How Participatory Is Thailand's Forestry Policy?

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Abstract

The British influence on the teak trade since the early 1830s forced the Thai government (Bangkok) to increase its direct interference in the affairs of the northern tributary states (Lan Na) because of a threat to annex the states that stemmed from problems in the timber business. As a result, the influence of the northern princes in political economic power was almost entirely destroyed; thus the princes intensified their efforts to gain income from agricultural taxes and fees, thus creating pressure on the availability of arable land for Thai farmers, who were forced to find other places with cheaper taxes. The establishment of the Royal Forestry Department in 1896, led by Englishmen up to 1932, planted a long-lasting influence on the future of Thailand's forestry policy, which was since then set as "cutting and processing timber for export to Europe."

The 1932 revolution that phased out foreign control over forest resources was only a metamorphosis to a kind of similar mode of resource expropriation by Thai citizens. This did not mean the influence of foreigner foresters was waning. In 1948 a group of experts from the FAO provided a solution to the perceived problems of "forest encroachment and poaching by shifting cultivators." (This added weight to the vulnerability of the tribe communities that had been created since the beginning of "nation-building," which posed the "us against them" polarity among the Thai.)

The Cold War during the mid-twentieth century brought the U.S. government to influence Thailand's forestry policy with an imposition of an idealized model of development with "dams and national parks." This thinking about wilderness, mixed with the phobia against "communists," found its implementation through proclamation of national parks, expansion of reforestation areas, farmer relocation projects, road building, forest clearing (in communist strongholds), forest business establishment, etc. The term *hill tribes* that appeared in the late 1950s created a "victim" for the newly-found model of development. Very soon the hill tribes were identified with the negative stereotype of forest destroyers, opium cultivators, and dangerous alien troublemakers.

The term *community forestry* was used as a façade of General Prem Tinsulanonda for industrial tree plantation (mainly eucalyptus) in the northeast. The farmers, who were very much disturbed by this interpretation of community forestry, resisted in an organised way in the form of farmer organisations from February to September 1985 by demonstrating in front of the district or provincial administration offices. In 1988, triggered by an accident when the wife of an MP encroached on communally-used forest to start "reforestation" and an ensuing national NGO meeting to react to the incident, the RFD was forced to concede the community's rights to manage the forest for the first time—thus the pro-farmer "community forestry" appeared. Severe floods and landslides that wiped out houses and killed 300 people led to the national logging ban in 1989.

The first phase of the struggle for community forestry started when the RFD conceded the community rights over forests and when it proposed a draft of the Community Forestry Bill for the first time in 1990. The second phase began when the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) launched an ambitious plan to relocate 250,000 households of northeast farmers from a 45,680-square-kilometer national forest reserve to a "community forestry" area. The farmers resisted this plan when they found out the "community forestry" area was barely arable land. In May 1992, half a million people took to the streets against the Suchinda regime to cancel the plan. (In connection with the general elections in September 1992, the main political parties put forward their versions of a community forest bill for political reasons.) The third phase buried the bill under the ground after the newly-elected government of Chuan Leekpai passed the Thai Forestry Sector Master Plan, which was based on the private plantation system and thus diverted the community forest bill into another direction, away from being a pro-farmer bill.

The Chuan government's attempts to increase the national parks and wildlife sanctuaries shifted the resettlement plans to the north, where ethnic groups were politically vulnerable to eviction. Nevertheless, the attempts led to the formation of the Northern Farmers Network in 1995, which was composed of both Thai farmers and ethnic groups.

The pressure from farmers through The Forum of the Poor (established in 1995 as an umbrella group

of 180 people's organisations and NGOs) in March 1996 onward forced the newly-formed Banharn government to produce a draft called the "Suanbua Draft Version." When the winning government of Chavalit replaced the Banharn government, the draft was scrapped again, provoking another demonstration by the Forum of the Poor in 1997. The Chavalit government proposed the "Wang Nam Khiaw" cabinet resolution to allow co-existence of people and forests, and organised a series of public hearing in May 1997 to discuss different positions on the bill. The victorious, second Chuan Leekpai government revoked the "Wang Nam Khiaw" cabinet resolution from the Chavalit government and re-launched the program of evicting villagers living in "sensitive areas," which was warmly welcomed by the RFD, the "dark-green" conservationist groups, and the NGOs established to support the Thai farmers against "hill tribe" groups.

1. Introduction

Most researchers with a neo-Malthusian perspective would likely perceive the destruction of Thailand's forests and all attempts to curb it as related with population pressure, when in fact these are related to the long history of colonial expansion in the region (Shalardchai Ramitanondh 1989, cited in Belo et al. 1998, 177). This paper thus retraces how colonial expansion has taken place and how it has shaped contemporary forest policy in Thailand.

This paper should be read with a precaution that participatory development, a dilemmatic and arbitrary concept, will not necessarily lead automatically to sustainable development, an inherently contradictory term in itself. Why? If it is invoked merely as a means of affording participants access to the wider resources of society, then participatory development means a loss of local control over resources for production (Hirsch 1990, 224). Sustainable development itself is contradictory, as the unclear distinction between the objectives of development (a process of directed changes) and the means to achieve these objectives would easily lead to "sustainable development" frequently being interpreted as simply a process of change that can be continued forever (Lele 1991, 609). This is contradictory to the World Commission on Environment and Development's own recognition that "ultimate limits [usable resources] exist" (WCED, 45).

As the main aim of this paper is to show the level of adoption of participatory development in Thailand's national forestry policy, the tempting first task to tackle is to find the means of measurement. There are at least two sources to determine this: (1) the discourse of the debate around the meaning of participation among academics and (2) the empirical research on participatory development. The early post-war discourse on development had seen the participatory roles of the masses in development as producers by provision of cheap labor and, through the "trickle down" effect, as consumers of the enlarged national products (Stiefel and Wolfe 1984, cited by Hirsch 1990, 184). The search for a more active way of involving the rural poor in development led to their increasing role not only as passive recipients but also as formulators, planners, implementers, and beneficiaries of various programs. This led to an approach by the United Nation Research Institute for Sustainable Development (UNRISD) (1978, 2) to see participation as "active and meaningful involvement of the masses of people at different level[s]: (a) in the decision-making process and (b) in the execution of resulting programs and projects." Eventually, the director of the Community Development Department (Phairat 1984, 6, cited in Hirsch 1990, 190) defines participation as something sponsored by outsiders, and its aim is to encourage local involvement (through formal government institutions or non-formal ones) in achieving objectives that are stipulated elsewhere. This approach was criticized by Saneh Jamrik (1984), who insisted that participation is developing and using local people's full potential, starting with what is already there. In this discourse of the meaning of participation, we can see a continuum starting from the masses as "passive recipients" to "actors in their full potential." Similarly, Bass et al. (1995) and Grant (1996) (cited by Martin 1997, 104) filled this continuum with seven categories of participation, starting from "manipulative participation" (a pretence, with so-called unelected and powerless people's representatives on official boards) to "self-mobilization" (independent initiatives from the people).

A newly proposed branch of science called ethnoecology adds weight to the discourse on the meaning of popular participation. This new science, sometimes also called "indigenous knowledge," increasingly acknowledges that other people (communities) have their own effective "science" and resource use practices, and that we need to understand their knowledge and management systems to assist them (to develop) (Sillitoe 1998, 223).

Facing a danger of oversimplification in doing otherwise, this paper does not propose any yardstick to measure the level of participation in the form of a continuum of any kind. The attempt to create a yardstick is highly theoretically problematic given the complexities of development theory and practice. The best measure of participation this paper can show is the comparison of the discourse on participation suggested by some related actors among development agencies, local bureaucracy, academics, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the local farmers themselves. In other words, the unfolded history of forest management practice is sufficient enough to show the "level" of participation of farmers, or those who stand at the bottom of the societal hierarchy, in a process inaugurated so far as development.

This paper is divided into six parts: introduction, history of Thailand's forestry policy, history of "hill tribes"

(marginalization) in the development discourse, history of the Community Forest Bill, summary and conclusion, and recommendations.

2. History of Thailand's forestry policy

Thailand's forests were dragged into the global market by the power relations that took shape following the introduction of monetary transaction (Madras rupee, in silver) into Lan Na (northern Thailand) by the British colonial administrators in the early 1830s in Burma, by which the latter forced the princes (local lords) to free cattle trade (Blundell 1836, cited by Anan 1984, 49). Eventually, as trade expanded, the teak trade brought in most of the currency during the second half of the nineteenth century. Labor for teak export was recruited mostly from outside of the system, favoring in particular the Khamu from Laos. During the year 1858/59 the export of teak from the port of Moulmein was worth 400,000 pounds sterling; almost 95 percent of the timber sold came from the Chiang Mai area (Ramsay 1971, 60, cited in Anan 1984, 50).

After the British timber interests, represented by the Bombay-Burma Corporation and the Borneo Company, had expanded operations into Lan Na in the 1880s (Ramsay 1971, 125, cited in Anan 1984, 51), they were followed by one French and one Danish company. The control of the princes (local lords) in Lan Na eroded when in 1873 they were charged for "double-leasing" by the Burmese timber contractors and forced to pay damages of as much as 466,015 rupees to the latter (Ramsay 1971, 63). King Chulalongkorn interfered to pay the damages, and this was the beginning of the integration of Lan Na into the state. The Thai government abandoned its long-time policy of limited interference in the affairs of the northern tributary states, mainly in response to the British threat to annex Lan Na because of the disturbing problems in the timber business. In 1874 the Thai government signed a treaty with the British by which it agreed to supervise the police and judicial administration for the protection of British colonial interests in Lan Na. A commissioner and seventy other Siamese officials were sent for the first time to be permanently stationed in the north (Anan, 1984, 53).

Under renewed British pressure a second treaty was signed in 1883, which provided for the setting up of the British Vice Consulate in Chiang Mai and for greater Thai government control over the northern states (Anan 1984, 54). The influence of the northern princes in political and economic power was almost entirely dissolved when, in 1896, the Thai government established the Royal Forestry Department (RFD) to assume more control over forest leasing. Therefore it was not surprising that the center of the early forest management philosophy of the RFD was the cutting and processing of wood for export to Europe (Belo et al. 1998, 177). The administrative head of the agency was always an Englishman, from its founding in 1896 until 1932. Most of the logging concessions went to foreigners as well. In 1927, for in-stance, out of 32 forests under concession, 17 were operated by British citizens, six by French, and one by Danes (Belo et al. 1998, 177).

The local princes, deprived of most of their sources of income and taxes, responded in many ways, including launching open resistance and looking for other sources of income. Primarily they turned to the appropriation of the ricelands of the peasants and of unclaimed land, turning them into *na chao*, their private property. This hidden complexity of struggles among the local actors, forest concessionaires, local princes, and land-deprived peasants, among others, had led many researchers to conclude, superficially, that the movement of lowlanders to the forest was caused to some extent by population pressure.

The control by foreigners over the forest resources was phased out in 1932 following the 1932 revolution, which disempowered the monarchy. The new concessionaires, the Thai citizens, continued to serve as the spearhead of deforestation. Colonial forestry practice has continued its influence, however, despite the withdrawal of western timber companies in the mid-twentieth century; in Thailand, colonial power remained in the form of advisory functions (Pinkaew Laungaramsri 2000, 74). In 1948 the first group of forest experts from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), led by G. N. Danhof, a Dutch forester, came to Thailand to provide advice and assistance on natural resource management. The forest experts pointed to the lack of knowledge, technology, manpower, and financial support as the major problems in Thailand. The problem of forest encroachment and poaching was caused by shifting cultivators (Royal Forestry Department 1971, 86, cited in Pinkaew Laungaramsri 2001, 75). The FAO recommended the preservation of 40 percent of the total land area of the country as forest cover and to use aerial maps for forest management in a national park system.

During the reign of Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat (1959–1963), national parks, as well as the monarchy and the Thai language began to be seen as ideal national symbols. Sarit's slogan about the forest stated this clearly: "Forests are significant natural resources for the lives of Thai people and the existence of Thailand. Those who destroy the forests are the enemy who destroy the nation's security" (Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives 1980, cited in Atthachak Sattayarat 1999, cited in Pinkaew Laungaramsri, 2001, 75). The idealized model for the management of forest and its development came from developed countries, especially the United States. During the mid-twentieth century, as an attempt to halt the so-called influence of communist Indochina, the U.S. government provided assistance on national park establishment and funded a Thai government officials' trip to Yellowstone, America's first national park. In 1955, the U.S. government, under the U.S.-Thai Cooperation Program, sponsored two groups of Thai bureaucrats, forestry academics and engineers, and policy-makers, to visit the Tennessee Valley Authority to learn about American

technology for developing water resources using hydroelectric dams. Since then, the U.S. model of dams and national parks has become an ambitious ideal of modern development for the Thai states (Pinkaew Laungaramsri 2001, 76). This is consistent with Guha's observation (1997, 19, cited by Pinkaew Laungaramsri 2001, 80) about the practice of national park management in Third World countries following U.S. thinking on wilderness, which is "the monumentalist belief that wilderness has to be 'big', continuous wilderness, and the claim that all human intervention is bad for the retention of diversity."

This unbalanced struggle for power and control over resources was realized at the cost of the farmers, lowlanders, and highlanders (tribes). One of the results of this struggle, in terms of size of landholdings, is shown for the year 1978 in table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of land by size of holding, Thailand, 1978

Gini coefficient	Whole Kingdom 0.45		Center 0.47		Northeast 0.40		North 0.49		South 0.44	
Size of holding (rai) (1 ha=6.25 rai)	% of holders	% of land	% of holders	% of land	% of holders	% of land	% of holders	% of land	% of holders	% of land
<2	1.6	.02	3.0	.03	1.0	.01	2.8	.03	0.8	.01
2-6	14.3	2.3	12.8	1.7	9.2	1.4	22.5	4.1	16.8	3.2
6-15	27.4	11.4	21.6	7.5	26.3	10.6	30.5	14.3	33.4	16.4
15-30	29.0	25.7	27.2	20.3	33.4	28.4	22.6	23.3	29.7	31.0
30-50	17.3	27.1	19.8	25.9	19.8	29.6	13.5	24.6	13.3	24.6
50-100	9.0	24.3	12.8	29.0	9.1	23.4	7.8	24.9	5.3	16.9
>100	1.4	9.3	2.7	15.5	1.2	6.5	1.3	8.7	0.8	7.8

Source: NSO Statistical Report of Thailand, 1981–1984.

Note: Figures omit households without any land at all.[1]

Subsequently, the landless lowland farmers were forced to migrate to the forests to get involved in a structure of illegal logging dominated by influential locals and to produce the highly demanded cash crops during the 1970s and 1980s (maize, tobacco, ginger, and sesame). Maize, during its golden age in the 1970s, thus emerged as one of the forces behind the destruction of 4.5 million rai (1 rai = 40 m x 40 m = 1,600 m²) of forest cover in the mid-1970s (Lohmann 1993, cited in Belo et al. 1998, 179). In the 1980s, non-paddy cash crop cultivation in the north went up by over 8,200 square kilometers (km²), compared to a mere rise of 1,644 km² for paddy cultivation. The estimated three million lowlanders affected the half-million or so minority peoples to whom the highlands were traditional, ancestral, communal, or open-access land (Lohmann 1993, 209, cited in Belo et al. 1998, 179).

The government policy focus on deriving economic gains from the forest brought forth a new episode in the highly complex conflicts over forest resources. Having designated some forest areas as "conservation areas," the government started to relocate the hill tribes away from their communal lands. Together with ending logging concessions, expanding reforestation areas and national parks, and encouraging business interests in forest resources, building roads, and eradicating opium farms, this policy has brought great benefits for the business interests of the lowlanders at the expense of the poor (Anan 1996, in Hirsch 1996, 202). While the highlanders, including women, are forced to look for work in towns with low health standards, lowlanders are increasingly looking for upland areas to develop as orchards and resort areas (Kunstadter and Kunstadter 1983, cited in Anan 1996 and Hirsch 1996, 205). In 1990, for example, 158 out of 220 tribal prostitutes tested were found to be HIV positive (*The Nation*, September 21, 1990, and *Bangkok Post*, October 1, 1990). Adding to the highlander's propitious position, the government issued land-use rights (STK, or *sor tor kor*) certificates to individual occupants of national forest reserve lands in certain areas, but it did not stop them from selling their rights and clearing more forestland (Anan and Mingsan 1992, cited by Anan in Hirsch 1996, 206).

Also arising is the conflict among the different hill tribes over forest resources and their struggle to gain access to more and more limited forest resources. Violent cases of land dispute between the Karen, Hmong, and Lisu in the Mae Khan basin (Anan 2000, 173) have become a continuous source of hostility between the

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[1] Inequality of land ownership in Thailand is still lower than in many other Asian countries if measured by the Gini coefficient of 0.45 (the Gini coefficient is a measure of income inequality developed by the Italian statistician Corrado Gini). While South Korea and Taiwan show the lowest degree of concentration (coefficient of 0.32 in 1973 for South Korea), India, Pakistan, Malaysia, and the Philippines all show a higher land concentration, with figures of 0.63, 0.60, 0.54, and 0.51, respectively (Douglass 1983, 196, cited by Hirsch 1990, 26).

three groups. The Hmong and the Lisu, facing stiffer competition from the Thai lowlanders, find no other choices but to clear the Karen reserve and fallow land.

Table 2. Thailand forest statistics, 1961–1999

Year	Remaining forest (rai)	Remaining forest (percent)
1961	171,017,812	53.33
1973	138,578,125	43.21
1975	128,278,755	40.00
1976	124,010,625	38.67
1978	109,515,000	34.15
1982	97,875,000	30.52
1985	94,291,349	29.40
1988	89,877,182	28.03
1989	89,635,625	27.95
1991	85,436,284	26.64
1993	83,470,967	26.03
1995	82,178,161	25.62
1998	81,076,428	25.28
1999	80,242,572.5	25.02
	(=12,838,811.6 ha)	

Source: Sureeratna Lakanavichian 2001, 7, cited from Charuppat 1998.

Note: One ha is equal to 6.25 rai (Thai measurement).

England (2000, 53–71, in Hirsch 1996) clearly picks out three areas of Thai forest policy that need special attention in relation to the frustration of forest conservation attempts: the logging ban, the "new partnership" between government and NGOs, and the reforestation program. Despite the impressive official figures about the 83.59 percent drop of the rate of forest encroachment after the logging ban, or the 1.9 million cubic meters (m) of Thai timber saved by the ban, there is proof that illegal logging in Thailand still persists in more surreptitious forms (Pinkaew Laungaramsri and Rajesh 1992, 39–41). The increased volume of logging traffic from the border areas (Cambodia, Laos) allows timber, illegally cut, on the Thai side to be mixed with foreign timber. Furthermore, state development projects open up chances for logging licenses over vast areas (Pinkaew Laungaramsri and Rajesh 1992, 43). These factors impair the efficacy of the logging ban.

The new partnership with NGOs, as promoted in Thailand's Seventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (1991–1996), allows NGO representatives (from grassroots to wider definitions of NGOs) into discussions on forest policy. World Wildlife Fund (Thailand), as an NGO example, sponsored projects in communities bordering the Khao Yai National Park to curb encroachment into the park by giving credits, education, and business ventures to villagers who conform to the park regulations. No matter how successful the projects are perceived, however, their replication in other areas demands heavy resources, which are difficult to obtain.

Various attempts to reserve and protect the remaining forest in Thailand since the 1960s, ranging from an active reservation program to reclaiming forestland, have produced nothing but the reduction of actual forest cover to between 22 and 29 percent (England 2000, 65, in Hirsch 1990) and outbreaks of violence, as many farmers have nowhere else to go. During the time leading up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) (1989–1992), the army was actively engaged in implementing plans to move 1.25 million people to free up their farmland for reforestation (Handley 1991, 15, cited in England 2000, 66), in spite of protests from environmentalists, farmers, and even the King, who opposed the eucalyptus plantations on environmental grounds (Apichai Puntasen et al. 1993, 201, cited in England 2000, 66). The underlying reason for the lack of progress on forest policy at the national level is the failure to resolve the conflicting interests that lie at the very heart of forest issues (England 2000, 68). In Thailand the conflict lies between two rival forms of ex-

ploitation: plantation forestry and smallholder cash-crop agriculture. The failure of sustainable exploitation policies throughout the world makes even clearer the need to address the basic conflict between conservation and exploitation that lies at the heart of forest policy.

The RFD, after it has largely failed to protect the forests and has inevitably compromised the 12 million ethnic Thai living in the forest areas, is trying to secure its interests by pushing ahead with its strategy of exclusion towards the ethnic minority groups of the uplands (Buergin 2000, 11). To support this strategy, high government officials as well as "dark green" conservation NGOs (anti-people) increasingly refer to nationalistic and even racist sentiments (see also Buergin et al. 1999; Pinkaew Laungaramsri 1999; Pinkaew Laungaramsri and Rajesh 1996). The following is the historical background of the relationship between the minority ethnic groups and Thai society.

3. History of the "hill tribes" (marginalization) in the development discourse

Anan (2000, 35–52) divides the history of settlements and land clearings of a sample village (141 households) located in Mae Ping National Park of Li District in Lamphun Province (south of Chiang Mai Province) into four periods: early forest communities (1887–1942), influential latent power (1942–1964), illegal logging (1965–1974), and competition for resources (1974–present). During the early forest communities period, indigenous people occupied the small plain areas in valleys of the upper north, and people from the plains who moved to the nearby areas sought agricultural lands or logging concessions. The indigenous villagers collected forest products and exchanged them for commodities brought into the village by cattle traders or by boat. During this period, highland ethnic groups such as Hmong, Mien, Lahu, Lisu, and Akha began to migrate from southern China, Burma, and Laos and settled down in the north of Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, and Nan (Anan 2000, 36–37, citing Geddes 1976 and Dessiant 1971).

The second period (1942–1964) was signified by migration and resettlement from the lowland areas to the marginal upland areas. The reasons for this were the ease with which villagers could fell the remaining trees left by logging companies, the expansion of cash crops (tobacco, groundnut, sugarcane) that needed small amounts of water, malaria eradication because of DDT, and an official (and misleadingly confusing) establishment of a land tax system for forest areas. The new groups of ethnic people started to settle down for lack of available agricultural lands.

The third period (1965–1974) was started when the National Forest Reserve Act of 1964 declared permissions for logging concessions in the national forest reserves and demarcated other areas to be "reserved." The confused villagers, noticing the abuse of timber licenses among the logging companies and that reserving forest meant reserving trees only, joined the rampage in illegal logging, which was more profitable than cash crops and rice farming. More migrants came in to join in the clearing of the forests.

The fourth period, competition for resources (1974–present), was marked by the expansion of cash crop cultivation, especially maize for cattle. The area for maize cultivation went up from 127,790 rai in 1970 to 2,928,461 rai in 1975, and to 3,926,242 rai in 1980. Government policies, such as job creation programs in forest areas, credit for agriculture policy, and a temporary land-use certificate policy (STK, or sor tor kor) supported the golden age of maize. The Isan people from the northeast joined in the competition for resources, moving in and out of the forests for new agricultural lands.

Looking at this example timeline of a "lowland" village related with migrating ethnic groups, business interests, and government policies, it is surprising to find out that the ethnic groups came under the classification of "forest destroyers" and "hill tribes." Pinkaew Laungaramsri (2001, 32) argues that the discourse about hill tribes was just recently invented and reflects the changing relations between the Thai state and the peripheral population.

The history of the Karen, one of the most "popular" hill tribes, started when the Karen entered into a tributary relationship with the Tai (Thai) lords in return for protection (Pinkaew Laungaramsri 2001, 50). In the 1880s, Hallet (1890, 40–41, cited in Pinkaew Laungaramsri 2001, 50) noted that most of the elephants working in the teak forests were owned by the Karens, who hired them out to foresters at the rate of 50 to 70 rupees per month. Prior to state intervention in the periphery and the exacerbation of ethnic prejudice by nature conservationists, the notion of ethnic identification had never been politicized. Any differences between highlanders and lowlanders were taken simply as instances of cultural disjuncture by lowland communities (Pinkaew Laungaramsri 2001, 52).

Later, one of the prevalent characteristics of state as well as public discourses about "hill tribes" in the late twentieth century is the binary opposition between "malign-aggressive" and "benign-submissive" figures. Fortifying ideas of the different kind of "strangeness" among different groups of "hill tribe," the standard of labeling worked to relate "Hmong" (one of the tribes) with aggressiveness and "Karen" as submissive, peaceful, backward, and pathetic. Pinkaew Laungaramsri (2001, 54) argues that the representation and stereotyping of Karen/Hmong as benign/malign hill tribes by government agencies and the Thai media has racial functions. One of the typical urban-based, middle-class, conservationist group's opinions toward the hill tribe is: "But the Karen community is currently turning to the same farming techniques as the Hmong, so I don't believe that they can live in harmony with the forest" (*The Nation*, May 9, 1997, cited by Pinkaew Laungaramsri 2001, 55). The secretary of the Green World Foundation, another nature

conservation organisation, even goes further to comment that, "But the hard truth is that [Karen] agroforestry can never replace the true functions of natural forest, no matter how good it is done. Even the most diverse [of] Karen's community forest—the likes of which is extremely rare—can only represent just a tiny fraction of natural biodiversity…resettlement is necessary." (*The Nation*, May 22, 1995, cited by Pinkaew Laungaramsri 2001, 57).

The term *hill tribes* came into use in the late 1950s as a generic name for the various non-Thai groups living in the uplands of northern and western Thailand. In 1959, the "Central Hill Tribe Committee" (CHTC) was estab-

lished in Thailand, and for the first time, a national policy towards the "hill tribes" was formulated. Objectives of the policy were "national security," reflecting fears that communist influences may spread among the ethnic groups of the uplands, control and substitution of opium cultivation, as well as the abolition of shifting cultivation, which in the international development community had been perceived as destructive, a threat to forest resources, and a hindrance to development. Very soon the term *hill tribes* was identified with the negative stereotype of forest destroying, opium cultivating, and dangerous alien troublemakers (Buergin 2000, 6–7). Tables 2 and 3 show the ethnic groups in Thailand.

Table 3. Ethnic groups in Thailand (not including refugees)

	1960 (Kunstadter 1967)	1980	1986	1996 (Kraas/Rivet 1997)
"Thai"	14,171,600	23,577,000*	27,696,000*	33,296,000*
Lao-Thai	9,000,000	12,058,000*	14,164,000*	17,028,000*
Thai-Malay	1,025,000	1,660,000*	1,950,000*	2,340,000*
Chinese	2,600,000	5,380,000*	6,320,000*	7,600,000*
Mon	60,000	—	~ 100,000**	—
Khmer	—	1,210,000*	1,420,000*	1,900,000
Hill tribes	~ 222,000	~ 385,000	~ 460,000	~ 793,000
Total population	26,258,000	44,824,000^	52,654,000^	63,300,000

Sources: Buergin 2000, 7, and other sources as follows: Kunstadter 1967; Husa and Wohlschlägl 1985; Santhat 1989; Kampe 1997. * Kraas and Rivet 1997; ^ from Donner 1989; ** from Keyes 1987.

Table 4. Ethnic "hill tribe" groups in Thailand (not including refugees)

	1960 (Young 1961; Kunstadter 1967)	1974/77 (TRC) (Husa/Wohlschlägl 1985)	1985 (Tribal Research Centre) (Donner 1989)	1996 (Kampe 1997)
H'tin	18,900	19,400	24,276	32,755
Lawa	11,000	11,300	13,282	15,711
Khamu	7,600	6,300	5,355	10,153
Mlabri	140		139*	173
Karen	71,400	184,648	235,622	402,095
Hmong	45,800	37,301	63,418	126,147
Yao	10,200	22,652	32,706	47,305
Akha	25,000	13,566	23,430	48,468
Lahu	15,050	22,584	38,558	78,842
Lisu	17,300	12,542	20,449	31,536
Total	222,390	331,305	457,096	793,185

Source: Buergin 2000, 5; *from *Thai Development News* 1993, #23, 18.

4. The history of the Community Forest Bill

The history of community forest as an indigenous institution can be first traced back to the reign of King Mangrai's *Mangraiyasart* (700-year-old document) or law that prescribed a system of punishment and fines for violators of sacred forests, called *pa seu ban seu muang* (Prasert 1971, cited in Yadfon Association, "Community Forestry in Thailand: Legislation and Policy"[2]). Apart from this written document, oral histories and field investigations reveal different types of communal forest management, including varieties of sacred forests, watershed forests, and village woodlots (Shalardchai, Anan, and Santita 1993; Anan and Mingsarn 1992).

The second root of Thai community forestry was introduced by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to Kasetsart University as a social forestry curriculum in 1984, and then was promoted by the state in the 1985 Thailand National Forestry Policy. This policy designates 15 percent of the country's area as protected forest and 25 percent as economic forest. It also encourages private reforestation on public land, plantation on marginal agricultural land, and woodlots for household consumption. For simplification purposes, the historical division by Brenner et al. (1999, 15) will be used to explain the discourse on the Community Forest Bill. Brenner et al. (1999, 15) divide the history of the Community Forest Bill into four phases: emergent phase (1985–1991), the hot phase (1991–1992), the submergent phase (1993–1996), and the Bill agenda (1996 until today).

Eventually, during the reign of General Prem Tinnasulanond, the term *community forestry* appeared in the cabinet resolution of 1985 (see the Royal Forest Department's Web page). In Article 12, the resolution stated "community forestry such as reforestation on public land by private sector, tree planting on marginal agricultural land and establishment of forest woodlot for household consumption shall also be promoted." This led to a sharp rise in the number and area of industrial tree plantations (mainly eucalyptus) in the northeast. The equation of community forestry with private plantation in "degraded forest" (actually agricultural lands) provoked a wave of resistance by farmers, who demanded a different kind of "community forestry." During February, May, June, and September 1985, the villagers staged demonstrations in front of the district or provincial administration offices. Uniting themselves into the "Farmer Committee for Forest Conservation" and the "Isan Community Forest Committee," and later "The Committee to Solve Land and Forest Problems in the Northeast," the farmers established in the same year a national network of NGOs, called NGO-Cord.

In 1988 the NGO movement won a major battle when the plan to build the Nam Choan Dam was shelved under the premiership of Chatchai Choonhavan. Severe criticism against the state logging policy, after severe floods and landslides that wiped out houses and killed 300 people, led to the national logging ban in 1989. Afterwards, a national meeting of NGOs called on the government to issue a community forestry bill after a Member of Parliament's (MP) wife encroached on communally-used forest to start "reforestation"; the RFD was forced to concede the community's right to manage the forest for the first time.

In this first phase, the state advanced a forestry policy that advocated private economic plantations and conservation areas at the expense of communities living in the national forest reserves. This attempt failed because of local and regional resistance, which built into massive public criticism of the state policy. In 1990, the pressure led to a draft of a community forest bill being proposed by the RFD for the first time.

The next phase, the hot phase, was marked by another proposed program, which became a decisive power struggle over forest resources. In June 1990, the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), approved by the prime minister, submitted a plan called the "Land Distribution Programme for the Poor Living in Degraded National Forest Reserves in the Northeast Thailand" (*Khor Jor Kor* plan) to cabinet. The Khor Jor Kor plan aimed to rearrange the land-use patterns in 45,680 km^2 (28 m rai) of national forest reserves in the northeast (Brenner et al. 1999, 17). Around 250,000 households (lowlanders) were to be resettled onto 7,800 km^2 (4,875 m rai), at around 2.4 ha per family, plus extra land for infrastructure and community forests. There would be an area as large as 14,400 km^2 (9 million rai) on which economic forests (fast-growing species) were to be established. The "successful" trial in Isan (northeast) led to implementation elsewhere. The private plantations were re-legalized by the then governing National Peace-Keeping Council (NPKC), without any sign of interest in a community forest bill.

Then the military moved villagers forcibly to the military-controlled settlements, which created another round of resistance by the soon-to-be relocated farmers. In May 1992, around 500,000 people took to the streets in Bangkok to demonstrate against the Suchinda regime, forcing the dictatorship to cancel the Khor Jor Kor plan. Later, the northeast-wide Isan farmer's march to Pak Chong (location of the forced relocation) cancelled the whole plan in June 23, 1992. In September 1992, in connection with the general elections, the community forestry issue was taken up by the main political parties (the Democrats, the National Aspiration Party, and Phalang Dharma), which put forward their own versions of a community forest bill for political reasons. Meanwhile, the interim government (Anand Panyarachun) again banned private plantations larger than 8 ha (50 rai).

The third phase, the submergent phase, buried the community forest bill under the ground. When the new government, under Chuan Leekpai, took office in late

1992, it passed the Thai Forestry Sector Master Plan, which was drawn up in connection with the World Bank's Tropical Forestry Action Plan, that planned to designate some 46,400 km² (29 million rai) of forest areas under community management. In January 1993, Chuan Leekpai announced the re-allowance of private plantations through the Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Cooperatives, Mr. Suthep Thueksuban. Representatives of the pulp and paper industries in Kanchanaburi demanded 320 km² for private plantations (and 1,280 km² by 2002), tax reductions, and soft loans and an import duties waiver for machines to produce pulp (*The Nation*, January 11, 1993; *Bangkok Post,* February 1, 1993). Meanwhile, after the RFD increased its campaign for private plantations, the cabinet legalized commercial reforestation on September 13 and 21.

The failed old strategy to commence commercial plantations or forced resettlement was replaced by a new, softer approach. First, the government acknowledged that large parts of the national forest reserves were already settled and used for agriculture and, therefore, it distributed Sor Por Kor documents to 220,000 families (title deeds for cultivation, available for loan but not for sale). Second, a large reforestation program in honor of the King (commemoration of the Royal Golden Jubilee of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne) was launched to reforest 5 million rai of lands. Half of the 4.3 billion baht budget was supplied by the private sectors, thus re-legitimizing private involvement in forestry. Despite this softer approach, Prasit et al. (1995, cited in Brenner 1999, 19) recorded around 932 conflicts over natural resources in the northeast between 1993 and 1995. This resistance was given by the main RFD officials as the reason for the failure of the reforestation program.

The conservation strategy of increasing the area under national park and wildlife sanctuary legislation still existed happily along with community forestry and industrial tree plantations. This time the focus of resettlement was now shifted from the northeast to the north. The Hmong, Mien, and other ethnic groups were evicted in 1994 (see table 5 for details on the classification of national forest areas). The resistance by farmers led to the formation of the Northern Farmers Network (Pratuang 1997; Anan 1998, cited in Brenner et al. 1999, 17).

Table 5. Classification of forest reserves and comparison to statistics

Region (# of provinces)	Total	Actual forest area (1995)	Classification of national forest reserve area (NFRA)									National forest reserve area			Actual forest in % of NFRA
			Conservation forest (Zone C)			Economic zone (Zone E)			Agricultural uses (Zone A)			Number		% of total area	
	1,000s of ha	1,000s of ha	1,000s of ha	% of NFRA	% of total area	1,000s of ha	% of NFRA	% of total area	1,000s of ha	% of NFRA	% of total area	Number	1,000s of ha	% of total area	
North (14)	16,965	7,389	8,170	77	48	2,197	21	13	183	2	1	233	10,550	62.2	70
Northeast (17)	16,886	2,127	1,938	35	11	3,276	59	19	298	5	2	352	5,512	32.6	39
Central (18)	10,390	2,388	2,473	52	24	1,856	39	18	404	9	4	167	4,734	45.6	50
South (14)	7,072	1,246	1,536	55	22	973	35	14	271	10	4	468	2,779	39.3	45
Thailand	51,313	13,150	14,117	60	28	8,302	35	16	1,156	5	2	1,220	23,575	45.9	56

Source: Rasmussen et al. 2000, 21, cited in Jira 1998 and RFD 1999.

By 1995 the government strategy had clearly failed. The reforestation program in honor of the King was officially declared a failure, as less than 40 percent of the target was realized. A 48-km march in the north involving 20,000 people ended with the government backing down on evictions and acknowledging community rights over forests. The land reform program ended in disaster and the Phuket Land Scandal, which involved members of the cabinet, led to the government's downfall. This submergent phase can be characterized by official government approval of community forestry without real action or legislative progress being made to establish it.

During the beginning of the fourth phase, with the Community Forest Bill on the agenda (1995–1998), popular protests were not strong enough to achieve a change in government policy in the direction of community forestry. The establishment of the Forum of the Poor in December 1995, a national umbrella organisation of 180 people's groups and NGOs, started to add pressure on the central government. A 28-day demonstration in Bangkok by 11,000 farmers started March 26, 1996, demanded a community forest bill, forcing the newly-formed Banharn government to produce a draft called the "Suanbua Draft Version." After a lengthy process involving the Cabinet, the Council of State, the House of Representatives, and Parliament, the bill was approved in principle by the Cabinet on June 2, 1996.

The election defeat of the Banharn government, however, postponed again the passing of the bill. The new, slow prime minister, Chavalit, had to face another 99-day demonstration by the Forum of the Poor in 1997 from January until April before his government made concessions in two areas. First, the government stated, in the so-called "Wang Nam Khiaw" cabinet resolution, that people and forests could co-exist, thus giving the right to settlers of national forest reserves to stay until the process of zoning conservation areas is completed. Second, the government organised three public hearing in May

1997 to discuss the different positions on the bill in preparation of its implementation.

But later, the government backtracked. The difference between the NGOs' demand for community forest rights and local empowerment and the state view of the Community Forest Bill as a state-initiated and state-controlled conservation program was too large. The second Chuan Leekpai government did not inspire hope that it would push for legislation more forcefully than in its first period of office. The newly-appointed head of the RFD, Plodprasop Suraswadi, declared that co-existence between people and forests was impossible. On July 1, 1998, the Chuan cabinet revoked the Wang Nam Khiaw resolution on the recommendation of the National Forestry Committee. The old strategies of classification and zoning, with the eviction of villagers living in "sensitive areas," were recommended.

The group of "dark-green" conservationists (anti-hill tribes) and the group of NGOs established in local conflicts to support the Thai farmers against the "hill tribe" groups pushed their interests at the national level and found a natural ally in the RFD with its protected area strategy (Buergin 2000, 12). Since 1997 they demonstrated, petitioned politicians, fenced the fields of "hill tribes" with barbed wire, blocked roads, and burned the effigies of professors in Chiang Mai University who supported the rights of ethnic groups. They demanded resettlement of all "hill tribe" groups out of the watershed forests and revocation of the Cabinet Resolutions of April 1997.

On April 13, 1999, the director of the RFD flew by helicopter to a wildlife sanctuary and landed where the Karen had just started to celebrate a three-day-long annual religious festival. Military troops burned down religious shrines of the Karen and threatened villagers as well as demolished huts, their rice barn, and personal belongings. From April 26 to May 20, 1999, about 3,000 representatives of the different "hill tribe" groups demonstrated in front of the provincial government in Chiang Mai, supported by various Thai NGOs and academics, to demand their rights to be granted Thai citizenship, the simple procedure for naturalization, and the recognition of their settlement and land-use rights. On May 2, 1999, Deputy Interior Minister Vatana Asvahame and Deputy Agricultural Minister Newin Chidchob clarified their position that rights in community forests shall be granted only to Thai nationals. But later, on May 11, the committee for the community forest bill was changed without provisions for representatives of ethnic groups and academics. The villagers' decision to continue their demonstration was responded to violently by around 1,200 forest rangers and 400 policemen on the night of May 18. On May 20, the villagers left Chiang Mai after the Minister of Interior agreed to improve the procedures for naturalization and the Minister of Agriculture declared he would reconsider the residence of the ethnic groups in the forests after they registered with the local forestry office.

To sum up the narration, the fate of the Suanbua Draft Version, approved by the Banharn cabinet on June 2, 1996, was unclear when the Banharn government was dissolved and replaced by the Chavalit government. A committee of seven members, mostly academics, led by Mr. Montree Roobsowan, a lecturer at Ramkhamhaeng University, organised the days of public hearings. Designating community forests in protected areas was later only considered possible if communities managing the forests could prove residence before 1993, the year of the latest aerial survey for the 1:4,000 map. In September, however, a new committee of a different composition was set up, this time chaired by the prime minister's office minister Pokin Polakul. It drafted and submitted a revised version (Juridical Committee Version) that again drew harsh criticism from the majority of farmers and organisations involved in the discussion. This draft did not include the conclusions of the committee nor publicize the decisions for other parties. Once again, due to strong opposition, a new revision of the draft, formulated by representatives of NGOs, government organisations (GOs), and academics emerged on May 18, 1998, which is as yet pending approval by the Chuan government (PM Appointment Committee Version).

The three contested points in the draft were the issue of community forest areas (settlement for villagers), the activities and residence of people (locals' ability to manage and protect forests), and management and monitoring (evaluation procedures). While "light green" (pro-people) NGOs and academics proposed evidence that people are able to protect and use the forests in a sustainable way, the "dark green" NGOs and conservationists, including the conservative members of the RFD, strongly opposed these ideas. In July 1998 the pro-people Wang Nam Khiaw resolution of the Chuan cabinet, which was agreed April 22, 1997, was revoked; the principle of co-existence of people and forests was questioned again.

5. Conclusion-Discourse of the meaning of participation in government circles

Hirsch (1990, 184) notices three sources of discourse on participation in the Thailand context: (1) the World Bank's conceptualization; (2) the Thai section of the UNRISD project on popular participation, a conference of prominent Thai academics together with civil servant and development workers; and (3) local-level discourse in Lan Sak (a studied village).

During the early post-war era, the participatory role of the masses in development was seen as one of taking part in economic development as producers by provision of cheap labor and as consumers of the enlarged national products that development would bring about (Stiefel and Wolfe 1984, cited by Hirsch 1990, 184). In the Thai context, this was epitomized by Sarit's doctrine in the early 1960s of concentrating on economic development while stifling all forms of popular political participation.

Eventually, the UNRISD (1978, 2, cited by Hirsch 1990, 186) stated that participation was interpreted as the "active and meaningful involvement of the masses of people at different levels: in the decision-making process and in the execution of resulting programs and projects." But later, a group of Thai academics, government officials, and development workers reflected the variety of interpretations of participatory development. The director of the Community Development Department, for example, proposed participatory development as "the process by which the government promotes, persuades, supports, and provides the opportunities for people in the community, whether they be individuals, groups, clubs, associations, foundations, or voluntary organisations, to take part in carrying out any piece of work…in order to fulfill stipulated development objectives and policy" (Phairat 1984, 6).

In the village studied by Hirsch, a forced village meeting organised by the officials was attended by villagers in a very reluctant, "foot-dragging" manner.

This paper, almost similarly, finds at least three contesting discourses over the meaning of participatory development in Thailand's forestry policy. The first discourse is the function of "forest encroachers" as the labor providers, either in the forest business or in urban areas, under a forestry policy regime focused heavily on the economic gains won by exploiting forests. The second, the new division of agricultural labor, appears in the fact that at the same time the highlanders are forced to look for work in towns, the lowlanders are looking for upland areas to develop as orchards and resort areas. The government's frustration in its attempts at forest conservation resulted in the new jargon of inviting a "new partnership" with NGOs in the Seventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (1991–1996). NGOs, broadly defined as organisations from the grassroots to larger, more formal ones, were invited to launch forest conservation projects. The replication of "successful" NGO projects in other areas, however, has proven to be problematic for many reasons. As these two discourses of participatory development are two different variants of the same theme in the government circle, this paper regards these as the same type.

And the farmers themselves offer, through their own style of demonstration or protest movements, the third discourse of participatory development, which is the farmers' own control and management over their own forest resources. For illustration, between 1993 and 1995 alone, Prasit et al. (1995, cited in Brenner 1999, 19) recorded around 932 conflicts over natural resources in the northeast, or about 25 conflicts per month. To repeat England (1996, 68), the conflict (in Thailand) is between two rival forms of exploitation, that of plantation forestry and smallholder cash-crop agriculture. The farmers have launched another series of campaigns for the pro-farmer Community Forestry Bill by using Section 170 of the 1997 Constitution, which states: "People, who are eligible to vote, at least 50,000 of them have rights to propose to the chairperson of the parliament a law as stipulated in Part 3 and Part 5 of this Constitution. The proposal must explain the criteria and methods of gathering the list of names according to the law."

6. Recommendations: Aagenda for research and policy development

The project approach to sustainable development must be both improved and supplemented by greater understanding of the grassroots-level concerns and activities related to the environment. As we have seen in the case of Thailand, its governments—from 1985 on—have been using popular jargon such as "community forestry" or "reforestation" to name ambitious resettlement projects related with fast-growing tree species (commercial). Instead of this program- or project-based approach, Vivian (1995, 53), having reviewed some cases in developing countries, offers two possible directions, both of which are based on public participation defined in a more fundamental sense that goes beyond the mere provision of labor and inputs into projects initiated from outside the communities. Barraclough (1990, cited in Vivian 1995, 53) notices and asserts that increased public participation is necessarily a confrontational process, because the development goals of the elite normally preclude increased involvement of the poor in resource management decisions. Similarly, the projects "offered" to the farmers have been violently resisted by the Thai farmers.

The first direction towards sustainable development involves the increased recognition of "traditional" (not necessarily "tribal") resource management practices, an analysis of the value of such practices under current and future conditions and an assessment of ways to ensure either that sustainable practices are maintained, or to adapt the most viable of them for use in different economic, social, or environmental contexts. The second direction involves incorporating the concerns, goals, and activities of local grassroots organisations and social movements into externally-assisted projects in such a way that such projects become self-sustaining and self-replicating without external promotional efforts.

The definition of sustainable development itself, lacking an analytical precision, must be rebuilt in terms of human needs and on ways in which local-level participation (including in definition of goals to attain) can form the basis of more successful approaches to reach this goal (Vivian 1995, 56). The issues of the role of the state and development community in policy determination that affects the environment, the mechanisms of influence of policies, the impact of large-scale environmental destruction, and the role played by system and structural factors in influencing the outcome of some environmental problems, if tackled properly, can produce fresh insights into some of the standard interpretations of the conventional wisdom of sustainable development.

This wisdom includes the viability of traditional resource management systems, the dynamics of common

property management, the relationship of population growth to environmental degradation, and the large-scale potential of small-scale popular environmental movements. Usually people who rely very immediately on natural resources for their livelihood, if they have been successful in establishing a sustainable mode of production, have developed "traditional" methods to ensure the conservation of their environment. Such traditional resource management systems are important to examine in more detail in the context of the search and research for sustainable development (Vivian 1995, 57).[3]

The traditional management systems, whose common property tenure and usufruct systems have been tainted by Hardin's "tragedy of the commons," have been revived by Bromley and Cernea's study (1989), which finds that the firm basis and long history of property rights of exclusion have been largely eroded by both active and benign neglect of the state. Bandyopadhyay (1990) showed that in certain communities in India, common property resources were better safeguarded than were private property resources. Nevertheless, some studies (for example, Watson 1989) warn that some communal societies are clearly repressive, thus excluding large numbers of people, including women, from enjoying the full benefits of community holdings.

The overt attention given to the relationship between population growth and resource degradation also deserves some reconsideration, because the population growth approach is an over-simplistic means of portraying the environmental problems in the Third World as well as a distraction from more fundamental causes and productive solutions (Vivian 1995, 64). Some studies on deforestation in the Himalayas and Brazil (Somanathan 1991; Mahar 1989; Hecht and Cockburn 1990) as well as study on the capacity of traditional management practices to support a densely-populated place (Miehe 1989) have shown that deforestation is related to a complex set of factors, including policy decisions.

The continuation of traditional resource management has been heavily dependent on the active support and struggle of their participants against the internationalization of local economies, increasing commercialization, and pressure and hostility from development agents. Environmental activism—including pickets and street protests (which are not typical strategies of Thai farmers only)—occurs when complete environmental destruction is threatened and when resource management is converted into other forms in which traditional ways of life are untenable (Vivian 1995, 67). It is not just a struggle against the expropriation of resources but also resistance against resource over-exploitation by outsiders.

Some lessons can be extracted from this environmental activism. First, as the activism is triggered rather by the lack of sufficient benefits from such projects for local communities, it becomes clear that farmers are much better at least to assess the true costs and benefits of ecosystem disturbances than any outside evaluator. Second, the success of such movements is often due to their ability to form a coalition with regional, national, or international groups that have similar interests, and to publicize their grievances and their cause. (The wave of evictions of some minority groups from forest areas in northern Thailand in 1994 led to the building of a loose Northern Farmers Network; about 180 people's organisations and NGOs in Thailand formed the Forum of the Poor in 1995.) This collective action often turns the movements from negative to positive activity in what is dubbed by Hirschman (1984) as "the conservation and mutation of social energy" from, for example, opposition to a large dam to proposals and support for a series of smaller, more manageable dams (Bandyophadhyay 1990). Third, the need for activism around local environmental issues has put sustainable resource management on the agenda of activist groups and NGOs with wider concerns.

The flood of research on participation in resource management has shown that poor communities not only have significant incentives to manage their resources sustainably but they also have often been able to develop a variety of effective and adaptable means to do so. Environmental degradation in rural areas of Third World countries like Thailand is not due to the poverty of rural communities; rather, poverty is a symptom of one of the primary underlying causes of local-level environmental decline in the Third World today—the disempowerment of these communities (Vivian 1995, 72). People may be deprived of access to the resources on which they depend, their traditional tenure rights and rights to exclude outsiders may be abrogated, or their ability to make their own decisions regarding resource management may be curtailed. The struggles for greater participation are essential elements of the foundation of an endurable basis for sustainable development (Vivian 1995, 73). This will depend on the efforts of development agents, researchers, and also environmentalists, not only to support people's rights for self-determination but also to recognize that their struggles are essential to the health of the environment.

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[3] First, they involve religious beliefs—social controls—to regulate resource use and to ensure that the environment is managed sustainably. Second, they have well-defined and explicit rules governing resource use, although sometimes these rules are invisible to outsiders. And third, the traditional systems have developed, refined, and transmitted environmental knowledge in rural communities (Vivian 1995, 57–58).

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