

**Social capital, human capital,
disaster recovery and sustainable
development in a fishing community
in southern Thailand**

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Statement of authenticity

I certify that the work presented in this dissertation has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged in the text.

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List of abbreviations

<i>ACFID</i>	Australian Council for International Development
<i>ADS</i>	air-dried sheets
<i>AED 2002</i>	<i>Amended National Education Act 2002</i>
<i>AUD</i>	Australian dollars
<i>CBD</i>	Convention on Biological Diversity
<i>CHARM</i>	Coastal Habitat and Resources Management
<i>CTF</i>	Cement Thai Foundation
<i>DOL</i>	Department of Lands
<i>DoNP</i>	Department of National Parks and Plant Protection
<i>FAO</i>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<i>FSF</i>	Federation of Southern Fisher Folk, or SAMAPAN
<i>GIS</i>	Geographic Information System
<i>GISTDA</i>	Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency
<i>JoMPA</i>	Joint Management of Marine Resources and Protected Areas
<i>KorBorRoe</i>	Committee for Solving State Land Encroachment Conflicts
<i>LTP</i>	Land Titling Program
<i>MDG</i>	Millennium Development Goal
<i>MoNRE</i>	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

<i>MPA</i>	Marine Protected Area
<i>NESDP</i>	National Economic and Social Development Plan
<i>NGO</i>	non-government organisation
<i>NP</i>	national parks
<i>NS4</i>	Nor Sor Si (4) Jor (Chanote). The NS4J or Chanote is a certificate of true ownership for land and the only true land title deed in Thailand.
<i>PDA</i>	Population and Community Development Association
<i>RDP</i>	Regional Development Plan
<i>RSS</i>	ribbed-smoked sheets
<i>SAN</i>	Save Andaman Network
<i>Schoko</i>	Schopokit Thay Thale, or Sea Watch Patrol
<i>SDFT</i>	Sustainable Development Foundation of Thailand
<i>SorTorJor</i>	Centre for Fighting Poverty
<i>THB</i>	Thai baht
<i>UN</i>	United Nations
<i>UNDP</i>	United Nations Development Programme
<i>US</i>	United States

Abstract

The Asian tsunami of 26 December 2004 affected millions of people in 10 countries around the Indian Ocean. More than 200,000 people died, tens of millions were left homeless and without livelihoods, and entire communities were dislocated. In Thailand, 408 of the 418 communities along the Andaman Sea were struck by the disaster; 47 of them were severely affected.

This study investigates how enhancement of existing social capital contributed not only to the re-establishment of the tsunami-affected island of Koh Mouk, in Trang Province, Southern Thailand, but also to its long-term sustainable development. The concept of social capital used in the thesis draws on literature from developed and developing communities and the lived experience of the people of the island of Koh Mouk. The study argues that NGO-facilitated capacity building, specific to local needs, enhanced human capital and played a crucial role in social capital building and the desired outcome of enriched sustainable development.

Through the case study of Koh Mouk, the thesis illustrates the ways in which local people drew on existing linkages whilst at the same time building new networks of trust and reciprocity. The case study also

demonstrates how capacity building, resulting in human capital, intersected with social capital to create something greater than the sum of its parts in the local sustainable development efforts. The case study of Koh Mouk explores the crucial areas of the management of marine resources, land use and housing, the participation of women into the money economy, the general economy of the island, the development of formal education through a new school curriculum, and engagement in the mainstream political process. The conclusion draws together these threads to establish the parameters of social capital and to explain its relationship with human capital in the recovery and sustainable development of this island community. ■



Figure i Administrative map of Thailand showing location of study site
Key: rectangle: Trang province; oval: Koh Mouk

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The 2004 tsunami disaster in Thailand

The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami struck all six of the Thai provinces along the Andaman Sea coast in Southern Thailand with different effects and impacts based on their physical geography. From north to south the six affected provinces were Ranong, Phang Nga, Phuket, Krabi, Trang and Satun. The disaster was of unprecedented magnitude in living memory in both extent and intensity. How did the affected communities manage to recover and, in some cases, become better prepared for local sustainable development? Left to their own devices it is unlikely that some communities would have been able to recover; similarly, outside intervention without local knowledge and agency would have met with less than desirable results in localities.

What human dynamics, i.e. human networks and interactions, took place to allow the process of recovery and sustainable development to succeed? What lessons can we draw from the experiences in Southern

Thailand that can benefit other communities in similar circumstances? This research project sets out to answer these questions.

The greatest damage and human loss occurred in the northern provinces, particularly in Phang Nga and Phuket. According to information from the Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency (GISTDA), included in information of the Save Andaman Network (SAN, 2005a) the immediate toll of the tsunami in Thailand was over 5,000 deaths, almost 3,000 missing, over 8,000 injured and almost 1,400 orphaned children. More than 3,000 homes were damaged, half of them severely. Damage or loss occurred to 5,000 small-scale fishing boats, about 1,200 large-scale fishing boats, more than 6,000 fish farms and almost 7,000 pieces of fishing equipment. The human loss was incalculable, and the disruption to daily life for most of the survivors was devastating. The loss of means of livelihood, especially boats and fishing equipment, and the loss of housing, were some of the most pressing challenges that communities and aid organisations faced. This was certainly the case in Trang province where, despite the relatively low loss of human life, the damage to fishing boats, fishing gear and housing was a prime concern.

1.2 Trang province

Information provided by the Thai Ministry of the Interior state that over 1,300 people from 660 households in 51 villages were affected by the

tsunami in Trang province (SAN, 2005a). Five people died, one was missing and 112 were injured; 190 houses were partly or completely destroyed and over 800 fishing boats were damaged. The Sustainable Development Foundation of Thailand (SDFT, Mullanithi Pueakarn Patthana Tee Hyangyuean) is the Thai NGOs umbrella organisation, its main aim is to foster human rights and sustainable development through local education, and it was a key organisation in the long-term development efforts in southern Thailand following the 2004 tsunami. After negotiations with development staff from the SDFT, SAN and community members, it was decided that the best location for this research project would be Koh Mouk Island for three main reasons: proximity to SAN central office, current recovery programs and controlled existing conditions.

Firstly, while Ban Koh Mouk (Koh Mouk village) was not one of the worst-affected communities, the island's proximity to SAN's central office in the city of Trang provided an ideal location for SAN staff to monitor my progress and provide support if necessary. Secondly, the island had been chosen to implement two important pilot programs: a community-negotiated school curriculum aimed at developing an emergency plan in case of a disaster and a joint marine resources management plan that brought together local knowledge, academics, and administrators in the

government and non-government organisations (NGOs). Both of these projects would require considerable elements of social capital, such as trust, cooperation and participation, if they were to succeed. Finally, the island provided a contained case study with relatively easy access to the principal stakeholders of the whole sustainable development effort in the area.

To better understand people dynamics in the process of tsunami recovery and sustainable development in Koh Mouk, it would be useful to consider the disaster and its aftermath in the wider Thai socio-political and economic context.

1.3 Socio-political and economic context

Across the 20th century Thailand underwent a series of tumultuous and, at times, violent political transformations on its journey toward political change. Such convulsions have persisted into the 21st century and are ongoing, as Thailand pursues its aspiration of one day being an established democracy. This dynamic political context has been a factor, directly and indirectly, in the country's short and medium term disaster response and in its efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Following the 2004 tsunami, groups and institutions with competing political views came together with the common purpose of assisting the affected communities. They made up NGOs such as the Save

Andaman Network (SAN). Their disaster recovery campaign took place within the existing socio-economic and political context and its vested interests and latent tensions. The following chapters will demonstrate how some of those efforts had the desired effects and will also provide an overview of the dynamics between the local, national and international political contexts in an effort to explain their impacts on the affected communities.

Until 1932 Thailand was an absolute monarchy whose legitimacy was underpinned by the concept of 'King, Religion (Buddhism) and Nation'. According to David Wyatt (2003), and Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit (2009), this concept provided the paternalistic umbrella under which a compliant population could find protection from external colonial and ideological threats. In June 1932 a military coup put an end to 150 years of uninterrupted absolute rule by the Chakri dynasty in an event that marked an irreversible break with the monarchy of the past. The following quarter of a century would see further coups, the introduction of a constitutional monarchy, and an emerging new role for Thailand in the rarefied geo-political landscape of the Cold War, with the military playing a pivotal role in Thai politics. From the momentous events of 1932 up to the present, Thailand has endured 18 military coups and gone through several constitutions. By the late 1940s Thailand's politics were split into

two main camps, whose very different ideologies are summarised by

Baker and Phongpaichit:

One side upheld the ideal of a diverse, liberal, fair, and egalitarian nation achieved by the rule of law, a constitutional framework and democratic representation. The other upheld the ideal of a strong and paternal state with the duty to protect, discipline, and educate its citizens within a hierarchic social order (Baker & Phongpaichit, 2009, p. 197).

From the latter half of the 20th century up to the present, these two conflicting ideals have competed for the hearts and minds of a growing population, sometimes with very bloody consequences.

It was during this period that, according to Baker and Phongpaichit (2009), the Thai internal conflict was 'absorbed within and eclipsed by the worldwide division of the Cold War'. The US patronage of Thailand, particularly during the 1960s and 70s, 'accelerated the development of a capitalist economy, strengthened the military dictatorship, revived the role of the monarchy, and extended the reach of the state deeper into society' (p. 197). The adversarial ideas of conservatism and liberalism, already well established in other parts of the world, were becoming established in Thailand. The U.S.-backed military and the monarchy identified with the conservative camp on the one hand, while a liberal movement, better identified with Marxist ideas, made up the other. It was ironic and

understandable at the same time that the liberal side, also identified with a more democratic movement, should find itself on the camp opposite the United States—a nation that saw itself as a staunch promoter of democratic values throughout the world. That was the political reality of the Cold War in the Southeast Asian context, when Thailand found itself surrounded by communist regimes to the east, north and west.

According to figures cited in Wyatt (2003), Thailand's population growth has recently undergone a significant change. In the 20th century the Thai population grew from just over 10 million in 1910, to over 11 million in 1930, to 18 million by 1950, to 34 million by 1970. By 2000 the Thai population had reached 60 million (p. 301). Towards the end of the century, however, there was a decline in the population growth. With families having fewer children, more resources could be allocated to their education and development. One of the salient characteristics of this decline, according to Wyatt (2003), was that the decision to have smaller families was not made by the government but largely by both parents, marking a 'profound change in Thailand's society in which women have at least an equal role, if not even more' (p. 299).

In the latter quarter of the 20th century the Thai economy grew and diversified from its dependency on agricultural production. Tourism led export earnings in the early 21st century, and manufacturing developed

significantly (Wyatt, 2003). An increasingly urbanised, well-educated middle class with their counter-parts in some rural areas provided a fertile ground for the growth of progressive political and social movements. One of the important demographic shifts that has occurred over the last few decades is precisely the increasing power of the rural population, described by Andrew Walker as:

rural Thailand's new political society ... driven by a middle-income peasantry with a thoroughly modern political logic. The strategy of this modern peasantry is to engage with sources of power, not to oppose them (Walker 2012, p. 219).

Wyatt (2003) explains one of the reasons for this rise in rural influence by asserting that Thai farmers are not just receptive to changes in the international market but also have 'the sensitivity to respond to technological changes' (p. 303). He suggests that 'It becomes hard to refer to such people as "peasants" and preferable to call them "farmers"' (p. 303). Another factor that might help explain the increased power of the rural populations is the rise of the NGOs, important in this study.

Local NGOs had been active in Thailand since the 1960s. By the 1990s they played an important role in the socio-political dynamics between the rural peasantry and the power of the state. According to Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit (2009) 'The rural protests tapped the

services of the NGO workers, journalists and intellectuals to organise their campaigns, articulate their demands, and add a touch of legitimacy to their projects' (p. 256). During the drafting stages of what would become the watershed *People's Constitution* of 1997, NGOs played a significant role:

NGOs lobbied for clauses to change the balance of power between the state on one side, and the individual or community on the other. As a result, the draft included an extensive catalogue of the "rights and liberties of the Thai people", formation of a National Human Rights Commission, removal of the electronic media from the grip of the military and government, and democratic decentralisation of power to local government. (Baker & Phongpaichit 2009, p. 257)

NGOs were also influential following the 1997 South East Asian economic crisis:

NGO activists persuaded the World Bank not to disperse its main social relief loan through government channels, but instead through an NGO-established network of local communities for projects to build such "social capital" as local welfare schemes, education projects, child-care centres, and environmental protection schemes (Baker & Phongpaichit 2009, p. 261).

The actions of Thai NGOs following the 2004 tsunami, in recovery and sustainable development efforts, have therefore followed a tradition that

stretches back over the last 50 years of Thai socio-political history. This study shows that NGOs such as SAN and the Sustainable Development Foundation of Thailand (SDFT) helped the people of Koh Mouk to 'organise their campaigns, articulate their demands, and add a touch of legitimacy to their projects', as Baker and Phongpaichit (2009, p.256) characterise Thai NGOs in general. NGOs did not only make efforts to shape the 2007 constitution, but were instrumental in the capacity building of the villagers resulting in an enhanced level of human capital.

A historical review therefore suggests that in the lead-up to the 2004 tsunami disaster, the political and economic landscape in Thailand was undergoing its own crisis. Forty years of prosperity in Thailand came to a rude halt during the Southeast Asian financial crisis in 1997. In Thailand the crisis was triggered, although not only caused by, a massive influx of foreign capital that fuelled a speculative and unsustainable property market. When the bubble burst, the economy and the currency collapsed, firms that had taken foreign loans went bankrupt, banks were ruined, consumers stopped spending and two million people lost their jobs (Baker & Phongpaichit, p. 259).

At the 2001 election Thaksin Shinawatra, a new brand of populist leader as well as a charismatic and wealthy media tycoon, became the new Prime Minister with his 'Thai Rak Thai' (Thai love Thai) or TRT Party.

Thaksin tapped the nationalist sentiment, galvanised in reaction to International Monetary Fund austerity demands. Thaksin declared war on drugs, violently repressed Muslim communities in the restive Deep South, presided over the initial recovery efforts following the 2004 tsunami, and promised to lead Thailand into the OECD (Baker and Phongpaichit, p. 267). Thaksin was also accused, and later found guilty, of corrupt practices that benefitted his family and friends. With his aggressive, populist approach to politics he created many enemies. Among them were the urban elite and the Palace, which saw its influence being undermined by Thaksin's populism, particularly in the north of the country. An electoral map of 2005 shows a clear divide between the TRT-supporting north, and the Palace-backed Democratic Party support south of Bangkok (Baker and Phongpaichit, p. 264), where the site of this research is located.

In 2005 Thaksin was re-elected, only to be ousted in a military coup in 2006. Thaksin went into exile, but his supporters regrouped under the new political banner of the People Power Party (PPP). By the time of my fieldwork for this project in Koh Mouk in 2007, the military leadership was preparing the draft of a new constitution to be put to the people in a referendum in August of that year, to be followed by fresh elections in December that year. According to Baker and Phongpaichit, the new constitution 'qualified the power of the executive, reduced the role of

parliament, attempted to protect the bureaucracy against political interference, and gave seven senior judges immense power to appoint the members of agencies acting as checks and balances on the executive' (p. 272). The army also introduced an act that revived the *Internal Security Act* that had been used to repress dissent during the Cold War era. The constitution was approved in the August 2007 referendum by a 54 to 48 margin, with overwhelming support coming from the south of the country. In the December general elections the PPP formed a coalition government that vowed to resurrect Thaksin's policies.

It is within this turbulent political context that Koh Mouk's disaster recovery and efforts at long-term sustainable development were unfolding when I undertook fieldwork in 2007. The area's disaster response and development processes must therefore be understood within these local, national and international contexts and their interrelations. The political developments canvassed in this section underpin the more detailed socio-economic data presented in following chapters.

1.4 Methodology

This is a qualitative field study about social capital development through capacity building towards the goals of disaster recovery and sustainable development. The study is centred on the island community of Koh Mouk. The fieldwork involved my immersion in the community over a six-month

period from April to September 2007. The purpose was to research post-tsunami events after December 2004. I commenced initial site visits in late 2005 and extended them to 2006 in order to carry out a preliminary investigation into the tsunami recovery efforts in Thailand. My interest stemmed from the fact that I had been an Australian volunteer in the tsunami recovery effort in the Republic of the Maldives in early 2005 and wished to understand and compare some aspects of both recovery processes. I interviewed approximately 100 subjects in forty separate interviews during the entire research project, including villagers, NGO staff members and academics. Sometimes a fine line separated an informal interview from a casual but relevant conversation. The interview methods included structured and unstructured interviewing, audio recording, audiovisual recording, including the production of a video component of this thesis, and hand written recording as well as photographic records of local people and significant events and places.

I conducted some structured interviews, sometimes in a formal pre-arranged setting, sometimes informally. Some interviews were targeted at specific groups or individuals while others were more random. Some structured interviews included 30 interviews based on a survey tool with males and females from all six Koh Mouk 'bays' or geographical locations along the seashore. I conducted eight targeted interviews with community

leaders, including the village head (Pu Yai Ban), the Muslim religious leader (Imam), the women's group leader, the financial administrator (Obotho) and the school principal. I carried out four focus group interviews with members of the fishing, women's and housing groups, as well as the high school principal and students. I have included a list of interviews in the appendix omitting the use of real names but otherwise including the interviewees' their occupations, the time and place of the interviews as well as the general topic discussed. I have also used their real names in the audio-visual component of this thesis at their request as they intended to use the video for their own purposes as initially negotiated between SAN, SDFT, villagers and myself. I have used pseudonyms throughout the body of the thesis for the purpose of future publication; the appendix would not be included in a publication. The interviews in the appendix are shown chronologically. I attended daily meetings and events and took active part in high school education and new curriculum implementation. I accessed several documents and maps as well as hundreds of photographs. During the preliminary stages leading up to my participation in the community, the chairwoman of the SDFT strongly suggested that I arrange to have a daily dinner with a local family nominated by SDFT staff to share ideas and consult in case of any issues. She also recommended a locally owned and operated mini-resort where I

could get a long-term lease for the duration of my stay. The family nominated by SDFT staff happened to be a prominent family of activists in the community. The wife was the leader of the women's group and the husband was a local fisherman-turned-rubber producer who was active in the marine resources management group. Their home was, in fact, the unofficial meeting centre for most people visiting the island for the purpose of recovery and long-term planning.

Photographs presented in the thesis also demonstrate further evidence of the multi-layered process of reconstruction. In producing the accompanying video, I recorded six hours of relevant video material. I cited 68 interviews in my research field journal for 2007, including 13 subjects in 11 video interviews; nine of these are included in the 50 minute audio-visual component of this mixed-media thesis. I transcribed 23 audio recordings from the 68 interviews. They consisted of up to five subjects in a single interview, totalling approximately 35 subjects. I recorded the remaining interviews in five field notebooks. I securely locked away all material and it is available for academic reference on request.

I conducted all of the interviews, most of them with the assistance of interpreters who spoke English and Thai language. Southern Thai language has its own characteristics such as some different vocabulary and pronunciation that differs from central Thai or northern Thai languages.

However, all three are mutually intelligible. I briefed the interpreters before the interviews about the purpose of the interview and points of ethics, for example, if they felt that a question or line of enquire might cause a problem to the locals to let me know in advance. The interpreters had some freedom during the interviews to ask follow up questions in order to clarify a point. I edited out my original questions and their interpretation from the final video component. While keeping those segments may have been useful from the methodological perspective, their inclusion would have trebled the viewing time and would have added little to the core body of information. The original, unedited master tapes with all voices are available for further reference.

Reflecting on my fieldwork practice with the benefit of hindsight, I must acknowledge a shortcoming in my methodology. It took two years of careful negotiations with both the stakeholders on the ground and the UTS ethics committee to gain approval for the research project to go ahead and to get access to the site. The negotiations revolved around what site would be most appropriate out of more than 140 affected villages, and what issues it would or would not be appropriate to raise in the field. This was an important matter because I would be living and working with people who had been traumatised and were on a recovery path that involved very sensitive and complex negotiations among a variety of stakeholders. I had

witnessed how outside interference in similar settings could be detrimental both in Australia, while working in remote communities, and in the Maldives, where I worked in the post-tsunami recovery effort as an Australian volunteer sponsored by AusAID. The UTS research ethics requirements specify that the researcher should not cause harm.

The stakeholders in the field, including SDFT and SAN NGO, who negotiated and facilitated my access to the research site, advised me about local sensitivities. I was satisfied that their concerns were genuine and that it would be appropriate for me to avoid raising certain issues in the community, particularly in relation to bonding networks and political issues. I estimated that avoiding these issues would not interfere with the ultimate goal of the research project. Starting from that premise, I consciously avoided broaching sensitive but important issues, such as power relations and micro-politics, even though questions around these issues would have shed greater light on the dynamics of the post-tsunami recovery and sustainable development process and on the core research topic of social capital. The net result is a research project that presents an inevitably oversimplified account of what is, in reality, a complex inter-relational power dynamic. This oversimplification was sometimes veiled by the language some locals used to suppress existing tensions. For example, the desire to live 'like brothers and sisters', as the head of the

village put it during the video interview, can be interpreted as being a thinly veiled reference to the fact that they do not in fact live that way. The socio-political section covered in chapter 1.3 here, also points to tensions between liberal NGOs and conservative donors and policy-makers. This, however, does not make up for what Andrew Walker (2012), in referring to power dynamics, calls ‘unpeeling the layers of meaning’.

I recognise that, ideally, a more academically rigorous response would have been to find ways of addressing these sensitive issues without necessarily allowing my research to impact negatively on the community. However, the fact that I was an ‘outsider’ who did not speak the local language, along with my limited experience as a researcher, meant that I was not able to find alternative ways to explore these issues within the time I had available for fieldwork. In future research, I shall be better equipped to address these issues—issues which continue to remain sensitive to both the relevant NGOs and to the local population.

The data collection and analyses were initially iterative, i.e. a process of data gathering, analysing, gathering and analysing again with the partial findings helping to fine tune the direction of the enquiry. This iterative process also reflects the dynamics of the social capital relationship between the villagers, NGOs and government authorities. In this way, the study is concerned more with understanding, interpreting and explaining

rather than with quantitative measurements that demand different and greater resources than this project would harness. In the words of Wendy Stone (2001):

It is important to note that there are alternative approaches to the measurement of social capital, particularly within specified organisations or communities. These include qualitative research and the study of specific localities, via participant observation, surveys of individuals about the local area, and a collection of local documents and histories. (p. 3)

The main data collection methods include a written and visual ethnographic approach as a way of “collecting data from the emic, or insider’s perspective while making sense of it from the etic, or external social scientific perspective” (Fetterman, 2010, p. 11). This search for insight from the local perspective is the most challenging aspect of the study, which was made more difficult by my limited Thai language skills. Despite this limitation, this study aims to present an honest and thorough account of observed events in what Sarah Pink (2007) describes as:

A process of creating knowledge based on ethnographers’ own experiences. It [ethnography] does not claim to produce an objective or truthful account of reality, but should aim to offer versions of ethnographers’ experiences of reality that are as loyal as possible to the

context, negotiations and inter-subjectivities through which the knowledge was produced. (p. 22).

This approach is consistent with Fetterman's (2010) idea of the emic, or insider's, perspective being interpreted from the etic, or outsider's, perspective. This thesis assumes that the six months I lived and worked with locals are not enough to consider me an insider, as I had a clear 'out' option and never came to depend on the local economy and culture for my survival. In this sense, my participant observations allowed me to assess the networks dynamics as well as the core social capital elements of trust and reciprocity from a quasi-insider perspective. Further to this methodological context John Brewer (2000, p. 10) equates big ethnography with qualitative research as a whole, as opposed to little ethnography, which he restricts to field research. Brewer (2000) defines ethnography-as-fieldwork in terms of the researchers' active participation in the setting in a way that will allow them to collect data without imposing meaning on it.

In this research, I had the privileged position of participating in the setting of my own role and active participation in community activities as a result of the initial site access negotiations with local stakeholders. They suggested that I should take on a defined role within the community – as a high school teacher – which enabled the villagers to relate to me while providing me with opportunities for better observation and networking. I

was a qualified teacher who had recently taught in Thailand for three years, so I was also able to make a contribution to the community. This was participatory methodological reciprocity in action.

During this research I depended on non-professional interpreters and translators in the field to back up my limited Thai language skills. My participation in community activities through immersion allowed the process of engagement with the villagers and other stakeholders to further inform the topic and method of the research. Therefore, during fieldwork the main research topic shifted from the initial idea of measuring post-tsunami community development, to the analysis of the recovery and development in terms of social capital, and finally, to an examination of the relationship between social and human capital in the context of the community's stated goals of tsunami recovery and sustainable development. Similarly, the case studies expanded from a focus on the joint management of marine resources to include issues of land and housing, the emerging economy, women's groups and civic engagement.

The video is the written ethnography's complementary visual component. Sarah Pink (2007) says that images in ethnography are "as inevitable as sounds, smells, textures and tastes, words or any other aspect of culture and society" and adds that "the ethnographicness of an image ... is contingent on how it is situated, interpreted and used to

invoke meanings and knowledge that are of ethnographic interest” (pp. 21–23). The use of audio-visual equipment in the field was discussed and approved during the access negotiations with the local stakeholders, while I continually assessed the ethical and practical use of such methods while in the field. I showed the final results to the local participants for comment and approval or veto. They expressed that they were satisfied that the results did not misrepresent them and copies were made available to the school and the women’s group for distribution. The school principal used sections of the video during a United Nations (UN) conference in Bangkok in September 2007 to illustrate the new curriculum development and implementation.

The ethnographic method of using interviews, observations, historical documents and audio-visual documentation as the main data-gathering tools can be justified in terms of the prominence given to culture in social capital literature. For example, David Halpern (2005) argues that despite the fact that deep-rooted cultural values may be an obstacle to the development of social capital between two different cultural groups, owing to a lack of trust, that lack of trust does not preclude the development of social capital “especially if the system is subject to some kind of external shock that kicks it into a new ... equilibrium” (p. 269). This statement applies well to the Koh Mouk experience where, as my research

will suggest, the magnitude of the tsunami disaster can be considered an external shock that kicked the extant social capital into a new equilibrium.

1.5 Location and characteristics of Koh Mouk Island

Koh Mouk Island is located approximately 700 kilometres south of Bangkok, a few miles off the Thai west coast. The island can be accessed from the city of Trang by taking the Trang-Hat Yao taxi van to Kuan Tung Ku village. A boat from Kuan Tung Ku pier departs daily at 13:00 hrs. A boat from Koh Mouk to Kuan Tung Ku pier departs daily at 07:30 hrs.

These were the only regular public transport services to the island in 2006–08. Private boats also made regular trips and it was possible to get a ride in one when circumstances allowed (i.e. if one were in the right place at the right time and the boat was not overloaded).

The population of Koh Mouk in 2007 was approximately 2,200 of whom 65 per cent were female. Island settlement is concentrated in villages along shoreline water features known locally as bays, or *aou* in Thai language, on the southeast of the island. According to the Save Andaman Network report (SAN, 2005) three main ethnic groups make up the island's demographics: Sea Gypsies (or Chao Ley), Malay and Chinese (no breakdown of these groups was available in the report). About 95 per cent of the islanders are Muslim, while the remaining five per cent are Buddhist. The economy of the island has traditionally relied heavily on the

sea. There are rich marine resources, especially fishing and oyster harvesting, though pearling has diminished over the last few decades. Rice farming and rubber production are also important economic activities. An emerging industry focused on tourism is creating both tensions and opportunities in the community.

The political organisation of the island consists of a village council made up of a village head, his or her deputy and a community chairman. The village head was originally appointed by the district official but is now appointed by the villagers. The first village head was appointed in 1914 and, since then, the village has had 10 heads. The term of each appointment is four years and elected village head could be reappointed for more than one term. The main duty of the village council includes the development of public facilities plus other functions deemed appropriate by the community. Before the tsunami people networks and functions in Koh Mouk were limited mainly to family and friends within the village and the smooth running of the village. Following the disaster these networks evolved and expanded considerably.

1.6 Culture as an aspect of social capital in Koh Mouk

Ethnic origin, religion, and the environment have all contributed to the development of Koh Mouk's cultural milieu. Thanee, Suavachittanont and others (2006) dates the settlement of the island back to the Sri Ayudhya

period of Thai history, about the 14th century A.D., and refers to the current ethnic characteristics of Koh Mouk as being “beautifully mixed among Buddhist-Thai, Muslim Thai and Chinese-Thai” (p. 1). My own observations regarding the ethnic and cultural mix in Koh Mouk concur with Suwajittanont’s to the extent that religion and religious practices vary; however, I was unable to identify either the Chao Ley or ethnic Chinese as distinctive ethnic groups on the island.

Rigg (2003) estimates the overall population of ethnic Chinese in Thailand at 10% of the total population and qualifies that figure saying that “most estimates of ethnic Chinese population in the region carry a disclaimer ... since ‘who is Chinese’ is increasingly understood through situated and complex contexts of citizenship, assimilation, and identity formation” (pp. 97–98). Rigg summarises that “a person’s identification can vary through time and context, as Thai, Sino-Thai, or as Chinese living in Thailand ... it is more accurate to see the Chinese as occupying multiple spaces of identity”. So while ethnic differentiations exist in the literature as well as in local anecdote, there did not appear to be ethnic divisions or tensions among the population. For example, during a video interview the Head of the village referred to the local ethnic Chinese population in Koh Mouk as *khon jin* or Chinese people, and added that they do most of the trading on the island, he said this in a matter-of-fact manner and no

apparent prejudice. The important point from the point of view of this study is that the locals see themselves as ethnically diverse but this diversity is accepted and does not appear to have any negative effect on relationships.

The religious groups were more easily identifiable. Thailand is predominantly a Buddhist nation. In the provinces of the far south, on or near the border with Malaysia, the majority of the people are Muslim. The Muslim religion is widely practiced in other provinces as well, particularly in the southern part of Thailand. According to Suwajittanont (2006) the Muslims in Koh Mouk were the ample majority at 95 per cent, while the Buddhists make up the remaining five per cent of the total population. In a similar warning against generalisation as Rigg's, regarding ethnic Chinese in Thailand, Guilquin (2005) warns against generalisations regarding religious practices among Muslims throughout Thailand. Gilquin cautiously offers some common sociological trends among Thai Muslims. For example, one trend that was consistent with Muslim practices in Koh Mouk was the avoidance of interest-bearing loans (Gilquin, p. 26). During an interview in July 2007 with the local Imam, he said that one of the things he wanted to inculcate in the young was careful thought about taking on interest-bearing loans, adding that they (the loans) were not good. He said that the new businesses being developed in Koh Mouk were

selfish and that he warned the locals, Muslims and Buddhists alike, against getting carried away in the selfishness.

This is an important point that may have a bearing on local cohesion and, therefore, on local bonding networks and the achievement of stated goals, such as sustainable development. On the other hand, the Imam also said that, in Koh Mouk, he (as a religious leader) was respected and trusted even by Buddhist people. For example, when the government donated some money to the community and some people reacted in self-interest, and neither the head of the village nor the civil administrator were able to resolve the issue, people went to the Imam for a resolution irrespective of their religion. The Imam also said that people put “a lot of trust in the religious leader; if he asks people to participate in a project they do so wholeheartedly”.

My observations regarding religious practices in Koh Mouk pointed to a faithful community that was firm in their practices but tolerant as long as there were no transgressions. The Imam said that everybody is welcome to come to Koh Mouk as long as they showed respect for the local values, their “traditional culture and values”. Some of these values and traditional culture related to the fostering of a modest dress code; not too dissimilar to that of Buddhist practice, but stricter, and avoidance of drug and alcohol use as well as general respect for the people and the environment. Some of

the local shops and resorts supplied alcohol and I witnessed the consumption of alcohol among a few local Muslims.

As a point of interest from methodological and ethical perspectives, and following strong advice from SDFT staff, I deliberately avoided active search for information regarding the relationship between ethnicity and religion in order to avoid potentially sensitive issues. Rather, I confined my enquiries to discreet observations and active listening where the subject was brought up by the interlocutor and I followed up with rephrasing or seeking clarification while avoiding fractious topics (one of the few exceptions to this approach was during my interview with the Imam).

On one occasion I interviewed three Buddhist elder men at the local Buddhist temple, a relatively modest structure housing a Thai-style Buddha statue located in a clearing among the trees. They explained that some religious needs were met by an itinerant monk from the mainland, who came on occasion to the island. They said that religious differences were not an issue although they pointed out that while they contributed to the repairs of the local mosque and attended Muslim religious festivals, their actions were not reciprocated; they also emphasised that that was not an issue. The proclamation of a community that gets along and tries to avoid conflict was a recurring theme and one that was fostered among the local people. Despite differences in ethnicity and religion, there was a

consensus among the people whom I interviewed and those I spoke with informally that all locals seek to live in peace with one another; they often described their relationship as being like 'brothers and sisters'. There were, however, some challenges the villagers were confronted with on a daily basis; these challenges related to economic activities in Koh Mouk.

The data coordinator for the Coastal Resources Management Project, funded SDFT, also works with other NGOs such as the Save Andaman Network (SAN), a conglomerate of more than 30 organisations set up in response to the tsunami emergency, and the Federation of Southern Fisher Folk (SAMAPAN). It was precisely the SDFT and SAN who together with Koh Mouk representatives screened and eventually supported this research. During an impromptu interview while visiting the island for a workshop on data collection, the Coastal Resources Management Project coordinator told me that one of the main sources of tension on the island was the issue of middlemen loans, whereby fisher folk borrow from or through a middleman, usually a *pae* (fish distribution enterprise) owner, in exchange for exclusive low prices from their catch which the *pae* owners then go on to sell at a profit in the mainland's fish market. The issue of profiteering, perceived selfishness or exploitation are perhaps no different in Koh Mouk than in many other communities around the world.

However, it is possible that this is connected to religious practices such as the *zakat*, one of the pillars of Islam that encourages charity. This refers to charity from those who have a lot being charitable to those who have less. In this light, profiteering through loans interest would be considered a breach of the religious code. I observed similar tensions in relation to hotel developments and the hiring of local staff, whereby at least some locals resented what they perceived as exploitative practices by the rich. These economic dynamics will be dealt with in chapter four in sections 4.7 and 4.8. Their mention here helps to outline some of the core prevailing cultural values and contradictions that may impact social capital in Koh Mouk and its goal of sustainable development.

As a last word on the topic of Islam in Southern Thailand I note that while three of the country's southernmost provinces bordering Malaysia—Yala, Naratiwat and Pattani—have been in a historical conflict with the Thai government for many decades, that conflict has mostly, though not always, been confined to those three provinces precisely for historical reasons. Duncan McCargo (2009) concludes that despite some isolated 'jihadist rhetoric the causes of the conflict seem overwhelmingly home grown ... a complex political problem centred on questions of legitimacy' (p. 3). This did not appear to be the case in Trang province or indeed, in Koh Mouk. The people of Koh Mouk appeared, at the time of this

fieldwork, to be concerned with their own local issues as a part of the larger Thai political discourse.

1.7 Characteristics of pre-existing and emerging networks

As well as political and religious organisations, there were a number of other organised groups on the island before the tsunami disaster of December 2004. The Koh Mouk Public Health Office organised a group of volunteers for the management of village public health, and there was an Education Committee that coordinated with other organisations to foster community development. There were also several professional groups, including the Fishing Tools Group, Fish Sauce Producing Group and the Tourism Resource Group, which was responsible for the development of the tourism industry and tourism employment on the island, in addition to the Sea Products Brokering Group. There were also two groups involved in finance and savings: the Sasomsajja Financial Group and Chalermphrakiat Saving Group, respectively.

Since the tsunami disaster, community members have organised themselves into self-help groups aimed not only at the short-term recovery process, but also at the long-term sustainable development of the island. Some groups are engaged in activities such as natural pearl harvesting, fish sauce production, coconut shell processing, sweet making, fish sweet meat processing and batik clothing production. Significantly, these groups

involve village women who, until recently, did not have their own source of income. As part of the longer-term sustainable development plan, there are also groups engaged in preserving the coastline and growing coral to develop reefs. Finally, there are groups for building and repairing boats, motoring, housing and funding fishing tools.

There are also a number of external agents that support and facilitate the development and efficient functioning of these self-help groups. They include SAN, Local Southern Fishermen's Association, Trang Fishermen's Club, Suppamit Foundation (Thailand), Raindrop Association, Chaipattana Foundation, Thai Red Cross, Institute for Community Development Organisation, Chumchonchai Foundation and SDFT, as well as a number of international organisations and donor groups. The existence of these groups implies complex interaction among agents from a range of backgrounds with different levels of capacity. Their potential capacity suggests reasons why social capital theory offers a promising framework within which to interpret and explain the disaster recovery and sustainable development in Koh Mouk.

1.8 Characteristics of previous development efforts

This thesis is based on the premise that the interaction among the numerous stakeholders requires a high level of social and human capital, i.e. the ability of people to network effectively in relation to a common

goal and the knowledge and expertise required to achieve that goal—if they are to succeed in achieving their recovery and development goals. It is, therefore, appropriate to point out the failure of some previous efforts at developing enterprises, which locals have variously attributed to lack of transparency, cooperation, participation, skills or trust. Transparency, cooperation, participation, trust and skill development are fundamental elements of social and human capital.

One example should suffice to illustrate. The 2005 SAN report (2005a) says that the Sasomsajja Financial Group was established in 1992 with the participation of 220 villagers. A common fund was set up whereby the funds could be loaned to its members at one per cent interest per month. The group met every three months and its committee was funded by the income on the loan. According to the same report, the group was terminated after money lent to members' relatives was not returned. Some committee members were not aware of their roles and there was an unexplained selling-off of donated fertilisers at a loss, which generated distrust. There was also a restructuring of the team, which caused disagreement. The report points out that, despite disbanding the group, those who participated learned positive lessons from the experience, such as the importance of good governance and efficient administration for future work (SAN, 2005a). The social capital elements of trust and

participation, as well as capacity building, were prerequisites for such development to take place.

Despite these failures, the longer-term process of sustainable development had gathered some significant momentum at the time of this study. The fact that a report exists on the performance, successes and failures of the communities in seeking their own way towards self-determination, speaks to a healthy process with concrete outcomes. Social capital development is dynamic, and in this case became increasingly positive. For example, SAN helped set up a revolving fund that allowed the villagers of Koh Mouk and Koh Libong, both located in the province of Trang, to assist in the repair of houses, boats and boating equipment. In addition, SAN supported grants for the purchase of tools for boat builders, as well as for the building of four boatyards in those two communities. The boatyards were used for building and repairing boats for affected fisher folk from 13 villages (SAN, 2005a, p. 50). This report together with the SDFT charter, which maintains a participatory approach with emphasis on the incorporation of minority groups and capacity-building with emphasis on livelihoods and sustainability, demonstrated a winning strategy, in relation to elements of social capital, such as trust and reciprocity, developed during the boat-building and repair process .

1.9 Summary

The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami caused unprecedented devastation and disruption around the Indian Ocean rim. The island of Koh Mouk, in Southern Thailand, was spared the loss of life experienced by other localities however, the material destruction caused severe disruption to the economy and community life, and resulted in trauma to a large number of people in the community. The disaster happened in what was already a socio-political effervescent context; conservative and progressive forces in Thailand had been in conflict throughout most of the twentieth century, often with bloody consequences. This divide was exacerbated by the geopolitical dynamics of the Cold War, followed by a crippling financial crisis in 1997, and further political upheaval in its aftermath. The island community of Koh Mouk had remained set in its traditional ways and at the periphery of these tumultuous events for most of its history. Then, the 2004 tsunami provided what Halpern (2005) would refer to as 'a shock' that kicked the community into a 'new equilibrium'. This substantive changes occurred in key aspects of community life, from the economy, to housing, to the role of women and the education system. Koh Mouk became a kind of social petri dish in the aftermath of the disaster, receiving a lot of attention from government, NGOs and other communities at both, the local and international levels. This thesis seeks to ask and answer some questions regarding those changes.

1.10 Research questions

In this thesis I argue that disaster recovery and sustainable community development efforts demand a high level of human knowledge and interaction and that a nuanced, well informed approach is more effective than a blanket approach to disaster recovery and sustainable development. The type of human interaction and knowledge exchange that took place on the Thai island of Koh Mouk following the Indian Ocean Tsunami offers some lessons that can be interpreted in terms of social capital theory. Interpreting the Koh Mouk experience, drawing conclusions and sharing those conclusions can offer a way forward to communities in ways that will suit their circumstances in the future.

Core questions

1. What were the constituent dynamics of social and human capital in the process of recovery in the post-tsunami Koh Mouk community in Southern Thailand?
2. What social and human capital conditions were required for the sustainable development of the tsunami-affected community of Koh Mouk?

Subsidiary questions

1. What were the salient features of social capital formation, particularly agency, participation, trust and reciprocity, in Koh Mouk Island before the tsunami disaster?

2. How did the pre-tsunami condition of social capital differ, if at all, from post-tsunami features up to the time of this research in 2007?
3. What were the front-line NGOs' roles in building human capital, and how did they contribute to the development of social capital in the context of disaster recovery and sustainable community development?
4. How can we apply the lessons learned in Koh Mouk about social and human capital formation in the wider context of post-tsunami Thailand?

In the next chapter I review literature relevant to addressing my research questions. ■

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Social capital is the central theoretical theme underpinning this research.

The overarching narrative of the thesis spans a number of specific topics

whose assessment demands their own supporting literatures in

subsequent chapters. In this chapter I review the international literature

on key aspects of social capital, including some of its definitions and

constituent elements, and how it is produced and where it lies in the

cultural contexts of the community in Koh Mouk. In addition, I also

analyse the relationship between social and human capital—a key

dynamic in this research—and present the local definition of sustainable

development as the main common objective of social capital in Koh Mouk.

2.2 Definitions of social capital

Social capital is a contested area of social inquiry with a great number of

supporters and their attendant detractors. The American sociologist

Robert Putnam (2000) is one of the iconic originators of the modern

concept. His core concept is that social capital has value in that the

effective capacity of social connections affect the productivity of individuals and groups. According to Putnam (2000, p. 19), in its simplest definition social capital refers to that effective capacity of connections among individuals. It also relates to what some people would call social virtue. However, Putnam (2000) makes a key differentiation between social capital and social virtue: "social capital calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations" (p. 19). People's lives are made more productive by social ties and the whole community will benefit by the cooperation of all of its parts. In Australia, Jenny Onyx and Paul Bullen (1997, p. 5) identify some common emerging themes in the social capital discourse such as participation in networks, reciprocity, trust, social norms, the commons and proactivity or agency.

Leading Thai sociologists Thaneer, Suavachittanont and others (2006, p. 4) describe a relatively cohesive pre-tsunami Koh Mouk community with low levels of formal education among the villagers and high levels of security and optimism, which functioned to address minor disagreements through coordinated community effort for the common good. Following the tsunami disaster, these feelings of security and optimism evaporated as traumatised villagers faced the prospect of rebuilding their lives in the face of a seriously inefficient response by

authorities and external agencies alike. Suwajittanont (2006) points out that one of the main complaints by the villagers was the government's lack of consultation in their response. In the short term, this chaos resulted in an increase in self-interest and a decline in social capital.

I would like to highlight Suwajittanont's point regarding low levels of formal education among the villagers of Koh Mouk and link that lack of formal education to the need for capacity building and one of its outcomes, human capital. This research will seek to understand, analyse and explain the relationship between social and human capital and the role that formal and informal education played in the recovery and sustainable development of the island. Further, I will also explore the relationship between the villagers and the authorities, i.e. government representatives and agencies and the way that they addressed the conflict resulting from the top down approach or what Suwajittanont referred to above as "lack of consultation". This is one of the knowledge gaps this research seeks to fill.

The conceptual threads of social capital are dense and multi-layered. The following discussion aims to tease apart these threads. Wendy Stone (2001, p. 6) conceptualises social relations in terms of social capital as networks characterised by norms of trust and reciprocity that allow us to identify their structure (e.g. whether people know one another, and what the nature of their relationship is), as well as their content (e.g. the flow of

goods and services between people, and the norms governing such exchanges). Stone (2001) states that networks may be understood as the *structural* elements of social capital, and the content of these networks refers to norms of trust and reciprocity, which operate within these structures. Putnam distinguishes between informal and formal networks or what he terms formality of civic engagement. Informal ties, according to Putnam, include those held between family, kin, friends and neighbours, whereas formal ties include ties to voluntary associations and the like (in Stone, 2001, p. 8). Gerhard Mutz and Rainer Klump (2005, p. 5) distinguish between macro, meso and micro network levels, whereby each level has its correspondent locus (e.g. transnational, communal, individual), form and components (e.g. traditional and modern values, family, philosophy, norms, trust) and outcomes (e.g. economic cooperation and development, social cohesion, distribution of wealth).

In short, Suwajittanont's (2006) study suggests that pre-disaster Koh Mouk was a community with strong bonding networks, somewhat isolated from the mainstream culture, with relatively low levels of human capital outside their traditional economic activities, limited levels of bridging networks with other communities and a dismal deficit of linking networks with the government and non-government sectors. The study also suggests that despite an initial decline in bonding networks following

the disaster, the community rallied together and made a concerted effort to improve their situation by planning for reconstruction, capacity building and networking at all levels. This research picks up where Suwajittanont's left off and explores what new networks developed following the initial recovery efforts, how they developed and, importantly, with what outcomes in terms of the villagers stated goals of recovery and sustainable development. In so doing, this research will also seek to make a contribution towards a body of research and knowledge that links social capital theory, i.e. the way in which people connect to one another and the effective capacity of those social connections among individuals towards achieving a common objective operating within a framework of norms and sanctions, with sustainable community development theory and practice.

More recently David Halpern (2005, pp. 26–27) has amalgamated previous concepts of social capital and refined them further into a three-dimensional conceptual map to isolate three main components: networks, norms and sanctions. (figure 2.1) These apply across three levels—micro (e.g. parents, siblings, family), meso (e.g. village, workplace) and macro (e.g. nation or ethnic group). In turn, these three levels have their own character or function in bonding, bridging and linking social capital, respectively (e.g. family and village networks, cross-village or communities networks and trade links between nations). Halpern (2005)

also broadens the original concept of social capital to include “habits of life, or national and regional culture” or shared local conditions that typically form the basis for social cohesion.

These two key points—the incorporation of the different levels of social capital and an understanding of national and regional culture—feature throughout this study. Different levels of social capital were visible during fieldwork as a deliberate and concerted effort to develop networks at the micro, meso and macro levels with the common goals of disaster recovery, sustainable development and civil engagement. In addition, people were developing methods of information sharing, rules and procedures, which is what Christiaan Grootaert and Thierry van Bastelaer (2002, p. 3) call the structural form of social capital. The second point above, i.e. an understanding of national and regional culture, helps to explain the very values and beliefs that underpin social capital in a community, region or country. This study addresses Halpern’s (2005) broader concept of social capital and what Grootaert and van Bastelaer (2002, p. 3) call the cognitive form of social capital.

This study requires the identification of social networks and their characteristics in terms of social capital theory through participants’ interactions.

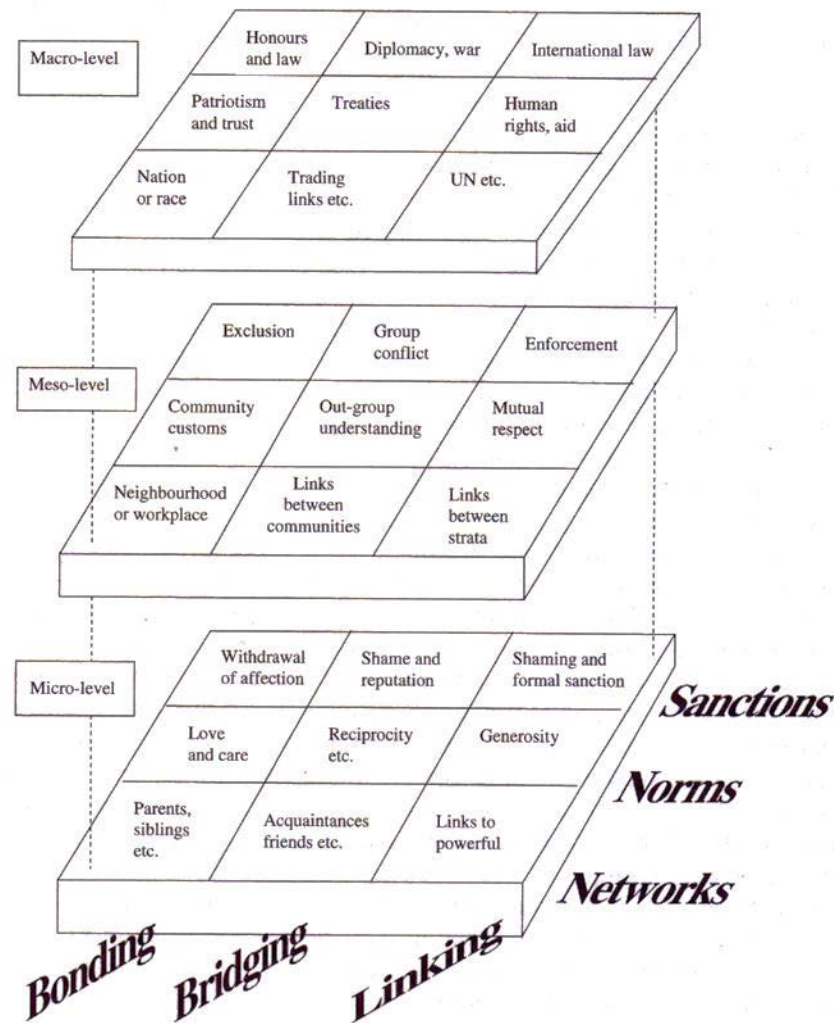


Figure 2.1: Halpern's (2005, p. 27) conceptual map of social capital

In chapter one I referred to the importance of gaining inside knowledge and understanding in recovery and community development interventions in order to apply a nuanced, informed approach. To that end I refer to David Fetterman's (2010) concept of the insider's perspective being interpreted from outsider's perspective, and attempt to address that challenge taking Pink's (2007) approach whereby the ethnographers' experiences of reality are as loyal as possible to the context. I considered

that this could best be achieved through participant interaction. Consistent with this line of thought, and in the localised context of this study, I proffer the following definition of social capital as the effective capacity of social connections towards the stated goals of disaster recovery, sustainable development and civic engagement in Koh Mouk. Further to that definition, and in the wider context of disaster recovery and sustainable community development, I suggest that where social capital, human capital and material/economic resources intersect is where those goals are most effectively achieved (figure 2.2). We will now look at some specific elements of social capital before moving onto the different categories of social capital formation.

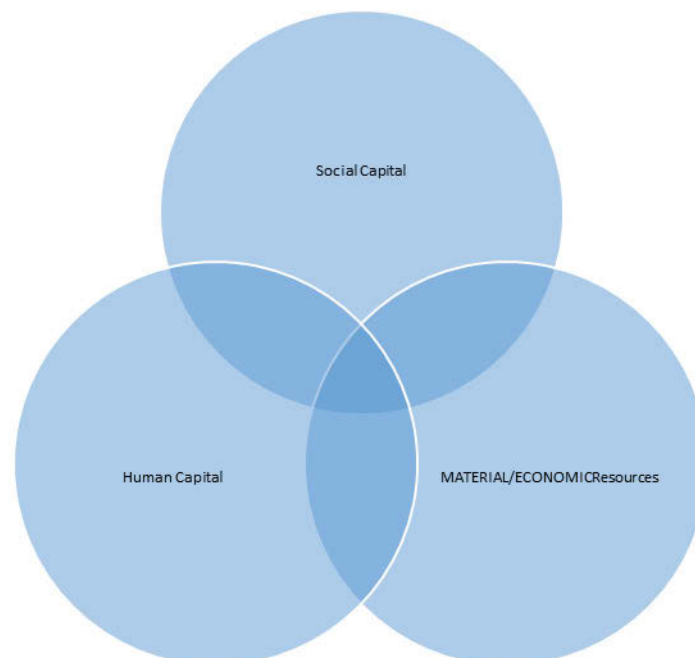


Figure 2.2: Graphic representation of social and human capital dynamics

2.3 Participation and agency

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the participatory process “entails open dialogue and broadly active civic engagement, and requires that individuals have a voice in the decisions that affect them” (in Neef, 2005, p. 7). Andreas Neef (2005) outlines the major features of peoples’ participation in sustainable development and land use in Southeast Asia. He differentiates between promoters and opponents of the participatory approach, and in so doing promotes a moderate stance (Neef, 2005, pp. 3–5).

The concept and practice of local community participation gained popularity after the obvious failures of the Eurocentric, technocratic approach to community research and development of the post-World War era. According to Damien Kingsbury (2001) the process of modernisation and development in Thailand commenced in the late nineteenth century during the reigns of King Mongkut (Rama IV) and his son, King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) (pp. 148–149). Later, says Kingsbury, Thailand rode the wave of development that swept through Southeast Asia during the period of decolonisation following World War II. Although Thailand had not been colonised by a foreign power as such, their model of development mirrored those of its neighbours in what was also known as a period of modernisation. This modernisation was “based on the idea that development and economic growth were identical, that economic growth

was separate to other political considerations” (Hettne in Kingsbury, 2001, p. 55), and that “growth could be achieved by applying technological answers to development problems” (McKay in Kingsbury, 2001, pp. 55–56). This model did not live up to expectations as it failed to deliver benefits to all or most, and rather contributed to concentration of wealth to the detriment of the majority whose only competitive edge was the lowering of their salaries. More recently, in the last quarter of the twentieth century, development in Thailand adopted a neo-classical development model whereby “government was an only marginally necessary evil that should be limited in its functions and markets would find their ‘natural’ equilibrium in a ‘free’ or unregulated environment” (Kingsbury, 2001, pp. 68–69). Following an initial boom, the Thai economy collapsed in 1997 under the weight of “easy credit, artificially high property prices, bad businesses and corrupt schemes” (Kingsbury, 2001, pp. 68–69).

Given those failures, the concept of participation gained popularity in development theory and practice. However, it gradually departed from its initial goal of involving the principal stakeholders in the development decision-making process and became something of a doctrine; this has prompted academics to scrutinise it more closely. Neef (2005) analyses some of the major criticisms of participatory approaches and, quoting different authors, warns against the risk of it becoming tokenistic:

Development practitioners [and] researchers ... increasingly tend to standardise participatory approaches, rather than systemising them in order to identify the common principles that are working across all these approaches ... Ironically, much participatory methodology becomes condescending and patronising of local population, just the opposite of the original intent of dispensing with researcher-driven agendas which once alienated local people. Rather than treating local people with respect and as colleagues, participatory methods sometimes treat them more like school children by playing titillating games, drawing exercises and other fly-by-night remedies... depth and precision in understanding social aspects [within a community] are all too often sacrificed to the participatory fetish. (p. 6)

Neef (2005) urges researchers, NGOs and other external actors to use a broader, more flexible and committed approach to participation which accommodates the needs and wisdom of the local people. Examples include the inclusion of women in development programs, integration of GIS technology and local knowledge, and the use of multi-agent systems in the participatory process (Neef, 2005). These types of real participation by local villagers apply to the tsunami-affected communities in question, since they are embedded in the SDFT definition of sustainable development. I will return to this question in section 2.7.

Whatever its virtues and criticisms, the concept of participation in development gathered momentum in Thailand since the 1980s. It became well established in the aftermath of the 1997 Southeast Asian financial crisis. Existing literature such as the SDFT charter, project papers and the SAN report show that the Thai experience has been developing in relation to broad ideas about participation. This is no coincidence. Neef (2005) places the shifting research paradigm on agricultural production technology in Thailand in the political context:

The spirit of the Thai 1997 Constitution and that of the Thai National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997–2001) place people at the centre of development by ensuring democratic processes in all development activities. This requires a radical departure from highly centralised systems of government. It also calls for a new system of thinking, both on the part of public agencies and the people themselves ... The ideology of the 1997 Constitution and the 8th National Economic and Social Development Plan, by placing the 'people' at the centre of development, created a new starting point for planning and development processes ... Such a reorientation of approach would create opportunities for the involvement of groups in the process of plan formulation and target setting. The idea of networks for the exchange of information and experiences including measures to strengthen the managerial capability of farmers, have also been advocated. (p. 321)

My outlook assumes that these conditions apply as much to other sectors of the economy, such as fisher folks' activities, as they do to rural society. This shift in paradigm also seems to have permeated deep into many

organisations and their approaches, including the SDFT and their definition of sustainable development for there is active participation as well as a local grass-roots driven agenda or agency in the post-tsunami recovery and sustainable development processes in Koh Mouk.

2.4 Measuring social capital

According to Halpern (2005, p. 31) one of the main challenges in the application of social capital theory is attempting to measure it, and some economists are reluctant to implement the theory because there seems to be a lack of consensus on how to measure social capital. Halpern suggests that there are four main criteria for what makes a good measurement of social capital: reliability, i.e. can the measurement be replicated and trusted to give the same result; surface validity, i.e. does a measure 'intuitively' capture the concept that we are trying to measure; criterion-related validity, i.e. does a measure relate to other 'gold standard', independent indicators of the same entity; and predictive validity, i.e. does the measure accurately predict other outcomes or variables that are of particular interest (p. 32).

Onyx and Bullen (1997) use a survey tool containing a number of questions designed to ascertain the level of different social capital elements in different communities in New South Wales, Australia. In a more recent study, Andrew Leigh (2010) takes organisational membership and

volunteerism as the main criteria to estimate social capital in Australia. Similarly, Grootaert and van Bastelaer (2002, pp. 6–7), who compiled case studies showing the impact of social capital in development, cite several that used proxy indicators. Halpern (2005, p. 205) warns against that type of criterion and suggests the inclusion of informal networks as part of the criteria when estimating social capital.

Stone (2001) has some important words of warning on the issue of outcomes as indicators of social capital:

It must be recognised that reliance upon measures of the outcomes of social capital as indicators of social capital itself poses the risk of tautological fallacy, whereby social capital is said to exist whenever the indicator is present. (p. 35)

This implies that outcomes may be achieved in the absence of social capital and, conversely, that social capital does not necessarily guarantee an immediate outcome. For the purpose of this research, and in consideration of the research questions, I refer back to my definition of social capital and I will seek to estimate social capital both in terms of its constituent elements as well as its outcomes in terms of sustainable development, while at the same time examining the dynamics between social and human capital in Koh Mouk.

2.5 Building social capital

While there is general agreement that social capital can be beneficial at every level of society, an inability to reach consensus on its exact definition and, importantly, measurement of its impact, makes any effort to customise a policy of social capital-building very challenging. Grootaert and van Bastelaer (2002) argue that while no country has ever reached high levels of development without investing in human capital, the empirical data is not conclusive on a similar return for investment in social capital, and they warn against the 'general applicability of proxies' to measure and determine the impact of social capital for the purpose of policy development (pp. 345–347). Indeed, it is reasonable to conclude from the history of Koh Mouk covered so far that government intervention can have an adverse effect on social capital development unless, using some creative logic, one decides that the unintended adverse effects created by that intervention may have led to the eventual creation of real, organic and endogenous social capital—which would make it almost impossible to measure and replicate.

The Koh Mouk experience is particular in terms of the building of social capital because an unusual number of organisations concentrated an extraordinary amount of resources and energy following a natural disaster, the likes of which had no parallel in living memory on the island. These, coupled with the energy and resources of the local people created a

synergy that would be difficult to replicate in a less traumatic set of circumstances. One characteristic of social capital-building in Koh Mouk stands out: there is a clear pre- and post-tsunami divide. Following the disaster things would never be the same. Another social capital-building characteristic that stands out in Koh Mouk following the disaster is the manner in which the locals took ownership of their recovery and longer-term planning—their agency was evident at almost every level.

Pooling resources for the purpose of self-help in the face of adversity is not uncommon in the creation of agency and network development in social capital. Onyx and Edwards (2010) adopt complexity theory to offer an insight into three quite different communities in Chile to explain the formation of networks in social capital. They say that complexity theory ‘can be applied to emergent self-organising networks within society’ (p. 3). Interestingly, when one extrapolates Onyx and Edwards’ (2010) case studies in what they call a “state of disequilibrium (that) draws agents together” (p. 4); i.e. in the context of adverse sets of circumstances such as a natural disaster or counterproductive government intervention, ideas about complexity are also relevant to the context of Koh Mouk.

Halpern (2005) reaches a similar conclusion to that of Grootaert and van Bastelaer (2002) regarding the importance of social capital in

community well-being and development and the challenges faced by policymakers in trying to build and harness it. He argues that:

Unlike other important decisions that affect the wider community left up to individuals; such as what to eat, how many children to have or what religion to believe in; social capital is worthy of intervention by governments, organisations and communities. At the most basic micro-level or bonding networks is the nuclear family and the best investment by governments at this level is in supporting families and parenting.

(Halpern, 2005, pp. 295–297)

At the meso-level of cross-community or horizontal networking, one of the key areas of investment by governments is fostering voluntary programs and the devolution of power to local and regional governments so that they can address their challenges more effectively (Halpern, 2005, pp. 303–314). At the macro-level or linking social capital networks, Halpern (2005) points to policy that promotes citizen education and service learning that contributes to the creation of a “contemporary shared moral discourse” as one way to promote social capital creation (pp. 318–320).

Halpern (2005) acknowledges that most of his research involves OECD countries, mainly Great Britain and the U.S., and predicts that the “operationalisation of social capital concepts and policy” will differ

between developed and developing countries (p. 285). We need to go no further than Thailand to confirm the above pronouncement. In his in-depth study of social capital at the macro level of Thai political economy, Danny Unger (1998, pp. 167–183) concluded that, paradoxically, Thailand's traditional low levels of social capital, partly reflected in its weak policies and norms, created a 'default laissez-faire' that resulted in its remarkable economic development in the second half of the twentieth century.

Whether this is a sustainable state of affairs at the macro, meso and micro levels in present-day Thailand and into the future remains to be seen. This project may shed some light on more recent developments in this area by examining and measuring the basic elements of social capital (e.g. trust, participation, agency, networks, norms and sanctions), and whether concerted efforts have been made towards the building of social capital in Koh Mouk by communities, organisations and government.

2.6 Human capital

Human capital refers to the personal assets of knowledge and experience that can be used in the production of wealth. As such, its individual and cumulative effect can, depending on issues of equity, have a bearing on sustainable community development. While the concept has been around since the eighteenth century, it was in the 1950s and 1960s that economists

such as Theodore Shultz exhorted his colleagues to embrace it. Margaret Blair (2011) defines human capital as:

the skills, knowledge and capabilities of the workforce of a firm, or of the population of a country, as well as the organizational arrangements and networks of relationships those people have formed that enable them to be more innovative and productive. (pp. 49–53)

Blair (2011) goes on to say that human capital can take many intangible forms such as the workers' health, their knowledge of popular culture and machine operation, and their capacity to adjust and innovate in the face of changing conditions. Halpern (2005) uses a narrower definition of human capital as the "stock of expertise accumulated by a worker knowing how to do something, and how it is valued for its income-earning potential in future" (p. 4). The main difference between these two definitions is Halpern's exclusion of elements such as organisational arrangements and networks of relationships that one would be more likely to associate with social capital, as well as less tangible attributes such as being able to adjust to changing conditions.

I observed dynamics between capacity building, trust and network development that lend particular relevance to the concept of human capital, in the way it contributes to wealth creation through interaction with social capital in Koh Mouk. Even though authors such as Blair (2011)

refer to human capital at the macro level of nations or the micro level of firms, the concept can equally be applied to individuals or communities in development. Those aspects of human capital espoused by Blair (2011) such as education or knowledge acquisition, networks of relationships and the ability to adjust and innovate in the face of changing conditions, have particular relevance for this study. The following chapters will expand on the dynamics between social and human capital and how their interaction fosters or hinders sustainable development for the whole community and environs.

The study of the interaction between social and human capital is challenging and exciting. Rather than seeking an ever-elusive, definitive, cause-and-effect answer, this study seeks to understand the dynamics between the two in what Janine Nahapiet (2011) calls “a highly interrelated and interdependent relationship” for which it is necessary to consider the “complementarity and situatedness of social and human capital, frequently lost in conventional studies and yet fundamental to understanding their development and impact” (pp. 82–90). Each chapter of this thesis expands on the role of capacity building and education in the formation of human capital, their effects on the community’s economic development and the particular local social dynamics that allow this organic synergy to develop.

2.7 Sustainable development

According to the widely used definition adopted by the Brundtland Report (www.developmentgateway.com.au), “sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. Some authors, such as Tim Forsyth and Andrew Walker (2012), warn against the oversimplification of the sustainable development process ‘by social and political influences that deny greater underlying complexity and uncertainty’. They argue that:

A more politicised account of how environmental knowledge is formed is necessary before assuming that it provides an accurate basis for explaining environmental problems or for indicating appropriate regulatory responses. (Forsyth & Walker 2012, p. 228)

The same authors advocate for a ‘more biophysically nuanced and politically representative understanding of environmental change’ (p. 4).

As pointed out earlier in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the political process in Thailand has been volatile and unstable. Issues around the environment and sustainable development have not escaped that volatility. Forsyth & Walker’s advocacy for an understanding of environmental change based on a rigorous scientific process as well as the political dynamics involved; i.e. political actors and processes; have

relevance to the sustainable development efforts in Koh Mouk. In the following chapters, particularly the chapters on the management of marine resources, land ownership, economic development and civil engagement; that double consideration of science and politics towards a better understanding of the changing environment will be demonstrated. Further, the emphasis on the political process in the development of a nuanced understanding of the changing environment is implied in the definition of sustainable development adopted by a prominent NGO actor in Koh Mouk.

The SDFT (2006) devised its own justifiable definition of sustainable development to suit its own and the global context as follows:

Systems of production and consumption must not destroy natural resources and the environment, nor lead to pollution or overexploitation. Sustainable development, in contrast to the modernisation paradigm, is a development model which is integrated and holistic. It takes into account local ways of life, indigenous wisdom and natural resources equilibrium, all of which contribute to greater self-reliance and improve quality of life. In addition, sustainable development strengthens social balances through encouraging local knowledge, cultural values and the participation of various groups, particularly women and those who are normally excluded from the problem identification and decision-making processes

at local and policy levels. Since this model emphasises POs (people organisations) and the cooperation of various stakeholders in society, it can lead to solving community problems as well as Thai social problems on a greater level ... Sustainable development is only possible when the management of natural resources and the environment occurs with the active participation of the people ... In order to support sustainable practices and to maintain already limited natural resources, it is necessary to consider the relevance and application of participatory management systems that promote a good balance between [the] human factors and local natural resources. (SDFT website, 2006)

This definition of sustainable development is an important point of reference for this research project; it defines the ultimate goal of social capital in line with its own definition and will be one of several indicators of social capital, together with social capital constituent elements. This definition of sustainable development also underpins each of the topics in the following chapters and permeates most aspects of life on the island.

2.8 Summary

Social capital theory is in a state of flux and not without controversy.

However, there is general agreement among scholars and practitioners regarding its potential benefits. Much of the literature suggests that communities are not only healthier but wealthier in the presence of social capital. This chapter identifies some common elements in the theory such

as networks, or structural social capital; norms, or cognitive social capital; and sanctions. Social capital operates at the micro, meso and macro levels, which are characterised by bonding, bridging and linking networks, respectively. The literature emphasises the importance of taking into account the cultural context when researching social capital. The literature canvassed so far is less forthcoming regarding social capital in minority Muslim communities in the south of Thailand.

A synergistic relationship between social and human capital has long been identified. This relationship is complex and causality is very difficult to ascertain, but it is a recurring theme in the literature. The dynamics between the two types of capital rather than the measurement of social capital is central to this study and is explored in later chapters. Finally, disaster recovery as well as sustainable development are the two stated goals for Koh Mouk community. This involves an understanding of the changing environment based not only on science, but in the political processes involved. The next chapter explores this dynamic. ■

Chapter 3

Joint management of marine resources

3.1 Introduction

As explained in chapter one, this thesis sets out to demonstrate that social capital provides a useful concept through which to explore successful disaster recovery strategies. The previous chapter traced applications of social capital in similar research. In this chapter I provide a first example of my argument, analysing how social capital, as it is reflected in the joint management of marine resources, is assisting the people of Koh Mouk to adjust to their changing reality. It highlights the historical importance of the artisan fishing industry in the economy of Koh Mouk community, outlining the challenges it faced before and after the tsunami and the existing and developing networks or social capital created to deal with them. The present conditions are illustrated throughout the chapter by a study of two days in the life of a Koh Mouk fisherman, describing his attempts to earn a living from an ever-diminishing resource and his reliance on a social network to maintain his equilibrium. This case study is used to highlight a common experience among fisherfolk in Koh Mouk: the economic and cultural paradigm shifts that are a direct result of dwindling traditional economic activity.

The chapter explains how capacity building, resulting in human capital, plays a synergetic role with social capital in many aspects of a developing community, including the management of marine resources and the transition to new economic endeavours. This aspect of NGO facilitation refers to the acquisition of skills and knowledge that allows villagers to both articulate their concerns and take more effective action to improve their circumstances in pursuit of what they consider to be, in the words of Amartya Sen (1999), “a worthy life project’. This chapter also shows that the transfer of knowledge and skills is a two-way process, where villagers’ knowledge, skills and experience also help inform and link with authorities and academics regarding local conditions. This information osmosis is consistent with Forsyth and Walker’s (2012) advocacy for a more nuanced understanding of the changing environment to include science and politics.

3.2 Marine Protected Area

The community of Koh Mouk is located within the boundaries of the Marine Protected Area (MPA) known as Had Chao Mai Marine National Park. An MPA is considered to be any coastal or marine area in which certain uses are regulated to conserve natural resources, biodiversity, and historical and cultural features. According to Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk, Jonathan Shott, Sirisook Weston, and Ruangkamol and Ronarongpairee

Wichoksak (2010), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), to which Thailand is a subscriber, defines an MPA as:

any defined area within or adjacent to the marine environment, together with its overlying waters and associated flora, fauna, and historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by legislation or other effective means, including custom, with the effect that its marine and/or coastal biodiversity enjoys a higher level of protection than its surroundings. (p. 9)

The joint management of marine resources in this study refers to the management of the resources by the people of Koh Mouk, as well as by the people of adjacent villages, government authorities, NGOs and academic institutions (figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1: Partial view of the area managed by the villages of Koh Mouk. Island at left depicts settled area. Changlang (top), Kwantungku (centre) and Namrub (below)

Source: Federation of Southern Fisher Folk, June 2007

3.3 Fishing and fishing practices

Together agriculture and fishing are the main occupations of the Thai people, at 35 per cent to the total with fishing activity making up 2.5 per cent of the total GDP. The Thai fishing industry is one of the ten largest in the world. Figures from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2010) show that the total fish consumption in Thailand in 2006 was 33.6 kg per capita per year. Marine capture grew rapidly from 1.3 to 2.6 million tons during 1970–1987, and now comprises 90 per cent of total Thai fishery output (Panjart, 2008, p. 1). Its capture fishery is classified into small-scale fisheries using boats under 11 metres in length and less than five gross tonnage, and commercial fisheries using inboard-powered vessels over five gross tonnage. The 2000 Marine Fisheries Census indicated that 80 per cent of a total 58,119 fishing boats were small scale (in Prasertcharoensuk et al., 2010, p. 7).

Fishing has been the single most important economic activity in Koh Mouk since the first Muslim majority migrants settled there over a century ago. The fishing practices carried out by the locals can be categorised as artisan sea capture or small-scale fishing. This is typically a family venture, with most households on the island having at least one boat at their disposal, plus a diesel motor and fishing gear such as different types of nets and crab pods or traps. Some families own their equipment outright, while others borrow from middlemen owners or one of the few *pae*

(seafood brokers' outlets) on the island. This type of inter-family activity fosters the bonding networks among close relations, as well as bridging networks with neighbouring villages.

While most people on the island identify the threat of large-scale industrial fishing activities and perceived government authorities' inaction to combat it, there are also areas of considerable disagreement. A Drewdrop NGO worker claimed that the use of unsustainable fishing techniques such as fine-mesh nets and diving gear has caused a rift among some villagers (interview, 19 July 2007). Although the use of unsustainable practices has reportedly decreased over the last few years, the overwhelming majority of the Koh Mouk fisherfolk continue to struggle to make a living using more sustainable fishing methods.

3.3.1 Daily life of the fisherman: part one

Bang Neung is a 32-year-old fisherman, married with two daughters aged 7 and 11. His wife, Ja Pu Yin Neung, supplements their income by preparing and selling sweets and snacks from home. Their house sits on a relative's block of land, a traditional arrangement until very recently (I will return to this topic). I accompanied Bang Neung out to sea for two days and recorded his fishing activities. His boat was of traditional timber design, about nine metres long and 1.5 metres wide, with a diesel motor and long propeller shaft (figure 3.2). Three long crab nets *auen pou* were

neatly stowed at the stern, ready for deployment. His boat was fitted with a canopy, though most boats on the island are open. It is only during the tourist high season, September to April, that some licensed fishermen fit canopies on their boats to cater for tourists' trips around the islands.



Figure 3.2: Bang Neung's boat (foreground) with other typical fishing boats at low tide on the east coast of Koh Mouk. Note its distinctive long-tail shaft and canopy

Photograph by author (2007)

Bang Neung is a very fit-looking man, short, wiry, with taut muscles and weathered skin, typical of the local men. He had a crew of one, a 15-year old boy, who was a kind of trainee or apprentice, who helped with the fishing chores as he learned the trade. According to the locals, it used to be quite common for young boys to leave school after Grade 6 or 7 (aged 12 or 13) to learn the traditional fishing trade, earning a little money for their work as trainees once the catch is sold at the *pae*. Most of the fishermen I interviewed had done so. This practice is now less common, with less

incentive due to diminished fishing activities and a greater emphasis on mainstream education. According to Sampan Panjart (2008):

The average number of years of schooling of Thai nationals is 7.2 and the average literacy level is 90.8%. Approximately 10% of fishers in the 6 Provinces (along the Andaman Sea coast) have lower elementary school, 71% have completed elementary school and only 19% have completed upper primary school. Most of present Thai fishers do not want to see their children pursue fishing as an occupation because, in their opinion, it is hard work with uncertain income and unhonored, they thus try to support their children's education as long as they can. (p. 32)

On the first day we set out late morning after Bang Neung had some trouble with the motor. We headed off in a northerly direction towards Koh Wehn (Ring Island, after its round shape), a few kilometres away. The view from the boat showed a clearer picture of human activity in Koh Mouk. Just beyond the white sands and coconut groves that framed the coastline, sections of the hillsides revealed a patchwork of increasing farming activity. Market produce and rubber trees formed a rich tapestry in shades of green (figure 3.3).

As we pulled away from Koh Mouk and sailed past the northern tip of the island, a gigantic slice of rock and debris could be seen detached from the vertical cliff face where it obviously had been attached before it collapsed. The rubble must have been dozens of cubic metres in volume weighing hundreds of tons. Bang Neung pointed to it and said clearly

“tsunami’. I watched the sight in awe; it looked as if the unimaginable power of the disaster had carved an exclamation mark on the landscape to punctuate its relentless passing through the area.



Figure 3.3: Koh Mouk village waterfront with houses on stilts and boats at their moorings. Note the patches of cleared, cultivated land (top left) and the typical *pae* building (right)

Photograph by author (2007)

3.4 The effects of the tsunami on resources and social capital

Bang Sam and Ja Pu Yin Sam, a husband-and-wife fishing team, said,

“Pangha Bay [furthest south] was severely affected by the tsunami. It destroyed houses, equipment and environment, and left only remains”

(interview, 12 June 2007). They are now active members of Schopokit Thay Thale, Schoko, or Sea Watch Patrol (figure 3.4).

Bang Hoc, a fisherman and small shopkeeper, explained to me that the tsunami came from the west and they saw it from the east coast of Koh Mouk as it approached the mainland. The backwash then hit Koh Mouk’s

east coast, with a surge of water almost two metres high at the shoreline where Bang Hoc's house-cum-shop stood at Kwan Bay. He showed me the water level above the door frame. Infrastructure damage to his cement blockhouse was manageable; however, he lost all his shop stock as well as fishing equipment. He said in conversation that they ran uphill as the surge approached. No one was hurt, but two foreign tourists were lost at sea. Bang Sam and Ja Pu Yin Sam said that Pangha Bay was the worst affected area of the island. All fishermen lost equipment and the great majority suffered damage to their boats and houses. They said that now there was even less catch than before the tsunami and that the sea environment had changed, with sea water getting warmer and some fish migrating while others came to die on the beach. After the tsunami, the cost of fishing equipment and fuel went up. This, coupled with a dwindling catch, severely exacerbated the hardships of the local fisher folk who depend on fishing for a living.



Figure 3.4: Bang Sam and Ja Pu Yin Sam fishing for squid using a hand line in the vicinity of Koh Mouk. Note the partial view of the radio antenna (centre) with improvised radio casing

Photograph by author (2007)

In terms of social capital, the disaster triggered a new dynamic that, despite initial convulsions, would set the scenario for real change and development. Bang Si, a much-trusted 56-year-old fisherman and natural leader said:

During the four days that followed the tsunami, people stuck together up in the hills, sharing everything evenly. As local political elections were approaching, some politicians began to distribute food in order to get votes. Some people became greedy and friction developed. After the tsunami, the government would pay between 15,000 to 20,000 baht for a damaged boat to be repaired and up to 30,000 baht for a lost boat. There were claims that some villagers who had never owned a boat claimed a loss

to get the money. This created some friction in the early stages of the recovery. (Interview, 1 July 2007)

Bang Si continued his narrative with force and conviction as he smoked, describing one of the most important developments in Koh Mouk with respect to the future:

As a result of the friction, two representatives from each bay plus the Imam and a few other people formed a committee to find solutions to the community's emerging problems. On 8 January 2005 [two weeks after the tsunami], right here in my house, the Obotho, village head, Imam and 12 representatives from the six bays met for the first time. Our main concern was how to restore and revive the village after the tsunami and distribute assistance fairly. The committee [chaired by B. Si] had to supervise the distribution of 77 boats and 177 houses donated by various organisations, including SAN, FSF [Federation of Southern Fisher Folk, or Samaphan Chaopramong Pueanbaan, also known as SAMAPAN], government, Rotary and Chai Patana Supanimit. Currently the committee is still operating and things are much better in the village. The committee manages boatyards and the housing project. (Interview, 1 July 2007)

This version of events was widespread among the villagers and NGO officials. My general perception is that the bonding networks among the villagers were strong and informal. They grew stronger in the very early stages after the disaster through a shared traumatic experience through which people displayed considerable selflessness and solidarity. But later the alleged opportunistic third parties' lack of equitable standards in the allocation of assistance contributed to a marked erosion of trust,

reciprocity, cooperation and norms. Based on that perception of events I concluded that it was only the early, decisive and positive action of the local leadership that prevented a further rift with potential long-lasting negative consequences. The voices of dissent were few and far-between. I heard only two villagers protest about the distribution of new housing and assistance for the purchase of fishing equipment and repair.

A brief pause for comment regarding my role and style as a researcher at this stage is in order. The word 'heard' in the previous paragraph is used advisedly to indicate that villagers volunteered the information unprompted during the normal course of interviews. Before I ever set foot on Koh Mouk I was advised by an SDFT representative that I should, ideally, avoid any lines of enquiry that might stir up dormant feelings and old resentment (interview, 26 April 2007). This happened after I had already discussed his methodology with SDFT and obtained their approval for the project. Although the SDFT representative did not forbid any specific line of questioning, his polite but firm suggestion left me in no doubt that SDFT would enforce its power to ask for my withdrawal from the island should any of my actions have a negative impact on their collective efforts to promote community cohesion. This highlighted the important role NGOs play in fostering positive interaction between the villagers and outsiders. However well-meaning I as a researcher might

have been, there was real potential for damage had I asked tactless questions about allocation of assistance and what it meant for people's personal relationships with others on the island. Therefore, most of the information regarding bonding networks (i.e. intra-communal) came from observation, inference, the SDFT warning itself and from discussions with few and chosen individuals with whom I had developed a considerably good rapport.

Back to the previous point, the two villagers above came from Pangha Bay, the area of Koh Mouk worst affected by the tsunami. One of them alleged that he had been left out of the new housing project altogether and had never been invited to participate in housing allocation or be properly informed about it. The other alleged maladministration of the revolving funds for the purchase of fishing gear. However, over 90 per cent of the people I spoke with seemed satisfied with the processes in place. I observed the meetings and gained some insight into the issues discussed, despite not always having an interpreter available. The processes appeared to be transparent, equitable and fair. Importantly, meetings and workshops were held totally in the open, where all villagers, male and female had access and were invited to participate. They were mostly on the island, sometimes elsewhere. There were usually several events every week, sometimes held back-to-back and lasting for hours. I

observed many villagers participating in almost every event. Some were nominated, volunteer representatives from each bay, while others saw it in their own best interest to attend certain events, such as land title forums. In short, everyone on the island seemed to have the opportunity to participate and have their views heard. It was up to individuals to take the opportunity, and the majority did, directly or through the bay representatives. Based on ethical precepts, I did not pursue the issue of the two villagers' dissatisfaction.

3.4.1 Daily life of the fisherman: part two

About 30 minutes later, we arrived in the vicinity of Koh Wehn. The sea was calm, the water clear with an emerald tinge, and the cliff sides rose sheer and majestic just 20 metres away. As we cruised around the island, we could see the makeshift camps clinging to the side of the cliff, just above high-tide level, where generations of fishermen built their platforms with rope and bamboo to get some rest, keep provisions and perhaps access the much sought-after birds' nests. We soon came upon an anchored fishing vessel. This boat was larger than Bang Neung's, approximately 11 metres long, with a three-metre wide beam, a deeper draft and a pilot's cabin and undercover area for cooking, rest and recreation. It was a longer-range fishing boat with a crew of four. Bang Neung manoeuvred around and pulled up alongside, fastening his boat to

the larger vessel. We both climbed aboard amid warm greetings; the young fellow stayed back on our boat for a nap.

We were soon sitting under cover, as our hosts prepared coffee and Bang Neung shared his snack of coconut rice. We started talking and our hosts agreed to be interviewed but did not wish to appear on camera. They said that they had known Bang Neung and other locals for a long time and were on good terms with them. They came from the neighbouring province of Satun, to the south of Trang, and had spent a couple of months at sea already, with stops for unloading and resupply. They ran a relatively small operation with fuel being their main overhead. Between sips of coffee, puffs of smoke and the sound of gentle splashing waves against the side of the boats and the cliff, the men narrated a similar story to the one I had been hearing in Koh Mouk: diminishing catches, rising fuel costs and competing industrial fishing vessels were making their fishing activities unviable.

What struck me about these men and their relationship with the local fishermen was their sense of camaraderie and willingness to lend a hand at a moment's notice. There was an already well-established bonding and linking network that must have been the foundation for later organised political activity, even though in the past their efforts had been less well coordinated. We finished our coffee and got underway. One of

their crew joined us on our boat to help Bang Neung set up the nets. I never became aware of any other arrangements that would explain this action and interpreted it as evidence of solidarity among fisher folk.

We cruised around the island and they began casting the three nets. Each net was about 300 metres long, just over a metre wide and sunk to a depth of up to 30 metres. They were deployed carefully, as the boat slowly manoeuvred around in an arch, a buoy with an identifying flag marking the spot. Fishermen told me that the large-scale industrial fishing trawlers that ply the waters around Koh Mouk deploy drift nets up to 5,000 metres long. SDFT staff said that each of those trawlers could catch up to five tons of fish and other marine life in one night (meeting with Japanese delegation, 6 June 2007). After deploying the nets, we returned the Satun fisherman to his boat and after some more coffee headed back to Koh Mouk until the following day.

3.5 Boats, fishing equipment, costs and a changing economy

According to the village head, there are 500 to 600 fishing boats in Koh Mouk, almost one per family. The boats are of traditional timber design, about nine metres long by 1.5 metres wide. They have a diesel motor and a long shaft culminating in a double-bladed propeller, which helps the fishermen manoeuvre in the shallows. The cost of a bare boat is about THB 60,000, the diesel motor THB 20,000, the propeller THB 7,000, the

battery THB 1,200, the drain pipe THB 700, the anchor THB 300 and the canopy THB 1,800—altogether over THB 90,000. The fishermen use squid pods (*loop muek*), that they build themselves, to fish for squid (figures 3.5 and 3.6).



Figure 3.5: A local fisherman builds his own *loop muek*

Photograph by author (2007)



Figure 3.6: A completed *loop muek*

Photograph by author (2007)

The fishermen also use different nets, such as crab and fishing nets, which vary from 300 to 600 meters in length and are about one meter wide. They cost from THB 3,000 to 5,000 and must be repaired or replaced regularly owing to wear, bigger fishing boats or natural disasters (see figure 3.7).



Figure 3.7: Bang Neung and Ja Pu Yin Neung display a damaged net while they sort the catch

Photograph by author (2007)

A fully fitted working boat can cost up to THB 150,000 or about AUD 5,500 (interview, 8 August 2007). According to most interviewees, the price of fuel has risen considerably over the last few years, while the catch has been dramatically reduced. In August 2007, diesel cost THB 27 (approx. AUD 1) per litre. Fishermen say that in the old days catch could be found nearby, allowing them to return home early and spend less on fuel. They now have to sail further offshore, spend more money on fuel and return home later, and expose themselves more to the elements. At the same time, the price fishermen can fetch for their catch at the *pae* has been halved. According to Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk, Jonathan Shott, Sirisook Weston, and Ruangkamol and Ronarongpairee Wichoksak (2011) “the catch per unit effort has decreased by almost 87 per cent between 1966 and 2003, leading to an increase in actual fishing time by almost seven hours” (p. 7).

A common arrangement by which fishermen are able to purchase or hire a boat is through a loan from the *pae* owner in exchange for exclusive rights to their catch at a reduced price (interview, 8 August 2007). A new arrangement is now available through the NGO FSF, whereby fishermen join a revolving fund for mutual benefit. The interest on the loan is a nominal one per cent for ongoing administration fees. In addition, some NGOs such as SAN have been able to provide funding and expertise from

other fishermen for the building of several boatyards in some of the bays, allowing for space and equipment to repair boats. Some of the main financial contributors to this effort are the Siam Cement Foundation and Michelin, operating through SAN. In some exceptional cases, fishermen were able to purchase boats and equipment through direct donations from sympathetic foreign tourists who had been on the island at the time of the tsunami and had developed a rapport with some of the locals.

One of the positive outcomes in this emerging dynamic has been the empowerment of the villagers through a process of education from NGOs and natural local leadership, cooperation and drive. Despite the few cases of villager discontent, there is a general feeling that the situation, while not perfect, has benefited most of the villagers and that things can be improved through involvement in a viable process. The single major concern among fishermen remains the often expressed reduction in the catch. This is compounded by a reduction in the price they get for what little they get; the increase in the price of other foodstuff and the increase in fuel price adding to the overheads. A study by Sangtien Ajjimangkul and Jaita Srisomwong (2008) on coastal resources and fishing activities along Thailand's Andaman Sea coast concluded that the tsunami had had no significant impact on prior conditions and that:

the problems of fishers in the study areas are more or less with their classic problems on resources depletion, high fishing costs, low fish price and encroaching trawlers (mostly Thai in this area) fishing within the 3000 exclusion zone ... the main social problem was diminishing community unity as a result of conflicts during the distribution of assistance from outside. (pp. 37–38)

While the experience in Koh Mouk would confirm these findings in regards to the distribution of assistance during the early days following the disaster, current observations on the island also point to strengthened unity and common purpose.

The cost of maintaining and replacing equipment (sometimes as a result of illegal large fishing trawler incursions into their fishing grounds) and in some cases the total loss of home and fishing gear (as a result of the tsunami) is all too much for some. Former fisherman Bang Sam was at sea when the tsunami struck. He was one of the few lucky ones. He rode the wave and lived to tell the story. However, since then, according to his wife, he has never returned to sea for fishing and only ventures out on the taxi-ferry to the mainland when he has no other choice. He now makes a living mainly from rubber production. He gets up at 2 am and taps the rubber trees, which requires considerable skill. Fortunately, he had some land that he could use for alternative economic activity. Despite these challenges

and their ill-effects on villagers' emotional well-being, they show great resilience in the ways that they have organised themselves, looking for alternative economic activities such as tourism, while at the same time attempting to preserve their traditional fishing culture through the sustainable management of their resources.

3.5.1 Daily life of the fisherman: part three

On the second day, I met Bang Neung at his home early in the morning while it was still dark. After some hot coffee prepared in the semi-darkness (the island generator would not fire up until later in the morning), we set off from the house at the break of dawn. On the way to his boat about 400 metres away, we stopped briefly at one of the 'coffee shops' set up by kerosene lamp early in the morning to supply outgoing fishermen and early risers with a hefty breakfast and snacks to take out to sea. The shoreline receded more than 200 metres in the early morning low tide. The boat was bobbing gently up and down, moored in knee-deep water. Its bottom, brushed by the sea grass, scraped the sandy sea floor as gentle waves announced the incoming tide. Bang Neung worked for 20 minutes preparing for the sea, sorting equipment and washing the boat as the tide came in. This time he was the only crew on the boat. As the sun broke over the horizon and the boat free floated, we set off putt-putting slowly along the coast, back towards Koh Wehn. Far out on the western

horizon, dark clouds hovered, low, heavy and ominous as we made our way north. We soon reached the fishing boat from Satun and after some coffee and chitchat two of their crew joined us on our boat as we set off to recover the nets.

As we approached the fishing grounds, the dark clouds were already upon us. Bang Neung and one of the men handled the nets near the bow while the other man skippered the boat from the aft section using hands and foot. The man up front hauled the net aboard arm-under-arm, all 300 metres of it, while the other man untangled the scant catch from the net and sorted it in the fore hold. This method differed from the usual practice I saw on the island. Normally, the catch would be hauled aboard and stowed tangled up in the nets, only to be untangled once ashore by the fishermen and their relatives or friends; the type and amount of catch as well as the number of hands available on board may account for this difference. On one occasion I witnessed several female neighbours helping one of the fishermen and his wife to untangle and sort the catch of mainly fish. When I asked them if they were from the same family, they smiled and said they were neighbours and just helping. The task can be tedious and time consuming but they seemed quite content and totally relaxed, even enjoying themselves in the common task while they chatted occasionally.

Back on the boat on that overcast day, I tried to help and was warned to be careful with the crab pincers and fish spikes. For every ten fish and crab the fisherman expertly untangled, I got my single crab even more tangled up. The fishermen were very understanding, forgiving and amused. As we started on the second net, the first drops began to fall, fat, heavy and warm. Within minutes we were engulfed in torrential rain, and visibility was down to just several metres. It rained in almost vertical sheets; water poured thick and fast. Mercifully, the rain was not accompanied by any perceptible wind, not even a breeze. The seascape was almost surreal, a violent storm in almost perfectly calm seas. Gentle waves poked by millions of raindrops rocked the boat gently, as the metal canopy thundered under the constant drumming. (The video resource does not do justice to the ferocity of the storm, but it gives a hint of what these men have to put up with on a regular basis for an ever-decreasing bounty.) The men continued to work in the rain seemingly unperturbed. I never ascertained the real nature of their relationship with Bang Neung or whether there was any compensation involved in exchange for their assistance. They later returned with us to Koh Mouk and helped Bang Neung with unloading and had lunch at his house, where I was also invited.

There is a sense of camaraderie between fisherfolk at sea and they seem to have had a long association, the bond was obvious. That day on the boat Neung went about his business, but eventually took refuge under the canopy. Retrieving his dry tobacco pouch from its perch, he rolled up a cigarette, lit up and waited for the rain to abate. Drenched and shivering from the cold, despite the deceptively warm rain, he slouched under his little boat canopy. He squatted down, bobbing up and down on the edges of the Andaman Sea, and contemplated the sea and the rain as he smoked; his calm demeanour in deep contrast with the upheaval unleashed from above.

3.6 The joint management of marine resources

Thailand has a comprehensive and long-standing legislative framework for the management of marine resources. Recently community participation in this management became an important component of the constitution that was being voted on at the time of this research field trip in 2007. There remains some confusion, however, regarding responsibilities from different bodies with overlapping jurisdiction. Some of the laws with particular relevance to the villagers of Koh Mouk are the *National Park Act* (1961), the *Fisheries Act* (1947) and the *National Environmental Quality Conservation and Protection Act* (1992), among many others (Prasertcharoensuk et al., 2011, pp. 10–11).

At the national level the Department of National Parks and Plant Protection (DoNP) are responsible for managing all national parks, including marine national parks; promoting the sustainable use of resources through participation; conducting research; and providing academic and technical services. The DoNP operates under the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MoNRE), which was only established in 2002 as part of a ministerial overhaul. The DoNP is also responsible for the rehabilitation and management of marine coastal resources (Prasertcharoensuk, 2011, p. 13).

Amid this complex and changing, multi-level, evolving legal and institutional framework, various community organisations, NGOs and projects have emerged and are currently involved in the management of marine resources. Well over 100 NGOs are engaged in managing coastal resources in collaboration with local coastal communities and their associated networks all over Thailand. In addition, “academic institutions and research centres provide expert technical inputs and facilitate better decision making and strategic planning for managing resources” (Prasertcharoensuk, 2010, p. 14). The main community organisations, NGOs and projects observed during this research include Schoko, Chom Rourm Villagers Association, FSF, the Coastal Habitat and Resources Management (CHARM) project, the Joint Management of Marine

Resources and Protected Areas (Karn Mee Sueanrueam Naikarn Pokpong Arnarkheat, nicknamed JoMPA) and the ubiquitous SAN. Some of their goals, such as their plight to fend off intruding large-scale fishing trawlers from their traditional, and later legal, fishing grounds had already been pursued for years before the tsunami.

A Dewdrop NGO worker told me that the Schoko was formed in the late 1990s. It is made up of the four neighbouring villages around the National Marine Park (NMP): Koh Mouk, Changlang, Kwnatungku and Namrub (interview, 19 July 2007). Schoko is mainly concerned with patrolling the sea in the immediate vicinity of these villages, looking for fishermen or vessels involved in illegal fishing practices and approaching them directly or reporting them to authorities. Its members work together with the Water Police under the auspices of SAMAPAN, which is made up of 13 southern seaside provinces and one land-locked province, although those are not necessarily directly involved with Schoko.

Conversely, the Chom Ruum Villagers Association was formed around 1995 and is made up of 44 communities from four districts and sub-districts from Trang Province only. For the purpose of administration and communication, each village nominates two Chom Ruum representatives. One of the main differences between it and Schoko is that its projects are also concerned with protecting the environment, such as

reforestation of mangroves, growth of artificial reefs and protection of fisherfolks' livelihoods. The projects are managed by its elected executive teams. Bang Si said:

The Chom Roum has committees and if there is a problem in one village they try to help and find a solution without outside intervention ... the Chom Roum has become stronger since the tsunami. Before the tsunami people were afraid of authority, but after the tsunami people are no longer afraid. We meet in different places so we also get to share information and experiences. (interview, 1 July 2007)

The CHARM project ran for five years from 2002 through to 2007. It was set up by the Thai government and was co-funded by the European Union. The main aim was to promote coastal co-management using a two-track approach involving communities and government, starting with small-scale projects, identifying issues to be addressed, finding solutions and, hopefully, scaling up the strategy based on results and lessons learned. According to Yves Henocque and Sanchai Tandavanitj (2006), major co-management issues include the strengthening of community organisations and local authorities, as well as overlapping responsibilities and conflicting jurisdiction of coastal resources among key government agencies. They say that "Essentially ... CHARM is designed around institutional development and capacity building with particular focus on

the key stakeholders and beneficiaries at the village and municipality (Tambon) community level” (Henocque & Tandavanitj, 2006, pp. 4–6).

The salient point in terms of Koh Mouk’s social capital is the strengthening and expansion of bonding and bridging networks since the tsunami, under the common goal of sustainable development through the joint management of marine resources at grassroots level. However, this might not have happened without the established practices of local fishermen working together at sea or without the important assistance of allies in the form of capacity building. The disaster brought a new urgency and energy to the villagers’ struggle to cope with a changing environment. It also resulted in the creation of SAN, a very committed, unifying and empowering local NGO. In addition, according to an SDFT worker (interview, 26 June 2007), the SDFT has worked for 10 years to foster capacity building in and around Koh Mouk to increase local participation in civil society. One way in which SDFT facilitated capacity building in the southern provinces was by fostering the development of leadership and public speaking skills as well as networks between villagers, NGOs and government departments such as the NMP Authority.

The results of these efforts were evident in the way local people participated and carried themselves in meetings, making their points passionately and respectfully, and the way they organised themselves to

address the issues at hand. It would be reasonable to conclude that the capacity-building aspect of NGO intervention (i.e. the facilitation of skills acquisition that empowers individuals at the grassroots level) is a key feature of social capital and sustainable development in Koh Mouk and surrounding villages (figures 3.8–3.10).



Figure 3.8: Chom Roun meeting at Trang City Library, with SAMAPAN NGO staff at hand to provide technical assistance

Photograph by author (2007)



Figure 3.9: Koh Mouk village representative, Bang Si, chairs the Chom Rourm meeting in the city of Trang, assisted by an IT technician from SAMAPAN NGO

Photograph by author (2007)

According to Bang San from FSF:

While the organisation existed prior to the tsunami, their efforts had been concentrated on dealing with the threat of the large-scale industrial fishing fleet to their livelihood, rather than the systematic management of other marine resources. Natural resources management, for example, mangroves protection and creation of artificial reefs, did not exist prior to the tsunami. (interview, 12 May 2007)



Figure 3.10: Chom Roum representatives from different villages meeting at Trang City Library

Photograph by author (2007)

The prior threats posed by the large-scale fishing fleet include their use of unsustainable fishing methods and equipment such as purse or fine-mesh nets and bamboo traps, poison, diving and explosives (the last two presumably not carried out together). Bang Song, Ja Pu Yin Song and Bang Sam all say that the trawlers from the fleet continue to violate the three-kilometre exclusion zone boundary around the island stipulated by law. In so doing, they not only fish the more abundant sea life from the area unsustainably, catching young fish with the adult catch, but also damage the local fishermen's artisan equipment and the delicate coral that is crucial to marine ecology, further exacerbating the problem. They also kill

other aquatic life such as turtles, dolphins, dugong and whales. Bang Song and Ja Pu Yin Song added that trawlers use large generators to fish at night by powerful spotlights, attracting marine animals to the light and further depleting the area (interview, 12 June 2007).

The struggle to prevent these large trawlers with their unsustainable fishing practices had been going on for almost 20 years according to Bang Si. Although Schoko had been set up eight years earlier, there had been no real initial representation from Koh Mouk until a few years after its creation. The group was based in the city of Trang, capital of the eponymous province, for the purpose of patrolling the sea around Koh Mouk and enforcing the three-kilometre exclusion zone. They worked closely with Water Police and were in the process of upgrading equipment such as safety and communications gear.

The Chom Roum group also operates along the same lines with some of the same people from Koh Mouk and similar objectives: the sustainable management of their natural resources. The CHARM project provides funds for fuel and the running of workshops. This relates to the locals' issues with the large-scale fishing fleet, as well as small-scale fishermen who use illegal fishing practices such as fine-mesh nets and diving gear. Four neighbouring villages work together in this regard in the MPA of Had Chao Mai: Namrub, Changlang, Kwantungku and, of course,

Koh Mouk. The sense of solidarity among these folk is almost palpable; not only the ones from Koh Mouk, where the bonding network is tight, but also in terms of bridging networks with members and groups from the other participating villages as well as NGOs. There is a clear sense of mutual trust, norms, participation and cooperation, even when villagers differ. The commitment some of these individuals display is considerable. Their involvement is on a voluntary basis. Although they receive stipends for travel and accommodation and meals are generally provided, they are not compensated for loss of wages. These meetings take place on a regular basis. In addition there are workshops, usually going late into the evening, as well as emergency calls to sea to deal with the core issues at hand: illegal fishing practices and rescue operations in rough seas. These activities carry significant risk, and this fact must add to the sense of trust and mutual respect they obviously feel for each other.

While there is a sense of egalitarianism among Schoko and Chom Rour members, there are some salient characters or natural leaders, such as Bang Si, a SAMAPAN representative and founding Schoko member in Koh Mouk. He is in his late 50s, wiry, with a full crown of dark hair, a pencil moustache and gregarious disposition with a movie star charisma about him. (figure 3.9). He is very open about his deep-seated values of responsibility for present and future generations and unswerving belief in

the power of solidarity. Bang Si is busy in many committees and often travels to other villages, provinces and the capital, Bangkok. Several interviews with him and other villagers had to be postponed due to last-minute changes to their set schedules. This was another typical feature of life along the sea, where the increasingly unpredictable weather wreaks havoc with planned schedules as unseasonal strong winds and high seas make sailing unsafe to and from the islands.

When an interview could finally be arranged, we sat on his home veranda, where he had called a meeting of village representatives two and a half years earlier to plan a recovery strategy two weeks after the tsunami. Bang Si was forward and direct in identifying some of their challenges, saying “the biggest problem for Koh Mouk residents at present is our relationship with NMP (DoNP) authorities. We’ve had many problems with them since 2002” (interview, 1 July 2007). He explained the villagers’ grievances as follows:

In 2002 some Koh Mouk fishermen were passing through Koh Kadan (protected area) waters on their way to their fishing grounds, when NMP officials fired warning shots at them. The fishermen reported the incident to the village head, who sent representatives to the local NMP headquarters to lodge a complaint and demand an explanation. NMP apologised about the incident saying that they didn’t know the fishermen

were from Koh Mouk. The apology did not fully satisfy the residents of Koh Mouk. (interview, 1 July 2007)

In a separate incident, according to Bang Si:

In 2003 a large fishing vessel operating illegally in NMP waters went undisturbed by the authorities. The villagers feel that NMP is biased against them and that they favour big business fishing trawler owners. The villagers made a complaint to local police but said the police cannot do anything because the vessels belong to important people.
(interview, 1 July 2007)

But seeking the DoNP officials' version of events is beyond the scope and resources of this study. (Such a line of inquiry could be potentially inflammatory in what is already a volatile situation.) Suffice it to say that, whatever the facts, the honest perception among villagers is that the authorities are biased against them, and this lack of trust is an obstacle in the development of linking networks between villagers and government authorities. Bearing in mind the complex, sometimes conflicting legal and institutional framework within which all actors are operating, it is quite possible to imagine the conundrum facing the different relevant authorities as they try to engage with the local people who are affected by the laws and regulations they are trying to implement.

Some efforts have been made to resolve the impasse. Government departments have made greater efforts to retrain NMP staff to increase local participation in marine resource management, with mediation by SDFT, the umbrella NGO for most sustainable development projects in Thailand (Field Data Appendix, p. 5). The retraining of NMP staff would be timely. Bang Si said that a serious incident involving NMP authorities in April 2005 had threatened to escalate into open hostility:

The NMP's authorities destroyed a coconut and rubber tree grove on what was allegedly a villager's land, claiming they were on NMP land. The event became TV news and was also covered in the local newspaper. The villagers asked for government intervention but the government did not follow up. In response to the lack of action from authorities, a large group of villagers threatened to close Emerald Cave [a popular tourist attraction in Koh Mouk] during the Sonkhran Festival [Thai New Year holiday], in order to highlight the issue. Men and women from Koh Mouk went together by boat and parked at the entrance of the cave. The following day a district official called the village chief, demanding a solution to the impasse. About ten villagers met with authorities, and the government promised that villagers could legally fish in the NMP after the earlier shooting incident. They are trying to improve the relationship between villagers and NMP but after the promise the government kept quiet about it so in the end there was no solution but more problems.

(interview, 1 July 2007)

In a quite separate incident, and to conclude these examples of challenging interactions, Bang Si said that Fisheries Department officials had set up artificial coral reefs as fish shelters, without consulting local communities

and “without knowing whether that area has fish or whether strong currents prevail”. He said scathingly, “they are the Fisheries Department but they are not fishermen ... they did not consult us and they mucked it up, so now we manage the marine resources by ourselves” (interview, 1 July 2007).

Although the bonding and bridging networks in Koh Mouk appear strong, the development of linking networks with institutional hierarchies (especially government departments and officials) has been made more difficult by allegations of corruption, gaps in communication, the urban background of many officials, and the historical marginalisation that villagers feel they have suffered. There seems to be an air of mutual mistrust between villagers and NMP authorities. Both parties have made serious efforts to address those issues through NGO mediation and facilitation, with some early positive results.

A good example of such an effort took place leading up to a meeting between the Schoko and NMP’s representatives held at Ja Pu Yin Sam’s house and chaired by Bang San from SAMAPAN (see figures 3.11, 3. 12 and video resource). Feelings among the villagers were running high and they appeared to approach the meeting with hardly disguised hostility. The village head appealed to them to be more positive and constructive, discussing current issues, not the past, and trying to negotiate a

compromise solution. It must have worked, as the meeting was at times passionate but always civil.



Figure 3.11: Schoko meeting with an NMP representative (in dark blue top). Bang San, from SAMAPAN NGO sits on his left, Bang Song is in the light blue shirt

Photograph by author (2007)

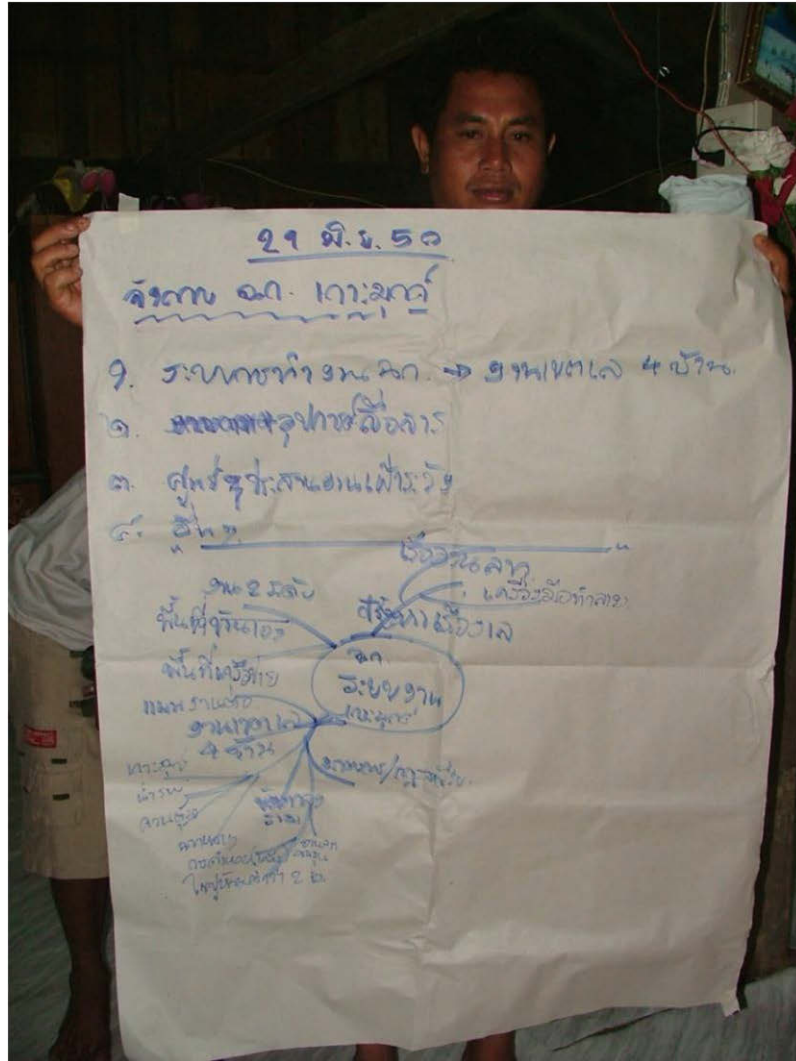


Figure 3.12: Agreed outcomes from the meeting spelling out concerns and establishing norms for cooperation, processes and procedures

Photograph by author (2007)

One particular space where bonding, bridging and linking networks have evolved is the umbrella body for JoMPA. Although the villagers have at times taken matters into their own hands for the protection of the natural resources around Koh Mouk, it is under the umbrella of JoMPA that organisations such as Schoko, Chom Roum, SAN, SAMAPAN, SDFT and NMP as seen above operate for the joint management of marine resources.

Bang Son told me that the specific entities involved in the joint management of marine resources in and around Koh Mouk include SAN, the NGO based in Trang Province, Department of Coastal Resources (Krom Trappayakorn Chaifang), Department of Marine Resources (Krom Trappayakorn Tangtalea), Department of National Marine Resources (Krom Trappayakorn Heangchat Tangtalea), FSF, SDFT, UNDP (Samnakharn Krongkarn Patthana Heang Sahapracharchat) and Thammasat University (Mahawittayalai Thammasat). (interview, 12 June 2007).

According to Bang Song, a long-standing member of JoMPA, its stated objectives are:

1. to set up a sanctuary for nourishing young sea life;
2. to monitor the use of appropriate fishing equipment;
3. to give warnings to fisherman who use illegal fishing equipment;
4. to arrest fishermen who refuse to abide by the regulations after they have been given a warning;
5. to organise meetings with fishermen at the village with NGOs from Trang for the purpose of information and education regarding fisheries and how to protect marine resources;

6. to advise villagers on how to protect and manage marine resources by themselves e.g. afforesting the mangroves, laying buoys to set up boundary lines between the mainland and Koh Mouk so fish and other aquatic animals can lay eggs undisturbed, to preserve fish and other scarce marine animals;
7. to avoid catching young fish and to conserve the coral reef and sea grass for the dugong population.

The early results are encouraging. Of the 1,000 large-scale fishing vessels plying the sea around Koh Mouk in the year 2000, only eight remain in operation. There may be more than one reason for this dramatic reduction, but the locals are adamant that their actions have been instrumental. The villagers have been actively involved in the monitoring and enforcement of norms in their traditional fishing grounds. They have themselves agreed to a number of measures that will give the depleted fishing grounds a chance to restore themselves so they can once again offer the local people a sustainable living. This has been achieved through lengthy and at times intense negotiation among different stakeholders. At the same meantime, local people are learning to adjust to a balancing act between traditional and emerging economies such as tourism and rubber production. In the words of Bang Sam:

We are a stronger community now, more united, more knowledgeable and able to cope and deal with authorities than prior to the tsunami, due to new challenges and hardships; the most important among them the scarcity of catch in the sea. (interview, 13 July 2007)

3.6.1 Daily life of the fisherman: part four

On our return to Koh Mouk two of the men from the Satun Province boat came with us to assist with the unloading. Bang Neung's house was directly up the hill from where we landed and this was the best place to unload before taking the boat back to its mooring place around the head. The three fishermen proceeded to unload the equipment and the catch. They left the nets on the sand to be sorted later and took the catch in baskets up the hill and to the house. Once there they sorted the catch, keeping some for domestic consumption while a relative took a basketful to the *pae*.

According to the village head, there are more or less well-defined roles among the villagers along ethnic lines. The Muslim majority in the village do most of the fishing, while the ethnic Chinese Buddhist minority run the shops and other businesses, including the *pae*. This was observed to be generally the case, but at least two Muslim-owned shops were observed as well as Buddhist fishing families. For the village head though, one of the most important things for the villagers is to preserve a sense of

civility and be cooperative. During my five months in Koh Mouk, I witnessed no antagonism between the different ethnic-religious groups.

I interviewed some of the ethnic Chinese shopkeepers. They took me to their small Buddhist temple, which is visited by a monk once a month, and explained that relations between Muslim and Buddhists on the island are excellent. The only qualification was that while they attended the Muslim festivals and contributed money towards mosque renovations, the favour was not reciprocated when the time came to make renovations to the small Buddhist temple. They said this with a reflective, slightly sad demeanour and smiles on their faces. Only on one occasion did I hear anything resembling discontent with the *pae* arrangement. During a meeting held in mid-July at Ja Pu Yin Sam's house, a household deeply committed to civic engagement, some villagers and NGO officials were less than enthusiastic about perceived unfairness. A representative from CHARM who coordinates resources with SAMAPAN, explained that the *pae* owners often facilitated loans to fishermen for the purpose of buying, fixing or hiring fishing boats and equipment, in exchange for exclusive rights to their catch at lower prices: a type of repayment with interest charges built in. Some of the villagers present at the time protested against this arrangement, considering it exploitative. These differences notwithstanding, life seemed to go on smoothly except for the negative

effects of depleted natural sea resources. The most noticeable effect observed was a generalised, increasing state of quiet despair among the fisherfolk. Bang Neung commented on one occasion that as fishermen saw their livelihoods disappear, they tended to smoke more and drink more coffee.

Bang Neung's mother-in-law took the catch to the *pae*—a dilapidated timber and corrugated iron structure standing precariously on stilts on the seashore half above the water—for sale; it was a mere half basketful of crabs. The owners of the *pae* were Muslim. The wife was Bang Neung's blood aunt Ja Pu Yin Ha and her husband Bang Ha was a Chinese-ethnic Muslim from Bangkok, who had lived on the island for 20 years. They were also the owners of the mini-resort where I was staying, as well as the land where Bang Neung's house stood. They were an entrepreneurial, middle-aged couple with three children who had done well for themselves. Bang Ha was also the island's government-appointed *Obotho* (government budget administrator). They were very open, showed me their operation and answered all my questions without hesitation. The *pae* is a labour-intensive small business. It is the outlet where many of the fishermen sell their catch to be taken to market in the mainland. Both husband and wife work at the *pae* hands-on.

Only three *pae* were counted on the island. There are an estimated 500 to 600 working boats in Koh Mouk. If a third of the boats took the catch to one *pae*, that would mean between 150 to 200 fishermen taking their catch to each *pae* on average, almost on a daily basis. The operators need to sort, weigh and store the catch from each fisherman to ready it for transport. Since they need to provide ice on a daily basis, and transport the seafood to markets on the mainland, they have their own mini-fleet of several boats moored just outside the *pae* building.

Bang Neung's mother-in-law strode casually into the *pae* with the half-basket of crabs under her arm. Cha Pu Yin Ha proceeded to sort, weigh and ice the crabs before sitting at her small desk under an open window, calculator in hand. After punching in some numbers she jotted down some figures on a notebook, held it open to the camera and showed me Bang Neung's profit. After two days at sea, getting up at the break of dawn, spending about THB 200 in fuel and getting drenched, Bang Neung took home the sum of THB 557 (approx. AUD 22). Following the sale, I was invited back to Bang Neung's house for a meal of freshly caught fish, crab and steamed rice with fried vegetables. The two fishermen from the Satun boat joined us, as well as a few other neighbours. A similar meal would have cost nearly THB 2,000 (approx. AUD 80) at an average restaurant, and considerably more at an up-market establishment.

Although the profit for two days labour was less than in former times, Bang Neung's family and guests still enjoyed the benefits of living close to the source of basic sustenance. There was obvious great joy and even pride in the sharing of a meal very much provided by the host. When I played back the video of the events described, including the sumptuous meal, I commented that even though fishing may not be making the locals much money at that time, they ate better than in a top restaurant. This comment was greeted with surprising strong and wide approval, giving me to understand that what was important to them was to be able to sustain themselves and their lifestyle and that somehow money itself was of secondary value to that privilege.

After this experience, I often saw Bang Neung and his family at the beach, tending the nets or having a picnic. I even taught his daughters English at Ja Pu Yin Sam's house during our evening lessons. A couple of months after my outing with Bang Neung, he sent his daughters to neighbouring Krabi province overland. Soon after, he followed with his wife on his boat. The last time I saw him, he was readying his boat for his final departure. His wife was already on board arranging some of their furniture. We shook hands and said goodbye briefly. He told me he was moving to Krabi where his wife's family lived to try to make a living there as a fisherman. I wished him good luck (*chok dee*), turned around and

heard him fire up his motor and putt-putt his way north towards a new life. They were, from observation, the only couple to have left the island during this research, but not the only one to feel the effects of the changing circumstances. Most of the villagers of Koh Mouk continue to manage their transition with resilience.

3.7 Summary

Many of the challenges faced by the Koh Mouk villagers, such as dwindling marine resources, lack of capacity to manage economic development and a deficit in linking networks, pre-date the December 2004 tsunami disaster, as do many of the bonding and bridging networks dealing with those challenges. This chapter highlighted dwindling marine resources as the villagers' major concern, in particular fish, crabs and squid, which make up the bulk of their traditional livelihoods. One of the villagers' main challenges is unsustainable fishing methods, both from their own traditional practices and by the encroaching large-scale fishing vessels on their traditional fishing grounds. In addition, complex legal and institutional structures have made it difficult for them to find viable, sustainable solutions to these problems. Nevertheless, there are clear signs of positive engagement, not only in the expansion of bridging networks with neighbouring villages and provinces, NGOs and academic

institutions, but also in the development of new linking networks with authorities as they negotiate this period of recovery and transition.

Social capital elements such as agency, norms, trust, participation, cooperation and reciprocity in the form of many networks and activities, including a budding network with NMP authorities, have allowed the community of Koh Mouk to engage in a program of sustainable development through the joint management of marine resources. In addition, this chapter argued that NGOs' capacity building plays an important role in the development of linking networks and sustainable development in Koh Mouk, with specific examples of how this changing reality is affecting people at grassroots level. Furthermore, the local reaction to a comment regarding the importance the locals place on lifestyle over monetary remuneration indicated a strong sense of priorities and value placed on those priorities. These include the basics of life such as fresh, healthy nutrition that is locally obtained and readily available and a sense of community and cooperation. Finally, this discussion reflected on ethical aspects of my own research practice, as I attempted to elicit information in a community where alleged dormant animosities may lie close to the surface. We now turn our attention to the topic of land use and the emerging economy in chapter four. ■

Chapter 4

Land and the emerging economy

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I show how the concept of social and human capital can help explain the link between natural resources, land rights and resilience in the face of emerging economic activities in Koh Mouk. The chapter deals with the distribution and use of limited available community-claimed land, a perceived free resource used by the community known in social capital theory as 'the commons', and argues that human capital resulting from capacity building is an integral qualitative advantage of Koh Mouk's long-term sustainable development strategy. The chapter also describes land tenure issues on the island, including the legal and institutional framework, traditional usage arrangements and new challenges stemming from confusion following the 2004 tsunami disaster. The way in which the villagers rallied together to address these issues is encapsulated in the field note extracts from the meeting on 5 August 2007 and the translated audiovisual records. The increased demand for land for rubber production, the tourism industry and the expansion of kitchen

gardens resulted in enclosure, i.e. the transformation from traditional common land use to private ownership, which transformed the social and human capital landscape on the island. Interrelated topics of housing and the socio-economic impact of the emerging women's groups as a new micro-economic phenomenon on the island are addressed in chapter five.

4.2 Land tenure

There is a well-established link between natural resources, property rights and resilience in the context of natural disasters. Oli Brown, Alec Crawford and Anne Hammill (2006) state that:

Natural resources can have a direct impact on a community's ability to recover from a disaster or to minimize its effect in two ways: 1) by reducing exposure to hazards or reducing their impact through natural buffering capacities, e.g. mangrove forests reducing the impact of a tsunami or protected hillside forests reducing the likelihood of landslides; 2) by supporting people's livelihoods and wellbeing that will help them build their resilience. (p. 4)

Clear examples of reducing exposure to hazards were experienced along Thailand's Andaman seacoast, including the hardest-hit southern coast of Koh Mouk, where mangrove forests managed to reduce the impact of the tsunami. Access to land is helping to mitigate the economic impact of the disaster by providing alternative economic activities such as agriculture,

both in the form of kitchen gardens and a type of value-added cash crop in rubber production, as well as the development of the tourism industry.

These benefits, however, can be reduced and even turn to conflict when there is confusion regarding land entitlements.

This poses the question of land ownership, or right of access, as well as land management. Brown, Crawford and Hammill (2006) stress that “central to the linking of ecological and social resilience are the institutional arrangements, such as resource or property rights, that influence the use of natural resources” (p. 5). Fikret Berkes (1996) identifies four types of property rights regime in conventional research and analysis:

1. Open access, where access to resources is free and open to all.
2. State property where governments regulate and control access to resources which are owned by citizens of the state.
3. Common property, where a specified group of people own the resource and can regulate use and exclude non-owners.
4. Private property; where resources are owned by individuals or corporations and their rights are defined by terms of exclusivity and transferability.

(in Brown, Crawford, and Hammill, 2006, p. 5)

In Koh Mouk there are two main natural resources from which villagers can earn their living: marine resources, as discussed in chapter three, and

land. The reduction in the former and the need to manage its use in a sustainable manner has put more stress on the use and demand for the latter. There is great interest and expectation among the local Koh Mouk population over land ownership or right of access as land has become a scarce resource that is vital for the sustainable development of the island. These expectations create new challenges for community harmony due to attendant tensions relating to who owns or has right of access to what land. Neil Adger (2000) provides a specific example where mangrove conversion and agricultural privatisation in Vietnam negatively impacted the resilience of local social and ecological systems, reducing household livelihood security, increasing conflict between households and rendering the coastline more vulnerable to flooding. Conversely Ronald Troster (2004) describes indigenous societies in the Pacific Northwest U.S., as “proprietors rather than owners of the land, as it could not be sold but inherited, and that this had helped to buffer and recover from disturbances from both the ecosystem and human activity” (in Brown, Crawford & Hammill, 2006, p. 7).

4.3 Land tenure in Thailand

Thailand enjoys a sound reputation for the policy, legal and institutional framework of land administration that goes back over a century and continues to evolve, as there still remain areas of confusion and conflict

about ownership and access to land in some areas (Burns, 2004). The

USAID's (2010) country profile of Thailand found that:

Thailand's efficient, transparent land administration system is a model for other countries. It has issued title deeds to large portions of the country's population, thus contributing to tenure security and developing a robust land market. However, the system has not reached many residents ... nor has it addressed the rights of occupants of the country's forestland. (p. 2)

Indeed, in 1984 Thailand's Department of Lands (DOL) embarked on an ambitious 20-year program to title rural land, appropriately called Land Titling Program (LTP). According to Burns (2004):

In the 1980s titles were largely confined to central plains and the provincial cities and their environs ... [for the 1981–85 period it was estimated that] only about 12% of the 23.7 million hectares of occupied agricultural land was held by title deeds, a further 49% was held by lesser documents, 18% was occupied by persons who may have a claim but lacked documentation, and 21% was illegally occupied forest land ... systematic registration is only possible on non-forest land and uncertainty in forest boundaries has been a major issue. (pp. 2–5)

By the end of 2001, the LTP had issued over eight million titles covering almost five million hectares. Full title deeds, abbreviated Nor Sor 4s (NS4s), were issued by the Provincial Land Offices after a parcel of land had been surveyed and charted on a cadastral map, a legal map for

recording ownership of property. Lesser documents included pre-emptive rights (NS2), transferred by inheritance, or certificates of utilisation (NS3), which could be sold and issued without being charted on a cadastral map (Burns, 2004, p. 2).

One major challenge faced by the LTP that is worth noting for later reference is the difficulty of surveying and charting claims when issuing them. In Bangkok and many major cities, DOL “has been unable to maintain accurate, up-to-date large-scale cadastral mapping to support the title registers, the photographic detail that supported the documents was becoming increasingly dated and the paper maps themselves were degrading over time” (Burns, 2004, p. 4). We will soon return to the topic of surveying and charting when we look at Koh Mouk’s specific set of circumstances and how NGO-facilitated capacity building contributed to overcoming this challenging aspect of land titling.

Despite the significant achievement and benefits the LTP brought to many land title holders, such as an increase in land price, the ability to borrow from banks, an increase in productivity due to tenure and bank loans and an increase in cultivated areas, there remains an unfinished agenda:

There has been significant encroachment in forest land. [...] as many as 12 million people live and work on land deemed forest land. This

segment of the population includes ... communities living under forms of communal tenure arrangements which have no legal recognition.

(Burns, 2004, p. 9)

This is despite the fact that the 1997 People's Constitution of Thailand guarantees the rights of traditional communities to preserve their ways of life and to participate in the management, maintenance, preservation and exploitation of natural resources and the environment. Although traditional communities who have resided by the sea for generations should be protected, the reality is that they now find their land under threat due to their lack of legal land titles (People's Report, 2008, p. 9).

The UN Country Team in Thailand's (2005) report says that of the 412 villages affected by the tsunami in Thailand, 83 have insecure land tenure. This situation has led to conflicts over land for conservation and private use as well as disputes among local communities, private developers and local governments in many villages. Many communities claimed that they had occupied the land long before titles were issued (Paphavasit, Chotiyaputta & Siriboon, 2006, pp. 213–216). Following the tsunami, several government organisations, together with NGOs, academic institutions, local administrative organisations and local communities collaborated to set up post-tsunami policies, regulations and plans for governing coastal land management and use. The *Land*

Readjustment Act was promulgated on 28 December 2004 and served as the basis for reviewing land use as well as planning for long-term post-tsunami reconstruction (Paphavasit, Chotiyaputta & Siriboon, 2006, pp. 216–217). Under the Act, many communities had to move inland and away from the sea and their livelihoods. Therefore the new blueprint was unsuitably applied as a blanket solution where a more nuanced approach would have been more equitable. Paphavasit, Chotiyaputta & Siriboon, 2006, conclude that the sustainable development of coastal resources should not be the sole responsibility of the government and that “local communities should have the responsibility to conserve coastal resources as well as the right to utilize them”, noting that “There is a need to design integrated coastal zonal management which are site-specific to suit the objectives of the coastal communities” (pp. 223–224). In order to achieve this, they say that “full cooperation among government sectors (both national and local levels), NGOs and the public are required” (Paphavasit, Chotiyaputta & Siriboon, 2006).

On the specific issue of land conflicts, Sayamol Kaiyoorawong, Sonyot Tolang and Dawan Sanlee (2008) point out that there are a number of mechanisms in place to resolve such conflicts. In the tsunami-affected communities a subcommittee was set up by the Committee for Solving State Land Encroachment Conflicts (KorBorRoe) on 2 March 2005 in

accordance with the policy of the Centre for Fighting Poverty (SorTorJor). As part of the solution process, Kaiyoorawong, Tolang and Sanlee (2008) propose that:

The National Human Rights Commission requests all relevant information from both the state and petitioners. The information is then taken into consideration with decisions based mainly on the evidence of land use on a case-by-case basis. The Commission decided on a resolution saying that when someone has occupied the land permanently, but others such as a business group or individuals held the land entitlement documents, this was unfair. As a result, its report was taken as an encouragement for the concerned parties to be more aware of their rights and duties regarding their legal status on the land.

(pp. 32–33)

To reinforce the sense of fairness in the process, the Andaman Community Rights and Legal Aid Centre was set up with the objective of assisting communities with legal procedures. The network has coordinated with the Law Society and the Law Centre of Thammasat University. Legal assistants are of the utmost necessity, especially when disputes occur on the land of individuals, requiring lawyers who have an understanding of the conflict's issues in the law.

This set of circumstances relating to land tenure, disaster recovery and sustainable development in the context of uncertainty regarding ownership or right of access has implications in terms of social capital. These include the element of trust, in this case in the institutions, and the related concept of linking networks, i.e. the asymmetrical networking between villagers and more powerful government institutions. There are also implications for the element of the commons and the closely related concept of bonding networks between villagers, as well as the concept of bridging networks among villages and villagers and facilitating NGOs. At the time of data collection in 2007, the very process espoused by Paphavasit, Chotiyaputta, Caseworker & Siriboon (2006) earlier was being implemented in Koh Mouk.

4.4 Land tenure in Koh Mouk

During our video interview the village head said that only about 40 per cent of local households have access to producing land, and in many cases that right of access is in dispute with government authorities. The traditional land ownership arrangements on the island were based on individual claims to common land; villagers would clear an area that they intended to cultivate or build a dwelling on and it therefore became their land. In addition, many neighbours, friends and relatives built dwellings on land already claimed by other individuals. As fishing has been the

overwhelming principal economic activity, most dwellings were built on or near the sea. Land cultivation for commercial purposes used to take on a much lesser role in the overall economy of the island, but the combined impact of population growth, natural disasters and declining marine life has shifted the economy of the island. Demand for land, including for tourism resort development, increased and traditional arrangements were thrown into disarray. There have been reports of opportunistic claims over land ownership after the 2004 tsunami, followed by a government push to regularise and document all claims to land ownership. This in turn prompted a race to lodge claims with supporting evidence to obtain official recognition of land ownership.

Despite Thailand's glowing report on the management of land tenure, gaps in the system have been exposed in the aftermath of the tsunami. The *People's Report* (2008) points to a clash of interests and perceptions between the State and villagers living in affected areas:

In India, Sri Lanka and Thailand there is a clash between the perceptions of coastal fisher folk and that of the States, regarding their rights to land and the sea. The State deals with land issues from a purely legal framework, whereas traditional fishing communities believe they hold a customary right to coastal land on which they have lived for generations, and which is essential to their life—the basis of their residence, food and

livelihood. [...] their land ownership claims have survived only so long as there were no competing claims—for tourism, industrial and port development, oil exploration, environmental conservation/management (pp. 8–9).

The *People's Report* (2008) describes the different types of land titles in Thailand and makes one important point:

In the Land Code, right to land includes both having legal ownership of the land as well as the possession right. This could be interpreted to mean that traditional communities with possession rights also have land rights. However, elsewhere in the Land Code there are seemingly conflicting sections. For example, it is stated that when an authority does not issue a land ownership title under the Land Code, the land is deemed to belong to the State. Since traditional communities are finding it very difficult to get their titles, it is safe to say that in reality, the ownership right and possession right are not the same. (p. 9)

In this turbulent legal and social atmosphere, NGOs are playing an important role in educating and facilitating what is a most sensitive process—establishing traditional land ownership and lodging official claims to that land. Under the auspices of the JoMPA project, the SDFT developed a project called Project on Participatory Information System Development Towards Sustainable Natural Resources Management in the

Southern Province of Trang. The overall aim of the project was to develop a Geographic Information System (GIS) that serves to support the process of collaborative boundary demarcation and participatory natural resources management planning in the province of Trang by making available clear and comprehensive information (Draft Project Concept, 2006). The target areas for the project were drawn from 51 coastal villages within the province of Trang, and the initial pilot project focused on four villages, including Koh Mouk.

As an NGO, SDF have had a wide range of experience over the years dealing with multiple stakeholders on very sensitive issues. They have a nuanced understanding of realities on the ground and of the importance not only of technical skills but, more crucially, people's skills and the ability to gain trust, one of the most basic elements of social capital. In the Draft Project Concept (2006), SDF write that they will provide "expertise on participatory field processes, community mobilization and community capacity building" (pp. 1–30). It articulates SDF's main areas of expertise:

is in working collaboratively with communities at the field level ... One of the key things when it comes to working successfully with local communities is the ability to develop strong working relationships and a feeling of trust between the community members and those who will be

working with them in the field ... without creating good relationships and a sense of understanding and trust between various stakeholders it is impossible to move on and discuss often sensitive issues like boundary demarcation within national parks and plans for national resource management without conflict arising. (p. 1–30)

The draft was prescient. Until the 2004 tsunami struck, Koh Mouk's inhabitants lived mainly in the southeast of the island, either on stilted houses on the shoreline or nearby, in the area between the pink lines shown in figure 4.1.

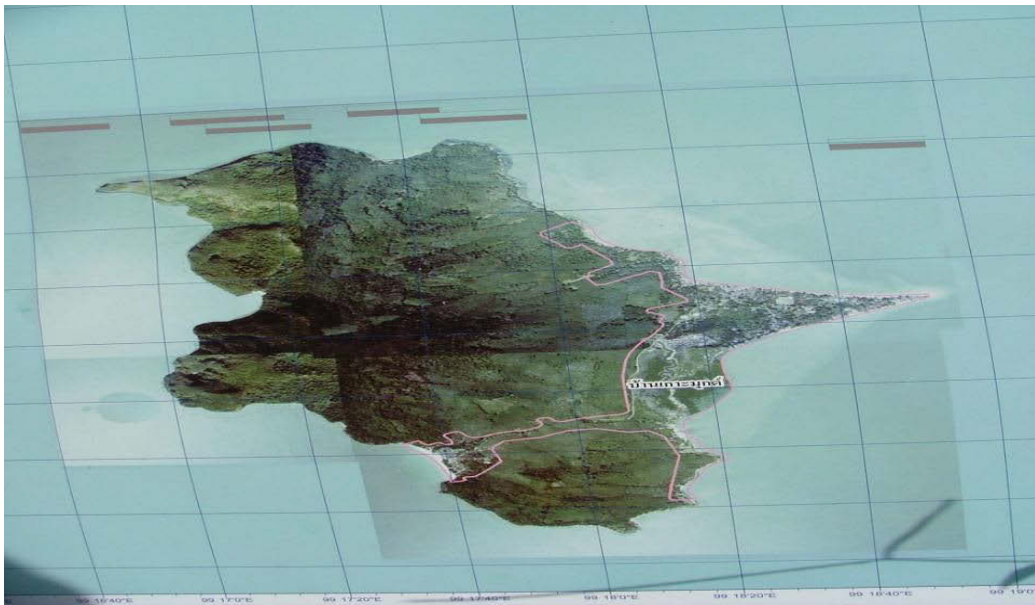


Figure 4.1: Aerial view of Koh Mouk

Source: SAN

Many villagers have since moved further inland and up the hills into a new housing project. The north, centre and northwest sections of the island are largely uninhabited, but there is increasing human activity in

the hill slopes in the centre and north as the demand for land, particularly arable land, increases.

Traditional informal land claims on land considered freely available—the commons—make it difficult to establish exactly who owns land in Koh Mouk. The following is a transcript of an interview with a villager:

Q: How many people own land in Koh Mouk?

A: About 200 people own land in Koh Mouk.

Q: How did people get the land?

A: People took it. Before it was common land. If someone clears the forest or land they can claim it. People claim land year by year. For 20 to 30 years, there was no problem with Marine Parks. Before it was not strict, now it is strict. For a long time it was not strict. Now the claimed area is larger so it's getting strict. Now it is becoming private land.

Q: Where do you see the future in Koh Mouk?

A: The forest is being destroyed; water is becoming scarce as the forest is cleared. People are still moving in and claiming land. We're worried in the community. Everyone must stop destroying the forest. We must protect [the] forest. We get water from the dam, from the mountain.

Q: Do people need to pay for water?

A: No we don't need to pay for water.

Q: What about electricity?

A: We have to pay for electricity, it's more expensive than in the

mainland. We have meters and have problems with the meters as the generator stops and starts again, so they don't charge the correct amount sometimes. We need the meters fixed.

(interview with Bang Noy, 13 July 2007)

According to SAN, the overall surface of the island is approximately 7,000 *rai* (1 *rai* = 0.4 acres or 1600 m²). On the less populated southwest part of the island there are at least two landowners who have rubber plantations in excess of 30 *rai*. Competition for land close to the sea is fierce, in particular on the southwest coastline where there is only one pristine beach, Charlie Beach, with a single access road. Developers, almost invariably wealthy outsiders seeking to invest in the potentially lucrative tourism industry, have been involved in litigation. There have been at least two separate stabbing incidents resulting in one death as a result of ongoing disputes related to beach access in the west. One occurred during this field trip and the villagers interviewed were clearly distressed by the increasing violent acts of revenge over disputed land rights. These incidents, it is worth pointing out, took place between people the locals consider *outsiders* or *newcomers*, the investors mentioned above and their employees.

Trust, a key constituent of social capital, lies at the heart of constructive human relations. It is worth noting that among the long-standing residents of Koh Mouk the traditional land ownership

arrangements among villagers have been largely respected and there appear to be no lingering resentment among the locals themselves. For example, one informant said that several families had built dwellings in what was land claimed by one family on the east coast; the arrangement was made by word of mouth and in good faith. They had enjoyed usufruct land rights through permanent long-term occupancy.

The new regulations introduced by government meant that in order to secure ownership of the land, the traditional owner would have to enter into a lease contract with those living on her land. Even though some of the land in question had long ceased to be common property, this new development marked the final state of transition, or enclosure, from commons to legitimate private ownership of land in Koh Mouk. This, however, was not acceptable to most settlers who had benefited from usufruct land occupancy. Despite the fact that NGOs made those settlers aware that they could legally claim ownership of the land where they had built their dwellings, they decided that they would respect the traditional arrangements “because that family had been kind to them and they would not dispute ownership” (Housing Project, interview). Instead, they would move to the new housing project further away from the coast. There seems to be a strong Islamic influence in this attitude. People seemed to be less concerned with disputing ownership of material possessions for the sake

of what they perceived to be fair. A recognisable local trait was a keen sense of justice and relative disregard for personal wealth and greater value placed on peaceful coexistence. In terms of social capital this type of attitude points to the survival of strong bonding networks among the locals in the post-tsunami land ownership. The real conflicts appear to involve non-local bigger players vying for prime real estate in Koh Mouk. There is, however, a different and long-standing critical arrangement for land use in less populated areas, and a third party involved in these land disputes.

The Marine Parks Authority manages coastal land in Koh Mouk. There have been ongoing and escalating disputes between the authorities and the locals over the use of land in the proximity of the sea. MP authorities have accused some locals of encroaching and squatting on government land and engaging in unsustainable practices that contribute to deforestation. Locals insist that they laid genuine claims to common land and have used the land for food production. These ongoing disputes, together with the issue of joint management of marine resources, have resulted in a distrust of government officials and a gap in linking networks, i.e. a dysfunction in asymmetrical relations between the less powerful locals and the perceived powerful government agencies.

Kaiyoorawong, Tolang and Sanlee (2008) say that SAN has collected data from 119 cases, as of November 2005, where communities have been struggling with land conflict problems. The problems with land conflicts involve many types of lands according to the law. The types of land in the affected communities assisted by SAN are categorised as: land belonging to individuals, national parks, national reserved forest, mangrove forests, Harbour Department land, Treasury Department land and public land. In Koh Mouk, there were 11 cases in conflict in 2007: five to do with mangrove forest, four to do with public land, one to do with national parks and one to do with land belonging to individuals. The government's policies relating to national parks are to ensure the preservation of natural resources on the coastline and in the ocean. If the process lacks public oversight, corruption can occur through state officers who have absolute powers in regard to the park. According to Kaiyoorawong, Tolang and Sanlee, (2008), if that happens:

The guidelines for long-term settlement of the conflicts will be undermined, which must be upheld by all those working on it together. This includes both the state and the local community to preserve the natural resources of Thailand and also the stability of community life. In order to fulfil their objectives, amending the laws concerning wild animals and conserved forest areas like those in national parks might be

considered by providing a co-management of the forest between the public and state. Or by enacting a resolution by the Council of Ministers approving forest co-management, recognizing the community's rights to reside and make a living in order that the encroachment onto national park lands may be reduced in the long run. (pp. 12–16)

During our video interview the village head said that problems with government officials over land ownership in Koh Mouk are long-standing. What can be surmised from canvassing a range of people's views in Koh Mouk is that even though the issue of land ownership on the island has existed for quite some time, the tsunami has been a catalyst for the final regularisation of land titles. In this sense, the outcome of the disaster, despite its tragic consequences, also presented an opportunity for people to obtain some certainty about access, use and ownership of land, which are key to their livelihoods and future project of life.

4.5 NGOs, Capacity building and human capital

Earlier in this chapter I mentioned briefly the role of NGOs in local education and facilitating interaction between locals, authorities and other organisations. I will argue that capacity building is intrinsic to social capital in a sustainable development scenario such as Koh Mouk's. In this section I will provide three specific examples of such capacity building implemented by NGOs in Koh Mouk: the first one has to do with

education as NGO field workers explain the legalities involved in land claims. The second has to do with facilitation, a bringing together of conflicting parties in a constructive way for the purpose of obtaining a positive outcome for all concerned. The third and final one has to do with technical skills in land surveying for the purpose of legal claims to ownership.

In the evening of the 4th and the morning of the 5th of July 2007, two important meetings-cum-workshops took place on the island about land title. They were very similar. On 4 July some 30 villagers met in a small women's group crafts shop (see figure 4.2) for those who would not be able to attend the bigger meeting being held in the mosque the following day.

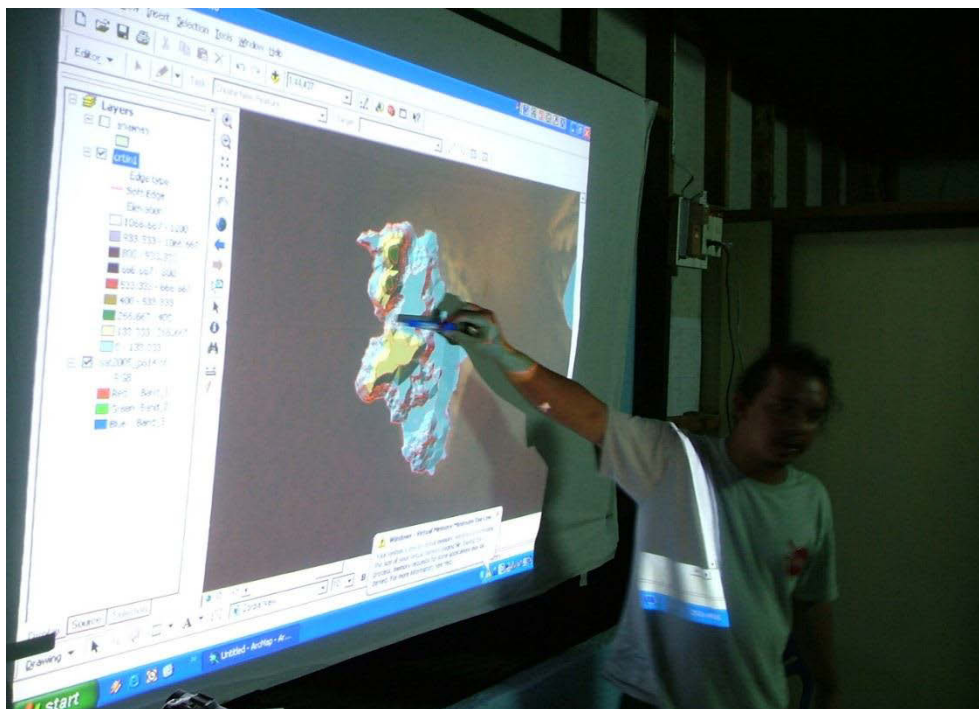


Figure 4.2: SAN NGO presenter at a land claim meeting 4 July 2007

Photograph by author (2007)

On 5 July, some 70 villagers met in the hall adjacent to the mosque (see figures 4.3 and 4.4). These meetings created great expectation as SAN workers set out to explain in detail the legal framework in relation to local people's claim to land and discussed methods and techniques for surveying and charting their claims. Authorities from the National Parks Authority (referred to by some English-speaking Thais as NP) were supposed to be in attendance on the 5 July meeting, but they had been stranded on the mainland due to dangerously rough seas.



Figure 4.3: SAN NGO participants at a land claim meeting on 4 July 2007

Source: Photograph by author (2007)

In their absence, the SAN field worker proceeded to inform the villagers about the legal framework, almost word by word from official documents

and maps (see figures 4.3 and 4.4), covering the due process of their claims as well as surveying techniques. Following are transcribed extracts from that landmark meeting.

SAN NGO field worker:

I know we used to hate them but we must now work together with NP authorities. We must keep cool and understand each other. They are willing to negotiate the old borderline [with legal status] to a new borderline [without legal status] so you can keep using the land to make a living [NS3 document] except for the dense forest area. We will survey the overall land claim by GPS to negotiate with NP we can then make arrangements for individual claims [of land not belonging to NP] The village head and village Obotho will be present during the negotiations. You must participate in the survey otherwise we may have a problem with the claim. The survey team will be made up of 10 villagers. Koh Mouk has its own title charts but they are for our reference and we don't need to show them to NP. (Land claims meetings 04–05/07/07)

The fieldworker proceeds to show the legal status of each area on a projected map of Koh Mouk:

Villager 1: We know Koh Mouk is 7,000 *rai* [approximately 3,000 acres], How much belongs to National Parks?

Field worker: More than half. Large and small rubber plantations survey should be no problem, but claims of dense

forest areas may be a problem. Well brothers and sisters who use the dense forest areas, you must understand that you cannot take it, I hope we can work together to succeed if we don't cooperate we will fail for sure. I mean, we must respect our contract with the National Parks authorities. The contract will be invalid if either party breaks the rules. We can negotiate other areas but we must forget about dense forest areas.

Villager 2: Some people used to plant rice before but then stopped and the trees grew again and now the land is back to dense forest, what happens to them?

Field worker: National Parks don't care what happened before if it's on their land and it's dense forest they will protect it. Let me explain the (four) rules to legalise title claims. First, you must either make a living from your claim or be settled on it. Second, you must have some proof of ownership on paper, tax invoice or land history document.

(Land claims meetings 04–05/07/07)

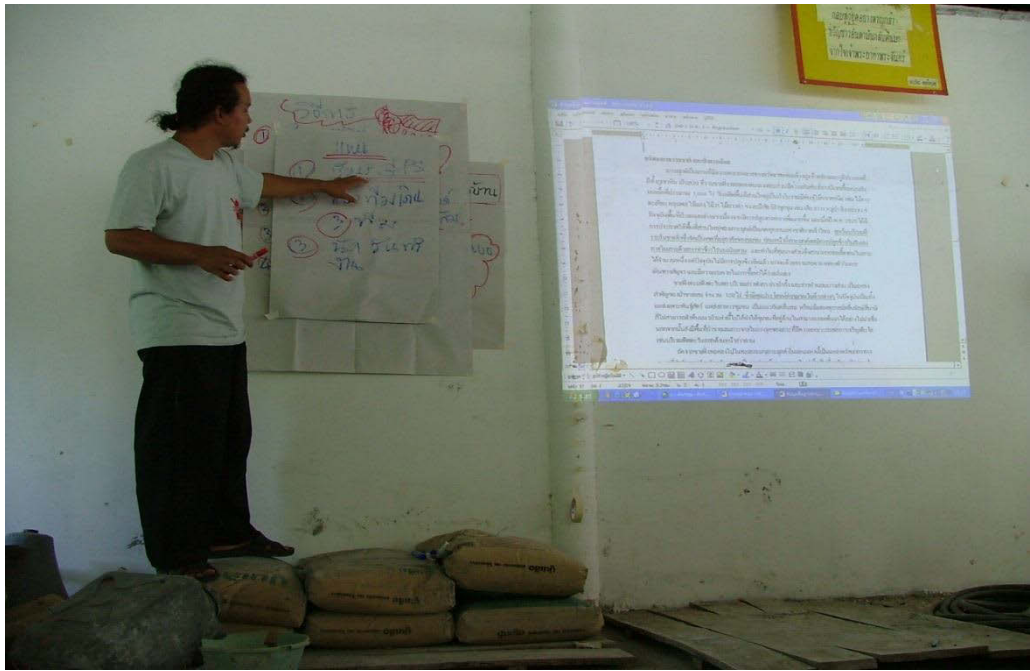


Figure 4.4: SAN NGO presenter at a land claim meeting 5 July 2007

Photograph by author (2007)

Villager 3: Can you explain about land history document?

Fieldworker: You must write the history of your land yourself. When you write it you must state how and when did you get the land; who used to make a living on that land in the past; and how many rai do you own. You must also present witnesses. The third rule is that you must have land guarantors they include former and present Pu Yai Bans, Obothos and members of the senior committee Koh Mouk village.
(Land claims meetings 4–5 July 2007)

The last rule is that the last landowner must attend when the claim is lodged. We are only negotiating the boundary lines with National Parks we can make individual claims for ourselves afterwards once those boundaries have been settled. There is a lot of interest from other

communities because Koh Mouk is the first village to start this process with National Parks and they want to learn from our experience.

Excited open discussion followed with villagers putting several questions to the field workers in relation to land use and types of titles. Nominations for land claim committee membership were sought, put forward and accepted in an open and transparent manner. Participants who nominated someone would explain the reason why, e.g. their nominee “knew everything that happened on the island”, or were elders and/or trustworthy.



Figure 4.5: Villagers attending the land claim meeting held on 5 July 2007

Photograph by author (2007)

There was a great emphasis by the NGO workers on trying to bring the parties together to the negotiating table in a spirit of cooperation and understanding of existing rules while at the same time trying to accommodate the villagers' claims. During the meeting one of the fieldworkers asked the participants to avoid "making National Parks officials lose face"; loss of face or public humiliation being intolerable to most Thai people and particularly so to people in positions of perceived authority. Should loss of face occur, there was every likelihood that negotiations would have been severely disrupted.

The village head then stood up to propose the formation of a third seven-people subcommittee. This was to liaise between the land claims committee and the 30-member JoMPA committee for the purpose of developing a project subsidised by JoMPA for the amount of THB 50,000 to THB 100,000 that would result in the management of protected areas for the benefit of the whole village and could be related to land management. The village head emphasised the importance of trustworthiness in financial management, commitment and participation in the whole process by the elected members. He said that if villagers agreed then the subcommittee would have to develop a project to justify the grant or, alternatively, they could forfeit the grant altogether. When a villager proposed that they get the money first and then develop the project, the

chief replied, to general laughter and amusement, that “in order to go fishing one had to use the right bait”:

Villager 4: I have a question. I really don't understand about the subcommittees of Koh Mouk village. They've had many meetings before but I've never seen them come to listen or guide the villagers about information except for the Pu Yai Ban. I apologise to the Pu Yai Ban because I don't want to refer to anyone in particular.

Villager 5: Then why don't you join the subcommittee yourself?

Chorus of villagers: No, that's not right, he didn't mean it that way!
(Land claims meetings 4–5 July 2007)

A general argument ensued.

Villager 4: I have good reason to say this, I don't want anyone to think that I'm making trouble, I'm entitled to make a comment because I'm a democrat.

This is followed by generalised arguments and laughter:

Village head: What [villager 4] says is right because before we didn't work as a team. Actually, the subcommittees didn't join in meetings with JOMPA.
(Land claims meetings 4–5 July 2007)

The village head goes on to recap the responsibilities of the subcommittee members and asks whether anyone needs further clarification. Villager 4 expresses regret about the arguments but he insists that his concerns are valid and that he does not want to make any trouble and then went on to

say “I love Koh Mouk more than myself”. More arguments ensued until finally one of the NGO workers interceded:

I can understand how he [Villager 4] feels because in the past the subcommittee worked only in Koh Mouk and didn't join in meetings outside, they did not understand what was going on and their responsibilities and duties were not clear. We just explained their duties.

(Land claims meetings 4–5 July 2007)

A short break followed when most of the attendants left the meeting while the subcommittee in charge of the land survey and a few onlookers stayed behind to be briefed on the use of GPS technology to accurately survey their land claims.

In terms of social capital there are a number of items covered during the meeting above worth highlighting for later reference. Firstly, while changes relating to land tenure had been taking place for a long time in Thailand, and were eventually bound to affect villagers in Koh Mouk, the tsunami disaster appears to have accelerated that process. In order for this process to take place effectively, high levels of education, organisation, participation and cooperation were required. The latter two have been already identified early on in this thesis as elements of social capital. The former two, I argue, are the formative elements of capacity building resulting in human capital that work iteratively with the elements of social

capital to maximise the benefits for all concerned. This is reflected in the fact that earlier efforts at participating and cooperating, getting organised and mobilised had resulted in disappointment to some villagers. The point is further reinforced by the villagers' newly acquired understanding of policies affecting land tenure, use and management, their ability to get better organised and mobilised, and even in their ability to use sophisticated technology to maximise the chances of their claims being successful. While this is a bottom up process where the villagers provide the agency for change, it can be argued that these same achievements may not have happened in the relatively short period following the disaster without the facilitation of capable and committed NGOs.

Secondly, there is one particular element of social capital that threads through the whole process described above and that works as catalyst for much of the organic fermentation of social interaction, and that is trust. Developing or enhancing trust in the institutions, i.e. government, their policies and agencies, trust in NGOs, and trust in local institutions such as village committees—as well as mutual trust among villagers themselves—must either have been already in existence, enhanced or newly developed for the land titling process to have gone as far as the meeting above. Once again NGO facilitation in terms of bringing the parties together, educating the villagers about policies and procedures and

building capacity that allows for more efficient organisations on the island, would almost certainly foster further the development and enhancement of that trust.

Finally, that organic process resulted in bonding and bridging networks. The villagers' enhanced capacity allowed for the development of efficient and trustworthy local institutions conducive to further participation, cooperation, trust, and bonding with other communities. It also led to an increasing sense of empowerment and confidence among those villagers. This, in turn, would allow for a more equitable civil engagement with government institutions. Bonding and bridging networks are evidenced in the complex interactions whose most likely outcome will be a negotiated settlement of the vexing issue of land tenure. The issue of land in Koh Mouk, however, does not stop with tenure but just as importantly with its use and management.

So far this chapter has dealt with the topic of land tenure policy and general claims between villagers and NP authorities. The balance of the discussion will assess emerging economic realities in Koh Mouk and how the use and management of land will determine the sustainable development of the island.

4.6 Rubber production

The three main macro-economic activities observed in Koh Mouk that account for most of the villagers' income were fishing, rubber production and tourism. In the previous chapter we have dealt with the issue of declining marine resources and the need to manage them sustainably, we now look at the alternatives of rubber production and tourism.

Thailand is the world leader in natural rubber production and export. Total rubber production in Thailand in 2004 was 2.9 million tons (Thailand Rubber Research Institute, in Tekasakul, Furuuchi, Tekasakul, Chomanee & Otani, 2008). Smallholdings, approximately 11 *rai* or 1.9 ha, in the southern provinces, account for almost 90 per cent of rubber production in Thailand. There are two main types of production systems: monoculture whereby the land is used exclusively for the production of rubber, and the integrated livelihood system, whereby farmers dedicate most of the land to rubber production but still allocate some of the land to alternative activities such as livestock breeding or vegetable and fruit growing (Viswanathan, 2006, pp. 1–5). Intermediate products from natural rubber industries include ribbed-smoked sheets (RSS), air-dried sheets (ADS), block rubber, crepe rubber, and concentrated rubber latex (Tekasakul & Tekasakul, 2006, p. 26). Viswanathan (2006) says that while rubber monoculture is viable under suitable market conditions, the integrated livelihood system offers household income and “amply

contributes to the household resilience during crises and ensures the subsistence of the smallholders” (p. 12).

The two largest rubber plantations observed in Koh Mouk, approximately 30 *rai* each, were located on relatively flat land on the south west of the island, adjacent to the only access road to Charlie Beach and only a few hundred metres from the sea shore (see figures 4.6–4.8).



Figure 4.6: Koh Mouk farmer collecting latex from a rubber tree

Photograph by author (2007)

According to Viswanathan (2006, p. 12) the average income for rubber monoculture or latex production in 2005 in Thailand’s southern state of Songkhla was THB 29,027 per hectare, approximately 6.25 *rai* or 2.4 acres. This price of rubber would increase when sold in the value-added form of ADS as it appears to be generally done in Ko Mouk. (figures 4.8–4.10). This

gives an indication that the largest properties on Koh Mouk mentioned above would produce an income of at least THB 150,000 per annum. Several other smaller holdings, only several *rai* in size, were scattered around the island.



Figure 4.7: Koh Mouk farmer collecting latex to be processed into rubber sheets

Photograph by author (2007)

However, rubber production requires a certain amount of human capital, particularly during the cutting process, which successful tapping depends upon. The work is usually carried out by torchlight during the night, using specialised cutting tools to tap the latex in the tree by making almost surgical diagonal and parallel incisions into the cortex of the trees from which the latex drips into a collecting cup. This has given rise to the establishment of rubber tapping as a valuable employment activity.

The landowners of one of the large holdings in Koh Mouk employed professional rubber workers from the mainland and shared profits with them on a fifty-fifty basis. These workers were all members of the same family; the mother, father and eldest child worked in the plantation while the younger two children attended the local school. The senior male of the family said that they were seasonal workers and earned approximately THB 12,000 per month during the five months of the rubber-production period. They lived in the most precarious conditions in what was apparently meant as temporary shelter and accommodation during their stay on the island. The other large holding was worked by the owners, and several members of the family were observed collecting latex, processing it into rubber sheets (figures 4.8–4.10) and taking it to the middlemen outlets in the mainland.

The logistics involved in the latter are considerable as the heavy rubber sheets must be transported to the pier to be loaded onto the taxi ferry to the mainland, unloaded and loaded again on local public transport consisting of a bus-truck hybrid suited for local use to be finally unloaded at the middleman's outlet to be weighed and paid for on the spot. For smaller holders their income from rubber would vary according to the size of their land.



Figure 4.8: Rubber farmers processing the latex in Koh Mouk

Photograph by author (2007)



Figure 4.9: Farmers processing rubber sheets

Photograph by author (2007)



Figure 4.10: Rubber sheets being air dried and readied for transport to market

Photograph by author (2007)

From my observations of the size of the plantations and number of rubber sheets being air dried, their income would have been considerably less than the THB 60,000 annual earnings stated above, on average approximately THB 40,000 per annum. Admittedly, these are soft figures, but there is no considerable discrepancy between the figures in the existing literature and my figures calculated from observation and interviews. So these figures should be considered an approximate guide. Most of these smallholders were also fishermen and while the engagement in both activities cannot be classified as an integrated livelihood system in terms of land use, it is certainly a form of diversification that would contribute to household resilience.

Again, if we consider a fisherman's average gross annual income from the case study in the previous chapter to be approximately THB 70,000, then even a small holding producing rubber would contribute considerably towards a household's ability to weather uncertain economic times and cope with a drop in income from fishing activities. The reality on the ground, however, is that at least from observation, only two households had rubber plantations in excess of several *rai*, and even those with smaller holdings were relatively few in number compared to the overall island population. In short, while rubber production is potentially a lucrative activity, the limited availability of land in Koh Mouk makes

large-scale production for a large number of households virtually impossible. Further, ADS production requires the use of chemicals and substantial volumes of water resulting in pollutants being released into the environment. Therefore, rubber production as the main macro-economic activity in Koh Mouk, given its small and contained environment with limited water resources, would probably be unsustainable. In the event, a relatively small number of households on the island are able to complement their main economic activity, fishing, with income from rubber production. This does not mean, however, that some villagers may not be driven to acquire land or use their existing lots for rubber production in the future. While not insignificant, rubber production on the island at the time of research did not appear to be a viable option as a main economic activity for the community unless there is a considerable shift in land and water allocations and use, as well as the implementation of environmental protection measures. Finally on the topic of rubber production, there appears to be no NGO involvement and no obvious networking of rubber farmers through meetings or organisations and no expressed need for them.

4.7 Tourism in Thailand

Tourism has been a booming industry in Thailand for the last 30 or 40 years contributing 6 per cent of GDP in 2002, or THB 323.5 billion (Ryan

and Hoontrakul, 2004, p. 6). The importance of tourism in Thailand is not only economic. It also “significantly engages the country’s social structure at both local and national levels, providing a focus for government action, training and employment, utilization of nature as tourism resources” (Meprasert, 2006, p. 7). Successive Thai governments over the last few decades have been well aware of the importance and potential of their tourism industry and have made concerted efforts to promote and manage it. The industry, however, can be fragile as it is subject to the vagaries of global incidents such as health pandemics, natural disasters, wars, and financial crises. Thailand’s 1997–2001 National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) used tourism as one of its main national economic recovery tools in the face of the Asian financial crisis by targeting foreign tourists and their strong currencies as well as promoting domestic tourism (Meprasert, 2006, p. 7).

More recently the 10th NESDP, 2007–2011, has shown more ambition and aims to establish Thailand as a centre of world tourism and gateway to the South Asia economy. The plan uses not only Thailand’s diversity of cultures and eco-systems as the basis of the plan, but also an enhanced infrastructure and services sector development, including the construction of yacht marinas for large luxury vessels as well as five-star hotels and resorts (Kaiyoorawong, Tolang, and Sanlee 2008, p. 5). The plan

focuses on the Andaman Sea provinces of Phang Nga, Phuket and Krabi, with an emphasis on different aspects of development under each area's Regional Development Plan (RDP). For example, according to Kaiyoorawong, Tolang and Sanlee (2008), Phuket province focuses on:

Creating a global center for tourism, improving the quality of life of its people, enhancing sustainable development, and preserving cultures as well as unique Thai characteristics ... The plan projections expected that Phuket would receive five million tourists in 2007, creating an income of 100,000 million Baht. (p. 6)

Kaiyoorawong, Tolang and Sanlee (2008) understate the logical conclusion to these frantic activities when they point out that "these developments cause land prices to escalate. The rising prices lead on to land conflicts between developers and local communities sooner or later" (p. 5).

On the southern fringes of these mega-developments, similar problems played out on a smaller scale, but with the added poignancy of seemingly intractable cultural clashes that undermine one of the very pillars on which Thailand rests its tourism development policy, that is, its cultural diversity. This undermining of the local culture goes against the local definition of sustainable development. It can also provide either a new opportunity for the community to reconsider their cultural values and norms and reconcile them with their economic needs, or it can provide a

point of friction that threatens the peaceful coexistence the local value so much. This dynamic continued unresolved at the time of my exit from Koh Mouk.

4.8 Tourism in Koh Mouk

The tourism industry in the province of Trang is more recent and less developed than in the iconic seaside playgrounds of Phang Nga, Phuket, and Krabi which are located a short distance to the north. However, the province benefits from the inevitable overspill of tourists from its neighbours and it could easily lay claim to a more eco-friendly and cultural type of niche market due to its natural assets, particularly on the islands, where it offers smaller resorts and their proximity to traditional lifestyle villages and direct access to local people and culture in a more natural, relaxed manner. Some of the tourists interviewed in Koh Mouk said that they wanted to get away from the beaten track of major tourist destinations to experience more of the natural beauty and have more contact with 'real' local people.

Koh Mouk enjoys the marketing advantage of being located within the boundaries of renowned Had Chao Mai National Park. There are two major resorts on the island in terms of their high-end clientele rather than their number of beds. Sivalai is a luxury resort located on the southeast of the island (from THB 4000 per night per bungalow low season in 2007).

The resort was built on a mini-peninsula covered by the whitest and cleanest sand on the island. When the tsunami struck the resort was half-built and suffered devastating damage. The owners rebuilt it and put up effective but very aesthetic sea barriers on the southern side of the resort. Charlie Beach resort is located on the only beach on the southwest. The locals said that these two resorts are owned by outside investors. In addition, there are four more smaller, lower-end (THB 300 to 800 per night per room/bungalow), locally owned mini-resorts along the east coast of the island, right among villagers' homes. On the east coast there are two smaller resorts including one that caters for the more budget conscious tourists, offering air-conditioned tents, communal ablution blocks and slightly unnerving tours to the breathtakingly beautiful Moracot Cave (see figure 4.11), accessed only by sea in a resort-operated small inflatable boat. The entrance of the cave had been the rallying point for villagers during their conflict with NM authorities over their decision to increase access fees to tourists without consulting the locals. In 2007 there were at least two more high-end resorts being built near Charlie Beach.

While Trang can cater for tourists all year round it is recommended that the islands be visited from December to May, outside the monsoon season months. Therefore, most of the smaller operators do little or no

business from June till November. On the other hand, these are family-run businesses with few overheads and no employees.

The two major resorts remain open all year round. Sivalai resort displayed genuine efforts to provide quality service and accommodation to customers as well as trying to provide employment opportunities and capacity building for the locals. On the other hand, smaller operators have disclosed during interviews that there are serious questions as to the legitimacy of Charlie Beach Resort as a hospitality business. They report that they have had to accommodate many disgruntled tourists from Charlie Beach Resort who complained about the lack of or poor quality of service and accommodation. Both major resorts in Koh Mouk employ local people as well as people from outside, mostly from mainland Trang itself.



Figure 4.11: Moracot Cave's inland beach, one of Koh Mouk's major tourist attractions and a former source of friction between locals and NP authorities

Photograph by author (2007)

According to the village head, Koh Mouk is staking its economic future on tourism (see figure 4.11):

As far as the economy in Koh Mouk goes, fishing is going down. If the government helps, tourism will be very popular in Koh Mouk and tourists will come ... Out of the 500 or 600 boats on the island, about half are fitted to cater for the tourism industry during the tourist season and they work as tour boats or taxis. (interview, 1 July 2007)



Figure 4.12: Fisherman preparing his boat for the upcoming tourist season
Photograph by author (2007)

There appear to be good reason for his optimism. Not only is there the possibility of direct employment by the bigger resorts and the development of local tourism enterprises, including the building of locally owned resorts, but an influx of tourists would also stimulate other areas of the local economy including a demand for local sea food and other produce as well as the possible placement of locally made crafts. The resorts offer a number of positions such as receptionists, housekeeping, catering, tour guides and maintenance. A university-trained hospitality industry employee earns on average approximately THB 8,000 per month, a housekeeper much less. Each large resort could employ an estimated 30 people during the tourist season and maintain a skeleton staff during the

low season. Some households are already entirely dependent on the tourism industry. One villager, who had recently moved into her new home as part of the island housing development project, said that she worked for Sivalai resort as a gardener while her husband was employed by Charlie Beach resort as a boat driver. She said, "tourism is good for development in Koh Mouk. Before there weren't as many resorts ... even if the cruise ships don't come anymore we can work in the resorts" (interview, 9 August 2007).

However, not everyone on the island feels the same way. Land tenure remains a contentious issue, not only in terms of who owns land, but also what the land will be used for in the future. During the housing focus group interview some villagers expressed their concern that while they had moved their homes up the hill from the coast, they still needed access to the beach for their boats. The consensus was that once land tenure was established, outside investors would acquire the land adjacent to the sea by making irresistible offers to the legal owners and would then build resorts on the beach, blocking their access.

At another focus group fishermen spoke more bluntly. One of the interviewees said that the resort owners get the big money from the tourists while all the villagers get was "all the shit they leave behind". This statement can be taken both literally and metaphorically. In such a

contained environment waste disposal is a critical issue. In the metaphorical sense there is a real concern that community values could be undermined by outside influence. During an interview the Imam said that while tourism was welcome, the community would have to remain vigilant so that their values are not corrupted. Issues such as substance introduction and abuse, dress code and acceptable behaviour are foremost in the minds of local villagers. There is also a generalised concern about a proposed big resort development on the northwest of the island. The resort would be built on an isolated, flotsam-strewn beach, accessed only by sea between two imposing heads of land through which the swollen seas squeeze in, resulting in waves pounding relentlessly on the beach. It is an eerie stretch of sand surrounded by steep hills. The development proposal includes a casino and cabaret-style shows. According to one resort manager locals strongly oppose this type of development.

In addition there were at the time, in 2007, serious grievances among employees of one of the big resorts relating to working conditions and alleged but unspecified management corruption. One informer said that a pregnant employee had been made to work lifting heavy loads during construction work in the middle of the day with the temperature reaching over 32°C. She said that the employee had fainted and that her

boss had told her to keep working after a short rest. Shortly after, several staff members resigned their jobs.

The grievances are not all one way. One of the managers interviewed said that he was trying to engage local people to work in his resort. He said that he was happy to provide training but that the locals lacked commitment to their training:

We provide English language lessons and skills development for them after work but they don't want to stay and go home instead. They are not well educated and don't understand; our customers pay big money and they expect excellent service but the local employees don't understand about work ethics. (interview, 9 July 2007)

I did not prompt the disclosure of such information but listened without judgment during general conversation in order to avoid any possible escalation of hostilities.

Let us look at the relationship between tourism as an emerging economic activity in Koh Mouk and social and human capital. At the time of the research, in 2007, the level of human capital in relation to tourism industry requirements in Koh Mouk was in deficit. The main jobs the local villagers were able to access were low-paid and low-skilled jobs. There were a few locals attending university courses in hospitality in the mainland. There appeared to be a significant cultural clash in terms of

work ethics expected by management on the one hand, and a sense of fairness by the employees on the other. Frictions between management and some employees in the big resorts have resulted in resignations. There is a disconnection between employer and some employees' expectations. Importantly, locals have expressed concerns regarding the possible negative impact of tourism on their culture and maintain that the most important thing for them is to preserve their traditional brotherly-sisterly relationship. No substantial NGO involvement on issues relating to the resorts and their employees was observed during the field trip. Rather, locals dealt with resort issues by themselves either as individuals or in a loosely organised manner.

These negative issues impacting on the development of tourism-based employment, however, are not generalised across Koh Mouk, they are reversible and do not appear to be affecting the smaller operators. Despite its unpredictability and occasional fragility, tourism appears to be a viable alternative to fishing as a macro-economic activity in Koh Mouk, particularly if local capacity building is enhanced and issues of environmental and cultural sustainability are properly addressed.

4.9 Summary

My observations of Koh Mouk in 2007 support the argument for a correlation between land tenure and ecological and social resilience. While

Thailand enjoys a good reputation regarding land tenure, there are many areas of the country where land ownership and use are yet to be determined. This uncertainty has led to feelings of insecurity and friction between locals and government officials in many communities following the 2004 tsunami disaster. In Koh Mouk there are ongoing negotiations between the locals and government authorities. Facilitated by NGOs, progress is slow but constant. The process involves capacity building and the development of human capital among the locals as well as the enhancement of bonding networks in the village and the development of linking networks between the villagers and government authorities. At the same time, there is an irreversible shift to a land-based economy in Koh Mouk, which is highly reliant on the ever-expanding national tourism industry. While rubber production appears to be an unsustainable macro-economic activity, tourism offers a real alternative provided locals are able to develop their human and social capital in order to maximise the benefits from the industry without compromising their core values. The next chapter will discuss the related and overlapping topics of the new housing project and emerging women's groups and the development of micro-economic enterprises. ■

Housing project and women's groups

5.1 Introduction

This chapter demonstrates the synergetic relationship between social and human capital on the one hand, and the socio-economic activities of housing development and the growing strength of the emerging women's groups on the other (see figure 2.2). The significance of the housing project extended beyond its primary objective of housing people. It connected to important issues such as participation, cooperation and the development of new networks and norms— the enhancement or reshaping of existing human and social capital.

Traditional fishing activities determined that most of the houses built in Koh Mouk before 2004 were built on the shoreline or nearby. Consequently the 2004 tsunami resulted in widespread destruction and damage to dwellings. Following the disaster, the government sought to prevent a recurrence by encouraging villagers to move further inland and onto higher ground. This presented a challenge in terms of land use and

allocation, as introduced in chapter four. Further, such a large-scale project required the relocation of hundreds of people from their traditional community clusters, resulting in dislocation to existing networks and the creation of new networks of people brought together by a common cause. Some of these challenges included developing culturally appropriate living arrangements with established norms or rules for coexistence. Other challenges included developing adequate dwelling designs and waste disposal as well as energy generating systems. More vexing issues included establishing who would be allocated their new home in the village and making sure that the land they previously lived on would not be used for tourist industry development that would preclude them from using the shoreline for traditional activities.

At the same time, and as part of the dovetailing topics of sustainable development, land ownership, shifting economic activities and safe housing, the women of Koh Mouk began to consolidate changes to their socio-economic status to make them more consistent with the shifting realities of the island and the stated SDFT definition of sustainable development. Many of these changes occurred under the SDFT umbrella, and through SAN's facilitation. Through their own agency and NGO facilitation, the women organised themselves into groups to develop skills that would allow them to increase their civic engagement in Koh Mouk

and beyond and develop economic activities that would give them greater financial independence. This chapter argues that the enhancement of human capital contributed to the improvement and expansion of social capital which, in turn, resulted in better outcomes for both housing and the emerging women's groups.

5.2 Housing in Koh Mouk

Looking north along the shoreline as the taxi-ferry approaches Koh Mouk pier, one can see that the first row of fisher folk houses squat comfortably over calm waters at high tide, against the backdrop of a coconut grove and assorted lush vegetation on the hillside. The houses are an array of rustic dwellings built out of local timbers and various other materials, topped with rusting corrugated iron sheet roofing. The low tide exposes their stilts, which resemble the legs of giant, static crabs (see figures 5.1 and 5.2).

Their seemingly precarious existence is deceptive for they withstood one of the most overwhelming forces when the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami struck the island. Some houses show signs of recent repairs or upgrades, with new wall panels and tin roofs, while most display the wear and tear of years of exposure to the elements and the disaster.

Although the sea surge in Trang province did not strike with the full force it carried when it devastated the coast in the provinces of Krabi, Phuket

and Pa Nga, further to the north, it still caused major damage to houses and fishing equipment.



Figure 5.1: Koh Mouk pier and homes on the shoreline to its north

Photograph by author (2007)

Their seemingly precarious existence is deceptive for they withstood one of the most overwhelming forces when the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami struck the island. Some houses show signs of recent repairs or upgrades, with new wall panels and tin roofs, while most display the wear and tear of years of exposure to the elements and the disaster. Although the sea surge in Trang province did not strike with the full force it carried when it devastated the coast in the provinces of Krabi, Phuket and Pa Nga, further to the north, it still caused major damage to houses and fishing equipment.



Figure 5.2: Homes north of Koh Mouk pier at low tide

Photograph by author (2007)

The figures of the *People's Report* (2008, p. 5) show that 4,800 houses were damaged or destroyed in the six affected provinces in Thailand. The SAN Report of February 2005 (pp. 11–13) places that number at 3381, adding that out of the 420 houses in Koh Mouk, 87 were affected. Sathanboa and Aphorn (2008, pp. 30–33) place the number of households in Koh Mouk at the time of their research at 493, adding that the number of houses damaged by the disaster was 83, while another 31 were completely destroyed. During an interview, the village chief stated that 32 houses had been damaged.

The slight discrepancy in the figures found in the literature may be due to new houses being built in the interim between the two latter

research projects. Further, SAN figures are less precise about the nature of the damage to the homes, that is, the report does not specify whether that figure includes houses that were completely destroyed. Similarly, during the interview with the village chief, I had no other reference figures but they are quite consistent in terms of houses 'damaged' and 'totally destroyed', giving a fair approximation of the extent of the damage to households in Koh Mouk. These approximate figures reveal that about 18 per cent of all homes in Koh Mouk were damaged and 7 per cent were totally destroyed. Most of the damage to houses occurred in Pangkar Bay on the southern end of the island, according to the chief. With a total island population of approximately 2,000 and an average of just over four dwellers per household, nearly 500 people, or 25 per cent of the population were directly affected by the damage or destruction of their homes.

While the majority of Koh Mouk's houses are located within a few hundred metres from the seashore, relatively few are built on the shoreline or are made of perishable materials. Many houses are made out of less traditional materials, using cement blocks, and the houses rest directly on the ground or on cement pillars, barely a couple of metres above sea level and within 100 metres of the shoreline at high tide (see figure 5.3).

Despite all the damage, it was not only the disaster that prompted many villagers to build their homes further away from the seashore. The

issue of housing had been simmering in the background ever since Kho Mouk was declared part of Hat Jao Mai National Marine Park in 1981. This, say Sathanboa and Aphorn (2008), made many villagers realise the importance of land tenure, and while many were able to obtain title deeds, many were left with a sense of insecurity. As the tourism boom pushed the price of land up, many villagers were displaced, and while many were able to build their homes on the land of relatives, a sense of insecurity over land tenure remained.



Figure 5.3: A post-tsunami home structure not part of the housing project, mixing traditional design with new materials

Photograph by author (2007)

According to Sathanboa and Aphorn (2008):

In 1989, there was the case of Mrs. Tuan who had legally owned land around the old Hua Lam area. She wanted to sell it, so she asked the people who lived on her land to move to a new area and offered to pay between 2,000 to 3,000 Baht as compensation for each household that moved. Most of villagers left and moved onto land owned by a Mr. Surin. They lived there for four years, and then in 1993, Mr. Surin wanted to sell his land. So, about 15 families had to move again to Pa Kung bay, which is a mangrove forest ... [2005] there were about 248 families with land problems that could be divided into five categories: 100 families living in conservation forest area; 70 families living on private land; 45 families living on relatives' land or in temporary residence; 24 families living in the harbor department area; 9 families living on the seashore in a state of fear. (pp. 30–39)

Housing insecurity was not particular to Koh Mouk and it was well identified by international NGOs, including ActionAid International (2006), which carried out an assessment into a number of issues in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami disaster, including housing. Among other measures, ActionAid International (2006) recommends that:

Governments must make land available for housing construction, including for people who were homeless before the tsunami, and it

should be close to people's sources of livelihood. New houses should be accessible to people with disabilities and to senior citizens. 'Buffer zones' must not be used to disenfranchise traditional coastal communities in favor of tourism or the interests of the local elite. People's customary rights to the coast should be recognised and protected, and instead of penalising villagers and settlements close to seashores, governments should protect all coastline populations by establishing reliable people-centered early warning systems using new technology and communications systems. (p. 54)

In the aftermath of the tsunami, the Department of Urban and Regional Planning from the Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University, reviewed existing planning projects and feasibility studies for the use and management of coastal areas, and "suggested that authorities should not rebuild on the same sites, but that affected villagers should be moved inland" (in Paphavasit, Chotiyaputta, Caseworker and Siriboon, 2006, p. 217). The idea of removing villagers from their traditional dwellings on land they had occupied for generations, surrounded by neighbours, friends and family members that make up well-established bonding networks is not always an easy matter. Any attempt to create a community artificially, bringing people to live together in close proximity without appropriate consultation and planning, can have a serious impact

on the health and wellbeing of the community. According to Teddy Boen and Rohit Jigyasu (2005):

Relocation needs very careful planning and thorough analysis because it concerns setting up a new community ... We are dealing with a principle matter, namely 'moving a way of life'. It implies moving the place where people live, the place where they work, the place where the children play, and many others integrated social functions that are part of the social life of a given community. This is more so in developing countries, where the 'network' of social life at the village or community level is very complex and there are a number of highly interrelated physical and social elements ... Already, we are getting news of many well-intending donors, who are 'adopting' the villages along the coastline and making hurried designs for 'match box type' housing and 'city-like' plans for these settlements, without any regard to the 'way of life of people'. Moreover, most of these settlements are getting relocated without consideration to the traditional livelihoods and ecological relationships ... Rather reconstruction initiatives help in reinstating the way of life of the local people, which truly represents the culture than merely a few historic buildings. (pp. 8–9)

A Koh Mouk local fisherman and shopkeeper expressed similar concerns during an interview for this research. Bang Hoc is a 35-year-old man, married with a 14-year-old child. He attended the local school up to grade

six and then started going to sea to earn a living as a fisherman. He and his wife opened a small shop with his extended family, who live nearby. He has his own home on land he says belongs to him but has no papers to prove it. In regards to local people moving to the new housing project, he said, "About five members of my family are moving to the new housing project with their families. I am concerned about the family drifting apart when they go. We don't talk about it but I think it might happen" (interview, 6 August 2007).

5.3 The community housing project

The atmosphere of change following the disaster provided those villagers who did not have home security with the opportunity to explore alternative arrangements. In Koh Mouk the SAN (2005b, p. 12) advocated for better housing for the villagers and this goal was immediately integrated into their plan. The village head said:

The government provided initial assistance to help repair some of the damaged houses. However, a survey carried out after the tsunami revealed that the houses did not have strong foundations, prompting the villagers to look for alternatives resulting in the housing project.

(video interview).

Aside from the individual homes that were restored or newly built after the tsunami, the single most significant housing development took place

on a 30-*rai* parcel of land provided by the state (People's Report, 2008, p. 19). The land, claimed from a decaying mangrove forest on the southern side of the island, would become the site for the construction of 138 new homes housing approximately one quarter of the population of Koh Mouk. This figure includes not only many people whose homes were damaged or destroyed in the tsunami but also those who were forced to relocate due to new tenancy demands by their landlords or because their homes were vulnerable to events such as tsunamis.

Theoretically, these changes can be contextualised as follows. In their research into the relationship between reconstruction approaches and social vulnerabilities in post-tsunami Thailand, Angers, Marien and Rheume (2007) divide their findings into three categories:

Reconstruction approaches used by organizations, changes in villagers' social vulnerabilities, and analysis of the relationships between reconstruction approaches and social vulnerabilities. The last category describes our central findings because this section details the causal relationships between the approaches used by organizations and the changes in social vulnerabilities. (p. ii)

Some examples of the reconstruction approaches given by these authors include the lack of consultation by government agencies and NGOs with villagers during the planning and construction phases of reconstruction

with little regard for local people's housing requirements or their social and cultural needs. Among the social vulnerabilities, Angers, Marien and Rheume (2007) found that:

Some villagers are unable to perform repairs on their new houses because they have little knowledge of the materials and construction techniques used or do not have access to the proper materials. Therefore, villagers have an increased dependency on others ... We found that when villagers were relocated from coastal areas, they experienced changes in vulnerabilities. These include changes in vulnerability from economic strains, occupational shifts, new land ownership, and modernization. We also found that some villagers do not trust the structural integrity of their houses because they feel certain structures are unstable or poorly constructed. (pp. iii–v)

According to Joel Audefroy (2010), there are four key aspects to the post-tsunami Asian reconstruction process: planning, housing design and construction, organisation and participation, and property and land use. Audefroy (2010, pp. 668–670) cites the Koh Mouk community housing project as an example of success in all of these key aspects. Human and social capital was utilised to the fullest extent possible, i.e. the local people learned new skills and helped to build their own homes, they also developed new networks based on participation, cooperation and trust in

the development of new norms of coexistence, resulting in the successful completion of the whole enterprise, a tribute to the capacities of all those involved in the project.

The funding for the Koh Mouk Community Housing Project came from a number of sources including Malteser International, an NGO relief agency based in Cologne, Germany, the government and the public. Importantly for a project of this nature, the local people were proactive and involved in the project from its conception. The villagers organised themselves to lobby government for land, were involved in the design of the village and displayed agency in starting the project after government gave verbal consent for land use but before official approval was granted. They cooperated in the construction of the whole village, from the sewage treatment plant to housing construction, and together decided who would have priority for housing allocation. They also developed norms of conduct and rules of heredity. The village head said:

Many organisations provided assistance for the housing project, but the most important input came from the local villagers. We came together to help ourselves. We sat together face-to-face and shared our information and ideas about whose house had been damaged. We established some criteria to allocate the new houses: first of all, people who live close to the

sea, are afraid and want to move; and secondly, people who rent from others would also have priority. (video interview, 2007)

While this process of housing allocation appeared to be fair and transparent, it did not always fulfil everyone's expectations. During a survey carried out by local high school students for a curriculum development camp in August 2007, one villager expressed his dissatisfaction with the whole process in no uncertain terms. He was repairing his boat on the beach using hand tools. He interrupted the staccato hammering at regular intervals to lift his head from his work and point in the general direction of the new housing project, steadily raising his voice as he spoke and becoming more agitated, only to return to his task for several seconds and then continue to express his grievances. His house was located within metres of the seashore in the worst affected area of the island and had been severely damaged. He was demonstrably angry at the allocation process and suggested that the process was corrupt. He said that he and his family clearly had been badly affected by the disaster and that they needed housing but that no one had come to ask him about it. His wife promptly joined him with an infant in her arms and echoed his accusations. It was not up to the school students to provide an answer to this family's plight; all they could do was to record their complaint and raise it during the presentation of the survey results. For the family in

question, there appeared to be no resolution. We left them to their tasks with a sense of sympathy but little consolation. Such cases, however, turned out to be few, and according to the local teachers that accompanied the students, these few cases were due to misunderstandings or communication breakdowns.

During a number of visits to the housing project building site over a period of six months up to September 2007, I was able to witness a high level of participation and cooperation by local people during the construction phase. One of the characteristics of these activities was the level of involvement by women in every aspect of the process: from digging trenches and carrying bags of cement to giving finishing touches to some homes. At times there were more women than men on the construction site; this could be due to the fact that many of the men would have been out to sea fishing at that time. Neighbours and relatives helped each other and there was a noticeable air of enthusiasm in the whole enterprise. By mutual agreement, the villagers developed four main types of building methods: they could hire a foreman to supervise the building process; build the entire house themselves, get a professional to help them construct the main frame of the house and do the rest themselves; or get a professional to help them for free if possible.

Bang Mhan, a Koh Mouk villager and resident of the new community housing project said:

Working together in a group was the way we chose to go, because we knew this would strengthen our collective sense during building houses for the community with teamwork. Although some people may split up after the construction, there are others who would take on board concepts about teamwork. From over 200 meetings we all attended along with the result of working in groups showed there are about 30 percent of people who have improved their skills in each group, even though those in charge had to shoulder a large burden at the beginning.

(in Sathanboa and Aphorn, 2008, pp. 42–43)

In the early stages of my stay on the island in April 2007, the site looked like an amorphous swamp peppered with houses in different stages of construction, many of them only showing their skeletal frames. The hot sun beat down on the villagers who sought a respite in the scarce shaded areas around the site in the middle of the day. The main form of motorised transport on the island was the motorbike. The only road wide enough to carry four-wheeled vehicles ran from the pier across the island to the west and past the housing project. I counted two four-wheeled vehicles during my time on site. Both were utility vehicles, a cabin with seating for three people and a tray back for loading. One was privately owned and seemed

in good repair. The other was used for the housing project; it looked impossibly old and dilapidated and I never saw it driven at faster than the equivalent speed of a sedate bicycle ride. It was used to carry heavy materials, equipment and people to the project site, but it had to stop on the street since the interconnecting pathways were too narrow. Everything else was carried by hand or on hand-drawn carts.

At the end of my six-month field trip, some of the houses were already inhabited ahead of time and the project was on schedule. The homes were not expansive. They were mostly basic dwellings with what could be described as an open plan in keeping with traditional designs. There were two main sizes, approximately 28 and 38 m² excluding the ablutions room and the all-important veranda area where most of the domestic activities take place. A whole new village was emerging above and among the mangrove forest, and children could be seen riding bicycles and motorcycles along the narrow interconnecting pathways with visible confidence and what I interpreted as a sense of belonging in their demeanour. Such an enterprise would have required a high level of organisation, commitment and skill.

During an interview carried out in August 2007 for this research at the new village construction site, the building inspector, the SAN coordinator for the housing project, and the project accountant provided

some insights into how the project came about and how it was developing at the time. According to the interviewees, the project started in 2005, after the tsunami, but its planning preceded the disaster. They said that the tsunami triggered the commencement of the project because:

The owners of the land where many villagers used to live before the tsunami demanded money to be paid to them within a month so they decided to move ... When the tsunami happened, they had a chance to present their project; good timing for the people. Other organisations were involved, such as SAN, Thai Community Foundation, and community development organisations. The government was not involved at the beginning and decisions were made on Koh Mouk. The government owns the land and had given verbal consent but it is not in writing yet. There are two reasons why we need to hurry the project up: first, people are afraid that another tsunami may strike, second, the owners of the land where many people live want their land back. If we wait for official government approval we would wait too long; people's needs are important.

We received seven million baht in support from the Thai community. The Housing Project Committee is made up from representatives from each of Koh Mouk's bays. People put in their application with the representative from their bay and the committee made a decision as to who is allocated housing. The main issue with the project is obtaining

written permission from the government to use this land for the housing project. The project is still running, and we should finish by November this year and the community should be opening in December. This project is different from similar projects in other provinces because here people learn how to build their houses from the start, so the villagers learn how to get the land and build their houses for themselves. They can design their own homes and present it to the committee. They don't have to pay for the house, only for furnishing them. Because of the new housing project, people who came from different bays and didn't know each other well now help each other and get to know each other; there is good participation. Most of the people who are moving here are fisherfolk. They are expanding a canal from the sea to bring their boats closer to their homes. Some of the land they vacated is public land and nothing is going to happen to that land; there are no plans to build resorts there right now. By the time this project is finished [38 houses] there will be a total of about 450 houses in Koh Mouk. The community promised to look after the environment, including the mangrove forests. The houses are built on steel stilts and are connected by elevated, interconnecting pathways so they do not damage the ecosystem underneath. Some people have already finished and moved into their new homes. At the moment they use septic tanks to collect their waste, no problems. The new housing project residents have organized

themselves into subcommittees to address different issues such as organising equipment and materials, building and waste disposal.

(interview, 9 August 2007)

There are a number of salient points from the social-human capital perspective in the content of this interview. There is a clear link between villagers and NGO whereby the villagers demonstrate agency and the NGO facilitates the development of the housing project. There is also the empowerment of the villagers through their choice of construction and capacity building so that they can build their own dwellings. Another important point is the transparency of the process and the creation of negotiated norms. Finally, there is the reshaping of bonding networks in the community due to the coming together of villagers from different parts of the island. When asked about the issues of inheritance, the group responded that that was exactly the sort of issues they were dealing with at the moment but that the houses would not be for sale. During an interview (12 May 2007) with Bang Sam, a senior SAN representative, he emphasised that "if there is problem with the housing group they try to solve it for themselves. Other groups may try to help and collaborate, this happens naturally. The NGO idea is that they come together once a month".

Sitting in the shady veranda of her brand new home in the housing project and overlooking the main road, Cha Ha, who works as a gardener in one of the main resorts in Koh Mouk, explained that her family had been living in the unfinished but liveable house for four weeks already:

They allowed us to move in a month ago. Our previous home did not belong to us. I can't remember which organisations helped us, there were so many. My previous house was on the beach, we were asked to move because it was a risk area, so they provided this land because it's in a safe area. It's safer, we're not afraid. Our relationship with our neighbours is as helpful as it was before, that hasn't changed we are all old friends. We may not know some new neighbours from other bays, anyway, there are no bays here anymore, the area is a central point, everybody is free and we join together. So far we've had no problems things are actually more convenient with water and other facilities. This land now belongs to us, we're not afraid to be driven away by anyone. Being near the mountains is safer because we can run up the hill more easily [she laughs].

(interview, 9 August 2007, video resource)

This interview illustrates the successful outcome of the housing project and it confirms what I had observed so far, that is, the synergetic relationship between social and human capitals. In its January 2008 newsletter, Malteser International celebrated the conclusion of the Koh

Mouk Housing Project (see figure 5.4) and the handover to the community as follows:

The village community had been highly involved in the reconstruction process. The funding and the coordination were carried out by Malteser International in cooperation with the local organisation Save Andaman Network. Together with German and local engineers and companies, 138 houses had been reconstructed and trendsetting technologies from the environmental sector had also been taken into account. In addition to infrastructural facilities such as electricity and water systems, three so-called 'Subterra' biological sewage plants wetlands (German export technology) had been built. These constructed wetlands allow a high-quality purification of the waste-water on an environment friendly basis.

5.4 Housing: summary

While plans had already been in existence to improve the housing situation in Koh Mouk before the tsunami, the disaster became the catalyst for fast and tangible change. The main reasons for seeking alternative housing before the tsunami had been due to insecurities regarding tenure and the displacement of tenants from the coast as the demand for land near the sea increased in order to satisfy a boom in the tourism industry.



Figure 5.4: Koh Mouk Housing Project, completed in December 2007

Photo by Malteser International (2007)

Following the tsunami, the housing problems on the island were exacerbated when many people lost their homes or their homes were so severely damaged as to render them unliveable or too expensive to repair. Fear of a repetition of the disaster became a strong additional motive and criteria to move further inland and for allocation of new housing. These two factors—landlords' demands for their land to be formally leased or vacated to expand tourism, and the disruption to traditional bonding networks resulting from villagers moving from their traditional cluster of homes to the new village—gave way to the creation of new networks in the new village. While those who stayed in their traditional dwellings lamented the departure of those who moved into the new village, those

who moved appeared to be well satisfied with their new living arrangements.

The villagers whom the students interviewed expressed relief in the knowledge that they had their own place—safe, legal and well serviced. Importantly, from the point of view of social and human capital, villagers reported a shift from the old ways whereby new and strong bonding networks were being forged in their struggle for new housing and in the actual building of the village. Many different government organisations and NGOs, as well as private contributions, made the housing project possible. The project was developed in close consultation with the principal stakeholders, i.e. the local people. While the process was not always to everyone's satisfaction, as in the case of the family who alleged that they had not been approached about the project, the project made it possible for 138 families to obtain permanent homes. This was done through the agency from the local people, their participation, cooperation, commitment and skill development. Importantly, women were active participants and, in some instances, the main protagonists in the reconstruction efforts. This reflected changing realities for women in Koh Mouk.

5.5 Women's groups

Social and human capital theory provides a useful lens through which to understand and explain the development of women's groups in Koh Mouk. Local women's groups need to be set in the wider context of existing community development and gender-specific movements in Asia in the years before the tsunami. The following brief review of literature on these movements shows four main concerns. First, some authors (Manalo and Reyes, 2005) have questioned the motives of those in power, as they seem to follow a women-friendly agenda while in reality maintaining the traditional patriarchal structures. Second, other authors, such as Naila Kabeer (2007), have addressed the need for equal access to education and employment opportunities for women in Asia. Thirdly, a group of writers, such as Josephine Ho (2007) and Kabeer (2007), have questioned whether women's entry into the paid workforce represent a benefit or perpetuate their exploitation. Finally, other writers, Chunkath, Della, Chotani, Smyth, Burns and Hidayat (2005), and Bennett, Bertrand, Harkin, Samarasingh and Wickramatillake (2006), have pointed to a deficit by governments and NGOs alike in addressing women's specific issues in the post-tsunami recovery process. These topics are reviewed here as a reference point before the examination of specific case studies in Koh Mouk regarding the development of women's groups in the context of social and human capital.

Manalo and Reyes (2005) point out that while there have been some political advances in global terms for women in some Asian regions following the Millennium Declaration adopted by all UN member states in 2000, reality is yet to match the gesture. One of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, p. 4) in the Declaration is specific to the promotion of gender equality, and in particular the empowerment of women. According to Manalo and Reyes (2005), despite the rhetoric, “family and traditional restrictions impede women’s full participation in the political process ... political empowerment is useless without economic empowerment”.

In the specific case of Thailand, Manalo and Reyes (2005) trace modern advances in women’s status back to the 1932 Constitutional Monarchy, which allowed women equal rights to vote, and removed formal barriers to the advancement of women in the civil service, while provisions of the Thai Constitution, since 2005, provide “new concepts on local decentralization in terms of administration, personnel, finance and political participation” (p. 5). Importantly for the study of the development of women’s groups in Koh Mouk:

Some programs (developed from those concepts) include the setting up of women’s development groups which promote supplementary income to increase women’s role in the communities; as well as setting up the

National Women Coordination Board to strengthen women's potential and increase gender sensitization in government. In Thailand, women have made a substantial contribution to economic development in which (the) female labor force participation rate is consistently high at more than 60% for the past two decades. Out of the 31.3 million persons in the labor force in 1995, 13.8 million or 44 per cent were women, with 80 per cent (11.1 million) working in rural areas and 20 per cent (2.7 million) in urban areas. (Manalo and Reyes, 2005, p. 6)

From this quote one can conclude that the experience of women in Koh Mouk in terms of self-organising and empowerment through paid employment and participation in the decision-making process follows a wider pattern and is informed by it. Josephine Ho (2007) states that gender-based movements in the West emerged over time through a range of different streams. By contrast, she says, in Asia they developed over a shorter period as a result of a foreign-driven and local-implemented agenda aimed at assuaging the new internal demands fostered by those foreign ideas while attempting to gain international recognition and legitimacy as modern liberal democracies. In many Asian states, Ho (2007) observes:

A very complicated collaboration has evolved in which the state adopts certain gender-related, women-friendly policies and measures in order to

secure new constituencies in the increasingly competitive electoral processes, as well as to showcase their progress in modernization while maintaining their traditional patriarchal social structures and cultures. (pp. 9–11).

Conversely, Kabeer (2007) prompts us to ponder whether, in parts of Asia, the entry of women into paid work represents empowerment or exploitation, by focusing on men's attitudes towards women in employment. In particular their husbands' attitudes, rather than those of their fathers, sons or brothers. Kabeer (2007) contends that in the context of a globalised economy women are the perfect disposable asset as they are more likely to yield to traditional domestic demands perpetuated by deeply-engrained patriarchal attitudes rather than pursue a career or employment pathway. According to Kabeer (2007):

Continued responsibility for a major share of unpaid domestic work, including care of children and the elderly, appears to be the most frequent concession yielded by women. They are permitted to go out to work as long as their husbands are not required to shoulder a greater share of this unpaid labour. (pp. 4–7)

Kabeer (2007) qualifies this statement by saying that an increasing number of Asian women are prepared to either leave their marriage as soon as they are financially able, or refuse to marry altogether in the first place. In

regard to the sustainability of women who organise themselves into income-generating groups, Anna Dimitrijevic (2007) states:

One of the main constraints appears to be the poverty of business management skills in the affected communities, combined with poor planning on the part of some managers of the employment rehabilitation schemes. Some projects relied overly on the presence of outside NGOs for access to their markets, which collapsed after the organizations wound down their activities in these communities. There are also reports of unfulfilled demand for group management skills, which created internal conflicts in particular over questions of transparency.

(In APWLD, 2006, pp. 51–62)

In terms of gender-specific issues in the aftermath of the tsunami, Chunkath, Della, Chotani, Smyth, Burns, and Hidayat (2005) report that despite the rhetoric on gender equality:

One of the most astounding aspects of many of the reports on the 2004 Tsunami, is the lack of comment on gender perspectives and human rights ... There also has been an absence of gender analysis for all aspects of the Tsunami. This has been true not just for the dead (and mass burials), but also for the injured, the missing, the internally displaced persons (IDPs), and lost or orphaned children. (pp. 404–407)

Bennett, Bertrand, Harkin, Samarasingh and Wickramatillake (2006) say that a disproportionately high number of women and girls' deaths in many areas affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami will likely have long-term effects that have not yet been duly evaluated and addressed, because "the tsunami response lacked a consistent, quantified and coordinated gender analysis, an omission that has resulted in some serious protection anomalies and the persistence of male dominated decision-making structures that have largely gone unchallenged" (p. 58).

The 2005 SAN report states that women in Thailand are one of the groups that have received the least attention from the government following the tsunami disaster, and there are great fears for the health and wellbeing of women survivors, especially those who were widowed by the disaster and have no land titles to their name. It states that there have been no studies on the long-term impact of their increased vulnerability (SAN, 2005, p. 5).

In this disaster, the women of Koh Mouk did not have to endure the same suffering and deprivation as other women further to the north and in the wider Indian Ocean region. The island was spared the most devastating effects of the disaster, as discussed in previous chapters. Further, my observations during the fieldwork for this study point to a process whereby women's roles had already been shifting before the

disaster as they increasingly took on non-traditional activities. This is consistent with the SDFT definition of sustainable community development:

It is important to develop indigenous wisdom, recognize indigenous cultures, and empower indigenous peoples, at the same time increasing the participation of both men and women in making decisions and implementing activities at both the local and policy levels.

(SDFT website 2006).

During the very early stages of this research project I was invited to join an entourage of NGO staff, community leaders and benefactors, including representatives from the Cement Thai Foundation (CTF) and Michelin, as they toured affected communities and held meetings with villagers to listen to their concerns and requests for project funding and other resources in southern Thailand. On 30 June 2006, we travelled to the province of Trang in a small caravan of vehicles. Once there we visited the community of Banh Nam Rap, a small cluster of run-down dwellings by a mangrove-lined water inlet. The villagers welcomed us in a clean, cool, multipurpose building resembling a community hall, which on that occasion was used as a meeting venue. The meeting revolved around achieved objectives and future projects for the community, funded partly by CTF and Michelin. Project proposals were not automatically approved

for funding, and CTF representatives were responsible for making sure that the projects were feasible and viable before resources were allocated, and that the outcomes were in line with projections; the exercise was an audit of sorts. One of the village leaders, an articulate middle-aged woman with a powerful presence and a clear, projecting voice, stated her case politely and forcefully; she was a magnificent advocate for her people.

The whole exchange took place in a positive, constructive atmosphere. There were peculiar dynamics playing out during these meetings; while there seemed to be a sincere partnership approach to the interaction between CTF representatives and villagers, there was a distinct deferential attitude from some villagers towards their guests. This view should be tempered by the fact that hospitality is a constant in Thai culture and, if anything, more so in Muslim communities. Furthermore, it is possible that a universal rapport between people in need of assistance and their benefactors, combined with a possible perception of greater financial know-how and its attendant reverence, might have contributed to that perception.

There are three interlinked elements of the above experience that I would like to highlight: the dynamics between the different stakeholders; aspects of social capital, capacity building and sustainable development evidenced in the exchange; and the actual role of women in the process of

disaster recovery and sustainable development. However one chooses to interpret the villagers' attitudes towards their guests and vice-versa, the overwhelming feeling was one of respectful cooperation, excitement and optimism. This leads to the second point, aspects of social capital, capacity building and sustainable development. The meeting was not only about material resources and finances; there was also a strong element of capacity building, a clear effort to make people, who up until then had subsisted in a relatively simple economy, more financially literate, to be able to deal with new challenges in order to make the efforts sustainable. This was indeed a strong, organic mix, and an exciting development after their sense of so much despair after the disaster.

This link between high-calibre members of the Thai financial world and proactive grassroots activism facilitated by capable, dedicated NGOs was the mortar of social capital building in this enterprise. Finally, on the issue of women's traditional and emerging roles, my observations, at least in this case as well as others to be described below, pointed to gender being less of an issue than merit in terms of strength of character, a commitment to the cause at hand and the ability to communicate effectively. The meeting ended on a positive note with food being served and shared equally by all. Later, SAN's chairman told me with clear satisfaction that in one of the villages they worked with, in the

neighbouring province of Satun, a Muslim woman had been elected village chief for the first time. He added that there were many women like her ready to take on greater responsibilities.

Both my observations in Koh Mouk and other villages, as well as the existing literature, corroborate that point. Sathamboa and Aphorn (2008) state that:

Before the house-building project or even before the Tsunami, women at Koh Mouk had already set up their own activities, particularly the extra-income groups. They had just begun to participate in activities outside their community, but they still had less of a leadership role in the community than the men. After they joined in the post-Tsunami community activities, the house building for instance, women began to have a greater role, mainly in the leading group. They had become more confident in expressing their opinions in the meetings and had more involvement in the decision making at household and community levels. In the leading group, there were two women, who worked as accountants, one working as an investigator and three who sat in the public utilities committee. The women in this community took charge in the building project, for example by checking the process of the house construction. And it seemed that the women's roles in the building project exceeded those in other activities of the community. (pp. 43–44)

This, locals assured me, was not always the case. Koh Mouk's village chief candidly shared his views about women's circumstances in Koh Mouk before and after the tsunami:

Before the tsunami, the husbands went out fishing while their wives stayed at home not doing too much. Some of them used to spend their time gossiping and gambling. Right now the income is not enough. The women's group will become stronger in the future. When modernisation came to Koh Mouk it marked the first step in the women's group. Before there were no women's groups then they came up with the idea to develop employment opportunities. First, they can get some income; secondly, it brings people closer together; and thirdly, they can show their skills making locally designed products. (video interview, 2007)

As an outsider and non-native speaker of Thai, I could not tell how accurate this statement was. It clearly indicated a shift in women's status after the tsunami. However, whether one considers women's activities purely in the context of an increasing money economy or informal economy in Koh Mouk, the village chief's statement calls for qualification in order to properly contextualise the changes in women's status. The testimony of several people in regard to women's activities before the tsunami and my observations point to women's heavy involvement in the informal and the moneymaking economy on the island. In the informal

economy, women's contributions—to the overall health and development of the population as household administrators, allowing other members of the household to engage in the money economy more freely, child rearing, kitchen gardeners and workers for the local clinic's health programs to name only a few—were invaluable.

The local clinic nurse, Ja Lo Tu, said that 65 per cent of Koh Mouk's population is female. Ja Lo Tu said that small groups of women from each bay are trained at the clinic and are responsible for primary health care in their bay. This arrangement had been in place for 34 years and after the tsunami they organised themselves better. She said:

The groups take care of sick people at home before they need to be taken to the clinic or hospital. For example, experienced women are responsible for monitoring and assisting women with their first pregnancy. Also, these groups are the first line of defense in the prevention against H5N1 (bird flu). One of the greatest issues for women in Koh Mouk is obesity and related illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, strokes and vascular disease. This is because their lifestyles have changed over the years. They are more sedentary and their diet contains more cholesterol. We have two main health problems in Koh Mouk, emergency transfer and rubbish. The emergency transport of patients to mainland hospitals requires a special license and qualifications that nobody seems

to have time to obtain and there are ongoing disputes with mainland hospitals as to who should be responsible for the transfer of patients. Rubbish disposal is a health issue, children are taught at school to dispose of rubbish and they in turn teach their adult relatives at home. The project started a few months ago at the villagers' initiative. Other health issues on the island are the fact that after the tsunami people expected that the clinic would provide medicines whether they needed them or not and when medicines are prescribed sometimes people do not follow the 'how to use' instructions. Other health issues on the island are conjunctivitis, foot and mouth disease and drug use, particularly marijuana. Local people sell the drugs and the community cannot stop it because they are not strong enough, they do not cooperate. Koh Mouk people are more reactive than pro-active, they solve problems but don't prevent them. When they do something it's not for free, they expect some monetary reward. (interview, 27 June 2007)

Most of the activities described above, child rearing, kitchen gardeners and workers for the local clinic's health programs, are paid jobs in the economy of many communities, including in Thailand. At the same time, there is ample evidence to demonstrate that many women on the island have been directly involved in paid work including fishing alongside their husbands and sorting the catch as described in chapter three, and being involved in Koh Mouk's rubber production and pre-tsunami tourism

industry, as described in chapter four. The village chief's comments help, however, to mark a before-and-after tsunami dynamics in women's drive and ability to organise themselves, to develop the networks, norms, cooperation, participation, trust and capacity building to enable them to contribute to, and benefit from, the island's money economy.

Chapter one outlined some of the pre-tsunami efforts to create cooperative income-generating enterprises for women in Koh Mouk. In short, "the locals attribute the failure of those enterprises to lack of transparency, lack of cooperation and participation, lack of skills and lack of trust" among other things (chapter 1). Theoretically, this is consistent with general consensus (chapter 2) that wealth creation follows social capital rather than the other way around. Further, in my own observations during the field trip for this thesis, the absence of human capital (i.e. the lack of skills mentioned above), whether to do with the actual manufacturing, accounting or management of the enterprise, would seriously compromise people's endeavours. By contrast, in the post-tsunami era, Koh Mouk villagers have rallied together with the assistance of local NGOs such as SAN and SDFT and developed a number of income-generating enterprises or cottage industry women's groups. One of the most successful is the Sweet Chili Sauce Making Group.

On 5 August 2007, I visited the Sweet Chilli Sauce Making Group at their workshop located on Makham Bay, on the eastern side of the island, about 200 metres north of Koh Mouk pier, and within a few metres of the water line at high tide. The group operated out of what can be described as a large gazebo-like building, with a floor surface of approximately 25 square metres with fly-screens for walls. Half a dozen women of different ages sat around on the immaculate raw-cement floor facing the centre. Each woman focused on her particular task while at the same time exchanging comments or carrying on small talk. The leader of the chili-paste making group was 28-year-old Ja Pu Yin Si. Against the din of pounding pestles on mortars she explained her involvement with the group, its origins, composition and dynamics:

I have been involved with the chili-paste making group for two years. The women of the village formed the group after the tsunami. There are about 19 women in this group. There used to be 27 women in the flower-cultivation group but 13 left to do other things; some people prefer to do other things. When the group first came together we all contributed THB 100 to the bank to start the business. The profits from the sale of the paste are distributed according to the amount of work each person does. Some of the money is reinvested into the business and some of the money is used to attend meetings. There is a lot of trust among the members and the group leader is elected by vote. Some of the members already knew

how to make chili-paste before joining the group, others learned after joining the group. Things are going well for now so we don't have any plans to change anything in the near future. (interview, 5 August 2007)

The topic of the interview then changed to wider issues of power relations in Koh Mouk as well as the impending ballot for constitutional changes in Thailand. Ja Pu Yin Si spoke clearly and with conviction:

Before the tsunami people did their own thing; now we are more united. When decisions have to be made women have a voice and people listen, it's better than being alone. I don't know much about the government, but we talk among ourselves and we have our own ideas and don't just follow our husbands' ideas. (interview, 5 August 2007)

Ja Pu Yin Si was what the locals call a natural leader. She was not the exception. One of the most remarkable characters in terms of natural leadership in Koh Mouk was Ja Pu Yin Sam. I mentioned her briefly earlier in relation to her husband, Bang Sam, one of the quiet Koh Mouk leaders working on the joint management of marine resources. Their household is an unofficial meeting place for locals as well as visiting individuals and organisations. It was also the household that the SDFT chairwoman 'strongly recommended' with whom I arranged to have my evening meals, as I did most days. This helped me gain an insight into the amount of social and human capital traffic into and out of Koh Mouk.

Visitors of different backgrounds arrived at the house almost on a daily basis, some stayed at Ja Pu Yin Sam's house overnight or for short stays, and it was the default lodging for all SAN staff when they stayed on the island. Ja Pu Yin Sam was a trusted woman; children would come to the house regularly to deposit money into their 'bank' accounts which she helped them learn to manage (see figure. 5.5).



Figure 5.5: Ja Pu Yin Sam teaching local children how to manage their 'bank' accounts

Photograph by author (2007)

Ja Pu Yin Sam was a portly woman at the time in her forties. She had three children, the youngest ten and the eldest at university studying for a career in the hotel and tourism industries. Ja Pu Yin Sam had an understated, kindly manner topped by an oft-smiling face and a steely determination to uphold the cultural values of her people in the context of major changes and opportunities. She said that Koh Mouk's Central

Women's Group was involved in many commercial activities such as making curry paste, sweet dry fish, artificial flavours, desserts, goods from coconut shells and seashell crafts. She had been voted leader of the group, whose story epitomises the shifting social and human capitals in Koh Mouk:

There used to be some problems about costs so we joined together and became the Central Group. We set up a committee made up of the president, the secretary, the treasurer, auditor and financial director to make the operation possible. The president of the Central Group must be a strongly committed leader. (interview, 20 August 2007)

Ja Pu Yin Sam said that most people in Koh Mouk are related to each other. She also said that while there were Buddhist people in Koh Mouk, they all lived in brotherhood and sisterhood and that there were no conflicts because of the different religions. She pointed out that in terms of the outside world, local people did not have much knowledge and experience because they lived in Koh Mouk most of the time and did not travel much. However, as the community leader she travelled overseas for capacity building. She said:

Working in this capacity I travelled to Bangladesh to learn about community work then came back to help develop my community. They [in Bangladesh] are better organised because they have steering

committees. When we returned we imitated them and set up a steering committee to take care of emergency assistance during a disaster. At first the president of the committee made the decisions now every committee member joins in in the decision-making process, brainstorming and sharing ideas to solve our problems. The villagers voted for me to be their leader. I don't take advantage of anyone. I'm dedicated and everybody trusts me and believes in me. The objective of the group at the time was to create employment for women. In the past women had no right to do such work we wanted to establish a women's group to help our community, the same as men do. We still have a lot of work to do. In the future our group will go on working for our community. For example, we will join the students in cleaning up our community. We also want to set up an example for the next generation. Some of our activities are successful and others are not. We participate and help in all community activities. The group has no problems except for profits allocation. Some groups had to stop their activities because they didn't know how to manage. I want all the women in the group to love one another and to enjoy a strong bond forever. Let nothing destroy this friendship. (interview, 20 August 2007)

This quote indicates one of the most important developments in Koh Mouk and feeds into the social-human capital theory as it marks the beginning of capacity building of local women towards self-organisation.

The quote also points to the linking process between local villagers and NGOs as well as with wider communities overseas. The trip was sponsored by the SDFT. This Thai NGO in turn was funded by the government of Denmark. She did not travel alone; most notably, Cha Pu Yin Sam was accompanied on a trip by Koh Mouk's school principal. I return to the subject of education in chapter six.

5.6 Women's groups: summary

The development of women's groups in Koh Mouk follows a global agenda aimed at the overall improvement of the status of women, in particular, equal rights and opportunities, and empowerment not only in rhetoric but in practice. There still exist traditional constraints in the implementation of the agenda, most notably in traditional domestic roles and unyielding patriarchal structures. Possibly deriving from these are also other constraints, particularly in the areas of social and human capital, that is, a lack of skill development or capacity building coupled with elements of social capital such as trust, cooperation, norms and reciprocity that would enable women to network to break away from or renegotiate traditional roles. Against that background, through their own agency and NGO facilitation, the women of Koh Mouk have organised themselves to develop the skills and abilities that have enabled them to engage in the money economy. Further, they have enhanced their social

capital bonds. While this may be considered a modest first step, it is most likely irreversible. This is not only because of the characteristics and ability of the current women's leadership, but also because of parallel events taking place among the younger generation of women and men on the island. My observations in Koh Mouk in 2007 would leave little doubt that one of the most remarkable events taking place on the island was the villagers' shifting attitudes towards education for both, boys and girls, embodied in the development of the new school curriculum. It is now time to turn our attention to the future of Koh Mouk. ■

The new school curriculum— capacity building and civic engagement for the future

6.1 Introduction

This chapter demonstrates how social and human capital interacted in the development of a new approach to formal education in Koh Mouk in response to the tsunami disaster of 2004. It explains the implications of this new approach to education in terms of long-term strategic goals for both local and wider communities. The chapter also discusses the significance of the newly developed approach to education in terms of civic engagement with the broader Thai political narrative as the community prepared to take part in a referendum on a new constitution. Finally, I will also argue that both these projects, the development of a new school curriculum and the engagement in the wider political discourse, created the synergies between existing social and human capital that allowed the communities involved to become more resilient. The first workshops for the development of the new curriculum were held in 2006 and the first pilot was implemented in 2007 in Koh Mouk. In July of that year, during the field trip for this research, student representatives from

three other neighbouring villages congregated in Koh Mouk and joined local students in a camp designed to put in practice aspects of the new curriculum. The resulting effort highlighted the development of skills, cooperation and efficiency that augurs well for the future of the local people.

6.2 Children and the tsunami

Children are particularly vulnerable in disaster situations as traumatic events can have a long-lasting and potentially indelible effect on their developing minds, particularly their sense of security. According to the UN Country Team in Thailand (2005), traumatic events have a big influence on the way children relate to the world. In order to cope with natural disasters, it is important to give as much security to the children as is humanly possible. As well as being psychologically significant, a sense of security allows the young mind to develop better cognitive and social skills. After the family environment, one of the places where children feel within their comfort zone is the school environment. This is where much of the emphasis in disaster recovery efforts is placed, and where longer-lasting contingency measures are developed and implemented. The UN Country Team in Thailand (2005, pp. 15–16) reports that in Thailand, around 20 per cent of schools serving 50,000 children in 20 districts, were affected by the tsunami—five schools were destroyed, and 19 more were

damaged. Others suffered the death of students or teachers. Many schools lost furniture and equipment. Damage to school buildings and furniture was estimated at USD 800,000. Quite remarkably, however, all schools had re-opened by 10 January 2005; the majority had begun their school year on 4 January, and 75 per cent of children were back in school during the first week. In the aftermath of the disaster Thailand was left with 1,449 orphans, in the most devastated districts 50,000 children underwent the trauma of severe disruption to their normal lives.

Koh Mouk School was spared the most damaging effects of the tsunami, but parts of it still felt its destructive impact and children and staff suffered trauma. The school principal said:

When the tsunami hit, the school was flooded as it is near the sea. The football field was damaged and the school was used as a community emergency centre ... One student sustained a terrible leg injury but now he is OK. The school was badly affected by the tsunami due to economic problems. Students lost both material things as well as emotional stability. They were afraid that the disaster would happen again.

(interview, 2007)

In the words of a Year 9 female student from Koh Mouk School:

The tsunami happened on a Sunday. Secondary students had just returned from Scout camp. No students were harmed because they were

with their families. The tsunami water came through the schoolyard and reached the old building, but it was not destroyed.

(student # 1, video interview, 2007)

During the interview the principal took the opportunity to send a message and a plea for assistance to any potential donors on behalf of the school and the community:

If any NGOs wish to provide their assistance, they should come directly to Koh Mouk and talk with the Pu Yai Ban, the Islamic teachers, the school and the community committee, and they will know the real needs of the community and the assistance will correspond to the real target requirements. In terms of education management, since Koh Mouk is located on an island, communication is not easy. The budget from the government is the same amount as for other schools, so we have financial difficulties. For example, a school on the mainland gets THB 100,000 (approx. AUD 3,200), the same as Koh Mouk School, but we have greater expenditure. Koh Mouk School was founded more than 40 years ago; it's now wearing out. A few buildings are going to fall down; they need repairs as they are dangerous for students, but we have no budget. We're sure that our teachers can educate our students as well as the teachers in the mainland. We have master degree teachers and we use computerised lessons. The learning opportunities for students here are not different from other places. Only transportation is difficult. (video interview, 2007)

Student #1:

Before the tsunami, the school didn't have a budget for things like school development and building renovations. After the tsunami, government organisations provided assistance for things like roof and building repairs. The government also provided scholarships and stationery.

(Year 9 female, interview, 18 August 2007, video resource)

These statements seem to imply that despite some assistance from the authorities, there is still an unfilled gap in the needs of the community school that they are not filling or likely to address in the near future. This can be interpreted as a lack of confidence in the authorities and therefore a diminished level of social capital in the erosion of bridging and linking networks. At the same time, the plea shows that there are reliable social structures in place in Koh Mouk that can guarantee the proper distribution and use of any resources donated to the island. This, in turn, implies that there is a high level of social capital in the community in terms of norms, trust and enhanced bonding networks.

One of the main concerns with children following a disaster or similarly traumatic event is to provide them with a sense of normalcy and opportunity to express their feelings. I had first-hand experience as a member of a volunteer teacher team sponsored by the Australian government, through AusAID, to assist in the recovery efforts in the

Republic of the Maldives from January to April 2005. During pre-departure briefings, the team was introduced to the effect of disasters on a young population and the need to re-establish pre-existing routines and activities to allow self-expression. At the same time, similar efforts were being made throughout the Indian Ocean rim. The Population and Community Development Association (PDA) (2007) reported on similar efforts in Thailand:

Psychological and Rehabilitation Camps activities started soon after the tsunami and provided emotional and psychological support to children and youth reducing post-tsunami stress and trauma as well as establishing friendships and youth networks. (pp. 6–9)

Looking beyond the immediate recovery efforts following the disaster, there is the pressing question of what do in case of another disaster. The UN Conference on Disaster Management and School Curriculum Development held in Bangkok in September 2007 points to a widespread consensus on this issue to the effect that schools play a major role in disaster management. Haliza Abdul Rahman (2012) sums up this concept as follows:

Communities can survive future tsunamis if they are well prepared and have integrated knowledge about this matter. Apart from that, education is considered as one of the key tools for any subjects. The real

mainstreaming to risk reduction starts from formal education institutions to informal education ... Incorporating hazard and disaster risk-related issues into existing education curricula contributes to continuous learning and enhancement knowledge. By educating children the knowledge will be transmitted to future generations. They are effective agents for improving safety and resilience. Higher education and research also merit special attention, as they are the sources of practical means to build disaster reduction capacities. (p. 163)

There are tangible reasons for these recommendations. Francesco Maria Battisti (2005, pp. 9–10) recounts how students at St Giuliano School in Italy were saved during an earthquake by following an earlier teacher's instructions to hide under their desks in case of a tremor. Reports travelled around the world about how 10-year-old British student Tilly Smith saved hundreds of lives at Phuket's Maikhao beach on Boxing Day 2004, after recognising the signs of an incoming tsunami and warning her mother, who then raised the alarm that prompted the evacuation of the beach and adjacent hotel. Against this backdrop, Koh Mouk School embarked on an ambitious plan to develop a curriculum that would include disaster management in order to make the local school a safer place. Before discussing how the longer-term implications in terms of human and social capital point to greater benefits for the local people than the management

of a disaster, in the next section I outline the educational context in which these changes took place.

6.3 Thai school education system

Thailand has a comprehensive public education system from pre-elementary education at approximately age 3, through to grade 12 at approximately age 18. The Thai grading system is consistent with international standards, including Australia, with six years of primary schooling, Prathom or P 1–6, starting at approximately age 6, and six years of secondary schooling, Mattayom or M1–6. This system is complemented by a non-formal education sector as well as a healthy private sector education system, particularly in the area of vocational education.

According to the Thai Ministry of Education, “The current Thai Education system stems from the reforms set by the 1999 National Education Act which implemented new organisational structures, promoted the decentralization of administration and called for innovative learner-centred teaching practices” (www.bic.moe.go.th, 2008). The Thai education system provides nine years of compulsory education and 12 years of free education. The public system covers 82 per cent of educational institutions across all sectors, while private institutions cover the remaining 18 per cent. In the area of vocational education alone the break-up is in the vicinity of 65:35 per cent public-private institutions,

respectively. The average level of education for a citizen between the ages of 15 and 39 is 10.1, while, significantly, for those aged 15 to 59 it is 8.7. These figures seem to indicate an increase in the level of school grade attainment in the last few decades and an increasing trend in the number of students who are staying at school longer. The Thai Ministry of Education is implementing a long-term plan to improve the educational level of the population across all levels including tertiary and vocational, or technical, education.

The figures above are not inconsistent with Koh Mouk's reality. Thaneer, Suavachittanont and others (2006) collected data that suggests the educational outcomes in Koh Mouk approximate the national average. These authors surveyed the educational outcomes of 1,713 villagers out of a total population of 2,193. Of those surveyed, 348 were aged between 0 and 24, while 1,365 were between 25 and 59, and 115 had attained a level of high-school, vocational education diploma or Bachelor's degree. While the study does not provide a break-up of the educational outcomes for the 18 to 24 year-old age bracket specifically, it does provide enough accurate data to suggest that Koh Mouk's educational outcomes are in line with the rest of the nation. Significantly, the study also reveals that out of the same surveyed group, 808 had only attained sixth grade and 319 attained the ninth grade. Assuming that these figures exclude students attending high

school at the time of the study, the survey only includes 348 villagers aged between 0 and 24, which point to an older population up to the age of 59 who stopped formal education at the age of 12 or 13, before junior high school.

In Koh Mouk there is some evidence that this type of lower academic outcome may also be changing in line with the rest of the nation. Recent developments in Thai education may be partly responsible for this shift. In particular, the development of locally relevant syllabi, as suggested by the studies outlined above, developed in collaboration with locals and using local knowledge, created a synergy that was gathering momentum at the time of research. Referring to one such development, Boonreang Kajornsinn and Chalutip Samahito (2006) state that:

The objective of this study was to develop integrated school-based curriculum for schools around the Ranong Coastal Resources Research Station ... As outside academics and researchers, we facilitated a process but did not impose a curriculum. Teachers developed a curriculum appropriate to their values and community, so they had ownership. With this sense of ownership, they were willing and able to do a good job.

(pp. 1–5)

6.4 Curriculum development workshop, 2006

During a short field trip in 2006, I was invited by the Chairwoman of the SDFT to attend a curriculum development workshop at Hat Ja Mai Marine Park Education Centre. Koh Mouk is located within the boundaries of Hat Ja Mai Marine Park, and the Education Center is located on the mainland shoreline of the park, almost within sight of Koh Mouk. I arrived at the Centre on 30 June 2006 at the commencement of activities. Approximately 40 people attended, including teachers, principals, NGOs and community representatives. The main objective of the exercise was to set up protocols to develop a curriculum that would enhance the local communities' resilience in case of another natural disaster like the 2004 tsunami. During three days of frantic activities, the participants attended general presentations and then split into teams and worked into the night brainstorming, planning and presenting material to the main group. The earlier presentations were mainly on the impact of the tsunami in terms of lost lives, displacement, and loss of livelihoods, property and infrastructure. Then the topic shifted to future potential disasters, including the possible effects of global warming. We discussed local communities' vulnerabilities and the development of a holistic approach to manage such potential disasters with an emphasis on the development and implementation of locally relevant school syllabi. Importantly, there was an emphasis on the realisation of what came to be known as the 'Safe

School Project'. On 1 July 2006 the SDFT chairwoman addressed the congregation, summarising the preliminary decisions as follows:

Let's develop the curriculum, compare it to the existing one and improve it. Develop it in detail and to a high standard with clear objectives as to influence policymakers, make it a practical exercise. Compile all data, take the content for each year of schooling and break it down into teaching processes, deconstruct existing curriculum, each local school is to integrate or develop curriculum by grade. Koh Mouk is to serve as a pilot program where other school can access material and choose as required. The curriculum can then be integrated across the board in risk areas. (field notes, Trang Province, 2006)

This seminal workshop was the milestone that marked the mid-point between an earlier idea and the ultimate implementation of the pilot project. The Koh Mouk School Principal said:

The 'Safe School Project' originated with SDFT. The Chairwoman suggested that we attend a seminar in Bangladesh, so community representatives and myself attended the seven-day seminar. We discussed how the community would manage in case of another disaster. We decided the community should have a contingency plan to help students. After the Bangladesh seminar we returned to Thailand and held workshops together with another five schools in our cluster network. Koh Mouk is the pilot 'Safe Schools' project in cooperation with

Educational District 2 in Trang Province.

(video interview, 18 August 2007)

According to a ReliefWeb report released in 2006, this principal was the 'champion' of the Safe School Project Curriculum development after taking part in a disaster school training program organised by ActionAid in flood-prone Bangladesh (<http://reliefweb.int/report/thailand/safety-begins-school-pupils-muk-island-thailand>). This type of local agency and leadership aided and abetted by local and international NGOs and complemented by high levels of local participation, cooperation and trust was in full display, as the next step in disaster preparedness demonstrates.

6.5 The disaster management school camp (20–22 July 2007)

In 2007, one year after the Hat Ja Mai Marine Park Education Centre workshop, the Safe School Project pilot was implemented in Koh Mouk. In July that year, an additional disaster management youth camp for students was organised with the participation of 88 junior high school students from Koh Mouk and three neighbouring community schools, Chang Lhang, Hat Samrarn and Kwan Toong Ku. The implementation of the camp required a higher level of organisation than was usual in Koh Mouk. Thirty-seven officials from the different schools, NGOs and government, as well as dozens of volunteers, also took part in the proceedings. The efficient and effective operation of the camp, as well as

the knowledge gained and presented by the students, indicate the surge in the social and human capital in Koh Mouk and neighbouring communities. The translated camp report states that the camp had six main objectives:

- To carry out a survey of Koh Mouk community, including the history of each bay, population, geographic characteristics, housing and mapping.
- To share lessons learned from 2004 tsunami disaster response
- To develop disaster evacuation routes and contingency plans.
- To develop a forum for the sharing and brainstorming of ideas among a wide range of people from neighbouring communities.
- To identify safe zones in case of a natural disaster and to develop evacuation routes maps.
- To heighten the community level of awareness regarding natural disaster and to prepare the community for such an event (July 2007 School Camp Report, Koh Mouk).

Students, staff and guests arrived for the camp on 20 July 2007, and the camp continued until 22 July. The school classrooms were set up as temporary accommodation quarters and meals were prepared by local volunteers on site and served in the school cafeteria, an outdoor area

under cover. Before assembling in the school hall, students were issued identical uniforms—light blue, long tracksuit pants and pink polo shirts—so that there was no distinction between different communities or genders (see figure 6.1). The gender ratio was approximately 1:1.

The majority of students of 76 were from Koh Mouk, joined by four students from Chang Lhang community school, five from Hard Samrarn, and four from Kwan Toong Ku School. At every stage of the camp, and in typical Thai fashion, proceedings were interwoven with fun activities displaying the Thai concept of joy and fun, or *sanook*, in almost every aspect of life. From generalised traditional dancing to team games and performances, the students' core camp activities were always started, followed or interspersed with a sense of *sanook*. They are similar to what are called 'warmers', 'ice-breaking' or 'energising' activities in some countries.



Figure 6.1: Students assemble in Koh Mouk School Hall at the beginning of the disaster management camp

Photograph by author (2007)

Following these preparations, the students were split into six groups of approximately 15 students, one for each bay, for the purpose of brainstorming, planning and carrying out a range of activities designed to engage the community, elicit information on disaster management from them, and analyse, collate and present that information to the main group. One of the salient points of the exercise was the way in which the students engaged with the communities. Each group set out to a different bay accompanied by at least two teachers. They broke up into smaller groups to interview villagers in their homes or while they worked on their boats or carried out assorted chores (see figures 6.2 and 6.3).



Figure 6.2: A group of students from the disaster management camp, accompanied by teachers, interview a villager at home

Photograph by author (2007)



Figure 6.3: A group of students from the disaster management camp interview a villager while he repairs his boat

Photograph by author (2007)

After gathering their data, the students regrouped back at the school to analyse and present their findings (figures 6.4 and 6.5):

Student #2: After that my friends persuaded me to join a camp on sea conservation. We interviewed villagers along the bays regarding evacuation routes in case of another tsunami and also about the history of each bay. Ban Chang Klang, Ban Kuan Toong Ku, Ban Koh Mouk School and Nam Rab as well. (Year 9 male, interview, 18 August 2007)

Student #3: We asked them about their experience in the tsunami and how to get to safety. They gave us practical knowledge that we can use in real life. As a student council member, I can teach the younger students about the tsunami, its causes and how to get to safety if it happens again.
(Year 9 female, interview, 18 August 2007)

Student #2: I was able to share my ideas about the rules within the group during the camp. I learned about disasters and how to be safe.
(Year 9 male, interview, 18 August 2007)

Student #1: I learned about disasters and survival. I can actually use the knowledge in my daily life. I'm a student leader; I can teach the younger students. Several schools participated in the camp—for example, Chang Lang School, Si Khao Pracharaj Padungwit, Wi Chien and Kun Tung Wittaya School. We developed good friendships.
(Year 9 female, interview, 18 August 2007)

The students' statements point to a fostering of resilience among young people and the development of future bonding and linking networks as well as future community leaders.



Figure 6.4: A group of students from the disaster management camp present their findings to the main group

Photograph by author (2007)



Figure 6.5: A group of students from the disaster management camp present their findings to the main group

Photograph by author (2007)

School Principal: The students learned where they can reach safe shelter, what direction they should follow, and how to survive in the shelter. The students showed a lot of interest and the project objectives were achieved; the camp was successful. We're also thinking of compiling a book on Koh Mouk, its history, way of life, etc. Seventy per cent of the book has been written already; we will finish the whole book in about a month. We know the project is successful from our evaluation with students and the community. After the camp we had two meetings that confirmed the success of the project. Future projects include assistance from ActionAid to set up a warning system and other necessary equipment. We carry out disaster drills every two or three months using

sirens and a public address system provided by ActionAid.

(interview, 18 August 2007)



Figure 6.6: Students pose with their disaster management camp participation certificates surrounded by staff

Photo courtesy of Koh Mouk School archives (2007)



Figure 6.7: Students from the disaster management school camp gather for final remarks from NGO staff

Photograph by author (2007)

The quote from the School Principal is consistent with my observations regarding the school camp. At the end of the camp there was a palpable sense of achievement among students, staff and wider community members and NGOs. From the social-human capital perspective the developments taking place at Koh Mouk school are further evidence of the positive feedback cycle between the two types of capital as the bonding and linking networks fed into the skill development and vice-versa.

6.6 School students and the new constitution

Chapter 1.3 of this thesis presents an overview of Thailand's socio-political development from the early 20th century to the time of the field work for this research in 2007. It is not within the scope of this research to analyse Thailand's turbulent political past and the trials and tribulations that resulted in the development of its 18 constitutions, following a corresponding number of *coups d'etat* since the country became a constitutional monarchy in 1932. However, it would be remiss not to mention the crucial political moment the villagers of Koh Mouk experienced in 2007 along with the rest of the country as they prepared to vote in a referendum on a new constitution. This is of particular importance in the context of the shifting social and human capital dynamics in the village following the 2004 tsunami disaster. In the context of this chapter, the event acquires a greater significance in the role played

by the school and younger generation in educating the older generation while engaging in the wider civic process. The idea of developing a greater level of participation of southern villagers in the Thai civic process did not happen by chance or simply as a result of the prevailing political winds of the time. For many years, there had been a concerted effort by NGOs in Thailand to develop leaders and able speakers who could represent their fellow villagers in the wider political discourse. This is the type of political frontline in the historical battle between the main two political forces Baker and Phongpaichit (2009) identified broadly as liberals and conservatives (see chapter 1.3 here). The political circumstances in 2007 prompted NGOs to rethink their strategies. During an interview for this research, a foreign SDFT staff member said:

NGOs in Thailand have gone into overdrive due to their efforts to increase people's participation in the drafting of the new constitution. SDFT efforts and resources have shifted to the southern provinces. There will be several forums and conferences in the next several weeks. SDFT is seeking to influence drafting of the new constitution by encouraging local participation in southern provinces. Therefore, resources, efforts and direction have shifted from the management of marine resources to the new constitution. (Interview, 26 April 2007)

In terms of social capital networks, this shift implies a building of bridging and linking networks on the foundations of existing networks. From strengthening local networks and community engagement with NGOs to deal with the aftermath of the disaster in environmental and economic terms, the locals now prepared to develop linking networks through engagement in mainstream civic activities. In terms of human capital, this engagement required the building of capacity among the local population. According to the same SDFT source:

Capacity building to increase local levels of participation in civic society has been around in Koh Mouk for about ten years. The locals may not think of it in terms of capacity building or participation. Key people attend forums; usually they are able speakers, but ten years ago they were not able speakers. As a result of NGO facilitation, now they have able public speakers in the community on issues such as political reform, natural resources management and linking with NGOs.

(Interview, 26 April 2007).

This is just as well since political developments in Thailand over the previous 80 years leading up to the 2007 vote on a new constitution had been tumultuous. It is worth noting that Baker and Phongpaichit (2009) identified this type of NGO engagement with rural communities; i.e. advocating for and educating communities; and that this advocacy and

education are in line with the development of social and human capitals as argued in this thesis. It is also worth mentioning Walker (2012) suggests that in communities where this process has been in place for a longer period, the increasing power of the rural population results in those populations seeking to engage with the sources of political power rather than to oppose them (see also chapter 1.3 here). In August 2007, the Thai people went to the polls to vote on whether or not to replace the 1997 constitution, also known as the People's Constitution. This was in the lead-up to the December 2007 general elections promised by the interim government following a 2006 *coup d'état* that resulted in the dismissal of the then Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra on what Nancy Wei (2009) calls "the pretext of corruption tax evasion and abuse of power" (pp. 296–300). Until 1997, the Thai political process was characterised by its lack of partisanship as political parties had an ephemeral life. The 1997 constitution was designed to foster the creation or strengthening of political parties with a particular brand and constituency. One unintended result was the opportunity for concentration of power in such a way that it could allow the Prime Minister to challenge the conservative forces (Hicken, 2011). Following the 2006 coup, the interim government moved to "correct some of the perceived shortcomings of the 1997 constitution and the excesses of the Thaksin era. In short, the 2007 constitution was

explicitly crafted to undermine the capacity of political parties and elected leaders to challenge Thailand's conservative forces in the future" (Hicken, 2011, p. 11).

Politics can be a sensitive topic in Thailand. It can also awaken very strong passions among a people who are renowned for their tolerance and tendency to avoid conflict whenever possible. Bearing this in mind, the approach to find out how the community engaged with the wider political process in this research was low key and avoided ideology-specific topics, but rather focused on the mechanics of the engagement, the 'how' rather than the 'what'. In the months leading up to the referendum on a possible change to the constitution, I observed an information campaign meant to educate the Thai people on the implications of voting for a change. One of the main tools used in this campaign was a yellow book, available to all citizens, in which the proposed changes were spelled out and explained. Koh Mouk School took a more structured approach to educate the young citizens, even though they were not of voting age. This process not only helped to prepare the future voting population citizens of the island to understand the current political process but, more directly, it was aimed at educating some of their parents through their children.

Interviews with the school principal and some of the students involved were instructive:

Regarding the drafting of the 2550 B.E [2007 C.E] constitution, we educate the students at the school assembly as well as during school. Yesterday we started a campaign so that parents in the community will come out and decide whether they will agree at the upcoming referendum if the new constitution will lead to democracy in our country soon. (Interview, 18 August 2007, video resource).

This indicates a concerted effort to engage the community in the wider political discourse through the young, and in so doing also predisposing the future generations towards civic engagement.

Student #1:

We students participated in a campaign for the referendum regarding the 2550 B.E. constitution giving the community the consequences of agreement or disagreement. The campaign was successful because when I came home my family said they would participate. (Year 9 female, interview, 18 August 2007, video resource)

There was a clear sense of achievement as the student spoke; the explanation of the 'consequences' in voting one way or another would suggest that the process had, at the very least, a semblance of equity rather than being politically charged regarding voting preferences.

Sunday, 19 August 2007 was a particularly wet and windy day on the island following several days of similar weather conditions. The palm

trees bent, their fronds flying horizontally and the school football pitch resembled a lagoon. A large classroom at Koh Mouk School had been set up for voters to cast their votes. A large table was set up near the entrance to the room where three voting officials checked voters' identifications, checked their names against a list of local registered residents and handed voting papers to them. The voting booths were located against the far wall, a lone policeman paced slowly near the room entrance and politely but firmly indicated that filming was not allowed near the booths. As the day progressed, more people ventured out of their homes and braved the weather to cast their votes. One of the most enduring images of that ominous day captured on camera was that of an elderly lady who emerged from her booth to cast her secret vote in the ballot box; she paused for the camera, looked right into the lens and, smiling proudly, held her folded voting paper above her head for posterity to witness and then confidently slotted it home into the box.

As it turned out, the new constitution was approved by popular vote and new general elections were held in December that year. That landmark wet August day also marked the beginning of the end of the field trip for this research. The social and human capital dynamics in Koh Mouk were in full display to even the most casual observer. They revealed a community in the midst of a very significant transition in terms of their

socio-economic system, the way they saw themselves and the way they chose to engage with the wider world. It is fitting then that the final words of this empirical section of the research be left to the promising young generation of Koh Mouk villagers, the students, who voiced their future aspiration:

Student #3 (Year 9 female): Because of the tourism boom I would like teachers to teach English to the villagers so they can speak English and get a job at one of the resorts. I want to have my own business such as a tour agency. Koh Mouk is my birthplace, I want to develop it so I can employ local people to work with me and earn an income together.

Student #2 (Year 9 male): I want to be a singer.

Student #1 (Year 9 female): I want to have my own resort. I want to be a tour guide because I love English.

Student #4 (Year 8 male): I want to be a singing artist.

Student #1 (Year 9 female): I want to see Koh Mouk unspoilt and peaceful. I want to develop the community and the island. I want progress and I want it to be the best community in Thailand.

Student #1 (Year 9 female): Now the resources in Koh Mouk are decreasing. I would like my brothers and sisters and everybody to conserve the sea grass, coral, etc. The fine-mesh nets

should not be used anymore.

Student #2 (Year 9 male): I would like the whole world to care more for Koh Mouk. I invite them to visit us and conserve our environment.

Student #4 (Year 8 male): I want people to help gather the rubbish so now there is a campaign for proper rubbish disposal.

Following my interaction with the villagers of Koh Mouk for several months I was convinced that underneath the natural youthful enthusiasm exhibited by the local students lay the seeds of something more resilient and enduring. At a young age they had already survived a natural disaster, their families and their community were undergoing considerable changes in their traditional lifestyles and their world was being reshaped, indeed, they were active participants in that change. It is this active participation that is likely to provide the impetus for long-lasting and meaningful change.

6.7 Summary

The local response to the disaster and contingency measures drew on existing human and social capital and expanded them through capacity building in the form of curriculum development and its implementation through enhanced bonding networks among local and neighbouring villagers, as well as through bridging networks between villagers, NGOs and academic institutions. Despite criticisms of what was considered a

relatively inefficient initial response to the disaster, the groundwork for enhanced linking networks between locals and government authorities became established a few years later through a process of civic engagement, especially during the 2007 referendum on a new constitution centred in the school with students playing a key role in that engagement. While the agency for these efforts lies largely with the local people, NGOs, and in particular SDFT, were instrumental in facilitating that process. The outcome of this study points to a shift in the human and social capital in Koh Mouk. Having walked through the empirical 'trees', it is now time to look at the proverbial 'forest' in the final discussion chapter of this thesis. ■

Discussion

7.1 Key findings

Based on fieldwork carried out in 2007, following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami disaster, the village of Koh Mouk in Thailand underwent a transformation in terms of social and human capital. Drawing on evidence from observations and interviews with villagers, I have argued that these changes relate to the expansion and consolidation of bonding networks and the creation of new linking and bridging networks. I have also presented evidence of improvements in various elements of social capital such as trust, reciprocity and participation, as well as an increase in capacity building leading to a potential self-sustaining reservoir of human capital.

Drawing on social capital theory and based on my empirical research, social and human capital in Koh Mouk influenced each other in a positive way resulting in a synergetic relationship. This synergy came about as a result of both a need to recover from the disaster and a shifting economic imperative due to the traditional local reliance on marine

resources being undermined by overfishing and unsustainable fishing practices. This is the particular ‘complementary and situatedness’ of social and human capitals Nahapiet (2011) refers to as explained in page 45 here. That positive interaction between social and human capital had a positive effect on the sustainable development of the island in the early stages of recovery and implementation of development strategies up to at least 2007. Increasing global resonance of reconciliation between development and sustainability over the last few decades found an echo in Koh Mouk. This is particularly so in the post-tsunami recovery period, when the cultural dynamics of the village—those “habits of life, or national and regional culture” (Halpern, 2005, pp. 26–27)—could be understood in the context of “an external shock that kicks it (the culture of social capital) into a new equilibrium” (Halpern (2005), p. 269), and what Grootaert and van Bastelaer (2002) consider to be the more subjective aspect or “the cognitive form of social capital” (p. 3).

My research suggests that the unprecedented development dynamism in Koh Mouk in the 2005–2007 period was also connected to global trends in terms of ideas as well as resources. Here, the concept of considering the political aspects in developing our understanding of environmental change espoused by Forsyth and Walker (2012) in page 58 here, finds an echo in the SDFT definition of sustainable development. The

social capital element of agency displayed by villagers and NGOs, as well as their mutual cooperation, was one of the salient characteristics of social and human capital dynamics in Koh Mouk and can be said to have played a substantive role in the successes of the different enterprises discussed in this thesis. Finally, the noticeable improvement in social and human capital in Koh Mouk appears to have been a catalyst for the integration of the local community, from the fringes of civic engagement, into the maelstrom of the national political discourse and further away from the radical secessionist movements in Thailand's 'Deep South'.

7.2 Discussion

The salient features of social capital in Koh Mouk are the shifting nature of networks, characterised by the expansion of existing bonding networks at the micro level before the 2004 tsunami, into emerging bridging and linking networks at the meso and macro levels in the three years following the disaster. The networks in Koh Mouk expanded from mostly bonding at the micro level and relatively low levels of human capital before 2004, in line with Suwajittanont's (2006) findings, to bonding, bridging and linking and increasing levels of human capital in most areas of study by 2007. A prime example is in the joint management of marine resources, in which more than 40 communities, several NGOs and government organisations joined in discussion to address issues of sustainability with

emphasis on fishing practices and the preservation and regeneration of depleted marine resources. Similarly, on the challenging issues of land tenure and local housing, the communities received assistance from NGOs, and engaged with government to negotiate land tenure and a housing project that would house up to 20 per cent of the local population. This in turn reconfigured some bonding networks as traditional neighbours became separated and new neighbourhoods emerged.

The development of the women's groups is another example of expanding into bridging networks through their connections with global organisations at the Bangladesh workshop mentioned in chapter six. According to locals, the quality of bonding networks among the women in Koh Mouk in relation to the different moneymaking enterprises improved in relation to an increase in capacity building and subsequent improved levels of trust. This contrasted with earlier efforts that had failed due to a lack of business management skills as well as a deficit in norms, trust and reciprocity which impinged on development of small enterprises and small business management. This deficit was not peculiar to Koh Mouk but had already been identified by Dimitrijevic (2007) as being one of the 'main constraints' for self-organising women's groups in developing communities'.

The final example of expanding networks manifested in development of the new school curriculum and the role that the school played in community engagement and the wider civic process. The curriculum development brought together people and organisations from a variety of places and backgrounds, including villagers, educators, NGOs, government officials and academics. The Koh Mouk school camp encapsulated this process, as it brought together many stakeholders in a display of practical results for the communities. This development is in line with a wider understanding that disaster management and mitigation starts at school. The concept was the subject of a UN Conference held in Bangkok in 2012. During this conference, Rahman (2012) contended that ‘the real mainstreaming of risk reduction starts from formal education...incorporating hazard and disaster risk-related issues into existing education curricula contributes to continuous learning and enhancement of knowledge’. The school also became something of an instrument of the community in their engagement with the wider political process. Party politics aside, i.e. the conservative status quo on the one hand and a liberal movement on the other as broadly identified by Baker and Phongpaichit (2009), the local public school and its students played an important role in the political process leading up to a vote for a new

constitution. The advocacy and educational role played by NGOs is also noted by the same authors.

One exception to these trends is the area of economic development relating to tourism. Despite the fact that there had been an earlier effort by locals to organise themselves into the Tourism Resources Group, as noted in chapter one, there appeared to be no particular follow-up organisation for this potential economic activity. Rather, they appeared to take opportunities as they presented themselves in response to the resort employers' prerogatives, for example, taking on menial jobs at the resort employers' convenience. I interpret this as a deficit in social and human capital and suggest that given the experience of the villagers in relation to other aspects of their recovery and development in recent times, such as the Housing Project and the Women's Group, they would be well positioned to organise themselves and negotiate better employment outcomes and business opportunities.

One aspect of tourism with which the locals seemed to be tacitly in agreement was their expectation that tourists would respect local sensitivities in regard to presentation and behaviour so as not to negatively influence the local population, particularly the young. This is an example of the cultural aspect of social capital highlighted by Halpern (2005) in chapter one. It is precisely this young generation, as represented in the

interview samples, who count on tourism as one of their main sources of economic and development opportunities for the future.

Another example of shifting views and overlap is the creation of the children's bank throughout the community, which was illustrated in figure 5.5. The concept of banking in Islam differs in that bank interest is not allowed; rather, the investor becomes a shareholder and is then awarded increases in capital over time. The recent concerted effort to instil in the young a need to save and manage capital marks a departure from more relaxed earlier practices. Of note, therefore, is the reconciliation of these two perceived and seemingly different attitudes towards capital in what at the time of this research could be described as harmonious transition.

There is an observable increment in most of the elements of social capital such as trust, participation, cooperation, reciprocity and agency, compared to locals' versions of past experience and in line with Suwajittanont's (2006) findings. There were some commensurable areas between social capital and capacity building in the development of methods of information sharing, norms or rules, and procedures—what Grootaert and van Bastelaer (2002) call “the structural form of social capital” (p. 3)—which have played a key role in the development of trust and participation. Some influential areas of capacity building in this respect seem to be organisational skills, public speaking and financial

literacy. Moreover, an earnest sense of solidarity and commitment to community improvement was a constant in the bulk of the villagers observed and interviewed. The organisational skills include setting up committees, agendas and procedures. This was particularly in full display during the large meetings held at Trang City Library, during negotiations with a Marine Parks official in Koh Mouk and during meetings and workshops in preparation for negotiations with government authorities to determine land tenure. In addition, the whole curriculum development exercise was capacity building in practice from conception to implementation, as described in chapter 6.

In terms of sustainability, most areas of study were concerned with the SDFT definition of sustainability in chapter two. A salient point in the community's embrace of sustainability was the strengthening of social balance by including local knowledge and culture, as well as encouraging local groups such as women's groups in the decision-making process. Sustainability was most evident in the joint management of marine resources and the new housing project, but two important areas of the local economy—rubber production and tourism—remain more vulnerable as they depend on global rather than local demand.

Rubber production is taxing on the environment due to the amount of natural resources it requires such as fertile land and access to a reliable

water supply, as well as its waste products such as sulphuric and other acids. At the time of the research there appeared to be no plans to increase the levels of rubber production from those before the tsunami.

Tourism is not a homogenous industry in Koh Mouk. Besides small, locally-owned and managed resorts that seem to blend with the landscape and the people, there are a few larger complexes owned, according to locals, by wealthy people from Bangkok with whom they maintain an ambiguous relationship. While many locals have benefitted through employment and skills development, there are conflicts over working conditions and treatment of employees, as well as the need to develop skills demanded by the standards of such facilities versus local values of quality time with family. Indeed, there appears to be a quiet, relatively small but strong undercurrent of local animosity regarding the development of the tourism industry by those whom some locals regard as outsiders. As well as the overall disruption to their lifestyle, the locals regard tourism as providing very little gain; lowly paid jobs in exchange for the demand on their clean water resources as well increased waste in their environment. In light of recent historical precedents, there appears to be ample scope for NGO facilitation in the education of all parties regarding tourism development and negotiations on the best way forward for the industry on the island.

7.3 Limitations to the research project

The main challenges and limitations to this research project have been the inability to communicate freely in a common language and, partly as a result of this, an oversimplification of the power dynamics prevailing at the time of research. My limited Thai language skills and subsequent need to access a reliable and suitable interpreter took several weeks to be resolved. Some situations such as formal interviews and the observation of meetings as well as other developments such as the school camp required an interpreter in order to get the most out of them. The six-month-long field trip and the fact that many of these events were rescheduled at the last minute or took place unexpectedly meant that an interpreter would have had to be on standby for that time, a practical impossibility in the context of the modest resources allocated to the project.

Several Thai people and one bilingual foreigner facilitated communication and data collection at different times, but one stood out for her reliability and availability on site. Although Khun Meaw had not been born in Koh Mouk, she was a local Muslim woman from Trang Province who had assisted her university lecturers in a research project and understood the ethics requirements of the research, including confidentiality, the need to avoid causing any problems in the course of data gathering as well as behaving in a naturally ethically manner at all times. Serendipitously, at the time of this research she was working as a

tour guide at one of the biggest resorts in Koh Mouk. Her English language skills were steady and, she was proficient enough to facilitate communication between the researcher and locals. It would have been virtually impossible for any interpreter to be on call every time an interview opportunity presented itself for the six-month duration of my fieldtrip. In the event, various interpreters were available often enough to make data collection possible. Khun Meaw, in particular, was an asset to this research for not only her communication skills but also her local knowledge and ability to access places and people that would have been much more challenging without her assistance.

I covered the issue of oversimplification of power dynamics in the Methodology section, chapter 1.4 in this thesis. To summarise, power politics at the micro, meso and macro level during the time of my research in Koh Mouk were significantly more complex than the way I have presented them here. My account perhaps suggests a slightly more optimistic version of the relationships between villagers, NGOs and authorities than a deeper analysis would reveal. This complexity is an issue to be addressed in future research projects.

7.4 Future research

This research project opens the door to further enquiry in a number of areas. The most inviting would be a longitudinal study of the dynamics

between social and human capital as well as the results of long-term sustainable development efforts in the different areas of study in Koh Mouk.

Some questions that would follow naturally from the original study would be: Have the networks on the island been increased and strengthened, and what is their nature? What is the current status of the elements of social capital such as participation, norms, trust, cooperation and reciprocity? Have they continued to evolve? Has capacity building continued? What is the current nature of human capital? Where is the class of 2007? Did they go on to university or technical college, open businesses, or become fisher folk? What is the current level of NGO involvement? What is the current status of the environment? Did fisheries recover sufficiently over the last several years to make a positive impact on the local economy? What is the current status of land ownership in Koh Mouk and the housing status of the locals? Has the tourism industry delivered on its promise? What is the relationship between local villagers and government authorities such as those from the NMP? What is the current level of engagement of the locals in the larger political discourse? What are the power dynamics among the different stakeholders?

Ultimately, does the Koh Mouk experience have observable counterparts in social and human capital dynamics, sustainable

community development and third sector facilitation elsewhere in the Southeast Asian region or internationally? Does it provide any kind of alternative blueprint towards the development of social and human capital in some of the more intractable relationships between some Aboriginal communities and the broader Australian community? And if so, how could that be implemented? Are strong, core community values the foundation on which to sustainably build the rest of the development structure?

7.5 Conclusion

Social and human capital in Koh Mouk underwent substantial changes and expansion in the three years following the 2004 tsunami. Increased levels of agency, participation and trust characterised dynamics of social capital. In this respect, the element of trust can be singled out as the most crucial. It could be argued that this trust was to a large extent fostered by capacity building and a corresponding increase in human capital. This was particularly so in relation to some of the enterprise networks such as the women's group, which benefitted from improved know-how as well as norms, such as the introduction of sustainable fishing practices. To this end, NGO facilitation was instrumental in the early stages of recovery as well as the longer-term sustainable development plan implementation. This highlights what Nahapiet (2011) calls "the highly interrelated and

interdependent relationship between social and human capital” and what Blair (2011) calls the more intangible aspects of human capital in people’s “capacity to adjust and innovate in the face of changing conditions”. The cooperative relationship between villagers and NGOs reflects what Neef (2005) considers one of the prerequisites in genuine participation, that is, the long-term commitment of villagers and development workers. The Koh Mouk experience supports Halpern’s (2005) contention that:

unlike other important decisions that affect the wider community left up to individuals; such as what to eat, how many children to have or what religion to believe in; social capital is worthy of intervention by governments, organizations and communities ... [with] policy that promotes citizen education and service learning that contributes to the creation of a ‘contemporary shared moral discourse’ as one way to promote social capital creation.

This concept of a “shared moral discourse” leads to a final point on the cultural aspect of social capital. Whatever differences may exist between them, the people of Koh Mouk as a whole seem to have a strong sense of identity, solidarity and togetherness. They are focused not only on the ‘what’ and ‘how’ but also, importantly, on the ‘why’ of their sustainable development efforts. Faced with inevitable change in their traditional

lifestyles and using a variety of available resources, their values have underpinned and informed the manner and direction of that change. ■

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Appendix A

Field trip interviews

List of field trip interviews 2007 in chronological order

1. With academic at Phranakhon Rajabhat University, Bangkok on 25 April 2007, in relation to her research in post-tsunami Koh Mouk.
2. With staff member from SDFT at their Bangkok office on 26 April 2007 in relation to Koh Mouk dynamics, issues to avoid and SDFT shift of focus to tsunami-affected communities.
3. With SAN, SAMAPAN and SDFT NGOs staff at SAMAPAN office in Trang on 11–12 May 2007. Topics included the role of their NGOs, my possible areas of research in light of latest developments on Koh Mouk and my role within the community as well as my manner of arrival and introduction on the island. I arrived in Koh Mouk on 29 May 2007.
4. Already on Koh Mouk: With shopkeeper/fisherman, at his home on 30 May 2007 regarding his experience during and after the tsunami.
5. Six Housing Project volunteers/fisher folk, men and women, impromptu interview on site on 30 May 2007 regarding their changing circumstances.
6. With resort workers at the resort on 30 May 2007 regarding their employment.
7. With former fisherman turned rubber producer, at his home on 1 June 2007, regarding villagers' participation in the decision-making process in Koh Mouk.
8. With small resort owner/operator and *pae* owner, and her husband, *Obotoh* (island financial administrator), at their resort on 1 June 2007,

- regarding the changing reality of the marine resources around the island and the pressure of living costs.
9. With fisherman from Koh Mouk and four fishermen from Satun province on their boat anchored near Koh When (island) on 3 June 2007, regarding the violation of the 5 km exclusion zone by large fishing ships.
 10. With elderly man, impromptu interview at street-side restaurant on 3 June 2007, regarding the political organization of Koh Mouk.
 11. With the leader of the Women's Group, and her husband, a former fisherman turned rubber producer at their home on 4 June 2007, regarding the reason for him having given up fishing after the tsunami.
 12. With SAN Housing Project coordinator, at Women's Group leader's house on 4 June 2007, regarding the Housing Project and the Children's Bank.
 13. With Women's Group leader, at a side-street restaurant on 5 June 2007, regarding religion, gender relations and the decision-making process in the management of marine resources.
 14. With a fisherman, his wife, the leader of the Women's Group and her husband at small resort disused restaurant on 12 June 2007, regarding life in Koh Mouk, the different working groups, their organization and the joint management of marine resources.
 15. With a SAN worker on joint management of marine resources at Women's Group leader's house on 13 June 2007, regarding the SAN NGO and the joint management of marine resources.
 16. With a nurse at the clinic on 27 June 2007, regarding health and cultural issues in Koh Mouk.

17. With the school principal, at Koh Mouk School on 28 June 2007, regarding education issues and my role as a teacher at the school.
18. With an English teacher at Koh Mouk School on 28 June 2007, regarding teaching in Koh Mouk.
19. With a fisher folk leader, at his house on 1 July 2007, regarding the challenging relationship between Koh Mouk residents and Marine Parks authorities.
20. Audiovisual interview with the Head of the Village, 1 July 2007
21. With the leader of the Women's Group, and her husband, a former fisherman turned rubber producer at their home on 5 July 2007 regarding the community becoming stronger after the tsunami.
22. With the leader of the Women's Group, at her home on 10 July 2007, regarding the women's changing roles in Koh Mouk.
23. With a resort employee, member of the Women's Group and rubber producer, at her home on 11 July 2007, regarding her role in the Women's Group, her employment at the resort and rubber production in Koh Mouk.
24. With a fisherman and tour boat operator, at his home on 13 July 2007, regarding tourism as a viable alternative economic activity in Koh Mouk.
25. With two staff from Dewdrop NGO as well as eight staff from SAN. At the Women's Group leader's home on 13 July 2007, regarding the management of marine resources and the upcoming school camp.
26. With a SAN worker, at the home of the Women's Group leader on 19 July 2007, regarding land and the Housing Project.

27. With the Imam (Muslim religious leader) and his deputy, at the Women's Group leader's home on 23 July 2007, regarding religious practice and religious leaders in Koh Mouk.
28. Chili paste-making group at Ao Makham (Makham Bay) on 5 August 2007, regarding the organization and activities of the group.
29. Two people at local mosque on 5 August 2007 following land claims meeting, regarding land claims and the changing circumstances in Koh Mouk.
30. Small resort local owner at her resort in Ao Kuen (Kuen Bay) on 6 August 2007, regarding tourism and changing circumstances in Koh Mouk.
31. Three fisher folk at Ao Huanon (Huanon Bay) on 9 August 2007, regarding changing circumstances in Koh Mouk.
32. With SAN coordinator for the Housing Project, and four local Housing Project organisers, on site on 9 August 2007, regarding issues relating to the project as well as the management of marine resources.
33. Audiovisually recorded interview with new housing project resident and resort employee, at her new house on 9 August 2007, regarding the Housing Project and the tourism industry.
34. Resort manager, not a local, at the resort on 9 August 2007, regarding the dynamics between resort employers and local employees.
35. Audiovisually recorded interview with *the* school principal and four students, at the school on 18 August 2008, regarding the effect of the tsunami and the villagers as well as education authorities' response.
36. Audiovisually recorded interview with the leader of the Women's Group, at her home on 20 August 2007, regarding the Women's Group.

37. With a mall resort manager near Charlie Beach on 24 August 2007, regarding ongoing conflicts about road access to island's west coast.
38. Audiovisually recorded interview with fisher folk leader at boat shed on 25 August 2007, regarding the joint management of marine resources.
39. Focus group, five fishermen at boat shed on 24 August 2007, regarding the joint management of marine resources and tourism.
40. Two Buddhist islanders at Buddhist temple on 26 August 2007, regarding religious difference and cultural dynamics on the island.
41. With a SDFT staff member in Bangkok on 8 September 2007, regarding the history of NGOs in Thailand, democracy and the political agenda.

Appendix B

Research instruments

Research Instrument #1: Basic personal information plus some indicators of participation, cooperation and capacity building

1. Name.....
2. Address sub-district.....
district..... province.....
3. Gender Male Female
4. Age.....
5. Education
 Primary school secondary school
 Senior high school vocational school
 Bachelor degree or higher other:
- Family members (only those who stay with the family)
.....
6. When did the JoMPA project start?
7. When did you become involved in the JoMPA project?
8. How did you become in the JoMPA project?
9. Why did you become involved in the JoMPA project?
10. What are the specific objectives of the JoMPA project?
11. Who are the stakeholders in the project?
12. What is your role within the project?
13. What are the personal challenges you face in fulfilling your role within the project? And how do you overcome those challenges?

14. Do you require particular skills to perform your role in the project? If yes how and when did you acquire those skills?
15. How confident do you feel in the performance of your role in the project?
16. What level of support do you get from other members of the project both, local, and from other stakeholders?
17. How are decisions made regarding the project both, in your community and between your community and other stakeholders?
18. What have been the final outcomes of the decisions taken so far?
19. Are you satisfied with the outcomes of the project so far?
20. How would you describe the relationship between Koh Mouk members of the project and other stakeholders since the start of the project?
21. How would you describe the relationship between KohMouk community and the other stakeholders in the JoMPA project prior to the tsunami disaster?
22. How has that relationship evolved since the commencement of the project in your view?
23. What challenges, in your view, do Koh Mouk members of the project face when dealing with other stakeholders? And how do you overcome those challenges?
24. What have you learned through your involvement in the project?

Research Instrument #2. Some indicators of levels of achievement in sustainable practices

Level of achievement	Achieved	Almost	Partly	Low	Abandoned
Mangrove forests:					
Protection of established mangrove forests					
Regeneration of damaged mangrove forests					
Establishment of new mangrove forests					
Coral reefs:					
Protection of established coral reefs					
Regeneration of damaged Coral reefs					
Establishment of artificial reefs					
Sustainable fishing practices:					
Eradication of the use of poison					
Eradication of the use of explosives					
Eradication of the use of diving gear					
The introduction or expansion of sustainable fishing practices					
The establishment of an exclusion zone against large scale fishing vessels					

Research Instrument #3. Focus group topics of discussion.

- What are the past and present fishing practices in Koh Mouk?
- What changes in fishing practices have taken place over the years?
- When did fishing practices change?
- Did you have to acquire new skills in order to change your fishing practices or in order to negotiate with other communities and organizations?
- What are the reasons for changes in fishing practices?
- What are your achievements in terms of changes in fishing practices so far?
- How would you describe the level of cooperation among Koh Mouk residents in terms of the changes in fishing practices?, between Koh Mouk and other villages?, between Koh Mouk, other villagers and the authorities?
- How would you describe the level of trust as above?