

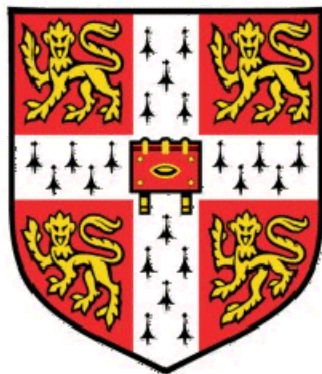
# **SOCIAL CAPITAL AND PARTICIPATORY SLUM UPGRADING IN BANGKOK, THAILAND**

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**October 2009**

*This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy*



# **Social capital and participatory slum upgrading in Bangkok, Thailand**

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## **Abstract**

This study applies the concept of social capital to participatory slum upgrading, specifically the Baan Mankong (“secure housing”) programme in Bangkok. The Baan Mankong programme uses community participation to meet the housing needs of the urban poor, with financial assistance from the state. Since starting in 2003, the programme has drawn international praise, and is being scaled-up nationally, yet few studies have examined its social and institutional outcomes, focusing rather on the physical outputs. This study tries to fill this gap: as a programme that aims to be about “more than just houses”, attention needs to be paid to its impacts on both horizontal and vertical associations to determine whether it really offers an increased role for the urban poor in governance.

A qualitative approach was taken, using semi-structured interviews, participant observation and discussion groups in four case-study communities. The analysis is structured on three levels: intra-community ties, inter-community ties, and state-community linkages, representing bonding, bridging and linking social capital respectively. At the level of intra-community relations, the study finds that upgrading had positive but temporary effects on collective action. Community leadership can be a uniting or dividing force, determining whether collective activities are sustained. Slum networks, representing inter-community relations, are essential for scaling-up upgrading through learning-by-doing. There is scope for cooperation between different networks for unity in negotiations with the state. With regard to community-state linkages, bureaucracy can still be a barrier to effective cooperation, and trust in officials remains low.

This study focuses on those at the core of the upgrading process, and offers suggestions for ensuring that collective action provides the best results for both the urban poor and the state. Social capital is a valuable resource for the poor, when the formation of horizontal and vertical associations is actively promoted. As participatory development becomes the new paradigm and the poor increasingly take the initiative in ensuring their needs are met, a fuller understanding of Thailand’s experiences can help shape housing and community development policies elsewhere.

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## Acknowledgements

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I have been fortunate to experience support from many sides during the course of my PhD. I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Anne and Ray Archer, for their unfailing support from halfway across the world during my time at Cambridge. I particularly wish to thank my father, for conveying to me his interest in urban development.

A heartfelt thank you goes to my supervisor, Dr Derek Nicholls, for his never-ending confidence in my abilities, for always being approachable, and for knowing when to exert gentle pressure on me. I have been lucky to benefit from such a supportive and kind supervisor.

My research would not have been possible without the assistance of many persons in Bangkok. Firstly, many thanks to Ajarn Tip for acting as my field supervisor and providing me with a base in the Department of Housing Development, at the Faculty of Architecture at Chulalongkorn University. Thank you also to her students, Noon and Roonroj, for accompanying me during my pilot survey. I also benefited from the input of Ajarns Virat, Vira, Boonlert and Prayong during my fieldwork. I am grateful to the National Research Council of Thailand for giving me permission to carry out my research.

Without the help of my research assistant, Jang, and her openness and gentle touch, I am sure I would not have been able to obtain such a richness of information from my informants. I am grateful to Mark and Prapha at the DPF for introducing me to Jang.

My dissertation would be non-existent without the willingness of many persons to give some of their time to answer my questions. I am grateful to all the staff at CODI for indulging my queries, in particular Khun Lek Sompop, for giving me important leads. I wish also to thank Khun Jutima at the Treasury for taking an interest in my research, and Ajarn Akin at the Crown Property Bureau for his insight. I would like to thank all my informants in the various district offices, the Port Authority, the Treasury, the Crown Property Bureau, and the National Housing Authority. Thank you also to Maurice Leonhart and Tom Kerr at ACHR for their time and for answering my email queries, and Jeffrey Ing for providing me with a preliminary draft of his report.

Most importantly, my immense thanks go to the many community residents, community leaders, and members of the Sor Or Chor (SOC) and Slum 4 Pak networks, who so warmly welcomed me into their homes and meetings. I was humbled on many occasions by their generosity, and I wish them all the best for the future in their new homes.

This research project would not have been possible without the generous funding of the Gates Cambridge Trust, and I am also grateful to the Department of Land Economy and Sidney Sussex College for providing additional funds for fieldtrips.

I would also like to thank Dr Nicky Morrison for comments on my first year report, Dr Janice Stargardt for reading an initial draft of my thesis, and Dr Tomas Larsson for his insight on Thai politics. Many thanks to Priti, Ben, Donna, Jennifer, Hiroe and Eli for reading and commenting on sections of my work. Thank you finally to Zub, Anu and Gabor, for keeping me company in the department's "dungeon"!

## Timeline of Political Events

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6 January 2001: Thaksin Shinawatra's Thai Rak Thai party wins national elections in landslide victory

February 2001: Thaksin becomes Prime Minister

January 2003: The Baan Mankong project is launched by the government, in conjunction with Baan Ua-Arthorn

February 2005: Thai Rak Thai Party re-elected, Thaksin continues as Prime Minister

23 January 2006: Thaksin Shinawatra's family sells its stake in the Shin Corporation telecommunications business to a Singapore-based firm, with tax-liability exemption.

January-February 2006: Protests calling for Thaksin to resign by the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), also known as the Yellow Shirts

24 February 2006: Thaksin dissolves the House, calls general election for April 2006

April 2006: Thai Rak Thai party wins election; Thaksin announces he will not stand as Prime Minister again but will act as Caretaker Prime Minister

19 September 2006: Thaksin government overthrown in a military coup

27 September 2006: Draft interim constitution released, after the 1997 "People's" constitution was abrogated. Military junta takes control as the Council for Democratic Reform and promises democratic elections within a year

2006: The National United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD) formed to protest against military rule

19 August 2007: The 2006 interim constitution is passed in a referendum.

23 December 2007: Elections won by the People Power Party, formed of former members of the Thai Rak Thai party.

January 2008: Samak Sundaravej of the People Power Party becomes Prime Minister

May-December 2008: The PAD hold regular rallies and protests against the government

September 2008: Samak steps down as Prime Minister, Somchai Wongsawat of the People Power Party takes over

December 2008: The PAD blockade Bangkok's two international airports and Government House for one week. The People Power Party is dissolved.

15 December 2008: Abhisit Vejjajiva, of the Democrat Party, becomes Prime Minister

April 2009: The UDD, also known as the Red Shirts, protest against the Abhisit government and demand general elections

## Glossary

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### Abbreviations

ACHR	Asian Coalition of Housing Rights
BMA	Bangkok Metropolitan Administration
CDD	Community-driven development
CODI	Community Organisations Development Institute
CPB	Crown Property Bureau
DPF	Duang Prateep Foundation
MSDHS	Ministry of Social Development and Human Security
NHA	National Housing Authority
PAT	Port Authority of Thailand
S4P	Slum 4 Pak (Four Regions Slum Network)
SOC	National Urban Poor Communities Development Organisation
SRT	State Railway of Thailand
UCDO	Urban Community Development Office

### Thai terms and expressions

<i>Baan Mankong</i>	secure housing
<i>Baan Ua-Arthorn</i>	“we care” housing
<i>Chao ban</i>	villager (community resident)
<i>Khun</i>	a term of respect for men and women
<i>Klong</i>	canal
<i>Moobarn</i>	housing estate
<i>Pi nong</i>	brothers and sisters (elders and youngsters)
<i>Soi</i>	alley or street
<i>Tua kai tua man</i>	each to himself



## **Thai measurements**

1 *rai* = 1600 square metres

1 *gnarn* = 400 square metres

1 *talangwa* = 4 square metres

55 baht = 1 pound Sterling (as at 10 July 2009)

Unless otherwise specified, all Thai to English translations are the author's own.

Thailand functions on the Buddhist calendar (AD + 543 years). All dates have been converted to the Gregorian equivalent.

Following convention, Thai authors and interviewees are listed by their first name

All photos were taken by the author, unless otherwise acknowledged.

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## Chapter 1 – Introduction

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### 1.1 Why slum housing in Thailand?

### 1.2 What is Baan Mankong?

### 1.3 Why social capital?

### 1.4 Research questions and hypotheses

### 1.5 Outline of the thesis

*“Thailand provides a shining example of participatory governance that has resulted in successful slum upgrading efforts”* (UN HABITAT, 2006:168).

*“When every single family – even the poorest – can have a piece of secure land and can survive, that is the basis of a democratic country!”* (Khun Somsook Boonyabancha, ACHR, 2008c)

Though successive Thai governments have implemented projects aimed at improving housing conditions for the urban poor, the factionalised nature of Thai politics means few policies have endured with long-lasting and perceptible effect. However, the Baan Mankong programme, introduced under former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra’s government, appears to have gained the necessary momentum to be scaled-up nationally and sustained despite Thailand’s recent political turmoil. This participatory slum programme builds upon a decade of efforts to build up collective action in low-income communities, through savings groups and community networks. This thesis seeks to examine Thailand’s latest approach to slum upgrading, with specific regard to the impact that participatory methods has had on social relations. It does this by exploring the Baan Mankong programme’s effect on the social networks of which the urban poor are part, at the intra-community, inter-community, and state-community levels. The concept of social capital frames the analysis, as it represents the norms and networks which facilitate collective action, and without which participatory approaches to housing and governance will struggle to succeed and to be sustained.

### 1.1 Why slum housing in Thailand?

Over 50% of the world’s population now lives in urban areas, and of these, approximately 75% live in developing countries. Many of the developing countries’ city dwellers live in precarious conditions, lacking security of tenure and the basic utilities necessary for a decent life. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has been declared the century of the city by UN HABITAT, and with this comes an awareness of the need to improve the lives of city-dwellers, especially the poor and marginalised. Tying in with this are the Millennium Development Goals, specifically

Goal 7 Target 11, which aims to improve the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020, the Agenda 21 for sustainable development, and a global call for cities without slums.

Amidst these worldwide pushes for change, Thailand has received praised for demonstrating “consistent political commitment over the years to large-scale slum upgrading and service provision for the urban poor... Such long-term support for low-cost shelter and slum upgrading has undoubtedly contributed to Thailand’s extraordinary success in improving living conditions in slums” (UN HABITAT, 2006:160). According to UN HABITAT (ibid), Thailand’s slum growth rate has fallen by an average 18.8 per cent per year since 1990, which they see as a testament to the country’s efforts to improve living conditions in slums. However, the UN’s praise may be too generous. As the historical review in chapter 2 outlines, Thailand’s solutions to the lack of affordable, secure housing have included building government flats, sites-and-services, land-sharing, and private provision, but few slum households were reached by these policies, which were neither well-targeted nor always financially viable. There is a lack of interaction between communities and the government in policy and planning, and slums are implicitly expected to improve themselves (Douglass, Ard-Am and Kim, 2001). Community-led improvements have often been most successful in meeting the needs of residents. However, these self-help projects may face institutional hurdles, especially with regard to gaining secure rights over the land and their houses. Low-income communities also face financial barriers which hinder their attempts at implementing physical improvements.

Estimates of Thailand’s slum population in urban areas vary, from 2,061,000 persons, consisting of 26% of the country’s urban population (UN HABITAT, 2008:248), to 5.13 million people (CODI, 2004). As communities may be a mix of households with and without land titles, this can lead to underestimates of low-income settlements, as some may have title but be suffering from poor living conditions.

## **1.2 What is Baan Mankong?**

In 2003, the Thai government, headed by then-Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, announced funding for two projects aimed at improving housing conditions of the poor, providing 1 million new homes within 5 years. This grand plan for cities without slums was to be achieved through a combination of two projects: Baan Mankong (secure housing) and

Baan Ua-Arthorn (we care housing). Baan Mankong was to supply 300,000 houses, and Baan Ua-Arthorn 600,000 houses, with the shortfall being made up with so-called “knock-down” temporary houses.

While Baan Ua-Arthorn follows the more traditional supply-side route of government-built, low-cost houses and flats, aimed at the lower-middle class such as government clerks, Baan Mankong has been hailed worldwide as an innovative, ground-breaking model. Baan Mankong is a demand-side approach aimed at low-income slum communities. It is different from previous schemes in terms of scale, as it relies on linkages and a learning-by-doing approach to allow scaling up nationally, reaching communities in all urban areas. The Baan Mankong scheme builds upon decade-long efforts by the Urban Community Development Office (UCDO) to promote community savings groups and networking between slum communities. In 2000, UCDO became the Community Organisations Development Institute (CODI), a public organisation, with the remit to promote development through community organisations. CODI was tasked with implementing the Baan Mankong scheme, due to its existing connection to communities and experience in promoting participatory projects. CODI works closely with low-income communities, both rural and urban, to increase the welfare of the poor through community-based activities. According to a CODI press release (3/3/09), it had spent 2,625 million baht on Baan Mankong from the start of the program until January 2009, and hopes to benefit 300,318 households across Thailand.

### ***The Baan Mankong process<sup>1</sup>***

At the core of the Baan Mankong process are the urban low-income communities. However, upgrading requires cooperation with and input from many other stakeholders: the landowners, government officials, such as district officers<sup>2</sup> and CODI staff, and academics and NGOs who provide technical knowledge. The process starts by creating an understanding of what Baan Mankong is, through meetings in low-income communities, if possible including district staff. The different communities in a city or municipality then come together, along with other stakeholders such as municipal officials, NGOs and academics, to draw up a city-level plan to improve housing and integrate communities into the city. A survey is then done of all the communities to build up a database regarding community problems, type of tenure,

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<sup>1</sup> This section draws on <http://www.codi.or.th/housing/StrategicPlans.html>

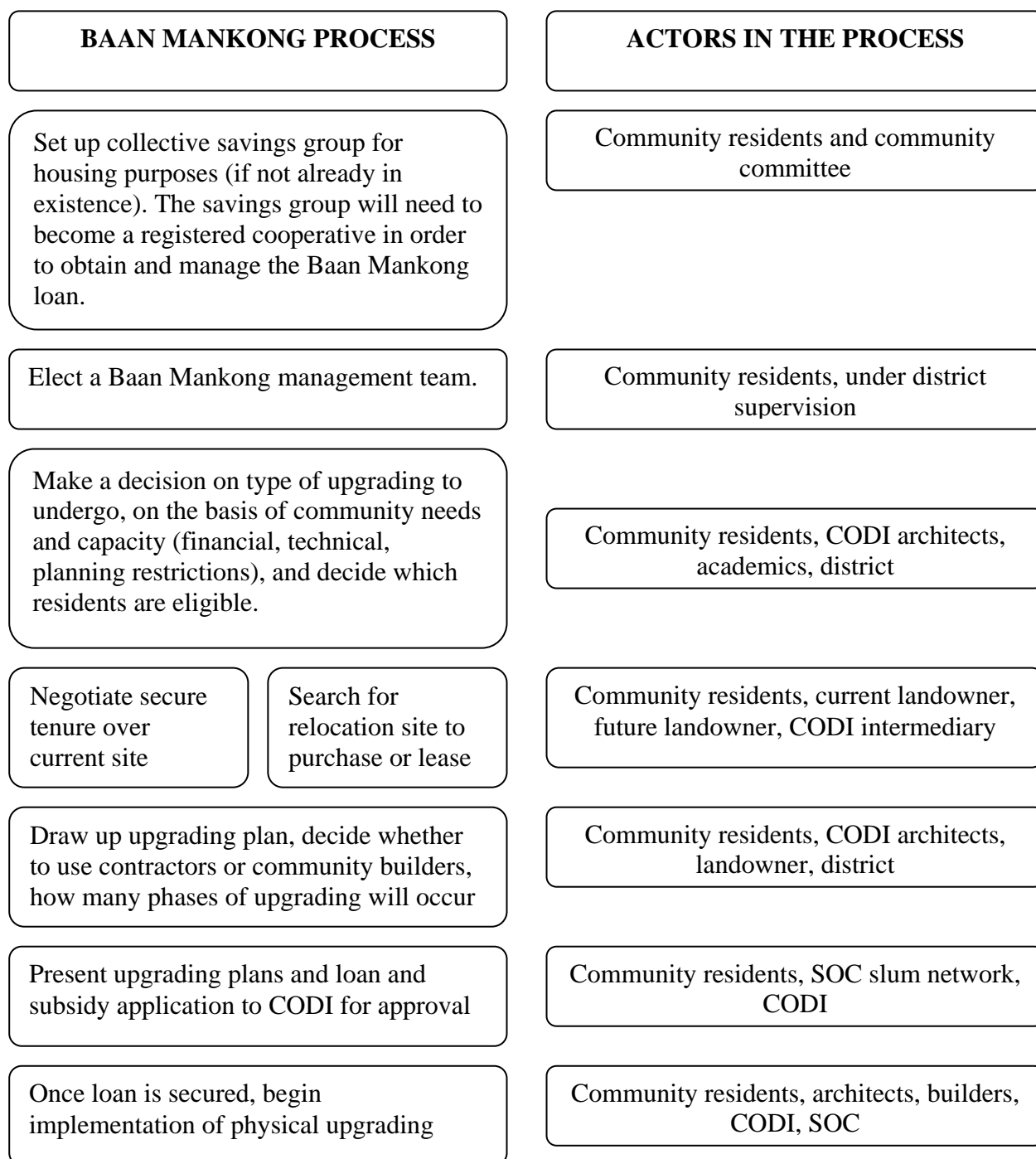
<sup>2</sup> The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration is divided into 50 districts (municipalities).

existing savings and collective activities. From this database, a plan of action is drawn up, selecting communities to upgrade on the basis of need and willingness to embark on the project – these communities can then serve as learning opportunities for other communities in the city, through information exchange and study visits. As communities upgrade, networks can be built up along common themes such as landowner, environmental problems, or location.

At the community level, the process of upgrading requires the formation of a community committee in charge of managing the Baan Mankong process, and setting up collective savings activities. Communities are entitled to government loans and subsidies for upgrading, administered by CODI, but to qualify for the housing and land loans – totalling a maximum of 300,000B per household, to be repaid over 15 years – each household needs to save a 10% deposit of the total loan amount. Therefore, the community residents must either negotiate for secure tenure in their current site, or, when that is not possible, purchase or lease land elsewhere for relocation. Once tenure is secured, the community needs to decide what type of upgrading to undergo (outlined in Appendix 1), as this will influence the type of loan they obtain. As well as the land and housing loan, the community is entitled to an infrastructure subsidy, which varies in amount depending on whether the community is upgrading on-site, or reconstructing. Additional subsidies are available, such as for temporary housing during the construction process or to install sewage treatment systems.

A community is expected to decide collectively what type of upgrading to undergo, and how to carry out the upgrading process: whether contractors will be hired or residents will do the construction work themselves. Decisions will depend on the financial burden each household is willing to accept. For this reason, a survey is carried out by the community residents of each households' income and expenditure, to ensure that the loan taken out can be repaid. Figure 1.1 summarises the upgrading process and the various stakeholders involved.

Figure 1.1: Summary of the upgrading process at the community level



***The significance of Baan Mankong***

Though initial Baan Mankong output targets were certainly ambitious, at 300,000 dwellings in 5 years, they signalled a serious government commitment to ensuring that all Thais are well-housed. The participatory nature of Baan Mankong, and the fact that it requires communities to cooperate at a city-wide level to draw up an upgrading plan, signals a shift towards increased citizen participation in urban governance, and cooperation between the



community residents and various government agencies can be regarded as a mode of co-production. This is evident in the goals of Baan Mankong (Box 1.1), which see the project as about more than just houses. At the community level, collective action at all stages is required, from the savings group, to the design of the new community layout, to decisions regarding the purchase of construction materials and perhaps even construction itself, if contractors are not hired.

This thesis uses the Baan Mankong participatory slum upgrading project as a case-study due to the ambitious nature of the project in terms of the scale of what it is trying to achieve, and the manner in which it hopes to do so. As the programme is still relatively young, having been initiated in 2003, there is scope for research regarding its impacts on a social level, most assessments having been done on a financial or physical slant. This thesis therefore hopes to fill the gap, by providing an assessment on multiple levels, both horizontal and vertical, of the Baan Mankong process and outcomes, with regard to social and institutional relationships. It does so by focusing on the implementation of Baan Mankong in Bangkok, using four upgraded communities as case studies, as well as examining the operations of slum networks. This is done whilst considering the vertical relationships between the urban poor and government officials and other holders of power, as investigations of social capital should not evade issues of context and power. Baan Mankong comes at a time of increasing recognition of Thailand's poor as an important voter base with a growing interest in ensuring political promises are kept. The potential for Baan Mankong to achieve large scale improvements in housing conditions, whilst at the same time promoting participatory governance, means that it is an example that should be studied for its potential to be replicated elsewhere. Marginalisation and voicelessness are components of poverty which can be targeted through participatory processes (Lemanski, 2008), and Baan Mankong strengthens local organisational capacity whilst promoting engagement with actors on various levels.

**Box 1.1: Goals of Baan Mankong** (from <http://www.codi.or.th/housing/StrategicPlans.html>)

1. To improve living conditions or develop new housing for people in squatter settlements.
2. To create a sense of security through land/housing tenure for the poor.
3. To improve sanitation facilities and the surrounding environment.
4. To create a living environment that is secure, beautiful, respectful, and compatible with the community's way of life.
5. To create a holistic development plan that takes into account social and economic factors as well as physical improvements.
6. To empower poor communities so that they will be acknowledged by society at large.
7. To create a community management system that has transparency and networking capabilities.
8. To create a database of squatter settlements and their development plans throughout the country.
9. To create a participatory development process in which the community organizations in each province oversee their own housing, economic, and social development issues.
10. To create new roles for educational institutions and universities so that they can fully participate in community development and research.
11. To create more flexible laws that are compatible with the development of communities, and communities should participate in the drafting of the new laws themselves.
12. To distil and synthesize new knowledge from each community so that it can be widely available to other communities and the public.

### **1.3 Why social capital?**

Simplistically, social capital is composed not of what you know, but who you know: linkages to people can provide benefits. The definition adopted in this thesis follows Putnam's (1993, 1998) conception as adapted by the World Bank, that social capital is composed of the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). Specifically, the concept of social capital can be divided into three parts, representing the three levels of analysis used throughout the thesis: bonding, bridging and linking social capital (Woolcock, 2001).

Social capital is one of the five capitals, along with human, economic, physical and environmental. Social capital is perhaps the most accessible asset for the poor, as it arises out of social relations, and being part of a social network can be vital to ensuring a better quality of life. Those on low incomes have limited endowments and assets, and therefore sharing assets between neighbours or a community can create community-level assets, and it also makes self-help possible. This mutual aid and cooperation creates bonding social capital within a community, which can be an essential lubricant for self-help. Bridging social capital

extends beyond a community, through horizontal ties to like persons, whilst linking social capital can provide vertical ties to persons with power and resources. Thus, whilst bonding social capital may be sufficient to survive, bridging and linking social capital provide opportunities to improve one's situation both economically and socially.

Social capital is the latest catchphrase in development, and is seen as an important component in urban development: the 2008 UN HABITAT report includes a chapter on building bridges in order to achieve harmonious cities. It states that "strengthening social capital has become one of the three pillars of programme interventions in developing countries, along with strengthening of financial and human capital" (2008:202), and more widely, social cohesion is a key component for achieving democracy, development and social change. If social capital is used strategically, it can therefore help the economic and social development of communities.

In the Thai context, an awareness of the importance of social capital arose following the 1997 financial crisis. A realisation that social capital functions as a vital safety net for the poor, especially at the household and community level, led to an emphasis on promoting social cohesion, with projects such as the Social Investment Fund (SIF), funded by the World Bank, which requires collective action in decision-making and project implementation. Though Baan Mankong does not specifically refer to the term social capital, the project's goals implicitly reflect the concepts of bonding, bridging and linking social capital.

Why analyse participatory upgrading within the context of social capital? Community-driven development, with its emphasis on community participation in decision-making and project implementation, is inextricably linked with social capital. Participation will not work without trust and experience of working in groups. Free-riding prevents participation, and trust prevents free-riding. Therefore, social capital will be a determinant of the outcomes of a participatory approach. Communities with high levels of trust and strong norms of reciprocity and collective action are generally regarded as being more suited to participatory projects.

#### **1.4 Research Question and Hypotheses**

The main research question is to what extent Baan Mankong, as a participatory process, promotes increased linkages both horizontally and vertically, with beneficial consequences

for governance. This question is examined within a social capital framework, in order to capture the different components which make up these linkages, such as trust, group membership, collective action and information sharing. This thesis argues that though the Baan Mankong process leads to an increase in all these components, the problem comes in sustaining the increase in social capital beyond the upgrading process, both at the community and wider institutional level. As such, the thesis serves as an evaluation of the Baan Mankong project in an urban setting, with regard to how well it manages to set out its self-proclaimed goals. The focus of this study lies not so much in documenting the upgrading process itself, but rather, its outcomes.

In order to answer the research question, six hypotheses have been devised:

- 1) Participatory slum upgrading is more likely to succeed the higher the starting level of social capital in the community;
- 2) Participating will lead to higher levels of trust in the community, though levels of participation may drop once the upgrading is complete;
- 3) Community leadership is integral to determining the sustainability or not of collective action within the community;
- 4) Slum networks will play a vital role in connecting communities and promoting policy reform in favour of the poor;
- 5) Completing the upgrading process and gaining security of tenure will lead to community residents feeling more integrated in the city and its governance issues;
- 6) There will be a positive shift in the way the poor are regarded by institutional bodies, and trust between the two groups will increase.

These hypotheses reflect some of the goals of the Baan Mankong scheme listed in Box 1.1, and refer to the concepts of bonding, bridging and linking social capital (Figure 1.2). At the community level, participation requires the direct involvement of residents and their full cooperation and willingness to participate in such a time and resource-intensive project. Collective action to achieve common goals is more likely where social capital is high. Certain residents may have more to lose from upgrading, depending on their pre-upgrading asset base, and their willingness or not to make sacrifices for the common good can affect the outcome of upgrading. This outcome may depend heavily on the ability of the community leadership to unite all community residents.

At the network level, slum networks are integral to the learning-by-doing and information exchange aspect of Baan Mankong. They can also serve to break traditional patron-client ties, by providing communities with the necessary linkages to those with access to resources and power. However, slum networks depend on volunteers, and thus face the problem of sustaining interest in network activities. As many of the volunteers are the leaders of their respective communities, the risk is that either their community or the network suffers from lack of input. With regard to linkages between the communities and the state, this happens primarily at the local government level, and in the case study communities, with the government landowners. The upgrading process promotes cooperation between the two parties, and CODI plays an important role not only in facilitating this cooperation, but also in putting pressure on at the policy level. Baan Mankong provides an opportunity for state-society synergy (Evans, 1996), as communities and the government complement each others' development efforts.

Figure 1.2: Overall structure of the thesis.

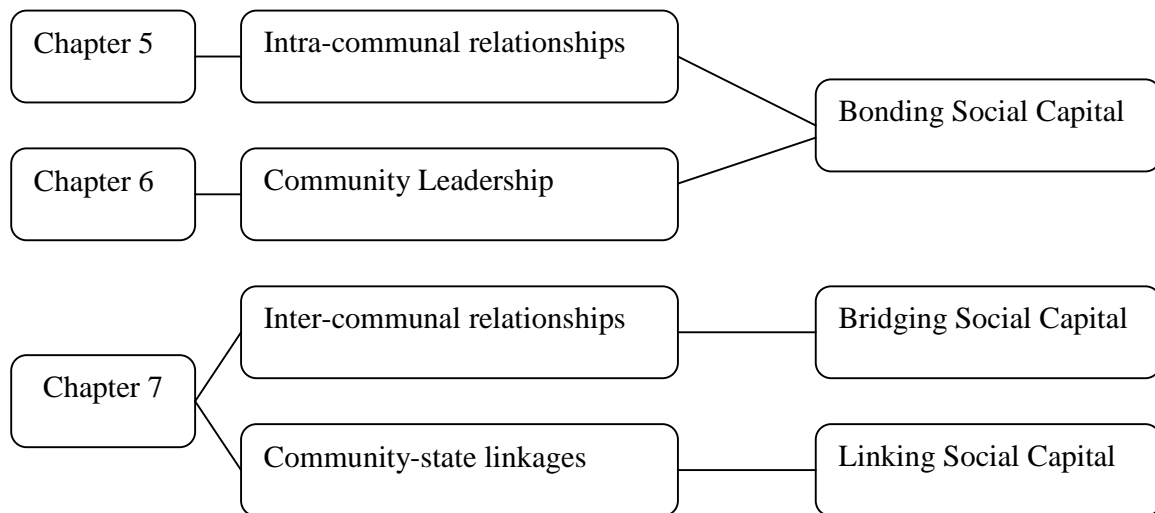


### 1.5 Outline of the thesis

This thesis seeks to explore the outcomes of the Baan Mankong project from the perspective of the beneficiaries themselves, the community residents, and makes rich use of primary sources to offer a qualitative perspective. Chapter Two provides the contextual background to

the study, exploring Thailand’s social structures and the growth of participatory movements, signalling a move away from the traditional hierarchical structure. It also outlines previous Thai responses to the provision of affordable housing. Chapter Three provides a conceptual outline to the research. It examines the importance of community participation, especially with regard to promoting co-production and enhancing agency. The chapter then introduces the concept of social capital, which forms the theoretical basis of this study, and its relevance to poverty reduction. The concept of social capital ties in with the role of institutions in society, and their relevance to the poor is examined. Federations and networks are also introduced, as institutions which can help the poor. In Chapter Four, the methodology used, a qualitative, case-study approach, is explained.

*Figure 1.3: Structure of Empirical Core*



Chapters Five, Six and Seven form the empirical basis of the thesis (Figure 1.3). These chapters examine social capital on three levels: bonding, bridging and linking. In Chapter Five, the community residents’ views with regard to their material and social satisfaction with the outcome of Baan Mankong are presented. Material satisfaction considers the physical output (the houses) and perceptions of security of tenure. Social satisfaction examines the community’s trust and solidarity, groups and organisations, cooperation and collective action, and explores what “community” means to the residents. Chapter Six continues the intra-communal analysis, by focusing specifically on the role of the community leaders, and their linkages both within the community and with outsiders. Chapter Seven explores inter-communal relationships, through the medium of slum networks, which serve to connect Baan

Mankong communities. The chapter then explores vertical community-state linkages, examining how outside actors such as government officials and politicians are perceived by community residents. Finally, Chapter Eight discusses the lessons learnt through this thesis' exploration of the Baan Mankong process from the participants' viewpoint, and the implications of participatory projects within the current Thai political context.



## **Chapter 2 - Thailand's Institutional, Social and Housing Background**

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### **2.1 Thailand's institutional and social context**

#### **2.1.1 Social structure and civil society**

#### **2.1.2 Institutions**

#### **2.1.3 Social capital in Thailand**

#### **2.1.4 Conclusion**

### **2.2 The low income housing situation in Thailand**

#### **2.2.1 A self-sufficiency approach**

#### **2.2.2 Why was Baan Mankong introduced?**

#### **2.2.3 Characteristics of Thai slums**

#### **2.2.4 The slum as a social structure**

#### **2.2.5 Existing literature on Baan Mankong**

### **2.3 Conclusion**

Woolcock (2002) cautions against explanations of social capital which occur in an institutional vacuum. This chapter puts the research study in context by outlining Thailand's social structure, the current trend towards grassroots participation, and its influence on traditional patrimonial relations. It is becoming recognised in Thailand that participation is necessary for achieving social and economic development. Recognition of the role of NGOs has increased in the last decade, particularly since the 1997 economic crisis, which led to an emphasis on the importance of communities and grassroots action. The crisis and subsequent measures imposed by the IMF led to many Thais expressing a desire to shun international intervention and turn to self-sufficiency, and this has been reinforced by the King's call for Thais to follow a "sufficiency economy" principle. Therefore, the 1997 economic crisis coincided with, and reinforced, a turning-point in Thailand's institutional structures and economic policies, leading to a focus on people-centred development, as exemplified by the 1997 Constitution.

The chapter then considers the country's low-income housing policies over the last 50 years, and gives background on the social and physical characteristics of low-income communities. The election of Thaksin Shinawatra's party in 2001 brought with it a raft of policies benefiting the urban and rural poor, among them the Baan Mankong slum upgrading scheme.

## 2.1 Thailand's Institutional and Social Context

### 2.1.1 Social Structures and Civil Society

It is recognized that Thailand's political culture has not traditionally been participatory, being based on a patron-client system. However, the huge economic growth experienced in the country over the last few decades has partially broken down traditional social structures. The recent turmoil in the country's democratic system following the 2006 coup has led to a more prominent role for civil society, and exposed the cleavages between the haves and have-nots. This section explores how the transformations of Thailand's social structures are shaping the country's future, as a civil society develops.

Thai society's patrimonial structure emphasises autocratic, "top-down centralized authority", and participation is not traditionally favoured as it represents a dilution of power and influence (Gohlert, 1991:87), as does the trend towards decentralisation. The need to 'keep face' and prevent the 'loss of face' of superiors is important, which may have reinforced the patrimonial structure, characterised by a reliance on leadership. The traditional hierarchical concept of *sakdhina* is still influential, whereby seniority is respected and people know their place. More recently, however, Arghiros challenges the domination of patronage, on the basis that it is capital that now grants power, rather than control over resources as in a traditional patron-client relationship, and in rural areas at least, people rely on the market for their livelihoods (2001:7). Therefore, Thailand's economic boom is contributing to the disintegration of traditional clientelistic relations, as individuals can now have more control over their economic situation, whether in rural or urban areas.

Gohlert finds that "pronounced individualism" is frequent, which could explain the "seeming inability or unwillingness to cooperate on a long-term basis" (1991:80). Unger believes that Thais traditionally had a "low propensity to form groups", which in turn limited the levels of social capital in Thai society, as it arises from social interactions, and hence the growth of a civil society (1998:14)<sup>1</sup>. The "dearth of networks of social groups" is blamed for Thailand's

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<sup>1</sup> Analysis by Albritton and Bureekul (2002b) using data from the 2001 Asia Barometer survey seems to support this. From a sample of 1546 rural and urban respondents, only 39.1% respondents were members of any formal organisation, of which 21.7% were residential associations. 13.5% were members of informal organisations. By way of comparison, 67.1% of respondents in Japan in the same survey were members of formal groups. The data also shows that 94% of Bangkok respondents are not members of any groups, compared to 48.4% of rural residents. The authors conclude that Thai civil society participation is therefore weak, especially in urban areas.

reliance on market rather than state provision of social goods, as officials did not have any opportunities to form partnerships for addressing social concerns (Unger 1998:18). Orlandini points out that the years of national development were characterized by a paternalistic “we take care of you” style of leadership (2003a:112).

The emergence of the Thai civil society can be traced to the student uprisings in the 1970s and 1992, and, as a concept, has gained popularity in political discourse. Though there is much confusion as regards what constitutes civil society, with political actors adapting it to suit their political stance, the presence of a strong civil society is regarded as vital for the success of political reforms, solving social crises, and achieving good governance. Girling concludes that Thailand has all the elements that make up a civil society, having passed the test of two major crises, political (the 1992 demonstrations against the military regime) and economic (the 1997 crash), enabling the political system to carry out its proper democratic role, that of “replacing a (discredited) government with one that enjoyed popular support” (2002:263). The 1997 economic crisis may be regarded as the turning point, the “silent revolution”, that led to calls for more transparency and participation, and hence empowerment, at the expense of the traditional authority of the state (Nuremon, 2002:195). Though the concept of popular participation is still young, and in many cases is applied superficially, there is an increasing willingness by ordinary people to stage mass protests, from poor farmers in the Assembly of the Poor, slum dwellers in the Four Regions Slum Network, to the mass anti-government rallies throughout 2008 by the “Yellow Shirts”, followed by “Red Shirts” protests in 2009. The Thai people are coming to realize they can have a significant impact on political actions, to the extent of bringing down governments, and they are using this to their advantage to bring about change. Civil movements also occur at a smaller, more local scale. Thaksin’s populist policies meant that the country’s poor recently started seeing votes as a way to demand access to resources (Murphy, 2009).

The prevalence of military regimes in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century means that democracy is still relatively new in Thailand. The process of democratization is an opportunity to promote the participation of the poor, who can strengthen their position by social mobilization and by the development of autonomous groups within civil society. According to Somchai, popular empowerment within civil society can contribute to the “deepening of democracy” (2002:140) by creating opportunities to learn about democracy through collective action, and empowering civil society and grassroots organisations, hence

challenging patron-client relations. Somchai believes that democratization from above will not succeed in Thailand, and therefore the active popular participation from below is vital for democracy to materialise.

Thailand faces deep political cleavages, which were brought to the fore in the political upheavals of 2008-09, stemming from long-standing social inequalities. There is a degree of dualism to Thailand's democracy: a distinction is often drawn between rural and urban voting patterns. There is a tradition of vote-buying in rural Thailand, with villages having a *hua kanaen*, who collects votes on behalf of a politician, usually a person in a position of some power, such as village leader or teacher. This tradition makes it easy for the urban middle class to dismiss the voting ability of the rural poor, an argument used by the People's Alliance for Democracy (represented by the "Yellow Shirts") during its protests in 2008. However, Albritton and Bureekul (2002a) find that the higher the socio-economic status of respondents, the lower their support for democracy. Thus elites view mass-based democracy, as opposed to "elite-guided" democracy, as a threat to the traditional hierarchical society, where there is deference to authority and people know their place.

NGOs in Thailand have played an important catalyzing role in recent years, despite their relative newness, supporting the formation of people's movements and coordinating their activities. 14,000 NGOs and private organisations were operating in 1999 (Asian Development Bank, 1999:4), and cooperation between NGOs and government departments is being encouraged, in both economic and social development. Some NGOs have managed to promote empowerment of the people by channelling grievances, information and skills (Orlandini, 2003a:116). However, these NGOs often lack funding and skilled human resources, and the credibility for negotiating with the government and mobilizing the masses. Many NGOs are politically or commercially motivated, acting as "social movement organisations", bringing local conflicts to national attention (Preecha, 1999:1). The NGOs play an enabling role, by providing linkages and networks to communities and groups doing the protesting. The networking aspect provides communities with access to expert knowledge, which can provide clout in the face of authorities, as well as access to resources. The NGOs also play a role in dismantling the power relationships of the authorities, bureaucracy and elites over the poor (ibid, 1999:17), providing poor communities with resources in their struggle with the authorities, and acting as their representative. There has also been a rise in the number of community-based organisations: a survey conducted in 1999

found 40,186 organisations ranging from savings groups, women's groups, health volunteers, and youth clubs (Orlandini, 2003a:118).

### **2.1.2 Institutions**

Thai rules and institutions are changing with the strengthening of civil society, and the political reforms that have been occurring since the 1990s. Decentralisation of governance is a large part of this reform, with the passing of the 1999 Decentralisation Act, and the 1997 constitution devotes a chapter to local government. Since the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in 1932, Thailand has had seventeen constitutions. The sixteenth, the "people's constitution" of 1997, was widely viewed as being revolutionary, especially with regards to its provisions for decentralisation and public participation, but was repealed in the September 2006 coup. Traditionally, the Thai political and administrative system consists of a highly centralized, "hierarchical and deferential culture", leading to "fierce bureaucratic resistance to the decentralization initiatives envisioned in the constitution, and widespread perceptions of corruption" (Asian Development Bank, 1999:3). The 1997 constitution, combined with the 8<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Plan of 1997-2000, demonstrated a paradigm shift in favour of a more democratic and participatory approach to governance. The relevant section of the 1997 constitution laid out that:

*"The State shall promote and encourage public participation in laying down policies, making decisions on political issues, preparing economic, social and political development plans, and inspecting the exercise of State power at all levels."*

(Section 76, Chapter 5: Directive Principles of Fundamental State Policies, quoted in Mutebi, undated:10).

The constitution not only encouraged participation, but also local self-government through decentralisation, creating an officialised space for public participation. The 1997 constitution was drafted with representatives from Thailand's provinces and political, administrative and legal experts, who had been nominated and approved by parliament through a decentralized, participatory process. When the constitution was repealed following the 2006 coup, some sections of civil society viewed the 2006 replacement charter as a step backwards.

The 8<sup>th</sup> National Plan of 1997-2000 demonstrated the commitment to decentralisation in provincial administration, creating civic assemblies, though Orlandini argues that these will "epitomize a new form of control over civic politics, rather than a genuine improvement in

people's participation" (2003a:124). There is also the possibility that patronage will continue to impede participation by the lower classes. There is a need for grassroots groups to stop working around local governments, and instead work through them, but this means that local governments need to end their domination by local elites and bureaucratic structures (ibid, 2003a:130). As Thailand has been labelled a "bureaucratic polity" (Riggs, 1996), due to the dominance of bureaucracy over local affairs, the challenge lies not only in implementing the decentralisation process fully, but also in the capacity of local civil society and community groups to organise themselves in order to re-appropriate the empowerment process.

Following the 1997 crisis, there were calls for the adoption of a "sufficiency economy", with the backing of the King, and this was the theme of the 9<sup>th</sup> National Plan (2002-2006), along with sustainable development and good governance, through the use of participatory approaches. The sufficiency economy concept can be broken down into six facets: *people* must change their attitude, taking the middle path in their business, and recognizing Thai culture; *socially*, Thai society must address the different levels of social functions, being family values, community, and country; *economically*, there should be optimal investment in public and private projects; *politically*, there should be an increase in social responsibility and political discipline; *national and environmental resources* should be used optimally; and the appropriate *technology* should be used (Poapongsakorn et al., 2000:18). As a principle, sufficiency economy is widely respected and aspired to in Thailand, perhaps largely out of reverence for the King.

As well as top-down reforms, networks of poor communities are increasingly taking matters into their own hands, though they can face state resistance. The Community Organisation Draft Bill, initiated by community networks country-wide in 2007, illustrates this. The Bill was to allow local communities to have a say in any projects that could affect their livelihood, with local community organisation councils being elected at the village, provincial and national levels. The Ministry of the Interior feared that these community organisation councils might overlap with the work of local administration organisations, despite the concessions that had been made in the Bill to allay any such fears, such as community leaders being given only the role of consulting and cooperating with local administration organisations (Assavanonda and Santimatnedol, 7/6/07). The bureaucratic

resistance to this proposal demonstrates the reluctance of the Thai political structure to share power with the people<sup>2</sup>.

There is recognition that the top-down, centralized form of government failed to have the desired effect in terms of poverty reduction. Though Thailand has undergone massive economic change over the last 50 years, bringing a long-term decline in poverty, the poverty reduction is mainly attributable to the effects of economic growth and a reliance on trickle-down effects, rather than well-targeted government policies for the poor (Warr and Sarntisart, 2005). The state's poverty reduction strategy consists of three dimensions: opportunity, security and community (ibid, 2005:193). Opportunity refers to the capacity to participate in economically rewarding activity; security refers to the existence of mechanisms to maintain well-being in the face of unexpected short-term reductions in incomes; community refers to social capital, and is both a means of achieving the other two dimensions, and an end in itself, as well-being is affected by the extent to which it is present. Thai poverty reduction is centred on a desire to use decentralised local community approaches, in order to minimise dependency on central government. Post-1997, a more concerted strategy of targeted programs was adopted, such as the Social Investment Fund in rural villages, to provide financial support to community groups that set out a plan that would benefit the community. Hence the policies themselves encourage the growth of social capital. The state is relying more on the "enabling" approach to development, where people are the subjects of development, and self-sufficiency and empowerment is promoted. This fits in well with the paradigm shift from a patrimonial hierarchy to decentralisation, not only in urban development but in all areas of public administration and policy. What is necessary now is to ensure continuation of policies to full implementation, irrespective of changes in government.

### ***Corruption***

Thailand's governance system has been plagued by endemic corruption. The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index of 2007 ranks Thailand as 84<sup>th</sup> most corrupt out of 179 countries, down from 63<sup>rd</sup> in 2006, out of 163 countries. According to Jacobs (1971), Thais accept corruption as a cause of inefficiency and social disorganization, but do not see it as arising from the patrimonial culture. Rather, it comes from the weakness of certain persons

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<sup>2</sup> Community leaders took the Bill to the National Legislative Assembly, where an amended version was eventually passed with the support of various members and the Speaker (interview with Khun Paiboon, 2/4/08).

in the face of temptation, so the solution is seen to be the removal of these individuals, rather than reform of the patrimonial system (1971:321).

More recently, Pasuk and Sungsidh (1994) surveyed attitudes to corruption in Thailand, and found that bureaucratic corruption is caused by the low moral standards of individual bureaucrats, the deficiencies of the administrative system, and the pressures and constraints imposed by society on officials (1994:179). For many Thais, giving bribes to officials is seen as a gift of good will, a mutual transaction between the two individuals. However, “cheating the people” and “cheating from the royal coffer” is regarded as corruption only when large sums of money are involved, and with damaging consequences for society as a whole. The authors see the problem as arising from the fact that the concept of “public office” is weak and hence people are failing to protect their rights (1994:134). Middle class professionals and academics have a better appreciation of the duties of public servants, whilst the lower classes are more concerned by cases of corruption that involve large sums of money. The authors therefore believe that solutions for corruption must begin by changing society’s perceptions of what is legitimate and what is corrupt, by improving standards in business, professional and official ethics. People regard politicians as being more corrupt than bureaucrats, but corruption in the bureaucracy has helped to shape corruption in politics. The corruption allegations against deposed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra signal a stronger resolve to tackle high-level corruption by the government, but low-level corruption may be more detrimental to the poor.

### ***The Thaksin Government’s Policies***

The former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra (2001-2006) is a figure of great controversy in Thailand at present, though this thesis will not delve into his alleged wrongdoings. It is undeniable that during his tenure, many policies were introduced which were targeted at Thailand’s poor, both rural and urban. According to Hewison, his Thai Rak Thai (Thais love Thais) party came to power through “electoral policies that targeted the poor, and made social welfare a significant part of its platform” (2003:12). Though they have been criticised as being part of a populist campaign to win votes, with no long-term sustainability, they succeeded in ensuring Thaksin’s popularity in rural areas. Thaksin himself quoted Rousseau on social contracts, saying that political parties “are bound together by a Social Contract towards our peoples. This Social Contract confers upon us the duty to dedicate ourselves to



solving the people's problems, improve their livelihood, and create greater opportunities for them to enrich their lives" (quoted in Hewison, 2003:10).

One of the Thaksin government's platforms was the Dual Track policy, which aimed to make Thailand more competitive internationally, whilst building a stronger and more resilient economy. In a booklet entitled "Empower the Grassroots" (2005), the then-Prime Minister set out the three components to grassroots empowerment: decentralisation, democracy, and distribution of development benefits. In Thaksin's own words:

*"This new emphasis on strengthening the grassroots is no cynical ploy to win votes, but an effort to empower our country's most important asset, which is its people, so that they can take charge of their own lives and build more wealth and a better future for themselves... Grassroots empowerment requires mobilisation of their intellectual capital as well as their financial capital, and is equally important for the future prosperity of the nation as a whole" (2005:21).*

Thus, empowering the grassroots would not only help the poor, but also the economy by boosting domestic demand, making the poor stakeholders in Thailand's economic success. The resulting stable social platform would overcome the "problems of poverty and inequality which threaten to create political barriers to business success" (Pasuk and Baker, 2002:10), effectively functioning as a cushion to protect profit-making. Policies promoting entrepreneurship at the grassroots level included "One Village One Product" and debt relief for farmers. Though the majority of policies were focused on the rural poor, certain policies, such as 30B health care and the Baan Mankong and Baan Ua-Arthorn projects, benefited the urban poor too. Though Baan Mankong effectively extends existing CODI practice, the Thaksin government's ambitious output targets, funding and general fanfare surrounding the launch of the project, effectively institutionalised the project and gave it legitimacy in the eyes of officials.

### **2.1.3 Social Capital in Thailand**

Thailand's traditional village culture included self-help practices and was inherently participatory in nature. However, these cultural norms were eroded with the rise of the centralised and paternalistic authority structure, the patron-client system, and socio-economic divisions (Gohlert, 1991:87), which came when European powers introduced bureaucratic

systems to the region<sup>3</sup>. Jacobs' (1971:81) analysis of the patron-client system in Thailand concludes that clientelism has encouraged vertical loyalty at the expense of horizontal cooperation and coordination. Though this is in reference to the administrative structure of authority, this trend would also have filtered down to the decision-making behaviour of non-bureaucrats. Jacobs finds that Thai society lacks "effective, goal-oriented, formal organizations", with interpersonal relations being structured by "relationships of subordination and superordination (or client and patron)", so an "ordinary Thai realizes that he cannot rely on non-bureaucratic community organization of any kind to satisfy his goal-oriented needs" (1971:90), consequently promoting individualist behaviour. Another view is that organisation does exist in an informal sense, at the level of personal relationships, when it is absolutely essential to achieve a certain task, after which it is abandoned. A combination of the individualist nature of the Thais, the centralised form of government, and a tradition of relying on leadership in decision-making, are viewed by Gohlert (1991) as reasons for the lack of collective action in the country's history, and these traits mean that social capital in Thailand has traditionally been limited.

Gohlert may be over-generalising. One can assume that many low-income urban communities function like rural village communities ("urban villages"), with a cooperative tradition, due to the rural origins of many of their inhabitants. Out of necessity, low-income communities often form groups, not only to benefit from pooling their resources, but also to gain strength when facing government officials and landlords. However, the formation and maintenance of these networks can be hampered by the social fluidity in communities, as residents move in and out, often due to insecurity of tenure. What communities lack are not social networks, but connections to decision-makers – they have no linking capital. Links between poor communities and political bodies are weak in Bangkok. The patronage system may be the only connection between the urban poor and those who hold power, allowing the poor to live and work in an informal setting with a minimum level of security, in exchange for money and political support for politicians (Mohit, 2002:291). As the urban poor do not like having contact with government officials in offices (Akin, 1975), patrons serve as the channels when communities need certain services. Though patron-client norms may lower the levels of confrontation between Thais, they also serve as a "system of social control" (Preecha, 1999:4).

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<sup>3</sup> Thailand was never colonised.

Thai society has been characterised as a “loosely structured social system” (Embree, 1950). Though this characterisation has been criticised, Jacobs supports the claim: he believes Thais have limited kinship units, and “it is the patrimonial hierarchy of clients and patrons that is the touchstone of Thai social relationships” (1971:90). This patrimonial system meant that Thailand achieved “modernisation without development”: changes were only at a superficial level, rather than the “qualitative change in the crucial focuses of the social order” (1971:12) required for true development, causing divisions and gaps in Thai society.

The qualitative change that Jacobs called for in 1971 is now increasingly becoming apparent in Thai society, and appears to be coming from below, as will be explored in this thesis. Local community organisations are being represented by groups such as the Assembly of the Poor, and, more pertinently to this thesis, the Four Regions Slum Network and National Urban Poor Communities Development Organisation (SOC). Ockey’s (2004) study of “everyday resistance” in urban poor communities finds that class-based horizontal ties are replacing patron-client ties, and the resistance is being directed not at the rich, but at the state. Horizontal ties can be regarded as “weapons of the weak”, suitable for those with no strong patron and few resources, and they encourage a style of leadership suitable for democratic politics (ibid). At the same time, the increasing participation of the poor in the process of democratisation is empowering them to challenge government officials and act on injustices, rather than silently accepting them (Somchai, 2002:141). Accordingly, this thesis explores whether traditions of subordination are still relevant in a growing culture of collective action.

Interest in social capital in Thailand saw a revival following the 1997 economic crisis, as it was realised that in the absence of state support, communities provided themselves with solutions, such as through the creation of savings groups. A study by the World Bank outlined the features of Thai social capital: 1) norms and values which place much respect on nature; 2) inter-generational local knowledge; 3) a horizontal social structure which emphasises reciprocity; 4) community rights to manage resources; 5) a diversity of local cultures that can enrich the knowledge of communities (World Bank, 2000:8). Another manifestation of social capital is the concept of unity (*samakee*), central to Thai society, and viewed by the King as one of the components of good citizens. Unity leads to the survival of the nation, pride, and dignity (Connors, 2003) and is a basis for a developmental democracy.

The importance of unity as a national trait is reflected community names, such as Ruam Samakee (together united) and Samakee Ruam Jai (hearts united together)<sup>4</sup>.

#### **2.1.4 Conclusion**

This section has explored the traditional norms which have shaped Thailand's political structures and patterns of social interaction. It has highlighted the recent trends away from traditional, clientelistic and hierarchical structures towards more participatory interactions, with the impetus coming both from the top, with government reforms, and the bottom, through the growth of civil society. The 1997 economic crisis coincided with, and reinforced, a shift toward participatory and decentralised governance, as well as a trend for living within one's means, as encouraged by the King. The Thaksin government's adoption of the Dual Track policy provided grassroots groups with financial support for participatory economic and social development projects at the community level. By extension, these policies promoted the empowerment of the marginalised poor, who have traditionally not been given space to participate in governance matters, due to the country's hierarchical social structure. Among the policies aimed at helping the poor were the Baan Mankong and Baan Ua-Arthorn housing projects. The following section takes a historical look at government responses to housing provision in Thailand, as well as exploring the features that define Thailand's urban low-income communities.

#### **2.2 The low income housing situation in Thailand**

Thailand's economic boom, combined with an expanding population and very rapid urbanisation<sup>5</sup>, put pressure on the housing market over a wide range of income levels. Bangkok, as Thailand's primate city, attracts many people from rural areas seeking to make a living in the big city. These migrants often work in the informal sector, and the lack of job security creates problems in terms of finding secure, affordable accommodation. They are priced out of the housing market, which has responded well to meet the needs of those on high and upper-middle incomes, but has largely avoided catering for those on lower-middle and low incomes. Due to the lack of public housing, these persons often end up residing in slum and squatter settlements. 60% of current slum dwellers were born in a slum (UN Habitat

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<sup>4</sup> However, the names are no guarantee that the community will be united.

<sup>5</sup> 31% of Thais lived in urban areas in 2001 (UN HABITAT 2006:201).

2006:202), which means the problem now stems more from natural growth than migration, while 6% of Bangkok's housing is considered slum housing.

Bangkok did not benefit from significant urban planning through the boom period of its expansion. Lack of planning for land to house the poor stemmed from competing power relations, as land resources were a vital economic resource for politicians to secure a power base (Korff, 1986). Organisations like the National Housing Authority lack these land resources and the power to acquire them; consequently, public housing projects are in poorly-serviced, distant sites. The poor, having the least power, thus suffer the consequences of inadequate affordable land.

As a result, vacant plots of land develop into slum communities. Slums provide those who come to the city with an access point to the urban economy and social connections. For example, living in Klong Toey slum by the port provides access to foremen with links to casual job opportunities. Thus, living in a slum is a means of ensuring access to work, as well as being a way of living in which people live in close connection to each other.

Though the Thai government has implemented different housing policies for those at the lower end of the income scale, the trend has been to set unattainable goals, without the necessary financial backing and political will to implement the policies fully. A housing policy should have two objectives: the removal of barriers to supply of and access to private housing, and provision of adequate housing to those who cannot afford private housing (Yap, 1996). Though the Thai state has generally succeeded in achieving the first goal, by making private supply one of the main ways of meeting housing demand, its attempts at meeting the second goal have been less successful.

Giles (2003) provides a comprehensive history of the Thai government's response to urban housing problems between 1940, when the first Housing Division was formed, and the mid-1990s, tracing the government's reluctance to use self-help methods. Giles concludes that the Thai government "consistently failed to act in ways that were cost effective, instead preferring approaches that offered political visibility" (2003:228), and was largely unresponsive to external policy influences such as the World Bank and UN, at least until the 1980s when these organisations endorsed a market-oriented strategy. Between the 1950s and 1970s, the housing agency's main focus was on public housing and slum clearance.

Apartment buildings were built for those displaced by urban renewal, with much media attention, but the public housing was unpopular with its inhabitants. In 1962, UNICEF suggested an urban renewal project based on self-help in the Bonkai area; municipal officers resisted self-help and were slow to put it in practice. UN records from the time suggest that officials were resistant to self-help because it was “a new approach which runs counter to their traditional way of doing things *for* the people as judged by the administration to be in their best interests” (Giles, 2003:235).

The 1970s saw an increase in activity in the housing arena, with the formation of the National Housing Authority (NHA) in 1972, with a remit to build homes; “conduct urban community development, clear slums and resettle inhabitants; provide dwellings for rent, sale and hire-purchase; and subsidise and guarantee tenants and buyers” (Giles, 2003:236). The NHA’s plans and projects were very much stop-start, with ambitious plans halted by funding issues; the 1976 five year plan targeted three income groups with a production rate of 20,000 a year, but by 1977, the government cancelled the plan, due to lack of funds. A second plan of 1978 took a sites-and-services approach, but again funds were lacking, the state preferring to build more politically-visible flats in Bangkok.

*Box 2.1: A note on terminology:*

The definition of slum used by the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority (BMA) is “an overcrowded, non-orderly and dilapidated community with unample [sic] environment which can be harmful to health and lives and with a minimum of 15 housing units per rai”, while the NHA’s definition requires a minimum of 30 houses per rai (UN HABITAT 2006:202).

The English word “slum” is frequently used in Thai with reference to low-income communities. Alternative phrases are *chumchon ae-ad* which literally translates to mean “crowded community”, or *chumchon buk ruk*, which means “squatter community”. This thesis refers to pre-upgraded communities as slums.

The NHA’s 2001 figures counted 1,604 poor and informal communities in Bangkok, comprising of 283,566 households (CODI, 2005:6).

By the 1980s there was a shift towards an “enabling strategy” as the state adopted a policy of no longer funding public enterprises like the NHA. Internationally, the World Bank and the UN encouraged enablement, facilitating the role of the private sector and communities in developing housing, and the Thai government followed this path in its Sixth National Plan (1987-91). The provision of low-cost housing by the private sector in Thailand has been described as a “success story” (Yap, 1996:316), facilitated by the availability of housing

finance. In 1980, only 15% of Bangkok's households could afford the cheapest private-sector housing on the market; by 1994, this had risen to 70-80% (Yap, 1996:317). Though the NHA continued to build flats, these were mostly targeted at the lower-middle class population, such as government employees, as it requires rental income and sales to stay solvent. Thailand's economic growth helped to bring poverty reduction through the trickle-down effect, but it also meant that many slum dwellers were being evicted from city-centre locations as demand for land grew. However, land-sharing projects provided a solution in certain cases, whereby squatter communities came to an agreement with the landowner to remain on part of the land, allowing the rest of the site to be developed.

The Government Housing Bank (GHB) is another actor in the affordable housing market, established in 1953 to act as a housing developer as well as financier. With the formation of the NHA, the GHB became a specialised housing finance institution, and expanded greatly during the 1990s following the construction boom. By 2002 it had a market share of about 40% in home loans (Kritayanavaj, 2002:16), and approximately 90% of the GHB's total borrowers are from lower-income groups, as it offers lower interest rates than commercial banks (ibid, 2002:22). The GHB has recognised its role in helping those on low incomes to access housing, and it introduced in 2003 an asset capitalisation program, to help the poor escape the poverty trap (Khan, 2005). This targets low-income households whose assets cannot usually be used as capital for loans, by allowing them to borrow against assets such as rental rights. Nevertheless, at the very low end of the income spectrum, those residing in slum and squatter settlements and low priced rental units are priced out of the housing market.

NGOs have been an important partner to slum communities, especially since the 1980s, though their reach has been limited. Surveys from the early 1990s show that less than 300 of 1500 slum communities had worked with slum-focussed NGOs (Douglass, Ard-Am and Kim 2002, quoting Kaothien 1994). The Klong Toey slum area in central Bangkok, located on Port Authority land, has probably benefited the most from NGO assistance, especially due to the prominence of former Senator Duang Prateep, of the Duang Prateep Foundation, who has been active in promoting the rights of slum dwellers in the face of authorities. According to Askew, the NGO presence in slums has led to slum dwellers being exposed to a bureaucratic and ideological environment, which has given them a "new language and a strategic framework with which to advance both individual and collective claims to resources" (2002:169). However, Askew does not see the increased NGO presence as having led to any

significant achievement of the NGO ideals of local democratisation and sustainable development.

### **2.2.1 A self-sufficiency approach**

The 1997 economic crisis led to a shift in national policy towards self-sufficiency and decentralisation. The economic problems led to a growth in community-based organisations (CBO), and in the housing field, these CBOs began operating their own housing projects. In 1992, the Urban Community Development Office (UCDO) was formed, an arm of the NHA, with the remit of developing new processes to address urban poverty, and throughout the 1990s, it encouraged the formation of community savings groups and networks, as well as relocation and upgrading projects. In 2000, UCDO merged with the Rural Development Fund to form the Community Organisations Development Institute (CODI). CODI's role is to strategically link communities to encourage collective action on poverty reduction, land, housing, welfare services and community enterprises. It also benefits from its status as a public organisation, which makes it a key institution in bridging the government and civil society groups, and can function as an "instrument of inclusion" (World Bank, 2001). However, it is semi-autonomous, and on its board of directors has representatives from government and citizen organisations, including communities. When UCDO became CODI, it gained independence from the NHA, and the freedom to pursue its own policies. The two agencies still collaborate, for example in collecting data about low income communities, but the NHA's focus is on the supply-side, through projects such as Baan Ua-Arthorn, whilst CODI deals with the demand side. When the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) was formed in 2002, for public equity and social justice, and to develop social capital, it took responsibility over CODI and the NHA.

CODI symbolised a new approach, with a focus on communities achieving things for themselves. According to the organisation, Thailand's housing problems have not been solved effectively because of the state's highly centralised approach, and its very hierarchical, vertical system. The state has focussed too much on construction targets, regarding people as recipients or beneficiaries, and hence has failed to forge relationships with the urban poor. It is a case of the formal housing system pitched against an informal culture, with no social dimension to the policy (CODI, undated). CODI is taking housing development in a new direction, through community and local partnerships, with community organisations and



networks the core actors in the process. Community participation can be used to build the managerial capacities of community groups, and the communities can choose to be assisted by development agents. There is also an aim to link local housing development plans with other city developments, so that housing is integrated into city development plans. CODI's director, Khun Somsook Boonyabancha, has been instrumental in getting the government to realise the ability of low incomes groups to empower themselves. She has tried to demonstrate to bureaucrats that the urban poor can be viewed as resources, and not just as problems, and therefore that urbanisation presents opportunities. Khun Somsook looks to the European example of community participation in decision-making about development projects, in order to allow people, as well as physical infrastructure, to develop (Kongrut, 28/6/07). In this way, urban areas can be well-managed whilst allowing real democracy.

### **2.2.2 Why was Baan Mankong introduced?**

CODI's aims are embodied in the Baan Mankong (secure housing) slum upgrading project, which received state funding in 2003. The Baan Mankong scheme is not the first of its kind, but can be distinguished in terms of sheer scale and funding. CODI's predecessor, UCDO, implemented similar housing upgrading schemes during the 1990s, providing loans to community savings groups, funded by international donors. Baan Mankong extends this, with a special allocation of the government's budget, physical output targets, and on a national scale, repackaged as part of Thaksin's schemes to "empower the grassroots" (Thaksin, 2005). In conjunction with Baan Mankong was the Baan Ua-Arthorn (we care housing) scheme, of government-built flats targeted at the lower-middle class range, to be carried out by the NHA.

The "Building Together" project of 1978 embodied many similar principles to Baan Mankong, such as the use of organised self-help in producing and assembling building materials, organising the work into clusters of row houses of about 20 families, and completing the settlement cluster by cluster to create learning opportunities. The Building Together Company's work has been described as "indicative of the trend towards ideals of participation" (Midgely et al, 1986:116). This thesis explores the outcomes of self-help, community-based schemes for environmental and physical management, examining Lee's claim that these methods are limited without "external intermediary institutions...to provide support to communities in mobilizing internal resources and gain access to outside inputs" (1998:993). Though CODI is required to play a facilitating role, slum networks aim to

demonstrate to formal institutions that low-income communities on their own are increasingly capable of taking on this facilitating role.

Though CODI has been instrumental in setting the precedent for Baan Mankong-type upgrading on such a large scale, the budget allocated to it by the government in 2003 may largely have been due to the Thaksin government's highly populist policies, focussing on providing opportunities for the grassroots to develop, mainly through micro-finance projects in the rural sector. The Thaksin government led the trend towards acceptance and facilitation of community-led development, which fits in well with the commitment to devolve power from central government to local government and groups, as first embodied in the 8th National Plan (1997-2000). The focus on self-sufficiency as set out in the 9th National Plan (2002-2006) also reinforced the trend towards good governance, and people-centred development, as part of the country's 20-year vision to alleviate poverty and upgrade the quality of life of Thai people, to achieve sustainable development and well-being for all. The 10<sup>th</sup> National Plan for 2007-2011 continues along this path, calling for human and social development, strong communities, and good governance, within the context of a sufficiency economy (Saralthorn, 2007).

While Baan Mankong has received much positive press, especially internationally, the Baan Ua-Arthorn project has run into trouble. Public housing estates often suffer from being of low quality, hurriedly built at the lowest possible cost, often in poor locations. Baan Ua-Arthorn has been investigated since the 2006 coup in relation to graft allegations, and land being purchased at inflated prices. In Chiang Mai, residents of one Ua-Arthorn project are demanding compensation due to the shoddy construction of their housing, which includes crooked doors, leaky roofs and flooding. In Suan Phlu community in Bangkok, the construction process seems interminable, with delays in electricity fittings preventing residents from moving in. The blame for some of these problems can be partially laid at the unrealistic construction targets of over 600,000 units within the five years from 2003 to 2007. Despite this negative coverage, when Baan Ua-Arthorn units were announced for sale in 2008, demand overwhelmed supply.

### **2.2.3 Characteristics of Thai Slums**

Low income settlements in Bangkok are organised into “communities”, each with their own internal management structure in the form of a community committee. The BMA’s Regulations of Community Committees of 1991 defines a community as “dense communities, suburban communities, NHA communities, housing estate, and communities in Bangkok which the BMA has defined as such” (BMA, 1991, Article 1 clause 5). Community is therefore a legal definition. When a community is legally recognised by the local district office, community elections need to be held according to the rules decreed in the 1991 Regulations. Houses need to be registered with the district to benefit from access to utilities, local public schools and voting rights.

Many low income communities squat on land without a formal lease, with the landowner’s consent. Where leases do exist, it is common for them to stipulate that any contract is automatically terminated if houses are destroyed by fire, which makes fires a common eviction method. Additionally, the BMA regulations require that no rebuilding take place for 45 days following a fire, so that the fire’s cause can be investigated (Yap, 1989). As Thailand’s economy boomed in the 1980s and 1990s, the rate of evictions rose.

The majority of Bangkok slums are well-provisioned with necessities: a 1994 survey shows that 89% had formal registration number, 99% had electricity supply, 97% water supply, 71% had a community committee, and 19% had a day-care centre (Soapon, 2003:15). However, utilities often are supplied at inflated prices, especially where houses are not officially registered and therefore must rely on pooled water and electricity supply, rather than individual connections.

### **2.2.4 The slum as a social structure**

Patron-client relationships are common in slums, but they have been the basis for social organisation in Thailand in general. Patron-client relationships may restrict the potential for social change within communities, which are characterised by inequalities in wealth and power. Askew provides a review of three common stereotypes of Bangkok’s slum dwellers, which he rejects (2002:140):

- 1) slum dwellers as a cooperative group, joined together to achieve collective income and environmental improvements, working with NGOs. Communities can be ‘built’ and ‘broken’;
- 2) slum dwellers as individualistic opportunists who buy and sell land for profit;
- 3) slum dwellers as ‘communities of the poor’, tied through bonds of kinship and friendship in a ‘face-to-face’ society.

Askew instead sees slums as “multilayered economic, social and spatial formations, spaces of survival, accumulation, status and inequality” (2002:140), essentially places where characteristics of all three stereotypes may be present in varying dimensions, a view which the evidence presented in this thesis supports.

Though one would expect households which climb up the social ladder to move out of slums, Korff find that this is not the case due to the value of the existing community social networks (1986). Instead, households turn to social creativity, which is “rapid adaption of resources and the allocation of resources in the process of reproduction of labour power to keep the living standard and cope with changing socio-economic conditions in Bangkok” (1986:337), a way of ensuring the integration of slums into the Bangkok urban system. However, in the long term, social networks may not sufficiently outweigh the sub-standard living conditions, causing people to move when the opportunity arises.

The inhabitants of slums are both a source of labour and consumers of goods – they are an essential part of the city’s ecology. Evictions can destroy this balance, and usually mean eviction not only off the land, but out of that neighbourhood and consequently out of the city (Korff, 1986:353). The Baan Mankong scheme realises the importance of maintaining and reinforcing the integration of slum dwellers in the city, and aims to make use of their social creativity. Baan Mankong aids the integration of slum-dwellers into society at large by giving them decision power through “horizontal power delivery”, creating horizontal linkages between peer groups in the city and allowing the urban poor to form one big community (Somsook, 2005a).

Research conducted within Bangkok slum communities found that the level of horizontal integration within these communities is much higher than in high-income areas. Wissink, Dijkwel and Meijer (2006) found that twice as many slum dwellers greet their neighbours daily, compared to rich, gated communities, and slum dwellers almost always demonstrate a

reliance on each other. However, many residents of low-income communities work within their community, for example selling food from their house, whereas high income persons are unlikely to work within their neighbourhood. The study also found a correlation between income and the size of daily urban networks, with the poor having the smallest but most integrated networks, whereas networks of the rich are not based around the neighbourhood. Residents of slums felt integrated in Bangkok society, and were as proud of being residents of Bangkok as of their neighbourhood. However, the self-image of the residents was much more positive than the image that other groups had of the slum dwellers.

Carpenter, Daniere and Takahashi (2003), in a comparative study of low income communities in Vietnam and Thailand using cooperative games, found that in-community trust and cooperation vary with sex, education, age, household size, years of residence, and a psychological cooperation scale. Additionally, within-group sanctions depended on whether people owned their homes, how homogenous their communities were, and whether there had been previous instances of collective action, which suggests that communities are more likely to be harmonious the more socially integrated the residents are. A previous study by Daniere, Takahashi and Na Ranong found that in Bangkok slum communities, increases in income are positively associated with increases in community participation, and “there is likely an essential basic level of material resources necessary for individuals and households to contribute to more communal activities, especially given Thai socio-cultural norms emphasizing individualism and patron-client relationships” (2002b:478). Therefore, Thai low income communities have a propensity to participate and co-operate, forming close-knit networks through their daily interactions, though cooperation is related to income levels and length of time in the community.

### **2.2.5 Existing literature on Baan Mankong**

The relative newness of the Baan Mankong scheme means that there have not yet been many assessments of the outcomes of the projects. Existing studies focus mainly on the financial and physical aspects of the scheme. CODI has produced extensive literature on Baan Mankong, but this is aimed at slum communities wanting to enter the scheme, such as reports of how upgrading was carried out in the 10 pilot communities, in line with the programme’s “learning by doing” ethic (CODI and Department for Social Development and Human Security, 2004; 2005, in Thai), and advice booklets on how to qualify for a loan. A study by

Ing (2008) commissioned by CODI took an engineering slant, examining the infrastructure and construction materials of the project in a number of Bangkok communities.

Other existing reports on Baan Mankong include articles in *Environment and Urbanization*. Somsook (2005a) provides an outline of the theory and values behind Baan Mankong, and the hoped-for outcomes, in terms of giving power to the communities with regard to planning, finance and management, and promoting horizontal and vertical linkages. Nattawut and Prayong (2006) examine the role of community networks in Baan Mankong, specifically focusing on the Bang Bua canal community network, outlining the process of cooperation between the communities, CODI, the municipality, and other actors, in designing and implementing upgrading. The authors are architects who helped the communities draw up layouts of their upgraded communities. Boonlert (2007, in Thai) provides a sociological evaluation of Baan Mankong, examining the impact of Baan Mankong on the “world view” of Ruam Samakee residents. He highlights the community’s problems with regard to money going missing, and the divisions this creates in the community, as well as examining the relationship between community residents and the local district office, and concludes that Baan Mankong has produced unintended consequences. Ruam Samakee is one of the case-studies in this thesis, and similar conclusions are reached here with regard divisions and money problems, though further problems which have arisen since Boonlert’s study have been considered.

There is therefore scope for further independent studies of Baan Mankong, especially those taking a social perspective. Particularly, there is room for research which gives voice to the beneficiaries of the upgrading project, by examining the reality of the outcomes of the scheme. This study hopes to go some way towards filling this gap, and brings into the English-language domain the voices of Thai community residents and other Thai-language sources.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

This section has provided an overview of the Thai state’s policies towards housing the urban poor, and the institutions which exist to help them. After decades of top-down housing provision and private supply, there has been a shift towards community-based development following the 1997 crisis. The Thaksin government introduced policies which were targeted

at the poor, including the Baan Mankong scheme, which fits in with a trend towards grassroots development. CODI has built the capacity of communities for participatory projects through the formation of savings groups, and 90% of Thailand's rural and urban communities now have active savings groups (ACHR, 2008c:4). The features and social structure of slums has been examined, and while there are many stereotypes of slums, it appears that low-income communities have a high propensity to participate and cooperate for mutual goals. As this chapter has provided a contextual framework for the study, the following chapter outlines the conceptual framework, with regard to community participation, social capital, and the role of institutions.

## **Chapter 3 – Conceptual Outline**

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### **3.1 Why community participation?**

#### **3.1.1 Community participation in practice**

#### **3.1.2 Community participation for co-production**

### **3.2 Social capital – a review of the literature**

#### **3.2.1 Does social capital matter?**

#### **3.2.2 The role of social capital in poverty reduction**

#### **3.2.3 Measuring social capital**

#### **3.2.4 Criticisms of social capital**

### **3.3 The role of institutions**

### **3.4 Federations and networks**

### **3.5 The motivation for the research**

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter outlines the concepts framing the thesis. It starts by exploring the idea of community participation, and its relevance for development projects and governance. The concept of social capital is examined, including a review of the literature, its relevance to poverty reduction, and how it is measured. The notion and role of institutions are then analysed, as are federations and networks. Finally, the motivation behind this research study is explained.

### **3.1 Why Community Participation?**

The last few decades have seen a movement towards participation, in development projects and governance. Citizen participation is now regarded as a necessary component of development projects. Stakeholders are expected to have a voice in the design and implementation of projects, in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of these projects' outcomes, by incorporating local knowledge in decision-making. Participation should enhance accountability as well as create a sense of ownership in the project by the beneficiaries. By engaging the stakeholders in a project from the planning to the evaluation stage, this can also create civic engagement and promote democratic governance. With this in mind, there has been growing emphasis on community-driven development (CDD), whereby community groups initiate, organise, and take action to achieve common goals, having direct control over the project. The World Bank sees CDD as a way of achieving sustainability in poverty reduction, empowering the poor and building social capital. CDD can help reduce information problems, expand the resources available to the poor, and strengthen the civic capacities of communities (Mansuri and Rao, 2004:2).



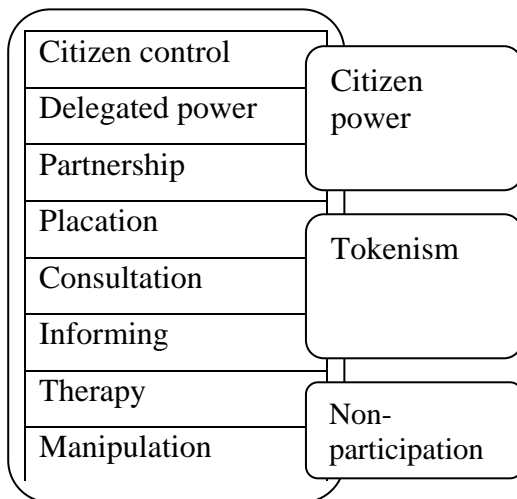
At the UN Habitat conference in Vancouver in 1976, a pro-participation stance was adopted with regards to urban management. The following statement from the conference sums up the consensus that was achieved:

*“Public participation should be an indispensable element in human settlements, especially in planning strategies and in their formulation, implementation and management; it should influence all levels of government in the decision-making process to further the political, social and economic growth of human settlements” (in Narine, 1986:116).*

Participation has been advocated in the realm of urban management for the last 30 years, yet in the majority of cases does not seem to have penetrated all levels of the decision-making process, as advocated by the conference. The declaration did coincide, however, with the World Bank’s and other agencies’ shift towards financing schemes making use of participatory approaches. The backing of these organisations for participation has made the concept less controversial in the eyes of government policy-makers, though civil servants and politicians may be more resistant to the concept.

The success of participatory approaches can depend heavily on who initiates them. Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of participation demonstrates that what the government calls “participation” can range from tokenism to actual citizen’s power, involving partnerships and citizen control (Figure 3.1). Arguments against state sponsorship of community participation include beliefs that it weakens local self-reliance, stifles initiative, undermines community solidarity and subverts local authority (Midgley et al, 1986). Instead, a community’s capacity to deal with its own problems should be strengthened. On the other hand, if one regards the state as a policy maker and provider of social development services, one can argue that it should have the power to determine the nature and extent of participatory activities (ibid 1986:147). However, in certain cases, communities may rely on participatory approaches due to state and market failures in providing necessary goods and services, and such grassroots approaches to participation may be more successful in promoting civic engagement than participation imposed from the top-down.

Figure 3.1: Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation



True participation can be viewed as a threat to powerful vested interests: as Chaufan says, “participation is applauded; encounter is not” (1983, quoted in Dudley, 1993:7). True participation requires a commitment on behalf of the state to create an “enabling” environment, rather than being the orthodox “provider”. The success of participatory approaches requires the support of high level government figures and a policy context in which democratisation and decentralisation are truly embraced as necessary government reforms (Blackburn and Holland, 1998). If the decision to take a participatory approach is imposed from the top down, care must be taken to ensure that the capacity of the local groups to take action is strengthened, as the poor often lack strong organisations to make their voices heard.

Even if participation has the commitment of the state, the interpretation of participation can vary. Dudley distinguishes between those who “see participation as a means to an end, and those who advocate it as an end in itself”, and quotes Turner and Fichter (1972) who see participation as a goal as necessary to “stimulate individual and social well-being”, perhaps in a search for local-level democracy (1993:7). Community participation can therefore be the goal itself, or a tool for achieving political or physical outcomes. If the latter, it is often regarded as the more cost-effective and sustainable way of meeting these goals, though it leaves power relations largely untouched, in what are often short-term projects to produce certain goods. According to Dudley, true participation is about power, and “the exercise of power is politics” (ibid:160), and therefore if community participation is the end in itself, it

must be viewed within the country's political context. Figure 3.2 illustrates the possible outcomes of community participation.

There are a number of reasons participatory development is increasingly prominent in development rhetoric, mainly boiling down to the international consensus that many developing country governments do not have the capacity to meet the needs of all poor communities through a top-down development approach, or the ability to target their assistance. Bottom-up development is now the approach of choice of international donor agencies and NGOs, who also see it as a way of ensuring that the real needs of the poor are met by empowering them to take decisions which affect their welfare. Communities may also take the decision alone to help themselves, due to a lack of government support.

### **3.1.1 Community Participation in Practice**

According to Cleaver, participation has become “an act of faith”, based on three tenets:

- 1) participation is intrinsically a “good thing”;
- 2) a focus on “getting the techniques right” is the principal way of ensuring the success of such approaches;
- 3) considerations of power and politics on the whole should be avoided as divisive and obstructive (1999:598).

The third tenet is arguable. If participation is seen as part of wider institutional changes - and it is increasingly being related to the rights of citizenship and democratic governance - then power analysis can be “critical to understanding the extent to which new spaces for participatory governance can be used for transformative engagement, or whether they are more likely to be instruments for reinforcing domination and control” (Gaventa, 2004:34). For there to be a sustainable shift to participatory processes, therefore, considerations of power and politics are essential for understanding the extent of possible action, especially if participation is initiated from the bottom-up as a challenge to the failures of the state.

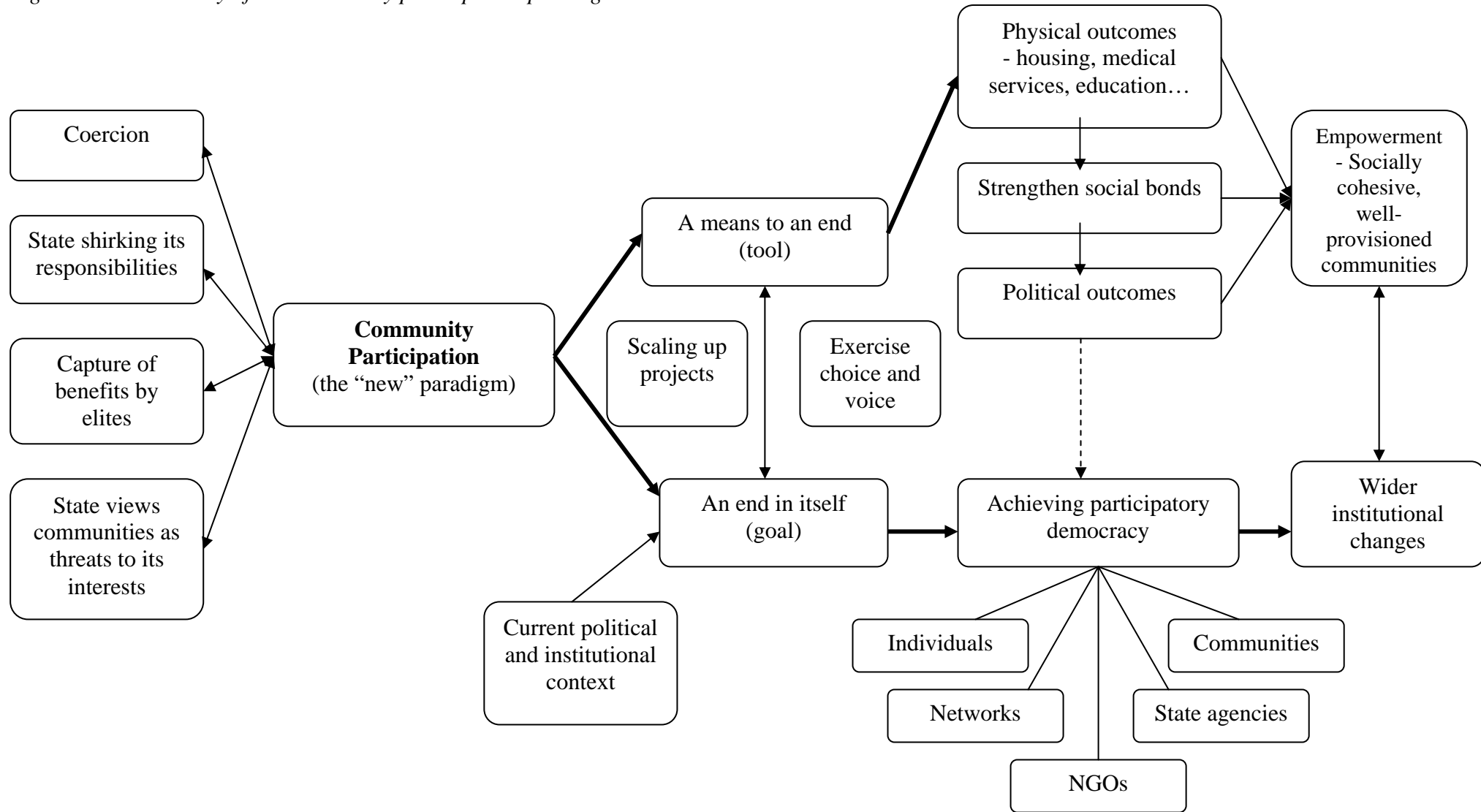
One method of “getting the techniques right”, as Cleaver recommends, is through the incorporation of local knowledge in a project's decision-making process, leading to the empowerment of people through the exercise of choice and voice. In theory, this should lead to better-designed projects, better targeting and fairer distribution of benefits, and reduce the

possibility of corruption. The cultural, economic and social context is important: notions such as participation, community and social capital must be detailed in a context-specific manner to ensure project-design suits the case. Community participation should not only serve immediate physical goals, but also fulfil broader social development ideals, by strengthening community bonds, and demonstrating to the participants what they can achieve themselves.

Participation should not be a form of forced labour, or a way of shifting the costs of service delivery onto the potential beneficiaries. Projects with high levels of participation may not actually make as much use of “local knowledge” as claimed, if participation is used simply to legitimise a previously established agenda. Participation may end up being coercive, rather than empowering, for the locals, as practitioners are reluctant to give up their authority (Vincent, 2004:111). As with all collective efforts, there is the risk of community conflicts over decisions, and the possibility of capture of the benefits by elites, such as community leaders or wealthier community residents. Proponents of community participation must not assume that a community is a “cohesive and integrated entity fighting for justice against powerful external forces” (Midgley et al., 1986:35), as poor communities may be divided in terms of status, income and power, and so the interpersonal relationships of the community must be considered when implementing participatory projects. The impact of heterogeneity in groups on the success of participatory projects may depend largely on how the heterogeneity is managed to ensure the satisfaction of as many different interests as possible (Mansuri and Rao, 2004:24).

The inclusion of state institutions is desirable in participatory approaches, to ensure the more efficient delivery of development and empowerment. Participation itself, through CDD projects, can be seen as part of a shift toward a “broad-based participatory and decentralised system of governance” (Mansuri and Rao, 2004:25), and therefore part of wider institutional change. The problem is how to do this without the state viewing the communities as a threat to local political interests. The state needs to create an enabling environment for community development efforts, but without going to the extent of manipulation, at the bottom of Arnstein’s ladder. The authors conclude that in order for participation to work, forms of downward accountability must be created, whilst maintaining close links between the higher levels of government and the community.

Figure 3.2: A summary of the community participation paradigm



Community-driven and community-based development projects often start on a very small scale with pilot projects, which are “scaled-up” and replicated elsewhere if successful. However, projects that succeed on the small scale are not always easily replicable, and things may go wrong if the task of scaling up is transferred to NGOs or international agencies, who do not face the same incentives or motivations as those who initially started the project. The usual approach to scaling up is to test pilot schemes in a number of selected communities, learn from the pilot experiences, and apply the projects to further communities. Mansuri and Rao (2004) set out five preconditions for successful scaling up, a process which has to be gradual in order to avoid failed schemes.

- 1) the state’s capacity to support community-based development should be assessed through a contextual historical, political and social analysis;
- 2) a strong ethic of learning by doing is necessary, with constant monitoring and evaluations;
- 3) a core of facilitators should be appropriately trained;
- 4) there should be a national commitment for cultural change in the institutional environment, promoting participation and transparency;
- 5) the change from top-down to bottom-up development can only occur over a long-time period, thus projects should not be judged hastily, as problems are bound to arise.

Concurrently, local participants need to be made aware of their importance to the project, as the motivation of the participants and intended beneficiaries is vital for the success of projects. As Appadura explains, “to break structural inequities in social relations and achieve equitable development it is important to build the ‘capacity [of the poor]’ to aspire” (in Mansuri and Rao, 2004:27). This necessitates the building of “equality of agency”, to create environments to equalise the relational and group-based structures that influence individual aspirations, capabilities and agency (ibid). This is less likely to occur with a rapid scaling-up process. Community-based development can serve as a rebellion against traditional systems of social organisation, which have evolved to manage resources in a manner serving the purposes of entrenched elites (ibid). However, such processes of social change take time, as the habitus of the various actors, that is, their disposition or acquired patterns of behaviour arising from social structures, means that they are resistant to change.

Participatory approaches have been adopted by the development community as a way in which to allow poor communities to develop both economically and socially. It is nevertheless important to question the longer-term political value of participation for the poor, especially if the goal is to achieve a fundamental change in institutional structure regarding the relation between the state and the poor. Williams (2004a) also questions the extent to which participatory development programs contribute to the processes of political learning among the poor, and to what degree participatory programs reshape political networks. These questions, once answered, can provide a better idea of whether community participation really is leading to institutional change, or whether it is just a means of meeting local needs.

### **3.1.2 Community participation for co-production**

Mitlin defines co-production as a “strategy used by citizens and the state to extend access to basic services” (2008:339), through the joint production of these services. Co-production can be used to achieve public goods and services, and hence higher levels of welfare, when public organisations and citizens share one or more stages of production. Because co-production presents entry-level opportunities for citizens to engage with and influence the state, it is relevant to discussions of community participation. Mitlin believes that co-production is increasingly being used explicitly by grassroots organisations as a way to strengthen their political position and increase their negotiating power. In the context of this thesis, Baan Mankong can be regarded as an example of co-production in the provision of housing and infrastructure services, and the formation of networks of Baan Mankong communities presents potential for these networks to strengthen the position of the urban poor with regard to the state.

Co-production ties in with the concept of synergy, the “mutually reinforcing relations between governments and groups of engaged citizens” (Evans, 1996:1119), which requires complementarity and embeddedness. Complementarity refers to the division of labour in the production of goods and services with regard to comparative advantage, allowing the state to benefit from the local knowledge arising from citizens. This in turn can promote the formation of social capital at a vertical level, by encouraging linkages between public officials and citizens. These ties connecting citizens and public officials are termed embeddedness. If one views all societies as having latent social capital, the synergy which

arises from public-private cooperation enables social capital to be scaled up with mutually beneficial ends, and therefore participation also requires a role of the state.

Community participation has potential for marginalised and disempowered citizens, such as the urban poor, by demonstrating their capacity to produce goods and services collectively. They can not only achieve better access to public goods and services, but also extend the opportunities offered by the linkages arising from co-production to bring about wider social change, through the openings this presents for increased bargaining power and political influence. Co-production can give citizens more power in the face of the state, and power is a central element of social change through collective action. Co-production can also bring about, or coexist with, co-governance, which represents a more advanced level of citizen influence, but requires statutory changes to become possible<sup>1</sup>.

Community participation and collective action for a common goal are more likely where social capital is high (Krishna, 2002). The following section presents a review of social capital, which can be regarded as a determinant of the propensity for collective action.

### **3.2 Social Capital – A Review of the Literature**

Simplistically, the concept of social capital can be summed up as “it’s not what you know, it’s who you know”. A person’s family, friends and associates constitute an important asset. Bourdieu has generally been acknowledged as one of the popularisers of the concept, defining social capital as “made up of social obligations (‘connections’)”, and the relations between individuals within specific groups or categories (Van Deth, 2003:79). Ostrom summarises the definition of social capital as being “the shared knowledge, understanding, norms, rules, and expectations about patterns of interactions that groups of individuals bring to a recurrent activity” (2000:176). Thus, social capital arises from interpersonal networks.

In the last two decades, social capital has gained increasing influence in development studies, largely due to Putnam (1993, 2000) bringing the concept into common usage. The World Bank has described social capital as the missing link for global economic development and democratic governance, and established the Social Capital Initiative, which gathers papers

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<sup>1</sup> Participatory budgeting in Recife, Brazil, is an oft-cited example of this.



considering the relevance of social capital, as found in community organisations, for social and economic development. The concept has been adopted by many disciplines, and Edwards describes social capital as a “multi-faceted creation requiring collaboration across different disciplines, communities and approaches to development” (2000b:33).

Putnam’s conceptualisation of social capital refers to the nature and extent of a person’s involvement in informal networks and formal civic organisations. Social capital more narrowly refers to the different ways in which a community’s members interact through horizontal associations, and the norms and networks that “lubricate cooperative action among both citizens and their institutions” (Putnam, 1998:v). Lin’s (2001) take on social capital refers to resources like information, ideas and support, which individuals can access through their relationships with other people. These resources make up the “capital”, and they are “social” because they are only accessible through these relationships. The flow of resources will depend upon the structure of a given network of relationships, such as the frequency and the terms of interactions. The world “capital” represents a stock of assets yielding a flow of benefits, and Krishna and Uphoff (2002) suggest that the stream of benefits from social capital comes in the form of mutually beneficial collective action.

There are multiple approaches to social capital, and Woolcock and Narayan (2000) provide a summary of the four broad approaches to social capital (Table 3.1). In this thesis, the “synergy” view is adopted for its relevance to co-production and community participation. As well as these four approaches, social capital can be distinguished as “structural” and “cognitive” (Uphoff, 2000, Foley and Edwards, 1999). Structural social capital refers to the role of social networks and their supporting institutions, such as rules and precedents, in facilitating information sharing and collective action, and is commonly used by sociologists studying social networks and organisations. These are constructed forms of social capital. By comparison, cognitive social capital refers to norms, trust and values, a more subjective concept which is usually measured through survey responses by political scientists and economists. Structural social capital helps to achieve mutually beneficial collective action, while cognitive social capital is what predisposes people to act collectively, and this thesis draws on both approaches.

Table 3.1: Four views of social capital (adapted from Woolcock and Narayan, 2000:239)

	Thesis	Actors	Policy prescriptions
<i>Communitarian view</i> Local associations	Social ties can help the poor manage risk, but ignores risk of perverse social capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community groups</li> <li>• Voluntary organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small is beautiful</li> <li>• Recognise social assets of the poor</li> </ul>
<i>Networks view</i> Bonding and bridging ties	Importance of strong intra-community ties and weak extra-community ties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business groups</li> <li>• Community groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decentralise</li> <li>• Bridge social divides</li> </ul>
<i>Institutional view</i> Political and legal institutions	Social capital is dependent on formal institutions under which it functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private and public sectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant civil and political liberties</li> <li>• Transparency and accountability</li> </ul>
<i>Synergy view</i> Community networks and state-society relations	Integrates <i>networks</i> and <i>institutional</i> views – the private and public sector are complements to each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community groups, civil society, firms, states</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-production, complementarity</li> <li>• Participation, linkages</li> <li>• Enhance capacity and scale of local organisations</li> </ul>

### 3.2.1 Does Social Capital Matter?

Uptake of the concept of social capital has been quick, and it is regarded as having positive and desirable effects. Because it lowers the costs of communication and information transfer, it can increase the spread of knowledge and innovation. Social capital promotes cooperative behaviour, generating good outcomes for society, but also individual benefits, making people happier and healthier. Social capital can improve the efficiency of activities through better coordination, and norms and sanctions prevent dishonesty and cheating among group members. It is also possible that social capital will lead to better governance, because “well-connected citizens are well-informed citizens” (Halpern, 2005:188). However, there is evidence that the causal processes run in both directions, as government actions can affect a nation’s social capital, for example by encouraging participatory local governance.

Krishna writes that social capital matters for “development, communal harmony and democratic participation”, and even more when it is “activated and made productive through the intervention of capable agents” (2002:31). Krishna outlines three possible hypotheses regarding the importance of social capital (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Three hypotheses on the importance of social capital (from Krishna, 2002:27)

Social capital hypothesis	Differences among social units in performance in multiple domains of human endeavour can be accounted for substantially with reference to social capital	Social capital matters a lot
Structuralist hypothesis	Differences in institutional performance depend on variables associated with state and market formal institutions, and the incentives deriving from these institutions. Social capital is a residue of these structural effects.	If social capital matters at all, it is as a result of structures, and the incentives that arise from structures
Agency hypothesis	The effects of social capital are translated into performance by mediating agencies. The effectiveness of the agencies is as important as the level of social capital for understanding variations in institutional performance.	Social capital matters contextually and in part.

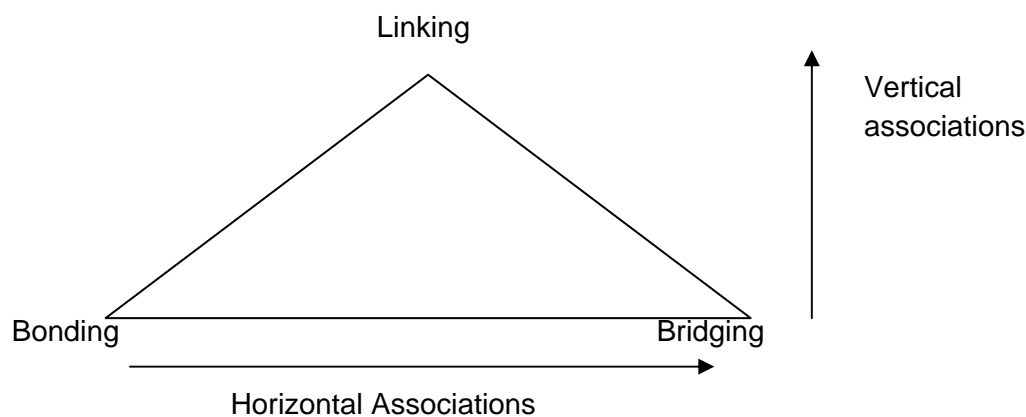
With regard to community participation in low-income communities in Thailand, it is likely that the agency hypothesis will play the largest role. The social capital that is latent in these communities often needs to be encouraged by outside agencies, which help communities form groups and act collectively for mutual benefit. Therefore in the Thai context, it is also important to understand the institutional shifts underlying the move to decentralisation and encouraging action at the community level. The cognitive elements of social capital (the norms and values) are changing to emphasise the role of grassroots-level action, as are the structural elements (the networks and rules), with the trend for decentralisation of governance.

Social capital can operate on a number of different levels, and various categorisations have been developed. As Table 3.1 outlined in the “networks” view, social capital is made up of bonding and bridging ties, defined below. Woolcock adds a third category, that of linking social capital, reflecting society’s social structures and inequalities (2001:10-11):

- 1) bonding social capital: ties between like people in similar situations, such as family and friends;
- 2) bridging social capital: more distant ties of like persons, such as loose friendships and work colleagues;
- 3) linking social capital: ties reaching out to unlike people in dissimilar situations, such as those who are entirely outside the community, enabling the members to leverage a wider range of resources than available in the community.

This three-tiered categorisation of social capital is adopted in this thesis to inform the analysis. Poor communities are generally regarded as being well-endowed in bonding social capital, which is needed to get by, but lacking the bridging and linking social capital in order to gain access to further resources for development. Bonding and bridging social capital exists in horizontal associations, whilst linking social capital represents vertical ties, reflecting the imbalances of power and barriers in a hierarchical society. This categorisation of social capital relates to Granovetter’s (1973) concepts of strong and weak ties. Bonding social capital can be equated to strong ties which exist between close families and friends, whilst bridging and linking social capital represents weak ties, which are necessary to access further resources. Additionally, bonding and bridging social capital can be regarded as operating at a horizontal level, whereas linking social capital represents ties on a vertical plane. This conceptualisation assumes a hierarchical, pyramidal structure of society, with those at the top only accessible to people with vertical ties (Figure 3.3).

*Figure 3.3: The hierarchical operation of social capital (adapted from Colletta and Cullen, 2002)*



In an ideal situation, there is a combination of horizontal and vertical associations, providing access to resources for those at the bottom of the pyramid. Putnam (1993) finds that horizontal networks of civic engagement are present in civic communities, while less civic communities are dominated by vertical networks. The problem with vertical networks, such as patron-client relationships, is that they cannot sustain trust and cooperation, due to the asymmetric obligations involved. However, horizontal networks can help to solve dilemmas of collective action, and membership in “horizontally ordered groups” such as sports clubs and cultural associations, should be positively associated with good government (Putnam,

1993:175). The denser the networks, the more likely it is that citizens will be able to cooperate for mutual benefit, through better flows of information, and strong norms of reciprocity, increasing the potential costs to a defector.

### **3.2.2 The role of social capital in poverty reduction**

Despite some disagreements about the role of social capital, the general message is that social ties have implications for a person's well-being, and therefore it is regarded as an important consideration in poverty reduction programs. Social capital can be regarded as a public good, and therefore will be undersupplied and undervalued by private agents, unlike conventional capital, which is a private good. As a result, social capital is often produced in the form of externalities from social interaction, and it is "capital" only if its effects persist. If the state wants to encourage its production, it should reduce the barriers to social interaction, for example by improving communication infrastructure, or promoting embeddedness.

The existing levels of social capital within a community can affect the success of any policy programs implemented in that community, therefore these levels should be assessed beforehand. If a community is fragmented and has no history of participation, a policy requiring collective action may face many difficulties when implemented. Research should therefore seek to understand how people, through household formation and social networks, implicitly devise strategies for sustaining their own livelihoods and welfare. Social capital may matter more than technical or economic considerations, while a society's economic, political and cultural institutions also play a large role in shaping social relations and interactions. The institutional context within which the networks of the poor operate needs to be considered, especially the role and quality of the state. High levels of corruption, inefficient bureaucracy, suppressed civil liberties and failure to uphold the rule of law may force communities to take over the supply and delivery of public goods, though on the other hand, communities may be highly engaged *because* they enjoy "complementary relations with the state" (Woolcock, 2002:27).

It is increasingly being realised that social capital has a role to play in poverty reduction and development, as the concept revolves around the benefits and costs of cooperation. Woolcock points out that the advantage of the social capital approach is that it allows theorists and practitioners to take an approach based on "assets" rather than "deficits", as is usual when

discussing the poor (2002:32). The poor usually rely on their intensive stock of bonding social capital in order to survive, and they benefit from some bridging social capital, but they lack linking social capital and the access to power and resources this brings. The information-sharing role of social capital is of key importance in poverty alleviation. At a very local level, urban migrants may form groups to share information about available jobs and to channel this information back to their home village to help prospective migrants (Grootaert, 1998:5).

A more sophisticated understanding of the links between social capital and poverty can help the poor get better access to bridging and linking social capital. Vertical linkages should be exploited, as poverty is often a result of “powerlessness and exclusion”, and therefore the activities of the poor should not only “reach out” but also be “scaled up” (Woolcock, 2002:26). The World Bank believes that existing forms of bridging social capital in poor communities should be used as a basis for scaling up the efforts of local community-based organisations (Woolcock, 2001). Therefore, social capital can leverage assets for those who lack economic resources or political power (Gittel and Thompson, 2001). Alliances should be formed with individuals in positions of power, in order to gain access to formal institutions such as banks, insurances companies, and the justice system. Interventions should be designed to foster a network of “cross-cutting ties within society and between society’s informal and formal institutions” (Ishan et al, 2002:79), promoting complementarity and embeddedness. However, social capital is hard to construct through external interventions, and the level and type of social capital available to individuals for development activities is strongly affected by a country’s government and institutional structure (Ostrom, 2000).

While empirical studies have shown that solid investment in human capital is necessary for countries to reach high levels of economic development, a case has not yet been made for massive investment in social capital. Simply collecting information about levels of social capital within a community and including this information in project design can lead to development activities that do not negatively affect existing social structure and norms, and may even enhance them. However, there remains the causation question of whether participation creates social capital, or social capital leads to participation. Assessing social capital at a project-design stage will increase its chances of success. This is especially obvious in projects involving community management of resources, which require a minimum level of human and social capital to be successful.

If a social capital-based policy agenda is adopted, Woolcock advises that its central goal should be to reduce social and economic divisions, “increasing the responsiveness and accountability of public institutions, and encouraging openness to and interaction among people from different walks of life”, at the levels of family, community, firm and state (2002:39).

### **3.2.3 Measuring social capital**

Part of the criticisms of social capital lie in the difficulties in its measurement. Grootaert and van Bastelaer suggest that the problem may also be due to substitution taking place between different types of social capital as economic development occurs and markets develop: for example, local and indigenous forms of social capital may be replaced by more formal and larger-scale networks and institutions (2002b:347). Woolcock therefore suggests that “any definition of social capital should focus on its sources rather than consequences, on what it *is* rather than what it *does*” (2002:27). The question then arises of whether social capital can be created and intentionally invested in.

Knack and Keefer point out that the “elasticity” of the term social capital can make agreement in discussions about development difficult, but there is general agreement that trust and norms of civic cooperation are essential to well-functioning societies and for their economic progress (1997:1283). Additionally, social capital as a concept facilitates conversation across disciplines, and therefore should promote cross-disciplinary solutions.

Social capital is multi-dimensional in nature. It revolves around the different types of groups and networks that people belong to, as well as the perceptions of people regarding the trustworthiness of others and of institutions. Additionally, traditions and norms will affect cooperation and reciprocity when people get together to solve a problem. This operationalisation of social capital means that distinct indicators are used for networks, trust, and norms and values, rather than trying to integrate the different aspects in a measurement tool (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: Indicators of social capital (adapted from Van Deth, 2003:83)

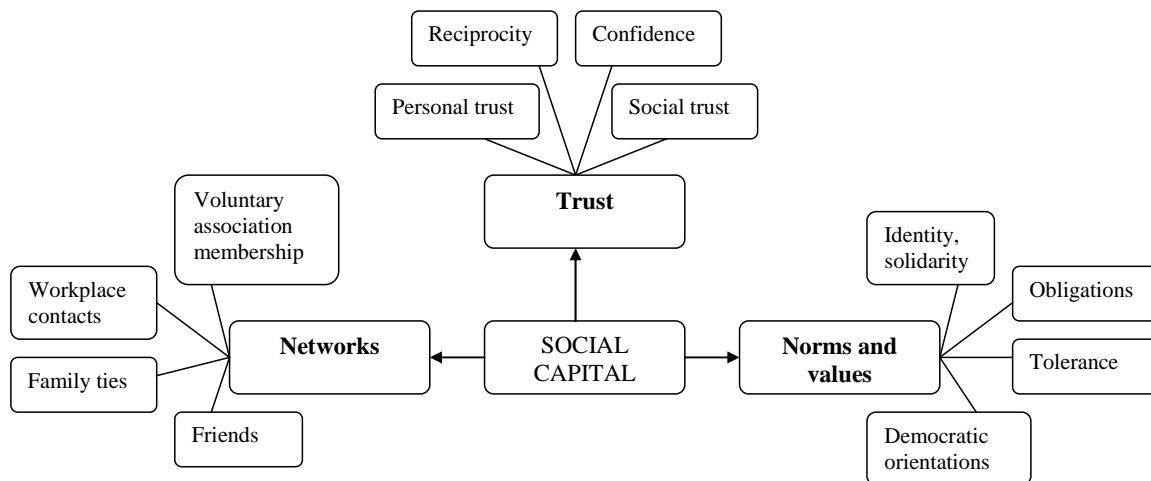


Figure 3.4 illustrates that when measuring networks, voluntary association membership is the most commonly used variable, whilst personal and social trust are often used to measure trust. Norms and trust must be observed indirectly, through the perceptions of the people that act based on those norms, whereas direct measures can be used for networks.

When measuring social capital, the researcher must distinguish between individual or community level social capital. As Edwards points out, the larger the unit of analysis, the more complex the factors that are acting on social capital formation and distribution, and the less controllable the outcome will be (2000b). Various data collection methods exist, as Foley and Edwards summarise (1999), depending on whether social capital is viewed as a dependent or independent variable. Survey and polling methods are dominant – though this seems obvious for aspects like norms, values and trust, this method is also used for assessing networks, due to difficulties in observing actual relationships. Van Deth suggests that more creativity in methods, such as experiments, could improve the validity of the whole measurement strategy applied (2003:87).

Krishna and Uphoff (2002) suggest that social capital, like capital, represents a stock of assets yielding a flow of benefits, and if the flow associated to social capital can be identified, its measurement should be simplified. They suggest that the stream of benefits arising from social capital is “mutually beneficial collective action” (2002:86). The question then arises of what indicator should be used to quantify this collective action. Unlike physical capital, social capital is difficult to see and measure, and it wears out through lack of use rather than



through use. As Edwards (2000b) points out, capital is a stock, but development is a flow, something that has purpose and direction.

### **3.2.4 Criticisms of Social Capital**

Despite its positive aspects, the concept of social capital cannot always be regarded as the panacea for development, and social capital itself is not always “good”. Social capital can be destructive, as well as constructive. For example, mafia gangs generate social capital, but it is not generally regarded as positive, as the gangs’ trust is limited to a very narrow group, and group members are restricted from cooperating with outsiders. Because stocks of social capital are self-reinforcing, one can end up with vicious circles in an “uncivic” community of traits such as distrust, shirking and exploitation (Putnam, 1993:177). Additionally, traditional norms may hinder social and economic development, for example the practice of favouring the education of boys over girls in certain developing countries. If group loyalties are too strong, then isolation and segregation of marginal persons or groups may occur.

The institutional context within which society operates will also determine whether social capital has positive impacts. An authoritarian government may forcefully build up its own form of social capital, destroying other forms in the process, or a cartel may use networks in order to garner more profits, at the expense of consumers. Having strong social ties and many informal groups will not necessarily lead to economic development, if these groups are unconnected to outside resources and therefore of limited help to the poor. Thus, social capital is very much context dependent, which means that empirical studies may not always be generalisable.

Additionally, studies of social capital have yet to establish a direction of causality – do trust-building social networks lead to efficacious communities, or do successful communities generate these types of social ties (Durlauf, 1999:6)? With regard to civic activities, does wealth lead to more group activity, or the reverse?

DeFilippis (2001) critiques Putnam’s work for ignoring the “capital” aspect of social capital, and its relevance for community economic development. Social capital should not be separated from economics and the production of capital in society, and formal and informal networks must operate in the competitive realm of market relations if social capital as a

concept is to make sense in a market economy. DeFilippis argues therefore that Putnam's view is fundamentally economically flawed, and in order to achieve economic development, disconnected communities need to build social networks that allow for control and power over flows of capital, while building on pre-existing relationships (2001:801).

Much of the criticism of social capital stems from the fact that it has so quickly been taken up by researchers and development practitioners, despite the lack of a single, clear definition with which everyone agrees. As a result, social capital is regarded as too flexible and can be used as a "notional umbrella" for any purpose (Fine, 2001:155). However, the initial criticisms aimed at Putnam's conceptualisation, for example, that it was too restricted to norms and associations, ignoring its "embeddedness within social structure characteristics" (Fine 2001:114), have partially been dealt with by the conceptualisation adopted more recently in the "synergy" view outlined in Table 3.1, which combines the "institutional" and "networks" views.

### **3.3 The role of institutions**

The concept of social capital is closely tied to the structure of institutions within a society, which are the structures and mechanisms of social order within which we operate (Rodrick, 2000), the "set of humanly devised behavioural rules that govern and shape the interaction of humans", and the enforcement mechanisms for these rules (Lin and Nugent, 1995:2306). The term institution can refer not only to customs and behaviour patterns in a society, but also to formal organisations such as the government. However, all societies are also governed by informal norms and institutions, norms being informal rules. These informal norms are not enforced by the state but largely through trust and reputation effects. Institutions function on multiple levels, from the household, to the community, to the national and international. A state with a strong institutional framework is commonly known as a strong state, and can do things such as implement policies and laws in accordance with pre-established procedures and minimal use of coercion. A state can supply an enabling environment for local institutions to operate in, whilst local institutions can help provide "validity and stability to the democratic institutions of the state as well as those that enforce the rule of law" (Grootaert and van Bastelaer, 2002a:342). A strictly hierarchical society with little history of cooperation will have lower levels of social capital and will find it difficult to adopt participatory measures. Thus any analysis within a social capital framework must look at the

institutional background, as this will shape people's decision-making behaviour and their interactions.

Institutional analysis can offer important insights into the behavioural choices of actors, as well as explain development patterns. North (1990), a pioneer of institutional analysis, links the strength of institutions to economic growth. A strong association has been found between legality and economic development, which could be either because rich countries can afford better institutions, or because strong legal institutions are a pre-condition for long-term economic growth and development. Clearly defined rules and norms should reduce transaction costs, and provide security for investors. Transaction costs may have a role in determining the structure of organisations and their rules.

The development of institutions has varied largely across countries, arising from differences in historical trajectories, geography, political economy or other initial conditions. Economic development can trigger institutional change, but institutions can also determine the pace and level of economic development. Institutional change is path-dependent, but can be either evolutionary, whereby customs gradually become embedded and rules are formalised through natural progression, or revolutionary, emerging from conflict and potentially causing tension due to the changed formal rules being inconsistent with unchanged informal norms. Additionally, as economies grow and develop, different institutions are called for to facilitate transactions, and actors in the economy may push for certain changes. The strength of the state here is vital to ensuring that the demands of certain actors are not put ahead of others, and that it does not indulge in arbitrary action, both of which depend on the state's capacity and political viability. A weak institutional framework will also make any kind of reform, such as legal or economic, very difficult to achieve. As North (1990) pointed out, institutional change is overwhelmingly incremental, and therefore it will take time for it to have a major impact on the marginalised members of society, who are defined by their habitus.

Olson's (1965) work emphasised the importance of distributional conflicts among interest groups in shaping institutional structure, especially the impact it had on economic performance. For example, those economies which performed less well following World War Two were those constrained by powerful interest groups who obtained controls over work rules, entry into new markets and production practices. Countries which faced complete destruction, such as Japan and Germany, were forced to start over from scratch, with many of

the interest groups having been destroyed, thus freeing the state from their stranglehold, benefiting these economies. This demonstrates the important role that interest groups can play in influencing a country's path to development, as well as in the distribution of economic benefits, as state institutions can be severely restricted by certain group interests. It is usually the case that developing country states, being weaker, are more susceptible to domination by a number of elite interest groups, who have the power to influence government policy for their own advantage, with the poor losing the most from this corruption. However, Lin and Nugent (1995) disagree. They believe that almost all developing country states share the characteristic of tending to dominate civil society, and having a substantial degree of autonomy in policy making. This means that they are not the agents of interest groups or the elites. If this is the case, Lin and Nugent argue that the appropriate framework for studying the behaviour of the state in developing countries is the multi-level, principal-agent framework, with the ruler being seen as the agent of the people. The principal's problem would then be monitoring the activities of the ruler to see whether they are adhering to the implicit social contract.

### ***Institutions and the Poor***

In the World Development Report 2000/1, it was pointed out that many poor people around the world perceive large institutions, especially those of the state, to be distant, unaccountable, and corrupt. Poor people are excluded from participation in governance, with state institutions unresponsive and unaccountable to the poor. The poor often need to interact with formal institutions on a regular basis, for services ranging from health care to loans, and they value relationship criteria ranging from trust, to participation, accountability, unity and the ability to resolve conflicts, but also effectiveness, and behavioural criteria such as honesty, respect and fairness (Narayan et al., 2000:180). The problem is that the poor are often regarded and treated as second-class citizens by formal bodies, who favour the elite with preferential treatment, and may disregard the opinions of the poor in decision-making processes. Politicians make promises near election time, only never to reappear in the community. Therefore, a key challenge is the construction of new relationships between ordinary people and the institutions, especially state bodies, that affect their lives. As is pointed out in "Voices of the Poor", institutional character determines whether poor people will become engaged with an institution, and therefore institutions may benefit from taking into account the values and behaviours which the poor desire most (Narayan et al.,

2000:179), if they have the motivation to reform. Decentralisation of resources, authority and finances to local government is growing increasingly popular, and this is creating opportunities for supporting democracy at a local level. Not only may citizens have more chances to participate in decision making, but municipalities, being closer to the ground, have a better idea of what local needs are and how to meet them. This “embeddedness” means civic engagement strengthens state institutions, while effective state institutions, in turn, create an environment in which civic engagement can thrive (Feldman and Assaf, 1999:4).

When the needs of the poor cannot be met by state institutions, they turn to institutions of the private sector if available, or they rely on members of their community and kinship groups, who may not always have the resources to provide assistance as they may be facing the same hardships. The formal and informal institutions of civil society play an important role, and poor communities will often form their own community-based organisations, allowing them to participate in decision-making and which can give them stronger bargaining power not only with formal organisations but also in markets. NGOs or religious organisations may also provide support, especially in times of severe hardship, or provide resources and training to help people develop new skills. Those on low incomes often have to turn to moneylenders, who though expensive, can be relied upon to be present to provide loans.

According to Olson’s “The Logic of Collective Action” (1965), groups and organisations are supposed to work primarily for the common interest of their members. However, Olson believes that unless the number of individuals is quite small, or unless there is coercion or some other device to make individuals act in their common interest, then rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests. The larger the group, the less likely it will provide the optimal amount of a collective good, due to the organisation costs of providing the good, such as communication and bargaining costs, and the possibility of free-riding. Collective action is more likely to succeed in a homogenous group where members have social and physical proximity, and the more sensitive the group is to the threatened loss arising from inaction. Hence, a group of squatters is most likely to act collectively when the threat of eviction is at its highest. Collective action is also assisted by freedom and by trust, and because trust helps to reduce opportunism, it should also improve public sector performance (Collier, 1998:19). Successful collective action means that institutions increasingly have to reflect the needs of marginalised groups in society, facilitating social change. Though community participation at the local level may deal with

physical improvements, it ultimately links up to wider institutional change in governance, and in how ordinary citizens are perceived and treated by government institutions.

Property rights are an essential institution, lowering transaction costs, by providing security in transactions, upheld by the law. For the poor, holding property rights over their housing is essential in many ways – security of tenure not only means that they have a measure of security against eviction, but having proof of their right over housing can lead to access to collateral from lending institutions, and proof of residency can give access to identity cards. A secure home gives people roots, and stabilises communities.

De Soto (1993) points out that though many residents of informal settlements accept and rely on informal norms and rules, these norms lack effective enforcement mechanisms. For property rights to be meaningful, they must function within a secure institutional context where these rights will be respected by everyone, so that holders of rights know that they can have recourse to legal action if need be. This is less likely to be the case in a corrupt, weak state where moneyed interests can have their own way. According to McAuslan, the system of tenure is “weighed so heavily towards those with financial or political power [that it] facilitates the development of the exploitative relationship of landlords and tenants in the cities of the developing world, rather than that of owner-occupiers” (2002:27). Property rights are more uncertain in highly-polarised societies, in terms not only of ethnic tensions and heterogeneity, but also income and land inequality (Knack, 1999). As Knack emphasises, though secure property rights might seem to benefit primarily the rich at the expense of the poor, the existence of institutions protecting property rights can have “powerful egalitarian effects” (ibid:23) and therefore improve the welfare of the poor.

### **3.4 Federations and networks**

Collective action presents an opportunity for the poor to achieve their goals of improving their lives and changing government policies in their favour. For this reason, it is helpful for the poor to be members of networks and federations, which serve to increase the recognition of the poor and bring their voices to the discussion table, through bridging social capital. Networks are associations of individuals sharing a common interest, for example in providing mutual assistance, whilst federations are formed by organisations uniting to form a common body, whilst maintaining independence within the individual organisations.

These organisations work to meet the needs and aspirations of their members, and are different to NGOs, which operate externally of the people they aim to help. Such groups exist at different levels. Networks may work within a country, from the city, regional to national scale, such as the Four Regions Slum Network (S4P) in Thailand, or operate at an international level, such as Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI). These groups provide a forum for their members to exchange learning experiences through bridging social capital, involving the residents most in need. Networks and federations are to be distinguished from community-based organisations (CBOs), which operate at the very local level of individual communities through bonding social capital. These work for the benefit of community members, such as collective savings groups, youth groups or housewives groups.

Federations play an important role in helping to carry the voices of their poor members to policy makers through linking social capital, as well as organising their members in order to enable them to exercise their rights through bridging social capital. Federations can work with the government to promote better governance, by bringing the voices of the poor to the fore, which is especially important in the context of urban governance. Working with the state on issues such as housing can serve as an entry point to involve the poor in other matters such as changing land policy and promoting democratic inclusion. Federations work through long-term negotiations and rarely use direct confrontation. Perhaps the most famous example of a federation working to help the poor is the Alliance, based in Mumbai, which is composed of three organisations: the Society for the Protection of Area Resources (SPARC), the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF), and Mahila Milan, an organisation for poor women. The three organisations work in partnership to improve the lot of Mumbai's slum dwellers, ensuring access to infrastructure resources and security of tenure. The Alliance is a grassroots movement that has extended to global networking, allowing networks of the poor in other countries to benefit and learn from the Alliance's methods, and gain visibility from the state.

However, networks and federations face challenges arising from their scale and organisational structure. Federations composed of different organisations may struggle to find a suitable tactical approach with which all members agree, even if they are all joined by a common ideology. Successful partnership within a federation can benefit from each member organisation having a distinct strategy, as long as they share key aims. Challenges can include

having the capacity to manage complex operations, maintaining a strong code of conduct, and sustaining the engagement of members. Externally, it helps to have supportive community power structures, an enabling legal, political and policy environment, external funding and support from external organisations such as NGOs, and sympathetic individuals in the bureaucracy and government (Chen et al., 2006). However, federations may be precisely trying to achieve a favourable change in the attitudes of the government. The operations of networks and federation should be viewed in the context of local social and power structures, which can influence the structures within the organisations, for example, reproducing patron-client patterns.

Federations and networks have the potential to allow poor people to become developmental forces, and to influence governmental reform and policy change, things which will only happen if the poor can act collectively, by forming a critical mass. Many federations are formed by starting collective savings groups, which are seen as collecting not only money, but also people. By forming a federation, a sort of political agency is created with credibility in negotiations with the government. The ethos of SDI is that “a participatory development process that includes the poorest can only take place if it is institutionalised through local groups controlled by their members which are then be[sic] linked together through a horizontally-driven federating process” (d’Cruz and Mitlin, 2005:26). Federations and networks play an important role in community learning through exchange, and it is these exchanges that form the basis of the networks and federations linking the various communities, whilst building up knowledge capital. By demonstrating to policy makers what can be achieved by poor communities, they can be regarded as problem-solvers, rather than beggars holding out their caps for government assistance, especially in the case of housing.

### **3.5 Motivation for the research**

Community-driven development, with its emphasis on community participation in decision-making and project implementation, is inextricably linked with social capital. Participation cannot occur without ties between people, whether these ties are horizontal, such as bonding and bridging ties, or vertical, in the form of linking ties. Therefore, social capital will be a determinant of the outcomes of a participatory approach. Communities with high levels of trust and strong norms are generally regarded as being more suited to participatory projects.



Though there has been considerable research output with regard to social capital in the last 15 years, there is still scope for further research. There is limited research regarding social capital in the context of housing provision in urban areas in developing countries, despite urbanisation being a driver of development, with urban-based social capital research more common in the context of developed countries. Social analysis is vital for the success of participatory projects, and is just as indispensable as economic analysis in assessing feasibility of development projects (Cernea, 1996). Johnston and Percy-Smith highlight the need for community-based studies which examine what constitute “successful” and “effective” communities, within a historical, economic and social understanding of the communities (2003:331). Such a perspective also allows for a bottom-up approach to social capital, gaining the participants’ perspective on the processes involved in the project and what matters to them. Ultimately, development projects are for the benefit of the urban poor (in this case) and yet their voices are rarely heard when it comes to assessing projects, in favour of financial and physical outcomes. This thesis aims to bring out the opinions of community residents on how they feel the Baan Mankong slum upgrading project has affected the social structures in which they function.

At the community level, there is no strong evidence as yet that participation will lead to more social capital and hence a higher capacity for collective action in a community, which is a hypothesis of this thesis. There is a need to investigate the incentives and disincentives for collective action, such as the institutional environment within which a community functions, including the norms which regulate community relations. Cleaver suggests that analyses of “competent” communities and “successful” participatory projects focussing on process, power dynamics, patterns of inclusion and exclusion, can help resolve some of the paradoxes of participation (1999:609).

This thesis also goes beyond the community context, by attempting to examine the relevance of community participation in slum upgrading for Thailand’s governance structure. The thesis seeks to combine the concepts of collective action, institutions and social capital in analysing the process of participatory slum upgrading, in order to understand how the urban poor fit in to the social structures in which they live. Cleaver calls for a more dynamic vision of “community” and “institutions” that incorporates social networks and recognises dispersed and contingent power relations (1999:609). According to Ostrom, “if social capital is conceptualised too casually and projects are designed to enhance ‘participation’ without

substantial changes in the structure of institutions, then the concept will become a shallow fad” (2000:201). Thus, this thesis examines whether the Baan Mankong project represents a true challenge to the historical top-down approaches to development, and whether and how state structures are responding to the shift towards bottom-up development. By looking both at relations within the communities, and ties with formal institutions of the state, this thesis attempts to extend the analysis from the micro level to the macro level, examining the wider implications of participatory approaches to upgrading, and the potential for achieving synergy, through complementarity and embeddedness. By providing an analysis of the social relationships between a community and formal institutions, in the context of slum upgrading, it may then be possible to determine how the positive aspects of social capital - cooperation, trust, and institutional efficiency - can offset the negatives, such as corruption and isolationism (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000:238).

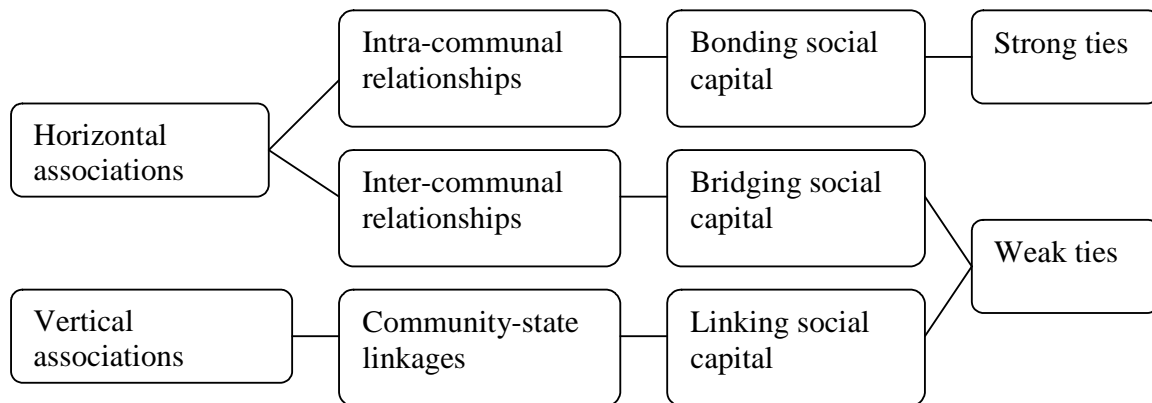
As Baan Mankong is a participatory project, the social relations of those involved in the process are necessarily of relevance, at all stages of the process: before, during, and after upgrading. Khun Somsook, the former director of CODI, herself said that “What we need to be stronger ... is the sense of power: the sense of politics that how things have been changing. ... We can understand why the people’s process is important only if we understand this power issue” (ACHR 2008b:9). An attempt is therefore made at examining the effect of participation in housing issues on wider power structures.

This thesis provides an examination of social relations at three levels – intra-community, inter-community, and state-community - across both horizontal and vertical associations, and these relationships are important in determining the outcome of upgrading not only at the local scale, but nationally, as the upgrading programme is scaled up across Thailand. As Baan Mankong is about community development as well as physical upgrading, the case-study approach used in this thesis, outlined in Chapter 4, can offer insight into what leads to successful upgrading. The strength of a comparative community study is its capacity to explore behavioural responses within households, between households, and within the community (Moser, 1996:1).

### 3.6 Conclusion

This section has provided a conceptual framework for the research, around the concept of social capital. Participatory development is the new paradigm, replacing the top-down practices of old. Social capital is a collective asset for communities, and hence allows community participation to occur, and its various forms are illustrated in Figure 3.5. The factors influencing community participation, including social capital and the role of institutions, have been considered, as has its potential for bringing about political and social change. The importance of the political, social and institutional context to social capital studies has been highlighted. Governance is the relationship between civil society and the state, and increasing collective action within civil society can empower marginalised citizens such as the urban poor, for example through networks and federations. The motivation for the research has been outlined. In the following chapter, the analytical framework within which the data analysis takes place is explained, and the methodology used to carry out research on the Baan Mankong scheme is outlined.

*Figure 3.5: Outline of the forms of social capital used in the analysis*



## **Chapter 4 – Analytical Framework and Methodology**

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### **4.1 Analytical framework**

#### **4.1.1 The Thailand Social Capital Evaluation Framework**

### **4.2 Research methods**

#### **4.2.1 Qualitative versus quantitative**

#### **4.2.2 Data collection and sampling**

### **4.3 Research timeline**

### **4.4 Meeting challenges in the field**

#### **4.4.1 Ethical considerations**

#### **4.4.2 Role of the researcher**

#### **4.4.3 Potential sources of bias**

#### **4.4.4 Limitations of the study**

### **4.5 Outline of case study communities**

### **4.6 Conclusion**

Chapter 2 outlined the contextual background of the research project, setting the Baan Mankong scheme within Thailand's institutional and social structure. Chapter 3 provided a conceptual framework, outlining the theory of social capital, within which this research is grounded, and its relevance to participatory development. In this chapter, the research methodology is described, outlining the analytical framework, based on a World Bank study of social capital in Thai rural communities, and how this analytical framework was put into practice through a case-study approach to data collection in Baan Mankong communities.

### **4.1 Analytical Framework**

This study aims to operationalise social capital within the context of participatory slum upgrading, through a qualitative methodology. As an assessment of the Baan Mankong scheme, this study examines the effectiveness of a participatory strategy in upgrading slum housing, in terms of social outcomes. The primary stakeholders in the evaluation are the slum dwellers themselves, and by extension, those who participate in slum networks, as they are the beneficiaries of the policy, and the secondary stakeholders are the state officials in institutions relevant to Baan Mankong. Upgraded slum communities are therefore the primary unit of analysis, more specifically their inhabitants. The analysis takes into account the physical and the social impacts of the upgrading process, providing an output that is both descriptive, outlining the results of upgrading, and explanatory, examining the extent to which Baan Mankong promotes horizontal ties and vertical associations.

The analysis in this thesis is grounded in the concept of social capital. The thesis is structured around the three levels of social capital outlined in Chapter 3: bonding, bridging and linking. When looking specifically at the upgrading process in the case-study communities, the analysis draws on the Thailand social capital evaluation framework, based on a World Bank report entitled “Thailand Social Capital Evaluation: a mixed methods assessment of the Social Investment Fund’s Impact on Village Social Capital” (2006). The Thailand social capital evaluation framework provides methodological steps for measuring and operationalising social capital within a community-driven development arena.

#### **4.1.1 The Thailand Social Capital Evaluation Framework**

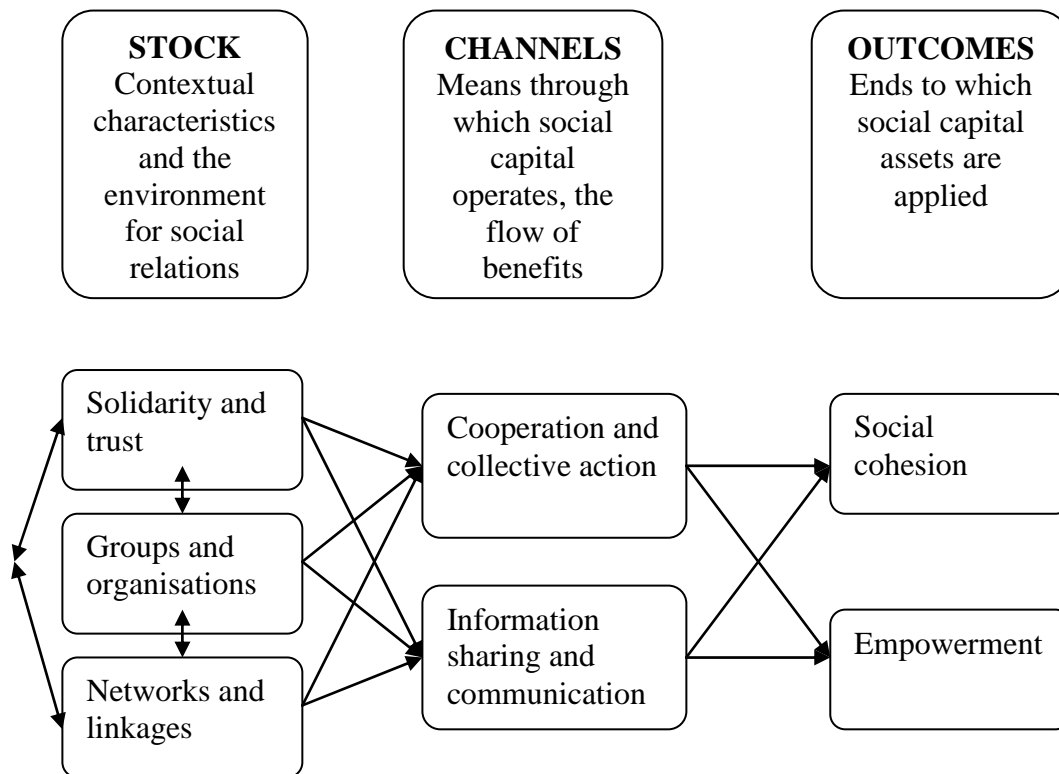
The Thailand social capital evaluation framework was developed to assess the impact of the Thai Social Investment Fund (SIF), using a set of indicators for several dimensions of social capital reflecting the Thai context. The SIF was a government program to provide resources for local and grassroots organisations to implement their development projects, following the 1997 economic crisis. The objective was to encourage community organisations and local administration, promote self-sufficiency, and stimulate widespread participatory social development (World Bank, 2006:16). Village organisations had to prepare funding proposals for one of a “menu” of options, such as “community welfare and safety” or “community economy”, and if successful in gaining funds, implemented projects themselves.

It was during the SIF’s implementation that it became clear which dimensions of social capital were relevant for rural village projects. The analytical framework which was developed to measure this separates social capital into three categories: stocks, channels and outcomes (Figure 4.1). The stocks are characteristics that establish an environment for social relations, being solidarity and trust, groups and organisations, and networks and linkages. The channels represent flows of benefits, in the form of cooperation and collective action, and information sharing and communication. The outcomes are the areas to which social capital is applied within the communities, namely, social cohesion, and empowerment. The higher the stock of social capital, and the more channels there are through which social capital operates, the higher the likelihood of the outcomes of social cohesion and empowerment being higher.

The SIF evaluation took the form of a mixed methods evaluation, as the SIF project was a community-driven development (CDD) project with an explicit focus on collective action.

The researchers identified two effects arising from the CDD approach: a *selection effect* means that CDD schemes may identify and reward communities with higher levels of social capital, whilst an *impact effect* can help communities enhance social capital, because the project helps communities develop ways to collaborate more effectively. In order to separate and test these effects, baseline information about the starting levels of social capital within the community is needed. However, as with many CDD projects, this baseline data had not been collected before the SIF project was implemented. Thus this evaluation framework provides the technique to identify the effect of a CDD project on social capital when baseline data doesn't exist.

Figure 4.1: The Social Capital Framework (adapted from The World Bank, 2006)



The research team combined quantitative matching techniques with qualitative field research to identify how and why villages that participated in the SIF differed from those that didn't. Existing household survey data from the Thailand Socio-Economic Survey, carried out every two years, was used to match the 72 sample SIF villages to 72 comparison villages in the same province. Researchers then consulted local authorities to pair the treatment village to its most similar comparison village, and each village was scored for each social capital variable on a one to five scale. Because there were several statistically significant differences between treatment and comparison villages on these scores, qualitative data was gathered from the

villages, to assess whether the observed differences were due to a selection effect by the SIF program, or whether SIF itself had an impact on social capital levels. The qualitative data was collected using semi-structured interviews with key informants in each village, comprising village leaders and villagers. These persons were asked to rate their village on the same social capital dimensions, after having been interviewed.

This approach provides a useful breakdown of indicators of social capital that have been adapted and made relevant to the Thai context. Though this social capital evaluation was carried out in rural communities, it is relevant to urban low-income communities, which have many village characteristics. The matching approach to getting around the problem of lack of baseline data is innovative. Unfortunately, in the context of slum communities, there is a lack of baseline data on social characteristics, limiting the possibilities of matching treatment communities with control communities in order to assess the impact of the upgrading program on levels of social capital.

Nevertheless, this SIF evaluation is valuable for its stock, channels and outcomes framework, which this thesis adopts, as it provides a useful tool to analyse the interactions between the different forms in which social capital can manifest itself. These indicators can be used to question community members about whether levels of social capital have been affected by the Baan Mankong scheme. Though the use of retrospective questioning poses potential problems of bias, the lack of baseline data makes it necessary if one wants to assess the effects of a participatory development scheme on community dynamics. The treatment communities can be compared to control communities which did not undergo upgrading. Because policy evaluations are usually carried out using the implementing body's definition of success, which often refers only to physical improvements, using a bottom-up evaluation from the perspective of the participants can illustrate the social impacts of the scheme. The social capital evaluation mechanism can provide an idea of how pre-existing stocks of social capital within a community will affect the number of channels through which social capital operates. These stocks and channels will affect the outcome of the upgrading scheme.

The stocks-channels-outcomes framework is especially useful for looking at social capital factors internal to communities, and was used to shape the semi-structured interview questions for community residents. However, it does not consider external factors, such as the role played by outsiders, such as CODI, public officials, and NGOs, who may affect the

decision of community members whether or not to work collectively. These external players can have an important part to play in the upgrading process and its outcomes, and are also considered throughout the analysis.

## **4.2 Research Methods**

### **4.2.1 Qualitative versus quantitative**

Because social capital is difficult to define precisely, it is also difficult to measure, and research projects have used both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data refers to textual or visual data gathered from interviews, observations, documents and records, which can be analysed in both a statistical or thematic manner, whilst quantitative data is analysed statistically. The two methods can be complementary.

Quantitative methods appear to be more prevalent in social capital research, with a reliance on polling methods and survey questions, generating easily codifiable data for statistical analysis. However, no one method is superior, and multi-method and multi-level strategies can usefully inform the social capital debate (Van Deth, 2003), though qualitative methods may be more appropriate when seeking to gain an in-depth understanding of the mechanisms of the processes of social capital, and not just its end products (Woolcock, 2001). Devine and Roberts find that quantitative methods are of limited use when “understanding social relations in space and time” (2003:96). Mwangi and Makelova call for more qualitative data, including discussion groups, semi-structured interviews, and ethnographic observation, which can provide “important insights into the dynamics of poverty, particularly perceptions of vulnerability, the role of institutions, and power relations” (2008:7). In light of these sentiments, the author feels that a qualitative approach is appropriate in the search to understand the Baan Mankong process and outcomes. Combining various qualitative approaches allows the researcher to get a better “feel” for the dynamics of collective action.

Qualitative research places importance on understanding a phenomenon from the respondent’s perspective (the “emic” view) and not just the researcher’s perspective (the “etic” view) (Chung, 2000). The emic view allows a representation of the meaning that locals give to events and institutions in their lives, which is essential in the case of this study, in which the perspective of the beneficiaries was used to understand the impact of the upgrading process. Because qualitative research is less concerned than quantitative research in making



sample-to-population generalizations, cases can be chosen purposively, and a smaller number of cases need be investigated.

The author's data-gathering methods were informed by the grounded approach, which Strauss and Corbin define as "theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process" (1998:12). Chung (2000:338) recognises that in practice, researchers begin fieldwork with a rudimentary conceptual framework in order to frame the data collection and the interview design. Whilst carrying out fieldwork, the author kept a daily log in which she recorded and developed her thoughts according to the material that had been collected that day. The data-collection stage was therefore constructivist in nature, as findings developed during the fieldwork.

#### **4.2.2 Data collection and sampling**

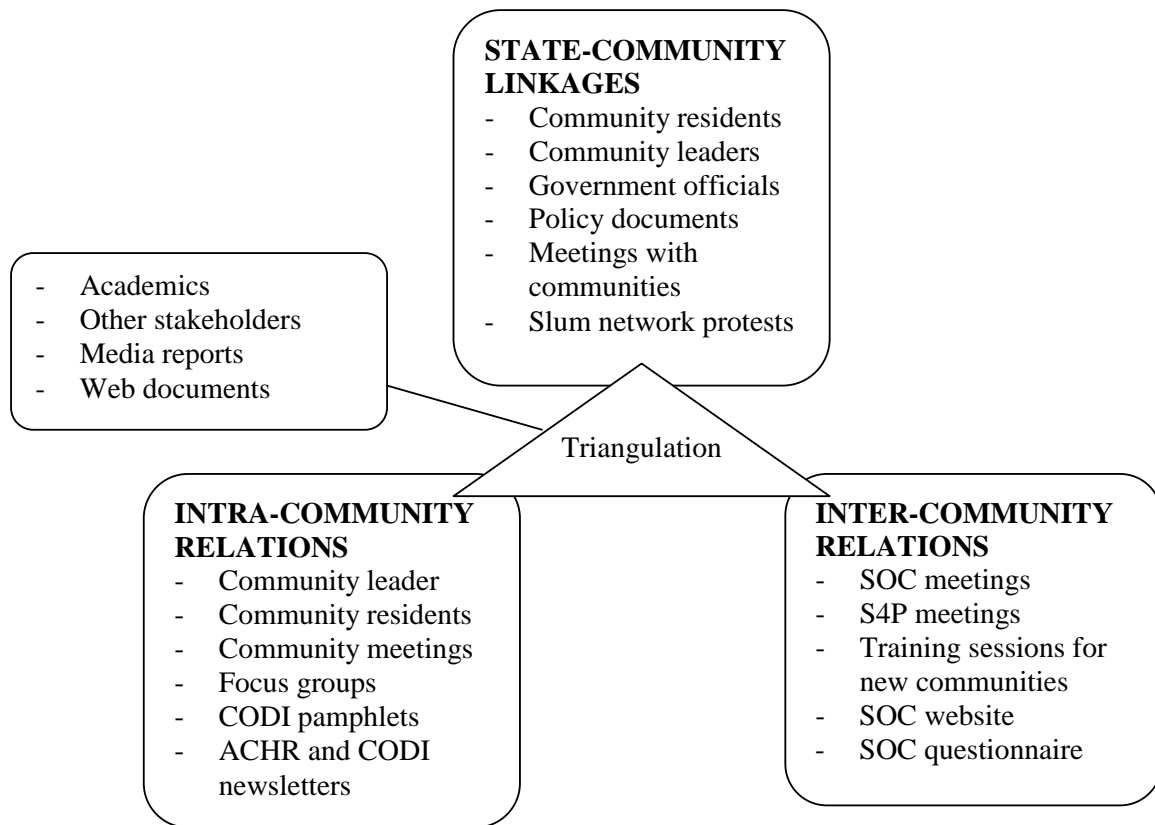
##### ***Data collection – a case-study approach***

A multiple case-study approach was chosen, and four upgraded case-study communities were selected as the primary units of analysis. The case-study approach provides the contextual background necessary to a study of social capital: case studies "excel at investigating the in-depth causal processes that lead to certain outcomes" (Grootaert and van Bastelaer, 2002b:344). Additionally, it can provide a depth to the analysis and yield insights which are difficult to generate with a purely quantitative technique. Though a case-study approach means that conclusions cannot be generalised for every community, it can still provide valuable insight into likely outcomes, and why they might occur.

Primary data was gathered in the form of interviews with community residents, community leaders, government officials and academics. Discussion groups were held with the community members, and community and slum network meetings were attended for participant-observation. In addition to this primary data, relevant material from secondary sources was collected. CODI produces many pamphlets regarding Baan Mankong, about communities that have already completed the process, and instruction booklets for communities wishing to participate. Additionally, it produces English-language newsletters with progress reports, through the Asian Coalition of Housing Rights. Newspaper articles

relating to low income housing and government policy towards the poor were also consulted. The multiple levels of data sources allowed for triangulation (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: Triangulation of data sources



Due to the qualitative nature of the concept of social capital, including trust and solidarity, use of semi-structured interviews was regarded as the best approach. However, surveying the communities only once they had completed the Baan Mankong process meant there was no baseline data about the levels of social capital within the community before the upgrading process had commenced, data necessary for an assessment of the impact of undergoing upgrading on community relations. CODI did not carry out baseline surveys of social capital, though communities may have been assessed for the strength of their community savings groups and previous collective action, in order to begin by upgrading the communities where the scheme had the highest chances of success. Consequently, retrospective questioning was used in interviews.

Retrospective questioning raised the risk of biased answers, as respondents' memories may have been tainted by their experiences. A solution to the lack of baseline data would have

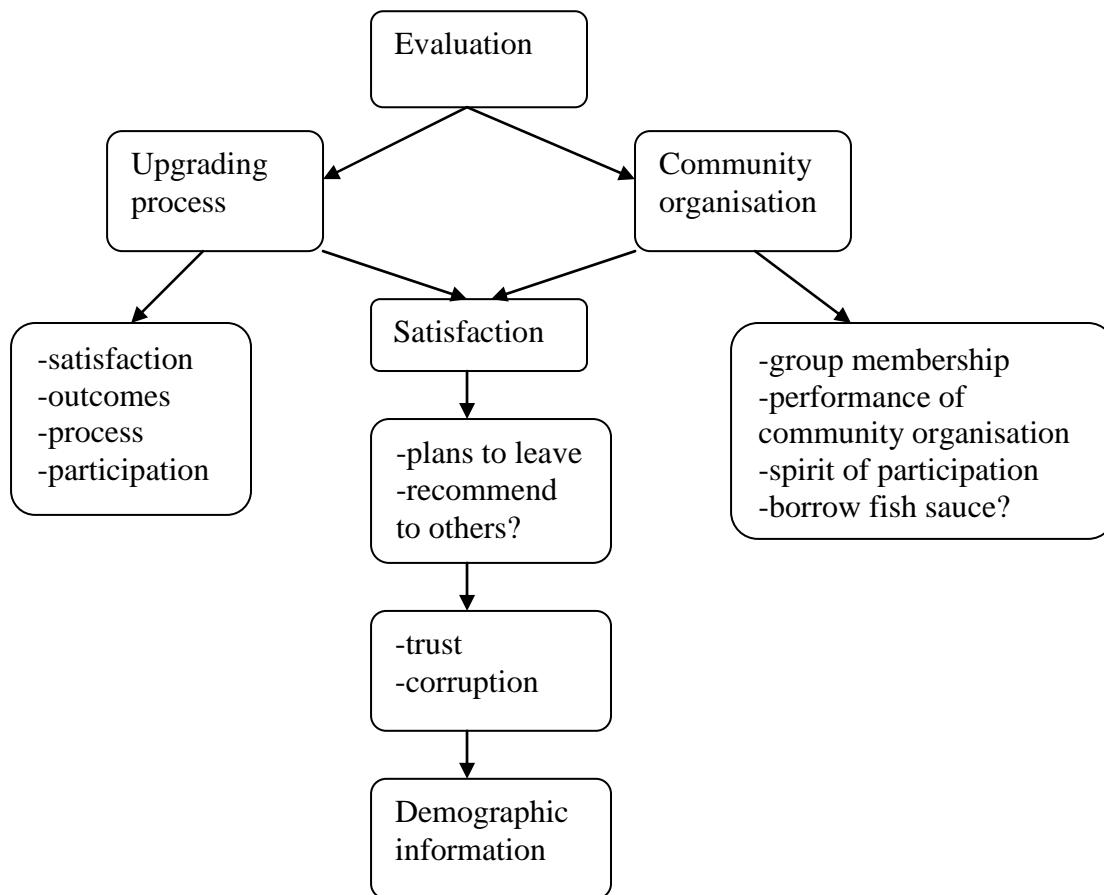
been to match upgraded communities to communities that had yet to be upgraded, on the basis of size, type of tenure and other characteristics, and use the social capital characteristics of these communities as proxies for the upgraded communities, in a similar manner to the SIF evaluation. However, this method was beyond the resources and time available to the researcher, and it makes assumptions about similarities between communities which may not actually exist. All the communities differ with regards to their age, social structure and previous experiences of collective action, and relations within the communities may be dependent on the inhabitants' region of origin or type of work. Hence retrospective questioning was used to obtain the necessary data for comparison purposes, to try and correlate the levels of social capital pre-upgrading with the outcome of the upgrading process.

In the future, it would be preferable to assess the forms of social capital within communities prior to project implementation, since they can critically affect a project's probability of success. A community which is divided over rival leaders is less likely to succeed in a collective project than one which has already attempted collective action, whether or not the action resulted in a successful outcome. It is also more likely to undertake a collective project, in a selection effect.

### ***Pilot Survey***

The first stage of the research was a pilot survey carried out during the summer of 2007, in Klong Lumnoon community, selected for its small size of only 49 households. The intention of the pilot survey was to test the questionnaire design. Local academics were consulted on the pilot questionnaire's design, which consisted of close-ended multiple choice and ranking questions. It contained in-built checking mechanisms – for example, to measure satisfaction with the upgrading program, a question about whether the respondent had plans to leave the community was followed by one asking whether they would recommend the upgrading program (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Structure of pilot questionnaire



The pilot survey revealed a number of changes needing to be made to the survey design. It highlighted potential difficulties in getting a representative sample, due to the prevalence of elderly persons at home during the day, whilst younger persons were out at work. Additionally, it revealed that some questions were not phrased simply enough, some respondents struggled with the concept of ranking, and the choice of responses for certain questions did not always coincide with the response that the person wanted to give. Hence, a shift was made to a semi-structured interview style for the final surveys, allowing for open-ended responses. However, the ranking questions were retained. In certain instances, it was apparent that the respondent was uncomfortable about answering the question, which was also borne in mind when questions were re-written.

### ***Final survey design and procedure***

The semi-structured interview questionnaire (Appendix 2) was written in English and translated into Thai. Due to the ‘fuzzy’ nature of social capital as a concept, it was important

to ensure that no meaning was lost in translation. The design also had to ensure that there were no leading questions, especially the retrospective questions regarding social capital.

Because slum inhabitants, as the beneficiaries of the Baan Mankong scheme, are central to the study, the interview questions used to collect their opinions needed to be correctly geared to obtain the maximum amount of information. The information gathered from interviews with community members make up the backbone of the analysis. Interviews were carried out in the four case-study communities that underwent upgrading, as well as two control communities that were not doing any upgrading under the Baan Mankong program. The aim of the survey interviews was primarily to establish what the slum inhabitants thought of the upgrading process and its outcomes, as well as to find out whether they thought the implementation of upgrading caused any change in community relations, in terms of linkages, trust and collective action. The questions were split into three parts: the first dealing with the interviewee's experience during the upgrading process, the second assessing the levels of social integration in terms of trust, group membership, collective action and vertical linkages, and the third dealing with demographic information.

The questionnaire design drew on World Bank questionnaires for measuring social capital. Because social capital is an elusive concept, basing the questions on purpose-designed, tried-and-tested tools ensured more consistency and validity. These questionnaires included the qualitative Social Capital Assessment Tool (SOCAT), and the indicators used by the Thailand Social Capital evaluation, which are adapted to the Thai situation, making it an appropriate framework on which to base this study's measures. Grootaert and van Bastelaer suggest three proxy indicators for social capital: membership in local associations and networks, indicators of trust and adherence to norms, and indicators of collective action (2001:23). The OECD agrees that trust is an acceptable measure of social capital (2001:45).

Before doing the household surveys within the communities, the leader of each community was interviewed, to gain background information about the community, providing a basis for comparison to the views of the community members themselves. With the community leader's permission, community residents were then interviewed. In addition, key stakeholders in the upgrading process were interviewed, providing a basis for triangulation: the landowners, government officials from the relevant agencies, and academics who had been involved in community upgrading.

After analysing the community interviews, discussion groups were held in the case-study communities to discuss the issues that arose from the analysis. This was the third stage of fieldwork. The discussion groups provided more information on matters affecting the community as a whole, for example what the community still wanted in terms of communal facilities, what problems remained, and the relationships between the community and organisations. The discussion groups were a chance to find out what the community wanted to gain from the upgrading process, and compare this to what was actually achieved. They were an opportunity to bring up matters that people were reluctant to raise when being surveyed individually.

The notes, transcripts and observations of all interviews, discussion groups and meetings observed, once translated into English, were coded manually. These codes allowed the main themes to emerge and concepts to be developed, and to be compared to the themes in secondary sources.

### ***Sampling***

The study was centred on Bangkok, in four upgraded case-study communities. The aim was to use random sampling in the household interviews, with a target 20% sampling rate of completed houses for each community. In practice, random sampling of every  $n$ th house was difficult due to householders being away, at work, too busy or unwilling to respond. The author tried achieve a physical spread of respondents, for example, two households per lane, in order to have respondents from a spread of community sub-groups, which are formed of physical clusters of houses. The respondent had to be an adult already living in the community before the upgrading began. Household heads who were the holders of the housing right, male or female, were targeted, though the main criterion was that the interviewee be involved in the day-to-day running of the household. The right to the house was often in the name of an elderly parent who lived with their children and grandchildren – in these situations, those who contributed towards the repayment of the housing loan were targeted. In many cases, women were more knowledgeable due to their role in managing household finances.

When organising focus group discussions, the original aim was to get community members to volunteer themselves to take part in the discussions, by asking the community leader to announce over the tannoy that participants were needed for the discussion group. However, the first attempt at this failed, as the community leader instead asked his friends to participate, most of whom were on the community committee. Though it was valuable to have the committee gathered together for a discussion, in order to get “ordinary” community members to participate, the following discussion groups were organised by distributing invitation letters randomly, explaining to recipients what would be involved.

*Figure 4.4: Discussion group in Klong Toey 7-12 community*



### ***Participant observation***

Observation of community and slum network meetings formed another part of the primary data (Appendix 4 lists all interviews and events attended). Community meetings were attended, for example regarding the allocation of housing rights in a future phase of upgrading, or a fire safety session. Meetings of local-level slum networks were attended, such as that of the Bang Bua canal communities. Meetings organised by larger-scale slum networks were observed, such as the SOC meetings where training was provided to new communities hoping to enter the upgrading program, as well as CODI-run events.

During these meetings, impartial observations were made, by taking notes and observing interactions between the different participants. These meetings provided important insight into the way in which community members planned their strategy for upgrading their own communities, other communities, and influencing policy reform. It demonstrated the strength of community organisations and networks in achieving things for themselves, as well as providing insight into how community members are regarded by other groups such as government officials. Therefore, by attending meetings the author was able to observe directly whether or not factors such as social cohesion and social engagement were present, and to what extent people were participating. Where officials were present, their role provided an insight into their attitudes towards urban poor communities and the Baan Mankong policy.

### ***Contribution to methodology***

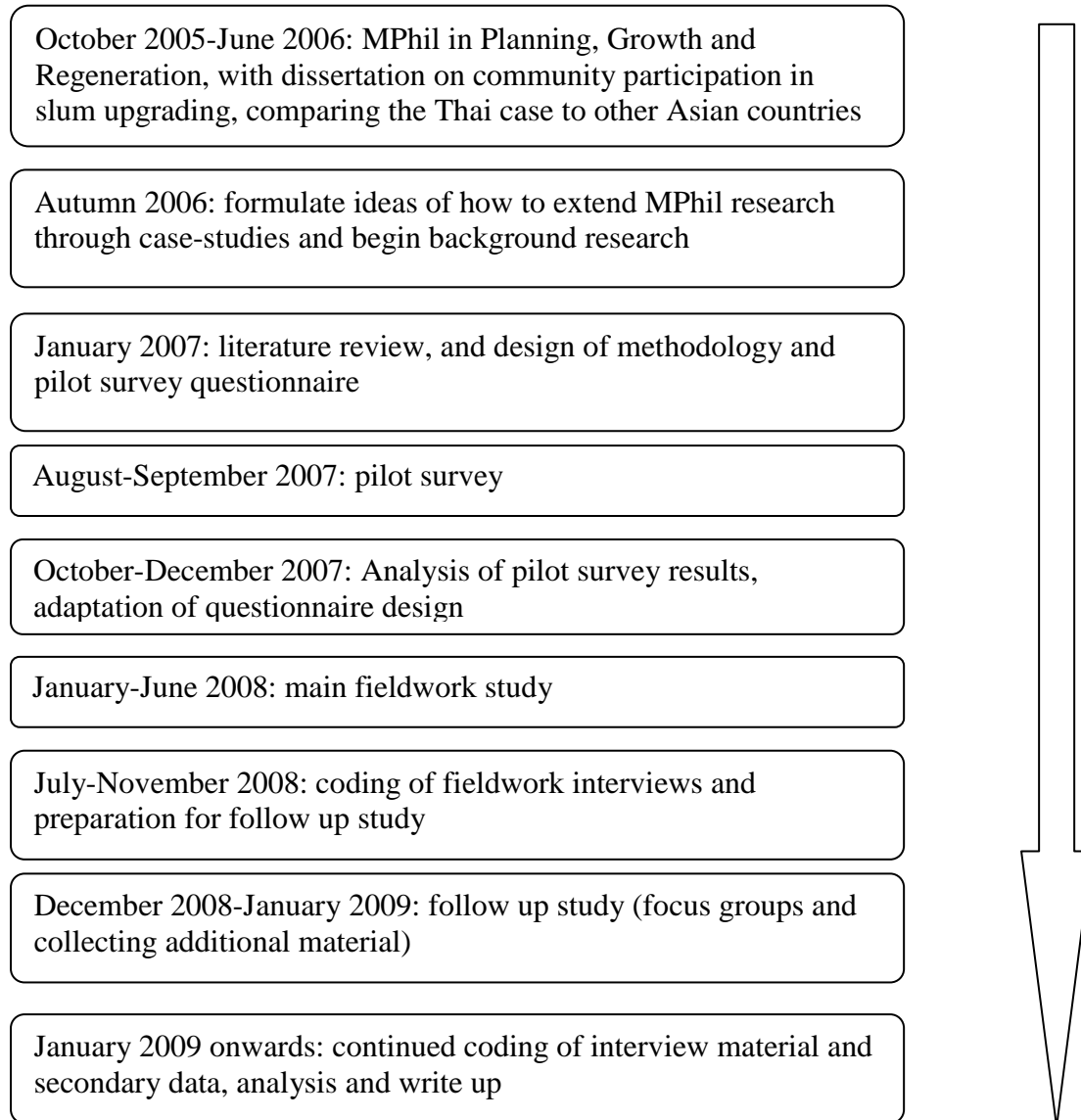
As previously stated, much of the research on social capital relies on quantitative methods. This study takes a multi-method qualitative approach, using interviews, discussion groups, participant observation, and secondary sources, both in Thai and English. Use was made of open-ended questions in semi-structured interviews, rather than polls, as previous surveys of Baan Mankong have done, allowing the opinions of the stakeholders to emerge. This demonstrated to the community residents that their views matter, and are perhaps not taken into account frequently enough. By adapting the framework from the SIF Social Capital evaluation, it allows for an assessment of social capital in urban contexts through a qualitative approach. As well as the community case-studies, the outcomes of the upgrading process were examined from various angles in order to observe any shifts in communal and institutional relationships, by examining the role of slum networks, and the attitudes of official institutions such as district offices. This multi-method and multi-level approach can provide a deeper insight into the outcomes and impacts of the Baan Mankong scheme, and an understanding of why these occurred.

The majority of the research carried out in Thailand on the Baan Mankong upgrading project relies heavily on questionnaires focussing on physical and monetary aspects, such as the type of housing built and how it was funded. The social and institutional aspects are not very commonly studied, despite being important factors in the ultimate aim of “building communities”. Therefore, this study provides insight on more than just the bricks-and-mortar



aspects of slum upgrading, and can provide lessons in how upgrading through a participatory approach can best be achieved.

### 4.3 Research Timeline



### 4.4 Meeting challenges in the field

#### 4.4.1 Ethical considerations

Research such as this which relies heavily on the willingness of respondents to answer interview questions inevitably brings up potential for the researcher to abuse their position, especially in the case of surveying members of low-income communities. As a clear outsider,

of different educational background, upbringing and race, the worry was that community members somehow felt obligated or coerced to answer the author's questions.

The author's ability to speak Thai lowered the barriers between her and the respondents, as did a familiarity with Thai culture and traditions arising from long-term residency in the country. Hiring a Thai assistant, who herself lived in a low-income community in Bangkok, also helped to overcome barriers. This common factor she had with the interviewees allowed discussion to flow more freely, as she could often relate to the community members with regards to the problems they were facing, for example in dealing with the district officials. The assistant was present on most visits to the communities and assisted in all the interviews, both in asking questions and taking notes. Additionally, being accompanied by a Thai person made the author's presence less remarkable.

In every community, the permission of the community leader to enter the community and interview residents was secured. Having the leader's stamp of approval validated the researcher's presence to the community residents. Before each interview it was made clear that the author was a student, doing research for personal purposes, and not working for any government agencies or NGOs. Community residents were never asked for their name, nor contact details, as keeping anonymity assured them that they could not be "tracked down" in future. Some of the interview questions dealt with sensitive topics, especially those regarding the community leadership and corruption in the upgrading process, so interviews were held privately and face-to-face. When it was obvious that someone was uncomfortable discussing these issues, the matter was not pressed. Thai society remains patriarchal and matters such as corruption are only beginning to be discussed openly. Interviews with community members were never recorded, as this threatened to create a barrier between the respondent and the researcher by formalising the situation. Instead, notes were taken as the person spoke, which the author compared with her assistant afterwards. The author's notes were taken in English, directly translating what the person said. These translated quotes are used in this thesis.

The participatory approaches used, of discussion groups and interviews, led to the risk of raising expectations. There were certain situations where respondents in the communities hoped that the author would be able to give them some assistance, as a "rich" foreigner. For example, the author was asked on several occasions if she knew of job opportunities, if she could assist in the purchase of school uniforms, or find a boxing instructor for the

community's teenagers. Such requests presented a dilemma, in that the author could not be seen to offer, for example, money to one respondent but not another, who did not ask for anything. The author therefore did not give any assistance in physical or monetary terms, but tried to provide advice wherever possible, of NGOs to contact or places to look for jobs. The research assistant was particularly knowledgeable in this area. The author's fieldwork experience certainly proved humbling on many occasions, as respondents almost always welcomed her into their homes with cold drinks, the prime position in front of the fan, as well as giving her some of their precious time. Not wanting this research to be a case of all "take" and no "give" in return, the author plans to make available the results of her research to the case-study communities. The author is aware that she was very much reliant on the kindness of the community members, and their willingness to help a PhD student complete her research, and will hopefully give back to the community, or other communities elsewhere in Thailand or the world, through professional expertise later in life.

Before commencing fieldwork, the permission of the National Research Council of Thailand was obtained to carry out this research. Once in Thailand, CODI was contacted and informed of research intentions, and for the most part they were cooperative in allowing the author to sit in on meetings and looking through their files on the different communities. It was through CODI that the existence of the SOC network was revealed, whose members were very willing to let the author sit in on meetings and participate in activities. Through SOC, good links were established with key actors in the community network movement.

The hierarchical and bureaucratic nature of the Thai government system means that getting access to government officials can be problematic, normally requiring written permission from those "high above". Due to time constraints, an initial approach was adopted of ringing the office of the person in question and requesting an interview – for the most part, this worked. Interviews with government officials were taped for later transcription, as in many instances the language was technical and could not be captured through notes alone, and the formal nature of the interview suited taping. Interviews with community leaders were also taped and transcribed into English by the research assistant.

#### **4.4.2 Role of the researcher**

As an outsider to the Baan Mankong project, not involved in the upgrading in any way, the author hopes to bring a fresh, unbiased look to the program. CODI also carries out evaluations of the upgrading process, however, as the instigator of the upgrading program, it may have a vested interest in portraying the project in the best possible light. The researcher's role is to be free of any bias, and let the voices of the community members, as the core of the research, come through in the analysis. It is not permissible to take sides, whether the dispute is within the community or between the community and outsiders.

The researcher also has the responsibility to disseminate information among those concerned, and an assurance was made to each community leader that they would be provided with a copy of the completed findings. As a core principle of Baan Mankong is "learning by doing", the author will give back to these communities not only what was have learnt from them, but also from other communities. CODI will also be provided with the findings, as they serve as an evaluation of the Baan Mankong policy, not only in terms of the physical outcomes such as new houses, but also with regard to the social and institutional impacts.

#### **4.4.3 Potential sources of bias**

Though being a neutral outsider to the upgrading programme may bring an open-mindedness to the project analysis, it also brings with it many potential biases. However much the aim is to let the theory arise from the data, the analysis will be tainted by Western perspectives. The danger, as with any analysis, especially qualitative, is that the author's own views will be imposed on the data. As Chambers (1997:163) states, "a person who is not poor who pronounces on what matters to those who are poor is in a trap". One way of avoiding this trap is to let the data speak for itself, that is, by allowing the voices of my respondents to direct the conclusions, rather than any pre-existing biases which may be held by the researcher or theories she may have read. Hence, this thesis makes liberal use of direct quotations from interviews, to ensure that the voices of the respondents come out clearly.

In the administration of the community surveys, the use of open-ended questions allows the respondents to express their own views. Avoiding leading questions is essential, so as not to influence the response. However, the nature of the study required a certain reliance upon retrospective questioning with regards to attitudes within the community before and after the

upgrading process, and the risk with this is that the respondents perceived that certain answers were more desirable, i.e. that everything had improved post-upgrading. Therefore, the phrasing of these before-and-after questions had to minimise any implication of this type. Tying in with this, certain community members may have felt an obligation to present their community in a positive light, even if this was not necessarily their opinion. By emphasising the author's position as a student, not a government researcher, respondents should have felt less pressure to respond in a certain way. Having said this, it is unlikely that most community members would be afraid to express their true opinions of the upgrading project to a government official.

Bias could also have arisen in the residents' responses due to questionnaire overload. The relative newness of the Baan Mankong project in Thai housing policy, and its reputation as the "golden child" of housing policy, means it has been the focus of many research projects, by CODI and local university students, who also often relied upon community questionnaires. Some respondents may therefore have reached saturation in answering questions, or may have perceived that researchers wanted to hear certain responses. As the respondents were willing to spare their time to answer the author's questions, it is hoped that they had not yet reached this point. Also, the qualitative nature of the interviews differed from many of the questionnaires used by other students, with one respondent expressing surprise that rather than having to fill out four pages of detailed household expenditure, she was asked to express her opinions on various issues. Therefore, this different approach will hopefully have been a change from the usual for respondents.

#### **4.4.4 Limitations of the study**

As a case-study approach was chosen, the conclusions reached will necessarily be limited to what was learnt from the case-study communities. Choosing four communities out of the 1,010 communities across Thailand which have upgraded or are in the process of doing so will obviously not give a full picture of the outcomes of Baan Mankong. However, this is not the aim. The aim is rather to fully examine the upgrading experience of four particular communities, compare and contrast, and continue the learning-by-doing ethos of Baan Mankong. Though no generalisations for the whole of Thailand will be made, possible reasons for particular outcomes can be drawn out and serve as lessons for future upgrading projects.

As with all research, time and resource constraints limited the data-gathering process. The study could have benefited from following a community through the upgrading process, from the first community meetings where a decision was made to start saving for Baan Mankong, to drawing up the designs for new houses and budgeting the construction projects. This would have been an opportunity to assess how truly participatory the process is. However, this can be a drawn-out process: in the case of Bang Bua community (see section 4.5), it took three years from the first suggestion of upgrading to the laying of the first stone. The process can be faster, for example when building new homes is a matter of urgency after a fire. Such an opportunity did not present itself during the author's period in the field (perhaps fortunately for the residents). The author compensated for this by attending community meetings reflecting different stages of the process in various communities, from one community which was choosing a new management committee following the disappearance of some of the community savings, to training sessions provided by CODI in designing community layout plans. Bonkai community also presented opportunities as it was about to embark on the third phase of upgrading, a year after completing the second phase, so meetings were observed where community residents decided on the layout of the housing and interviewed short-listed contractors.

The author was heavily reliant on word of mouth about meetings and other opportunities. This was not without problems, as meeting dates often changed at the last minute, without the author being informed. She also found that community members were much more likely to invite her to meetings than officials were, perhaps a reflection of the community residents' desire to promote knowledge-sharing. However, the author is grateful for all the meetings she was able to attend, and thankful to her informants for thinking of her when interesting opportunities arose.

With regard to the collection of secondary material, the author's lack of ease in reading Thai meant that she was not able to scan Thai newspapers daily for relevant newspaper articles. As a result, she relied heavily on news clippings posted in CODI and given to her by others, as well as internet searches for key news items. This means that the Thai-language printed material used here consists mostly of material printed by CODI, including its "Community News" monthly newspaper, and thus may be biased in favour of the scheme. News articles printed in Thailand's two English-language papers were also used.

#### **4.5 Outline of Case Study Communities**

Though Baan Mankong as a scheme is being applied across Thailand, implementation in rural and urban areas differs, due to differing local government structures. There is a different dynamic in the relationships between communities and government officials when one compares Bangkok to a rural community. In rural areas, it is much easier for communities to gain access to their town mayor, than for a Bangkok community to meet with the Governor of Bangkok. Bangkok communities therefore are primarily in touch with government officials through the local district office. This study focuses on Bangkok.

The chosen case-study communities had completed the first phase of the upgrading process within the last two years. This selection was made for a number of reasons: first, time constraints meant it was not possible to follow a community through the whole upgrading process; secondly, the aim is to assess the impact of the upgrading process on the community. In communities where upgrading was complete, the inhabitants would have had more time to not only reflect upon the whole process, but also to notice any changes in community relations. Assessing the project some time after it has been completed allows time for the community to form and implement any maintenance plans, and they may also have shared their experiences with other communities, in keeping with Baan Mankong's "learning-by-doing" principle.

In selecting the case-studies, the author sought communities of approximately 100 households, though Bang Bua was chosen despite its larger size on the recommendation of a number of local academics and practitioners. Having obtained a list of Bangkok Baan Mankong communities from CODI, it soon became apparent on visits that very few of these 108 communities had completed or even begun upgrading, and others had used Baan Mankong funding for infrastructure improvements only, for example. The author sought communities which had undergone large-scale upgrading, as this required the full participation of all residents. Consequently, the author narrowed down the case-studies to three of the original pilot projects, and Bang Bua.

The four case-study communities each represented a different form of upgrading, as classified by CODI: land sharing, reblocking, nearby relocation and reconstruction (Appendix

1). The communities selected were all formerly squatters on state land who had negotiated a lease from the state. This is much rarer when the squatters are on privately-owned land; in these cases, the community usually must buy the land onsite or elsewhere, which means that the loan money goes towards buying the land, rather than housing, which is the focus of this study. Two non-upgraded slum communities were also sampled as control communities.

Figures 4.5 through to 4.14 provide aerial and map illustrations of the four case-study upgraded communities. Table 4.1 summarises the features of each community.

#### **4.5.1 Bang Bua community**

Bang Bua community is located in Bang Khen district. The community is bordered by two low-income communities, an army barracks, and klong Bang Bua (a canal). The land is owned by the Treasury department. There are 820 residents in the community, comprising 185 households.

The first squatters settled along Bang Bua canal in the 1940s, living a rural life, rice farming, catching fish and shrimp in the canal. With economic growth, increasing numbers of people moved from the countryside to Bang Bua, often joining other family members already squatting on the land. Eventually the community reached the point of become a densely-populated slum, built on waste water swamps. In 1992, the community registered with the district. The community asked for assistance from various organisations to improve living conditions, without success, so Bang Bua community decided to form a canal-side network in 1999 with eleven other low-income communities living along the canal, to develop the canal's environment, as well as dealing with housing issues. As with many low-income communities, those along klong Bang Bua were blamed by the authorities for polluting the canal, and so the network aimed to raise awareness among community members about the dangers of spoiling the canal water, and instituted schemes to improve water quality, such as through the use of solutions containing micro-organisms.

When plans were announced to build a road along the canal, requiring the community's eviction, community members decided to together find a way of developing their housing. A housing savings group was formed in March 2004. The community is organised into 28 subgroups, of five to six households each, from which savings are collected. The subgroups



make up seven zones, of five to ten subgroups, and the leaders of each zone form the community committee. The community opted to enter in the Baan Mankong programme in 2004, and construction began in January 2006, once sufficient savings had been collected.

The upgraded houses in the community are a mixture of row-houses and detached houses, mostly 2 storeys high. At the entrance to the community there is a communal garden and community meeting room. There is another open garden space in the community, with a small pond. There are plans to build a library and IT centre.

#### **4.5.2 Pattana Bonkai community<sup>1</sup>**

Pattana Bonkai community (hereafter referred to as Bonkai) formed when the first squatters arrived in 1973, settling on a site owned by the Crown Property Bureau (CPB). Though part of the land was leased to the National Housing Authority (NHA) to build affordable flats for the squatters, the surrounding areas were soon overtaken by squatters again. Bonkai community (excluding the flats) covers an area of 12 rai, bordered by Rama IV road, NHA flats, and an expressway.

In 1983, the community faced its first eviction threat, and community residents appealed to the NHA for help, who offered three relocation sites. The residents preferred to stay on-site, so they turned to the head of the armed forces, who gave the community informal permission to stay. Thereafter, the community mobilised to improve living and social conditions, opening a day-care centre and getting utility connections. The first community committee elections were held in 1985, won by the team of Khun Sangwarn, who was active in getting the army's help in securing the land. A cooperative was formed in 1989, and plans for community upgrading were drawn up. By 1997, there were 486 households living on-site, and the average density was 39.75 houses per rai, exceeding the BMA's recommended limit of 15 houses per rai.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2001, a fire destroyed 134 houses, affecting 333 families. The CPB announced that it would be willing to give permission to Bonkai community to stay on-site, on condition that living conditions be improved so that the community would no longer be a slum. On the 8<sup>th</sup> December another fire broke out, so in total about 159 houses were

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<sup>1</sup> This section draws on [www.codi.or.th/housing/BonKai.html](http://www.codi.or.th/housing/BonKai.html) and CODI 2004 (in Thai)

destroyed over 3 rai of land. The Human Development Foundation and the Duang Prateep Foundation, both NGOs, donated money to be used as deposits for building new housing, totalling 400,000B.

In a meeting with various stakeholders, including community residents, Pathumwan district, CODI, the NHA and local NGOs, the reconstruction was planned out in phases, and the first phase would also require the demolishing of some unaffected houses. Those households affected by the fire received 25,000B compensation, which could be used for construction of new housing. However, some 43 households were unharmed and did not receive compensation money for reconstruction. Therefore, it was decided that the community residents should all become members of the cooperative and start saving a minimum of 20,000B to serve as a deposit for a 200,000B house. Community residents also formed subgroups of 9 to 10 households, to collect data about the residents and whether they were eligible to a right to a new house.

Plans for community reconstruction coincided with the introduction of the Baan Mankong policy in 2003, and Bonkai was designated one of the ten pilot projects. Bonkai was the first Thai community to be granted a long-term lease on public land made to a community cooperative. Construction started in 2003 and by the end of 2007, the community had built 101 housing units in two phases, and construction of phase 3 started in late 2008. The houses are all row-houses over 2.5 storeys. The community benefits from the children's day-care centre in the slum area, but as yet has no communal areas or meeting room.

#### **4.5.3 Chumchon Sarngsan Pattana 7-12<sup>2</sup>**

The Sarngsan Pattana 7-12 community (hereafter referred to as Klong Toey 7-12) was relocated for upgrading purposes. Originally located in locks (blocks) 7 to 12 of Klong Toey, on land belonging to the Port Authority of Thailand (PAT), it was moved to another PAT-owned plot, one kilometre away. The Klong Toey area contains many low-income communities, housing the Port's day labourers. In the current location, the community is bordered by Rim Klong slum, a pig abattoir, and NHA flats.

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<sup>2</sup> This section draws on CODI, 2005 (in Thai)

The community faced eviction in 1989, with the PAT offering land to residents in the Bangkok outskirts, but about 46 households remained on-site. For five years, as the community was not facing eviction threats, the community savings activities slowed down. However, the PAT's tactic was to create problems for small groups at a time, as this meant less people could group together to resist, whilst breaking down solidarity between households. In 1999, the community were again given notice to leave lots 7 to 12. Some households refused to leave and contacted various organisations for assistance, and negotiated with the PAT for a joint solution. In the end, the PAT agreed that the households move onto land near the abattoir. The community was then able to start looking into how to develop the land into housing. The savings group reformed, and by August 2004, 926,924B had been saved. This coincided with CODI's introduction of the Baan Mankong scheme so the community contacted CODI, and 114 households were considered eligible to enter the Baan Mankong program, under eligibility criterion drawn up between the community, PAT and local NGOs. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2004, the savings group became a cooperative, enabling the community to receive a Baan Mankong loan.

Construction started in 2004 and was largely finished in 2005. The houses are either 15 or 7.5 talangwa, and the community has a children's playground, a cooperative meeting room, and an IT school, built above a covered market area.

#### **4.5.4 Ruam Samakee community<sup>3</sup>**

Ruam Samakee community is located in the Wang Thong Land district of Bangkok, in an area of seven low-income communities on Crown Property Bureau (CPB) land. The community is bordered by a canal and low-income residential areas.

The community had participated in a DANCED<sup>4</sup> environmental improvement project in 1996 to obtain water supply, which required the CPB's approval of the giving of legal housing numbers to households. However, in 1998, the CPB decided to lease the land to a private sector developer. At this stage the community decided to organise itself, setting up a savings group and asking for temporary housing registration from the district office.

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<sup>3</sup> This section draws on ACHR, 2008, and [http://www.codi.or.th/downloads/english/Baanmankong/Case/Case\\_RuamSamakee.pdf](http://www.codi.or.th/downloads/english/Baanmankong/Case/Case_RuamSamakee.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> The Danish International Development Agency funded environmental projects in a number of Bangkok communities in the mid-1990s.

In 2003, CODI suggested that Ruam Samakee, twinned with nearby Kao Pattana community, pilot Baan Mankong. With CODI's support, the community asked for a lease from the CPB, who eventually agreed to a land-sharing arrangement, whereby the community would return 1 rai of land to the CPB for commercial development, with the community staying on the remaining plot. As Ruam Samakee's saving group was already active, residents were able to obtain a CODI loan in 2003 to start reconstruction, and by January 2004, the first 31 houses were complete, and the rest were complete by 2005.

Due to lack of space, residents who had been renting housing previously (rather than living in their own house) would be accommodated in a block of flats. The flats were designed with 5 storeys, to house 24 households that had participated in the community. However, this fell foul of planning laws, which requires permission for flats over 4 storeys high from the BMA rather than the local district office, and so construction was halted. At this stage, 6 households dropped out of the scheme, allowing the building to be built with 4 storeys only, but funding ran out and so the community is still awaiting a new allocation of money from CODI. The situation is very difficult for the families waiting to move into these flats, as they are not only paying rent on temporary accommodation, they are also repaying the loan on the flat at the same time. Additionally, the flats are more expensive per household than the houses were, because of higher construction costs for apartment buildings, and the rise in prices of construction materials. A 4.7 million baht loan is required from CODI to finish off construction, but the committee feel that it should be one of the 18 households wanting to live in the flats that should organise to ask for this loan, though these households have not formed a group in order to achieve this. As of January 2009, construction of the block of flats was still paused.

Two other problems which have affected the community should be noted. In September 2007, elections were held in the community to choose a new community management committee and community leader. Elections are overseen by the district office and governed by the BMA Community Committee Regulations of 1991. A dispute arose after the candidate who won the most votes, Khun PAC, was not appointed community leader. As per the regulations, the community leader is not appointed on the basis of votes, but at a meeting of all elected committee members mediated by district officials following the election. In this case, Khun AP, who came second, was appointed community leader, but the confusion

surrounding the election results led to community divisions as residents took sides (see Chapter 6).

The second problem concerns the community cooperative, which manages Baan Mankong loans. The cooperative has failed to filter housing loan repayments back to CODI for a number of months (interview with Khun PAC, 6/5/08). Additionally, the cooperative has not balanced its books for a number of years, and there are allegations that money has disappeared. Consequently, a significant proportion of community residents stopped repaying their housing loans to the cooperative, at the behest of Khun PAC, who has signalled the matter to various agencies.

The community's 101 houses are 2.5 storey row-houses, and the community has an open area which serves as a sports ground. Once the block of flats is completed, the ground floor will be a covered market area.

#### **4.5.5 Two slum communities**

Two slum communities were selected as controls, in order to compare their social capital indicators with those of upgraded communities. One of these was Bonkai slum, neighbouring Bonkai community, on CPB land. The houses in this area are very densely packed, in badly-lit and aerated alleyways. There is a high proportion of persons renting individual rooms, and therefore there is a high degree of social fluidity as community residents are transient. Though this area is earmarked for upgrading, this is unlikely to happen within the next two or three years, as there is no savings group movement and many residents had not heard of CODI.

The second slum community was Rim Klong slum, bordering the relocated Klong Toey 7-12 community. This community consists of shacks built along concrete pathways, over swampy ground. The community is squatting on PAT land, and PAT has banned the construction of any new homes. The existing homes have been numbered by Port officials. The community has a health centre, and several attempts at starting a savings group have been made by the lady running this centre. The community has an elected community management team, but this team is shared with that of another community 100 metres further down the road, and the majority of committee members live in this second community.

The author found that there were less willing respondents in these slum communities<sup>5</sup>, and due to the higher number of people renting rooms in these slums (especially Bonkai), there was very little knowledge of Baan Mankong. Consequently, it was difficult to use these communities as controls as planned. However, the evidence gathered is summarised in Appendix 5, with reference to the spillover effects from neighbouring upgrading communities.

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<sup>5</sup> The residents' reluctance to talk may have been because these slums still face the threat of eviction, however low, and residents may have perceived the author to be siding with the landlords and hence a threat to the security of their homes.

Table 4.1: Outline of case-study communities

	District	Landowner	Land rental	Total CODI loan	BM start	Type of upgrading	Size of plot	Number of households
Bang Bua	Bang Khen	Treasury	Negotiating to 3B/ talangwa for 30 years	24mB, 1187B repayment per month, 2% to CODI + 3% to cooperative	2004	On-site reblocking	9 rai, 2 gnarn and 75 talangwa	131 complete by 2008, 55 in construction
Bonkai	Pathumwan	CPB	19B / talangwa for up to 30 years (with 5% increase every 3 years). Collective lease starting Dec 2002	11.8mB for phase 1, plus 2.5mB savings, at 1%, lent by cooperative at 4%, so repayment is 1200B per month for 15 years	2003	On-site reconstruction after fire	12 rai (including slum area)	101 complete by 2008 in phases 1 and 2; 109 started phase 3 in late 2008
Klong Toey 7-12	Klong Toey	PAT	5B / talangwa	25.9mB (9.3m for infrastructure, 16.6m housing loans) at 1% to CODI + 2% to cooperative	2004	Nearby relocation	5 rai 1 gnarn	114
Ruam Samakee	Wang Thong Lang	CPB	15B / talangwa for 30 years	Borrowed 17.1mB in February 2003, infrastructure subsidy of 2.73mB	May 2003	Land sharing	4 rai 3 gnarn 27 talangwa	124

#### **4.5.6 Outline of the data**

This section summarises the characteristics of the survey respondents from the four upgraded case-study communities. In total, 85 community residents were interviewed<sup>6</sup>. The respondents' distribution of ages and occupations are displayed in Tables 4.2 and 4.3.

##### **Bang Bua community**

Representatives of 24 households were interviewed, comprising of 12 females and 12 males. The average number of household residents is 4.71, and the average household monthly income 12,650 baht<sup>7</sup> (20 persons stated their income). The average CODI loan for housing is 150,000 baht, and 13 respondents also took out other loans, averaging 114,615 baht.

##### **Klong Toey 7-12 community**

22 community residents were interviewed, comprising of 15 females and 7 males. The average household size is 5.33 members, and average monthly income is 11,236 baht (out of 19 respondents; 2 respondents have “irregular” income). Of the 11 respondents who answered the question about the CODI loan, the largest loan is 220,000 baht, and the smallest is 100,000 baht, with one respondent not taking out any loan.

##### **Ruam Samakee community**

A total of 20 households were interviewed, comprising of 13 females and 7 males. The average household size is 4.84 inhabitants, and the average income is 28,571 baht (however, only 7 persons replied to this question and the results are likely to be skewed). The average CODI loan is 130,000 baht, and 15 households also have loans from other sources, averaging 197,333 baht.

##### **Bonkai community**

19 households were sampled, comprising of 11 female and 8 male respondents. The average household size is 4.58 persons, and the average income is 15,167 baht. The average CODI loan is 194,267 baht, whilst the average size of additional loans from other sources is 63,846 baht.

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<sup>6</sup> Only 84/85 respondents completed the ranking questions, as one respondent from Klong Toey refused to do so.

<sup>7</sup> The 2008 minimum wage for Bangkok is 203B per day.



*Table 4.2: Age frequency distribution of respondents*

Age	Bang Bua	Klong Toey	Ruam Samakee	Bonkai	Total
<20	1	0	1	0	2
20-29	1	0	1	0	2
30-39	6	2	4	1	13
40-49	6	6	7	8	27
50-59	8	6	5	6	25
>60	2	7	2	4	15
n	24	21	20	19	84

The table shows that the majority of the respondents are in their 40s or 50s, and these are the age groups where people are most likely to be in a position to be earning a regular income, save regularly, and be heads of households. However, in many cases, the rights to a house are held in the names of people in their 60s or above, as they would have been head of the house when the community was not yet upgraded.

*Table 4.3: Distribution of occupations*

Occupation	Bang Bua	Klong Toey	Ruam Samakee	Bonkai	Total
Vendor	5	6	5	6	22
Work from home/housewife	2	4	6	1	13
Labourer	3	5	2	3	13
Government employee	6	0	0	1	7
Other e.g. taxi/DJ/beautician	2	1	3	1	7
Retired	2	2	1	4	9
Office worker	1	1	2	1	5
Community team	0	0	1	1	2
Unemployed	3	2	0	1	6
n	24	21	20	19	84

The most common occupation is to be a self-employed vendor, either ambulant, or selling directly from home. The second most frequent occupation is labourer, which included jobs such as construction worker, cleaner, or factory employee. A high number of respondents are housewives, reflecting the higher proportion of female respondents. In many cases these persons take on small jobs such as sewing to earn extra income. Office workers are not very common, reflecting the prevalence of

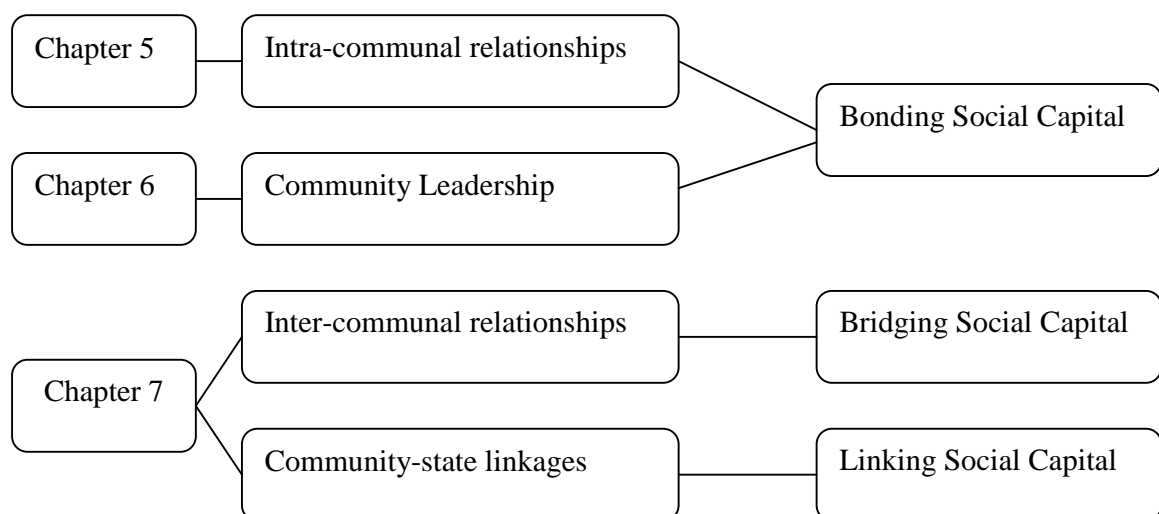
informal jobs in low-income areas. Bang Bua community has a higher number of government employees, mainly street sweepers.

Of the 85 respondents from the four main upgraded communities, 52 are female and 34 are male. This imbalance reflects the fact that men are more likely to be working outside the community and therefore harder to interview. However, women are often in charge of household finances, and more likely to have participated in all stages of the upgrading process, as they generally spend more time in the community than male members of the household.

#### 4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the analytical framework within which this research project is carried out, namely, the “stocks, channels and outcomes” framework used to study the SIF project in Thailand, due to its relevance to participatory projects. The methods used to collect the data have been described and limitations noted. The case studies are designed to provide insight into how the attributes of communities and the institutional structure within which these communities operate, shape the incentives and interactions between the different actors, and what the resulting outcomes are. The next three chapters move on to present the results of the fieldwork, following the structure outlined in Figure 4.15.

*Figure 4.15: Structure of the empirical chapters*



## Chapter 5 – Intra-community ties

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### 5.1 Eligibility for upgrading

#### 5.1.1 Choice and self-sacrifice

### 5.2 Material satisfaction

#### 5.2.1 Satisfaction with physical outcomes

#### 5.2.2 Perceptions of security of tenure

### 5.3 Social satisfaction

#### 5.3.1 Stocks: Trust and Solidarity

#### 5.3.2 Stocks: Groups and Organisations

#### 5.3.3 Channels: Cooperation and Collective Action

#### 5.3.4 Outcomes

### 5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the four case study communities are presented, in order to assess the impact of upgrading at the intra-community level, with regard to bonding social capital. The community residents' experience of the upgrading process is analysed, both in physical and social terms, with the physical outcomes representing the direct results or outputs of the upgrading, whilst the social outcomes reflect the longer-term impact. Social impacts, specifically with regard to bonding social capital, are assessed through the Thailand social capital framework (World Bank, 2006) outlined in Chapter 4, looking at how the stocks of social capital feed through the channels, and the resulting outcomes in terms of social cohesion and empowerment. The chapter concludes by comparing the experiences of the different communities to each other, assessing the sustainability of social outcomes and the impact that community collective action has on bonding social capital. This chapter considers the following two hypotheses: 1) participatory slum upgrading is more likely to succeed the higher the starting level of social capital and social cohesion in the community; 2) participating will lead to higher levels of trust in the community, though levels of participation may drop once the upgrading is complete.

### 5.1 Eligibility for upgrading

Because Baan Mankong upgrading presents an exceptional opportunity for squatters to obtain secure tenure and a new home, demand for a right to a house in the case-study communities was high<sup>1</sup>. The communities therefore drew up rules for eligibility to a housing right, to ensure fairness in the distribution of rights, such as preventing people getting multiple rights

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<sup>1</sup> The case-study communities all constructed new homes. In other communities, where upgrading involves only improving infrastructure, for example, matters of eligibility are less of an issue.

to a house by having their relatives apply. Box 5.1 outlines the criteria set out by Klong Toey 7-12 and Ruam Samakee.

The rules are fairly restrictive, more so for Klong Toey, where only long-term squatters of at least 10 years were allowed a right<sup>2</sup>. This reflects the fact that the Port had already offered the residents of Locks 7-12 other options in their attempts at evicting the squatters, such as land in Wat Charapon<sup>3</sup> or a flat in Klong Toey. A Baan Mankong place was only for those who had resisted all other options from the Port. The shorter required minimum time-scale spent in Ruam Samakee suggests that the community is less at risk of outsiders trying to gain a right, and that the Crown Property Bureau faces less pressure from people wanting legal title to stay on its land than the Port does. Having eligibility requirements ensures that the original squatter community stays together, without an influx of new residents diluting the existing social bonds.

When upgrading requires complete rebuilding, it represents a significant upheaval for all community residents, and a financial burden. During the construction process, residents either rent rooms elsewhere, or live in specially-constructed temporary housing<sup>4</sup>. Constructing homes in phases means it is easier for some residents to live in remaining slum shacks during construction, and when they vacate these shacks for their new homes, the next batch of households move into them. This allows residents to save money on temporary housing, which can facilitate the decision to upgrade. Everyone's full participation is necessary, otherwise the community's ability to negotiate tenure is compromised. Government agencies will only give leases to the community as a collective, and so communities have to demonstrate full willingness to upgrade.

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<sup>2</sup> Consequently, a number of residents were left in limbo: in February 2008, squatter households remaining at the old locks 7-12 site faced increasing pressure from the Port as it began to infill the land, causing floods and cutting off electricity. 106 households were eventually given a small plot by the Port on which to carry out Baan Mankong upgrading, within the Klong Toey area. In December 2008, the community was beginning the construction process, having obtained a loan from CODI.

<sup>3</sup> In the outskirts of Bangkok.

<sup>4</sup> CODI provides subsidies of 18,000B per household for construction of temporary housing.

**Box 5.1: Eligibility criteria for Baan Mankong****a) Ruam Samakee (CODI, 2005:21, in Thai)**

- a. Those who have a right to participate in the program must be a house owner, with a house registration and a real place to live
- b. If it is an “extended” family or renter, must have lived in the community for at least 5 years, and must be a member of the cooperative
- c. In using the housing loan, members must have saved 6,000B or more, and can borrow up to 10 times what they have saved (must not have debt from Japanese Miyasawa Fund or SIF Menu 5). If they still have debt, the loan will be decreased by the amount that they still owe.
- d. Must not be involved in drugs of any kind, or be a violent person
- e. If the above conditions are not met, the committee will use their discretion in deciding whether members are eligible to participate.

**b) Klong Toey 7-12 (CODI, 2005:24, in Thai): the following are not eligible for a house right:**

- a. Squatter houses that were set up on the land after the Port had accepted to give land to the existing households for Baan Mankong
- b. Squatter houses that were erected after 1993
- c. Those who had already built a house in Wat Charapon and only partially moved houses
- d. Rental houses that are satellites of those who have received a right
- e. Buildings which are shops or parking garages
- f. Those who received a right to Wat Charapon already and have returned to build a new house in Klong Toey
- g. Those who already received a right from the Port for example at the flats or 70 Rai, and have returned to build new houses.

When determining the type of upgrading to undergo, the financial capabilities of the households has to be taken into account. Each community therefore has to collect data about every household, including monthly in-goings and out-goings. Community-run surveys, rather than using an external agent, can reduce the scope for residents to exaggerate details which could affect their eligibility for a loan, as fellow residents have more information about their neighbours’ behaviour, reducing the scope for moral hazard. However, it may create feelings of shame over income levels.

**5.1.1 Choice and self-sacrifice**

Baan Mankong can lead to certain persons ending up with less property following the upgrading. Certain slum residents owned more than one property in the slum, which they would have rented out. For this reason, a degree of self-sacrifice for the common good was necessary on behalf of all community residents. The question of choice arises – if the community was tight-knit before upgrading, certain residents may have felt coerced into upgrading even if they didn’t see the benefits, or if they could not afford it. In Ruam Samakee,

one household which chose not to participate received money for relocation back to the countryside, which suggests that a choice was available. However, this is unlikely to be sufficient for the owners of multiple properties in slums, who instead create delays by refusing to demolish their properties.

Norms of self-sacrifice are evident in Bang Bua community, where many of the later arrivals to the community originally lived on stilts over the canal. With upgrading, everyone was moved onto equal-sized plots on land. Many residents now have a smaller plot than before the upgrading. The communal garden at the entrance was once a house with 6 rental units, the owner of which was given the right to one house in return. Khun DM, a committee member, explains that *“I’d built another house for 200,000B in the community. I destroyed it all to start again for Baan Mankong to be possible, as it was too big for my [allocated] right”*. These sacrifices for the common good demonstrate the trust that residents have in each other not to abuse any initial advantage they may have had. This also illustrates norms of reciprocity, as residents make sacrifices in the expectation that other residents will do the same, which forms an important component of social cohesion. Additionally, for upgrading to work in larger communities, equality between all reduces the possibility of accusations of unfairness or favouritism.

However, one Bang Bua homeowner refused to demolish her home, blocking the construction of a wider canal-side path. This one-person household had withdrawn from the original savings group, stating that she had another house elsewhere. She later wanted to return to the savings group and to her original plot, which had since been reallocated to another household. Khun DM explains that *“We want to create unity, we want to develop together. They [this household] still pull us, and create problems. They have a house outside anyway, they just want to create problems. They are the last house, the 229<sup>th</sup>. It’s just one person, and they are educated too”*. There is an expectation in the community that residents should help each other, especially those with more resources, with no preferential treatment. Those who don’t conform are regarded with disapproval: *“Some people have different ways of thinking, they are guarding their land, afraid to demolish their old house and start again”* (BB5). Norms of self-sacrifice and reciprocity therefore can encroach on notions of private property, which means residents with more resources may be reluctant to participate compared to the asset-poor who gain more through collective action. However, one resident who won the lottery

and built a 3-storey home in the community (Figure 5.1) is happy to share his wealth, for example hosting a children's day party.

In Bonkai, the problems starting the third phase of upgrading reflect the difficulties in allocating housing rights – some residents who owned more than one building in the squatter community wanted more than one right. This delayed the start of construction of phase 3 by six months, as the existing buildings could not be demolished without their owners' agreement. As a committee member explains of one of these home-owners, *“He's good at talking but won't commit, keeps going back on his word, so slows down the whole process, keeps thinking of himself”*. The unwillingness of certain homeowners to allow demolition caused hardship for fellow community members, some of whom have been renting housing since the fire, whilst saving towards their new house. These homeowners were eventually placated by being given more than one right to a new house, with the agreement of fellow community members, as well as pressure from the landowner. This demonstrates that wealthier community members can co-opt a group when their own interests may not benefit the group, and norms of cooperation do not always prevail. With no solution in the rule book, certain community members wanted to have these non-co-operators removed from community membership. The question also arises of how easy it would have been for Bonkai to upgrade without the fire making it a necessity.

## **5.2 Material satisfaction**

### **5.2.1 Satisfaction with physical outcomes**

Though Baan Mankong is about more than housing, the physical outcome of the upgrading process is probably the residents' primary concern. Residents take on a big loan, so their satisfaction in the quality of the house will be of as much, if not more importance, as the social outcomes.

Government loans are limited to 300,000B per household for land and housing<sup>5</sup>, of which housing loans make up 150-200,000B, which is only enough for a basic structure of walls and a roof. Consequently, certain households which don't have access to more money (either from savings, by borrowing from family or friends, or taking a commercial loan) have to live in an unfinished house (Figure 5.2). Though people are encouraged to live within their means

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<sup>5</sup> As some communities buy land for relocation.

- in line with the Sufficiency Economy principle advocated by the King and the government - this creates disparities within communities between those who live in completed houses, and those who live in half-finished structures. As BB9, who spent 1 million baht on a double house with his brother, explains, *“150,000B is no way enough money – the government has made a bad calculation there. It’s not fair that they expect people to build a proper house with that little money”*. As inflation rose in 2008, so did the cost of construction materials, though many households reuse materials from their old houses, in line with the sufficiency principle, a practice encouraged by CODI.

Nevertheless, in Bang Bua, residents generally feel that their quality of life has improved, though their satisfaction depends on their pre-upgrading house. For BB19, the new house is *“a bit smaller, 4X8.5m instead of 9X10m”*, while BB9 is very pleased with his new house, *as “it’s brilliant now, really much better than before. It was too squashed”*. BB8 feels *“100% pleased with Baan Mankong, I’m very satisfied”* though *“sometimes I regret spending so much and being in debt for 15 years”*. Other respondents also feel their satisfaction is tempered by debt and increased expenses, though some find debt repayments cheaper than renting a room. The residents no longer fear flooding during the rainy season, and the overall community is *“developed, neat, orderly”* (BB11) with better paths. There are still some problems such as rubbish, which people throw *“in the spaces behind their houses”* (BB21), and waste water in the canal. A few respondents cite drugs as a remaining problem.

In Klong Toey, respondents are generally satisfied with houses but ambivalent about the community environment. According to KT8, the *“old place was ‘natural’, it grew naturally, each lived to his means. Here, everything is arranged into blocks as someone thinks is good, looks nice, but it is not natural”*. However, this provides access for fire engines and decreases theft because of the openness. According to KT13, there is *“no space for car parking so you feel krieng jai<sup>6</sup> if you park it too close to someone’s house or encroach on communal space”*, though others think there is ample parking space. The debt factor is mentioned by the majority of respondents, in comparison to Bang Bua, and for many, the satisfaction with physical outcomes is tempered by social problems: *“The culture of helping has decreased though, here it is each to his own as we have houses now. The problems are not with the*

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<sup>6</sup> *Krieng jai* is a Thai concept defining social relations, that one should not cause another loss of face.



living environment” (KT20). Drugs remain a prevalent problem, as well as insufficient outside lighting.

Figure 5.1: Lottery winner’s house (Bang Bua)



Figure 5.2: Unfinished house (Bang Bua)



In Ruam Samakee, the new housing is considered an improvement by most. RS7 feels that this house is “*much better: prettier, safer, secure*”, but problems remain with infrastructure and the environment, with garbage and smells from the canal and drains. For RS10, “*it’s*

*better and neater, but before there was more privacy*". With regards to communal living, *"there are some noise problems, especially in the evenings when the kids play sport"* (RS20), but the community now has an open sports area, unlike previously.

In Bonkai, B1 says that *"thanks to the fire, we got to do Baan Mankong and got new houses"*. The respondents seem happy with their new houses and the increased space. B16 feels that the housing design is flawed, however, she acknowledges that they *"were limited by the budget, and everyone was okay with the design because they wanted a house"* – for phase 2, the design was modified to include a balcony. Though residents feel that drugs problems have decreased, they still exist, as does some theft.

Although the residents generally agree that their houses have improved, the accompanying debt burden hampers the satisfaction of many respondents in the upgrading program. In Klong Toey, communal living problems also impinge upon satisfaction. When residents were asked whether they would recommend Baan Mankong to others, the Klong Toey respondents' recommendations are usually conditional: *"Baan Mankong depends on the people and on the leaders"* (KT1); *"I would recommend that people ... buy their own materials, not through the cooperative"* (KT17). In Bang Bua, BB2 would recommend it to people only if they can afford the loan, and others warn of debt. BB13 says that *"Baan Mankong is not easy. [We] need the moobarn to form a community, [we] need a leader"*, and BB19 believes community unity is necessary for success. Most of the Bonkai respondents would recommend Baan Mankong, if the opportunity to upgrade arises. In Ruam Samakee, RS4 emphasises the importance of good money management, whilst RS5 only recommends upgrading to those who can afford it without a loan. RS13, a renter waiting for construction of the flats to finish in order to move in, says she *"wouldn't recommend it since we can't even do it"* – a rare voice of dissent, but with good reason, as she and fellow renters still have nowhere to live.

### ***Housing as an investment?***

The upgraded communities have seen a surge of interest in their properties from outsiders wishing to buy or rent them. However, for those who took a 15-year loan, the houses technically belong to the cooperative until the loan has been repaid, and the cooperative has the power to repossess homes if loans are not repaid for over three months. The housing was not developed to be sold for profit, but to improve the living standards of the urban poor,

which is why the land-owning government agencies were willing to provide long-term leases over the land. The Sufficiency Economy principle means that the government does not want people to spend beyond their means on their homes, as Khun Siam from CODI explains: “...we want residents to think about what is sufficient for their life. They might decide they want things like tiles... But they could gradually build up the house, start with the kitchen, toilet, roof, but some people want to finish it all” (6/5/08). CODI wants the urban poor have a secure roof over their heads, not necessarily a house with painted walls and tiled floors, at least in the short term. As such, they would not approve of RS3’s approach: “with the new house I have more debt. Now that we have a new house we want new things to go in it, [whereas] before we didn’t care”. This kind of spending is what CODI would rather avoid, as residents are then burdened with high-interest commercial loans which they have to repay before the housing loan<sup>7</sup>.

Though the upgrading process means that certain community residents who had multiple properties lose their assets, for others, the upgrading could be perceived as an opportunity to make money. As Mukhija points out in the case of Mumbai slum upgrading, “Beneficiaries were not treating their housing as merely ‘shelter’. They were also thinking of it as ‘real estate,’” (2002:567). However, this is not a goal of Baan Mankong, hence the strict rules about eligibility, and why cooperatives exist as buffers, controlling the transfer of properties. For example, when Bang Bua cooperative announced over the loudhailer that a house was for sale, ten interested persons signed up, whom the leaders explained would be prioritised according to need. The owner wanted to sell the house for 3-400,000B – however, the leader explained that this was not possible as it would mean making a profit.

Bang Bua residents also face requests from soldiers in the neighbouring camp to rent or buy their houses, with offers of up to 4-500,000B. Residents proudly explain that their houses would cost one million baht elsewhere. Upgrading also means value-adding improved infrastructure such as pathways, and residents talk of making “investments” in their houses: “Someone wanted to buy my house, the person in the row behind. The leader said if you want to sell you have to return the house to the cooperative. I think it shouldn’t be impossible to sell the house, they can just make the buyer take over the repayments. But then I’d lose my right to the house, and the investment we made in water and electricity connections” (BB2).

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<sup>7</sup> CODI wants to avoid non-repayment becoming non-performing loans.

For RS1, upgrading has potential financial benefits as, *“Lots of people want to buy or rent my house, they think it is secure [but] the community code says can’t rent out your house, if you decide not to live here”*. The restrictions on selling their property means that residents who plan on selling up would not, in theory, invest beyond the bare minimum in constructing the house, as the added value from tiles and paintwork would not be accounted for in a sale back to the cooperative. However, most residents do use their savings or borrow from friends or family to make their house comfortable and attractive. Thus, Baan Mankong houses cannot be considered as an investment for profit, at least in the first 15 years, as B14 explains: *“some people have asked to buy my house but I’ve made a 15 year investment of 200,000B”*, and the loan cannot be passed on. Neither can the houses be used to get a mortgage, as they are owned by the cooperative until the loan is repaid.

When residents were asked whether they had any plans to leave the community, the responses suggest that the residents display adaptive preferences, that is, *“the adjustment of people’s aspirations to feasible possibilities”* (Elster, 1982:219) and they did not do Baan Mankong for its real-estate potential, but rather to improve the quality of their life. Some residents had initially signed up for Baan Ua-Arthorn houses built by the NHA before the opportunity for Baan Mankong arose, *“many of us applied but then we decided to cancel. It’s expensive, we don’t know each other [there]”* (Bang Bua focus group). Those who have no plans to move feel this way for various reasons. Many are happy where they are, like BB10: *“I don’t have plans. I will leave this house to my daughters”*, and *“I never thought of moving. My kids work here, don’t want to move away”* (B14), suggesting that existing social networks are valuable. Others feel tied to the community by debt: *“No, never. It took a long time to get this, now I have to pay back for 15 years”* (BB24). A lack of alternatives is another reason: *“I have nowhere to move to, and anyway I can’t sell the house, I would have to return it to the cooperative”* (KT1); *“Where would I move to? But if I had money I would like to move”* (RS15). However, some respondents harbour aspirations to move if they can, like RS19: *“I want to buy a house somewhere, it’s my aim”*. Others face concerns about tenure security, like RS6, who wants *“a house that’s totally mine. Now I don’t know if the CPB will want the land later”*, a concern echoed by B2 and B17. Then there are those who want to move back to their roots in the countryside, like RS2: *“Yes, I want to go back to Sukothai to work the farm”*. In the meantime, they have adapted their preferences to what is feasible in the short run, and taken the opportunity that Baan Mankong has presented them.

### 5.2.2 Perceptions of security of tenure

Since Baan Mankong means “secure housing”, it aims to provide households with secure tenure. CODI, as a government agency, has more clout than community residents in negotiating tenure, and has signed MOUs with the Treasury and the CPB. All four communities have a collective lease agreement through their cooperatives. It is interesting to explore the significance of tenure security for the beneficiaries: whether they feel more secure in their new homes, and if so, whether they will take advantage of the benefits security can bring, such as the freedom to invest in housing without fear that it will be taken away (Table 5.1). Tenure status also defines how these low-income households are regarded by outsiders, ranging from neighbouring residents to government officials and commercial service providers, as RS5 expresses: “*Now it’s secure in that we’re leasing, the government accepts us*”, and BB20: “*Now that we’ve done Baan Mankong, the expressway authority can’t come and force us to move.*” Gaining official status as government tenants means that the residents are no longer at the bottom of the pile, the first to have to make way for infrastructure plans, though BB19 remains reserved in judgement: “*[there is a] possibility of new roads or trains so it’s never perfectly secure*”.

Table 5.1: Perceptions of security of tenure

	Community	Same	Increase	Decrease
Your perception of security of tenure (Frequency)	Bang Bua	3	21	0
	Klong Toey	3	12	6
	Ruam Samakee	3	16	0 (1NA)
	Bonkai	0	19	0
Total frequency		9	68	6
Percentage		10.84	81.93	7.23
Your willingness to invest further in your house (frequency)	Bang Bua	2	22	0
	Klong Toey	8	13	0
	Ruam Samakee	3	15	0 (2NA)
	Bonkai	1	18	0
Total frequency		14	68	0
Percentage		17.07	82.93	0

What is striking is that all the respondents who feel that tenure security has fallen are from Klong Toey 7-12, while only in Bonkai do all respondents feel that tenure security has increased. There are a number of possible reasons for the lack of an absolute increase in perceptions of security. Firstly, the leases given to the four communities differ. In Klong Toey, the Port has agreed to a short-term lease of 3 years, to be renewed at least five times,

guaranteeing the community 15 years on the land. In Ruam Samakee and Bonkai, the CPB has agreed to a 30 year lease, whilst the Treasury has agreed to the same in Bang Bua.

Misinformation or lack of information is another reason that perceptions of security are low. For example, KT19 explains that *“There’s an agreement with the Port to renew the lease 30 times, so that we can be here for 30 years”*, whereas according to KT21, *“we were told that we have a 15 year lease, then the Port will find us new land”*, while KT22 seems uncertain as to what she believes, saying that *“people say that security of tenure has increased”*. Another cause of perceived insecurity lies in community leadership. As KT7 says, *“seeing leaders argue among themselves made my confidence fall in security”*, since the leaders represent the community to outside parties such as the landowner.

Perceived insecurity could reflect the difficulty some of the community residents have in keeping up with loan repayments, as RS4 explains: *“The house is secure but the general picture is not secure, if I can’t repay for 5-6 months I may lose my right”*. With economic difficulties, repossession fears may increase. Additionally, repossessions could dilute the community’s social cohesion, through an influx of outsiders to the community. As one Klong Toey focus group participant says, *“I worry that outsiders will start moving into the community, renting houses from those who can’t repay... I’m scared the cooperative will reclaim the houses and rent them to outsiders and there will be no original people left in the community”*.

Many respondents feel that their house is secure, but not the land on which it is built. For RS6, *“Baan Mankong is good, but it would be better if we could own land so that it would really be my house”*. BB9 concurs: *“The Treasury should sell [us] the land because we have proper houses now, and a lease. The house is secure thus we should own the land too”*. However, government land cannot be sold to private parties, and if this were clarified, it would decrease feelings that the government does not fully accept the residents. Getting a house registration with the local district office is seen as one step in guaranteeing security, a step already complete in Bang Bua and Bonkai, where B8 believes *“we won’t get evicted now, we have a proper house registration”* In Ruam Samakee the transfer from temporary to permanent registration was getting underway in early 2009, whereas in Klong Toey it is still temporary. Being officially recognised puts residents in a position of dependency on the district, rather

than resistance. Having title is important, as KT20 explains, *“I still have no title, no right. If I die my children will have to fight to keep the house”*.

For some, insecurity remains a distant threat: *“Now I don’t know if the CPB will want the land later”* (RS6). Residents are aware that the landowners are missing out on financially lucrative uses for the land, and therefore keeping their options open, like B1 explains: *“It’s meant to be a 30 year lease, but we have to renew it every 3 years. The CPB is not stupid, like with the Suan Lum Night Bazaar<sup>8</sup>, they won’t give long leases anymore, only short ones”*. Klong Toey 7-12 has faced the most serious eviction threats in the past, and because the Port is still active, it more likely to need the community land than the Treasury is to use Bang Bua’s land. In Bang Bua, BB24 says *“the committee said that after 30 years we should be able to extend the lease. They can’t evict us now, we have built proper houses”*, while BB20 has faith in the state’s generosity: *“It’s government land, we were told we can stay forever.”* RS17 accepts that the land is not his, but *“If CPB want to evict us, they’d have to give us about 1 millionB per house”*, as the houses belong to the residents. For BB3, upgrading is a necessary step for tenure security: *“people here realised they had to participate otherwise they would get evicted. There is no need to worry about eviction and where we would go.”*

For a minority of respondents, gaining secure tenure is a negative thing which comes at a price, as *“security means that you have to pay more for rent and interest”* (KT3). Another respondent feels tied to the community by the housing loan repayments, saying *“I can’t move out. Not allowed to move”* (RS7). According to B7, *“we are unlikely to have been evicted beforehand anyway”*, so a lease offers no major benefit, but rebuilding was necessary after the fire. However, most respondents see secure tenure as a positive thing, as KT11 sums up: *“Security of tenure only has benefits, there is no fear of eviction”*.

The fact that respondents realise that their tenure security is not absolute has therefore affected their willingness to invest further in their housing, as KT8 explains, *“If this place is truly Baan Mankong, poor people could plan their lives. If truly baan mankong [a secure house], I would invest more in my house, paint the house, but there is still the risk of the lease not being renewed, so we are worried about investing more. We’re therefore investing only about 40% in the house, not fully. We prefer to save the other 60%”*. However, the majority

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<sup>8</sup> A neighbouring night bazaar, for which the CPB refuses to renew the lease, in favour of developing a shopping and hotel complex.

would like to continue improving their homes, also reflecting the fact that many households ran out of money before finishing their homes. In line with Sufficiency Economy principles, this will be done gradually.

The respondents' answers reflect a degree of adaptive preferences, as they are realistic about what is feasible. Having faced the possibility of eviction for many years, they accept that their new tenure status is unlikely to be permanent, but better than nothing: "*Land is still insecure, but more secure than before. We have a lease now*" (B6). This ties in to their sense of belonging in the community, and in Bangkok, as will be explored below. The question remains whether the residents will now aspire to more, having demonstrated their capacity to negotiate leases and build new homes. This relates to how the residents perceive state institutions, and how these institutions regard the residents, which is explored in Chapter 7.

### **5.3 Social satisfaction**

#### **5.3.1 Stocks: Trust and solidarity**

In order to assess whether the levels of social capital within a community affect the outcomes of the upgrading process, each of the four upgraded communities is analysed and compared using the stocks, channels and outcomes framework (World Bank, 2006). As explained in Chapter 4, due to the lack of baseline data on social capital in the communities, retrospective questioning is used to try and compare the levels of stocks of social capital (solidarity and trust, groups and organisations) before and after upgrading. The results of these questions are analysed for each community in order to draw comparisons. Relevant comments from the focus group discussions are also drawn upon.

#### ***Bang Bua community***

The community members were presented with the following list of statements and asked whether they felt the sentiments expressed had increased, decreased or stayed the same since participating in upgrading:



	Same	Increase	Decrease
Most people in this community are basically honest and can be trusted	7	16	1
In this community, one has to be alert or someone is likely to take advantage of you	0	10	14
If I have a problem, there is always someone to help me	3	20	1
This community has prospered in the last five years	1	23	0
I feel accepted as a member of this community	0	24	0
I feel at home in this community	2	22	0
In this community we take care of each other	1	23	0

In general, the upgrading process seems to have had a positive impact on these indicators of trust and solidarity. Norms of self-help appear to have been strengthened through the upgrading process, as has social cohesion, as respondents demonstrate a sense of belonging in the community, which is one of the criteria for successful self-help.

The statement about being taken advantage of displays the least clear-cut improvement, possibly due to the growth of the community over the years: *“People in the community used to all know each other, then starting in 1987 more people arrived so people don’t know each other so well”* (BB5). With the new housing, other persons may have moved in with their relatives to benefit from the better quality of life. Theft is another reason people keep their guard up: *“Can’t trust everyone. Someone had 3000B stolen from their house. Need to look after yourself, watch out”* (BB10).

Despite the growth of the community, trust levels are still high, and this trust extends to self-sacrifice for the common good: *“People trust each other, are willing to accept smaller houses than before so that everyone is equal”* (BB16). This could be put down the upgrading process bringing community members together in meetings and construction, as well as the fact that the new houses are more closely arranged, as BB7 explains: *“To do the upgrading we had to understand each other better, because we have to live closer to each other”*. Resident BB1 concurs, though money is still an issue: *“Now I know my neighbours better so I’m more willing to help more. Before we didn’t know each other, rarely saw each others’ faces. But I might not trust people with returning money”*.

The survey also showed that a great majority of respondents could borrow small amounts of food or household items from their neighbours. Those who do not borrow are constrained by pride, rather than lack of trust. Borrowing is also facilitated by the fact that there are many clusters of relatives living in the community, who would be expected to display strong bonds.

Many respondents cite the physical changes brought about by upgrading in their explanation of the improved social cohesion in the community. The upgrading created a communal meeting area for the community members, and as a result, *“we are more of a group with Baan Mankong, we have a meeting point now, before we had to meet outside the community in the road”* (BB21). There is more space for people to socialise outside their homes, as fences no longer separate houses as in the slum: *“People should still participate once the project is finished, because houses are much closer together, so people have to keep helping each other”* (BB1). Upgrading has promoted closeness between neighbours through the division of the community into zones, allowing familiarity to develop between proximate neighbours. As savings group money is collected through these zones, it is important that they be trustful.

Residents recognise that the upgrading has improved social cohesion, as *“Before, people were more tua kai tua man [each to himself]. Now with Baan Mankong people come out and participate more”* (BB4), a sentiment echoed by others. Therefore, it seems that stocks of social capital were lower before upgrading, and have increased through the channel of upgrading.

Though participation may have increased in the eyes of some respondents, others see limits to collective action. Reasons given include economic pressures: *“Helping [each other] if you have a problem has decreased because people have to work to find money”* (BB4) and the fact that individualism is a norm of city living *“It’s each to himself. Not much willingness to help each other, not like when upcountry. Need to adapt to city living. People still can’t be trusted”* (BB2).

When asked about any divisions within the community, there is some divergence in responses. BB1 says that *“No, there are no divisions. It is not possible for there to be divisions. People have to get on. If there are arguments they have to try and resolve them,”* suggesting again that there is a norm of self-sacrifice, with residents putting aside differences for the

community's benefit. Any arguments seem to be at a superficial level, as BB7 explains: "Some people might not get on but that doesn't create divisions. There may be some jealousy". For BB2, city norms are different to village ones, and therefore "There are divisions. Some zones don't get on with others. I don't get involved in these problems. Unlike upcountry, people in the big city are more likely to be divided". Divisions may be expected in any community where people live in close proximity to one another and have to cooperate over many matters affecting their daily life and spending. However, for a community with a long, stretched-out shape, there is apparently no divide between each end of the community, perhaps due to the community's single entrance gate, thereby creating a point of contact for members.

Residents were also asked, overall, whether Baan Mankong led to an increase, decrease or no change in the following areas:

	Same	Increase	Decrease
Your willingness to work collectively	7	17	0
Trust between neighbours	5	19	0
Willingness to help one another	6	18	0

The residents generally express positive responses, which can be viewed as a reflection of a positive upgrading experience. The willingness to work collectively and help one another has generally increased, in a few cases staying the same as before upgrading. Trust between neighbours also grown in most cases, which could be as a result of the increased interaction between community residents.

Residents were also asked whether they agreed with the following comments, to assess whether the upgrading process had an effect on their self-perception and pride in their living environment:

	Yes	No	Unsure
I feel I am a real Bangkokian	22	2	0
I feel proud of this community	23	0	1
This community is better than others	21	2	1

A number of respondents compare Bang Bua favourably to the neighbouring Ruam Jai Samakee community, which was the first to start upgrading along Bang Bua canal, but was quickly overtaken by Bang Bua community in terms of progress. As BB7 explains, in "Ruam Jai Samakee they are not as good at participating, they are arguing a lot more", and Bang

Bua is being used by others as a positive example: “*Other communities had meetings at our cooperative – they wanted to know how to finish Baan Mankong. At Samakee Ruam Jai, the community leader is not trusted by the people*” (BB22)<sup>9</sup>.

Though some respondents were not ready to say that their community was better than others, there was a clear sense of pride in the community’s achievements, as BB1 expresses: “*I’m proud of the community since we have been building houses. Before, I wanted to move out.*” Residents also recognise that community strength and cooperation made the upgrading possible: “*This community is better than others in terms of unity*” (BB5).

### ***Klong Toey 7-12 Community***

	Same	Increase	Decrease
Most people in this community are basically honest and can be trusted	6	8	7
In this community, one has to be alert or someone is likely to take advantage of you	0	10	11
If I have a problem, there is always someone to help me	1	13	7
This community has prospered in the last five years	1	17	3
I feel accepted as a member of this community	0	17	4
I feel at home in this community	0	16	5
In this community we take care of each other	0	16	5

The results show that in most cases, trust and solidarity has improved since the upgrading process began, though the results less positive than in Bang Bua. In the case of help being available if there is a problem, a third of respondents feel that this had decreased since upgrading. Additionally, trust levels do not seem to have increased significantly, with a third believing that trustworthiness had fallen since the upgrading, and nearly a third believing it was unchanged.

The lack of trust may be because the upgraded community is composed of a mix of smaller relocated community units, from each of the locks 7 to 12. As KT7 explains, “*There was more trust before in my former community. Here the people are split into lock groups. In the*

<sup>9</sup> Prayong Prospriprasert, an architect who helped design the new layout of Bang Bua canal communities, explained that the Samakee Ruam Jai community leader did not allow enough community input, and tried to solve all problems himself, which meant sometimes the residents were not satisfied. By comparison, in Bang Bua community, the residents had more input, as they were given independence and responsibility in thinking about the upgrading. (Interview 17/4/08)

*old place, there were no leaders but people would help each other... Willingness to help each other fell as people [now] stay within their own groups. Not just because they are from different groups or locks, it depends on the people".* This suggests that the residents did not all know each other beforehand, which is likely to decrease the willingness of residents to make sacrifices for the good of the whole community.

Some respondents do not believe the relocation affected the levels of perceived trust within the community: *"Levels of trust are the same as before because the same people have moved in from previous community"* (KT9), and the upgrading process is regarded as a way of promoting mixing between different community groups: *"Baan Mankong is very good for getting people to participate. Before, there were divisions between the locks. Now they are all mixed in together"* (KT11). However, another resident feels that this mixing has impeded trust, as people have to get to know their new neighbours: *"The housing lottery mixed households up thus people don't know each other, they have to find people that they trust as neighbours"* (KT8). In terms of the physical layout of the community, the new Lock 7-12 promotes social cohesion, as *"In the old place, people were much more spread out so didn't look out for each other so much"* (KT3). This relocation experience suggests that the mixing up of residents has caused some divisions, and that residents should be consulted about whom they want to live with, rather than following a lottery approach.

The Baan Mankong process is less frequently cited as something that has brought community members together than in Bang Bua. KT18 says that *"I don't think Baan Mankong brought people closer together"*. Rather, the eviction process itself was the binding force, as the residents fought the Port for 10 years before being able to upgrade. As one focus group discussant explains, *"This community is very strong. We were offered many places to live, for free, 20 talangwa houses in Wat Charapon, we didn't go. We're headstrong."* Another explains that *"When we were evicted we were closer together. We explained to our children the difficulties in getting this home, we fought for 10 years to get here"*. The process of building new homes also promoted social cohesion, as *"We helped each other between neighbours to build my house"* (KT17), and *"There has been an increase in collective action. Before this people were more each to himself. Now they look after each others' houses"* (KT2). However, now that people have gained their houses, *"people are splitting up again, because they have no collective cause to fight for"* (KT2). This suggests that participation

does not occur for the sake of participation, but rather as a means to an end, and it could die out unless active measures are taken to promote further collective action.

When asked about the possibility of borrowing food from neighbours, most respondents believed this would not be a problem. As KT7 explains, “*People give each other things, they share food – like today someone gave me some Chinese food to cook and share*”. However, food is not always available, as KT22 explains: “*I tried to borrow from neighbours but they don’t have food either. But I can borrow nails and things like that*”. If residents do not borrow from neighbours, they can do so from relatives or buy products from shops. The high number of corner shops in the community allows people to easily restock if they run out of supplies, reducing the need to borrow<sup>10</sup>. However, this density of corner shops means residents can easily avoid venturing into other lanes, thus facilitating the segregation of the community into lane units.

Community divisions seem to be a significant problem in Klong Toey 7-12. Though the housing lottery mixed the community residents randomly, there was some exchange of plots, allowing a physical division between two “sides” in the community, with one side viewed as the “Port” side (where many residents work at the Port), and regarded by some as causing problems, for example by not repaying loans. According to KT8, there are “*divisions in the community – jokingly referred to as East and West Timor. There are these divisions and then other smaller groups*”. KT1 explains: “[*There are*] *more than 50% divisions in the community, people know there are problems but don’t want to go to meetings,*” creating a vicious circle, as meetings could be a way of promoting understanding and trust between residents, but people do not attend because of disagreements with other residents. As KT6 says, it is “*difficult to resolve this problem*”.

When the author held discussion groups in Klong Toey 7-12, the two “sides” of the community were invited to separate meetings. The participants in the first meeting soon understood that this was how the meetings had been arranged, and recognise this division. As one respondent says, “*before we were strong, now we’re not so strong, we’re more individual. I feel there’s division in the community. The other side don’t come to our side*”. Another

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<sup>10</sup> It was noticeable in Klong Toey 7-12 that there was an excess of corner shops, almost one per lane. Opening a shop selling snack foods and drinks is a simple way to earn an income from home, but the excessive number of shops makes one wonder how they stay viable, and demonstrates a lack of alternative income sources, such as a collective craft group.

respondent explains that the community is weaker now, *“we aren’t soft. But people nearby are soft, they have a house so they don’t care anymore. There were no outsiders [people not from the former 7-12 community] who asked for a right. Just some people don’t want to talk [about problems], they have more money”*. Again, money is a cause of problems in the community.

Economic hardship hampers community integration – as people have to work hard to earn an income, they have less time for improving community relations: *“bad economy at the moment means more distrust”* (KT21). For KT10, the solution is employment: *“There are divisions in the community but I don’t know how to solve them. If everyone had jobs then the community would be united.”* One respondent suggested that the community would benefit if it could get contracts for jobs like making posters, but no one else suggested a cooperative solution to unemployment.

At the focus group, someone explains that *“One bad thing is that some people thought it would be easy to get a home here. Some people got a lot. Some got more than one right [to a house], they got it easily, they think they don’t need to repay. I once couldn’t repay for two months, but some never pay”*. Therefore, the perceived lack of equality in allocation of housing rights, and loan repayments, adds to the distrust in the community.

When asked about the impact of upgrading on the following indicators of trust and solidarity, the following responses are given in the community:

	Same	Increase	Decrease
Your willingness to work collectively	3	13	5
Trust between neighbours	9	7	5
Willingness to help one another	4	9	8

The results are generally not as positive as one would hope. A quarter are now less willing to act collectively: *“There are divisions, people stick to themselves and won’t unite”* (KT15). Additionally, over a third of the respondents are now less willing to help one another. For the majority of respondents, trust did not increase between neighbours, whereas *“Formerly, you could trust everyone in your lock”* (KT6). These results suggest that the collective upgrading experience was not a positive one for everyone in the community, and may even have led to mistrust among residents, perhaps due to perceptions of favouritism, or more personal

dislikes: “It’s hard to tell who to trust here, it’s tua kai tua man [each to himself]. I don’t like the people here” (KT16).

	Yes	No	Unsure
I feel I am a real Bangkokian	16	5	0
I feel proud of this community	18	3	0
This community is better than others	13	6	2

Despite the community divisions and perceived lack of participation, the majority of respondents express pride in their community: “It didn’t feel as safe in the old lock, not as proud of old community” (KT6). Certainly, compared to many other communities in the Klong Toey area, the 7-12 community can be viewed as having achieved great things in the face of hardship, and so despite the social problems, KT18 feels that “I can’t be proud of the community when it is split. But here is better than 70 Rai [another Klong Toey community]”. As one focus group participant says, “Sometimes I think people are jealous...We have somewhere to live, yet it’s like renting. People who rent also want to own a house like us”. This reflects the sense of achievement that comes from owning a house that is legally recognised, an uncommon thing for an urban informal worker. Pride is expressed in the physical achievements, and not so much in the social aspects of the community, as KT20’s remark exemplifies: “I am proud of the house, not sure I am proud of the people”. Respondent KT19 accepts that no community is perfect: “Cannot say that this community is better than others. Each has its flaws”.

### ***Ruam Samakee Community***

	Same	Increase	Decrease
Most people in this community are basically honest and can be trusted	1	18	1
In this community, one has to be alert or someone is likely to take advantage of you	1	9	10
If I have a problem, there is always someone to help me	1	16	2 (NA 1)
This community has prospered in the last five years	0	20	0
I feel accepted as a member of this community	0	20	0
I feel at home in this community	1	18	1
In this community we take care of each other	0	19	1

In Ruam Samakee, as in other communities, the general trend is for an increase in all of the indicators. However, a high proportion of respondents feel an increased need to be on guard.



The community's misunderstandings with the district office over the results of the September 2007 community election may have contributed to this feeling, though by December 2008 it seemed that the matter had been resolved. However, there was still tension about the cooperative not sending CODI the community loan repayments, causing a number of residents to withhold repayments, or withdraw their savings from the cooperative. Therefore, residents may feel that they have been taken advantage of by the cooperative, and money is a matter over which residents can have issues trusting each other, like RS2, who says that *"People buy on credit from me but I avoid it as it's hard to trust people. Need to know them for a long time"*. RS7 trusts most of his neighbours, but *"about five per cent of the community can't be trusted"*.

With regards to participation, like elsewhere, it seems that levels have fallen since the completion of the upgrading process: *"Participation is good, we help each other a lot. But now it's falling, people have more debt"* (RS16). Economic pressures, and the fact that the houses are finished, means there is less reason to participate: *"It's [the community] improved physically but not the people. They don't participate as well as before when they were doing Baan Mankong"* (RS12). For RS3, participation levels have fallen since pre-upgrading levels: *"Now there is not so much people's participation compared to before upgrading. Now people keep to themselves"*. However, RS9 disagrees: *"Participation is better now, before it was a slum so people didn't really know each other"*. RS18 concurs, though for a different reason: *"Participation is better now, before it was each to himself, some people had many rooms to rent out"*. Consequently, the upgrading has led to more equality between the residents in terms of ownership. However, for some, the upgrading is still causing hardship. The uncompleted block of flats for former renters in the community is a reminder of the cooperative's financial problems, and the community's inability to finish off the upgrading. As a result, those due to move in to the flats are in a position of financial hardship as they are paying both rent on their current housing, and towards the flats.

Ruam Samakee community went through acrimonious community elections, due to lack of clarity with regard the election process. The local district office did not make it clear to community members that they were electing the committee, from which the leader would be chosen in a meeting at the district office, in line with the 1991 BMA regulation governing community elections. Community residents thought they were electing their leader and were therefore unhappy when the front-runner in the elections, Khun PAC, was not appointed

leader, the position instead going to Khun AP. As a result, some respondents feel that the community is divided into two factions, like RS10: *“There will be divisions with regard to the committee ... If you compare our comments with those in phase 1, phase 1 people will always say there are no problems”*. There are also divisions between those who work for the cooperative, and therefore are perceived as having benefited from the money of community residents, and the rest of the community. For RS16, *“There are many divisions. People think that they are better now, that they changed, they think they are big”*, whereas RS4 feels the disputes are less significant, calling them *“small divisions, misunderstandings”*. Of course, as one respondent points out, divisions are also part of human nature: *“Even husbands and wives don’t get on, it’s normal. There are definitely splits”* (RS20).

The upgrading process has not had as positive an impact on the following indicators as it did in other communities:

	Same	Increase	Decrease
Your willingness to work collectively	10	2	8
Trust between neighbours	8	8	4
Willingness to help one another	11	5	4

Many people are now less willing to work collectively. This could indicate that collective action was problematic, as people have lost their savings in the cooperative, and some are still waiting to move into the flats, or that community members now see less need to work collectively, as most residents have completed their houses. Similarly, the willingness of respondents to help other neighbours in most cases did not change, though RS4 feels that *“Helping each other has fallen, but I’m willing to help people. If I have a problem I try to help myself first”*; people do not want to burden their neighbours. It is also concerning that in some cases both trust and willingness to help fell.

	Yes	No	Unsure
I feel I am a real Bangkokian	15	2	3
I feel proud of this community	18	1	2
This community is better than others	14	3	2 (NA 1)

In general, the respondents have a positive perception of their community, though for RS2, this feeling is muted: *“I’m proud of the community but also sad that people’s hearts haven’t developed along with the housing. The community is better than others only in terms of housing”*. For RS3, the community has retained a village atmosphere: *“Here it’s not like*

Bangkok, it's like upcountry where everyone knows each other. Like brothers and sisters". However, according to RS2, "Soon it will be like any Bangkok community where people don't know their neighbours, unlike upcountry where everyone knows each other". For now though, "We know straight away if there is a strange face in the community" (RS16). Clearly, the village atmosphere is something that residents cherish, and should be maintained.

### **Bonkai community**

	Same	Increase	Decrease
Most people in this community are basically honest and can be trusted	3	16	0
In this community, one has to be alert or someone is likely to take advantage of you	0	3	16
If I have a problem, there is always someone to help me	1	18	0
This community has prospered in the last five years	0	19	0
I feel accepted as a member of this community	0	19	0
I feel at home in this community	0	19	0
In this community we take care of each other	0	19	0

Bonkai displays the clearest improvement in these indicators of trust and solidarity. However, in many cases the respondents were referring particularly to their own soi (lane) in the community, consisting of approximately 20 houses each, as the community was divided into zones for the upgrading and many activities were and are still carried out at the soi level. These comments suggest that using a sub-group or zone model is a key step in building trust: "I trust people in this soi. No need to stay on alert" (B6); "I can't say whether everyone can be trusted, but it's fine within our row" (B10). However, B8 sees trust as dependent upon the people: "Some people can't be trusted. Some are willing to help".

Within the community, most residents seem happy to borrow and lend items to each other, so you "can borrow things, from people you know. I know everyone in the upgraded part" (B2). The phrase "brothers and sisters" is often repeated, signifying a closeness between the community members: "In this zone though we are like brothers and sisters so we can tell each other if they are doing something wrong, like if they don't throw garbage away. We are very close in this soi, we can go into any house" (B3). Those who don't borrow are constrained by pride: "I've never borrowed, and no one has borrowed from me. People don't reach that point" (B4).

Baan Mankong has had no single effect on participation. According to one respondent at a focus group, *“we’ve been a strong community for a long time, since Loung Sangwarn [the former community leader]. We had a cooperative, he helped us when there was a fire”*. The upgrading means that people got to know each other better, like B19 who *“didn’t really know these people before Baan Mankong”*, B13 who says that *“helping each other increased with Baan Mankong. No need to worry about someone taking advantage of you”*. Yet some respondents feel that upgrading did not change participation. For B2, *“participation is the same as before, it’s still tua kai tua man [each to himself]”*, while B12 agrees: *“People still keep to themselves. They leave at 8am, come for lunch, return at 5pm, go back to work after”*. As elsewhere, the need to earn an income limits collective action.

Bonkai community seems not to suffer unduly from divisions. As a discussion group participant mentions, the community suffers from the usual small disputes: *“we are like a family, not divided. Maybe just within the community a little”*. Some respondents refer to separation between different sois (lanes) within the upgraded area, as B16 mentions, *“There are some divisions. Some sois will be jealous, they wonder why are our houses so pretty in this soi?”* Some of the sois are more active as a collective, for example banding together to get street lights in their lane. Some see a separation between the upgraded section of Bonkai and that which is still a slum: *“There are no divisions between sois. But I don’t really have much contact with the non-Baan Mankong side” (B19)*. This is not the case for everyone: *“People are like relatives on the non- Baan Mankong side too. They turn out better for events than the Baan Mankong side” (B17)*. Because of the high number of renters in the slum area, the transient nature of these residents limits closeness, as B3 explains: *“Those on the other side aren’t good at participating, they are mostly rentals thus there is too much movement of people moving in and out, they don’t form a bond with the community”*.

When asked about the impact of the upgrading process on the following aspects of community life, the results from the Bonkai respondents show that the upgrading had a positive impact on these measures:

	Same	Increase	Decrease
Your willingness to work collectively	2	16	1
Trust between neighbours	4	15	0
Willingness to help one another	3	16	0

Because the indicators of trust, willingness to help one another and to work collectively have all generally increased, this suggests that the upgrading process had knock-on positive effects on trust and solidarity within the community. However, in Bonkai as in other places, economic factors are a potential threat to collective action, as B17 says: *“I would like the community to keep developing but not sure if the chao ban will help, especially now that the economy is bad, people become selfish.”*

	Yes	No	Unsure
I feel I am a real Bangkokian	17	2	0
I feel proud of this community	19	0	0
This community is better than others	12	4	3

Bonkai residents have pride their community, though a number of residents were unwilling to say that their community is better than others, like B5, who says that *“Before, people didn’t put their hearts in the community, people worked outside. Now they care. But I’m not as proud of this community as I could be”*. Though B10 says that *“Yes, I feel like I belong here. Only a small number don’t participate”*, B17 has a different perception of the community’s social cohesion: *“Bonkai is behind other communities, because of people not giving their participation, compared to other places where there was fire”*. For some residents, like B16, the new houses are deemed inferior to those elsewhere: *“I’m proud that my community has succeeded, at first I didn’t think it would be possible. I think my community is good, but in terms of the houses they could be better, they are better elsewhere”*.

### ***What made Baan Mankong possible?***

The community residents were asked an open-ended question about what they thought made Baan Mankong possible (Tables 5.2 and 5.3), with some respondents giving more than one reason.

*Table 5.2: What made Baan Mankong possible?(Frequency)*

	Money	Loan	CODI	Coll. action	Gov’t	Thaksin	Savings	Builders	Leaders	Others	Total
B	1	0	1	12	3	0	2	0	3	1	23
BB	3	1	1	8	3	2	1	3	7	0	29
KT	0	2	2	8	1	4	0	1	5	1	24
RS	1	1	6	9	4	1	1	0	1	4	28
Total	5	4	10	37	11	7	4	4	16	6	104
%	4.81	3.85	9.62	35.58	10.58	6.73	3.85	3.85	15.38	5.77	100

Table 5.3: What made Baan Mankong possible? (Percentages)

	Money	Loan	CODI	Coll. action	Gov't	Thaksin	Savings	Builders	Leaders	Others	Total
B	4.35	0.00	4.35	52.17	13.04	0.00	8.70	0.00	13.04	4.35	100
BB	10.34	3.45	3.45	27.59	10.34	6.90	3.45	10.34	24.14	0.00	100
KT	0.00	8.33	8.33	33.33	4.17	16.67	0.00	4.17	20.83	4.17	100
RS	3.57	3.57	21.43	32.14	14.29	3.57	3.57	0.00	3.57	14.29	100

The results demonstrate that the respondents recognise that their ability to work collectively within their community made Baan Mankong possible: *“Fighting for what we wanted made this possible”* (KT17); *“the unity of the people”* (RS16); *“the willingness of people to participate, help each other”* (B1). The community leadership is the second most popular reason: *“the leader and committee, we wouldn’t know anything without him”* (BB21). A number of respondents cite the cooperation between leaders and community residents. Therefore, “in-community” reasons of collective action, leaders, savings and builders form 58.66% of the reasons, highlighting the importance of horizontal ties.

The government is cited as another major reason, along with CODI: *“Without CODI and their loans, Baan Mankong would not be possible”* (KT13). People’s savings and other money sources are regarded as more important than the loan, reflecting the self-help aspect of this project, and B2’s comment also reflects this: *“CODI and the government weren’t helping...CODI only came once we were already building”*. Because a number of respondents cite former PM Thaksin directly, he is distinguished from the ‘government’ as a reason (see further discussion in Chapter 7).

Within the individual communities, Ruam Samakee respondents place a high emphasis on CODI’s role, and much less on leaders. Bonkai respondents view collective action as the most important factor, which coincides with the community’s very positive responses to trust and solidarity indicators. Leaders get the most mentions from Bang Bua, though Klong Toey is not far behind despite the community’s divisions. Klong Toey residents emphasise Thaksin’s role over that of the government in general.

These results suggest a certain amount of pride in what communities have been able to achieve, and many feel that this is of their own accord. Few respondents suggest that Baan Mankong was a cooperative effort with outsiders, though B11 does suggest that it was

because “*The government and the chao ban are willing to work together*” – in most cases, reasons are either internal or external to the community, not both.

### ***Overall impacts on trust and solidarity***

*Table 5.4: Total percentages for trust and solidarity indicators*

	Same	Increase	Decrease	Total
Your willingness to work collectively	26.19	57.14	16.67	100
Trust between neighbours	30.95	58.33	10.71	100
Willingness to help one another	28.57	57.14	14.29	100
Most people in this community are basically honest and can be trusted	20.24	69.05	10.71	100
In this community, one has to be alert or someone is likely to take advantage of you	1.19	38.10	60.71	100
If I have a problem, there is always someone to help me (NA 1)	7.23	80.72	12.05	100
This community has prospered in the last five years	2.38	94.05	3.57	100
I feel accepted as a member of this community	0.00	95.24	4.76	100
I feel at home in this community	3.57	89.29	7.14	100
In this community we take care of each other	1.19	91.67	7.14	100

Questions regarding trust were asked on two separate sections of the survey, giving more ambivalent results when the shorter statements were posed (in the top three lines of Table 5.4), at the same time as questions regarding tenure security. These briefer statements refer to the overall picture, whereas the statements that follow give specific examples which could explain the more positive results, as, for example, a resident would be able to find at least one person to help them if needed.

The areas where upgrading has had the clearest positive effect are:

- Acceptance as a community member: this matters for successful collective action, as people will not participate if they feel marginalised;
- Community prosperity: residents are helping to lift each other out of poverty;
- Taking care of each other: residents know their neighbours are there as a safety net in times of hardship;
- Feeling at home: this relates to being accepted as a community member;
- Availability of help: this relates to the importance of community as a safety net.

*Table 5.5: Total percentages for community pride*

	Yes	No	Unsure	Totals
I feel I am a real Bangkokian	83.33	13.10	3.57	100
I feel proud of this community	91.76	4.71	3.53	100
This community is better than others	72.29	18.07	9.64	100

Community residents express pride in their communities, though they are less willing to say that their community is the best. The majority feel like Bangkokians – this is because many of them were born in Bangkok, and also an outcome of upgrading, as they now have, or are getting, permanent house registration.

The results exposed in this section provide some insight into whether the process of upgrading had a positive impact on trust and solidarity within the community, by giving the individuals’ perceptions of community social capital. Though there are a number of divergent views, it seems fair to conclude that participation peaked during the upgrading process itself, but has since died down as residents focus on earning an income to repay their housing debts. As no baseline data exists regarding pre-upgrading levels of participation (the stock), an attempt was made to ascertain this by asking for comparisons to current participation and trust levels. With the exception of Klong Toey 7-12, which had high collective action previous to upgrading (due to constant eviction battles), it seems that participation is higher post-upgrading. With regards to making Baan Mankong happen, residents feel a strong bond to their community, as expressed through feelings of pride and achievement.

### **5.3.2 Stocks: Groups and Organisations**

Community groups and organisations are part of the building blocks of social capital, being one of the stocks that feed through to create higher levels of social capital as an outcome. By encouraging residents to interact, community groups can create social cohesion within a community, as residents gain familiarity with and trust in one another. Community groups also serve to empower their members, as they provide themselves with services where the state has failed, and participation in certain groups can increase income.

In order to participate in Baan Mankong, communities must have a savings group, through which members should save a 10% deposit of the total government loan to be taken out. CODI’s predecessor, the Urban Community Development Organisation, encouraged community savings groups in low-income communities, as a way of building community



strength in collective activities. The success of community savings very much depend on the trust that the residents have in the management of the savings group – in many communities, savings activities waxed and waned, because money disappeared, eroding confidence in collective savings, or because savers were not seeing any results. For a community to maintain savings activities for long enough to qualify for a Baan Mankong loan is indicative of the trustworthiness of the savings group management, and of the faith that residents have in each other to continue their savings activities for a collective aim.

Before beginning Baan Mankong, communities also had non-savings group activities. Some of these groups have continued since upgrading, while others have died out. In many cases, these activities revolved around skills and jobs, such as sewing or artificial flower groups, functioning like cooperatives through which members would get orders. Bang Bua had a group making a liquid solution of micro-organisms that is poured down drains, improving canal water quality. Many communities also had groups for teenagers and children. These various community groups functioned on an informal basis and because they were limited to particular sectors of the community, it is hard to conclude that they were a firm basis for adding to community cohesion, though they promote closeness within the subgroups.

Following upgrading, the four communities do not seem to have formed many new groups. The high demand that the upgrading process puts on time and resources means group activities may wane during this period, as the upgrading is a huge collective undertaking. When residents were asked whether they were members of any groups or organisations other than community savings, the general response was “no”, other than those who qualified for the elderly person’s group (those over 60). In Klong Toey, a few respondents attend weekly meetings for the elderly at the Duang Prateep Foundation NGO. In Bang Bua community, respondents are not members of any other group, but mention that groups will be formed once all the houses are complete, as well as the community centre. There are plans, according to BB9, for a “*women’s group, nursery, community cooperative for selling things*”. Another respondent mentions that “*they haven’t set up a housewives group yet, but there are plans for one*”. Work-based cooperatives can integrate social capital with human capital, with beneficial effects on community economic capital. Hence in Klong Toey 7-12, KT3 mentioned a desire for a women’s group: “*it would be good to have a group like a housewives group who could have jobs brought into the community, like making election posters*”.

In Ruam Samakee, RS4 says “*there used to be a skills group but now it’s tua kai tua man [each to himself]*”, while RS20 explains that “*there was a flower group, but they couldn’t find a market so they had to stop*”. According to RS5, “*the committee set up a women’s group, but for their own advantage*”. This is in reference to the Mothers of the Land Fund, which is available to provide loans for small businesses or to help those in financial hardship. Khun AP, the community leader, explains that “*we got about 8,000B for 10 people. We sold 100B notes for 200B each, getting 16,000B, some of which went to making jackets*”<sup>11</sup>. According to Khun AP, the community also benefited from Social Investment Fund (SIF) money, totalling 500,000B, which was used to make an elderly fund. Of this, about 230,000B remains, which used to be saved within the cooperative but has been withdrawn for the Mothers of the Land group to manage. This money is used in a revolving fund, providing, for example, scholarships. Therefore, Ruam Samakee community does have a certain number of groups, though they extend mainly to funding provision. The fact that many respondents do not think there are any community groups suggests that the reach of the Mothers of the Land group is fairly limited.

Bonkai appears not to have many active groups either. According to B1, there was a housewives group that organised festivities, but it died out. B8 says there is a women’s group in another soi, while B11 is not in the women’s group, “[*because*] *I feel too old to join*”. B12 says she was “*invited to join [the women’s group] but I don’t get on with the organiser so decided not to join*”. Therefore, where groups do exist, there is a measure of self-selection to membership.

In terms of community-run facilities, Bonkai benefits from a long-standing community-run daycare centre, which provides an important service to residents of both the upgraded and slum sections. In Ruam Samakee, a resident voluntarily runs a health centre, with supplies provided by the government. Klong Toey 7-12 has a Microsoft-sponsored IT centre running computer classes, attracting pupils from outside the community. These community-run facilities are an important manifestation of social capital, whereby residents provide themselves with services, often with external sponsorship. In Bang Bua, there are plans to build a library and computer centre.

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<sup>11</sup> This money is revered as it is seen as coming from the Royal family. Therefore, by “buying” marked-up banknotes from this fund, people can have something which came directly from the Royal family.

Groups and organisations within the communities seem most popular when they can serve an economic benefit, such as a skills group involved in cottage industry. For most residents, lack of time precludes membership of any groups, as RS3 explains: *“there are no groups. What would the group do? Most people here don’t have time, mostly they work outside the community”*. As the upgrading process has increased the debt burden on community residents, the outcome is that there is even less interest in groups, unless they provide an income. Hence, Bang Bua’s plan to set up various skills group once the upgrading is truly complete will help promote the sustainability of the community, as it can ensure an additional source of income for residents. Another group for which there seems to be high demand for organised activities is the elderly. Many of the elderly feel like financial burdens on their families, and would benefit from income-generating activities they can do from home.

### **5.3.3 Channels: Cooperation and Collective action**

#### ***Community rules***

The four communities have their own community rules, setting norms of behaviour. Community rules provide boundaries which will affect the outcomes of the upgrading process, by setting the norms and values which the community should try and uphold. Once the goal of new houses is achieved, guidelines need to be provided to ensure the cooperation of members. Rules therefore institutionalise community behaviour and provide a framework for action. As Ostrom notes, though social capital is “embedded in common understanding”, this common understanding can easily be eroded unless “substantial efforts are devoted to ... monitoring behaviour in conformance with common understandings, and sanctioning behaviour”, for example by creating institutions such as rules (2000:179). However, none of the case study communities display their rules, for example, on the community notice boards, perhaps because the rules are in fact norms of neighbourliness. Akin found that the community he studied had “certain rules of conduct, never articulated but shared by all” (1975:156). Box 5.2 outlines Klong Toey 7-12’s rules, which are similar to those in other communities.

**Box 5.2: Klong Toey 7-12 community rules**

The community rules of Klong Toey 7-12 have been drawn up in order to facilitate communal living and to promote participation (2548:32):

1. Protect your family from drugs
2. Don't leave belongings on the communal footpaths
3. Act as security guards (community members rotate)
4. Manage garbage areas
5. Keep the front of your house attractive for example by planting trees, collect rubbish, fix paths, clean areas
6. Participate in community activities (monthly meetings) and activities for important days
7. The cooperative model:
  - a. changing rights: in the event of death, the holder of a right can give it to someone who will benefit
  - b. selling rights: must sell it back to the cooperative (extended family of existing members can buy it from the cooperative, with the cooperative having the right to decide)
8. Turn on lights outside houses to illuminate the area outside your house
9. Look after the cleanliness of your pets
10. Be careful when driving and keep noise down.

Klong Toey 7-12's rules highlight that the environment, drugs, safety, and the transfer of housing rights, are issues for which behaviour needs to be defined. Rules set out boundaries, providing a mark from which residents can take action if norms are not kept to, thus promoting accountability amongst residents. However, this raises the question of what happens if rules are broken, and how they can be enforced, especially as the acting community leaders have not been officially elected in Klong Toey, as is discussed in Chapter 6. Bowles and Gintis state that "an effective community monitors the behaviour of its members", and does so using the norms and values fostered by social capital, such as trust, solidarity, pride, and reciprocity (2002:F424). These norms should mean that a community with higher levels of trust need not have recourse to following written rules except in the case of serious disputes which require mediating by a neutral party. Communities are capable of self-governance, through participation, transparency, and accountability.

***Community Events***

An essential part of maintaining social cohesion in the communities is the holding of collective community events. Religious institutions are the most "pervasive kind of civil society institution in low-income communities" (Saergert, Thompson and Warren 2001:10), and Thai celebrations often involve Buddhist merit-making ceremonies which bring together all community residents. Communities usually hold parties for special holidays such as New

Year's Eve, Children's Day, Thai New Year and Father's Day, and community clean-up days. These occasions bring community members together, and often require collective effort in preparing food, activities and prizes.

The author attended Children's Day events in three of the four case study communities in January 2009. Klong Toey 7-12 opted not to host a community event, due to the financial burden it would impose on residents; many children attended a party at the Duang Prateep Foundation kindergarten. This demonstrates the community's reliance on charitable organisations, of which there are many in Klong Toey, rather than collective action. As Children's Day was the day before BMA elections, many district offices were not able to participate in the festivities.

In Bonkai, morning activities were scheduled for children at the day care centre. As the community had not received sponsorship from the district, due to upcoming BMA elections, the event remained small, though the CPB provided a gift for each child. Additionally, the community had already organised a merit-making ceremony (Figure 5.3) and party for New Year's Eve. This ceremony was attended by representatives of the police, the district office, and the chief of Pathumwan district. These special guests each made a speech, with the district chief encouraging community unity, saying "*the cooperative and community leaders are strong, in last few years, many good things have happened to your community. If people give their participation, the work of leaders is easier.*" Additionally, she emphasised that the whole community would have to undertake Baan Mankong eventually, referring to the slum section.

In Ruam Samakee, a tent and stage had been installed in the outdoor sports area, with organised games and prizes for winners. Every child received a gift from the district and the CPB. There was free food and a party that extended into the night. Parents gathered outside their houses as they watched their children.

*Figure 5.3: Merit-making in Bonkai*



In Bang Bua, everything was provided and funded by the community, using the 5000B monthly budget allocated by the district. This self-reliance was a source of great pride for the community leaders, and reflects a desire to be independent from outside assistance. The committee had prepared lunch for all community residents, and purchased gifts for the children. The party was held in the garden and ground floor of the community centre. Additionally, another community resident organised a children's day party for the evening. This resident had won the lottery and often contributes to community activities.

Community events such as the children's day celebrations are an essential part of maintaining community spirit, by bringing together the community residents in the same place for celebrations. As the community leader of Charlernchai Nimitmai community said, children can act as a bridge to bring together adults, who may otherwise not know each other or disagree with each other over certain issues. Additionally, community events promote community spirit as households may be required to contribute food, crockery, or clean up. It can also be an opportunity to develop a sense of responsibility among young residents. For example, in Klong Toey 7-12, the youth are encouraged to help wash up after celebrations. Community celebrations promote togetherness and a sense of belonging, and encouraging everyone to contribute fosters norms of reciprocity.

### 5.3.4 Outcomes of collective action

Collective action in Baan Mankong should be for the benefit of all community residents, but the actions of certain community members can be at odds with community goals. As already discussed, residents with multiple pre-upgrading properties may be unwilling to give them up. At the other end of the scale, the poorest residents may be excluded from activities (Di Gregorio et al, 2008; World Bank, 2006). The Thailand Social Capital Evaluation study (World Bank, 2006) found that communities focused on reaching objectives at the expense of excluding residents viewed as least effective, weakening social cohesion. DeFilippis (2001) argues that those with fewer resources lose in participatory situations, as they have less to bargain with. However, the case-study communities demonstrate that this is not always the case, as the poorest community members are taken into account, as the examples below demonstrate. This long-term outlook taken by communities, by providing solutions to all residents, demonstrates a remnant of the village culture of mutual aid. Thus, bridging social capital is not used to exclude people.

#### *Social welfare fund*

Thailand lacks social security provision, except for government employees. Hence, it is important for the urban poor to be a part of a community that can function as a social safety net, for example by providing food when times are tough. However, if someone falls ill or loses their job, they can easily become a burden to others. Each community may have their own way of providing support. In Klong Toey 7-12, an elderly lady with no source of income is paid by her fellow residents to collect their garbage, while in Ruam Samakee, a few elderly persons are paid to sweep the community roads every morning. However, it can be difficult finding sufficient odd jobs and funds to help these persons.

Bang Bua community has therefore set up its own social insurance scheme, providing for births, marriages, death and disability, as well as a fund for the elderly. As the community leader explains it, “*there is no point doing just the houses, otherwise people just end up with debt and nothing else*”. Households make a 1B a day contribution to the fund, which totals 2,950,000B (Bang Bua information CD), which provides compensation of 500B if someone has to go to hospital, as well as financial contributions for marriages and births. The elderly fund has 80 members, who each contribute 1B a day, and have monthly social meetings and health checks. This scheme ensures more equality than the district elderly fund, which

provides 500B a month, but only to five recipients in the community. The funeral fund has 500 members, who each contribute 20B per funeral, which the community tops up with 5000B or more from general funds, so a family receives at least 15000B to cover funeral expenses. On top of this, the community employs a few people to act as gardeners, garbage collectors and guards. Bang Bua's social welfare schemes exemplify its desire to become self-reliant and independent from the state.

Klong Toey 7-12 is the community with the lowest average monthly income, but being located in the Klong Toey "slum" area, also has access to the most sources of external help, such as the Duang Prateep Foundation (DPF) and the Mercy Centre, two NGOs located in the Port area. Two houses within the community were fully funded by the DPF. These houses are inhabited by elderly ladies with no income and receiving limited financial assistance from their families. One of these ladies expressed contradictory feelings about how the community looks after her, saying that she doesn't *"really get on with neighbours, don't really talk to them much"*, yet *"I feel valued, and neighbours will look after me"*. Another case is that of a house that has been divided into two, making two very narrow houses, the residents of which are clearly very poor. According to KT8, this case *"shows flaws in the system. Lots of open space goes unused like the market<sup>12</sup>, but they can't make an exception for her so that she gets a better house. This is a blind spot in the community, they need to solve the problem"*.

A number of respondents explain that residents facing difficulties often go to see the Sister, a nun linked to the Mercy Centre, living in the next door Rim Klong community. However, according to KT10, *"people take off their gold jewellery and go ask for charity"* from the Sister, implying that residents have not got their spending priorities right. This respondent explains that she wanted a Mercy Centre scholarship for her children, but they *"won't give it to me because they see I have a nice house. But I have a lot of debt"*. Therefore, it appears that Klong Toey 7-12 has not collectively done much to help the needier residents, and there are no communal sources of finance, so assistance comes from NGOs external to the community. At a focus group meeting, residents mentioned that they would like a state-run social insurance scheme. The specification of state-run suggests that they may think they, as a community, are not able to run their own scheme, as by their own admission, they are *"not very regular"* with 100B monthly payments to their savings scheme for possible future

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<sup>12</sup> The computer centre is built on stilts, making space for a fresh market underneath. However this space has remained unused.



revolving funds. It seems that the proximity of external charitable organisations mean that Klong Toey residents turn to these organisations to solve their problems, rather than collective action.

In Ruam Samakee, residents can apply for financial assistance from the Mothers of the Land and SIF revolving funds, though only ten loans are available at any one time. In Bonkai, there is a 1B-a-day savings group, where money is collected at a soi level (in one soi the savings are 5B-a-day), and the funds can be used to provide loans and a safety net in times of hardship.

Bang Bua's social insurance scheme is a good example of a community solving problems of state and market failure, and is being extended to other communities along the canal. It builds upon existing close bonds between community members, solving the problems of moral hazard, through trust and communication. Additionally, community residents themselves know best what their needs are and therefore can direct their efforts at meeting these most urgent requirements.

### ***Baan Klang (“central houses”)***

As Baan Mankong aims to promote community self-help, in a number of communities, there is provision for a Baan Klang (central house), functioning like a residence for those in need, such as the elderly with no relatives, or the disabled. Though none of the four case study communities had a Baan Klang, one can compare Bang Bua and Ruam Samakee's provision of housing for those who used to rent (rather than own) housing in the community when it was still a squatter settlement.

In Bang Bua, two buildings were built using community funds, to house those who used to rent within the community and therefore did not get a right to a full house. These buildings contain a number of one-room flats, rented out at 1000B a month, so those who were not eligible for a full housing right are still able to stay within the community.

In Ruam Samakee, residents who used to rent in the squatter community were also given the option of a small apartment in the block of flats, to be built at their own expense<sup>13</sup>. These flats are smaller than the originally-planned houses, at 3X7 metres, and also more expensive than the upgraded houses built in the rest of the community, at 290,000B per flat, due to the higher cost of high-rise building. Completion of the flats has been delayed by breaches of building regulations and funding shortfalls from the cooperative. These renters face financial hardship as they have to pay rent on their current accommodation, and make monthly contributions towards their loan, totalling 1905B for the loan and interest. Consequently, feelings of ill-will are rising, with RS12, a renter, saying that *“I don’t know how our flats can be finished, people keep lying to us about whether they can build it and regulations... people don’t care about us anymore, they want 30,000B more”*. RS13 says that *“the ‘flat’ people who don’t have a house yet are the ones getting squeezed, not the ones with the finished houses”*, suggesting that those residents who have a completed house are not interested in helping those waiting for the flats. Therefore, a complex mixture of financial and legal problems have created much hardship for certain residents, and there is an unwillingness to help them, as the cooperative continues to fine people for late repayment of loans.

### ***Meaning of Community***

Were the case study communities already regarded as ‘communities’ by their residents before upgrading, or have they become communities as an outcome of the project? All four communities already had the required community organisational structure before undergoing upgrading, with an elected committee of representatives and leader. However, Klong Toey 7-12, the only community which did not upgrade on-site but which relocated nearby following eviction from Locks 7-12, did not have elections following the relocation and therefore technically is not recognised as a community by Klong Toey district. This creates problems for the residents of 7-12, as one participant at a focus group explains: *“I took my mother to the district to ask for the elderly fund, and they said they didn’t know Baan Mankong, they don’t know where it is, they only know Rong Moo [a neighbouring community]. When we ask the district to accept us, they say that we are against regulations. We still have temporary registration”*.

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<sup>13</sup> Originally, the CPB had agreed to rent the community a larger plot of land, allowing former renters (as opposed to homeowners in the slum) to also get a house. However, the CPB then decided it needed part of the land back, in a land-sharing agreement, so as a result of the lack of space, renters had to be housed in an apartment building.

However, for the residents, being a community extends beyond the official definition as set out in the 1991 BMA regulation. In focus group discussions, the concept of community is equated to being an urban village, and the term “chao ban” used to refer to residents means “villager”. As most of the residents of these communities are migrants from rural areas, they retain their village ideals, looking after their neighbours like relatives. For a respondent in Bonkai, *“It means people come and live together, whatever province they are from.”* For a Bang Bua discussion group participant, *“community means many people together, united, sharing, if someone doesn’t have rice or soup, we share, we borrow money and so on”*.

The Klong Toey focus group participants see community as specific to poor persons, with one lady saying that it means *“people living together, the poor living together”*, while for another it means the *“meeting centre for the poor”*. Accordingly, *“rich people living together does not equal a community, they live separately. In a community like this, people look after each other more, are united, better.”* There is therefore a belief that the poor need to be in a community to compensate for the things that rich people are able to provide themselves. The residents therefore already mostly regarded themselves as being part of a community before upgrading – the difference is that *“the community now is better, we are less likely to fall off the path into the canal. But we’re still the same. We still love each other the same”*, and *“the community has improved with Baan Mankong, still the same feeling, but the houses are better.”* Essentially, then, it is the people who make the community, not the physical environment. One respondent from Bang Bua believes a community is an improvement from a slum: *“Baan Mankong is good, we have improved the community, it has upgraded from a slum to a community”* (BB7). For a respondent from Ruam Samakee, community means *“togetherness - community members have to help, if not 100%, then 90%.”* However, for one Bonkai respondent, community has connotations of poverty, as *“outsiders distinguish us as community people”*, and therefore, if he were the leader *“we would already be Moobarn [compound] Baan Mankong”*. These comments support Akin’s assertion that community means “a unity, a feeling of being a cohesive collection of people, distinct from others” (1975:146).

In Thailand, people aspire to live in “moobarn jatsan”, which are gated estates. Baan Mankong residents see their community as better than a moobarn jatsan, though, of course, they also realise that a house in a gated estate is out of their financial reach, with houses starting at around one million baht: *“Moobarn jatsan is more expensive, we couldn’t build*

*houses for 2-300,000B [there]*". The respondents believe that in a gated community, there is no sense of togetherness, as this Klong Toey resident explains: "*They [residents of jatsan] don't talk to each other, they work. People individually move into moobarn jatsan, [whereas] we all moved here together, we pooled our money. It's better to live in a community like this. We can trust each other, we can leave our keys with our neighbours. In jatsan, can't leave your keys with anyone, leave them with the police and you still get burgled. In moobarn jatsan, people don't know each other, don't accept each other.*"<sup>14</sup> For another Klong Toey resident, "*we are middle class, jatsan are top class*", and "*we're not different to baan jatsan. The only difference is that it's quieter in jatsan, they have no playground*". Another discussant says "*this is better than jatsan. We have events in our community. In jatsan people celebrate in hotels*" and because moobarn jatsans are gated, "*they have guards, you need ID [to visit]. Here's it's independent. We're used to independence, we can't deal with guards*". The community members act as their own guards, as they know each other well enough to recognise a strange face. Similar sentiments are echoed in Bang Bua, where "*houses here are like moobarn jatsan. But we think like villages. In moobarn jatsan, if a house is burgled, neighbours don't care. Here we know everyone in the community. This kind of community is better*". There is a close tie between social identities and social capital, which develops through bonds formed of participation (Dasgupta, 2009).

Therefore, the residents see being a community as more important than the BMA's official sense of the word, which merely serves to formalise and institutionalise a concept already used by the residents themselves. A community extends to much more than the physical environment, though "*having a community is important for us to have somewhere to live*". The residents know that they have to rely on each other to be able to get what they want, that is, a housing loan and secure tenure. A community also serves as a family for the residents, and as with any family, "*in a community, we need to love each other. Some don't, it always happens when people are living together*" (Klong Toey focus group).

### ***Does better housing lead to "better people"?***

Though the residents recognise that they are not living in the equivalent of a moobarn jatsan housing compound, has the upgrading had an effect on how they regard themselves? Many

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<sup>14</sup> The physical design of houses can have a strong impact on participation. The community leader of Chalernchai Nimitmai, a community where upgrading involved mostly infrastructure upgrading, with some households also building new homes, notes that the homes that are built with high fences and gates are the least likely to participate (and also the richest).

respondents brought the topic up of their own volition. As they are no longer living in a slum, does living in a better environment also make them better people? This is what BB8 feels, saying “*Before it was more tua kai tua man [each to himself], now we have better houses so we are better people*”, and RS4 concurs, saying that the “*community has developed both physically and in terms of living together*”. For RS16, better housing leads to personal development: “*People, since they have moved out of the slum, it’s like they’ve developed their minds. Like the contractor’s house [a resident living in a particularly stylish house], he’s also bought a factory. People have nicer cars now.*” For B13, the living environment feeds directly into people’s behaviour: “*the community has improved with regard to the environment. If the environment is good, then hearts and lives are good.*”

However, for most respondents, a better physical environment is insufficient to change the way that people act, or perceive themselves and each other. They are still “slum” people, despite living in an upgraded community. The concept of habitus, or a person’s belief and dispositions, seems to be on display here: people’s aspirations are based on and limited by their perceived position in the social structure. The residents of Klong Toey 7-12 seem especially to feel this way, though their identity may be tied to the fact that they have lived in the area for many years, widely regarded as being Bangkok’s most notorious slum area. Respondent KT21 explains that “*People’s hearts are the same, the materials are better... Some people think that slum people will always be slum people.*” For some of the respondents, the problem stems from disagreements within the community, as KT8 explains that the community has “*developed, in terms of buildings, yes, but still problems of arguments and fights between neighbours... If you give your heart to people, they will give it in return. If you give materials then people will give that back. There are some bad people in the community. The community has prospered in terms of materials but not in terms of the heart.*” This respondent also feels that the fact that the community was relocated contributed to the divisions, as “*we lived for many years at the lock in the old place, a long time thus we were all very close. Here we have to start again, there has been a mixing of locks, people have to gradually adapt to the environment*”, thus slowing down social improvement in the community. KT9 takes things further, by suggesting that slum people act differently to others, and so “*there are some small problems because slum people can’t be ‘poo dee’ [upper class], same level of noise and problems as before.*” However, for KT7, living in a slum does not necessarily mean that people will behave badly, as “*the people in Rim Klong community [next door] are better, better mannered. 7-12 may be better in physical terms, but in terms of*

*attitudes it is still a slum*". For KT17, however, slum people are poor, and therefore the community residents *"are still slum people, still poor, the houses are secure but now they have debt which they never had before"*. There does not seem, therefore, to be a clear feeling that having secure housing in a better environment has changed the way people act, and the community's relocation and mixing of households may be a reason for this.

For resident BB24, Baan Mankong is a first step towards people improving themselves: *"I like the Baan Mankong project, we have a better life. Now it lies with the people whether they will develop themselves"*. BB19 concurs, saying that *"houses are better but people's behaviours are the same"*, a sentiment with which others agree, as *"I feel that this community has developed only in terms of material things, not in terms of the way of thinking of the people"* (BB5). Similar views are expressed in Ruam Samakee, where *"the community has developed but not the people. The community is better than others, but the people are not"* (RS20), while a Bonkai resident says that *"Baan Mankong problems are the environment and people. People don't develop with the housing"* (B5), and B17 feels that *"It's still like a slum in terms of society."*

The respondents' comments suggest that they believe that slum people should act in a certain way, and many still perceive themselves as slum people. Akin states that members of a community *"share certain values and norms that are different from those of outsiders"* (1975:146). There is a certain sense that people were hoping that with improved housing would come a different way of thinking, or that the process itself would develop people's minds. As one resident of Ruam Samakee expresses, slum communities have certain norms of behaviour which might not be acceptable in upgraded communities: *"The problems are mostly about living together, people are not krieng jai<sup>15</sup>. This happened also before but it was a slum then so more acceptable"* (RS1). Is the residents' identity inexorably linked to their original place of residence and way of living? Has this view been imposed on them through the attitudes of outsiders? If one refers to Wissink, Dijkwel and Meijer's (2006) finding that the self-image of inhabitants of informal settlements is much more positive than the image that other groups have of them, this suggests that the other groups must have very negative images of the urban poor. There is scope for further research in this area, as one would expect that the neighbours of these communities would prefer to live near an upgraded

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<sup>15</sup> *Krieng jai* is a Thai concept defining social relations, that one should not cause another loss of face.

community than a slum, especially in a country where gated estates used to be advertised as not being near slums. As Baan Mankong aims to achieve community development, it is worrying that residents have a negative perception of the attitudes of their fellow residents, and perhaps, by extension, of themselves. This is despite having overcome many challenges to achieve secure tenure, official recognition, and a house of their own. However, it may be a case of rationalising what they do have, and with this comes an acceptance of their “low” status.

The residents’ perceptions of themselves tie in with a concern about gentrification of the communities, expressed by CODI and other stakeholders – a fear that residents may sell their housing rights to others from outside the community who are not truly deserving of these homes, not being poor or original squatters in the community. Additionally, allowing new residents in the community may lead to the loss of the community’s “common understanding” and hence social capital (Ostrom, 2000). One of the roles of the community cooperative is to act as a buffer against gentrification, by requiring that those who need to sell their homes sell them back to the cooperative, which then sells the right on. In this case, “gentrification” seems to refer to people who have the money to buy their way into a community. Completing the upgrading process is not regarded as being gentrification in itself. Yet it can provide the basis for social mobility, by giving residents skills in construction, financial management and teamwork (though the 15-year loan goes some way to restricting social fluidity). Having house registrations allows parents to send their children to school. Gaining official recognition from government bodies that one is a legal resident of the city can do much to change the way that residents perceive themselves, for the better.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

In terms of material outcomes, the community residents have gained new houses, with a measure of secure tenure. Residents accept the increased financial burden as the necessary trade-off to be able to remain in their community. Despite many residents finding themselves with smaller houses as a consequence of upgrading, the majority would still recommend Baan Mankong secure housing to others.

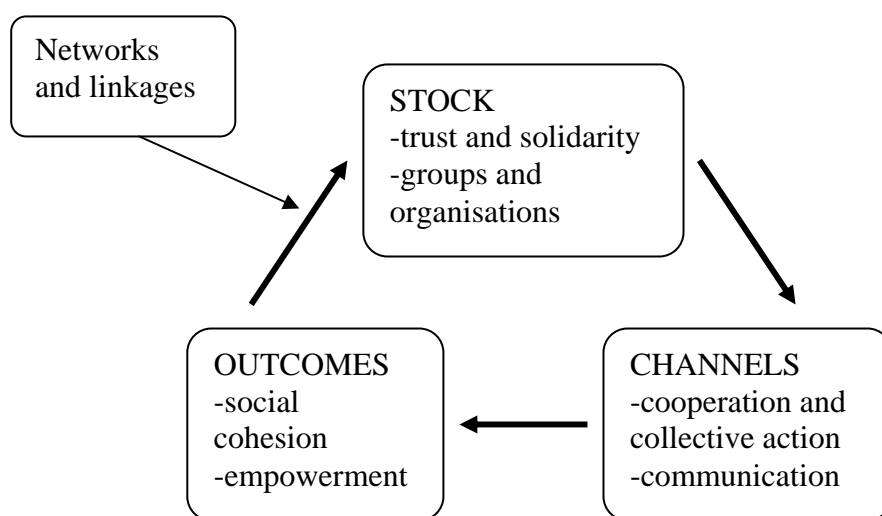
With regard to social outcomes, one can distinguish between the different communities. In Ruam Samakee and Klong Toey 7-12, the upgrading process appears to have led to an increase in social divisions within the communities, whereas in Bang Bua and Bonkai,

divisions are not an issue. However, even with community divisions, trust levels have increased on the whole, as have solidarity indicators, and therefore the participatory process has had a positive effect on bonding social capital. Through schemes such as social welfare funds, elderly groups, and provision of jobs and housing for the poorest members, community residents demonstrate that they care for each other, and allow for empowerment not only of the more marginalised groups, but of the community as a whole, by taking a self-help approach to development. The upgrading process gives the residents a chance to exercise agency, and some communities have seized this chance to achieve more than just new houses, notably Bang Bua. The experiences highlighted in this chapter suggest that participation leads to increased social capital, especially with regards to trust and a sense of belonging. Communities have taken steps to ensure that this participation is more than just fleeting, by institutionalising it in community regulations outlining rules of neighbourliness, and in groups like the social welfare fund in Bang Bua.

This chapter has also demonstrated that community participation will not necessarily continue once the upgrading is complete, suggesting that participation is seen as a means to an end: housing. Were participation the end in itself, it could continue indefinitely in a self-sustaining “virtuous circle”, as it has economic and social benefits. The stocks will feed through the channels to produce positive outcomes, which create incentives for further participation (Figure 5.4), extending the stock-channels-outcomes framework indefinitely. For example, a socially cohesive community may form a work cooperative, to produce certain goods collectively. If members of the group work well together, they are more likely to secure contracts to produce goods, leading to increased income. If the community also provides other services collectively, such as day-care, social insurance, and activities for the elderly, the residents will see the benefits of participation and continue to engage in collective activities, and as the community becomes more socially cohesive, trust continues to increase.



Figure 5.4: Virtuous circle of participation



Nevertheless, there seem to be limits to collective action, leading to a breakdown in the “circle of participation”. The first limit is the increased debt burden on the residents, which means they have to work harder in order to pay off their loans, restricting the amount of time they have for collective community activities. This may be more problematic for certain residents than others. Secondly, many residents have achieved the goals they set out to achieve through collective action, namely, secure housing, and therefore have no pressing need to work collectively, suggesting that participation is a means to an end, rather than the end in itself. Outside interference is another factor which can hamper the circle; witness the divisions created over community elections in Ruam Samakee due to lack of communication from the district. Linkages to persons outside the community, and networks between communities, are external factors which can contribute to promoting the virtuous cycle, or break it (further discussed in Chapter 7).

The community leader plays an important role in determining whether the community continues on a collective path or not, by promoting collective activities, such as cleaning up the canal or setting up a fresh market. Participation may also be slowed by problems arising as a result of cooperation, such as when money goes missing from the cooperative, or if people perceive there to be unequal treatment between residents. The following chapter will explore the role of community leaders in enhancing (or not) collective action in their communities.



## Chapter 6 – Community Leadership

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- 6.1 The selection of leaders**
- 6.2 The leader as a gatekeeper**
- 6.3 The “privilege” of leadership**
- 6.4 Trust in leadership**
- 6.5 From the leaders’ point of view**
- 6.6 The training of leaders**
- 6.7 Leaders as networkers**
- 6.8 Conclusion**

*“Just like a household head affects the goodness and success of children, the community leaders affect the success of the community” (KT8).*

Community leadership brings with it many responsibilities, and can put the leader under heavy pressure. Traditionally, the community leader would often have been the client in patron-client relationships, with more powerful outsiders, such as politicians, using the leader to co-opt the whole community. Mitlin quotes Peattie (1990:21) who “argues that in the absence of alternative strategies to provide housing, ‘...squatter settlements provided a kind of de facto strategy which governments and politicians in various ways agreed to, supported and even (to some degree) sponsored in return for the political benefits...” (2001:161). Because the community leader is a volunteer receiving no financial compensation, this limits the potential candidates to those who can afford to volunteer their time for the good of the community, or, less positively, to persons who think that being in such a position could bring them financial or political benefits. Traditionally, Thai community leaders have had “nakleng” or gangster characteristics. According to Akin (1975), the ideal leader has two qualities reflecting these gangster characteristics: the willingness to expend efforts and wealth without hesitation to help friends and followers, as well as status, power and prestige. However, Ockey (2004) points out that leadership styles are shifting away from “nakleng” patron-client ties, to forming partnerships with NGOs and the government, and with this shift in style comes new tactics. As leaders turn to slum networks to resolve their communities’ problems, this negates the need for patronage ties, and reflects a belief in collective action over hierarchical relations.

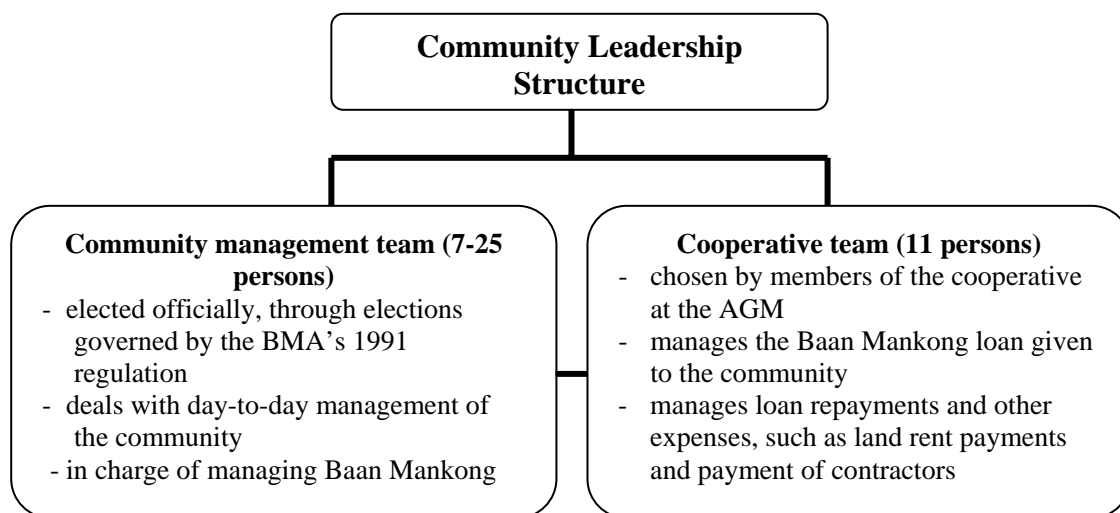
This chapter explores leadership from the viewpoint of the community residents, and the leaders themselves, considering hypothesis three, that leaders are integral to determining the sustainability of community collective action. Their intra-community roles are examined, as well as their interactions with outside groups.

## 6.1 The selection of leaders

A community organisation needs an adequate institutional framework, in order to gain recognition from the state. In Bangkok, this framework is imposed by BMA Community Committee Regulations of 1991, which require a community to elect a team of representatives in order to be officially recognised as a community. This reflects the state's desire to promote democratic practices at the grassroots, and the elections formalise relations between the communities and districts, with the committee serving as the communication link. The community leadership structure is divided into two parts (Figure 6.1): the community management team, which is elected every two years in elections run by the district office, and the cooperative team, with representatives selected at the cooperative AGM. A cooperative is legally required for the administration of Baan Mankong loans, and acts as guarantor of the loan, thus spreading the risk across its membership.

The district provides the management team with a monthly budget of 5000B for community activities. There is often overlap between the two teams, with some committee members working on both teams, and because Baan Mankong depends on the loans, the process of upgrading requires constant communication between the management and finance sides. The leader of the community heads the community management team. This team is split into sub-teams, such as construction, social, and management.

Figure 6.1 – Community management structure



Given the power that the community leader holds, it is important that he or she be chosen in a fair and transparent manner, and that they are trusted by the community residents. Much like in politics, successful leaders who bring improvements to their community are unlikely to face strong competition. However, not all communities follow the official route of elections: Klong Toey 7-12 has yet to hold officially-recognised community elections. This lack of a formally-approved “link” to the district can create problems with regard access to district-provided services, such as garbage collection and house registration. Khun CH, acting leader of Klong Toey, explains, when asked about community elections: *“We haven’t told the district yet about the new committee election because there are some groups of unclean [powerful] people here in our community. I’m not sure if they will do some cheating to be the community leader. Once they become leader, politicians will come too. When the next national election comes, these unclean people may get used by bad candidates to buy votes, chao-ban [community members] will be forced to [vote for them]. This is a very bad connection”*.

This highlights the continued possibility of old-style patronage ties, and supports Mitlin’s statement that “relationships between civil society (primarily in the form of grassroots organizations) and the state (in the form of local politicians and state officials) both involve and reinforce patronage and dependency within grassroots organisations” (2001:161). However, the delicate nature of such relations means that they are hard to examine, and community members are reluctant to talk about such matters. Khun CH hints at the issue of the local mafia, who have influential connections and are usually involved in drug dealing, and also clearly prefers to keep politicians at a distance from the community.

By comparison, in Ruam Samakee, district involvement in community elections led to what some residents felt was an un-democratic outcome. Elections were held in September 2007 for the new community committee. Residents thought the elections determined who should take which positions, but at a meeting with the district following the election it was decided that Khun AP should be the leader. As RS10 explains it, *“we selected seven committee members, Pa<sup>1</sup> PAC won, then we saw that she wasn’t the leader and the district had to choose the leader. So now Pa PAC is only a committee member. So what was the point of the elections?”* Though this informant supports Khun PAC, her confusion over the election

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<sup>1</sup> “Pa” is a term of respect meaning “aunt”.

process shows that the district failed in its role of providing adequate information. RS10 continues: *“relations with the district are worse since the election issue”*, and warns the author that *“there will be divisions with regard to the committee”*. The district office should have clarified beforehand that the elections were held to select a committee, from which a leader would be chosen, in line with the 1991 BMA regulations, which state that district staff should preside over a meeting 30 days after the election to select different committee positions..

The cooperative leader explains the election result as follows: *“Pa PAC used to be head, but the community wasn’t [legally] registered so we had to hold the elections again. ... The district said that they had to select the leader from the seven committee members... Here we had never run as teams before so at the district they had to decide on a leader, the district chief said they had to decide at the district, not with the chao ban... Loung<sup>2</sup> AP had already been leader so it was best for him to be leader”*. The process of appointing the community leader lacks transparency and clarity, risking abuse of the system. This situation also highlights the difficulties faced by candidates running independently, without a team. Teams can create factions in communities.

In this case, it seems that the district perpetuated divisions by not explaining the election process clearly before the event, leading to results which displeased some of the community residents, who perceived the outcome as a sign of favouritism between the district and leader. By December 2008, when the author returned to Ruam Samakee, it seemed that residents had accepted that the initial furore over election results had been a misunderstanding, and Khun PAC was working with the committee to resolve the issue of money missing from the cooperative.

## **6.2 The leader as a gatekeeper**

The leader, along with the community team, represents the community to the outside world. The community leader is a gatekeeper, commanding the flows of information in and out of the community, thereby controlling a channel through which social capital can function. This control directs the information that the residents may receive. Khun CH, leader at Klong Toey 7-12, explains: *“There is a coordinator who will transfer the information between*

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<sup>2</sup> “Loung” is a term of respect meaning “uncle”.

*CODI and Baan Mankong. The coordinator is from our team, Khun TE. How much information we get depends on what he'll tell us and what CODI allows him to. Sometimes TE may forget to inform us, so SOC, the union run under CODI, will send someone to inform us again.*" The suggestion that CODI restricts flows of some information highlights the fact that with knowledge comes power, and there is potential for information to be withheld for the benefit of a few. Respondent RS20 says, *"Someone works as a driver for the district, so the district just gives information to him and his cronies, not the whole community"*. This demonstrates the value of vertical linkages and their potential for abuse: linking social capital may be used for personal gain instead of communal benefit. Additionally, as the leadership structure is externally imposed, it could be used by the state to influence or act through leaders as their agents. However, state agencies such as the district and CODI have a responsibility to ensure that information is properly distributed so as to prevent accumulation of power in the hands of certain people. All communities are equipped with district-supplied loudhailers, but as they are controlled by the community committee, information can still be filtered. As BB5 says, *"the only problem with this leader and committee is that they might not give all the information"*.

Sub-groups are one method of overcoming communication problems. In Bang Bua community, sub-groups promote a better flow of information, as BB13 explains: *"I'm a representative of the subgroup so that I can have access to information, and to report back to the other five households. So this way I know what is going on"*. Those interested in community affairs can volunteer to be sub-group heads, in order to be *au fait* with news, whilst mediating interaction between community residents at a sub-group level.

### **6.3 The "privilege" of leadership**

By volunteering to manage the community, leaders risk accusations from disgruntled community members. A common complaint is that the leaders save the best house plots for themselves, or allocated themselves more than one house right: *"Some leaders think that because they fight more [for the community] they should get a better house"* (KT20). KT13 says, *"I think there was some corruption in community leadership. What do they do with the interest? I'm not sure how they calculate things, and pay things with CODI"*. By clarifying such matters, the leaders could save themselves from accusations and avoid misunderstandings.

Some residents accept, without question, that being community leader brings with it benefits, such as RS4, who says the “community leader has been leader since the slum days – it’s normal that his house is pretty”. As the community representative, it is also important that the leader’s house be an example of what is possible. Khun PR of Bang Bua was one of the first to demolish his slum house and rebuild, to demonstrate to dubious residents what could be achieved by upgrading. At the other end of the scale, Khun SAM lives in the slum section of Bonkai, and seems to accept that his section of the community are not yet ready to upgrade their homes.

#### 6.4 Trust in leadership

The respect and trust which community members have in their community leader and the community team are vital towards ensuring that residents have the faith to carry out the upgrading programme. One would expect a community with a well-respected community leader to find it easier to successfully complete the upgrading, as leaders are the agents who mobilise existing stocks of social capital through collective action. The community respondents were asked to rank their trust in the community leader (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Trust rankings (1= very low trust, 5= very high trust)

	Trust in leader
Klong Toey	3.45
Bang Bua	4.17
Bonkai	3.74
Ruam Samakee	3.25
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.65</b>

The Bang Bua leader is the most highly trusted, while Ruam Samakee’s is the least trusted. This question was asked in the context of trust in the government, the police, CODI, politicians, and the landlord. CODI and the community leader scored equally in terms of average scores, reflecting the important role played by these two figures in the communities.

When asking the community residents about leadership, two important issues that arise are corruption, and favouritism. For residents it is important that all parts of the upgrading be fair, especially with regards to the allocation of housing rights, and the location of houses. In Klong Toey 7-12 and Ruam Samakee, the committee members’ houses are centrally located within the community, and are double houses, meaning that they got two rights. This can be



because they merged their rights with those of their children, for example, but for some community residents, it suggests an abuse of power.

Because the community cooperative holds the collective land lease in the name of residents (as required by landowners), residents need to trust the cooperative. If it is regarded as an unreliable institution, their sense of tenure security will be weakened.

### ***Ruam Samakee community***

Ruam Samakee has the most discontent over community leadership, due to the divisive election results in September 2007, and money missing from the cooperative (see 4.5.4). Many community residents perceive the community organisation and the cooperative to be one and the same, further affecting the trust levels for the community organisation, despite the fact that it does not deal with loan money or savings. RS1 recognises that the committee doesn't get paid a wage for their work, and therefore *"I can't say that they aren't good"*. There is however a general feeling that transparency is not the committee's strong point. RS6 believes that *"the committee work to the best of their ability. I don't know if they are transparent"*, while RS3 says that *"the committee work well but it's not very clear on money issues"*. RS4 says that *"There are some money problems, it's not always very clear. But if there are donations of free things they will be shared out fairly"*. Though some residents seem to accept the lack of transparency, for others it is unacceptable, and they can be virulent in their accusations. As RS10 says, *"there are lots of problems with leaders. They are fighting to be on the committee. They get two houses each"*. For RS13, *"money always goes to the relatives of the committee. They even get rights [to houses]. I like Baan Mankong, but why are the committee cheating, unfair? Why aren't they united?"* RS2 also has similar accusations, saying *"if the [potential] skills group gets money, the committee takes the money and eats it<sup>3</sup> so there is no money left for community groups.... Baan Mankong is good, but needs good leaders. But people here think the leaders are good. The committee all get two rights to a plot, everyone else only gets one plot. ... I know about the money stealing because I was on the committee and didn't want to take any money"*. This respondent sees his fellow residents as too passive in their acceptance that the community leadership may benefit from their position. However, rather than exposing the mismanagement, he left the committee.

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<sup>3</sup> The phrase *gin gnuen* (eating money) is used to mean corruption.

Disagreements between community residents and the committee depend on whether the residents feel that they have been treated unfairly. RS7 believes that the “*community leader is close to people*”. It seems almost inevitable that when there is disagreement between community representatives and residents, disputes will turn personal, creating divisions. Those who do not feel that they have been negatively affected by the actions of leaders will have fewer complaints.

### ***Klong Toey community***

Klong Toey 7-12 is another community where the leadership causes antagonism. Because the community suffers from social divisions, this makes the search for a successful leader difficult, as KT6 says, “*we’ve still not found someone who everyone respects but should be able to find one in the future*”. Though many respondents criticise the leadership, they also admit that they don’t want to do the work themselves: “*some groups have problems with the community leaders but I know that myself I wouldn’t be able to achieve anything alone*” (KT6); “*I wouldn’t bother running for a committee position, it’s too much hassle*” (KT18). This lack of enthusiasm makes it difficult to increase choice in elections.

Because Klong Toey 7-12 has not held official elections, this creates the danger of the community being officially unrecognised, and the cooperative committee being blamed for the problems caused by the community organisation, and vice versa. The community leader who led the community through the eviction battle died soon after upgrading was completed, and the reins were taken over by a group who were not officially elected into office. Those with better community connections are therefore more likely to hold power and be unwilling to give it up. As KT17 says, “*we all fought together for our houses yet leaders think they have a higher right, but there have been no elections... only about four or five leaders make the decisions, the other 15 moved away from the committee and had enough. Yet we can’t get the district involved, because they would try to get rid of the leaders. We need community elections every two years, we would get garbage collection, so it has benefits. But the leaders don’t want this*”. Herein lies the problem – without a mandate, being on the committee can be seen as an easy way to grab the best for oneself.

According to KT18, “*the committee cheat, there is eating [corruption]. ... the leaders all got the best located houses*”, despite housing being allocated by lottery. Additionally, there seems to be disagreement between certain members of the leadership, which does not give

the residents much confidence in their position, as the leaders should represent the community to outside groups with a united front.

However, many disagreements with the community leadership may lie at a personal level, and those who disagree with the leaders will be more vocal. For some respondents, the “*community leader makes all the decisions*” (KT5), and “*leaders don’t come to check on me*” (KT16). Approval in the leadership may lie closely with friendships and whether people know committee members. For many of the respondents, the “*leaders look after members well, there’s collective decision-making, leaders make announcements*” (KT14).

### ***Bang Bua community***

Bang Bua community seems to have avoided leadership divisions and disputes, and a measure of the present leadership’s success can be found in the fact that Khun PR has been an elected leader for 10 years, and “*other people don’t dare run for leadership because the current leader is so good*” (BB15). In Bang Bua, the community organisation and the cooperative team work closely together. Bang Bua residents recognise the importance of the leadership in making Baan Mankong successful – comparisons are often made to Ruam Jai Samakee community next door, where “*there was possibly favouritism, some people got more land and so on, it creates problems. Here we’re all equal*” (BB24). In Bang Bua, the leader has been praised as “*the one who made Baan Mankong possible, he will listen to everyone*” (BB3), and because all the committee is good, “*people are willing to help*” (BB9). As BB3 explains, the leader “*has money yet he still participates with people, he stayed in the community, when he could afford a nice home elsewhere*”, and he is approachable, so “*if I have any doubts about PR I will just go and talk to him, so it’s totally transparent*” (BB24). The work of the committee is regarded as clear and transparent by most respondents, with only BB14 saying that there is “*50:50 clarity with the current leader, as we can’t inspect him*”, while BB21 admits that “*I wouldn’t know if they were cheating*”. BB12 was the most critical: “*I’ll only give the leader 2/5 because he put us in debt*”, while BB19 believes that “*the committee is still not cracking down on the problem people. The old leader was stronger. This new leader is not so forceful so he has fewer followers*”. This appears to be a minority view.

### ***Bonkai community***

Bonkai community's leadership, though not as well-regarded as that in Bang Bua, does not provoke as much debate as that of Klong Toey and Ruam Samakee. During the initial stages of the upgrading process, Bonkai was led by Khun Sangwarn, a dedicated fighter against eviction. After a serious car accident he moved to the countryside, but he is still highly regarded. B14 says that *"after his accident lots of people came to visit him because he fought so well for them"*, and B17 explains that *"if Loung Sangwarn were still here things would move fast, we are thinking of inviting him back to speed things up"*. This highlights the importance of a charismatic and respected leader in uniting a community. Khun Sangwarn was replaced by Khun SAM, who lives in the non-upgraded Bonkai slum, and according to one resident he *"fights well but has little heart"* (B3), while B5 emphasises that *"the leader is not afraid"*. However, though he may be a fighter, according to B6, *"he has not achieved anything, his term is nearly over and they still live in a slum [on the non-upgraded side]"*. B5 disagrees, saying that *"I don't want to split the management of the committee between the upgraded and non-upgraded parts, the leadership have already achieved this much"*.

In Bonkai, the cooperative and community teams work closely together and can be regarded as one team by residents, though the cooperative team has more contact with residents as they collect loan repayments. The residents generally seem to think the leadership work well: *"the committee are good, no cheating or anything"* (B7), and B13 adds that *"they work transparently"*. However, for others, there is always the possibility of cheating by the committee, with B18 stating that *"I think leaders now are eating, cheating... some of the committee are good, they help. The other half don't help"*, while B1 thinks that *"if you want to be leader you need lots of relatives in the community"*. One respondent believes that people work for the community for personal benefit, saying *"some people work on the committee just to get face"* (B16). Perceptions of corruption will depend on personal experience and relations with the committee persons in question, with B15 saying *"I think they are clear but someone else might not"*. However, the residents find the decision-making process of the committee acceptable, as they are consulted where necessary, as *"for some things they will ask the residents, but for some things they can make the decisions without asking"* (B11).

## Loan Repayments

Different communities have different methods of dealing with those who are late in repaying loans. In Klong Toey, there is resentment over the committee's methods for dealing with late debtors: *"sometimes the community leaders tell us off over the loudhailers"* (KT7); *"The committee will announce over the loudspeakers the house number, as though the money is theirs to be paid back, and not the government's money"* (KT17). The Bonkai cooperative posts the names of residents who are behind on payments on community noticeboards (Figure 6.2). Though this is also a way of shaming residents into payment, it is less direct than making announcements over the loudhailer. In Bang Bua, the leaders prefer a more personal approach, negotiating a solution with the household in question. Khun DM explains that *"it embarrasses people when you write up their names if they can't pay. We don't do this, we prefer to discuss issues. There is no telling off"*. The flexible approach is appreciated by residents, as one resident explained: *"I borrowed 150,000B and it's [the house] still not finished. The committee let me finish the house first as they know I can't repay yet"*. Such an approach also demonstrates to residents that they are trusted by the committee.

Figure 6.2: Notice of late repayments

ลำดับ	เลขที่โฉนดที่ดิน	เลขที่โฉนด	ชื่อ - สกุล	จำยัด	ชำระ		เงินต้น	ที่ค้าง		แยกแต่ละรายการ			สุทธิ	
					งวดก่อน	งวดนี้		เงินต้น	เงินต้น	ดอกเบี้ย	ค่าปรับ	คงค้าง		
13	12-046	41	นายหญิง ศรีแก้ว	23 พ.ค. 51	1,400	ค.พ.-51	141,323	6	35	8,400	542	16	1,380	10,338
4	12-047	52	นายบุญธรรม กมร	9 พ.ค. 51	1,500	พ.ค.-51	168,753	7	49	10,500	906	24	1,610	13,040
5	12-048	58	นางหนูจีน ศรีพนธ์	23 พ.ค. 51	1,200	มิ.ย.-51	135,139	6	35	7,200	518	14	1,380	9,112
6	12-049	60	นายสมเดช วรพสุศรี	2 พ.ค. 51	1,200	ค.พ.-51	118,027	4	56	4,800	724	22	920	6,466
7	12-050	66	นายวรวรรณกร คุณมี	31 พ.ค. 51	1,200	มิ.ย.-51	66,985	6	119	7,200	874	47	1,380	9,501
8	12-051	82	นางคิม นรมาศย์	7 พ.ค. 51	1,700	พ.ค.-51	196,765	7	112	11,900	2,415	63	1,610	15,988
9	12-052	138	นายชัชวาลย์ คำพันธ์	15 มิ.ย. 51	1,700	มิ.ย.-51	195,401	6	196	10,200	4,197	110	1,380	15,887
10	12-053	171	นายทวารวดี บุญชนะ	6 มิ.ย. 51	1,700	ม.ค.-50	210,164	24	266	40,800	6,126	149	5,520	52,595
11	12-054	173	นายวิญญูศักดิ์ สมพรภรณ์	31 พ.ค. 51	1,700	ค.พ.-51	192,596	4	119	6,800	2,512	67	920	10,298
12	12-055	174	นายฉัตร สมพรภรณ์	31 พ.ค. 51	1,700	ค.พ.-51	192,596	4	119	6,800	2,512	67	920	10,298
13	12-056	229	นางศันษา คำพันธ์	12 พ.ค. 51	1,700	ค.พ.-51	198,755	4	77	6,800	1,677	43	920	9,440
14	12-057	256	นายธีรวิทย์ รามธนบุรี	8 มิ.ย. 51	1,700	ค.พ.-51	198,638	10	203	17,000	4,419	113	2,300	23,832
										261,200	54,564	1,558	37,490	354,812

## 6.5 From the leaders' point of view

### Klong Toey 7-12

Klong Toey's acting community head, Khun CH, and the cooperative head, Khun TE, were interviewed. The cooperative has a committee of 11 persons, dealing with the housing loans

and debt, liaising with CODI, collecting repayment money, and renting the land from the Port. Another team cares for the roads and communal areas in the community, while a third group runs the community's Microsoft-sponsored computer centre.

### *Community relations*

Though neither mentioned community divisions directly, Khun CH acknowledged that some people trust the leaders, and some people are never satisfied. Some residents who are unsatisfied with the leader will “*talk behind our backs*”, while others will speak directly to the leader. Khun TE explains that some residents do not see committee members as representatives, but as “*an employee who will solve everyone's problems*”, and therefore, instead of helping out, they expect the leaders to do everything, demonstrating a lack of reciprocity.

The leaders acknowledge that community participation has fallen since the completion of the upgrading, though participation remains high for traditional activities such as merit-making ceremonies. Khun CH states that “*we need the people to come join us in every activity we run, however, we cannot force them to*”. Partly, this is due to the lack of a uniting impetus for action, such as the threat of eviction. Khun TE explains that “*For about five years there was not much activity in the savings group, as the Port were not threatening as much. Problems made the group stronger, encouraged the group to re-form*”. Even an external threat is no guarantee of true participation, as Khun CH explains: “*Let me talk about the time we got evicted. There were many who joined the committee group, but there were just 4-5 who really did the job. Everyone wanted to get a place but no one wanted to work*”. Another reason for participation being higher is because “*CODI only accepts strong communities onto the program*”, according to Khun TE. Therefore residents did what was necessary to gain funding. However, some people obtained a right to a house despite never participating in any activities.

Khun CH ranks the community's rate of participation at about 60-70%. Khun TE concurs with 70% - he explains that “*households not having any urgent problems is already a form of participation*” in itself. He acknowledges that though people have a better quality of life, many now face debt problems. At the time of the interview, approximately 20 households of the 91 that took out a loan were not repaying their loans. The cooperative implements a fine for late payments, making the committee unpopular with some residents. The fine was 25

satang<sup>4</sup> per 100B for the first days of lateness, to encourage repayment on time, increasing to 75 satang per 100B, because *“if you pay that late you’re not bothered [about repayment]”*. However, the leaders realised that this was putting people off repaying, and in February 2008 they changed it to 25 satang per 100B per day for everyone. Fining individuals who missed a few payments risked putting them off repaying altogether, creating a vicious cycle of non-payment. The system of increasing fines did not recognise the possibility of some people genuinely not being able to afford repayments, and suggests a lack of flexibility and trust in community members by the leadership, which would not facilitate trust formation.

A lack of clarity about the interest rate which the cooperative charges creates more problems, and hence distance, between residents and leaders. The government loan was given at a base rate of 3%, and the cooperative charges an additional 2%, as is usual, to cover administration expenses, and to generate a reserve of money to cover lapses in payment. The committee leaders admit that they know that residents think they use the money personally. This misunderstanding could be resolved by displaying the cooperative’s accounts publicly.

### ***Relations with outsiders***

Community leaders are the link between communities and the external organisations involved in the upgrading process. According to Khun TE, the community is on *“equal terms”* with other groups, who have to listen to him as he is the community representative. Khun CH acknowledges that though many residents may be less educated, *“fortunately, there are young, educated people on our team. Some chao ban are confident enough to express their feelings when we are in meetings with outsiders.”* She adds that *“we talk from our hearts”*, meaning that the residents know from experience what they want to see in their community.

The community’s relations with CODI are close, with Khun CH saying that *“CODI always support the chao ban in work, and then CODI will coordinate with other organisations for us, such as the Port”*. Khun CH believes that CODI has the community under its care, and therefore CODI will do the negotiating with the Port should any problems arise over the land lease: *“we’re not worried about that because our houses are under the care of CODI. We’ll let CODI negotiate with the Port”*.

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<sup>4</sup> 100 satang = 1 baht.

In terms of relationships with the Port, Khun CH states that *“PAT does not have negative feelings toward us as we’ve made the land contract with them, it’s a three year contract”*. As long as the Port has no plans to use the land, the contract is expected to be renewed every 3 years for a minimum period of 15 years. Khun TE accepts that communications with the PAT are slow, as they only meet monthly, though community problems often arise more frequently. However, as tenants, the community is in a position of dependency.

### ***Bang Bua***

The community leader of Bang Bua, Khun PR, was interviewed, along with Khun DM, a zone leader. Khun NON, a committee member in charge of Baan Mankong finances, was interviewed separately.

### ***Community relations***

Khun PR, an army sergeant, has been community leader for 10 years. He is obviously proud of his community’s achievements, and he accepts that a large part of these achievements rest upon the relationship of trust he has built up with the residents. As he explains, his house was rebuilt first, because he *“believed it could be done and thus had to prove it. This drove me”*. Under the previous community leader, money went missing from the savings group. Khun PR therefore had to rebuild trust in the savings systems, as well as in his ideas for community improvement. According to Khun DM, the previous leader had family members on his committee and *“would tell people off for not participating”*. Change was necessary and according to Khun DM, when Khun PR became the new leader, *“it was like the sky opening, with new ideas, so they had to try him”*.

Khun PR admits that the upgrading process was not easy to start with, and took three years to get off the ground. At the beginning of his leadership, he faced distrust, with some community residents producing a leaflet resisting Baan Mankong as it would only create debt. When the community cooperative moved the community’s savings to a bank on CODI’s advice, he faced accusations that he stole the money. Thus, Khun PR realised the importance of promoting communication within the community, for example through the use of sub-groups and zones. He saw collective action projects, such as the initial canal-cleaning campaign, as a way of spreading power amongst the residents.



Transparency is key to the upgrading process. Khun DM records how many building materials were purchased, delivered and at what price, keeping an account book for each house. Though this requires more work, it prevents problems in the long term. The building material suppliers are encouraged to sell directly to the individual households, rather than the community buying materials collectively. This protects the community leaders from accusations of corruption, and gives residents control over their own houses. Khun PR sees himself as an example for the community in the upgrading process. As he explains, *“this is the problem with the leaders – they see money and their eyes become big, they never see the households anymore”*. He recognises that in Bang Bua, the households form the backbone of the community. Khun DM explains that *“Every community wants to change; but with weak leaders, the money disappears”*. The example was given of another community facing eviction, where the leader had a house elsewhere, and therefore did not face the same urgency as his community members. This is not the case in Bang Bua, and as Khun DM jokes, *“Try telling householders that the leaders said they are leaving tomorrow, and see how they react”*.

Khun DM acknowledges that it is necessary to *“give people your heart before they will give you yours”*, for example by chatting with householders. Using forceful words will not help. Khun DM specifies that all the committee listen to the householders, and it is important for committee members to show people that they want nothing from them, other than participation. The zone group system works because people can build up trust by realising that the leaders are working for the group and not for their own benefit.

Khun NON specifies that residents don't see the committee as “heroes”. As the community members can work well together, work is made easier for the committee. The committee is proud that the community has won prizes, for being a safe community, anti-drugs awards, and a World Habitat day award. These prizes signal an acceptance of the community's achievements from wider society. Khun PR has received an honorary degree for his work in promoting collective action, from Sripatum University, which cooperated with the community during upgrading. For Khun NON, the work makes her *“tired, very tired, but seeing results makes me happy and proud”*.

Khun PR believes that the Baan Mankong programme given community residents the independence to do many things by themselves, rather than waiting for politicians to provide

funding and resources to the community. Now, people can generate funds through the savings group, and “*chao ban are more willing to help each other like when they give a hand for building new houses and cleaning the canal*”. The Treasury gave this community the right to develop the land before other communities along Bang Bua canal, as it felt this community was strong. Not only did it give the community a collective lease<sup>5</sup>, it also measured out housing plots for residents, and other organisations which helped the community such as Sripatum University and the district were “*impressed by the chao ban’s enthusiasm*”. CODI and other groups want to learn from the community, and see it as one of the best examples of Baan Mankong. Khun PR is proud of his community, and says that “*I can tell you that Rim Klong Bang Bua is the first community of Baan Mankong that was based on the chao ban’s [initiative]*”.

### ***Relations with outsiders***

The community and CODI enjoy good relations. Khun NON says that CODI is the “*heart of the community*”, providing funds, and training her in accounting. Khun DM acknowledges that although CODI has tried hard to renew slums, they usually failed, as their programs only ever reached the community leader and stopped there.

CODI suggested to the community that they should negotiate for tenure over the land, shifting the focus of the community’s activities from cleaning the canal, to improving housing. In Bang Bua, it was decided that those people whose houses were built over the water would be shifted onto dry land, even though they settled last in the community. Khun PR thought that to get everyone’s participation in the upgrading project, all households should get equal amounts of land. The community was divided into 28 groups of five households to promote discussion about upgrading. Discussions began in 2003, and it took 3 years to get the approval of all residents and to plan the upgrading, before construction could begin. Community members were initially hesitant, and construction plans had to accommodate everyone’s wishes, even though not everyone agreed to join in at the same time. The strongest sub-groups in terms of readiness and money management started first, as once one group showed it was possible then others would be willing to join in.

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<sup>5</sup> Though the community started upgrading before the lease was finalised, demonstrating a belief in the Treasury’s commitment. Additionally, by investing in their housing before there was a lease, this put a certain amount of pressure on the Treasury not to renege on their agreement.

Relations between Bang Bua community and Bang Khen district are good. The community was unsure for a while who the land belonged to, and Khun PR invited the district to act as the “mother in charge” in order to ensure that all relevant stakeholders were involved in the upgrading process. The community faced many problems from regulations unsympathetic to those living in low-income communities. For example, regulations state that houses have to be built eight metres from the canal, and Khun PR made requests to bypass these regulations and introduce policies to help the poor who have very limited access to land. Now, Bang Bua is regularly used to showcase the Baan Mankong method, including by the district authorities themselves.

### ***Bonkai***

In Bonkai, the community leader, Khun SAM, the cooperative leader, Khun DA, and a committee member, Khun CHO, were interviewed. The community committee has 25 members whilst the cooperative has 11, though they overlap. The community holds an annual general meeting, to which the whole community membership is invited, and requires a 60% quorum to pass decisions. In late 2008, a new cooperative team was selected, though Khun DA retains an advisory role.

### ***Community relations***

Khun SAM explained that the community has had a savings group since 1992 to promote togetherness and provide low-interest loans for businesses. Khun SAM is proud that the community won a “strong community” prize two years ago. Residents of this community help each other, especially when they were in a desperate situation following the 2001 fire. People joined together to help in phase 1 of the upgrading, even those not living in that phase. As a result, trust now is high in the community, and people “*believe in the leader, they will do what the leader says. Before the fire it was tua kai tua man [each to himself]*”. However, at a community meeting in May 2008 to choose a contractor for phase 3, the community leaders clarified that “*it’s up to the members to choose the appropriate contractor, not the cooperative or the community committee. So [you] members can’t then blame the representatives or leaders for getting into debt*”. The cooperative leadership are making it clear that members have to take responsibility for their actions, since the cooperative is only acting as their representative.

Khun DA manages housing loan repayments, and collects savings for those wishing to undergo the next phase of upgrading in the community. At the moment, the repayment rate for the first two phases is about 90%, and there is a fine for repayments that are made later than the first week of each month. She says that in order to get the CODI loan, it was necessary for *“the cooperative, members and construction team to be close. The cooperative needs to know who is in debt, their wages, the number of household members and so on. So I’ve got a lot to do!”* She says that people *“don’t give money easily so we need the right information”*. In addition to the housing savings groups, some of the community’s subgroups have a 5 or 10 baht-a-day savings scheme, thereby building trust within each lane.

### ***Relations with outsiders***

Relations with the Crown Property Bureau (CPB), the landowner, are good and “tight”, according to Khun SAM. He states that the CPB has never tried to evict the community, they just want to ensure that housing is developed on the land. However, the CPB put a condition in the land lease forbidding modifications to the houses, a rule which a number of households have broken, for example by adding extra windows. Khun DA has to ensure that the households follow this condition of the lease, and she says that *“there are twenty houses that have made changes already... I don’t know what will happen to these twenty houses, but other houses are forbidden to alter or extend”*.

With regards to relations to the district, Khun DA states *“I fight with the district a lot. There are 16 communities in Pathumwan and the district helps very little”*. There is resentment between the community and district over the fact that the former leader, Khun Sangwarn, was arrested when he started rebuilding his home following the fire, though relations were good before the fire. According to Khun CHO, some local politicians created divisions within the community, which also made the district officials *“scared of the politicians”*. The district initially wanted to fine the community 1.2 million baht from the cooperative funds for rebuilding without permission, however, this fine eventually was lowered to about 500B per household, and Khun Sangwarn was sent to prison. Relations between the community and the district now are better, though Khun DA believes that Bang Khen and Klong Toey districts provide better help to their communities, and Bonkai community could also benefit from more assistance from academics and soldiers, who can provide technical knowledge and manpower in construction, respectively.

Khun DA says that in order to do Baan Mankong, she has to participate in the events and activities run by CODI, the SOC network and the CPB: “*doing Baan Mankong led me to the society outside: the district, the CPB, CODI*”, and therefore the upgrading scheme had a positive effect on her vertical linkages.

### ***Ruam Samakee***

In Ruam Samakee community, the elected community leader, Khun AP, and the head of the cooperative, Khun WA, were both interviewed in May 2008, as was Khun PAC<sup>6</sup>, the committee member who won the majority of votes in the September 2007 elections. Khun AP was re-interviewed in a discussion with two other members of the committee in January 2009. In the intervening period, Khun AP became more aware of the cooperative’s failure to repay loans to CODI and the full land rent to the Crown Property Bureau.

### ***Community relations***

As section 6.1 explained, in the community elections of September 2007, Khun PAC was independently running for the position of community leader, and she claims that the six other candidates all had connections with the district office. Though Khun PAC won the election by 90 votes to Khun AP’s 70, this did not make her leader as many community residents believed it would, and at a meeting at the district office, it was decided that Khun AP should be the committee leader. Khun PAC had a letter published in Siam Rath<sup>7</sup> newspaper over this matter, which raised awareness about the poor communication of election procedures by the district office. Though this issue has now been resolved, Khun PAC continues to fight for clarity from the cooperative over the management of the community’s savings and loans, and has encouraged some households to withhold loan repayments. She is a member of the community organisation team but is operating largely independently when it comes to the issue of the cooperative. She alleges that the cooperative has not closed its accounts for 5 years, and failed to repay CODI for up to 6 months, a sum totalling 600,000B, though CODI never asked the community residents about this (interview 6/5/08). Khun PAC arranged a meeting at the police station with a number of residents to file a complaint against the cooperative, to which the cooperative head, Khun WA, was invited. Khun WA did not appear, but Khun AP went, and this was when he learnt that the cooperative had not been paying land

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<sup>6</sup> Khun PAC was often referred to using her nickname, though for consistency, her real name is used throughout.

<sup>7</sup> A major Thai language newspaper.

rent to the CPB. This demonstrates poor communication within the community committee, on which both Khun AP and Khun PAC serve.

Khun PAC has written to various relevant organisations: CODI, the CPB, the Ministry of Human Security and Social Development amongst others, encouraging them to *“take a look at what has been going and do something about the corruption here”* – however, the matter is delicate as she alleges that the CPB ground-level staff are also implicated. Khun AP admits in January 2009 that the pressing issue is to balance the accounts of the cooperative and clarify matters, as *“people don’t know why they should save if the cooperative is not transparent”*, and CODI also will not give them the money to finish the flats (planned for the community renters) until then. The community has fallen into a vicious circle, as many residents no longer trust the cooperative to look after their savings.

Khun AP and Khun WA acknowledge that community participation is lower now than it was during the upgrading process. Khun WA says that *“the community is not as strong as before, people have to work to earn an income”*, and that now that the community is legalised, people have more expenses compared to before the upgrading when neither the land nor houses were paid for. Khun AP says people are *“a little distanced”*, though participation is still high for festivities. Khun AP also expresses plans to promote community interaction, such as by leaving the ground storey of the apartment building as open space for public gatherings, and opening a day-care centre. Khun AP would like Ruam Samakee to serve as an example to the rest of the country.

According to Khun WA, nearly a third of households are no longer repaying their loans. This is partly due to Khun PAC encouraging residents to withhold repayments. Khun WA recognises that trust within the community has fallen, which she says arises from the fact that other people have moved in the community, *“people from all regions of Thailand, so there are different ways of thinking”*, and also *“trust in the committee has fallen, they said that the committee are eating money [corrupt] in phase 1”*. She alleges that the opposing team in the community elections invested money into buying votes, and were very unhappy when they lost. She also believes that Khun PAC has on her side those who don’t want to pay back their housing loans. For Khun WA, *“Loung AP had already been leader so it was best for him to be leader. The cooperative and community have to work in the same direction”*. With regard to the stalled construction of flats for the remaining community members, she says that the

*“residents are creating problems, if they had not divided themselves and gone with CODI it would be finished by now. But residents want bigger rooms and so on”*. Therefore, a lack of unity and unwillingness to compromise by the residents still awaiting flats is the root cause of the problem, though again she blames Khun PAC for causing problems with her accusations against the cooperative.

When asked why she has chosen to work for the community, Khun PAC clarifies that *“you don’t get any money [as leader], so why are people fighting over it, you don’t get a wage. But I get pride in being a human being”*. Elections are coming up again in September 2009 – Khun PAC claims she does not want to run, but *“people tell me I have to”*. She also faces misconceptions from residents about her role: *“People think when I’m leader I can buy them beer”*. In Khun WA’s words, the qualities a cooperative leader needs are *“to be strong and take responsibility, and listen to others”*.

### ***Relations with outsiders***

With regards to the relations between the community and CODI, Khun AP feels let down by CODI, and says *“I can say that now CODI failed me, I really want to present Baan Mankong and CODI in a positive way but now I really don’t know what to say”*. He believes CODI is too focussed on getting the Baan Mankong project running in too many communities: *“I just feel CODI, now, is trying to expand their kingdom by bringing up new communities to be in Baan Mankong but abandon old ones like us”*. This is fairly damning, and Khun AP feels that CODI should hire more staff, rather than send SOC members to help communities, as they are not professionals. Further, in his opinion, CODI are more concerned with the community clearing old debt than in giving the community more funds in order to finish construction of the flats, without understanding that some households are too poor to be able to pay back their debts regularly. Consequently, CODI has more contact with the cooperative than with the community management.

Though Khun PAC acknowledges that Baan Mankong is a good government programme, there is lack of clarity in the way that the CODI staff and community committee manage things, and there is apparently a mismatch between what residents are repaying to the cooperative, and what the cooperative is actually feeding through to CODI. She believes that CODI need to *“stand straight”*, as she feels that they are siding with the cooperative.

Relations between the community and the landowner, the CPB, are more regular, with monthly meetings. The community needed the permission and approval of the CPB in order to upgrade, and to get permanent housing registration for the community.

Khun AP feels that the relationship between the community and the local district office has been good for a long time. The district is willing to help when necessary, for example by providing garbage collection. Khun AP is aware that the community was, until recently, illegal, and therefore understood that the district could not register them formally. However, the Community Development officer of Wang Thong Lang district office said “*don’t talk just to Pa PAC about this. She doesn’t get on with the district*” (27/5/08), due to the election conflict. He stated that the district is “*central party*”, it doesn’t want divisions in communities. However, in this case it perpetuated the division between the two committee leaders, hence creating factions in Ruam Samakee, and the district also appears to have taken sides against Khun PAC. Some residents may perceive this as meaning that Khun AP benefits from a privileged relationship with the district.

## **6.6 The training of leaders**

With regard to the training of community leaders, the cooperative head in Ruam Samakee explains how she was given training by CODI: “*CODI trained me as a leader for 8 months, I had meetings upcountry, seminars, climbed mountains at night. You need to be strong and take responsibility, listen to others. I really benefited from this*”. However, when the cooperative was accused of stealing money, “*some committee members quit... CODI said that I couldn’t stop being the cooperative head. I stopped for two months but CODI told me I had to continue*”. Hence it is important to have more than one qualified person to act as leader, of the community or cooperative, not only to increase choice but also increase the skill set of the community members and get more of them interested in the running of the community. The committees would also benefit from getting youth interested in the community finance and management.

CODI also runs training days at the CODI headquarters<sup>8</sup>, and many of those are run through the National Urban Poor Communities Development Organisation (SOC) slum network. Some sessions are specifically for the heads of cooperatives, whilst others provide training to

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<sup>8</sup> Located on Nawamin road, in Bang Kapi district of Bangkok.



communities wishing to apply to do Baan Mankong. The SOC, which consists of volunteers from various communities, provides much of the training to communities. In this way, SOC members are passing down knowledge gained through their own experiences and from the training they each received previously.

### **6.7 Leaders as networkers**

As well as being active within their own communities, some of the leaders are active within the SOC movement. As a result, some community residents may feel that their leader spends too little time dealing with their own community's problems, as they instead visit other communities, both in Thailand and abroad. Because some community leaders devote themselves to improving the lot of the urban poor, their interests also lie outside their communities, and many see their work with the SOC as a full-time role, especially once they deem their own community to have finished the bulk of the upgrading process. This is explored further in Chapter 7.

### **6.8 Conclusion**

A number of important points emerge from these case studies. The community leader functions as an agent for the community, and a capable agent must be able to make the most of the community's social capital for continued productive use, for example by looking for further collective action projects. If these projects are successful, the leaders and their committee will be more likely to stay in power. Thus leaders are a vital component of the circle of participation, mobilising the stocks of social capital. Leaders should know about a community's needs and what works best. It is in the community residents' interest to maintain unity in order to ensure successful completion of the project, and the community leader has a large role to play in ensuring this unity is achieved.

The strength of a leadership preceding the upgrading process can be regarded as a stock of social capital. If the leaders show solidarity to the residents, then this will feed through to facilitate the upgrading programme. In Bang Bua, Ruam Samakee and Bonkai, the current leaders were already community heads when the upgrading programme began, and therefore had time to earn the community's trust. The act of upgrading can further cement the leader's position as community chief if he or she successfully implements Baan Mankong, though it can also cause a breakdown in trust and respect.

The success of a leader depends largely on how trusted he is, and this trust depends on transparency and accountability, which, along with participation, form the basis of good governance. According to Akin (1975), the community leader acts as the anchorage, the centre of the community's personal networks. The leader has a role in enforcing rules to avoid the unravelling of cooperation, and for this they need the respect and trust of residents. However, it seems the whole committee plays this role, not simply the leader. Residents see receiving equal and fair treatment from the committee as important – favouritism is likely to cause discontent, and if people feel like they are being treated unfairly, their willingness to participate will fall. Consequently, Ruam Samakee and Klong Toey 7-12 face difficulties because community management is not regarded as clear or fair. According to Narayan et al., (2000), good governance, for the poor, means achieving recognition, and no corruption. Corruption is badly regarded at the community level, because it directly affects the residents, especially if their savings go missing, and represents a breach of trust and a lack of respect for fellow residents.

Perhaps the externally-imposed structure of elected community committees should not be required in all communities, as some might benefit from a more equal structure which does not give one person, or team of persons, more power than others. In the past, the voluntary nature of leadership meant power was often held by the privileged few who benefited from strong linkages. However, despite the democratic system, power can still be co-opted by a team, putting those candidates running independently at a disadvantage, as happened in Ruam Samakee. Rather than promoting democratic governance, when elections go wrong it can lead to disillusionment with the democratic system. However, democratic leadership elections mean that unsuccessful leaders who do not promote the community's interests should not be re-elected, unless there is a dearth of alternatives.

When talking to the leaders themselves, a variety of leadership styles emerge, and one can see how these styles can influence the relationship between the leaders and the community residents. The evidence suggests that “nakleng” gangster characteristics are no longer prevalent, especially as community elections have been introduced, and so the position of leader no longer necessarily goes to the person with most power and prestige. It is important for the leaders to be approachable to the residents, so that concerns can be discussed and mutually agreeable solutions found. Full transparency in community decisions helps to promote trust. Naming and shaming residents who are behind on loan repayments, which

happens in Klong Toey 7-12, is not conducive in promoting social cohesion, as the residents concerned feel resentment, and embarrassment in the face of their neighbours.

Community leaders are not only the anchor in the community, they also act as the bridge between the community and outside stakeholders, channelling information between the two sides, and representing the community to outsiders. Leaders have been given the authority to act not only by community members, but also by the district office and CODI. They can set their own terms for collaboration, rather than having them imposed from above by outside parties. It seems that leaders are generally on good terms with these external groups. This is essential for ensuring that the communities can get the most out of these vertical linkages – again, if there is a transparent leadership, residents should not need to worry about the possibility of the resultant benefits from these linkages not being shared equally. The strengthening of linkages between community leaders and external organisations such as CODI and district offices are furthering the breakdown of traditional patron-client ties, as it is now easier for communities to collaborate with government agencies. Additionally, slum networks like the SOC are also playing a vital role in breaking the historical vertical patronage ties, as the urban poor increasingly rely on each other through horizontal associations, rather than persons in positions of power, to meet their needs. The role of slum networks will be explored in the following chapter, as are the vertical ties which exist between communities and external agents such as the state.

## **Chapter 7 – Slum Networks and Institutional Relations**

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### **7.1 Inter-community linkages**

#### **7.1.1 The SOC**

#### **7.1.2 The Four Regions Slum Network**

#### **7.1.3 International level networks**

#### **7.1.4 Conclusion**

### **7.2 Community-state linkages**

#### **7.2.1 Community-State Linkages**

#### **7.2.2 State-Community Linkages**

#### **7.2.3 Conclusion**

### **7.3 Core empirical chapters**

Chapters 5 and 6 examined the outcomes of the Baan Mankong process at the intra-community level, focusing on bonding social capital. It was concluded that though participation necessarily increased during the process of upgrading, once houses were built, community residents had other priorities, and collective activities were no longer dominant. However, Baan Mankong also promotes bridging social capital, by uniting communities around a common goal through networks, whilst encouraging linkages between communities and state agencies.

### **7.1 Inter-community linkages**

Networks create bridging social capital by linking communities. Communities can be part of networks at different levels – local, regional, national and international - which perform varying functions. This section focuses on national level networks, notably the National Urban Poor Communities Development Organisation (SOC), which was formed as an offshoot of the Baan Mankong project, and is integral to the programme’s scaling up. Its methods and approaches are compared to those of the Four Regions Slum Network (S4P), another national-level network, with a longer history of fighting for the rights of the poor. Networks can provide vertical linkages, linking community residents to state agencies, by functioning as “a channel through which the poor can access, control, or contest policy processes, or engage in political discourses” (Mwangi and Markelova, 2008:24). Under conditions of good governance, the state should complement the functions of these social groups, allowing for the creation of state-society synergy. However, networks may sometimes function as a replacement, rather than complement of the state, facilitating the provision of certain services where there is market or state failure.

### 7.1.1 The National Urban Poor Communities Development Organisation (SOC)

*“One community on its own will not achieve much, we need to form networks and turn up and make demands as a larger group” – A SOC member*

The SOC (*Sahapan Pattana Ongkorn Chumchon Konjon Muang Chart*) was founded in September 2006, with CODI’s backing, formalising an existing informal network of community residents who had participated in Baan Mankong. The two core aims of SOC are:

- 1) to solve the problems of community organisations of the poor in cities;
- 2) to collectively push forward policy changes with the state.

The SOC website<sup>1</sup> emphasises that community residents need to be at the core of Baan Mankong upgrading.

SOC works closely with CODI. Because CODI lacks staff to deal with the full scale of the Baan Mankong programme, it delegates many of its community-level functions to SOC. SOC is staffed entirely by volunteers who are reimbursed for their expenses for attending meetings, up to 300B per day, funded by CODI and contributions from community cooperatives. SOC is a national network, with seven regional teams. This study only examines the Bangkok team, through participant observation of SOC meetings at CODI and within communities.

The need for SOC is recognised by community members and CODI staff. As Khun Roy, head of CODI operations in Bangkok and Eastern region, explains, *“the BMA has two or three people working in 50 districts, which is impossible to cope with, so we need to get community members to solve their problems themselves. Plus we have SOC working on this, on loans and savings.”* He recognises that there are separate roles for community members and government staff, saying that *“staff may be more educated so they can help with writing things up, and can also help to think about things. Staff and communities need to work as a team, it’s not for staff to boss people around or just give money”*. There is a mutually beneficial relationship between CODI and SOC members helping to facilitate their work. This close relationship facilitates the access that the urban poor have to other government agencies, through the vertical linkages that CODI can provide as a public organisation.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nulico.com>

SOC links the urban poor, which is central to bridging social capital, as it gives access to more resources, as well as sharing of experiences, and with this they can achieve change. The network members have created an identity for themselves around their ability and willingness to upgrade, calling themselves the *chao chumchon baan mankong prachar samakee*: the united citizens of Baan Mankong. It seems they have been collectively empowered by the upgrading project. Khun Lek from CODI explains that the distribution of society means “*the poor get a very small plot, politicians get half, and civil servants get some. SOC joins up these small plots held by the poor so that the poor people have more space in the city, so that the poor can come out and speak at the district level*”. The process of fighting for their communities has brought residents together: “*they have all been fighting, have been squeezed, by government offices, land owners, they have gone to jail and so on, over 10 years. ... They have gained more than houses, they have friends, they know each other for at least five years so they have closeness from fighting together, the poor are like relatives. ... To be heard they have to be numerous. They get power from numbers. People won’t listen to one community, won’t listen to 10, so they need 100.*” Khun Lek is also a community activist from Klong Toey 7-12 community, as his repeated use of the phrase of communities “fighting” against the state and land owners suggests.

Community residents active in SOC explain its importance in terms of the limitations of CODI’s ability to help the poor, despite being a government agency. According to one, “*poor people are getting together to fight for land because they don’t have back up, CODI doesn’t have the strength and manpower to help everyone, so they are getting poor people to help themselves*”. For another, “*Desperate community members set up SOC because no one was helping them, the CODI organisation used to be small. ... If we don’t work collectively, the government doesn’t care about people*”. SOC emerged from the community residents, as a reaction to the lack of representation and solutions from the state, as another member explained: “*We have to help others who haven’t done Baan Mankong yet... Before Baan Mankong we struggled to find people to help us, this way there is no need to wait for government or district help*”.

According to Khun PR from Bang Bua, “*CODI doesn’t have much strength, so the community residents have to use their strength. ... Khun Somsook is leaving, her replacement will come from the government, so community residents need to demonstrate now that they can do it..... SOC stays constant as the government and CODI can change*”. SOC has

maintained the momentum to keep the Baan Mankong project going, and now, “*people look at us as the heart of Baan Mankong*”. However, this does mean the network is very narrowly focussed.

Because community residents suffer directly from unfriendly policies, changing policy is one of their core aims. Khun Lek explains that “*land policy is SOC’s main problem. [They] need to change how land is used, for example, why do new roads always pass through slums? Why? So the poor have to get reform, so that they can rent government land or buy private land.*” Khun Lek also describes other SOC goals, which include forming community welfare funds, ending a dependence on the state, and promoting better linkages between different government policies such as city planning and building regulations. Khun Lek sees these three issues as the “*misfortune*” that unites SOC members, and consequently they put their heart in it, making SOC the “*most independent of the poor peoples organisations*”. The formalisation of the linkages between the urban poor communities by the SOC and CODI cements the network’s role as an agent for social change.

#### ***What does SOC do? How does it do it?***

SOC works through specialised “teams”: management, information exchange, social welfare, construction, infrastructure, inspection, and finance. The Bangkok region holds a monthly meeting for all members, as well as meetings for the different teams. SOC representatives also facilitate discussion at meetings of more localised networks, such as the Bang Bua canal network.

SOC puts into practice the Baan Mankong ideals of information exchange and learning by doing. As community residents who have already completed upgrading and know best what the experience entails, they are better placed to inform their counterparts than government bureaucrats who view things from afar. As one SOC member said, “*sometimes I go visit two or three communities in one day*”. SOC team members can advise communities, for example those drawing up an application for Baan Mankong funding, or by checking cooperative accounts, or inspecting the building work carried out by contractors.

SOC is setting up learning centres, funded by CODI, in 18 Bangkok upgraded communities, embodying the programme’s learning-by-doing ethic. Upgraded communities are visited by

slum communities, so they have to be able to present their experiences clearly, both good and bad. SOC also have plans to set up a 'Baan Mankong university', because as Khun Jan of Klong Lumnoon community says in Thai rhyme, "*we may not have paper degrees, but we have degrees of the heart*". For those without higher education, the process of upgrading is perceived as teaching them the equivalent of a university degree, and learning centres serve to disseminate information.

SOC also run meetings, in conjunction with CODI, providing training for communities in how to prepare funding applications and their component parts, such as new community layout plans (Figure 7.1). A community applying for CODI funding for Baan Mankong must first have its application approved at a SOC meeting, hence it is in the network's interest to ensure applications are complete before they reach the meeting. Some of the advice provided at a SOC training day<sup>2</sup> is outlined below and illustrates what SOC members have learnt:

- CODI charges a 4% interest rate for 15 years. Each cooperative must decide how much interest to charge on top of this, and justify it to the community. The cooperative is a tool for all residents – it must not overcharge members but it needs enough income to survive.
- Baan Mankong is for true residents of the community so allocation of rights is an important issue. Residents need to have lived in the community permanently for at least 5 years.
- Housing rights can only be sold back to the cooperative. The committee can't sell rights on the side to their relatives. It is important for the residents to trust the committee, and the committee to respect their community
- The committee usually has 9 to 15 members, split into different roles. It's better for the committee not to all be related, e.g. the father is the leader, the mother collects savings and the son does the accounts! There should be working teams, for social, data-collection, management, infrastructure, construction.
- The maximum CODI loan is 300,000B. If the land costs 200,000B and the house costs 180,000B, there will be a shortfall of 80,000B, so either save more money or buy less land and have a smaller, cheaper house, or build the house gradually.

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<sup>2</sup> 28/4/08 at CODI



Figure 7.1: SOC training day at CODI (28/4/08)



The advice given by SOC members reflects their own experiences, and is realistic in expectations. As one member said during a session on drawing up community layout plans, “*we are not gated estates!*” referring to the necessary lack of space between houses. SOC meetings are learning and exchange platforms<sup>3</sup>, as many communities are ill-prepared: one community had 140 households hoping to get a CODI loan, yet only 25 households were members of the savings group, which is a loan requirement.

There are also teams of builders, composed of community residents with masonry, carpentry, plumbing skills, who can be hired to build houses in other communities, at lower rates than those offered by contractors, thereby generating jobs and collective business skills. In Bangkok, there are 52 teams of community builders, composed of 2000 people (Community News, 2008, 112:3). These teams have built 38 upgrading projects, covering 5609 units<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> These large meetings were attended by representatives from a dozen communities. As each community presented its plans, not much attention was paid by the other representatives, who chatted amongst themselves. There is scope for finding a more efficient meeting style where not only the SOC moderators participate in discussion.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.codi.or.th/housing/selfbuild.html>, accessed 12/2/09

SOC also runs its own welfare fund, to which members can contribute. Additionally, events like a community sports day are held to build team spirit outside the context of housing. Members all wear green shirts, symbolising their unity, and there is a SOC song. Therefore, SOC performs a “family” role for its members, providing support in areas other than upgrading. SOC are creating an identity for the urban poor, as a group capable of providing for their own welfare and development.

### ***Demonstrations***

SOC as an organisation is not afraid to make its views known if it feels that the community members are being neglected by the powers above. Because the needs of the poor stay the same despite constantly changing governments with differing policies, SOC plays a role in ensuring continued funding for Baan Mankong projects. In January 2009, approximately 100 SOC members demonstrated at the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security to request funding for Baan Mankong, led by Khun PR and other SOC leaders, because “*we have a new government and minister, we’re not a mob<sup>5</sup> or protesting, but we want to meet him [the minister]*”. Though the tone of the demonstration was very friendly, the leaders were clear that if their demands were not met, “*we will fight, not just four regions like today, but [representatives from] all seven regions will come*”. Their rhetoric emphasised the distance between the government officials and the poor: “*if they [the government] don’t believe us, we can send them to see our projects, to compare the NHA and Baan Mankong, and which meets the needs of our people*”, and “*Mr Minister, you are sitting in your ministry, you should come and look at your brothers and sisters on the ground*”. The demonstrators also clearly identified themselves as lower class people: “*for human security, you need to look after everyone, not just high and middle class people, you have to look after the bottom class*”, reflecting the fact that social identity is defined by the networks a person belongs to.

The bulk of the speeches emphasised what the communities were capable of achieving themselves and their sense of ownership over Baan Mankong: “*no one is forcing us to do Baan Mankong, we thought to do it ourselves, to upgrade our communities, to improve our environment*”, and therefore, “*we want the minister to know that we always solve our own problems, but funding never reaches us...we just want funding so that we can solve our own problems so you don’t need to send civil servants*”. The speeches also show the extent to

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<sup>5</sup> “Mob” in Thai usage means a political demonstration.

which the movement believes it can influence Thai society: *“It’s not just an issue of houses, of solving land problems, it’s an issue for the whole country, building the country and society”*, and *“we solve our own problems. If we cannot, the country will stay still”*. Baan Mankong is therefore regarded as the panacea, providing not just housing solutions but also social development. In government-led projects like NHA flats, *“before it is even finished the buildings are broken, and we can’t even use our own people to fix it, have to use their people”*. By comparison, Baan Mankong gives the poor true ownership and security over their housing, as *“we build it ourselves, we know how much it costs”*. The SOC members clearly create a sense of “them” and “us”, by emphasising that it is the community residents themselves who know best what they want and how to achieve it.

The protestors make clear that they don’t want money for free, they are willing to pay interest, and they also contribute with their own community funds. One of the leaders emphasised that *“If we can get a budget, communities use it and then repay it so that other communities can borrow it too through a revolving fund”*. By comparison *“the budget that the government gives to various ministries always gets lost”*: the implication is that residents are more trustworthy with money than officials, yet the state still does not see community residents as serious actors in housing provision.

*Figure 7.2: SOC protest at MSDHS, 12/1/09*



The demonstration concluded with a meeting between ten community representatives and the minister, the outcome of which was a promise of 1000 million baht a year, for five years, toward Baan Mankong. To celebrate, the demonstrators stood in a circle around the national flag and sang the SOC song. However, Khun PR reminded the demonstrators that this outcome was not enough – the following day a small group of SOC representatives went to lobby the Prime Minister, to ensure that the Cabinet would approve the budget.

### ***Why do people join SOC?***

A short written questionnaire was administered to SOC members during a Bangkok region team meeting attended by many of the “core” group of SOC volunteers. Of the 17 respondents, ten were female and seven were male, with an average age of 48. None were from a community which had fully completed Baan Mankong upgrading, though 11 communities were in the process of doing so. The information displayed in Table 7.1 below show that as most have informal jobs, this gives them the flexibility to do SOC work. They are generally not the main wage-earner in their household. Thirteen also hold positions on their community committee. The majority of respondents displayed a high level of commitment to their SOC work, a number of them regarding it as a full-time job.

*Table 7.1: Demographics and time-commitment of SOC members*

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>SOC team position</b>	<b>Days a week on SOC work<sup>6</sup></b>
<b>Vendor</b> 4	<b>Information</b> 4	<b>1-3</b> 5
<b>Seamstress/laundry</b> 3	<b>Infrastructure</b> 4	<b>3-5</b> 7
<b>Labourer</b> 1	<b>Social</b> 5	<b>6-7</b> 5
<b>Housewife</b> 2	<b>Management</b> 3	
<b>Business</b> 1	<b>Not on team</b> 1	
<b>No work</b> 5		
<b>Other (bus driver)</b> 1		
<b>Total</b> 17	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>

When asked why they were working with the SOC, the answers reflect a desire to help other “brothers and sisters” in a similar situation of need, and by extension, to help Thai society as a whole: *“To help society and develop housing, and develop strong communities”*; *“I was in need, and want others in need to have secure housing for their children, and to help Thai society”*. Others see it as a way to change government policies: *“to solve the problem of*

<sup>6</sup> Those who answered a range of up to 3 days were put in the 1-3 category, while those who gave a range of 3 or more were put in the 3-5 category.

*getting government land for communities, and of regulations not being appropriate*"; *"because I see the need of the communities, and government agencies taking advantage"*. Other responses reflect the lack of help from other parties: *"[it's] hard to find people to work on this, to solve problems of lack of secure housing"*. There is also a sense of pride in doing things for themselves: *"when working together with ordinary people, it makes us build up strength and pride"*. These responses demonstrate the altruistic nature of the community residents – though they are themselves busy upgrading their own communities, they want others to benefit from their knowledge so that their lives can be improved too. Norms of self-sacrifice which exist within communities extend across communities. This is solidarity in action, and for many, the network represents not bridging social capital, but rather bonding social capital, due to the closeness they gain through their work.

When the SOC members were asked what they regarded as the main problems when helping community residents upgrade, the responses can be distinguished as in-community factors and external factors. Nine respondents cited a lack of understanding from the community residents themselves: *"residents don't understand, think it's impossible"*; *"residents... think the leader wants to do it for own benefit"*. Other community-based problems included a lack of participation, being taken advantage of by the leader, divisions within the leadership, and unwillingness to participate in savings groups. External problems cited included unfriendly building regulations, securing tenure, and lack of support from organisations. With a clear understanding of the challenges, they can develop a plan of action to resolve these problems.

Finally, respondents were asked for suggestions to improve the Baan Mankong scheme. The responses focus on in-community improvements, such as better management in communities, having clear community plans, improving understanding of the residents, and increasing participation. However, there is also a need to increase understanding from the government itself, with more participation from and cooperation with government agencies and other organisations. Therefore, there is still room for improvement in terms of both bonding and linking social capital.

### ***How sustainable is SOC?***

SOC risks becoming unsustainable as Baan Mankong scales up. Though SOC is meant to channel the knowledge of those who have completed Baan Mankong to other communities

wanting to upgrade, there is the distinct possibility of participation burn-out once people finish upgrading, as well as people needing to work more to pay off their debts, as was observed in Chapter 5. At two of the SOC meetings attended, in February and May 2008, the participants noted that numbers had dropped. Possible reasons given were the burden of community events, illness, people working on-site in communities, or working on too many projects at once. Additionally, some felt that SOC members were losing touch with each other and therefore unaware of meetings. SOC members rely heavily on mobile phone communications to organise events, and though a SOC website exists, the lack of IT knowledge and access of most community residents means that it is not a viable form of communication.

As was observed at the May meeting, it is easy to build a network, but hard to keep it going. According to Khun CHO, *“At the start SOC was new, fragrant, now it’s older, we let other problems get in the way such as family. To do this work we can’t let personal problems get in the way”* – suggesting that for the SOC core team, at least, the wider problems of Thailand’s poor should come first. Certainly, the volunteers acknowledge that their work requires self-sacrifice, but it may be unrealistic to expect everyone to commit to such an extent to the movement.

There is also pressure on the Bangkok team, because it has the highest concentration of upgrading sites. However, fear was expressed at a SOC team meeting in May 2008 that social issues and projects are too much the focus, and strategy is being neglected. A long-term strategy is essential to ensure the continued success of Baan Mankong as it scales up across Bangkok and Thailand. Though SOC needs to look at the micro level, that is, the aims of each individual community, it also needs a macro-level plan in terms of national objectives and government policy reform as the upgrading scheme scales up across Thailand.

### **7.1.2 The Four Regions Slum Network**

The Four Regions Slum Network (S4P) was founded in 1998 by a group of slum dwellers, in order to create a movement of the urban poor to campaign for urban land reform and solve problems of insecure housing. S4P works closely with the Human Settlement Foundation, a civil rights organisation, and is a member of Leaders and Organisers of Community Organisations in Asia (LOCOA), a network based in the Philippines. S4P deals with wider

civil rights issues, having participated in movements such as protesting rising electricity prices and campaigning for a new constitution after the 1997 “People’s Constitution” was annulled. S4P serves as an umbrella organisation for ten networks, covering 110 communities across Thailand. S4P representatives are often quoted in newspaper articles on human and housing rights and are a recognised movement. In Bangkok, the networks deal with communities in specific areas of the city, the homeless, those living under bridges, and promoting united slum development. S4P methods focus on negotiation to push for policy changes and access to rights such as electricity, water and house registrations. According to Khun Pratin, the organisation’s chair, S4P are self-mobilising, and do not rely on the state’s generosity, though they do receive funding from CODI. Evictions are also a big issue for S4P, and they categorise communities as “*hot and cold: hot are urgent cases, for example facing an eviction threat*” (29/4/08).

S4P have a strong presence among communities on State Railway of Thailand (SRT) land. They have successfully changed the SRT’s policy towards providing leases to squatters, with lease length varying according to distance from the railway track. Nineteen S4P communities have rented SRT land, whereas according to Khun Ake, a S4P advisor, “*none of the SRT communities under CODI have a lease yet as CODI doesn’t encourage negotiation*” (24/4/08). Khun Ake puts this down to S4P’s emphasis on negotiations, followed by protests if necessary, with support from residents of other communities. According to S4P representatives, CODI did not believe that S4P would be able to change the SRT’s policy towards giving land tenure to communities. For S4P, the problem at its root stems from land distribution problems, and the network is pushing for reform to change the inequalities of tenure.

S4P see themselves as an independent alternative to CODI for communities in difficulty. CODI’s methods are described as being based on building partnerships, whilst S4P believes class differences are still a barrier (interview with Boonlert, 9/4/08). S4P takes a different approach to resolving housing problems, as explains Khun Ake: “*CODI makes it [savings] a core of their work, but for S4P, savings is not the main aim, land and policy are*”. Khun Pratin does not hide the fact that S4P do not agree with CODI methods, as “*CODI avoids conflict with other state organisations... S4P wants households to fight to stay in the same place before starting Baan Mankong. CODI doesn’t wait for security of tenure, so it can put an extra burden on the residents as they have to pay for the land too if they relocate*

*somewhere, and sometimes they start Baan Mankong before having security of tenure*”, like in Bang Bua, where rebuilding began before a lease was finalised. Consequently, when asked about S4P’s relations with CODI, the response was that it was not close, because CODI are regarded as a government organisation, which suggests that S4P regard vertical linkages as difficult to achieve. According to Khun Ake, S4P “*introduced the concept that communities can stay in the city in the same place, or move nearby, using government or private land to solve the problem*”, and CODI used this thinking to form the Baan Mankong policy. There is therefore tension between the two organisations, though he also acknowledged that some closeness is necessary, as CODI funds S4P communities involved in Baan Mankong upgrading, and because CODI’s role is to help community members.

Like SOC, S4P recognise that once land issues are resolved, it is important to continue with other work, such as setting up welfare funds. Communities need to continue with activities, otherwise they will fall apart. S4P recognise that sometimes residents have to fight for a long time for their housing, and have to start their lives again, and so it’s important to keep them involved in community activities. However, there does not seem to be any cooperation between SOC and S4P, who see SOC being used by CODI as temporary staff. On the day that SOC lobbied the Prime Minister at Government House, in January 2009, S4P held a separate protest, and both groups kept to opposite ends of the building without interacting.

In December 2008, when CODI was selecting a new Board of Representatives, which includes three community representatives, S4P tried to get one of its members on the Board. However, S4P felt like they had been left out of the selection process, receiving only last-minute notification of the nomination process, and were not being given full opportunities to participate in CODI. This also makes it harder for S4P to benefit from the linkages that CODI can provide.

### ***Different practices?***

Looking at the different tactics and discourses employed by SOC and S4P, it appears that there is potential for the two networks to form an alliance, rather like the Alliance of Urban Activists, which exists in Mumbai between SPARC, Mahila Milan, and the Urban Poor Federation. S4P and SOC both display a number of characteristics similar to those of the Alliance’s organisations examined by Appadurai (2002). Both organisations are independent



from any political groups, though during the January 2009 Bangkok governor elections, both networks played host to gubernatorial candidates. The difference was that S4P's meeting with candidates was organised by a news agency, whilst some SOC communities were visited by candidates. Both organisations make use of events like housing exhibitions on World Habitat Day to display their projects to a wider audience. The two organisations also make use of self-surveys and data collection, a form of "governmentality from below" (Appadurai, 2002:36), which gives them knowledge, and hence power, when dealing with the state.

However, SOC and S4P are different on many fronts, though these differences could be complementary were the two groups to work together. The organisations have different linkages: SOC has close ties to CODI, with at least one staff member attending meetings, and by extension, to land-owning agencies such as the Treasury and CPB. S4P does not have close linkages to a government agency, but rather to a network of academics and civil society organisations under the S4P umbrella. S4P could benefit from SOC's link to CODI, though as explained above, S4P does not have a positive attitude towards CODI, despite receiving funding from them. SOC is anchored to Baan Mankong, while S4P works on a range of issues. SOC's effectiveness in bringing about change may be limited by the fact that they function more as "nannies" to other communities, rather than organisers, used by CODI to facilitate its transition from one community to another. One wonders if SOC has the independence to disagree with CODI, despite their rhetoric emphasising independence and ability, or whether CODI has moulded it as an organisation which the government is happier to deal with, as less confrontational than S4P. When talking to people on the ground about these networks, a community was always identified as either a "S4P community" or a "CODI community".

S4P are close to the media, with S4P spokespersons often quoted in news reports, and SOC would benefit from more media recognition. Neither organisation has its own headquarters, and SOC often uses CODI facilities, further cementing its linkages to the agency, and giving fuel to arguments that CODI uses SOC volunteers as staff. S4P holds its meetings in various places, from the Human Settlements Foundation to a homeless shelter. S4P, as a longer-standing organisation, has more experience as a civil society organisation, fighting for matters ranging from electricity prices to the constitution. SOC, due to CODI's influence, puts a strong emphasis on the importance of savings, whilst S4P prioritises land issues. As it does not benefit from CODI's linkages to land-owning agencies, it has to fight for land rights

itself, and is proud of its achievement in changing the policy of the SRT towards squatters. SOC members proudly wear a uniform of green shirts, perhaps a reflection of their more institutionalised nature, which makes them recognisable as a unit to officials, whereas S4P are not identifiable as a common group. The SOC's green shirts also reflect the financial support that their ties to CODI provide.

When community leaders were asked about networks, they clearly identified with SOC over S4P, due to SOC's links to Baan Mankong. Khun SAM of Bonkai explained that the community used to be close to S4P, which was initially based in Bonkai. However, now that *"Bonkai is doing Baan Mankong, we are more with CODI, because Slum 4 Pak is a different type"*. In Klong Toey, Khun TE does not see S4P's methods and activities as useful to the community, because, for example, S4P deal with communities on SRT land, which requires different tactics of negotiation to the Port. However, in the past, community residents participated in S4P activities. Bang Bua's leader, Khun PR, is prominent in SOC, and thus the community is closely tied to the network, hosting meetings in its community centre. Thus, SOC seems to be clearly focused around Baan Mankong communities, who regard the S4P approach as outdated.

### **7.1.3 International level networks**

The similar methods employed by SOC and S4P to other slum groups, such as the Alliance in Mumbai, demonstrate the extent to which the urban poor have already shared their methods through international networks. Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI), officially formed in 1996, promotes networking across fourteen countries, through exchange visits. SOC's closeness to CODI means it has more exposure to SDI member networks than S4P, which instead has links to civil society NGOs and activists. As Khun Somsook of CODI also has close ties to the Asian Coalition of Housing Rights (ACHR), SOC members are regularly taken abroad to "spread the gospel" of community savings and collective action, with leaders going on visits to Cambodia, Mongolia, and Fiji amongst other places (though this means leaders spend less time in their own communities). Baan Mankong communities play host to international visitors in turn. As Baan Mankong increasingly gains recognition at an international level, this puts pressure on the Thai government to continue to support the scheme.

#### **7.1.4 Conclusion**

SOC and S4P are networks which link residents of low income communities in order to increase their capacity to improve their living environments, and by extension, their lives. These networks function as agents for the poor; they recognise and take advantage of opportunities that exist for effective collective action, and organise the residents at a city or regional level. As Ockey (2004) points out, the Thai political input structures remain very inaccessible to the poor, especially at the policy formulation stage; slum networks can use multiple tactics to increase the voice of the poor, from resisting building regulations, protests, to mobilising for Baan Mankong, and presenting the poor as a unit. By expanding horizontal ties beyond individual communities, networks are a “weapon of the weak”, a form of class-based resistance (Ockey, 2004).

Forming SOC has helped to institutionalise the role and position of the urban poor in the Thai social fabric, and its formation is timely, coming when the country’s political situation is far from stable, and the Thaksin government’s policies are not guaranteed continuation. This instability means that it is the poor themselves who have to ensure they stay on the government’s agenda and continue to be allocated funding for the Baan Mankong scheme. Additionally, as Khun Somsook, the founding director of CODI retires, the communities cannot be sure that her successor will place the same emphasis on Baan Mankong, given the range of activities and projects in which CODI is involved. Khun Somsook has much faith in the ability of community members to help themselves, and the formation of SOC can be seen as a way of replacing the role formerly played by NGOs in community development, though this may be a risky strategy as some areas may still require the expertise of NGOs.

Most importantly, SOC plays a vital role in forming bridges between communities and putting into practice the Baan Mankong requirement of learning exchange. Networks enable communities to support each other, and they promote access to information, which is vital to achieving empowerment through local organisations (Harriss, 2007). SOC embodies norms which make up social capital, by creating an identity for the urban poor, creating a sense of solidarity between communities. Communities trust SOC to help them through upgrading, and once they have upgraded they are then expected to help others, because of norms of reciprocity. As S4P communities have also learnt much from their experiences in bringing about land policy change and fighting eviction, cooperation between the two networks would

seem beneficial, in order to find the ultimate technique for getting the state to regard the urban poor as worthy partners. These two networks do much to bring the urban poor into the wider democratic processes, by encouraging grassroots groups to make their voices heard, not only through protests where necessary, but by demonstrating to society what they are capable of achieving by themselves. As Khun PR said, “*we need to broadcast ourselves to the world*”, and it is through social movements such as these that it will be more easily achieved, cementing the legitimacy of the Baan Mankong project and the position of the urban poor in the city. The networks also have a policing role, in ensuring that the government delivers on its promises. These two organisations appear to be taking over from NGOs as the link between the state and communities, and because they are internal to the communities, unlike NGOs, they know exactly what their needs are and what they are capable of achieving.

## **7.2 State-community linkages**

Because Baan Mankong is a government-sponsored project, its implementation requires interaction between the communities and various government agencies, including CODI, the district office, the utilities authorities, and the police. Additionally, in the case of the four case study communities, the landowners are state agencies. This interaction between the communities and state agencies presents a chance to rectify the imbalances in power which exist in the vertical relationship between these two parties. Thus, Baan Mankong represents an opportunity to bridge the public-private divide, as the government takes on the role of coproducer, and creates synergy, which arises when strong public institutions are combined with organised communities (Evans, 1996). This should increase trust between both parties, as hypothesised.

Because Baan Mankong promotes self-help with participation from other stakeholders, as outlined in Chapter 1 as target nine (to create a machinery for development with the participation of many stakeholders), it wants a shift from a top-down “we take care of you” attitude to a bottom-up “look what we can do with your support” perspective. At a SOC meeting (27/2/08) it was pointed out that “*at the grassroots level we have done a lot, savings and so on, but at the higher level they have not done so much. They have only released funding.*” Though the communities benefit from strong horizontal associations, without strong vertical linkages with the state agencies, their efforts would be limited. The attitude and willingness to cooperate of state agencies is therefore important in defining the success of

Baan Mankong. “Voices of the Poor” (Narayan et al., 2000) found that large institutions, especially those of the state, are perceived by the world’s poor as being distant, unaccountable, and corrupt. The cooperation that a project like Baan Mankong promotes can go some way towards improving these perceptions. In this section, the relationship between the communities and the various government agencies will be explored from the viewpoint of both sides.

### 7.2.1 Community-State Linkages

*Table 7.2: Levels of trust\* in outsiders amongst community residents*

	Trust in outsiders					
	Gov	Police	CODI	Politicians	Landlord	Leader
Klong Toey	2.57	2.33	3.58	2.62	2.90	3.45
Bang Bua	3.38	2.50	3.58	2.92	3.54	4.17
Bonkai	3.42	2.79	4.22	3.11	3.95	3.74
Ruam Samakee	2.90	2.75	3.21	2.95	3.20	3.25
<b>Ave.</b>	<b>3.07</b>	<b>2.59</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>2.90</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>3.65</b>

\* Trust as measured on a scale of 1-5 (1 meaning ‘very low trust’, 5 meaning ‘very high trust’)

As Table 7.2 shows, the residents’ trust in these institutions varied. The community leader and CODI consistently received the highest scores, reflecting their strong presence in communities, and the police the lowest. Bonkai and Bang Bua display the highest average levels of trust, and Klong Toey 7-12 the least. Though Bonkai and Ruam Samakee communities are both leasing Crown Property Bureau land, it is interesting that Bonkai residents rank their landlord higher than Ruam Samakee residents do. Klong Toey residents display the least trust in their landlord, possibly due to the history of acrimonious relationships between the Port and the former squatters.

The respondents were also asked whether their overall trust in these six groups had increased, decreased, or stayed the same, since carrying out the upgrading process (Table 7.3):

*Table 7.3: Levels of trust since upgrading*

	Increased	Decreased	No change	N/A
Klong Toey 7-12	4	6	11	0
Bang Bua	14	2	7	1
Bonkai	14	1	4	0
Ruam Samakee	5	5	10	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1</b>

Though an increase in trust was reported in the majority of cases, like B2 who feels that *“Now with Baan Mankong, the community knows these outside groups better”*, there were also a high number of “no change” responses. BB11 states that *“relations are better with outsiders now that we have finished Baan Mankong. During the actual upgrading things were more difficult”*, suggesting that outside groups leave the communities to do the hard work before offering their help. Some respondents felt the upgrading process caused their trust in these six groups to fall. However, as this question referred to the general feelings of trust towards all of the groups, a strong sense of trust or distrust for one or two of the groups may have swayed the response in a certain direction. Bang Bua and Bonkai both clearly show higher “increased” responses, whilst in Klong Toey and Ruam Samakee, a higher proportion of respondents felt that trust “decreased”, a reflection of the more difficult situation post-upgrading in these communities.

### ***Government officials***

The scores given to the government (meaning government officials such as district officials) are relatively low, perhaps because government regulations and bureaucracy are not pro-poor. Additionally, residents may not be treated well: Akin points out in his study that slum residents “do not want to contact government officials for any service because the latter look down on them” (1975:258). In Klong Toey 7-12, residents appear more willing to turn to NGOs for help, due to their high concentration in the area, rather than to the district.

The respondents interact with district officials for matters other than housing, such as KT10, who says *“I don’t like government officials, they have rules about when I can sell from my cart, they tried to remove my cart.”* Additionally, those officials with whom the respondents interact are often fairly low-ranking and may adopt a patronising and bureaucratic attitude, as RS13 expresses: *“The heads of organisations are good, but the low-level people who come to the community aren’t so good... District community development office side with the cooperative and leaders, but some are good”*. RS9 feels that the district officials also take sides, as they *“don’t distribute school scholarships fairly and equally”*, while B16 feels that the officials *“don’t work with their hearts”*. BB5 tars all officials with the same brush, saying that *“Government officials don’t do any work, they are always taking breaks, I saw when I was working as a security guard”*. Very few respondents cited the district in a positive light,

though B14 says that the district gave the residents money after their houses were burnt down in a fire, and RS4 believes that the “*district will help us if we ask them for things*”.

Khun Lek from CODI reflects that if district officials were elected rather than appointed, they would work harder for the communities. As Khun KIE, leader of Chalernchai Nimitmai community explains, “*the BMA don’t really help though, it’s too much work, too expensive, too much trouble... The [Bangkok] governor is good, but at the local level there are problems*”. Thus, policy platforms on which the governor is elected do not necessarily translate to the lower levels of administration, and residents cannot sanction officials through the voting process, making them powerless and the district less accountable. Additionally, district officials can be transferred from one district to another, creating difficulties in achieving embeddedness, by breaking their ties to community residents, and may give officials a short-term outlook.

### ***Police***

The mistrust in the police could reflect the fact that the police see the urban poor as an easy target, for example closing down small-scale gambling activities in communities, or carrying out drugs busts, which may affect the relatives of certain community members. KT10 summarises the situation as “*the police don’t come if you have a problem, but will come if you’re gambling so that they can take your money*”. B12 says that “*the police come almost everyday, arrest people then release them so it’s pointless*”. The police enforce evictions, and therefore “*I don’t like the police because they help the PAT*” (KT10). The residents feel victimised by the police, who treat them as sources of pocket money rather than dealing with real crime, as B7 summarises: “*the police want bribes*”<sup>7</sup>. The police would get more cooperation, for example in fighting drugs, if they were not perceived as using the poor communities as easy targets by cracking down on small-time gambling, or stopping motorcycle drivers instead of drivers of BMWs.

### ***CODI***

CODI’s relatively high score reflects how community residents recognise its role in making Baan Mankong possible (as discussed in chapter 5). As B9 explains, “*without CODI’s money,*

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<sup>7</sup> A study by the National Anti-Corruption Commission found the police force to be the most corrupt state agency. (Bangkok Post, 7/6/09)

*this house wouldn't be possible*", and *"CODI work for us"* (B17). CODI also clarifies to residents what is involved and feasible in upgrading: *"CODI are good, they tell us what we can or can't do"*.

Though CODI scored the highest average score, they scored only 3.21 in Ruam Samakee, compared to 4.22 in Bonkai. The respondents' comments reveal that this could be because some Ruam Samakee residents associate CODI to the cooperative from which money has disappeared, like RS17: *"CODI need to return me some money, about 60,000B, because I built most of the house myself"*, when actually it is the cooperative's responsibility to refund residents, and *"CODI only give importance to the cooperative leaders, not the community leaders. It's the same with the CPB"* (RS16). Again, money problems and divisions in Ruam Samakee are factors that affect the overall satisfaction of residents.

There is also repeated reference to lack of interaction between the residents and CODI, especially in Ruam Samakee: *"CODI doesn't listen to the residents"* (RS20); *"CODI never comes now, they used to come often"* (RS15). BB24 concurred, saying *"I've never met CODI, they will talk to the leaders"*. Though CODI is severely under-staffed, it seems there is scope here for it to increase its contact with ordinary community residents, as otherwise they are not getting the full picture of the situation in the communities, as KT8 explains: *"CODI only come to talk to the community leaders, they don't talk to the community members so they don't see the two sides...CODI came about 10 times to collect data, but each time they sent students to do surveys, who just send the results back without really understanding the problem"*. Many residents have not had much opportunity to interact with CODI, which focuses its contact on community leaders and SOC members. Though CODI scores highly in terms of trust, the lack of contact does have implications with regard to the flow of information – as discussed in chapter 6, leaders act as gatekeepers, and may therefore selectively pass information on to residents, with negative consequences for social cohesion both within communities, and between communities and outside institutions.

### ***Politicians***

Though the residents display a keen interest in politics, politicians, overall, receive low scores, with many respondents commenting that they only ever see politicians in their communities for special events or during pre-election vote-seeking. Though no politicians were



interviewed during fieldwork, the Baan Mankong project is closely tied to the politics of the day, as it stems from the Thaksin government. The residents of the case study communities take their right to vote seriously, with almost every respondent claiming to always vote. The recent political turmoil has had important implications for the urban poor – whilst changing governments create doubt about the continuation of Baan Mankong, events like the PAD airport blockade have had economic effects which have hit the urban poor hard, and the appointment of the Democrat party to power caused many people to question the value of their vote<sup>8</sup>.

The attitude towards politicians in the communities was generally negative. Khun CH explains that before elections, a lot of politicians visit her community, but people don't want to sell their votes. Khun NON of Bang Bua explained that *“people are not really interested in politics. Politicians don't help, people help themselves. They only come for elections”*. According to Khun PR, politicians would come and talk, but never did anything. Khun KIE, of Chalernchai Nimitmai community, believes that *“communities are divided because of politicians, they are the number one reason for divisions. I've asked politicians not to stick up election posters all over the place, just in specific areas. This community used to be very heavily Thai Rak Thai [former PM Thaksin's party]. For communities to move forwards, they mustn't be attached to politicians.”* Khun LEK of Suan Phlu community explained that *“now it's mostly businesses that help the poor, politicians try to squeeze the people. We've decided not to join any political groups, we will work with anyone who will help us.”* District officials also recognise the communities serve as a voting base: the Pathumwan official explained that communities are the easiest place to get votes. Bigger communities represent a larger voting base, and therefore may receive more help from the government.

In certain cases, politicians stir up trouble, for example telling residents that Baan Mankong is not going to work, creating divisions and weakening social cohesion. According to a member of the Bonkai committee, after the fire of 2003, *“there were problems because the local politicians caused divisions in the community, and so the district were scared of the politicians too”*. Khun ANA of Kao Pattana community described how some politicians tried to give him money and invited him to dinner. Such actions are representative of the

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<sup>8</sup> The People's Alliance for Democracy blockaded Bangkok's airports in December 2008, with disastrous consequences for the tourist season, and hence jobs. The PAD are anti-Thaksin Royalists who believe that voting rights should be held only by certain groups, as the poor are prone to selling their votes.

traditional patron-client relationships, but self-help projects like Baan Mankong present an alternative method to meeting needs, without relying on connections to the rich and powerful.

According to a participant at the Bonkai discussion group, politicians are like dirty water. BB19 went as far as to say that “*politicians know that they can’t do anything to help in this community*”, though KT8 feels that “*politicians are important, they can change policy, they have power*”. In Klong Toey, the local senator received special mention from two respondents for installing street lights, and B14 mentions that “*politicians help check that people get glasses, have a gold card [medical card]*”. Thus patronage still has a role.

The majority of community residents interviewed are supporters of former PM Thaksin, who was deposed in September 2006. In Bonkai community, many houses proudly display photos of Thaksin inaugurating the community. The fact that all Baan Mankong projects are inaugurated by government personalities, often the Bangkok Governor, gives the community residents legitimacy as members of the city, and they express pride that their community is now good enough to host a high-ranking member of government.

The residents take their right to vote seriously: “*we all vote, and we all like Thaksin here*”. As discussed in Chapter Five, many respondents acknowledged that the Baan Mankong programme came about because “*at the core it was Thaksin’s government that made it possible*” (RS16). They feel that he helped them in other ways: “*Thaksin developed the country*” (BB9); “*I like Thaksin and Samak<sup>9</sup>, they helped to get rid of drugs. They might be corrupt but then all of them are*” (BB8). The residents acknowledge and accept the existence of corruption: “*Thaksin helped the poor a lot, he might have cheated but he helped the poor*” (B11); “*[Thaksin] didn’t steal our money, only from elsewhere*” (BB23). These residents evidently feel that the “cheating the people” and “cheating from the royal coffers” (Pasuk and Sungsidh, 1994) matter only where they are personally affected<sup>10</sup>, so money disappearing from community cooperatives is a more serious offence. There is a sense that Thaksin was seen almost as the saviour of the poor, with BB23 saying “*I would like him to return to help us*”, and BB24 concurs: “*now we are abandoned*”. Therefore, the respondents clearly want to vote for politicians who take tangible action to help them. It is widely recognised that

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<sup>9</sup> Prime Minister from December 2007 - September 2008, a member of Thaksin’s Thai Rak Thai party.

<sup>10</sup> Thaksin was accused of tax evasion following the sale of his family’s shares in the Shin Corporation, a telecommunications business. The case continues.

Thaksin's voting base was predominantly composed of the poor, who benefited from his premiership's policies like Baan Mankong and 30B health care provision.

### ***Landlord***

The residents seem grateful to their landlords for giving them a lease, allowing them to upgrade. Now they are tenants, the residents' relationship with their landlords has changed from one of resistance to one of dependency, as they have to meet the landlords' conditions to stay on-site. This weakens their ability to make demands, though they may instead increasingly turn to resistance through their horizontal networks.

Having trust in the landlord is important to ensure that residents feel secure on the land, and as discussed in chapter 5, a sense of insecurity remains among many Klong Toey residents, reflected in the low trust score the PAT receives. KT18 also blames the fact that *"the PAT keep changing their representatives so they can't build trust"*, demonstrating that embeddedness matters to residents too. However, KT14 feels that *"the PAT should be respected for giving us a lease"*. As B1 explains, *"we have to trust [CODI and CPB] because we are working with them"*. The residents of Bang Bua express gratitude towards the Treasury: *"I like the Treasury because they allowed me to rent the land cheaply. We need to follow the sufficiency economy principle"* (BB14). In Ruam Samakee, where a land-sharing solution was negotiated, the *"CPB comes often at the moment, it's worried about people encroaching on land"* (RS8), but like with CODI, some residents feel that it only contacts leaders and not ordinary residents. Because the CPB is the guardian of the Crown's property, residents also feel that they have an obligation to maintain the royally-owned land in good condition, and the CPB can use this to their advantage.

## **7.2.2 State-Community Linkages**

### ***CODI***

CODI is clearly close to the hearts of the community members, especially those who work with SOC. CODI is a unique para-statal organisation, described by Khun Somsook, director for eight years, as *"half government half people"*. It has community representatives on its management board. CODI puts a lot of effort in achieving embeddedness, for example, hiring staff directly from low-income communities to work in its Baan Mankong division, thus

benefiting from local knowledge. However, CODI is under pressure to meet output targets, and is also severely understaffed, given the scale of Baan Mankong, and hence cannot always devote sufficient time to each community, functioning as a coordinating agency while relying on SOC members.

CODI and the communities enjoy a close and friendly relationship. As Khun PR explains, *“CODI is the first development organisation in Thailand that has given an opportunity and opened land to communities, it has faith in the path of letting the communities be the core of development, and approved a budget to go directly to the communities”* (Community News, issue 113). However, as Khun Somsook explained to SOC members at her leaving dinner in January 2009, *“I’ve been told off by academics and others for trying to get residents to do it without developing them first. But anyone can do this project. Residents can manage development.”* Khun Somsook puts herself, and by extension, CODI, on the side of the poor, talking about how *“We have land and opportunities. We know how to do Baan Mankong. It lies with us”*, hence creating a distinction between CODI and other government agencies.

The essence of CODI is a belief in the importance of the poor being the owners of their projects, and their ability to achieve things for themselves: *“Being poor builds up people. It’s difficult but you can survive, can manage... some of you don’t know how to write but can be managers, can save, this is important knowledge”* (Khun Somsook, 6/1/09). Additionally, allowing community-based development delivers faster results, rather than waiting for the government to change regulations: *“Some say change policy and regulations first. But if you do that you’d get nowhere, the rich won’t change regulations for the poor”*. Therefore, communities which begin upgrading before they finalise lease agreements and get district clearance can rely on CODI’s backing should they get into trouble. This is an important asset for residents as it gives them the confidence to go ahead – though in many cases, they were already willing to risk arrest for the sake of their housing, as happened in Bonkai when rebuilding started immediately after the fire. However, CODI also sees the need to reform the law, as Khun Somsook states in a newspaper interview: *“When people break the one same law over and over again, the question should be ‘Is something wrong with this law?’ and not with the people”* (Roongwitoo and Un-Anongrak 12/2/09).

CODI also emphasises that Baan Mankong is not purely about housing, but also about social upgrading. Therefore, it promotes the skills of the community residents, by highlighting the

importance of community savings, and developing good leaders. The process of upgrading boosts social ties, says Khun Somsook: *“the organisation of social groups of residents boosts their activity in construction and management, everyone know each other thus the construction process is used to boost social relations”* (at CODI, 17/3/08). The people who want to be together can stay together, through subgroup systems.

CODI sees money as a vital factor in empowering the poor. By forming cooperatives and savings groups, the poor can challenge the status quo, and by having the skills to manage finances, the poor become the owners of the process and outcome, and not just recipients. Thus CODI sees giving loans as also giving power to communities. However, the experience of Ruam Samakee community’s alleged missing money, and Klong Toey’s high rate of default on loans, suggests that CODI could do more to ensure that this money is well-managed, even if these communities will serve as learning opportunities for others.

CODI plays a role in liaising with landowners and district offices, acting as an intermediary between these agencies and the communities. CODI has signed memorandums of understanding with the CPB and Treasury, setting up an agreement that these agencies will cooperate to provide squatter communities with affordable long-term leases. Districts sometimes ask CODI to act as guarantors for the communities, because they still don’t see the community cooperative as an independent entity. CODI tries to change these attitudes, as it is not desirable for CODI to have to ask for building permission on behalf of the communities, and hence take responsibility, as they are trying to promote community agency – but districts do not always understand this. As Khun Lek explains, *“Some think that it is not their responsibility, not the task of the BMA, so they aren’t interested.”* CODI therefore has a role in promoting understanding amongst government officials, and a SOC member explained that the poor need someone like Khun Somsook to bridge the gap between individuals and the state. With unwilling district officials, *“it’s the residents and SOC who push it forwards, they communicate, cooperate”*, according to Khun Lek. There is an understanding that the residents should not wait for civil servants to solve problems for them.

CODI is reliant on SOC to push Baan Mankong forwards. Khun Somsook feels that *“whoever manages to finish the project can be regarded as having passed a degree”*, and the process of doing Baan Mankong qualifies residents to teach others how to do it. Khun Somsook told SOC members that *“we opened up Thailand’s and the world’s society to a new*

*method*” (6/1/09) – CODI is not taking credit for the Baan Mankong project; rather, the residents can claim ownership as they are the ones who actually undergo upgrading.

Khun Somsook, as the founding director of CODI, was essential to pushing forward the Baan Mankong agenda, with her belief in the ability of the low-income communities to resolve their own problems. Having served her mandated two 4-year terms, the question arises whether her replacement will share her belief in communities, and place the same importance on Baan Mankong, hence the focus on building up the role of SOC. Her replacement may prefer a more distant, bureaucratic approach. Additionally, CODI faces budget shortages, and as well as asking for 5,000 million baht over a period of 5 years from the central government, it is trying to persuade governmental banks to provide the poor with housing loans at rates of not more than 4%. So far, only the Government Housing Bank has approved 100 million baht for this purpose (CODI press release, 3/3/09). Baan Mankong depends on continued financial support, and the SOC network is aware of this, which is why it has turned to protests to ensure slum communities remain on the government’s agenda.

CODI functions under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS), and the Minister promotes Baan Mankong both domestically and internationally. At a community inauguration, the Minister said he would endeavour to connect all institutions in order to reform society, to achieve a strong society where everyone coexists happily and is equal (CODI press release, 23/5/09). Baan Mankong is an important tool for achieving this goal, as are community welfare funds, and programs for youth, the disabled and elderly, which the Ministry is happy to help with. Thus part of being a strong and equal society means looking after each other through community groups, yet the fact that members of SOC identify themselves as being “bottom class” suggests the Ministry still needs to prove this goal is not simply rhetoric, and that the government is not co-opting the results of Baan Mankong for the positive international press it generates<sup>11</sup>.

### ***Landowners***

The landowners in the four case studies were public agencies. Because Baan Mankong is government-sponsored, squatters on public land should theoretically find it easier to obtain a lease over the land, because the land-owning agencies must follow government policy. When

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<sup>11</sup> Though this positive press can be used by communities as an argument to ensure Baan Mankong continues.

squatters are on privately-owned land, it can be very difficult to find an agreement allowing the residents to stay, and in most cases these communities have to purchase affordable land elsewhere. One exception is Chalernchai Nimitmai community, which had been renting private land for 60 years and enjoyed close ties with the landowner. It formed a savings group in 1994, and when the landowner received inquiries from commercial land developers, the community put in their own offer, eventually paying less than a third of the land's market value. The seller's condition was that the current households remain in the community, to prove the community's strength. Such outcomes are rare on private land, and even on publicly-owned land, communities can face difficulties in coming to a mutual solution with the land owner.

### ***Port Authority***

The PAT owns the land in the Klong Toey area, which houses many low income households in apartment blocks or houses, and relations between the two groups have not always been easy. The PAT officials dealing with communities say that Baan Mankong is not a “final solution” to the housing problem – it gives people somewhere to live, but they do not own the land. They regard the best solution to be, for example, moving people to Soi Wat Charapon, where the PAT has already given relocated squatters land for free, and the officials pointed out that the PAT is the only government department that has bought land for squatters. The relationship between the PAT and communities was described as being a “*soap opera*” where people “*act*” around each other. The PAT believes that it should have the upper hand since squatters have broken the law, but Klong Toey slum residents are “*privileged*” as they benefit from the support of many locally-based NGOs. Therefore, the PAT and squatters need to find friendly and reasonable solutions, because the “*law can't be used with land and squatting problems*”, as evictions create protests. Rather, when it comes to land, negotiation needs to be the solution, as PAT wants to avoid accusations of breaching human rights during evictions.

### ***The Treasury***

The Treasury is a one of Thailand's biggest land owners. According to Khun Panassorn, a Treasury official, the Treasury previously had a policy of eviction, but since 2004, it is usually willing to let communities rent the land collectively, as long as they also develop it. The Treasury will examine whether the government needs to use the land, whether it is

suitable for the communities to remain on site, and if not, the Treasury will try to find a relocation site. Khun Panassorn acknowledged that Baan Mankong means land may not be put to the most economically viable use. For example, Suan Phlu community is on prime city-centre land, where Baan Mankong houses and Baan Ua-Athorn flats were built following a fire: sometimes land sharing may be a better solution so that land can also be used commercially, but an economic and social trade off is necessary.

The Treasury has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with CODI and the communities and districts, showing their commitment to helping Baan Mankong. As Khun Jutima explains, *“The Treasury is the land owner but not the owner of the programme”*, and so it cooperates with the different parties. Additionally, the communities benefit from a preferential rent, and are exempt from having to pay retrospective rent and administration fees. Though the Treasury only has about four members of staff in Bangkok dealing with communities, Khun Jutima often attended meetings in communities to explain what the Treasury expects of communities leasing its land: *“It will get a 30 year lease, but in return it must improve housing, and decrease the risk of fire. Fire is a big problem. We need it to be neat, clean, so that people can have a better life quality”*.

It appears that some communities feel they are being forced into upgrading. An article in Siam Rath (31/3/09) detailed how residents of Chai Klong Bang Bua community, part of the Bang Bua canal network, felt bullied into upgrading. Like in all Bang Bua communities, the Treasury requires complete rebuilding of houses to neaten the canal-edge, as part of the agreement to allow them to stay on-site. According to the community leader quoted in the article, Baan Mankong’s requirement of complete rebuilding was causing financial hardship for many residents, obliging them to take out a loan which was insufficient to build a complete house, during a time of economic crisis. Tenure security was not a sufficient incentive, as they had not faced serious eviction threats. This raises the question of the extent to which residents have a choice in the matter, as they either need to make the financial commitment to upgrade, or get evicted. Given the different degrees of upgrading possible, complete rebuilding is not the only option, but the Treasury has power to impose conditions on leases, which may create hardship for residents.



## *The Crown Property Bureau*

There are 107 communities on CPB land in Bangkok, 39 of which are doing Baan Mankong, according to Khun Danuch, director of the Community Project department. According to Khun Danuch, Baan Mankong represents “real development”, as it is better to get community residents doing things for themselves, rather than the CPB doing it for them. Like the Treasury, the CPB gives communities a 30 year lease, and does not charge a land administration fee. The rent begins at a low level as community members start off with a lot of debt, and will gradually be increased. The CPB acknowledges that Baan Mankong represents a change in policy – in the past, squatters were evicted, though the CPB always tried to find replacement sites, or help in other ways. Now, Khun Danuch feels that three areas need to be emphasised: society, economy, and the environment, and communities should follow a “sufficiency economy” path. CPB staff are active in communities, going on-site in the evenings and on weekends, as well as liaising with district offices. According to Akin (interview 10/3/08), the CPB now regards these communities not as “dense communities [*chumchon ae-ad*]” but as “organised communities [*chumchon jatsan*]”.

## *District offices*

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration is divided into 50 districts. Communities have to interact with the Community Development department of their district in order to hold community elections, obtain planning and building permission, and housing registration. The relationship between the community and the district often depends on how development-minded the Community Development chief is, as well as the number of communities under the district’s jurisdiction, and therefore different communities can have very divergent experiences with their district. District officers usually will communicate mainly with community leaders, as community elections create an official point of contact in each community. Representatives from the four case-study districts were interviewed. Table 7.4 shows the districts related to each community (refer to Figure 4.6 for a map).

*Table 7.4: Respective districts of the case-study communities*

Bang Bua community	Bang Khen district
Bonkai community	Pathumwan district
Klong Toey 7-12 community	Klong Toey district
Ruam Samakee community	Wang Thong Lang district

The district officials all agreed that Baan Mankong is a good programme, as “*we want community residents to be able to think for themselves, to develop as people*” (Pathumwan official). According to the Klong Toey official, Baan Mankong teaches residents about saving and budgeting. The districts allocate a budget of 5000B per month to each community committee, though as the Pathumwan official points out, “*5000B is little if you [the community] think of lots of ideas, but too much if you do nothing*”, and there is therefore a role here for districts to suggest possible events and productive uses for this money.

According to Khun Siriporn, the Bang Khen Community Development chief, the main problem is building understanding among the residents before embarking on upgrading, as some residents are resistant to the scheme, such as owners of multiple houses. These people “*prefer to listen to officials*” so the district plays a mediating role. The Klong Toey official sees the district acting as a nanny to the communities, setting up activities and providing sanitation, for example.

The district officials display varying attitudes towards low-income communities. The Klong Toey official said that “*it would help if some of the residents had the same way of thinking as the district*”, suggesting that the district’s way is the only way. Klong Toey’s high density of charitable organisations means that residents may turn to the district only as a last resort. The Wang Thong Lang official takes a somewhat paternal attitude, saying that “*if we give them [residents] too much land, they have to borrow more so they will have more debt*”, and the district wants to avoid loan default. Additionally, he says that with regard the block of flats in Ruam Samakee, as they do not have building permission, “*if they carry on building they will be arrested*”. This is in contrast to Khun Siriporn, of Bang Khen district, who talks about the district “*advising*” the residents with regards building regulations, such as minimum road widths. The Klong Toey official explains that building regulations are necessary for safety and access, but understands that people complain about them as they already have very limited space. Though it is true that district offices are supposed to implement government regulations, a degree of flexibility and willingness to negotiate can strengthen their relations with communities

Khun Siriporn is respected by community residents in Bang Khen district because of her willingness to mediate disputes, even attending one meeting at 1am. She relates Baan Mankong to ideals upheld by the King, which are compassion, participation for the public

good, honesty, and fairness. In doing so, Khun Siriporn is appealing to the community residents' sense of loyalty to the monarchy, and implicitly suggesting that failure to participate means failing the King.

According to Khun Siriporn, the districts' approaches to community development depend on the head of the Community Development section, as *"the housing issue needs a lot of power, understanding with the residents, managing divisions, negotiating, it's very time-consuming. So it's work that might not suit some heads of department, or they might have priorities"*. Some of the responsibility lies with the communities themselves – as Khun PR of Bang Bua explained, *"Bang Khen communities prepare themselves before meeting the district, so they show they've thought of solutions before the meeting, unlike Laksi [another district] communities which pile problems on the district, which discourages the district. Communities need to take responsibility too"*. This allows for complementarity, as communities' local knowledge can benefit the district. Khun Siriporn recognises that the communities in her district were ready to upgrade, due to the role played by the Klong Bang Bua network. Additionally, some Bang Khen communities face the threat of eviction for a new railway line, and this is a *"critical opportunity ... if they hurry and lease the land, it will be possible to change the route of the train"*, demonstrating that the district wants to avoid evictions.

In many cases, relationships between the communities and the districts have improved once the bulk of the upgrading is completed. As a SOC member said of her community, *"now that we are developed, we are the eyes and face of the district, they want us to help develop other places"*. Khun PR of Bang Bua is used to advise other communities, and districts learn from the communities. The Pathumwan official admitted that at the district, *"some people are lazy about Baan Mankong"*, and the district has other problems to deal with, such as providing for the elderly.

An important role for the district is to give the households permanent housing registration, which brings with it voting rights in Bangkok, access to local schools, and cheaper utilities. However, some districts are slow to implement this: in Ruam Samakee, the conversion from temporary to permanent registration was only just being implemented in January 2009, three years after the completion of the project, though the official recognises the difficulties this creates for the households: *"Ruam Samakee still has no house registration because the houses are against the regulations. They still don't have the permission. This has an effect on*

*the price they pay for water and electricity so makes life difficult for them*". Klong Toey residents also have temporary housing registrations, while those in Bonkai and Bang Bua benefit from permanent registration.

Wang Thong Lang district's problems with Ruam Samakee community over the community election results in September 2007, have led to tension between certain community residents and the district, as previously discussed. The Community Development official explains: "*I am an official, I have to work within the regulations. The 1991 Community Committee regulations, clause 28, says, 'Let the district staff hold a meeting 30 days after the election to select the different positions with the district presiding over this meeting'. In the community, the people had already decided who should take which position. In this meeting they have to decide amongst themselves, with the district chief just acting as the leader of the meeting. The district is the central party, it doesn't want divisions in communities*". By not clarifying to the community residents what the election procedure was, divisions arose. This illustrates the negative impact that external bodies can have on communities, especially when there is a lack of communication. In Ruam Samakee, the election dispute led to Khun PAC, a committee member, writing to a local newspaper, displaying one of the new forms of resistance by the urban poor which Ockey (2004) highlights, as residents rebel against old-style patronage ties.

There is a disconnect between the upper levels of local government, that is, the BMA, and what the local-level actors, the 50 district offices, do on the ground. The BMA accepts the merits of Baan Mankong, but getting district officials to facilitate its implementation can be difficult, especially as the bureaucratic system means that officials are likely to follow outdated rules by the book. The Pathumwan official believes that the BMA is at a standstill in terms of development work, whereas CODI has a clear sense of direction. There is scope for CODI to make it clearer to the BMA how exactly the district offices can facilitate upgrading for the poor, as well as push for policy changes. However, as long as district officials are appointed rather than elected, they will not necessarily try to do what is best for the urban poor.

### **7.2.3 Conclusion**

As stated in Chapter 1, goal 6 of Baan Mankong is to "to create status for the communities and the poor, with acceptance from agencies, society, and relevant organisations", while goal

11 is to “adjust regulations and conditions to create flexibility, to be consistent and helpful in developing housing for the poor”. This section has explored the attitudes of various institutional bodies towards communities and the Baan Mankong policy, as well as the community residents’ perception of these groups. The institutional actors involved in Baan Mankong at different levels are outlined in Table 7.4, which illustrates that the programme is composed of cross-cutting ties within society and across society’s institutions, both formal and informal.

The case studies show that community residents generally feel that the process of upgrading has increased their trust in outside bodies; however, this is not to say that all is perfect, and there are disparities in trust levels both between the different communities (reflecting their upgrading experience) and the different bodies. The residents’ comments should be taken into account by the relevant bodies to further build upon improved relationships, especially with regard to improving communication so that ordinary residents are contacted, and not just the community leaders. The support displayed for former Prime Minister Thaksin demonstrates that where governments take positive action to reduce poverty, they will be rewarded with popular support of the beneficiaries; thus, reciprocity is vital in fostering vertical trust and linking social capital.

With the exception of CODI, government agencies are pursuing the Baan Mankong agenda because they have received instructions from above, and as a result may sometimes be half-hearted in facilitating the implementation of the scheme. This seems to be especially the case with district offices, which are complying with their bureaucratic duty to ensure that building and planning regulations are enforced, and may not always be understanding of the communities’ plight. It seems that once communities complete the upgrading process, relations with their local district office improve, and districts may use residents from these communities to help other communities within the district with upgrading. By giving out awards such as the “White flag of strong communities” and “Drug free community”, it is recognising communities as capable actors in self-improvement, and communities appreciate being held with respect by officials. Community management teams and leaders are the main link between the community and officials.

Table 7.4: Institutional actors in Baan Mankong

Levels	Institutions				
<b>International</b>	UN MDGs	ACHR	SDI	LOCOA	
	<i>Goal 7, target 11</i>	<i>Links Asian low-income settlements</i>	<i>Provides worldwide links between urban poor</i>	<i>Asian network of community organisers</i>	
<b>National</b>	Government and MSDHS	CODI		State land-owning agencies	
	<i>Grants loan budget and subsidies</i>	<i>Approves projects and grants loans; supplies links to architects and academics, signs MOUs</i>		<i>Provide land lease or land sharing agreement</i>	
<b>City</b>	BMA	SOC Bangkok and region	S4P		
	<i>Draws up building and community regulations</i>	<i>Organises learning exchange between communities, teams of building technicians, organises protests</i>		<i>Provides support and advice to communities, organises protests</i>	
<b>District</b>	District office		Local Network		
	<i>Approves building plans, provides housing registration, runs community elections</i>		<i>Provide learning exchange and support during negotiations e.g. Bang Bua canal network, Railway Land communities</i>		
<b>Community</b>	Community organisation	Community cooperative	Contractors/builders	NGOs	Private landlord
	<i>Manages Baan Mankong process and promotes community activities</i>	<i>Manages community loans, repayments and savings</i>	<i>Build the new Baan Mankong housing and infrastructure</i>	<i>Provide financial assistance, activities</i>	<i>Provides land lease or sells land</i>

When efforts are made to develop the weak, vertical ties that exist between the state and ordinary citizens, moving away from traditions of subordination, the outcome is mutually beneficial for all. The case of Bang Khen district is a positive example of this. The Community Development chief is willing to mediate community disputes, and encourages communities to upgrade, telling slum communities at risk from plans for new railway lines that upgrading would increase their bargaining power. As a result, communities regard the district office with trust which can be called upon to help in times of need. By comparison, Wang Thong Lang district was not perceived to remain a neutral party in the dispute over Ruam Samakee's community election results, and hence is not highly regarded by many

residents, as well as for its slowness in giving households permanent housing registrations. Similarly, Klong Toey district office does not officially recognise Klong Toey 7-12 community and does not provide the community with adequate garbage disposal facilities, actions which suggest that it does not hold the community residents with high regard.

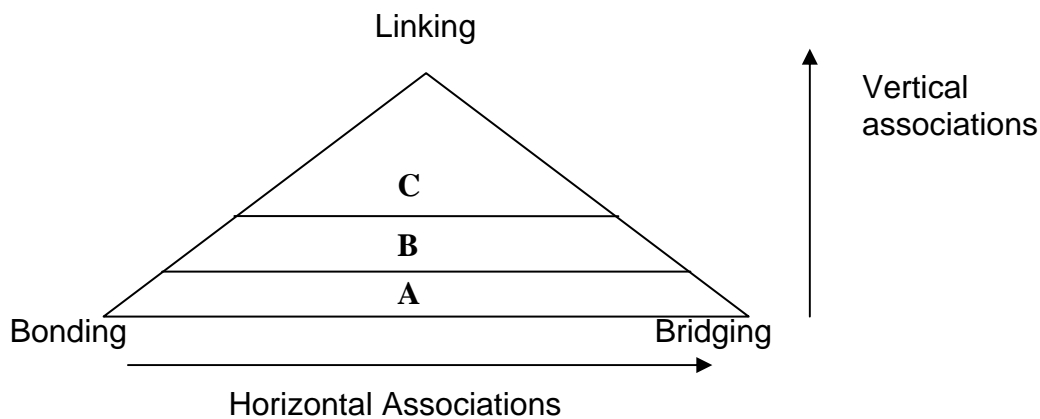
With regard to the land-owning agencies, Baan Mankong may not always fit in with these agencies' planned use for their land, and to an extent it seems that landowners care most about ensuring the land is well-maintained. However, certainly in the case of the CPB and Treasury, a good working relationship seems to have been established with the communities. Therefore, the process of undergoing Baan Mankong upgrading seems to have beneficial outcomes for linking social capital, increasing the partnership between the low-income communities and government bureaus. However, CODI has a large part to play in this, as it still acts as an intermediary in many cases, using its position as a public organisation to encourage these agencies to facilitate the process for the communities. By signing MOUs with landowning agencies, it formalises a new commitment to helping low-income communities.

Similarities can be drawn between the case of Baan Mankong and Evans' studies (1996) of embeddedness in the case of Taiwanese irrigation, whereby he argues that there is a division of labour between farmers and bureaucrats, which complement each other. This complementarity, combined with embeddedness of public officials in social relationships, can lead to synergy. This would allow relationships that span the public-private divide to form, and it is in these relationships that social capital inheres (Evans 1996:1122). There is still scope for improved complementarity and embeddedness between Bangkok's communities and government officials. With regard to complementarity, CODI benefits from its status as a public organisation in influencing landowners and bureaucrats, whilst it leaves communities to use their local knowledge to decide what kind of upgrading they want. However, at present, most district officials prefer the rigid application of bureaucratic rules, rather than flexibility, which would lead to improved relations with community residents. Residents have shown a willingness to invest in their houses themselves, provided that the state reciprocates by demonstrating that they view the urban poor as citizens worthy of basic services and a relationship of mutual trust and hence mutual benefit. CODI seems closest to achieving embeddedness, but struggles due to understaffing. Districts are hampered by the fact that officials are unelected and regularly moved to different districts, breaking bonds that may

have been formed. Bang Khen district displayed the most embeddedness, as a spirit of cooperation exists between the district and the communities, perhaps explaining why the Bang Bua network is now a showcase. However, traditions of hierarchical bureaucracy may hamper Thailand's achievement of synergy, which requires egalitarian social relations (Harriss, 2002).

The implications of linking social capital are illustrated in Figure 7.3. State agencies have access to power and resources, and the vertical associations formed through linking social capital allow the residents of low-income communities to access more resources than through horizontal associations alone. With only bonding social capital, a community's access to resources and information is limited to the bottom level of the pyramid (area A). With bridging social capital, communities can access more resources and information from other communities (areas A + B), for example benefiting from the vertical connections which others may have. With linking social capital, communities' access to resources extends to the top of the pyramid (areas A + B + C) as they can reach those in positions of power and with control over resources. Baan Mankong takes steps to ensure that communities can access the top of the triangle by promoting the three facets of social capital.

*Figure 7.3: Horizontal and vertical associations*



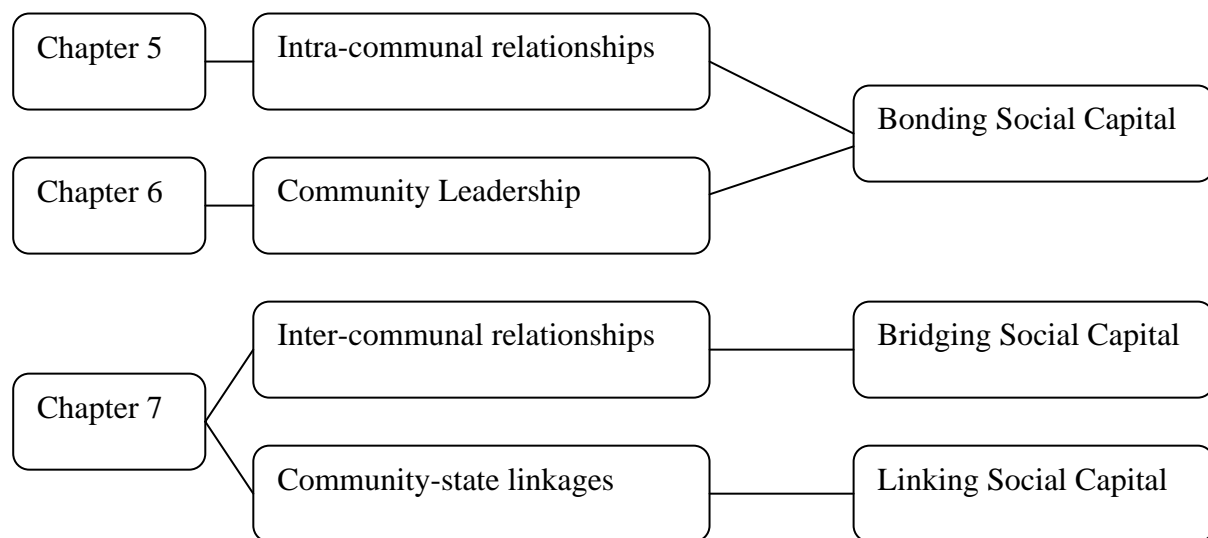
### 7.3 Core empirical chapters

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 have sought to contextualise the Baan Mankong experience, by bringing out the voices of the various parties involved. The analysis was structured along the three levels of social capital (Figure 7.4): bonding social capital at the intra-community level; bridging social capital at the inter-community level; and linking social capital, at the vertical



level of state-community relations. The empirical chapters have demonstrated that upgrading has improved horizontal associations - especially by creating cross-community networks - and vertical associations, to a more limited extent, for the benefit of social capital. Thus social capital is an important element of upgrading. The next chapter seeks to explore the implications of Baan Mankong on self-perception, governance, and civil society in the context of the democratic process in Thailand, by combining the findings of the three empirical chapters.

*Figure 7.4: Structure of the empirical chapters*



## Chapter 8 – Discussion and Conclusion

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### 8.1 Stocks, channels, outcomes

### 8.2 Bonding social capital

### 8.3 Bridging social capital

### 8.4 Linking social capital

#### 8.4.1 Participation and politics

### 8.5 Areas for further research

### 8.6 Further reflections

### 8.7 Conclusion

*“Why do governments always think of building the economy, building cities? Why not start by solving problems of the poor people first, and then things like the klongs will be cleaner too... Look at the economy now, it’s back to zero.”* Khun DM, Bang Bua committee member, 4/1/09

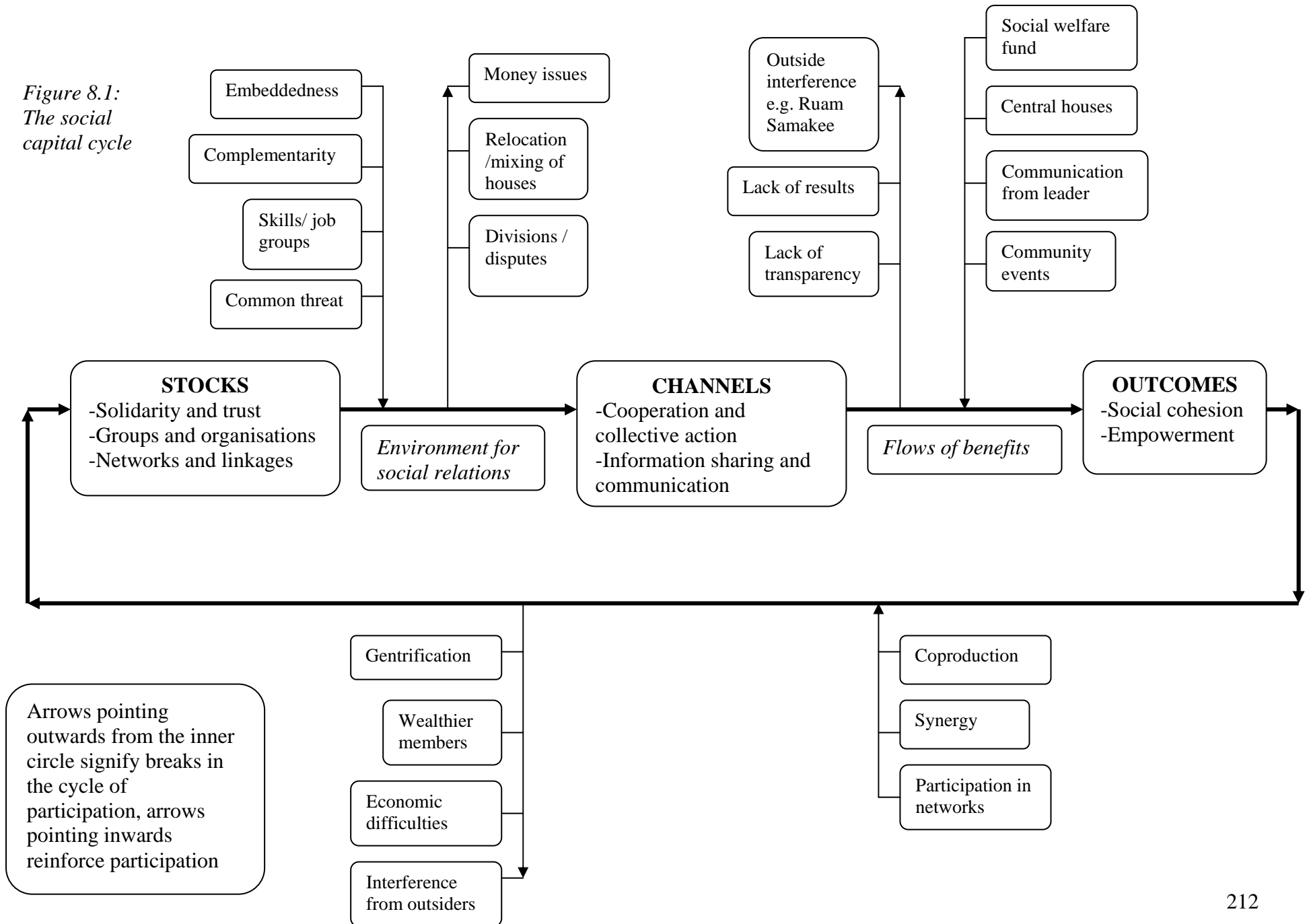
*“We need to be like water, and go into every nook and cranny of government.... We don’t know how to work with the government.”* Bangkok community representative, at the National Community Organisations AGM, 19/3/08

The last three chapters have presented an overview of how the upgrading process and its outcomes have been experienced by community residents, community leaders, slum networks, and government agencies. They have examined the potential for linkages at both horizontal and vertical levels, by letting the voices of stakeholders emerge. This chapter discusses the implications of a participatory approach for the development of communities, and their positioning in Thailand’s social structure, at a time of political change. It also provides recommendations for areas of further research.

### 8.1 Stocks, channels, outcomes

Returning to the stock, channels and outcomes framework presented in chapter 4, Figure 8.1 illustrates how the different components of the framework contribute to continued participation and enhancement of social capital. However, this “virtuous circle” of participation can also be broken if certain internal and external factors contribute to the breakdown of participation in a community. Whether or not the circle breaks has a bearing on how successful the participatory process is at activating social capital within the community. As social capital wears out with disuse, it is desirable to promote continued collective action, at the same time creating synergy as communities and other stakeholders increasingly cooperate. The following sections will revisit the analysis of social capital at the three levels framing the thesis: bonding, bridging and linking.

Figure 8.1:  
The social capital cycle



## 8.2 Bonding social capital

Baan Mankong upgrading presents a significant upheaval in the communities, especially where rebuilding is required. Yet communities have shown a willingness and desire to upgrade, in order to improve the quality of their lives. They are willing to take on a 15-year debt burden to do so, even though this debt is not income-generating and requires people to work harder in order to meet repayments.

The four case-study communities upgraded for different reasons, though ultimately it was about getting security of tenure. Thus the incentive for collective action was the threat, real or potential, of eviction, and three of the case-studies were also pilot projects in upgrading. There is likely to be a degree of selection effect in communities chosen for upgrading, as those chosen as pilot projects had already demonstrated that they had the capacity for collective action, through savings groups and previous environmental improvement projects.

Three hypotheses were set out in Chapter 1 relevant to the community level:

- 1) Participatory slum upgrading is more likely to succeed the higher the initial starting level of social capital in the community;
- 2) Participating will lead to higher levels of trust in the community, though levels of participation may drop once the upgrading is complete;
- 3) Community leadership is integral to determining the sustainability or not of collective action within the community.

Retrospective questioning provided an indication of whether social capital levels had increased as a result of upgrading. In terms of solidarity and trust, it does appear that levels of this indicator increased through the participatory upgrading process, and residents of a trustful community are less likely to break norms of collective action. This is an outcome not only of the participatory process, but also the physical layout of the upgraded communities facilitating community interactions. However, the problems experienced in Ruam Samakee with regard to money management demonstrate that trust can easily be breached, and this has implications for the likelihood of further collective action. Financial and social inequalities are especially sensitive issues which are most likely to lead to divisions. Though savings groups are meant to be financially empowering, residents feel tied down by large debt.

If the community already had groups and organisations before upgrading, this demonstrated a capacity for collective action, and the community residents expressed a desire for more groups, especially groups with money-earning potential. Many respondents acknowledged that participation levels had fallen since their houses were completed, especially as people had to work harder to repay their debts. Divisions also affected post-upgrading participation levels, especially in Klong Toey 7-12 and Ruam Samakee. However, residents generally accepted falling participation, knowing that should the need arise, collective action for a common goal is possible. Participation appears to be regarded more as a means to an end, rather than the goal in itself. This raises the question of whether community stocks of social capital are only mobilised when there is an external threat, such as eviction or fire. However, one should also question why the poor are expected to rely on each other, when this is not the case for other city residents, and thus falling participation could simply echo city norms.

Chapter 6 outlined different approaches to community management, and demonstrated that community leaders play an integral role as a unifying (or divisive) force in the communities. Though the community management structure is imposed by the district, the democratic selection system means that residents can express their satisfaction or not with the leader through elections every two years. A community leader is the agent who mobilises the community's existing social capital for mutually beneficial outcomes, and depending on their transparency and openness to collective input, they can have considerable influence on the empowerment of residents. Community leaders have much power, as the gatekeepers to the community, with control over flows of information, and they are the face of the community in relations with outsiders.

According to Somchai (1997, quoted in Askew 2002), there are a number of personality characteristics of Thai slum people which are obstacles to development work: acceptance of hierarchy and patron-client ties; acceptance of government authority; a desire for freedom, but a dislike of working in groups; a desire to build personal influence and honour; extravagant tastes; an unwillingness to listen to those of equal or lower status; and a love of independence and fun. The Baan Mankong process suggests that some of these characteristics are no longer relevant: residents have demonstrated an ability to work in groups, and have managed to do so by building working relationships with their landowners, CODI and the districts. Though some residents displayed a desire to spend "extravagantly", most were aware of following the sufficiency principle. While residents still display deference to

government authority, for example inviting high-ranking officials as guests of honour to community opening ceremonies, they have also gained some independence from the government by being able to meet their own needs, for example through Bang Bua's social welfare fund or Bonkai's day-care centre.

With regard to individual self-perception, upgrading can be viewed as having positive impacts in that residents are confident in their ability to solve their problems collectively, when provided with some financial assistance from the state. Money is the resource that the poor lack the most, as other needs can often be met through mutual assistance. Residents found the sense of community and belonging an important aspect of living in a low-income community, and expressed pride in their communities. The presence of bonding social capital affects the residents' well-being and self-perception. Their self-perception can have implications on power relations with other actors, and as legal tenants, they expect improved relations with government agencies. The fact that the theme for World Habitat Day 2008 was "Revolutionising Thai Slums" suggests that community actors and CODI see Baan Mankong as a true force for change from below, changing both how slum communities are perceived, and perceive themselves, which can ultimately lead to a reshaping of social structures.

### **8.3 Bridging social capital**

Intra-community social capital is just as important as that at the inter-community level for ensuring successful scaling-up of Baan Mankong across Thai communities, as hypothesised:

- 4) Slum networks will play a vital role in connecting communities and promoting policy reform in favour of the poor.

As Pantoja (1999:60) states, horizontal forms of social capital are important, but without proper vertical articulations the impact of community development will be limited. Though networks function on the horizontal level, they have the ability to promote changes through their ties and influence on vertical structures.

The SOC network plays two important networking roles: connecting communities to each other, in order to facilitate learning-by-doing, and acting as a mouthpiece for the urban poor, hence creating vertical connections to government agencies and people with money and resources. SOC is taking over a role formerly played by NGOs, giving the urban poor independence from outside actors. Effective community-based development requires gradual

learning-by-doing, and SOC applies the knowledge gained by its volunteers in their respective communities to other communities hoping to upgrade. This knowledge-sharing is core to its work, and forming a Baan Mankong “university” is one of its central plans.

Because SOC relies heavily on norms of reciprocity in order to function, the network is at risk if people do not have the time or resources to participate. SOC participation can also put pressure on the volunteers, who often hold committee positions in their own communities, and residents of their home communities may regard them as devoting too much time to the collective cause of the poor, rather than their own communities’ problems. SOC’s close ties to CODI means it benefits from CODI’s resources and expertise, and an enabling environment which allows it to thrive as a community group devoted to furthering Baan Mankong, though CODI may also be regarded as SOC’s patron and thus able to make demands of the network.

Networks are pushing for a new form of bottom-up governmentality, as power is gradually decentralised from the state. They play an important role in terms of promoting democratic and participatory governance, by acting as representatives for the poor, hence providing horizontal power delivery. As the SOC protest at the Ministry of Social Development demonstrated, the organisation is ensuring that the poor remain on the government’s agenda. Slum networks can be regarded as social actors in the public interest, and it is here that they form vertical-reaching bonds in order to ensure access to resources and the creation of enabling policy environments. However, SOC may be too narrowly defined by Baan Mankong, a government policy, which could pose risks for the network’s sustainability, and its close ties to CODI may limit its ability to push for real reform in governance.

#### **8.4 Linking social capital**

Two hypotheses were explored relating to linking social capital:

- 5) Completing the upgrading process and gaining security of tenure will lead to community residents feeling more integrated in the city and its governance issues;
- 6) There will be a positive shift in the way the poor are regarded by institutional bodies, and trust between the two groups will increase.

With regard the first hypothesis, it seems that many residents are wary of how long-lasting their tenure security will be, though they saw their investment in housing as offering added security, and also believed that CODI would support them should they face an eviction battle. Residents regarded themselves as Bangkokians; however, this was already largely the case before upgrading. With regard to interest in governance issues, though the residents were politically aware, it seems that they relied on their community leaders to act on their behalf, through slum networks, to put pressure on the state on matters of governance.

Upgrading has given residents legal status as tenants of the state, or collective owners of a plot of land, and this legality is important for positioning them as members of the city, with a say in its governance and the right to demand services. Additionally, as the residents did the bulk of the upgrading work, they can regard themselves as partners of these government agencies, ensuring that the land is well-maintained and facilitating the districts' roles with regard to providing sanitation and other services. Thus there is complementarity in the mutually supportive roles of the communities and the government agencies, though districts may not all feel this way. However, by becoming legal tenants, residents have moved from a position of resistance to one of dependency, tied to the state by debt and leases, unless both parties encourage the formation of synergy through complementarity and embeddedness to become partners. Horizontal networks are also important here, through their power to demand accountability of officials.

Chapter 7 demonstrated that the trust with which community residents held various government agencies was not very high. In order to foster strong vertical ties, an improvement in trust levels is necessary. As vertical relationships are dominated by inequality in terms of access to resources and power, trust arising from linkages can be used to override these inequalities, through reciprocity, so that linking social capital is not merely a form of patronage. Here networks also play an important role, as residents can turn to collective action rather than patronage, and gain increased bargaining power. Government agencies cannot be seen as free-riding on the communities' improvements as a result of upgrading and instead should strive to achieve ties that cross the public-private divide, through embeddedness and complementarity. Reciprocity is a vital component in trust-creation, and this has policy implications for the attitude of government bodies towards low-income communities.



As relations between the state and the urban poor have over decades been based on inequalities of power and dependency by the communities on the state for assistance, a shift toward a more equal relationship will not happen overnight, as social structures are characterised by inertia. Social relationships which have been engrained in the mentality of the state and residents take time and effort to change. However, Baan Mankong, by promoting ties between communities and state agencies, is helping to change relations, and the growing culture of collective action encourages the breaking down of traditions of subordination. Baan Mankong promotes embeddedness, by connecting citizens and public officials across the public-private divide, which is essential for mutual benefit. This necessitates close contact, and one way in which to achieve this is to ensure that appointed positions, such as district officials and local police chiefs, are not changed too frequently, in order to allow the formation of ties between communities and these government representatives. The already weak vertical ties cannot be developed if they are regularly broken by the shuffling of officials from one district to another.

The implementation of Baan Mankong still faces barriers, such as building regulations which are not suited to communities with very limited space. Thus, SOC and S4P can promote reform of state institutions to further encourage collective action as a way of providing solutions to problems. According to Fox (2005:6), as well as the state's role in reforming policy, organisations of the poor need to continue scaling up, horizontally and vertically, in order gain the bargaining power necessary to outweigh the "anti-poor elements embedded within the institutions". The two processes can interlock to form a virtuous circle of "mutual empowerment between institutional reformers and social actors in the public interest" (Fox, *ibid*). The most obvious "institutional reformer" in the Baan Mankong case is CODI, which has always pushed the cause of poor communities with the government. It has been the catalyst for Baan Mankong, because of its belief in the power of the poor to help themselves. Additionally, the Thaksin government, by implementing many pro-poor policies, has changed the face of Thai politics, as the poor increasingly see democracy as a way to ensure their needs are met.

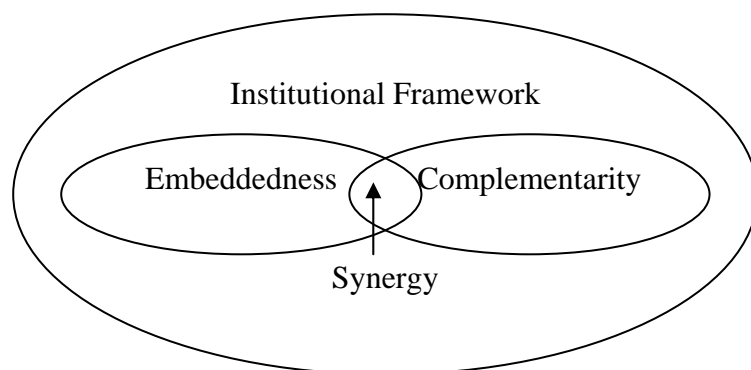
Communities in Thailand are seeing a gradual shift from previous form of linking social capital which was based on patron-client ties, to a new form, composed of co-production and collaboration, between communities and the formal institutions. However, care needs to be taken to ensure that the linking social capital does not develop into negative outcomes such as

nepotism and clientelism, and situations where communities are indebted to government agencies for overriding certain regulations, creating a new form of patronage. One method to prevent this is to ensure that there are sufficient levels of bridging and bonding social capital to accompany it, to ensure democratic governance (Titeca and Vervisch, 2008). Hence it is important for communities to continue promoting strong social ties internally, for example through community events and groups, and continued democratic community elections. Slum networks like SOC play an important role in reducing the isolationism of communities, helping to prevent the creation of patronage ties.

***Baan Mankong –achieving synergy for development?***

Does Baan Mankong provide the conditions necessary to create synergy, which arises from public-private relations when complementarity and embeddedness are combined (Figure 8.2)? Synergy can be a useful tool for development and democratic governance. Evans (1996) sees synergy as arising from pre-existing socio-cultural endowments, or, where necessary conditions are not met, it can be constructed. In the Thai case, the country’s hierarchical and unequal structure has previously limited state-society partnerships, with the government usually regarded as the provider, and the poor as beneficiaries. However, the existing social norms at the community level, and the emphasis on the concept of unity, mean that they have the capacity in terms of trust and solidarity to undergo collaborative activities, provided that the public sector is willing to engage with them. The challenge remains to scale-up this community-level social capital “to generate solidary ties and social action on a scale that is politically and economically efficacious” (Evans, 1996:1124). This is a role for slum networks like SOC.

*Figure 8.2: Conditions for synergy*



Evans believes synergy can be created in three ways, though these are context-dependent: changing self-perceptions; using soft technologies of organisational design; and redefinition of problems (Figure 8.3). Baan Mankong displays characteristics of all three methods. The achievements of communities in producing housing and gaining legal tenure means they are no longer slum dwellers. Baan Mankong can lead to a reshaping of social identities in such a way that the urban poor no longer regard themselves as inferior to government agents, but instead as partners in the coproduction of housing services, as has happened in Bang Bua community, which Bang Khen district now uses as an example for all the other slum communities in Bang Khen. This more equal relationship also facilitates scaling-up of upgrading, as government agents and community residents can gain a clearer understanding of how each party works, for mutually beneficial outcomes. The changing self-perception was a process which was already beginning in the 1980s, as NGOs increasingly worked with urban poor communities and provided them with new methods of meeting their goals.

Baan Mankong also uses an innovative organisational design, by redefining the relationship between communities and different government actors. It sets out clear roles for community organisations, both within and between communities, and facilitates linkages between community organisations and other actors, such as government agents, NGOs and architects. The process is participatory not just at the community level, but also between communities and outside actors, by promoting increased connections between different stakeholders in the drive to achieve strong communities.

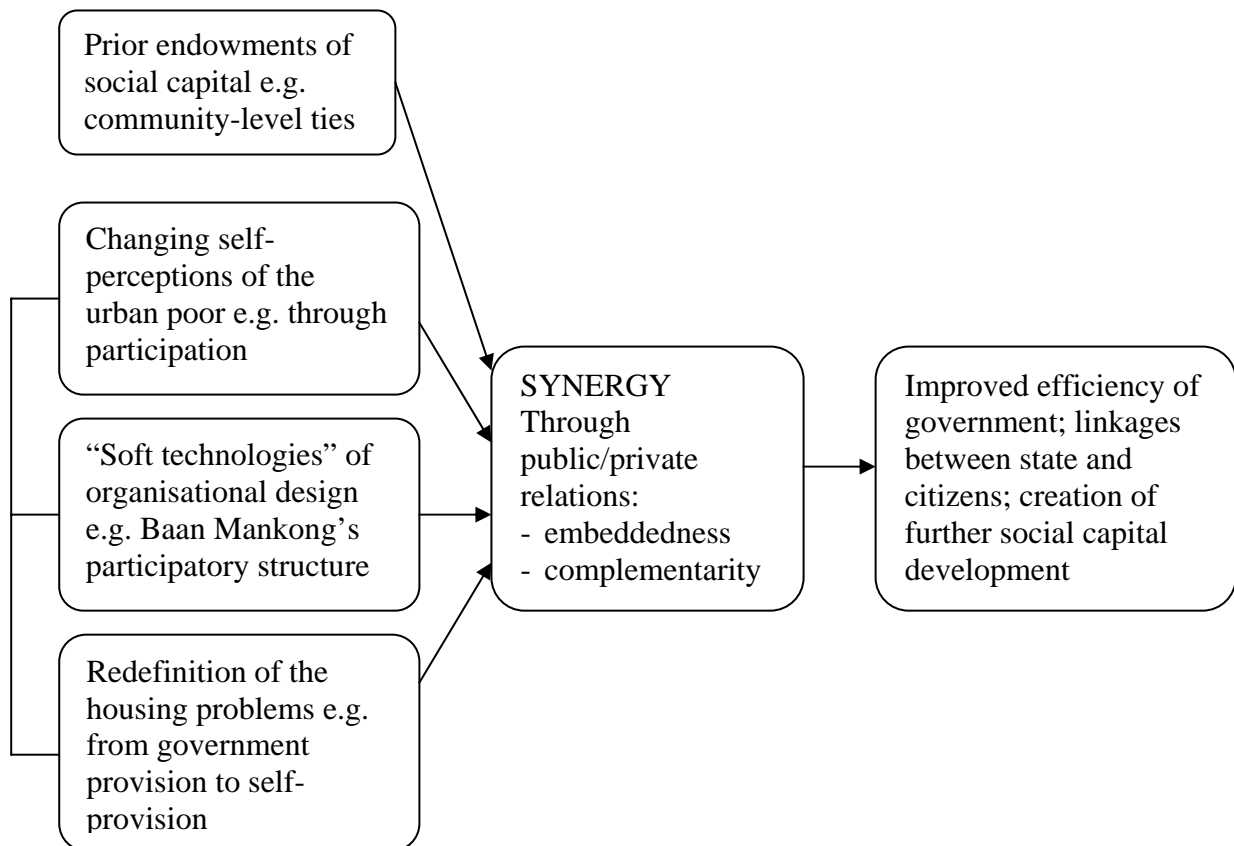
Thirdly, Baan Mankong offers a redefinition of the housing problem, as developed by CODI. Rather than waiting for state provision of public flats, which is beyond the state's finances and capacity, it believes that community residents are better off negotiating and implementing their own solution. Thus they meet their needs, learning skills in the process, and forming closer ties as partners of the state, rather than beneficiaries, while collective leases create an impetus for collective responsibility.

Thus, Baan Mankong displays all the characteristics necessary for the formation of synergy, which is a form of linking social capital. Trust will not develop between the two parties unless they work together for the achievement of common goals, and Baan Mankong allows communities to make use of their local knowledge for their own benefit, and also that of state agencies. Additionally, the scheme recognises that state-community partnerships will be

more effective than if either group works alone, and empowerment of the poor is unlikely if they are not recognised as partners by state agencies. Public-private partnership is also regarded as a way of using social capital to ensure that improvements to communities, and cities as a whole, can be sustainable.

However, care needs to be taken to ensure that communities are not forced or rushed into upgrading. Because CODI faces physical output targets, it prioritises getting upgrading started in as many communities as possible, which is not necessarily compatible with community development, a process that takes time and nurturing. Thus some communities feel that they are being forgotten by CODI, who may instead send SOC members to follow-up on upgrading progress. Many communities are required by the landowners to upgrade as a condition of staying on site, which means that they do not really have a choice in the matter. Until such issues are resolved, there will always be an imbalance in power between communities and outside agencies.

Figure 8.3: Constructing synergy (adapted from Evans, 1996)



#### **8.4.1 Participation and politics**

It would be ambitious to say that Baan Mankong alone, with its associated movements, is changing government attitudes towards the poor and giving them power in governance matters. However, Baan Mankong's ideals of self-help, whilst promoting linkages and offering solutions to the way in which the poor have been marginalised, come at a timely moment in Thailand's politics. The country is reflecting on the meaning of democratic politics, and taking note of the social inequalities which have been exposed by the recent political turmoil. This is the right moment for the urban poor to use their capacity for collective action to push for policies which are beneficial to them. The recent political events in Thailand can be regarded as a critical juncture for the country's institutional structures, especially political ones, and the urban poor may have gained enough momentum through participatory projects to ensure that what Murphy (2009) terms mass-based democracy prevails over elite-dominated democracy where the poor have no power.

As Gaventa states, "when participatory approaches are scaled up from projects to policies, they inevitably enter the arena of government, and find that participation can become effective only as it engages with issues of institutional change" (2004:27). There has been a move away from communities being highly engaged with the state because they are marginalised, hence facing battles against eviction and to gain access to services, towards engagement because they enjoy complementary relations with the state (Woolcock, 2001). These complementary relations arise through the cooperation fostered by Baan Mankong, and are especially evident between communities and CODI, and increasingly with landowners and some districts, though these relationships remain more hierarchical and dependent.

The Thai government has provided an enabling environment with incentives for the poor to mobilise, through schemes such as Baan Mankong and One Village One Product, and harnessing citizen action is beneficial for both the state and the people themselves. Participation is most effective if it is regarded as a form of social exchange by both sides, with reciprocity and balance of power (Bowen, 2008), and government agencies are realising that it is advantageous for them to allow communities to provide their own solutions to problems, with the agencies providing a degree of support. However there is still room for the state to be more supportive, for example in recognising that certain building and planning

regulations are anti-poor, and in providing residents with housing registration in a timely manner.

The last three years have been politically tumultuous for Thailand, and this has implications for the continuation of government policies, especially with regard to funding. Consequently, grassroots groups have had to make an effort to remain visible, and this is the role that networks like SOC and S4P play. Though Baan Mankong is not framed in a political way, these slum networks bring politics into the equation, as they have the power to influence the voting patterns of community residents. For example, during the January 2009 Bangkok Governor elections, SOC collectively decided to support a particular candidate. However, the danger here remains finding the right balance as politicians vie for the network votes, in ensuring networks are not co-opted by certain political groups, and that networks do not dictate how community residents should vote.

A project like Baan Mankong helps to create political capital, an asset linking individuals or groups to the power structure (Mosse, 2005). Thus, it seems that a participatory project can create long-term political value for the poor (Williams, 2004), as actions which are not political in themselves have political consequences: self-help in upgrading is a signal from the poor that they don't want to wait for government assistance. Additionally, because Baan Mankong comes at a time when the Thai political structure is realising that the votes of the poor cannot be bought, but have to be earned through policies which benefit the poor, it fits in well with Thailand's shifting political and institutional structures.

### **8.5 Areas for further research**

This research study by no means claims to be a comprehensive evaluation of the social outcomes of Baan Mankong. Four communities represent a small proportion of the hundreds that are currently upgrading. Indeed, a comprehensive review of the impact of Baan Mankong on social relations in every community would be extremely time-consuming, and perhaps unnecessary, given that each community is an individual unit with its own defining factors. Since Baan Mankong is still in its early years, this study hopes to have demonstrated the importance of talking to the ordinary residents of the communities, and not just the community leaders, to get an understanding of how residents perceive themselves and each

other, and their ability to work collectively. This information can usefully inform future upgrading projects.

As this study specifically examined the outcomes of collective action, it would be interesting to do a comparison with communities which have chosen government-built Baan Ua-Arthorn flats instead of building their own homes, such as Suan Phlu community in Bangkok, after it was razed by fire. A division formed in the community, between residents who wished to build Baan Mankong homes, and those who preferred government-built Baan Ua-Arthorn flats. The community presents a perfect case-study in the making, with Baan Mankong residents on one side and Baan Ua-Arthorn residents on the other. This community would be an ideal case for examining whether participation in collective endeavours is the variable which affects community trust and further participation, and whether the Baan Ua-Arthorn residents, as beneficiaries rather than producers of housing, perceive government officials differently. Despite “Ua-Arthorn” meaning “we care”, it is Baan Mankong “secure housing” which appears to have more room for the social capital implied in the name. By January 2009, the government flats were not yet complete and thus residents were still living in temporary accommodation.

At the network level, as SOC is still a young network, there is potential for further exploration of its relations with CODI, communities, various government agencies and other networks. It remains to be seen how it deals with an ever-expanding network of member communities – will it adopt a more bureaucratic approach, or will it be able to continue with its current hands-on tactics which require a large commitment of its volunteers?

With regard to Thailand’s move towards democracy, much of the existing literature on the subject highlights the divide between the urban middle class and the rural poor regarding their voting patterns. However, there is no real consideration of the urban poor and their position in the political spectrum. As this study has shown, many of the residents recognise the role of former Prime Minister Thaksin in making the Baan Mankong scheme possible. They also identify as being poor, rather than middle class. However, they are very much aware of their voting rights and do not seem susceptible to vote-buying, of which their rural counterparts are accused. The urban community leaders shy away from introducing politics in their communities, and thus do not function as vote canvassers, unlike their rural counterparts did traditionally. Therefore, there is scope for research identifying where the urban poor fit

into the spectrum of Thai politics, since, as they become more integrated into the formal economy, starting with their housing, they might increasingly be regarded (by outsiders, if not by themselves) as middle class. The urban poor are an important voting base for politicians, but the latter have much more to do in order to gain their trust: the then-Prime Minister Samak's comments in 2008 about evicting slums to make way for parks demonstrates that the poor are still too easily put at the bottom of the pile.

There is also scope for research to identify whether urban low-income communities reflect village or city norms. Slum communities are sometimes termed urban villages, due to their migrant resident base. However, as an increasing proportion of slum residents are born in the city, do they lose traditional village norms, and hence their spirit of mutual self-help? A comparison between Bangkok and provincial Baan Mankong communities could provide insight into this.

With regard to the spillover effects of Baan Mankong, an assessment of the perception of neighbouring residents of communities with regard to their low-income neighbours would provide insight into whether the urban poor are regarded more highly when they are better-housed. When communities demonstrate what they are capable of achieving as a collective, this can change the way they are perceived by outsiders, spreading the net of bridging social capital wider.

On an economic level, an assessment of the multiplier effects arising from Baan Mankong communities could provide CODI with the quantifiable data of the benefits of the scheme. Baan Mankong not only provides training and creates jobs, for community residents who act as builders, it also stimulates the construction sector. Additionally, it is probable that a former slum community which upgrades is going to have positive impacts on surrounding land values. These factors can increase the power of the urban poor as economic actors in the city.

## **8.6 Further reflections**

How can these case studies of Baan Mankong communities add to the current understanding of social capital? It is important to remember that while the concept of social capital provides a useful framework for analysis, it remains an analytical construct or label which researchers attach to processes which occur regardless of their name, and of which stakeholders may not be conscious. This thesis considered social capital from the perspective of community



residents, allowing an examination of how social capital can be created for and used by one group. The analysis distinguishes between factors internal and external to the communities, and considers the motivation for people to use their social capital resources, providing insight into whether participation is viewed as a goal, or a means of achieving an end.

As outlined in section 3.2, this thesis adopts the synergy view of social capital, emphasising the need for linkages between the private and public sectors, which can act as complements to each other. The thesis followed Krishna's (2002) agency hypothesis (Table 3.2), that social capital matters contextually and in part, and that it is important to also consider the role of stakeholder agencies in understanding institutional changes arising from participation. The agency hypothesis therefore allows for differences in power relations to be brought in to the analysis, rather than looking simply at institutional or cognitive factors, as implied by the structuralist and social capital hypotheses. The agency hypothesis best complements considerations of synergy, and adapts well to the Thai context, where both structural and cognitive forms of social capital are present. If Baan Mankong were purely a bottom-up project, without institutional support, it would best be examined under the social capital hypothesis, while if it were a completely top-down project, the structuralist hypothesis would be most appropriate. The strength of the agency hypothesis lies in its considerations of context, bringing in both cognitive and structural factors and balancing them against each other, whilst the main critique of the agency hypothesis as it stands is that it does not make this balance explicit, by not mentioning the actors who produce this social capital. While Baan Mankong relies on the collective capacity of communities, it would not have reached its present scale without an initial favourable political climate, which promoted policies requiring government agencies to facilitate community collective action. An institutional commitment to decentralisation and participatory approaches to development, as detailed in recent National Economic and Social Plans, should provide support for the achievement of synergy. A country's institutional and political context is again an important consideration in this regard.

However, though government agencies may help communities to mobilise their latent social capital, for example by encouraging the formation of community management committees, government agents can also destroy existing social capital. Landowning agencies which evict or relocate communities may break existing social bonds. They are not trying to create synergy in these situations. In fact, any landowner demanding complete reconstruction of a community as a condition for remaining on-site risks breaking apart communities lacking the collective strength

to upgrade. Thus, agencies may have to provide support, for example mediating community meetings. Synergy appears to rely heavily on the personalities and motivations of individuals within agencies, who may seek to establish strong ties with communities even if this is not the agency's goal, and vice versa.

The agency hypothesis should therefore take into account the fact that mediating agencies do not always translate the effects of social capital into performance. As well as breaking up social bonds, as outlined above, agencies may instead use social capital for negative purposes, such as perpetuating clientelistic ties, using linking social capital for the benefit of a few community members, rather than all. While the implementation of Baan Mankong creates increased opportunities for the creation of synergy between the state and communities, this synergy remains fragile. The goals of agencies may be at odds with synergy, as the primary aims and roles of various agencies remain different, but it appears that better ties between individuals and the state should be strived for. Again, power relations need to be considered.

Though the concept of synergy facilitates an understanding of the Thai context, it assumes that the state is always a stakeholder in participatory programs. In a different country context, it may be NGOs that perform the enabling role, rather than state agencies, if the policy climate is not conducive to promoting capacity-building at the grassroots level. These NGOs therefore have to support local communities whilst pressuring for policy changes. Thailand benefits from having CODI supporting community-level development in certain areas such as housing and savings, but in other fields such as healthcare and environmental protection, NGOs may play a more important role. NGOs can therefore be additional important actors to consider in the agency hypothesis of social capital.

The institutional, political and cultural context of any participatory programme makes generalising conclusions to another country context difficult. Thai communities are ethnically homogenous, and religious differences are tolerated, facilitating community relations. The implementation of Baan Mankong benefits from Thai norms which predispose people to act collectively at the village level, and the fact that communities are officially registered and recognised as self-contained units. The relatively small size of Bangkok's low-income communities makes participation by all residents manageable, and allows more flexibility in the implementation of upgrading solutions which meet the individual characteristics and needs of each community. Additionally, officially registering communities, even when they are illegally

squatting, creates the basis for a formal relationship with and recognition from officials, hence paving the way for future synergy. These are lessons which can be applied elsewhere, which demonstrate that social capital can be harnessed on multiple levels (bonding, bridging and linking) for positive ends.

However, a large factor in the successful implementation of a large-scale participatory programme lies in ensuring that community residents have the capacity to act collectively. This comes through the creation of self-run savings group, and implementation of small-scale collective projects, such as environmental improvement. Communities should have an accountable and participatory leadership system, ensuring that there is a channel of communication with official bodies. External to the communities, agencies should facilitate the projects, by supporting all levels of social capital: bonding, bridging and linking. This requires a policy environment which recognises the abilities of grassroots groups to take a role.

Therefore, the successful implementation of participatory development projects requires the right balance of cognitive social capital, with norms facilitating collective action, and structural social capital, with rules and institutions providing an enabling atmosphere for cooperation and participation, both within communities, and between communities and outside agents. This enabling atmosphere is also determined by the power relationships between the agents and beneficiaries. An imbalance between structural and cognitive norms in certain cases may give rise to a vicious circle of self-perpetuating problems. Klong Toey 7-12's lack of a formally elected community organisation meant there was distrust in the cooperative, affecting loan repayments, cooperation and participation. At the same time, the community's relocation meant that some bonds between neighbours were broken, reducing cognitive social capital. These problems fed each other, exacerbated by a district office which did not address the community's problems. By comparison, in Bonkai, norms of trust have remained strong despite destruction by fires, and there is an effective community cooperative and committee, institutions through which structural social capital arises. The local district office and landowning agency provide support to this community stock of social capital, allowing it to be translated into a well-run community.

As a concept, social capital therefore applies well in Thailand, as social capital is both bottom-up, arising from individuals and communities, and top-down, with the government encouraging community organisations. Without the rules and institutions facilitating cooperation, even if there are strong norms of collective action, it is difficult to scale up cooperation beyond the

community level. Thus, the social capital hypothesis introduced in Table 3.2 is too limited in scope, by underestimating the need for structural social capital to complement cognitive social capital. Yet structural social capital on its own is also insufficient, as rules and formal institutions are ineffective without social capital to harness. Thus only the agency hypothesis incorporates the importance of mediating agencies: though many Thai communities had existing collective activities and norms of participations, slum networks, CODI and other government agencies played a necessary role by introducing the rules and institutions in which this social capital could be better harnessed for large-scale impact. Yet there remain slight limitations to the agency hypothesis, which can be addressed by explicitly considering the role of actors other than agencies, and Table 8.1 offers a reconsideration of Table 3.2 in light of the Thai experience. While the three hypotheses consider the effect of social capital on institutional performance, it should be emphasised that this should include not only formal but also informal institutions, which in a country like Thailand play a vital role.

It is of course ambitious to claim that a national housing project is sufficient to change the relationship between poor communities and the state in all areas of governance. It is beginning by demonstrating how social capital can be harnessed for productive ends, within an enabling institutional and political environment provided by the state. However, the Baan Mankong experience is one example of the worldwide movement towards the urban poor seizing on an opportunity offered by the state, and taking it largely in their hands. This may also be in part due to Thailand's shifting approach to democracy, whereby grassroots groups are only beginning to regard politicians as actors who should be meeting their needs, rather than vice versa.

## **8.7 Conclusion**

This thesis has considered the effects of participatory slum upgrading on horizontal and vertical associations, through bonding, bridging and linking social capital. For empowerment and democratic governance, all three forms of social capital are necessary and complement each other. Baan Mankong provides a movement from bonding to bridging to linking social capital, which is necessary to ensure that participatory development is not one-off, but contributes to a strong and egalitarian society. As Saergert, Thompson and Warren (2001) found, bonding social capital provides foundations for effective action at other levels. Bonding social capital is essential for allowing communities to collectively achieve what individuals cannot aspire to alone, while SOC cannot function without strong communities at its core. Though Baan

Mankong may not always have created bonding social capital, which was latent in the communities, it promoted the formation of bridging and linking social capital.

Bridging social capital is essential for its information-spreading role, linking not only communities horizontally, but also vertically to persons in power. Networks bridge the gap where the state fails, and thus can be regarded, to a certain extent, as taking over the role formerly played by patron-client relations. The negotiating power which they hold as a large group echoes that of a patron with influential ties, and communities are rejecting patron-client ties in favour of collective action. Horizontal ties are the new weapons of the weak. Bonding and bridging social capital together allow the urban poor to change their position on the social scale, moving away from being marginalised and bottom-rung, and through secure tenure they gain institutional security. However, the power of bonding and bridging social capital depends heavily on the institutional context in which the networks of the poor are embedded.

This institutional context currently appears to be in a state of flux, as Thailand is still coming to grips with democracy, providing the poor with a chance to “deepen democracy” from below (Somchai, 2002). Participatory projects and their associated organisations, like SOC and S4P, promote a more vocal civil society, and it seems Baan Mankong as a policy has bound the government to providing for the poor. It has set a precedent for giving the residents of low-income communities control over their future, while providing them with financial support, and it seems the state is now committed to encouraging participatory projects in achieving development goals, which ties in with trends towards decentralisation. Thai low-income citizens are seeing accomplishments in poverty reduction as a criterion for the legitimacy of governments. A project like Baan Mankong takes a rights-based approach, so that people are increasingly regarded as citizens with rights (entitlements and capabilities), rather than beneficiaries with needs, and now the government has to meet its obligations to citizens (Alsop, 2005). Thailand may now be moving towards modernisation *with* development, as opposed to the “modernisation without development” of which Jacobs (1971) was so critical, as the trend towards participatory projects brings about the qualitative changes in social structures which he called for.

**Table 8.1 – Reconsideration of social capital hypotheses**

	<b>Importance (from Table 3.2)</b>	<b>Role in creation of synergy</b>	<b>Relevance to the Thai context</b>	<b>Limitations of hypothesis</b>	<b>Advantages of hypothesis</b>
<b>Social capital hypothesis</b>	Social capital matters a lot.	Only the community/ grassroots role is considered.	Considers the role of community organizations and slum networks.	Ignores structural social capital; looks only at bottom-up social capital; ignores the rules and institutions within which society operates, looks only at “soft” norms.	Takes into account the ways in which communities operate – the “natural” social capital.
<b>Structuralist hypothesis</b>	If social capital matters, it is as a result of structures and their incentives.	Only the role of formal institutions is considered.	Considers the favourable political and policy climate.	Ignores cognitive social capital; ignores the norms which influence people’s actions.	Takes into account the political and institutional context, including role of market structures.
<b>Agency hypothesis</b>	Social capital matters contextually and in part.	Role of stakeholder agencies is considered, and their linkages to communities. Agencies can also destroy synergy.	Considers both the formal and informal institutional and social context.	Does not explicitly mention non-agency actors who are source of social capital; mediating agency does not always translate effects of social capital into performance; possibility of negative social capital; synergy is fragile; mediating agencies can also be NGOs and grassroots groups.	Allows room for consideration of power relationships; balances structural and cognitive social capital; considers the role of agencies as mediators; attempts to combine top-down and bottom-up for achievement of synergy; allows for CODI-type agencies which are public sector but take a grassroots approach.
<p><b>Recommendation:</b> the agency hypothesis provides the most holistic and balanced approach to analysis within a social capital framework, especially if it takes into account the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-make explicit that agencies are needed to complement the actions of other actors, such as community and grassroot actors, in achieving a balance between structural and cognitive social capital, and that this balance cannot be achieved when agencies work on their own;</li> <li>-examine power relations when considering the context, in order to provide the optimal combination of top-down and bottom-up policies.</li> </ul> <p>All three hypotheses refer to the importance of social capital on institutional performance – this should be with regard to both <i>informal</i> and formal institutions.</p>					



### Types of upgrading

- **On-site upgrading:** a community's physical environment and basic services is upgraded, without changing the existing housing layout.
- **On-site reblocking:** a community's physical environment and infrastructure is improved, with some adjustments to the layout of some houses and paths, for example re-aligning lanes to allow installation of sewage pipes.
- **On-site reconstruction:** existing housing is demolished and the community is rebuilt, allowing low-lying areas to be in-filled before reconstruction. Reconstruction is also used following fire or other disasters.
- **Land sharing:** where a landowner needs to use the land, the community negotiates to lease or buy a portion of the land, while the landowner uses the other section of the plot.
- **Relocation:** if tenure cannot be secured on the existing site, a community can find a relocation site with secure tenure. Nearby relocation is within 5 kilometres of the original site.

### Upgrading subsidies (from CODI, 2008:4)

- **Infrastructure subsidy:**
  - On-site upgrading: 25,000B per family
  - Reconstruction: 35,000B per family
  - Other subsidies: land-filling, landscaping (20,000B per community); livening visual character of new community (200,000B per community); construction of temporary housing (18,000B per family)
- **Land/housing loans:** maximum loan 300,000B per family for purchasing land and building housing. Housing loans usually up to 200,000B. Administered by the community cooperative. CODI's interest rate is 4% (2% for the pilot communities), and the community cooperative charges a mark-up of 2-3% for administrative costs and to create a buffer fund for late loan repayments.
- **Administrative subsidy:** a sum equal to 5% of the infrastructure subsidy, to be paid to the organisation selected by the community to assist it in its upgrading process, such as an NGO or a group of architects.
- **Process support subsidy:** 2,000-5,000B per unit to support the activities around the national-level upgrading process, such as exchange visits between communities, training activities, and coordination costs.



## Appendix 2 – Community Residents Semi-structured Interview Questions

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How long had you lived in this community before the upgrading process began? \_\_\_\_\_years

Why did you move to this community?

How does your new home compare to your previous one?

Has your community improved with the upgrading process? In what way?

Are there any problems that remain to be addressed in your community? What are they?

How would you rate your experience of the Baan Mankong scheme (from very positive to very negative, including neutral)

What was your involvement in the upgrading process? Please detail your experiences.

What factors do you think have made the upgrading project possible? Do you think it was successful or not?

Are you a member of the community savings group? Why or why not?

Are you a member of any other groups or organisations, e.g. sports team? Why or why not?

How would you rate the spirit of participation in your community?

Has the upgrading process affected the spirit of participation in any way? Has it helped networking in the neighbourhood?

Do you feel valued as a community member?

What is the decision-making process in this community? Who gets involved?

Are there any divisions in your community? How are they resolved?

If you run out of garlic or fish sauce, would you buy some or borrow some from your neighbours?

During the upgrading process, did you witness any corrupt behaviour? If yes, would you be willing to describe it to us?

Has the upgrading process changed your relationship with people outside of your community?

Do you have any plans to leave the community in the near future? Why or why not?

Has having secure tenure affected your life in any way?

Would you recommend Baan Mankong as an upgrading scheme to other communities? Why or why not?

Overall, has Baan Mankong led to an increase, decrease or no change in the following areas?

	<b>Increase</b>	<b>Decrease</b>	<b>No change</b>
Your willingness to work collectively			
Your willingness to invest further in your house			
Your perception of security of tenure			
Trust between neighbours			
Willingness to help one another			

Please tell me whether in general you feel the following sentiments have increased, decreased or stayed the same since completion of upgrading:

	<b>Increase</b>	<b>Decrease</b>	<b>No change</b>
Most people in this community are basically honest and can be trusted			
In this community, one has to be alert or someone is likely to take advantage of you			
If I have a problem, there is always someone to help me			
This community has prospered in the last five years			
I feel accepted as a member of this community			
I feel at home in this community			
In this community we take care of each other			
I feel I am a real Bangkokian			
I feel proud of this community			
This community is better than others			

How much do you trust the following groups, on a scale of 1 to 5 (1= do not trust at all, 5= fully trust)?

	<b>Do not trust at all</b>	<b>Distrust slightly</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>Trust a bit</b>	<b>Trust fully</b>
Government officials					
Police					
CODI					
Politicians					
Community leader					
Landlord (if applicable)					

Has the upgrading process caused your general trust of these groups to increase, decrease, or stay the same?

Increase 1

Decrease 2

Stay the same 3

Age: >20            20-29            30-39            40-49            50-59            60+

Gender:        Male                                  Female

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_                                  Unemployed

Place of work:        In community                                  Outside community

Details of other household members:

	Age	Occupation	Relation to you
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Average household monthly income: \_\_\_\_\_ baht

## Appendix 3 – Community Leader Interview Questions

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How were you selected as community leader?

How long have you been community leader?

Why was a community group set up?

How strong and bonded do you think your community is?

Do you think the upgrading process has had an effect on bonding within the community?

Is everybody equal within the community?

What joins community members together? E.g. do they come from the same region, work in the same place?

Do you think people in this community trust each other?

Has the upgrading process had any impact on the social relations in the community?

How much were community members involved in the decision-making process during upgrading? How were decisions taken?

Do any sections of the community participate more than others in the decision-making process?

How often does the community turn to collective action and participation?

How would you rate the spirit of participation in this community? Do you think the upgrading scheme has had an impact on this?

Is collective action usually seen as an effective way of getting things done in the community?

What other methods are used to do things in the community?

Do you feel that you are on equal terms with outsiders in negotiations, e.g. government officials, CODI, the landlord?

Do you think the community has strong links with these outsiders?

How much communication is there between the community and these outsiders?

Have information flows improved between both parties?

Is this community part of a slum network or federation? If yes, how did they help, if at all?

## Appendix 4 – List of Interviewees and Events Attended

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### Community Representatives Interviewed<sup>1</sup>

<b>Name</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Date</b>
Khun CH	Klong Toey 7-12	Acting community leader	9/2/08 and 20/12/08
Khun TE	Klong Toey 7-12	Cooperative leader	16/3/08
Khun PR	Bang Bua	Community leader	17/2/08
Khun DM	Bang Bua	Committee member	17/2/08
Khun NON	Bang Bua	Committee member	24/3/08
Khun SAM	Bonkai	Community leader	16/3/08
Khun DA	Bonkai	Cooperative leader	20/3/08
Khun CHO	Bonkai	Committee member	21/5/08
Khun AP	Ruam Samakee	Community leader	5/5/08 and 11/1/09
Khun WA	Ruam Samakee	Cooperative leader	18/5/08
Khun PAC	Ruam Samakee	Committee member	6/5/08 and 5/1/09
Khun AN	Kao Pattana	Cooperative leader	24/2/08
Major SO	Cherng Saphan Mai 1	Community leader	9/3/08
Khun SOM	Moobarn Arthit	Community leader	9/3/08
Khun WAN	70 Rai	Community leader	22/2/08
Khun KA	Sukhumvit 93 Jamkat	Community leader	18/2/08
Khun TA	Rim Klong	Community leader	7/3/08
Khun CHA	Rim Klong	Savings group leader	20/2/08
Khun KIE	Chalernchai Nimitmai	Cooperative leader	28/3/08
Khun LEK	Suan Phlu	Former community leader	17/5/08
Khun SR	Kaew Fa Sai Monkon	Community leader	28/3/08
Khun X	Lock 7-12 squatters	Committee member	23/2/08
Community group	Wat Chonglom Rama 3	-	2/5/08

### Community Discussion groups

<b>Community</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
Klong Toey 7-12	Discussion group (with committee members)	25/5/08
Klong Toey 7-12	Discussion group 1 and 2	21/12/08
Bonkai	Discussion group 1 and 2	27/12/08
Bang Bua	Discussion group (residents and committee)	4/1/09

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<sup>1</sup> Community representatives have been anonymised.

## Officials, Academics and Practitioners Interviewed

Name	Organisation	Position	Date
Khun Ake	Slum 4 Pak	Public Relations	24/4/08 and 19/12/08
Khun Siriporn Narkcharoen	Bang Khen district	Chief of Community Development	2/5/08
Khun Boonchai	Klong Toey district	Community Development Division	7/3/08
Khun Prasomsup Boonlert	Pathumwan district	Community Development officer	20/5/08 and 29/12/08
Khun Surapon	Wang Thong Lang district	Community Development Division	27/5/08 and 7/1/09
Khun Y and Khun C <sup>2</sup>	Port Authority of Thailand	Community Development	29/2/08
Khun Panassorn Arieayawong	Treasury	Treasury Official	16/12/08
Khun Chutima	Treasury	Property Valuation Division	17/2/08
Khun Danuch Isarasena na Ayutthaya	Crown Property Bureau	Director, Community Project 1	12/3/08
Khun Siam Nonkamchan	CODI	Head of Baan Mankong	6/5/08
Khun Roy Rattaya-anan	CODI	Head of Bangkok and Eastern Region	27/3/08
Khun Waraporn	CODI		1/2/08
Khun Kai	CODI	Baan Mankong team	5/2/08
Khun Lek Sompop	CODI	Baan Mankong team	30/5/08
Khun Suchada Sirorangsee	National Housing Authority	Housing Development Research division	7/2/08
Khun Paiboon Wattanasiritham	Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Social Development and Human Security		2/4/08
Ajarn Akin Rabibhadana	Crown Property Bureau	Social research	10/3/08
Ajarn Prayong Posriprasert	Arsomsilp ARCH studio	Architect	17/4/08
Ajarn Boonlert Visetpricha	Thammasat University	Social researcher and Slum 4 Pak advisor	9/4/08
Ajarn Virat Treampongphan	Arsomsilp ARCH studio	Director of Community Projects	29/5/08
Jeffrey Ing	Engineer, Urban Planning	Independent consultant for CODI	21/2/08

<sup>2</sup> These officials remain anonymous as no official permission from above had been sought before the interview

Maurice Leonhart	ACHR	Regional Coordinator	7/2/08
Tom Kerr	ACHR		7/1/09
Dr Thomas Eric Johnson	E-Research Social Systems Co., Ltd	President	7/5/08
Dr Sopon Pornchokchai	Agency for Real Estate Affairs	Director	14/5/08

### Meetings and Events Attended

Event	Description	Location	Date
SOC meeting	Network meeting of four districts	In a temple	27/2/08
SOC meeting	For committee members	At CODI	14/3/08
SOC meeting	Bangkok and region meeting	At CODI	26/3/08
SOC meeting	Training of communities wanting to apply for Baan Mankong	At CODI	28/4/08
SOC meeting	Bangkok meeting	At Chalernchai Nimitmai community	21/5/08
SOC meeting	Meeting of Bangkok communities	At CODI	2/6/08
SOC meeting	Bangkok and region meeting on learning centres	At Bang Bua	15/12/08
SOC dinner	Farewell dinner for Khun Somsook	At CODI	6/1/09
SOC demonstration	Bangkok and regions	Ministry of Human Security and Social Development	12/1/09
SOC meeting	Meeting the Prime Minister	Government House	13/1/09
CODI and Klong Toey leaders	Meeting to discuss problems repaying loans	At Klong Toey 7-12	20/2/08
CODI seminar	Presentation by students on Bonkai	At CODI	17/3/08
AGM of local communities	Organised by CODI	Muang Thong Thani	19/3/08
CODI and SOC meeting	Seminar for 9 canal-side communities	At CODI	19/4/08
CODI and SOC meeting	Communities introducing their project plans	At CODI	6/5/08
CODI meeting	Monthly meeting of board members, chaired by NHA chief	At CODI	16/5/08
NHA conference	35 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary conference	Queen Sirikit centre	11/2/08
Bang Bua network meeting	Meeting to resolve problems of Anusorn community's missing	Local school	15/3/08

	money		
Slum 4 Pak meeting	Meeting with Chulalongkorn University students	Rong Poon community	29/4/08
Bonkai meeting	Setting a date for demolition for Phase 3 and allocating plots	Bonkai day care centre	9/5/08
Suan Phlu AGM	AGM of the community	Suan Phlu day care centre	25/5/08
NHA seminar	“30 decades of policy for housing low income persons”	Mercure hotel	27/5/08
Bonkai meeting	Meeting to choose contractor for phase 3 construction	Bonkai day care centre	31/5/08
Slum 4 Pak meeting	Meeting to discuss strategy	Human Settlement Foundation	19/12/08
Ding Daeng flats meeting	Meeting at Block 14 to discuss setting up savings group, attended by Khun Praphart	Din Daeng flats (NHA flats)	20/12/08
Bonkai merit making	New Year merit-making ceremony	Bonkai community	30/12/08
Treasury officials visit	Treasury officials do a tour of the communities along Bang Bua canal	Bang Bua canal communities	8/1/09
Children’s day		Suan Phlu, Bonkai, Bang Bua, Saphan Mai, Ruam Samakee	11/1/09



## Appendix 5 – Non-upgraded slum communities

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A sample of residents from two slum communities, neighbouring two of the case-study upgraded communities, were interviewed. This was to examine any spillover effects arising from the neighbouring upgraded community, and to see whether bridges existed with the neighbouring community.

Bonkai slum is a squatter settlement located next to the upgraded Bonkai community, and the elected Bonkai community management committee spans both sections, which officially form one community. The community leader lives in the slum area. Relations between both sections appear to be good, with no one from either side mentioning divisions, and the shared committee probably does much to ensure cooperation between the two sectors. Though the whole Bonkai area is supposed to be upgraded eventually, with the leader estimating a finish date of 2011, none of the Bonkai slum (BS) respondents seemed to be saving towards this aim, and the leader admitted that no savings “zones” had been set up yet within the slum. BS6 said her savings were not very regular, while BS2 renounced her savings group membership because it wasn’t convenient. There is no immediate plan for upgrading to occur, with BS1 saying *“there is no programme for upgrading, they will build Baan Mankong once the current phase is done”*, while BS3 doesn’t know when it will occur, as it *“depends on the help we’ll get”*, suggesting that collective action is insufficient.

Rim Klong slum community neighbours Klong Toey 7-12, with which it enjoys friendly relations. Rim Klong residents have to walk through the upgraded community in order to access the main road, and they attend merit-making ceremonies in Klong Toey 7-12. They can also use Klong Toey 7-12’s meeting room for community meetings.

Rim Klong’s community committee is shared with that of another community about 100 metres further down the road, and officially, the two parts make one community. This physical distance creates communication barriers between committee members and residents, as residents do not know where to find the leader. As the leader is based in the other half of the community, activities are focussed there. Rim Klong faces a higher threat of eviction than the other half, and therefore the community leader admits that there is no savings group in her half, as *“here in this community we are looking at the short term only, not long term plans... sometimes I want to do Baan Mankong but it looks like a lot of work and trouble”*. Matters would be simpler if the two parts were officially recognised as separate communities, but according to RK5, Klong Toey district will not allow it.

Within Rim Klong itself, Khun CHA, a committee member who runs a health clinic in the community, is pushing for Baan Mankong and strongly encourages savings activities. However, participation in savings is still lacking, despite her entreaties *“that people have to help themselves, have to make an effort otherwise no one will help them”*. She says that the community wants to upgrade, but meetings haven’t yet been held. Khun CHA believes that *“collective action is better, we don’t want divisions, it’s better than just leaders [doing the work]”*. Mobilising for upgrading activities is complicated by the Port’s offers to relocate people to Soi Watcharapon<sup>3</sup> or the flats nearby. Additionally, those residents of the

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<sup>3</sup> The Port’s relocation site in the suburbs, where those who relocate receive land for free.

community who are renting a house do not have any rights should they be evicted, and whether or not they can participate in upgrading depends on what the other residents decide.

Residents from both Bonkai and Rim Klong slums saw the high cost of Baan Mankong as a barrier. As BS2 explains, *“it requires money. We work as day labourers so we have no certain income”*, while RK3 says *“I need a secure job first in order to get a secure house”*. Upgrading is not a priority at the moment, as RK11 explains: *“People at the moment have job insecurity, so they just live day by day for now”*. RK2 sees herself as too old to participate in Baan Mankong, as *“Where would I get the money?”* As certain residents don't want to go into debt, this prevents a united decision to upgrade: *“If people help each other and have unity then we could do it but at the moment there are differences between sois”* (RK6).

In both communities, a significant number of respondents did not know what CODI was. This suggests that CODI communicates mostly with community leaders, and not all residents. RK10 believes that CODI's drive to scale up Baan Mankong has a measure of selection, and even favouritism to it: *“CODI selects who they want to help. If three communities apply at the same time, the community that has links will get to do Baan Mankong first”*. If Baan Mankong is viewed as a community-driven project, then the lack of knowledge in the project can be interpreted as meaning that these two slums do not have the capacity, willingness, or cohesion required to propose upgrading. The alternative explanation is that the eviction threat is not real enough for community residents to mobilise and take notice of Baan Mankong.

In terms of intra-community relations, neither community appeared to suffer from significant divisions, though drug-dealing was mentioned as a problem in both. For RK5, dealers are a barrier to upgrading, as *“dealers don't bother with savings but we need everyone to participate in order to be able to register with CODI”*. Additionally, both communities have a significant proportion of residents renting houses or rooms within the community, making for a fairly transient population. These renters have less interest in the long-term future of the slum than home-owners, like RK7: *“I wouldn't receive any benefit from plans as I have no rights, I'm registered upcountry”*.

These two case studies suggest that the fact that the neighbouring communities had upgraded did not serve as a catalyzing factor to mobilise the slum residents to save towards upgrading. Rim Klong residents felt that the Klong Toey 7-12 houses were too small, whilst both Rim Klong and Bonkai slum residents displayed ambivalence about going into debt for Baan Mankong. Seeing the outcomes of upgrading nearby does not seem to have provided a strong desire to follow suit. The upgraded communities do not appear to have encouraged the slums to upgrade too, and CODI does not seem to have been actively promoting Baan Mankong, at least amongst ordinary community residents. As in the upgraded communities, whether or not the slums upgrade depends also on the community leaders, and their readiness to mobilise the residents to upgrade, especially in Rim Klong. In Bonkai, as the upgrading is being carried out in phases, the leader is waiting until a phase includes the slum section.

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