bangkok Bank and the Charoen Pokphand Group. These relationships go well beyond the arms-length conduct of a perfect, decentralized market. Institutional economists argue that imperfect capital markets in developing countries require these more personal-based relationships. Credit markets, according to their argument, are characterized by high uncertainty and moral hazard which refers to the inability of a lender to evaluate the risk of the borrower. Because creditors cannot judge the likelihood that a borrower will default on a loan, given a developing countrys imperfect financial markets, lenders tend to extend credit to members of the same community or social circle as a means to minimize the risk of loss and enhance the prospects of contract enforcement. This strategy leads in turn to credit rationing which tends to favor large borrowers. Smaller borrowers often receive higher interest rates, and hence the frequent criticism, in Thailand and elsewhere, that the banks favor large industrialists over small-scale enterprises, and industry over agriculture. A justification for the inequitable treatment is the fact that the credit networks did benefit the manufacturing sector. In cases of a dispute among textile firms, the bank was the key mediator. But there is evidence that long-time friends and clientele of the leading banks have at times had to square with the requirements of the market. It is likely that this trend will continue as the banks pass into the hands of the third generation of their founding families. The third generation heirs will need to be accountable to a more diverse complexion of shareholders, and they will work with a larger and increasingly dominant cadre of professional managers.

The above was a brief outline which addresses the trends among the business group at a macro and economic level. What follows, after a consideration of some recent ideas about the rise of the middle class in Bangkok, will be a discussion of the trends at the micro and social level, accounting for what has happened to the group of people who have participated in modern organisations at the level of everyday life and values.

The Middle Class

The various concepts and assumptions underlying the seemingly simple term "middle class"[38] are problematic, especially in the context of Thai society: definitions vary, depending on dimensions of activity and values (eg. political, economic, social) being considered, as well as the ideological and theoretical and academic foundations of the commentator concerned. In this report we will use this term to refer to a broad-spectrum of mainly urban people who have benefited from economic expansion by means of their involvement in market exchanges or specialised skills. The contention in this section is that the various members of this subgroup which has emerged largely as a result of Bangkok-based economic growth, find themselves in a different physical, economic and social environment and develop new ways of life and a worldview that place more importance on specialised knowledge and specialised relations between individuals. Yet at the same time the world of the middle class is full of ambiguities. In critical moments of risk and uncertainty, the middle class will resort to means contrary to their ideals, such as resorting to the superordinate-subordinate relationship of hierarchy and dependence, or to supernaturalism. By definition, the modern middle class is a product of the differentiation consequent upon development and modernisation; the system which has produced them on occasion offers them little hope of lasting satisfaction beyond continuing the mode of consumption which will apparently confer sufficient meaning in life. Commodification of culture is a framework which surrounds the modern middle class. In analysing the cultural framework, it may be meaningless to draw distinctions between modernity and tradition.

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38 The use of the term 'class' may raise a number of theoretical problems. The term 'middle class' as used in this report refers to the terms 'chon chan klang' or 'khon chan klang' in Thai. Studies of middle classes in the context of western societies have been extensive and have a long history since Marx and Weber. Marxist and Weberian theories of class are frequently portrayed as opposing explanations. As an oversimplification it may be claimed that Marxist approach stresses the economic basis of class, an analysis has to begin with the mode of production in society and the relationships that each group has to the productive means. Weberian approach does not reject the economic basis of class, but stresses that prestige based on occupation, pattern of consumption, life style is what determines one's position in modern societies. However, both Marx and Weber have been interpreted and reinterpreted in major debates since the Second World War and some recent trend has suggested that the distinction between these two theoretical perspectives should be collapsed. For discussion, see a summary in Nicholas Abercrombie and John Urry, Capital, Labour and the Middle Classes. London: George Allen & Unwin. 1983p.7.

This present study does not aim to make any contribution to this complex theoretical debate but it employs the term middle class to cover a broad spectrum of groups within the urban population that have emerged largely as a result of the economic expansion after the Second World War. Whether they form a class, or a status group, or whether there is a clear boundary between this group and the others, will have to be decided in a different kind of study.

Like the equivalent consuming classes throughout the world, Bangkok's emergent middle class achieves meaning and expression through an array of symbols and expressions, some of them incorporate elements of tradition, recast in different formulas, such as modified Buddhist doctrine aiming to meet the new existential needs of individualized professionals.

What constitutes the urban middle class of Bangkok?

The "embryonic" middle class may have been present in Bangkok society as early as the its foundation. The influx of Chinese immigrants in early Bangkok period, coupled with the expansion of external and internal trade by the reign of Rama III (1824-1851) gave rise to "bourgeois" outlook reflected in new wave of literary tradition[39]. The administrative reforms of the late 19th century created a new class of salaried civil servants. But it was the rapid economic development of the mid 1950s that gave birth to the modern middle class on a large scale and this class is predominantly based in Bangkok. Field Marshall Sarit, in justifying his economic development policy, actually stated that the best way to build a strong nation was to increase the proportion of the middle class, using the term *chon chan klang* in Thai.[40]

As we have already seen, economic development has brought about marked expansion in occupations in trade, banking, manufacturing, as well as increasing demand for professional occupations (see earlier discussion in Section 3 above). These occupations were filled by both the Sino-Thai and ethnic Thai alike. The crucial factor that they have in common is education. "Many of these professionals, technically trained officials, and middle-echelon businessmen had attended good, but often not the top, primary and secondary schools in Bangkok and had gone to one of the new colleges or universities. Others had studied abroad, especially in the United States."[41].

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39 Nidhi Eosiwong: The Quill and the Sail: Collection of Essays on Literature and History of Early Bangkok. Bangkok: Amarin Kan Phim. 1984. (in Thai)

40 Anek Laothammathat, "Sleeping Giant Awakens? The Middle Class in Thai Politics", paper presented in the international conference on Democratic Experience in Southeast Asian Countries, December 1991. The paper was revised and published in Thai in the *Thammasat University Journal*, Vol.19, No.1, 1993.

41 Charles F. Keyes: Thailand: Buddhist kingdom as Modern State Nation. Bangkok: Duang Kamol. 1981. p.170.

Juree's study[42] of Bangkok's middle class in the mid 70's identifies two characteristics of this class: a minimum amount of security over their source of livelihood and a positive sense of identification with their occupation and social status in society. In terms of occupations, the middle class consists of low to medium-ranked civil servants (within which we include the large group of university or college educated teachers and academics) and employees of state enterprises, professionals, employees of banking and other business institutions, members of the police and military forces (excluding the higher ranks), and Chinese, Thai and Indian shopkeepers . Low-level civil servants and private employees are included because of their prestige and security of their jobs. What they share in common is the mental rather than manual/physical labour that their jobs require. Within the middle class there are many groups with differential income level and wealth. Occupation is differentiated and specialised since it requires certain ascriptive and achieved criteria to become members of an occupational group.

The political scientist Benedict Anderson identifies the Thai middle class rather differently, placing more emphasis on its role in political events. The groups termed 'moyen bourgeoisie' and 'petit bourgeoisie' by Anderson,[43] were the first to show political potentials of the urban populace. Among the migrants who reached Bangkok in the 1960's, two developed high economic potentials: the petty bourgeoisie, consisting of those who could secure a job in the informal sector such as barbers, hairdressers, dressmakers, dry cleaners and retail traders, another was the moyen bourgeoisie, consisting of those with access to foreign capital. The sign of the formation and consolidation of this urban middle class is the expansion of education since 1960 to fulfill the social and economic aspiration of these groups. Another important signal is the support given to the Democratic Party which won all the seats in Bangkok in 1965 despite the reign of the military regime. Anderson considers the middle class to be the silent force behind the student uprising of 1973. Their main dissatisfaction was not so much in dictatorial rule as the lack of access to economic resources and fear of economic insecurity. When this same group turned against the students three years later, their frustration with student movement and the democracy period stemmed from a number of factors: against the background of general

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42 Juree Namsirichai Vichit-Vadakan,"Not Too High and Not Too Low: A Comparative Study of Thai and Chinese Middle-Class in Bangkok, Thailand". Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley. 1979.

43 Benedict Anderson, "Withdrawal Symptoms: Social and Cultural Aspects of the October 6 Coup" Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, 9:3 (July-September 1977).

economic recession and reduced spending power, the emergence of the labour movement became a threat to their model of paternalistic relations between employers and employees; strikes also caused damage and created personal discomfort, all of which were seen as threats to their recently acquired economic security.

The political changes of the 1970's could be seen as paving the way for the emergence of another subgroup, the 'technocrats'. Rudiger Korff[44] defines technocrats as professional, administrative and clerical workers who increased from 4.2% of total labour force in 1975 to 7.2% in 1986. Most of them resided in Bangkok. For Rangsan[45], they were middle-level executives whose job was to monitor the implementation of economic and fiscal policies, analyse, and project economic conditions and develop certain policies. The most important technocrats whose role is crucial in controlling economic policies are those working in the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank. The role of technocrats was particularly crucial during the Prem administration in the period 1980-1988. The technocrats mediated between the public and private sectors and negotiated the interests of both sides. Agencies such as JPPCC, TDRI, NESDB and BOI were either created or strengthened during this period. The technocrats were, according to Korff, people behind the economic boom of the 80's. But Rangsan noted that the second generation of technocrats of the 80's have adopted a different pattern of behaviour, having business connections, whereas their predecessors, represented by people such as Dr. Puey Ungphakorn, would refuse to do so.

Another important subgroup emerging in the mid 80's as a consequence of the economic boom of the 80's was the 'rentiers'[46], consisting of land owners, property developers and real estate businessmen with varying levels of capital and financial backing. These groups opened up another economic opportunity via land speculation, often with the help of personal connections with government officials. Joint-venture enterprises with overseas companies and capitalists in residential and shopping complexes in the city highlight the new opportunities afforded by changing government policy (through Board of Investment incentives and the Condominium legislation, for example).

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44 Rudiger Korff, Bangkok and Modernity. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute (CUSRI). 1989.

45 Rangsan Thanaphonphan, The Process of Economic Policy Formulation in Thailand. (in Thai) Bangkok: The Social Science Association of Thailand. 1989.

46 Korff, Op.cit.

It should be noted that the concern about the middle class, both in terms of an analytical concept and as a political concept are closely linked with major political events in Thai history. Though the term has been in existence for a long time, it has only become a popular term since the events of May 1992. During and after the May crisis, the mass media, particularly business newspapers such as the *Manager* (*phu chad kan*), began to popularise the term. The *Manager* newspaper handed out questionnaires to those who participated in the protest on the night of 17 May and found that the majority were young- to middle-aged managers and professionals, a typical group among the middle class. The events of May 1992 gave an impetus to the interest and concern about the middle class among academics.[47]

Among these academics, Nidhi[48] proposes that in many ways the Thai middle class share common characteristics with middle classes the world over, including operating in modern institutions (companies, factories) organizing on a legal-rational basis, emphasizing individualism, sharing a worldview based on the market exchange model, and demanding cultural products with popular appeal. But the groups among the Thai middle class also reveal specific cultural aspects of their own including: attachment to and dependence on the culture of the ruling elites, a tendency to need to display material status conspicuously, the persistence of the notion that merit and power are closely linked, persistence of traditional form of personal relations. The Thai middle class has not yet formulated a distinctive politico-social ideology (including such things as respect in human rights, equality of man, respect of law) necessary for the development of a democratic system of government, despite the clear articulation of such values among certain active groups on particular issues.

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47 For example the annual seminar of the Political Economy Study Centre, Chulalongkorn University in November 1992 was devoted to the topic of "The Middle Class and the Development of Democracy in Thailand". Thammasat University Journal, Vol. 19, No.1, 1993, is devoted to the theme of "Democracy, Civil Society, and the Middle Class in Thailand".

48 Nidhi Eosiwong: "The Culture of the Thai Middle-Class" in Thammasat University Journal, Vol.19, No.1, 1993. pp. 32-42.

Suburban Housing Estates as the Environment and Expression of Middle-Class life

The following part will be a discussion of concrete experiences of some groups among the urban middle class in Bangkok. We have chosen some residents of suburban housing estates to represent this group.

The process of suburbanisation began a long time ago but the new form of suburban residential area for the middle- income group developed in the 1970s. Soon after WW II, the need to providing housing for the middle and low income groups was increasingly evident. Phibul's government introduced some state-run housing projects known as *akan song khro* for middle and low income groups to buy by paying in installments[49] and a few government projects followed during the 1960s. But it was in the decade after 1970 that property developers began to invest in commercial housing projects known as *muban jat san* which comprise a piece of land complete with an unfurnished house. The growth of these *muban* has led to the development of suburban centres with facilities such as shopping complexes, hospitals and schools to serve the needs of the residents.

The growth of *muban jat san* has gone through at least 3 phases[50]. First from around 1970-1975, *muban* which tended to be in the eastern suburbs were large, about 100 square wa on average, beginning with *Muban Seri Hua Mak* which, as its brochure claims, "was the largest muban at that time. The project was very well received as it offered so many different styles of houses and complete with public services and modern conveniences." The first phase constitutes the golden era of *muban* of comparatively large-sized houses which sold at 150,000-300,000 Baht each. The well known *muban* such as Seri sold 80-100 houses per month. Other projects sold around 30-50 houses per month[51]. The second phase, which began around the mid 1970s, saw projects which offered smaller-sized houses spreading to the northeast and north. The smaller size was due to the increase in the price of land as well as the growing demand from the lower middle income groups. It is interesting to note that small houses offered at this time were without a maid's quarter so typical of the large houses. A new form of row house or so-called 'townhouse' was

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49 Akan Phibulwes on Sukhumvit 71 in 1958, Akan Phibul Watthana on Rama 6 in 1959.

50 Pussadee Thippathat et al. Houses in Bangkok: Forms and Changes in the last 200 years. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press. 1982 (in Thai)

51 Pussadee Op.cit. pp.371-372.

also introduced. The first generation of townhouses were 30-40 square wa and built quite close to the city centre in areas such as Nana, Lang Suan, and Witthayu road. Later generations were further away and became much smaller, sometime as small as 11 square wa.

The decade of the 1980's marks another phase of *muban* development, when property development became a form of speculation as much as providing houses for those in need. *Muban* of diverse sizes and forms have expanded into the periphery of Bangkok in all directions: in the north towards Rangsit and Phathumthani along Vibhavadi Road, northeast along Ram Intra and Sukhapiban roads, east along Srinakarin and Bangna-Trad, and west along Pinklao-Nakhon Chaisi and Petkasem roads.

A number of factors have contributed to the growth of housing projects. First, those who lived in the city preferred to move out of the relatively congested inner city areas, especially during the first phases. This process can be seen from many interviews we conducted in Banglamphu as well as in Sampheng. It may be noted that residents of the inner area moved out for different reasons which reflect certain values associated with houses. Those who already lived in private detached houses with gardens, often government officials, said they felt the area was getting too crowded, with more shophouses being built as well as more houses being rented out as cheap accommodation for migrants. In their view the area has become downgraded and, if their economic circumstances permitted, they would prefer to move to a less crowded, cleaner, less noisy area where they would be among people of similar status. For some shop-owners that we interviewed in old commercial district (see **Sampheng**), the reason for moving out is not only to avoid overcrowded conditions, but living in a house with a garden has also become a preferred form of living. So the choice of type of house and residential area has to be seen in the light of the social aspirations of those who are affluent. Western architecture and modern comforts have become a model for the middle class.

Secondly, a large proportion of the population of Bangkok are those who have migrated for education or for a job. These people were born outside Bangkok and need somewhere to live. In the early phase of their settling down in Bangkok, they relied on relatives (real or fictitious) for accommodation[52], when they managed to earn a steady

52 There are many examples in Akin 1977 and Juree 19 79.

income they started looking for a house. *Muban jat san* projects are attractive for those who do not have large savings since they are only required to raise enough funds to pay the down-payment and the rest can be paid in installment over 15-20 years.

Thirdly, in the decade of 1970 and probably until mid 1980's, the traffic from the suburbs into the city centre was thought to be tolerable. One study of *muban* 20 km out to the north west shows that in 1986 it took 30-60 minutes for most people to travel from home to work and they felt that the transportation system was convenient[53].

Lastly, after WW II a western life style such as food, dress, household appliances, music, etc was rapidly adopted by urban population. The idea about house style and residential areas were also influenced by western culture. Thai architecture was much influenced by designs in the west, with modern methods of construction adopted by architects and engineers trained abroad. *Muban* houses fit well with images of a desirable way of living as seen in movies and magazines and therefore satisfy the aspiration of the middle class to enjoy *chiwit than samai*: the modern life.

Community and Kinship

Although the term *muban* is identical to the Thai term denoting "village" as used in the rural context, it is not a community in a sense of a bounded unit of members who share a common identity and have obligations to assist one another. The choice of the term *muban* in fact reflects an attempt to reconstruct or reinvent a community in an urban context.

There are differences at many levels between a rural 'ban' and an urban 'muban'. Here we suggest that the transformations that have happened to urban populations and urban ways of life have contributed to the erosion of two factors discussed earlier as the basis of an older urban way of life in Bangkok: namely, kinship and long-term exchange which have enforced communal duties and obligations. It has been noted that economic cooperation and kinship ties among members of the same village function to strengthen long-term relations of reciprocity such as the labour exchange group. Although preferences for neolocal patterns of settlement after marriage have been noted as both the

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53 Warawan Wetchasat, "A Comparative Study on Influences of Urbanizing Elements on ways of Life in Suburban Area of Metropolitan Bangkok". M.A. Dissertation, Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology, Thammasat University. 1986.

norm and ideal, it is common to find siblings settling in the same village if there is a sufficient amount of land. Moreover a matrilocal pattern of residence strengthens kinship ties through the female members. Kinship ties provide cultural expression such as *luk phi-luk nong*, *bunkhun*, which are still verbal models for the kinds of relationships which ensure long-term reciprocity. So both economic necessity and cultural values expressed in kin ties call for long-term reciprocal relationships. Such views of relationships in rural villages may be too simplistic, and contemporary villages often depart considerably from this model. However it will serve as an ideal type with which to compare the urban community.

Urban *muban* differ a great deal as to their size, composition, and general pattern among members. Attitudes towards neighbours range from "I have been here for 6-7 years and don't even know my next door neighbours.", to "I get along well with my neighbours and they have been very helpful.". Our observation is that interaction within *muban* communities varies to a large extent according to the socio-economic status of the *muban*. The lower income type of *muban* tends to consist of people in the informal sector who earn their living by working in the community more than the richer, more exclusive *muban*. The physical layout and the greater space of the rich type of *muban* tends to have the effect of secluding each household from one another much more than in the smaller *muban*. Here are brief descriptions of two *muban* to illustrate the contrast.

Muban P

This is a *muban* of the upper-middle-income group, on the east side of Bangkok. The project began in 1973-4, selling plots of land and house or just the land. In the earlier phase, the size of land was about 120 square Wa. Later, as the *muban* became popular and expanded, the size grew larger to as large as 4 rai. The site of the *muban* was originally a vegetable garden which was bought up piece by piece until it was almost completely transformed, with the exception of only one small plot which has no access to the main road.

Muban P's physical appearance is striking. Everything is clean and orderly, a complete contrast to a messy surroundings outside its walls. Its streets, unlike the typical streets of Bangkok, are straight, wide, clean; small sois are beautifully labelled. Houses in the early phase, close to the entrance, are of medium-size: of 120-150 square Wa. Further inside there are opulent houses with large, well kept gardens. There is no question here

that the houses in this *muban* must be very expensive. One medium-sized house was put up for sale for 15 million Baht (price in 1992).

During the daytime the *muban* appears to be populated mostly by security men and street sweepers. Only occasionally can one see gardeners and servants lurking behind handsome fences. The quiet atmosphere is interrupted occasionally by the noise of barking dogs.

Members of *Muban P* are described in Thai as *nak thurakit* or businessmen. These are people who are engaged in entrepreneurial activities of some kind. Many of them are owners or managers of medium to large sized companies dealing in importing and exporting, manufacturing, services and finance. There are also high income professionals such as doctors, surgeons, dentists, architects, engineers, all in private practice. There are few retired civil servants and public enterprise employees (Thai International).

In comparison with the other *muban* to be described below, P is a *muban* of individual large houses, separate from one another. The space for communal activities is small. There is a small block of shops and an enclosed sports centre. We do not observe any gathering place anywhere in this *muban*.

Muban S

This is a *muban* on the northern side of Bangkok, on Phahonyothin road. It is set deep inside one of the sois, about 5 km. from the main road. *Muban S* was set up in the mid 1970's. There are two *muban* sites, S1, and S2. S1 has larger two-storey detached houses of about 100 square wa. S2 has a more modest appearance and consists of one-storey bungalows of 40-60 square wa .

To reach *Muban S* from the main road there are minibuses and *rot si lor* which run regular services. On the way to the *muban* there are many clusters of shops and fresh food markets. Near the entrance there are a small park/playground, a restaurant, a laundrette, a TV repair shop, a hairdresser, a garage, a swimming pool and a tennis court owned by the *muban*. In front of S2 the road goes round a playground and there are a number of activities going on around this field. A fresh food market is held here every morning. Later in the day, a few *rot khen* come out and start selling *Kwetiow* or *Somtham* and there are tables and chairs for people to sit down and eat. Next to it is a queue of minibuses to the main road and a group of young boys who work as ticket collectors sit and chat on the

pavement. On one corner of the field, there is a shrine of *Phra Phrom*, and not very far from it another smaller shrine of *Phanthai Norasing*. The field is surrounded by blocks of houses, many of which operate as shops selling groceries, drinks, cigarettes, fresh food etc. This common ground serves a focal point of activities in the *muban*.

Residents of S2 tend to be middle-ranking government officials, many schoolteachers, as well as employees of business establishments. Quite a few are engaged in the informal sector such as selling food and groceries; others are self-employed and run small businesses, such as car and motorcycle repairer, TV repair, video rental, handicrafts products, hairdressers, or involved in services such as minibus drivers and ticket collectors

As for changes that have occurred in the past 15 years, it appears that people have moved in and out quite a lot. None of the interviewees have been here since the beginning of the estate. People generally complain about the increasing population in the area. Many housing estates have sprung up leading to rush-hour congestion in the only street joining the estate to the main road. One interesting comment many interviewees make is that in recent years there have been more cars on the road because people have become richer.

Comparing the neighbourhood relations of *Muban* P to *Muban* S, we can note that for *Muban* P this is limited to greetings during morning jogging, or on a special occasions like New Years day when a collective merit making is organised, although this arrangement has only been in place for a year. One reason given by informants for this state of things is that people spend very little time within the *muban*. Travelling time has doubled in the past five years and this will make communal interaction even more limited. So the expression used when asked about relationships with neighbours is often *tang khon tang yu* to say that each household leads a separate, independent life. Relationships with next-door neighbours are filled with ambiguities. We hear both compliments and complaints. Some say that they have good relations with their neighbours who keep watch for them when they are away, and they exchange small gifts. Other complain about noise and a variety of unsociable behaviour. But even among those who are on good terms with their neighbours, their social activities are outside the *muban*. Maids tend to be more communal oriented, and information concerning wages and habits in each household circulate among them. One informant reported that the road sweepers perform the functions of a go-betweens to transfer maids from one house to another.

Though there may be some degree of interaction, the *muban* as a whole does not operate as a unit which has a common interest, to obtain certain resources or services. Public services (water, electricity, telephone) are looked after by specific government agencies, others (security guards, road maintenance) are taken care of by private companies. In either case each household is an independent customer. Collective effort only occurs on an ad-hoc basis and the personality of certain individuals is largely responsible for such collective action. One example: in *Muban* P there is a conflict between the *muban* owner and some members over the ownership of *muban* roads, sports facilities, and the monopoly of water supply. One member, a retired civil servant, has been responsible for setting up a committee, trying to deal with the owner by legal means.

As for kinship, it is rare to find members of the same *muban* that have kinship connections with each other. When asked why they do not settle next to their siblings, they cite different reasons. Some prefer to stay near their place of work, some say that siblings find themselves in different financial circumstances and they have to settle where they can afford. Some deliberately stay away from siblings because they say that they will quarrel if they see one another too often, others complain that siblings and relatives tend to borrow money and do not return it.

A typical household consists of two generations (husband, wife and children). Of the 70 cases interviewed, only 3 include the grandparent generation (one the husband's father, one the husband's mother, one the wife's mother). Few households have other relatives or dependents. But from a different set of samples it appears that obligations towards parents remain strong. In our survey of 180 bank employees, 104 reported that their parent/s lived with them[54]. In Warawan's study, informants of one *muban* visited their relatives regularly, those of the other visited less regularly but contacted them by phone[55].

So it appears that there is a high degree of variation as to the pattern of household composition. As to patterns of interaction and assistance among kinsmen, some reported that assistance is given to their kin in the case of finding jobs or getting children into prestigious schools. Some take advice from relatives in their decisions to make

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54 The survey was made by sending out 200 questionnaires to members of the Bank Employees Association.

55 Warawan Op.cit.

investments in real estate or stocks and shares, as they feel that they can trust their own kin more than non-kin.

Though kinship obligations remain the ideal, there are several factors related to the decline of kinship ties. A look at the life history of one lady may illustrate some of these.

M is now 40, a spinster, living in a 16 square wa townhouse in a modest *muban* on Ratchadaphisek Road with her mother and sister, both of them widows. Twenty-two years ago she came to Bangkok from Nakhon Nayok from a rice-farming family. She found a job as a clerk in one government department. Working very hard, typing by day and attending classes by night, she passed several exams and acquired a university degree. Then she managed to get herself transferred to a different department where she could take time off to study and earn a Masters Degree in education. With that qualification she changed jobs once again and became a lecturer in a higher education institution. She is still working very hard, teaching to earn extra income in the evening.

This lady's life is a success story for many of the middle class who have moved upward socially and economically. When M first lived in Bangkok, she and her sister rented a room, now they own a house. M also saved up and invested in at least two pieces of land, one with a bungalow where she would like to go to live after retirement.

Though she lives with her mother and sister, she leads a solitary life. She is very different from her sister who sells pork in a market nearby. Her other sister did not have any education and they rarely see each other. In fact the three sisters rarely see one another since they each lead a different kind of life. One niece will be married soon and M quotes her sister as saying that she cannot go to the wedding because she has work to do. M says that she has a group of friends, most of them unmarried and of her age, that she sees occasionally or they go on a tour together. These are friends she met while was a student, or friends of these friends. She no longer goes back to Nakhon Nayok. The rice land was sold after her father passed away. She has an ambivalent attitude towards her rural origins, the countryside is (was) peaceful, yet it offers little opportunity. She may go back, but only upon retirement, after her financial circumstances are secure.

Shaped by her education, work, colleagues, friends, and the patterns of opportunity available in Bangkok, M's lifestyle and values are those of the urban educated middle

class. M's mobility and her present station in life have distanced her from a number of bonds characteristic of older way of life, particularly community and kinship.

Values and Worldviews

The life history of M is shared by many and will inspire many more. The pattern of upward mobility may explain certain attitudes, hopes and fears of the middle class. The highest hope in life is success, measured in terms of material possessions and security and expressed in conspicuous consumption, although in the case of M this latter impulse is sublimated for the sake of accumulating secure assets. More many in the middle class affluence has to be displayed and commodities purchased. From 1987-1991 numbers of private cars in Bangkok increased by 50% each year, and each day there were 575 new cars on average[56]. The ratios of television sets, telephones, cars, per 1m population in Thailand rose dramatically from 1982-91 and the fastest among ASEAN countries.[57] In our survey, normal household items include, in order of frequency, colour television sets, video players, stereo sets, cameras, cars, washing machines. One informant, also a spinster, sums it up in one sentence, "what do I want in life? a house, a car, a round-the-world trip, savings, bank accounts with a lots of interest. That's what I want. I don't care if I get married or not.".

Middle class views and meanings of community and family are defined by new circumstances as a result of their structural position in economic development. Community is not viewed as a space-bound unit which has a cultural institution, be it a temple or a mosque, functioning both as a community centre where subgroups can participate in collective activities and a channel through which prestige for some and welfare for others can be exchanged. Community in middle- class life is scattered through space, and constituted by different places and relations. In terms of places, the *muban* are individually defined in brochures, TV commercials and other advertisements as 'a place for living'. How much time one actually lives there is probably not as important as its images which communicate one's identity to others. Thus an ideal *muban* should have, according to our informants, "a club, a swimming pool, a sports centre, a tennis court, a restaurant, shops, laundrettes, gardening services, a good security system, and neighbours of our own

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56 See C. Setchell. Op.cit.

57 Far Eastern Economic Review Asia Yearbooks 1982,1987,1991. Quoted in Anek Op. cit. p.48-9.

class". Workplace is another important place which is both a unit in the economy where one derives one's income and identity as a producer, and a unit of socialisation into an occupational culture where one's identity is shaped by means of uniform, dress, speech, activities and attitudes. In terms of relations, community is constituted by a variety of informal and formal associations, ranging from a weekend get-together of relatives, a tour group, school and university alumni, charity club, to trade and professional associations. In contrast to the total, multi-dimensional, and complex nature of relationships of members of the same community in small-scale lower-income society, relationships of members of within each segment of the new middle-class community are more limited and specialised.

A fundamental change has also occurred to the functioning and meaning of household and family. Household has become less of a unit of production that operates together and more of an aggregate of consumers. Those who are the subjects of these changes more than others are women. Middle-class women now face the dilemma of divided loyalties: between playing the domestic role of a mother and housekeeper on the one hand, and the role of a worker in the labour market and an independent income earner on the other. As the typical family structure moves further towards the small nuclear family, assistance between relatives becomes more limited, and the burden of housekeeping and looking after the weaker members falls heavily on the shoulders of women. Thus in the past four decades domestic burdens of women have been parcelled out to servants, lived-in nurses, but more and more to commercial-based institutions of nurseries and kindergartens. The transformations have an effect on the view towards children who are seen less as a labour force to contribute towards the household productive activities as is the case of rural households or urban households in the past. Children's role is seen more as an extension of the parents' aspiration for success in the competitive modern life. The Children industry - child-care products, entertainments, special lessons, summer school abroad, is a big business. These attractions construct and shape an image of good-quality parenting, as well as making demands on parents. But nowhere are the modern parents' aspiration, hopes and fears, expressed as clearly as in the investments in children's education. In this environment, education, especially at high level, is seen as an expensive commodity, but crucial for climbing up the social and economic ladder. Thus the value of parent-children relationships is measured in terms of the amount of investment and efforts spent in obtaining this commodity.

In this environment where personal relationships are limited, specialised, and mediated through commodity exchange, cultural values that validate long term reciprocity between persons such as *katanyu* (grateful), *kreng chai* (considerate, afraid to displease), *chua fang* (obedient), which imply relationships of hierarchy and dependence and mutual exchange over a long period, are becoming incompatible with modern life. They become irrelevant when one talks about relationships between employers and employees, between colleagues, or neighbours. Even between people with kinship connections, the only pair of relations where these concepts may be invoked is between parents and children. Alternatively the meanings have to be redefined to fit the new context. It has been noted , for example, that the term 'kreng chai' in the old days would be used in the context of a subordinate *kreng chai* (is afraid to cause displeasure to) his superordinate who could be his master, his older relatives, his parents.[58] It implies that the subordinate would get himself into trouble because he risking provoking the anger of the superordinate. Now the term can be used without implying any hierarchical notion, perhaps to refer to ordinary shyness, or fear to annoy someone. For example people who leave litters on a beach do not 'kreng chai' others. 'Others' here can be anyone out of the nameless mass who have no personal relations to the litter throwers.

Meanwhile other cultural and behavioural concepts such as privacy, freedom to do what one likes, breaking away from superordinates of any form, become more meaningful. In asking *muban* householders why they want to buy a house of their own, the expressions that are used repeatedly in answers are *issara* (independence), *pen suan tua* (private), *pen tua kong tua eng* (be oneself). A few say that they used to live in their mother-in-law's house and found it too noisy and overcrowded.

Relying on oneself to survive means that economic security is the basic concern in one's life. It is not surprising then that when asked what they want most in life, *muban* dwellers' answers are almost invariably *setthakit di* (good economy, and *khwam man khong nai chiwit*: economic security). If this is the goal of one's life, it follows that relations in everyday life are to be shaped towards this goal. Priority is given towards relations that offer pecuniary rewards, those that do not may have to be sacrificed.

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58 See Suwanna Satha-anand and Nuengnoi Bunyanet (eds.): Words: Remnants of Thai Thoughts and Beliefs (in Thai). Bangkok: Chulalongkon University Press. 1992.

Does this mean that the modern middle class see personal relations solely in terms of profit maximization as many social analysts and critics fear? Though the trends may point to that direction, the present situation is indeterminate, less clear-cut and filled with contradictions and ambiguities. The middle class, as much as anyone else in a rapidly changing society, have to negotiate between different sets of values which contradict one another. One informant, a manager of a computer company, says that, "I am tired of the kind of people I have to meet everyday. I have to think about what I will gain from them and they have to do the same. But that's the way it is. I am glad when I meet friends from school days. That's the only time I relax. I don't feel the same with university friends. With them there seems to be something else involved, like business interests." Then he describes what happens in his workplace which illustrates how conflicts arise between people who hold different sets of values. "I am disappointed with young people we recruit lately. They join our company soon after they got their degree. Not very long after that they will come to me saying that they want to get a Masters Degree. If I don't allow them to they will think I am hard-hearted. As a *phi* (elder brother, more senior person) I am obliged to assist them to progress in life. So they take a lot of time off, leaving early in the afternoon. And when they have exams, they won't turn up to work at all. Then when they get their degree, they leave for another job, just like that. They just use us as a stepping stone to a better paid position. Some of them haven't even finished the projects they are assigned to do. And they think it is their right to do so. They don't even seem to notice that I am upset. When they see me again, they will come and talk to me, calling me 'phi' as if nothing has happened."

The young employees have a different version of the story. The employer-employee relationships are not viewed as having any personal involvement. Unlike a shophouse where a shopkeeper is a father-figure to his apprentice/employee, as the business organisation grows the personal nature of the employer recedes from the foreground. The relationships between the two partners are considered closed once the job is done and the salaries paid. No further obligations can be imposed on either side. Thus in contemporary conversation, the expressions *katanyu*, *bunkhun* are not applicable. A business organisation is not there to offer *metta karuna* (compassion, kindness), but to provide *okat* (opportunity) to employees, while employees are not expected to return gratitude but to *phatthana* (develop, improve) the organisation.

These are the major trends but each individuals attitude lies at different points in the continuum which explains the conflict between the manager and the employee in the above case.

6 The Marginal

This section focuses on another group of urban population whom we lump together under the broad title of the marginal. Slum dwellers, squatters, the urban poor, homeless people, people living in settlements built around garbage mountains. This group too is a product of industrialization and urbanization, but there are three specific factors that are responsible for the emergence and expansion of the urban marginal. First is the predominant Bangkok-centred development, accompanied by the breakdown of the rural economy which has brought rural-urban migrants to Bangkok. Secondly the inadequate public services provided by the BMA and the government departments concerned, particularly housing for the low-income. Thirdly, the demand for land in the inner city and the increasing prices pushing the urban poor into a more vulnerable position.

As stated in Section 1 the urban poor have been studied more than any other group in Bangkok as it is seen as the 'problem' area. Here we will concentrate more on the question of personal relations in connection with the question of access to resources. Unlike the middle class that has high education and specialised skills, the urban poor have minimal education, they are unskilled and often lacking experience in city life. In order to get a job, or an opportunity to earn a living, they need to enter into a relationship with a person or an agency that acts as an intermediary. The nature of this broker and his relationship with his clients varies from community to community and from job to job.

The term 'urban poor' is a loose category and until now there has been no comprehensive study of this group. One preliminary report[59] states that in 1986 a household needed a minimum of 3000 baht per month to pay for bare necessities such as food and energy. This amount cannot cater for rents, travelling costs, or medication. On the basis of this figure, it is estimated that in Bangkok alone, 250,000-300,000 households can be classified as the urban poor. They amount to 22-27% of Bangkok population, or

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59 Somsuk Bunyabancha, "The Urban Poor". (in Thai) Preliminary report presented in the conference on "Thai Culture amidst Global Development" at the National Cultural Centre of Thailand, 5-7 August 1993.

about 1.2-1.5 million people. Another study[60] approaches the subject by dealing with housing types and proposes that low-income housing types are, following the author's own terminology, made up of: (1) sites of street dwellers (juvenile delinquents, temporary migrants, the abnormal, the real nomadic), (2) workers' housing (temporary constructions, maids' living quarters, factory workers accommodation), (3) rental housing (rental compounds, slum rental housing, walk-up apartments), (4) developer's projects (land subdivisions, land-and-house, condominiums), (5) slums (mini-squatters, squatters, land rental slums, land owners' slums).

Whether slums are increasing or decreasing is a subject of controversy. According to the NHA surveys, the number of slums increased from 1968-1988, but decreased after that period. In the first survey it was estimated that there were 50 slums in 1968, then 480 slums in 1984, 1020 in 1985 (of which 943 were in Bangkok, the total number included Nonthaburi and Samut Prakan), 1500 in 1990 (the figure was for BMR), then 981 in mid 1990's (figure for BMA only)[61]. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the proportions of slums in housing units and in land area have both dropped[62]. The same author also claims that the decrease in number and proportion is due to the private sector industry which is providing lower-income houses especially in fringe areas.

While slums may decline in number, another study shows a different trend that Bangkok slums are in fact more populous and more overcrowded in 1990 than in 1974[63]. The slum population increased from 890,000 in 1974 to 1,495,525 in 1990. Population density, measured in terms of people per slum dwelling unit, increased from 6.39 in 1974 to 7.70 in 1990. The fact that slums typically do not have access to safe supplies of electricity, clean water, waste disposal services, or sanitary facilities, suggests that environmental conditions of slum dwellings may have actually declined.

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60 Sopon Pornchokchai: Bangkok Slums: Review and Recommendations. School of Urban Community Research and Actions, Agency for Real Estate Affairs. 1992.

61 These figures are from Sophon, Op. cit., p.60-63. Figures quoted in Setchell, op.cit., differ slightly but show more or less similar trends. The big increase in mid 1980's is due to the change of method of survey to aerial photography.

62 Sophon, Op.cit., p.81.

63 Setchell, Op.cit., p.12.

Setchell[64] also suggests that the 1990 data are underestimated. The many 'small' slums which do not contain the threshold number of 30 or more 'congested' housing units to qualify as a slum, as defined by the NHA, or the roughly 75 'bridge' slums are left out of the survey.

Slum Social Organisation

Bangkok slums in the 1990's differ from those in the early 1970's when they began to be a subject for investigation. They vary a great deal from one slum to another. Factors such as age, internal structure based on traditional institutions such as religion or ethnicity, security of land tenure, may affect the nature of organisation in each slum. In general many slum case studies indicate that social interaction among people within the same locality remains strong. Kinship and personal connections among residents are reported. These ties are important in getting access to very limited resources. An example from settlements which grew up around BMA's garbage dumps in Onnuj and Nong Kham are a case in point.[65] In these places the BMA plants can only process half of the amount of garbage collected in Bangkok each day, the rest is dumped on garbage hills where residents of the so-called 'garbage community' will sort out metals, plastic bags, paper, etc. and resell them. In Onnuj it is found that garbage pickers form themselves into 13 groups, each having 15-30 people. Each group, authorised by a BMA employee in charge, 'owns' a certain location on the garbage hill where trucks unload the garbage. Members of each group are connected either through kinship or friendship. A complete outsider, without any connections to the previous members, will not be permitted by the official and cannot join. Those who are not part of the groups working on the garbage hill can pick anywhere on the surrounding ground but the garbage is not so rich in resaleable items.

One important phenomenon of change that has happened to the slum way of life is the introduction of formal organisation in the form of the community committee. The need to deal with outside pressures and assistance make it necessary for slums to have a formal organisation which has a legal existence. Since the mid 1970s, government agencies such

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64 Ibid.

65 See Siriphon Sombunburana, "Garbage Dump Community in Nong Khaem". (in Thai) MA Dissertation. Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology, Thammasat University. 1992; and Manop Prathumthong, Report on the Way of Life of Garbage Pickers in Onnuj, (in Thai) Alternative Development Project, Chulalongkon University Social Research Institute. 1985.

as the Social Welfare Department, the NHA, BMA, and later charitable organisations and Non-Government Organisations have been active in working with slum communities. State strategies in dealing with slums have changed: from seeing slums as an eyesore to be torn down and relocating residents into multi-storey apartments in the 1960s and early 1970s to allowing slums to stay and giving assistance to improve the environmental conditions since that time. In the 1980s the policy of giving greater security of land tenure in the form of land sharing have been adopted. This latest policy has proved to be more successful with slums on government land or land belonging to the Crown Property Bureau than those on private land where cases of slum eviction are still going on.

The idea behind setting up the community committees appears to have been be twofold, both as a formal body representing the community in contacting outside agencies and as a means of encouraging residents in participating in decision-making affecting everybody. The extent to which these objectives are achieved varies. From one study[66] which documents in detail the process of implementing a land-sharing scheme in one slum (which has led to the development of a co-operative group among the residents in order to obtain a bank loan), it is found that the following factors are the ingredients necessary for success.

First those who were elected as community representatives to form the co-operatives and played an important part in the process were the **natural leaders** of the community before. Their roles and relationships to the other residents were comparable to those of leaders in early studies of slums[67]. They were described as those who are "of relatively good economic status, a good person, generous, keen to help neighbours,...also well-connected with the outside world.., knowledgeable, not selfish, and able to protect the interests of the community."[68] One of these is a subcontractor dealing in transporting cargoes. He has a lot of relatives in the community, about 110 (out of the total of 928 residents) people are related to him by blood or marriage and a number of them are also his employees. Another leader is a retired public enterprise employee. These leaders were able to contact influential people from outside, especially politicians, but in such a way as

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66 Orathai At-am, Sengki Slum: Way of Life and Development Process Towards Self-Reliance. (in Thai) Academic Paper no. 117, Population and Social Research Institute, Mahidol University, June 1988.

67 Compare them to Net in Akin Rabibhadana, The Rise and Fall of a Bangkok Slum.

68 Orathai, Op.cit., p.29.

to benefit the community as a whole. Contact with politicians is seen as an exchange between votes gained by the politicians and material benefits gained by the residents. In the case of Sengki slum it is felt that material benefits are distributed fairly. This may not be the case for many slums where leaders are seen as untrustworthy and use their position to take advantage of the rest of the community. As a result the leaders could manage to muster the interests and efforts of the residents in the process of setting up the co-operatives group.

Secondly although there are dimensions of conflict in this slum - between individual leaders, and between subgroups of different levels of income, the **conflicts are manageable** and resolved satisfactorily. When the project first started, rumours began to circulate that the poorer subgroup would not benefit from it as they would have no means to raise a loan. In the meantime leaders had different attitudes towards the poorer subgroup: some strongly opposed their participation in the project, some, including the one with a large group relatives and dependents, supported them. Through a series of political maneuvers, the leaders who were against the poorer subgroups lost their credibility and were not elected as representatives of the community in the co-operative project pilot group, resulting in the group representing a cross section of the residents. The charisma and influence of the natural leader over a large section of the residents were vital to resolving the conflict and mobilising the support of competing subgroups.

Thirdly the ability to contact and **mobilise support from outside agencies** was crucial in the development of the project. Through months of negotiation, leaders sent petitions to members of the Royal Household (the land belonged to the royal household), and obtained assistance from the NHA to negotiate for loans from a private bank without which the project could not materialised.

Other slum communities may not be so lucky as Sengki. The strength of Sengki depends much on its long history of over a hundred years where it has developed tightly-knit relationships among its residents, and it is able to use this strength to adjust to demands and challenges in the modern urban context. In the case of Ban Duek Din community in the Banglamphu district (see Section 3) or the Ban Khrua dispute, religious and ethnic solidarity can also turn into strength. But some trends in urban development seem to work against community strength. The first is that **old slums have been disappearing** due to eviction and relocation. The pattern in new slums is different and it lacks the kind of leaders and ability to mobilise collective efforts as described above. As

shown in one detailed study of a new slum[69], the community is made up of small factions which are physically rather segregated as each settled here at a different time after being evicted from its previous location. Leaders have limited influence and none command the respect and trust of the whole settlement population. There may be some informal groups (share money, card playing, drinking parties) which interact regularly, but none can be said to represent the whole community or provide a basis for collective action or protection.

Secondly, **formal organisation may not correspond with natural networks** of relations and influence as their formation is directed by outside agencies. In 1990, out of the total of 868 slums, only 12% were self organised, 42% were assisted by the BMA, NHA and others, and 46% had no organisation.[70] So it is questionable as to whose benefits these formal organisations serve. In some cases they serve the interests of outside government agencies to promote forms of top-down development; in others, as one author puts it strongly, they promote the "exploitative structure" of the community whereby: "communal tycoons (house renters) tend to be elected onto the committee"[71].

Finally, **new forms of settlements** such as bridge settlements, street dwellers, small slums whose livelihood is even more precarious will be in an even more difficult position to form any collective organisation. As yet there is no study of these sub-groups, but articles in newspapers and magazines on their life point to the fact that they function mainly as individuals.

Dilemmas of Rural Women in Urban Employment

In many ways the female labour force has been the cornerstone of economic development in urban areas. Among the middle-class, women have entered professions in the formal sector and jobs such as teachers, nurses, office workers are filled mainly by women (See Section 4 above). Women also feature strongly in unskilled work too, and the majority of them are girls from the countryside.

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69 M.L. Pornvisit Worawan, "Social Network in S. Sukthawi Community", (in Thai). M.A. Dissertation. Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology, Thammasat University.

70 Sophon, Op.cit., p.64.

71 Ibid.,p.111.

Figures from migration studies confirm the high proportion of female rural-urban migrants. Since the 1960s increasingly more women moved to Bangkok until they outnumbered men. Between 1955-1960, approximately 70,000 males and 60,000 females moved to the metropolitan area, later from 1965 to 1970 there were 145,000 males and 153,000 females, a reversal of the sex ratio. The trend has since continued.[72] From the same source it is found that most of these women are young, between the ages of 15-24.

Since the WW II four major types of economic activities have attracted rural girls: (1) domestic servants (2) manufacturing jobs, both as workers in formal factories and in various forms of informal establishments, (3) small trades such as food vendors, street stall operators, and (4) service jobs such as waitresses, cleaners and cashiers. It is worth noting that the boom in the tourist industry has generated another major sector that absorbs an increasing number of women into the labour force. Five types of tourist industry that employed women most are: hotels, travel agencies, transport, souvenir and gift shops, restaurants and entertainment places. Together they absorbed 900,000 women in 1981. Most of the women were 20-25 years of age, with 57.6% unmarried.[73] The women who worked in the hotels and airline companies were more educated and better paid.

Findings from different studies show that in some jobs, in order to adjust to new rhythms of life and find jobs, female migrants depend heavily on the support of their kin or friends from the same village who have already settled down in Bangkok. One study of domestic servants, construction workers, factory workers, and vendors, concludes that those in the first three categories entered their jobs with the help of relatives and friends while vendors report that they set up the business themselves.[74]

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72 Suwanlee Piampiti, "Female Migrants in Bangkok Metropolis", in Women in the Cities of Asia: Migration and Urban Adaptation. The East-West Population Institute, East-West Center. Westview Press. 1984.

73 Chuta Manusphaibool: "Factors Motivating Female Participation in the Tourist Industry: A Case Study for Bangkok Metropolis", in Suchart Prasith-rathsint (ed.) Population and Development Interactions in Thailand. Bangkok: Steering and Review Committee Macro-level Studies Program on Population and Development Interactions. 1983.

74 Kusuma Koseyayothin, "The Pattern of Recruitment and Job Satisfaction among Female Migrants in Bangkok: Cases of Domestic Servants, Construction Workers, Factory Workers, and Vendors". M.A. Dissertation. Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology, Thammasat University. 1983.

In another study of Bangkok masseuses[75], it is estimated that in 1980 there were 200,000 prostitutes working in massage parlours, teahouses, nightclubs, discos-cum-restaurants, and disguised brothels, making a total of around 1,000 establishments providing sexual services for male customers, both Thais and foreign tourists. Among the masseuses studied, 36% had worked in Bangkok before as domestic servants, waitresses, factory-workers, seamstresses and salesgirls. But the majority, 64%, came straight from the rural areas, which suggests that in some occupations, a direct rural-urban channel exists in order to recruit rural girls.

Female migrants shoulder heavy economic responsibility for their family back in the countryside. Sending remittances for the welfare of the parents and education of younger brothers and sisters is the most common story. As Pasuk noted, these young girls "were engaging in an entrepreneurial move designed to sustain the family units of a rural economy which was coming under increasing pressure. They did so because their accustomed position in that rural society allocated them a considerable responsibility for earning income to sustain the family."[76]

The dilemma of young migrants caught between the attraction of modern city life and the responsibility and obligation to fulfill the role of good daughters towards their rural family is best described in Mills' study of northeastern girls. "Confronted with new work disciplines and new consumption expectations, new ideas about appropriate sexuality and new opportunities for personal decision-making, young women in Bangkok are often torn between duty and affection to rural kin on the one hand, and personal desires for autonomy and urban amusement on the other".[77] Mills argues that the difficulty faced by women in reconciling personal desires and familial obligations is often more severe that men. The women often resolve this conflict by reaffirming ties with rural kin and falling back on rural community as a source of economic and moral security. Migrants are careful to maintain such bonds by periodic visits and wage remittances, as well as preferences for

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75 Pasuk Phongpaichit: Rural Women of Thailand: From Peasant Girls to Bangkok Masseuses. Geneva: International Labour Office. 1980.

76 Pasuk, Op.cit., p.141.

77 Mary Beth Mills, "Moving Between Modernity and Tradition: The Dilemma of village Daughters and their Families". Seminar Paper presented at the Research and Development Institute, University of Khon Kaen. 1989. p.4.

making merit on their trips home and returning at key periods in the religious ceremonial calendar.

The above discussion has some important social implications. Apart from the fact that the economic supremacy of Bangkok over the rest of the country has been built upon the labour of rural people who take turns to populate Bangkok and who toil for relatively low wages, the organisation of the life of these people depends primarily much on the bonds that they have with their rural network of social relations both in the villages and among themselves in the city. The extent to which this situation will remain in the future depends on a number of things. Migrants' tolerance of low wages, harsh living conditions, and little prospect of advancement in life rest on the expectation of most migrants that their stay in Bangkok is only temporary. From Mills' sensitive study[78] of the worldview and values of migrant girls from Northeastern Thailand, some of these girls feel that it is going to be difficult for them to go back and live in the village again since their life has changed so much. Some of them fear that their parents may force them, for the sake of brideprices, to marry men in the village whose country outlook is unacceptable to them. Yet they know that the working life in the city is only temporary. Factories do not want to employ women once they pass their prime, they do not trust city men: the chance of finding a husband and settling down in the city is slim. Stranded between the city and the country, whatever option these girls are going to take, it is going to be an awkward one. Broader conditions of economic and gender subordination underlie their personal dilemma. But Mills suggests that "their participation in fledgling labor unions and strike actions indicate that there is still space for the production of new meanings about work and gender in Thailand which have some potential to challenge current structures and symbols of exploitation."[79]

The options for such young women may indeed be created through a new independence facilitated through urban work ; such will be gained at a cultural price, namely the disappearance of the village as a meaningful context for personal identity and relationships. Such an independence will, however still rest on the basis of personal networks, not between patrons and clients, but between friends at work. This underlines

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78 Mary Elizabeth Mills: "We Are Not Like Our Mothers": "Migrants, Modernity, and Identity in Northeast Thailand". Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of California at Berkeley, 1993

79 Mary Elizabeth Mills, Op.cit., p. 221.

the fact that the idiom of kinship so central in Thai interpersonal language (however attenuated in the case of the middle class) is thus likely to continue to be more operable and valid for marginal groups. Where government agencies fail to deliver, Thai cultural idioms and patterns of reciprocity necessarily interpose to establish networks for survival. Among the marginal the basic values underlying reciprocity are daily reinforced in far more tangible ways than among the middle class, who need offer aid to members only at key periods in the life cycle.

7 Conclusion

The past forty years have marked a critical phase in the history of urban life and urban people, with Bangkok experiencing a passage from an agricultural-based environment, to an industrial-based one.

At the macro level, three interrelated broad processes have taken place since the Second World War and become the framework for events at the micro level. These are (1) the process of economic development which emphasizes growth in manufacturing and service industries at the cost of the decline of the agricultural sector, with expansion of the national economy focussing on the capital city, (2) the change in the occupational structure deriving from economic modernisation and urbanization, resulting in growth of the professional and managerial classes, factory workers and those in the services industry, (3) the growth of population which until the past ten years was the result of mass migration from provincial towns and villages in the Central Plains first and later from the Northeastern Region.

After the WW II, Bangkok was the centre of the administrative system of the Kingdom, and its economy was based on exporting agricultural produce. The social system was composed of a small aristocratic elite, incorporating a section of government officials and merchants, with a larger middle and lower middle-class of petty traders, then a broad stratum comprising craftsmen, labourers, fruit and vegetable cultivators and paddy farmers. Control of urban resources, land and access to the civil service which was a source of wealth and prestige was in the hands of the few elites. Thus, despite the heterogeneous nature of ways of earning a living, in general it may be said that forming a relationship with people in control of these resources was a necessary means to survive. So the relationship of superordinate and a subordinate was fundamental in social life. The

underlying principle of this relationship is reciprocity, in the form of exchange between people who have different levels of status and wealth. At the level of everyday life, the units of social organisation in which this relationship was operational were the household, and the community where relations between parents-children, kinsmen and master-apprentice, were the models of such reciprocal relationship.

All these groups comprising the urban population have been subjected to relocation, at physical-spatial, social and cultural levels. New forms of wealth, some induced by foreign capital, from commerce, banking, manufacturing industry or the tourist industry become new resources to be controlled and shared by new groups of people. These new social groups have since emerged and become new components of the social system. They can be grouped as the business elites, the middle class and the broad category of those less advantages in the urban order, comprising slum dwellers, workers, migrants.

New systems of work, mobility, and the availability of land all contribute to the reconfiguration of the units of social organisation. Household and community in the past were units based on a specific locality whereas by contrast interaction in modern life is less and less space-bound. Urban people interact at home, workplace, shopping centres, rural villages, etc. as well as across space by means of communication technology. Thus units of social organisation where relationships are experienced in a person's life become more fragmented, and within each one the trend is for relationship to become less personal, more specialised and instant. Ironically, the Thai language of personal relations embedded in a kin-based terminology persists.

But transition to modernity is a continuing process and both traditional and modern ways coexist. The new and emerging social groups are continually adjusting to changing environment and make use of traditional practices for their benefits.

In the early phase the business elites adopted the patron-client mode of relations with military leaders and high-ranking government officials so as to obtain opportunity and protection.[80] The age-old exchange of women in the form of intermarriage among families of business partners or between business families and bureaucratic leaders was, and still is, used to strengthen bonds between families as well as concentrate wealth within the elite

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80 For more detail on such relations see the Background Report on the Central Region in this TDRI 1993 Year-End Conference report collection.

group. But in the later phase new business strategies are appearing. These are concerned less with making personal ties and more with expansion through business strategies and associational behaviour.

Among the professionals and white-collar workers, their specialised qualifications enable them to participate in the labour market as individuals. Economic transaction is the most important mode in conducting everyday business. But it appears that in cases where these transactions are not fully sanctioned by law, or when the stake is high, personal connections may be resorted to as a way to ensure trust. Personal connections are thus supportive but not indispensable. This group which represents the membership of the modern Thai middle class has experienced a high degree of social and physical mobility in their life histories and in the course of their daily experience. Their livelihood depends less and less on the household or community in the traditional sense. Being a new group, they distinguish themselves by a new identity which relies heavily on images of a consumer. Conspicuous consumption of luxuries is cherished by the middle class as it is a mark of economic success and a source of social prestige. In this new environment, a new space for social and collective activities takes the forms of a variety of associations, some professional, some informal. The basis of such association is not so much on the patron-client reciprocal relationship but rather on interaction of people in a common situation who share some common interests or goals. This may lead to a concerted action in some cases.

The third new group which in fact is a very broad category includes slum dwellers, factory workers, and those working in the informal sector. What they share in common are low level of education, low skilled jobs, low pay and the majority have come to Bangkok from the rural areas. Some are temporary migrants but some have settled down in the city. Though they too are the products of modernisation, they are in a less advantaged position than the middle class. They have less bargaining power as their low skills are usually easily replaceable, their access to accommodation in the city is by cheap renting, depending on relatives and friends, or squatting. The environmental conditions in which they work and live are often poor, with inadequate public services. Their way of life is more locality-based as their access to jobs and accommodation is limited and there are advantages in settling down near to relatives and friends. So persistence of community or tradition form of public life is stronger among this group than the middle class. The superordinate-subordinate relationship too persists, especially between members and community leaders who have a crucial role in giving protection, dealing with the police

and government officials, finding jobs, as well as obtaining services, funds, assistance, from outside agencies. In some old-established communities, the relationships may imply personal, trustful, long-term reciprocity as the leader's strength is based on the network of kinship connections and personal connections built up over a long period of residence. But in new slums such leadership and relationships are harder to develop, as most members are newcomers. A more recent trend is for the slum to form a formal organisation as a legitimate body to deal with outside pressures, especially in the case of eviction. The failure of these organisations have been attributed to lack of trust, lack of leadership, or abuse of power by leaders. Moreover it remains necessary for slum organisations to seek assistance or patronage from influential individuals for successful implementation of slum improvement projects. In any case low income and lack of security in land tenure will always place this group in a structurally vulnerable position. Among factory workers who are temporary migrants too, labour unions have not developed fully to represent their interests and strengthen their bargaining power. Female workers and migrants suffer more than their male counterparts since they face heavier demands from their rural parents as well as their own demands as urban consumers. As their wages are low, it is impossible to fulfill both.

As Thailand is moves rapidly into a phase of an advanced capitalist economy, what is experienced by urban people may be described as a set of dilemmas posed by conflicting values. In a situation where channels to resources are limited or when transactions cannot be fully guaranteed by law, then there is a need to resort to personal connections. In a different social system, based on small scale society and feudal control over resources, the superordinate-subordinate relationship is commonly understood and accepted as a means of building trust and long-term reciprocity between persons which resulted in system of resource distribution. In a new environment, under a different system of power control and distribution, the cultural values and meanings of such a relationship are ambiguous. For some whose chance of capital accumulation is limited and whose place in the economic structure is insecure, the superordinate-subordinate relationship offers livelihood and welfare. Ironically for those who are in control of power and resources, it too can be means of securing more. While those whose place in the economic structure is more secure by virtue of their specialisation, it may be regarded as a form of nepotism destructive to fair competition. Such description is only schematic, the realities as experienced by each individual will be even more complex.

The personal idiom of kinship is comforting in times of change and uncertainty, and for the urban insecure it can operate as a reinforcement of the most basic communal type. In other dimensions of urban life the personal idiom is the expression of a deep seated system based on rivalries or on patronage which keeps corruption alive. Pluralism and complexity in the urban system had necessarily given rise to a whole host of secondary relationships and corporate and bureaucratic interfaces that mediate between groups or facilitate activities and services. This has been inevitable and there is little doubt that such a process will continue. The increasing lament in many quarters about the decline of old values in Thai society underlines the process of change occurring, focussed on the city as a vast site of economic consumption, production and competition. Through the complexity and plurality that marks the urban system of Bangkok, some sense of alignment is being sought among groups between an older identity based on patterns of interrelationships and beliefs and a new economic and spatial system of modernity. In terms of life in the city, the challenge for government, agencies, communities and individuals will be to maintain some sort of balance between the necessities of change, the inevitability of larger scale management of conflicts in the interests of equity in the urban and national arena, and the maintenance of a sense of continuity and meaning. It is clear that the latter lies not so much in the promotion of the "urban community", or in "the village" as mutually exclusive symbols or static categories, but in the quality of relationships which people can sustain across generations and between the city and the country. Older cultural resources and idioms are sure to be employed in this process of adaptation; hopefully they will not reinforce the inequities which currently characterise the urban system of Bangkok.