



The Limits of Community Participation: Examining the Roles of Discourse, Institutions, and Agency in the Promotion of Community Participation in Thailand

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DPhil in Social Policy in the Social Sciences Division at the University of Oxford.

Trinity Term 2013

Word count: approx. 81,000

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of how community participation is understood, enacted, produced and governed in the context of an organization that promotes community participation. The contribution of this thesis is to shed light on the frequently found gap between the expectations and the reality of community participation.

In examining how community participation is promoted, the thesis focuses in particular on actors such as community leaders and development workers, and the interactions between them. The thesis applies a multi-disciplinary theoretical framework, which is built through combining theoretical approaches that include discourse analysis, institutional analysis, and the actor-oriented approach. The framework accommodates the examination of the roles of various types of social factors in shaping the workings of community participation. These include the idea of community, social relations in communities, and the agency of actors who are promoting the approach. This thesis conducts a case study of the Council of Community Organisations (CCO) programme in Thailand, which is a large-scale promotion of community participation in development and governance. The case study examines the operation of the programme from national to local level, and explores several localities where the programme is being implemented.

The exploration of the CCO programme illuminates pathways through which the approach's inner mechanisms can constrain it from fulfilling the expectations. The thesis identifies how the idea of community, through its association with the sense of collective identity, tends to distort community participation from achieving empowerment. Moreover, the social relations in communities, generally characterised by inequality and diversity of interests, frequently constrain the approach from achieving effective mobilisation of collective action. Such a constraint is often accentuated by adverse incentives that community leaders face when they become part of development interventions. Finally, it is found that the deficiencies of community participation are likely to persist. This is because the actors who are promoting the approach usually manoeuvre to gain advantages from their roles in ways that reinforce the influence of the aforementioned factors.

Acknowledgement

It has taken me the longest amount of time, in comparison to any other part of this thesis, to write this page. It is impossible to adequately acknowledge all who have played a part in allowing me to complete this work. Despite the inevitable omission, I will try my best in recalling those who made my life and academic journey in Oxford such a wonderful experience.

My first thanks goes to Professor Robert Walker. His kind assistance and wise ideas, provided to me throughout my time as his student, are essential in enabling me to reach the end of this project. Robert is an excellent supervisor who cares a lot about the life and work of his students. I shall remember him as one of the most important mentor of my academic life. Fran Bennett is another Oxford academic whom I greatly admired. I am particularly thankful for her role in examining my thesis during the confirmation and final viva.

There are so many friends in Oxford who have helped me built a great memory of the place. During my time as a DPhil student, Jesper Kulvmann has been such an excellent friend. I cannot recall anyone I have met who is more kind and helpful to me, and also to other human beings. Others friends whom I really appreciate their friendship and generosity include, Narae Choi, Robert Massam, Amrit Virk, Barbara Zarate and her husband Mauricio, Mariann Urbina, Hamsa Rajan, Saltanat Rasulova, and Bori Kovacs.

The Thais I met in Oxford were crucial to my happy memory of the place. Pornthep Benyaapikul has been really helpful to me even before the start of my time in Oxford. Prach Panchakunathorn, Chinnawut Techanuwat, and Nirawat Thammajak have filled my Oxford journey with countless of lovely intellectual conversations. Jaturong Pokharatsiri and Chulawadee Santad were both really nice to me as housemaids.

Finally, my special thanks go to my family. I am always certain that I am born into a family that is full of love and joys. This enabled me to go through difficult period with the sense of optimism. Furthermore, it is during my time in Oxford that I received the greatest gift of my life, Wanwiphang Manachotphong. It was difficult to be away from each other during the first few years after we got married. Nevertheless, her endless love and supports allowed us to ease through such a time, and also gave me the strength to go through all the days and nights of completing this thesis.

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|---|
| CBPDP | Community-based Participatory Development Programme |
| CCO | Council of Community Organisations |
| CCST | Community Culture School of Thought |
| CO | Community Organisation |
| COCC | Community Organisation Coordination Committee |
| CODI | Community Organisation Development Institute |
| IAD | Institutional Analysis and Development Framework |
| MOI | Ministry of the Interior |
| MOSD | Ministry of Social Development and Human Security |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| PAD | People's Alliance for Democracy |
| SIF | Social Investment Fund |
| TAO | Tambon (Sub-district) Administrative Organisation |
| TRT | Thai-Rak-Thai Party |

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Setting the stage for examining the limits of community participation

The first section of this chapter introduces the main puzzle that motivates this research in examining community participation. The puzzle is the gap that is frequently found between the "expectations" of community participation and the "reality" of the actual implementation of the approach (Cornwall, 2011: xvii).

Community participation has been one of the major approaches in theories and practices of social development. This approach is seen as a means to resolve problems associated with the top-down administration of development policies and programmes, and to bring about a vast number of benefits. The involvement of the locals in deciding the direction of development programmes is recognised as promoting the voices of the poor or the disadvantaged (Mansuri and Rao, 2004). Community participation is also perceived to help raise the effectiveness of development assistance, by improving the targeting of beneficiaries, incorporating local knowledge into the planning process, and developing the locals' capacity to undertake their own self-initiated development activities. In addition, the approach is expected to strengthen the governance and accountability of the state by building the civic capacities of communities (Nelson and Wright, 1995; Geventa and Valderrama, 1999; Cornwall and Gaventa, 2000; Barnes et al., 2007). With these "expectations", it is not surprising that community participation has been widely promoted by international development agencies, NGOs, and the governments of both developed and developing countries.

Literature on community participation has often been driven by optimism and activism, due to the way that the approach could be taken normatively as an ideology to be advocated.

Advocates of community participation are usually reluctant to pursue critical examination of the approach, and their evaluation of it tends to be oriented toward presenting results to create a favourable impression (Platteau, 2004: 224-225). Recently, however, this has started to change, with a proliferation of academic work that tries to critically examine the reality of community participation. From these studies, contrasting pictures of the approach frequently emerge. Evaluative studies of actual practices in community participation provide mixed results; they cannot confirm that the approach is more effective than conventional approaches in terms of promoting efficiency, equity, and sustainability in development policies and intervention (Mansuri and Rao 2004; Platteau, 2004). Closer examination of actual practices reveals that the approach tends to suffer from several problems, particularly unequal power relations between actors involved in the process. Instead of being a space for reversing power relations, community participation more often than not ends up sustaining the dominance of the local elites, or becoming the means to serve the pre-determined agenda of development agents (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Li, 2007). These studies indicate that there exists a crucial "gap" between the "expectations" and the "reality" of community participation, and this gap seems to exist together with the ever-growing popularity of the approach.

The existence and continuation of a gap between expectations and the reality of community participation requires explanation. The research is motivated by this need. It seeks understanding by investigating the inner workings of a community-based participatory development programme (CBPDP), in order to investigate the mechanisms that produce and sustain the gap. This thesis examines the "policy process", which it refers to as the process of conceptualising of social problems and their solutions, implementation of such solutions, and evaluation of the implementation for further revision (see Sabatier, 2007:3). Examination of such a process is made in order to examine the roles of social factors within the process in shaping the emerging nature of community participation. The main objective of this thesis can

be stated thus: **"to explain how the gap between expectations and reality of community participation tends to emerge; and to explore how actors who promote community participation engage with such a gap"**.

To explain the gap in community participation, the thesis looks at various types of social factors associated with "community". It develops and applies a multi-disciplinary framework to examine these factors, attempting to reveal mechanisms by which they constrain the outcomes from the promotion of community participation to diverge from or fall below expectations. The thesis uses the case study method in pursuing the empirical investigation of community participation. It selects one of the major community development programmes in Thailand called the Council of Community Organisations (CCO) programme as the case study. The CCO programme has established local "community-based" councils to promote community participation in development activities and in improving governance. It has also formed a network of supports and forums for its representatives at provincial and national levels. Being operated by a government-supported development agency, the CCO programme provides a rich source of evidence for examination of a large-scale effort to promote community participation.

The contributions that this thesis tries to make are manifold. Its major aim, as mentioned, is to provide an understanding of community participation by examining why and how the gap between the approach's expectations and reality tends to arise. In answering such a question, it seeks to unveil the "limits of community participation", which arise from the inner mechanisms of the approach. In doing so, it moves beyond the observations of the effects of community participation into providing insights into the approach's internal pathways that produce the effects.

Most of the insights that will be unveiled in this thesis, through exploring the CCO programme, resonate with two broad arguments. The first argument is that many of the often observed deficiencies in the reality of community participation are contributed by the approach's "structural conditions". The approach actually contains fundamental elements which make its promises difficult to actualise. The second argument is that the actual nature of community participation tends to contrast with perceptions. Moreover, the key aspect of this contrast lies in the way actors who promote the approach actually gain advantages from the conditions underpinning the approach's deficiencies.

In the course of fulfilling its major aim, this thesis also contributes to the development of a multi-disciplinary approach in examining development policies and programmes, providing an example of how such an approach can be designed and pursued. Finally, the thesis also seeks to contribute to the improvement of the practices of development, particularly those that put emphasis on community participation.

The rest of this chapter explains the scope of the thesis, and introduces the theoretical framework and the research methodology that the thesis will apply. The following section clarifies the focus of this research, making clear of what it is and what it is not. The third section introduces the multi-disciplinary framework of this study. The framework combines approaches to examining community participation from varying theoretical perspectives, in order to provide a more complete analysis. The research questions that this thesis will address are derived from this framework, and will be outlined in this section. The fourth section provides details on the application of the case study method used in the research, and also introduces the CCO programme. The final section of this chapter then provides the structure of the thesis, briefly outlining the content of each chapter.

1.2. What this thesis is, and what it is not

This thesis is not an evaluative study of the CCO programme. It is a study of how community participation is understood, enacted, produced and governed in the context of an organisation that promotes community participation. The thesis is also not about an organic form of community participation that emerges out of the locals' own initiation. It is about community participation that is "externally" induced by a government or a development agency. This focus is the reason for the emphasis of this research on elite actors, such as community leaders and officers of a development agency, rather than on ordinary villagers, and the relative lack of attention paid to social inequalities and differential experiences within those communities. Rather than bounding its exploration to a single geographical location such as a village, this thesis conducts a programme-based study, exploring the working of the programme in multiple sites and at multiple organisational levels. The types of participation that will be investigated include both activities in governance and in development. This is in accordance with the objectives of the CCO programme, which were defined relatively broadly.

The thesis does not aim to build a model that can be generalised to explain or predict the working of all cases of community participation; rather it is an attempt to highlight important dynamics that signify some key aspects of the approach. In this sense, this research should be seen as an enquiry that provides a useful way in to understanding community participation, even in different contexts. The case study of the CCO programme acts as an example to reveal features that are likely to be relevant to other attempts at promoting community participation. The relevance of this study is more oriented towards, but is not limited to, the context of social and development policies in developing countries. Such an orientation is explained in relation to the way that, in the context of developing countries, communities have been perceived as

having an important role in complementing or substituting for the role of the state in providing welfare and solving development problems (Gough and Wood, 2004:5).

1.3. Understanding the limits of community participation: theoretical framework and research questions

The goal of developing a theoretical framework for this research is to be able to gain a comprehensive understanding of the actual nature of community participation. In this sense, the theoretical framework needs to be able to engage with two requirements: firstly, to provide insights into how various types of factors within the policy process of a CBPDP affect participatory process; and secondly, to relate these different factors so as to provide a coherent understanding.

In identifying social factors fundamental to the promotion of community participation, the framework emphasises those social factors that are associated with "community". This emphasis is justified by the perception that the benefits of community participation arise mainly from qualities associated with being a community (Somerville, 2011:42-43). If the expected benefits fail to materialise, then it is worth looking into the causes associated with such a fundamental condition, which are likely to be those associated with "community". Nevertheless, there are different dimensions of community. What is meant by community is usually unclear. Community, although the term is often used to refer to a set of social relationships, also has the attribute of being an "imagined vision" (Delanty, 2003). Furthermore, looking only at community as a social structure is unlikely to be adequate. Actors in the promotion of community participation also possess "agency", i.e., the capacity to manoeuvre within social conditions, and turning what seems to be constraints into opportunities. Hence, the roles of these three types of factors – the idea of community, the

relationships in a community, and the agency of actors who promote community participation – represent the three dimensions of community participation that this research attempts to incorporate into its theoretical framework.

Keeping the goal of incorporating different dimensions of community, and adding the requirement of analysing their effects in a coherent way, the thesis develop its framework by extending the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework (Ostrom, 2007). The IAD framework was developed by a Nobel Laureate Economist, Elinor Ostrom, to examine the dynamics of collective or coordinated action in a policy process. The IAD framework emphasises the interactions between structural related conditions such as rules, physical conditions, and social relations, in shaping collective actions. The concept of rules here refers to “prescriptions prohibiting, allowing, or requiring certain actions” (Ostrom, 2005). The scope of the IAD framework, however, is mainly appropriate for examining a community as a set of social relations. Hence, it needs to be extended to examine other dimensions of community.

To incorporate the role of community as an idea, the thesis extends the IAD framework by complementing it with an analysis of discourse, i.e., an interpretative frame for constructing meanings. The use of discourse analysis allows the roles of community as an idea to be captured by looking at how the ideological dimension of community affects interpretations of social realities. The framework then incorporates examination of human agency into the analysis of discourse and institutions through the actor-oriented approach, which puts the central emphasis on the capacity of social actors to engage with constraints from structural conditions. This amendment of the IAD framework allows the interactions of different dimensions of community in shaping the participatory process to integrate into a broader picture. The framework gives rise to three interrelated parts of empirical analysis that constitute the structure of the thesis. Each contains the research questions that it tries to

answer. Based on this design, the three empirical chapters in this thesis will correspond to these three parts and their associated questions.

The first part of the empirical analysis examines the role of the "discourse of community" in influencing the meanings and practices of participation in CBPDs. Crucial to this examination is the application of "discourse analysis" in examining the policy process (Hajer, 1993; 2006; Apthorpe and Gasper, 1996). Discourse analysis recognises that meanings associated with policies, including the definitions of social problems and the suggestions of measures to solve the problems, are to some extent socially constructed. The analysis of discourse aims at unravelling the "intellectual framework" from which these social constructions emanate, and the set of practices that relate to their emergence and functioning (Apthorpe and Gasper, 1996). Taking discourse analysis as the theoretical guideline and method, the research questions that will be pursued in the first empirical chapter of this thesis include:

- **How does the discourse of community affect the definition of meanings and the organisation of practices in the promotion of community participation?**
- **How do the influences that the discourse of community has over the meaning and practices of participation affect the capacity of community participation to empower?**

The second part of the empirical examination of the policy process in CBPDs applies the IAD framework to explore the roles of "institutions" and their related conditions in the promotion of participation (Ostrom, 2007; Gibson et al. 2009). Institutions, in this respect, refer to the rules that are used by social actors in organising their social interactions. The IAD framework focuses on studying the capacity of the policy process to achieve the desired outcomes, by examining the capacity of rules in shaping the "incentives" that promote intended patterns of

interactions. The effects of rules, however, are conditional upon other factors such as the nature of the relationships of actors within the communities (Ostrom, 2007). Moreover, because rules are actually made by policy actors, the understanding of the effects of rules on practices needs to be complement with knowledge of how the rules themselves are made and monitored. Using the IAD framework as the basis, the research questions that will be pursued in the second empirical chapter of the thesis involve:

- **As a CBPDP is implemented in communities, how do rules introduced by a CBPDP interact with the relationships between actors in communities? And how do such interactions constrain the capacity of community participation in promoting cooperation in the development and improvement of governance?**
- **In a policy process supporting implementation of a CBPDP, how do conditions that exist in the relationships between policy actors constrain the capacity of a CBPDP in the making and monitoring of rules in promoting participation?**

The final part of the empirical examination of the policy process in CBPDPs investigates the roles of "agency" in the process. It takes the observations of the limitations from the previous analysis of the roles of discourse and institutions, and examines how actors use their agency in engaging with such conditions. In this sense, it also acts as the bridge that integrates the thesis findings. The examination of the role of agency in the policy process of CBPDPs is based on the "actor-oriented" approach (Long, 2001; 2003). This approach conceptualises the policy process as consisting of different sites of engagement and negotiations between actors. The resulting investigation focuses on looking at how actors negotiate their different interests and engage with challenges inherent in their interactions, in order to unveil their uses of agency and their contributions to the functioning of community participation. Based on the application of the

actor-oriented approach in examining CBPDPs, the research questions that will be examined in the final empirical chapter include:

- **At different stages of the policy process in a CBPDP, how do actors use their agency in engaging with the challenges facing their interactions?**
- **How does actors' agency contribute to the evolution of structural conditions involving discourse and institutions, and how do these contributions affect the gap between the expectations and the reality of community participation?**

1.4. The case study method and details of the Council of Community Organisations (CCO) programme in Thailand

This section explains the features and benefits of the case study method, elucidating how the method will be applied in this thesis in correspondence to the previously stated framework. The details of the CCO programme in Thailand, and the details of data collected during the fieldwork, will also be introduced.

1.4.1. Applying the case study method to study community participation: pathways and benefits

A case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its surrounding context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2009:18). The case study method is chosen for this research as it fits with the major aim of examining the multiple dimensions of community participation. The method has a flexibility that allows an examination of multiple

dimensions in a social phenomenon, enabling the complexity of their effects to be explored, while at the same time allowing the analysis to fit coherently within a broader framework.

The application of the case study method in this research directs the investigation towards the mechanisms that link social factors, including discourse, institutions, and agency, to the emerging nature of community participation. The exploration of these factors is structured through different parts of the theoretical framework of the thesis, which function as different lenses that complement one another in the exploration of the empirical evidence.

The case study method provides an appropriate tool to explore the workings of these factors, allowing the "process" that links the effects of these factors on the outcomes to be explored (see George and Bennett, 2005). This so-called "process tracing" approach is applied throughout this research in its examination of the empirical details of the case study. The application of the case study method in this research is expected to provide both the means for building theoretical-based explanations and for building new hypotheses (Bennett and George, 1997; Gerring, 2004; and Yin, 2009). Theories and concepts that explain the working of community participation will be chosen through an iterative process of reviewing literature and empirical analysis. They will eventually form the basis for an analysis of empirical details. The examination of empirical details, in turn, also allows the theories and concepts to be extended in order to improve its ability to explain community participation.

The design of the application of the case study method to examine the CCO programme is structured according to the thesis's theoretical framework, which divides the analysis into three parts to examine the three dimensions of community participation. Each empirical investigation in the three parts will be based on different units of analysis, different aspects of

a phenomenon being observed, and different uses of data sources. The application of the case study method in this research is as follows:

In examining the mechanism of the effects of the discourse of community on the participatory process, the CCO programme is taken as the main unit of case study. The aim of this examination is to examine how the discourse of community affects the meanings and nature of participatory practices. Therefore, the relationship between the following aspects of community participation will be examined through the case study: 1) the features of the discourse of community in the Thai context; 2) the characteristics of the programme's content that emerged from its formulation process; and 3) the characteristics of the programme's participatory activities. This examination draws mainly on the data obtained from policy documents, including the documents recording activities during its formulation process, the documents outlining policy arguments and contents, and the documents recording the details of its participatory activities. These data will be supplemented by interviews and participatory observations.

In examining the mechanism of the effects of institutions on community participation, the embedded case study method is used. The case studies of the local implementation of the programme are embedded within the case study of the programme's network of policy actors. In examining the case studies of local implementation, five sub-districts that are part of the CCO programme are chosen to explore the local functioning of the programme. In examining the case of the programme's network of policy-actors, different levels of committees set up by the Community Organisations Development Institute (CODI) to facilitate and monitor the local implementation are examined. The committees were established at provincial, regional and national levels. The examination in this chapter looks at how the attributes of communities, or of the relationship between policy actors, constrain the working of rules in promoting

participation. Thus, the relationship between the following aspects of community participation will be observed: 1) characteristics of the relationships between actors; 2) the programme's regulations and funding, and; 3) the nature of collective activities that emerged in and from the programme. Examination of the roles of institutions draws mainly on data from interviews, supplemented by data from participatory observations, and policy documents.

And finally, in examining the role of human agency in influencing community participation, the main unit of the study is also the CCO programme. The study focuses on the interactions at different stages in the programme, from formulation of plans to the implementation and the evaluation of practices. Such interactions arose within and between the two groups of actors, the CO leaders and the CODI officers. The examination seeks to explain how actors use agency to engage with challenges, and how that consequently contributes to the evolution of the programme. The aspects of community participation that will be observed include: 1) details of the challenges the actors faced at each of the aforementioned stages; 2) the strategies used by the actors; and 3) the resulting changes in discursive and institutional conditions in the programme. The examination of agency relies mostly on data collected from the participatory observations and records of the meetings in the CCO programme. These data will be supplemented by data from interviews.

1.4.2. The CCO Programme in Thailand

The case study of the Council of Community Organisations (CCO) programme in Thailand is chosen as the research's case study. The strong influence of community participation in the context of Thailand makes the country a good case for examining community participation. Both the Thai government and the domestic NGOs have been encouraging communities to take active roles in development and social welfare, for example, through organising their own

saving and safety-net groups (Shigetomi, 2009). Subsequent to the country's political conflicts since the mid 2000s, communities have also been further encouraged to take active roles in improving governance and democracy, leading to the formation of the CCO programme. The CCO programme gives this research a wealth of information on how community participation actually functions. Its extensive nature enables examination of how different stages of the policy process interact with one another. Its close association with the idealistic vision of community in Thailand allows the significance of the ideological dimension of community participation to be uncovered. Furthermore, my preliminary examination of the CCO programme also reveals numerous stories of unexpected outcomes, conflicts, and sustained optimism in its operation. These stories provide decent empirical material for understanding the complex nature of community participation.

The CCO programme was first introduced in 2007. It is implemented by the hybrid organisation, the CODI. The CODI has the status of being a relatively independent "public organisation", but at the same time it also receives financial support from, and is supervised by, the Thai government's Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (CODI 10th Anniversary Report, 2010). The CODI is currently one of the major supporters and donors of community-based development projects in Thailand. The CCO programme has, in recent times, been one of Thailand's major efforts in promoting community participation. The programme emerged from a movement by the Thai NGOs and community leaders, many of whom had connections with the CODI. Their support for the programme grew out of their concern with the problems of representative democracy and top-down development. They wanted "communities" to play a central role in promoting cooperation in development, and more importantly, in improving the governance of political institutions (CSM, 2006).

The formulation and operations of the CCO programme are strongly guided by the Thai vision of community development, which perceives the goal of development to lie ultimately in subsistence and self-government of communities (Rigg and Ritchie, 2002; Walker, 2009). The programme has been claimed to be the instrument that will allow communities to dictate their own direction of development, which is seen as essential for enabling them to solve their development problems. To achieve such a vision, the CCO programme was designed to create the "councils of communities". The most important type of council that was created is at sub-district level, the Sub-district CCO. The Sub-district CCOs subsequently select their representatives to form the "Provincial CCO Forum" and the "National CCO Forum" (CCO Act, 2008).

In its actual implementation, the CCO can in fact be described more accurately as the council of "community representatives". It is set up for representatives of community organisations (CO), which include numerous types of locally-based groups that engage in community development activities. These groups include, for example, saving groups, women's groups, and farmers' groups. Membership of the Sub-district CCO is attained through nominations by representatives of the COs within a sub-district¹. In addition, the representatives of COs can also nominate to CCO membership local "experts", who can be any locally respected figures such as teachers and religious leaders (CODI's CCO Act Explanation, 2008). The groups of actors who are prevented from attaining membership to the Sub-district CCOs include members of a locally-elected government, members of political parties, and anyone who has recently been a candidate in any election for a public position. The programme specifies that these rules were made to protect the independence of the Sub-district CCOs from the influences of electoral politics (CODI's CCO Act Explanation, 2008).

¹ In order to be eligible to have its representatives participating in the CCO programme, a CO must be registered first with the Village Headman (*poo-yai ban*) or the Chief Village Headman (*kamnan*) of its area (CCO Act, 2008).

The Sub-district CCOs have to meet at least four times a year, in order to discuss development and governance issues. Their roles are specified to include two broad tasks: 1) to promote local cooperation in community-based development activities; and 2) to discuss local governance issues and pass on their concerns and suggestions to relevant public institutions. The same roles were ascribed for the Provincial CCO Forum and the National CCO Forum. The forums have to meet at least once a year (CCO Act, 2008). The meetings of the Sub-district CCOs and the CCO Forums are funded by the CODI, which also establishes numerous committees to support the operation and establishment of CCOs. By May 2013, the CCOs had been established in 3,754 sub-districts, which is 47 percent of all the sub-districts in Thailand². The focus of this research will be mainly on the operations of the Sub-district CCOs and the committees that were established by the CODI to support the implementation of the CCO programme. The CCO Provincial and National Forums will not be emphasised because they were mostly inactive during the time the fieldwork for this research was conducted,

To collect the data for this research, the fieldwork to study the CCO programme was conducted from April 2010 to March 2011. Data collected include interviews with 61 informants³. The informants include local members of Sub-District CCOs, CO leaders associated with the CCO programme, CODI officers and executive, local politicians, academics, and NGOs. Documents relating to the operations of the CCO programme, including the records of meetings and seminars, were collected from the Songkhalah Province in the south of Thailand, the southern region, and from the national level. Other policy-related documents such as the programme's plans and strategies, and the programme's handbook and PR materials, were also collected. Participatory observation was conducted, whereby the researcher passively

² http://app.codi.or.th/codi_sapa/pages/Login.aspx (access date: 4 May 2013)

³ Some informants were interviewed in groups. More details on this will be provided in Chapter 4– Research Method.

participated in meetings and seminars associated with the CCO programme at sub-district level, provincial level, regional level, and at national level.

1.5. Structure of the thesis and outlines of chapters

The thesis contains 8 chapters. Chapters 1 to 4 give the background to the thesis. This chapter, Chapter 1, introduces the thesis, highlighting the gap in the knowledge of community participation that this thesis tries to fill. It also outlines the research questions and introduces the case study. Chapters 2 to 4 provide literature reviews, the theoretical framework, and the research method of the thesis. Chapters 5 to 7 then provide an empirical analysis of the case study of the CCO programme. Finally, the conclusion of the thesis will be provided in Chapter 8. It is worth noting beforehand that there will be some overlap in the thesis between the contents in the background chapters – particularly those from the theoretical framework chapter – with some contents in the empirical chapters. This overlapping is allowed with the intention of enabling each of the empirical chapters to be self-contained.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature, in order to provide a basis for this thesis's examination of community participation. The chapter begins by reviewing the literature on the meanings of community and community participation. The purpose of this is to clarify these concepts, and to elucidate the thesis's design of research questions. The chapter proceeds to review the literature that has studied the nature and outcomes of participatory development. The literature is categorised, according to the various theoretical perspectives they take, into: 1) an institutional/instrumental approach; 2) a critical approach; and 3) an actor-oriented approach. Explanations are provided on their ability to uncover different aspects of community participation, followed by a suggestion for the approaches to be integrated. This review builds a basis for the thesis's theoretical framework. The final section examines the literature on

community development in Thailand, highlighting the divided perspectives on the approach in the Thai context. Such a division emerges mainly between the Thai academics who identify community development as "unique" and "virtuous" to the Thais, and non-Thai academics who question its actual relevance and benefits. This review introduces a more specific context of knowledge on community development in Thailand, and locates this work into such a context.

Chapter 3 builds the theoretical framework. The framework is built with the purpose of enabling different dimensions of community participation to be examined, and allowing these examinations to complement each other. The design of such a framework is based on combining three different approaches that can be applied to research the policy process in the promotion of community participation. The approach in building the framework is to complement one approach, institutional analysis, with insights from the other two approaches: "discourse analysis" and "the actor-oriented approach". The chapter explains the details of these approaches, and elucidates how they can complement one another in providing an understanding of community participation. It is worth noting that the framework outlined in this chapter functions mainly as a basis for structuring the research's overall empirical analysis; the framework will be built upon further in each empirical chapter to accommodate more complex empirical details.

Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology. The chapter begins by explaining the features and benefits of the case study method. It is explained that the method can help to establish the explanatory power of certain theories and concepts in understanding community participation. The method also provides a means to propose new hypotheses on the actual nature of the approach. The chapter then describes the application in the thesis of the nested approach in selecting a case and sub-cases in order to examine the CCO programme. This is supplemented by explanations on the use of the snowballing technique in selecting

interviewees, the selection of activities in the CCO programme for participatory observation, and the attainment of access to the programme's documents. The rest of this chapter discusses several issues in data collection and data analysis such as the conducting of elite interviews, the checking of data for validity, and the methods used in transcribing and analysing data.

Chapter 5 investigates the roles of the discourse of community in relation to community participation through an empirical analysis of the CCO programme. The chapter aims to explain how the "normative" attributes of the discourse affect the meanings and practices of participation, and how this affects the capacity of community participation to empower. The chapter begins by conceptualising the features of the discourse of community, in order to build a framework for investigating its effects. The conceptualisation is based on an iterative process of exploring the attributes of the notion of community in Thai rural development, and developing a theoretical perspective to capture such attributes. The conceptualisation identifies the discourse of community as having the properties of being a symbolic construction (Cohen, 1985). The main feature of the discourse of community, it is argued, is its ability to function as a means to attain a sense of collective identity. The chapter then explores the way in which such a feature affects the meaning and practices of participation, through exploring the case of the CCO programme. It is explained how the promotion of participation tends to be interpreted as part of the attempt to mark the importance of identity, becoming a means to signify "our way" of development. It also illustrates that such an interpretation can endow the organisation of participatory activities with selectiveness, both in selection of participants, and in the design of the activities to promote only certain voices. These findings lead to an argument that the discourse of community can in fact compromise the empowering potential of community participation.

Chapter 6 examines the roles of institutions in the promotion of community participation through an empirical analysis of the CCO programme. The aim of this chapter is to unravel the constraints on the promotion of participation that arise from attributes in the relationship between actors in communities, or between actors in the policy process. Analysis in the chapter is divided into two levels: the local implementation; and the network of policy actors. Examination of the local implementation of the CCO programme investigates the programme's attempts to promote cooperation in development activities and participation to improve governance in public institutions. Through exploring the experiences of the CCO programme, it is explained that the promotion of participation at the local level is likely to face challenges arising from "imperfections" that exist in actual communities, particularly those of inequality and diversity of interests among community members. The exploration of the network of policy actors in the CCO programme looks at their collective efforts in facilitating local implementation, which includes their tasks of allocating resources and monitoring of the programme's progress. It is illustrated through the case study of the CCO programme that the achievements of these tasks are likely to be compromised by the deviation of interests among actors in the process. This occurs particularly by the way that included beneficiaries are likely to utilise their roles in allocating resources to gain benefits for themselves and their networks. Overall, the findings from this chapter illuminate the usual sources of ineffectiveness in the mobilisation of collective actions through community participation.

Chapter 7 turns the emphasis on the roles of human agency in community participation. This chapter can be recognised as an attempt to complete the thesis analysis, by looking at how actors actually engage with the conditions arising from the roles of both "discourse" and "institutions". The chapter applies the "actor-oriented approach" to explore the actors' actual engagements with the approach. The exploration looks more specifically at the actors' strategies of brokerage and translation. Brokerage refers to their actions in linking resources

and projects to the target beneficiaries, while translation refers to their roles in interpreting the experiences and realities of the programme into representations that resonate with the expectations of other actors. Actors' uses of agency in the CCO programme are examined through exploring their interactions in the following processes: planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. It is explained that the actors' engagements with these processes were characterised mainly by their attempts in drawing upon properties of the discourse of community, and the rules in allocating resources, to gain advantages in their interactions. Two implications are drawn from these observations to further the understandings of community participation. Firstly, the observations signify that actors' uses of agency in the promotion of community participation tend to actually reaffirm the conditions that constrain the approach's potential. Secondly, the observations point to the key features in the actual functioning of community participation that do not fit with the conventional perception. These key features are summarised into the "hidden scripts" of community participation, which propose alternative insights into the nature of the approach.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis. The chapter reiterates its objective in examining community participation: the unveiling of the "limits of community participation". The chapter highlights the thesis's major findings, and points to the ways these can complement the existing understanding of community participation. The roles of the contextual conditions in shaping the findings are also outlined, in order to provide some warnings on the application of the thesis findings to other contexts. The chapter moves on to state the contributions of this thesis: the gap of knowledge it illuminates; the methodology it develops; and the basis it provides for improving development practices. Finally, the chapter discusses the limitations of the study, and suggests pathways for further research on community participation.

Chapter 2. Literature review: building the study of community participation

This chapter reviews the literature in order to engage with a range of issues concerning the examination of community participation. The perspectives from this review are expected to provide a platform for the design of a critical inquiry to explain the functioning of a community-based participatory development programme. This review seeks to achieve three objectives. The first is to clarify the foundation for the design of the research questions, through highlighting the key factors and processes that are crucial in the functioning of community participation. The second is to build a basis for the design of the theoretical framework. This is done through examining other works that have pursued the task of examining community-based or locally-based development practices, and trying to understand their ways of performing the task. The final objective of this review is to provide some insights into existing knowledge of community participation in Thailand.

This review consists of three sections, each corresponding to the above three objectives. The first section engages with varying definitions associated with the concept of community and community participation. This section attempts to overcome the problem arising from ambiguity in the concept of community. The second section engages with the task of reviewing different approaches in studying community participation. The review aims to highlight the key features of each approach, including the conceptualisation within each approach of the key dynamics in the participatory process, and the factors and aspects that are emphasised. The third section of this review explores the literature on community participation in Thailand. It introduces features of the concept of community in the context of Thai rural development, and

outlines important issues that have been highlighted by academics who have studied the concept and its associated development practices.

2.1. Community and participation

The first section of this literature review starts by reviewing different meanings of the concept of community, particularly those relevant to the context of social development. The identification of different meanings of the concept plays an important role in the design of this thesis. The section also explores the literature explaining the meanings of community development, and the evolution of community participation from community development. Finally, it clarifies the criteria for characterising participatory processes, which can be applied to exemplify the influences that the factors associated with community have on participation.

2.1.1. What is community?

The concept of community is highly ambiguous and the range of meanings that can be associated with it is considerable. The complications in defining community trouble any attempt to study community participation, as the ambiguity of the concept tends to also lead to an unclear identification of what is to be studied. To avoid such a problem, this research attempts to distinguish variations of the concepts that have been conceptualised in the existing major literature. The key literature associated with the concept of community from multiple disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and political sciences is reviewed to answer one fundamental question; "what is community?".

Gerard Delanty's "Community" (2003) explores the variety of meanings associated with the concept of community. He observes different uses of the concept of community that include,

for example: to be identified as a form of social organisation based on a small group such as a neighbourhood or a village; to be the imagined notion that satisfies the search for belonging; to be seen as the normative vision of civil society; and to be depicted as the new form of social relationships that emerge in the context of globalised communication. Having observed that the concept has such a broad range of meanings, Delanty sums up his review by arguing that the concept of community has "a variable nature and cannot simply be equated with particular groups or a place. Nor can it be reduced to an idea" (Delanty, 2003:3).

Despite pointing to the comprehensiveness of the concept's meanings, the work of Delanty helps this research identify the two major variants of the meanings of community, which are relevant in the context of social development. The first variant arises from the identification of community as a set of attributes of social relationships. It perceives community through a positivistic stance, conceptualising community as a description of empirically-based types of relationships in a group of individuals. The second variant recognises community as a social construction. In this perspective, community is the product of the collective imagination, arising from people's desire to fulfil their sense of identity or security. The following review explains these two different variants, and highlights their different implications for the study of community participation.

The concept of community as a set of attributes of social relationships

The concept of community can be conceptualised in terms of a set of attributes of social relationships between people. Such attributes, which are perceived to be empirically-based, have a number of different aspects, ranging from how people are bounded within a locality to the inner qualities of their relationships. Furthermore, the perception that is often related to this perspective is that there are social values in a particular type of social relation, and such

values became lost due to changes in a society. As will be shown here, this perception of changes and losses is a recurring theme that emerges in the identification of community as a set of attributes of social relations.

The review of literature in this variant of meanings of community starts with classical works by two prominent sociologists. These works marked the rise of community as a social concept. The first is that of Ferdinand Tonnies (1855-1936) "Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft", which refers to two opposing types of associative life; "community and society"⁴ (Tonnies, 1887). Tonnies referred to the community as the associative life that resided in the folkways of rural villages or the religious ways of life in town, and identified the central aspect of such associative lives as existing in the central roles of "tradition". He portrayed the associative life in community as real and organic. His concept of society, on the other hand, depicts the contrasting type of associative life that is based on convention or legislation, and can be found in city life. The associative life in the society, he argued, is mechanical; it is a rational and mental product that is sustained by relations of exchange. The polarisation of community and society in Tonnies' works captured the sense of loss that modernity has brought to the traditional society. Modernity was seen as eroding the traditional type of associative life found in communities, and replacing it with the modern world of formal and rationalised structures of mass society.

Tonnies' work coincided with works on a similar issue by another sociologist Emil Durkheim (1858-1917). Durkheim's concept of community is found in his writings on social solidarity (see Durkheim, 1893). Although both Durkheim and Tonnies engaged with the challenge of modernity, Durkheim's concept of community contrasts with Tonnies'. He rejected the portrayal of social relationships in communities as organic and in societies as mechanical. To

⁴ "Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft" has also been translated as "community and civil society".

him, it is the modern society that can produce the organic form of social relationship. This is because modernity provides autonomy for individuals to reproduce their own collective norms and values. This sense of organic solidarity represents Durkheim's concept of community. He warned, however, that the sense of community is not an automatic property of modernity; it can only arise as individuals are able to combat their egoistic individualism (Durkheim, 1957). In this sense, Durkheim's vision of community was rather the argument for solidarity that can promote social integration in modern societies full of societal differentiations. The challenge of the modern society, for Durkheim, was not the collapse of the traditional society, but rather the failure to evolve a new spirit of community. Both Tonnies and Durkheim were preoccupied with the challenges in the transition toward modernity, with their major concern being on the kind of desirable social relationship that may be lost, or may not be developed, through such transition.

Such concern with modernity subsequently gave way to concerns with other types of changes. During the period 1920s-1930s, a major group of works that contributed significantly to the development in the concept of community came from the Chicago School of urban sociology. The common concern of these works lay in identifying challenges that communities faced from "urbanisation" (Delanty, 2003:53). The Chicago School sociologists identified community as a set of social relations bounded, and preserved, in a spatial-based locality (see for example, Wirth, 1938; Whyte; 1943). Community is seen as a set of relationships based on a small group of people such as a neighbourhood, and on mutual interdependence and common forms of life. It is a sense of belonging based on shared experiences, common language, kinship and, most importantly, of inhabiting a common spatial lifeworld (Delanty, 2003:55). The Chicago School sociologists tended to see urbanisation, industrialisation, and modernisation as transforming towns into cities, creating challenges to the survival of community-based social

relations. Consequently, they tried to find ways to defend community from the threats arising from such transformation.

The changes created by neo-liberalism and globalisation, and the reactions to it from the "locals", have become the central theme in the works on "post-development" theory (see Rahnema and Bawtree, 1997). These works present another variation in the concept of community that can be found particularly in the context of developing countries. The post development theorists identify development as discourse wielded by the West, or developed nations, to extend domination over developing nations and their populations (Escobar, 1995; Rahnema, 1997). To counter such domination, the post-development theorists advocate for development to put an emphasis on local knowledge and traditions. They also identify grassroots social movements as having the capacity to liberate the locals from exploitative threats of globalised capitalism, and to allow them to rediscover their common interests and identities (Kiely, 1999). Social movements, therefore, can be the means for reviving a sense of community that embodies the aspiration to preserve the local way of life (Escobar, 1992). Another sense of the concept of community, also in the context of developing countries, is to be found in works that envisage an alternative system of welfare provision (Korten, 1987; Morduch and Sharma, 2002). These works argue that, through the closely-knit social relations that can be found in "local communities", a community-based network of safety-nets can be the basis for welfare provision in the developing world.

The previously mentioned two variations in uses of the concept of community continued to depict community as a set of social relations bounded to locality or cultures, and to portray crucial values to be associated with such relations. The more recent uses of the concept of community in development have been associated with the popularity of the concept of social capital. The rise of the concept of social capital relates to a broader trend in political

philosophy called "civic republicanism", which puts the emphasis on participation in public life as a key virtue of human beings. Social capital is proposed as the key concept that conceptualised how active participation in public life can be the foundation for the well-functioning of public institutions. The concept of social capital is rooted in the works of the classic "civic republican" theorist Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859). De Tocqueville highlighted the importance of vibrant associational life in contributing to the well-functioning of American democracy, citing the high level of civic engagement as leading to cooperation across civil life (de Tocqueville, 2000).

The recent popularity of the concept of social capital is associated with an American political scientist, Robert Putnam. His first contribution to the theory of social capital arises from the comparative study of regional governments in the north and the south of Italy (Putnam, 1993). He identifies the differences in performance of public policy actors in the north and the south of Italy as a result of different endowments of social capital. His concept of social capital refers to the features of social organisation such as trusts, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating collective action and cooperation within the society. This, as a result, can contribute to the better functioning of public institutions. Putnam's subsequent famous work, "Bowling Alone" depicts the level of social capital in America (Putnam, 2001). This can be seen as the follow-up to de Tocqueville's perspective. It is, however, portraying a contrasting picture of the long-term decline in civic engagements in America. The concept of social capital links the central features of community-based social relationships with its functions. Through it, the promotion of community-based attributes such as trust between members can be argued to be productive in achieving better consequences for society.

The concept of community as a social construction

In contrast to the first variant of meanings of community, the second variant of the concept's meanings recognises community rather as a "social construction". The central feature of the concept of community, as perceived in this theme, is its ability to function as a collective imagination that satisfies one's need for a sense of identity, belonging, and security. One of the first major works that helped provide the basis for this conception of community is that of Victor Turner. His work, "The Ritual Process" (Turner, 1969), discusses the temporal moment that can be found in collective rituals called 'liminality'. The moment of liminality gives rise to a sense of "communitas". Communitas is the sense of relationship where people feel their "togetherness", beyond their differences such as differences in social class prescribed by the actuality of the existing social structure. It is rather an "anti-structural" moment where a participant in a ritual can collectively attain their sense of being "us". Communitas can be recognised as Turner's concept of community. Turner, however, avoided using the word community to avoid his concept being misunderstood as relationships in a spatially bounded group (Turner, 1969:96).

This conceptualisation of community as a sense of togetherness that exists beyond the actual existing social relationships was reiterated by Anthony Cohen in his work "The Symbolic Construction of Community" (Cohen, 1985). Similar to Turner, Cohen conceptualises his concept of community as a symbolic structure. Community exists as a social construction rather than an empirical reality. Community, he argues, is better recognised as an interpretative means with symbolic features. It is the repository of symbols that are drawn upon in communicative activities to construct the boundaries between groups, or to reassert the boundary that divides "us" from "them". In addition, Cohen explains how the symbolic nature of the concept of community allows for different meanings to arise. A ritual, for

example, is the moment where symbols of a particular community are collectively mobilised; but the same ritual can produce different meanings for its participants. Cohen then argues that the reason why symbols of community are effective as instruments for marking the sense of identity is because they are imprecise.

Turner and Cohen's conceptualisation of community departs from the conventional account of the concept. Here, the concept of community is no longer seen as actually existing social relations bounded to traditions or places; it also does not possess the inherent normative feature of being a 'desirable' condition. Community is a "social construct" that arises from the search for the sense of togetherness. Recognising this provides a basis for developing critical perspectives on the concept. This can be observed through the perspective on community of Alain Touraine and Zygmunt Bauman. Alain Touraine finds a similar element in the notion of community and nationalism, which is the sentiment that society is based on the pre-established unity over and above individuals and all social groups, whose diversity must be denied in the assertion of the wholeness (Touraine, 1997). Touraine is not specifically opposed to community in the sense of collective goals or the common good, but he is concerned that the pursuit of common goals associated with the notion of community has become overly obsessed with identity. This obsession creates a threat to the functioning of democracy, particularly at a time when what is more needed is the protection of personal liberty and human rights. In addition, he sees the world dominated by community as mainly seeking homogeneity and consensus, while rejecting democratic debates. Such a world, he fears, could be easily transformed toward theocratic or nationalist despotism (Touraine, 1995).

Bauman shares with Touraine scepticism about the concept of community. Rather than pointing toward the issue of identity, Bauman argues that the notion of community is drawn upon to satisfy the missing sense of security. However, it is also the sense of security that the

modern world has become less and less able to offer (Bauman, 2001). Consequently, the notion of community tends to be capable of offering just nostalgia and illusion. The ideal community always remains beyond our reach, and actual forms of communities cannot solve the uncertainty they are confronted with. Bauman views the promise of the notion of community as often coming at the price of trading off freedom for security, arguing that the effort to bring about the ideal of community can easily lead us to build a fortress against the external world. Both Touraine and Bauman, rather than reasserting the normative visions associated with the concept of community, warn against its danger. Both see possibility and values in having certain attributes of the society that resemble the vision of community, but argue that such a vision needs to be balanced with a concern for equal rights for human-beings and an equal ability to act on those rights. They also ask for the concept of community to be made compatible with a critical power of communication and reflexivity.

This section's review of the two variants of the meanings of community helps clarify the rationales behind the conceptualisation of community in this thesis as two dimensions of social factors: community as a set of social relations, and community as an idea. This conceptualisation plays a crucial role in the design of a major part of the thesis's research questions, which examine the influences of these two dimensions of community on the participatory process. It will also be explained in the next section that the "agency" of actors who promote community participation can also be added as another factor to be observed in examining community participation.

2.1.2. Community and participatory development

Similar to the concept of community, community development also has several meanings. Gilchrist and Taylor (2011) observe that the concept can be used to refer to both an

occupation and an approach of working with communities. Craig (2011) explain that community development can be associated with numerous types of development project, from state-sponsored and well-resourced programmes to small-scale but independently operated community-based action. Its broadness endows community development with wide relevance, and with the meanings associated with the concept also being constantly reinterpreted, in order to become up-to-date with popular concepts and ideas. Recent interpretations of community development, for example, have put particular emphasis on concepts such as social capital (De Filippis, 2001; Somerville, 2011). The variation and continual change in its meanings make it difficult to find a specific and concise definition for community development.

Nonetheless, two particular features can at least be observed from definitions of the concept of community development. Firstly, the concept is closely associated with a perception that community as a set of attributes of social relationships within a group of people can bring about certain benefits. Taylor et al. (2000:3), for example, refer to community development broadly as an effort to release potential within communities, by bringing people together to address issues of common concern and to develop the skills, confidence, and resources to address their problems. Somerville (2011) explains that community development can be broadly recognised as the effort to actualise desirable social relations in communities, turning them into "strong communities". Secondly, the concept frequently contains normative and prescriptive elements, to the extent that the division between them and the descriptive elements of the concept is often blurred. This is due to the fact that the depiction of the approach is frequently moulded as a guideline for practitioners.

"Community participation" is a more specific development approach within a broader umbrella of community development. Community participation can be recognised as putting

more emphasis on the "inclusion" of the community members. This focus can be seen as emerging more recently from the past failure of the community development approach, which was argued to be "top-down and bureaucratic" (Midgeley, 1986; Brocklesby and Fisher, 2003; Gilchrist and Taylor, 2011). Midgeley (1986) explains this evolution in more detail. He portrays community participation as arising out of the three ideas associated with community development. The first of these ideas is a branch of democratic theory such as that of neighbourhood democracy, which sees citizens' genuine participation in public decisions as arising in small-scale institutions like villages or neighbourhood. The second idea is Western social work, which puts emphasis on assisting communities to improve their own conditions. Associated with this is the concept of community radicalism. The third idea comes from the Third World community development movement during the 1950s and 1960s that mobilised the local people to improve their socio-economic conditions through participating in development projects. Midgeley (1986) argues that community participation evolved more specifically in response to criticisms of the earlier practices of community development. Such criticisms pointed to community development as failing due to the bureaucratic way of administration. Community participation, therefore, puts more emphasis specifically on ensuring involvement of the powerless, aiming to formulate a more politicised and people-centred approach to community development.

The literature on community participation from the World Bank also depicts the focus on involvement as the product of a recent revival of the community development approach (Binswanger-Mkhize et al., 2010; Mansuri and Rao, 2013). In describing the history of its work on community development, the literature provides a similar story of past failure in the approach. This literature explains how, in the 1950s and 1960s, the core ideas of community development were already influential in many developing countries, but efforts to realise the ideas were constrained by a simultaneous popularity of the centrally-driven development

approach. This led to limited success and subsequent abandonment of the approach in many countries. It was not until the early 1990s that the World Bank started to look at community-based development again as a means to involve the poor in its renewed emphasis on poverty reduction. This renewal of emphasis tries to improve upon past efforts by focusing on involvement of communities, and also by seeking co-operation from local government.

A number of works in the literature on community development (Binswanger-Mkhize et al., 2010; Somerville, 2011; Gilchrist and Taylor, 2011) provide insights into the process that allows community development to produce improvement in development outcomes. Two processes can be broadly identified. The first process is efficient production and use of public services by local beneficiaries. This occurs when the communities are given resources and the authority to decide on initiatives that can produce the highest impacts. The involvement of community members is perceived as leading to an incorporation of valuable "local information" into decision-making in policies or projects. This involvement, coupled with commitment and obligations that community members have towards one another, is also expected to improve local governance and accountability. The second process that is expected to arise from community participation is that of empowerment; this refers to the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives. The recognition of these two processes elucidates ways to examine the influences of factors associated with community on the nature of participation. It helps clarify the research questions of the thesis, which examine such influences by observing the capacity of the resulting participatory process to empower, and to promote participatory activities in development and governance.

2.2. Examining different approaches in studying participatory development

This section reviews works that have been pursued in examining the nature of participatory development. The types of participatory development examined in these works are mostly those that arise from community-based or locally based development projects. The literature in this section has tried to conceptualise the way participatory development functions, and has attempted to evaluate the potential of the approach. Three of the most typical approaches in analysing participation are identified and explored. These include: 1) the institutional/instrumental approach; 2) the critical approach; and 3) the actor-oriented approach. The three approaches are broadly based on different theoretical bases, and also can be recognised as focusing on different aspects of participation. The review aims to highlight their key differences and their implications for the study of community participation. It will be explained how each approach has advantages in uncovering different aspects of community participation. The review also suggests the potential benefit of building a study that integrates the approaches.

2.2.1. The institutional/instrumental approach

The review begins with the instrumental/institutional approach, which can be argued broadly to perceive development policy as a rational problem-solving process (Mosse, 2005:2-3). This view tends to recognise the promotion of participation primarily as a technical intervention that has been associated with development objectives such as empowerment and the building of social capital. Works on participatory development mainly by economists, particularly those who work in cooperation with the World Bank, typify this approach. An example is the work by Picciotto "Putting Institutions to Work", which conceptualises development projects as "an instrument of policy reform and institutional change" (Picciotto, 1995:2). He argues for a

development project to be seen broadly as a set of contracts linking several development agents, including owners, employees, contractors, borrowers. The objective of designing a project is to design rules that can govern the relationships between these actors in a way that can produce desired development outcomes. He suggests that the design of the project should allow opportunities for participants to express their views, and thus, complement the functions of the institutions of the market and the state (Picciotto, 1995:12).

The emphasis on fostering institutions for development, particularly to work in conjunction with the operations of the market and the state, represents the core concept in the economics works on community-based development. The works of Elinor Ostrom, who won the Nobel Prize in economics in 2011, can provide a good example. Ostrom's early foray into the analysis of community may be traced back to her work "Governing the Commons" (Ostrom, 1990). She was motivated by the prevailing perception current at the time of the problem of the "tragedy of the commons", i.e., the over-exploitation of natural resources in which access for use cannot be limited. It was perceived that the tragedy of the commons could only be solved by using the system of private property rights, or by government regulations (Ostrom, 1990:23-25). To counter the narrowness of such a perception, she explores real-world cases of communities that engaged with the problem. Ostrom identifies the rules that allow, forbid, or require certain actions and outcomes in relation to the uses of natural resources as "institutions" (Ostrom, 1990:50-51). She explains how the characteristics of a group (such as their closeness), and of a resource (such as the extensive length of time for it to be utilised), could lead the group to successfully develop their own set of rules to overcome the tragedy of the commons (Ostrom, 1990:186-188). Ostrom's primary focus, however, is not to celebrate the value of community-based development, but rather to develop a framework for analysing the roles of institutions governing collective actions.

The framework for analysing the roles of institutions in governing collective actions was subsequently developed in Ostrom's later works. She outlines the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework for a policy analysis that focuses on the roles of institutions (Ostrom, 2005; 2007). The institutional and institutionally-related factors shaping the structure of interactions between individuals are divided into three categories; rules, attributes of communities, and attributes of the physical world. These factors interact to shape the incentives for collective actions. The IAD framework is applied to study the system of development aid in the work "Samaritan's Dilemmas", which arose through collaboration between Gibson, Ostrom, Anderson, and Shivakumar (Gibson et al., 2009). They conceptualise the system of development aid as having different stages, from the relationship between donor governments and the aid agency, between the aid agency and the government of the aid recipients' countries, to the level of project implementation by the locals. Each of these stages is characterised as having problems in achieving collective actions, which only appropriate designs of rules can overcome. The analysis in this work signifies the nature of the instrumental/institutional approach, which is oriented toward constructing a functionalist model of how development should work.

The instrumental/institutional approach received a number of criticisms for its tendency to see development too simplistically. Its prescriptions for improving development, such as proposals for involving of beneficiaries in the management of resources, services, and facilities, are usually seen as lacking emphasis on the complexity of political dynamics (Mosse, 2005). More recent works on this approach, however, have been responding to this criticism, trying to incorporate more political factors in their analyses. Works by economists such as those of Rao and Ibanez (2003), Platteau and Gaspart (2003), and Platteau (2004), try to examine the implications of political dynamics in community/local-based development. The dynamics that these works examine include the domination by the local elites in development projects, and

the situation of conflictual or diversified interests. Rao and Ibanez (2003) find the process of participation and decision-making in the World Bank SIF programme in Jamaica to be dominated by the local elites. They, however, argue that in certain cases such domination can lead to satisfaction among the wider section of the local population. Platteau and Gaspart (2003) and Platteau (2004), on the contrary, perceive the local elite's domination of the development programme more negatively, relating it to the misuses of a programme's resources for private benefits.

The advantage of the instrumental/institutional approach in examining participatory development lies in its capacity to capture the essential dynamic of participation. Through it, participation is recognised as a form of collective action. The approach can highlight the capacity of regulations and resources provided through development programmes in shaping the nature of such collective action. Although the approach may be criticised for the tendency to take a simplistic view of interactions in development programmes, some improvements have been made to it in order to accommodate such criticism, by incorporating the significance of political-related conditions. Overall, the approach is appropriate to depict the effectiveness of any participatory development programme in promoting participatory practices. This depiction, however, can be complemented by the insights from the critical approach and the actor-oriented approach.

2.2.2. The critical approach

The second approach to the analysis of community-based development emerging from the "critical turn" in the analysis of participation. Literature in the critical turn criticises the instrumental view of development, arguing that it tends to isolate intervention from history and the socio-political realities, or bending these realities to fit into the disciplinary-bounded

model (Mosse, 2005:3). The key work in the critical turn that provides a powerful critique of the instrumentalist approach is "Participation: the New Tyranny" (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). Cooke and Kothari, the editors of the book, argue that the participatory approach to development contains fundamental problems. It tends to allow its facilitators and the political dynamics of the locals to dictate the process (Cooke and Kothari, 2001:6). This argument is supported by the authors in the volume.

Mosse (2001) argues from his experience with participatory development projects in India that the local knowledge, seen as the previously neglected valuable information that can be promoted by participation, is in fact structured and manipulated by external development agents. Kothari (2001) further explains how external development agents have selectively constructed local knowledge by setting the participatory stage in favour of collecting the data they want. Hilyard et al. (2001) find from their case study of the Joint Forest Management Programme in India that the involvement of the locals in participatory processes was only used to lend credibility to the decision that the external agent had already made. The programme failed to engage with the unequal power relations between different local stakeholders, for example, between businessmen and farmers, and between different genders.

Several authors in the New Tyranny use the Foucauldian concept of power to examine power relations in the process of participation. To understand ways in which external agents can dominate the functioning of a participatory process, Hailey (2001) suggests the use of "discourse analysis" to uncover the agent's motivations in adopting the discourse of participation. He argues that the Northern NGOs favour the participation discourse because it helps justify and purify the pre-determined plans in operating development programmes (Hailey, 2001:98-100). Taylor (2001) and Kothari (2001) apply the Foucauldian approach that views power as something that circulates in all relationships, not only between external agents

and the locals, but within the locals. This condition gives rise to the paradox of a participatory process; the more participatory the process is, the more likely that the norms and culture of the locals will be more powerful in determining the outcome. And if these norms and culture are part of the unequal power relations of the locals, then the participatory process would just continue to sustain domination of the more powerful (Kothari, 2001: 146-147).

The literature in the critical turn also highlights the problem of romanticising and essentialising the use of the concept such as "community" or "the local". Cleaver (1999; 2001) criticises the way community is often seen as a natural social entity with solidaristic relations. She argues that community is in fact the site of both solidarity and conflict, shifting alliances, power and social structures. In addition, far from having a definable boundary, community has multiple, overlapping, shifting, and permeable boundaries (Cleaver, 1999:603-605). Mohan and Stokke (2000) criticise specifically the use of the concept "the local". The danger of essentialising the concept of "the local", such as glorifying local knowledge and the locals' autonomy, is highlighted. It is pointed out that doing so neglects the actual lack of harmonious relationships, and the existence of the powerful vested interests, within the communities. Mohan and Stokke (2001) also argue that, by focusing on the level of communities or the locals, the wider process by which that external agency can manipulate the uses of the concept such as community and the local then receives inadequate attention. This leads to neglect of the possibility that the state can also co-opt local civil society in its governing process.

The role of the state in participatory development also provides an important aspect for the analysis in the critical approach. The state's uses of participatory technique can be seen critically as an attempt to reinvent the way to govern. This issue is studied by Cheshire (2006) in her book "Governing Rural Development". Her analysis looks at how communities in Australia were promoted to participate in improving their own development through a "self-

help" approach (Cheshire, 2006:3). Cheshire adopts a concept from Michel Foucault, "governmentality" (see Foucault, 1991), to explain how the self-help approach is applied by the state to govern through promoting self-governance. Governmentality explains the modern technique of governance in which the mechanisms of governing conduct are not based on the use of force, but rely upon discursive techniques to create self-governing individuals (Lemke, 2000). Cheshire argues that self-help is not an open-ended process; it is actually a discursive practice to shape, guide, or affect the conduct of the person(s) (Cheshire, 2006:74-75). However, she also understands that looking at governing is only one side of the story. Another side is the agency of local people in engaging with the technologies of governing; they also try to negotiate, challenge, and transform development agendas to fit with their objectives (Cheshire, 2006:35).

Another group of works that can be associated with the critical turn in the analysis of participation tries to link participation with the wider socio-political context. The work "Spaces for Changes", edited by Cornwall and Coelho (2007) fits into this category. It specifically examines development attempts that try to foster the democratic spaces between the state and society, which have recently grown in the context of developing countries (Cornwall and Coelho, 2007:2-4). Participatory spaces, it is warned, cannot be expected to automatically lead to the improvement of democracy, for such an expectation is based on unrealistic assumptions that citizens are always ready to participate and that the state is also willing to respond (Cornwall and Coelho, 2007:5). To understand the actual dynamics of participation, Cornwall and Coelho (2007:22) argue for locating the micro-politics of the participatory process within the history of development in state-society relations.

The volume's authors illustrate the importance of contextualising participation within the state-society relations. Mahmud's (2007) examination of participation in the health-care sector

of Bangladesh finds the hierarchical relationship between professionals and communities to be carried into the participatory space. Professionals valued their expertise and refused to value alternative perspectives, while the locals were also used to a paternalistic relationship with the professionals. Barnes (2007) discovers a similar finding from a participatory programme for youth in the UK. The governmental officials – being used to the norms of having the responsibility of shaping citizens' conduct – found it difficult not to intervene in shaping the youths to present their acceptable version of participation.

Other authors in the volume explain how norms and cultures within society can exclude participation by marginalised groups. Mohanty (2007) explored the role of women in participatory development programmes in India. She found the prevailing norms that marginalise the voices of women in public also limited their participation in the programme to just a contribution of labour. Williams (2007) demonstrates the impact of the history of the Apartheid system in South Africa on participation. He shows how the Whites' domination in the institution of governance, and the culture of deference to professional authority, led to the marginalisation of Black people's participation (Williams, 2007:111). Finally, the need to investigate the role of human agency is suggested. Rodgers' (2007) examination of the participatory budgeting programme in Buenos Aires brings attention to the new possibilities that may arise as a result of local actors' agency. He finds that, although the participatory budgeting programme in Buenos Aires was used primarily as the means to promote alliance and mobilise the support of a political party, local participants still gradually gained their sense of agency from the opportunities to engage directly with local officials (Rodgers, 2007:194).

The literature applying the critical approach emphasises the importance of politics and power, highlighting the dynamics of domination, exclusion, and marginalisation that emerge in the participatory process. The approach identifies how participation is inescapably a highly

political process that cannot avoid being trapped in the dynamics of power. The focus on the relationship between discourse and power opens ways for a critical examination of the potential for an idea, such as that of community, to function as a means for exercising power. This makes the approach suitable to examine the dynamics of empowerment that arise from community participation.

The insights from the critical approach can provide an answer to the lack of emphasis on politics and power by the instrumental/institutional approach to examining participation. Thus, bringing the two approaches together can capture both the importance of rules in shaping incentives for collective actions, and the roles of power dynamics in the participatory process. Nonetheless, as the aforementioned literature by Rodger (2007) suggests, it is also important to recognise the nuance of actors' engagements with these conditions, that actors also utilise their agency in such engagements. This recognition can be attained with the insights from the actor-oriented approach.

2.2.3. The actor-oriented approach

The literature applying the actor-oriented approach in analysing development intervention puts the emphasis on the roles of human agency. It shifts the focus from highlighting the social conditions facing actors to the capacity of actors in engaging with the conditions. Rather than looking at an incentive structure governing actors' collective action, or aspects of power-relations that underpinned a dynamic of domination and resistance, it looks into the numerous possibilities that come from actors' utilisation of agency in turning the conditions facing them to their advantages. This feature sets the actor-oriented approach apart from the prior two approaches that have been reviewed.

The actor-oriented approach is pioneered by Norman Long, a sociologist. In his work, "Sociology of Development" (2001), he argues that a development project is always comprised of actors with diverse identities and interests. These actors cannot be seen as passive workers or recipients of development intervention; they are active participants who possess information and strategies for dealing with others and the conditions facing them (Long, 2001: 13-14). The actor-oriented approach considers policy process in development as an ongoing socially constructed and negotiated process full of uncertainty (Long, 2001:25). The approach focuses on examining actors' interaction at the social interface, i.e., the point where different interests and identities are encountered. Long argues that the aim of the actor-oriented approach is to understand the social life of development projects, from its conception to realization, through exploring ways in which its meanings are produced and negotiated at the interfaces (Long 2001; Long and Long, 1992).

Long provides numerous examples of how his actor-oriented approach can be applied. His cases include, for example, the irrigation scheme in rural Mexico, where the emphasis was made on the roles of "water-guards" in managing the system (Long, 2001:73-78). The water-guards had to negotiate with farmers on when to schedule water flowed, and to whom. At the same time, they had to satisfy the demands of engineers who oversaw the whole irrigation system. The water-guards, in this sense, had to use their agency to manage multiple interfaces and to enable the overall scheme to function, from engaging with the abstract perspectives of the engineers, to managing the more pragmatic needs and conflicts among farmers. Another example of the cases Long discusses was a government project to promote entrepreneurship among rural women in Mexico (Long, 2001:79-81). It was explained how the women who joined the project had to face contradictory demands, one from their external supporters and another from within their villages. The women managed to become adept in this situation, and were able to manipulate the outsiders to silence their local oppositions. Through these

examples, Long expresses his critical view of participatory development. He finds development intervention to be generally reflective of differences and conflicting interests, therefore making it difficult for any integrative and equitable participation to easily emerge (Long, 2001:88).

The focus on “actors” continues to be the central theme of “Cultivating Development” by David Mosse (2005). Mosse puts his central emphasis on the "translation process" in his examination of a participatory development programme in India. His ethnographic question is not how the programme succeeds or fails, but how the success of the programme is produced by actors through their "translation" of meanings (Mosse, 2005: 8). He argues that the formation of a development project depends not on what the project is actually able to deliver, but on the ability of development workers to translate the meanings of the project in a way that can enrol support from the stakeholders. A concept such as participation, therefore, serves rather as an effective means to enrol support, for the concept is capable of having diverse meanings that fit with diverse interests. Mosse also argues that, in order for a development project to be categorised as successful, it simply requires an active role of development workers to translate meanings from the project to satisfy supporters' demands. Whenever this task of achieving the interpretation of success fails, the development project also fails (Mosse, 2005:18).

Lewis and Mosse (2006a), editors of "Development Brokers and Translators", continued with the same focus on actors' agency. They argue that the actor-oriented approach's focus on negotiations in development interventions can be illustrated through the role of intermediaries in development (Lewis and Mosse, 2006a:11-12). This can be illustrated through examining development brokers, the actors who specialise in the acquisition, control, and redistribution of development revenue. Brokers work in the space between the aid agency

and their target beneficiaries. They represent the local populations, expressing their needs to the donors, and perform a key role in hunting for development projects (Lewis and Mosse, 2006a:12). Because the concerns and interests in a project are varied and unstable, brokers also need to engage in the process of enrolling diverse expectations and interests through the required interpretation of the project's realities. In doing so, they also assume the role of "translators" (Lewis and Mosse, 2006a:14-15). Brokers and translators operate at the interfaces of different world-views and knowledge systems. Therefore, by examining them, one also gets to explore the interweaving of such differences in the systems.

Some of the authors of *Development Brokers and Translators* apply the actor-oriented approach to highlight different aspects of how development intervention functions. Rossi (2006) investigates a project in Niger, with particular emphasis on the interplay of agency between development workers and the beneficiaries. She argues that both actors, rather than acting only according to the roles stipulated through their categorization, demonstrated their capacity to learn from and reproduce the development rationalities of each other. The beneficiaries learned to manipulate the development discourses of development workers to their advantage. The workers, on the other hand, would sometimes shift their position to share the perspectives of the beneficiaries. In another work, Doolittle (2006) studied a development project by the Malaysian government in Sabah. She finds the project to be the means by which the Malaysian state could extend its nationalist ideology. She, however, also demonstrates a nuanced dynamics in which the locals reject, embrace, and modify the state-sponsored image of modernity that comes with the project. The local people, she argues, express their conformity to some elements of the project mainly in exchange for benefits. These cases highlighted the importance of recognising how actors in development can use their agency in response to the constraints they face, turning the situation to their advantage.

Other authors of the volume highlight the existence of "disjuncture" in the system of development, and the need for actors to exercise their agency in engaging with it. Disjuncture arises where there is a disconnection between the ideal guiding development practices and the reality of what actually occurs. The case of the NGOs in Vietnam is studied by Salemink (2006) to highlight how the international discourse of civil society, with the emphasis on participation, failed to fit into the local reality in Vietnam. The introduction of participation as the cornerstone of development in Vietnam led to misunderstandings, mistranslations, contestations, and an unsuccessful search for common discursive ground among actors. Such disjuncture became the ground for development workers to use their agency in translating the reality to fit with the ideal in order to legitimise their projects. Another work, Shrestha's (2006) examination of the agency of NGO workers in Nepal, explains that it is not necessary to merge the differences through translations; what is pursued could be the sustenance of differences. She explains how the NGOs in Nepal tried to promote their professional values, which stressed the disregarding of any societal differences. She finds that, ironically, in their everyday practices, the Nepalese NGOs actually strove to reproduce the differences between them and the beneficiaries, to order to affirm their distinction, and to craft their superior identity.

This review of the literature applying the actor-oriented approach provides two implications for this research. Firstly, this review points to the potential of complementing the actor-oriented approach with the above two approaches in examining participation. By understanding a participatory process from the viewpoint of how actors engage with the process, the approach is capable of unveiling the interplay of their diverse motivations and identities. Moreover, it can illustrate the capacity of actors to negotiate and turn what seem to be constraints into opportunities. These insights complement the previously mentioned two approaches by incorporating the capability and knowledgeability of humans into the broader

picture of the functioning of community participation. Thus, bringing them together to examine community participation will be the aim of the theoretical framework of this thesis.

Secondly, the review points to the importance of recognising the roles of actors' "agency" in the participatory process. It explains that, beyond recognising the importance of structural factors such as ideas and social relations, an examination of participatory development also needs to take into account the contribution of actors who are part of the process in influencing the phenomena. This clarifies the rationale behind the design of the research questions in this thesis to look at the agency of actors as another dimension of the social factors influencing community participation.

2.3. Studies of community participation in the context of Thailand

The final part of this review looks into the literature related to the study of community participation in Thailand. Community participation has attained a dominant influence over the ideas and practices of social development in Thailand during the recent decades, making a convincing case to study this in Thailand. The most intriguing feature to be found in exploring literature on community participation in Thailand lies in the divide in perspectives on the characteristics and potential of community participation. This divide is particularly observable between the Thai and the foreign academics. The review is structured to examine this divide.

In Thailand, the concept of community, even in the context of development, shares elements with the sense of national identity. Crucial in the Thai vision of community development is how the approach has been identified with the promotion of the "uniqueness" that is rooted in the history of the Thais. While Thai academics have been quite receptive to this concept of community development, foreign academics who work on rural development in Thailand have

approached the notion more critically. To them, the Thai vision of community is weakly supported by empirical evidence, and its practical benefits are questionable. They highlight the shortcomings of the Thais' ideal of community, pointing to its lack of relevance to actual problems and conditions of the Thai rural society, and argue for a better understanding of community development to be attained through perspectives not oriented toward an idealistic view of community. The disjuncture between these two perspectives provides the context for this research to situate its inquiry.

2.3.1. The literature on community participation in Thailand by Thai academics

During the past few decades, the ideas and practices of community participation in Thailand have been dominated by the vision that associates community with tradition, locality, and a subsistence economy. This vision of community is usually combined with the perception that such a community has been undermined by the modern forces of state incorporation, market penetration, urbanisation, and globalisation. The perspectives that the virtuous community-based way of living in the past has continually been undermined by the forces of changes, and the claims for their revival to be the source of hope in building a better society, have been the central themes in the vision of community participation in Thailand.

The origin of the view of community as a "cultural-based unit" can be traced back to the expansion of alternative perspectives in rural development among the Thai development NGOs during the late 1970s (Yukti, 1995:14). In response to the Thai government's economic-oriented development approach, these development NGOs tried to promote the values of local culture in rural development (see Yukti, 1995:14-16). The popularity of the development approach centring on a "community culture" expanded to the Thai academics. One major work related to the approach is by a Thai economist, Chattip Natusupha. Chattip's work "The Thai

Village Economy in the Past" was aimed to describe the characteristics and evolution of the Thai rural villages from 1455-1932 (Chattip, 1999). The essence of the book is less about a rigorous description of the history than about bringing forward a politically influential argument; that the economy and the way of living of the Thai village communities were predominantly subsistence-led, and that they have tried to remain thus in face of the enforced exploitations by the state and the market.

Crucial to Chattip's depiction of the Thai village is the concept of "subsistence". Subsistence in the Thai villages was more than the characteristics of economic activities; it encompassed all aspects of the Thai village life. It was argued that Thai villagers' farming activities relied on commonly held factors of production, such as land, and their products were mainly for internal consumption and not for trade (Chattip, 1999:16). Their political affairs were governed through their own system of self-government based on tradition; conflicts in the villages were settled through the council of village elders (Chattip, 1999:10). The Thai "village" communities were described as highly harmonious, class-less and undifferentiated. This portrayal was followed by the observation that the "external systems of state and market" had led to exploitations of the villagers. The state extracted economic surplus from them. And the arrival of the market economy, driven by the integration of the Thai economy with foreign trade, was argued to have dragged them into further exploitations (Chattip, 1999:50). Chattip is adamant that the villages had always been fighting back by holding onto their subsistence way of life. He suggests that supporting the villages in their fight should be the task of development, arguing that "the problem for the future is: how to preserve the good aspects of the village community" (Chattip, 1999:76).

Chattip's book led to the glorification of the Thai rural village as the virtuous hero of subsistence values, whose hardship only came as it became the victim of intrusion by the state

and the market. This perception was taken up by the NGOs, development activists, and Thai academics, notably, for example, Seri Phongpit, Apichart Thongyoo, and Kanchana Kaewthep (see Yukti, 1995:18-43). Their works reiterate the shortcoming of the modernisation process in Thailand, and support the attempt to revive the rural villages' value of subsistence as being the solution to development problems. After the economic crisis of 1997, this perception was assimilated with the sentiment of economic nationalism (Hewison, 2001; McCargo, 2001). Globalisation was seen as a primary factor causing the crisis by bringing about uncertainty for the Thai economy. On the other hand, the notion of self-reliance or self-sufficiency was promoted as the national virtue, particularly through the Thai king's idea of a "sufficiency economy", which stressed the value of self-reliance as key to Thailand's survival in the highly volatile globalised world.

The glorification of the village-based virtue of subsistence became the foundation for envisioning development strategies associated with the promotion of community participation in Thailand. There were in fact some critical voices about such a perspective among the Thai academics and NGOs (see for example, Yukti, 1995). Some of them proposed that "class", not "community", was a more appropriate frame for collective action in countering marginalisation (Somchai, 2006). However, these criticisms had over time achieved less significance in comparison to the growing influence of the Thai vision of community. The vision's pervasive influence contributed to the propositions for community participation to be the central element of development activities. One major proposition arose in the argument for community-based approaches to natural resource management. This proposition is usually associated with advocacy for community "rights". Anan Ganjanapan (1993) observes how the state's policies in regulating the use of natural resources took away communities' access to natural resources crucial to rural livelihoods such as forests. He sees the use of local knowledge and traditions as an alternative means for the communities to manage their own

resources, and sees the notion of "rights" as having the potential to legitimise such a vision. However, the focus of this research on examining community participation will not be on this issue.

The influences of the concept of community in Thailand have recently been crucial in the discussions of democratisation and governance. A major architect of this association is a Thai public intellectual, Prawase Wasi. Prawase, a highly respected medical doctor with a connection to the Thai king, became a prominent figure in Thailand political reform in the 1990s. He is widely respected among the Thai NGOs and the bureaucrats. Prawase has been a fierce social critic. He criticises particularly the Thai education system for focusing only on "technical knowledge", leading to a lack of respect for the poor and for rural peasants. He argues that these groups also possess a respectable knowledge, which is to be found in their community culture (Prawase, 2006a). While frequently using the Thai nationalist symbols such as the King and Buddhism to justify his arguments, Prawase also identifies the Thai state as the main culprit whose exploitations have caused the Thai communities to become incapable of self-reliance. He advocates that communities have to fight back through claiming their "rights". His concept of community rights extends beyond rights to management of local resources. It includes, for example, the rights of communities to engage in traditional forms of production, and to have their own media and financial system (Prawase, 2006a).

Prawase's recent contribution on the association between the promotion of community participation and democracy came against the background of the Thai political crisis in the mid 2000s, where Thailand's democracy was criticised for failing to produce a clean and accountable government. Prawase proposes the concept of "communitarian democracy" as the solution to the problem (Prawase, 2007; 2012). This concept is based on the general idea that development problems arose because the Thai state took away from communities their

ability to "self-govern". The solution to the problem, he suggests, lies in the return of power to the communities to govern themselves. Prawase also stresses the roles of "traditional leaders", such as the village elders, in guiding communities' affairs in self-governance. This idea became influential during the aftermath of the military coup against the elected government in 2006. Prominent Thai political scientists such as Chaianan Samudhavanija and Anek Laothammatas joined forces in supporting the idea (Anek, 2011; Chaianan, 2011). They argue that the community-based governance system has the potential to bring about self-reliance among the rural villagers, and thus bring Thailand out of the vicious cycle of having corrupted governments winning elections from the rural poor's support through their populist policies and vote-buying.

The review of literature on community development in Thailand by Thai academics highlights the important feature of the approach in the Thai context – that is the strong ideological character of the approach, which stresses the association between the promotion of community development and the revival of the community culture of subsistence. Moreover, the review also explains the recent development of ideas associated with community participation in Thailand, in which the vision of community has been mobilised as a basis for improving governance and accountability, particularly of public institutions. Consequently, the concept of community participation has become more than just an approach of rural development; it has become one of the cornerstones for re-visioning the country's political system. This research, therefore, provides a timely critical examination of such a major proposal.

2.3.2. The literature on community participation in Thailand by non-Thai academics

The emphasis on the roles of community in development among Thai academics draws a lot of attention from foreign academics who study Thailand. Much of their discussions engages with the accuracy of the "subsistence" view of the Thai villages in the past. Katherine Bowie (1992), in her study of the case of textile production in nineteenth-century northern Thailand, challenges the myth of the Thai subsistence economy. She uses the findings from her case to argue that, rather than living in a homogenous, egalitarian, and self-sufficient way, the Thai society in the past was characterised by a complex division of labour, class stratification, poverty, and integration with trade. Her inquiry into the nature of textile production in the past points to the dynamics of past Thai communities rather than their static nature as portrayed through the subsistence view of the Thai villages.

Jeremy Kemp (1991) disputed the perspective of isolation between village communities and the state. He argued that the social unit with the characteristics of the Thai villages was actually the product of the Thai modern bureaucratic system. It was created from the rural administrative attempt that was introduced together with state reform in the 1890s. Hence, rather than being an "organic" social unit rooted in the past, the Thai villages were rooted in dialectics between the locals and the modern state. This view was echoed by Craig Reynolds in his work on the genealogy of the Thai word "*chumchon*" which means "community" (Reynolds, 2009). It is observed that such a term only came to be used widely through the Thai government's introduction of its rural development programmes in the late 1950s. There is, therefore, some sense of irony and discontinuity in the uses of the term by development activists and intellectuals to embody their anti-state sentiments. What these studies contribute is for the relevance of the notion of community to the analysis of a reality not to be taken for granted. The concept of community is as much an imagined imposition on the past,

borrowing a sense of realness to endow its functions as a normative vision with greater strength.

Other works by foreign academics have critically examined the actual benefits of community-based development in Thailand. Jonathan Rigg is one of the leading academics on this issue. One of his early works was on the emerging trend of "grass-roots" development in Thailand (Rigg, 1991). Contextualising the rise of such a trend within a similar international trend, he pointed out a range of factors that constrained grass-roots development from realising its promises in Thailand. He explains that the Thai government's turn toward participatory-based and bottom-up development did not fit with the actual reality of the bureaucratic system in Thailand, which was highly centralised and influenced by several interest groups. Further impediments to grass-roots development also existed deep in the hierarchical nature of the Thai society. In addition, Rigg warns that development ideologies centring on the "cultural element" may find themselves divorced from the actual reality of the rural villages, as the actual conditions and aspirations of the villagers may have changed significantly from the picture that such a vision tries to portray (Rigg, 1991:207).

Rigg raises a similar standpoint in his subsequent works. After the 1997 economic crisis, when globalisation was identified as the main threat to the Thai national economy, he criticises such a vision for failing to recognise the extensive integration between the global economy and the lives of Thai rural villagers (Rigg and Sukunee, 2001). He argues that integration with the global economy actually brought opportunities for the villagers, leading to new types of non-farming economic activities, and providing jobs outside the villages. He also suggests that the stability in villagers' lives comes rather from embracing these new opportunities. This perspective was opposite to the Thai NGOs' portrayal of integration with the market as leading to vulnerability, dependency, and instability. Rigg and Ritchie (2002) wrote a subsequent critique on the

relevance of the portrayal of the Thai villages as predominantly subsistence-led. He argues how such a portrayal, which was fostered and consumed by the Thai elites rather than by the rural villagers, led instead to the elites' intrusion into the rural areas and the displacement of the rural dwellers.

Recent contributions on examining community participation in Thailand come from anthropologist Andrew Walker. Walker also discusses the Thai imaginary vision of the village community in his works. As the editor of "Tai lands and Thailand", he offers a critique of the uses of the Thai vision of community as development strategies (Walker, 2009). He suggests a need to rescue the Thai concept of community from the obsession with subsistence, arguing for the state and market to be seen rather as contributive to the formulation and functioning of communities. Drawing upon the work of A.P.Cohen (1985), "The Symbolic Construction of Community", he suggests that community should be seen rather as a set of symbols that are drawn upon to provide a basis for common orientation of the villagers, and to assist their aspiration to "access" the state's power and resources. This point is reiterated in his most recent publication, "The Thai Political Peasant" (Walker, 2012). Through his fieldwork in a Thai rural village, he dismisses the characterisation of Thai peasants as subsistence-led, characterising them rather as "the middle-income" peasants. The middle income peasants sought to attain more power by aligning themselves with state support, particularly through community development projects.

Finally, two recent works on community-based development in Thailand put the emphasis on the central roles of the agency of actors. A study by Funder (2010) examines the agency of the local participants engaging with a participatory development project. He looks at an NGO's project on promoting the livelihoods of the local fishermen in Thailand's southern region. Funder highlights how the local Buddhist people, most of whom had better economic and

educational backgrounds, and were not relying on fisheries for their livelihood, were able to manipulate the project's emphasis on Buddhist-oriented virtues to their advantage. They were able to capture the operation of the project and, in the process, marginalise the local Muslim fishermen. A work by McKinnon (2011) shifts the emphasis to the motivation and identity of development workers. McKinnon asks why development workers keep on lending their support to participatory development, despite recognising the constant failure of their past efforts. She argues that participation is an ideal that is impossible to reach due to its highly political nature. Yet, development professionals continue to insist on the need to bring about the participatory ideal, for this is their basis for building meaningful identities and a sense of purpose to their work.

The review of literature on community development in Thailand by non-Thai academics builds a valuable guideline for this thesis. The works of Rigg highlight stories of inconsistencies and contradictions between the imagination of community development and the reality of rural Thailand (Rigg, 1991; Rigg and Sukunee, 2001; Rigg and Ritchie, 2002). They direct this thesis to bring further understanding to such an issue. Walker's works provide a number of helpful suggestions that this research took up, particularly in understanding the ideological dimension of community participation, and in looking at community development projects as signifying the integration between the rural people and the state (Walker, 2009; 2012). These works, however, developed their perspectives mainly from a study in a village. Thus, this thesis can complement them by changing the scope of study to investigate the working of a development programme, exploring it from the planning process at national level to the implementation in villages. Finally, the recent works by Funder (2010) and Mackinnon (2011) reaffirm the need to look at the roles of actors' agency in understanding community-based development.

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter reviews the literature related to community participation in order to serve three objectives: 1) to clarify the foundation for the design of research questions in the thesis; 2) to build a basis for the design of the theoretical framework; and 3) to review studies of community participation in Thailand.

The review of the literature on the concept of community identifies two major variants in the meanings of the concept. The first recognises community as a set of social relations based on groups' properties such as their belonging to a place, and their closeness to each other. The second perceives community as a social construction that is collectively constructed to serve the sense of collectiveness or security. The literature review on community participation identifies two key processes that relate the approach to improvements in development outcomes. They include the improvement in effectiveness of the delivering of development outcomes, and empowerment. These elucidate the major aspect of the design of the research questions in this thesis.

The review of studies of participatory development identifies three main approaches of examining participation. The institutional/instrumental approach puts the emphasis on looking at how the design of rules in development intervention affects the actual emergence of collective actions. This perspective contrasts with the second approach, the critical approach, which prioritises the importance of politics and power. The critical approach recognises the participatory process as being situated in the dynamics of power that influence its functioning. Nonetheless, the perspectives of these two approaches often fall short of adequately capturing the importance of actors' agency. The third approach, the actor-oriented approach, focuses on this aspect. It looks specifically at how actors could turn the constraints facing them

to their advantage and, thus, influence the situation they are faced with. The review suggests a potential benefit from integrating the three approaches, in order to build a framework for examining community participation. This is the task that will be pursued in the next chapter.

Finally, the review of studies of community development in Thailand points to the divide in perspectives between the Thai and non-Thai academics. Works by Thai academics often signify the important feature of community participation in Thailand, which lies in the ideological character of its concept of community. The concept is strongly associated with the perception of culture and history of the Thai village. The literature by the non-Thai academics, on the contrary, provides critical perspectives on the Thai concept of community, disputing its empirical and practical relevance. This thesis can be recognised as building upon these critical perspectives.

Chapter 3. Theoretical framework: examining the roles of discourse, institutions, and agency in the promotion of community participation

The previous chapter reviewed how different approaches in examining community participation have varying advantages, and made a suggestion for their integration. This chapter follows the suggestion by building up a theoretical framework for a multi-disciplinary approach in examining community participation. The framework will trace the effects on participatory processes of different social factors associated with the concept of community. As mentioned, these factors include: the idea of community, the social relations of communities, and the agency of actors involved in promoting community participation.

The challenge in building up this theoretical framework is twofold; it needs to be able to capture the roles of the social factors mentioned, while also being capable of relating their influences cohesively. The approach employed is to adopt one major theoretical framework as the foundation, and to complement this with other theoretical approaches. This thesis employs as its foundation the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework, which focuses on analysing the roles of institutions. An attempt is made to enrich the IAD framework with insights that have been previously missing from it, by complementing it with discourse analysis and the actor-oriented approach.

It should be noted beforehand that the purpose of this short chapter is to construct a conceptual basis that helps structure the empirical analysis into various parts that complement one another. The attempt here is not to develop a grand theory that will explain how different theories can be synthesized. Each aspect of the framework will also be further developed in each empirical chapter.

This chapter contains three sections. The first starts by explaining the IAD analysis of policy process, and how it can be applied to examine a community-based participatory development programme (CBPDP). The section also points out the need to enrich the IAD framework with the insights from the analysis of discourse and agency. The second section elucidates the analysis of discourse in the policy process, explaining how discourse analysis can be related to institutional analysis, and how it can be applied in examining a CBPDP. The third section then discusses the approach to analysing actors' agency in the policy process. Like the second section, this section also explains how the analysis of agency can be related to the institutional and discourse analyses, and how it can be applied in the context of CBPDPs.

3.1. The IAD framework and the analysis of the policy process of CBPDPs

The IAD framework is one of the most developed frameworks for the study of the policy process (Sabatier, 2007). It focuses the examination of the policy process on the role of institutions – the shared concepts used by humans in repetitive situations organised by norms, rules, and strategies (Ostrom, 2007:23). The IAD framework examines the roles of the institutions in shaping the incentives that individuals face and their resulting behaviours.

The IAD framework has an advantage in providing a broad scope for different types of factors that shape the structure of interactions to be taken into account, enabling various aspects of social conditions such as economic, political, and cultural aspects to be examined. Its key feature, therefore, is its compatibility with other schools of thought and theories (Clement, 2010). This advantage makes the framework appropriate for use as the theoretical basis for incorporating other theories to build up a comprehensive examination of the policy process.

3.1.1. The IAD framework and analysis of the policy process

The application of the IAD framework starts with an identification of the unit of analysis, a concept used by the framework to refer to a social phenomenon of interest. The framework defines its unit of analysis from identifying social spaces where individuals interact. Such social spaces are conceptualised as "action arenas" (Ostrom, 2007:28). Action arenas can occur in varying settings and can arise from interactions between actors in different types of group, for example, a community or a group of policy-makers. In the context of a policy process, action arenas can occur at points where actors interact to formulate, implement, and evaluate policies.

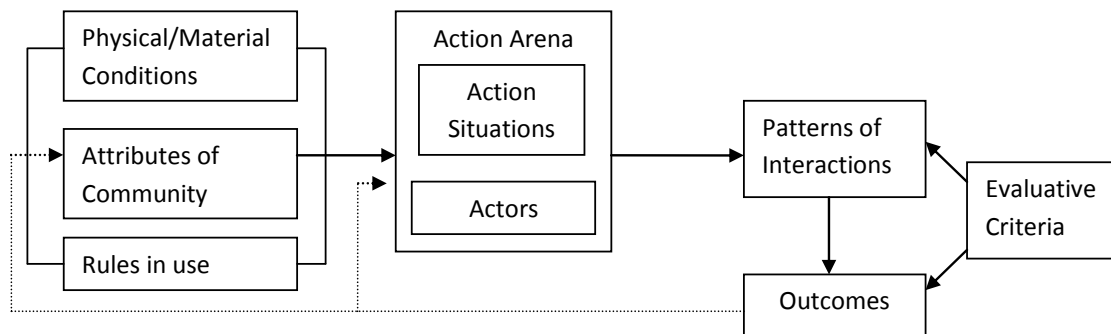
Action arenas provide a focal point of the analysis in the IAD framework. They represent the settings where two key sets of variables, "action situation" and "actors", interact (Ostrom, 2007:28-32; 2005:13). The first set of variables, action situation, describes characteristics of a situation that individuals face in their interactions. Variables that describe an action situation characterise the conditions of social interactions, including the types of actors eligible to participate and their positions in the interactions, the actions that they are allowed to take, the outcomes from their actions, and the costs and benefits associated with such outcomes. The depiction of an action situation can be recognised broadly as indicating the "structure of social interactions".

Acting on an action situation are the actors. The concept of actors describes the characteristics of individuals or group of individuals who interact in an action arena. This concept is used to characterise preferences, resources, and information that individuals possess. The main features of these characteristics are usually characterised by assumptions regarding the key features of human nature. The perspective on individuals often used with the IAD framework is

that of Homo-economicus. This perspective perceives the key features of human nature as being based on the neo-classical economics assumptions about human behaviour. The perspective of Homo-economicus assumes that individuals have complete and well-ordered preferences, i.e., rational, and that they always strive to “maximise their own self-interest” (Sen, 1987; Ostrom, 2007:30)⁵.

The interaction in an action arena, between actors and an action situation, is characterised by the encounter between actors and the "incentive structure" arising from characteristics of the action situation. As a reflection of the assumption of Homo-economicus, the IAD framework recognises the incentive structure as having the primary role in influencing actors' behaviour. The encountering in action arenas results in patterns of the actors' interactions, which can be evaluated to see whether the action arena can produce the desired social outcomes. These dynamics can be observed in figure 3.1. below.

Figure 3.1. The IAD framework



Source: Ostrom (2007:27)

It is worth noting from the figure that, beyond describing the social interactions in action arenas, the IAD framework also extends its analytical scope to explain how the nature of social interactions in action arenas is being shaped. This is in fact the key analytical feature of the IAD

⁵ Ostrom (2007) also attempts to improve upon this assumption in her IAD framework. She tries to recognise that individuals also have a capacity to adjust their behaviour over time through learning.

framework. It attempts to understand what creates the different natures of action arenas, by conceptualising action arenas as dependent variables that are conditional upon three set of factors. In essence, therefore, the IAD framework can be seen as building upon a distinction made between the "factors that shape the structure of social interactions", and the "engagement of actors with the structure of social interactions". The core essence of the framework can be seen as mimicking the interaction between structure and agency, where structure is determined by three sets of social factors, including: 1) rules; 2) attributes of the physical/material world; and 3) attributes of community (Ostrom, 2007). The three sets of factors can be recognised as representing the characteristics of rules, nature, and society that govern social interactions. They are the social factors underpinning the structure of social interactions.

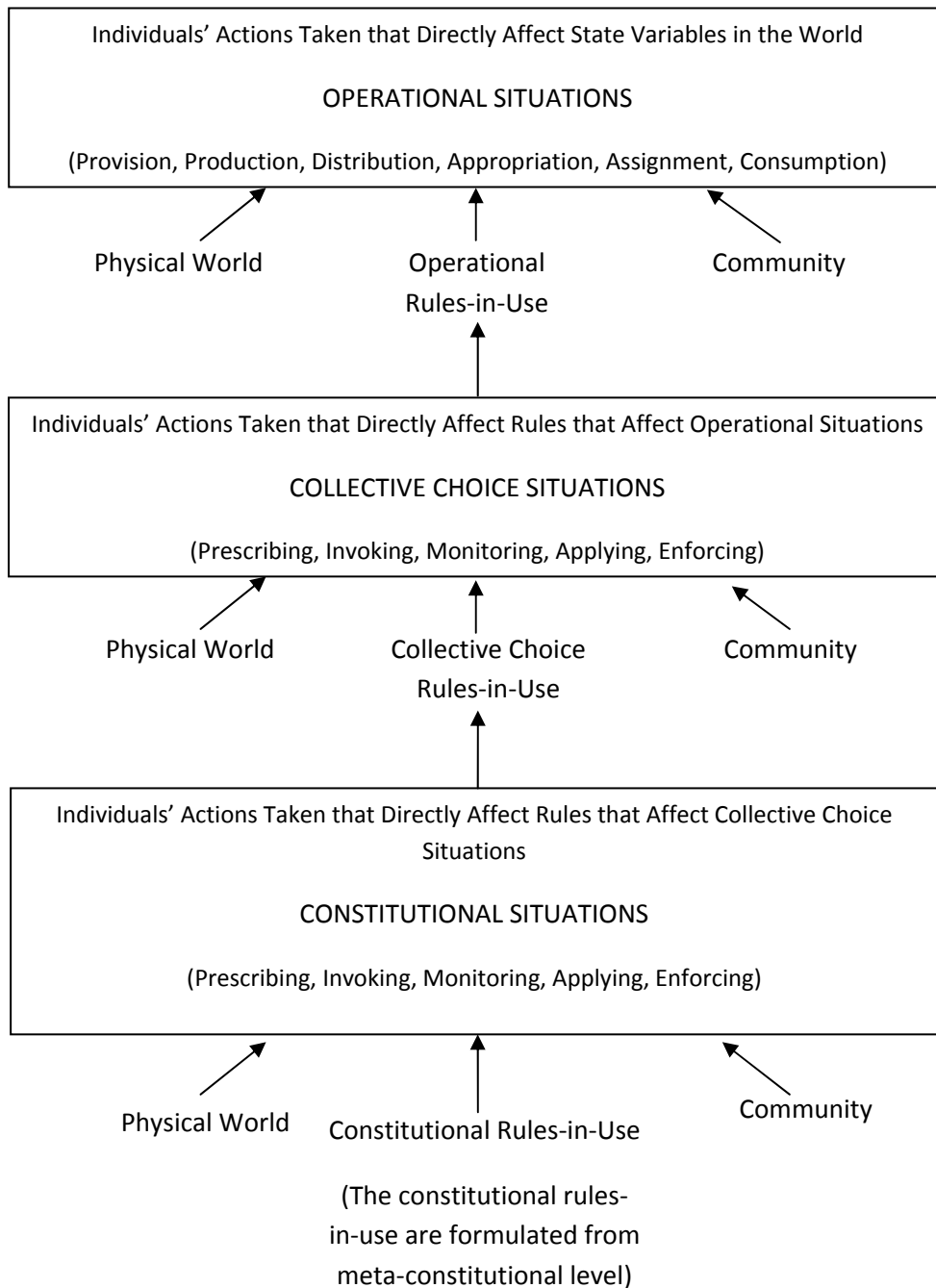
The concept of rules in the IAD framework is defined by Ostrom (2005:18) as "shared understandings by participants about 'enforced' prescriptions concerning what actions (or outcomes) are required, prohibited, or permitted". Rules recognised by the IAD framework need to be the "rules in use", which can include both formal rules such as law and regulations, and informal rules such as norms. The concept of attributes of the physical/material world describes the physical aspects of the context that is being acted upon by actors. The concept indicates, for example, whether resources that actors are acting upon are renewable, and what is their size, abundance, or risks that are involved with their usages. These attributes determine which actions are physically possible in the context. The concept of attributes of communities refers to the nature of relationships between actors that are interacting. Attributes of communities can include, for example, the types of behaviour generally accepted in a community, the level of common understanding that potential participants share about the conditions of an action arena; the extent of homogeneity in their preferences; the size and composition of a community, and the extent of inequality within it.

The application of the IAD framework usually focuses its examination on the capacity of rules in bringing about the desired pattern of interactions. In doing so, the analysis needs to look at how the capacity of rules in shaping the nature of an action arena is conditional upon the attributes of the physical/material world, and the attributes of communities. In cases where actors are sharing the usages of natural resources, for example, resources that are difficult to prevent access to their usage, such as lakes and seas, can make it difficult for certain rules aiming to limit their usage to work. On the other hand, the attributes of communities such as smallness in size, homogenous preferences of members, and more equality in their wealth, are seen as facilitating rules that promote cooperation in development activities (see Agarwal and Gibson, 1999).

Another important feature of the IAD framework lies in the way that it situates one level of action arenas within another. To explain how the functioning of rules in a certain context is actually governed by another set of "deeper" rules, the framework categorises action arenas into different levels, nesting the functioning of one set of rules within another set that defines how the first set can be changed and how its uses are monitored. The framework categorises three levels of action arena: operational level, collective-choice level, and constitutional level. Rules at operational-level action arenas concern interactions that generate outcomes directly into the world, such as a desirable type of social practice. Rules at this level affect day-to-day decisions made by participants in any setting. Rules at operational level are designed and monitored by interaction at the collective-choice level action arenas. Participants at the collective-choice level action arenas can be the same or different from ones at the operational level, but the decisions to be made in this level are policy-related decisions that produce rules for operational decisions. Rules governing the interactions in policy-makings at the collective-

choice level are in turn made at the constitutional-level action arenas. Figure 3.2 illustrates the way the IAD framework situates different level of action arenas.

Figure 3.2. Different levels of action arenas in the IAD framework



Source: Adapted from Ostrom (2007:45)

3.1.2. The application of the IAD framework in examining community participation

In applying the IAD framework to examine community participation, the emphasis can be put on a more specific set of action arenas and factors. The operational-level action arenas of CBPDPs can be recognised as being associated with the promotion of participatory activities in local communities. These participatory activities can be recognised as forms of collective action. The capacity of rules introduced through the external support in promoting the participatory activities can then be examined. This can be done by looking at whether and how rules implemented by a CBPDP can create an incentive structure that allows the desired participatory activities to arise. Such an examination needs to take into consideration that the functioning of the rules is conditional upon other sets of factors, particularly the attributes of communities. Different conditions associated with communities, such as the internal inequality and diversity of interests, can influence the effects of rules introduced to promote participation to work in ways different from the expected.

Action arenas at other levels of the policy process of CBPDPs can also be examined. Action arenas at the collective-choice level of CBPDPs can be conceptualised as the arena where policy actors in the programme make rules for the operational level, and monitor the usage of such rules. Thus, analysis can examine how the regulations in rule making and monitoring interact with the conditions in the relationships between policy actors, and how such interactions consequentially affect the capacity of the programme to make and monitor rules. Similar analysis can also be applied in examining the constitutional level action arenas of CBPDPs. In order to limit the scope of the analysis, however, examination of the constitutional level of CBPDPs will not be taken up in this thesis. Further development of the framework to relate the functioning of rules in CBPDPs to the conditions of communities, or that of policy

actors, will be pursued further in Chapter 6, which examines the roles of institutions in community participation.

3.1.3. The challenges in extending the IAD framework to incorporate the roles of discourse and agency

The IAD offers a useful foundation for the analysis of policy process in community participation, by its ability to incorporate an extensive range of factors into the analysis, and its structuring of policy process as multi-level action arenas. Nonetheless, the method is not without limitations. There are aspects of conditions within the policy process that the IAD framework overlooks or does not pay adequate attention to. The most important of these aspects is the roles of discourse and agency.

Although the range of factors that the IAD framework recognises as influencing the structures of interactions is extensive, the framework does not adequately take into account the possibility that "meanings" involved in the design of the policy process can be "socially constructed". As Clement (2010) pointed out, although the IAD framework recognises that actors can possess values and beliefs, it does not take this recognition further to explain how such values and beliefs emerge, change, or are sustained. As a result, the framework underplays the possibility that, beyond structures that shape the interaction between actors through "incentives", there can be another dimension of structure – the "structure of subjectivity" – that shapes actors' normative values and their interpretations of social reality. The structure of subjectivity can be recognised as a set of factors that influences meanings in social interactions. In analysing policy process, the construction of meanings in the process can be examined through the theoretical approach of "discourse analysis".

Taking the structure of subjectivity into account also means recognising that actors not only interact in pursuit of their self-interests, but also strive to achieve what is valued as "normatively" good. This recognition points to another limitation of the IAD framework, which lies in its restrictive view of the nature of actors. The framework's Homo-economicus perspective in characterising individuals as rational self-interest maximization agents has been widely criticised for downplaying the capacity of actors to pursue goals beyond those related to self-interest. Amartya Sen, for example, criticises the Homo-economicus perspective for failing to take into account that rational actors also act based on their sense of being a member of a group, and also gain satisfaction from their achievements for others in the group they belong to (Sen, 1987). To add to Sen's perspective, Bowles and Gintis (2002) observe that actors can also strive to fulfil their sense of being a member of a certain group by pursuing "normative values" associated with such a group. In this sense, actors can be seen generally as pursuing goals both related to their "self-interest" and to their "subjectivity".

Furthermore, the perspective of social actors in the IAD framework also fails to adequately take into account the capacity of actors to manoeuvre within the structural conditions that they are facing. Actors, rather than being determined by social conditions, possess the capacity to work within the constraints they are facing, turning conditions to their advantage. Within limits of information, uncertainty, and other constraints, social actors also possess "knowledgeability" and "capability". They attempt to solve problems, learn from experiences, monitor their actions, and observe the contingencies (Giddens, 1984:1-16). These aspects of actors, both their ability to pursue goals related to subjectivity, and their capacity to manoeuvre within the conditions that they are facing, are associated with the "agency" of actors. The agency of actors can be examined in the analysis of policy process through the uses of the "actor-oriented" approach.

Recognising these limitations of the IAD framework, there is a need to expand the analysis of the policy process in community participation by relating and conciliating the IAD framework with the analysis of discourse and agency. This is the task that will be pursued in the rest of this chapter.

3.2. Discourse analysis of the policy process in CBPDPs

As suggested, social construction can be recognised as an important intervening factor that affects the formulation and functioning of the policy process. Taking into account the role of social constructions means understanding that the definitions of social problems are not purely objective; definitions of problems emerge from interpretations of social conditions. This points to the importance of analysing how social realities in the policy process are subjectively defined, which can be done through discourse analysis. Analysis of the effects of discourses on the policy process can complement an institutional analysis by providing insights into the normative aspects of the process, and therefore, explain the values and meanings that are involved with the emergence and functioning of certain institutions.

3.2.1. Discourse analysis of the policy process

There are different variants of discourse analysis, and those employed in different disciplines also have different forms and focuses. The explanation of discourse analysis here is based on the context of policy analysis (see Hajer, 1993, 2006; Apthorpe and Gasper, 1996). The basic assumption of discourse analysis is that policies are influenced by discourses that shape the social constructions of the reality perceived by policy actors. The concept of discourse is defined as "as an ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meanings are given to phenomena. Discourses frame social problems; that is to say, they distinguish some

aspects of a situation rather than others...discourse provides the tools with which problems are constructed" (Hajer, 1993:45). Discourse can be seen as a structure that governs discussions of policies, an "intellectual framework" that influences policy making and practices (Apthorpe and Gasper, 1996).

Discourse analysis is usually conducted through the analysis of texts associated with policy contents, discussions, and arguments. Crucial to discourse analysis is the examination of the "framing" of policy, investigating the different components of policies to uncover how problems and solutions are framed, for example, how certain groups of populations come to be included as a policy's beneficiaries and others excluded (Ingram et al., 2007). Examination of framing involves looking at the way labels or metaphors used in policies are formed and utilised. For example, how labels such as "the poor" or "the peasants" are being used to communicate certain perspectives on characteristics of particular groups of the population. Discourse analysis can also be pursued by examining the use of stories and narratives in offering a simplistic but galvanising view of the social reality, and in analysing the arguments that are employed to justify certain interpretations of reality.

Beyond observing the influence on meanings, discourse analysis can also give insights into the practices of policy processes. Examination of discourse can look into the way in which it influences what can be discussed in policy making, who can take part in policy discussions, and what kind of interactions are possible (Hajer, 1993, 2006). Such influence can be seen as arising from the relationship between discourse and the subjectivity of actors in the process, where discourse influences their "taken for granted" view of truth and reality, right and wrong. In addition, analysis of the influences of discourse over policies can be supplemented by an exploration of the formation of "discourse coalitions". A discourse coalition is a group of policy actors that, through time, have come under the influence of a similar discourse, galvanised by

the shared use of the same storyline to express their perspective on the social conditions related to a policy (Hajer, 1993:45). Looking at the formation of discourse coalitions can bring further insights into the characteristics of social interactions under the influence of dominant discourses. This is because the effects of such discourses can be solidified into the institutional and organisational aspects of the interactions (Hajer, 1993:46).

Exploration of the formation of discourse coalitions can also elucidate social dynamics that underpins the dominant position of certain discourses, explaining the production, reproduction, and transformation of discourses in a certain policy arena. A dominant discourse emerges and is sustained together with the formation of a discourse coalition. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the formation of a discourse coalition can involve contestation between several discourses (Hajer, 1993:46; Gaynor, 2010:77-78). Also, it is important to examine how different discourses within a discourse coalition interact and, more importantly, how they can be combined or concealed under the influence of a dominant discourse.

In examining the effects of discourse beyond the realm of policy content and practices, discourse analysis is frequently associated with the observation of "power relations". The functioning of discourse, in this sense, is seen as a means by which the power of certain actors is being exercised over others. This association is influenced by the work of a French philosopher, Michel Foucault, whose work relates knowledge to power. Foucault recognised discourse as both an expression and an instrument of power and knowledge. The categorisation of the world that discourses convey brings about both the structure of knowledge and power to the society (Foucault, 1980). This is achieved through the prescription of what is right and wrong, normal and abnormal (Clement, 2010). The dominance of a certain discourse in structuring values, beliefs, and knowledge, in this sense, is associated with the expansion of power. In a number of studies that examine the roles of discourses in

development, for example, domination through development discourse is associated with construction of concepts such as "the Third World" or "underdevelopment", and the uses of such concepts are associated with the expansion of the power of developed countries over developing countries (see Escobar, 1995; Rahnema, 1997).

3.2.2. Relating discourse analysis to the IAD framework, and the application of discourse analysis in the context of CBPDPs

The roles of discourse in the policy process can be related to the IAD framework by recognising discourse as another dimension of the structure of interactions that actors engage in, the dimension of subjectivity and identity. Nevertheless, combining institutional analysis and discourse analysis can provide complementary perspectives. Discourse analysis can complement institutional analysis by highlighting the meanings underpinning the existence and the functioning of rules. Institutional analysis, on the other hand, can complement discourse analysis by extending observations of the relationship between discourse and practices, by giving further insights into the functioning of the rules influenced by discourse.

Questions may be raised as to whether this perspective that sees discourse and institutional analysis as complementing each other is ontologically feasible. Such feasibility depends on one's ontological standpoint. Clement (2010) argues that the complementarity of discourse analysis and institutional analysis is possible when one takes the ontological standpoint of "critical realism" (see Bhaskar, 1975). Such an ontological standpoint recognises the existence of "reality", but also sees that actors' perception of reality can be framed to a certain extent through socio-cultural factors. This perspective allows an understanding of institutions, based more on analysing aspects of certain social conditions that are objective-oriented, to be put

together with discourse analysis – which examines the aspects of the conditions that can be subjectively framed.

Recognising discourse as another type of structure in the policy process, discourse analysis can be applied to study a CBPDP by treating the notion of community as discourse, and then by examining the way in which the discourse of community affects the participatory process. In this approach, participation is recognised as a process that can be endowed with meaning. Analysis of the discourse of community needs to examine how it affects the construction of meanings attached to the participatory process, including the definitions of problems that the participatory process is expected to solve, and the making of objectives and goals that the process is expected to promote. Moreover, beyond analysing meanings associated with the participatory process, the analysis also needs to examine the influence that such a construction of meanings has on actual participatory practices, for example, how the discourse of community influences the criteria for who can participate in the process and what can be discussed.

An additional challenge in examining the discourse of community, particularly in situating the functioning of the discourse of community within the dynamic of power, lies in the need to also recognise important features of the notion of community. These features exist in the normative element inherent in the notion. Such a normative element is associated with how the notion of community can help social actors attain their sense of identity, yielding to them the sense of belonging (Cohen, 1985; Jenkins, 2008). It is crucial to build an analysis of the discourse of community which allows this feature to be recognised, thus enabling the examination of the influence of the discourse of community on power relations to take into account the implications of this feature. Further development on this pathway of analysis will

be made in Chapter 5, which analyses the effects of the discourse of community on participatory development.

3.3. The analysis of agency in the policy process of CBPDPs

In examining CBPDPs, institutions and discourses can be considered as two dimensions of structure that shape the nature of social interactions in a policy process. Examination of these two dimensions of social structure helps to explain how and why the actual reality of community participation usually differs from the rhetoric associated with it. Nonetheless, there is another aspect of the policy process. The examination of which can complement the insights gained from the analysis of institutions and discourse. Such an aspect is the role of human agency in the policy process. The analysis of agency, as will be explained here, can be achieved through the "actor-oriented approach" (Long, 2003).

3.3.1. Application of the actor-oriented approach in examining the policy process

The focus on agency requires the consideration of actors as pursuing both self-interest and normative values, and also recognition that actors have the capacity to manoeuvre within constraints that arise from social structures. The "actor-oriented" approach allows for these aspects of actors, and their role in the policy process, to be examined. The approach is pioneered by sociologist Norman Long to assist his examinations of development interventions (Long, 2001).

The crucial aspect of the actor-oriented approach is its identification of facets of the policy process in which the importance of human agency can be recognised, and the implications elucidated. In identifying such aspects, Long proposes that the policy process in development

needs to be conceptualised differently. Instead of seeing the policy process in development intervention as an instrumental process where practices are executed according to plans or blueprints, the process is recognised rather as consisting of different sites of negotiation that arise between actors who possess different values and interests (Long, 2003). As Norman Long and Ann Long explain:

"The concept of (development) intervention thus needs deconstructing so that it is seen for what it is – an ongoing, socially constructed and negotiated process, not simply the execution of an already-specified plan of action with expected outcomes" (Long and Long, 1992:35)

The actor-oriented approach focuses their analysis of development intervention on points where different actors interact, investigating how they use their agency in engaging with the interactions. It puts the emphasis on understanding the ways in which meanings are produced and negotiated, and examining the significance of such a process to the actors involved (Long and Long, 1992). The approach proposes the concept of "social interfaces" to refer to points within the policy process where different actors and their different values and interests intersect (Long, 2001:26). Social interfaces create conditions for actors to manoeuvre in consolidating and transforming their differences. At social interfaces, social actors "steer or muddle their ways through difficult scenarios, turning 'bad' into 'less bad' circumstances" (Long, 2001:14). The capability of social actors in engaging with such circumstances signifies the roles of actors' "agency" in enabling development interventions to consolidate inner differences and disjuncture, and sustain their operation.

The application of the actor-oriented approach in examining development intervention can benefit significantly from the attempt to situate actors' agency within a broader social context.

This can be done via the depiction of their "lifeworld", the term used by Long to describe the "lived-in" and "taken-for-granted" world of social actors. Each actor's lifeworld gives them the basis for forming intentionality and values in their everyday practices (Long, 2001:54). The explanation of lifeworlds can be complemented by the knowledge of broader social forces that the actors are embedded in. The lifeworld of actors in the development sector can be seen as embedded in the broader trajectory of the roles of the state or development agencies (Biershenk et al., 2002). Understanding the conditions underpinning actors' roles in development can illuminate their choice of strategies in engaging with social interfaces, as such choices are inevitably shaped by conditions that go beyond the realm of development interventions. The grounding of lifeworlds within a broader trend of social change can alleviate what has been observed as the tendency of the actor-oriented approach to neglect the roles of wider social conditions (Lewis and Mosse, 2006a:10).

Although the actor-oriented approach gives a useful basis from which to examine the roles of agency in the policy process, the approach can be criticised for having a scope that is too broad. This critique led to the recent development of the actor-oriented approach by Lewis and Mosse (2006a) to focus on more specific activities which occurred at the interfaces in development intervention. They take on such a task by directing the actor-oriented approach toward the roles of development "brokers and translators" (Lewis and Mosse, 2006a:11). Brokerage and translation are suggested as the two key activities that sustain the functioning of development interventions. Brokerage concerns the distribution of resources from one level of the programme to others, while translation involves the enrolment of different meanings and perspectives in the programme to create representations of the programme's purposes, values, and successes (ibid; Mosse, 2005).

3.3.2. Integration with the IAD and discourse analysis, and application in the context of CBPDPs

The focus by the actor-oriented analysis on actors' agency does not mean that the roles of social structure will be overlooked. In fact, the approach provides a means of relating structure with agency. This can be done by "situating" the social interfaces in a development programme within the social structure. The characteristics of the context that actors' interactions occur within, in this sense, can be seen as being influenced by institutions and discourses.

Nonetheless, it is important to recognise that the roles of social structure in governing social interaction are not deterministic; the social structure actually creates the "constraints and opportunities" for actors to act upon in their interactions. As actors encounter the structure of subjectivity arising from discourse, which compels them to produce normatively acceptable actions, they also find opportunities to turn their perspectives into agreeable representations. In addition, faced with the structure of incentives arising from institutions, actors can devise ways of simultaneously fulfilling their self-interest and producing the required pattern of interactions. This recognition enables the dialectic between actors' agency and social structure to be explored.

Examination of the relationship between agency and structure can be built upon the perspective of Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration. Central to the theory of structuration is the recognition of the duality of structure: that social structure functions as both medium and outcome of social interactions. Giddens argues that social structure can both constrain and enable actors' actions. It is explained that, as individuals draw upon aspects of structure to enable their actions, they are at the same time engaged in the process by which structure is "reproduced" (Giddens, 1979:5). This insight into such a reproduction process provides a way

of understanding the relationship between agency and structure. The theory of structuration helps coordinate the analysis of institutions and discourse with the examination of agency. It indicates that the key point of such linkage lies in how institutions and discourses are drawn upon by actors to deal with the challenge facing them, for such a moment is also when agency contributes to the reproduction of these structural conditions.

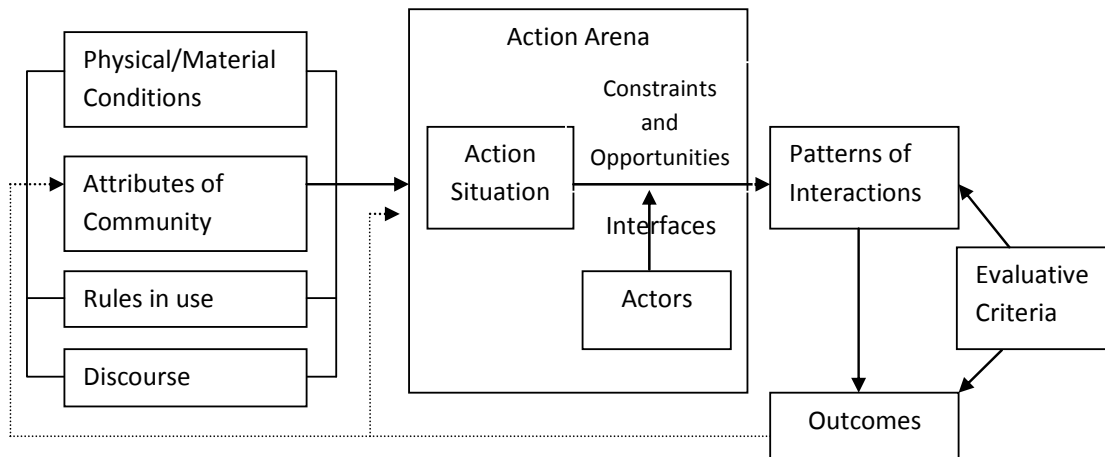
Application of the actor-oriented approach in examining CBPDPs can focus on providing two types of explanations. Firstly, the actor-oriented approach can reveal the dynamics of community participation from the perspective of actors in the process. This allows the nature of community participation to be explained from the ways in which actors use their agency to shape it. These usages of agency, as mentioned earlier, can be observed through the strategies employed by actors to negotiate their differences, and to turn the constraints they face to their advantage.

The second type of explanation that the approach can provide results from combining the actor-oriented approach with the structuration theory. This combination allows the approach to explain how conditions in a CBPDP evolve through the agency of actors, particularly through investigating actors' engagements with discourse and institutions. In the aspect of discourse, such engagements arise in the situation where different perspectives among actors in the programme need to be translated to be coherent and consistent with the dominant "discourse of community". In the aspect of institutions, the engagements arise in the links of resources, from development agencies to local community-based groups. This is because such links provide the context for actors to engage with "rules", i.e., regulations regarding the allocation of resources and arrangements of collective activities. Actors' engagements with the discourse of community and rules, in turn, contribute to the evolutions of these structural conditions.

Further explanations on the application of the actor-oriented approach to examine community participation will be provided in Chapter 8.

Figure 3.3. depicts how discourse and agency can fit into the IAD framework.

Figure 3.3. The enriched IAD framework



Source: Adapted from Ostrom (2007:27)

3.4. Conclusion

This chapter explains the theoretical framework that the thesis will apply in order to examine the policy process in CBPDPs. The framework is constructed with the aim of investigating the roles of discourse, institutions, and agency in shaping the policy process of a CBPDP. Three theoretical approaches are combined in response to this aim. The first theoretical approach, the institutional analysis and development (IAD) framework, acts as the foundation for this combination. The IAD framework focuses the analysis on the interaction between rules, relationships in communities, and physical conditions, in shaping incentives for collective action. The second theoretical approach is discourse analysis, which focuses on examining the roles of ideas in shaping interpretations of social reality. The third theoretical approach is the actor-oriented approach, which investigates the roles of human agency in engaging with and

influencing social conditions. Combining the three approaches can enrich the examination of a CBPDP by: 1) providing an explanation of the construction of meanings that underpin the design and functioning of rules in promoting community participation; and 2) explaining how actors engage with the conditions in the promotion of community participation that arise from the influences of discourse and institutions.

The empirical analysis in this thesis is structured into three chapters, each corresponding to one of the three theoretical approaches that make up the framework. The first empirical analysis chapter, chapter 5, applies discourse analysis to examine the roles of the discourse of community in shaping the meaning and practices of community participation. The second, chapter 6, utilises the IAD framework to study the roles of institutions and their interrelated conditions in the mobilisation of participatory activities. And finally, the third, chapter 7, employs the actor-oriented approach in examining the roles of actors' agency in engaging with the conditions arising in the policy process of a CBPDP, linking the roles of discourse and institutions with the roles of actors' agency. However, before reaching these empirical chapters, the following chapter will explain the use of the case study method in the thesis to facilitate the application of this theoretical framework.

Chapter 4. Research method: the case study method

The previous chapter elucidates how the theoretical framework in this research brings together three theoretical approaches to studying the roles of discourse, institutions, and agency, in influencing the nature of community participation. This chapter explains the research methodology that will be used in operationalising such a framework, which is the case study method. The main purpose of this short chapter is to look into the implications of this method for the design of this research. The chapter also explains other relevant issues concerning the selection of cases, and the collection and analysis of data.

The chapter contains four sections. The first discusses the features of the case study method, and their suitability for the nature and objective of this research. The second explains how the case and sub-cases in this research were selected. It also gives details of the method of sampling the sources of information, including the interviewees, activities for participatory observation, and the documents. The third deals with issues concerning the collection of data. This section explores issues that were relevant to the process of gathering information during the fieldwork, particularly in relation to the conducting of interviews. It also clarifies how participatory observation in a passive degree, rather than non-participatory observation, was conducted during the fieldwork. Finally, the fourth section explains the approach used in transcribing and analysing data. This final section also offers some personal reflections on the effects that the Thai political conflict, which arose during the fieldwork, had on the research.

4.1. The case study method

The case study method was chosen due to its suitability for addressing this research's questions and objectives. Yin (2009:2, 13-14) describes the case study method as involving the

researcher being "in the field". This allows the use of both ethnography and participatory observation to collect data. The method enables the use of data from various sources, contributing to the ability to flexibly design a research project. These advantages are suitable for the objectives of this research in terms of capturing multiple aspects of community participation.

The case study method is also appropriate for the type of question that is being asked in this thesis, and also for the timing of its empirical evidence. The method is favourable when the research questions being posed are concerned with "how" and "why", and when the research engages with contemporary events (Yin, 2009; Gerring, 2004). This thesis engages with a contemporary development programme, and its main questions can be described in a simple-fashion as asking how and why community participation tends to produce results that contrast with the expectations of the approach. The advantage of the case study method, and its implication for the design of the research, will be explained in the rest of this section.

4.1.1. The case study method as a means of explaining a social phenomenon

The advantage of the case study method lies in its ability to examine "mechanisms" in a social phenomenon (Bennett and George, 1997; Mahoney and Terrie, 2009; Bryne, 2009). In contrast to the statistical method, which usually aims to prove the existence of the effect that independent variables have on dependent variables, the case study method aims to explore the complexity of processes whereby social factors interact to produce the effects on a social phenomenon (Bennett and George, 1997).

The central aim of this thesis is to examine mechanisms that underlie the emergence and persistence of the gap between the expectations and reality of community participation. Such

an examination tries to unveil findings that can be relevant to the understanding of other cases of the promotion of community participation. Through the study of the CCO programme in Thailand, the thesis combines the analysis of three different social factors, namely, discourse, institutions, and human agency. The analysis of how these three factors influence the participatory process is structured into the three parts of the theoretical framework. These three parts can be understood as different lenses that complement one another in exploring the empirical evidence.

Examination of mechanisms through the case study method can be made through "process tracing" (George and Bennett, 2005; Mahoney and Terrie, 2009). Process tracing, sometimes termed the "pattern matching" method, involves analysing data to map out the potential paths that link causes to observed effects. The process being traced, in this respect, is one where the workings of social factors lead to the production of a certain social phenomenon (Bennett and Elman, 2006). As Mahoney and Terrie (2009:418) explain:

"Most basically, process tracing helps one to assess whether a posited causal factor actually exerts a causal effect on a specific outcome. If intervening mechanisms cannot be located, then doubt is cast upon the causal efficacy of the factor in question. By contrast, if appropriate intervening mechanisms are found, then one has grounds for believing that the factor in question did exert the effect. Beyond this, process tracing allows one to evaluate hypotheses by considering 'sub-hypotheses' that do not necessarily refer to intervening mechanisms but that should be true if the main hypothesis of interests is valid"

According to Bennett and George (1997), process tracing can be done either through the method of verification or induction. Process verification involves testing whether the observed

processes in a case match those predicted by previously designated theories. Process induction, on the other hand, involves the inductive observation of apparent mechanisms and heuristic rendering of these mechanisms as potential hypotheses for future testing. The use of process tracing in this research involves both process verification and induction.

The implementation of the process tracing method requires matching theoretical propositions with the empirical evidence gained from the study of a case. In doing so, propositions of a mechanism that are developed from theories are matched with actual evidence. It is recommended by Yin (2009), and George and McKeown (1985), that the theoretical propositions for the case study research be clearly set out. In the case of this research examination of the CCO programme, the theoretical framework allows a number of theoretical propositions to be outlined. These propositions are built from the three theoretical approaches that this research combines to examine community participation. The propositions are divided into three sets, corresponding to the three empirical chapters in the thesis. The propositions are also developed further in each of the empirical chapters. They are summarised in the following table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Theoretical propositions in examining each dimension of community participation

| | Research Questions | Theoretical Propositions (as developed later in the empirical chapters) |
|---|---|--|
| The influences of the discourse of community on community participation | How does the discourse of community shape the meanings of participation, and the power relations that emerge from participatory practices? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The symbolic nature of the discourse of community, and its feature as a means of attaining collective identity, significantly influence the construction of meanings and the nature of practices in the participatory process. • The meanings are influenced through the stressing of the boundary between "us" and "them". The influences on practices arise through the creation of limits on the types of participants and voices that are allowed in the process. |
| The roles of institutions in the promotion of community participation | How do the attributes of the relationship between actors, both at the community level and at the level of policy actors, affect the capacity of a CBPDP to promote the participatory process? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The attributes of communities at the local level, such as inequality and a diversity of interests among community members, limit the capacity of the rules of a CBPDP to mobilise local participatory activities. • The attributes of the relationship between policy actors, particularly after the inclusion of local beneficiaries as the actors, limit the effectiveness of their collective task in monitoring and allocating resources. |
| Human agency and the functioning of community participation | How does human agency play a role in the reproduction of structural conditions in community participation, and how does that contribute to the evolution of the gap between the expectations and reality of the approach? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agency of actors in the promotion of community participation is demonstrated through their brokerage and translation strategies. • Their agency contributes to the persistence, rather than the reduction, of the gap between the expectations and reality of the approach. |

4.1.2. The case study method as a means of developing theories

As explained by Benett and George (1997), the uses of the case study method can be seen as an experiment to observe the predictive power of theories, and to add insights to the prevailing theories. Flyvbjerg (2006) elaborates these advantages of the case study method in terms of the wealth of information it provides in allowing researchers to traverse back and forth between their assumptions, concepts, and hypotheses, and the case materials.

The ability of the case study method to examine the predictive power of theories is associated with the method's engagement with generalisation. It must be noted that generalisation through the case study method differs from, and must not be confused with, generalisation in the statistical sense. Statistical generalisation lies in the ability to enumerate frequencies of prediction, in order to be able to claim with high probability the conditions or characteristics associated with the population of a certain social unit. This cannot be achieved by the case study method due to the small sample size it is relying on. Generalisation through the case study is "analytic generalisation". This type of generalisation, as Yin (2009:14-15) argues, exists in the way case studies are generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations. The contribution of the case study lies rather in examining the explanatory power of theories and concepts for a particular set of cases (Mahoney and Terrie, 2009:417). The case study, thus, has the power as an "example" to elucidate how the preconceptions about a phenomenon actually match up with the reality (Bryne, 2009).

In case studies, previously developed theories are being applied as templates to compare the empirical results. Case studies can act as a means for theoretical development. They can help expand existing theories by adding ingredients to the existing insights (Stake, 1978; Gerring, 2004). While theories can operate in the case study method as orientating frameworks that

allow researchers to identify patterns of the social world, evidence from examining a case or cases can connect back to theories, thus allowing theories to be extended or refined. Such an extension of theories arises from extending existing theoretical or conceptual formulations to other groups or aggregations, to other bounded contexts or places, or to other sociological domains (Snow et al. 2003:187). Theories, in this regard, serve as the carrier of the accumulated case-based knowledge (Ó Riain, 2009). In addition, the application of the case study method also opens up possibilities for developing additional hypotheses. This way of using the case study is oriented toward the inductive approach of uncovering new concepts or conceptual tools, in a manner similar to the use of the grounded theory approach (Ó Riain, 2009).

This research examination of the CCO programme tries to attain both aspects of the benefits of the case study method. It attempts to explore the power of the theories to explain how social factors affect community participation. It is worth noting that the theoretical propositions in this research are adapted to fit with the application in examining community participation. Its examination of the role of discourse and institutions in the promotion of community participation will be oriented towards the goal of theoretical extensions, by building upon existing concepts and theories associated with communities to further elucidate the working of these factors in community-based development programmes. Its examination of the role of agency in community participation, however, will be more open-ended. The exploration of human agency, i.e., the capacity of human to act in face of constraints, will act as a basis for developing new propositions on the way that community participation actually works.

4.2. The selection of cases and sources of information

The selection of the case and sub-cases in this research corresponds to the aforementioned theoretical propositions. It will be explained in this section how the theoretical propositions led to the selection of the unit of analysis for the case and sub-cases. This unit of analysis⁶ here refers to the real-world group of actors or activities to be studied (Yin, 2009:29-30). Defining the unit of study is equivalent to deciding what will be the "case" to be examined and explained. A study of neighbourhood, for example, requires the study of a group of actors who live together in a small locality, in order to explain the characteristics of such a group. Due to the objective of this research of examining multiple dimensions of community participation, the units of analysis to be observed can differ according to the dimension being studied.

For analysis of the influences of the discourse of community on community participation, the unit of analysis will be the whole programme, with a specific focus on its meanings and their associated practices. The historical details of the programme's formation will be examined with the aid of documents, and also the programme's key participatory activities.

The unit of analysis in examining the roles of agency in community participation will also be the whole CCO programme. Although the focus in examining the CCO programme will be on the actors and their uses of agency, such a focus is not aimed at explaining the actors themselves, but rather how the programme actually works. The examination of agency will be investigating actors' interaction at different stages in the CCO programme, including planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Such an examination, as mentioned, will be more exploratory than the examination of discourse and institutions in this thesis.

⁶ The concept "unit of analysis" here must not be confused with a similar concept used in the previous chapter explaining the IAD framework, which refers to a social phenomenon of interest.

Analysis of the roles of institutions in community participation requires the use of the embedded case study method. A number of cases of locality, in which the programme is implemented to produce participatory activities, are selected to be embedded within the network of policy actors that facilitates the implementation. In examining the implementation of the CCO programme, the unit of analysis will be sub-districts where the programme is being operated. Five cases of sub-district will be examined. The examination of the policy actors in the CCO programme looks at a network of CODI's committees that span different "geographical" levels, including national, regional, and provincial, as the unit of analysis.

Table 4.2 explains the framework for the selection of the unit of analysis in this research, and also the factors and their effects on each of the dimensions in community participation that will be examined. The mentioning of factors and their effects here is in order to point to the mechanisms that will be explored, mechanisms that connect these factors to the effects.

Table 4.2. Unit of analysis and the aspects that are observed in the research

| | Unit of Analysis | Aspects observed |
|---|---|--|
| The influences of the discourse of community on community participation | CCO Programme | <p>Factor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The discourse of community <p>Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy contents (narratives, storylines, objectives, and rules) The design of participatory activities (who was allowed to participate, what and whose voices were allowed and promoted) |
| The roles of institutions in the promotion of community participation | Embedded case study: cases of local implementation (Sub-Districts) embedded within the case of the network of Policy Actors | <p>Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rules (the CCO programme's regulations) Attributes of communities (conditions in relationship between actors who operated the CCO programme) <p>Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The characteristics of local participatory activities that emerged from the CCO programme (number and variation of participants, and contents related to the promotion of development cooperation and attaining governance) The characteristics of monitoring and supportive activities (contents related to tasks in resource allocation and monitoring of progress) |
| Human agency and the functioning of community participation | CCO Programme (with focus on observing actors' agency) | <p>Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human agency (as reflected by the translation and brokerage strategies employed by actors in their interactions) <p>Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reproduction of the structural conditions in the programme The evolution of the gap between expectations and realities of community participation |

Two issues will be explained in the rest of this section: 1) the rationale behind the selection of the CCO programme in Thailand as the case study, and the approaches in choosing sub-cases in conducting the embedded case study for institutional analysis of the CCO programme; and 2) the approach for the selection of informants, activities, and documents to describe the case and sub-cases.

4.2.1. The selection of the case and sub-cases

The choice of Thailand and the CCO programme

Thailand is chosen as the context in which to examine community participation due to the strong presence of the community-based approach in terms of social development in the country. In the context of Thailand, community development is strongly perceived, particularly among development activists, as a crucial means of providing welfare and developing good governance. Such a strong presence of this approach means that the country provides a compelling case for a comprehensive examination of community participation.

The choice of the CCO programme was decided after documentary research, and the conducting of preliminary fieldwork. The suitability of the CCO programme as the case study arises from two aspects. Firstly, the programme's strong presence, particularly during its formation and early years of operation, provides this research with sizable evidence to explore in examining community participation. The extensive scale of the programme, having a structure of operation from national to local level, also enables this research to examine the mechanisms to promote community participation at different levels. Secondly, the timing of the CCO programme makes it suitable. The programme began operation in early 2008, 2 years

before the conducting of the fieldwork. The fieldwork took place during the third and fourth years of the programme's operation (from early 2010-early 2011). This allowed the research to examine the programme at a time when it was very active.

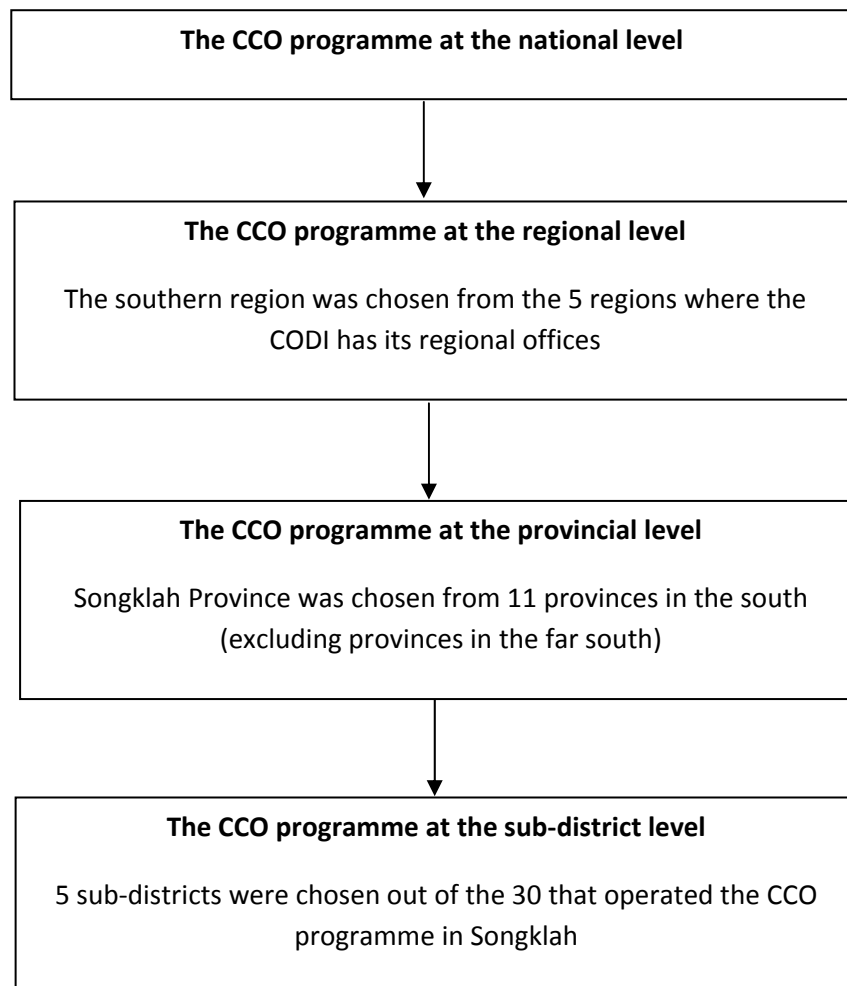
Nonetheless, the timing raised the question of whether it was too early to examine the programme. It is worth remembering that the objective of this research is not to evaluate results, but to understand the nature of participatory process in a community-based development programme. The timing of the fieldwork, in this sense, is appropriate in order to examine the nature of the process that arises when the programme is introduced, allowing this to be investigated. Moreover, in the context of community development projects in Thailand, each project tends to have a short life cycle of receiving strong support; the project's activeness depends on funding, which can shift to newer projects within a few years.

The choice of localities in the CCO programme: the selection of region, province, and sub-districts

The theoretical propositions derived from the analysis of institutions in community participation required the sampling of different geographically-based arenas of interactions. This is because, in addition to implementation at sub-district level, the CCO programme also had a structure of a supporting network that ran from the national to regional and provincial levels. At the level of implementation, thus, it was necessary to choose sub-districts which operated the CCO programme. Also, in examining the level of policy actors who supported the programme, selection of region(s) and province(s) in which the network of policy actors would be explored was necessary.

During the conducting of the fieldwork, the general approach in choosing these sub-cases relied on the nested method. This means that the geographical region of the policy actors to be explored was chosen first. The province in which its network of policy actors would be examined was chosen within the selected region, and the sub-districts that operated the CCO programme was chosen within the selected province. The nested approach allows findings at the lower levels of the “geographical-based arena” to be understood within the context of the higher levels. Figure 4.1. explains the use of the nested approach in this research.

Figure 4.1: Selection of geographical areas for data collection



The choice of the southern region was made after discussions with the CODI officials in Bangkok. The reason for this choice was that the southern region was one of the programme's more active. I avoided regions that had serious conflict over the programme's operation, as this would be likely to disrupt the programme's implementation at the lower levels. In addition, I obtained very good support from the CODI officials in the southern region, which enabled me to efficiently gain access to informants at the provincial level.

The choice of Songklah Province was made after field visits to a few provinces in the south. Songklah Province provided the best practical choice since it is not too large when travelling to sub-districts. The activeness of the CCO programme in Songklah was another reason for its selection, as various provinces were encountering conflicts between CO leaders, making it difficult to gain access to a wide range of informants at sub-district level. Finally, comparing two provinces was initially considered, but this idea was dropped since I wanted to focus my examination of the programme's implementation at sub-district level. Given time and resource constraints, therefore, the choice I made was to expand the study to cover more sub-districts within one province.

The choice of the main cases of the five sub-districts within the Songklah Province was made after visits to eight sub-districts that were suggested by the CODI officials and the province's leading CO leaders. The five sub-districts finally chosen were relatively active in the CCO programme implementation. Their selection was theoretically driven, in order to gain an understanding of how the different attributes of communities affected the local promotion of participation. The conditions that were found to be affecting the working of the CCO programme include, for example, the relationship between community organisations and the local government, and the existence of conflict in a community.

Finally, although my sources of data came primarily from the selected region, province, and sub-districts, I did not limit my interviews to informants from these areas. CO leaders from sub-districts other than the chosen cases and from other provinces in the South were also interviewed, in my attempt to contextualise the insights into the cases I selected within a broader sample.

Figure 4.2. indicates a geographical location of Thailand's southern region and the fieldwork location in Songklah Province.

Figure 4.2. Location of fieldwork in Songklah Province, Southern Thailand



Source: Google Map, and www.tica.or.th

4.2.2. Selection of information sources

Informants

Selection of informants for interview corresponded with the objective of gaining an understanding of the workings of the CCO programme at national level, in the southern region, in the Songklah Province, and in the five sub-districts. The selection of informants was based on snow-balling sampling. I expanded my access by seeking support from key informants at each level and in each sub-district, asking the key informants to provide access to other informants.

I recognised that this method of gaining access through "gatekeepers" can limit the opportunity for gaining contrasting perspectives to those of key informants. At national, regional, and provincial levels, therefore, I tried to secure support from several key informants, in order to have more than a single gatekeeper. This was not difficult as I could meet different community leaders during meetings or seminars. However, this was relatively more difficult at sub-district level, as the local leaders with whom I established a connection had some degree of dominance over other local actors associated with the CCO programme. To deal with this issue, I sought to gain varying perspectives from other leaders within the same provincial network. In addition, the long period of time I spent in Songklah also allowed me to gain a more 'insider' and realistic perspective of conditions at the local level.

At regional and national levels, interviews were conducted mainly with the CO leaders and the CODI officials. CO leaders who I interviewed were all members of committees set up by the CODI to support or operate the CCO programme. Various types of CODI officials were interviewed, with the focus being given to officials who played more important roles in the

CCO programme. A few office-based officials who processed documents for the CCO programme were interviewed. In addition, three academics with consulting roles in the programme were also interviewed.

At the provincial level, which was the level in which I spent most of the time participating in the CCO-related meetings, nearly all the influential CO leaders within the CODI network were interviewed. One CODI official in charge of supporting the CODI's provincial network of CO leaders was interviewed. Interviews were also conducted with the locally influential NGO figures who often participated in the CCO-related meetings.

At the sub-district level, where all informants are CCO members, the choice of respondents was determined by the objective of exploring the dynamics of the CCO programme's implementation. Selection of non-members, in this sense, was not considered necessary to explore most aspects of such dynamics. Access to informants in each sub-district was obtained through local CO leaders, who were identified with help from a CODI official at provincial level. These leaders helped to schedule the interviews of CCO members in their sub-districts. Usually, several interviewees would be scheduled to meet me on the same day. On several occasions, the interviewees preferred to be interviewed as a group. The issue regarding the conducting of the group interview will be discussed in the next section.

The gender balance among the CODI officials, and the ordinary members of the CCO at the sub-district level, was more or less equal. However, for the CO leaders, there were many more male than female; perhaps a reflection of the Thai traditional perception that males have the advantage in taking on leadership roles. This orientation was reflected in my interviews of the CO leaders, where there were more males than females. The following Table 4.3. categorises the informants of this research according to background and gender.

Table 4.3. The informants according to background and gender

| Level | Informants according to background | Informants according to gender |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| National Level | 1 CODI executives 6 CODI officers 2 CO leaders 2 academic consultants to the CODI | Male:6 Female:5 |
| Regional Level | 5 CODI officers 4 CO leaders 1 academic consultant to the CODI | Male:7 Female:3 |
| Provincial and Sub-District Level | 1 CODI officer 14 CO leaders 21 CCO members (some interviewed in groups) 2 Mayor of the Local Government 2 local NGOs | Male:30 Female:10 |
| Total | 61 Informants | Male:43 Female:18 |

Participatory activities

The selection of observed participatory activities corresponded to the cases and sub-cases. I tried to maximise the number of activities in which I was able to do participatory observation at each level and in each sub-district. Two types of participatory activities dominated the CCO programme: seminars and meetings. Access to participatory activities was obtained by permission of the CODI officers and CO leaders. My status as a lecturer from a prominent university in Thailand played a crucial role in enabling me to gain access.

In selecting participatory activities to observe, however, it must be noted that the boundary between activities in the CCO programme and those of other programmes was not always clear. Most of the CCO-related meetings I observed at provincial and sub-district levels were operated jointly with other programmes. They were not CCO-specific in content, as the discussion involved operations of several other development projects. However, this is not necessarily a problem; it can actually be recognised as a central feature of the programme that is worth explaining.

Also, the boundary between the CCO programme and other CODI's programmes was also unclear in a number of participatory seminars I attended. Although the CCO representatives provided the majority of participants in these seminars, there were also participants who represented other development programmes. I am cautious to attribute observations from these seminars as reflecting the nature of the CCO programme, because they can also reflect the functioning of other programmes. The seminars I chose to examine in the thesis include only those that are adequately relevant to provide an understanding of the promotion of community participation through the CCO programme. The seminars that were deemed too irrelevant to the CCO programme, despite being observed, were not considered in the analysis⁷.

Table 4.4. summarises the participatory activities observed during the fieldwork according to their type and the number of times of I was able to participate.

⁷ I also tried to observe other development activities that the CO leaders in the CODI network participated, in order to gain a better understanding of the general context of their development works.

Table 4.4. Participatory activities observed during fieldwork

| Level | Participatory activities observed | The number of times I participated |
|---|--|------------------------------------|
| National | CCO National Operational Committee meeting | 2 |
| | CCO National Supporting Committee meeting | 1 |
| | CODI officials meeting for the CCO programme | 2 |
| | Seminars related to the CCO programme | 2 |
| Regional | CCO Regional Committee meeting | 2 |
| | Seminars related to the CCO programme | 2 |
| Provincial | CODI Provincial Network meeting | 2 |
| | Seminars related to the CCO programme | 2 |
| Sub-district and zone (zone = a group of sub-districts) | Sub-district CCO meeting | 4 |
| | Zonal meeting of CCO representatives | 3 |
| | Workshop related to the CCO programme | 1 |

Documents

During the fieldwork, I was able to build up a large database of documents used in the CCO programme. These documents were gained through CODI staff, who allowed me to obtain all the document files they had that were related to the CCO programme. Documents that were especially helpful were those containing the minutes and summary reports of meetings and seminars organised at the regional and national levels. These provided a detailed account of speeches, presentations, and discussions. They helped me gain a broad understanding of

different aspects within the programme, and also allowed me to triangulate my data collected from other sources. Nonetheless, I am also concerned that these documents, recorded as official records of meetings and seminars, had some details filtered out, particularly those that could cause the programme to be perceived negatively. I tried to overcome this limitation by supplementing them with data from interviews.

4.2.3. Selection bias

While selection bias poses a crucial problem in statistical-based studies, it poses a different type of problem for the case study. A case with rather extreme characteristics may be selected for the purpose of testing the explanatory power of theories in differing contexts (Flyvbjerg, 2006). This study, however, does not aim to carry out such a task. It selects cases and sub-cases more in accordance with an attempt to develop insights relevant to an understanding of the general context. In this sense, it still tries to avoid examining cases that may seem too peculiar.

During my fieldwork, I was initially concerned that my selection of sub-cases was oriented toward those networks and localities where the CCO programme was more active in producing participatory activities, and had fewer problems in operation of the programme. This was due to the influence of the gatekeepers, who were more than willing to introduce me to good examples of the programme. As a result, the regions and provinces where strong conflicts were known to stall the CCO programme's operation were not chosen as the main cases. I did, however, conduct interviews with CO leaders from the inactive cases for a balanced perspective of the programme's overall nature.

I decided to steer my observations toward cases where the information was richer. The objective of this research is not to evaluate the CCO programme. Therefore, orientation towards cases that were more active had fewer implications for the findings. The objective of this research is to explore the nature of mechanisms linking social factors to the emerging nature of the participatory process. It makes sense to observe active cases where such mechanisms can actually be observed with rich detail. I could thus ensure that the factors I wanted to observe were exerting influence. As Ragin (2009:525) pointed out, it is difficult to trace a process within a phenomenon, if such a process does not exist.

Nonetheless, as my fieldwork went on, I found the actual conditions in the programme to be different from what I initially perceived. It turned out that the difference in the activeness of the programme's implementation was not very significant. Even in the "model cases" of the programme, there were actually limited activities that could be attributed to being truly the outcomes of the CCO programme. Similar problems in the provision of support for the programme were also found in all regions and provinces. This discovery directed my attention toward the roles of constraints on the promotion of community participation. My examination developed into a more specific attempt to explain what contributes to the tendency of community participation to fall short of delivering its promises. In this regard, my selection of active cases was still helpful to my study. It allowed me to observe that how the "efforts" to promoting participation were eventually faced with constraints that limited their outcomes. Furthermore, it also allowed me to pose further questions regarding the social construction of what appears to be the active cases by the actors in the programme.

4.3. Issues in data collection

There are issues that are worth spelling out and discussing in relation to the data collection process, including issues in the conducting of interviews, verification of data, and the reflexivity of the researcher.

4.3.1. Issues in conducting interviews

The interviews conducted for this research had some elements of "elite interviews". In research on policies, elite interviews typically include those with policymakers such as politicians and high-ranking bureaucrats. Nonetheless, the use of the term 'elite' can vary in different contexts. For this research, those interviews that can be considered as elite interviews were the ones conducted with high-ranking officials in the CODI, and top-level CO leaders in the CODI's network. The interviewees can be considered as elites since they had significant influence over the operations of development programmes within the CODI. During the interviews, they would often seek to demonstrate the value of their insights and contributions to the CCO programme.

The elite interviews created several challenges. The first concerned access to interviewees (see Goldstein, 2002). High-ranking CODI officials and top-level CO leaders were busy for most of the time, having meetings to attend and, therefore, interviews were difficult to schedule. I dealt with this by arranging most of their interviews to be held at meetings and seminars in which they were participating, using the time available before and after such events. The second challenge of elite interviews concerned the nature of the interview questions. Most elite interviews consist of open-ended questions (Berry, 2002; Harvey, 2010). This allows the elites to demonstrate their insights and give firsthand account of the social phenomenon

under study. While the interview questions I asked tended to be open-ended, they remained within the topic guidelines (see Appendix 2). As the fieldwork progressed, I was able to gain more insight into the programme, becoming more adept at controlling the direction of the conversations.

The final challenge concerning elite interviews arises in the tendency for the elites to portray certain issues that they have their stake in only in a positive way (Berry, 2002). This was also a problem at the initial stage of my fieldwork. However, as my knowledge of the actual operational issues of the CCO programme grew, I was able to question the interviewees on these specific issues. This allowed the dialogue to be centred around real-world issues, rather than on abstract representations.

Some of the interviews were conducted in groups; this resulted from the difficulty of scheduling interviews. All the interviews that were conducted in groups occurred within sub-district level. Their scheduling was assisted by the local gatekeepers. The main difficulty arose from having to schedule visits to the interviewees' homes for a private interview. As a result, the local gate-keepers sometimes scheduled three to four interviewees to meet with me simultaneously; thus, I had no choice but to conduct a group interview. Conducting a group interview faced the potential problem of discussions being dominated by particular members with "strong opinions", or those tending to evoke the importance of a group's "norms". This occurred at times during group interviews I conducted, because discussions usually came on to collective issues. Although it was not possible to fully overcome such a dynamic, I tried to keep the balance of the discussions by directing questions away from the dominant interviewees. Moreover, I also complemented the information I gained from the group interviews, which only occurred four times, with many other interviews conducted individually.

Finally, it is worth mentioning a few ethics-related issues arising in the conducting of interviews. The first of these concerned compensation to interviewees. I did not provide any financial compensation. Nonetheless, on a few occasions, I paid for coffee or snacks in gratitude for their allowing me to use their time. Such a gesture was difficult to avoid as I developed close relationships with several key informants. The effects of such a gesture on the response from interviews, however, were also unlikely to be significant. Another ethics-related issue concerned possible harm from the research. I noted that some findings could be potentially harmful to the informants, particularly critical analysis of the programme's actual problems in its operation. As a result, in line with the consent form that the interviewees signed, I decided to anonymise the interviewees, and also the sub-districts where the data were collected (see Appendix 1).

4.3.2 The degree of participation in participatory observation

In conducting participatory observation, I tried to limit the degree of my involvement in the activities in which I participated. This was in order to minimise any impact on the nature of the activities I observed. I was aware of the probability that taking an active part in the activities could accentuate my presence as an external observer. This could compel actual participants to purposefully demonstrate the good side, and to hide the less favourable aspects, of their activities. In addition, some participants could perceive me as having the potential to influence the reputation of their locality, or affect the evaluation of projects in which they were engaged. Although it was still difficult to completely avoid having other participants perceiving me in such a way, I expected my minimal presence to ease their feeling of being observed. Furthermore, on a few occasions when I was asked to provide comments on the activities in which I participated, I attempted to minimise the significance of my comments, and tried not to be too critical. This is because I did not want any of my comments to be interpreted

negatively. That could create adverse reactions among the informants, disrupting the support and trust I received from them.

Despite the effort to limit my involvement, the nature of the observation I conducted could still not be described as non-participatory. It could be seen instead as being participatory to a moderate extent. This degree of participatory observation arises when a researcher is "present at the scene of action but doesn't actively participate or interact, or only occasionally interacts, with people in it" (Dewalt et al., 1998:262). In the participatory observation I made, my presence as an external researcher in the activities was acknowledged by most other participants. In almost all the meetings and seminars in which I participated, I was often introduced, or asked to introduce myself, as an academic who is researching the CCO programme. Hence, even though I tried to limit my presence, I was to some extent recognised as one of the participants by others, joining them in listening to the speeches, presentations, and discussions. Furthermore, I also occasionally had interactions with other participants, asking them for their opinions or information on issues that arose during the activities.

4.3.3. Verification of data

Verification of data was an essential issue for this research, because the CCO members tended to give an overly positive picture of the programme. This occurred mostly among the informants at the sub-district level, due to their fear that any negative portrayal of the programme could lead to a disruption in funding. Triangulation of data from various sources to check their consistency was, therefore, essential.

I used two approaches for triangulating data. The first was to cross-check the interviewees. Follow-up interviews were also conducted with key informants, in order to ask more specific

questions. The follow-up interviews proved highly useful in enabling deeper knowledge of actual conditions, particularly at the local level. This was because, after being in the field for a long time, I had gained more understanding of the important issues, and had also developed closer relationships with the key informants. The informants, therefore, were asked more direct questions, and they were more honest in their personal reflections. Secondly, I was able to also triangulate data with the information from the organisation's documents. I was very fortunate to gain access to a large database of administrative documents that the CODI created. These documents allow some of the details obtained from interviews to be verified. Moreover, I was able to draw upon information from the database to ask interviewees for clarification or verification of the details.

4.4. Analysing data

The final section of this chapter briefly describes the approach I used to analyse data. The explanation here concerns my method of transcribing and analysing data.

4.4.1. Data transcription and analysis

All interviews were transcribed. The challenge for the transcription process was the language, as all interviews were conducted in Thai. Initially, I tried transcribing at the same time as translating the interview into English. Such an approach was highly inefficient, and caused the interviews to lose their original meanings. As a result, I decided to do the transcriptions of the interviews in Thai. However, I can only type in Thai at a very slow speed. Thus, I decided to transcribe all the interviews in handwriting. This was the most efficient way to deal with a relatively large number of the interviews I conducted. One major limitation that arose from this choice was that I could not subsequently engage with the transcriptions through a

computer programme. I had to organise details from my transcriptions by making additional notes.

I organised details into themes. The themes were designed and structured from the theories I employed. I also read other works that applied the same theories to understand what themes of data were emphasized. The method I used, as described earlier, was process tracing, by matching data with predictions from theories. Nonetheless, not all data accorded with the theories, resulting in a subsequent process of "explanation building". As explained by Yin (2009), the process of explanation building has an iterative nature. The initial propositions are compared to findings, and any additional information gained from such comparison can lead to further modifications to theoretical propositions, which can then be compared with the findings again. This iterative process occurred throughout the writing-up process. I developed clearer analytical themes as I gained more insight into the interactions between data and theories. I then went through the transcriptions to take note of details that corresponded with the more developed themes. This process went on until I felt that the relationship between data and my analysis had become "saturated", in the sense that the findings from the data could not provide significant alteration or additional insight to the explanations that the study had already built.

4.4.2 Reflexivity

The research was conducted during a period of one of the worst political conflicts in Thailand in my lifetime. This situation created much difficulty in engaging with my informants. One particular event which occurred during my fieldwork was the suppression of a major protest staged in downtown Bangkok. The protesters were called the Red-Shirts. Many of them came from the poorer section of the Thai society, and were known for their support for the ex-prime

minister Thaksin Shinawatra. I was distressed by the event, which led to the loss of lives of nearly ninety people, and injured thousands. However, my view was not shared by many of my interviewees. During several meetings I attended before the crackdown happened, strong condemnation of the protesters was pervasive among the CO leaders and the CODI officials. Most held a negative view of Thaksin, and believed that the protesters were simply being manipulated.

Frustration grew as the CODI and the network of CO leaders eagerly decided to join the "reform" initiative by the government that had ordered the crackdown. I recognised such a move as the government's attempt to prolong their time in power. I could not help but feel some frustration at several points during my observation of participatory activities by the CODI. Still, I never expressed any contrasting opinion, or showed how I felt during my participation.

Nonetheless, the sense of frustration remained for many months after the fieldwork was finished. During the early period of writing up, I was still obsessed with the question of why most of the CODI officers and CO leaders, despite their claims to devote themselves to the poor, held such a negative view toward the poorer section of Thai society. This, perhaps, affected the writing of the first empirical chapter and I was advised by my supervisor to be careful of my position. After sufficient time had passed, I was able to come to terms with the frustration, and had revised my chapters, being more careful about the bias arising from the experience. The frustration I felt earlier turned into the motivation to ask questions, examining how CODI officers and CO leaders had formed their perspective. The situation also gave me a basis to reframe the question related to the roles of the discourse of community in influencing the construction of the meanings of community participation.

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter explains and justifies the choice of methodology. It introduces the case study method, highlighting how the method is appropriate for the research questions, which require the use of different data sources in order to observe various aspects of community participation. It also explains how the case study method is relevant to examining the mechanisms underlying the emerging nature of community participation. The set of theoretical propositions have been outlined, in order to guide the observation of empirical evidence. Through the use of the case study method, this research seeks to both confirm theoretical predictions in explaining community participation, and to propose some new hypotheses concerning it.

In addition, this chapter explains the process of selecting sub-cases. A nested approach was applied in choosing the southern region, the southern Province of Songkhal, and the five Sub-Districts in Songkhal, in order to investigate the workings of the CCO programme. The chapter also discusses key issues in data collection and data analysis procedures. It has been explained that the interviews contained elements of elite interviewing. This influenced the open-ended nature of interview questions. Elite interviews, and the use of the gate-keepers to access informants, also had a tendency to lead to information that could give an overly positive picture of the programme. These issues, however, became less significant with my attempt to diversify the gatekeepers, and with the deeper knowledge on the programme that I attained from a longer period of time in the field. Finally, it was explained that, due to the ethical issue concerning the potential harm to informants, it was decided that all the names of the informants would be anonymised. Having established the research design, the next chapter analyses the influences of the discourse of community on the nature of the participatory process.

Chapter 5. The influence of the discourse of community on community participation⁸

This chapter examines the mechanism by which community, "as an idea", influences the characteristics of a participatory process. The aspect of the process that this chapter focuses on is that of its ability to empower, which in this chapter will be recognised broadly as an enhancement of power to actors through a participatory process. Community participation is frequently lauded for being a means to empower. Empowerment is expected to result from the inclusion and the promotion of voices from the local actors, particularly the poor and the marginalised, to play a crucial role in the public institutions relevant to their lives. What these expectations frequently fail to recognise, however, is that the notion of community involves more than just the identification of existing social relations. Community is also a socially constructed notion that encompasses a certain perspective on the world, particularly the aspirations and values associated with the sense of identity (Cohen, 1985; Jenkins, 2008). The notion contains the "normative elements" that can have significant influences on the meanings and practices of the participatory process, and such influences may not be necessarily conducive to empowerment.

The chapter takes the theoretical approach of discourse analysis. Community is conceptualised as discourse, an ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meanings are given to phenomena (Hajer, 2006). The participatory process, on the other hand, is taken as a process involving the defining of social problems and their solutions, and the conducting of corresponding participatory practices, the nature of all of which is affected by the associated discourses. Analysis in this chapter is based on the case study of the Council of Community

⁸ Sections of this chapter were presented as a paper titled "The paradox of Communitarian Democracy in Thailand" at the Oxford Southeast Asian Symposium 2012, 10-11 March 2012, St. Antony's College, Oxford, UK.

Organisations (CCO) programme in Thailand. Two major aspects of the programme will be explored to uncover the ways in which the discourse of community affected its participatory process. The first aspect is the programme's formation, involving its definition of social problems and their solutions; the second aspect is the implementation of the programme's participatory activities.

This chapter challenges the taken for granted perception that community participation is intrinsically contributing to empowerment. Using the case of the CCO programme as an example, the chapter signifies the close association between the discourse of community and the sense of collective identity. It argues that such association tends to transcend the design and organisation of the participatory process, consequentially compromising the empowering potential of community participation.

The chapter consists of four sections. The first builds a theoretical basis and introduces the case study. It introduces the discourse of community in the context of Thailand; the Community Culture School of Thought (CCST, or in Thai: *naew kid wattanatham chumchon*)⁹. The CCST provides an empirical basis for the conceptualising of the features of the discourse of community that have important implications for the meanings and practices of participation. The second section explores the emergence and formulation of the content of the CCO programme. It observes how the discourse of community in Thailand influenced the meanings of participation in the programme. The third section then examines the characteristics of the CCO programme's participatory activities, in order to investigate how the discourse influenced the nature of the activities. Finally, the fourth section discusses the findings from the CCO programme, in order to analyse the way in which the discourse of community tends to limit the ability of community participation to promote empowerment.

⁹ The Community Culture School of Thought has also been conceptualised as “localism discourse” (McCargo, 2001; Hewison, 2001)

5.1. Understanding the discourse of community: the discourse of community as a symbolic construction

This section proposes a framework to conceptualise the discourse of community. This conceptualisation begins by a brief exploration of the Thai discourse of community: the Community Culture School of Thought (CCST). Some details of the CCST were actually covered in the literature review, in describing community development in Thailand. Nonetheless, it is worth discussing them again to explicitly describe the CCST, in order to signify features of the discourse of community, both in the Thai and a general context. These features are signified first, so that a conceptual framework can be proposed to conceptualise them as the attributes of the discourse of community. This framework comes from the work of Anthony Cohen (1985), the "Symbolic Construction of Community". Further details in the conceptualisation of the discourse of community as a symbolic construction will be explained, followed by the implications of this conceptualisation for the analysis of the discourse's influences on participation.

5.1.1. Characterising the features of the discourse of community: insights from the exploration of the CCST (Community Culture School of Thought) in Thailand

Thailand's local discourse of community called the "Community Culture School of Thought (CCST)" has been a dominant development idea in Thailand during the past few decades. Most of Thailand's community-led ideas and practices of development are associated with it. Perspectives of development associated with the CCST centre on the portrayal of Thai rural development problems as caused by the loss of the culture of the Thai communities in the past. The CCST has been interpreted very broadly, resulting in its association with a wide range

of development practices such as community-based management of natural resources, micro-finance, conservation of traditions, and organic farming.

The CCST emerged and grew in popularity with the proliferation of the Thai NGOs in the early 1980s (Yukti, 1995). It was at first taken as a practical guideline for the development work of these NGOs, who wanted to put more emphasis on the role of local cultures and traditions in development practices (Reynolds, 2009:35-36). Through the writings of academics and public intellectuals, the CCST was subsequently built into a more systematic and coherent set of ideas. These writings portrayed the livelihood problems faced by the Thai farmers as arising from the process of modernisation, which had been forced upon the rural society by the Thai state (Yukti, 1995). Modernisation was criticised for bringing rural farmers out of self-reliance, and into a system of commercialization. This was seen as putting them into an endless cycle of debt, and destroying the community-based traditions and culture which had allowed rural people to live together harmoniously. Consequently, they argue that the solution to Thai rural development problems must be found in the revival of the "community culture" of the Thai rural people.

To its proponents, the CCST is seen as the solution to all of Thailand's development problems (Kitahara, 1996). The "subsistence" ways of living, and the "local wisdoms and traditions", are seen as ways to help people achieve the good life; these characteristics in themselves are defined as features of the good life (Kitahara, 1996). The idealisation of the "Thai village" played a crucial part in the CCST perspective. The vision of community promoted by the CCST is a village-based community (Rigg, 1994). This has arisen from the perception that Thai villages in the past had been operating a subsistence mode of production, which was supported by the culture of harmony and unity. This glorious past of Thai communities is recognised as being deteriorated by the intrusion of the state and market economy (Chattip, 1999). Such a

portrayal has been widely embraced by the Thai NGOs. The influences of the CCST have continued to persist despite objections to its accuracy in depicting the reality of rural society, both in the past and in the present (Bowie, 1992; Kitahara; 1996; Kemp; 1991). In this regard, the CCST, as many have argued, can be recognised more correctly as an ethical construction; "a normative vision"¹⁰ (Hewison, 2001; Anan, 2001; Walker, 2009).

The CCST evolved into the Thai national stage during the 1990s. The wave of democratisation allowed public intellectuals and activists who were associated with the Thai NGOs to exert influence over the government's development plans, leading the CCST to gain popularity among the government's development agencies (Connors, 2007:212-239). The CCST also evolved through assimilation into the King of Thailand's concept of a "self-sufficiency economy", which was introduced in the aftermath of the 1997 crisis (see Chalida et al. 2004). The King urged the Thais to adopt self-sufficiency and moderation as being the virtues that would allow Thailand to survive and prosper (see Pasuk and Baker, 2000). The popularity and authority of the King's concept, which resembled much of the CCST's vision of development, contributed to the CCST attaining influence as one of the central themes in the national development agenda (McCargo, 2001, Connors, 2007). In addition to modernisation, other changes such as Westernisation and globalisation have also been criticised by the CCST proponents for contributing to the problems of the Thai society. Moreover, the CCST has been associated with other concepts that had recently become more influential such as welfare, democracy, and rights. The ability of the CCST to be combined with numerous perspectives highlights the other main feature of the discourse, which is its "ambiguity".

¹⁰ The CCST has also frequently been defended by its proponents for its ability to be the "strategy" to empower the poor and the marginalised (see: Walker, 2009). This chapter provides a good opportunity to investigate such a claim.

This brief exploration of the CCST here points to its two important features: "normativeness" and "ambiguity". These features are also found in studies on community participation in other contexts to be important attributes of the notion of community (Midgley, 1986; Craig and Mayo, 1995:1). Thus, they can be recognised as general features of the discourse of community. In this light, the following conceptualisation of the discourse of community seeks to capture them as its important attributes.

5.1.2. Conceptualising the discourse of community as a symbolic construction

Discourse is defined as an ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices (Hajer, 2006). It can be seen as a frame for interpreting social phenomena (Apthorpe and Gasper, 1996). In a policy context, discourse analysis is concerned with how discourse influences interpretation of aspects of social reality as being problematic, and how it influences the constructions of policy solutions and target beneficiaries (Ingram et al. 2007). Discourse analysis also includes the analysis of social conditions that underpin the functioning of a certain discourse. Such an analysis generally portrays discourse as existing and functioning within power relations. There is, however, a tendency to view the functioning of discourse as being interlocked in the dynamic of domination and resistance (Grillo, 1997:21-23). Such a tendency can be at fault for downplaying the shared benefits that actors can collectively gain from engaging with discourse such as the notion of community. Thus, the conceptualisation of the discourse of community in this chapter tries to break away from this tendency.

This chapter proposes the discourse of community to be conceptualised through the concept of community argued by A.P.Cohen (1985) in his work, "the Symbolic Construction of Community". Cohen explains community as a collectively imagined social construction that has

a symbolic nature. Community can be understood as a repertoire of symbols that allow their adherents to attain the sense of collective identity. The symbols of community also allow their adherents to attain from it diverse meanings that are valuable to them. For example, a concept such as "village", which has often been related to the notion of community, can be used by some to designate the sense of place, distinguishing their locality from other places. On the other hand, village can also be interpreted by others as signifying kinship and belonging to the same group (Cohen, 1985:18).

The symbolic nature of the notion of community underpins its lack of specific meaning and, therefore, explains the source of the notion's ambiguity (Cohen, 1985:15-21, 71-75). On the other hand, the notion of community's association with the sense of common identity explains the source of the concept's normative nature. In this light, Cohen's perspective fits with this chapter's objective in capturing the normative and ambiguous features of the discourse of community. Therefore, the discourse of community can be conceptualised as having the attributes of a symbolic construction. The discourse's functioning as an interpretative frame can be seen as occurring through the uses of symbols of community to construct social reality, and at the same time to affirm the sense of collective identity.

The application of Cohen's perspective in the analysis of the discourse of community in this thesis is in fact following the suggestion of Andrew Walker (2009; 2012). Walker points to the relevance of Cohen's perspective in allowing community to be seen as an imagined notion that can bring about possibilities and values for everyone who engages with it. The engagements with the notion of community, he argues, should be seen as reflecting the agency of all actors, rather than reflecting the domination of one over another. For the analysis here, the conceptualisation of the discourse of community as a symbolic construction is not to reject that power relations can play a role in the functioning of the discourse of community. It is

about first gaining an understanding of the nature of the discourse of community more accurately, so that the analysis of how power relations interrelate with the discourse can be eventually built upon this.

Nevertheless, there are some issues that can be further considered in conceptualising the discourse of community as a symbolic construction. These issues will be clarified here. They include: 1) the type of identity associated with the discourse of community; 2) the types of symbols that constitute the discourse of community.

The identity of development activists

In Cohen's perspective, the desire to affirm the sense of collective identity is the main imperative behind the usages of the symbols of community. While Cohen's discussion is more about the general uses of the notion of community, the discussion here is more specific to the development context. It can be recognised that the usages of the notion of community in the development context can go beyond one's assertion of one's own group's identity. The notion in the development context is frequently not employed by the internal member of a group, but by the external agents who seek to defend or help the group they are not part of. The notion of community has also been used by development agents to present their vision of development that glorifies the culture and identity of groups of the people they are working with (Cleaver, 2001). In this respect, the type of identity that is associated with the uses of the notion of community in development needs further explanation.

Olivier de Sardan (2005) provides insights into such a type of identity through his concept of development populism. He points to the elements of "populism" that tend to

be found in the identity of development activists and intellectuals, who seek to bring betterment to the people they are concerned with, such as the poor and the disadvantaged. It is worth noting that de Sardan's notion of populism is not one that is found in the political science description of a leadership style; it refers to the type of relationship between development agents, including intellectuals who study development, and the people they are helping. It is the relationship wherein the agents “discover the people, pity their lot in life and/or marvel at their capacities, and decide to put themselves at the disposal of the people and to strive for their welfare” (Olivier De Sardan, 2005:35). Populism arises out of the agents’ dissatisfaction with the neglect of the poor and the disadvantaged, and the resulting drive to put previously disregarded people at the centre of attention (Olivier De Sardan, 2005:115-116). Building on the explanation of Olivier de Sardan, the identity of development actors that mobilises the uses of the discourse of community will be described here as the identity of development populists.

Certain details are worth clarifying in this depiction of the identity of development populists. Olivier De Sardan actually categorises development populism into two degrees; methodological and ideological. Methodological populism only goes as far as the effort to explore the life of the poor or the disadvantaged, trying to understand their choice and strategies. However, at a higher degree lies ideological populism, wherein development agents go further to idealise the cognitive, moral, and cultural virtues of the people they are working with. This often leads to the stereotyping and glorification of the locals, reductively portraying the locals as living in a culture of solidarity, self-reliance, and tradition (Olivier De Sardan, 2005:116-117). It is ideological populism that can often be found in writings associated with the CCST. This can be observed in how CCST proponents generally take the position of “defenders of the rural poor”, and pitch

their voice as that of the authentic-consensual voice of the poor. Their insights into development frequently place local knowledge into the opposite category to that of the modern Western-based knowledge, subsequently stressing the primacy and superiority of the knowledge of the rural poor. Thus, the use of the term development populist in this thesis refers more specifically to ideological populism.

The symbols constituting the discourse of community

In explaining how the symbols associated with community can be mobilised to attain a sense of identity, Cohen conceptualises these into two types; 1) symbols of boundaries; and 2) symbols of the model of reality. The symbols of boundaries are the devices through which users can mobilise to mark the boundaries that distinguish their identity from that of others (Cohen, 1985:39-40). The symbols of boundaries usually exist in oppositional categories, ones that identify with the identity of "us" and the opposing ones that identify with the identity of "them". Through the symbols of boundaries, users can mark the difference between us/them, ours/others, and reaffirm the existence and value of their common identity. The symbols of the model of reality can be mobilised to construct the projected reality, in order to be the basis for envisioning a common identity. This, as explained by Cohen, is frequently accomplished through the construction of the collective history, creating the sense of belonging to the same roots.

Combining Cohen's perspective with the analysis of discourse, both aforementioned categories of symbols can be recognised as the central elements that make up a "storyline" of the discourse of community. A storyline is the method of narrating or giving interpretations of a phenomena; it is a crucial element of discourse, providing a way in which different perspectives can come together by sharing the same course in the

telling of the story (Hajer, 1993, 2006). For example, the storyline associated with the CCST makes frequent uses of symbols that make a distinction between us/them. The symbols that signify the sense of Thai community includes notions such as village and tradition. On the contrary, the symbols that signify the "otherness" usually include notions such as modernity and the West. These symbols are used in order to construct the vision of development that belongs to the Thais, against the development that belongs to "others" (see Yukti, 1995:131-140). In addition, as mentioned earlier, the CCST proponents also often draw upon stories from the portrayal of Thai villages in the past, in order to lend a further sense of rightness to their ideal of community. Such portrayal of the past, in this sense, can be recognised as a type of the model of reality.

Finally, the earlier descriptions of the CCST can also provide one additional insight into the mobilisation of symbols of community. It can be noted that the mobilisation of the symbols of community can serve a purpose beyond the assertion of an "existence" of a collective identity. Their usages can also be about the assertion of "collective values" recognised as central to such an identity. This is illustrated by the way that the CCST has also been mobilised in asserting the "virtues" portrayed as relevant to the identity of the rural Thais, such as subsistence and respect for local traditions.

The conceptualisation of the discourse of community as a symbolic construction has two major implications for the examination of the influences of the discourse on the construction of meanings of participation. Firstly, it suggests what the examination should focus on is how the functioning of the discourse as an interpretative frame is driven by its feature as means of asserting a collective identity. Secondly, it also raises the significance of looking into the effects of the discourse's symbolic nature, which allows the discourse of community to be associated

with multiple meanings, on the framing of the policy content in promoting participation. The next section examines these issues by looking at the formation of the CCO programme.

5.2. Constructing the vision of participation through the discourse of community: examining the formation of Thailand's CCO programme

This section explores how the discourse of community in the Thai context influenced the emergence of the CCO programme. The aim of the section is to examine how the policy content of the programme was constructed through the discourse of community in Thailand: the CCST. In doing so, the section investigates how the CCST shaped the interpretation of a particular social condition in Thailand as problematic, and subsequently suggested the need to promote a certain type of participatory process as a solution to the problem. In relation to this, the section also examines how the CCST influenced the details of the participatory process that the CCO programme was designed to promote.

The section begins by introducing the context in which the CCO programme emerged, exploring a situation that triggered reactions among a group of Thai development activists and led to their mobilisation for the CCO programme. It subsequently explores the role of the discourse of community in the framing of the CCO programme. The exploration focuses on examining the uses of symbols, stories, and rationales relating to the discourse of community, which can be found in texts associated with the programme's formulation. The texts examined here include the content of the seminars that were organised by the programme's proponents, the contents of news and articles that recorded the proponents' rationales and arguments in support of the programme, and the content of the programme's introductory booklet.

5.2.1. The context of the emergence of the CCO programme: the Thai political conflict in the mid 2000s

The CCO programme was formulated during the Thai political conflict in the mid 2000s, and the nature of the conflict played a crucial part in its emergence. The major dividing factor in the conflict was the ex-Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra. The conflict can be roughly described as arising between Thaksin's supporters and opponents. The supporters comprised of the rural poor as the main group, while the opponents comprised of mainly the urban middle class and the elite. As Thaksin based his power on the electoral majority, which he derived mostly from the rural voters, the central issue in the conflict was the legitimacy of the electoral system. The emergence of the CCO programme in this context was the outcome of the stance that many development activists in Thailand, particularly the CCST proponents, took in relation to this issue.

To understand the political developments that led to the Thai political conflict in the mid 2000s, one needs to trace the context back to the political reform that took place in Thailand a decade earlier. The Thai political reform in the mid 1990s was ignited by the urban middle class uprising against the military in May 1992, which led to the retreat of the military from politics, and brought about a subsequent wave of democratisation (Hewison, 2010). Urban-based pro-reform political activists and public intellectuals, having emerged as the leading force of Thai politics, eventually led a reform to bring about a political system with stability, participation, and good governance. The reform led to the making of the 1997 Constitution, which aimed to enable a strong civilian government to emerge in Thai politics (Hewison, 2010).

A strong civilian government was precisely what Thailand eventually got from the 1997 Constitution. In 1998, the billionaire businessman-turned-politician, Thaksin Shinawatra,

decided to form a political party in his bid to lead the country. The Thai-Rak-Thai (TRT) party was formed, and it dominated Thai politics from 2001 to 2006. The basis on which Thaksin had built his solid political support was the rural poor. He was able to attain their support to a degree that had never before been achieved by any Thai politician (Pasuk and Baker, 2008). Thaksin put pro-poor policies at the centre of his election campaign and implemented them effectively during his time in power. He advocated himself as the hero of the poor, promising his devotion to eradicating poverty from Thailand (Pasuk and Baker, 2008). However, in contrast to this growing popularity among the poor, his support among the urban middle class dwindled. His leadership was seen as drifting toward authoritarianism and corruption (Hewison, 2010). He suppressed the opposition and those academics and media that were critical of him, and was seen as abusing his power in order to benefit his family and friends.

The National Election in 2004 saw Thaksin's TRT Party win a landslide victory, and Thaksin was able to lead the first majority government in Thai history. At the same time that his political power peaked, his greatest rival emerged. A media businessman and Thaksin's old ally, Sondhi Limthongkul, turned against him in 2005. Sondhi initiated a public rally against Thaksin, attacking him for his corruption, failure to protect the national interest, and for his disloyalty to the king (Nelson, 2007). Sondhi's movement gained support from the urban middle class, leading media figures, public intellectuals, and wide sections of the Thai development NGOs. In early 2006, the movement changed its name to the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), using the 'yellow shirt', the colour of the king, as their symbol. The PAD rally against Thaksin culminated in a surprise Military Coup against Thaksin in September 2006.

One of the main groups of Thaksin opponents is that of the Thai development activists, particularly the CCST proponents. This stance of the CCST proponents against Thaksin seems perplexing, as Thaksin's main supporters were the rural poor whom the CCST proponents claim

to be fighting for. Two important perspectives can be said to contribute to the CCST proponents' stance against Thaksin.

Firstly, the CCST proponents saw Thaksin's pro-poor policies as going against their vision of development. They condemned Thaksin's populist policies for drawing the poor away from their self-reliance way of living toward that of relying on the government's support. Some of the CCST proponents argued that Thaksin's policies represented efforts to integrate the poor with the corrupting force of global capitalism, luring them further into consumerism (see Chatchawal, 2006). Secondly, the CCST proponents also disputed the quality and morality of the participation of the rural poor in electoral politics. They were influenced by the perception that the rural poor simply voted for Thaksin for the material benefits from the pro-poor policies. This perspective of the poor as being bought by Thaksin through the pro-poor policies was influenced by the long-standing perception of rural politics in Thailand as prone to vote-buying because the rural people are embedded in the local patron-client relationship (see Anek, 1996). The analysis in this chapter will provide further insights into how the CCST itself could have a crucial role in underpinning these perspectives.

5.2.2. The framing of the CCO programme through the CCST

The stance of certain CCST proponents against Thaksin, and their challenge to the legitimacy of the electoral participation of the rural poor, urged them to search for an alternative version of participatory process built upon the CCST. During the height of the PAD movement against Thaksin in 2006, a group of CCST proponents mobilised a movement to propose a vision of participation that was constructed around the discourse of community. They proposed an alternative concept of political participation called "Communitarian Democracy". This idea was subsequently turned into the CCO programme.

The exploration of the concept of Communitarian Democracy here will explain how meanings of the participation process, and more concrete details of the CCO programme, were constructed through the discourse of community. The explanation here focuses on the effects arising from the emphasis on identity and the ambiguous nature of the discourse of community.

The construction of a vision of participation through the concept of Communitarian Democracy

The emergence of the movement that led to the formulation of the CCO programme can be traced back to a series of seminars organised by the CCST proponents in mid 2006. The theme of these seminars was "Harmony Politics". This use of the word harmony, however, was actually to signify the conflict that was occurring in the Thai society. The organisers of the Harmony Politics seminars included the NGOs and Community Organisation (CO) leaders. Many of them had close connections with the CODI. The discussions in the seminars centred on the concept of Communitarian Democracy.

The seminars were joined by widely respected NGOs and public intellectuals such as Prawase Wasi, Paiboon Wattanasiritham, and Chatchawal Thongdeelert. Their speeches in the seminar advocated the concept of Communitarian Democracy. The symbolic construction of community and the assertion of collective virtues were observable as the core content of these speeches, which were about constructing the oppositional categories of political participation, between the electoral system and another system based on the Thai community culture. The electoral system was argued to be the root cause of Thai political problems. It was portrayed as immoral, full of vote-buying and corrupt politicians (Prawase, 2006b; Chatchawal, 2006).

The most crucial problem with the electoral system, it was argued, was that it led to conflict and rivalry, and destroyed the harmony in communities (Chatchawal, 2006). Since the electoral system was portrayed as problematic, an alternative system for political participation was proposed in the form of Communitarian Democracy.

Crucial to the proposition of Communitarian Democracy as the alternative path for political participation was the use of a storyline that mobilised the symbols of boundaries. These symbols were mobilised to construct the boundaries based on collective identity, labelling Communitarian Democracy as the "Thai system" and the electoral system as the "Western system". It was argued that the crucial presence of the electoral system in Thailand was based on the misconception that the "Western type of democracy" was the only type of democracy. There was, it was explained, another type of democracy that existed even before the Western type of democracy. And such system of democracy was based on community culture; the Communitarian Democracy. This was elucidated by Prawase as followed;

"In the present there are misconceptions that democracy began in the West, from the British...Actually democracy began before the West, in the era of the Buddha...In addition, the villagers also had their own democratic process that concerned participation of every member, which put emphasis on the importance of the "elders", including the monks and the local elders...This political system existed long before the academics started talking about the Western type of democracy. Therefore, we need to look at our own cultural roots...do not think that we do not have anything and then bring in the foreign system" (Prawase Wasi, 2006b:128).

The Communitarian Democracy was argued as being a political system based on the 'Thai community culture' of self-reliance, collectiveness, and unity. In addition, the symbols crucial to the Thai national identity, such as ones associated with the king and Buddhism, were also drawn upon to stress the "Thainess" of the concept of Communitarian Democracy. Communitarian democracy was portrayed as a governance system corresponding to the teaching of Buddhism and the idea of righteous rule that the Thai king proposed (CSM, 2006).

The storylines based on the model of past Thai communities were also drawn upon to contrast the electoral system with the system of Communitarian Democracy. The speakers at the Harmony Politics seminars argued that the local leaders in Thailand should come from the selection method based on the Thai community culture rooted in the past (CSM, 2006). It was stated that the Thai communities in the past had had their own way of choosing leaders. The members of the communities would work collectively, living together in harmony and unity; therefore, they always had a consensus on who should be their leaders. The selection of leaders could thus be made simply by allowing community members to deliberate for a consensus to be attained (Prawase, 2006b; Chatchawal, 2006). As explained by Chatchawal;

"In the past, communities had their own political culture in selecting leaders. The selection was aiming for the leaders who were moral and were willing to dedicate themselves to the locals. In the past, the leaders did not need to run in elections. The villagers deliberated, and then invited the leaders to take up the positions"
(Chatchawal, 2006:47-48)

Leaders from such a process were labelled "natural leaders" to signify their origin in the community culture (Prawase, 2006b). The natural leaders, they argued, were moral leaders

who would steer their communities toward the pathway of development based on the virtues of self-reliance and self-determination.

Apart from the aforementioned speeches by prominent public intellectuals, stories of community-based politics was presented by some CO leaders in the seminar to add a sense of reality to the vision of Communitarian Democracy (CSM, 2006). The leaders told stories of how their sub-districts had benefited from the forms of political participation portrayed by Communitarian Democracy. One sub-district from the South was presented as a community that had suffered from conflicts that arose from electoral competition. It was subsequently told that, through the intervention from locally respected figures such as the elders and monks to prevent competition in elections, the harmony was eventually restored to the community. Other localities gave their stories of how the roles of local traditions and kinships had prevented conflicts from arising in their local politics.

Following the seminars, the proponents of the vision of Communitarian Democracy agreed that their vision could be brought to reality by setting up a local council of natural leaders, and by promoting such a council to have a role in governance (CSM, 2006). This became the vision that the CCO was built upon. The 2006 Coup provided the proponents of the ideal Communitarian Democracy with a magnificent opportunity to turn their vision into reality. The military Junta chose one of their leading figures, Paiboon Watanasiritham¹¹, to be the Minister of Social Development and Human Security (MOSD). The proponents of Communitarian Democracy started a movement for the promulgation of the CCO Act – which would subsequently give rise to the CCO programme¹².

¹¹ Paiboon Watanasiritham, a highly respected public intellectual among the CODI officials and CO leaders, had an instrumental role in the creation of the CODI. He remained closely linked to the organisation until his death in 2012.

¹² At the time of the movement for the CCO Act, another influential NGO figure and a proponent of Communitarian Democracy movement, Dr. Poldej Pinprateep, was also appointed (continue next page)

In the movement for the promulgation of the CCO Act that followed the seminars, "arguments" were made by the CCST proponents to gain public support for the idea of having a local council for each community. Crucial to these arguments was the identification of the vision of Communitarian Democracy with the promotion of "direct democracy" and "community rights". The CCO Act was argued by its proponents to be a progressive vehicle toward achieving genuine democracy, a democracy that did not suffer from problems with representative democracy. It was also argued that the CCO Act would allow for the better protection of "community rights", such as the rights of communities in determining their own future (CODI, 2007a; Son, 2007). The explanation of this was that the CCOs would give communities a "legal status", allowing them to be formally recognised by government institutions when negotiations are needed. In addition, the CCO Act was explained to be the instrument for promoting "local participation", allowing every member of a community to participate in determining their own course of development based on their local way of life and local wisdom (Pensri, 2007; Son, 2007).

Another important argument used to support the CCO Act was to associate the CCO Act with the promotion of "direct democracy" (CODI, 2007b). Such an argument portrayed the CCO as a form of direct democracy built on community culture. It was elucidated that the CCOs would transform communities, turning their members from people who expected government support to people who were self-reliant (Prachatai, 2007a).

It can be recognisable from these arguments that the proponents of the CCO Act seemed to identify "community" as the primary social unit in which rights and democracy were to be promoted. Such a community was envisioned as existing in opposition to the external and

(continue from the previous page) by the military junta to be the Deputy Minister of Social Development and Human Security. Interestingly, having a military-appointed government was seen as a valuable opportunity among many development activists in Thailand to push through their agendas.

intrusive system such as that of the state. In this perspective, therefore, the promotion of direct democracy was perceived as allowing the community to gain more autonomy from, or to gain bargaining power against the state.

The framing of a participatory process in the CCO Act

The movement for the CCO Act gained significant support among Thai academics and NGOs (Prachatai, 2007b). Although there were objections from the Ministry of the Interior in the process of legislation¹³, the CCO Act was finally approved by the National Legislative Assembly (NLA), the junta-chosen stand-in for the parliament, in October 2007, and became active in February 2008. In turning the vision of Communitarian Democracy into a prescription for participation, details of the participatory process in the CCO programme were specified. The overall aim of the programme, as explained in its introductory booklet, was reflective of the CCST (CCO Introductory Booklet, 2008). The CCO programme recognised the promotion of the "local community" as its mission, and such notion of the "local community" was defined as follows;

"The local community is the important historical root of the society. The past development had created a rapid change that weakened the local community, causing poverty and social problems. Nonetheless, the local community has sustained its survival through social capital, culture, and local wisdom". (CCO Introductory Booklet, 2008:5)

As can be observed, this notion of the local community is based on the CCST portrayal of communities as rooted in the past of Thailand and endowed with the subsistence culture. The

¹³ The MOI, particularly its minister from 2006-2007, Aree Wong-araya, objected to the creation of the CCO. He argued that the roles of the CCO would overlap with the existing local government institutions.

statement on the programme's objectives further signified how its participatory process was bound to the CCST's storyline of promoting "our way" of development. The objectives of the CCO Act states were argued as follow:

"1) to strengthen communities, allowing them to become self-reliant, and having important roles in development, democratization, and good governance of the country; 2) to promote local communities' roles in shaping local development according to the diversity of the local way of living, local culture, and local knowledge; and 3) to allow local communities to participate efficiently in the country's development."(CCO Introductory Booklet, 2008:5)

It is worth noting how this storyline encompassed several perspectives of development. This indicates how the ambiguity of the discourse of community allowed diverse perspectives to be put together into policy content. Nonetheless, it is also observable that the differing perspectives that were put together also exhibit some "inconsistencies" and "inaccuracies". As stated in the objectives mentioned above, for example, the promotion of self-reliance was combined with perhaps the inconsistent proposition of promoting communities' engagement with a wider political structure. An inconsistency in perspectives can also be observed from the following statement of the CCO Act's intention.

"The CCO Act's intention is to strengthen communities...it gives a legal status that leads to the acceptance of the community's deliberative forum. CCOs have a mission, but have no power...With the CCO Act, communities will continue to work voluntarily and independently...The CCOs will gain acceptance through their works, and will not use legal power" (CCO Introductory Leaflet 2008).

From such a statement, it can be recognised how the importance of allowing communities to have a legal status was put together with the inconsistent argument that communities would not use the legal power.

Furthermore, some inaccuracies can also be recognised between the vision of community as perceived through the CCST, and the actual details of the CCO programme's rules, i.e., the regulations concerning the promotion of participation. The CCST identification of communities as the Thai villages influenced the vision associated with the formation of the CCO at the local level. On explaining who was able to participate in the CCO, the CCO was identified as a forum for village members, as the guideline for establishing the CCO explains:

“the (sub-district level) CCO is the forum for every member of a village to think together on what we need and how to develop our homes in order to better our lives” (Guidelines for establishing the CCO 2009:13).

Nonetheless, such a policy content based on the imaginary vision of the CCST in fact deviated from what the programme's rules actually specified. This explanation of the CCO as the forum for all village members misrepresented the actual details of the programme's rules. The CCO, in fact, was to be formed primarily at “sub-district” level, not at village level. Most sub-districts in Thailand contains around 6-12 villages; a sub-district is a much bigger spatial unit than a village. Furthermore, the portrayal of the CCO as a forum in which “everyone” could participate was also inaccurate. The membership of the sub-district level CCO belonged only to the selected “representatives of COs”. A similar deviation between the imaginary vision of the Thai communities and the actual details of rules was also observable in many places in the CCO programme's policy content.

Finally, it is observable how influences from the imaginary vision of the communities can also result in the rules that lack connection to the actual context. This can be seen in the way that the CCO programme's rules specified the relationship between the CCO council and the locally elected government. The construction of the electoral system as the opposing system to the Communitarian Democracy played an important part here. Such a vision endowed the CCO programme with a crucial feature, which was the prevention of anyone who had recently been involved with the local electoral politics from becoming a CCO member (CCO Introductory Booklet, 2008:26-27). The same vision also influenced the specification of the roles of the CCO. The CCO was expected to be an alternative political realm to the local government in promoting development and governance. Nevertheless, in the CCO rules, there was a significant lack of detail on specifications of how the CCO council would interact with local government. The CCOs were stated to have a role in providing suggestions to the local government. However, apart from broadly specifying that the government should consider the suggestions from the CCOs, no further details were given on how the local government should respond to them.

5.3. Building a participatory process through the discourse of community: examining participatory activities in the CCO programme

This section builds on the previous section by exploring the characteristics of participatory activities set up by the CCO programme. The aim of this exploration is to examine how the discourse of community influenced the characteristics of the participatory process, such as who were eligible to participate, and whose and what type of voices were being promoted. It will explain how a participatory process that emerges from the discourse of community tends to operate with a particular way of selecting and prioritising certain voices.

The examination here benefits from Hajer's concept of the formation of a discourse coalition, which refers to a group of actors who share an interpretative frame or storyline (Hajer, 2006). The arrangements of participatory activities to be explored in this section can be recognised as reflecting the formation and sustenance of a discourse coalition around the discourse of community. In this sense, their exploration also indicates the nature of practices that allow the discourse of community to sustain its dominance. The types of participatory activities that will be examined involve the two major participatory activities of the CCO programme; seminars and meetings. The data used here are mainly the records of meetings and seminars in the CCO programme and records from participatory observations of these activities that were made during the fieldwork.

5.3.1 Participatory practices in the CCO programme's seminars

Seminars¹⁴ were the most important participatory activities in the CCO programme. They were organised to formulate the programme's objectives and strategies, to give training to the programme's actors, and to formulate policy recommendations to be publicised as the programme's output. Seminars related to the CCO programme varied in the numbers of participants, from a few hundred to less than one hundred. During the first few years of the CCO programme, seminars associated with the programme were held once every 3-4 months at the national level, and less frequently at lower levels. They generally contained specific themes or objectives. The themes for seminars associated with the CCO programme included, for example, "Promoting Understanding in Operating the CCO programme" or "Summarising Lessons from the CCO Programme".

¹⁴ In contrast to meetings, which were recognised as the activities that correspond with the programme's implementation, seminars were associated mainly with the process of planning and evaluation. Some seminars were arranged for several development programmes simultaneously.

There were usually two groups of actors in the seminars. The first group comprised of the seminars' organisers and the invited experts. The organisers included both the CODI executives and officers, and the top-level CO leaders within the CODI network. They had a role in determining the seminars' themes or objectives, selecting the speakers or presenters, and also selecting the participants. The invited experts included well-known CO leaders, academics, and NGOs, whose ideas and experiences in community development have been well publicised within the Thai development sector. Most of them had a good connection with the CODI.

The second group included the community leaders within the CODI's own networks. This group was usually much larger than the first group. The national seminar marking the first anniversary of the CCO programme, for example, had around 350 leaders participating, in comparison with 70 invited experts and CODI's officers (Report on the Seminar at the National Level of the CCO Programme, 6-7 November 2008). The leaders had been generally invited for their part in operating the CODI's development programme or because of their status as members of committees that the CODI had established to support the implementation of the programmes. In the case of the large seminars, some participants were invited through the connections they had with the CODI officials or through committee members. In this regard, the connection with the CODI can be recognised as crucial in the selection of participants taking part in the seminars. Such a connection was often based on participants' perspectives and experiences being known to the organisers as being consistent with the CCST vision. More details of how the CODI's committees were established will be explained in the discussion of participatory practices in meetings.

A notable characteristic of the seminars was that they were not just a space for participants to express their views; they were also intended by the organisers to be a space in which the participants could "learn" about the vision of the CCST. The participatory activities in seminars

were divided roughly into two types: learning activities and brainstorming activities. Most seminars followed the same routine, starting with learning activities consisting of speeches and presentations by the invited speakers and the experts. The seminars then proceeded to the brainstorming session, where participants could express their views as appropriate to the themes of the seminars.

The voices of invited experts and the seminars' organisers were promoted through learning activities. These were the prioritised voices. Through the speeches made and presentations of these actors, the CO leaders were expected to learn the CCST's perspectives on development. These activities characterised the participatory activities in seminars as a means for the participants to absorb the vision of the seminars' organisers. Important seminars in the past, such as the seminar that marked the anniversary of the CCO programme, included speeches given by the most widely respected public intellectuals and NGO figures. Their speeches were notable for an emphasis on "morality". They put moral perspectives on the programme's aims and objectives, and stressed morality as a means toward success. For example, Dr.Prawase Wasi, the most influential public intellectual for the CCST proponents, made the following suggestion in his speech at the 1st Anniversary of the CCO Programme seminar:

"CCOs must not have power to influence government organisations...We must remain the council of morality and knowledge" (Prawase Wasi: in CCOs: the first year in the making, 2009, page 14)

Another speech on the same occasion by Paiboon Wattanasiritham, a public intellectual highly revered by the CODI officials and the CO leaders, argued:

"In what ways can we develop the CCOs to have the capability, efficiency, and quality to achieve their mission? Three main pillars to bring successes to the CCOs are: firstly, we need to do good things...we do creative and moral things, and purify our minds" (Paiboon Wattanasiritham, in CCOs: the first year in the making, 2009, page 19)

The speeches given by these influential figures were regarded very highly among the CCST proponents. They were turned into the main content of the CCO programme's objectives and strategies (CCOs: the first year in the making, 2009). The emphasis on morality of these speeches was relevant to the sense of populist identity among development activists, helping them in reasserting their position that their task was about "doing good".

Seminars that did not mark any important events usually contained speeches that focused on specific issues related to seminars' themes. Speeches dealing with "social issues" were usually given by the NGOs, academics, or journalists, who were known for their experiences or ideas that corresponded with the CCST. These speeches provided examples of the CCST interpretations of social problems. They highlighted the problems that the Thai communities were facing and pointed to the solutions. Most of their speeches in past CCO-related seminars fell within two types of storyline. The first focused on the threat from globalisation or industrialisation to communities, and explained how communities could survive the threats through their subsistence. Another type of storyline focused on highlighting the problem with the electoral system and representative democracy, and pointed to Communitarian Democracy and the people's sector politics (*kan muang pak prachachon*) as providing the answers.

The speeches were followed by presentations, generally on the "successful cases" or "guidelines for success" by the CODI high-level officials or by prominent CO leaders in the CODI's network. These presentations endowed a sense of reality to the CCST vision. The model cases were lauded as both a "learning example" and "evidence of successes" of the CCST's development approaches. Most stories of the model cases were told in a similar narrative pattern, starting with brief information on the general conditions of a locality, and proceeding to mention the history of community development projects within their locality. The story would then highlight the factors of their success in development, which were typically attributed to the importance of kinship, tradition, harmonious relationship between members, and the quality of the leaders. For example, the story of a successful sub-district CCO in the South was told as follow:

"Tumbon (Sub-district) Proo-Pree was the base of the Thai Communist Party in the past...this contributed to the strength of community members as they had a history of fighting and working together. The CCO emerged as a consequence of the continuous process of development...This allowed the CCO in Proo-Pree to have clearly defined roles in collaborating with local government" (Report of the Seminar for the First Anniversary of the CCO Programme, 6-7 November 2008) .

Speeches and presentations built up a context for the subsequent participatory activities in the form of a brainstorming session. In brainstorming, participants were divided into groups, from less than 10 persons to around 20-30. Although brainstorming can be recognised as an opportunity for participants to be heard, the actual discussion in brainstorming activities was in fact not open to any voice. The following examination illustrates the "boundary" to what can be discussed in brainstorming.

The first aspect of such a boundary existed in the way that brainstorming activities were actually conducted in response only to the questions that were set in advance by the organisers. Examples of these questions were: how to establish good quality CCOs, and how to build good relationships between CCOs at sub-district level and their forums at provincial and national levels. The seminars' organisers put their efforts into providing guidelines on the expected type of answer to these questions. The speeches or presentations usually provided hints on the type of answer. Guidance was provided more explicitly through the organisers' introduction to the brainstorming session. Some seminars also had the organisers participating in the brainstorming activities, who intervened to guide the participants' discussion from time to time.

Another important aspect of the boundary to what can be discussed in the brainstorming existed implicitly, in the fact that outcomes of the discussions needed to be presented to the organisers and other participants. Having to do the presentation, participants faced the constraint that their discussion's outcomes needed to be "agreed" by other participants. More importantly, participants who sought to establish or maintain good connections with seminar organisers had to produce outcomes that could be accepted by and could impress the organisers and other participants. Limits to the discussion in the seminars, in this sense, were built upon the need to adhere to the values of the CCST, as doing so provided the path to attaining a good impression.

Nonetheless, for the participants, these aspects of the boundary were not just constraints that imposed limits on their participation; they also provided opportunities. The brainstorming sessions created space for participants to express their differing aspirations, concerns, experiences, and knowledge through engagement with the Thai discourse of community. The participants could channel their aspirations through engaging with brainstorming sessions in

various ways. In responding to the questions related to the problems in implementation of a development programme, for example, participants were frequently found to stress the importance of their own and others' knowledge of and devotion to the CCST vision. Thus, it can be argued that participants also used their agency in turning the situation they faced to their advantages. The details of such usages of agency and their roles in influencing the nature of participatory process will be examined in detail in chapter 7.

Overall, seminars can be seen as a hybrid space characterised by the dialectic between learning and participating. Speeches and presentations in seminars stressed the values of their identity of development populists – someone who is “doing good” for the marginalised and the poor. These "learning activities" were also guiding the participants toward the vision of the CCST, whereby the discussion of the model cases helped make the benefits of the vision becoming more "real". Brainstorming activities, then, built up a space for the participants themselves to take part in affirming the value of the vision of community. Through working within the boundary of expressing views that the organisers outlined, participants could demonstrate their allegiance to and understanding of the CCST, and attained acceptance and admiration from such qualities.

5.3.2 Participatory practices in the CCO programme's meetings

Another main type of participatory activity in the CCO programme was the meeting. Meetings form a crucial part of the programme's implementation process. The CCO programme can be seen as simply an effort to establish numerous meetings by the representatives of communities. There were two major types of meetings in the CCO programme: those with the CCO committees, and the Sub-district CCO meetings¹⁵.

The CCO committees were set up by the CODI to support or supervise the implementation of the CCO programme. These committees existed mostly at national and regional levels, and their members consisted of both the CO leaders and invited "experts" such as the NGOs, local activists, and CODI executives. In the selection of these committees, the connections with CODI executives, or the top-level CO leaders in the CODI network, remained highly influential. The executives could dictate the selection of leaders whose "personality and ideas impressed them"¹⁶ (CODI Officer R, interview, 25/1/2011). The leaders who held close connections to the executives could also use such connections to solidify support from CO leaders at lower levels, allowing them also to be nominated when a nomination system was used to select committee members.

"there were CO leaders who brought only people close to them into the network...when they held meetings, this same group always attended...And when they had to nominate representatives to the committees, the group were already

¹⁵ As mentioned in Chapter 1, the CCO representatives from the sub-district level also nominate representatives to form the CCO Forums at the provincial and national level. However, at the time of the fieldwork, these forums were mostly inactive. Their roles, in this sense, will not be explored in the thesis.

¹⁶ It is worth adding that the CO leaders' personal connection with the CODI executives could be developed in seminars, which provided them with an opportunity to present themselves favourably to the executives and other participants (CODI officer S, interview, 2/3/2011).

packed – particularly at the provincial level – for choosing a particular candidate"

(CODI officer S, interview, 2/3/2011).

The Sub-district CCO meeting was considered as the core activity of the CCO programme. The participants in the meeting were supposed to be the representatives of COs within a sub-district. However, in all of the Sub-district CCO meetings I observed during the fieldwork, participants in the meetings were actually relatively limited in number. Moreover, most participants attended because they were associated with a local CO or a local network of COs that led the local implementation of the CCO programme.

The type of discussion that occupied the meetings reflected a pragmatic side of development programmes. For the meetings of the CCO committees, apart from discussion of the progress in implementation, most of the discussions in these meetings were related to the issues of funding, funding criteria, the setting up of sub-committees, and the setting up of seminars. The extent to which the committees could have their say over the details of these issues depended on the level of committees. Committees at the higher level, such as the national level, could exercise more influence over the allocation of funding and funding criteria. Committees at the lower level such as the regional level simply shared the information from the top level and discussed the further allocation of funds.

Discussions in the Sub-district CCO meetings were also pragmatic. A CO or a network of COs that led the programme's local implementation simply used the CCO meetings to discuss development projects that the group was implementing or was planning to implement. In all of the Sub-district CCO meetings I attended, the CCO programme featured only as one of the projects that these groups were working on. Communication in these meetings was mostly one

way, with one or a few local leaders communicating details of projects to participants, and asking for their cooperation in operating the projects.

The content of the CCO programme's meetings reflects a different aspect of the CCO programme; this aspect is about the engagement with a system of resource distribution. This system of resource distribution could be recognised as facilitating the formation and sustenance of the discourse coalition that was built around the discourse of community. This is because the engagement with the links of projects and funding allowed the benefits of being a member of the discourse coalition to become tangible.

5.4. The influence of the discourse of community on the capacity of community participation to empower

This section brings observations from the CCO programme to provide insights into the mechanism through which the discourse of community influences the meanings and practices of participation. Crucial to the analysis in this section is the recognition of the important feature of the discourse as a means of asserting identity. The section begins by examining how such a feature affects the construction of the meanings of participation. This examination tries to unveil how the discourse of community tends to lead to the prioritising of a certain type of meanings, and the crowding out of others. Such an influence over meanings can be recognised as the foundation of the discourse's influence over participatory practices. Thus, the examination continues by looking at the influence over practices, focusing on the dynamic of inclusion and exclusion that is likely to come with the promotion of community participation. The implication of these findings for the potential of community participation in bringing about empowerment will be drawn out, particularly through its functioning as a means to include previously marginalised voices.

It is recognised that the analysis here can come across as prioritising the influence of one discourse, the discourse of community, and simplifying the multiplicity of discourses that exists in a policy process. Nonetheless, such simplification is justified in order to highlight the mechanism of influences arising from the idea of community, which is the main process that this chapter seeks to observe. In addition, this examination does not presume that the discourse of community has the capacity to shape all aspects of practices in participation. It understands that there are also other factors at play in influencing the practices, for example, the availability of resources, and the characteristics of relationships between actors. This is why this examination is designed to focus on the dynamic of inclusion and exclusion, which can be seen as more relevant to the influence of the discourse of community.

5.4.1. The influence of the discourse of community on the framing of participation

The discourse of community is attractive and compelling. This is, to a large extent, associated with the way that the notion of community is frequently mobilised to mark the value of collective identity. The sense of community is usually mobilised in response to situations of social change that are seen as threatening to the existence and values of a common identity. As Bauman explains (2001:4), the divergence of reality from the imagined vision of community, instead of reducing the vision's relevance, brings even more significance and desire to it. This is perhaps why the importance of the discourse of community in framing a social development programme frequently arises in response to the contexts of crucial changes such as an economic crisis or cultural integration.

In the context of Thailand, the change that largely triggered the recent mobilisation of the notion of community was its political transformation. Such a transformation saw the

participation in electoral politics by the poor evolve to have a major influence over the direction of national politics and development policies. Perhaps paradoxically, aspects of this change were seen by many of the country's development activists as threatening the virtuous way of living associated with the Thai notion of community. Consequentially, the notion of community was asserted in reaction to the changes, leading to the creation of the CCO programme.

The case of the CCO programme indicates a crucial aspect of the mechanism through which a participatory process is frequently framed through the discourse of community. The approach tends to become identified with an attempt to assert collective identity. This frequently results in the construction of values and attributes associated with such identity as being the "ends" of participation, transcending the meanings and practices of the participatory process to become a "means" to promote such ends.

The formation of the CCO programme indicates the way in which certain types of meanings are prioritised and others are neglected through this mechanism. It is illustrated through the construction of the concept of Communitarian Democracy that, as the discourse of community was drawn to interpret social reality, the symbols associated with the sense of identity were mobilised. The framing of a participatory process was done through a storyline that involved the use of symbols signifying the boundary of community. Such symbols identified certain desirable attributes of social reality as ones belonging to "us", or instrumental to the sense of being "us". These symbols, in constructing Communitarian Democracy as the Thai system of political participation, included notions such as that of Thainess and the past traditions. These attributes were contrasted with opposing undesirable attributes that were identified as "theirs" or those of being "others". This was signified in the labelling of electoral system as the "Western" system.

In this light, the case study suggests that the discourse of community tends to influence the meanings of community participation towards those that signify participation as an attempt to promote "our way" of development. It is also worth noting that, through such an influence, other aspects of the meanings of participation are also frequently crowded out. Asserting the sense of being "us" usually leads to the identification of community as the social unit in which social values are being promoted. This results in the neglect of identification of individuals as a social unit of concern in the participatory process. Consequentially, individuals tend to be recognised only as parts of a community. Thus, the importance of individuals' freedom, and of the equality between them, is often overlooked. The content in the formation of the CCO programme signifies this particularly through its condemnation of the electoral system. Such a condemnation arose with only a limited recognition that electoral system also provides an invaluable means for political participation based on individuals' equality in political rights, particularly to the poor.

The influence of the discourse of community over the meanings of participation, as depicted in the case of the CCO programme, indicates the crucial way in which community participation can diverge from being conducive to empowerment. The approach may in fact be endowed with the intent of helping and protecting the marginalised and the poor. However, even with such a noble intention, as it is transcended with an overarching goal of promoting the value of collective identity, its potential in being a transformative space for marginalised voices can be compromised. The essence of community participation tends to become more about asserting the ethical values that are decided upon for the marginalised and the poor from the perspective of the development populists, i.e., those who care for the poor and the disadvantaged but romanticise and glorify the moral and cultural virtues of the people they care about (Olivier de Sardan, 2005).

The fact that, in the CCO programme, concepts such as democracy and rights were also mobilised to support its formation, might seem to be in contrast to observations here. Nonetheless, it can be recognised that these concepts were actually drawn up to facilitate and not to contradict the goal of promoting "our way" of development. The concept of "rights" was in fact framed in terms of community rights. The promotion of political participation governed by the community-based values, i.e., Communitarian Democracy, was also defined, perhaps inaccurately, as an attempt to promote direct democracy¹⁷. What was also playing an important role in these instances was the ambiguity of the concept of community itself, which allowed it to be interpreted broadly and to resonate with various perspectives. Such an ambiguity tends to create confusion, concealing the mechanism of transcending meanings that this chapter highlighted.

As for the relevance of this case study to a more general context, it is important to note that some specificity in the context of Thailand can play a role in leading to the above findings. The findings can be accentuated because the notion of community in Thailand has a strong association with its notion of culture and tradition. Furthermore, the political conflicts in Thailand also had a significant influence on what has been observed here. Nevertheless, these so-called "country's conditions" of Thailand can be recognised as accentuating certain limitations of community participation to enable them to be observed more clearly, rather than making the case for the CCO programme as being unable to be compared with other contexts.

¹⁷ As Walker (2012) argues, this perspective of direct democracy seems to come mainly from the attempt to dichotomise representative democracy with other forms of democracy based on participation and deliberation. Moreover, this perspective seems also to fail to recognise how the ability to directly influence government's actions through the participation of certain "community-based" groups can override the protection of the equality of political rights.

The danger of the idea of community has also been elucidated by Touraine (2000) in the general context of world politics. He observes how politics in many countries, during present times, is caught in a situation where, in reaction to the rise of mass culture due to globalisation, there is an increase in community-based groupings and associations, sects, cults, and nationalism based on a sense of belonging, and a rejection of otherness. Touraine (2000:33, 290-292) argues that such a rise in the idea of community can pose a threat to individuals' freedom, as the idea tends to recognise individuals only as members of a collectivity, and because its proponents are often inclined to further their goal by seeking help from authoritarianism.

Finally, another important mechanism through which the discourse of community influences the construction of participation can be noted. This lies in the way the discourse of community affects the ability to specify rules in promoting participation. As the CCO programme's formulation of rules indicates, the discourse of community has the capacity to relate diverse perspectives through its ambiguity. This allows the discourse to expand its relevance to various aspirations. However, such a property can also lead to incoherencies and contradictions in the content of the rules that the discourse underpinned. A few other problems can also arise. The normatively envisioned picture of community can create some misunderstanding as to what rules in promoting participation actually prescribe. Furthermore, it can also cause the framing of the rules in promoting the participatory process to be based on a misrepresented perception of the actual conditions, where complexity within communities and their integration with a wider system are underplayed. The effects of the rules that emerge from this process will be examined in detail in Chapter 6, where the roles of institutions in the promotion of collective action will be examined.

5.4.2. The influence of the discourse of community on practices of participation

The way in which the discourse of community transcends a participatory process to become a means for asserting collective identity also shapes the nature of the participatory practices. This has direct implications for the capacity of community participation to promote empowerment. The main linkage for community participation to promote empowerment exists in the way it can lead to the "inclusion" of the participant voices. Nonetheless, as the process becomes associated with the assertion of identity, the inclusion of participants can become subverted to such association, and the empowerment process can be consequentially undermined.

Before proceeding, it is worth making further clarifications about the concept of empowerment. Narayan (2002:xviii) defines the concept of empowerment as "the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives". From this definition, empowerment can be recognised in the context of participation as the improvement in the power of participants to influence policy-related decisions. However, to capture a dynamics of empowerment more completely, further insights will be taken from the concept of power by Lukes (1974). Two other types of power are to be seen as inherent in the participatory process: firstly, the power to set the rules for interactions, to allow only certain voices to enter into interactions and limit the scope of what can be decided; and secondly, the power to endow others with ideologies, values, or norms, which make the conflict of interests invisible (see Lukes, 1974; Gaventa, 2004:37). The analysis here examines how all these types of power are distributed from the creation of a participatory process through the discourse of community, looking both within the discourse coalition, and beyond the coalition to the wider society.

The first question to be asked here is "whose inclusion" is to be promoted in the participatory process under the influence of discourse of community, and who has power over such a decision. It has already been explained that the discourse tends to endow meanings that signified the approach as an attempt to promote "our way" of development. This can be recognised as a crucial basis that underpins the selection of participants. Such a basis influences the selection towards selecting "who fits with our way". The case study of the CCO programme indicates this by the way its selection of participants was based on the CODI executives seeing them as good representatives of the community-based vision of development. More importantly, because such a criterion for selection was arbitrary and ambiguous, it opened up ways for personal connections with the organiser of participatory activities to be crucial. Consequently, the power to decide who fitted such criteria tended to become centralised.

As for the "selected" participants, they become part of the discourse coalition in promoting community participation. The next question to examine is how power is being distributed through such a discourse coalition. As observed from the CCO programme, the top-level organisers of its participatory process— such as the CODI executives and top-level CO leaders— held the power over the selection of participants and the setting up of the scope for their interactions. They also had the power to make decisions on allocating resources, and could therefore dictate the distribution of material benefits. More importantly, the design of certain participatory activities to be the "learning space" meant that the organisers of the participatory practices could create boundaries as to where they wanted the dominant voices in the participatory process to be. In this sense, they also acquired a certain degree of power to endow others with ideologies and values. This is illustrated by the functions of the speeches and presentations in the seminars, which became the guideline for participants to learn the types of voice desired from them.

These powers were then distributed from the organisers of the CCO programme through the selected participants. At the levels where the participants became "leaders", they were to some extent endowed with similar power to the organisers. As observed from their roles in meetings, the leaders were endowed with power over allocation of resources and the operation of projects. They could influence the selection of the recipients of resources, or invite participants to the participatory activities they organised. In this regard, being part of the discourse coalition in the promotion of community participation could actually mean being empowered. Nevertheless, those at the top of the discourse coalition still retained more power over other members, making such a distribution of power hierarchical.

More importantly, looking beyond the discourse coalition, such an empowerment to the selected voices occurs simultaneously with a certain process of exclusion. As the participatory process is transcended to serve the promotion of collective identity and values, those with identities or vision that do not identify with the imagined community are usually denied the opportunity to participate. In this sense, the more that power and resources are endowed to the selected voices that are part of the discourse coalition, allowing them to affect changes in the surrounding society, the more disempowering it can be to those voices that are excluded.

In sum, the findings here signify how the promotion of community participation, under the influence of the discourse of community, can come with the dynamic of inclusion and exclusion that is not congruent with empowerment to the poor and the marginalised voices. Although the included participants can in fact be endowed with various forms of power, their inclusion is qualified mainly on the basis that they fit the vision of the facilitators of the process; there will be other marginalised voices who are excluded simply because they do not fit with this vision. This point was also made forcefully by Li in her study of development

programmes in Indonesia. She found, too, that participatory development is being trapped in power relations between its operators and its targets. As a result, participation itself cannot avoid being governed by those who position themselves as experts of the process (Li, 2007:274). Furthermore, she warns that such experts often come with strong ideas about a proper way of living for the people they are trying to help. Such an idea can drift easily from an attempt to conceptualise a utopia, to their prescribing and enforcing particular programmes upon others. The dogmatism of activists, she summarises, pushes relations of trusteeship in development toward an authoritarian pole (Li, 2007:278-279)

The findings here also give further insights into observations of the relationship between the notion of community and the capacity to benefit from integration with the state's power and resources. Andrew Walker (2012) argues that the notion of community can function as an instrument wherein the marginalised actors, such as the Thai rural peasants, can domesticate external powers into their local relationships, particularly through participating in state-supported development projects. The findings elucidate a broader picture of the power dynamics that results from community participation. It argues that, as long as the approach is still under the major influence of the drive to assert collective identity, the overall process of empowerment that it can bring tends to still be caught in the selectiveness influenced by its facilitators. The approach's capacity to empower, in this sense, tends to come together with the power to exclude that belongs to those who operate the approach.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter examines the influences of community as a normative idea on the promotion of community participation. The chapter reconsiders the claim that has usually been taken for granted, that the promotion of community participation is conducive to empowerment. It is

pointed out that, in contrast to such a perception, the normative elements of the idea of community can actually constrain the capacity of community participation to empower.

The foundation for this chapter analysis lies in the two aspects in which it applies a certain theory and concept to examine the CCO programme. The first is the conceptualisation of the idea of community as a discourse, which functions as a frame in interpreting social realities associated with participation. The second is its conceptualisation of the features of the discourse of community to be those of a symbolic construction. This explains how uses of the discourse tend to be associated with the assertion of collective identity.

Through examining the formation of the CCO programme, it is revealed that association between the discourse of community and the search for collective identity tends to play a significant role in shaping meanings of participation. It is illustrated that community participation tends to be interpreted as the process of promoting "our way" of development. The investigation of participatory practices in the CCO programme further exemplifies how such an interpretation can endow participatory activities with selectiveness. Such selectiveness can exist in the way the participants are chosen on the basis of their perceived fitting with the vision of "our way" of development, and the way participatory activities can be designed to promote only the voices that fit with such a vision.

These findings signify the mechanism that can constrain the empowering potential of community participation. They indicate how, through the influence of the discourse of community, the meanings of participation tend to prioritise collectiveness over the importance of individuals. This leads to a crowding out of a recognition of equality between individuals' rights – a valuable notion to recognise in order to enable the poor and the marginalised to participate on an equal footing with others. Furthermore, the selectiveness of the participatory

process mentioned above also means that power tends to be distributed only to people whose voices resonate with the organisers of community participation, leaving those who do not resonate thus excluded.

This chapter suggests the need to be critical of the normative aspect of the notion of community, particularly when the notion is mobilised as the basis for envisioning an alternative participatory process. The chapter's findings provide a staunch reminder of the darker side of the notion, where it can become an effective means to resist changes and marginalise differences in the name of the collective good. The chapter warns that, for a participatory process to be successful in empowering, its central focus should lie away from an obsession with identity and collectivity. Having explored the roles of community as an idea in influencing community participation, the following chapter examines the roles of community as a set of social relations.

Chapter 6. The roles of institutions in the promotion of community participation¹⁸

The previous chapter examined the roles of the discourse of community in the participatory process. However, discourse represents only one dimension of the social structure that influences community participation. The practices of community participation are also constituted on the actually existing social relations between actors. The influences that social relations have over the participatory process can be captured through institutional analysis. The approach that this chapter takes is to examine the interaction between two institutional factors: rules and attributes of communities. It conceptualises a community-based participatory development programme (CBPDP) as an attempt to promote collective actions through a set of rules, referring in this chapter mainly to regulations prescribed through a development programme in allocating resources or arranging collective activities. The application of rules has to intersect with the conditions in the relationship between actors, both in local communities or in a network of policy actors. The major question to be asked here, therefore, is how the attributes of such relationships can affect the working of rules in promoting community participation.

The chapter separates its institutional analysis of a CBPDP into two levels. The first level of analysis looks at the local implementation of rules in promoting participatory activities among the locals. The second examines the process of rule making and monitoring, which is carried out mainly by a network of the representatives of the locals. The institutional analyses of

¹⁸ Sections of this chapter were presented as a paper titled "Ineffective by Assumptions? The Real Experiences in Promoting Community Participation in Rural Thailand" at the 27th ASEASUK Conference, 7-9 September, 2012, University of Durham, Durham, UK. They were also published as a paper titled "The Paradox of Community Development: Lessons from the Promotion of Community Participation in Thailand" in the conference proceedings of the 5th Next-Generation global workshop "Social Innovation and Sustainability for the Future: Recreating the Intimate and Public Spheres", 6-7 November 2012, Kyoto University, Japan.

these two levels are carried out separately, with the case of the CCO programme in Thailand as their empirical basis. Analysis here is based on the application of the IAD framework to examine the system of development aid, which was recently developed in the work co-authored by the Nobel Laureate economist Elinor Ostrom (see Gibson et al., 2009). The chapter also tries to build on the analysis by departing from a simplistic view of communities, and recognising the complexity in the relationship between actors in a development programme.

This chapter seeks to challenge the common perception that social relations in communities are conducive to a participatory process. This will be highlighted through an examination of the CCO programme in terms of how the attributes that commonly prevail in actual communities can in fact create constraints on the ability of development interventions to promote participation. In addition, the chapter demonstrates ways in which the inclusion of local beneficiaries in the process of rule making and monitoring is likely to lead to the distortion of incentives that compromise the accomplishments of such a process.

The chapter consists of three sections. The first section introduces an institutional analysis of community participation, and highlights the types of institutional-related conditions crucial to an analysis of CBPDPs. This section also gives a brief overview of the action arenas, i.e., the sites of social interactions, in the CCO programme. The second section looks at the CCO programme at the operational level, where a programme is implemented at the local level to promote participatory activities. This section examines the implications of conditions in communities on the working of rules to promote participation. The third section examines the CCO programme at collective-choice level, i.e., the level where the rules of the programme are made and monitored. Analysis here looks at how the inclusion of local beneficiaries into the

policy-making process can actually constrain the capacity of CBPDPs in making and monitoring rules.

6.1. The institutional analysis of community-based participatory development programmes (CBPDPs)

This section builds on from the institutional framework for an analysis of how institutional factors affect the workings of CBPDPs in promoting participation (taken from the theoretical framework chapter). The framework adopted is from the recent work by E.Ostrom and her colleagues in "The Samaritan's Dilemma: the Political Economy of Development Aid" (Gibson et al., 2009) which studies the incentives structure underpinning development aid. The details of this framework were already outlined in Chapter 3 – Theoretical Framework. However, it is worth recapturing some of the details here, in order to assist its further development in this chapter. This will be followed by a depiction of conditions that are crucial for the institutional analysis in the context of the promotion of community participation. Finally, this section gives an introduction to the institutional context of the CCO programme.

6.1.1. Community participation and institutional analysis

The concept of institutions, as defined by Elinor Ostrom, refers to "the prescriptions that humans use to organise all forms of repetitive and structured interactions" (Ostrom, 2005). The institutional framework focuses its analysis on rule-structured situations that individuals face in their interactions, and tries to explain how rules within a particular situation affect the choices in actions and strategies that individuals take. Ostrom's institutional framework postulates that the capacity to achieve collective action in each circumstance of actors' interaction is shaped by the interactions between three different sets of institutional

conditions. The first set is "rules", referring broadly to the set of regulations or instructions that prohibit, allows, or require certain actions. The second set of conditions is the nature of relationships between actors, referred to broadly as attributes of a community. And the third set of conditions is the characteristics of the physical/material conditions that the actors are facing (Ostrom, 2005:16-17). The focus of this chapter, however, will be limited to examining the interactions between two sets of conditions; the rules and attributes of communities.

In examining whether a certain form of collective action can emerge from a social interaction, one needs to look at whether the interactions between the aforementioned sets of conditions can create incentives that help overcome "collective action problems". These collective action problems include problems such as the tendency of actors to free-ride on others' efforts to attain development benefits, and the asymmetric information that makes it difficult for agents to monitor the effective implementation of rules (Gibson et al: 2009:35, 53). Recognising participatory activities as forms of collective action, the examination here looks specifically at how attributes of communities affect the ability of rules governing interactions in a CBPDP to overcome collective action problems.

The relationship between attributes of communities and rules was in fact a central part of Ostrom's famous work, "Governing the Commons". Her work examines the capabilities of communities to engage with the "tragedy of commons" problem, which refers to the tendency of common resources, such as lakes and irrigation systems, to be overused. She observed how, in particular contexts, conditions within communities such as their access to information about one another and their need to engage in long-term interactions allows them to successfully develop and enforce rules that help them overcome the tragedy of commons (Ostrom, 1990). Nonetheless, Ostrom also recognised how numerous communities also failed to successfully manage their own common resources. She made the reservation that the

context of collective action varies from case to case; and each case has its own complexity and requires its own careful examination (Ostrom, 1990:22-25).

Ostrom's reservation, however, is frequently overlooked by the trend that lauds the general capacity of communities in development, which has a tendency to underplay the complexity of actual conditions in communities, and matches the analysis of community development with an idealistic view of community (Agarwal and Gibson, 1999). It often reduces conditions within communities into a simplistic and normative-oriented picture. Communities are perceived as a small group of harmonious and homogenous individuals that share similar interests, while their relationships with external actors are assumed to be characterised by independence and autonomy (Cleaver 1999; Agarwal and Gibson, 1999). Furthermore, each community is also often assumed to have its own culture and way of living that set them apart from the external world (Mohan and Stokke, 2001).

The analysis in this chapter tries to avoid this tendency, in order to pursue the examination of community participation in a more realistic way, and take into account more complexity. The chapter recognises important findings from studies on community-based development that observe how most communities actually contain members with diverse and unequal socio-economic backgrounds (Cook and Kothari, 2001; Platteau and Abraham, 2002; Mansuri and Rao, 2004; Platteu, 2004). This makes it rare for community members to share the same interest, and also meaning that the fulfilment of interests for some members to occur only at the expense of others. Moreover, the studies also highlight the embeddedness of communities within wider contexts. Their relationships with the development agencies that implement development programmes, for example, exemplify the lack of boundary that separates them and the external world.

Ostrom was recently involved in developing the institutional framework to analyse a more complex development process. In "The Samaritan's Dilemma", institutional analysis is applied to studying several stages of interaction in development programmes, from donors to development agencies and to local beneficiaries (Gibson et al, 2009). The different stages are conceptualised into different arenas of collective action. These arenas are structured into three levels, with the lower levels being nested within the higher ones. The arenas of collective action that relate directly to the achieving of desired outcomes in development are conceptualised as the "operational" level. This level occurs at the local level where communities are promoted to set up development activities. The operational level is nested within "collective choice" level arenas, where actors work together collectively to make and monitor rules for interactions at the operational level. The "collective choice" level is then nested within the "constitutional level" of collective action, where rules for the collective-choice level are made (Gibson et al, 2009:24). As for this chapter's institutional analysis of the CCO programme, to prevent the scope of analysis being too extensive, the examination here is limited to the functioning of CBPDPs at operational and collective-choice levels. The chapter will not examine the constitutional-level of CBPDPs.

6.1.2. Important conditions in the action situations of community-based participatory development programmes (CBPDPs)

Before the analysis can proceed, it is necessary to develop the analytical framework further by narrowing down the scope of the analysis to focus on the attributes of communities, or networks of policy actors, that are more relevant to the operation of CBPDPs. These attributes have crucial roles in affecting the local implementation of CBPDPs, or the links between communities and the external development agents.

At the operational level

Applying the institutional framework, the promotion of community participation can be conceptualised as efforts to produce or improve public goods at the local level. Public goods refer to goods that are consumed jointly by individuals, access to their benefits is difficult to limit, and/or their consumption by one individual does not subtract from the availability for others. Community participation can promote collective activities in producing public goods, for example, through promoting group-based development activities such as saving groups. Community participation can also enhance a community's capacity to obtain public goods through promoting collective monitoring of public services and local governance (Mansuri and Rao, 2004). The basic challenge that faces these efforts is the "free-riding" problem (Gibson et al., 2009). This problem exists in the way that, as members of communities can attain benefits from public goods, even without needing to contribute any effort, they face an incentive to rely on others to put in the effort for them. In the idealistic view, communities are assumed to contain harmony and voluntariness that help them overcome the free-riding problem (Agarwal and Gibson, 1999). However, actual communities that are characterised by diversity and inequality cannot simply be assumed to have such a capacity.

Two conditions have also been identified by a number of studies as having crucial effects on the attempt to promote community participation. Analysis of the operational level of CBPDPs here focuses on the intersection between these two conditions and the rules in promoting community participation. The first condition arises from the inequality at the local level. As development programmes are implemented in the context of local inequality, they tend to be dominated by the local elites (Mansuri and Rao, 2004; Platteau, 2004). Such a condition can be recognised as "elite capture". Elite capture occurs as the benefits that come with a CBPDP encourage the entry of wealthier and more educated people into the programme's leadership

positions (Gugerty and Kremer, 2000; Mansuri and Rao, 2013). As local elites take the leading role in the programme's operation, they can dominate the programme to produce benefits for themselves or for a group close to them. However, local elite domination of the programme can be more complex. Rao and Ibanez (2003) observe that there also exist cases where a development programme can produce a satisfactory result among the local beneficiaries, even when dominated by local elites.

The second condition within communities that has crucial implications for CBPDPs arises from a diversity of interests at the local level. The divergence of interests means it is not always possible for outcomes from participation to be beneficial to all members of communities. Furthermore, in the context where interests between different groups in the local context diverge significantly, to the extent that there exists conflicts and rivalries between them, the operation of a CBPDP inevitably faces difficulty as its implementation is drawn into the dynamics of conflicting interests (Rao and Ibanez, 2003:21).

At the collective choice level

Many CBPDPs incorporate representatives of local beneficiaries to take a leading role at the collective-choice level, where collective actions in the making of rules and the monitoring of implementation are pursued. A number of studies recognise these representatives as "development brokers" who connect development agencies with communities, linking the flow of resources and information (Bierschenk et al., 2002; Lewis and Mosse, 2006a). The behaviour of development brokers crucially affects the collective actions at this level, particularly through their "rent-seeking" behaviour. Rent, in this context, refers to the leverage power in dictating directions of benefits from the programme (Gibson et al. 2009).

Brokers can seek personal returns from their authority and use it to establish a network of support that protects their access to rent.

Additional conditions also play an important part in the promotion of collective actions at the collective-choice level. The divergence of actors' preferences from promoting desired collective action can also occur in development agencies and their officers. A performance requirement can drive them to produce limited aspects of outcomes, while neglecting other aspects (Mansuri and Rao, 2004). Jackson (1997), for example, found from his study of a participatory development programme in India that the programme's field officers tended to gloss over difficult issues such as the local power relations in a rush to show favourable results. This problem can result from the more general need for development agencies to present a good impression of their work in order to maintain support from the government or donors. This can pressure them to set a performance requirement that focuses mainly on the short-term and more presentable outcomes (Platteau, 2004).

Furthermore, the monitoring of implementation in development projects also tends to face the condition of "asymmetric information". Asymmetric information occurs when there is an imperfect flow of information between different actors in the programme (Gibson et al., 2009). One group of actors in the programme may possess limited information regarding the performance of actors in another group. An information gap can arise at different levels within the policy process of CBPDPs, for example, between the local beneficiaries and the officials of a development agency. Asymmetric information makes it difficult for the information regarding the actual conditions of local implementation to be accurately attained by the external development agency.

6.1.3. The institutional context of the CCO programme

This sub-section introduces the context of the case study, the CCO programme. Details that are provided here cover both the types of rules and the types of actors in the programme. These details will be provided first for the programme's conditions at the operational level, followed by the collective choice level. Some of the details will be overlapping with the introduction of the CCO programme in Chapter 1 – introduction, and the previous chapter's explanations on the influence of the discourse of community on the formulation of the CCO programme.

The context of the CCO programme at the operational level

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Thailand's CCO programme was formed through a movement of Thai development activists who wanted to introduce a new participatory institution to promote the roles of communities in development and governance. In their vision, the CCO programme was set up to function as the council in which all community members could participate. The programme's operators also expected the community leaders, which are perceived to be the traditional and virtuous leaders, to lead the mobilisation of participation (CCO Introductory Leaflet, 2009). Such a perspective is based on the construction of community participation, through the discourse of community, as the system of political participation based on the Thai community culture.

In practice, however, only a particular type of representatives of the local people can participate in the CCO programme. The CCO programme's rules specify the CCO to be set up at the sub-district level, and the members of the CCO have to be chosen as the representatives of the Community Organisations (COs) in the sub-district. The representatives can choose to

bestow additional membership of the sub-district CCO to any locally respected leaders (CCO Act, 2008). Nonetheless, not everyone is eligible to be the CCO members. The important group of actors who are barred from the membership include the officials or executives of the locally elected administrative unit at the sub-district level, and any candidates in elections for public positions during the past year. This prohibition was argued to help prevent the CCOs from getting involved in political rivalries, which was perceived to be a crucial nature of electoral politics.

The CCO programme prescribes that the CCOs at the sub-district level have to meet at least 4 times a year, and the CODI will provide financial support to the establishment and operation of the CCOs. The sub-district level CCOs are prompted to use their meetings to engage in two main types of activities: 1) to promote collective development activities between COs in a sub-district; and 2) to establish participatory activities in discussing governance-related issues, and provide suggestions to government organisations. In this thesis, these two types of activities will be referred to in short as “the promotion of cooperation in development activities”, and “the promotion of participation in improving governance”. It is worth noting that, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the CCO programme specified no obligations on the part of government organisations to respond to the suggestions provided by the CCOs¹⁹.

Some details regarding the COs should also be mentioned here, for their representatives are the main actors in the CCO programme. COs in Thailand have been formed through development programmes run by both NGOs and the government. There are generally several COs in each sub-district, ranging from saving groups and farmers' groups to youth groups, etc., each having their own links of support with the government or non-government development

¹⁹ The explanation of this may seem contradictory to the programme's intent to promote governance. It was explained that the CCOs, being the space for virtuous community leaders, might be corrupted if given the power to interfere in political affairs (Prawase, 2008).

agencies. Some CO can have a large network of membership, but it is rare for the membership to cover the whole sub-district. The formation of COs in Thailand can be traced back to the 1960s, when the Thai government pursued rural development policies with the focus on forming local groups such as occupational groups (Shigetomi, 2009). Many COs were also later formed by the development NGOs, which proliferated in the 1980s. During the late 1990s, in the aftermath of the economic crisis, the COs received significant support from the World Bank's Social Investment Fund (SIF) programme in Thailand. Many COs that received funding from the SIF programme subsequently became the recipients of CODI's support (CODI officer P, interview, 4/3/2011).

Finally, it is also important to introduce some information on the main body of government organisations that the CCOs tend to interact with. Although the CCOs are not prescribed to interact exclusively with any government organisation, the government unit that they are most likely to interact with is the local administrative unit at the sub-district level. In most cases, such a unit is the TAO (Tambon Administrative Organisation). The TAO was formed through the decentralisation effort of the Thai government during the mid 1990s (see TAO Act, 1994). The TAO consists of the administrative unit, which is headed by the locally elected TAO Mayor, and the TAO assembly that consists of elected representatives from each of the villages in a sub-district.

The context of the CCO programme at the collective-choice level

The context of the CCO programme at the collective choice level is characterised by the system that the CODI uses to administer and to distribute resources for the programme.

The CODI is the product of the Thai government's emphasis since the early 1990s on the community development approach. It was set up in 2000 by combining two major government funds for community development, the Rural Development Fund (RDF) and the Urban Communities Development Fund (UCDF) (CODI Annual Report 2001)²⁰. The CODI has the status of being a "public organisation". It is supervised by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, but is administered independently through its own board and director. The CODI receives an annual budget from the government to operate its development programmes, and its performance is subject to government evaluation. The CODI also maintains close connections with, and provides funding to, a section of Thai NGOs.

The CODI uses a "committee" system to administer their development programmes. Numerous committees are set up to perform roles in distributing funding and projects, and monitoring and facilitating the programmes' implementation. Committees with supporting roles are comprised of CO leaders, CODI officials, and the representatives from government sector, academics, and the NGOs. On the other hand, committees that perform the role of facilitating and monitoring the implementation of development programmes mostly consist of CO leaders and some CODI officials. The presence of the CO leaders in all the committees reflects the CODI's emphasis on "participation" by representatives of local beneficiaries in leading the operation of development programmes; this is the organisation's main value (CODI officer R, interview, 25/1/2011). The intention behind this emphasis was that the poor themselves should be the "drivers" of their own development. This was summed up by Somsuk Boonyabanha, the ex-director of the CODI, as follows:

²⁰ This actually led the CODI to divide its operation of development programmes into urban and rural-based programmes. This thesis, however, looks only at the CODI's rural-based programmes. The CODI's urban-based programmes, which are primarily concerned with the provision of housing for the poor, are beyond the scope of the thesis.

"Projects cannot be ends in themselves; they need to be part of a more comprehensive plan that is driven by the poor. Conventional development systems and processes are not designed for the conditions of the poor nor are they appropriate to the needs of the poor...What is required is that the poor determine the conditions attached to projects – thereby enabling plans and processes to be better suited to their needs and capacities" (Somsuk, 2003:vii).

After the introduction of the CCO programme, several committees were also established to implement and monitor the programme²¹. The crucial interactions in the policy process of the CCO programme, therefore, occurred in the relationship between CO leaders and the CODI officers, and within a different group of CO leaders who work with the CODI. More details on these committees will be provided in the third section of the chapter.

6.2. Institutional analysis of the CCO programme at the operational level

This section looks at the operational level of the CCO programme, examining how the rules of the programme interacted with the attributes of communities, and how such interactions affected the participatory process that was promoted. The section starts by examining the implementation of the CCO programme at the sub-district level, exploring the workings of the programme in a number of sub-districts within the Songklah Province in the south of Thailand. Details from these cases allow the action arena at the operational level of the CCO programme to be characterised. This helps identify the incentives that the programme created for the participatory process it sought to promote. The section then uses the findings from the CCO

²¹ Initially, the proponents of the CCO programme wanted their programme to have its own separate budget set directly by the government, and their own administrative structure independent of the CODI (CODI officer S, interview, 2/3/2011). However, they were unsuccessful in pushing through the proposal.

programme to discuss the nature of constraints arising from the attributes of communities on the capacity of CBPDPs in promoting certain types of participatory activities at the local level.

6.2.1. The case study of the CCO programme at the operational level

The objectives of the CCO programme are the promotion of participation by the representatives of COs in achieving local cooperation in development activities, and the improving of governance through voicing their opinion in the local government affairs. During the fieldwork, I visited several sub-districts in the south of Thailand to examine how the CCOs were faring in achieving these objectives. It was observed that the pre-existing conditions in communities crucially influenced how the CCO programme functions. The main conditions that were found to contribute significantly to the way the CCO functions at the sub-district level included: 1) the linkage between the local COs with the external development agent, which in this case is the CODI; 2) the close association between the local COs and the TAOs; and 3) the existence of conflicts in the locality.

To highlight how these conditions affect the operation of the CCO programme, the cases of sub-districts in this section are categorised according to the above three conditions. Five sub-districts were selected based on their ability to illustrate the effects of the conditions of communities on the functioning of the CCO programme. To control the effects that conditions at the higher levels of the programme can have on them, these five districts were selected from the same province so that all were supported by the same CODI's provincial network of community leaders.

My explanation will proceed in two main parts. The first part focuses on explaining the main features of the pre-existing conditions in the communities before the CCO programme was

introduced. The second explains how the CCO was established in each area, and how its functioning turned out.

Case 1: Localities where community organisations had a close connection with the CODI

In the vision that guided the formulation of the CCO programme, the political affairs of communities were envisioned as being led by the "natural leaders", the traditional leaders based on the Thai subsistence culture (see CSM, 2006). The CCO programme intended to promote the roles of the natural leaders to lead communities toward the path of self-reliance. This idea, however, seemed to neglect the significance of links to external support that arise in community development programmes. The implications of such links for the operation of the CCO programme will be examined here by exploring the two sub-districts that had a close connection to the CODI, Sub-districts A and B.

Both Sub-districts A and B had COs with a very close connection to the CODI. In Sub-district A, that CO was "the School of Organic Agriculture", led by its prominent leader, Uncle K²². Uncle K was a moderately wealthy local businessman who had set up a local agricultural group to promote the practices of organic farming (Songklah CO leader K, interview, 19/5/2010). The creation of the group allowed Uncle K to establish connections with several development agencies, including the CODI. Uncle K entered into the CODI's network of CO leaders and rose through the ranks. He was recently appointed a member of the CODI's national committee of CO leaders. As a result of these connections, Uncle K was able to channel numerous development projects to his CO. He also organised a local saving group for his own village, and used the group's monthly transaction to hold a meeting. The meetings were organised mainly

²² The terms "uncle" or "sister" that are used here follow the Thai custom of addressing older people. In Thai, it is generally impolite to address anyone older by just his/her name.

for Uncle K to inform the locals of a range of development projects on which they could work collectively (Sub-district A CCO member W, interview, 12/6/2010).

The initial context in Sub-district B was almost identical to that of Sub-district A. Its CO leader with a close connection to the CODI, Sister L, was introduced to the CODI by Uncle K. Sister L led the implementation of a saving group called the "Sufficiency Economy Saving Group". (Songklah CO leader L, interview, 19/2/2011). She grew to have a crucial role in the CODI network of CO leaders, particularly in the Songklah provincial network, holding an influential position as secretary. She also managed to expand her CO's connection to several funding sources, and had been operating several development projects in the area. She formed a team of CO leaders with nearby villages and sub-districts to help her with these projects (Sub-district B CCO member Pm, interview, 14/5/2010).

As prominent members in CODI's network of COs, Uncle K and Sister L were encouraged to set up the CCO as soon as the programme was introduced. In Sub-district A, Uncle K used his CO as the basis for registering the CCO programme. As a result, the CCO meetings in the locality were a direct continuation of the pre-existing meetings organised by Uncle K's CO. The nature of the meetings continued to be the same, with regular participants being the locals with close connection to Uncle K. (Sub-district A CCO members Ch, J, and R, group interview, 19/5/2010). A number of participants only attended because they were beneficiaries of development programmes, the implementation of which had been led by Uncle K, such as the CODI's housing benefits programme.

In Sub-district B, Sister L and the members of her CO said they were putting efforts into getting the other COs in the sub-district to be involved in the CCO, holding several meetings with them before establishing the CCO. After the establishment, however, such cooperation

deteriorated. Nonetheless, Sister L's CO continued to meet as before, mostly to discuss the operation of a range of projects and to write proposals for the donors. These meetings were nonetheless accorded as having the status of the CCO meetings (Songklah CO leader L, interview, 19/2/2011).

It is notable, however, that both CCOs in Sub-districts A and B had been very reluctant to get involved with any affairs of the TAO. In Sub-district A, the CCO under the leadership of Uncle K had only minimal interactions with the TAO (Songklah CO leader K, interview, 16/2/2011). The members of its CCO explained that getting involved with the TAO's affairs could lead the TAO leaders to sense that Uncle K was trying to compete with them in local popularity (Sub-district A CCO members Ch, J and R, group interview, 19/5/2010). Asked whether the TAO could also provide support to his CO's works, Uncle K expressed his disagreement with the idea, arguing that doing so would contradict the concept of community self-governance. He explained:

"We cannot expect the TAO to collaborate (with what we do). Our work can be the same. We can expect them to help us, but not so much. If the TAO get involved much with what we do, we can no longer say it is 'community self-government'."

(Songklah CO leader K, interview, 16/2/2011)

The relationship between the CCO and the TAO in Sub-district B was worse. This was because Sister L herself had decided, perhaps in conflict with the CCO's rules, to run in the previous TAO election for the position of Deputy Mayor. She lost the election, resulting in personal acrimony between her and the present TAO mayor. As a result, her CO did not get any support from the TAO. Moreover, leading members of the CCO in sub-district B were afraid that getting involved with the TAO over any governance issues would only aggravate the TAO's "resentment" toward them (Sub-district B CCO member P, interview, 14/5/2011).

Case 2: Localities where the local government dominated community organisations

Another important element in the vision guiding the formation of the CCO programme is the perception of communities and the state as two separate systems. This is influenced by the vision of development that sees the Thai state as an external force that intrudes into self-governing communities (Chattip, 1999). Again, this picture can be taken as misrepresenting the actual dynamics of politics in existing communities, where interactions with the local government form a crucial feature of local life. Communities, even if identified through community organisations, can in fact be highly integrated with the local government. The two sub-districts in Songklah Province, Sub-districts C and D, provide good examples of such a case.

Sub-district C was among a limited number of sub-districts in the southern region that were promoted as the "model cases" of the CCO programme. It was selected as a model case from its story of "harmony politics", which highlighted how its community culture helped limit conflict in and from elections (CSM, 2006; CODI-Southern Talk in the CCO, 2011). Interestingly, the actual condition in Sub-district C was characterised by the connection between its TAO and many COs in the locality. The establishment of its network of COs can be traced back to the sub-district involvement in the SIF programme in 2001. Such involvement contributed to the creation of a network of CO leaders, the "Leaders' Network". This network eventually played an important part in local politics, lobbying some electoral candidates to desist from entering the elections. Interestingly, this was retold as the story of "harmony politics". Members of the Leaders' Network themselves managed to attain important government positions, including that of TAO Mayor. This led to the TAO providing support for and working closely with several COs in the locality. Working together, they secured good connections with several government departments and development agencies (Sub-district C CCO member T,

interview, 18/2/2011). The sub-district became the “learning centre” for community development, receiving frequent study trips organised by development agencies and government organisations.

Sub-district D also had its TAO playing a dominant role in supporting the local network of COs. Yet, the relationship between the TAO and COs in Sub-district D was slightly different from Sub-district C. The supportive role that its TAO provided to the local COs came mostly from the initiation of its TAO mayor, who had been in power for more than 12 years. The mayor had been working collaboratively with a number of development agencies in Thailand, and had attained popularity within and outside of his own sub-district for doing so. He had been a major supporter of several local networks of COs, particularly of the sub-district’s saving groups and its network of elders (Mayor S, interview, 15/2/2011). His length of time in the position had allowed him to consolidate his influence over many COs in the area. Several leading members of the COs in the locality were his close aides.

The establishment of the CCO in these two localities was done with the TAO's support. Sub-district C set up its CCO through the already existing "extensive" network of COs that worked closely with the TAO, transferring the members of such network to become CCO members (Sub-district C CO Leader S, interview, 15/5/2010). In Sub-district D, the close aides of the TAO mayor coordinated the establishment of the CCO. As a result, most of the leading members of its CCO had a close relationship with the TAO, particularly with the mayor (Sub-district D CO leader P, interview, 12/6/2010).

As the CCO in Sub-district C was formed through the pre-existing CO network, they were recognised locally as the same network. Their meetings were held simultaneously, with the same participants. The CCO was simply recognised as one of the labels that they used for

gaining support in certain activities (Sub-district C CCO member M, interview, 16/6/2010). The network of COs in Sub-district C met monthly. The works that they did, however, were mainly related to the implementation of the development projects that they received from external development agencies, as explained by a member:

"The works that we do are mostly linked to the external funding and support. We got the funding, and we really implemented the activities. Therefore, we keep on getting the funding. More projects are flowing into the area. At the moment, our work is mostly related to these projects and organising the reception of field visits from outsiders" (Sub-district C CCO members K, V, S, and Pc, group interview, 16/6/2010)

Still, through the connection with the TAO, the operation of the CCO in Sub-district C led to an organisation of one important governance-related activity. Such an activity was a participatory forum to gather opinions regarding the opening of new factories in the area (Sub-district C CO leader S, interview, 15/5/2010). The forum was well publicised to outsiders, particularly among development agencies. However, when asked, a member of the CCO was reluctant to approve the ability of such a forum to actually affect the TAO's final decision (Sub-district C CCO member M, interview, 16/6/2010).

The CCO in Sub-district D was less active. Its meetings had been sparingly arranged, once per three or four months. Discussions in the meetings were also mainly about the implementation of the development projects received from external development agencies. The leading members of its CCO admitted that their participation in the CCO programme was mainly seen as the opportunity to access a new source of funding (Sub-district D CO leader N, interview, 17/2/2011). However, the meetings that took place also provided an opportunity for a few

attendees to express their concern over several issues in the area, and requested the leaders of the CCO to pass on their concern to the TAO mayor through their personal connections.

Case 3: A locality with a major conflict

The final case that will be examined is that of the CCO in a sub-district that had experienced conflict, which had arisen over usage of local natural resources. Communities are usually assumed to be the protector of local natural resources. They are seen as having a livelihood dependent on the local natural resources, which are at risk of being harmed by external actors. One of the suggestions that followed this line was for communities to be able to protect their local resources by holding public institutions accountable, such as allowing communities to be entitled to protection of their "rights". Such a view, however, was based on the simplistic perception that all community members share an interest in protecting local resources. In actual situation, interests over the utilisation of local resources within communities can diverge. Sub-district E provides a good example of this.

Sub-district E was another "model case" in the CCO programme. Its story is promoted in order to highlight how having the CCO can help a community protect its natural resources (CODI, 2010). This sub-district's conflict over natural resources arose from the operation of mines in the area. A group of local opponents to the mines wanted to preserve the natural resources. However, the mines also had their local supporters; there was a significant number of the population in the area that benefited from the mines, including both the mine employees and those who received compensation from the mines (Sub-district E CO leader S, interview, 10/5/2010). The differences between these two groups became increasingly tense as the mines' concessions entered the ending period, and the mines' owners were seeking extensions, including from the TAO.

Before the mines became an issue, Sub-district E had had a well-connected network of COs. In 2008, a group of local government officials and CO leaders established a network, the Hundred Council, to discuss development projects and local issues. The Hundred Council provided the basis for the subsequent emergence of the CCO. After the establishment of this, a group of CCO members who were opposed to the mines cooperated with the CODI to set up a forum to discuss issues relating to the extension of the mining concession, which at the time was coming to the end (Sub-district E CCO report, 2009). The CODI provided funding for the arrangement of the forum. The setting up of the forum, however, encountered significant difficulty from the prevailing conflict among the locals on the issue (Sub-district E CO leader S, interview, 10/5/2010). The conflict led some CCO members, including its main leader, to abstain from their involvement in the CCO activities. As the local CO leader explained:

"In the beginning, the CCO got cooperation from several local leaders, but since the idea of (organising the) forum was discussed, they stopped joining... We were trying to have both sides talking to each other, and were not just opposing the mines. However, the perception of the CCO was not good, and its role in being the forum became difficult" (Sub-district E CO leader S, interview, 10/5/2010).

The CCO members themselves were also divided over the issue. As a result, the subsequent efforts in the setting up of the forum was carried forward only by a section of the members. The forum over the mining concession was finally organised with much external support from local NGOs and the CODI (Sub-district E CCO report, 2009). Since the forum was held, however, the operation of the CCO in Sub-district E had suffered significantly. The CCO meetings were not held. The leader of the Sub-District E CCO mentioned that it was difficult to gain local cooperation again, as the CCO was perceived to be equivalent to the mines'

opposition group. Such a perception also damaged the relationship between the CCO and the TAO (Sub-district E CCO members B, Chat, and Su, group interview, 22/2/2011).

6.2.2. The characteristics of action situations and the incentives within the CCO programme at the operational level

Using the simplified version of the IAD framework's description of "action arenas", details from the examined cases of sub-districts can be used to illustrate the three major characteristics of the interactions at the operational level of the CCO programme, including: 1) who the actors were and what were their positions in the interactions; 2) what scope of actions was allowed in their interactions; and 3) what were the outcomes of such actions, and the costs and benefits associated with them. It is important to describe these details, as they are the characteristics that produced the incentive structure in the programme. Such incentive structure, in turn, influenced actors' decisions to pursue participatory practices.

The main actors in the CCO programme at the sub-district level were the leaders and members of community organisations. The condition of elite capture, where the operation of a development programme is dominated by the local elite, had crucial implications for the position of their interactions. The community leaders who captured the programme took a leading role in its operation. Most had connections with the external development agencies that gave financial resources and rules to operate "projects". The CCO programme was simply a project that they obtained from the CODI. The members of COs, on the other hand, had only the task of assisting the leaders in "doing projects". This general condition applied to all the cases.

The major tasks of collective actions that the CCO programme promoted were cooperation in development activities, and participation to improve governance. The cases in this section explain that the scope in pursuing these activities varied, depending on the leaders who captured the programme. The major difference existed between the leaders who had connection with the TAO, and the leaders who had no such connection. In terms of promoting cooperation in development activities, it can be observed from Sub-districts A and B that the leaders with limited connection to the TAO had limited capacity to mobilise cooperation from other COs. Although the CCO programme provided them with some financial support, the support was inadequate to sustain what was actually a difficult task in mobilising extensive development cooperation. On the other hand, the cases of Sub-districts C and D highlight how connections with the TAO could give the leaders greater capacity to pursue the task.

The connection with the TAO also had a major influence on the scope of action in improving governance. Only in the cases of Sub-districts C and D, where the CCOs were supported by the TAO, could the CCO members take some part in discussing TAO affairs. All other sub-districts illustrate that the affairs between their CCO and TAO remained isolated. Such isolation was partly due to the inability of the programme's rules to create a channel of interaction between the CCO and the TAO. As explained earlier, there were no concrete specifications as to how the operation of CCO could actually be linked with the affairs of the TAO, and also there was no obligation on the TAO side to make a genuine consideration of any suggestions provided by the CCO.

In relation to the task of promoting development cooperation, most of the explored sub-districts point to the main benefits from engaging with the programme to exist in its funding and the chance to access other CODI projects. Interestingly, this created an incentive structure that actually contradicts the task of promoting development cooperation. This is because the

CO that implemented the CCO programme actually did not gain any benefits from extending cooperation to other COs; they could even lose the benefits from having to share the access to projects. The lack of incentive for such a task can explain why, in Sub-district A and B, the CCO meetings were simply a continuation of the pre-existing meetings by the COs that implemented the programme, with minimal extension of cooperation to other COs. The meetings were still reported as the CCO meetings, perhaps only to be eligible for the programme's funding.

Interestingly, it was observed that the connections between the leaders and the TAO could in fact improve such an incentive structure for the task of promoting development cooperation. As explained through cases of Sub-districts C and D, support from the TAO could significantly reduce the cost in pursuing the task. Moreover, for other COs in a locality, the TAO could itself be a source of benefits, both financially and operationally, making cooperation seem more attractive. As for the TAO, these cases indicate that the engagement of the TAO in promoting local development activities was also helping them in raising their popularity, both locally and externally.

As for participation in improving governance, the cases of Sub-districts A and B show that the major cost in doing so was a possible resentment from the TAO. The leaders who mobilised collective action in engaging with governance issues could enter into conflict with such a powerful local actor. In addition, the case of sub-district E signifies how the possibility of facing negative responses to the engagement with governance-related issues could arise even among community members. This is because certain governance-related issues can be associated with conflictual interests within a community, making it easy for anyone who promotes participation in relation to it to fall into a dynamic of conflict. Mobilising engagement with governance issues, in this sense, was a costly task. The cost represented a major disincentive

that discouraged the CCO members, particularly the leaders, from pursuing the task. Again, in this regard, the close connection between the leaders and the TAO could reduce such a cost. The TAOs of Sub-district C, for example, even supported participatory activities in relation to their own affairs.

6.2.3. Constraints from the attributes of relationships in communities on the promotion of community participation

The depiction of the conditions in the CCO programme at the operational level indicates that, overall, the programme experienced significant difficulty in achieving its objectives, both in promoting cooperation in development activities and participation in improving governance. This problem was in fact recognised at a more general level by the CODI. It was admitted among the CODI officers and the top-level CO leaders that sub-district CCOs rarely functioned as expected²³. As indicated in this section, with the exception of cases where the TAO played a role in altering the incentives, most cases of CCOs could not create the incentives that allow their desired collective actions to arise. This problem can be recognised as being rooted in the failure of the programme's rules to properly engage with the "constraints" arising from the interaction between an externally-supported promotion of participation and the actual attributes of the communities. Such attributes include particularly inequality and the diversity of interests within them. These constraints can be explained as follows:

In terms of the promotion of cooperation in development activities, the experience of the CCO programme indicates that the constraints in achieving such a task mostly emerge from interaction between an externally supported development programme and inequalities within communities. This interaction tends to result in the capture of the programme by local elites.

²³ This was observed from the CO leaders' discussion during "The Seminar to Promote Understanding in the Operation of the CCO Programme", 17 March 2011, CODI Central Office, Bangkok.

Nonetheless, such interaction is not necessarily detrimental to the promotion of collective action, the nature of constraints depending largely on two characteristics of the elite who capture the programme.

The first characteristic concerns whether or not the local elite has a capacity to mobilise collective action. Many CO leaders in the programme proved to have little capacity to attain cooperation beyond their networks. Perhaps ironically, it was when the leaders had connections with the TAO – the realm of electoral politics that was negatively perceived by the programme's proponents – that they were able to gain the capacity to engage more successfully in the task. These experiences indicate the importance of connecting the local promotion of participation with local elites that can give it a sustained capacity to mobilise large-scale collective actions.

The second characteristic concerns whether or not the elites have an interest in using their capturing of a development programme to promote local cooperation in development activities. The existence of such a motive is likely to hinge upon the connection between the interests of such elites and the locals. In the implementation of the CCO programme, the primary interest of most local leaders who captured the programme lay mainly in attaining funding and projects for their network. This contributed significantly to the programme's inability to promote local cooperation. Interestingly, it was also illustrated that, as the operation of the programme became connected to local government, there was at least some interest in using the programme to promote collective development activities. This was likely because the interests of a locally elected government were more connected to the locals, for they had to rely on their popularity among the locals to remain in power. The point being made here reiterates the argument made by Mansuri and Rao (2013:10-11). In their evaluation of the participatory development approach, they stress the importance of the

mechanisms to ensure the accountability of the local leaders to the locals as a crucial condition for participatory development to produce positive outcomes.

In the case where the objective of promoting participation is to improve governance, the constraints tend to emerge differently. They arise from the interactions between the externally promoted collective action and the local diversity of interests. The experience from the CCO programme shows why the domination of local elites in promoting participation tends to contribute to the lack of success in this task. Most local elites who operated the CCO programme avoided the cost of leading movements against other locally powerful actors or interest groups. The possible exception to this may exist in cases where the local elite had a good connection with local government, allowing some participation in government's affairs to occur. However, it remains questionable whether such participation can really improve governance, because the connection itself can compromise the elite's actual effort on the task. In sum, the case study of the CCO programme indicates that the local diversity of interests tends to combine with elite capture to limit the success of community participation in promoting governance. The possibility of achieving such an objective, in this sense, exists rather in providing channels for the wide range of interests of the locals to deliberate and to have influence over the affairs of local government.

It is worth noting that the conditions in the CCO programme also contributed to its inability to achieve its tasks in promoting participation at the local level. The effectiveness of the programme was also compromised by the limited financial support it could provide, and the inability of its rules to create any operational links between the CCO and local government. Nonetheless, the effects of these conditions were rather additional to the effects of the constraints highlighted here, or illustrative of the failed attempt to engage with the constraints.

Finally, the exploration of the operational level of the CCO programme indicates that relationship between the locals and the locally elected government is actually a crucial basis for rules to promote participation to engage with, in order to achieve its objectives. It reasserts the recognition that community and the state, in fact, are mutually constituted (Walker, 2009:11; Rigg, 2012:41; Kemp, 1991). This recognition, however, tends to be neglected in the vision guiding community participation. The vision that underpinned the design of the CCO programme, for example, was one that perceived the realm of community participation to be separated from that of local electoral politics. This perception was shaped by the construction of community-based politics being based on tradition and morality. It proved to be unproductive in the actual operation of the programme. The unproductiveness of the Thai vision of community, as observed here, also provides a lesson for efforts to promote community participation. It warns against an idealistic vision of community: a community of voluntariness, of culture and tradition, that exists apart from the realm of the state. Such a perspective, although it can make the idea of community attractive, is also likely to miss the important links that are actually instrumental in promoting participatory practices. This adds to the point raised by Rigg, that the many taken-for-granted visions, such as that of the value of community-based subsistence, the importance of land to rural-livelihood, and threat of globalisation to rural livelihood, frequently lead us away from the recognising the actual challenges in promoting development (Rigg, 2006; Rigg and Sukunee, 2001; Rigg and Ritchie, 2002).

6.3. Institutional analysis of the CCO programme at the collective-choice level

The previous section points to the ineffectiveness of the CCO programme's rules at the operational level. However, in such a case, the question that also needs to be addressed asks

why the rules were not improved or better enforced. This suggests the need to also explore the process of rule making and monitoring in CBPDPs. This will be done here through a study of the collective-choice level of the CCO programme. It does so by examining several layers of the committees that the CODI employed in making rules – particularly on the allocation of funding, and in monitoring implementation of the CCO and other related development programmes. Observations from this examination will be put together to describe the action arena of the CCO programme at the collective choice level, depicting the incentives that existed for the tasks of collective actions the programme sought to achieve. Finally, the findings from the case study will be analysed to characterise constraints that tend to arise from conditions in the relationship between policy actors on the capacity of CBPDPs in making and monitoring rules.

6.3.1. The case study of the CCO programme at the collective-choice level

The CODI itself is a small organisation compared to the size of the area that its development programmes cover. In the southern region, each of its field-level staff has to support and monitor the CODI's programmes in one or two provinces. Moderately large provinces like Songkhalah Province contain around 100-130 sub-districts, while the larger provinces can contain more than 150 sub-districts. The limitation in the number of staff is also another reason why the CODI uses committees comprising local representatives to take the central role in the CODI's policy process.

As explain in the following Figure 6.2, the CODI's committees are structured into three different geographical levels: national level, regional level, and provincial level (see CODI Annual Report, 2007; 2008; 2009). The CODI's large programmes, including the CCO programme, contain all three levels of committees. The CODI's smaller programmes have a

national level committee connecting directly to the provincial committees. At the national level, there exist several "top-level" committees for different CODI programmes. These committees work in close cooperation with CODI executives²⁴.

The CO leaders, who are the main actors in most CODI committees, also have their own body of representatives called the COCC (Community Organisations Coordination Committee), which is recognised by the CODI as the body representing all the COs that it works with. At the top of the COCC structure exists the national COCC. The CODI has five regional offices. In each region, a number of committees, including the regional COCC, are established to cooperate with the regional offices in running and supervising the CODI's development programmes. The committee system extends to the provincial level. At the provincial level, CO leaders who are well connected to the CODI have formed themselves into "the provincial COCC"²⁵.

The CCO programme has also led to the creation of a number of programme committees. At the national level, there is the CCO National Operational Committee²⁶. At the regional level, there are CCO regional committees²⁷. Figure 6.2. maps the relationship between the CODI's committees.

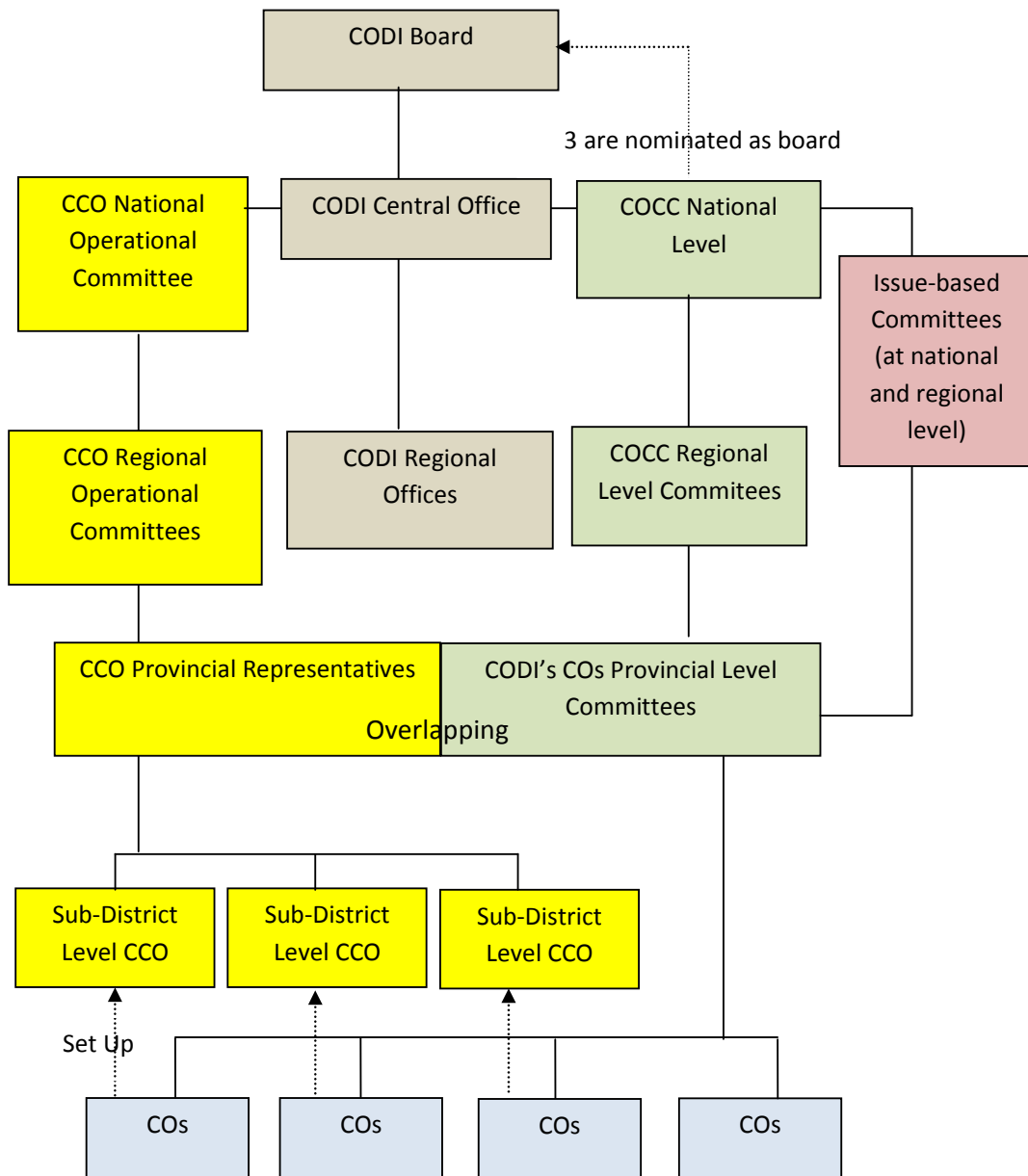
²⁴ The creation of committees and the arrangement of their meetings were described by several CODI officials as "the main task" of the CODI. New committees had constantly been created, while a number of created committees only had limited significance. A CODI official explained that this was perhaps due to the organisation's belief in the value of promoting participation (CODI Officer R, interview, 25/1/2011). This will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

²⁵ The CODI adopted the system of provincial-level committees from the World Bank's SIF programme (CODI officer P, interview. 4/3/2011).

²⁶ During the first few years of the CCO programme's operation, the meetings of its committees at the national and regional level generally took place monthly. This is with the exception of the CCO National Supporting Committee – a committee also comprising invited government officials, NGOs, and academics – which met infrequently. Due to its limited significance, this thesis will not look at this committee.

²⁷ In 2010, the CCO Regional Supporting Committees were also created. The committees were formed by adding a number of NGOs and academics to the prominent CCO representatives. Their contribution, however, was insignificant. Therefore, this thesis does not examine them.

Figure 6.1. Map of the network of CODI's committees



As mentioned in the methodology chapter, I use the nested approach in selecting the sample of committees within the CODI's committees system. Through this approach, the study of the CODI committees at the provincial level is carried out primarily through examining the CODI's provincial network in the Songklah Province in the south of Thailand. The choice of Songklah is made since all the case studies at the operational level reside in this province. Its analysis will also be supplemented by insights from a few other provinces in the southern region. The case

of Songklah is nested within the analysis of the CODI committees in the southern region, and the analysis at the regional level is nested within the analysis of the CODI committees at the national level. In analysing each of these levels of committee, the pre-existing conditions of the CODI committees are explained first, followed by an exploration of how the CCO programme and its related committees functioned, and how they were affected by conditions in the system.

The CCO programme at the provincial level

The CODI had only one field-level official supporting their rural development programmes in each province. Therefore, both before and after the introduction of the CCO programme, the CODI's development activities within each province had been managed mainly by the provincial COCC (Community Organisations Coordination Committee). The provincial COCC consisted of a small group of community leaders who had been associated with the CODI for a long time; many had been part of the CODI's committees at the higher levels. The provincial COCC was also commonly referred to by the CODI as the "provincial network" (*ka-buan changwat*).

Songklah Province's provincial network consisted of less than 20 members. In recent years, most of the CODI's rural development funds have been channelled directly from the central office to the provincial level (see CODI Annual Report, 2007; 2008; 2009). Thus, the main activity of provincial networks has been a distribution of programmes and their funding to the COs in their province. Prior to the introduction of the CCO programme, Songklah provincial network met once monthly. The leaders in the network chose among themselves to be the representatives of different "development issues" such as the environmental issue, the

agricultural issue, the saving issue, and the women issue. (Songklah COCC meeting report, 18/7/2008). A leader for each issue was allocated funding to be distributed by them to COs.

An introduction of the CCO programme into every province was rushed. It was required that at least 10 sub-district CCOs needed to be set up within a few months²⁸. As the number of sub-districts connected to Songklah provincial network was relatively small before the introduction of the CCO programme, the network sought help from the local NGOs to establish the CCO in sub-districts beyond their connections (NGO P, interview, 11 May 2010). This had a crucial consequence of introducing new CO leaders into the provincial network. The CCO programme also changed the way the CODI allocated funding to the provincial level. The CODI made the condition that each provincial network must allocate a proportion of its annual budget to assist in the setting up and operation of the sub-district CCOs (CODI Annual Reports 2008 and 2009).

After the introduction of the CCO programme, Songklah provincial network was encouraged by the CODI officer and the NGOs to change its approach in managing funding and projects. A "zonal" approach was introduced, dividing the area of Songklah into four zones, and allocated budgets and responsibilities to each of them (Songklah COCC meeting report, 1/7/2009). The leaders of the four zones subsequently had monthly provincial network meetings. A large proportion of funding was allocated to the CCOs in each zone, while the "development issues" still received separate funding, but with fewer amounts than before.

²⁸ The reason for this was that the initial establishment of the Sub-district CCOs was made to connect to the creation of another institution, the Council of Political Development (CPD) (see CPD Act, 2008). A clause stipulated that a section of the CDP representatives had to be nominated at the provincial level among the representatives of Sub-district CCOs. It was also stated that at least 10 Sub-district CCOs had to be formed in a province before such a nomination could be made. This caused the rush in establishing the Sub-district CCOs. Several CODI officials and CO leaders recognised this as a major cause of subsequent problems in the CCO programme.

Songkalah's zonal approach was perceived favourably among the CODI officers as being a good way of integrating the pre-existing provincial network and the new leaders who emerged from the CCO programme (CODI officer N, interview, 3/3/2011). However, a closer look revealed that the integration in Songkalah was in fact not entirely smooth. The leaders from the zone level expected the provincial meeting to be the forum where all the details of CODI-related development programmes were shared. This was not always the case. The leaders of some zones, particularly those who were from the pre-existing provincial network, kept certain projects only for themselves and their network of COs (Songkalah CO leader B, interview, 15/2/2011). This problem created a tension within the network. The newly joined leaders felt dissatisfied at the lack of transparency in the distribution of funding. The tension was raised further with suspicions of corruption, where it was observed that a large sum of funding from certain projects seemed to disappear without creating recognisable activities.

The same tension between the pre-existing provincial network and the newly introduced CCO representatives occurred in almost all provinces in the southern region, with the tension being turned into a conflict in a number of them (CODI officer V, interview, 14/6/2010; CO leader B, interview, 4/3/2011). CCO representatives felt that many leaders from the pre-existing provincial network were preventing them from gaining or sharing their resources and power (CO leader W, interview, 4 March 2011). This tension was widely recognised by both the CO leaders and the CODI officers as the main problem in the operation of the CCO programme. The situation was summed up by a CODI official in the South as follows:

"The co-existence of CCO representatives and the provincial network led to conflict. The CCO representatives were not the same group of people as the provincial network...and the provincial network did not want to cooperate with

CCO representatives. They wanted to manage 'resources' rather than to manage 'ideas'". (CODI officer V, interview, 14/6/2010).

The CCO programme at the regional level

During my fieldwork, the importance of regional committees in the CODI system had been in decline. As explained, the CODI was changing its approach in managing development programmes, making connection directly from the national to the provincial level (CODI officer P, interview, 4/3/2011). Nonetheless, it was against this background that the CCO programme was introduced; and the CCO regional committees were created. The CCO regional committees consisted mainly of the CCO representatives from the provincial level. A budget was set for them to meet monthly at the CODI's regional office. As committees for the CCO programme did not exist at the provincial level, the CCO regional-level committees were the first level of committee where all the CCO representatives could gather and meet the CODI officials. The meetings of the CCO regional committees were arranged primarily in order to allow the CODI to follow the CCO programme's progress in local implementation. Progress reports were asked to be presented by the members of CCO regional committees at monthly meetings²⁹.

During the fieldwork, the relationship between the leaders and the officials was characterised by a tension. Such a tension extended from the conflict at the provincial level among the CO leaders described above. The CO leaders in the CCO southern region's committee believed the CODI had given them inadequate support. Some felt the CODI should have recognised their entitlement to gain more access to decision-makings over the allocation of resources. The

²⁹ Paperwork was also requested to be submitted from the sub-district level, via the provincial network, as another means to monitor progress. However, there were suspicions among the CODI officials that some paperwork was counterfeited by members of certain provincial networks (CODI officer N, interview, 4/3/2011).

CODI officials in the southern region disagreed with these concerns, pointing out that the CCO programme was just one of the development programmes that the CODI were operating (CODI officer T, interview, 3/3/2011). The CODI officials in the southern region perceived the criticism made by the CCO representatives to be unfair, and expressed their lack of willingness to work with the CCO southern region's committee (CODI Officer SM, interview, 22 February 2011). Similar tension between the CCO representatives and the CODI officials also occurred in other regions.

In addition, there was a significant concern among the CODI officials that most of the progress reports presented by the leaders overstated the actual progress, which was recognised as being much more limited than suggested (CODI officer N, interview, 4/3/2011). Despite such concern, the CODI officials rarely pushed for further inquiry into the accuracy of progress reports. The reason why this was the case was not stated explicitly. The CODI officers explained that many of them recognised the problem but preferred to "leave it as it is" (CODI officer S, interview, 2/3/2011). In a private conversation with one of the local leaders I knew quite well, it was explained to me that such a practice of overstating progress had already become more or less the norm that all the leaders followed.

The CCO programme at national level

At national level, the CODI set up numerous "top-level" committees to formulate plans and supervise their development programmes. The connection between the CO leaders and the CODI executives played a crucial role in the formation of the national-level committees. The executives could demand that certain leaders were members of the committees they were in charge of (CODI officer R, interview, 25/1/2011; CO leader J, interview, 2/3/2011). Such a connection was the main foundation for the broader expansion of the CODI's network of CO

leaders. Top-level leaders with good connections to the CODI could bring in other CO leaders to join the CODI's networks at lower levels, giving them access to CODI's projects. In return, the top-level leaders could build the alliance that sustained their prominence in the CODI's network. This also meant that, even on the occasions when leaders at the provincial level were able to nominate members of the committees at a national or regional level, the CO leaders with good connection to the CODI executives still tended to be nominated (CODI officer S, interview, 2/3/2011). Most top-level CO leaders in the CODI's network were members of the national COCC.

The aforementioned nature of the network led to the strong presence of a small group of CO leaders at the national level. The CO leaders from a small circle were selected to be in several committees at once. The CODI officials referred to them as the leaders with "many hoods" to highlight the fact that they had so many different roles to fulfil. These leaders spent a lot of time out of their own locality to attend meetings at the national level. These meetings also included ones held by funding organisations other than the CODI (CO leader W, interview, 4/3/2011). Although the leaders also received meeting allowances from the meetings at other levels, the meeting allowances at the national level were the highest. The allowance could provide a decent financial return to top-level leaders who attended meetings frequently. In addition, as they attained instrumental roles in projects, they could also gain some financial return in the form of project management fees (Academic S, interview, 26/1/2011). Nevertheless, the behaviour of leaders at the national level was perceived negatively by many CODI officers; it was seen as impeding the effective implementation of CODI work. The officials argued that the leaders had lost their connection with their locality, not knowing the actual conditions in the area, and failing to achieve implementation at the local level of national level strategies and plans (CODI officer B, interview, 24/1/2011; CO leader J, interview, 2/3/2011).

After the introduction of the CCO programme, the CCO National Operational Committee was established. The committee functioned as the top-level committee that oversaw the overall implementation of the CCO programme (CCO national forum meeting report, 15/1/2009). More than half of the members of the CCO National Operational Committee were nominated from the regional level. The committee's selection process, however, also gave a membership quota to some leaders to be chosen through their "expert" status. Such a condition played an important part in causing the committee to also consist of many leaders who were also part of the national COCC. This condition had important implications for the CCO National Operational Committee's engagement with the tension in the CCO programme. As mentioned, there was a tension at the provincial level between the CODI's pre-existing network of CO leaders, i.e. the COCC, and the new leaders introduced by the CCO programme. At the national level, however, the strong presence of the members who were part of both the COCC network and the CCO programme diluted the presence of such a discontent. A number of CCO representatives from the regional level felt that the leaders who had positions in both the CCO and the COCC did not push strongly enough for their problem to be resolved³⁰.

The main tasks of the CCO National Operational Committee was monitoring the progress of the CCO programme, and facilitating the local implementation of plans from the national level³¹. Yet, in performing these tasks, they were seen by the CODI officials as suffering from the same problems as the pre-existing national level committees. They were criticised for "losing touch" with the reality at the local level, failing to connect the plan for implementation with their own provinces and localities, and therefore, contributing to inactivity of the CCO

³⁰ There was in fact a proposal made by top-level CO leaders to request from the government a large sum of funding specifically for the CCO programme. Such an ambitious proposal, however, failed to materialise (CCO National Operational Committee meeting report, 25/3/2009 and 15/10/2010)

³¹ It is worth mentioning that the CCO National Operational Committee also had another task, which was to arrange a national level seminar, in order to make "policy recommendations" on behalf of the community sector to the Thai government. However, the success in this task had been limited. Therefore, it will not be included in the analysis in this thesis.

programme at the local level (CODI officers B, interview, 24/1/2011). Nevertheless, similar to the regional level, even in the case where these problems were known to the CODI officials, it had not been the case that any punishment followed. It was observed that there was reluctance among the officials to turn such a problem into a major issue. During the interviews, they were reluctant to delve into details in discussing the issue, preferring to express their optimism about the programme's future.

6.3.2. The characteristics of action situations and incentives in the CCO programme at the collective-choice level

As in the previous section, details from the case study are brought together to describe the action arena at the collective choice level of the CCO programme. Three main characteristics are described: the actors and their position of interactions in the arena; the scope of action that the actors could take; and the benefits and costs that accrued to each action. The description of these characteristics helps depict the incentives for the tasks of collective action that the programme sought to promote. These include the interaction in rule making, which in this case primarily concerns the rules for resources allocation, and in monitoring the programme's local implementation.

The two main actors who interact at the collective choice level of the CCO programme are the CO leaders and the CODI officials. The CO leaders are the main group of actors whose roles can be defined as that of the "brokers" who interacted to allocate resources that the CODI provided for its development programmes. There was, however, a crucial division between them into: 1) the leaders who had been part of the pre-existing networks; and 2) the newly introduced leaders, who had joined the network through the CCO programme. The pre-existing leaders dominated the network at the provincial level. While having separate committees for the CCO programme allowed the newly introduced leaders to have a stronger presence at the regional level, such a presence became diluted at the national level where pre-existing leaders had exclusive access to the membership of the committee from their "expert" status. The CODI officials had minimal presence at the provincial level due to the CODI's limited personnel. But their presence became stronger at the regional level and the national level.

The actors' first major type of collective action was decision-making on the allocation of resources, particularly funding and development projects. The leaders could decide how to expand the access of resources to others. They could expand the access vertically to a group of recipients at the lower levels, or expand horizontally to new members at the same level of their network. At the regional and national levels, the CCO committees also worked with the CODI officers in carrying out the task of monitoring the CCO programme's implementation. Because the officials had limited capacity to supervise the local level, they had to rely on reports made during meetings by the CO leaders to monitor progress. Correspondingly, the leaders' scope of action in monitoring rested on whether or not to report the progress accurately.

Prior details from examining the collective-choice level of the CCO programme signify that the main benefits the leaders could gain from the task of allocating resources was "rent", i.e., the leverage power over the provision of access to funding and projects. They gained rent through the vertical expansion of access, creating a group of project recipients at the lower levels—who became reliant on them for the access to benefits. This allowed them to solidify their leadership and brokerage position. Nevertheless, the exclusivity of the access some leaders tended to keep only for their recipients could also contribute to the lack of transparency and suspicion of corruption – the problems that were observed in the Songklah provincial network. Rent could increase as the leaders rose to a higher level in the network, and gained access to more information and decisions over resources allocation.

Rent from vertically expending access to resources provided the CO leaders with the incentive to carry out the task of allocating resources. And although their task in brokering projects came at the cost of time and effort, they were also compensated financially, in the form of meeting allowances and project management fees. Furthermore, by staying away from their

locality, the leaders at the top level could also minimise their cost of travelling, and maximise their compensation. This indicates a major reason why several national-level leaders in the CODI network spent a lot of time out of their own locality to attend meetings at the national level.

The horizontal expansion of access, however, could lead the leaders to lose their rent. This was because the authority in distributing the same pool of resources had to be shared. The unwillingness to expand access horizontally contributed significantly to the main problem that plagued the CCO programme, the conflict between the pre-existing leaders and the new leaders introduced by the programme. In this regard, it seemed to be the case that the more the pre-existing members of certain provincial networks solidified their bond and connection with the CODI, the less willing they were to lose their rent.

Interestingly, based on this insight, the moderate success of the Songklah provincial network of CO leaders in expanding horizontal access to new members can be seen differently. Such a success was in fact due to the lack of solidity in its pre-existing network of CO leaders. This observation was confirmed by the CODI officials and the local NGOs, who explained that the Songklah provincial COCC was perceived as a somewhat "weak" network in the CODI system prior to the CCO programme (CODI officer Sm, interview, 8/5/2010; NGO P, interview, 26/2/2011). In addition, the reluctance to lose the access to rent already attained also helps explain the observed hesitancy among some leaders at the national level of the CCO programme, who were also part of the pre-existing CODI's network, to push for changes in the CODI system of resource allocation.

The incentive for the leaders to perform a monitoring task was related to their roles in allocating resources. Presenting a favourable picture of the programme's progress allowed the

leaders to stabilise their brokerage position in the programme, for they could be perceived as accomplishing their tasks well. And, although doing so meant they faced the risk of punishment from the CODI, such a risk was low. This resulted in a lack of incentive to provide an accurate report in their task of monitoring, and an incentive to present a rather overstated picture of progress. The low risk was due to two factors. Firstly, there was an asymmetric information problem in the monitoring process, arising from the limited capacity of the CODI officers to get accurate information at local level. Secondly, the officers were also unwilling to discipline the leaders. A lack of willingness was most likely due to their reluctance to break their relationship with the leaders, whose strong presence in CODI's system made their cooperation essential. The pervasiveness of the existing misbehaviour also meant any punishment had to be extensive, increasing the risk. In addition, the officials' sense of agency in supporting the ideology of participation also contributed to their willingness to skim over the problem and focus only on success. This issue will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, which examines the agency of actors in the CCO programme.

6.3.3. Constraints from attributes of relationships between policy actors on the promotion of community participation

From the previous description of the incentives that arose at the collective choice level of the CCO programme, it is not surprising that the programme ended up being ineffective in its tasks of monitoring implementation and allocating resources. In fact, these problems were widely recognised by the CCO operation committees and the leading CODI officers involved in the CCO programme. This led to a number of attempts at restructuring the programme's supporting system³² (CCO National Operational Committee meeting report, 9/9/2010).

³² Towards the end of the fieldwork, the CCO National Forum Office was created by the CODI as part of the effort to deal with problems in the CCO programme (CCO National Operational Committee meeting report, 9/9/2010).

Underpinning the ineffectiveness of the CCO programme was the incapacity of its rules to deal with the divergence of preferences among its policy actors from fulfilling the desired objectives. This condition can be recognised more generally as the constraints in the promotion of community participation which emerge from conditions in the relationships within the network of policy actors. The experience of the CCO programme illustrates these constraints.

In the process of rule making, which in the case of the CCO programme occurred over the allocation of resources, the constraints arose particularly from the divergence of interests among the local beneficiaries included. Such a divergence of interests, as explained, arose from the benefits associated with the “rent” that the beneficiaries included could attain from their roles. Their rent-seeking behaviour could also lead to other problems such as conflict and corruption in the process of resource allocation. The observations here adds further insight into the findings of other studies, which have pointed out how the inclusion of beneficiaries into the process of targeting benefits frequently leads to no improvement in results. The resulting allocation of benefits, these studies have found, tends to be limited to that group of wealthier sections of the locals which is more connected to the beneficiaries included. This is both because of the prevailing connections and because the beneficiaries included do not have egalitarian preferences (Conning and Kevane, 2002; Araujo et al., 2008; Mansuri and Rao, 2013:133-135).

As for the collective task of monitoring implementation, the findings from the CCO programme suggest that the rent-seeking behaviour of the beneficiaries included could combine with the asymmetric information problem to produce an important constraint on the task. Such constraint exists in the form of a perverse incentive to misrepresent the actual conditions at the local level. The leaders in the CCO programme, for example, were taking the opportunity

from the gap in information to maintain their brokerage position by overstating local progress. In addition, the potential divergence of preference among officers from enforcing punishment on the leaders also contributed to this problem. The incapacity of development officers to ensure effective implementation has been observed in other works as arising from the short-term need of the project or a lack of experience (Jackson, 1997; Vasan, 2002; Botchway, 2001). The officers of the CCO programme did not suffer from these problems, but were still willing to compromise with the misbehaviour among the locals, due both to the need to sustain good cooperation, and to their ideological support of the roles of the locals.

As noted in the previous section, the ineffectiveness of the CCO programme at the collective choice level was also influenced by the CCO programme's specific conditions. At the time it was being studied, the programme was in its early years of operation. Its regulation that compelled numerous sub-district CCOs to be established in a short period of time also contributed to a proliferation of the local leaders who had newly joined the CODI's network. These conditions also played an important part in contributing to the conflicts over resource allocation within the CODI, the main problem observed in this study. Nonetheless, as mentioned in the previous section, these specific conditions can be recognised as heightening the effects from the constraints highlighted here. The quick proliferation of new members in the CODI network, for example, can be recognised as accentuating the negative effects of the rent-seeking behaviour, stimulating conflict over the rent.

Discussion of the ineffectiveness of the CCO programme at collective choice level also points to the unproductiveness of the vision guiding its rules concerning inclusion. This vision advocates the promotion of the "locals" to determine their own direction of development. The romanticising of the culture and moral values of the locals often contributes to the optimism of such an ideal. The section has highlighted the shortcoming of this, pointing to its

oversimplification of the multiplicity of interests that exist within a system of development intervention. Although the inclusion of local leaders can be perceived as a benevolent action, this does not mean that the nature of the leaders should be automatically glorified. As demonstrated here, the local leaders also find opportunities to serve their own self-interest from their tasks. The ideology in promoting the roles of the locals, in this sense, only serves to worsen the problem by diverting attention away from engaging with the actual problems.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter examines the roles of community as a set of social relations on the promotion of community participation. It seeks to challenge two common perspectives related to the approach. The first perspective is that relationships within communities are endowed with attributes that can allow participatory activities to easily emerge. The second, which is more relevant to the policy process in supporting the promotion of community participation, is that the inclusion of local beneficiaries in such a process can help enable it to work better. The chapter explains how the actual attributes of relationships in communities, and the inclusion of the locals into the policy process, are in fact likely to constrain the ability of community participation to mobilise participatory activities.

In examining the case study of the CCO programme, an institutional framework is applied to investigate interactions between the attributes of relationships in communities or a network of policy actors and an attempt to promote participation through a CBPPD (community-based participatory development programme).

Investigation of the local implementation of the CCO programme reveals that an attempt to promote participation in development and governance is likely to be constrained by two

conditions in communities: inequality and diversity of interests. Inequality means attempts to promote participatory activities are usually captured by local elites. Hence, unless such elites have adequate capacity to promote extensive cooperation, and have interests that are connected to a wider range of locals, the elite capture is likely to constrain the achievement of an attempt to promote participation in development. Furthermore, the elite capture tends to compromise an attempt to promote participation in improving local governance. This is because most of the elites tend to avoid the cost of mobilising against other powerful local interests, such as the local government.

Exploration of the network of policy actors in the CCO programme illustrates that the inclusion of local beneficiaries in the policy process tends to produce a condition that constrains the process's ability to allocate resources and to monitor local implementation. Such a condition exists in the way that local beneficiaries find the incentives to perform their roles to lie rather in seeking "rent", by using their authority over allocation of resources to establish and maintain their exclusive network of clients. This condition tends to lead to problems such as the limiting of the extent of resource allocation, and misuse of the task of monitoring implementation by overstating progress.

In connection with the previous chapter, which examined the roles of community as idea, this chapter explains how the ideologically-oriented perception of communities frequently underpins the failure of CBPDPs to overcome the constraints highlighted here: such a perception tends to lead to the designing of rules that inadequately recognise the actual complexities and challenges in operating the approach. Thus, this chapter suggests that the promotion of community participation needs to realistically take into account the actual attributes of communities and their representatives, including their deficiencies, and the existence and interaction of their various interests.

This chapter and the previous one have explored the tendency of the two types of social factors, the idea of community and the social relations of communities, to create constraints on the promotion of community participation. The following chapter turns to the roles of the actors who engaged in promoting the approach, exploring their agency in engaging with these constraints and contributing to the actual functioning of the approach.

Chapter 7. Human agency and the functioning of community participation

Previous chapters have explained how the discourse of community, and the institutions in community-based participatory development programmes (CBPDPs), contribute to the emergence of the gap between expectations and the reality of community participation. Nonetheless, with the depiction of such a gap, further explanation is required on how the actors in the process themselves deal with the gap, and how this contributes to the evolution of a CBPDP. This chapter engages with these questions with a view to relating the findings with those from earlier chapters.

Here, the focus shifts from the roles of structural conditions to the roles of actors in shaping the functioning of CBPDPs. Emphasis is placed on the study of actors' "agency", i.e., the actors' ability to manoeuvre within the constraints arising from the conditions they are facing. The examination of agency here is pursued through the "actor-oriented approach" (see Long, 2001, 2003). This approach focuses its examination of development interventions on the diversity in actors' interests and knowledge, and on how actors use their agency in engaging with structural conditions. To examine how the usages of agency contribute to the way a CBPDP evolves, Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration (Giddens, 1984) will be complemented with the actor-oriented approach. This is because the structuration theory can provide further insights into the process whereby agency contributes to the reproduction of structural conditions.

It is worth mentioning here that the aim of this chapter is not to provide a comprehensive examination of agency in all aspects of community participation. Rather, the aim is to suggest an alternative path for understanding the actual nature of community participation. The

chapter points to how the operation of community participation is actually shaped by the actors' uses of agency, both in taking advantage from the normative character of the approach, and in benefiting from the resources that the approach provides. These engagements with the approach diverge from the common perception of how it functions. Thus, they help explain why the gap between the approach's reality and expectations tends to persist.

These questions will be answered through an examination of the case of the Council of Community Organisations (CCO) programme in Thailand. The chapter contains three sections. The first section introduces the actor-oriented approach and its application for analysis of a CBPDP, and explains how such an application can be complemented by the structuration theory. The section also outlines the background details to the lives of the actors who have central roles in the CCO programme. The second section examines the actors' uses of agency at different stages of the policy process in the CCO programme. The section looks into the actors' interaction in the programme's planning, implementation, and the monitoring and evaluation process. The third section looks at how actors' uses of agency contribute to the evolution of structural conditions in the CCO programme, and draws out the implications of this for the more general case of CBPDPs. This section also brings together all the findings in the chapter to propose hypotheses on the way community participation actually functions, by identifying the "hidden scripts" that characterise the approach's nature. The explanations provided in the third section also shed light on the dynamic that underpins the persistence of the gap between the expectations and the reality of community participation.

7.1. Analysing the roles of human agency in community participation

This section introduces and conceptualises the analysis of agency in CBPDPs. The section begins by explaining the examination of "agency" in development interventions through the use of the "actor-oriented" approach, highlighting how this approach can further an understanding of community participation. The details of the actor-oriented approach were in fact already provided in chapter 3 – theoretical framework. Nonetheless, it is worth recapping on some of its key details here. The section then builds upon the actor-oriented approach, complementing it with concepts from other studies of development intervention, and the theory of structuration. This is in order to construct a framework that helps point to the aspects of CBPDPs that the examination here needs to focus on. Finally, the section provides background information for examination of the case study. This is done by describing the lifeworlds of the two groups of actors in the programme: CO leaders and CODI officials. The term lifeworlds refers broadly to their lived-in and taken-for-granted background and experiences that are relevant to their intentions, values, and abilities in engaging with everyday practices (see Long, 2001:54). These depictions will be related to the broader trend of social changes in Thailand.

7.1.1. Examining the roles of agency in CBPDPs through the actor-oriented approach

Actors' agency and the actor-oriented approach

The emphasis of most studies of development interventions has been on the role of different forms of social structure in influencing the nature of development practices (Long, 2003; Funder, 2010). The problem with such an approach, however, is that they seem to be "people-less"; it is obsessed with the conditions and context as driving forces of social life rather than

the capacity of human beings to self-organise and to transform the conditions they are facing (Long, 2003). In other words, the active role of “actors” in engaging with structure is missing. Without looking into such a role, the understanding of a social phenomenon cannot be complete. There is a need, therefore, to also focus on the “actors” and their capacity to “act” on structure. This chapter aims to tilt the balance of the examination of a CBPDP toward fulfilling this need.

Agency refers broadly to human beings’ faculty for action, i.e., the capacity of humans to take action of their own free will (Fuchs, 2007). This chapter’s concept of agency focuses on two aspects of such capacity. The first aspect is the capacity of actors to form and pursue their own values and goals (Sen, 1992:56-57). The second aspect is actors’ capacity to engage with the constraints arising from the social structure. Recognising these, an examination of agency needs to be aware of the multiplicity of actors’ interests and motivations. Moreover, it has to recognise that an actor has the capacity to process social experiences and to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion (Long, 2001).

The recognition of these two aspects of human agency urges an analysis of agency in community participation to focus on actors’ differences, and their ability to manoeuvre within social structures and turn the situational constraints to their advantage. In examining the effects of agency on the working of a CBPDP, this chapter applies the analytical approach known as the “actor-oriented approach”. The approach puts the central emphasis on the roles of human agency in its examination of development. The approach is built upon the recognition that the social life of actors is heterogeneous; that actors are always differentiated in their interests, knowledge, and identity. It also directs attention to examining how differences between actors are mediated and resolved through the actors’ agency, and how social practices and meanings emerge from such a process (Long, 2003).

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the actor-oriented approach proposes that a development programme should not be seen as a rational problem-solving process, where each stage of its policy process is perceived to be executed according to a plan. It is argued that a development programme should be seen rather as the arena where social actors are locked into a series of intertwined battles over resources, meaning, and institutional legitimacy and control (Long, 2001:1). Thus, the approach conceptualises a development programme as "an ongoing, socially constructed and negotiated process", consisting of multiple contested arenas where actors interact.

The concept of "social interfaces" is developed by the approach as a heuristic device to analyse actors' agency in their interactions (Long, 2001). Interfaces refer to points where different lifeworlds intersect, where interactions become oriented around the problem of bridging, accommodating, and contesting different standpoints. Major interfaces in a development programme emerge where different levels of social organisation within the programme intersect. These are points where discontinuities of values, interests, and knowledge are clearly presented, and therefore, allow actors' interaction to be elucidated. The examination of these interfaces stresses the importance of actors' capacity in engaging with such discontinuities, allowing the networks of links related to collective action to be organised, and their discrepancies of interests and interpretations to be mediated.

It was also previously mentioned that the application of the actor-oriented approach, particularly in the examination of a CBPDP, can be complemented by the concept of "brokers and translators", and the theory of structuration. The concept of "brokers and translators" complements the depiction of actors' agency in engaging with the structural conditions they are facing. The theory of structuration, on the other hand, complements the examination of

how actors' exercises of agency contribute to the evolution of structure. The following discussion provides further explanations on these complementarities.

Applying the actor-oriented approach to studying a CBPDP: examining actors' uses of agency

As earlier chapters have suggested, the operation of CBPDPs is also characterised by a "gap" between expectations and realities. The existence of the gap represents the existence of "disjuncture" in development, where the "ideal worlds" that development actors aim to bring about diverge from the social reality they are facing (Mosse and Lewis, 2006b). This disjuncture represents the important constraint that actors in a CBPDP need to engage with. The examination of a CBPDP, in addition to recognising constraints arising from differences between actors, needs to focus on the engagement with such disjuncture and the implications of such engagement for the programme's functioning.

The examination of actors' strategies of engagement with these constraints can benefit from the work of Mosse and Lewis, which directs the focus in studying development programmes on to actors who play the role of intermediaries. These actors can be characterised as development "brokers and translators" (Mosse and Lewis, 2006a). Brokers and translators are intermediaries who engage particularly with the process of negotiations and constructing representations in development interventions. They occupy the spaces in between different stages of a development programme. Their agency in steering or muddling their way through difficult scenarios, working their way through constraints, has crucial implications for the way negotiations and contestations are resolved.

Through the concept of brokers and translators, this chapter's examination of a CBPDP focuses on identifying the actors' "strategies" in brokerage and translation. Translation in development

refers to the process in which social realities are translated into meanings that have relevance and are accepted. As a development programme always contains actors with different interests and identity, strategies in translation are crucial to the management of differences. Furthermore, with the existence of disjuncture, rather than trying to amend the practices, it has often been that the disjuncture is dealt with by interpreting the divergent social realities to make them consistent with the ideal worlds. In this sense, the strategies in translation are crucial in allowing the system of development to be stabilised and for the impression of legitimacy and success to prevail (Mosse and Lewis, 2006a).

Nonetheless, the exploration of agency of intermediaries is not limited to their strategies in translation. A development programme cannot function solely on the management of meanings; it also needs actual social practices to occur. In engaging with the tasks of producing social practice, the intermediaries also exercise their agency in performing the roles of development brokers. In doing so, actors need to develop strategies to engage with a system of resource distribution in producing social practices. Such strategies exist in the way actors work with the flow of resources. This can be seen as a reflection of the "entrepreneurial roles" of the brokers (Biershenk et al., 2002).

Applying the actor-oriented approach to studying a CBPDP: the roles of agency in reproducing structure

The next step in examining the roles of agency in the functioning of a CBPDP is to look at how agency contributes to the evolution of the programme's conditions. This analysis engages with the question of how the social structure of a CBPDP is reproduced through agency. In doing so, the chapter adopts Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration as the guideline. Giddens' theory

of structuration provides the means that help bridge the divide between structure³³ and agency. It does so through the concept of the "duality of structure". The concept of duality of structure recognises the dual roles of social structure as both the medium and the outcome of social practices. Giddens refers to his concept of duality of structure as: "the essential recursiveness of social life, as constituted in social practices; structure is both medium and outcome of the reproduction of practices" (Giddens, 1979:5). As the medium of social practices, structure both constrains individuals' thought and action and also enables them to adjust to and challenge the regularised patterns of social interactions. Giddens explains that, when individuals draw upon aspects of a structure to enable their actions, they are at the same time engaged in the process by which the structure is reproduced (Giddens, 1979).

It is explained that, as "knowledgeable" individuals draw upon or employ structure, structure becomes "modalities", which refer to a medium of interaction (Stones, 2005:18-19). And it is the functioning of structure as modalities that indicates the way the structure is reproduced. Giddens conceptualises the aspects of social structure into three types, according to the way they function as "modalities" (Giddens, 1984:29-31). The first type is the structure of domination. It is the structure that gives control over resources or people. Structure of domination is drawn upon by individuals to exercise "authority" in social interactions. The second type of structure, the structure of legitimation, gives normative values to actions, and is drawn upon as modalities in legitimising or sanctioning actions. The third type of structure is the structure of signification, which gives meanings to actions, and is drawn upon as modalities in being the interpretative schema.

The structural conditions in a CBPDP that this thesis has described are divided into the dimension of discourse and institutions. To fit into the perspective of the theory of

³³ The term "structure" here is used synonymously with "social structure".

structuration, discourse can be taken as the dimension of structure that is drawn upon as modalities for attaining legitimacy or meanings. On the other hand, the dimension of institutions can be seen as the dimension of structure that is drawn upon to attain authority over resources and people. It can be identified as the structure of domination. To understand the reproduction of structure in a CBPDP, the functioning of the discourse and institutions as modalities in the programme's interfaces needs to be examined.

It needs to be noted that the way structure functions as modalities over time also depends on the context of actors' engagement (Parker, 2001). Actors' uses of structure, for example, depends on the differentiation of power among them, i.e., who among them has the power to influence the way an aspect of social structure is used. Hence, to examine the dynamic of the reproduction of structure, the examination also needs to look at the characteristics of actors' collective interaction. This means examining whether there were differences in the way an aspect of structure becomes modalities for different actors. And in the case where there were differences, what also has to be examined is whether such differences clashed, and which actors had more power to dictate the reproduction process in such a situation.

Finally, as the functioning of aspects of structure as modalities become regularised over time, the modalities can also be seen as the "script" that actors follow in their interactions (Barley and Tolbert, 1997). Such a script can depict the regularised patterns in the way that structure was constantly used and reproduced by actors. The depiction of such a "script" can help reveal the dynamics of a development programme, usually concealed behind the official representations that development agencies prefer to present.

7.1.2. Introducing the lifeworld of CCO's brokers and translators

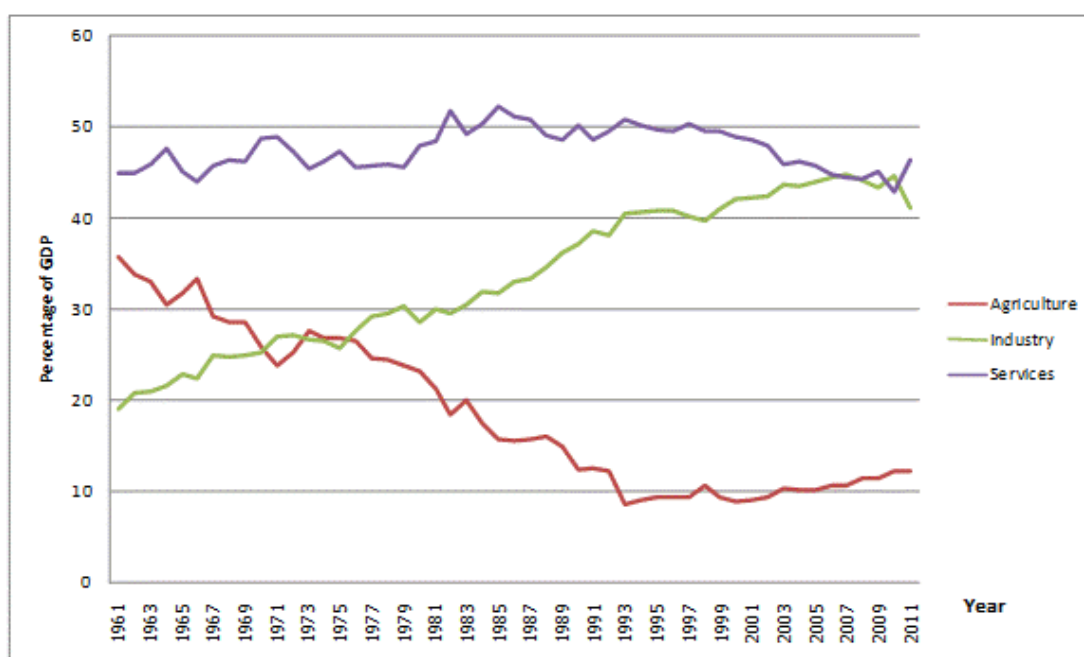
Before proceeding to an examination of the actors' agency in the CCO programme, it is worth exploring details of their background and experiences, i.e., their lifeworlds, which are relevant to their practices in development. The explanations provided here explain the trajectory of changes in Thai society that surround the emergence and functioning of development brokers and translators. It also explains how the lives of the actors in the CCO programme are situated within the wider context of such changes. The group of actors that will receive most of the emphasis is the community organisation (CO) leaders, because they are the main "brokers and translators" of the CCO programme. However, some details of the Community Organisation Development Institute (CODI) officials will also be discussed, because they also have a crucial role in interacting with the leaders in the programme's operation. These explanations are expected to portray the picture of the wider web of interests and aspirations in which the interactions in the CCO programme are embedded.

Contextualising the rise of development brokers in Thailand

Community development in Thailand has been closely associated with rural development. The imagined representations of rural villages as a social unit rooted in the subsistence culture and self-government forms a crucial basis for community development in Thailand. The rural villages became the main target of Thai community development programmes, contributing to the promotion of actors with rural backgrounds to participate in these programmes' implementation and policy formulation. In this regard, community development programmes in Thailand can be recognised as situated within two key changes: 1) the changes in the rural economy and livelihoods; and 2) the shift of Thai government rural development policies toward community development.

The key trajectory of change in Thai rural society during the past decades has generally been in the decline in significance of agriculture. The trend of the Thai economy during the past 50 years has been a rapid decline in the percentage of agricultural production, which has been replaced by a rapid rise in industrial production.

Graph 7.1. Share of GDP in Thailand (Percentage) from 1961-2011



Data Source: The World Bank 2013 (<http://data.worldbank.org/country/thailand>)

Changes in rural living can be seen as the products associated with such fundamental changes. The major changes in rural living include deagrariansisation and the rise of non-farming activities, integration with the external world, and the rise in the overall living standard.

Nidhi Eawsriwong (2006; 2013), a prominent Thai academic, observes that the past decades of economic change in Thailand have contributed to a high degree of integration between rural and urban life, especially in terms of migration and highly integrated markets. Rigg (2003:214-

219) elucidates this transition in his examination of rural livelihoods in Southeast Asian countries, with Thailand as one of the main case studies. He argues that agriculture is no longer the major source of a livelihood for rural households in these countries. Thai rural families, for example, have been diversifying their sources of income, engaging in both farming and non-farming activities, and have also expanded their source of income by migrating to work outside their own localities. Rigg and Sukunee (2001) also observe how the Thai rural economy became embedded within the global economy. They highlight how, through the demand of export markets, agricultural production in rural Thailand has been restructured and integrated into the global agro-food system. This integration in the Thai manufacturing sector led to the opening of industrial estates benefiting from foreign investment, which provided employment opportunities for the rural dwellers, allowing them to move outside the farming sector.

These changes in rural living conditions have contributed to a rise in the overall income level of the Thai rural society. Andrew Walker (2012) captures this transition in his depiction of Thai rural peasants as "middle income" peasants. He argued that most peasants in Thailand can no longer be considered as poor. They are not as well-off as the urban middle class, but their livelihoods have been substantively improved to the level where their primary concerns are no longer about security and survival.

The aforementioned changes in the Thai rural society, however, did not come without problems. One of the major problems associated with such changes is the rising disparity between rural and urban areas (Walker, 2012:46-47). Such a disparity can be depicted through a general picture of comparison between the decline in absolute poverty and the persistence of inequality. Absolute poverty (poverty headcount ratio at 2 dollars a day), which has been more pervasive in the rural areas, declined from 44 per cent in 1981 to just 4.6 per cent in

2009. On the other hand, the Gini Index in Thailand, which largely reflects the inequality between rural and urban dwellers, has declined very little, from 45.22 per cent in 1981 to 40 per cent in 2009³⁴. Many other problems in the rural area have also been perceived, in particular by Thai development activists; these range from environmental problems caused by industrialisation to the powerlessness of the rural people in their engagement with the state (Rigg, 2003:44,68). The perception of these problems has contributed to a rising recognition of the importance of rural development, and has eventually contributed to another key change that will be described here, which is the shift of the Thai government toward community development.

At first, the community-based development approach was more influential among the NGOs. The Thai government focus on rural development, particularly in the period from the 1960s, was more on aspects such as investment in rural infrastructure and the provision of rural credits (Walker, 2012:50-55). Such a focus became a major point of criticism among the Thai development NGOs in the 1980s. The NGOs argued for a development approach that was centred rather on local communities, and argued for the previously neglected cultural value of rural communities to be the focal point of development. This led to a rise in the popularity of the Thai Community Culture School of Thought, which sees the promotion of the subsistence way of living as the goal of development.

The period from the late 1980s to the mid 1990s saw the turn of the Thai government's development policies toward the NGOs' approach of community-based development. The "grass-roots development" approach, with its emphasis on participation, self-help, and self-reliance, started to gain a strong presence in national development plans (Rigg, 1991). The turn to localism became more apparent in the 1990s through the period of political reform

³⁴ Data from: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/thailand>

(Connors, 2005). This reform allowed public intellectuals and political activists who advocated localism to attain positions of influence in government committees. The Thai government has turned itself into major funding sources for community-based development activities, both through ministries and through the government-supported public organisations. An important product from this has been the formation of local networks of development actors, particularly at the provincial level, to support the operation of and resource distribution to numerous community development programmes that have emerged. These networks have assumed a crucial role in managing links between the locals and development agencies (Shigetomi, 2009).

The lifeworlds of actors in the CCO programme

The Thai government's community development programmes have opened up a space for brokerage and translations. While the vision guiding the rise of community development in Thailand has been that of subsistence communities rooted in the past, the local actors who actually occupied such a space were perhaps the product of the opposite process. The main observation that can be made of the local actors who are employed to perform the roles of brokers and translators in the CCO programme is that most of them were those who have benefited from the opportunities that arose in the transition of the Thai society.

The lifeworlds of community leaders

As mentioned in the last chapter, the CODI used the approach of setting up a network of committees in operating its development programme. The main group of actors in such a network consists of the local leaders of COs. These local leaders were promoted to play an important intermediary role in distributing resources to the community organisations at the local level. Most of these leaders had prior experience in working

collaboratively with NGOs and government development agencies. They were mostly from a background of rural dwellers, but had successfully benefited from the transformation of rural livelihoods. Most of them are relatively more wealthy and educated than others in the community, and have attained experience in working with the world outside their villages.

Many of them are those who have migrated to work outside their villages, before coming back to their village as "post-peasants", dividing their time between farming or entrepreneurial jobs and performing their tasks as local CO leaders (see Rigg and Salamanca, 2012; Hirsh, 2012). The importance of them having been in touch with the external world was summarised by one of the academics who worked as a consultant for the CODI. In depicting one of the community leaders in the south, she pointed out that the leader was able to attain his influential position simply through his experience and knowledge about the wider world (Academic M, interview, 4/4/2010).

A look into the background of leaders in the CODI's network of CO leaders in Songkhal Province supports this observation yet further. Most of them have benefited from the economic and educational opportunities created by the rural changes. Uncle K, one of the network's established members, had experience of working as a salesman, travelling around many provinces in Thailand. In addition to his entrepreneurial background, he undertook several kinds of voluntary work, particularly with the government. One of his notable experiences came during the Thai government's fight against Communism in the 1970s, when he volunteered to be part of the right-wing "Village Scout" movement. His experiences from the volunteering encouraged him to set up a local farmers' group in his village, and he built a linkage of support between his group and the government's development agencies. He established himself firmly

as a leader of the local farmers, and has been working with them on a number of development projects. Uncle K remains a locally wealthy man, owning a local shop and a gas station (Songklah CO leader K, interview, 20/4/2011).

Sister L, another established member in Songklah's network, also came from a better background compared to others of the rural population. She had graduated from the region's leading university. Sister L married a local businessman, providing her with financial support that allowed her to pursue voluntary work in development (Songklah CO leader L, interview, 19/2/2011). Both Uncle K and Sister L entered into, and attained a strong presence, in the CODI's provincial network. They performed roles as intermediaries who connected the CODI's and other agencies' development programmes to their own group and groups in nearby localities. Uncle K was recently selected by other members as the representative of Songklah in the CODI's national level network of CO leaders. As the representative, he needs to travel to the CODI's regional office and national office in Bangkok to take part in numerous meetings each month. Sister L performs the role of secretary of the Songklah network, taking charge of the network's paperwork and accounting.

A look at other members in the CODI provincial network in Songklah suggests additional characteristics that community leaders often need in order to perform roles of development brokers and translators. These characteristics include, for example, the experience of working in locally respected positions such as a teacher or the Village Headman (*pooyai-ban*). Teacher P was a teacher in a rural sub-district for a long time, rising through the ranks to get on to the senior staff of a local school. After retiring, he became closely involved with the local radio station that played a crucial role in promoting local development works. Teacher P's involvement in the CCO

programme came when his locality was chosen as the "model case" for the programme. He undertook the role of "presenter" of his locality, and joined the provincial network as a specialist in giving presentations related to the CCO programme (Songklah CO leader P, interview, 20/4/2011). Another member who was recently introduced into the CCO programme holds the position of the Village Headman in his locality. Chief B has a well-educated background, graduating with a bachelor's degree from a top university in the south. His brother is a highly influential NGO figure in the southern region, and he himself has also accumulated experiences in working on numerous development projects (Songklah CO leader B, interview, 15/2/2011).

Looking at the community leaders at the national level in the CODI's network, similar types of background remain crucial. However, additional patterns can also be observed. The leaders at the national level in the CODI's network have secured their highly respected positions through long experiences in development activities. The background of these leaders can be divided into two distinctive types. The first type includes the experience of working in government positions at the local level. Many of the leaders with this background had been working as Sub-District Chief-Headmen (*kam-nan*), a position that is equivalent to that of Sub-District Mayor in the present. Others had been working as teachers. Their position allowed them to work cooperatively with the Thai government on numerous development programmes.

The second type of background is one in social movements and activism. A number of national-level leaders in the CODI network had had experience as "left-wing activists", and had been involved in protests against the Thai state. A very good example of this is Uncle J, one of the most influential CO leaders in the CODI's network. Uncle J was a

student activist during the 1970s. Like many other student activists at this time, he had joined the Communist insurgency that operated in the forest area. Uncle J eventually left the forest and worked as a farmer. He retained his involvement in social activism and led a number of local development programmes to promote alternative agricultural practices. He also established links to several NGOs and development agencies and became a respected figure among development activists in the southern region. His experiences in activism endowed him with the knowledge and communication skills that impressed development agencies. He and other leaders with a similar background have received much respect among the CO leaders and CODI officers for the superiority of their ideas in terms of development.

The lifeworlds of CODI officers

In addition to the leaders of community organisations, the background of another group of actors should be mentioned here briefly. This group of actors is the CODI officers, who also play important supporting roles in CODI development programmes, including the CCO programme. In contrast to the local leaders, who can be observed from their background in rural society, most of the officers come from a background of an urban-based, highly educated middle class. Most of the CODI officers can be recognised for their concern with rural development problems, and for their belief in the vision of development based on the Thai community culture of subsistence and self-reliance.

There are, in general, two major groups of CODI officers who support CODI's rural-based community development programmes; the field-based officers and the office-based officers. The field-based officers mainly include those who have long experience

in working in development sectors, usually with NGOs. They are mostly male, middle-class, with a decent background in education. An officer who led the implementation of the CCO programme, Officer S, worked in the 'watchdog' type of news agency in Bangkok for a long time before he joined the CODI. He graduated from one of the leading universities in Bangkok, and is married to another NGO activist from a relatively wealthy family in the South (CODI officer S, interview, 2/3/2011). The regional director of the Southern office had a similar background. He had worked for a long time with one of the distinguished foreign-supported NGOs in Thailand before joining the CODI (CODI officer T, interview, 3/3/2011)

The office-based officers are largely young and are female. Their tasks are mostly related to the processing of documents, writing up meeting summaries, and other administrative tasks. Their work is mainly in the CODI central and regional offices. However, their supporting roles in coordinating meetings means they also have to occasionally travel to attend meetings in different places. Most of them have recently graduated from colleges or universities, and some were attracted to the prospect of working with the CODI through their experience in student development activities. A good example is Officer R, who recently graduated from one of the best universities in the northern region of Thailand. She came into contact with the CODI when she was a university student, participating in a student activity supported by the CODI. This brought her to work with the CODI again following her graduation (CODI Officer R, interview, 25/1/2011).

7.2. Actors' uses of agency at the CCO programme's interfaces

This section examines major sets of interfaces within the CCO programme in order to investigate the actors' uses of agency. The interfaces that are selected to examine here are the stages of policy where important outcomes are needed to sustain the programme's existence and operation. Three types of interfaces are examined: 1) interface in planning; 2) interface in implementation; and 3) interface in monitoring and evaluation. The empirical basis for this exploration of interfaces is selected from the CCO programme's participatory activities, including seminars and meetings.

The examination of agency is done by highlighting how actors have manoeuvred within the conditions facing them at the interfaces, particularly in the context that such interactions were filled with disjuncture and differences. Community leaders and the CODI officers are the two main groups of actors. The examination here puts the emphasis on highlighting the challenges and constraints that each group of actors faced in their interactions. It then explores the range of strategies that the actors employed in engaging with such constraints and challenges, particularly in terms of the strategies in translation and brokerage.

7.2.1. Actors' uses of agency in the CCO programme's planning activities

The interface in planning will be examined through looking at one participatory activity, which was a national-level seminar associated with the CCO programme. This seminar is one among the CODI's frequently held seminars in formulating the plans for development programmes. It was organised by the CODI to discuss the theme for their overall operation, under the title of "Seminar on Community Self-Government". The seminar was organised at an NGO training centre in Bangkok. The community leaders in the CODI's own networks featured prominently

in these activities; 120 of them were invited to define the meanings and plans associated with the theme. These CO leaders were joined by more than 30 CODI officers.

Their interactions in the seminar were filled with differences and the disjuncture that arose from having the actors coming with different experiences, expectations, and interests. Such conditions underpinned the challenges actors had to engage with. For the community leaders, the seminar represents the opportunity to demonstrate their virtues and achievements, and to impress other members with their knowledge and vision. The impressions that they can create through performance in seminars play a crucial role in affirming their position in the network. For the CODI officers, seminars represent the arenas in which they can demonstrate their identity as development activists, of someone who is striving to help the rural poor by promoting the poor's own culture and wisdom. The officers are faced with a paradoxical task of providing guidance to participants, but also having to prioritise their own voices.

The seminar began with speeches by the CODI's Director and invited speakers. These speeches reminded the participants of the "Community Culture" perspective on development. The key activity of the seminar, where community leaders and officers had the chance to exercise their agency, was in the subsequent brainstorming activity, where the meaning and strategies for community self-government were sought. The brainstorming endowed the seminar with "participatory moments". The CO leaders from the CODI's model cases were divided into groups of around 30. These groups were joined by the officers who helped facilitate the discussion.

Community leaders' uses of agency in translation at the interface in planning

The usages of agency by the community leaders can then be observed from the discussion within each group. Each of the CO leaders was called upon to talk about their experiences and their insights from such experiences. The CO leaders took turns in telling stories of their own localities. A number of strategies were used by different leaders in doing so. Crucial to these strategies was the use of the "language of community development", storylines and narratives that were associated with the Thai "discourse of community". The stories and narratives from such discourse had been repeated many times through CODI's documents, speeches, and presentations.

The ability to draw upon the language of community development is a crucial skill for the leaders in giving speeches and presentations. It is an essential means for them in translating their actual experiences into representations that can create a good impression. One particular way in which the leaders in the Seminar on Community Self-Government communicated through the language was to tell of their experiences in community development through narratives. It was observed how the stories of success in community development were told through the CODI's frequently stated "steps of community development". This narrative was even reiterated in the CODI director's speech at the beginning of the seminar. The steps, in brief, consisted of: making plans together, collecting data, coordinating with other organisations, and synthesising experiences into lessons. Drawing upon such a narrative, a community leader from the central region gave the following explanation for the success of her case:

"We began with ourselves...we set the objective together on what we wanted to do...the whole community then gathered to collect data, to see how many people

had problems. It began in our sub-district and expanded to others. We then gained support...and the local government inserted our plan into their plan."

Another way of drawing upon the language of community development was to talk about what was to be implemented in the locality. Such communication of plans can make an impression through their ambition and extent. Moreover, the locals can discuss the plan together with its expected achievement, while blurring the line between the two. As a participant from the northeast region said in presenting the successes of her case:

"We divided our work into 4 issues; welfare, agriculture, resources, and natural disasters. Then we divided the network to work on each of these issues. The CCO have the task to operate these issues, moving them towards a democratic process...to drive these issues to the wider discussions at the provincial level."

A distinctive but powerful strategy of communicating through the language of community development lies in the mobilising of the language to express ethical statements. Rather than discussing experiences or plans, this strategy involves affirming one's own virtues by condemning problems that ruined the Thai communities. This strategy requires good rhetorical skills, and was used by the more respected and experienced leaders. In the Seminar on Community Self-Government, several leaders voiced their concern over globalisation and capitalism being the root of development problems facing their communities. Others stressed the value of community culture as the basis of true democracy.

It is worth noting that, with the differences in background and experiences, clashes in translations through the language of community development also occurred. For example, during the Seminar on Community Self-Government, one of the issues that divided discussion

was whether the locally elected government should be considered part of local communities. This division seemed to occur because some leaders who had joined the seminar were themselves holding positions in the locally elected government. Interestingly, when such differences occurred in a brainstorming group, the pragmatism of having to present the discussion result to other seminar participants became prioritised. As the participants of the group agreed, the discussion should just produce outputs that were "understandable" to others.

CODI officers' uses of agency in translation at the interface in planning

The other major group of actors in the seminar, the facilitators, comprised mostly of CODI officers. They had central roles in guiding the discussions in seminars. As explained, the basic challenge they faced was how to manoeuvre between their "expert" role of providing guidance, and their role as facilitators of the local voice. This required careful engagement with the "language of community development", moving back and forth between providing the guiding vision and at the same time stressing that the "locals" were in fact the ones who were going to produce the discussion's outcomes. In the Seminar on Community Self-Government, this was illustrated through the facilitators' roles in providing guidelines for the conduct of the brainstorming session. A CODI officer provided guidance by reiterating the objectives of the discussion. He outlined questions and suggested examples of the answers. Yet, he also stressed that only through the real experiences told by community leaders could the answers to the questions be obtained.

The roles of officers in providing guidance continued throughout the discussion during the brainstorming activities. The officers' guidance was in fact frequently sought by the participating community leaders, particularly when the leaders were not sure that the outputs

of their discussion would be "accepted". As most of the officers who facilitated the discussion had backgrounds of highly experienced NGOs, they were able to judge or suggest modifications to the uses of the language of community development. The discussion in brainstorming, in this regard, presented a crucial opportunity for the officers to illustrate their expertise.

The final task in seminars provided further opportunity for the officers to demonstrate their expertise. Such a task existed in the making of a summary to the discussions. This occurred both during and at the end of the seminars. During the discussion, an officer would often intervene to give an account of his/her perspectives of participants' inputs. Yet, the more difficult task occurred toward the end of the seminar, when lessons from the seminar had to be summed up and presented. This meant that all the presentations of the brainstorming groups had to be put into a single summarising presentation, which would be taken up as the output from the participatory process.

A crucial constraint to the provision of such a summary, however, was that it had to be acceptable to participants. In dealing with such a constraint, the narratives from the "language of community development" were again very crucial. In the Seminar on Community Self-Government, the common strategy used in providing a summary was to translate the discussions back to the narratives. However, the uses of translation alone were often inadequate to produce a final summary of the seminar, as the perspectives were usually highly diverse. In this case, another strategy was adopted, which involved simply combining diverse terms and rhetoric. This strategy, although giving rise to the final outcome of the seminar that sounded acceptable to every participant, also produced a summary that was long, inconsistent, and contradictory. This is illustrated from the following definition of community self-government, put together at the end of the Seminar on Community Self-Government:

"Local communities have public concerns, know the objectives, and trust in the community-based way of life and power. Communities have the capability to manage and to coordinate their relationship with partners, to use plans and to manage knowledge, and to use community-based capital to solve problems. Communities can develop all aspects in a systematic way. This is in order to create the changes in social structure and to achieve sustainable development".

(CODI document, 2011)

7.2.2. Actors' uses of agency in the CCO programme's implementation

The interface in implementation will be examined through a key participatory activity in the CCO programme, the meeting at the zone level, i.e., the group of sub-districts. The case of zone level meetings is chosen because the CCO meetings at sub-district level, despite being considered by the CODI to be a more direct outcome of implementation, were largely inactive. In the Songkhal Province, the participatory activities in the CCO programme were instead active at zone level.

The creation of the zone-level meeting in Songkhal was directly influenced by the introduction of the CCO programme. Having more members joining the network, and having the task of establishing more CCOs, the zonal approach to the management of CODI's funding and development activities was introduced. The province was divided into 4 zones, with each of the zones being allocated a share of provincial funds. Each zone held a monthly meeting. These meetings were attended by around 15-20, the main actors being the zone leaders. Each zone had 2-3 zone leaders, most of whom were members of the CODI's provincial network, and seen as the more senior and experienced leaders. The zone leaders joined the meeting with

their own supporting teams, comprising a few persons who worked on accounting and meeting reports. Most participants in the meeting were CO leaders from the sub-districts that were participating or looking to participate in the CODI's development programmes.

Interactions in the meeting were mostly one way, with the zone leaders running the meeting, while the other participants were there to be informed by the zone leaders. What can be noted distinctively from the meetings was the way that the zone leaders used their agency in performing roles as "brokers". The leaders employed varying strategies to situate themselves into the links of resources and operations of the development programme, which existed between the external development agencies and the locals. In performing such a task, they had to legitimise their roles, and also faced the difficulty in mobilising cooperation and collective action from the locals.

Community leaders' uses of agency in brokerage at the interface in implementation

The zone leaders' performance as brokers was encapsulated by their tasks in "doing projects". This term "doing projects" was coined by observers of community development in Thailand to describe the how locals actually engaged with development projects. Doing projects is the act of connecting external development support with the local network of groups; it was the primary task in the CCO zone meetings. This is demonstrated through the content of meetings attended. The following table 7.1. depicts the meeting agenda of the two zones: the Seashore Zone and the Mountainous Zone³⁵.

³⁵ The other two zones that were formed by the Songklah CODI provincial network include the Urban Zone and the Cha-na Zone.

Table 7.1. Agendas for the CCO Programme Zone-Level Meetings in Songklah Province, February 2011

| Agenda of the Seashore Zone Meeting | Agenda of the Mountainous Zone Meeting |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issues to inform and discuss <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Reporting the progress on the Housing Repair Project b) The upcoming CCO Provincial Forum meeting c) The making of a proposal for the CODI's self-determination fund d) The upcoming meeting on "summarising lessons" for the Songklah Province's CO network e) Community College Project f) Occupational Training Project g) Housing Project h) Nominating the 100 "learning centres" i) Energy Project j) Community Saving Group Project 2. Approval of the meeting minutes from the previous meeting | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issues to inform <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Council of Political Development-related Projects b) Arrangement of the CCO Provincial Forum meeting c) Report from the making of a development plan in Mae Tom sub-district, for the CODI's self-determination fund 2. Approval of the minutes from the previous meeting 3. Continuing issues <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Writing of proposals for the CCO programme's funding b) The CCO programme's progress 4. Issues to be discussed <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Nominating 5 representatives to join the "seminar on summarising lessons for the Songklah Province's CO network" b) Nominating 5 representatives to help make the local self-determination plan c) Nominating the Non-CCO localities to receive CODI funding |

The meeting agendas show how most of the discussion centred on giving details related to "projects". The zone leaders explained each of the projects on the lists, and through the course of doing so, they demonstrated their legitimacy for authority and leadership. They did so by using several strategies in engaging with the "rules", i.e. regulations concerning resources allocation and arrangement of collective activities that were associated with the projects.

Many zone leaders showed that they had exclusive knowledge about the organisation of the funding of projects, signifying that that they had superior information to complement the operation of the projects' rules. A leader of the Seashore Zone, for example, explained the CODI's history, thus showing his long-term connection with the organisation. Several leaders also showed their exclusive connection with the high-ranking bureaucrats or executives of development agencies. In addition, the zone leaders also attained authority from functioning as "gatekeepers" for other leaders to be part of some projects. Such functioning occurred through their application of the projects' rules that delegated them the tasks of nominating representatives to participate in provincial participatory activities, and in nominating the lists of localities to be recognised as "learning centres".

Another way in which the zone leaders could effectively demonstrate their authority was that of giving instruction on the writing of "project proposals". Project proposals played a key role in providing access to projects' funding, but writing them required exceptional skill. The proposals needed to be cloaked with the right language, and satisfy the expectations of external development agencies. In the meetings, the leaders of the Seashore Zone were teaching participants how to incorporate the Swot Analysis into a proposal. Meanwhile leaders in the Mountainous Zone went through an example of a proposal, explaining the list of items that needed to be included, and suggesting the appropriate content for each item. By teaching the writing of proposals, the leaders were able to show the skills that affirmed their position as brokers. It can be noted that such skills were endowed more among those who had had experience in working in the educational or government sector, where they were likely to had written similar documents.

The discussions during the zone-level meetings were significantly different from the planning process. The narratives and storylines of community culture did not occupy the central role in

the zone meetings. The discussions about projects were mostly pragmatic, centring on the required details needed to attain funding. In the discussion of each project, the amount of money that could be gained was always mentioned. The CODI's Self-Government Project, for example, was described as the "85,000 baht project". The talks were also dominated by stories of connections with government departments and development agencies, and seldom touched upon the concept of self-reliance and the threat to communities. Terms such as "ours" or "us" were rarely mentioned. The few times they were mentioned was when stating how the model cases in "our province" could bring 'us' good reputations, a rather outwardly oriented way of using the term. Alongside this vision, Sister L, the leading member of the network, also depicted her task as a leader as someone who had brought "good opportunities" from the outside to the villagers (Songkalah CO leader L, interview, 19/2/2011).

This pragmatic engagement occurred, interestingly, with the exception of one particular zone, the Urban Zone. The main zone leader of the Urban Zone had a long experience in working with an NGO, and is also a brother of the leader of one of the highly influential NGOs in the South. His background was different from all other zone leaders. This, perhaps, shaped his different way of directing a zone meeting, focusing a lot more toward discussions about the threats to communities from the government's industrialisation policies. In addition to indicating how a different background can affect one's agency, this deviation also signifies that, beyond the patterns in the usages of agency depicted here, there always remains possible divergences.

Finally, beyond their performances in conducting meetings, perhaps the most important way to exercise agency in brokerage can be observed from how the leaders "located" themselves in the relationship between the development agencies and the locals. From the zone-level meetings, it can be observed that the leaders tried to locate themselves further up the stream

of resource allocation. Rising further up from the sub-district level meant they would gain access to a larger share of the resources. It also allowed the collective activities to be easier to mobilise, as the leaders at the lower level already sought benefits from access to the programmes.

In this light, it can be observed that the zone leaders were not brokers between the villages and the CODI, but rather the brokers of other brokers. They functioned as the conduit in resource allocation, compiling the projects from outside and distributing them to brokers who operated at the level lower than theirs. The higher they could rise within certain development agencies' network of brokers, the more benefits they could attain. Thus, being located within their own locality was not necessary in performing the role of brokers; it was in fact a constraint. This is exemplified by the story of one member in the Songklah provincial network. He had been living outside the sub-district he represented for a number of years, and his community organisation in the locality had become inactive. Yet, he was still able to function as the central figure of the network, and had become even more influential at the provincial level due to his recent access to an affluent funding source.

7.2.3. Actors' uses of agency in the CCO programme's monitoring and evaluation

Two activities involving the CCO Regional Committees will be explored here in order to examine the interfaces that arose in the process of monitoring and evaluation. The first activity is the case of a meeting held by the CCO regional committee in the southern region; this is explored to look specifically at the interface in the monitoring of the CCO programme's implementation. Another activity to be examined is a seminar on evaluating and solving problem by the CCO Regional Committees from all regions. This is in order to gain further insights into the context where problems in the programme were discussed. The two activities

examined here occurred at points where the local realities were linked to the expectations of the programme. The examination, therefore, is expected to provide insights into the merging of the gap between the expectations and the reality of community participation.

The uses of agency in translation by community leaders and CODI officers at the interface in monitoring

In the CCO programme, the task of monitoring implementation was delegated to the CODI's network of committees at national and regional levels. Although they also performed other tasks in supporting the operation of the CCO programme, the examination here puts the emphasis only on the task of monitoring. The meeting to be examined is one held monthly by the southern region's CCO Committee to discuss the progress of the CCO programme. This committee consisted of around 20 members, who were the provincial representatives. They were joined by a small team of around 10 CODI officers, comprising high-level officers in the regional office and administrative staff.

Carrying out their management roles, the officers set the agenda and the content of the meeting in advance. After the routine of checking the minutes from the previous meeting, the meeting then proceeded to its monitoring activity, which was the report of progress by the representatives of each province. Each member was called upon to present the activities that had taken place in their province during the past month, and also the number of new CCOs that were established in their province. This moment of discussing progress was the point where the reality of the programme had to be translated into representations that met with expectations. This presented a crucial challenge to both community leaders and CODI officials. The community leaders needed evidence of progress to justify their position and success. The

officials on the other hand, also needed the evidence of progress to justify the worth of their works and vision.

Community leaders had to construct the representations of progress. Most of their reports were about the activities that occurred in their province. It was noticeable that the criteria through which such activities could be associated with the CCO programme were highly ambiguous. Hence, the main strategy in translation that was used by the leaders to construct the representation of progress was to manoeuvre with such "ambiguity", which was associated with the vagueness of the discourse of community. The ability to utilise such ambiguity was crucial to the translation of limited progress into representation of success. A few leaders, for example, simply reported the exclusive meeting with government officials as evidence of the CCO programme's progress. Some leaders also cited the "plans" for future activities as part of their progress report. The representative from Songklah Province, for example, reported the progress:

"We will have the CO leaders from sub-district level making the agreement that each CCO will design the plan to follow the tasks of the CCO programme as stated in the law. In having the plan, the CCO will certainly have to hold more meetings, and we will know exactly when they will meet."

Interestingly, the CODI officers who joined the meeting raised little objection to the progress report. As stated in the previous chapter, the need to maintain cooperation from the leaders played an important part in this. Nonetheless, it was observable that such lack of objection was replaced instead by the effort to find a good example from the existing representations. A senior officer in the meeting complimented one province on its progress report, arguing that this province had demonstrated real progress at local level, and that other provinces should

take this as an example. The officers' agency, in this sense, is reflected in their willingness to prioritise evidence that justified the value of their development vision, and to define their roles primarily in terms of working towards achieving that value. This was actually illustrated in a number of interviews with the CODI officers. When asked to evaluate the success of the CCO programme, many simply responded by picking upon selected cases that they saw as "the model cases". Others also responded with the hope that the programme would simply require much more time to succeed.

The uses of agency in translation and brokerage by community leaders and CODI officers at the interface in evaluation

As explained in the prior chapter, the CCO programme was also full of the dynamics of conflict and contestation, particularly within the CODI's network of leaders who were competing for funding. The discussion of monitoring activity was perhaps inadequate to gain insights into the engagement with such an aspect of the programme's reality. This is why another participatory activity will be examined here. Such activity was a seminar organised as part of the programme's evaluation and problem-solving process. It will be referred to in short here as "The Seminar to Promote Understanding".

The seminar was organised at the CODI's central office in Bangkok, and was joined by two main groups of actors: CO leaders and CODI officers. The main participants were some 50-60 members of CCO Regional Committees. They were joined by the CODI officers and executives. Before the seminar was arranged, problems associated with the CCO programme were increasingly recognised by the CODI and community leaders. The major problem was the conflict within the network of community leaders, between the pre-existing group leaders, who had existed before the CCO programme was introduced, and the new group which the

programme introduced. Tension between the representatives within the CCO programme and the CODI was also growing. A conflict was occurring within both groups of the community leaders and the CODI officers. How each group exercises their agency in this situation will be examined here.

The seminar was one of the few occasions on which representatives at the regional level were allowed the opportunity to voice their concern directly to the CODI high-ranking officers and executives. Many leaders who had been dissatisfied with the local conflict in their provincial network, which contributed to the lack of access to the CODI's resources, did not miss the chance to express their discontent. Their expression of the conflicts was direct; as one CO leader from the northeast region put it:

"There were two networks in the province. The old one is stronger and more experienced. When the two operated, they got into conflict with each other. The CODI needs to make it clear how they will provide support to the CCOs".

Such a comment can be seen as a direct challenge for the CODI to adjust their rules in distributing resources and in structuring the network of CO leaders. However, this type of challenge was not supported by all the leaders. Some of the CO leaders, many of whom were more experienced members, found an opportunity to express the problem in a different fashion, making expressions that drew upon the narratives of "self-devotion". They argued that everyone should also attribute the problem in the CCO programme to their own lack of effort and responsibility. A CO leader from the western region argued:

"Today we need the CCO representatives to understand their responsibility; we need to find a way to develop them. We at the provincial level need to teach the CO leaders to know their responsibility."

The two contrasting strategies, one of criticising rules and one of criticising their own selves, were reflective of the two opposing approaches in engaging with problems in the CCO programme. However, between these two positions, another crucial strategy in engaging with problems existed. This strategy lay in identifying the problems within the CCO programme as being caused by a "lack of understanding". Such lack of understanding was argued to be prevalent among all the actors, both the community leaders and the CODI officers. This argument also drew upon the narratives from the discourse of community, stressing the need to understand the value of communities. In addition, it was also consistent with an attempt to attain further resources by creating more participatory activities to promote understanding.

Conflict and contestation also occurred within the group of CODI officials who had facilitated and joined the seminar. A group of CODI officers and senior CO leaders who led the organisation of the seminar were the ones who held a leading position in the implementation of the programme. For these facilitators, the organisation of the seminar was also an opportunity to mobilise support for further access to management power in the CODI's network. This is perhaps best highlighted by the fact that they allowed the representatives from the regional level to gather at the national level seminar, although it was known that dissatisfactions were more prevalent among this group. The group of seminar facilitators led the discussion, pointing to the problems to be discussed. The discussion that took place seemed to be less about compiling opinions, and more about mobilising support for challenging the CODI to change the system of distributing resources. An illustration of this

existed in the way the seminar's summary asking the CODI to alter its organisation of resources allocation was prepared even before the seminar started.

Finally, the discussion was to be responded to by a CODI executive who had joined the seminar; this provided a chance to observe how he would accommodate such contestation. He expressed dissatisfaction with the challenges that were put on the CODI. Nevertheless, he suggested that the response would be that the CODI would arrange further "participatory seminars" between the CO leaders to settle the issues. Such a response reflected the further promotion of participatory activities as the solution to accommodate contestations and conflicts. The response was reflective of the strategy that was also proposed to accommodate problems in other discussions of problems in the CCO programme. In earlier discussions of the problems, for example, similar strategies of promoting more "participatory forums", and of creating network and committees for participants, had been proposed several times. This "restructuring" (*jud-kabuan*) of the network, and the setting up of more "discussions", had repeatedly been the solution that the CODI used to deal with problems in their development programmes.

7.3. The contribution of actors' agency to the nature of community participation

The final section of this chapter analyses observations of actors' uses of agency in the CCO programme, in order to examine their contributions to the nature of community participation. Two aspects of the contributions will be examined. The first is the contribution of actors' agency to the "evolution" of the structural conditions in CBPDPs. This involves explaining how actors' strategies in engaging with interactions in community participation in turn reshape the social structure underpinning the constraints they face. The second involves the broader explanations of how actors' agency contributes to the actual functioning of community

participation. The section also aims to provide an explanation as to why the gap between the expectations and the reality of community participation tends to persist.

The section begins by analysing how the actors' uses of agency in the CCO programme contributed to the reproduction of the programme's structural conditions, including discourse and institutions. The implications of the findings from the CCO programme will then be drawn to a general case of CBPDPs. Insights from this analysis also connect the chapter's examination of agency and the earlier chapters' examination of discourse and institutions. The section then takes all the findings in this chapter to sum up the actor-oriented perspective of the nature of community participation, by proposing the "hidden scripts" of the approach.

7.3.1 Actors' agency and the evolution of structural conditions in CBPDPs

The analysis of the evolution of structural conditions in CBPDPs here draws upon the structuration theory. The theory explains that the moment when structure is drawn upon as a medium in actors' interactions, is also the moment of its reproduction. Giddens (1984) refers to this as the moment when structure functions as "modalities". Examined here is the functioning of each of the two types of the structural conditions of a CBPDP, discourse and institutions, as a medium of interactions. Discourse in this context refers more specifically to the discourse of community. Institutions refer more specifically to the rules governing the allocation of resources and the arrangement of collective activities through a development programme. The roles of these structural conditions were discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

The examination begins by looking at how each of these structural conditions was drawn upon as a medium of interaction by each group of actors in the CCO programme. Nonetheless, the way actors draw upon a structural condition to facilitate their actions can also be shaped by

the nature of their interaction with one another. For example, an action by one group of actors can have an influence on the way another group reacts, leading them to alter their engagement with a structural condition. Hence, one needs to also look at how actors' collective interactions can influence one another's uses of a structural condition. The findings regarding how a structural condition functions as a medium of interaction will then be analysed to depict the nature of its reproduction. Finally, implications will be drawn for an understanding of how actors' agency can contribute to the evolution of structural conditions in a more general case of community participation.

Actors' agency and the evolution of the discourse of community in the CCO programme

It can be seen that, within the CCO programme, the discourse of community was drawn upon as a medium of interactions particularly at the programme's interfaces in planning and in monitoring of implementation. Its functioning as a medium of interactions was characterised by its ability to give "meaning" and "legitimacy" to actors in their communication with one another.

At the interface in the planning of the CCO programme, the discourse of community functioned as the "language of community development". It gave a collection of narratives and storylines to be mobilised by all actors. These narratives and storylines were constantly drawn upon to give meaning to the presentations and speeches actors had to make, helping actors to attain legitimacy for their positions in the process. The community leaders utilised the language of community development in demonstrating their experience and knowledge in development. The facilitators of the participatory process used the language to show their expertise, justifying the importance of their

guidance of the process. Beyond each actor's usages, actors' collective engagement with the discourse of community, as illustrated by the planning process, was characterised by contests in producing interpretations. Community leaders, in particular, tried different uses of the language in order to compete in attaining positive impressions. The uses of the discourse of community became like a competition in producing rhetoric that could better convey the sense of the normative values of the discourse.

At the interface in the monitoring of progress in the CCO programme, the discourse of community was also drawn upon by both the CO leaders and the CODI officers in the process of discussing the conditions at the local level of the programme. The discourse had a crucial role in allowing the CO leaders to interpret the local conditions as representations of progress. Playing an important role in this was the discourse's ambiguity, which allowed diverse evidences of activity to be associated with the success of the programme. As for the CODI officers, who had to consider the representations of progress made by the leaders, their considerations were largely influenced by the discourse of community's normative nature. Such a nature compelled representations of progress to be accepted by the CODI officials, because the officers also sought evidence of progress to justify their belief in the discourse's normative value. In this regard, the collective engagement with the discourse of community at the interfaces in monitoring can be characterised by the usages that were receptive to each other. The discourse was drawn upon to represent progress, and it also underpinned the acceptance of such representations.

In considering how these uses of the discourse contributed to its reproduction, it can be observed that the usages of the discourse of community were mutually

constitutive; they helped reassert each other's significance. Engagement with the discourse in the CCO programme was not about critically discussing its ability to be relevant to the realities. It was predominantly about "affirming" the normative value of the discourse. To this end, it can be argued that the actors' uses of agency in the CCO programme tended to continually re-establish the dominant influence of the discourse of community.

Actors' agency and the evolution of the rules in the CCO programme

Institutions, particularly in the form of rules prescribing the allocation of funding and arrangement of collective activities, were engaged by actors particularly at the interface in implementation of the CCO programme. The actors who dominated the implementation process were the CO leaders, who performed their roles as "development brokers". The CO leaders drew upon the rules in order to establish their "authority" as indispensable leaders connecting external development support with local beneficiaries; they demonstrated their exclusive knowledge of the rules, showing that they knew what was needed to access the funding. They also applied the rules in acting as gatekeepers, selecting beneficiaries of development projects. In engaging with the rules, the leaders attempted to locate themselves further up within the network of brokers, in order to gain more authority over the allocation of resources.

The leaders' engagements with the rules at the interface in local implementation occurred mainly in terms of engaging within the "provided" rules. This in itself did not create a challenge for a change of rules. Nonetheless, as they were able to climb further up the network of brokers, the leaders could have mobilised for a change of

rules in order to gain further authority over resources. In the CCO programme, such a challenge occurred at the interface in evaluation.

At the interface in evaluation in the CCO programme, the actors' collective engagement with the rules was characterised by their contesting as to whether and how the rules should be changed. Sections of CO leaders and CODI officers sought change, citing several problems in the operation of the CCO programme as the reason. Yet various interpretations of the problems by some CO leaders, such as relating to lack of understanding, could have moderated the strength of such a demand. This contestation, however, could not lead directly to change, as the rules could only be changed through the authority of the CODI executives. It was illustrated that the executives usually accommodated contestation over change in rules by creating additional participatory forums or by building or restructuring committees, and not by creating substantive changes. This, perhaps, is because doing so corresponded to their belief in the participatory process, and also because it was a politically viable way of achieving a compromise between competing interests.

To this end, it can be observed that the reproduction of the rules in the CCO programme tended to be characterised by a continuous expansion of participatory networks and activities. The option of creating more participation was frequently selected as the solution to any operational problem in the programme. This, however, came at the same time as a tendency to draw attention away from a large-scale restructuring of the rules.

These findings from the case of the CCO programme provide insights into the way that the structural conditions in community participation evolve through the agency of actors. They

signify that the conditions tend to be enduring; and that it is difficult for significant change to arise from within the programme. Actors who are part of the promotion of community participation are likely to face the need to draw upon the discourse of community to give meaning to their communication and legitimise their role. This continually reproduces the discourse's dominant influence. Moreover, the evolution of institutions governing practices in community participation also tends to be self-reproducing, because the approach itself tends to be resorted to as the answer to its own problems.

These observations may appear to emphasise the existence of the patterns in usages of agency. This may not resonate with the way that the concept of agency signifies the unpredictable capacity of human to act upon social constraints (see Rigg, 2012:4-5). To defend its observations, this chapter in fact recognises the capacity of actors to act beyond expectations. However, it argues that there exist some "tendencies" to be recognised from such a capacity. It is not claiming that social structure has full power to determine the course of events; it is only suggesting that agency is still applied within a broader framework of structure, allowing tendency in its uses to be acknowledged.

These observations also illuminate why the gap between the expectations and the reality of community participation tends to persist. The earlier chapters explained that the structural conditions in the promotion of community participation tend to constrain the approach from realising its expectations. It is explained here that the actual engagement of actors with these conditions in the approach, instead of leading to their modification, tends to lead to their sustenance. Thus, as the conditions remain, their effects in limiting the approach outcomes also endure.

7.3.2 The hidden scripts of community participation

The final discussion in this chapter unveils the key aspects of the actual nature of community participation through the actor-oriented approach. In doing so, all details in the chapter are brought together. The attempt here is to uncover the dynamics of interactions that are not easy to observe by basing the understanding of community participation on the blueprint of its operation. It is only through applying the actor-oriented perspective that these dynamics become more observable. Hence, they can be seen as the "hidden scripts" that actually characterise actors' engagements with community participation.

The hidden scripts of community participation point to the range of differing logics underlying the operation of an effort to promote community participation. They explain why the gap between the expectations and the reality of the approach is not unexpected, but tends to be the systematic product of the approach's nature. It is worth noting, however, that this outline of the hidden scripts is not an effort to provide a complete description of how community participation functions. It is just an attempt to propose a different way of seeing the approach.

Hidden Script 1: Planning in community participation is more about the participants attaining legitimacy from the rightness of the approach

Community participation has been perceived as the means to bring "locals' knowledge" into a development process (Cooke and Kothari, 2001:5). It is expected that, by incorporating the voices of the locals, the resulting development plan will be more responsive to locals' needs and their way of living. This chapter's observation of the CCO programme points to a contrasting picture, revealing that the core dynamic in the planning process was not about participants providing their local knowledge. It was more about participants actually attaining

legitimacy for their roles from the narratives and storylines associated with the concept of community participation. This is because the concept is endowed with a sense of "rightness". Drawing upon associated narratives can endow actors with good meanings in their communications, giving their intentions laudable credibility. These benefits are crucial to justify one's importance within the arenas of diverse interests, motivations, and experiences.

This observation resonates with that of David Mosse (2005). Mosse observes how the narratives of community participation functioned as the linguistic device that helped enrol different interests, in order to gain support for the programme's operation (Mosse, 2005:14-16). The case here explains that the functioning of the concept and its narratives is not just about legitimising the operation of a development programme; it is also extensively about the participants legitimising themselves as a part of it.

This finding points to the first hidden script of community participation; that planning in community participation is actually mainly about attaining legitimacy from the rightness of the approach. This also helps explain the continuation of the gap between the expectations and the reality of community participation. As the dynamic of attaining legitimacy dominated the planning process of community participation, the planning process tends to create a plan that is difficult to implement. As details from the planning process of the CCO programme show, in order to make a good impression, participants competed in producing interpretations that would make one stand out from the other. This created a situation where a broad range of meanings had to be accommodated, prompting an emerging plan to employ a number of ambiguous terms and vague rhetoric. A plan from such a process is likely to lack specificity and coherence, causing it to have limited value in terms of guiding practices.

Hidden Script 2: The implementation of community participation is dictated by development brokers and their ability to function outside their own locality

Another dominant perception of community participation is that the approach is about the locals coming together to do good things voluntarily. Underlying this perception is the important assumption of a bounded "local" community, i.e., relating community to a group of people living in the same geographical location such as a village or a town. However, the case study of the CCO programme gives a contrasting picture of the local implementation of community participation. In accordance with Walker (2012), the findings in this chapter signify the actual dynamics of community participation to be mostly about integration with the links to external supports. Furthermore, the findings illustrate that playing a crucial role in such links is the experience of the local leaders in, and their current ability to be, working away from their own locality.

Several studies have observed that the assumption of local community as being bounded to a locality has become increasingly untenable (Vandergeest and Rigg, 2012, Keynes, 2010). As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the reality of rural changes, both in Thailand and several other developing countries, has actually been characterised by integration between the rural and urban, and by the rural dwellers' ability to migrate to work outside their own locality. The implications of these observations for the promotion of community participation, however, have not yet been fully explored. Examination of the CCO programme, particularly descriptions of the lifeworlds of CO leaders, provides insights into this issue. Examination indicates that the experience of work or education outside their own locality is the key aspect of most CO leaders' backgrounds. The leaders were able to perform their role in brokerage through their knowledge of the opportunities of the world outside their villages, and their ability to demonstrate the ways of interacting with such opportunities. Their ability to function away

from their own locality, even in terms of constantly moving in and out of the locality, helps increase benefits to them and to their networks. This is illustrated by the observation that, perhaps ironically, the top-level CO leaders within the CODI network are the group who actually spend least time in their own villages in comparison to other actors in the CODI's network.

This finding brings about the second hidden script of community participation; the implementation of community participation is dictated largely by development brokers and their ability to function outside their own locality. As Rigg and Salamanca (2012:106-107) note in relation to the migration of rural villagers in Thailand, migration has in fact assisted the resilience of rural villages, helping them with income from outside. In a similar sense, by working away from their own locality, local leaders can actually integrate themselves and their associated COs with additional links to external supports. This insight also provides a further explanation for the continual existence of the gap between the expectations and the reality of the approach. It explains that the assumption of a community as being a group bounded to a locality is in fact incompatible with the key aspect of the approach's actual nature. As long as such an assumption remains influential in guiding the approach's expectation, it is likely that the approach's expectations tend to diverge from its reality.

Hidden Script 3: It is the nature of community participation as a normative vision, not as the realities of development practices, which sustains its operations

The final hidden script of community participation proposed here concerns the linkage that sustains the operation of CBPDs. This linkage is the connection between the reality of implementation at the local level and the vision of community that underpinned the planning process. The conventional perception that is often found among the proponents of community

participation is that the approach's planning process is guided by the success of its implementation in reality. Such success is often portrayed in the form of model cases of community development. These are perceived by many proponents of community participation as providing the justification for continuation of the efforts to promote the approach.

The exploration of the interfaces in monitoring and evaluation in the CCO programme points to a contrasting picture. The case study of the CCO programme illustrates that it is the vision of community participation itself that actually plays a more important role in guiding the finding of success from implementation. The interpretations of realities in the programme were steered mainly by the need to justify the normative nature of the discourse of community. Interaction in the process of monitoring in the programme, for example, was not so much about evaluating whether there was actually evidence of progress from implementation. It was more about searching for the existence of any evidence of progress, in order to affirm the value of the programme and the vision guiding it. Successes, in this sense, were not simply found. They were largely "made" by actors in the programme.

Furthermore, even in an instance in which problems in the programme's operation became recognised, the normative nature of the vision of community participation could turn such a problem into arguments for further efforts to be made in promoting the approach. As the case of the evaluation process in the CCO programme shows, accepting the value of community participation could compel actors to sustain the approach's operation. Perhaps, even if the actual implementation of participatory development falls short of the expectations, development activists were willing to continue to support the approach simply because their devotion to it can make their identity meaningful (McKinnon, 2011). The willingness of

development activists to maintain their support of community participation can be recognised as what Li (2007) describes as the "will to improve". As she explains:

"Although improvement (from development) seldom lives up to the billing, the will to improve persists. The endless deferral of the promise of development to the time when the ultimate strategy is devised and implementation perfected does more than enable the development apparatus to sustain itself". (Li, 2007:276)

These observations point to the final hidden script of community participation: that it is the vision of community participation, rather than the approach's actual success in reality, that is instrumental in enabling the operation of a CBPDP to be sustained. This hidden script also explains the persistence in the gap between the approach's expectations and its reality. It explains that the normative character of the vision of community participation has a central role in concealing and downplaying the significance of the gap, thereby hindering an attempt to engage with it.

7.4. Conclusion

This chapter examines the roles of human agency in contributing to the functioning and evolution of the promotion of community participation. The focus of this chapter is on the capacity of actors to shape the working of the approach through their ability to manoeuvre within the constraints and differences, and their capacity to turn the conditions facing them to their advantage. Analysis in this chapter complements the explanations provided by the previous two. Firstly, it explains how the actors themselves engage with the constraints in promoting community participation that were argued to have arisen from the idea of

community and the social relations in communities. Secondly, it also illustrates how such engagement by actors contributes to the evolution of these constraints.

The actor-oriented approach is applied to examine actors' usage of agency at different stages of CBPDPs (community-based participatory development programmes). This approach puts the emphasis on revealing how actors negotiate their differences and consolidate disjuncture within the operation of a development programme.

Applying the actor-oriented approach, key observations regarding the actors' usage of agency in the CCO programme can be summarised as follows. In the planning process, both the CO leaders and CODI officials were found to mobilise the narratives and storylines associated with the discourse of community as a means to justify their roles and contributions in promoting community participation. In the process of local implementation, the CO leaders were found to establish their authority as development brokers through their knowledge and application of the rules in allocating development funding. At the interfaces in monitoring and evaluation, the leaders manoeuvred within the ambiguity of the discourse of community to represent their contributions to progress in implementation. The officials were compelled to be receptive to such representations by the need to justify their normative vision in development, which was also influenced by the discourse of community. The discussion of problems in the programme's operation, although significantly propelled by the contestation over access to resource allocation among the leaders, ended up with CODI executives choosing to make small extensions of participatory forums and activities as the solution.

In terms of explaining how the actors' use of agency tends to contribute to the evolution of the conditions in the promotion of community participation, the above findings from the CCO programme can provide the following insights. The findings exemplify that the role of

community as an idea is likely to persist. This is because its normative features are constantly drawn on by actors in their communication, in order to legitimise their ideas and actions. This leads to the constant reaffirming of the value of the idea. As for the rules in promoting community participation, the findings also signify that the rules tend to be resistant to large-scale changes. This is because the actors in the process tend to preside over the continual promotion of participatory practices as the solution to any problems in the approach's operation. These insights explain how conditions that create the constraints in community participation are largely enduring, which explains why it is difficult for the gap between the approach's expectations and its reality to disappear.

Bringing together all the findings in this chapter suggests an alternative way of understanding the nature of community participation. This alternative understanding, as characterised in the chapter as the hidden script of the approach, can be outlined as follows. Firstly, the planning process in community participation is more about the actors attaining legitimacy for themselves, by drawing upon the approach's rightness. Secondly, the implementation of the approach is dictated rather by the brokerage roles of local leaders, who tend to function in such roles away from their own localities. Finally, the sustenance of the approach's operation is underpinned by its normative nature, which guides the finding of its success and justifies the "will to improve" its shortcomings.

Chapter 8. Conclusion: The limits of community participation

In his book "Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World", Zygmunt Bauman (2001) compares the fate of those who search for the revival of their ideal of community to that of Tantalus, a Greek mythological figure. Tantalus is cursed by the gods and required to stand up to his neck in a stream. Whenever he lowered his head to drink water and satisfy his thirst, the water would flow away. Over his head there is a bunch of fruits, but whenever he stretched his hand for them to satisfy his hunger, a wind would blow away the fruits. The story is given to highlight how, similar to Tantalus, those who try to reach for an ideal community would always end with their ideal vanishing away in reality. As Bauman explains: "contemporary seekers of community are doomed to share Tantalus's lot; their purpose is bound to elude them, and it is their own earnest and zealous effort to grasp it that prompts it to recede" (Bauman, 2001:17).

A question remains: if the curse of the Greek gods was behind the unfortunate fate of Tantalus, what is behind the tantalising fate of the search for an ideal community? This thesis seeks to answer this question through exploring the promotion of community participation. It investigates the frequently found gap between the expectations and the reality of community participation, explaining how and why such a gap tends to appear and persist. The approach that the thesis has taken is to uncover and observe the mechanisms that link social factors in the promotion of community participation to its outcomes. Such an examination aims to unveil the "limits" that usually constrain the approach from reaching its promise.

Still, the exploration of the thesis requires further design. For the mechanisms underlying the outcomes of community participation to be observed, there is a need to identify a set of factors associated with such mechanisms. The design that this thesis has taken is to observe the relationships between "community" and "participation", for these relationships are central

to any promotion of community participation. This, nonetheless, leads to another challenge. What can be recognised as "community" is multi-dimensional. Community can be both an idea and a set of social relations. In addition, the agency of actors who are part of the effort to promote community participation is also an important factor shaping the outcomes of community participation.

The recognition of these factors, together with their different attributes, means that their examination requires guiding theories and concepts from more than one discipline. This requirement led to the multi-disciplinary design of this study. A multi-disciplinary framework was designed by synthesising different theoretical approaches to studying participation in order to facilitate the exploration of how the aforementioned social factors influence the participatory process. The case study method was adopted to accommodate the application of this framework, due to its advantage in allowing a flexible design of an empirical analysis. The case study chosen is a development programme in Thailand called the CCO programme. The CCO programme is a large-scale attempt to promote community participation through the establishment of a local council of community representatives, with a view to promoting cooperation in development and improvement of local governance.

It is worth recognising that the case study of the CCO programme is used merely as an "example" to uncover insights into the phenomenon of community participation, revealing the dynamics of the relationship between its associated factors and outcomes. The enquiry in this thesis is aimed at providing a useful way into understanding the promotion of community participation, even in different contexts. However, it is also important to keep in mind that the details of each case can vary. In each case, there exists a range of "contextual conditions" that can come into play with the mechanisms explained here, and shape the outcomes differently.

This conclusion is divided into three sections. The first restates the findings from the empirical chapters and explains their implications for understanding community participation. It also adds a discussion on the role of contextual conditions in the findings. The second section outlines three main contributions that this thesis has made from researching the limits of community participation. The contributions include filling gaps in knowledge, developments in methodology, and providing a basis for improving practices and policies in development. The third section highlights the limitations of this research and suggests pathways for further research.

8.1 The limits of community participation

Community participation comes with various promises. The approach is expected to help improve the efficiency of the development process through enabling collective action, promoting governance in governmental institutions, and empowering the marginalised and the poor by encouraging their inclusion. The actual experiences of the CCO programme signify how these promises tend to become elusive. They unveil how the mechanisms within the approach actually create limits on what it can achieve and, thus, contribute to the gap between the approach's expectations and the reality. The key aspects of such mechanisms include the distortions caused by the idea of community over the meanings of participation and their associated practices, and the constraints arising from the actual attributes of community on attempts to mobilise collective actions. In addition, the findings also reveal that the engagement of actors with the promotion of community participation differs from common perceptions, and tends to reinforce the aforementioned distortions and constraints.

The following details recapture the findings from the case study, and the insights they provide concerning the limits of community participation.

8.1.1. The ideological limits

The thesis started its examination by investigating the role of community "as an idea" in shaping the nature of the participatory process. It built this examination on the recognition that the idea of community also entails a certain vision of what the society "should be". In the context of developing countries, such a perception often comes with the glorification of "local" knowledge and culture, which are perceived as being marginalised through the forces of modernisation and global capitalism. Community, in this regard, is seen as the idea that is "empowering", simply because it helps put the importance of the locals back to the centre stage of development. Yet, can such a potential of the idea of community be taken for granted? Chapter 5 in this thesis engaged with this question, re-examining the influence of the idea of community over the potential of community participation to "empower".

The theoretical approach of "discourse analysis" was applied to examine the role of the idea of community in shaping the meanings and practices of participation. Community was analysed as "discourse", an interpretative frame that influenced how social problems are perceived and solutions proposed. Such an interpretation can eventually shape the nature of policy-influenced practices. However, it was also recognised that the idea of community has its unique features, which had to be captured in the analysis, so that its roles in interpreting social reality can be better understood. In the context of Thai rural development, for example, the idea can be observed for its ambiguity, and more importantly, for its association with the "normative vision" of a desirable way of living. Recognising this, the analytical framework was further developed. Community, in addition to being recognised as discourse, was conceptualised as a "symbolic construction". The property of being a symbolic construction entails two distinct attributes. It means the discourse of community comprises several "symbols", such as the notions of village and tradition, which are productive of "meanings".

More importantly, it also means the uses of the discourse of community are made with the purpose of asserting the importance and values of a "collective identity".

The finding from exploring the CCO programme indicated the importance of these features in characterising the influence of the discourse of community. The details of how it was formulated illustrated how the rationale of promoting participation was significantly shaped by the broader attempt to mark the boundary of identity. The programme was portrayed as promoting the "Thai way" of participation, which was needed to solve the growing political problems in Thailand. The Thai way of participation was constructed in opposition to the "electoral system", which was branded as the "Western" way of participation, and thereby inappropriate for the Thais. The examination of the nature of the CCO programme's participatory practices revealed how the influence of the discourse of community led to selectiveness in the arrangements of participatory activities. The system of selecting participants for the activities was built upon the connections with the CODI executives, who selected participants from the way they "fitted" their community-based vision of development. Participatory activities such as seminars were designed as a hybrid space, for participants to "learn" the vision as well as for them to express their views. The scope for expressing their views, however, was bounded by the "objective" of the activities that were pre-determined by the organisers of the participatory process.

The findings from this exploration of the CCO programme point to the mechanism by which the "discourse of community" can constrain the achievement of empowerment through community participation. This mechanism exists in the way the discourse of community can transcend the meanings and practices of participation to become a means to assert the values of collective identity. Through such a mechanism, the meanings of participation tend to be framed so as to resonate with the promotion of "our way" of development. Consequently, this

can shape the participatory process significantly by limiting who can participate and what they can say in participatory activities. The implications of such a mechanism for empowerment are twofold. Firstly, it explains how empowerment based on the idea of community, despite being motivated by concerns for the poor and the marginalised, can get entrapped in a vision of development populism. Instead of seeing all the poor and the marginalised as entitled to choice and freedom, they become part of the collective whole upon whom certain values are to be imposed upon. Secondly, it signifies how the ideological aspect of community participation actually includes the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. Although it can give power to the "selected participants", it also excludes many others who are deemed by the organisers to not fit with their vision of the collective good.

The lessons from the CCO programme unveil the first type of limit to community participation, the ideological limit. This limit exists in the normative attributes inherent in the idea of community, whereby the collective tends to be recognised over individuals, and collective values are placed above individual freedom. It is explained that these features actually constrain the ability of the approach to be truly inclusive of the marginalised. The insight into the mechanism of the ideological limit complements existing knowledge from the "critical perspective" of community participation. Such a perspective is critical of claims for the approach's empowering potential, pointing to how it tends to be trapped into dynamics of power, and thus becomes a means of domination and marginalisation (see for example, Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Monpati and Prinsen, 2011). The lessons from examining the CCO programme explain that the "idea" of community itself also provides a foundational condition for dynamics of domination and exclusion to arise. The approach's political nature, to this end, is inherent in its ideological character, particularly in the relationship between identity and power that is intrinsic to its operation.

8.1.2. The institutional limits

A community is commonly seen as a set of social relations that belongs to a group of people. It is frequently perceived to be endowed with qualities such as closeness and voluntariness (Agarwal and Gibson, 1999). These qualities are perceived to be conducive to the successful promotion of participatory activities. However, such idealistic qualities are usually missing from actual communities, which seem to always be "imperfect" in comparison with their ideal counterpart. A question then arises about the implications of such an imperfection of real-world communities for the actual capacity of community participation to effectively mobilise participation. Chapter 6 of this thesis tried to answer this question.

The attempt to answer this question involved using an institutional framework. Emphasis was placed on examining the interaction between two factors: firstly, "rules", referring to regulation in resource allocation and arrangement of collective activities that a development intervention prescribes; and secondly, the conditions of relationships between members in communities, or in a network of policy actors. The examination aimed to reveal the implications of such interactions for the ability of community participation to achieve different types of collective actions.

It was noted, nonetheless, that promotion of community participation usually operates through a development programme that spans from the arena of local implementation to the realm of policy process, all designed to support implementation. Therefore, the institutional analysis of community participation in this thesis was structured into two levels of collective action: the operational level which represents the arena where local participatory activities are promoted; and the collective choice level where rules for the local implementation are made and their applications are monitored.

The exploration of the workings of the CCO programme at these two levels revealed how the rules failed to accomplish their objectives. At an operational level, a "local council" of community representatives was tasked with the goals of promoting cooperation in local development activities and improving local governance. The actual operation of the programme was dominated by the leading role of the local elites. While this might be in line with the programme's effort to promote the roles of "traditional leaders" – the leaders whose roles are rooted in traditions and culture – the outcomes of the programme contrasted significantly with expectations. Most leaders engaged with the programme mainly as a means to obtain funding for their own groups or networks, and did not strongly attempt to promote wide-cooperation between different groups. They also avoided getting involved in the affairs of local government, for fear of entering into conflict with such a powerful actor. At the collective choice level, the programme's inclusion of representatives from the CCOs was meant to help in distributing funding and monitoring local implementation. The actual functioning of such a network also did not match these expectations. The newly created network of representatives from the CCO programme entered into a major conflict with the CODI's network of community leaders, mainly due to their competition over the allocation of resources. Their monitoring performance was found to be characterised by the tendency to "overstate" progress at the local level.

The inability of the CCO programme to achieve what it initially set out to do exemplifies the constraints that frequently compromise the capacity of a development intervention to promote participation. Such constraints arise from the attributes of the relationship between members of communities, and also those of the relationship between policy actors. Firstly, it signifies that any local promotion of community participation is likely to have to interact with inequality, and a diversity of interests, in communities. This means its operation tends to fall

into the hands of local elites, whose interests and capacity dictate the programme's ability to promote participation. In cases where the local elites have limited resources and capability to mobilise cooperation, such a limited capacity also constrains the ability of the programme they captured. Furthermore, unless the elites have a connection which links their conduct to the wider interests of the local, the incentives that exist for them in operating a development programme tend to exist primarily in the programme-related benefits.

Secondly, the failure of the CCO programme's network to provide support also indicates the constraints that arise from the "divergence" of interests among the policy actors who provide support to a development intervention. This occurs particularly through the way that the locals who are included to make decisions over the allocation of resources tend to take advantages of their inclusion; they utilise the role to establish their own exclusive network of clients, who become reliant on them to gain access to resources. This "rent-seeking" behaviour frequently prevents the benefits of the programme from reaching a large number of recipients, and can contribute to corruption and conflict among those beneficiaries who are included. It also compromises their roles in the monitoring task, compelling them to overstate progress in order to sustain their advantageous positions in allocating resources.

The case study of the CCO programme points to another type of limit on community participation, the institutional limit. Such a limit exists in the way that a community or a group of policy actors is a self-interested collection of individuals. This creates a crucial complexity that can compromise attempts to promote community participation. The necessity of balancing and connecting different interests in promoting participation also limits the ability to achieve several objectives at the same time. This is because the requirement for balancing and connecting different interests is likely to differ for different objectives of participation. The findings add to an understanding of community participation by illuminating the mechanism

underlying several observations of the ineffectiveness of community participation (see Conning and Kevane, 2002; Mansuri and Rao, 2013). Although some of the constraints on community participation outlined here have been observed in other research, this study has systematised them within the working of a single development programme.

In addition, the existence of an institutional limit connects to the ideological one. This is because the capacity of rules in engaging with the constraints arising from conditions in actual communities can be compromised by the ideological character of the vision guiding community participation. The lack of realistic recognition of the challenges facing the approach leads to rules that do not fit productively the actual conditions, contributing to their failure in attaining the expected outcomes.

8.1.3. Human agency and the evolution of the limits

The explanation of ideological and institutional limits on community participation creates further questions. How do actors who are part of the process themselves engage with these limits? And how does their engagement contribute to the practices of community participation? Chapter 7 of this thesis sheds light on these questions by turning the spotlight on the role of "human agency" in the promotion of community participation. This focus on agency, referring broadly to the human's capacity to make their own choices and to turn constraints to their advantage, tilted the balance of the examination of community participation in this thesis away from the role of social structure towards the capability of actors in shaping the conditions they face.

In examining actors' agency in community participation, this thesis adopted an "actor-oriented" approach. The approach conceptualises a development intervention as comprising

various sites of interaction, whereby actors have to negotiate their different interests and identities. It also argues that, through observing these sites, which are referred to as "interfaces", the actors' uses of agency can be observed. Furthermore, to narrow the scope of the actor-oriented approach, the focus in observing actors' uses of agency was on their strategies in "brokerage and translation". Actors' strategies in brokerage concern how they engage with the links of resource allocation. On the other hand, actors' strategies in translation involve the making of interpretations and representations – in order to consolidate their differences and disjuncture in a programme's operation.

The examination of actors' interactions in the CCO programme was structured according to the three stages of the programme's policy process: planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Their interactions at the interface in planning were characterised by the use of narratives and storylines from the discourse of community to justify their roles. Community leaders drew upon a "language of community development" to demonstrate their experiences and contributions. Development officials demonstrated their skills in using such a language to justify their roles as "experts". The local leaders played a central role at the interface in implementation. Their roles were characterised by an attempt to establish authority by positioning themselves as invaluable brokers providing linkage to external development support. This was done through demonstrating their exclusive knowledge of rules governing the allocation of resources, and by acting as gatekeepers in selecting the beneficiaries of development projects. Finally, the interactions at the interfaces in monitoring and evaluation were characterised by the local leaders' selective representations of the programme's progress, in order to justify the value of their work. The ambiguity in the discourse of community helped facilitated this by expanding the scope of what can be represented as progress. The normative nature of the discourse, alternatively, also helped such

representations to be accepted, by instilling into the actors the sense of a need for evidence to justify the values of the community-based development approach.

What can these observations from the CCO programme illustrate about the actual functioning of community participation? First of all, they illuminate the linkage between actors' use of agency and the ideological and institutional limits of community participation. The observations exemplify how actors actually find opportunities to gain advantage from engaging with factors that contribute to the limits, the discourse of community and the rules in promoting community participation. In the CCO programme, the discourse of community was drawn upon as a crucial means to justify actors' positions and the value of their work. This in turn leads to continual affirmation of the discourse's dominance status. Furthermore, the acceptance of correctness of the approach among the actors means the rules in promoting participation are self-reproductive; further promotion of participation is usually recognised as the answer to its own problems. These observations point to how the roles of these structural conditions can be resistant to change, and thus, explain why their effects in creating the limits of community participation tend to persist.

More importantly, the examination of actors' use of agency also helps uncover a different perspective on community participation. It illustrates how the actors' actual engagement with the approach does not match common perceptions and, thus, illuminates why such engagement tends not to lead to the overcoming of the limitations. The findings from examining actors' agency were summarised into hypotheses that signify the key aspects of how community participation actually functions. These hypotheses were proposed in the form of the "hidden scripts" of community participation. The first hidden script explains that, rather than being the process of contributing "local knowledge" to improve development intervention, the planning process in community participation is characterised predominantly

by the participants' use of narratives and storylines from the discourse of community to legitimise their positions in the process. The second hidden script observes that, instead of being a "locally-based development", the dynamics of implementation is actually dictated by the community leaders' striving to gain advantage from their roles in brokering resources, especially by functioning at distances away from their locality. Finally, the third hidden script argues that, beneath the surface of the claim of the approach to be based on evidence of successes, the discovery of such evidence is largely driven rather by the valuation of community participation as a normative vision.

8.1.4. The role of contextual factors in the findings

This case study of the CCO programme in Thailand has been based on the attempt to "exemplify" the nature of community participation. There is admittedly a danger of "cherry picking" a case to highlight its particular characteristics, in order to support pre-determined arguments (Rigg, 2006:181). The intention of this work, however, has been to go beyond the specificity of a case to reflect on issues that have broader relevance. The insights that have been highlighted, therefore, are expected to be applicable to the promotion of community participation in other developing countries, and also to some extent in the developed countries. However, it is crucial to note that being relevant is different from being universally true. A case study only offers lessons that may be relevant in other contexts; it does not claim to predict the characteristics of all cases of community participation.

As Bryne, Olsen, and Duggan (2009) explain, the outcomes of a social phenomenon can be recognised as arising from the interaction between mechanism and context. In this regard, for a different context, the mechanisms in promoting community participation that have been explained in this thesis still have to interact with the conditions of such a context before a

participatory process can arise. The role of contextual conditions in shaping development outcomes was discussed at length by Rigg (2012). He argues that each country or region has its own conditions and historical context that shape the course of developmental change. Furthermore, at the micro-level, development outcomes are also shaped by the personal choices of individuals and households, which cannot be easily predicted by any formula on how they make their decisions. Although the importance of the contextual conditions in the findings of this thesis has already been mentioned at several points, it is worth spelling this out again explicitly.

Firstly, the context of development in Thailand is endowed with the concept of community that is highly ideological. As mentioned, the Thai concept of community is intrinsically associated with the notion of the nation and its culture, to the extent that what is meant by the word "community" is almost always the "Thai" community. This explains how the meanings associated with participation were transcended within the broader attempt to promote "our way" of development. Secondly, the specific characteristics of the CCO programme itself can be understood as another type of contextual condition. At the time of this research, the programme was still in its early years. Although this was arguably the period when its operation was highly active, the programme's rules were relatively underdeveloped. This contributed to the failure to overcome the constraints inherent in its implementation. The rules were vague in their purposes, and failed to recognise the challenges of embedding the programme within the wider context of local governance and development activities. In addition, the urgency in the early period of its operation to establish a large quantity of the sub-district CCOs significantly contributed to abrupt expansion of the CODI's network of community leaders, leading to conflict that hampered the programme's operation.

The mentioning of these contextual factors does not mean that the CCO programme was idiosyncratic, hindering its usefulness as an example to others. In fact, many of the contextual conditions that are outlined here can also be found elsewhere. The ideological character of the concept of community has also been observed in countries such as Sri Lanka and India (Woost, 1997; Mosse, 1997). And many other development programmes also have rules that failed to engage with the constraints presented by local conditions. The differences in these conditions across contexts, in this sense, tend to be a matter of degree. In the case of Thailand, these contextual factors can be recognised as aggravating the mechanisms that produce the limits of community participation.

Finally, it is worth noting that human agency can always contribute to the outcomes of development intervention. Although this thesis has observed how agency tends to contribute to the limitations of community participation, the possibility of actors learning from their past mistakes, and their willingness to make improvements to their engagement cannot simply be precluded. They remain capable of acting beyond expectations, including against the patterns of interactions in community participation that this thesis elucidates.

8.2 Contributions from researching the limits

The previous section has summarised the contribution of this thesis to explaining the "limits of community participation", and thus, answering the puzzle of how and why the gap in community participation tends to occur. This section situates the findings of the thesis in the bigger picture of knowledge appertaining to community participation and social development. The contribution that this thesis makes consists of: 1) illuminating a previously understudied aspect of development; 2) developing a multi-disciplinary framework; and 3) providing a basis for the revision of development practices.

8.2.1 Illuminating a previously understudied aspect of development

The first contribution that this thesis has provided to the broader knowledge of social development, particularly community development, is to look into an aspect that has not been adequately studied before. Much of the economics-oriented study of community development has been geared toward proving the effects of projects or policies. On the other hand, many studies that have stressed the political aspects of development, with the exception of the actor-oriented approach, often underemphasise the complexity of the mechanism producing development outcomes. For example, a number of these studies assumed development to be governed by the dynamic of governing or domination. They portray a mechanism in which power is being exercised to operate in an automatic fashion, without adequately acknowledging the actors' role in the process (see for example, Ferguson, 1994; Escobar, 1995). Explanations that these works provide, therefore, tend to lack the emphasis on explaining why development organisations and their actors keep on doing what seems not to be producing the desired effects.

The thesis has tried to capture and explain the nature of community participation from the angle of those who work to promote it, shedding light on inner pathways that link their ideas to the process of planning and providing support, and from that to the realm of local implementation. It has demonstrated that, by looking into the inner system, many of the aberrations in development outcomes can be more sensibly explained. The knowledge of the inner working of development illuminates the process and factors that can lead to tyrannical political outcomes and ineffectiveness. More importantly, these insights have been integrated while emphasising the agency of the actors who are themselves part of the approach, allowing their motivations, conflicts, and negotiations to be a crucial part of the explanation.

8.2.2. Developing a design of a multi-disciplinary framework

The second contribution that this thesis has made is the development of a theoretical framework. Many social phenomena, especially those that are associated with development and social policies, are multi-dimensional. Understanding them requires knowledge of the working of economic, political, and socio-cultural factors. The frameworks that academics apply, however, have frequently been bounded by disciplines. This has limited the potential insights that can be gained. The study of community development from an economic perspective, for example, tends to prioritise the importance of incentives, and may have overlooked the broader meanings of action that actors also consider. The study of development from the political perspective, on the other hand, often inadequately recognises the importance of human agency in engaging with the dynamics of domination or governing.

This thesis has, from the start, been designed and developed with the goal of breaking the boundaries of disciplines, and enabling a more complete picture of a development issue to be attained. It has demonstrated how such a project can be undertaken and the benefits it can bring about. The conducting of this thesis signified that the design of multi-disciplinary research can be aided by the case study method. This is because the method provides flexibility in combining approaches from different disciplines. The thesis has also exemplified the benefits that the application of a multi-disciplinary framework can provide. Such benefits exist in the way it allows different aspects of its analysis to speak to one another. The study of discourse in conjunction with institutions allows the emerging insights to complement one another, giving a context of meanings to the existence and functioning of institutions, and clarifying the path in which discourse can affect social outcomes. More importantly, the thesis has identified a way to conciliate the usual divergence of the analysis of social phenomena, which arises from the tendency to put the primary focus on either structure or agency. This

was done by grounding actors' agency within structural constraints, but also through recognising their capacity to gain advantage from the constraints.

8.2.3. Providing a basis for the revision of development practices

The final contribution made by the thesis is that it provides a basis for improving development practices, particularly those that involve community participation. Despite providing insights into the limits of the approach, the thesis does not reject community participation entirely. It recognises that the practice of participation can still provide much value to development. Participation as a process has a potential to bring about benefits. The participatory process can enrich research in understanding a certain phenomenon such as poverty (Bennett with Roberts, 2004), and opening up opportunities for a re-negotiation of power relations (Gaynor, 2010:207, Hickey and Mohan, 2004:13-14). The ability to participate in shaping broader affairs that are relevant to one's life can also be recognised as having an intrinsic value (Sen, 1999:38). It is difficult to deny the pervasive influence of the idea and social relations of community. The concept of community, for example, is always widely used for the sense of security and warmth it can provide (Bauman, 2001:1-2).

This thesis has indicated, however, that the combining of aspirations and visions associated with community with an attempt to promote participation is not a simple process in which the benefits can be easily derived. The interaction between them can actually produce paradoxical outcomes in terms of exclusion and futility. Thus, the findings from this thesis can provide some suggestions for improving the application of community participation. The most important suggestion is the warning that application of the concept of community needs to be saved from an obsession with identity and an idealistic-romantic vision of the community. In addition, for the approach to be better used, an aspiration for collective identity has to be

balanced with consideration for equality, and its design has to take into account realistic understandings of the actual challenges in engaging with locally "imperfect" conditions and the unequal power relations that exist in a participatory process. Moreover, through observing the agency of local actors who took part in promoting community participation, this thesis has revealed their major aspiration to be the way in which they strove to be part of the wider system of the state's development apparatus, where they could access resources and power from which they had long been excluded. The design of community participation, besides keeping away from the aforementioned danger, should focus on how to accommodate this aspiration of integration, and not in prescribing isolation and self-reliance to communities.

8.3 Limitations of this study and suggestions for further research

This final section discusses the limitations of the thesis. The process of undertaking this research has been predominantly a learning one, and much of the improvements and problem solving have been made along the journey. The process has been iterative rather than the simple execution of a plan. There are some key limitations of this research that should be kept in mind.

The first limitation exists in the process of selecting the sample and collecting data. Although an effort has been made to select a sample that is most relevant to answering the research questions, the insights from some actors are missing. The sample of interviewees consists mostly of the actors who were part of the CCO programme. Insights from the actors who were not taking part in the programme were rarely covered. Such insights, while not essential to this exploration of the mechanisms in a development programme, could actually complement some of the findings. For example, they could enrich observation of the "exclusionary" effects of participation. The process of collection data, as in most research, did not always operate in

ideal conditions. Some of the local interviews were made in groups, possibly allowing group dynamics to affect the data collected. As most of the interviewees were part of the programme, some interviewees were inclined to present a positive picture of how the programme operated, and they were reluctant to fully discuss the problems that occurred within the programme. These problems were alleviated through the longer time spent in the field and the close relationships with interviewees. Nonetheless, it is important to note that they could leave some biases in the data.

The second limitation exists in the way that certain details fall beyond the scope of the focus here. The emphasis of this thesis is on the overall working of a development programme. It can be recognised as prioritising breadth rather than specificity, as reflected in its design as a multi-sites and multi-levels study. However, such a broad focus came at the cost of the inability to focus on the rich detail of each aspect, level, or locality. The study of discourse, for example, could have paid more attention to the interplay between numerous discourses, rather than focusing mainly on the discourse of community. Doing so would have allowed for a more nuanced and detailed perspective of the interaction between different ideas in community participation. In addition, for each locality that features in this thesis, there are also broader contextual details that could interact with the working of a development intervention. Details regarding the actual level of income and economic inequality at the sub-district level, for example, could help to establish a more solid base of study and to compare the effects of inequality on participation. However, the collection of data for these details, and their discussion, would require extensive effort. They would have made the scale of this work too vast for a doctoral thesis. Work with a more specific focus on each aspect, level, or locality could be pursued further to incorporate more detail and, thus, further develop the explanations offered in this thesis.

The final limitation lies in the methodology of a single case study. Firstly, it is important to recognise that the advantage of the case study method does not lie in the capacity to generalise its findings to a population of observations, i.e. statistical generalisation. The type of generalisation that it can offer is limited to analytical generalisation (Yin, 2009). The findings of this thesis cannot be read as a claim to reflect the general characteristics of community participation. Its value exists in affirming the capacity of prevailing concepts and theories to give insights into the phenomenon, and in developing explanations of the mechanisms underlying the observable outcomes of interest. Secondly, the use of only a single case is also inadequate to give insights into different types of interactions that can arise between mechanisms and contexts. To further explain the interactions between the context and mechanisms, and even to extend the insights that it has developed into the mechanisms, the extension of this study into a study of multiple cases in a comparative fashion is recommended. Such an extension could, for example, occur through selecting cases of the promotion of community participation from other countries to compare with this study. The extension could also be in the form of comparing this study with other community-based development programmes in Thailand. Finally, even the case of comparing the study of the CCO programme at different times, through "revisiting" it at a later period, could also help extend insights from this study.

Community participation is an attractive concept. As a social development approach, it continues to attract the interest of policymakers, practitioners, and academics, both in developed and developing countries. The intellectual journey of this thesis has provided community participation with a much needed "realistic" understanding of its actual complexities and deficiencies. Such knowledge is a crucial basis to bring about a refinement of the approach, and an improvement to development policies and practices in general.

Appendix 1. Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIAL WORK

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Participant Information Sheet

31.1.2010

Research Title: The New Politics?: Examining the Restructuring of Associational Life in a Participatory Development Programme – The Case of Thailand's Community Assembly Programme

Researcher: Thom Pitidol
Tel. 0818443100
e-mail: thom.pitidol@socres.ox.ac.uk

Supervisor: Professor Robert Walker
Tel. 0044 (0)1865 280374
email: robert.walker@socres.ox.ac.uk

I'm a Thai student in a doctoral program at the Department of Social Policy and Social Work at University of Oxford, UK. As part of my research on how a participatory development programme works by studying the case of Thailand's Community Assembly Programme, I carry out interviews with individuals who participate or associate with the Community Assembly Programme. I will also, depending on the permission I obtain, participate to observe activities that occur within the Community Assembly Programme. My study aims to provide a better understanding of how constraints and transformative potentials arise in participatory processes within a participatory development programme.

I would like to invite you to take part in my research by giving me an interview. The interview is based on open questions related to the Community Assembly Programme. The interview will be in a form of conversation. It will take no longer than 50 minutes, and will with your permission be tape recorded. You may at any time choose not to answer any questions as well as withdrawing from the interview.

The information collected from the interview is confidential and the interviewee's identity will be anonymised according to legal requirements. Hence, your real identity in relation to any information provide in the interview will not be disclosed, and will be replaced by pseudonyms. All the information from the interview will be anonymised by the researcher himself after the interview, in an electronic version of the interview and their transcription note. The information from the interview will be used by the researcher for a PhD dissertation bearing the above title that will be accessible to the public. Depending on your permission, which you may choose not to grant, the anonymised quotations from this interview may be used in the dissertation. All information collected is stored digitally by the researcher, who is the only person that has access to the data. At the end of my PhD project all information collected will be destroyed.

If you subsequently have a concern about any aspect of this project, please contact me either by my e-mail address or telephone number. I will do my best to answer your query. If you remain unhappy and wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Department of Social Policy and Social Work, Oxford University, who will direct your complaint to the appropriate body.

The project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

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Consent Form

Research Title: The New Politics?: Examining the Restructuring of Associational Life in a Participatory Development Programme – The Case of Thailand’s Community Assembly Programme

Researcher: Thom Pitidol
Tel. 0818443100, 025270387
e-mail: thom.pitidol@socres.ox.ac.uk

- I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 31.1.2010 for the above study ()
- I agree to take part in the above study and that I will be given a signed copy of the consent form to keep ()
- I have had the opportunity to consider information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily ()
- I understand that my participation is voluntarily and that I’m free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason ()
- I agree that the interview will be recorded ()
- I agree that anonymised quotations from this interview can be used in the dissertation and be published ()
- I have been informed about procedures if I have any concerns about the project and if I wish to make a complaint ()
- I have been informed that the present project has been reviewed by and received clearance from the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee ()

| | | |
|---------------------|-------|-----------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Name of interviewee | date | signature |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Name of researcher | date | signature |

Appendix 2. Topic guide for conducting interviews

In this research, the interviews were initially designed to be semi-structured. However, in the actual process of conducting fieldwork, it was found that open-ended oriented interviews worked better. Two reasons were behind this. Firstly, many of the interviews had the characteristics of being an elite interview. Community leaders, CODI executives, and high-ranking CODI officials disliked being asked routine and basic questions. They tended to see these questions as a sign of lack of preparations of the researcher. Secondly, the operation of the CCO programme turned out to differ from expectations. This meant that the interviews had to be investigative, aiming at exploring several problems in the programme. The open-ended questions gave more flexibility to achieve such an aim.

Nonetheless, a broad topic guideline was developed to assist the interview process. The guideline was developed at the initial period of the fieldwork and, therefore, some questions were designed to specifically address issues that were found to be salient to the CCO programme. Different versions of the guideline were also developed for different actors in the programme, in order to allow more relevant insights to be generated. The guideline was loosely followed in the actual interview process, thereby allowing the conversations to flow more freely, and enabling specific questions to be pursued in response to the interviewees' answers.

Topic guideline for interviewing actors in the CCO programme

CODI executives and high ranking CODI officers

- Background
 - General background (education, past work experiences)
 - Background in development activities
 - Past activities with the CODI
- Current position and tasks in the CODI
- Roles in relation to the operation of the CCO programme
- Current objectives and strategies in operating the CCO programme
- The contributions of the CCO programme
- Issues and problems in the operation of the CCO programme
 - Problems with the system of resource allocation
 - Problems in the performance of CODI officers and CO leaders
- Future directions in the operation of the CCO programme

CODI officers

- Background
 - General background (education, past work experiences)
 - Background in development activities
 - Past activities with the CODI
- Tasks and roles in the CODI
- Tasks and roles in the CCO programme

- What supporting roles do they provide to the programme?
- Region and province engaging with? (in the case of field officers)
- The contributions of the CCO programme
- Issues and problems in the operation of the CCO programme
 - The relationship between the CODI and the CCO representatives
 - The relationship between the pre-existing CODI's network of CO leaders and the CCO representatives
 - Other operational issues in the CCO programme
 - In the monitoring of the programme's implementation
 - The lack of connections between CO leaders and their localities
- Other issues concerning the CODI's operation of development programmes
 - Issues and problems in the CODI's overall operation of development activities?
 - The selection of committees in the CODI's system

Academics and NGOs

- Background in development activities
- Past activities with the CODI
- Tasks and roles in relation to the CCO programme
- Observations on the CCO programme
 - What regions or provinces have they been in touch with?
 - How have they been participating with the programme in such regions or provinces?
 - How do they see the operation of the CCO programme?
 - What do they see as the contributions of the CCO programme?
 - What do they see as the problems of the CCO programme?
- Other observations on the CODI's development activities
 - Issues and problems in the CODI's overall operation of development activities?
 - The selection of committees in the CODI's system

The top-level CO leaders (regional and national level)

- Background
 - General background (education, past work experiences)
 - Background in development activities
 - Past activities with the CODI
- Roles in the CODI's network
 - What province and region are they from?
 - What positions do they have?
 - What are their roles in CODI's development activities?
- Roles in the CCO programme
 - How did they become part of the operation of the CCO programme?
 - How was the programme established in the province they are from?
- The contributions of the CCO programme
- Issues and problems in the operation of the CCO programme
 - The relationship between the CCO's representatives and the pre-existing networks
 - Relationship between the CCO's representatives and the CODI

- The lack of connections between CO leaders and their localities

The CO leaders in the Songklah provincial network

- Background
 - General background (education, past work experiences)
 - Background in development activities
 - Past activities with the CODI
- Roles in the provincial network
- Roles in the CCO programme
- Conditions in the provincial network before the CCO programme
 - How often did they meet?
 - What did they discuss in the meetings?
 - How were resources allocated among members of the provincial network?
- The operation of the CCO programme
 - Has it changed the operation of the provincial network, and how?
- The contributions of the CCO programme
- Issues and problems in the operation of the CCO programme
 - Effects of the programme on the relationship between actors in the provincial network

The members of the Sub-District CCO (including some CO leaders in the Songklah provincial network)

- Background
 - General background (education, past work experiences)
 - Background in development activities
 - Past activities with the CODI
- Roles in the CCO programme
- Local conditions before the CCO programme
 - What were the pre-existing development activities, what were the supporting development agencies of these activities?
- The establishment of the CCO programme
 - Who led the establishment, who cooperated?
- The operation of the CCO programme
 - How often does the CCO meet?
 - Who are the participants?
 - What is discussed? By whom?
- The contributions of the CCO programme
 - The contributions to resolving development problems in the area
 - The contributions to promoting cooperation in development activities
 - Other benefits of the CCO?
 - Has the operation of the CCO created any changes to what they were doing before?
- Issues and problems from operating the CCO programme
- The relationship between local governments and the sub-district administrative organisation (TAO)

- Did the TAO support the establishment of the CCO?
- Does the TAO provide any support for the CCO operations?
- Can the CCO participate in the TAO's affairs? How is the relationship between the two?

Appendix 3. List of Interviews and Primary Sources

List of Interviews

| Interviewee(s) | Date (date/month/year) | Position |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| Bangkok | | |
| CODI officer B | 31/3/2010 24/1/2011 | CODI Bangkok Officer |
| CODI officer Bt | 31/3/2010 | CODI Bangkok Officer |
| Academic M | 4/4/2010 | Academic from Songkklah Province |
| CODI officer R | 25/1/2011 | CODI Bangkok Officer |
| Academic S | 26 /1/2011 | Academic in Bangkok |
| CODI executive P | 1/2/2011 | CODI Vice Director |
| CO leader Sg | 8/2/2011 | CODI National COCC member |
| CO leader Sd | 8/2/2011 | CODI National COCC member |
| CODI officer Pe | 10/2/2011 | CODI Bangkok Officer |
| CODI officer C | 10/2/2011 | CODI West Region Officer |
| CODI officer L | 17/3/2011 | CODI Bangkok Officer |
| Pattalung Province, Southern Thailand (Location of CODI Southern Region Office) | | |
| CODI officer V | 14/6/2010 | CODI Southern Region Officer |
| CO leader J | 2/3/2011 | CODI National COCC member, CCO National Operational Committee |
| CODI officer S | 2/3/2011 | CODI Southern Region Officer |
| CODI officer N | 3/3/2011 | CODI Southern Region Officer |
| CODI officer T | 3/3/2011 | CODI Southern Region Officer |
| CO leader B | 4/3/2011 | CCO Southern Committee |
| CO leader Jb | 4/3/2011 | CCO Southern and National Committee |
| CODI officer P | 4/3/2011 | CODI Southern Region Officer |
| CO leader W | 4/3/ 2011 | CCO Southern and National Committee |

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| Academic S | 4/3/ 2011 | Academic in Surat-Thani Province |
| Songklah Province, Southern Thailand | | |
| Songklah CO Leader P | 20/4/2010 18/2/2011 5 /3/2011 | Songklah CCO Representative and Sub-district C CCO member |
| Songklah CO leader K | 20 /4/2010 19/5/2010 16/2/2011 | Songklah COCC member and Sub-district A CCO leader |
| Songklah CO leader L | 7/5/2010 19/2/2011 | Songklah COCC member and Sub-district B CCO leader |
| Songklah CO Leader Ps | 7/5/2010 | Songklah COCC member |
| Songklah CO Leader A | 7/5/2010 | Songklah COCC member |
| CODI officer SM | 8/5/ 2010 22/2/2010 | CODI Officer in Southern Region |
| Sub-district E CO leader S | 10/5/2010 | Leading CCO Member Sub-district E |
| NGO A | 11/5/2010 | NGO in Songklah, advisor to Songklah COCC |
| Sub-district B CCO member K | 14/5/2010 | CCO member Sub-district B |
| Sub-district B CCO member P | 14/5/2010 | CCO member Sub-district B |
| Sub-district B CCO member Pm | 14/5/2010 | CCO member Sub-district B |
| Sub-district B CCO member An | 14/5/2010 | CCO member Sub-district B |
| Sub-district B CCO member A | 14/5/2010 | CCO member Sub-district B |
| Mayor T | 15/5/2010 | TAO Mayor Sub-district C |
| Sub-district C CO leader S | 15/5/2010 | CO leader and the leading CCO member Sub-district C |
| Sub-district E CCO members B, Nan, Chat, and Ut (interviewed in group) | 18/5/ 2010 | CCO members in Sub-district E |

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|--|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
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| Sub-district A CCO members Ch, J, and R (interviewed in group) | 19/5/2010 | CCO members of Sub-district A |
| Sub-district D CO leader N | 27/5/2010 17/2/2011 | The leading CCO Member Sub-district D |
| Sub-district D CO leader Pl | 27/5/2010 | CCO member Sub-district D |
| Sub-district D CO leader K | 27/5/ 2010 | CO leader in Sub-district D |
| Sub-district C CCO member M | 16/6/ 2010 18/2/2011 | CCO member Sub-district C |
| Sub-district D CO leader P | 12/6/2010 | CCO member Sub-district D |
| Sub-district A CCO member W | 12/6/ 2010 | CCO Member Sub-district A |
| Sub-district A CCO member P | 12/6/2010 | CCO member Sub-district A |
| Sub-district C CCO members K, V, S, and Pc (interviewed in group) | 16/6/ 2010 | CCO members Sub-district C |
| Sub-district E CO leader B | 17/6/2010 | CCO member Sub-district E |
| Sub-district E CCO member A | 17/6/ 2010 | CCO member Sub-district E |
| Sub-district E CO leader N | 17/6/ 2010 | CCO member Sub-district E |
| Songklah CO leader B | 15/2/2011 | Songklah COCC member |
| Mayor S | 15/2/2011 | TAO Mayor Sub-district D |
| Sub-district C CCO member T | 18/2/2011 | CCO member Sub-district C |
| Sub-district E CCO members B, Chat, and Su (interviewed in group) | 22/2/2011 | CCO members in Sub-district E |
| NGO P | 11/5/2010 26/2/ 2011 | NGO in Songklah |

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- CCO National Operational Committee Meeting Report 3/2010 28 May 2010
- CCO National Operational Committee Meeting Report 5/2010 9 September 2010

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