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Framework of Analysis

Review of the Existing Research

Before entering into an analysis of the organized activities that take place in the Thai village, we need to review the work that has already been done in Thai rural studies regarding the analysis of village organizations and organized activities.[1] In this author's opinion, there have been four approaches to understanding rural Thai society, each based on different perceptions of what underlies villagers' organizational relationships.

One approach has been the argument that dyadic relationships lie at the base of the society. This view of villager relationships was presented for the first in the first ever study on Thai rural social structure carried out in the late 1940s in the village of Bang Chan located in the central delta (Sharp et al. 1953). In this study the social relationships of the people in the village were seen as "not institutionalized" and "relatively unstable and changing" (p. 33). Bang Chan was said to exhibit undifferentiated social organization, and the study found few indications of the people belonging to formal groups, nor did it detect the existence of voluntary organized associations like clubs, societies, or cooperatives (pp. 26, 28). The village's class structure was also said to be unclarified (p. 28). Because there were no institutions or organizations that set down specific social roles for the people, the study came to the conclusion that appropriate role behavior in Bang Chan village society was only vaguely predetermined and great latitude for personal idiosyncrasies was allowed (p. 26). As a result, the study concluded that the only things prescrib-

ing the villagers' social behavior were the most general rules of local and national culture (p. 26).

The conclusions of this study of Thai society accorded perfectly with the concept of Thai society as being "loosely structured" which had been proposed by John Embree in 1950. However, it was Lucien Hanks, a participant in the Bang Chan study, who later took the social organization described in that study and theorized it for the whole of Thai society. According to Hanks (1972), reciprocal relationships in Thai society are formed in conjunction with social superior and subordinate relationships, but these superior and subordinate relationships are determined by patron-client relationships between individuals rather than by clearly differentiated classes and social strata (p. 84). As a result, Thai social relationships do not remain fixed like those of feudal society in western Europe, but are fluid and change in accordance with the mutual convenience and benefit of the parties in the relationship. The Thai social order, to quote Hanks (1962, p. 1250), has "a very unfeudal fluidity. Feudal relations to a lord were assumed to be permanent and even passed from father to son. Among the Thai, however, the relation endures only as long as it serves the convenience of both parties." In other words, it is possible for a client to terminate his relationship as a client depending on the benefits coming from the patron. Instability is inherent in this sort of relationship, and Hanks says that love and respect become important for mitigating this instability (p. 1257). He concluded that Thai groups and organizations are essentially entourages with their patron-client relationships spreading and branching in tree-like fashion (Hanks 1962, p. 1250; 1975).

The above discussion sets out the major points of hypothesis describing Thai society as dyadic relationships. In essence, people's social relationships are based solely on dyadic relationships between individuals, therefore groups and organizations in Thai society are nothing more than linkages of dyadic relationships. These relationships rely heavily on emotional factors, therefore people's relations can easily change, and constant patterns of behavior in social relationships are difficult to form. This in essence is the nature of a "loose" social structure.

Over the years this dyadic theory of Thai social structure has been expounded in varying forms by other scholars. Within the realm of rural studies, it has been most firmly supported by Jeremy Kemp, who sees "relations between individuals" and not "group-like structures" as the "units of interaction" not only within the social structure of rural Thai society, but within that of rural society in Southeast Asia in general (Kemp 1988, p. 20). For example, the Thai kinship system has no fixed core. Kinship relationships and members regarded as kin change depending on who is seen as the kindred

head. Therefore Kemp says that kinship cannot be called a group (pp. 14–15). The family is viewed in the same light. Kemp says that the authority of the family head is very weak, and the ownership of property is vested in individuals and not in the household as a whole; furthermore the family is not seen as having any permanent identity or existence (p. 17). Therefore the family is fundamentally not a group, but should be understood as ties of dyadic relationships. He has gone further still saying that the village in the sense of being a "community" did not exist historically in Thailand (Kemp 1989, pp. 10–15). Thus for Kemp, even such entities as the family, kinship, and the village which are seen in rural society generally are explained in terms of dyadic relationships.[2]

Kōichi Mizuno, who conducted research in northeastern Thailand, has taken the same view of rural Thai society as that of Hanks and Kemp, who have worked in central Thailand. In the village that he studied, Mizuno regarded groups as cumulations of "ego-based bilaterally radiating dyadic relationships," and one of the criteria for judging these dyadic relationships is the principle of reciprocity, what could be called a mutual sense of sympathy in both parties (Mizuno 1981, pp. 203–4). Mizuno made detailed studies of the kinship groups in his village. These exhibited the concept of the "multi-household compound" referring to the housing compound inhabited by a group of kin, but even by this definition Mizuno regards the actual nature of the kinship "group" as a cumulation of "ego-based bilaterally radiating dyadic relationships."[3] And similar to Kemp, Mizuno sees the village as simply an assemblage of dyadic relationships (p. 204). Mizuno goes on to say that kinship relations spread out beyond the confines of the village. Therefore the "village" does not demarcate the limits of people's social relationships; it is only a geographical vicinity with a high-density accumulation of dyadic relationships.

Numerous scholars since Hanks have applied his idea of patron-client relationships to their village studies. Michael Moerman in particular, in the village he studied, clearly showed that the relationship between a tractor owner-operator and those using the former's plowing service (i.e., the farmers) was not purely economic in nature, but was a patron-client relationship (Moerman 1968, pp. 71–74). There was a consciousness of a superior-subordinate social relationship between the two parties; at the same time there was a definite feeling of "friendship" between the two. In fact, Moerman said that there was a difference in the economic benefits to the farmers depending upon whether a patron-client relationship existed or not. For example, it affected the order in which the tractor owner plowed fields. At much the same time as Moerman, Edward Van Roy explained the entire economic system in the village he stud-

ied in terms of patron-client relationships (Van Roy 1967, 1971). He examined a village in the mountains of northern Thailand where *miang* (a kind of tea for chewing) is grown, and there he saw that business between *miang* dealers and cultivators was determined by patron-client relations. Arguing in the same vein as the other above-mentioned scholars, Van Roy maintained that, "The institutional regularity underlying Thai peasant economy is not readily apparent in the structure of the village, the hamlet, or the household. It is, however, clearly identifiable in the relationship between miang cultivators [clients] and their valley contracts [patrons]" (Van Roy 1971, p. 114). As such, patron-client relationships are understood as social relationships in the village characterized by economic reciprocity.

There are many other studies that make reference to patron-client relationships, and most interestingly, even scholars who are critical of the "loosely structured society" theory stress the importance of patron-client relationships in Thai society. Even Jack Potter, the most severe critic of the theory, has stated that "entourages and similar structures are a basic feature of Thai society at all levels" (Potter 1976, p. 193). Thus whether one sees Thai society as "loose" or not, the idea that patron-client relations form the basis of Thai social relationships is commonly accepted by many scholars of Thai rural studies. These patron-client relationships are formed between two individuals, and a characteristic of these relationships is the involvement of an emotional element. These points place the concept of patron-client relationships as a subspecies within the larger theory of dyadic relationships.

Perhaps inevitably there arose in opposition to the "loosely structured" argument of rural Thai society depicted by dyadic relationships the idea of a "tightly structured society." This can be regarded as the second approach to understanding rural Thai society. Proponents of this approach have focused on the presence of organized activities based on assemblages of people rather than on dyadic relationships. Moerman, for example, has reported along with the existence of the above-discussed patron-client relationships the presence of collective activities in Thai villages which cannot be explained solely on the basis of patron-client relations. Moerman provided a detailed report of the actions taken by the people in his study village (in northern Thailand) when they heard rumors that a tribe from elsewhere was going to attack them (Moerman 1967, pp. 408–15). He reported that the villagers saw their whole village as the entity that had to be defended, and for this purpose they organized themselves for collective action, such as for guarding and patrolling. The process for reaching agreements and mobilizing people at that juncture could not be explained by dyadic relationships. On the basis of this report, Moerman has argued that northern Thai villagers are able to band together

and carry out organized activities as a single village (pp. 417, 419).

Another researcher following the second approach is Stanley Tambiah who has described the world view formed by the religious beliefs held by the villagers in the village he studied in northeastern Thailand. He points out that within this world view there is the perception of the village as being one social unit (Tambiah 1970). According to the Buddhist beliefs of the village, for example, the object of merit making (*thambun*) need not necessarily be limited to something personal. There is also merit making where the object is the whole village as a unit (Tambiah 1970, p. 54). He also states that the belief in guardian spirits that protect the village is the expression of "solidarities of people associated with territory" (pp. 345–46). The work by Tambiah has shown at least within the realm of spiritual beliefs that in northeastern Thailand there is a recognition of the village as a single social unit.

The above two studies dealt with the social perceptions of Thai villagers in the limited areas of defense and spiritual beliefs. By contrast, Potter has undertaken a full-scale criticism of the whole idea of a "loosely structured society." He argues that in the Thai village the "corporate extended-stem matrilocal family" is the social unit within the village (Potter 1976, p. 147). He also argues that villagers form cooperative labor-exchange networks for carrying out work amongst its members and these "reciprocal labor-exchange networks are tightly knit entities" (p. 169). Furthermore, he points out that the "natural" village community exists as a corporate group possessing social identity, common property, and a system for carrying on cooperative activity (pp. 34–50).

Not only does Potter point out the existence of a natural village community, he counters the proponents of the "loose society" idea (who see people's behavior in social relationships as changing easily and being unpredictable because of not being prescribed by social customs) by stressing that there are plenty of predictable things in the social behavior of Thai villagers, and he enumerates repeatedly appearing patterns of behavior in social relationships (Potter 1976, pp. 147–223). These appear in the behavioral patterns of such things as the extended-stem family cycle, the bilateral kindred system, the junior-senior relationship, and class and status divisions. In essence Potter maintains that the patterns of social behavior that are seen as sociably desirable form the norms of village society.

As the proponents of the second approach argue, the existence of collective or fixed social relationships in the Thai village should be accepted as fact. However, these people do not show how that apparent fact relates to the Thai rural social structure in general, or what place collective relationships have in the economic system of the villagers. In short, the arguments pre-

sented by these people have only provided counterexamples and have not provided a paradigm for the structure of Thai society that can replace the concept of dyadic relationships.[4]

The above-discussed debate over "loose" or "tight" social structure has centered on the issue of social relations within the village. In contrast to these approaches, there appeared the third approach which has focused on the economic and political conditions lying outside of the village and has come to be known as the political economy approach to understanding the structure of rural Thai society. Proponents of this approach argue that with the penetration of the market economy and the influence of state authority, the economic production of the villagers has come to be affected much more by relations with people outside of the village, such as dealers, entrepreneurs, government officials, and politicians. These outside relationships have placed the villagers into mutually competitive relationships, and the disintegration of the social strata in the village has even pushed them into confrontational relationships. Such a perception was displayed in many of the work by researchers who studied villages during the 1970s when severe confrontation was taking place among the social classes of the village.[5]

That this third approach should focus on individualization and social stratification rather than villager cooperative activities was natural. But during the 1980s with the appearance of new types of organized activities among the villagers, proponents of the political economy approach also widened the scope of their research to include these activities. They tried to apply their own framework of analysis to villager organized activities, and this has focused on the relations between villages and on village relations with the state and capital rather than on one village as a self-sustained, demarcated world. The research by Andrew Turton (1987) and Philip Hirsch (1990) exemplifies this focus.

These two scholars have defined "popular participation" as the participation in the village development process through collective action (vis-à-vis the power holding class) by village residents who hitherto have been excluded from the process (Turton 1987, p. 12). They see the situation in the village as one where the control by village residents (poor farmers) over the resources of production[6] has been wrested away by capital and state policies. Their research presents cases where poor farmers have organized themselves and fought for empowerment to regain control over the resources of production. The two researchers maintain that such cases show it is possible for poor farmers to wrest back control.

Hirsch, for example, highlighted what he termed a "development dilemma" where external control over the resources of production increased as devel-

opment advanced, and villagers became more dependent on external control, a process he discovered when undertaking a detailed study of development in villages in Uthai Thani Province (Hirsch 1990, p. 224). Hirsch however noted that, to counter this growing external control, villager cooperation in the development process was organized (p. 199). But, in this author's view, the more that emphasis is put on the growing influence of external control, the weaker are the conditions for villager organization to counter this control, which undermines the grounds for incorporating the idea of resistance from inside the village into the logic of the political economy approach.

According to Hirsch, the obstacles to villager participation in the development process in his study villages were: (1) a lack of control over resources, (2) no time outside of work for participation, (3) benefits of the development program going to the owner farmers and not reaching the poorer villagers, (4) the increasing dominance of the moneylenders, (5) the patron-client relationships existing in the villages, and (6) the villagers' lack of confidence in their organizations vis-à-vis state authority (pp. 226–28).

Nevertheless, Hirsch saw some possibility for realizing villager participation. "Despite the considerable obstacles to participatory development resulting from concentration of control and power within the communities under study and despite the perpetuation of non-participatory attitudes, recent developments have opened up a certain amount of space for action" (Hirsch 1990, p. 228). These developments included: (1) legitimation of NGO activity in rural areas, (2) increasing awareness of the wider meaning of participation by certain officials and others such as doctors, monks, and teachers, (3) enhanced potential for participatory action because of a slowly growing confidence in the legitimacy of independent action, and (4) emergence of local leaders who can utilize new structures for the benefit of the community (pp. 228–29). Thus while saying that the circumstances for participatory development are still difficult, Hirsch argues that conditions are improving for overcoming these difficulties. However, without any well-developed explanation of the effects that these negative circumstances and positive conditions can have on villager organization, Hirsch's conclusions are not persuasive enough.

For villagers to organize, they have to cope with the socioeconomic environment surrounding them. In this respect, the analytical framework of the political economy approach has merit in that it examines external economic and political conditions as factors affecting villager organization. But there is a problem in regarding the impact of the economy and the state on village society as the one-sided process of most villagers being deprived of control over production resources by outsiders. The result of this view is that the disintegrative effects become important, and the positive conditions for orga-

nizing cooperative villager action cannot be incorporated into the logic of the analytical framework.[7]

Anan (1992), who studied northern Thai villages using the political economy framework, has attracted attention in that recently he too has emphasized villager cooperativeness. According to him, northern Thai peasants are conscious of a sense of *chumchon* (community—however Anan does not see the community as being solely a territorial group). He points out that the peasants have in common concepts that are bound up with their animistic beliefs, and have in common their religious ceremonies for passing these on to the next generation. They also have a common perception about knowledge, organizations, networks, and authority over the use of resource. In other words, Anan maintains that the peasants have a concept of cooperation. However, in Anan's argument, heterogeneous concepts of cooperation are dealt with in an undifferentiated manner. "Territorial groups" and "networks" have heterogeneous principles of organization, therefore the quality of their cooperativeness will be different. Also there is the problem of the disintegration of the social strata in the village from the impact of the external environment and how the peasants' concepts of cooperation react to this. Anan's analysis of this process is insufficient, especially regarding its manifestation in the organizations of the true-life village. However, his efforts should be highly appreciated in that, along with examining the external environment affecting the villagers, he has also tried to incorporate the internal conditions into his analytical framework. This author has already taken this approach in previous research in which he has maintained that changes in the external environment bring about conditions necessitating new forms of villager cooperation, and the formation of cooperative organizations has been based on social organizations of the traditional community; then the traditional community itself will also change in response to changes in the society (Shigetomi 1992a).

Since the latter half of the 1970s, a new way of looking at rural Thai society has been taken up by many of the NGOs and researchers based on their practical experience helping villager to organize. Their approach has come to be known as the "community culture theory," and for the author this is the fourth approach to studying rural Thai society. The thinking of the protagonists of this approach is essentially that as the external environment surrounding the Thai village has undergone dramatic changes, stratification of village society has progressed while at the same time the villagers have lost access to the many natural resources that they hitherto had utilized freely. But even under these worsened conditions, the mutual support and sympathy of village "cooperative culture" has by no means completely disappeared (Seri 1989a, p. 7). The emphasis put on this "cooperative culture" which can be mobilized

for villager organizing is the defining characteristic of this approach. In contrast to the practitioners of the political economy approach who emphasize the impact of the external environment and deny the existence of the village as a self-reliant community, the community culture theorists have emphasized the village's autonomous elements and even their revitalization (Apichart 1986, p. 47). In the idea of "cooperative culture" it is considered the social norm for people to cooperate, and community culture theorists have emphasized this social norm because they have recognized the importance of the human factors of the participants for the effective operation of organizations.

However, a number of problems arise when trying to explain villager organization as predicated upon the existence of "culture." One is that "cooperative culture" indicates cooperative behavior in toto arising among many different people in many different forms, and it is impossible to explain why cooperation of one form or another arises based simply on the existence of "culture." For example, having sympathetic feelings for others underlies dyadic relationships, and it may also operate even within patron-client relationships. But the principles of cooperation underlying the collective organizations among villagers must be different from those that operate in dyadic relationships, even though the two kinds of principles belong to the same cooperative culture. However, community culture theorists fail to acknowledge this difference. When Kemp, a proponent of the dyadic theory, criticized the community culture theory saying that in rural Thailand a village community as a social unit has historically never existed (Kemp 1989, pp. 12, 15), Seri Phongphit, a community culture theorist, countered that the village community need not be seen as a unit-like territorial group (Seri 1989a, p. 3). In other words, despite the importance of establishing social norms that unify the principal actors and sustain the organization in participatory development, community culture theorists do not see the need for specifying any particular norms as principles supporting unified, collective activities. They explain all cooperative relationships among people simply with the word "cooperativeness." Moreover, as shown in Seri's counter argument, the community culture theorists use the word "community," but this word does not always indicate a territorial group.

A second problem with the community culture theory is that it does not specify how and to what extent community culture influences villager behavior; rather it regards community culture as if it is the only factor determining villager cooperative behavior. But contrary to the view of community culture theorists, it is generally seen that villager cooperative activities are basically guided by the individual villager's economic interests, and the focal point for successful cooperation lies in how to organize people who have selfish moti-

vations. This being the case, the conditions that the political economy approach stresses, such as economic and political conditions in and outside of the village, are as equally important as "culture" for villager organization.

A third problem is that when the community culture theorists deal theoretically with rural society, they assume an idealistic society separated from the market and the state, or they treat all the influences of the market and state as negative. But a description of the modern-day Thai village that ignores its connections with the external market and government administration is a depiction of a utopia-like community.[8] The villager organizations that community culture theorists focus on have come into existence in response to the growing impact of the market and state. These theorists need to recognize this fact and take into consideration the cause-and-effect relationships that are acting on the Thai village.

The dyadic theory, the tightly-structured society theory, the political economy approach, and the community culture theory are the four approaches typically used for studying Thai rural society, and the foregoing discussion briefly explained how they perceive organized relationships among Thai villagers. All four of these approaches deal with these relationships, but the interest of the first two is in analyzing the social structure of the village, primarily the villagers' traditional social relationships and social organization, while the latter two deal with the issue of villager organization in response to the impact of economic development and focus on activities organized for specific objectives. The political economy approach delves into the villagers' external economic and political environment, while the other three approaches deal with the villagers' social relationships and their sense of values. These different focal points have never been integrated into analyzing the villagers' cooperative activities in coping with the rapid environmental changes taking place in rural Thailand.

Looking more closely at the argument for cooperative culture (i.e., a cooperative sense of values), the advocates of this argument are not interested in analyzing the objective economic environment. They focus on such feelings as sympathy and mutually assisting one another and neglect numerous other values that determine people's actions, such as the priority of personal economic gain and whether or not village organizations bring about benefits for the villagers themselves. As a result, the cooperative culture argument has fallen to the level of a psychological argument divorced from the political and economic environment.

In contrast, the proponents of the political economy approach focus on the socioeconomic conditions that determine individual (i.e., each household's)

economic production. However, the practitioners of this approach equate these socioeconomic conditions with the penetration of the market economy and capitalism which has led them to depict these socioeconomic conditions as a mechanism weakening the villagers' social relationships; as a result, they failed to logically explain how the workings of these same socioeconomic conditions have brought about the formation of cooperative organizations.

In the author's view, there are cases where individual economies responding in individual and piecemeal ways to the market economy have not always create an environment beneficial for the individuals; rather it has been beneficial for individuals to organize. This sort of utilitarian motivation is enough reason for people to try and organize themselves. Then once people begin to organize, the need to adjust the human relationships connected with the organizing process comes into play, and this adjustment will be done in accordance with the behavior patterns that the people hold in common. These commonly held behavior patterns are determined by people's social relationships. It is important to note, however, that these social relationships exist to a certain degree independent from the economic environment. Therefore when examining villagers' cooperative activities, the social relationships and social structure in which they function have to be taken up along with the economic environment in the researcher's analysis.

However, this very argument about the Thai social structure, the main theme of debate between the dyadic and tightly-structured society theories, has not occurred with the community culture theory. In the case of the community culture theory, this is because its practitioners focus solely on culture even within the social structure, a deficiency of this approach which has already been pointed out. But even the dyadic and tightly-structured society theories which were developed primarily as ways of comprehending the Thai social structure have not been able to provide a good explanation of the mechanism that brings about the formation of villager organizations conducive to economic development. If people's cooperative relationships come about only as two-party units as maintained by the dyadic theory, it is unlikely that numbers of people would join together to form groups based on collective relationships, and it is unlikely that the ongoing formation of villager organizations that is taking place in the villages would have happened. This very phenomenon, in fact, runs contrary to the theory's hypothesis. Meanwhile the tightly-structured society theory points to the existence of the "community" and collective action for its counter argument to the dyadic theory, but it fails to go further and provide any explanation of the mechanism that promotes the formation of collective villager organizations. Thus all four approaches have been unable to provide a sufficient explanation for the formation of

cooperative organizations in rural Thai society. What is needed is a reexamination of the social structure of the Thai village in order to comprehend these new villager organizations which have come into being in response to economic development.

Method of Analysis

The word "organization" as used in this study follows the definition put forward by Chester I. Barnard (1956), who called it "a system of consciously coordinated activities of two or more persons." By using this definition, not only can we regard groups with a clearly set membership as organizations, but we can also include reciprocal activities such as mutual assistance which have no clearly set membership as a type of organization. This sort of broad definition is needed when studying rural society and particularly when dealing with a so-called loosely structured society.

Furthermore, organizations can be classified as "formal" or "social" (Blau and Scott 1963). Formal organizations are groups organized for specific purposes; they are organizations that have been consciously created by people. From among the variety of formal organizations, this study will deal primarily with cooperative organizations set up to support the economic production of the rural individual economy (i.e., households).

Social organizations, on the other hand, are not organized for any specific purpose. However, the members have in common "shared beliefs and orientations that unite the members of the collectivity and guide their conduct," and the members' mutual social relationships create an entity greater than the sum total of its individual members (Blau and Scott 1963, pp. 2–3). Kinship and peer groups as well as all the different sorts of locality groups (groups composed of all the people living within a certain locality) are examples of social organizations.

In this study, the local community (hereafter simply called "community") is also included among the social organizations. It is defined here as a locality group in which there is a consciousness of unity (a "we-feeling"), face-to-face relationships, and social interaction among its members.[9] However, in this study "social interaction" is understood as being those relationships where all the members mutually affect one another socially, even where there is no direct social reciprocity between some members within the group, because they all belong to the same group. Thus, it can be assumed that such a group has incorporated within itself systems for coordinating the interaction of its members.

The concern of this study in the above differentiation between formal and social organizations is its application to the analysis of how villagers are or-

ganized; and the concern will not only be with newly formed organizations but also with new organizational activity arising out of preexisting groups and organizations.[10] This study will concentrate on villager formal organizations and their formation and on the new organizational activities carried out by villager social organizations. The formation of social organizations will not be dealt with. Although all social organizations came into being at some point in history, their origins are not an issue in this study. They will be dealt with here simply as organizations already existing prior to the formation of formal organizations. In order to analyze the mechanism of villager organizing here, this last point is an important qualification differentiating social from formal organizations.

Organizations can also be categorized on the basis of how people's actions and behavior are coordinated within the organization. These can be divided into hierarchical organizations where coordination is on the basis of authority and its commands, and cooperative organizations based on consensus among the members. Among formal organizations, most of the modern ones such as business enterprises and bureaucracies belong to the former category, while cooperatives and the many types of mutual assistance groups belong to the latter. Even in these latter organizations there is often an allotment of responsibilities among the members, and there can be a hierarchy among these responsibilities; however, where such hierarchy is strictly for the sake of expediting the operations of the organization, such organizations are classified in this study as cooperative. The villager organizations that this study will focus on are those cooperative organizations organized to promote economic development (Walker 1975).

Cooperative organizations can be classified as dyadic or collective depending on the way people are joined in their relationships. The difference is whether the organization is formed based on a concurrence between two specific people or on one consented to among three or more people. Villager groups for mutual assistance such as mutual labor exchange (two households mutually exchanging labor to make up for each other's labor insufficiency) are based on a dyadic relationship, while organizations such as cooperatives are based on a collective relationship among people. This sort of demarcation of organizations is useful for examining villager organizations in Thailand, and from this examination it will be shown that the contrast between the two and the transition of the former into the latter characterize villager organizational activities in rural Thailand today.

The above discussion set forth the definition of "organization" and explained the categorization of organizations that will be used in this study. The next requirement is setting out the framework for explaining the conditions and the mechanism underlying villager organizing. People organize them-

selves in the first place because they cannot complete their production using only their own resources and are compelled to procure from others the resources they lack. (Here resources mean the goods and services that humans can transact as objects of their actions and do not include the elements of the actors themselves such as ability and intention.) However, there are ways other than through organizations for procuring resources from others. To understand why in some cases people organize, we first have to compare the organizational method with the various other methods for procuring resources.

Among the usual methods for procuring resources, there are those that require and those that do not require exchange relationships with other economic entities. Falling under the latter are the picking, gathering, and taking possession of natural resources, and these methods cannot be ignored when studying villager organizations in a developing country like Thailand. Regarding methods where exchange relationships arise, the one which is frequently contraposed against organizational methods is that of exchange via the market (Arrow 1974; Miyamoto 1987). This exchange via the market is where price becomes the index for determining the exchange of desired resources, and the parties involved in the exchange maintain no fixed mutual relationship (Imai, Itami, and Koike 1982). It is a system where the parties exchanging resources need not consciously coordinate their mutual actions.

Organizing will take place only when this method is more advantageous for procuring resources than those of picking, gathering, taking possession, or via market exchange. Where there is an expansive unoccupied forest, for example, from which people can obtain a sufficient and stable supply of firewood and other resources, there will be no incentive coming forth for any organizational control of the forest. Or if there are numerous traders coming and competing to buy up agricultural products, or there is a wholesale market nearby, villagers can have easy access to the market and can obtain a proper monetary income, and they will not likely organize marketing organizations.

The scope of this study, as has been broadly indicated already, is limited to cooperative organizations created by Thai villagers and will not deal with organizations in general. Therefore the conditions that bring about villager organizations have to be discussed in comparison with other types of organizations. If the government through its bureaucratic system and local government structure can supply the individual villagers with resources in an efficient manner, it is not likely that villagers will seek to form cooperative organizations.

On the other hand, when there are resources in the village that can only be used cooperatively, such an environment can be expected to make villager organizing more advantageous. An example is the situation where (1) funds

would be granted from the government or other source on condition that the villagers organize the use of them, and (2) there are communal lands in the village.

As can be seen from the above, the concerns when villagers organize are the extent that individual economic units (i.e., the individual households) have to procure resources from others, who is in possession of these resources, and what means would be efficient for obtaining these resources; and these points become the *first* most important factor for villager organizing. This is, in effect, the studying of the economic opportunity of organizations.

For organizations to achieve the economic results for which they are organized, they need to work as expected. However, generally speaking, an organization needs to fulfill two objectives: achieving the purposes of the organization and satisfying the desires of their members (Shiobara 1976). These two objectives are frequently in conflict and cause problems in the organization. Thus very crucial for the success of an organization is how the actions of organization members can be controlled and directed toward the objectives of the organization. This is the *second* most important factor for villager organizing (Miyamoto 1987, p. 125).

This is the "internal" factor of an organization which can include two elements. One is the management system which formally regulates how participants behave toward the organizational purposes. They are formalized rules and procedures for organizational management. However, it is neither possible nor efficient for every form of behavior of the members to be defined by formal provisions. Therefore organizational norms are necessary, and these for the other element of the "internal" factor of organization. This second element works to restrict any opportunistic behavior of participants and motivate them to behave in accordance with the purposes of the organization. This element is especially important for the organizations dealt with in this study. The authority for controlling the participants' behavior is based on their consensus, not on legal authority, and the participants are villagers with a certain degree of economic independence, and thus their involvement in the organization is by free choice. Therefore formal regulations cannot be decisive for controlling their behavior.

When establishing a new collective organization, such "internal" conditions usually are not provided beforehand. This can make organizing efforts unsuccessful even though there exist economic opportunities for the organization. Inputs such as guidance, advice, restraints, and systems offered by outside bodies may help provide a certain degree of direction for villager actions. However, it has long been shown that villager organizations will not continue to exist solely relying upon outside influence. It is also clear that

organizational norms do not readily develop based on outsider instructions. This is the reason that villagers must utilize the social norms embedded in social relationships and social organizations of their own making.[11]

This study will pursue its examination of villager organizations taking the external factor (economic opportunity) and internal factors (management systems and organizational norms) mentioned above as the basic conditions for forming villager organizations. It is taken as axiomatic that villagers choose to organize because there is economic opportunity in doing so, but our primary concern in this study will be how villagers go about organizing themselves, which will be sought by examining the social conditions that determine how the villagers consciously coordinate their actions.

In order to really understand these issues, it is imperative for the researcher to undertake an on-site community study of actual villager organizing, particularly when the focus is, as in this study, on the social conditions that give rise to villager organizing. The author undertook his on-site study for one year in 1989 when he resided in the northeastern village of Thon (in Khon Kaen Province). During that time he also stayed two to three weeks in a number of other villages where the residents were active in organizing, and he conducted basic economic surveys and surveys of the villager organizations (see Appendix A). However, because of the time required to conduct surveys, it was possible to collect data on only a small number of villages. Therefore the author went around to as many other villages as possible where organizational activity was taking place and got information from local leaders about local conditions and organizations in order to verify if the same kind of examples of organizing could be found in other villages as were taking place in the villages cited in Appendix A. During the next seven years from 1989 to 1995 the author was able to conduct such interview surveys in 133 localities around the country. In the Northeast and North, most of the localities surveyed this way were administrative villages (*muban*); in the central region (especially the lower part) and the South, quite a few of the localities were subdistricts (*tambon*). In the latter two regions, the administrative villages were not always based on natural hamlets; frequently the villager organizations extended beyond the limits of the administrative village. (The list of villages and locations the author surveyed is given in Appendix B. In the following chapters of this study, when reference is made to the surveyed villages and locations, the numerical symbols of these villages and locations are shown in parentheses.)

Augmenting the data which the author compiled through his own surveys is the large amount of information from much previous research that he made extensive use of. The numerous community studies on rural social structure

done since the Bang Chan survey were instructive as were the publications put out by NGOs involved in villager organization as part of economic development. This study is concerned mainly with villager organizing among the lowland Thai people, with the frame of reference concentrated in the northern, northeastern, and central regions. The author conducted no on-site surveys in southern Thailand. This deficiency along with the as yet scant amount of previous research that has been done on this region means that the analysis in this study pertinent to this region remains speculative.

Summary of the Chapters

This study proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 will look at how cooperative organizations based on dyadic relationships, long the most commonly used form of cooperation in the Thai village, are being replaced by collective cooperative organizations in response to the penetration of the market economy. Since some of these newly forming organizations are based on territorial social relationships, Chapter 3 will examine the structure and function of the "community" by analyzing the attributes of the locality groups seen in the Thai village. At the same time the penetration of the market economy and the changes brought on in the village by development projects are changing the "community" itself. Chapter 4 will show how this "community" is becoming the entity for the cooperative holding, administrating, and operating of land and funding. Villager organizing is being influenced by the effects of external policy making, and Chapter 5 will analyze Thai rural development policy from the standpoint of this villager organizing. Chapters 2–5 provide separate analyses of the conditions for villager organizing. Chapter 6 will examine how these conditions actually operate when villagers form organizations. For this purpose one village in northeastern Thailand will be used as an example to show the trials and errors, the experiences, and the accumulation of know-how that the people go through in the course of forming and operating organizations. Finally in Chapter 7 the author will bring together the analyses and arguments of this study showing that the phenomenon of villager organizing in Thailand's rural areas reflects the changes taking place in people's cooperative systems and in their communities.

Notes

1 The author owes much to Chayan Vaddhanaphuti's review (1993) of the various approaches to the study of the Thai village community.
2 Regarding kinship, Hanks has already interpreted the Thai kinship system as "a set of voluntary reciprocities between pairs of people" (Hanks 1972, p. 86).
3 Mizuno's interpretation of the family and kinship has been more thoroughly developed by Masuo Kuchiba, Narifumi Maeda, Yoshihiro Tsubouchi, and others. These people have proposed the idea of the "family circle" or "sphere," and have sought to interpret the Thai and Malay family as "an accumulation of dyadic relationships" (Tsubouchi and Maeda 1977; Kuchiba and Maeda 1980).
4 On this point, Atsushi Kitahara criticizes Potter and others of the second approach saying that "the problem is that [these researchers] simply enumerate the "structural elements" in compliance with their analytical framework and they have not yet clarified the functional relationships between these structural elements" (Kitahara 1993, p. 189).
5 Charles Keyes (1966) was the first to emphasize that Thai villager life had to be understood within the context of its relationship with outer society. He first studied villages in northeastern Thailand during the early 1960s, and showed how the life of the villagers was politically, culturally, and economically being integrated into the external society. But it was during the 1970s that the political economy approach to analyzing rural Thai society became the mainstream methodology. Turton (1975), who did studies in the northern Thai province of Chiang Rai during 1969–70, described the changes in traditional rural mutual aid and autonomous institutions that took place with the penetration of the market economy and state authority. Then, Paul Cohen (1981) studied a village in the Chiang Mai Valley. This work revealed the relationships existing between the different social strata in the villages from the end of the 1960s through the early 1970s. Cohen's study village was surveyed again by Anan Ganjanapan at the start of the 1980s. Anan's study (1984) has been ground-breaking work tracing the disintegration of the village social strata and changes in class relationships over an eighty-year period. Chayan (1984), in his study of villagers living in mountain valleys of Chiang Mai Province, showed the types of social and economic relationships that the villagers form with local leaders and business people. As for research on social class relations in central Thailand, some examples are the work of Kitahara (1990) analyzing changes in the villages of the Chaophraya Delta during the 1970s, and that of Toshio Tasaka (1991) who detailed the social strata disintegration during the 1980s in the same village that Kitahara studied; also Ananya Bhuchongkul's study (1984) which described the disintegration of social strata in the villages of Chachoengsao Province since 1900. Most of the

research from a political economy approach has been done on northern and central Thailand. This is because the disintegration of the peasant class and class confrontation have been the most severe in the rural areas of these two regions.

6 Turton and Hirsch include information which can be utilized in the villagers' production and daily life as among these resources.

7 During the time that rural studies from the political economy approach were predominant, there was also research being done which stressed the importance of ecological conditions in addition to the market as a determinant of villager organizations; this was the work by Shigeharu Tanabe (1994) who studied villages in northern and central Thailand in the mid-1970s. In this research Tanabe takes up northern Thai irrigation groups and labor exchange as villager organizations. His description of the environment from the perspective of forming the irrigation group, an organization closely connected with a natural resource, has been a particularly significant research contribution. However, by explaining the formation and characteristics of villager organizations only from the external impact of ecological conditions and the market, Tanabe's framework differs little from the political economy framework of analysis.

8 The importance that the community culture theorists give to the villagers' own senses and norms when forming organizations is a valuable feature of their approach. However, as Kitahara (1996) correctly pointed out, they frequently overemphasize this point which drops the community culture theory into the realm of a normative or utopian explanation of villager organization.

9 A concept of community put forward by George A. Hillery relies on the three elements of "social interaction," "area," and "common ties," and this definition can be found in much of the research (Hillery 1955). However, in this study "area" is limited to within the sphere where face-to-face relationships take place, and the author has avoided expanding the concept of community.

10 Here organizational activity (or action) means the activity (or action) of the people connected with the objectives and purposes of the organization.

11 "Social relationships" are relationships between people based on social roles, but these roles are given an order and a regularity and are directed toward some sort of common objective by "social organizations"; "social organizations" are brought into mutual order and regularity by "social institutions" (Shiobara 1976, pp. 108–9). In this way social roles are organized and create a social structure.