

**Mainland Southeast Asian Studies**  
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**Ethnic Group Livelihood Strategies and State Integration:  
Moken and the Hill People in Negotiation with the State**

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## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

### **STRATEGIEN ETHNISCHER GRUPPEN ZUR SICHERUNG DER EXISTENZGRUNDLAGE UND STAATLICHE INTEGRATION: DIE MOKEN UND BERGVÖLKER IN VERHANDLUNG MIT DEM STAAT**

#### **Einleitung**

Die Peripherie der Staaten waren in der Vergangenheit, obwohl formal Teil des Territoriums, aufgrund ihrer großen Entfernung vom Zentrum weder für die Zentralregierung noch von der Mehrheitsbevölkerung von großem Interesse. Ebenso wäre die Integration in das Verwaltungssystem kostspielig gewesen und die Ressourcen spielten keine bedeutende Rolle. So konnten Minderheiten diese Gebiete nutzen. Von den staatlich verfassten Mehrheitsethnien, wurden sie als primitiv und marginal angesehen. Daher blieben die Einwohner jener Gebiete in früheren Zeiten vom Staat weitgehend unbeeinflusst. Seit sich jedoch die Situation aufgrund von Einflüssen in verschiedenen Bereichen änderte, wie der staatlichen Sicherheitspolitik (als Antwort auf kommunistische Aufstände, des Opiumanbaus und der Migration), oder des erwachenden Umweltschutz-Bewusstseins (wegen der rasch voranschreitenden Degradation natürlicher Ressourcen in Zusammenhang mit Brandrodungs-Wanderfeldbau, Entwaldung und Übernutzung), gerieten die Bewohner der Peripherie in den Mittelpunkt des staatlichen Interesses und wurden als „Gefahr für den thailändischen Nationalstaat“ betrachtet.

Dieses vermeintliche Bedrohungsszenario für die thailändische Nation wurde zu einem zentralen Aspekt der staatlichen Integrationspolitik gegenüber den ethnischen Gruppen der Peripherie. Sie sollten in das staatliche System integriert werden, um sie besser kontrollieren zu können, zu zivilisieren und Beeinträchtigungen der natürlichen Ressourcen und der staatlichen Sicherheit vorzubeugen. Darüber hinaus führte diese Form der Integration zur Herausbildung einer hierarchischen Beziehung zwischen den ethnischen Gruppen und dem Staat. Der Staat kann, legitimiert durch seine Amtsgewalt, Macht über seine Bevölkerung ausüben. Er behauptet dazu befugt zu sein, auf die Existenzgrundlage aller ethnischer Gruppen innerhalb seiner Staatsgrenzen, Einfluss zu nehmen. Das Ausmaß des staatlichen Eingriffs innerhalb der ethnischen Gruppierungen hängt jedoch davon ab, wie sehr diese als Bedrohung für die staatliche Sicherheit erachtet werden. Da die Sicherheitspolitik ein zentrales politisches Thema ist, steht jede Gruppe, von der man annimmt sie wäre möglicherweise eine Gefahr, unter intensiver Beobachtung. Das ist der Grund warum

den Bergvölkern<sup>1</sup>, die gemeinhin als Umweltzerstörer, Drogenproduzenten, usw. gelten, große Aufmerksamkeit von der Regierung zuteil wurde. Ein weiterer Faktor war, dass das nördliche Bergland lange Zeit die Grenze zwischen den politischen Blöcken (Sozialismus, Liberalismus) darstellte. Im Gegensatz dazu wurden die Moken auf den Surin Inseln von den Behörden kaum beachtet, da sie als ungefährlich eingestuft wurden.

Durch die Integration der peripheren Minderheiten in die Thai-Gesellschaft soll „die Andersartigkeit“ verringert und eine Loyalität gegenüber dem thailändischen Staat erreicht werden. Mit anderen Worten, mit der Eingliederung in den thailändischen Sozialraum beginnt der Prozess der „Thaisierung“, der immer auch mit einer relativen Entfremdung von ethnischen kulturellen Werten und Formen des Alltagslebens verbunden war. Allerdings bot und bietet die Integration in den thailändischen Staat, durch Programme und Projekte, den Moken und Bergvölkern mindestens die Möglichkeit thailändische Staatsbürger zu werden. Dieses wiederum impliziert Bürgerrechte, Eigentumsrechte, die Gelegenheiten Zugang zu Wirtschaft und sozialer Wohlfahrt zu erlangen, und die Chancen sich an der staatlichen Verwaltung zu beteiligen. Jedoch sehen sich die Moken und Bergvölker mit Umständen konfrontiert, die große Auswirkungen auf ihre Existenzgrundlage haben. Ihre Praktiken der Nutzung natürlicher Ressourcen (beispielsweise das Sammeln von Meeres/Waldprodukten) und der Landbau (wie etwa der Brandrodungs-Wanderfeldbau der Bergvölker) gelten als ökologisch unverträglich, weswegen diese Aktivitäten verboten wurden. Diese Einschränkungen haben direkte Auswirkungen auf die Existenzgrundlage der ethnischen Minderheiten, die jedoch von den Behörden meist nicht ernst genommen werden. Darüber hinaus dienen die von staatlicher Seite initiierten Programme meist den Interessen des Staates und schenken den „Lebensverhältnissen“ der Minderheiten wenig Aufmerksamkeit.

Sowohl die Moken als auch die Bergvölker haben gelernt mit den neuen Umständen und den damit verbundenen Beeinträchtigungen ihrer Lebensgrundlage - hervorgerufen durch die zunehmende Integration - umzugehen. Um herauszufinden wie sie Wandlungsdynamiken die sich aus der Integration in die Staaten (Verwaltung) und Marktwirtschaft ergeben, bewältigen, werden in der Arbeit ihre Strategien genauer analysiert. Es geht um die Darstellung, wie die sehr unterschiedliche Minderheiten mit der Staatsmacht verhandeln und ihr ebenso trotzen.

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<sup>1</sup> Die für die Minderheiten in der Bergregion verwandten Begriffe sind umstritten. In vielen Arbeiten wird von Bergstämmen (hilltribe) gesprochen, doch handelt es sich hier keineswegs um Stammesgesellschaften. In der Arbeit wird der neutralere Begriff „Bergvolk“ (hill people) verwendet.

Der in dieser Studie verwendete Begriff „Strategie“, bezieht sich auf die Zielsetzungen und Entscheidungen, welche von den Moken und Bergvölkern in Verhandlung mit dem Staat und anderen Gruppen getroffen werden, um ihre Risiken zu minimieren. Zu diesen Risiken gehören etwa die Vertreibung von ihrem Wohnort, die Verweigerung der Zugangsrechte zu natürlichen Ressourcen und der Verlust von Einkommen. Die Strategien basieren auf Widerstand, „Cosmo-Vision“, spezifischen Verhaltensmustern und Institutionen. Obwohl sich die Moken und die Bergvölker sehr unterscheiden, was ihre Produktionsmuster betrifft, versuchen beide die Risiken zu verringern, ihr Einkommen zu steigern und weitere Möglichkeiten zu finden. Mit anderen Worten zeigen ihre Strategien zur Sicherung ihrer Existenzgrundlage ihr Streben nach mehr Sicherheit und Wohlbefinden. Um ihre Existenzgrundlage zu sichern, beschäftigen sie sich nicht nur mit Strategien welche die Produktion und das Sammeln betreffen sondern auch mit jenen, welche Verhandlungsmöglichkeiten mit dem Staat thematisieren.

Bei dem hier gebrauchten Begriff “Verhandlung” sind nicht nur offizielle Dialoge zur Konfliktlösung oder zur Verhandlung von Verträgen gemeint, sondern vor allem alltägliche Strategien und ad hoc Aushandlungen zwischen Personen bzw. Personengruppen (Moken/Bergvölkern und Repräsentanten des Staates wie Parkranger, Beamte, Polizei usw.). Diese Studie legt den Fokus auf die Strategien welche von den Moken und Bergvölkern angewandt werden um ihre Interessen durchzusetzen und andere Gruppen - insbesondere die Behörden - (entweder direkt oder indirekt) davon zu überzeugen, ihren Forderungen zuzustimmen, sie zu akzeptieren oder mindestens zu ignorieren.

Da das Jagen und Sammeln und auch die Landwirtschaft hauptsächlich auf der Nutzung natürlicher Ressourcen basiert, gibt es eine klare Konkurrenz zwischen den verschiedenen Nutzern, inklusive dem Staat. Der Staat versucht durch Naturschutzbestimmungen den Zugang zu den natürlichen Ressourcen einzuschränken und zu kontrollieren. Es ist von zentraler Bedeutung sich mit Gegendiskursen, Widerstand und Identität als Teil der Strategien der Moken und Bergvölker zu beschäftigen. Sie sind Hilfsmittel um mit dem Staat und anderen Gruppen in Verhandlung zu treten und um die Existenzgrundlage zu sichern. Darüber hinaus ermöglicht eine Analyse ihrer (Überlebens)-Strategien nicht nur ein besseres Verständnis davon, inwiefern die veränderten Bedingungen ihre Möglichkeiten einschränken, sondern auch neue Möglichkeiten eröffnen.

Diese Studie geht ebenso der Frage nach, auf welche Weise die Moken und Bergvölker ihre Gegendiskurse konstruieren um ihre Existenzgrundlage aufrecht zu erhalten und von den Behörden akzeptiert zu werden. Ferner passen sich die Moken und Bergvölker nicht nur der neuen Situation an, sondern widersetzen sich ebenso gewissen - vom Staat verordneten - Regeln. Die Weigerung den staatlichen Regelungen Folge zu leisten bzw. der Versuch sich diesen zu entziehen, kann auch als Form des Widerstands verstanden werden.

Die Konstruktion ethnischer Identität zur Abgrenzung vom Staat und anderen ethnischen Gruppen und als Instrument internen sozialen Zusammenhalt zu schaffen, ist ein wichtiges Element, das in Verhandlung mit der Mehrheitsgesellschaft eingesetzt werden kann, um die Existenzgrundlage zu sichern. Gerade in Thailand ist die Diskussion kultureller Identität ein wichtiger Aspekt staatlicher Ideologien, so dass der Staat derartige Argumente ernstnehmen muss.

Gerade die Konstruktion von Identität hat vielfältige Facetten, die eine politische, soziale und ökonomische Bedeutung haben. Die Abgrenzung der eigenen Gruppe vom "Anderen" führt zur Entstehung von ethnischen Grenzen die wiederum ein Gefühl von "Wir" und "Sie" und eine Inklusion (soziale Kohäsion) und Exklusion bewirken. Das "Wir"-Gefühl beinhaltet eine Unterstützung innerhalb der Gruppe und eine Exklusion anderer von der Gruppe und von Ressourcen, welche von der Gruppe als die ihren beansprucht werden. Interethnische Beziehungen ermöglichen jedoch die Überwindung ethnischer Grenzen und verbessern die politischen Verhandlungspositionen. Daher können ethnische Identitäten auch von anderen Gruppen für die eigenen Interessen instrumentalisiert werden. Tourismus ist ein gutes Beispiel dafür wie ethnische Identitäten simuliert, geborgt, reproduziert und zu ökonomischen Gütern werden. Nichtsdestotrotz zeigt es, dass die Vermarktung der ethnischen Identitäten für die Moken und Bergvölker ein Teil der Strategie zur Existenzsicherung ist.

Wie bereits erwähnt, bringt die Integration in das staatliche System nicht nur neue Möglichkeiten für die Moken und Bergvölker, sondern auch Einschränkungen mit sich, welche sich auf ihre Existenzgrundlage auswirken. Nichtsdestotrotz sind sie nicht nur passive Empfänger die alle, von der Regierung verordneten Regelungen und Programme annehmen, sondern Akteure die selektieren, anpassen, verändern, verwerten etc., um ihr Auskommen zu sichern. Um herauszufinden, wie diese beiden Gruppen mit der neuen Situation umgehen und die Ursachen ihrer Handlungen zu ergründen, bedarf es ethnographischer Methoden. Mit Hilfe der Ethnographie ist ein tieferes Verständnis davon möglich, wie die Moken und Bergvölker die Integration

für sich nutzen und ebenso wie sie ihre Kosmologie und Identität, einsetzen um ihre Existenzgrundlage und ihre traditionellen Nutzungsrechte der natürlichen Ressourcen zu erhalten

Diese Studie konzentriert sich hauptsächlich auf die Gruppe der Moken auf den Surin Inseln im Distrikt Kuraburi in der Provinz Phang-nga, die vom Nomadismus zur Sesshaftigkeit übergegangen sind. Dennoch werden, um die Reaktion der Moken auf die Macht des Staates und insbesondere ihrer Strategien in Verhandlung mit dem Staat und anderen Gruppen, besser erfassbar zu machen, zum Vergleich die Bergvölker (in diesem Falle Lisu, Karen, Lahu und Shan) im Distrikt Pangmapha in der Provinz Maehongson herangezogen. Obwohl sich diese Gruppen, was ihre geographische Lage und ihre Kultur betrifft, stark voneinander unterscheiden, fallen sie doch alle in dieselbe staatliche Kategorie: Ethnische Minderheiten.

## **Ergebnisse**

### **I. Integration durch staatliche Verwaltung**

#### **1.1 Konstruktion und Behauptung von Raum**

Die Integration peripherer Gebiete und den darin lebenden ethnischen Gruppierungen in die staatliche Administration, beinhaltet sowohl die Integration des geographischen als auch des sozialen Raumes. Die vom Staat definierten und legitimierten dominanten Diskurse der nationalen Sicherheit und des Schutzes natürlicher Ressourcen schlagen sich in Gesetzen und Beschränkungen nieder, welche die Besiedlung durch ethnische Gruppen und deren Zugang zu natürlichen Ressourcen einschränken sollen. Allerdings konstruieren die ethnischen Gruppen ihre eigene Räume als Gegendiskurse um mit dem Staat in Verhandlung zu treten. Beide- die Moken und die Bergvölker- setzen dazu die ihre „cosmo-vision“ der natürlichen Ressourcen ein. Sie verwenden das Konzept der Beziehung zwischen den drei Welten (natürlicher, spiritueller und menschlicher) als bestimmende Determinante bei der Ausbeutung der natürlichen Ressourcen. Nach diesem Konzept ist Jeder Teil der Natur und befähigt unter gleichen Bedingungen zu nutzen was die Natur bereithält. Ebenso werden alle Geschehnisse auf den Einfluss der Geisterwelt zurückgeführt (Krankheit, Unfälle, Naturkatastrophen). So dient der Geisterglaube auch dazu, die Nutzung der natürlichen Ressourcen zu kontrollieren und Missbrauch zu verhindern. Dem Bild der Minderheiten als Umweltzerstörer wird das Bild der Minderheiten als mit der Natur in Einklang lebend gegenübergestellt.

Was das Thema des Raumes betrifft, so versuchen sowohl die Moken, als auch die Park-Behörden, die Definition des geographischen Raumes, des Surin Insel Nationalparks zu dominieren. Jedoch sind die Parkbehörden gesetzlich dazu berechtigt, die Kontrolle über Nutzung und den Zugang zu diesem physischen Raum auszuüben. Die Surin Islands wurden zu einem „sacred space“ des Staates, der durch Regulierungen vor weiteren Eingriffen bewahrt werden soll. Allerdings dekonstruieren die Moken diese staatliche Definition durch die Schaffung eines „counter space“. Historische Fundstücke dienen als Beweis ihrer Siedlungstradition auf der Insel und werden ebenso wie bestimmte Glaubensvorstellungen zur Erzeugung ihres spezifischen „counter space“ eingesetzt. Die *Lobong*, Geister-Pfähle, sind die wichtigsten Artefakte der Moken, die ihren „sacred space“ repräsentieren und als auffallende Zeugnisse die Anwesenheit der Moken auf den Surin Inseln belegen. Da *Lobong* immer nahe der Siedlungen und Friedhöfe der Moken errichtet werden, sind alte *Lobong* eindeutige Hinweise für die Existenz der Moken auf den Surin Inseln, bereits lange bevor diese zu einem marinen Nationalpark erklärt wurden. Deshalb spielen die Geister-Pfähle nicht nur eine dominante Rolle als Stellvertreter der Ahnen, sondern auch als Symbol der Abgrenzung der Moken. Demzufolge wird ihr geographischer Raum durch die Allgegenwart der Geister-Pfähle, die auf den Surin Inseln errichtet wurden, sichtbar. Sowohl die Parkbehörden als auch die Touristen erkennen die symbolische Kraft der Geister-Pfähle an. Indem sie die Pfähle als Wahrzeichen der Surin Islands betrachten, reproduzieren sie die geographischen Grenzen der Moken.

Ein offensichtliches Beispiel dafür ist die Zustimmung der Parkverwaltung zum Vorschlag der Moken, den Geister-Pfählen alljährlich Versöhnungsoffer darzubringen, um die Ahnen der Moken günstig zu stimmen und Unheil fernzuhalten. Indem die Parkverwaltung den Schamanen dazu einlädt die Opferzeremonie beim Nationalpark-Hauptquartier durchzuführen, wo sich ebenfalls Geister-Pfähle befinden, erkennt sie die Bedeutung der Zeremonie an. Jedoch wird der übermäßige Genuss von Alkohol und die Verwendung von Schildkröten im Rahmen der Zeremonie untersagt. Im touristischen Kontext gelten die Geister-Pfähle neben den Naturschönheiten der Inseln als besondere Attraktion, die sich als Erinnerungen an den Ausflug auf die Surin Inseln im Gedächtnis der Touristen manifestieren.

Die vorrangige Absicht hinter der Konstruktion und Behauptung ihres Raumes durch Zuhilfenahme ihrer Glaubensvorstellungen und Siedlungsgeschichte ist es, dadurch mit der Staatsmacht in Verhandlung zu treten. Die Moken konzentrieren sich auf den Erhalt ihrer Gewohnheitsrechte, was den Zugang zu natürlichen Ressourcen betrifft. Sie tun dies jedoch ohne konkrete Besitzansprüche zu erheben, ganz im Unterschied

zu den Bergvölkern. Letztere sind auf die Wahrung ihrer Besitzrechte angewiesen um Wohnort und Landwirtschaft zu sichern. Die Bergvölker treten mit dem Staat über Waldschutz-Diskurse in Verhandlung welche den staatlich dominierten Diskursen ähneln, wie etwa in Zusammenhang mit der (Mönchs-)Ordinierung von Bäumen und der kartographischen Ausweisung von bewohnten Gebieten.

Die Moken umgehen ebenso wie die Bergvölker die staatlichen Regulierungen und Gesetze die den Zugang zu natürlichen Ressourcen beschränken, indem sie beispielsweise Ressourcen aus den Schutzgebieten angrenzenden Arealen beziehen (so sammeln die Moken manchmal Seeschnecken im Gebiet der Similan Inseln, die jedoch ebenso unter Schutz stehen). Eine andere Möglichkeit besteht darin den Charakter der betreffenden Ressource so zu modifizieren, dass sie damit den staatlich vorgegebenen Kriterien entspricht (so werden Baumstämme zum Absterben gebracht und später zersägt, um das Verbot zu umgehen Bäume zu fällen).

## **1.2 Thailändische Staatsbürgerschaft**

Die Staatsbürgerschaft beinhaltet individuellen Schutz, soziale Solidarität und Gleichheit, Rechte und Pflichten. Die Bewohner einer Nation versuchen die Staatsangehörigkeit zu erlangen um ihren rechtlichen Status abzusichern und mit entsprechenden Rechten ausgestattet zu sein. Obwohl die Moken ein indigenes Volk sind wurden sie nicht vom thailändischen Staat registriert. Die Ignoranz des Staates den Moken gegenüber liegt in der Ansicht begründet, dass diese keine Gefahr für den Staat darstellen. Erst nach dem Tsunami 2004 wurden sie im Jahr 2005 erstmals registriert. 2006 wurde 96 Moken die thailändische Staatsbürgerschaft zuerkannt. Obwohl sich die Moken der Vorteile der Staatsbürgerschaft bewusst sind - so ermöglicht sie ihnen etwa sich frei im Land zu bewegen und eine legale Anstellung zu finden - sind sie ebenso über die Nachteile besorgt, welche die offizielle Bezeichnung „Thai“ mit sich bringt. Thais haben ihrer Ansicht nach den thailändischen Gesetzen und Regeln Folge zu leisten, die Moken jedoch nicht. Daher haben sie kein Interesse daran, wie Thais behandelt zu werden, insbesondere dann, wenn es um die Einhaltung von Gesetzen und Regelungen geht. Sie wollen die gleichen Rechte wie Thais und ebenso behandelt werden, jedoch ohne den damit verbundenen Verpflichtungen und ohne ihre Sonderrechte aufgeben zu müssen. Somit hat der Personalausweis als Symbol für die thailändische Staatsbürgerschaft für sie zwei Seiten, eine Positive und eine Negative.



Die Bergvölker, die als bedrohlich für die staatliche Sicherheit und natürlichen Ressourcen galten, wurden in die staatliche Verwaltung integriert um ihre Aktivitäten und Wanderungsbewegungen kontrollieren zu können. Trotzdem sind sie an der thailändischen Staatsbürgerschaft interessiert um ihre Rechte, insbesondere ihre Eigentumsrechte zu sichern. Um Gebiete, die zu staatlich definierten Kategorien von Schutzzonen gehören, bewohnen und bewirtschaften zu können, sind rechtlich gesicherte Besitztitel notwendig.

Im "Thainess"- Diskurs sind die thailändische Sprache, der Buddhismus und die Monarchie von zentraler Bedeutung. Viele Angehörige der Bergvölker greifen diesen Diskurs auf, um sich selbst als Thai darzustellen, in die thailändische Gesellschaft integriert und damit akzeptiert zu werden. Sie nehmen den Buddhismus als ihren Glauben an, sprechen Thai und erweisen dem thailändischen König ihre Ehrerbietung. All dies verdeutlicht die Bemühungen der Bergvölker sich in das Bezugssystem der Thais einzugliedern.

Trotzdem bedeutet die Zuerkennung der Staatsbürgerschaft für die Moken und Bergvölker nicht unbedingt, dass sie Gleichbehandlung erfahren wie es laut Verfassung sein sollte. Als Angehörige ethnischer Minderheiten werden sie als fremd betrachtet und erfahren häufig Ausgrenzung. Sie sind Bürger zweiter Klasse und erhalten weniger Zuwendungen, etwa in Form von Sozialhilfe.

### **1.3 Beteiligung in der staatlichen Verwaltung**

Seit der Eingliederung der ländlichen Regionen in das System der staatlichen Verwaltung sehen sich die informellen Führer dieser Regionen mit doppelten Pflichten und Verantwortungen konfrontiert. Sie sind in der staatlichen Verwaltung als staatliche Beamte involviert, während sie gleichzeitig ihre Funktion als Beschützer ihrer Gemeinden zu erfüllen haben.

Sowohl die Moken als auch die Bergvölker haben ihre informellen Anführer, meist Ältere und Schamanen, die wegen ihrer Kenntnisse und Fähigkeiten geachtet werden. Sie haben einen bedeutenden Einfluss auf Migration (in der Vergangenheit), Zeremonien, und die Sozialisation (indem sie Normen an ihre Nachkommen weitergeben) in ihren Gruppen. Der zu beobachtende Unterschied zwischen den Moken und Bergvölkern bezüglich der staatlichen Verwaltung ist, dass es bei Ersteren keine formale Organisation der Dörfer gibt, obwohl ihre Gemeinde auf den Surin Inseln nach dem lokalen Verwaltungsgesetz 2457 (1914) formal als Dorf gelten könnte. Dieses Gesetz besagt, dass dort, wo mehr als 200 Personen an einem Ort zusammen leben, formal ein Dorf gegründet werden kann. Dazu muss von den

Dorfbewohnern ein Dorfvorsteher, ein Stellvertreter und ein Dorfkomitee gewählt oder ernannt werden. Eine Voraussetzung für diesen Prozess ist jedoch, dass alle Wähler und Kandidaten die thailändische Staatsbürgerschaft besitzen und seit mindestens 3 Monaten (für Wähler) bzw. 2 Jahren (für die Kandidaten des Dorfvorstehers, Stellvertreters) in dem Dorf gemeldet sind. Da die Moken weder die Staatsbürgerschaft besaßen noch offiziell gemeldet waren, konnte keine formale Dorforganisation etabliert werden.

Informationen der Parkverwaltung an die Moken werden entweder durch jene Moken weitergegeben, die beim Nationalpark beschäftigt sind oder die Park-Beamten wenden sich direkt an das Dorf. In letzterem Fall kontaktieren sie üblicherweise Moken, die ihnen persönlich bekannt sind. Kommunikation zwischen den Moken und anderen Behörden vom Festland – abgesehen von der Nationalparkverwaltung- findet nur unregelmäßig statt, ganz im Gegensatz zu den Bergvölkern. Da die Bergvölker eine Dorfverwaltung besitzen gibt es regelmäßige monatliche Treffen, die für die Dorfvorsteher - welche anschließend ihre Dörfer zu informieren haben - verpflichtend sind. In der Praxis jedoch werden die Informationen nicht immer von allen Dorfvorstehern an ihre Dorfbewohner weitergegeben, da sie oft außerhalb ihres Dorfes unterwegs sind, und die Informationen privat nutzen.

Die Dezentralisierungspolitik des Staates, wie die Tambon (Subdistrikt) Verwaltungsbehörde (TAO), bietet den Bergvölkern die Möglichkeit sich an der lokalen Verwaltung zu beteiligen. Diese Möglichkeit wird erst durch die thailändische Staatsbürgerschaft eröffnet. Die Bergvölker sind besonders daran interessiert, als TAO- Repräsentanten Zugang zur staatlichen Verwaltung zu bekommen. Einerseits möchten sie von den staatlichen Ressourcen in Form von Gehaltszahlungen-, bzw. Zulagen und Wissen profitieren, andererseits sind sie daran interessiert, sich der mächtigsten Organisation - dem Staat - anzuschließen. Zugang zu Machtressourcen bringt Rechte durch Autorität und Legitimität mit sich. Diese Autorität ruft nicht nur das Gefühl hervor integriert zu sein, sondern schafft auch eine bessere Ausgangsbasis in Verhandlung mit dem Staat.

#### **1.4 Entwicklungsprogramme**

Mit der Entwicklung des ländlichen Raumes versucht der thailändische Staat periphere Gebiete in das wirtschaftliche Wachstum und soziale Leistungen zu integrieren. Die Diskurse in Zusammenhang mit der Entwicklung des ländlichen Raumes beziehen sich jedoch stark auf die Machtbeziehung zwischen dem Zentrum und der Peripherie. Entwicklungsprogramme werden deshalb als maßgebliche Werkzeuge eingesetzt, die nach Ansicht des Staates die Lebensbedingungen der

Landbevölkerung verbessern sollen. Die ethnischen Gruppen der Peripherie werden dabei typischerweise als schwach und rückständig angesehen, die auf Entwicklungsprogramme angewiesen sind um sie zu „zivilisieren“ und ihnen bessere Möglichkeiten zu geben. Die Entwicklungsprogramme, decken sich dabei immer mit den Sicherheitsinteressen des Staates, da sie darauf ausgerichtet sind, die Aktivitäten und Wanderungen der peripheren Gruppen zu überwachen.

Darüber hinaus unterliegen die Entwicklungsprogramme häufig einer „top down“ Politik deren Agenden von sogenannten Entwicklungsexperten festgelegt werden. Die lokale Bevölkerung wird, insbesondere was die Projektplanung anbetrifft, normalerweise nicht einbezogen. Das Prinzip der „lokalen Partizipation“, das inzwischen verbindlicher Bestandteil jedes Projektes sein muss, spielt erst in der letzten Phase der Projekte, d.h. der Implementierung, eine Rolle.

Das wichtigste Entwicklungsprogramm bei den Moken auf den Surin Inseln war das Ansiedlungsprogramm nach dem Tsunami 2004 bei Ao Bonyai auf der südlichen Surin Insel. Spätere Programme welche die Lebensbedingungen der Moken verbessern und sie der „Zivilisation“ näher bringen sollten, konzentrierten sich auf die Bereiche Bildung, Hygiene und medizinische Versorgung.

Die in der Moken-Gemeinde durchgeführten Entwicklungsprogramme basierten meist auf materieller Unterstützung von außen. Die Moken übernahmen nur die Rolle der Empfänger und gewöhnten sich deshalb allmählich daran um Hilfe zu fragen. Ihre Kompetenzen, wie etwa ihre Fertigkeiten in Verbindung mit dem Meer und seiner Ökologie, wurden nicht als Elemente oder Aspekte dieser Programme berücksichtigt. Obwohl einige Programme Kenntnisse über Gruppenorganisation bereitstellten, war die Teilnahme der Moken im Grunde lediglich auf die relativ großzügigen materiellen Zuwendungen zurückzuführen.

Intervention von außen, wie durch Entwicklungsprogramme, wird häufig als ein Hauptgrund für Wandel erachtet, der für die Gesellschaft der Moken eine Bedrohung darstellen könnte. Wandel ereignete sich jedoch kontinuierlich auch in der Gemeinschaft der Moken selbst. In ihrem Verlangen nach einem besseren Leben versuchen sie sich durch ihre eigenen Strategien von ihren Nöten zu befreien. Eine Strategie besteht darin mit jedem Außenstehenden, von dem sie annehmen er könnte ihnen etwas bieten, zusammenzuarbeiten. Allerdings kommt es hierbei meistens zu Missverständnissen. Während die Mitarbeiter der Programme davon ausgehen, dass die Mitarbeit der Moken darauf beruht, dass sie die Ziele teilen, ist die Motivation der Moken allerdings sehr viel pragmatischer: Für sie bietet die Mitarbeit im Projekt eine

Möglichkeit Lohn oder Material zu erhalten. Die Ziele werden meistens gar nicht verstanden, da sie für die Moken selbst auch weitgehend irrelevant sind.

Die in den Bergregionen des Nordens durchgeführten Entwicklungsprojekte unterscheiden sich nicht wesentlich von jenen bei den Moken. Hauptziel des Staates ist die Herausbildung eines „Thai-Beswusstseins“ unter den Bergvölkern um ihre traditionellen Methoden wie den Brandrodungswanderfeldbau einzuschränken und den Nationalstaat und seine Ressourcen vor Gefahren zu schützen.

Unzählige Entwicklungsprojekte brachten große Veränderungen für die Bergvölker im Distrikt Pangmapha. So wurde der Opiumanbau durch den Anbau von Cash Crops substituiert, Schulen und Spitäler errichtet und die staatliche Verwaltung und Formen der Gruppen-Organisation eingeführt. Letzteres stellt einen wesentlichen Unterschied zu den Moken dar, da die Bergvölker durch die in den Entwicklungsprojekten vermittelten Konzepte der Zusammenarbeit gelernt haben, sich sowohl in der Gruppe als auch mit anderen Gruppen in Netzwerken zu organisieren und so die Probleme zwischen den einzelnen Gemeinden zu lösen. Dies zeigt, dass der Einfluss von Außen eine wichtige Rolle spielen kann, wenn es darum geht notwendiges Wissen zu vermitteln oder Aktivitäten der Bergvölker zu initiieren bzw. zu unterstützen. Allerdings sind diese Ergebnisse eher den „nicht-intendierten Effekten“ zuzuordnen.

## **II. Ethnische Grenzen**

Das ethnische Bewusstsein der Moken setzt sich aus 4 Teilaspekten ihrer kollektiven Identität zusammen: das Sprechen der Moken-Sprache, das Leben auf den Surin Inseln, das Sammeln von Meeresschnecken und ihre persönlichen Fertigkeiten und Charakteristika. Diese kollektive Identität wird konstruiert, um sich von anderen Gruppen zu unterscheiden. Zu diesen „Anderen“ gehören sowohl andere ethnische Gruppen wie etwa Thai, als auch Angehörige ihrer eigenen Ethnie, die abseits der Surin Inseln leben. Ihre konstruierten Grenzen resultieren aus interethnischen Beziehungen zu anderen Gruppen, mit denen sie sich vergleichen. Alle Identitäten außerhalb ihrer ethnischen Grenzen werden als „Anders“ angesehen. Ihre Sprache dient den Moken als wichtigstes Merkmal ihrer „Moken-ness“. Obwohl es kein Schriftsystem für ihre Sprache gibt und obwohl sie nur in ihrer kleinen Gemeinde gesprochen wird und von anderen Sprachen beeinflusst ist, ist die Moken-Sprache weiterhin in Verwendung, da sie für die Kommunikation innerhalb der Gruppe als sehr wichtig gilt. Die Moken sind stolz auf ihre Sprache - dem zentralen Aspekt ihrer Identität - und ziehen sie wann immer möglich, der thailändischen Sprache vor.

Der Wohnort ist ein weiterer Aspekt der von den Moken zur Konstruktion ihrer ethnischen Grenzen ausgewählt wurde. Sie sehen sich selbst als „*die Moken der Surin Inseln*“ oder „*Menschen der Surin Inseln*“. Mit anderen Worten definiert sich ihre ethnische Grenze sowohl durch ihre ethnische Identität als auch durch den geographischen Bezug. Es ist wichtig für die Moken der Surin Inseln mit diesen Inseln, die leicht auf jeder Thailandkarte zu finden sind und eine bekannte Lokalität sind, in Verbindung gebracht zu werden. Als einzige Bewohner der Insel versuchen sie dieses Privileg auszunützen, um weiterhin auf den Surin Inseln leben und die natürlichen Ressourcen nützen zu können. Es zeigt, dass geographische Grenzen benutzt werden, um ethnische Grenzen zu ziehen und „the otherness within“ zu definieren. Seit sich die Moken auf den Surin Inseln dauerhaft angesiedelt hatten und nicht länger umherfuhren, hatte das *kabang* (Moken-Boot), das Symbol der Seenomaden, keine Bedeutung mehr für die Definition ihrer Identität. Der Wandel vom Nomadendaseins zu einem sesshaften Leben machte aus den „Bootmenschen“ die „Menschen der Surin Inseln“.

Ein weiterer Teil der Moken-Identität ist das Sammeln von Seeschnecken zum Verkauf zur Sicherung des Lebensunterhalts. Obwohl sie auch alternative Einkommensquellen haben, gehen sie nach wie vor dieser gefährlichen und illegalen Aktivität nach. Das bedeutet jedoch aus wirtschaftlicher Sicht, dass der Gewinn aus den anderen Einnahmequellen nicht ausreicht. Fälschlicherweise ist die Ansicht weit verbreitet, die Moken hätten geringere finanzielle Ausgaben, da sie ihre Nahrung direkt aus dem Meer, von der Küste und den Waldgebieten nahe des Dorfes beziehen könnten. Tatsächlich sind sie aber nicht autark was ihre Nahrungsversorgung betrifft. Zumindest Reis, ihr Hauptnahrungsmittel müssen sie vom Festland beziehen. Darüber hinaus aber verändern sich ihre Konsumgewohnheiten als Folge des Einflusses durch die Parkbehörden und Touristen rapide. Dies setzt die Moken zusätzlich unter finanziellen Druck mehr zu verdienen, um diese Mehrausgaben finanzieren zu können.

Allerdings reicht eine wirtschaftliche, funktionale Bestimmung nicht aus. Mindestens ebenso relevant ist, dass mit dem Tauchen und sammeln der Schnecken eine Kontinuität zur Vergangenheit geschaffen wird. Weiterhin sind die Schnecken auch ein politisches Symbol des Widerstandes. Von Ort zu Ort zu ziehen, um ohne staatliche Beschränkungen Seeschnecken oder andere Meeres-, oder Waldprodukte zu sammeln, war einst Teil ihrer Existenzgrundlage. Heute ist das freie Herumziehen und Sammeln von Seeschnecken durch die staatliche Gesetzgebung untersagt. Dass die Moken dennoch diese Tätigkeit weiterführen, unterstreicht auch ihren Widerstand gegen die Kontrolle der Staatsmacht. Jedoch findet dieser Widerstand im

Verborgenen statt, um eine direkte Konfrontation mit den Behörden zu vermeiden. Es ist zu erwarten, dass das Sammeln von Seeschnecken in Zukunft fortgesetzt wird, da es für die Moken ein wichtiger Teil ihrer Identität ist. In diesem Falle haben wir also eine vielfache Überlagerung unterschiedlicher Sinngebungen (wirtschaftlich: Schnecken als Einkommen; kulturell: Schnecken als zentraler Bestandteil genuiner Mokenkultur; politisch: Schnecken als Ausdruck von Widerstand), die sich gegenseitig verstärken

Persönlichen Fähigkeiten und Charakteristika dienen ebenso zur Definition ihrer ethnischen Identität. Die sich verändernden Bedingungen führten dazu, dass spezifische Fertigkeiten die vormals als unabdingbar für Seenomaden galten, inzwischen verschwunden sind. Obwohl etwa die Fähigkeit ein gutes *kabang* zu bauen für die Moken und insbesondere die Männer wichtig war, denn nur wer ein Kabang bauen konnte durfte heiraten, ist sie angesichts der gegenwärtigen Lebensverhältnisse, seit sie dazu übergingen in Häusern zu leben und Motorboote zu benutzen, nicht mehr relevant (Im Gegensatz dazu ist die Befähigung nach Seeschnecken zu tauchen weiterhin wichtig).

Selbstzugeschriebene Hauptcharakteristika der Moken sind Friedfertigkeit, Unabhängigkeit, Offenheit, und die Vorliebe für persönlichen Besitz und individuelle Arbeit, um sozialen Konflikten vorzubeugen. All diese Eigenschaften leiten sich von ihrem ehemaligen Nomadenleben ab, das auf Unabhängigkeit und der Vermeidung von Konflikten und Einmischung ausgerichtet war. Die Familie ist die wichtigste soziale Einheit in der Gemeinschaft der Moken. Nach Meinung der Moken sind spezifische Fertigkeiten und Eigenschaften notwendig, um diese Institution zu erhalten und genug Einkommen zu erlangen. Das Fehlen notwendiger Fähigkeiten und erwünschter Eigenschaften wird als bedrohlich für die Familie und die Gesellschaft der Moken gewertet. Demzufolge werden Moken welche diese Fähigkeiten nicht besitzen, nicht als "gute Moken" bezeichnet.

Kulturelle Praktiken wie das alljährliche drei Tage und Nächte dauernde *ne-en lobong*-Fest spielen weder für die Abgrenzung zu anderen ethnischen Gruppen noch für die Bestimmung der eigenen Identität eine wesentliche Rolle. Allerdings sind sie politisch relevant um territoriale Ansprüche zu definieren. Die Vernachlässigung der kulturellen Bräuche liegt in der Änderung ihrer Lebensverhältnisse, von einem unabhängigen Leben, zu einem Leben als Lohnarbeiter mit fixen Arbeitszeiten und Arbeitsaufgaben begründet. Als Lohnarbeiter unterbrechen sie aus finanziellen Gründen ihre Arbeitsroutine nicht mehr um an der Zeremonie teilzunehmen. Die

Bedeutung der Zeremonie bleibt jedoch nach wie vor und die Moken die an die Existenz der Geister glauben, versuchen diese zufrieden zu stellen.

Im gebirgigen Distrikt Pangmapha leben viele verschiedene ethnische Gruppen.<sup>2</sup> Obwohl es durch inter-ethnische Beziehungen zu einem kulturellen Austausch kommt, konstruiert jede Gruppe ihre ethnischen Grenzen vorwiegend durch ihre Sprache, Trachten und Traditionen. Ähnlich wie die Moken auf den Surin Inseln beziehen sich die ethnischen Gruppen in Pangmapha ebenfalls auf ihre Sprache als dem Kern ihrer Identität. Verwandtschaftsbeziehungen zwischen den Gruppen führen jedoch dazu, dass häufig auch die Sprachen der anderen Gruppen erlernt werden. Wie meistens in multi-ethnischen Regionen sind die Bewohner multi-lingual.

Die traditionellen Trachten sind die sichtbarsten Symbole der einzelnen Bergvölker. Diese sind ein unmittelbarer Hinweis über die Zugehörigkeit zur jeweiligen Kategorie der ethnischen Gruppierung. Gleichwohl hängt es vom Bewusstsein jeder einzelnen Person und der Gemeinschaft ab, ob sie im alltäglichen Leben die traditionellen Trachten tragen. Diese werden wegen der aufwändigen Vorbereitungen, ihres hohen materiellen Wertes und des geringen Tragekomforts kaum im Alltag getragen. Bei wichtigen Zeremonien, vor allem den Neujahrsfest, spielen die Trachten allerdings eine wichtige Rolle. Das Neujahrsfest dient als Plattform für jede einzelne ethnische Gruppe, um ihre ethnische Identität zum Ausdruck zu bringen.

Des Weiteren ist es akzeptiert Trachten anderer ethnischer Gruppen zu tragen. Manche Trachten mit kürzeren Blusen sind bequemer für die Arbeit auf den Feldern. Kleidung aus der Massenproduktion ist sehr verbreitet unter den Bergvölkern, da sie billig ist und als modern gilt. Üblicherweise werden die traditionellen Kleidungsstücke und solche aus industrieller Massenfertigung kombiniert, beispielsweise T-Shirts mit traditionellen Hosen.

Was den Glauben und die traditionellen Praktiken der Bergvölker im Distrikt Pangmapha angeht, so spielt der Glaube an übernatürliche Kräfte grundsätzlich eine große Rolle. Die meisten sind Animisten, deren wesentliches Konzept darin besteht, die Geister zufrieden zu stellen. Weil die Bergvölker Landwirtschaft betreiben und die Wälder besiedeln, beziehen sich die meisten Zeremonien auf ihre Farmen und die Gesundheit. Jede Gruppe hat eigene Formen des Umganges mit der Geisterwelt, auch wenn Ähnlichkeiten der Kosmologien und Mythen bestehen.

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<sup>2</sup> Die Sprachen gehören zu ganz unterschiedlichen Familien. Die Lisu gehört zu den tibeto-birmanischen Sprachen oder der Lolo Sprachgruppe, während Lahu und Hmong zu den tibeto-sinitischen Sprachen gehören. Karen wiederum gilt als völlig eigene Sprache.

Aus dem zuvor erwähnten kann man schlussfolgern, dass die ethnischen Identitäten der Moken und Bergvölker von diesen als wesentlich für ihre Lebensverhältnisse wahrgenommen werden und daher kontinuierlich durch Bräuche ausgedrückt und in ihrer Gemeinschaften institutionalisiert werden. Diese Bräuche werden aber nur solange aufrecht erhalten, wie die Moken und Bergvölker sich ihrer Bedeutung bewusst sind. Sobald Bräuche nicht mehr als nützlich oder wesentlich für ihr tägliches Leben erachtet werden, wandeln sich die damit zusammenhängenden - in ihrer Gemeinschaft eingebetteten - Institutionen.

## **CONCLUSIO**

Die Integration in den thailändischen Staat basierend auf der Staatsbürgerschaft hat ambivalente Auswirkungen auf die Minderheiten. Sie beeinflusst ihre grundlegenden Strategien zur Sicherung der Existenzgrundlage und schränkt Möglichkeiten ein. Zugleich aber eröffnet sie auch neue Chancen. Das Beispiel der Moken zeigt, dass ihr Jäger- und Sammler System durch das Seeschnecken-Sammelverbot stark beeinträchtigt wird. Darüber hinaus hängt dieses System auch von Mobilität ab, die ebenfalls durch die Staatsbürgerschaft beschränkt wird. Nichtsdestotrotz werden durch den Tourismus (Arbeitsplätze) und die staatliche Verwaltung (Thai Nationalität) neue Möglichkeiten geboten.

Diese Ambivalenz zeigt sich ebenso bei den Bergvölkern. Ihre Ausübung des Brandrodungswanderfeldbaus und Opiumanbaus als Erweiterung ihrer Subsistenzwirtschaft wurde verboten. Zusätzlich wurde der Zugang zu für die Landwirtschaft geeignetem Raum durch die Errichtung von Naturschutzgebieten limitiert. Die Staatsbürgerschaft aber bietet ein Maß an rechtlicher Sicherheit, was die Garantie von Besitztiteln betrifft und was vielleicht noch wichtiger ist, die Staatsbürgerschaft ermöglicht es ihnen, sich in die lokale TAO Administration einzubringen. Die TAO bietet teilweise Einkommen und relative administrative Sicherheit und Autonomie.

Diese Ambivalenz ist selbst ein Resultat von Verhandlungsprozessen in welchen neben den Verwaltungsbehörden und den Minderheiten noch andere Akteure - wie Entwicklungsprogramme, Katastrophenhilfsprogramme - involviert sind. Einerseits sind diese Verhandlungen formalisiert, insbesondere wenn die externen Organisationen in der TAO involviert sind oder wenn Vertreter der Minderheiten sich in der Öffentlichkeiten engagieren. Dies ist unter den Bergvölkern, die schon seit den 1980er Jahren von den administrativen Maßnahmen stark betroffen sind, bereits gut etabliert. Bei den Moken konnte sich bisher aber noch keine repräsentative Organisation herausbilden. Andererseits sind die Verhandlungen Teil der Strategien



des alltäglichen Lebens, was Scott als “weapons of the weak” oder als “off stage” Widerstand beschreibt. Weil die Moken keine formale Organisation besitzen die ihre Interessen vertreten könnte, wie dies bei den Bergvölkern der Fall ist, sind diese „weapons of the weak“ von deutlich größerer Bedeutung.

Eine durch Entwicklungsprogramme vermittelte Fähigkeit ist für die Bergvölker sicherlich die Fähigkeit zur Selbstorganisation. Der Selbstorganisation der Bergvölker liegt das Bedürfnis zugrunde, Probleme - wie beispielsweise Konflikte über natürliche Ressourcen - zwischen den Bergvölkern selbst und zwischen den Bergvölkern und dem Staat, im gemeinsamen Interesse zu lösen. Die Organisationen der Bergvölker, gemeinsam mit der Unterstützung durch Netzwerke und Entwicklungsprojekte externer Organisationen wie NGOs, ermöglichen nicht nur eine bessere gemeinsame Ausgangsposition in Bezug auf Verhandlungen mit dem Staat, sondern erweitern auch ihre Möglichkeiten zur Sicherung der Existenzgrundlage.

Der Anreiz für die Moken zur Zusammenarbeit liegt nicht in der Selbstorganisation zur Stärkung ihrer Verhandlungsposition gegenüber dem Staat. Stattdessen sind es versprochene finanzielle und andere Unterstützungen die sie für ihre Teilnahme erhalten. Dennoch zeigt es die Abhängigkeiten zwischen den Bedürfnissen und Interessen der Moken, die sich bemühen, ihren Lebensunterhalt zu bestreiten und ihre sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Grundbedürfnisse zu befriedigen und ebenso auf neue Möglichkeiten reagieren.

Ein zentraler Aspekt in diesen Verhandlungen ist der Zugang zu Raum als Existenzgrundlage. Für beide Gruppen wird der Zugang zum Raum durch die Errichtung von Nationalparks und Naturschutzgebieten deutlich eingeschränkt, bzw. gefährdet. Jedoch gibt es dabei einen großen Unterschied. Die Bergvölker benötigen Land nicht nur zum Wohnen sondern auch für ihre Subsistenzwirtschaft und zur Einkommensgenerierung. Für die Moken war Land(Besitz) im alltäglichen Leben unbedeutend, da sie vorwiegend auf ihren Booten lebten und ihre Nahrung im Meer sammelten. Es spielte nur als vorübergehende Wohnstätte, als Ort für die alljährlichen Versammlungen und als Friedhof eine Rolle. Ihre Sichtweise von Land änderte sich als der Staat Grenzkonzepte und das Umweltschutz-Konzept einführte. Erst als ihre Bewegungsfreiheit unterbunden wurden, erhielt Land für sie Bedeutung, bisher jedoch ausschließlich als Wohnort.

Diese unterschiedliche Auffassung über die Bedeutung von Land als Grundlage des täglichen Lebens spiegelt sich auch deutlich in den Verhandlungen um Besitzrechte und Landtitel wider. Bisher wurde von den Moken diese Thema nicht aufgegriffen. Im Gegensatz dazu verlangen die Bergvölker im Distrikt Pangmapha formalisierte

Eigentumsrechte über ihr Land, also die Dokumentation der Landtitel, um ihre Zugriffsrechte und Investitionen zu sichern. In im Nachhinein vom Staat als Naturschutzgebiete definierten Arealen ist es für die Bewohner jedoch schwierig solche Besitzrechte zu erlangen. Die Ausweisung dieser „sacred spaces“ ist daher bedrohlich für die traditionellen Landrechte der Bergvölker.

Da die Staatsbürgerschaft ein wichtiges Kriterium ist, um die Rechte als legaler Bürger in Anspruch nehmen zu können, ist sie auch relevant um Besitzansprüche auf Landflächen geltend zu machen. Daher begehren die Bergvölker die Staatsbürgerschaft um ihre auf Landwirtschaft basierende Existenzgrundlage abzusichern. Für die Moken scheint die Staatsbürgerschaft in ihren Verhandlungen mit dem Staat um das Land der Surin Inseln weniger bedeutend zu sein als ihre ethnische Identität. Während die Bergvölker die Staatsbürgerschaft klar einfordern, sehen die Moken in ihr sogar Nachteile. Sie möchten ihre Praktiken, die durch thailändische Gesetze und Regelungen untersagt sind, wie das Sammeln von Seeschnecken, beibehalten. Ohne Staatsbürgerschaft, so ihre Argumentation, sind sie nicht verpflichtet diese Gesetze zu befolgen. Sie behaupten schlicht nichts davon zu wissen. Sollten sie jedoch die Staatsbürgerschaft erhalten, so ihre Sorge, können sie sich nicht länger auf ihre Unwissenheit berufen. Von diesem Standpunkt aus scheint die thailändische Staatsbürgerschaft für die Moken zwiespältig. Einerseits verspricht sie mehr Möglichkeiten andererseits beschränkt sie ihre traditionelle Lebensweise.

Das Thema Staatsbürgerschaft ist Teil eines größeren Zusammenhangs, bei dem es um die Anerkennung durch die Behörden und darüber hinaus um Anerkennung durch die thailändische Gesellschaft geht. Die Bergvölker wollen als Thais akzeptiert werden und versuchen, nicht zuletzt durch ihre Organisationen, ihr schlechtes Image als Umweltzerstörer, Drogenproduzenten und ungebildete Bergvölker loszuwerden und ein positiveres Image aufzubauen. Bemerkenswerterweise wird das Bestreben als Thais anerkannt zu werden jedoch ebenso von der Forderung nach Anerkennung der kulturellen Unterschiede begleitet. Das ist auf den Umstand zurückzuführen, dass die Bergvölker Wert darauf legen, sich von anderen Minderheiten in ihrer Region abzugrenzen. Im Fall der Moken ist das Interesse ein positives Image zu etablieren weniger stark ausgeprägt. Dies liegt daran, dass sie nicht wie die Bergvölker als bedrohlich wahrgenommen werden und daher weniger unter Druck stehen, ein positives Image hervorzuheben. Die Moken wollen zugleich sowohl als Moken als auch als Thais anerkannt werden, da sie erwarten als Thais weniger Diskriminierung durch die Mehrheitsgesellschaft zu erfahren und gleiche Rechte zu erhalten. Gleichzeitig wollen sie als Moken gesehen werden, da sie ihre Gewohnheits-, und Sonderrechte nicht verlieren möchten. Das lässt sich dadurch feststellen, dass sie nicht

versuchen, die Moken-Stereotype auszulöschen, die sie als arme und dumme Menschen darstellen, die nichts von Gesetzen und Regeln wissen. Sie akzeptieren diese Stereotype, um von den Ausnahmen zu profitieren, die ihnen gewährt werden. So werden sie beispielsweise nicht festgenommen, wenn sie illegal Seeschnecken sammeln und können kostenlos Fährverbindungen oder Gesundheitsservices in Anspruch nehmen.

Ethnische Grenzen spielen sowohl bei den Strategien der Moken als auch der Bergvölker eine Rolle. Erstere definieren ihre Gruppenidentität neu und adaptieren sie an die Umstände eines sesshaften Lebens, um mit dem Staat in Verhandlung zu treten, und ihre traditionelle Existenzgrundlage zu erhalten. Letztere nutzten ihre kulturelle Identität und kulturelle Unterschiede, um den sozialen Zusammenhalt stärken, insbesondere zur Gründung eigener Organisationen und um als TAO Mitglieder gewählt zu werden.

## SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

Although periphery areas are part of state's territories, in the past, due to their distance from the centre, these areas received neither much interest from the central government nor from the majority of the population. The only groups making use of these areas were those viewed as minorities, primitive and marginal people. Consequently, the population of these areas experienced little interference by the state. However, as a result of the emergence of several issues, such as national security (due to, for example, communist insurgencies, opium cultivation, and migration) as well as conservation awareness (due to the rapid degradation of natural resources in connection with shifting cultivation, deforestation and over-exploitation), the inhabitants of periphery areas came into the focus of the state's interest and were named as "a threat to the Thai nation state".

The threat to the Thai nation state becomes a central aspect in which policies are applied onto ethnic groups inhabiting these periphery areas and integrating them into the state's system in order to control them, to prevent any encroachment on the natural resources as well as on the state's national security. Moreover, this integration led to a hierarchical relationship between the state and the ethnic groups. The state can exercise power over the people because it is legitimated by its authority. The state also claims to be legitimized to interfere in the livelihood systems of every ethnic group inside its boundaries. Nevertheless, the level of the state's intervention in ethnic groups depends on to what extent they are regarded as a threat to the national security. As the national security plays a dominant role in the states policy, any groups who are assumed to be a threat will be observed closely. This is the reason why the hill people, who are usually viewed as destroyers of the environment, drug producers, etc., have received so much attention by the government. In contrast, the Moken are hardly the focus of the authorities because they were not viewed as a threat.

By integrating the periphery minorities into Thai society, "the otherness" is assumed to be reduced, which is expected to create loyalty to the Thai state. In other words, to integrate them into Thai social space is a form of inclusion in which they are in the process of Thaization. Integrated into the Thai nation state through policies and projects, the Moken and the hill people are at least provided possibilities to become Thai citizens. This provides civil rights, property rights, opportunities in accessing the economy and social welfare, and the chance to participate in the state administration. However, the Moken and the hill people face new circumstances that have a great impact on their livelihood systems. Their traditional practices, such as natural

resources utilization (for instance, the collecting of sea/forest products) and cultivation (for example, the shifting cultivation of the hill people) are considered as a threat to ecology, therefore, all these activities are prohibited. Although these regulations have a direct effect on the livelihood of the ethnic minorities, the authorities do not regard the effects as serious. Furthermore, other programmes initiated by the state serve mostly the state's interest and pay little attention to their livelihood.

Since the Moken and the hill people are facing new situations that came as a result of being integrated, which has great impact on their livelihood, both have found a way to cope with the new circumstances. To find out how they handle integration, strategies should be analysed because this shows how these people negotiate with, as well as resist, the state power.

The term "strategies" as used in this study refers to objectives and choices made by the Moken and the hill people in order to negotiate with the state and other groups in order to overcome risks. These risks include eviction from residence, denial of access to natural resources and loss of income sources. The strategies are based on resistance, cosmo-vision, behaviour patterns and institutions. Although the Moken and the hill people are different in terms of production patterns, both of them seek to reduce the risks, increase their income and find other opportunities. In other words, their livelihood strategies show their attempts to gain security and well-being. To secure their livelihood, not only the strategies of producing and gathering are taken into account, but also a negotiation with the state.

"Negotiation" as used here does not refer to an official engagement to find an agreement or solve a conflict. Instead, it is a part of their everyday life strategies. Therefore, this study focuses on strategies the Moken and the hill people apply to support their interests in order to convince (either directly or indirectly) other groups particularly the authorities to agree or accept their claims and access.

As hunting-gathering and farming mostly relate to the utilization of natural resources, there are competitions among users including the state, who tries to control and limit access to the natural resources through conservation policies. It is central to look at the aspects of counter discourse, resistance and identity as part of the Moken's and hill people's strategies. They are tools to negotiate both with the state and other groups in order to maintain the livelihood. Furthermore, their livelihood strategies provide better understanding of how the Moken and the hill people cope with the changing situation in which they are not only deprived of, but also are offered new opportunities.

This research also seeks to explain how the Moken and the hill people construct their counter discourses in order to maintain their livelihood and to be accepted by the authorities. Moreover, both the Moken and the hill people do not only adapt to the new situations but also resist some regulations applied by the state. Refusing to follow or avoid the state's rules can be viewed as resistance.

Ethnic identity is another important issue, which can be employed to negotiate with the majority in order to maintain the livelihood systems. To view their own group as different from others, creates ethnic boundaries, which leads both to a sense of "us" and "them" as well as inclusion and exclusion. A sense of "us" leads towards in-group support and the exclusion of others from the group and the access to resources the group claims for itself. However, interethnic relations provide possibilities to cross ethnic boundaries. Therefore, ethnic identities can be used by other groups for their interest. Tourism is an obvious example in which ethnic identities are borrowed, reproduced and become a commodity. Nonetheless, it shows that commoditizing their ethnic identities is part of their livelihood strategies in order to cope with the new situations in which ethnic identities become exotic and can be sold.

As mentioned previously, integration through state administration system creates not only new opportunities for the Moken and the hill people but also some limitations that have effects on their livelihood. Nonetheless, they are not only passive receivers of the state accepting all regulations/programmes defined by the authorities. Instead they actively select, utilize, modify, adapt, etc. in order to maintain their livelihood. To find out how they cope with the new situations, ethnography is needed in order to view the causes of their actions. The ethnography provides deep understanding as to how the Moken and the hill people make use of integration, and how they apply their cosmology and identities in order to maintain their livelihood as well as their traditional rights over natural resources.

This research focuses mainly on the group of the Moken on the Surin Islands, in Kuraburi district, Phang-nga province who shifted from nomadism to sedentariness. However, the hill people at Pangmapha district, Maehongson Province are taken into account in order to compare with the Moken their response to the state power, particularly the strategies they applied to negotiate with the state and other groups. Although both groups differ greatly in terms of their place of residence and culture, they fall in the same category defined by the state, i.e., ethnic minority groups.

## **FINDING**

### **I. Integration through State Administration**

#### **1.1 Construction and Maintenance of Space**

Integrating peripheral areas and ethnic groups inhabiting these areas into the state administration implies integrating both geographical and social space of the ethnic groups into the state. Dominant discourses on national security and conservation of natural resources, defined and legitimated by the state, have influence on the related laws and regulations in order to restrict and limit the ethnic groups' settlement and access to the natural resources. However, the ethnic groups construct their own spaces as a counter discourse to bargain with the state. Both Moken and hill people employ their cosmo vision about the natural resources to negotiate with the state, i.e., utilize the concepts of the relationship of the three worlds (natural, spiritual and human world) as a key determinant to exploit natural resources. Under these concepts, everyone is a part of nature and is able to equally access what nature provides. All incidences are explained by the spirits' influences (causes of sickness, accidents, natural disasters etc.), which serve as means to control the extraction and avoid inappropriate utilization.

Within the space issue, the Moken and the national park authority seek a dominant role in defining the geographic spaces, i.e., the Surin Islands. However, the park authority is legitimated by the law to exercise its control over access and utilization of these physical spaces. In other words, the Surin Islands became a "sacred space" in which certain rules and regulations are applied in order to prevent any encroachment. Nevertheless, the Moken deconstruct the state's definition by creating a counter space. Historical evidences of their settlement on the islands and beliefs are employed to produce their own space. The spirit poles, *lobong*, are the most important artefacts which represent the Moken's "sacred space". They are used as remarkable signs legitimizing the Moken's presence on the Surin Islands. As the *lobong* are always posted near their settlements and cemetery grounds, they become an obvious indication confirming the existence of the Moken on the Surin Islands before the declaration of these islands as a marine national park. Therefore, the spirit poles play a principal role not only as the Moken ancestors' representative but also as a symbol for the Moken boundaries. Hence, their geographical space becomes visible by the omnipresence of the spirit poles which are erected around the Surin Islands. The park authority as well as tourists accept the symbolic power of the spirit poles and reproduce the Moken's geographical boundary by regarding these poles as an emblem of the Surin Islands. The apparent example is the acceptance of the park authority to

make a propitiatory sacrifice to the spirit poles (as suggested by the Moken) to satisfy the Moken's ancestor spirits in order to prevent unpredicted calamity. Asking the Moken shamans to do the offering at the park station where there are some spirit poles, implies that the meaning of the ceremony is acknowledged by the park authority while some practices such as drinking too much alcohol and use of turtles as offerings during the ceremony process are denied. Another example within the tourism context shows that the spirit poles become another attraction besides the beautiful landscape of the Surin Islands in which the tourists regard these poles as one of their visitation memories.

The main intention of employing their beliefs and history of settlement and resources utilization in order to construct and maintain their space is to negotiate with the state power. The Moken focus on preserving their customary rights to access the natural resources without demanding ownership, which is an obvious difference from the hill people. The latter need the ownership to secure their rights for both housing and cultivating in the forest areas. To negotiate with the state, the hill people apply the similar forest conservation discourses (defined by the state) such as trees ordination and mapping their occupied areas to obtain and maintain their privileges.

Moreover, both the Moken and the hill people resist the state laws and regulations about the access to the natural resources by extracting the resources sometimes from other adjacent places (to avoid to gather sea snails in the Surin Islands conservation zones the Moken sometimes collect them from the Similan Islands, which are also protected areas) or modifying the character of certain natural resources in order to meet the criteria defined by the state's regulation (for instance, modifying trees by gridding their trunk and cut them into pieces later, to avoid the ban on cutting fresh trees).

## **1.2 Thai Citizenship**

Citizenship is a system of individual protection, a source of social solidarity and equality, i.e., rights and obligations. Inhabitants of a nation attempt to be granted nationality in order to assure their legal status and to be provided related rights. Although the Moken are indigenous people, they were not registered by the Thai state. The ignorance of the state derives from the view that they are not a threat to the Thai nation state. Only after the Tsunami they had been registered in the year 2005. In 2006, 96 Moken were granted Thai nationality. Even though the Moken are aware of the advantages of being granted Thai nationality, particularly in terms of opportunities to travel and to be employed, they are also concerned about the limitation of being labelled as Thai citizen because Thais are subject to Thai laws and regulations. In



other words, having the Thai nationality in their point of view means having equal rights as other Thai citizens. However, the Moken do not want to be treated as Thais in case they break Thai laws and regulations. They want to have rights and be equal to the Thais but without any obligation. They want to maintain their privilege as being members of the Moken ethnic group. Thus, Thai identity card, a symbol of Thai citizenship, for the Moken has two facets, both a positive and a negative one.

As for the hill people, they are viewed as a threat to the national security and natural resources. Therefore, they are taken into state administration in order to control their movements and activities. Nonetheless, the hill people are keen to have Thai nationality because it is viewed as a fundamental condition to obtain other rights, particularly ownership rights. To settle and cultivate in the forest areas belonging to some categories of conservation zones defined by the state, having a legal title guaranteed by law is understood as a main criterion.

In relation to the “Thainess discourse”, aspects of Thai language, Buddhism and monarchy are the most crucial factors. In order to display oneself as Thai, many hill people adopt this discourse with the intention of being included and accepted in the Thai society. For instance, this includes speaking the Thai language, adopting Buddhism and paying homage to the monarch. All of these practices demonstrate the hill people’s endeavour to present themselves within the frame of Thainess.

Nevertheless, having Thai citizenship does not mean that the hill people or the Moken are always equally treated as it ought to be, as mentioned in the constitution. Being members of ethnic minorities, they are usually viewed as alien and are frequently excluded from the majority. They become inferior citizens and receive less distribution from the Thai state such as social services.

### **1.3 Participation in State Administration**

Since the rural areas have been integrated into the state administration system, the informal leaders of such areas carry the burden of double duties and responsibilities, i.e., they engage in the state administration system as state authorities while they also play a role as protectors of their communities.

Both the Moken and the hill people have their informal leaders, mostly elders and shamans who are respected because of their knowledge and abilities. These leaders have significant influence on their movements and migration (in the past), ceremonies, and socialization (by passing on norms to their descendants). The observable difference, concerning the participation in the state administration between

the Moken and the hill people is that the former do not have a formal village organization, although their community at the Surin Islands could be a formal village, following the Local Administration Act 2457 (1914). This act states that a village can be set up wherever about 200 people are living together. To set up a formal village administration, the village head, vice village head, and village committee have to be elected or selected by the villagers. However, a prerequisite for this process is that all voters/selectors and candidates have Thai nationality and are registered in the same village at least for the last 3 months (for the voters) and 2 years (for the village head and vice village head candidate). Since the Moken were neither Thai nationals nor registered, a formal village organization, hence, could not be set up.

Information is transferred from the park authority to the Moken villagers either through the Moken who work for the national park or the park staff goes directly to the village. In the latter case, they usually contact the Moken they know personally. The communication between other authorities - besides the national park - from the mainland and the Moken occurs only sporadically, which is different from the case of the hill people. Since the hill people have a village administration, the communication between the authorities and the hill people takes place regularly through monthly meetings which the village heads are obliged to attend and transfer the information to their villagers. Nonetheless, in practice some village headmen do not pass on the information to the villagers because they are not always staying in the village.

Moreover, the decentralization policy of the state, such as the Tambon (sub-district) Administrative Organization, TAO, provides an opportunity for the hill people to participate in local administration. This opportunity derives from being granted Thai nationality. The hill people attempt to access the state administration, particularly as TAO representatives, because on the one hand they want to benefit from the state's resources such as salary, allowance, and knowledge. On the other hand, they want to attach themselves to the most powerful organization, i.e., the state. Having access to the power source implies being granted certain power through authority and legitimacy. This authority provides not only a feeling of being included in the state but also creates bargaining power which the hill people can use again to negotiate with the state.

#### **1.4 Development Programmes**

Rural development is an effort of the Thai state to distribute economic growth and social services to the peripheral areas. However, the rural development discourses relate vastly to the power relation between the centre and periphery. Therefore, development programmes are employed as significant tools, as believed by the state,

to improve living conditions of the rural people. The ethnic groups are typically viewed as weak groups and backward. Therefore, it is seen as necessary to launch development programmes in order to provide them better choices and civilize them. Developments programmes always coincide with the aspect of national security, in order to control their activities and movements.

Additionally, the development programmes are frequently subject to top down policies in which development experts play a significant role in defining the agenda. The locals are not the main actors, particularly in the project planning. Instead, they are placed in the last stage of the programmes, only to fulfil the famous concept of “local participation”.

The most important development programme in the Moken community on the Surin Islands was the settlement programme after the Tsunami 2004, at *Ao Bonyai* on the South Surin Island. Later, programmes which were aimed at improving the living conditions of the Moken and bringing them closer to civilization focused on education, hygiene and health care.

Nonetheless, development programmes carried out in the Moken community were mainly based on material support from outside. The Moken only played a role as receivers; therefore, they got accustomed to ask for help. Their capabilities such as skills related to the sea and its ecology are not taken into account as central elements of the programmes. Although some programmes provided knowledge of group organization, for the Moken, their participation merely refers to the relative high benefit they expected.

Intervention from outside, such as development programmes, is often viewed as a principal cause of change which might become a threat to the Moken society. However, change has taken place continually within their community by the Moken themselves. Because of their desire for a better life, they try to free themselves from hardships by using their own strategies such as to collaborate with any outsiders who are supposed to provide something for them. Nevertheless, their collaboration does not always mean that they understand the objectives and goals. Instead, they want to gain something such as wage and materials.

The development programmes accomplished in the mountain areas are not much different from that of the Moken. The main objective of the state is to create a Thai consciousness among the hill people in order to restrict and limit their traditional practices such as shifting cultivation which is seen as a threat to the natural resources. Having intensive development programmes, many changes occurred among the hill

people of Pangmapha district, such as cash crops cultivation (substitute for opium), the construction of schools and hospital, the introduction of ideas of state administration and group organization. The latter aspect is obviously different from the Moken because the hill people are provided concepts of both, intra and inter group cooperation, by the development programmes. Hence, they are able to organize networks to solve the problems occurring between their communities. From this point of view, it implies that outside interferences play important roles to transfer necessary knowledge and initiate or support the hill people activities.

## **II. Ethnic Boundaries**

The ethnic consciousness of the Moken is created through 4 aspects of collective identities, i.e., speaking the Moken language, living on the Surin Islands, collecting sea snails for trading and (their) personal abilities and characteristics. These collective identities are constructed aiming to differentiate themselves from other groups. These “others” include both distinct ethnic groups such as the Thai but also the same ethnic group who live outside the Surin Islands. Their boundaries are constructed resulting from interethnic relationships which provide comparisons between them and the other groups. Any identities which lie outside their boundaries are considered as “otherness”. The Moken regard their language as the most important marker for their Moken-ness. Although they do not have a written system and despite it is only spoken in their small group and influenced by other languages, their (speaking) language tends to be maintained because they perceive it as relevant for their in-group communication. As central aspect of their identity, the Moken are proud of their language and prefer it to Thai, whenever possible.

The place of living is another aspect selected by the Moken to create their ethnic boundaries. They regard themselves as “*the Morgan of the Surin Islands*” or “*the people of the Surin Islands*”. In other words, ethnic identity and geographic reference are applied in constructing their ethnic boundaries. It becomes important for the Moken to be associated with the Surin Islands because these islands can be easily found on the (national) map and are a nationwide well known locality. As the only inhabitants of the Islands, the Moken use this privilege to maintain their rights to further reside on the Surin Islands to hold up their access to the natural resources. It illustrates that the geographic boundaries are employed to define the ethnic boundaries to create “the otherness within”.

Moreover, since the Moken have a permanent settlement on the Surin Islands and do not wander anymore, the *kabang*, (traditional boat) a symbol of the sea nomads, is no longer taken into account anymore to define their ethnic identity. Therefore, their identity is redefined, i.e., it is shifted from nomadic to sedentary life or from “the boat people” to “the people of the Surin Islands”.

Another part of the identity of the Moken-ness is to earn a living by gathering sea-snails for trading. Although they have alternative sources of income, they continue this risky, illegal activity. From an economic point of view, it means that these alternative sources do not provide enough income for them. The Moken are always misunderstood to have fewer expenses because food can be gathered from the sea, coastal and forest areas nearby their village. But in fact, they are not completely self-sufficient; at least, they have to buy rice, their main food, from the mainland. Moreover, their consumption patterns are changing, resulting from imitating others, such as the park staff, tourists, etc. Therefore, the Moken are under pressure to earn more to cover the expenses.

However, diving for gathering sea snails is not only done for economic reasons but also as reminiscence of their past and as resistance. Travelling from place to place, either to gather sea snails or other marine or forest products without any restriction from the state was part of their livelihood in the past. Nowadays, free travelling and collecting sea snails is prohibited according to the state’s laws. To continue this practice illustrates that they resist the control of state power. Nonetheless, the resistance is done secretly in order to avoid direct confrontation with the authorities. Gathering sea snails is expected to be continued because the Moken refer to it as important part of their identity.

Personal abilities and characteristics are also applied to define their ethnic identities. The shifting situation leads to disappearance of related skills which were once viewed as the most crucial ones for sea nomads. Though the ability to build a good *kabang* used to be significant for the Moken, particularly for the men, it is not relevant any more for their current livelihood system since they choose to stay in houses and use engine boats.

Apparent characteristics of the Moken on the Surin Islands are peacefulness, independence, openness, and the preference of private property to common property and individual work. All of these characteristics derive from their nomadic way of living, which focused on independence and avoidance of turbulence and interference. The family unit is the most important in the Moken society. According to the Moken, some abilities and characteristics are needed to maintain this institution and provide

enough income. Lack of necessary abilities and desirable characteristics are viewed as a threat to their family and society. Hence, any Moken who do not have these qualifications will not be considered as a “*good Morgan*”.

To differentiate themselves from other ethnic groups, the Moken do not mention their unique cultural practice, *ne-en lobong*- spirit poles ceremony- which is organized 3 days and 3 nights annually. Only the 4 aspects mentioned previously, are regarded as important parts of their identities. The declining importance of cultural practices derives from changes in their livelihood system, from an independent life to that of a waged worker who is subject to time schedules and work tasks. Their economic pressure from earning affects their participation in the *ne-en lobong*, i.e., they do not abstain from their routine work to join the ceremony. However, the meaning of this ceremony remains and the Moken are aware of the existence of the spirits and try to satisfy them.

The mountainous Pangmapha district is inhabited by various ethnic groups. Even though cultural exchange occurs, resulting from interethnic relationships, each ethnic group creates their boundaries mainly through language, costume and traditional practice. Similarly to the Moken on the Surin Islands, the ethnic groups in Pangmapha refer to their languages as the core of their identity to define their ethnic groups. However, the inter-affiliation between groups leads to the learning other groups' languages.

Traditional costumes are the most visible symbols of each group of hill people. These costumes provide an immediate indication of ethnic category. Nonetheless, dressing up in traditional costume in everyday life depends on the awareness of each person and community. Though the traditional costumes are not worn everyday due to the time consuming preparations, expensiveness and inconvenience, at least for their New Year celebration the hill people dress up in their traditional styles. This important occasion also serves as a platform for each ethnic group to express their ethnic identities.

Furthermore, dressing in other ethnic groups' costumes is acceptable, mostly because such costumes, such as shorter blouses, are more convenient when working in the field. Additionally, mass produced ready-to-wear clothes play a dominant role in the hill people's lives because they are cheap and modern. Usually, the traditional costumes and industrial cloths are combined, such as T-shirt and traditional trousers.

For belief and traditional practices, the hill people in Pangmapha basically believe in supernatural powers. Most of them are animists and the fundamental idea is to satisfy the spirits. Because they practice agriculture and inhabit the forest areas, most ceremonies relate to their farms and health. Each ethnic group has different forms of worshipping the spirits which serves as ethnic boundaries.

In conclusion, since the ethnic identities of the Moken and the hill people are perceived by themselves as relevant to their livelihoods, these identities are continually expressed through customs and institutionalized in their societies. However, these customs will be maintained only if the Moken and the hill people are aware of the importance of such customs. As soon as some customs are not considered as useful or crucial for their daily lives, the related institutions which are embedded in their societies are also shifted.

## **CONCLUSION**

Integration into the Thai state based on citizenship has ambivalent effects on the minorities. It affects in many ways their basic livelihood strategies and limits opportunities. At the same time, it is providing them with new opportunities. Taking the Moken as an example, their system of hunting-gathering is strongly limited due to prohibitions, such as those in regards to the collection of sea snails. Furthermore, this system depends on mobility, which again, is limited by citizenship. Nonetheless, new opportunities through tourism (e.g. employment) and the state administration (e.g. Thai nationality) are provided. This ambivalence is obvious for the hill people as well. Their practices of shifting cultivation and opium production as extension of subsistence production have been forbidden. In addition, their access to space to be used for agriculture was limited by the establishment of wildlife sanctuaries/national conservation forests. But citizenship provides a level of legal security, including security of property titles. What is probably even more important, citizenship allows them to participate in local administration particularly the TAO, which partly provides income sources, but provides relative administrative security and autonomy.

This ambivalence is itself a result of negotiation processes in which besides the administration and the minorities other actors like development programmes, disaster relieve etc. are involved. On the one hand, these negotiations are formalized, especially if external organizations are involved not the least in the TAO or through a public sphere in which representatives of the minorities are engaged. This is well established among the hill people, who have, since the eighties, been strongly affected by administrative policies and development projects. For the Moken, no own representative organizations have evolved so far. On the other hand, the negotiations

are part of everyday life strategies, as described by Scott (1986) as “weapons of the weak” or as “off stage” resistance. Because the Moken, unlike the hill people, lack formal organization for self-representation of interests these weapons of the weak are even more relevant.

One capacity provided by the development projects certainly is the ability of self-organization. The hill people’s self-organization is based on a need to solve problems of their common interests, for example, to handle a conflict over natural resources, both between hill people themselves and between hill people and the state. The hill people’s own organizations together with the support from networks and the development projects of external organizations such as NGOs create not only collective bargaining power to negotiate with the state but also widen their livelihood possibilities. For the Moken, their motivation for group cooperation is not self-organization in order to negotiate with the state. Instead, it is due to the promised income and other benefits they would receive from their participation. Nevertheless, it represents interdependencies between the needs and interests of the Moken striving to make a living by attempting to meet their economic and social necessities as well as responding to new opportunities.

One crucial aspect in negotiations is access to space as base for their livelihood because both groups are strongly affected by the establishment of national parks/wildlife sanctuaries which endanger their access to space. Here we have an important difference. For the hill people, land is needed not only for residence but also for subsistence production and for generating an income. For the Moken, the land was not relevant for their everyday life; they lived mainly on their boats and collected food in the sea. It played a role merely as a temporary dwelling place, site for the annual reunion and graveyards. Their perspective on the land changed when the state applied the concept of boundaries as well as the concept of ecology conservation. Only since their mobility had been prohibited, land becomes fundamental for their everyday life, but still primarily only for residence.

This difference in the relevance of land as a base for everyday life is well expressed with regards to negotiations over property rights and land deeds. The Moken, so far, have not raised this issues at all. In contrast, for the hill people in Pangmapha, ownership of land, particularly a land deed, is demanded in order to ensure their right of access and investments. However, inhabiting wildlife sanctuaries, which were defined as such later by the state, limits the possibility of legal ownership. The establishment of these “sacred spaces”, therefore, becomes a threat to the hill people’s traditional rights over the land.



Since citizenship plays a crucial role as fundamental criterion to gain other rights of being a legal citizen, it is relevant for making a claim over the land. Therefore, the hill people demand the citizenship in order to ensure their agricultural base livelihood. For the Moken citizenship seems less important than ethnic identity in their negotiation with the state over the land of the Surin Islands. While the hill people strongly demand citizenship, the Moken perceive it even as disadvantageous. They want to continue practices, such as collecting sea snails, which are prohibited by Thai laws. Not having citizenship, they argue, prevents them from having to follow the laws and regulations. They simply pretend not to know anything about the regulations and restrictions. If they have Thai citizenship, they worry they will not be able to refer to their ignorance anymore. From this point of view the Thai citizenship becomes an ambivalent aspect for the Moken. On the one hand, it is expected to provide more opportunities. On the other hand, it also limits their traditional pattern of life.

The issue of citizenship is part of a larger context concerning the recognition by the Thais. The hill people want to be accepted as Thai and try not the least through their organizations, to establish a positive image instead of being seen as destroyers of the environment, drug producers, uneducated etc. Interestingly, this attempt to be seen as Thai is accompanied by the demand for recognition of cultural differences. This might be due to the fact that for the hill people it is important too to distinguish themselves from other minorities within the same region. In the case of the Moken this interest to establish a positive image is far less pronounced. This is possibly because they are not seen as a threat as the hill people, hence, they have less pressure to highlight the positive image. The Moken want to be recognized as Moken and Thai together because being recognized as Thai is expected to reduce discrimination by the majority and to provide equal rights. At the same time, they also want to be seen as Moken because they want to maintain their customary rights and exceptional treatment. This can be observed from that they do not attempt to obliterate the stereotypes of being poor and stupid people and not having any ideas about laws and regulations. They accept these stereotypes in order to benefit from exceptions, such as not being arrested when collecting sea snails illegally, or being able to use the ferryboat to the mainland for free as well as hospital services.

Ethnic boundary is another strategy applied by the Moken and the hill people. The former redefine their ethnic group identities as well as construct a new identity resulting from their adaptation to the new circumstances of a sedentary life to bargain with the state in order to maintain their traditional livelihood system. The latter utilize their cultural identity and distinction to enhance social cohesion particularly for

establishing their own organizations and for being elected to be a member in the TAO.

Both the Moken and the hill people apply their own strategies to negotiate with the state and other groups in order to reduce uncertainties and discrimination as well as to diversify their opportunities.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

APP	=	Andaman Pilot Project
CFA	=	Community Forestry Act
DOLA	=	Department of Local Administration
GIS	=	Geographic Information System
GNP	=	Gross National Product
GTZ	=	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
MDGs	=	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	=	Non Government Organizations
ONCB	=	Office of Narcotic Control Board
PMP Network	=	Pangmapha Thai Hill People Network
RFD	=	Royal Forest Department
SIF	=	Social Investment Fund
SIMNP	=	Surin Islands Marine National Park
TAO	=	Tambon (sub-district) Administrative Organization
TG-HDP	=	Thai-German Highland Development Program

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Although periphery areas are subject to state's territories, in the past, due to their distance from the centre, these areas received neither much interest from the central government nor from the majority of the population. The only groups making use of these areas were those viewed as minorities, primitive and marginal people. In other words, living in remote areas was understood as being at the margin of the mainstream society and economy. Consequently, the population of these areas experienced little interference by the state. However, as a result of the emergence of several issues, such as national security (for instance due to communist insurgencies, opium cultivation, and migration) as well as conservation awareness (due to the rapid degradation of natural resources in connection with shifting cultivation, deforestation and over exploitation), the inhabitants of periphery areas came into the focus of the state's interest and were named as "a threat to the Thai nation state".

The threat to the Thai nation state becomes a central aspect in which policies are applied onto ethnic groups inhabiting these periphery areas and integrating them into the state's system in order to control them, to prevent any encroachment on the natural resources as well as on the states national security. Moreover, this integration led to a hierarchical relationship between the state and the ethnic groups. The state can exercise power over the people because it is legitimated by its authority. The state also claims to be legitimized to interfere in the livelihood systems<sup>1</sup> of every ethnic group inside its boundaries as pointed out by Jenkins:

*"...the capacity to intervene successfully in other people's lives implies either the power or the authority to do so. The exercise of power implies competitive access to and control over resources, while authority is only effective when it is legitimate. Power and authority are necessarily embedded within active social relationship"*  
(Jenkins 1998: 53)

Nevertheless, the level of the state's intervention in ethnic groups depends on the extent of threat they are viewed as to the national security. From this central concern, the hill people received much attention from the state. Keyes (1997: 13-15) points out

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<sup>1</sup> Webster's new world dictionary (1988) defines "livelihood" as "a means of living or of supporting life" (p.791) and describes "system" as "a set or arrangement of things so related or connected as to form a unity or organic whole" (p.1358).

A livelihood system refers to "the numerous bio-physical and socio-economic forces and factors that affect the family (Pomeroy, Gough, Baker, and Hildebrand 2002). [Online] Available: [www.depts.ttu.edu](http://www.depts.ttu.edu). Access date: August 10, 2007.

that before 1950 the hill people were ignored by the Thai government. Since Mao's successful revolution in China, the rebellions of tribal in Burma, and the conflict in Laos, the tribal people from these neighbouring areas migrated increasingly into northern Thailand. Some migrants maintained relations with politically active tribal people in these countries. It initiated the definition of the "hill tribe problem" by the government of Sarit Thanarat (1957-63), concluding that the hill people created a major threat to Thailand's internal security. This view led to several armed conflicts between the Thai military forces and the hill people who were considered supporters of a communist-led insurrection (as happened in some Hmong and Mien villages). The main task, to assimilate hill people into Thai society, began in the mid-1960s, mostly through educational and Buddhist missionary programmes. Furthermore, the Thai government also applied policies of opium elimination and forced the hill people to stop shifting cultivation and adapt to alternative forms of agricultural production and crops substitution which was strongly supported by the "royal project"<sup>2</sup>.

As the national security plays a dominant role in the states policy, any groups assumed to be a threat will be closely observed. This is the reason why the hill people have received much attention by the government. In contrast, the Moken were hardly in the focus of the authorities because they were not viewed as a threat. Because of the ignorance of the state they were allowed the possibility to maintain their traditional nomadic livelihood system. Since "natural resources conservation" has become a tool to control access to natural resources, applied by the state through a declaration of national park, the Moken's traditional livelihood is limited. The Moken's wandering and foraging throughout the Surin Islands has been regarded not only as a threat to ecology but also as a violation of the law of settlement, i.e., the people living in Thai territories have to have permanent residences. Therefore, the Moken have to change from nomadic life to sedentary life and are subject to the Thai administration system.

By integrating the periphery minorities into Thai society "the otherness" is assumed to be reduced, which is expected to create loyalty to the Thai state. In other words, to integrate them into Thai social space is a form of inclusion in which they are in the

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<sup>2</sup> In 1959 the State had promulgated legislation banning the cultivation of the opium poppy, but there did not exist at the time any research and development programmes to provide the hill tribe people with alternatives. In response to the problem, His Majesty King Bhumibol conceived and launched the Royal Project in 1969. The Royal Project has four major objectives:

1. Offer a helping hand to all humankind
  2. Ensure natural resources for conserving a sustainable future
  3. Eradicate opium poppy cultivation and opium derived addiction problems
  4. Encourage a wise and proper balance in utilising and conserving land and forest resources
- [Online] Available: [www.doikham.com](http://www.doikham.com). Access date: August 10, 2007.

process of Thaization. Nevertheless, being integrated into the national space does not mean that all of them are granted Thai citizenship. Only can they, with Thai nationality, be guaranteed their rights by law.

Integrated into the Thai nation state through policies and projects, the Moken and the hill people are at least provided possibilities to become Thai citizens. This provides civil rights, property rights and opportunities in accessing the economy and social services such as health care and education. Moreover, they also have chances to participate in the states administration, for example, through the Tambon (sub-district) Administrative Organization (TAO) in which mainly local needs are emphasized. However, the Moken and the hill people face new circumstances that have a great impact on their livelihood systems. Their traditional practices, such as natural resources utilization (for instance, the collecting of sea/forest products) and cultivation (for example, the shifting cultivation of the hill people) are considered as a threat to ecology, therefore, all these activities are prohibited. Although these regulations have a direct effect on the livelihood of the ethnic minorities, the authorities do not regard the effects as serious. Furthermore, other programmes initiated by the state serve mostly the state's interest and pay little attention to their livelihood. As pointed out by Phongpaichit that

*“The government programmes towards these people seem to be designed to change them from being who they are to render them capable of being included. The development programmes were initiated with little interest about the impact on their culture and livelihood”*

*(Phongpaichit 1996:26)*

Since the Moken and the hill people have faced the new situations that came as a result of being integrated, which has great impact on their livelihood, both have found a way to cope with the new circumstances. To find out how they handle integration, strategies should be analyzed because these show how these people negotiate with, as well as resist, the state power.

The term “strategies” as used in this study refers to objectives and choices made by the Moken and hill people in order to negotiate with the state and other groups in order to overcome risks. These risks include eviction from residence, denial of access to natural resources and loss of income sources. The strategies are based on resistance, cosmo-vision, behaviour patterns and institutions.

Although the Moken and the hill people are different in terms of production patterns, both of them seek to reduce the risks, increase their income and find other

opportunities. In other words, their livelihood strategies show their attempts to gain security and well-being. Chambers points out significances of the livelihood security that

*“Livelihood security depends most obviously on the physical, social and economic environment and on the means and ability to deal with stress and shocks without damaging loss. Security here means freedom from threats or loss”*

*(Chambers 1997: 170)*

“Negotiation” as used here does not refer to an official engagement to find an agreement or solve a conflict. Instead, it is a regular and routine occurrence as part of their everyday life. Therefore, this study focuses on strategies the Moken and the hill people apply to support their interests in order to convince (either directly or indirectly) other groups, particularly the authorities, to agree or accept their claims and access. Chambers and Conway mention about claims and access that

*“Claims are demands and appeals which can be made for material, moral or other practical support or access.... Claims are based on combinations of right, precedent, social convention, moral obligation and power.*

*Access is the opportunity in practice to use a resource, store or service or to obtain information, material, technology, employment, food or income”*

*(Chambers and Conway 1991: 8)*

As hunting-gathering and farming mostly relate to the utilization of natural resources, there are competitions among users including the state, who tries to control and limit access to the natural resources through conservation policies. It is central to look at the aspects of counter discourse, resistance and identity as part of the Moken’s and hill people’s strategies. They are tools to negotiate both with the state and other groups in order to maintain their livelihood. Furthermore, their livelihood strategies provide better understanding of how the Moken and the hill people cope with the changing situation in which they are not only deprived of, but also are offered new opportunities.

Counter discourses, both constructed by ethnic groups and taken from dominant discourses, also play an important role. They are one aspect of strategies which can be applied to negotiate with the state in order to be able to access the natural resources because discourse is the framework of thinking in a particular area of social life as pointed out by Giddens (2001: 687). Moreover, Foucault explains that

*“...in discourse something is formed, according to clearly definable rules that this something exists, subsists, changes, disappears according to equally definable rules; in short, that alongside everything a society can produce ... there is the formation and transformation of thing said”*  
(Foucault 1972a: 63 in Chareonsinolan 2002:21)

In other words, forming the new logic through counter discourse is a strategy to oppose/negotiate the prior logic. For example, the discourse that, “people and forests can co-exist” is constructed by the forest dwellers to counter the discourse of “forest conservation” of the state which views people as a threat to the forests who have to be moved out/ relocated.

Therefore, this research seeks to concentrate on the aspects which the Moken and the hill people apply, to construct their counter discourses in order to legitimize themselves to maintain their livelihood and to be accepted by the authorities. For example, the Moken make use of “*chao lay/chao Morgan*” discourse in which they are viewed as inferior to Thai, stupid, not having any idea about laws and regulations, to negotiate with the authorities dealing with the regulations of the national park (such as the ban on collecting sea snails).

Moreover, both the Moken and the hill people do not only adapt to the new situations but also resist several aspects applied by the state. Refusing to follow or avoid the state rules and regulations can be viewed as resistance. Nevertheless, the resistance is always done without direct confrontation as pointed out by Scott that

*“The everyday resistance may be grouped the ordinary weapons of many subordinate groups such as false-compliance, pilfering and slander. Such forms of resistance have certain features in common which often represent forms of self-help as well as avoid any direct symbolic affront to authority”*  
(Scott 1986: 1)

Ethnic identity is another important issue which can be employed as a means for some privileges such as not to be arrested when breaking rules. It can be applied to negotiate with the state in order to maintain the livelihood systems. To view their own group as different from others creates ethnic boundaries, which leads both to a sense of “us” and “them” as well as inclusion and exclusion. A sense of “us” leads towards in-group support and exclude others from the group and the access to resources the group claims for itself. However, interethnic relations provide possibilities to cross ethnic boundaries. Therefore, ethnic identities can be used by other groups for their interest. Tourism is an obvious example in which ethnic identities are borrowed,

reproduced and become commodity. Nonetheless, it shows that commoditizing their ethnic identities is part of their livelihood strategies in order to cope with the new situations in which ethnic identities become exotic and can be sold.

As mentioned previously, integration through state administration system creates not only new opportunities for the Moken and the hill people but also some limitations that have effects on their livelihood. Nonetheless, they are not only passive receivers of the state accepting all regulations/programmes defined by the authorities. Instead they actively select, utilize, modify, adapt, etc. in order to maintain their livelihood. To find out how they cope with the new situations, ethnography is needed in order to view the causes of their actions. The reason for applying this method is clearly explained by Giddens that

*“Ethnography is the study of people and groups at first hand over a period of time, using participant observation or interviews to learn about social behaviour. Ethnographic research seeks to uncover the meanings which underpin social actions; this is done through the researcher’s direct involvement in the interaction which constitutes social reality for the group being studied. ...ethnography provides richer information about social life than most other research methods. Once we see how things look from the inside of a given group, we are likely to have a better understanding of why members act as they do”*  
(Giddens 2001: 646-647)

Therefore, ethnography provides deep understanding as to how the Moken and the hill people make use of integration as well as how they apply their cosmology and identities in order to maintain their livelihood as well as their traditional rights over natural resources.

This research focuses mainly on the group of the Moken on the Surin Islands, in Kuraburi district, Phang-nga province who shifted from nomadism to sedentariness. However, the hill people at Pangmapha district, Maehongson Province are taken into account in order to compare with the Moken their response to the state power, particularly the strategies they applied to negotiate with the state and other groups. Although both groups differ greatly in terms of their place of residence and culture, they fall in the same category defined by the state, i.e., ethnic minority groups.

Following the Introduction in Chapter I, Chapter II centres on the background of the Moken on the Surin Islands. It provides a picture of their livelihood systems including social and economic aspects. It also illustrates their perspective on the state laws and regulations as well as their resistance to the state power.

The focal point of Chapter III lies on the state integration, both in terms of space and social issues. Since the geographic spaces are defined as heterotopias and are subjected to state control, the ethnic groups who inhabit these spaces encounter new situations, which obstruct activities that are part of their livelihood. Hence, this chapter shows how the Moken and the hill people construct their spaces with the intention to maintain control over their geographic areas and what they incorporate through negotiating with the state as well as other groups who compete for access and utilization of natural resources. For the social integration, the state applies policies of citizenship, local administration, and development programmes on the ethnic groups in order to include them into Thainess. This shows the reason why the Moken only recently were granted Thai nationality and are not very confident whether it provides an advantage or a disadvantage and why the hill people were granted Thai nationality and are keen to possess a Thai identity card. Moreover, this chapter illustrates the changes in the communities of the Moken and hill people, resulting from being introduced into the local administrative system by the state. It also indicates the reasons for the launching of development programmes in their communities by the state as well as the reasons of these ethnic groups for their involvement in such programmes, although some are inappropriate for their way of life.

The main focus of Chapter IV is how the Moken and the hill people as actors create their ethnic boundaries and how these selected identities play a role in relation to power issues. Interethnic relationship creates both ethnic consciousness and cultural exchange. Since identities are constructed and dynamic, their boundaries become vague when they are utilized by other ethnic groups for several purposes such as for economic reasons. Tourism is an obvious example of ethnic identities being commoditized. Therefore, this part will also analyse how the Moken and the hill people use their distinct identities to gain their market share from the tourism industry.

The last Chapter will discuss possible strategies, which the Moken and the hill people may be able to apply in order to negotiate with the state in order to maintain their livelihood. In other words, it illustrates how they make use of their ethnic identities as tools to negotiate with the state in order to maintain their legitimacy on their geographical spaces, access the natural resources, as well as gain equal civil rights.

Hopefully this study provides insight to possible strategies for these otherwise “powerless” ethnic groups in gaining and maintaining bargaining power.



## CHAPTER II

### BACKGROUND

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, this study focuses mainly on the Moken people on the Surin Islands in Kuraburi district, Phang-nga province. Therefore, the background of the Moken is taken into account as a focal point of this chapter while the general situation of the hill people in Pangmapha is briefly described towards the end of this section.

Although this is a comparative study of the Moken and hill people, ethnography of the hill people is not the focal point. A lot of data has been written about the hill people and is available in a variety of research papers, books, dissertations, journals, etc. For a long time, the Thai state has recognized the need for understanding and learning about the hill people. Obvious evidence of this is the establishment of the Tribal Research Centre (TRC) in 1965, which was institutionalized in 1984. Though the Bureaucratic Reform Act closed down this institution in 2002, the stories of the hill people continue to be published through the work of scholars, researchers, students and the media.

Since there is comparatively little data about the Moken on the Surin Islands, this chapter attempts to enrich the ethnographical knowledge on them. This is in order to understand how their cultural setting, as a whole, plays a role in selected strategies applied in negotiating with the state as well as how these strategies affect their everyday life pattern.

#### 1. Migration of the Moken

Scholars assume that the Moken previously based themselves along the Yangtze River in China, then migrated southward by boat along the Khong River through Indochina to the sea. Boats functioned as mobile houses and the people stopped over at islands from the Malay Peninsular to Burma (Hiranto, 1973). The argument of migration following the Khong River might be possible because it is found that the formal sea nomads at some places in Thailand have particular genes that relate to the Khmer which might result from intermarriage<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> From a genetic study, Nuntawan (1991) finds that sea nomads or *chaolay* at *ban Thachadchai* and *ko sireh*, Phuket province, southwest Thailand, have particular genes called  $\beta^E$ -globin which relate them to the Khmer of Khong River basin. She concludes that this might result from intermarriage between sea nomads and Khmer during their migration along the Khong River.

From the west coast of Thailand and Malaya, the Moken drifted northward into the Mergui Archipelago<sup>4</sup>. According to their oral history, they firstly settled down on the mainland. Later on they had been invaded by the T'now (Burmese) who burnt and plundered their settlements and cultivations, which drove them away. Being expelled to the coast, they crossed the shallower waters to the near islands of the Mergui Archipelago and founded several large settlements including plantations. However, acts of piracy were frequent as from the Batuk from the south. Their plantations were robbed or destroyed, and many of the people were abducted to become slaves. Said to be a quiet, peace-loving, and defenceless people, it became necessary for the sea nomads to build boats in order to flee from the danger. It was said that the sea nomads were involved in piracy. However, the characteristics of the Moken nomad (non-accumulative, non-violent) cannot have any connection with piracy (Ivanoff 2001).

Outside pressure, therefore, was the reason for their migration. In other words, retreats expounded on the pretext of defining “ecological niches” and explaining that the nomadic behaviour was always imposed and never freely chosen (Ivanoff 2005: xxi). Pelras (1972 in Ivanoff 1999: 2) asserts that the Moken left to the Mergui Archipelago to escape from commerce and Islam which utilized the Malay networks scattered all over the Indo-Malay Archipelago to assimilate the entire maritime population. Ivanoff (2001) supports that the Moken are Austronesian of Malay origin and they mostly came from the Riau-Lingga Archipelago, which is the historical centre of the nomadic maritime population. Simultaneous to their migration, the pressure to accept Islam, to engage in commerce and to stay on land, which was exerted on them, and which was partly responsible for the social expression of their nomadism, caused them to slowly turn towards the north.

Nonetheless, Hogan (1972) argues that the origin of the Moken cannot be reduced to a “flight from Islamization” nor to a “flight from commercialization”. He further states that Ivanoff seems to obscure the boundary between myth and history. Moreover, Ivanoff’s assertion of an origin centre of the sea nomad culture located in the Riau-Linga Archipelago, with diffusion afterwards, is speculative with regard to Southeast Asian history and does not correlate with the spread of the different sea nomad languages (Hogan 1972 in Maurer 2006).

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<sup>4</sup> The hypothesis of displacement from south to north is supported by 1) the disappearance of the Moken from Phuket-Trang coast 2) the Burmese name for the Moken, Selung, with a probable earlier home near Phuket 3) the evidence (such as boats) linking the Moken with Orang Laut Kappir of Trang who came from the south (the Langkawi Islands) 4) the Moken spirit posts are regarded as having southern affinities, while the complexion of Moken animism is Indonesian (Sopher 1977: 346).

An observation by White, who did a census of the Moken during 1911 in Burma, finds that some Moken were working in Ranong Province<sup>5</sup>. At that time, dredging for tin was developed and tin mines were opened up. Moken labourers were drawn away from the Mergui Archipelago into Thailand and were induced to work in these. Besides working as labourers in tin mines, another possibility was that some Moken went on a forage south of the Mergui Archipelago and found fertile islands in Thailand. News spread, bringing many friends and relatives down to the area, which entailed semi-permanent settlement. Wandering from island to island and even across the boundary was part of their livelihood system. However, when Thailand and Burma declared the national boundaries, freely wandering was limited and they had to decide where they wanted to settle down.

## 2. Name

### 2.1. Endonym: Mawken-Moken

White, who studied the Moken language insists that “*the sea gypsies have a right to be known by their own name: Mawken*” (White 1922: 56). In their language “Maw” means drowning, l’maw means “to draw”. “O’en” is their word for fresh water, taken from the springs, while O’en-ken, abbreviated into o’ken, means salt water. The word for “drown” and the word for “salt water” have been coalesced to create the new word Maw-ken, meaning “the Sea-drowned” (White 1922: 60). Einsworth (1930: 20-21) also supports the idea that “Mawken” is the name they call themselves. He points out that “Maw”, or drowning, is derived from the freeboard which is made of strips of the palm tree. Without it the boats used to be swamped and the occupants drowned. “Oken” is their word for salt water. So these two words seem to have been joined to the word “Mawken”, which means “Sea drowned”. Moreover, Sopher (1977: 63) also supports that “Moken” is their own name for themselves. However, Ivanoff (2001) argues that they call themselves “Moken” which signifies “diving into the sea”. Ivanoff reveals the meaning of Moken according to the epic poem of Gaman. “Mo” is “lemo” or immerse, and “ken” is the name of queen Sibian’s sister. Queen Sibian was angry about having been deceived by her sister, Ken, and her lover, Gaman. She cursed Ken to be immersed in the sea, “lemo Ken”, which is to say Moken. The verbal prefixes, le/me/ne, do not alter the meaning of words which they are joined; they add to the fluidity of elocution, the exaltation of sentiments.

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<sup>5</sup> Ranong was well known for the rich deposits of alluvial tin which were being worked by two large English companies (Einworth 1930: 10).

## 2.2 Exonym

The Thais call the Moken Chaonam (Men of the water, people living near the water), which many Moken dislike; Chao Talay or Chaolay (Men of the sea); Chao koh (Men of the islands); Morgan (the popular name used by the majority of the Thai people). However, Ivanoff argues that Morgan is a mispronunciation of Moken (Keuahong 1998: 4, Ivanoff 2001).

The Burmese call them Salung, Selung, Selon. It is assumed that this word derived from “Chalong” or “Thalang” which is an ancient name of Phuket (Junk Selon). In former times, many Moken were congregated here. The name called by Burmese can be found in other writings or transcriptions such as Chillones, Salon, Salons, Selone, Selones, Selong, Seelongs, Silongs (Ivanoff 1997: 7, APP interpretive centre 2006).

The Malay apply the term Orang-Laut (Men of the sea) to all sea-faring populations including nomads, fishermen and pirates. The Malay give a specific term “Besing” to the Moken intended to differentiate them from other sea nomads. Besing is probably derived from the Malay word “masin” which mean “salty”. There seems to be a correlation between the meanings of “masin” and Moken (Ivanoff 1997: 7, 2001; Schliesinger 2000: 141-142).

The Moken call the Thai “Thai”; the Burmese “T’now” and the Malay “Batuk” (White 1922: 55-56).

## 3. Language

Many opinions are given to the origin of Moken language, according to the list of words, of necessity arbitrarily chosen, which are obtained through interpreters. For example, *“the Selung is a distinct Malay language, not a dialect of any of the Malay languages. It has a greater resemblance to the language of Sumatra than to other Malayan languages”* (Ross 1901 in White 1922: 155). While Blabden argues that *“Selung and Malay are cognate language but Selung have adopted into the language a number of words which are not Malayan”* (Blabden 1901 in White 1922: 155). J.R. Logan finds that *“the language of the Silong of the Mergui Archipelago is mainly dissyllabic, but with a strong monosyllabic tendency. Its phonology, like that of the Simany, is a compound of Earlier West Indonesian and Ultra-Indian. It possesses several non-Indonesian combinations of consonants. Some of these are found in the more consonantal of the West Indonesian dialects, particular in some Malayan and Bornean ones”* (Logan 1851 in White 1922: 161). Nevertheless, Ivanoff (1970) argues that their language resembles that of the Malay but appears to be a kind of

dialect. While Emsworth (1930: 16) points out that sea gypsies understand Malay and they speak with a very broken accent, mixed with a number of Siamese and other words.

White (1922: 157-161) concludes from his experience, when he travelled on the Moken boats and learned their language, that each new centre of Moken developed a new dialect. For instance, the Lawta is the dialect of Lawta and Tongka, on the Siamese coast, borrowed from Malay because they had to work for and with the Malay. It is assumed that they picked up Malay words, such as the name of common things. The Dung (Elphinstone) dialect is spoken by the Moken in the Mergui zone. White further states that it is the purest form of Moken. The Ja-it dialect is used in the Lampi Island and Bokpyin area. Although White was able to write two dictionaries: Moken-English and English-Moken which recorded about 2,000 words, he confessed that he was still unable to definitely state the true position of the Moken language.

However, the scholars agreed that the Moken language falls into the Austronesian Language Group. It is assumed that the Moken's ancestors are related to Proto-Malays, the first group to migrate to the Malay Peninsula. Then they changed direction to seas, wandered along islands and coasts, covered Mergui Archipelago in Burma, Sulu Island in the Philippines, on islands and coastal areas of Malaysia and Indonesia (APP interpretive centre 2006).

The Moken consist of 400 and 2,000-3,000 people in Thailand and Burma, respectively. They have two subgroups, *Pula* and *Tamub*. The *Pula* live on islands of the Mergui Archipelago and on the coast of Burma and southwards to the islands in Ranong province, Surin Islands in Phang-nga province. The *Tamub* settle on Prathong Island, Kuraburi district and also the coasts of Takuapa and Taymauang district and in Phuket province in Thalang district. They are accustomed to wandering. Since the national boundaries concept has been introduced, their nomadic life has been limited. A group of Moken has based themselves on Surin Islands for more than 30 years (UNESCO 2001: 21, Ugrid 1993-1994: 94).

#### **4. Surin Islands and Moken**

##### **4.1 The Surin Islands Marine National Park (SIMNP)**

A national park establishment was initiated in order to cope with the enormous exploitation of natural resources, particularly the forest areas. Rapid population and economic growth led to high demand for cultivation areas, therefore, deforestation was inevitable. Abundant hunting of wildlife entails decreasing either quantities or

species of wild animals. Hence, Thai government had tried to protect forest areas and what they incorporate by the establishment of national park. The first National Park Act was declared in 1961 and Khao Yai has become the first protected area of Thailand. Eight years later, a marine national park was affirmed and Khao Samroiyod has happened to be the first area within this category.

The marine national park covers coasts, islands and sea both in the eastern part (the gulf of Thailand) and in the western part (Andaman). The marine national park aims to conserve costal and marine ecosystems as well as maintain its natural condition for research, educational and recreational purposes.

Many decades ago, the Surin Islands were unspoiled, acting as refuge for fishing boats during storms and hosting small communities of Moken. The islands were declared to be a national forest reserve by the Royal Forest Department on December, 30<sup>th</sup>, 1971. On January, 14<sup>th</sup>, 1976, it was suggested that the islands should become a wildlife sanctuary. However this was thwarted because the islands were located within the exploratory area leased to Weeks Petroleum Ltd. The alternative plan, then proposed to develop the islands as a Vietnamese refugee camp. This plan was rejected as it was realized that too many people in such a fragile environment would soon result in damage to the islands' pristine and marine habitats. The Royal Forest Department appreciated the islands' unique nature and their potential in terms of tourism and researching. Therefore, on July, 9<sup>th</sup>, 1981, the Surin Islands were gazetted as the 29<sup>th</sup> national park of Thailand.

The Surin Islands National Park is situated at 9°21'50''N - 9°30'30''N and 97°48'100''E - 97°54'25''E in the Andaman Sea, approximately 60 kilometres from the coast of Phang-nga province. To the north of the park is the border with Burma, St. Matthew's Island, and about 100 kilometres south is another marine national park called Similan Islands. The Surin Islands cover an area of approximately 135 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 76 percent is sea. The park comprises five main islands; Surin Nua (18.7 km<sup>2</sup>), Surin Tai (11.6 km<sup>2</sup>), Ree or Stock (1 km<sup>2</sup>), Glang or Pachumba (0.6 km<sup>2</sup>), Khai or Torinla (1.05 km<sup>2</sup>). Surin Nua and Tai are large islands and are situated on a north-south axis. There are also freshwater springs on both of these islands. Figure 2 in appendix shows the location of the five main islands and their name in Thai and Moken language.

Most of the park is covered by tropical rain forest (30.71 km<sup>2</sup>), beach (1.95 km<sup>2</sup>), mangrove forest (0.15 km<sup>2</sup>), and beach forest (0.14 km<sup>2</sup>). Important plants found on the island are, for example, *Diospyros malabarica* (Kostel), *Barringtonia* sp., *Cerbera odollam*, *Rhizophora apiculata*, *Rhizophora mucronata*, *Xylocarpus granatum*.

The islands provide a unique habitat for a wide variety of species, both on land as well as in the surrounding water. Due to the islands' distance from the mainland and the adjoining deep waters and strong oceanic current, the water of the Surin Islands is very lucid, nurturing healthy coral growth. Marine life is munificent with numerous types of coral and fish species present on the reef. Whales and whale sharks occasionally appear here. Species of sea turtle such as Hawksbill, Green turtles and Olive Ridley turtle nest on these islands. Moreover, not less than 80 species of animals inhabit the islands, including egret, terns, brahming kite, nicobar pigeon, the lesser mouse deer, monitor lizards, reticulated pythons, crab-eating macaques, lemurs, flying foxes and a number of bats and squirrels.

The climate can be divided into a rainy season and a dry season. The southwest monsoon, or rainy season, lasts from May until November. During this period, there is strong wind and rough sea. The yearly average rainfall is more than 3,000 millimetres and the average of related humidity is 83 percent. The northeast monsoon or dry season prevails from November until May (www.dnp.go.th/parkreserve, UNESCO 2001: 19-21, Land and forest Section 2000).

The Surin Islands Marine National Park was previously under the Marine Parks Division of the Royal Thai Forest Department of the Ministry of Agriculture. However, after the restructuring of the governance system in 2002, it came under the jurisdiction of the National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department which is part of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. The Marine Fisheries Conservation Unit is another government office located on the north Surin Island (Surin Nua). Its main concern is to prevent illegal fishing and trawling in the northern Andaman Sea.

The Surin Islands are known as "*palao lata*", Lata Island, to the Moken. It was a secondary island of residence which was part of the most important sub-group of the Mergui Archipelago that of *Chadiak*, St. Matthew island, in Burmese territory. Ivanoff (2001: 34) points out that the name of the island, *Lata*, had no other significance for the Moken, than a vague remembrance of the Malays who may call it *Louta*. The name *Lata*, nonetheless, resembles the name of ancient nomadic groups, who live on the coast of Trang (people of *Lanta* or *Lonta*) and who originally came from the island of *Lanta*, south of Phuket. In any case, the Surin Islands were at the borders of the Burmese, Thai, Malay, and Moken social territories.

Formerly, the Moken were the only inhabitants who have utilized natural resources in these areas. They lived on the boat during the northeast monsoon or dry season and foraging for food both from the marine and the forest. During the southwest monsoon

or rainy season, they made temporary shelters on the beaches. The Moken mainly extracted natural resources such as green snails, kinds of shells as well as fish from the reef and mudflats by gathering, therefore, they were not considered true fishers. These products were collected for the local market to barter mainly for rice and other necessities. Their temporary shelters and subsistent gathering did not overexploit the natural resources and the ecosystems. Damages of the Surin Islands' ecosystems were resulting from illegal fishing activities by the semi-industrial Thai fishing, and the anchoring of pleasure boats led to the damage of the reefs. Moreover, in the past, some Thais from the mainland encroached to the islands searching for fragrant wood and other products and there were also fishing or other fishery activities (UNESCO 2000: 22-23).

#### **4.2 Moken Livelihood after the Declaration of the Surin Islands as a National Park**

Since they cannot wander from place to place, the Moken inhabited two locations. One group settled on the Southern Surin Island (Surin Tai) adjacent to the park headquarter, built on the Moken cemetery, while the other group inhabited the Northern Surin Island (Surin Nua). Early 1987, the Surin Islands marine national park became famous for its natural beauty, especially its clear water and numerous types of coral and fish species present along the reef. They are the main attraction for tourists; making the Surin Islands become an important touristic spot. The Moken village and their life are another tourist attraction. At that time, the Moken were allowed to sell all kinds of beautiful seashells to the tourists. These shells were originally gathered either from around the Surin Islands or from those in Burma watercourse. The selling was continually practiced for almost 10 years and generated income for the Moken during the dry season.

In 1996, the collection and sale of seashells as well as other marine products such as sea slug and sea snail were prohibited according to the National Park Act because of the negative impacts on the ecosystems. The difficulties on the Surin Islands made some of the Moken moved out and build houses on St. Matthew Island (Burma). This island is very close to Thailand, which they are actually prohibited from leaving unless they have a permit. Every departure and entrance is stamped and they have to pay a fee (Ivanoff 2002: 28). The Moken's village at *Ao chongkhad* which is adjacent to the park's headquarter was moved further to another bay, *Ao Bon Lek*, due to the areas management of the park. However, the Moken Fund was initiated by the park to get donations from the tourists. These amounts were utilized to buy rice and other necessities for the Moken. Other revenues from the park's shop and restaurant were



shared with the Moken by employing some of them to drive boats, gather garbage, and assist in the kitchen. All to support the Moken because of their lack of income due to the prohibition of selling the seashells. The park cannot provide a wage for the Moken from the government funds because the Moken do not have Thai nationality. Moreover, the Surin Islands Marine National Park Development Plans do not emphasize much about the Moken. Their principal purposes are concerning the park itself, i.e., management and construction in order to benefit tourism. Other additional income of the Moken, which some families totally rely on, derives from their handicraft products sold to tourists, such as model boats from hard wood, mats and different styles of small boxes from the *pandanus* leaves. In other words, the Moken's life after the declaration of the national park depends strongly on the Surin Islands national park and the tourists, especially during the dry season.

Living in the rainy season is much more difficult because of strong winds and rough sea. However, when it comes to fine weather, the semi-nomadic life starts again. Some of the Moken go for fishing or harpooning along the coral reef with only simple fishhooks or harpoons either for their own consumption or small-scale local trading. Some of them go further, possibly to Mergui Archipelago, to dive for sea snails. This species is valuable and it has distributed principal income for the Moken since their ancestral time. Edible sea slugs once were also gathered to be dried and sold to the local traders.

The rainy season lasts for approximately half a year (May until November); the islands can recover from the vast number of visitors. During these months tourists cannot visit the islands because it is inaccessible by boat.

#### **4.3 Moken Livelihood on the Surin Islands after the Tsunami: Figures from Field Research**

Presently, the Moken village is located on *Ao Bonyai* on southern Surin Island. There is quite a large beach which provides space for housing and keeping boats. Formerly, they temporarily lived here at least 2 periods of about 1-2 years, and then moved to other beaches. As a result of disease and internal argument, some families moved out to stay at *Ao Saiend*, therefore, creating sub-villages.

After the Tsunami, two Moken villages, one on *Ao Saiend* and another on *Ao Bonlek*, have been grouped together and have been settled down on *Ao Bonyai*. They are prohibited to move from one bay to another as they did in the past. Previously, they went on forage and had a temporary shelter on various locations of Surin Islands. Figure 3 illustrates the moving around the Surin Islands of the Moken.

*Ao Bonyai*, formerly, was a dump site of the park station and all kinds of rubbish both from tourists and from construction, which were not separated, were thrown here. However, approximately 2 years before the Tsunami, all the garbage has been separated and some of it was transported to the mainland while other decomposable garbage was dumped on *Ao Saparod*, which is adjacent to the Moken village.

### 4.3.1 Preferable Name and Calling Each Other

The Moken have different ideas about Moken, Chaolay, Chaonam. Generally, they prefer to be called “Morgan”<sup>6</sup>. “Chaonam”, the water man, is considered as a very impolite word. Even though, they do not give any proper explanation why. Other researches (Keuahong 1976: 4, Arunothai 2003: 106) explain that “nam”, in this case, means seminal fluid. The Moken do not like this name, although they say that everyone is born from “nam”. Jok remembers his bitter experience when he was in school on the mainland. He was always mimicked teasingly that “*Ai (you) Jok Chaonam*”. It is regarded as very rude and despising. It also happened to Vied. At school on the mainland, he was called “*a son of Chaonam*” which he could not tolerate, so he punched the offender. When this matter had to be judged by the teacher, she asked him “*or it is not true that you are the chaonam’s son?*” However, Nguk, is proud to be “Morgan” and finds no reason to be ashamed to be called as such because Morgan people have a greater knowledge about the sea than others. Yet, he also does not like to be called “chaonam”. Bonan, Nguoey and Kaleng have the same feeling that “*we are not shy to tell others that we are the Morgan from the Surin Islands*”. In contrast, Dunung feels uncomfortable to be called either Morgan or Chaolay. He prefers to be called Chaonam. Nevertheless, Kang explained that Chaolay gives a meaning of dirty, dark skin and unhygienic. Whilst other Moken like to be called only one name, Salama argued that “*the right name should be “Chaolay Morgan” because Chaolay means the ones who earn their living from the sea and the Morgan are an ethnic group*”. Although it varies how they should be called, it seems they are satisfied to be known as “Morgan” and refer to themselves so.

Although Moken have a counting system, they never count their age. When asking how old they are, a frequent answer is “*we don’t know because we don’t count it*”. Moken respect the elderly, the vocabulary related to kinship is, more or less, based on seniority (older or younger). *Bab* is a word for calling grandfathers and any one else

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<sup>6</sup> The Moken on the Surin Islands pronounce their name “Morgan” which may derive from Thai pronunciation. However, Ivanoff argues that it is mispronunciation. It should be Moken (from the Gaman folktale). White maintains that this group of people call themselves “Mawken” which he found an explanation for from their language.

who is older than the father, whilst, *Boom* is used for older females. *Bab* or *Boom* will be put before the name such as *Bab Madah*, *Boom Chiyor*. Calling each other only by their name is not regarded as impolite. As witnessed through observation, it is seen that children or younger generation call the elderly without prefix. Father and mother are normally called without their name; only *Pong* (father) and *Anong* (mother) are used.

Moreover, calling others only by their name sometime relates to emotion. Married Moken women explained that “*in case of daughter or son-in-law, parents-in-law will call them ‘wife of (name of their son) or husband of (name of their daughter), if the parents-in-law call only their name it means they don’t like or are unsatisfied with their daughter or son-in-law’*”.

Previously, Moken did not have any family name, so it was possible and normal that the same name occurred several times in the village. However, they are never confused about it because the name of their father or mother will be put after. For example, if there are some people with the same name “*Yu*”, the villagers will differentiate by saying “*Yu, the daughter of Chipen*”. Nowadays, they have the family name given by an administration office<sup>7</sup>. The entire villagers have the same family name “*Klatalay*”, therefore, the old system of differentiating who is who remains in function.

#### **4.3.2 Village and Houses**

Previously, the houses were built on the beach with poles in the water. There were two rows of houses and each house was not in the same column which allowed the wind to blow through every house. The size of the house depended on the number of family members. The house was built upon 9-12 tall and thin posts. The floor was about no less than 8 feet off the ground and was made of bamboo. The walls and roof were made off palm leaves (*Livistona speciosa* Kurz). Each house had 2 doors, front and back, and one to two windows. The Moken believe that the front side of the house has to be facing east; the stairs have to be an odd number, if they are even number, the residents will get sick and have difficulties to gather sea products. The ground has to be a flat area, if not the sea-evil will come to stay under the house. Between two houses, there has to be enough space for spirits to walk through, if not the spirits will walk through the house and cause illness for the residents. Coconut shells were hung at the door to prevent evil spirits.

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<sup>7</sup> Some Moken insist that their family name was provided by the district administration office, while others state that it was given by the mother of the present king (Rama IX) when she visited the islands.

After the Tsunami, all the houses were damaged and new houses had to be built with the support of government agencies and volunteers. Materials were brought from the mainland. The construction emphasized neatness, safety and a natural look thus all houses now have the same design; square shape (approximately 16 x 16 feet) and were built on nine posts. The posts, which were taken from the mainland, became too small when the bark was removed. Therefore, many Moken used the bigger posts cut from the nearby forest. The floors of the new houses are about 5 feet from the ground and made of plywood. Walls and roofs are made of palm leaves (*Nypa fruticans*). The house has one door and a window adjacent to the door. Each house can be roughly divided into 2 sections, a sleeping and living section. However, it cannot be called a “room” because it is not exactly separated from the others. Some families separate the sleeping space with plywood or cloth while others, simply, do not care to. The living section is also used for cooking and an additional sleeping place for children.

The toilet is regarded as a “new thing” for the Moken. Previously, defecation was done behind big rocks adjacent to the sea, at the beach or directly from the house to the sea. Problems occur when the public toilet is used without cleaning or when it is full of waste. Presently, no one uses the toilet still preferring to use a big rock at the edge of the beach with a reason “*the high tide will wash away all excrement, no sign or smell left*”.

A garbage pit is also a new thing in the Moken village. Every house has a garbage basket. Most of the garbage is plastic packaging. All kinds of rubbish are dropped in the pits to be burned, except food residue, which is thrown into the sea.

The school building, a large and permanent structure, is located at the edge of the village. It is supported by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. There are two teachers, graduated from vocational school in the field which is not related to teaching. However, both of them had been trained in “teaching training course” before they came there. They are under the Kuraburi Informal Education Centre.

There is also an interpretive centre in the middle of the village organized by the Andaman Pilot Project (APP)<sup>8</sup>. It provides information about the Moken people and related activities. Under the same roof, there is also a basic health care station which aids the villagers with basic medicament. Although there is no doctor or nurse, some

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<sup>8</sup> The Andaman Pilot Project, APP was initiated in 1997. It is implemented by the Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute and supported by UNESCO. It aims to provide livelihood opportunities for the Moken, based on traditional practices and values, which will allow them to remain in their home territories while contributing to their increased social and economic well-being as part of Thai society. The outcome of the project may serve as a model for the region and beyond. [Online] Available: [www.cusri.chula.ac.th/andaman](http://www.cusri.chula.ac.th/andaman). Access date: November 12, 2006.

literate villagers were trained as health care volunteers to be able to give the right medicine to the right patient. Adjacent to this centre is a toilet for visitors which is always locked and of which only two people have the key, one is the Moken who regarded himself as a village headman and the other is the field staff of the APP. In the southern edge of the village, there is a house built particularly for the officers from the district or mainland who visit the Moken occasionally. A village map is illustrated in the appendix (figure 4).

Some vegetables and fruits such as chili, herbs, papaya and banana, which seeds and young shoots were supported from the district office and the APP, are found in the backside of the village. Sometimes, monkeys come out from the forest and steal what they can eat. This is a reason why the Moken are not willing to grow anything. Some families raise chickens; every evening all chickens will be put in the cage to protect them from other wild predators. Dogs are kept to warn the villagers in case someone or something trespasses at night. Cats are expected to catch rats which are abundant in every house.

#### **4.3.3 Beliefs and Ceremonies**

The Moken are animists and have great respect for spirits and all kinds of supernatural powers. They believe that these powers entail both desirable effects, i.e., they will be protected, and unwanted results such as getting sick. These effects are dependent on their behaviour. If they satisfy the spirits, they will have a happy life in return. When they do something wrong and make the spirits angry, they will be in trouble, suffer and become ill. Nevertheless, these unpleasant situations can be solved by the shaman. There are 11 shamans, both women and men, in the village. There is a hierarchy among the spirits. Misia, a Moken woman, is a medium of the highest spirit, the so called “boss”. When illness happens to the Moken, 1-3 shamans, depending on the condition of the patient, will be invited. Family members prepare 50-100 Baht<sup>9</sup>, 3 pieces of areca nut and betel leaves without red lime (because it will blind the spirits), candles, joss sticks, and liquor. The shaman invites their ancestor spirit to take possession of her/his body. Then, the cause of sickness will be told. Most illnesses are caused by the sea animal spirits such as mussels or fish; from tree spirits; and from the patient’s own ancestor spirits. In case the sickness is caused by ancestor spirits, it means the patient forget their own ancestors which makes them unsatisfied. Offerings will be offered as the spirits need. Generally, there is a small shelf hung close to the roof, in every house. There, some Moken put a small portion of rice, food and drinks

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<sup>9</sup> Exchange average rate of October 2006, 1 US Dollar = 37 Baht [Online] Available: [www.bot.or.th](http://www.bot.or.th). Access date: October 5, 2006.

as the offering to the spirits. This practice is believed to satisfy the spirits and they will not cause any trouble to the family members.

Medicinal plants have been used to treat patients in the past but this knowledge seems to disappear together with the old generation. The Moken accept that they do not know much about the medicinal plants, particularly the young generation. For elderly, even they know which plants can be used as a medicine; they do not like to go to the forest to collect them. *“I know, but I don’t have time to look for them and I prefer to take tablets because it is faster and gives good results”* explained by an old Moken. However, what is still practiced is, when a small baby has a fever; pounded fresh leaves will be put on its head to reduce temperature.

The Moken regard the spirits of their ancestors as the most significant. It is believed that those spirits are embodied in *“lobong”*, a wooden totem representing an ancestor spirit. Relating to the *lobong* posts, an annual celebration of the spirit posts, *ne-en lobong*, is held on the full moon days of the fifth lunar month. All together the celebration lasts for three days and three nights. Drinking, singing, dancing, and going into trance are main activities.

Another belief of the Moken is that of death and burial. When death occurs, a coffin is made, for which all kinds of wood can be used. *Chapan*, the Moken small rowboat, is also used as a coffin. The belongings of the deceased and food are also put inside the coffin, such as pot, cloths, chili, salt, and rice. If the dead is a woman, *padto*, a curved knife, will be put inside. For the man, *kapha* and *choom*, axe and three pronged harpoon, will be put in the coffin. The corpse will be washed, dressed, and then placed into the coffin altogether with artefacts previously mentioned. The corpse will be kept at home for not more than two days and two nights. In the case of an unnatural death, it will be kept only one day. Joss sticks and candles are lit. Food is laid beside the dead. The house’s front wall will be taken off for better air circulation and being able to see each other. In the night, food, coffee, and liquor will be provided. Loud music is turned on and dancing takes place.

According to the belief of life after death, the Moken do not cremate the corpse. If they do so, the soul of the dead will disappear. Burying maintains the soul and it will be reborn somewhere in the east, where a lot of islands are.

At an ebb-tide, the corpse will be brought to a cemetery island. The shaman lights the candle and joss-stick to ask permission from the spirits before digging a hole at a chosen spot. The hole is dug to a depth of four or five feet. The coffin will be put into the hole by arranging the head toward the west because when the soul gets up, it will

see the east immediately. After placing the coffin, broken glasses are spread over it, and then covered with sand. This practicing of sprinkling broken glasses is particularly done when there are valuable things in the coffin such as gold. This aims to prevent robbers who want to rob the gold from the corpse. The grave is marked by, for example, stones, tree, or hanging bottles for remembering. Then, they go back to the village and take a bath to rid the spirits which might have followed them. In case the death happens to a new born baby, the corpse will be buried on a mound near the village by its father. If the death occurs with children, the corpse will be kept for one night.

The Moken also believe in black magic. They say that the Moken from Burma are specialists. Once a Moken woman in the village got sick and coughed and could not eat but the doctor was unable to find the cause of sickness. Ultimately, she died. The Moken believe that it was an effect of black magic from the Moken who came from Burma who wanted to sell her something but she did not buy it. This belief was confirmed when her soul inhabited the medium and told the same story. Another case happened to Kaelang's family, *"my husband and both of my sons died because of the black magic when we lived on Chadiak (island in Burma) because we did not want to sell our boat to another Morgan, so he used the black magic to make my husband and my sons die. I could not live there anymore; hence, I moved to stay here with my younger sister"*. Many other cases are also narrated by the Moken. It seems this belief is embodied in everyone's mind because the causes of the death are unexplainable and it fits their belief of the spirits' influence. Not only the Moken say that one has to be very careful when the Moken from Burma appear in the village. The teachers are also aware of this and warned that *"don't receive or eat anything from the Morgan who come from Burma because they may put black magic on it and cause trouble"*.

Besides practicing according to their belief system, the Moken join an annual religious ceremony which is organized at the temples in town on the mainland. *Sat deunsip*, a religious event held during the waning moon days of the tenth lunar month. Main purpose of this ceremony for the people of the mainland is to make merit on the one hand to their ancestors and relatives and on the other hand to the neglected spirits which have no relatives or their relatives do not make as such for them. This ceremony generally lasts 15 days. The Moken usually go there to join the event, not as the ones who provide things but as the ones who will be provided for. Every year, most of the Moken of the Surin Islands, particularly the children and elderly group together and travel to *wat yanyao*, a temple in Takuapa district. A specific area in the temple is prepared for the so called "beggar". The Moken will sit there. They indicated that *"if we scatter and sit just where we like, we will not get much money"*.

When people who come to make merit walk past them, the Moken say “*please donate for us*”. Going as a big group makes them feel more relaxed and they dare to ask for donation. Some said that “*if I come alone. I don’t dare to do such a thing. I am too shy to do so*”. Moreover, asking for donation is also done outside the temple. They walk from house to house and say “*peenong (relatives) arrive*”. Money, food, and cloths are given to them. However, some people close the door immediately when they see who is coming. In the night, the Moken enjoy the temple fair. Sleeping places are in front of closed houses with closed gates, to ensure that no one comes in or out; in the temple, or anywhere they feel comfortable under the condition that they are in the group. The penultimate day of the ceremony, various kinds of food and other things will be put on tables in the temple area. After a religious ritual, a large number of people will flock in and try to take from the tables as much as possible. It is believed that if one eats the food offered to the spirits, one will have good luck and prosperity. Therefore, not only the Moken and local people are there, but also *Thaimai*, new Thai<sup>10</sup> from many places in the same province such as Tungwa, Bangsak, Tungkamin, Lumpi, Lumkean, Tabpla, Thapaeyoi and Tungdab. The Moken complained that “*sometimes the Thaimai allege that they are the Morgan from the Surin Islands, then they get money and things. When we, the real Morgan go to the same house, the people there don’t give anything to us and say that they already gave to the Morgan*”.

There are various opinions from the Moken about this event, for example:

“*We go there to take what the people offer to the spirits. Thai regard it as making merit, while we regard it as taking merit. Anyway, nowadays, going there is just for fun*”.

“*To go there is like to make a pleasure tour and get something back home. I like it and I have a lot of fun*”.

“*It is a begging festival and it is fun*”.

“*To go there with other Morgan and my family is very fun. I only sit in the temple, don’t beg but the people are willing to give me. Anyway, I pay out more than I get because my family enjoy eating and buying things*”.

“*I like to go there because I get a lot of food and money*”.

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<sup>10</sup> Former sea gypsies as the Moken but they have settled down for more than hundred years ago and they were granted Thai nationality.



*Thai mai* in Phuket province also have similar reason for joining this event. Many of them prefer to go to *wat chalong*, the very well known temple in this province. They regard that going there to take the offerings is their old tradition. If they do not go, they feel guilty. They said “*it is an old traditional practice that we go there every year to take merit. Although some other people look down upon us and say that we are beggars, we don’t mind. We go there because it makes us feel better than not to go and just stay at home during this ceremony*”. It is confirmed by Thais who also go there as merit makers. They pointed out that “*there are only Thai mai come to take the offerings. They will be there about 10 days. Some of them sit in the temple, while many of them walk around the village to ask for donation*”.

Nonetheless, it appears that this southern Thai religious ceremony perfectly fits the Moken belief. The main purpose of this ceremony is similar to the Moken “*ne-en lobong*”, in other words both ceremonies give an importance to their ancestors and offering them with food. Therefore, it is not difficult for the Moken to take part in this Thai ceremony.

#### **4.3.4 Family**

There are 52 households with 191 Moken people (106 female and 85 male) on the Surin Islands<sup>11</sup>. Although Moken society is based on kinship, the single family is the most important unit in their social structure. The elderly, especially parents and grandparents are respected and it is regarded as an obligation for the off-spring to take care of them. However, mother and grandmother are considered as the most significant. Even though they fall into a single family, the mother and the mother-in-law, play a dominant role in their off-spring family such as which job and for whom their son-in-law should work for. As it happened in a family of Lae, previously he worked with the APP and received monthly 3,000 Baht including occasional support such as food and drink. But his mother-in-law wants him to work with a tourism company as a boat driver. He followed her wishes and had to return his salary advance from the APP. He explained that “*...because my mother-in-law and my wife want me to do, so I have to*”. In case of Sunai, he wanted to settle down somewhere on Prathong Island after the Tsunami of 2004 but as his mother-in-law wanted to go back to the Surin Islands he then had to follow.

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<sup>11</sup> April 25, 2006

### 4.3.5 Marriage

A marriage depends on the willingness of the couple. Their parents let them decide freely. The age of which they get married is not clear because they do not count their age. Although a few cases occur that the parents were not satisfied with their children's decision, they accept it. However, in the past, some marriages had been arranged. It does not matter whether their partners are widows or widowers, with or without children. Sexual relationships before marriage is accepted as told by the young, but some elders say that it never happened in their generation. Youk, a married Moken woman with one child, said that *“Morgan do not pay attention on the marital status of their partners. It is not important whether they used to have husbands or wives. If they separate from their previous partner, then they can live with whom they love”*.

Wedding is not complicated. A so-called “gift” or a small bride-price will be provided to the bride's parents; however, it is not an obligation for the groom to do so. A Moken woman who had four husbands and all of them died already, now she lives with the fifth one. She explained that *“having sexual relation before getting married is not wrong. Wedding needs no ceremony. In some cases, the man does not need to give anything to the woman's parents because they like him very much and welcome him to be their son-in-law”*.

In general, the gift will be prepared and given to the woman's parents. It comprises of sarongs, money, and liquor; in some cases it includes gold necklaces, rings, or bracelets. The amount depends on the man or joint decision from both sides. Inter-married is accepted in the Moken society. Some of them got married to Thai, Thaimai (Moklen or Urakrawoi who are granted Thai nationality), and even westerner. Inter-marriage tends to usually happen with women. They get to know their partners when they leave the island to work as manual labourer in construction. In other cases, the Moken women who are employed to work in the Surin Islands National Park station, which is located adjacent to their village, engage in a partnership with the park staff. However, the Moken women, mostly, prefer to marry Moken men because they give all money they earn to their wives and usually follow what their wives say. Men also accept this custom and most of them insist that they give all money to their wives and this is regarded as good husband behaviour. They said *“a good husband has to take good care of his wife and does not let her work”*.

After they are married, the man will move to the woman's family. In the case that the woman only has her mother (the father died or separated), all of them will live together in the same house. If her parents are still alive they may first live with them for a short time and after that build their own house. As they have permanent shelter on *Ao Bonyai*, the Surin Islands, it is less important to build "*kabang*", a traditional boat. In the past, an ability to build this kind of boat was regarded as the most important factor to get a wife. A middle aged Moken man told that "*formerly Morgan men had to be able to build Kabang if not they would not get wives*".

Moken men, 30-35 years old, told a story of a marriage which was quite uncomfortable in the beginning. "*Relatives and friends are sent to the young woman's family to talk the matter over with the girl and her parents. If they accept, they will invite the boy to stay over night in their house. Sexual relationship may or may not take place in this first night. Next early morning the young man goes back to his family. At late morning, the girl will come and ask him to have breakfast with her family. This stage can be seen as an announcement to the entire village that "this young man belongs to me". The man then moves to stay with the woman's family. It is a torturous period for the man because he is scared of a father-in-law. The man just eats little and hurries to finish eating. Some men become very thin. A relaxation comes when we have our own house. The father-in-law always tests the son-in-law and does something on purpose. For instance, taking the son-in-law to deep forest to gather palm leaves and say that he will go to cut other leaves nearby, but he intends to go back home and leaves his son-in-law alone in the jungle. As all Morgan are really afraid of ghosts more than anything else, some son-in-law run off suddenly in a scared manner. The father-in-law wants to test the braveness and responsibility of the son-in-law. In the past, for the constructing of the kabang it was necessary to fell big trees (to use as a hull). The father-in-law let his son-in-law cut it down without assisting; instead, he sat and smoked happily while looking at the working son-in-law. Actually, the father-in-law cannot complain much about his son-in-law because his daughter loves him and they live together. Most fathers-in-law accept the son-in-law without any questions, but some of them are a bit tricky*".

#### **4.3.6 Gender Roles**

Labour division exists in Moken society, however, there is no customary prohibition regarding gender. The labour division is based on work characteristic. Hard work, which requires a lot of strength, or risky work is considered as men's work, for instance, fishing in the open sea, diving for sea products, building the boat and felling the tree. Women take more responsibility for taking care of the family, gathering

coastal food and collecting forest products. However, the women are skilful swimmers and divers. They can dive for sea products but not as deep as the men. Some women can navigate long tail boat going to other bays to collect littoral foods. In general, the main responsibility of the man is to earn money for the family but they also assist the woman for domestic work. Cooking, cleaning and washing are not prohibited for the man but they are always left to the woman. The men said that “*we can do but we are lazy*”.

Both men and women agree that “*the woman doesn’t need to work after marriage because it is the man’s duty. If the man is unable to take care of his family, he is not a good man and he will be blamed and gossiped from the community. Nevertheless, widows are quite pity because they have to work hard alone for their family*”. Dunung’s explanation clearly illustrates how the Moken men consider about their family, “*the things I want most in my life is to have job and money to feed my wife and children*”.

#### **4.3.7 Moken Children**

Each family has an average of 2-4 children. Formerly, some families had more than ten children but the survival rate was rather low. For example, only two out of ten children survived. Diseases such as malaria, cholera, typhoid and other illnesses were the main cause of death in both for children and adults. In some cases, it happened that their babies 2-4 months died because of unknown fever. Recently, a two-day-old baby died because of flatulence. Her father understands that it might have resulted from powdered milk.

Giving birth takes place in their house assisted by her mother, midwife and other women who have experience. Some cases happened that the grandfather also assisted in this situation because no one else was in the village. Breast feeding is practiced by all mothers. Moreover, sweetened condensed milk is also used to feed babies. It is considered inappropriate to feed the baby with this kind of milk, especially for the less than three years old ones. Nonetheless, the mothers do not regard it as unhealthy. As long as the baby/child likes it, the parents provide it for them.

Boys and girls are equally important to the family. The parents want to have girls because they can help with domestic work. As well as boys, who are expected to provide an income for the family when they grow up. If they have only boys (or girls), asking relatives or friends for girl (or boy) to join the family is widely practiced. In case of Sunai, a grandfather from the mother’s side, does not allow his nephew to live with his grandparents from the father’s side, although the nephew would have more

opportunities because the father side is Thai and owns a business. Sunai keeps the boy and expects that when he grows up he will earn an income, by gathering and selling sea snails, for the family. This idea is similar to other families, the parents expect their children to take good care of them in the future as they did or are doing for their ancestors. In other words, the new generation should look after their previous one.

Most children go to school which is approximately 200 metres northern part of the village. School hours are from 8.30-16.00, Monday to Friday. Lunch is provided as well as milk. School lessons mainly focus on Thai language skills (writing, reading and listening) and simple calculation. The children are keen to learn and do what their teachers say. Singing the Thai national anthem two times a day, before and after schooling, praying (Buddhism) and running around school building, as a punishment, for inappropriate behaviours such as talking or disturbing, are usual activities. Every afternoon, after school or on Saturdays and Sundays, some children run around in the village and the park station, while others look for edible coastal animals. They know very well which fish, mussel, crab or mantis-shrimp are edible and how to catch them. Their parents always tell them about these things and take them when they gather food from the littoral areas and in the forest. The children also help their parents to take care of their young siblings. They sometime do household work such as cleaning or washing.

Although the children like to go to school, they never miss a chance to go fishing with their fathers or travel to Burma with their families. When the teachers remain on the mainland, sometime for two weeks, all school children seem to be extremely happy and almost all of them go to the national park station, to play, swim, run and observe tourists. Some of them get money from the tourists by carrying their bags from the station to the boat or another way round. Sometimes they get drinks and sweets from the visitors. Pla, an older kid and very skilful in driving a boat also helps his grandfather in navigating the boat taking the tourists to snorkelling sites.

When asked about their future, except the answer “*don't know*”, all of the boys wanted to work for the Surin Islands national park as boat drivers. However, some parents want their children to get higher education and some plan to send their children to study in the school on the mainland because they believe that the school there is better than that in the village.

#### 4.3.8 Meals and Drinks

Rice is now their staple food instead of yam eaten in the past by their ancestors. Nevertheless, today, yam and cassava are still eaten as snacks. Rice is bought from the mainland by them or asked from the park's staff to buy it for them in advance. The Moken always complain that it is more expensive than that of buying by themselves on the mainland. Sacks of rice will be stored before monsoon season when it is very difficult to go to the mainland. Generally, a sack of rice per month is enough for a whole family. Rice is very important for the family and some Moken who work for the park, sometimes, ask for rice as an alternative payment. The park's staff explained that *“some Morgan men, who work for the park, sometimes prefer to receive their wage in form of rice instead of money because they have to give all money to their wives and the wives usually use it for playing cards (gambling)”*.

Dishes eaten with rice mostly consist of various species of fish, mussel, snail, and other marine crustaceans. In most cases, they are cooked. Oyster, occasionally, is eaten raw and the Moken usually take rice dishes with or without chili paste and vegetable with them while looking for oysters on the rocks along the coast adjacent to the village. Searching for littoral food depends very much on the tide. Only at a low tide, can they gather their food from the coast or the seashore. A net is used when the tide is around waist level can catch small fish. Crabs or shrimps are caught by hand when the water level is ankle level. Sometimes, they have to wait until eight o'clock in the evening and then start to collect these animals, which takes no less than an hour of gathering until the amount meets the family demand. Some families collect it for their next meal (breakfast) but many of them do it for dinner. So in the latter case, their dinner will be quite late. Many families prefer to eat dried fish bought from the mainland, canned fish, eggs, and instant noodle because it is more convenient, fast and available at any time. Turtle meat is a preferred food as well as pork and chicken. Although it is prohibited by the park to catch and eat turtle, rules are sometime broken especially during the monsoon season.

The Moken who work at the park will have breakfast and lunch there. Food is provided for those who work under the park authority. The Moken and the park's staff join their own group while eating. Every afternoon, before going back home, the Moken will get some food from the park's restaurant. This food is actually prepared for a set-menu for tourists at lunch time. The visitors do not always order the set-menu, so some food remains. Therefore, the Moken are allowed to take it back home for their families. Nonetheless, some complain that the food is not tasty.

When it comes to cooking, food is cooked or prepared in many ways such as boiled, fried, grilled, and curried. The most important seasonings are chili, shrimp-paste, garlic, salt, sugar, and monosodium glutamate (which is regarded as a necessity for cooking). Food taste is from medium to very hot and spicy and quite salty. Adult and children eat the same food, if it is too spicy, they eat more rice and less curry. Mostly, the Moken have two meals a day. Breakfast is around 09.00-10.00 o'clock and dinner from 17.00 o'clock.

Their favourite drinks are coffee and liquor. They state that being addicted to coffee results from working for the park. Previously, coffee was provided by the park authority for the entire day and they enjoyed it very much. The habit of drinking coffee has diffused throughout their village. As well for liquor, the Moken blame the park staff and tourists for introducing it to them. However, it seems that liquor drinking has existed in the Moken society already for a long time. As it is a main offering component in their celebration of the spirit poles, *ne-en lobong*. Children prefer sweetened condensed milk as well as sugary and colourful drinks. Some 3-4 years old children also like to drink coffee with a lot of sugar as their parents do.

Another favourite for some working Moken is a leave of a tree from the Rubiaceae family (*Mitragyna speciosa*). Some chew the fresh leaves, but mostly, eat the dried ones. The fresh leaves will be chopped, dried in the sun, then pounded and kept in plastic bags or bottles. They believe that this plant can strengthen and enable them to work all day long in the strong sunshine.

Smoking is also very popular among the Moken, both men and women. Cigarettes are made from dried palm leaves and tobacco. It is sold packaged in a plastic bag. They can buy this package in every shop in their village and also in the park's grocery shop which also sells brand name cigarette.

#### **4.4 Daily Life**

##### **4.4.1 Daily Life in the Dry Season**

Most Moken usually get up around 6 a.m. Some turn on the radio quite loud and wake up their neighbours, which results in many complaints. However, it does not matter for the radio owners. They keep it turned on and enjoy it. The ones who work for the park get up a bit earlier; prepare themselves before leaving the village at about 07.30 am. They have to arrive at the park not later than 08.00 o'clock. One group works at *Ao Chongkad*, the park head station, while others work at *Ao Maingam*. These two sites are on the same island but in opposite directions. This island is located north of

the Moken village. See figure 2 in appendix. The men drive boats for tourists, collect garbage and do other tasks directed by the park. Women sweep and collect fallen leaves from the ground and assist in the kitchen.

For the ones who stay home, getting up a bit late is usual. Some start their new day with chewing areca nuts or smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee, then some rice is cooked. Children are given, or prepare themselves, hot/cool sweetened condensed milk with boiled or unboiled water. All dishes from dinner are washed. Some Moken men, sometimes, with their children, remove fish from a net that was cast into the sea the night before.

Breakfast dishes sometimes are made from what is left from the last dinner or what was prepared the night before. Because the Moken do not have refrigerators, fresh sea products have to be cooked before they rot. The breakfast is usually around 10.00 am, and then dishes and cloths will be washed, sometimes followed by taking a shower. Some of them go to cut pandanus leaves in the forest which are used as a material for their handicraft, i.e., various forms of small boxes and mats. The weaving is regarded as women's handicraft. Nevertheless, not all women are able to do it, particularly the mat, only 2-3 women are able to weave it. The young are not interested in practicing this kind of weaving. Some said that they tried but they did not succeed, so they gave up, whilst others said they did not want to do it at all. The small boxes are much easier to weave but not everyone knows how to do it. The first step of weaving is quite complicated and many women cannot start it. This knowledge is transferred from the elder to the younger, so called "learning by watching and doing". Some women proudly said that "*we only watch how to weave for a short time from others and after that we can do our own boxes*". One reason that discourages the women from create such handicraft is the complexity of material preparation for the weaving. Ripe pandanus leaves have to be cut from the forest and brought back home. All thorns have to be removed. Then the leaves will be slit, in one centimetre wide stripes, and soaked in fresh water for a night. The next step is to dry them in the sun until the green colour becomes pale. The last process is to abrade it with a piece of wood in order to soften it. Finally, the thin pandanus stripes are ready for weaving. Men, in general, are not involved in weaving, very few of them help their wives with the first and last step, i.e., to cut the pandanus leaves from the forest and to cut all the unwanted pandanus stripes from the almost finished box.

Model boats are actively made by most of the Moken men. There are many types including *kabang* and *chapan*, kinds of Moken boats. Dry hardwood species of beach tree will be cut from a beach forest then transported back home, where it will be



carved in a boat form. The boat size depends on the size of the wood. The rough surface of the model boat will be rubbed with a piece of glass or emery paper. Some Moken men use a ray's skin to scrub the boat surface. The result is a smooth and glossy surface.

The ones who do not pay attention to any handicraft, mostly the women whose husbands work for the park or for tourist companies, group together to play cards, chat and gossip, get rid of lice by taking them out of their friend's hair, or lie on the ground under the floor of their house with their babies. At least 6 women group together to play cards and there are at least 4 groups each day. Some men join occasionally. They start playing after breakfast last until the afternoon, when they have a short break for preparing the dinner. Then some of them continue until late in the night. Usually 50-1,000 Baht are spent on gambling a day. Who spread this game is unknown. Salama, whose wife is said to be a gambling leader, pointed out that playing cards has taken place for a long time since his ancestor's generation and at that time, rice was used instead of money. The Moken women justify themselves that they have nothing to do for the whole day and are bored, so playing cards keep them occupied. They know how to play from their mothers. It happens that the children also group together to play cards like their mothers do. The only difference is that they use plastic bangles instead of money. The game "bingo" is also popular amongst the children. At least 5 Baht is put for the bet. Another Moken man explained that previously when they lived on separated islands, no one at *Ao Bonlek* played cards, only the ones at *Ao Saiend*. After they have grouped together to stay on the same island, the ones who did not play the cards before learned from the others. Their husbands are not satisfied with their wives spending the household money on gambling. When the husband admonishes the wife about playing cards, she usually retorts that it is her money which she can spend as she likes. However, all money is always from her husband. Some husbands support their wives in playing cards, they explained that *"our wives do not play it everyday and they usually win from the gambling (200-600 Baht)"*. Some stated that *"playing cards makes our wives happy so we should let them enjoy it"*. Another Moken man told that *"my wife does all housework, so she may want to relax after all the hard work"*. Playing cards continues, when tourists visit their village. Many tourists feel that the Moken are not poor because the amount of money they put on gambling is quite high. Some tourists find no reason to support the Moken, therefore, they do not buy any handicraft products from them. Some said that *"we see them play cards and we feel that they have much money and we don't need to help them"*. However, it seems the Moken do not pay much attention on the visitors, they continue to play cards and sometimes try to encourage the guests to join them and put the bet. Only when the park's director

and some high rank officers visit the village, cards will be hidden until those people leave the village, then the activity starts again. Nonetheless, some Moken stop their activities and encourage the tourists to buy their handicraft products.

While waiting for the excited tourists, who curiously walk through the village, taking photos and buying some handicrafts, the Moken men, who as boat drivers take the tourists from the park station to their village, go back home to their families and sometimes continue to carve the model boats. Approximately after one to one and a half hours, the visit of the Moken village is over. The Moken boat drivers take the tourists back to the park station. After lunch these drivers will take them to do snorkelling, following the programmes set by the park or by the tourist companies. Working hour ends at 16.00 o'clock, in general, if there are so many tourists the Moken will be asked to work longer with extra payment.

When coming back home, some men continue to carve the model boats while others play "*ta-graw*", a popular game played with a rattan ball. The other 2-3 Moken men learn how to read and write Thai at the village's school. After having dinner, some come together and chat with their neighbours or their family members either in front of their house or on the beach. Some continue to play cards, sometimes until late in the night. Although there is no electricity, darkness does not matter, small lamp using fuel oil, or batteries or candles will be used. Families, who have a television, using battery, always attract the others. The village is very lively when there is a DVD movie played once in a while from the house of the park staff who married a Moken woman and stay in the village. The television is brought outside in front of the house, put upon a high table together with amplifiers. Most of the Moken join this event. They sit on the ground, with or without the mat, and enjoy their village movie. If there is no movie, some families go to bed around 20.00 o'clock. Some continue listening to the radio until midnight. Some enjoy the night life by drinking and singing. Sounds of crying babies who wake up in the night and voices of its mothers lulling the babies to sleep can be heard. Dogs always curiously run through the village, barking and fighting.

#### 4.4.2 Daily Life in the Monsoon Season

Because of not having the opportunity to observe their life during the rainy season, the following post is based on what the Moken narrated. During this season, access by boat to the Surin Islands is entirely difficult because of strong waves. Therefore, the park is closed and the tourists are not allowed to visit the islands due to safety reasons. Generally, the Moken will not be hired to work during monsoon season neither for the park nor for the tourist company. What they can do for their living during these six months period of unemployment, is to turn to the traditional Moken life, i.e., gathering sea products. The main activities are fishing around the Surin Islands and diving for sea snails either in the territory of Burma or around Similan Islands, locate in the south of the Surin Islands.

For fishing, in 2005, four Moken on Surin Islands played a role as middlemen buying fish from the other Moken villagers. The fish were kept in a big plastic box filled with ice, asked from other commercial fishery boats that usually stop over to take a rest or avoid the strong waves at the Surin Islands. When the amount of fish reached their need or the box was full, they went to the mainland whether in Ranong or in Phangnga province. Selling takes place at a fish pier without having a regular customer. It depends on who will pay the best price. However, for selling sea snails, they will travel to Ranong because there is less risky to sell. If they sell it at Kuraburi, where the Surin Islands national park headquarters is located, news will be spread quickly and finally all the sea snails will be confiscated by the authority.

Although they know very well that fishing and gathering sea snails in the conservation zone for trading is illegal according to the national park rules, they continue to do so, whether they work for the park or not. Most of them explained that *“we do it secretly, if we don’t fish and dive for the sea snails, we don’t know where we can have money from. They are our source of income, especially in the monsoon season. Moreover, during the bad weather, the park’s inspecting boat rarely comes out”*.

Fishing and diving for sea snails cannot be done everyday; it depends heavily on the weather and health conditions. An alternative for some, is to look for work as construction labourers either for the park or for a company on the mainland. However, some of them prefer to stay in the village and learn to read and write Thai after a day of gathering sea products. Women’s activities are not so different from the dry season. Grouping together, chatting and playing card, cooking and doing housework, taking care of their children, etc. are their major activities.

The biggest concern for the Moken in the rainy season is being robbed by outsiders who may come in a big group with strong engine boats. In this case, no one can help the Moken because there is only few staff at the park station. However, this event never happened since the Surin Islands have been declared as a marine national park. Some of the Moken remember a story of robbing (which is before 1971) when they stayed at *Ao Chongkad*, next to the present park station. *“It happened before the existence of the Surin Islands national park. The Malay bandits plundered the Morgan, especially gold necklace worn by the women. The Morgan were forced to jump into the sea and the robber shot some Morgan men”*, Yalad told. Another story about the Malay is *“Malay came to the Surin Islands; they could speak Morgan and asked the women, who usually like betel nuts very much, to go into the boat to take betel nuts. Actually it was only a trick. When the boat was full of women, the Malay started the engine and left. I think that they all had been sold”*, narrated by a Moken man whose age is between 65-70 years old.

#### **4.5 Future Expectation**

All Moken expect that they can further live on this bay, *Ao Bonyai*, because their houses are there and they feel more comfortable to be there than at other places. To turn back to live on their boats is now impossible because they have grown accustomed to living in houses. Sunai said *“I like to live in the house more than on the boat. The boat is always rocking and I could not sleep but in the house I can sleep very well”*. Nevertheless, a new generation who is literate may prefer to stay on the mainland because they will have more opportunities than in the village. A Moken woman pointed out that *“our children may prefer to work on the mainland because there are a lot of jobs but for me I prefer to stay here and run my small shop which is enough for me and I am happy with that”*.

Many of them wish to have an alternative job to support their families such as catching squid by using squid traps. Income from this activity is relatively high but it also needs a lot of investment which is difficult for the Moken. They always say that *“we are poor; we don’t have enough money for investment”*. However, squid trapping presupposes knowledge such as where to find squid, how deep the trap should stay, etc. Mae explained that *“it is not easy; we have to know where we can find them. Some people lose a lot of money because they cannot catch any squid. Peedin once did it but finally he quitted”*.

Moreover, the ones working for the park in the last dry season are glad to be able to continue to work there. As well as others who work as construction workers, they prefer this job no matter where the construction sites are.

Many Moken anticipate that to earn a living by gathering sea products will be extremely difficult in the future because of strict rules according to the national park regulations. Changing, nevertheless, is seen as an unavoidable factor. Nguay gave his opinion that *“Morgan continuously change, no one wants to suffer hardship”*. He also expects that the village will have electricity from solar cells.

Television, radio, CD player (and maybe mobile phones) are desired by every family. One reason is that their neighbours have these entertainment devices so they also want to have them.

## **4.6 The Moken Economy**

### **4.6.1 Sources of Income**

The sources of income for the Moken can be divided into five main categories, which are: working for the park, driving boats for the touring companies, working as wage labourer for construction and making/selling handicrafts. Another main source of income is collecting sea snails which gives high income but is both illegal and risky.

Since 1996, according to concerns on environmental impact, the Moken have been prohibited to sell seashell to tourists. However, alternative occupation has been provided. During the dry season or tourist season, more than 25 Moken both women and men are employed as labourers by the Surin Islands national park. Both women and men receive 100 Baht daily wage plus free meals and coffee. The park is seen as an important source of income, even though only for six months a year. Many Moken confirmed that *“during the tourist season, most of us work for the park”*. Some of them, particularly widows, wish to work for the park as long as possible because it is their main source of income. They emphasized *“we want to work for the park forever because we are widows. We have no one to earn for us. We want to have money to spend”*. They regard working for the park is light work. Some men said *“working for the park is not tiring. Only drive a boat and wait for the tourists while they are snorkelling”*.

However, not all the opinions are positive ones; complaints are made especially about the wage rate. *“I used to work for the park for six years. I finally quit and select*

*working with ajarn Puk<sup>12</sup> because there is not much work and I get the same wage”, explained Suthad. As well as Nai, he pointed out that “working with the park is so heavy and tiring, but with pee Nok<sup>13</sup> it is so comfortable and I can have afternoon sleep”. The ones who still work for the park also complain about their daily work and it seems that they would like to go outside the park station more often. Boling told that “I like to drive the boat because it is a single work. If I have to remain on the park station, I have to do many works, following what I am ordered to go. Taking the tourists to do snorkelling, I just drive the boat there, waiting, and drive back, then finish my duty”. Another supported that the park takes advantage of the Moken labourers. A Moken man pointed out that “they give us only a hundred baht a day but order us to do many things. This hundred baht is not enough for the whole family, though we are provided two meals a day. I stop working for the park. Now I make a model boat because I can get money immediately, don’t have to wait for a week like working for the park”. However, paying the Moken once a week is seen by the park as the best way to help their saving. If the money is paid each day, it will be spent immediately because the Moken will buy all things they want both from the park small store and the shops in their village. “We want them to have a sum each week, which may be use in urgent case such as when they get sick and are in need to go to the hospital” explained by the park staff.*

Besides working for the park, other Moken men work with tourism companies. The companies leave some boats for the Moken during the tourist season and when the guests from the companies arrive, the Moken bring the tourist groups to the snorkelling spots which are around the Surin Islands. They get a monthly salary of 4,000 Baht.

Working with the Andaman Pilot Project, (APP) is another possibility for the Moken. They are all together 8 men and 2 women who work in this project. Formerly, all the men worked for the park. With an attractive offer, they decided to work for the APP. Three thousand Baht per month is their salary. They work in the village under supervision by the APP field staff. Some work in the past included building the *kabang*, preparing a trekking track from the village to the opposite side of the village, digging holes for garbage burning, and building an interpretive centre. The APP emphasizes on group working, therefore, these 10 Moken are trained to work in groups. They also get support from the project such as rice, salt, areca nut, red lime, tools for carving model boats, and materials for repairing boats.

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<sup>12</sup> The Andaman Pilot Project Coordinator

<sup>13</sup> The Andaman Pilot Project Field Staff

Construction work is one of their sources of income. Both Moken men and women are employed to work as unskilled wage labourers. Their work site is on *Ao Saiend*, the northern Surin Island, under supervision by the Fishery Unit. Women receive 150 Baht per day and men 200 Baht on a weekly basis. Moreover, some of them plan to continue to work as a manual labourer in construction on the mainland after the construction here is finished.

Selling handicrafts to the tourists is another source of income. Generally, it can be said that almost every Moken household sells at least one kind of handicraft. The men carve the model boats in many styles. The price for one model boat varies from 100-3,000 Baht depended on its shape, size and appearance. Mats and small boxes (or containers) from pandanus leaves are woven by the women. 100-200 Baht is the price for the mat and 30-80 Baht for the box. Some families like those of Sunai and Tad, produce both model boats and small containers. By selling handicraft, they could earn more than 20,000 Baht in the previous year. How much they can earn depends on the tourists. The Tsunami of 2004 is seen as a cause of income reduction because after this event, the number of the tourists was reduced. Many of them complained that *“this year we can earn only a half of the year before a happening of the Tsunami”*.

Due to the revenues from tourism, most of the Moken welcome tourists. Although some of the Moken feel uncomfortable when they are observed by the tourists, they do not pay much attention on that. As long as the tourists come, buy their products, give money and sweets to their children, no complaint will be made by the Moken.

Sea snails are another source of income. All of the Moken insist that income from selling sea snails can cover their yearly expense. They explained that *“our families have enough to eat for the whole year because of selling sea snails. Income earned from the park or from other sources cannot cover the expenses”*. The sea snail's price varies from 600-2,000 Baht per kilogram depended on where they sell it. They will get the higher price when they sell it at Ranong province. During monsoon season, this activity will take place no less than three times. They can earn up to 30,000 Baht a year. In 2005, some families also earned from selling sea cucumbers gathered in Burma. Some of them got 8,000 Baht from selling this marine creature. Nevertheless, selling sea cucumbers is not that popular anymore. Before it can be sold, it needs to be cleaned, boiled and dried which takes a time. For the sea snails, nothing needs to be done. In addition, its meat is edible. Although there are plenty of sea snails and sea cucumbers in Burma territory, the Moken are afraid to be arrested if they go to gather them there.

There are five grocery stores in the village and the owners gain quite good profits. Products are sold double the price than on mainland. Some owners earn 2,000 Baht per week. Most of the things sold are food and drinks, many kinds of sweets, instant noodle, sugar, coffee, liquor, etc.

Another occasional income for some families is provided by selling charcoal. Dried hard wood nearby the village is collected to make the charcoal. The wood will be burned in a barrel which is buried in the ground. The charcoal brings 70 Baht per basket and 150 Baht per sack.

#### 4.6.2 Status Stratification and Good Life

Considering their status stratification, the Moken give importance to boats and engines which are a means to earn their living. If they own a boat and engine, they can do fishery outside the conservation areas which are defined by the Surin Islands National Park. Other materials such as gold, money, entertainment devices, etc. are also taken into account. However, the ones who are considered as better-off argued that *“no one is richer than others. During the monsoon season, particularly, all of us fall into poor category. We will sell our gold necklace and use the money from it to buy food and other necessities for the family”*.

Table 1: The Status Stratification by the Moken

Better-off	Average	Poor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Own boat and engine</li> <li>- Have work</li> <li>- Own gold (necklace, bracelet)</li> <li>- Own grocery store</li> <li>- Own television, radio, CD-player</li> <li>- Have money on the Bank (for the one who has Thai identity card)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have work</li> <li>- Own gold (necklace, bracelet)</li> <li>- Own television, radio, CD-player</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Posses nothing</li> <li>- Alcoholic</li> </ul>

Source: Interview 2006



Additionally, the Moken regard good life as “life with money” and “live on the Surin Islands”. They explained that *“without money, our lives will not be good. We need money more than other thing else because the money can be used to buy everything we want”*. Living on the Surin Islands is also regarded as a good life because it is simple, i.e., less stress than in town, and the cost of living, particularly for food and accommodation is not as high as on the mainland. Although they have to pay double price in the village’s shops, things provided at the village’s shops are not as many as on the mainland, so they do not have many things to buy. Moreover, they also can collect food from the nearby sea and the forest. If they stay on the mainland, the most expense is for their children. Some Moken said that *“there are many sweets in the shops on the mainland and our children just want to eat them all day. We also have to buy food for every meal, so we do not have much money left*. Although some of them worked and stayed on the mainland as labourers and earned 200 Baht a day, they prefer to live on the island not only for the reason that it is their home but also because the cost of living is lower.

#### **4.6.3 Family Expenses**

The highest expenses for most of the Moken families are for food, particularly for their children. Some of them who work for the park pointed out that *“our weekly wage is finished within 2-3 days because our children eat too much”*. It happens that the father sells a model boat and immediately his child asks for the money to buy some sweets and chips. The reason for pleasing their children, apart from love, is that they are feeling embarrassed. They explained that *“if we don’t give money to our children when they ask from us to buy kinds of sweet, they will cry non-stop. We will be blamed from other neighbours that we are so stingy, have money but don’t let the children eat”*. Some pointed out that because of too many grocery stores in the village, which sell what the children like to eat, the parents have more expenditure. Previously, there was only one grocery store in the village and it had few sweets for the children. Another grocery store was situated at the park station, run by the park. At that time, the children did not frequently have chips and sweets. They would have them when their parents went to the park station or went to the mainland. Nowadays, it is possible to buy them in their village. The park shop offers sweets, drinks, and other things, which are mainly for the tourists. However, the Moken also like to come here to buy liquor and food. The park staff mentioned that *“some Morgan spend most of their money for liquor”*. In addition, many Moken argued that *“principal customers who buy liquor from the park shop are the Morgan, not the tourists or the park staff. Therefore, the park also earns from us but the park staff always blame that we drink too much. If so, why do they sell it to us?”*

Moreover, there is a grocery store in the Moken village supported by the APP. Two Moken women take care of it. The profit from selling is distributed within the working group. This grocery sells no liquor because the APP coordinator disagrees with selling it. However, one of the shop keepers plans to sell it in the monsoon season because it gives high profit and the APP coordinator will be away during the monsoon.

When there is a shortage of money, asking the offspring happens often but only in case their offspring has a job. Borrowing from neighbours is possible but not preferable. Some pointed out that *“when we have no money we prefer not to ask from others because others are also poor and we also do not want to be indebted”*. Moreover, to lend money is unpopular too, because repayment takes usually very long time. Table 2 illustrates estimated incomes and expenses of some Moken families in the year 2005, divided by their occupation. The incomes and expenses here were roughly estimated by the Moken themselves and numbers might not be exact.

Table 2: Estimated Income and Expenses of Selected Moken Families (2005).

Family	A	B	C	D
Occupation	Labourer	Boatman, labourer	Handicraft producer, boat man	Park staff, grocery store owner
Members	5	5	8	5
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>50,200</b>	<b>42,000</b>	<b>44,000</b>	<b>114,000</b>
<i>Income's details</i>	A	B	C	D
1. Wage/salary	18,700	42,000	24,000	66,000
2. Handicrafts	1,500	-	20,000	-
3. Sea products	30,000	-	-	-
4. Grocery store	-	-	-	48,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>45,677</b>	<b>37,296</b>	<b>42,170</b>	<b>92,934</b>
<i>Expense's details</i>	A	B	C	D
1. Rice	6,720	7,200	7,200	7,080
2. Sweets, chips for children	10,800	7,200	9,000	43,200
3. Sweetened condense milk	11,520	-	5,700	-
4. Shrimp paste	1,260	720	1,440	720
5. Cooking oil	800	3,360	3,780	3,600
6. Coffee	1,200	1,560	1,920	5,760
7. Sugar	792	1,200	1,000	1,584
8. MSG	1,260	960	1,500	720
9. Tobacco	3,300	1,200	3,240	600
10. Garlic	360	480	1,080	480
11. Onion	360	480	1,080	600
12. Fresh leaves <i>Mitragyna speciosa</i> (Korth.) Havil.	3,000	6,000	-	-
13. Areca nut	270	600	540	7,200
14. Betel leaves	200	-	240	3,600
15. Lime	20	40	20	240
16. Lighter	600	480	600	900
17. Face powder	360	240	480	200
18. Soap	120	840	720	360
19. Shampoo	240	360	840	480
20. Detergent	360	336	900	840
21. Dried chili	740	480	840	560
22. Liquor	1,200	200	50	1,200
23. Cloth	195	-	-	300
24. Ovaltine	-	1,560	-	-
25. Charcoal	-	1,800	-	-
26. Salt	-	-	-	160
27. Boat fee	-	-	-	7,200
28. Bus fee	-	-	-	1,350
29. Living allowance for children on the mainland	-	-	-	4,000

Source: Interview 2006 (a rough estimated by the Moken)

## **4.7 Natural Resources Utilization of the Moken**

### **4.7.1 Patterns of Natural Resources Utilization**

Natural resource utilization of the Moken can be, generally, divided into 3 categories, i.e., food, material for cooking and handicraft, and income generation. Food is always gathered for a coming meal. The Moken do not accumulate food for future consumption, except rice. The reasons are that they prefer fresh food and the food sources are around their village. Cooking material such as charcoal will be prepared for a week, and then looking for dried hard wood will take place again. Normally, dried branches are cut for making the charcoal, not the whole tree. Material for handicraft is pandanus leaves. Only ripe and big long leaves will be cut for this purpose. The leaves will be used until they are finished. Additional cutting is depended on how the product is selling. If all products are sold out, the Moken will go to the forest and gather the leaves again. It happens that there are no more handicraft products left in the village because they do not have mass production. Some tourists appear to be disappointed not to get the Moken handicraft as a souvenir. As well for the model boat carving, the men make the boats until all wood is finished, dried wood will not be cut until all their model boats are almost sold out.

Collecting sea products for sale falls into a kind of accumulation. Sea snails will be collected from the sea, their meat will be taken out for meal, and the shells are accumulated until they reach an amount they want, which is, normally, more than one kilogram. Then, they will be sold. As well as sea cucumbers, after all necessary processes, the dried sea cucumbers will also be accumulated of a needed amount, but in a shorter time than the sea snails. Actually, they want to sell all these products immediately because they want to get the money instantly too. However, as long as the quantity is too small, the Moken will collect more until they reach the demanded amount.

### **4.7.2 The Regulations of the Surin Islands Marine National Park and Natural Resources Utilization of the Moken**

The Moken are allowed to collect marine products only for household consumption. If they want to earn from fishing, they have to do it outside the conservation zone defined by the laws. However, two families earn from selling fish caught inside the conservation zone to the park kitchen. These fish are cooked for the park staff, not for the tourists. All food, including seafood, for sale to the tourists is transported daily from the mainland. The Moken are allowed to collect turtle eggs to sell to the park (5 Baht per egg) because there is a turtle conservation project in which the turtles will be

nursed until they have grown enough to be released to the sea. Some Moken said that *“the park nurses and liberates the turtles, but in the monsoon season they will become our meal. Their meat is extremely delicious”*. Actually, the Moken are prohibited to catch and eat the turtle, not even to use it for their ceremony.

Breaking the rules always happens and the Moken accept that they know the rules but they have no choice because they have to feed their families. Gathering sea snails and sea cucumbers for sale is a vivid example. Some Moken explained that *“catching fish for trading has to be done 16 kilometres away from the park territory. In 2005, three Morgan men were arrested by the Surin Islands authority because they used trawl in the conservation zone. Using the trawl in the conservation areas is illegal. Their boat was confiscated and they had to pay approximately 50,000 Baht for the bail. Fishing and sea snails gathering are done around the park zone particularly during the monsoon season because the park’s inspecting boat seldom reconnoitres”*. However, the park authority explained that *“we know what the Morgan do, such as gathering sea snails, cutting the trees, etc., but we try to compromise and not to punish them. We pretend not to notice what is going on. If this is done by outsiders, all of them will be arrested without mercy and forgiveness”*.

The Moken stated that the declaration of the Surin Islands as a national park restricts their maritime work for a living and they have to go further to gather the sea products. Some maintained that *“we conserve our marine creatures at the Surin Islands but we steal from others such as from Burma and Similan”*. Moreover, many Moken accept that the sea cucumber around the Surin Islands has disappeared because of them. *“They provide good income, the small size of the sea cucumber can be sold at least 80 Baht per kilogram”*, explained by the Moken women.

#### **4.8 Changes Related to the Tsunami 2004 in the Moken Community**

The fact that all Moken survived the Tsunami results from their careful observation. They noticed the rapid flow of the sea away from the shore. From this unusual event, something bad was supposed to happen. A rational is if the water draws away fast it will come back fast too. News spread throughout the entire village. All of them were able to flee to the hill before the big wave swept everything away. As well as other Moken, who were on the boat and were waiting for the tourists while they were snorkelling, noticed that there was strong tide and sand was floating up. The tourists were floated away without realizing. Nonetheless, all tourists were saved and got back into the boat. Although the Moken did not know exactly what was going on because they had never seen this case before, they believed a strange incident was happening. It appears that their familiarity with the sea provides useful knowledge, and enables

them to take notice of unusual events. Some of them call this deadly event “*Laboon*” (big wave), which is caused by the “lord of the sea” resulting from too many “*Lobong*” at the park station without any offering ceremony. However, not all Moken know and heard a story about “*Laboon*”, even the ones who are about 70-80 years old. This may result from their different origins, which are various islands in the Mergui Archipelago.

The impact of the Tsunami on the Moken society brought positive as well as negative changes. The positive effects were the provision of identity cards, school and aid, while the negative effects comprise loss of income and assets, and conflict.

The first positive change is that the Moken were registered and some of them were granted Thai identity cards, which mean they can become Thai nationals. Previously, there was no policy from the central government to register the Moken. After the Tsunami, initiated by the Royal Project, a new policy is applied to the Moken. A school and teachers are also provided as mentioned in the previous section. Moreover, the Moken get more attention from the public both governmental and non-governmental agencies, which try to support them. Aid in terms of house materials, boats, engines, cloths, food, and kitchen utensils, have been provided.

Nonetheless, it appears that the Tsunami had more negative impacts on the Moken. Decreasing income is considered as a big impact of the Tsunami from the Moken who mainly earn from selling their handicraft products to the tourists. They pointed out that “*our income declined because the number of tourists has decreased and this year (2006) we can earn only half of the year before the Tsunami (2004)*”. Another negative impact was frequent liquor drinking because of more shops have opened in the village after the Tsunami. The Moken stated that “*it is a vivid change in our village after the Tsunami. They drink too much and almost everyday resulting from selling the liquor in the village. The village’s grocery stores sell both Thai and Burmese liquor. Previously, if we wanted to drink we had to buy from the park shop which is situated on a different island and we had to go there by boat which created a little difficulty. If one was lazy to go, one could not have it, and the advantage was one could save more money. Now, it is very convenient, any time one wants to drink the liquor, it can be found next door*”. Alcohol consumption, regardless before or after the Tsunami, frequently leads to family violence.

Another negative impact the Tsunami had on the Moken was the loss of their assets. Boat and engine are considered as the most valuable assets for the Moken. What they want most from aid organizations are these two things. It is not clear how many of them had a boat and an engine before the Tsunami. The number they told varies from

3-30 boats. Most villagers and the park staff insisted that only 3 boats with engines existed before the Tsunami. They belonged to the better-off families. While Salama and his relatives argued that there were 10 and 20 boats with engines in *Ao Bonlek* and *Ao Saiend*, respectively. Nonetheless, all have gone and were totally destroyed. The Moken pointed out that no one received any boats neither from the Surin Islands National Park nor from other aid organizations. However, from other sources of information, some boats had been granted to some Moken families already. The park authority maintained that after the Tsunami, six boats from the park were granted to the Moken who are completely willing to do fishery outside the conservation area, and not just keep the boat on the beach and do nothing. Moreover, the park staff further stated that after the Tsunami many non-government agencies visited the Moken village and distributed donations without contacting the park. The park authority stated that *“we are always blamed both from the Morgan and the NGO that we do not give any assistance to the Morgan. The Morgan who do not get the boat from the park, such as ..., always attack the park”*. The national park staff that have worked here and known the Moken more than ten years confirmed that after the Tsunami the Moken did not tell the truth in case they were receiving help. *“They usually say that they did not get any help, not even rice and food, which is not true. Actually all of them received rice, food, kitchen tools, and cloths. Even their houses were built for them. This is because they worry that if they say the truth, they will not get any aid anymore in the future”*. Besides, from the data collected by the APP in May and October 2005, boats were donated to the Moken as seen from the following table.

Table 3: Boats Donated to the Moken

Donator	Number of boats	Size	Engine
USA Marine Corp	15	13 gong*	-
APP	6	19-27 gong*	3 (65 hp)
Kuraburi District Office	1	23 gong*	**
Tom Henry	1	25 gong*	**
ADDRA	2	23 gong*	**

Source: APP 2005

\* = Thai measurement for a boat's size

\*\* = no information

The reason for saying that “*we did not get any boat*” may be because of the boat size did not meet their demand. All of them want to have a large boat with a strong engine because only this boat can be used to do fishery outside the conservation zone and also to go to the mainland. The ones from the donation are too small and can only be used to travel between the adjacent islands. The Moken further stated that “*these small boats are almost useless for us*”. It is said that the Moken who were disappointed with the donated small boat, chopped it and used it as fuel wood.

Another impact related to the Tsunami was donations, besides boats. Many Moken mentioned that unequal donations brought about discord and dissociation. It happened that donors contacted the so-called village head first. All donations, particularly rice and money, were left at the village head expecting that he would distribute it to the entire village members. Rumour spread that he kept it for his family and some were distributed only to his close relatives. From the unequal distribution of donation, openly donation in the village is seen by some Moken as the best way to handle the problem. They mentioned that “*the donors should present themselves at the village centre and ask every household to go there and distribute to each equally*”.

After the Tsunami, approximately 80 Moken from Burma also came to the Surin Islands and intended to stay here. They received rice and other donations too but they were not allowed to live there. Moreover, a Moken family moved to Burma as soon as they got the boat. The Moken on the Surin Islands also notice that after the Tsunami the Moken from Burma frequently visit their relatives here. Many Moken here do not much appreciate the presence of the Moken from Burma. Some worry that they will come to live here. Due to the limited space for new more houses, they do not like anyone else to settle down here. Nevertheless, some of them mentioned that “*they can stay on the Surin Islands but it should be at the other bay because it is not enough space in this bay*”. However, under Thai laws and regulations, the Moken from Burma are not allowed to settle here. Besides, some also carry diseases such as elephantiasis which do not exist anymore in Thailand. Hence, the Thai authorities try to convince the Moken not to invite the Moken from Burma to come to visit them.

Receiving aid from government agencies was reserved for people with Thai nationality, in other words, for people in possession of Thai identity cards. It is explained by a man, whose father is Moken and his mother is Moklen and living on Prathong Island, which is not far from the mainland. After the Tsunami they receive very much attention from the government authorities because they all have Thai identity cards. Big house, big boat with engine, and other necessities had been provided. He further stated that “*comparing to the Morgan on the Surin Islands, they*



*received less help from the government agencies because they don't have Thai identity card".*

## **5. Background of the Hill People in Pangmapha District**

Pangmapha district, Maehongson Province, located about 60 km from the provincial capital and 180 km from Chiangmai City. Bordering Burma (Myanmar) to the north and west, Pangmapha district in the past were under the territorial influence of Khun Sa, once considered to be the world's leading drug lord. The total area of the Pangmapha district is 1,094 km<sup>2</sup>, at more than 1,000 metres above sea level, and more than 90% of the total area consists of complex mountains. The climate can be divided into the summer season (mid of February- mid of May), the rainy season (mid of May-mid of October) and the winter season (mid of October-mid of February)<sup>14</sup>. The areas covered mainly by three types of forest, which are tropical evergreen forest, mixed deciduous forest and dry dipterocarp forest<sup>15</sup>.

The eastern and southern parts of Pangmapha district are part of the Pai Wildlife Sanctuary; the western parts belong to the Sanpandan Wildlife Sanctuary, while other areas fall into the category of National Conservation Forests. In the past, forests there were rich and vastly undisturbed. During the last 20-30 years, however, due to the influx of new settlers and a rise of the indigenous population, the demand for natural resources increased. Forests degraded rapidly, wildlife, for all bigger species, disappeared, and water shortage began to adversely affect paddy production in the lower areas, especially during the dry season. Some village groups, encouraged by outsiders, made profit from cutting timber for commercial purposes. Others cleared forestland to convert it into agricultural land. As a result, many conflicts arose regarding forest encroachment, land and water use and demarcation of village/community boundaries. Today, virtually all land in the district falls under the jurisdiction of the Forestry Department, while farmers have no land titles and, following a strict interpretation of the law, are illegal squatters. Yet, given the present political situation in Thailand, farmers are not under the immediate threat of being evicted. Unlike other areas in northern Thailand, most of the people in Pangmapha district (an estimated 80%-90%) own Thai citizenship, which otherwise would limit people's movement and their access to government services considerably.

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<sup>14</sup> [Online] Available: <http://www.maehongson.go.th/phumiair.php>. Access date: December 12, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> [Online] Available: <http://www.forest.go.th/stat/stat44/TAB1.pdf>. Access date: December 12, 2007.

Pangmapha became a minor district (*King Amphoe*) in 1987<sup>16</sup> and covered two sub-districts (*Tambon*), which were Soppong and Pangmapha. Later, in 1996, it became a full district (*Amphoe*)<sup>17</sup>. Nowadays, Pangmapha district comprises 4 sub-districts, which are Pangmapha (major inhabitants are Dai (Shan) and Lahu), Sobpong (major inhabitants are Dai (Shan), Thai, Lisu, Karen and Hmong), Tamlod (major inhabitants are Dai (Shan), Karen and Lahu) and Napupom (major inhabitants are Dai (Shan), Lahu and Lua).

According to decentralization policy, the Thai government promulgated the Law for sub-District and Provincial Administrative Council in 1994. Local citizen are allowed to vote their representatives on those two levels in free and democratic elections. At the same time, these administrative bodies are entrusted with increased legislative rights and financial resources to manage their own affairs in terms of economic, social and cultural development. Tambon (sub-District) Administrative Organisations (TAOs) are classified, depending on their tax income, population and physical size, into 5 different categories, that gives them, apart from their own sources of income, access to different amounts of financial resources allocations through the centre. Due to its remoteness and its small population, all TAOs in Pangmapha falls into the fifth and lowest category. The TAO's offices there were established in 1997 and organized the first election in 1998. Each village elects 2 representatives to be TAO members. Each TAO has its Five Years Development Plan which mostly concerning infrastructures improvement or construction and agriculture related activities. Interestingly, in the second election in 2004, women were elected for the first time to be TAO representatives, i.e., there are 9 women among 69 TAO members from all sub-districts in Pangmapha.

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<sup>16</sup> Royal Gazette 104 (67): 2530 (1987). [Online] Available: <http://www.ratchakitcha.soc.go.th/DATA/PDF/2530/D/067/2485.PDF>. Access date: December 12, 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Royal Gazette 113 (62): 5-8. 2539 (1996). [Online] Available: <http://www.ratchakitcha.soc.go.th/DATA/PDF/2539/A/062/5.PDF>. and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amphoe\\_Pang\\_Mapha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amphoe_Pang_Mapha). Access date: December 12, 2007.

There are 2,818 households and a total population of 11,544 of which 5,637 are female and 5,908 are male.

Table 4: Total Households and Population in Pangmapha District in 2006

Sub-district	Villages	Households	Population		
			Female	Male	Total
Sobpong	8	796	1,629	1,665	3,294
Tamlod	7	598	1,297	1,301	2,597
Pangmapha	11	722	1,357	1,449	2,806
Napupom	12	702	1,354	1,493	2,847
Total	38	2,818	5,637	5,908	11,544

Source: Office of Pangmapha Community Development<sup>18</sup>

Annual income of the people in Pangmapha district (2006) is approximately 25,531 Baht<sup>19</sup> (638.75 US Dollar)<sup>20</sup>. Main income derives from agriculture and cattle. Some villagers also earn from non-timber forest products as well as from handicrafts. Since Pangmapha district has been known for its multi ethnic groups and beautiful nature, it attracts many tourists, both Thai and foreigners. However, only some villagers can profit from tourism (more details in Chapter IV 7.2). From a discussion on status stratification with Lahu, Karen, Lisu, and Dai (Shan), the following criteria in Table 5 were identified as indicators of wealth and status.

<sup>18</sup> [Online] Available: <http://cddweb.cdd.go.th/pangmapha>. Access date: December 12, 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Office of Pangmapha Community Development. [Online] Available: <http://cddweb.cdd.go.th/pangmapha>. Access date: March 20, 2007.

<sup>20</sup> Exchange average rate of January 2006, 1 US Dollar = 39.97 Baht. [Online] Available: [www.bot.or.th](http://www.bot.or.th). Access date: March 20, 2007)

Table 5: The Status Stratification by the Hill People

Better-off	Average	Poor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teak house with tile roof</li> <li>- Enough rice (own cultivation) for consumption for the whole year</li> <li>- Have rice for sale</li> <li>- Have more than 3 rotational cultivation plots</li> <li>- Have more than 5 cattle</li> <li>- Own grocery store</li> <li>- Car, motorbike</li> <li>- TV., CD player, radio, refrigerator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teak house with tile roof or corrugated iron roof</li> <li>- Have rice (own cultivation) enough for 7-8 months</li> <li>- Have 1-2 rotational cultivation plots</li> <li>- Have 2-3 cattle</li> <li>- Motorbike</li> <li>- TV., radio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bamboo house with thatch roof</li> <li>- Not enough rice</li> <li>- Have 1 cultivation plot or do not have any plot</li> <li>- Wage labour</li> <li>- Drug addict</li> </ul>

Source: Interview 2005

### 5.1 Settlement of Ethnic Groups in Pangmapha District

Although various ethnic groups inhabit Pangmapha district, their settlement pattern is based on ethnicity. Apart from a single Lua settlement, the oldest villages (more than 160 years old) are of the Shan, a Dai-speaking minority people. The central site was *Maelana*, located in a fertile valley. The Shan villages of *Naphupom* in the western valley, *Maelana* in the centre and *Thamlod* in the east were linked to each other and formed central places. These three villages, together with *Sobpong*, today form the four sub-districts of Pangmapha district.

Approximately in 1927, Karen from *Huai Puling* village, Muang district, Maehongson province moved to stay in *Muangpam* village. Afterwards, Red Lahu from Burma, who knew the Karen of *Muangpam* since they went to hook elephants in Burma, set up their villages at *Sankamlue* and *Aego* in order to cultivate opium. Due to the fertility of the area, there was an immigration influx in the late 1947. A priority of the new immigrants was to have new opium cultivation areas. Black Lahu entered from the north into the area of Pangmapha district and established their villages along the main mountain range towards the south. They settled down at *Huaihea*, *Papuek*, and *Bokrai*.

Commonly, the Lahu establish so-called “Pang Kham”. These are fields located further away from the village. As it requires walks of several hours to reach these fields, huts are built as shelter against the rain and sun, and some small animals (chicken and pigs) are raised. These shelters allow the farmers to stay for a few days.

Close to these “Pang Kham”, new settlements (often referred to as satellite villages) are established if the village becomes too large or internal conflicts emerged. In such cases, some families leave the village and establish a new one.

In 1965, Lisu from Pai district moved in and set up their village at *Namrin* which is next to *Doisingto*, one of the most fertile areas to cultivate opium in upper Maehongson. Most of the Lisu now live in the southern part of Pangmapha. An exception is the Lisu village of *Nambosape*, whose residents came more recently from the north-west.

Although Pangmapha is consisting of various ethnic groups, the people live together peacefully. Conflicts occur from the utilization of resources between neighbouring villages. For example, cattle of village A destroys a field of village B or people of village C cut the trees from the community forest of village D. Nevertheless, they compromise and solve the conflict by themselves. The common pattern is that the village headman, the village committee, and a sub-district headman act as mediators. Most of the conflicts are limited within one ethnic group. On the one hand, this results from the adaptation to ecological niches of the different groups. While the Shan live in the valleys and the Karen have terraced rice field at the slopes of the mountains, the Lahu and Lisu settle in the upper parts of the hills. This in turn implies spatial proximity of villages belonging to the same minority. On the other hand, the different groups have different pattern of conflict management. The Karen and Lahu tend to be easily compromising, while the Lisu are said to be fierce. Thus, where Lisu settle, other minorities tend to keep a larger distance.

## **5.2 Development of Sobpong as a Centre of Pangmapha District**

Since a dirt road was built by the Japanese troops from Pai via Muang Maehongson to Burma during the Second World War, it became a transportation and commercial route for the people. However, the road condition was rather bad and after the war the road was not maintained anymore. Nevertheless, people used this road, as it was the only available until the early eighties. Travellers would stop overnight in Pangmapha, located in between Maehongson and Pai. Pangmapha is Dai (Shan) language and means lime area because there was plenty of lime.

The development of Sobpong can be separated into 2 periods. The first period (before 1970) was the so called the “old Sobpong” with a police station as the only government agency in this area. Villagers recall this time as a period when large-scale timber extraction and poppy growing were the major agricultural activities in the district, with only a few wooden shop houses in Sobpong around the old market, and

most of the ethnic people moving around in the still densely forested mountains with no permanent settlements. It was also a time of lawlessness, with gunmen and warlords controlling law and order. The area was under the territorial influence of the notorious drug baron Khun Sa and his Shan army from neighbouring Burma, to whom the tribal people once a year – on the occasion of his birthday – went on a visit to show their respect and deference.

In the seventies the Thai state gradually established its territorial sovereignty over Pangmapha by pushing Khun Sa back to Burma, suppressing the production and trade of opium and promoting (cash) crop substitution programmes with the support of international organizations. They included the Thai-German Highland Development Programme (TG-HDP), jointly executed by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the Office of Narcotic Control Board (ONCB ) between 1981 and 1998 in the area of Pangmapha, among other places.

The building of the main road by the Thai government in the late seventies provided better access of the district to Chiangmai and Maehongson. In order to benefit from this infrastructure, the “old Sobpong” was relocated to the new location which is next to the main road and became a “new Sobpong”. A combination of infrastructural development (roads, schools, and hospital) and a centre for administration and market of the district triggered a rapid growth of Sobpong.

Reconstructing the history, it is said that a Thai family from Pai district founded Sobpong with establishing the market in old Sobpong. Approximately in 1977 this market was moved to the present place as “the new market”, located next to the new main road. When the road was finished, many shops were set up by traders and merchants coming from Chiangmai or other parts of Thailand. They settled around the new market under the patronage of this family. This market is a permanent consumer market offering products originating mainly from other parts of Thailand (even fruits, vegetables and meat mainly coming from Chiangmai), but with clothes and electric appliances coming from as far as China. Once a week, on Tuesdays, a fresh market, where farmers from surrounding villages sell some of their surplus products, joins this permanent market. In general, agricultural products are bought by outside (urban-based) traders who come into the village to pick up the product, which is then sold in Chiangmai or in other provinces.

In the beginning, businesses in the district prospered due to the involvement of many traders in the opium and timber trade. However, with the logging ban, the successful suppression of opium production and trade in the 1970s and a more diversified market economy, traders, merchants, and lately also restaurant and guesthouse owners,

became more independent and relied less on the extended network of this family, establishing their own networks instead. Resort owners, for example, attract their clients today through internet advertisements or through their network of tour operators.

### **5.3 Hill People Livelihood System and Interethnic Relationship**

Most farmers, particularly those in the more distant villages (as measured in terms of distance to/from the Chiangmai – Maehongson road) are still basically subsistence, shifting cultivation farmers (rotation: 3-6 years) with upland rice (basic staple diet), maize (animal feed) and kidney beans as their major crop grown on sometimes steep fields. Opium was a major cash crop for many tribal groups. However, since the central government inserted their power to control an access to natural resources such as a prohibition of shifting cultivation and opium cultivation, many households moved further to avoid the state power in order to continue their traditional cultivation. Today, some villages grow coffee, beside tea and vegetables (sesame, garlic, cabbage, ginger, potato, tomato). Livestock raising has become the major income source for cash. Another source of income is occasional agricultural and non-agricultural wage labor, mostly within the same or in neighboring villages. As land is scarce and restricted, and soils are poor and prone to erosion, up to 80% of villagers suffer from rice shortage between 3-6 months per year on average. Village rice banks, whose setting up has been encouraged and supported by the Community Development Department, play a major role in compensating for rice deficits.

Moreover, pigs and chicken also play an important role for the households who are animists because these animals are used for sacrifice. Most of the people in Pangmapha are animists but some of them converted to Christian. They pointed out that *“when we were animists we have to use many pigs and chicken to sacrifice spirits because we got sick very often. Since we have converted to Christianity, we do not need to make worship anymore”*. However, the Dai (Shan) believe firmly in Buddhism. It was stated by missionaries that *“we have to put a lot of effort to change the Dai to become Christian. Until now we do not succeed”*. Furthermore, conflict occurred when there are Christians and animists in the same village because the former criticize the latter that they are benighted and try to push them to change their belief as happened in *Bokrite* village. Nevertheless, the conflict was solved by the village headman and committee and the missionary has to stop his activity. It also happened in another Lahu village and moved out of the Christians to set up their own village was a solution.

Inter-ethnic relationship in Pangmapha district depends on the migration history. Jatuworrak (2005) found that in the earlier time, the relationship between Dai (Shan) and Karen had 2 different forms, exchange relationship and hierarchy relationship. For the first relationship, the Dai (Shan) bartered paddy rice varieties and salt for vegetable varieties and chilli from the Karen. For the latter relationship, the Dai (Shan) were regarded as a pioneer group who had permanent settlement in this area. The Dai (Shan) were also continually elected to be the sub-district chairman (particularly in Soppong and Thamlod sub-district); therefore during the Buddhist Lent the Karen from *Muangpam* and *Mae-u-mong* would make a visit to the Dai (Shan) chairman to express their respect. Moreover, the Karen of *Muangpam* have a close relationship with the Red Lahu of *Phamon*. Every year after finishing their cultivation, the Lahu work for the Karen as wage earner at *Muangpam* as well as the Karen always join the New Year celebration of the *Phamon* people. In contrast, the Black Lahu and the Lisu do not have close relationships because they moved in later. The Karen do not have regularly contact with the Black Lahu. The Karen as well as most Red Lahu distrust the Lisu, and assume that in cooperation they would always try to be dominant, because they take the Lahu and Karen as simpleminded or stupid, as poor and having a lower status than the Lisu<sup>21</sup>.

#### **5.4 Interethnic Cooperation**

Encouraged by traders from Chiangmai and an increasing demand from passing motorists along the main road between Chiangmai and Maehongson, villagers from three Lahu communities had started to collect and sell an ever increasing amount of bamboo shoots, mushrooms, orchids and other non-timber forest products. This led to increased conflicts among themselves as well as with neighbouring villagers over forest encroachments and depletion.

Given this situation, the TG-HDP started in 1996 to support a 'People's Forum' for the group of forest collectors, joined by two resource persons from the Royal Forest Department (RFD), which was followed by other regular meetings as villagers became increasingly aware of the situation. They held negotiations among themselves resulting in a management plan for forest products collection from what they considered as their community forests. Finally, resource utilization rules and regulations were defined, among others a total ban on the collection of wild orchids. News soon spread to other neighbouring villages and their leaders became likewise interested in joining the Pangmapha Thai Hill People Network, PMP Network. By

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<sup>21</sup> At present these resentment are obvious at the "view-points", where Lahu and Lisu women sell handicrafts and non-timber products to tourists. The Lahu have their stalls together as have the Lisu. The Lahu are jealous of the Lisu, as they tend to sell more for better prices, which is true.



1998, 20 villages, mostly from the Lahu ethnic group, had joined the Network, and its scope became broader to include, among others, conflicts over village boundaries, land use, encroachment of watershed areas, trespassing by livestock.

In 1998, the TG-HDP was terminated, however, together with AusAid, continued to provide some limited financial support for the PMP Network over the next year. Since 1999, a number of PMP Network proposals had been supported by the Social Investment Fund (SIF) jointly set up by the Government of Thailand and the World Bank to mitigate the effect of the economic crisis on the rural population.

By the year 2002, 28 villages had joined the PMP Network, including villagers from different ethnic minority groups, such as Red and Black Lahu (still constituting the majority), Shan, Lisu, Karen and Lua. Meetings were held monthly, composed of two representatives from each village, and hosted at every member village in rotation, apart from the rainy season when villagers met in the district town due to difficult access to some communities. With its broader scope, the PMP Network set up four different sections related to: (1) natural resources and environment, (2) culture and tradition, (3) drug prevention and control, and (4) education and accommodation (for students who want to further their studies in Pangmapha district town) and (5) agriculture. Already in 1997, with guidance by the TG-HDP the PMP Network had adopted an administrative structure with a Steering Committee at its top, consisting of a Chairman (a Lahu village headman), a Vice-Chairman (Lahu), a Treasurer (Thai) and a Secretary (Shan).

Obviously, neither the TG-HDP nor the local hill tribe population would have been able to set up and maintain such a network by its own. The PMP Network's history reflects how innovations from both sides, given a favourable environment, can trigger a dynamic process in terms of capability formation among parts of the local population with regard to organisational practices. Unfortunately, with the end of the development project, the network soon fell into decay. Obviously, the rather elaborated administrative structure and the complexity resulting from the many villages and different ethnic groups could not be maintained without outside financial and logistical support.

In 2002, with support from the ONCB (Office of the Narcotic Control Board), and on the initiative of the headman of Luk-khaolam village, a new network, the so-called Black Lahu Network, was set up among the six Black Lahu villages in Pangmapha district. Their main goals are to fight drug abuse and revive hill tribe culture. In order to prevent bureaucratization, they refuse to adopt an administrative structure. Decisions are made together by consensus, the committee has no chairman, and

villages have equal rights. In 2004, a new network of the Red Lahu villages emerged receiving support from ONCB. Its chairman is a Christian missionary from Wanaluang village. These smaller scale networks seem to be more sustainable than the former Pangmapha wide network.

This chapter provided information about the background, livelihood, and perspectives of the Moken in the Surin Islands marine national park and the hill people in Pangmapha district. The following chapters focus on strategies selected by the Moken in order to negotiate with the state to legitimize their traditional rights. Moreover, related aspects from the hill people are taken into account to compare the similarities and dissimilarities to the Moken.

## CHAPTER III

### STATE INTEGRATION THROUGH GOVERNING AND PROGRAMMES

In the past, although periphery areas were included into the governance of the centre, they were, as typical for the mandala system<sup>22</sup>, semi-autonomous. As long as overlord-tributary relationships were maintained, the subordinate areas could continue their own sovereignty. In the case of Thailand, a tributary (*prathetsarat*) had existed since Ayuttaya Kingdom (1350 to 1767). However, this system gradually changed since King Rama IV, Mongkut (Reign 1851-1868) due to his attempts to establish a modern system of administration and to encounter the threat of colonialism. The *thesaphiban* system, or protection over territory, was introduced as the new administration to replace the traditional local autonomy or the tributaries. Main purposes of the new system were the control of revenue, taxes, finances, education, the judicial system and other administrative functions by Bangkok. The reformation was continued by King Rama V, Chulalongkorn (Reign 1868-1910) by transforming an absolute monarchy based on relationships of power into a modern, centralized nation state. A cabinet system was introducing in order to modernize the government. A modern administration with province and district, which is still in use today, displaced the semi-feudal provincial administration or the *thesaphiban* (Winichakul 1994).

However, in the early phase of modern administration, the peripheral areas such as forests and islands had not been paid much attention to in terms of residence and cultivation areas according to distant locations. When the national economic development plans (particularly the first three plans) were applied to the entire country, the periphery areas became new sources of cultivation and exploitation in order to gain national economic growth. Extracting natural resources from periphery areas (for example, logging, mining, hunting, and cultivating) were major activities and continually done for decades. Since then, the periphery areas have been utilized mainly for economic purpose. Resulting from exploitation and concern about biodiversity, the government has sought regulations to limit all kind of activities which aimed to restore and maintain forest fertility. This concern for conservation led to declaration of the “National Park Act” in 1961.

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<sup>22</sup> A mandala represented a particular and often unstable political situation in a vaguely definable geographical area without fixed boundaries and where smaller centres tended to look in all directions for security (Wolters 1982: 17). States were linked in overlord-tributary relationships. The system gave greater independence to the subordinate states; it emphasized personal rather than official or territorial relationships; and it was often non-exclusive. Therefore, any particular area could be subject to several powers or none. [Online] Available: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandala\\_system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandala_system). Access date: September 15, 2006.

Additionally, since tourism has been initially officially promoted in the fifth national economic and social development plan (1982-1986) to increase the national income, the periphery areas such as coastal lines and mountainous areas have become attraction places. They are required from investment sectors to build resorts, hotels, guesthouses, etc. and also to create related activities, depending on the areas' characteristics.

The integration of the periphery areas into the state administration leads to the integration of the people living in these areas into the state. Actually, integration of the people living there is unintended because the state focuses mainly on the areas themselves. However, integrating the forest areas to become a national park implies integrating what these areas incorporate. All the people who live there are, inevitably, also subject to the national administration. The people who inhabit the periphery areas in Thailand are, often, ethnic groups. They are regarded as minorities who have a different culture from the state majority. Although they are well inside the geo-body as pointed out by Winichakul (1994), they are on the edge of Thainess, ethnically, religiously, or ideologically, and are not well accepted into the domain of Thainess. The central question is what new opportunities are provided through this integration and how the ethnic groups response to these new circumstances.

### **1. Space and Control Power**

The dominant discourse in Thailand on natural resources degradation/destruction emphasizes exploitation and extraction by humans, which is regarded as a threat to the natural resources and environment. Resulting from these dominant discourses, related laws and regulations are constructed in order to manage and control both humans and natural resources. In the case of Thailand, conservation is mainly focused on geographic areas and their biodiversity. Humans are considered as a threat to the natural resources and biodiversity. Such ideas, which become the dominant discourse in Thai society, come from an essentialist view of nature and environment in which the human sphere is excluded. It assumes that humans are the invaders who intervene with nature's purity. Therefore, if humans inhabit areas under protection by state policies, they are to be moved out, which leads to resettlement programmes. As pointed out by Brandon et al., (1998 in Korff 2002) the loss of biodiversity, especially in the tropical forests, can only be stopped through extreme means of protection, an exclusion of humans from these areas. In addition, it seems that protection of biodiversity stands in opposition to development understood as freedom and social justice (Sen 2000 in Korff 2002). In other words, the state control of space by defining territories and asserting control over a geographic areas attempts to affect,

influence or control people, resources, phenomena and relationships. Therefore, control over space allows for control over what this space incorporates (Korff 2003).

The concept of space becomes important because it does not merely appear as a natural space but also as a political space in which attempts are made to define rules and regulations in order to construct, control and evaluate various form of spaces in the society, for example, village, forest, and national park. As space is constructed, therefore, all related perceptions about it are solely reproducing such space. Thus, space, knowledge and power, are inter-related as stated by Foucault that

*“Space is fundamental in any form of communal life;  
space is fundamental in any exercise of power”  
(Foucault 1984:252)*

Spatialization of the state by categorizing space into specific groups serves as a mechanism of social control. Nonetheless, this type of power can be negotiated by creating other forms of space or counter space. In other words, space is redefined or given a new meaning. Hence, ethnic groups can make use of this logic to create and maintain their spaces as well as to negotiate with state power. As no one can monopolize the power, therefore, it is accessible for everyone no matter if it is an ethnic minority or the majority.

The ethnic groups and natural resources are connected in terms of social and economic life. Moreover, having been settled in forest areas and being dependant on the natural resources for their livelihood systems, they are viewed as a threat to the nature and there is an attempt to exclude them from the protected space. However, they react to the dominant discourses by creating their own spaces from their beliefs and practices and everyday livelihood systems. In other words, cultures, social relations within and between groups, and related conservation discourses are employed in order to give it a different meaning and to construct their own spaces. These counter discourses are constructed aiming to maintain their customary rights both to live in such areas and utilize the natural resources. Therefore, the space is a powerful means of control and contest the state power. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to show how ethnic groups construct their spaces in order to maintain their boundaries, to insist on their traditional rights over natural resources and to respond to state power. The concepts of cosmos, corpus and praxis are applied because they provide understanding of how ethnic groups perceive nature and create their spaces in order to maintain their rights over the geographic areas.

The cosmos is a people's vision of the entire universe encompassing natural resources, environment, land or nature that explains humans' expropriation of nature. The cosmo visions play a role in regulating mechanisms, translated in the customary law, and prescribing the culturally embedded rules on how to approach and use nature. The corpus is the repertoire of ideas and cognitive explanations about nature that is deeply rooted in their cosmologies. The particular ways of perceiving, conceptualizing and symbolizing the direct utilization of resources is stored in a collective repertoire of ideas that guides the practices. The praxis is the set of technical procedures by which nature is used and conserved. It is guided by the corpus of knowledge and is manifested in practical behaviour. These three concepts of cosmos, corpus and praxis are inseparable and are helpful for understanding the meanings expressed by ethnic groups (Salas, Jianchu and Tillmann 2003: 18-21, 149-151).

### **1.1 State and Spatial Order**

The state exercises power over space and what it incorporates by applying laws and regulations. The sacred space, a form of heterotopias<sup>23</sup>, is constructed through its particular roles and functions in society in order to avert intrusion. The defenders of the sacred space are authorized to protect the sacredness of such space which leads towards inclusion and exclusion, i.e., access to such space is not for everyone. For example, forest areas have been categorized as national parks, wild life sanctuaries and conservation areas and all activities in such areas have been limited. Furthermore, regulations are defined to limit the access and utilization of the space.

In case of the Surin Islands Marine National Park (SIMNP), it has been created as a heterotopia which has a precise function. It is a space that offers a beautiful landscape and a simple life for its visitors from the city. However, as it is a heterotopic site, it is not freely accessible like a public space. In entering the island, an individual has to have permission, i.e., when arriving and leaving visitors are obliged to register. Although everyone seems to be allowed to enter this heterotopic site, there is a form of exclusion. For instance, one cannot visit every bay or stay over night in the Moken village. All activities are under control of park authority. Even though all visitors seem free to do what they want, they are unconsciously controlled. Every movement of the visitors is observed and controlled by the park office of the park headquarter.

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<sup>23</sup> Heterotopias are sites with real places (places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society) which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real site, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and invented. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. These places are absolutely different from all sites that they reflect and speak about (Foucault 1967, translated from French by Miskowiec). [Online] Available: <http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heterotopia>. Access date: May 17, 2007.

Transgression of park regulations is prevented by confining the visitors' activities and movements through defining particular places as entrances and exits, camping places, routes in the park, cafeteria, and toilets. The purpose of this control is to maintain the park as a sacred space.

From a time-geography point of view, Hagerstrand indicates that

*“Time-geography has been concerned to map the movements and pathways of person through physical environments. It traces the variety of social activities which occur and the constraints which material and social factors place on the patterns of our movement”*  
(Hagerstrand 1973 in Barker 2000: 291)

The SIMNP, as the heterotopia, puts all visitors who usually have their own daily time-space paths together under its particular time-geography and social expectation. For their movement, everyone (no matter who they are) encounters the same physical limitations, i.e., distance, sea, and forest. The SIMNP also applies “ecotourism discourse” to the visitors and expects them to have a “natural resources conservation consciousness”. Since there are various visitors with different backgrounds (cultural, ethnic and geographic), respect is expected both by the park authority and the guests.

Moreover, the state also tried to control access to the mountainous areas in order to maintain these spaces as “sacred places” by applying registration processes together with entrance fees. But this policy had to be abolished because the locals strongly disagreed and organized protests, which is exactly what happened in Pangmapha. This clearly illustrates how the state views every square metre belonging to its space. Hence, the state tries to exercise its power to control and maintain the sacredness of every space. The villagers, in contrast, consider geographic space as part of their village boundary. What are in this territory is considered to belong to the village and implies the right of being utilized by the villagers. Besides, the concept of sacred space is also applied to Pangmapha area by the state by categorizing it as wildlife sanctuary and conservation forest. Therefore, all kind of activities regarded as a threat to this sacredness, for example, shifting cultivation, hunting, and any other activities that fall under natural resources destruction, are limited/forbidden. Such laws and regulations aim to restrict the utilization by inhabitants which are mostly ethnic groups, i.e., Shan, Lahu, Karen, Lisu, Lua, and Hmong. These ethnic groups, previously, practiced shifting cultivation and many of them cultivated narcotic plants, particularly opium. However, these practices were ended because of law, American pressure and development programmes. Nonetheless, these areas have also been

created as heterotopia which presents beautiful landscapes side by side various exotic ethnic groups. A significant difference between SIMNP and Pangmapha is that Pangmapha can be accessed more easily and everyone can freely access this space. It is located between two cities and well-connected by road. Therefore, access is only slightly limited by the mountainous geography. Outsiders/tourists are able to visit villages with little control from the authorities. At the village level, although outsiders are able to enter freely, some behaviour is viewed as inappropriate. Economic and belief systems of the ethnic groups play significant role in defining what the guest can or cannot do. For example, in case of *Thamlod* village, the visitors are not allowed to access the cave without being controlled through registration and escort by the villagers who are in charge, while many other villages do not have such control system. Many places can be accessed by outsiders alone within the village space.

The state applies spatial management to the forest areas and categorizes them. Related laws and regulations are set to protect these spaces. However, degrees of domination are different for each particular site. Both tourist and non-tourist spots' spatialization patterns depend on their geographical attributes, i.e., whether they are closed or opened. The closed or opened area, here, is considered by its geographic conditions. The closed one situates isolated from the mainland, has conspicuous boundaries, and an access to such spot is limited by physical circumstances such as weather proviso and distance. Vivid examples of this type of area are distant islands. Both inhabitants and visitors of the closed geographic areas will be more subjected to control because the authorities are able to observe their movement while in the opened ones it is more difficult for the authorities to keep the dwellers and travellers under surveillance. In general, an important aim of the state is to limit and exclude all kinds of activities which are regarded as a menace for these invented sacred spaces. Moreover, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment is the state representative who plays a dominant role in defining laws and regulations concerning to conservation and utilization of natural resources through its strategic plans which are applied to the entire country. Its definition of conservation becomes a dominant discourse which leads towards restriction in utilization.

The conservation discourse has a great impact particularly on ethnic groups who have mostly inhabited forest areas long before the declaration of such areas as conservation zones. Nevertheless, they struggle to maintain their rights to access and utilize natural resources. Counter discourses are constructed through their traditional practices and space meaning is defined in order to gain bargaining power. Besides, in creating counter discourses, the ethnic groups also select and apply some of the state's dominant discourses in order to support their own interests. The following discussion



emphasizes how the ethnic groups construct their spaces with the intention to maintain control over their geographic areas and what they incorporate through negotiating with the state as well as other groups who compete for access and utilization of natural resources.

## **1.2 Constructing and Maintaining Space**

### **1.2.1 The Moken: Surin Islands and Ancestor Spirits**

The Cosmo-visions of the Moken people are shaped by animism and equality of humans. Nature too is an integral part of their cosmology. They stress that everything in nature has its own spirit. Humans are only part of the nature and everyone is able to access and utilize equally what is provided by nature. For the Moken, natural resources can, by sui generis, not be owned by humans because the nature is not created by humans action. Since there is no ownership, everyone has an equal right to extract resources at any quantity. However, it does not mean that they can exploit the natural resources without limitation. Undesired situations such as sickness and accident, resulting from the spirits' power, are means to confine the extraction.

In other words, supernatural beings are seen to be attached to each of the natural resources (both living and non-living substances), i.e., plants, animals and other elements such as water, rock and land. This perception implicates a mechanism preventing exploitation. Physical and mental problems such as irregular behaviour (e.g. temperament, insane) and other sicknesses (e.g. fever, headache, skin diseases, etc.) are perceived as results of either excessive extraction or abuse the natural resources. These cognitions are applied to their livelihood system and become the guidance in the use of natural resources. Moreover, as hunter-gatherers, the Moken do not store food supplies, except rice, but collect them shortly before consumption.

Moreover, worshipping specific spirit entails restrictions to the extraction of natural resources. When one venerates a spirit one cannot eat or make use of the natural resources which are embedded by such spirit. For instance, the one who worships the ray spirit cannot eat ray. According to the Moken cosmology, spirits and natural resources are closely related. Therefore, making use of the natural resources requires some performances to illustrate their adoration to the spirit. Asking for permission from the spirit before utilizing and selecting the resource that is most appropriate for their objective are brilliant examples of connecting the three worlds (nature, spirits and humans) together. For example, building a traditional *kabang* boat, the Moken have to use only specific kind of wood with a straight and smooth trunk. If a gnarled

tree is used, the inhabitants of the boat will get a skin disease. It is a stratagem, inherited from generation to generation, that guide the Moken to use the right tree for constructing a good boat. As the wood of this tree can be used for a long time, therefore, unnecessary exploitation is reduced.

In the past, although the Moken travelled from island to island, extraction was limited. Until now, the amount of gathered littoral animals for household consumption is not more than they consume for one day. Furthermore, they collect coastal creatures from various spots and select only the big ones which contribute to the restoration of these resources. Additionally, the Moken also apply their indigenous knowledge which is related to their spirit world to select the proper place for constructing their houses or cemeteries to prevent disturbing the spirits.

It is obvious that the Moken connect the three worlds, i.e., the world of spirits, nature and humans. For the Moken, they are interrelated and cannot be considered separately. The spirit world is the most important of the three and has great power of control over both nature and humans which no one can resist this supreme power. Spirit world and the world of nature are closely related. Hence, access to the natural resources is inevitable subject to the power of spirits.

The Moken make use of this inter-related cosmology to assert their claims upon the Surin Islands against the state. This demand does not implicate ownership in terms of land documents, yet it means the right to access and make use of the natural resources, i.e., the right to inhabit the islands and make a living from nearby sea and forest. In interviews, senior members of the Moken on Surin Islands told that “*the park office, spirit poles, names of bays and fresh water springs show that we had access to the islands before the park authority*”. This is underlined by the fact that the park office is situated next to the old Moken cemetery and there are old spirit poles aside the office. Every bay of the Surin Islands has its name in Moken and the main water supply for the park and tourists was discovered by members of the Moken community. They also stated that “*the tourist can only come to the Island because we found the fresh water*”.

The Moken make use of all of these historical evidences to construct a counter space to the national park authority's version of Surin Islands. The spirit poles, *lobong*, of the Moken are accepted from the park authority as they are one of the park's symbols. These poles are used to present the park's identity coincide with the beautiful landscape and diversity of marine life. However, the spirit poles at the park headquarter comprise both the real ones which were carved by the Moken and the

imitations carved by the non-Moken aiming merely to be attractive colourful pieces of art. While the park uses the spirit poles in a tourism context, the Moken regard these poles as symbols of their space. The poles are used to define their physical space through ritual ceremony. Hence, the poles function as a mechanism to diffuse the Moken's belief and to convince the authority to accept their hegemony. The spirit poles represent the ancestor spirits, therefore, by accepting the spirit poles the authority indirectly acknowledge the Moken ancestor spirits. This entails worship practice from the park.

The background of this belief is an important reason why the park authority accepts worship of the Moken ancestor spirits. Generally, Buddhism is centred strongly on salvation and the after life, therefore, it emphasizes on the actions (karma<sup>24</sup>) and has five precepts<sup>25</sup> as guidance to live a better life in happiness. It also gives an importance to human's potential in order to predestinate one's life. In other words, to be prosperous or depressed depends on an individual's behaviour.

Buddhism, moreover, coexists with other religious systems which satisfy the worldly needs of the ordinary Buddhist. Hence, when Buddhists, particularly those of the Theravada branch as in Thailand, celebrate ceremonies such as harvest, marriage, seeking healing, they practice in a non-Buddhist way. Moreover, Buddhist lay people who worship non-Buddhist spirits or gods and practice rituals are viewed that they do nothing wrong. What they do is in hope of overcoming misfortune and obtaining salvation (Gellner 200: 1378-1385). To show gratefulness to ancestors, by honest intention and action, is one of the most important aspects for receiving the appropriate result from such action, i.e., salvation. In Thai society, to perform rituals for the dead is a common practice, particularly for the descendants to their ancestors or relatives. From this cosmology, the park authority simply accepts the Moken's ceremony, *ne-en lobong*, ancestor spirit poles ceremony, and takes it as an annual task.

There are differences in the practice of worshiping the ancestors between Thai and Moken. For Thai Buddhists, this practice takes place in the temple and monks play a significant role in connecting the world of spirits and humans. In the Moken society, the shamans have a dominant role as mediators between the two worlds. Although Moken and Thai-Buddhists practices are slightly different, the meaning of ancestor worship is compatible. Based on this point, the Moken have an advantage when applying their spirit world to the authorities. The spirit world of the Moken is

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<sup>24</sup> It is literally translated as action, work, or deed, which refers to moral law of cause and effect.

<sup>25</sup> To refrain from taking life, from theft, from sensual misconduct, from lying and from consuming alcohol or drugs which lead to carelessness and the breaking of the previous four precepts.

regarded as sacred space which has unlimited boundary. Yet it exists and maintains everywhere. The sacred space of the Moken is marked by severe incidents, for example, the case of drowning and another case in which a Thai fisherman was killed, thrown into sea and his corpse could not be found. Hence, his relatives and friends asked help from the Moken ancestor spirits through the Moken shaman and they later could find the corpse at the exact spot pointed out by the shaman. Another example was the deadly Tsunami. The scientific explanation does not matter to the Moken. Instead, they believe that the “*laboon*”, giant waves or so to say, Tsunami, occurred because their ancestor spirits were unsatisfied with too many spirit poles at the park station. Many poles were carved by non Moken and to be used simply as a decoration for the island without giving any worship. For the Moken, the poles and the ancestor spirits are strongly connected, therefore, worshipping has to be practiced, no matter who carved them.

The symbolism of the spirit poles can be used to establish a connection between the Moken and the cosmologies of the Thai officials. Because working conditions for the park authority depends on nature, i.e., working on distant islands and surrounded by the sea, a feeling of uncertainty is created. To protect oneself, supernatural power is taken into account. Therefore, the Moken cosmology about nature and spirits plays a crucial role in convincing the authority to accept the role of their ancestor spirits as the protector, providing security. Due to the undesired incidents explained above along with anxiety, the park authority does not interfere in the holy space of the Moken.

Additionally, the authority reproduces this space by making offerings to the *lobong*, spirit poles, as suggested by the Moken, in order to satisfy their ancestor spirits and to prevent unexpected calamity. The shamans, though they are seen as alcoholics by the authorities, are invited to make a ritual. On this rare occasion the authority follow what the Moken demand, in terms of oblations. It is a power relation in which the Moken play a dominant role in control and providing access to their holy space. However, in case of physical space, by law, the park authority is legitimated to execute control over the access and the Moken are powerless in terms of control over this space. Therefore, the spirit poles are used to counter the state power. Furthermore, these poles function not only as the Moken ancestors’ representative, but also a symbol for their geographic space. The symbol of the spirit poles is used to mark their claim over their boundaries, as mentioned previously. The poles function as remarkable signs of the Moken legitimacy over the physical space. Whatever place they inhabit for sometime or use as a cemetery ground, spirit poles are always erected. The spirit poles in front of the village are the most significant marks to announce that

this place belongs to the Moken people. Hence, the spirit poles become historical artefacts that display the existence of the Moken people.

Moreover, the Moken's physical territory is reproduced both by authorities and tourists by using the term "*Morgan village/island*" instead of the formal Thai names, *Ao Bonyai* or *Koh Surintai*. Although this is done because of tourism, it illustrates that their existence and territory are accepted. Nonetheless, Thai names applied to each bay indicate symbolic control, i.e., marking that such areas belong to the Thai state. Calling such areas in Moken terms, instead of Thai terms, implies that the Moken are accepted as the main inhabitants on the Surin Islands.

At the Moken village, spatialization such as a particular entrance or route is not defined to restrict the movement of visitors as at the park station. Nevertheless, physical control takes place for the reason that no one can enter, walk through or leave the village without being observed by the villagers. Since the village is located on the beach facing the sea, the inhabitants can monitor the every movement of visitors who mostly walk along the beach and through the village.

Moreover, the Moken resist the control over the geographic space of the SIMNP by escaping from it. A vivid example is the gathering of sea snails. Although they know that it is illegal, they regularly collect them outside the SIMNP territory. They consider other places outside not within the sacred realm, i.e., heterotopic space, of the SIMNP, so they –in their view - should be allowed to do such activities although they are again inside another national park boundary. They explained that "*we are not allowed to collect sea snails around the Surin Islands. The park's chief here is so ungenerous. So we go to collect them at the Similan. The authority there is not as strict as here*".

Even though the Moken are not allowed to gather sea snails for sale, they are not arrested for doing so. The reason for this leniency is due to the small number the Moken and the simple gathering methods (by hand). Also, no one exactly knows about the actual sea snails stock. In contrast, the exploitation of the forest areas is visible. That being the case, the hill people are absolutely forbidden to cut down trees. There is no exception for any groups. Moreover, the hill people can not refer to their ethnic categories to claim privilege. In general, highland groups are similar in terms of livelihood system. They are usually viewed as one group and are called "*chao khao*", mountainous people. When something considered as wrong occurs, such as deforestation, drug abuse, etc, it is frequently reported related to the term *chao khao*, without a specific tribe name.

### 1.2.2 The Hill People: Forest and Spirits

Cosmo vision of the hill people is not different from that of the Moken. Spirits and supernatural powers are important for them. Nature and spirits are interrelated and cannot be considered separately. They have specific ceremonies illustrating the relationship between nature and their ancestors or other spirits. Living in the forest, most of their ceremonies are, more or less, related to this place. For example, the Karen classify forest into several categories namely “*Taepehtau*”, water source forest; “*Kler*”, forest with papal or banyan tree; “*Daepor*”, birth forest (the umbilical cord of a new born baby is hung on the tree and no one is allowed to cut this tree). Their belief entails prohibition and restriction in utilizing the forest. If they break the rules, misfortune and illness are believed to occur. However, collecting non-timber forest products in these areas is not prohibited. For example, in some Karen communities women play a dominant role in collecting wild plants for consumption<sup>26</sup> in their households. They collect only the parts they need, such as leaves or fruits instead of cutting the whole branch (Nawichai 1999).

The Hmong, too, have special practices during their new year called “*Dongseng*”, or worship the big tree. The surrounding area is conserved and no one is allowed to make use of this forest space because it is regarded as holy place. The Lahu, additionally, have a thanking ceremony to the spirit of the forest and this area is regarded as the community conservation forest.

Forest categorization limits all kinds of utilization as well as creates the sacred spaces, i.e., the forest areas become holy places through rituals. All activities which are regarded as a threat to these places are excluded.

Although the praxis of each ethnic group is different, the most obvious dissimilarity of the hill people from the Moken is that they rely on their land not only for housing but also for cultivation and livestock. This attachment to the land creates a sense of possession and occupation. Therefore, demarcation techniques either by fences or trees are means to identify which land belongs to whom. Nonetheless, using the land for shifting cultivation and practicing slash and burn cultivation are considered as a threat to natural resources particularly to forests and water sources. Moreover, hill people have been accused of destroying natural resources, therefore, the state has applied rules and regulations upon them such as resettlement and

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<sup>26</sup> From the study in the three Karen villages, in Watchan sub-district, Chiangmai, it is found that at least 203 non-timber forest species are used by them. Women collect 190 species while men gather 115 species. Main purposes of gathering wild plants are for food, fodder, dyes, medicine and fuel wood.

restriction/prohibition of access to the resources by declaring the forest areas protected areas. In the meantime, conservation programmes are initiated and become a dominant topic of discussion in the society. Tree ordinations, for example, become nationwide accepted. This practice originated in the tree planting programmes associated with the bicentennial of the Chakri dynasty in 1982.

The hill people try to express themselves as a non-threat to ecology. Dominant discourses on forest conservation, such as the tree ordination, are selected and linked to their livelihoods. Since the tree ordinations become well-known and broadly accepted throughout Thailand, the hill people make use of this ceremony as means to, on the one hand, illustrate themselves as forest protectors- not destroyers. Since the trees are ordained and no one can cut them, hence, deforestation is limited. On the other hand, accepting the tree ordination implies the acceptance of Buddhist practices. An obvious characteristic of an ordained tree is that a robe of a Buddhist monk is wrapped around the trunk. Since most of hill people in Pangmapha are animism, hence, they do not have any difficulty applying Buddhism symbolism. However, this is not an obstacle for the Christian village as in *Ban Hueynampong*, the Lue village. They organized the tree ordination ceremony in which some processes are changed to fit their belief, for instant, small Thai national flags are used instead of the robes of Buddhist monks.

Moreover, this ceremony is a sign of exclusion, i.e., excluding everyone from utilization. This ceremony is usually done in the so-called “community forests”, except for the cutting of trees, utilization in terms of non-timber forest products is allowed to the members of the community. Non-community members (no matter who they are) cannot withdraw utilization rights from the community. Therefore, practicing the tree ordinations can, more or less, ensure the community legitimacy to further make their livelihood in the forest areas. In addition, practicing tree ordination can be seen as resistance against state control through laws and regulations. This practice also emphasizes the ability of the villagers to manage their common resources. Although the state tries hard to conserve the forest with its strict rules, its efforts cannot reach the goal; invasion in protected areas still exists. Therefore, the tree ordination creates holy places and it is expected to prevent further encroachment.

Applying tree ordination of the hill people is a technique to construct their geographic spaces, which exist and are easy to observe. Claiming particular areas is less complicated when concrete spaces have been constructed. If there are ideal spaces-spiritual spaces, like those of the Moken, the hill people will not be able to compete with other groups in maintaining their rights over such areas. Population growth and decreasing resources put pressure on the hill people to hold the areas for themselves.

The Karen, for instance, construct their spaces by combining forest areas and their livelihood system. Resulting from their unique utilization and cultivation practices, i.e., forest exploitation following its categorization and land rotation cultivation, they are widely acknowledged as conservators. Their practices become well-known and are taken on as case studies. Information about their conservation techniques are dispersed throughout the country and the righteousness over their geographic space is out of question.

At the village or individual level, the hill people also accept the practice of the so-called fire breaking line promoted by the forestry department. It is usually done during the field preparation period to control the burning direction and prevent other plots or forest areas in close proximity of the fire. This practice also illustrates that the hill people are cooperating with the conservation programmes boosted by the government, which, in return, helps them build a positive image.

To exercise its power over spaces and what they incorporate, the state also applies maps as tools to control both access in and utilization. As stated by Menzies

*“Mapping of forest resources is an intrinsically political act  
because they are drawings of a nation’s strategic space.  
Forest maps are an important tool for state authorities to exclude  
or include people within the same spaces as forest resources”  
(Menzies 1992 in Peluso 2005:273)*

Forest maps of Thailand have been an important means of the state to restrict and prohibit activities such as cultivation patterns of the forest inhabitants, most of which are hill people. Forest identification based on forest type, fauna and flora, and other physical characteristic is employed by the state and are included in mapping through modern “GIS<sup>27</sup>” technology. The forest maps of the state tend to exclude the people who inhabit this space. However, to preserve their customary rights, the hill people apply not only invented traditions such as tree ordination as a counter discourse on state’s forest management but they also map their spaces with a support from outside organizations. GIS is used to demarcate their boundaries within the state’s maps and it places more emphasis on village territories, cultivation areas, and community forests. Having their sites on maps as concrete evidence adds weight their claim over their physical territories.

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<sup>27</sup> Geographic Information System



However, the tree ordinations have not been applied in the Moken society on the Surin Islands. The main reason is that they do not practice agriculture. Hence, clearing land for cultivation is unnecessary. What they need from the forest are materials for construction such as boats and houses. Non-timber forest products are collected mainly for domestic consumption. Their non-mass product handicrafts production does not create much pressure on forest resources. Additionally, conflicts over access to resources have not occurred due to low population density and being the only group who are allowed to use the forest resources of the islands. The hill people, in contrast, face the problem of scarce resources which leads to competition both in and between the groups. Taking a case from Pangmapha district, Maehongson province, Lahu from different villages had a discord resulting from gathering enormous amounts of bamboo shoots for trading. Thereafter, rules and regulations were set up to prevent over-exploitation. From the state point of view, giving permission to utilize natural resources depends much on population densities and the characteristics of such resources. The most important consideration for the state is that such activities should not interfere in or be harmful to its sacred spaces or diminish its control over the spaces. In the case of the Community Forestry Act (CFA), the state hesitates to promulgate the CFA because the state seeks to maintain its power of control over geographic spaces, though most inhabitants of the forest areas demand the CFA. If the CFA will be declared (in the government gazette), it is foreseeable that the state's power of control over such spaces will shift to the communities. This creates legitimacy to manage their forest areas which will limit the state's power of control.

Moreover, the hill people resist the state laws and regulations through several practices. Since their farming is based on land, they usually have several plots of land and each year some plots will be cultivated while others are left to rehabilitate for a few years. These plots will not be slashed or burnt so that trees can grow rapidly. The authorities frequently claim these plots as being part of the forest areas because the size of trees is used to indicate forests. The hill people prevent this claim by cutting all the trees in their rotational plots, even though they do not use these plots for cultivation in the coming year. This resistance is done quietly to avoid confrontation with the authority and it is considered as the only way to keep their rights over the cultivation areas. Additionally, they respond to the prohibition of deforestation by girdling the trees and leave them in the woods for years. After that, the trees will be cut and used as fuel wood or for other purposes. They claim that this cannot be viewed as deforestation because the trees have already died. Some of them cut the trees very early in the morning to evade being arrested. These forms of resistance are

their weapons to negotiate with the state which can be called “weapon of the weak” as mentioned by Scott (1986).

## **2. Citizenship**

As modern states comprise ethnic groups with distinct languages and cultures, they attempt to promote national identities based on the concept of the nation state. This concept is constructed from the idea of homogeneous inhabitants of a particular territory united by a common descent, a common culture and a common language. The construction of a common ethnic consciousness and identity is what Anderson terms as the construction of imagine community. He indicates that

*“a nation is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear from them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion”*  
(Anderson 1983: 6)

The common identities or so-called “national identities” are generally developed by the dominant ethnic group, which is in most case the major ethnic group. The identities of the ethnic minorities are considered as inferior identities. Hence, they are overlooked and excluded from the process of constructing national identities. Citizenship is the united identity of the nation state which entails control and obstruction over the distinction of ethnicity.

Citizenship is viewed not only as a system of individual protection but also as a source of social solidarity in terms of public relations of reciprocity, i.e., rights and obligations. Nonetheless, it is argued that instead of creating emotional solidarity, it is a political means of suppressing protest and opposition. Furthermore, the citizenship actually supports inattention to the marginalized and the weak because people’s obligation to the indigent are distributed through taxation which is a neutral mechanism of the state and does not demand direct commitment from the tax payer to the poor who are viewed as strangers. Through this public arrangement, it tends to weaken moral loyalties to society (Turner and Hamilton 1994: 2).

However, the citizenship plays a crucial role in a nation state because it is a source of equality and it defines a particular set of obligations and rights vested in eligible people. Therefore, all who possess the status are equal regarding the rights and duties with which the status is associated (Janowitz 1994: 43). From this point of view, to possess equal rights, one has to be a legal member of particular national community. In other words, a community membership is determined by citizenship. When one

lacks a qualification, one is excluded from such a community. As Taylor (1994) points out

*“Citizenship, as a legal entitlement to rights and subjection to law, carries with it, not just formal membership of a nation state, but a whole set of socio-economic and ideological practices associated with nationalism. These amount to mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion of particular groups and categories of individual”*  
(Taylor 1994:142)

In other words, citizenship is obtained merely through membership in national communities, which are outlined by state jurisdictional boundaries. Hence, those without a “nationality” are also no citizens, and are excluded from personhood (Vandergeest 1990: 35-36).

In the case of Thailand, the idea of a “Thai nation” did not rise from below as in Europe, where nationalism frequently emerged as opposition to monarchy. Instead, modernization and national citizenship were initiated by the King in response to the invasion of western colonialism, the need to centralize the administration and the heterogeneity of the populations. Thai nationality was defined to assimilate all people living within the territory of the Thai nation. The characteristics of “Thai” nationality were delineated by King Vajiravudh, Rama VI (Reign 1910-1925), which comprises the Thai language, Buddhist religion, and loyalty to the Thai monarchy. This indicates that although the King adopted the western idea of a nation, he wanted to maintain the absolute governance by the King. Hence, the concept of one nation, religion and monarchy, was carefully selected to illustrate the Thai unity, in which the King is the embodiment of the nation. Following this concept, being included into the Thai nation happens to be more complicated than possessing the particular documents to apply for an identity card. One needs to be proficient in the Thai language, a devoted Buddhist and be loyal to the monarchy. Besides, the term “Thai” contains a double meaning. On the one hand, it refers to the membership in the group or nation and on the other hand, to the citizenship of the state. Thus, some groups such as the Moken and the hill people may be excluded from being Thai.

The Nationality Act, applied back in 1911 that everyone who was born in the country’s territory has the right to get Thai nationality. Access to this legal citizenship demands particular paperwork, i.e., a birth certificate and a house registration. Only with these particular documents can one apply for a Thai identity card at the age of 15 (Cohen 1991, Chalermkiat 1990, Phongpaichit et al. 1996). However, many ethnic

members of this group, such as the Moken and the hill people, have inhabited the Thai territory long before the establishment of the Thai nation state but do not possess Thai nationality. This is because either their parents, who were born in Thailand, were unaware of notifying the authorities about their births or lived extremely far away from the district office or were denied by the officer in charge. Many of them are still not registered. As Tapp notes

*“Although it is available to the hill tribes de jure,  
there are often practical difficulties de facts”  
(Tapp 1986: 53)*

The question of discussion is why the hill people were granted Thai citizenship and why they are keen on possessing Thai identity cards while the Moken were only recently granted Thai nationality and yet, are not very confident as to whether it provides an advantage or a disadvantage.

## **2.1 Moken and the Thai Nationality**

While the hill people have received much attention from the state, the Moken, on the other hand, seem to have been ignored. This may be a result of their livelihood system and society, which had not been regarded as a threat to the nation state. As a result of not being seen as a threat to the Thai nation state, the Moken had not been registered by the Department of Local Administration, although they inhabited the Surin Islands before 1981. Unlike the hill people, no politician paid attention to them because of the low population, low/no education, difficulty to access, etc. When in 2004 the Tsunami befell the west coast of Thailand, they were included in the population registration and some of them were granted Thai nationality. Moreover, presently, they are included in the plans of many aid organizations. This is done not only to help them for the reason of humanity, but also to compose a positive image of such organizations. It is obvious that without the royal project initiative, the Moken would not have been granted Thai nationality, permanent school, and the right to continue living on the Surin Islands. This illustrates that an extremely respected institution such as the royal project can exercise its power over other institutions without any doubt or resistance. What makes this institution so powerful is not because of any compulsion but rather because of its traditional authority which derives from its long establishment in the Thai social structure.

To be granted a Thai identity card for the Moken is deemed to have pros and cons. Not to be declared as Burmese when going to town, higher wages, easier handling of

financial conditions<sup>28</sup>, and receiving more help in case of disasters are expected when they have the Thai identity card. However, they are also concerned about the disadvantages of being granted Thai nationality, which is why they seem to not be as actively requesting Thai identity cards as the hill people. This card is also seen as a restriction and limitation in earning a living. Gathering sea snails is the main Moken activity, at least during the monsoon season. It is illegal according to Thai law and it is considered a threat to ecology. To possess a Thai identity card implies being a Thai citizen and respecting Thai laws and regulations. In the past, the Moken made use of the logic of “being Thai, ones have to be under Thai laws and regulations” to extract the natural resources without any fret to be treated as strict as Thai. Being Moken, not Thai, one is assumed to know nothing about Thai laws, hence, they are not supposed to know/understand Thai laws as every Thai should. They are viewed as backward, poor, and uninformed about administrative system/laws. What they know is only how to collect sea products for making a living, therefore, the authorities pity them and apply lenient regulations. Related authorities pointed out that “*they are not allowed to gather sea snails in SIMNP territory, so they go for it at Similan Islands. They don’t know that this site is also subject to the marine national park*”. The Moken want to maintain this soft regulation, although they are granted Thai nationality and also know very well that their activity is illegal. Since they receive Thai nationality, the Moken worry that they will be judged as any other Thai when they are arrested for gathering the snails illegally. Moreover, some of them who are approved to be Thai prepare for the arrest by not taking Thai identity cards with them in order to pose themselves as real Moken, who know nothing about Thai laws. They said that “*if we take the identity card with us, when we are arrested we will be put in jail as the Thai. Without the card we can claim that we are Moken and can bargain with the authorities that we don’t know anything*”. However, until now, the regulations applied to the Moken are relatively flexible. Although, being Thai citizen is important for them, particularly in terms of employment and settlement, they are not willing to be treated as Thais in many aspects, for instance, not to be arrested when gathering sea snails, not to be charged for boats and hospital fees. In other words, they require rights as a Thai citizen but at the same time, they want to maintain their previous rights as Moken. This illustrates that they want to make use of their different identities to get privileges or exceptional regulations.

In addition, having Thai identity cards makes access to goods and credits easier and increases the risk of becoming indebt as well. The identity card is one of the necessary documents one has to submit to the store/company/institution. Many hill people, as

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<sup>28</sup> For example, the possibility to buy things and pay back a little at a time.

well as other Thais, are indebted from instalment for buying motorbikes, cars, entertainment devices, etc. Many of them take out a loan from the bank to invest in agriculture but some use it for other non-benefit investments, i.e., consumer goods. In many cases they cannot pay back the loans and the cars or motorbikes are confiscated. Nowadays, the Moken do not owe money to outside store/company/institution. Borrowing small amounts of money or getting goods on credit from the grocery store happens within the village. High price goods can be bought only when they have saved enough money or sell their gold necklaces.

It can be concluded that, on the one hand, the Moken are willing to be integrated into the Thai nation state to gain equal rights as other Thais<sup>29</sup>. On the other hand, having a Thai nationality is seen as an obstruction to utilize the natural resources. In other words, the Thai nationality has two sides, integrative and limited.

Moreover, granting Thai citizenship to the Moken is viewed as creating a threat to the SIMNP. The park intendant is anxious that they may claim the Surin Islands, particularly *Ao Bonyai* where they are currently situated, in terms of land titles. This severe situation is unacceptable, therefore, it is prevented by the park. The national park asserts its rights to control every square metre of the Moken village by announcing that *“this area is subject to special control of the Surin Islands marine national park”*. This sign is placed next to the village name board in order to state the state’s rights over this area. In contrast, the authorities who are concerned with national security foresee an advantage by granting the Moken the Thai identity card. They pointed out that *“because it can be used to differentiate and separate the Burmese from the Morgan. However, a reliable verifying system to identify the real Morgan is needed because it might happen that the illegal Burmese claim to be Morgan”*.

## **2.2 Hill People and the Thai Nationality**

Since 1957, the hill people have been viewed as a threat to national security. Therefore, the state sought to solve this problem by integrating them into the state administration, i.e., registering and controlling their migration and activities. The initial survey on highland population was taken in 1969 by the department of Social Welfare. This led towards granting Thai nationality to 182,065 hill people for the very first time in 1974. Since then, their population number has been continually surveyed and observed by various organizations. However, numbers of the hill people vary

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<sup>29</sup> without any discrimination, particularly in terms of benefit they will get from being integrated such as standard wage, travelling and employment

greatly due to each organization's own agenda and counting technique (A-chawanitkul and Kerdsawang 1997).

The hill people and national security once were viewed as associated aspects. In the mid-1960s, direct military actions targeted some upland communities that were suspected to support the communist insurrection. Many highlanders were forced to resettle elsewhere in places defined by the government. The military actions against suspected tribal groups continued until the 1970s and only came to an end with the change of the government in Laos in 1975 (Keyes 1997). Meanwhile, the Thai government also attempted to encourage other hill people from different villages to serve as a united front, enlisted as allies for information and coordination purposes (Chotichaipiboon 1997).

Thus, initial programmes for the hill people were directed towards national security aspects such as the establishment of schools in upland villages by the Border Patrol Police to generate a Thai consciousness among hill people, land providing programmes for the highlanders who were relocated, and hill people registrations which focused on the control of movements both within the country and of new immigrants. The main criteria to grant the hill people the nationality followed precise indicators, for instance, the aspect of boundary, i.e., having been born within Thai territory, having been permanently settled for at least 5 years and being registered under population registration (T.R. 13). Another significant aspect is loyalty to the Thai nation state. This notion of Thainess is an inherited idea which every government since the reign of King Vajiravudh (1910-1925) applies to the society. The hill people have to show their loyalty to the Thai state by following rules and regulations defined by the government such as to abandon opium cultivation, avoid deforestation, and to be loyal to the Thai monarch. For the latter case, the hill people, for the most part, have the king's picture on the front of their houses and some of them also have small flags, either the national flag or symbolic flags connected to the king, in order to show their homage to the nation state and the king. Although the hill people, principally, believe in spirits or the so-called "animism", many households also have Buddha images in a corner of the room. All of these practices demonstrate the hill people's endeavour to present themselves within the frame of Thainess. In other words, they struggle to follow the dominant discourse on Thainess which originated almost 100 years ago.

Having Thai nationality, for the hill people, is considered extremely important since Thai nationality is a fundamental stage to obtain other rights, for instance the rights to legally reside and work in Thailand, own land, and receive social services such as

health care and education service. Even though the citizenship is constructed, its role is broader than solely a relation between population and the state. In contrast, the citizenship becomes a marker in the sense of inclusion and exclusion.

Out of the need to have equal rights as the Thai, the hill people struggle to possess Thai identity cards, which illustrates that they have Thai nationality. Frequently, when they apply for the identity card, the district officers and village headman ask them for a bribe. This happens although they have all the necessary documents. Moreover, there are many tricks to gain the identity card and these tricks generally require cooperation from other families, village headman and district officers. For example, the village headman does not report to the district office when death occurs because the name of the dead can be used for the illegal immigrant who wants to be registered and become a legal resident. In this case, the illegal immigrant has to pay an amount of money to the village headman and the family of the dead who guarantee and confirm that he/she is a family member. Another trick is the illegal immigrant pretends that he/she is a family member who has not been registered when he/she was born in order to gain a right of late-registration.

These practices are very well-liked among the new tribal immigrants in very distant areas. Nonetheless, the confirmation of their status from the village headman is necessary. Furthermore, to get an identity card, an amount of money has to be paid. The hill people who are actually qualified to be granted Thai identity cards may be unable to pay the charge due to their lack of money. In contrast, new immigrants or illegal foreign labourers, who are able to pay, will get the identity card more easily.

Moreover, receiving the Thai nationality leads to ignorance of ethnicity, as happened in some Lisu villages. Lisu people at the village of *Maemoolisaw* regard themselves as Thai people and point out that the Lisu at other village namely *Nambosape* are not Thai because they do not have Thai identity cards and have only recently migrated from Burma. They pointed out that “*the Lisu of Nambosape are not Thai because they do not have Thai identity card. We, the Lisu of Maemoolisaw are Thai because we have the card*”. Another case is from the Dai (Shan), one who possesses the Thai identity card is called *Dai-nai* (inner Dai), and *Dai-nok* (outer Dai) for the Dai who do not have Thai identity cards. Living legally in Thailand, therefore, creates a boundary within a same ethnic group.

It can be concluded that, although citizenship provides a kind of equality and rights, having full citizenship does not mean being granted full rights. Even though the population rights are guaranteed by the constitution, in practice, ethnic minorities are



often treated unequally to the majority. The stereotypes about ethnic minority groups, such as savage, backward, dirty, uneducated, etc. are embedded in the majority's perception, which leads toward exclusion or to put them into the second citizen or the inferior citizen.

### **3. Participation in State Administration: From Self Governing to Formal Administration**

The semi-feudal provincial administration was changed into a modern administration with provinces (*changwat*) and districts (*amphoe*) by King Chulalongkorn (Rama V, Reign 1868-1960). Villages and sub-districts, the local level that directly relates to villagers, was also established. The chairpersons on these sub-district levels, formerly, were appointed by the governor of the province (*chaomoeng*). Later, this system was changed and the chairperson had to be selected by the villagers themselves. This new administration system was first implemented as a pilot project at Bangphain district in Pranakornsriyuttaya province. Its success led to the "Local Administrative Act" which was promulgated in May 1897. Subject matter of this law was to systematize sub-districts and villages, give villagers an opportunity to govern themselves by selecting their village headman and sub-district representative, and to clarify the roles within village. The village/sub-district headman was expected to take care of and control the villagers and also to collect taxes for the state. This law, was enforced in the Thai state for 17 years, was improved and replaced by another act during the reign of King Rama VI (Vajiravudh) in 1914 and has been applied to Thai society ever since. This latter act emphasizes the duties and responsibilities of village/sub-district headman as intermediary between the central government and the rural people (Office of the Local Administration 2027, Chitlaoaporn 2004).

Usually, each village has its informal leaders who look for new areas for either housing or cultivation and who take care of ritual practices. Villagers accept and respect the leaders due to their kindness and devotion. Moreover, seniority is an important aspect to be acknowledged as a leader because old age is expected to implicate greatness. In the past, predominantly in distant rural areas, the main responsibility of the informal leaders were to guide their villagers in search for better and more fertile spots, as happened in Moken and hill people societies. Living in remote locations, they did not receive much attention from the central administration. Nevertheless, since this situation changed as a result of related laws and regulations, their migration and shifting cultivation was prohibited. Therefore, they had to settle down in the specific locations and adapt to the state administration system. Their leaders became engaged in the new governing system, which brought new duties and

responsibilities. On the one hand, they became official state authority working under the state's framework. On the other hand, they also still maintain their role as supporters/protectors for their villagers.

Although the Moken live together in the same village, a village administration does not exist. Elders and shamans play important roles in their society by the transmission of norms to their descendants. The shamans play a major role for spirituality as mediators between the two worlds of spirits and humans in order to satisfy spirits, prevent villagers from sickness and heal the sick. Both the elders and the shamans are respected due to their experience, knowledge, and behaviour. Nowadays, no one is regarded as the highest respected person in their community. They stated that *“we do not give high respect to any one, except our parents. We do not respect “phuyaibaan” (village headman) because he is not that good”*. This village headman, a son of the previous leader, receives less respect from the villagers because he is an alcoholic and often violent. “Village headman” is applied to him by the related authorities according to his language ability, i.e., he can speak Thai fluently, which is useful for the authorities to pass messages to other village members. The villagers, later, followed the authorities by also calling *“phuyaibaan”*. Since then, when outsiders arrive and ask for *“phuyaibaan”*, they will be sent to him. However, in the villagers' point of view, he is neither active nor behaves as a proper village headman should. Though many Moken want to change the headman, no one wants to take this position. Nevertheless, a formal election for a new village head cannot take place unless the village is authorized as main village. With their current leader in their mind, they make a point that the qualified headman must *“not a drinker and have good behaviour”*, while the aspect of seniority does not matter. They further stated that *“the village headman should take responsibility for all villagers and be a village representative to due with other organizations for donation or assistance”*; in other words, he is expected to act as a mediator between the Moken and outsiders in order to extract support and distribute it equally among the members of the village. Particularly, in the case of the Tsunami in 2004, they explained that *“though having no Thai identity card caused unequal aid, if “phuyai” (short form calling phuyaibaan) pays attentions on us, we would have received more help than we actually got”*. Additionally, rumour spread that he embezzled the donated money for himself as well as the donated rice, which was distributed merely among his close relatives, not the whole village as donors' intent. Generally, the donors presume that the village headman will distribute the donated articles to every family, which is why they leave articles with him. Nonetheless, some village members do not care for the donated rice, they pointed out that *“the rice quantity is too small for all of us; each*

*family will get less than a kilo. It can serve only one meal or even not. So, let him keep it for himself*". This situation clearly illustrates that the village headman does not take an active part in his villagers' affairs; instead, he follows his own interest.

Even though an administrative structure does not exist in the Moken village, indirect control from the state can be noticed from the house numbers and inhabitants names listed on the front of the house. However, the names listed are not always consistent with those of the actual inhabitants. It happens from time to time, that some families move into abandon houses when its former occupants return to Burma. Many families do not pay attention to the name labeled on the house. It is, often, upside down, torn, or had been blown away by the wind.

Moreover, social control (such as criticism, gossip, rumour, etc.) plays a crucial role in means of managing behaviour. Parents as well as elders in their direct clan give both advice and opinion in order to guide their descendants on the right path. Inappropriate behaviour such as adultery, theft, and aggressiveness hardly ever happens, however, there is always the exception. Quarrel usually occurs hand in hand with excessive alcohol consumption. Admonition from epitome, the one who is regarded as the non-drinker, barely takes place because there are so few role models and those who are, do not want to get themselves into any trouble. A vivid example of this can be observed in family quarrels. There was a case of a drunken couple arguing with each other and the husband seriously injured the woman. No villager dared to intervene. Their justification was "*it is a family matter. We are just outsiders, so let them solve the problem themselves. We also don't dare to help the woman because her husband has a big knife*". Fortunately, the woman survived the attack and when her husband left, she was given medical treatment by her neighbours. Nevertheless, quarrel resulting from alcohol consumption is becoming a norm in everyday life.

The case of the Moken is quite different from that of the hill people although there are similarities in terms of social structure. The elders and shamans have a significant role and are respected by the villagers. The difference is that the mountain- society comprises of persons or groups with distinct roles. For instance, in Lisu community, there is *Kurtupha* who governs the village; *Moemuepha* act as leaders in spiritual ceremonies; *Nhipha* communicate with spirits to find out a treatment for the sick; *Naecheuzhezu* who give treatment to the sick using herbal medicine, and *Chormochotea* which is the group of the elder from each clan in the village and act as advisors both in terms of rites practices and conflict resolution.

Another example is the Lahu Shele society, in which the most important person is the *Kaelupa* who can communicate with *Gheuza*, which is regarded as the supreme divinity. The *Kaelupa* has knowledge about all ritual ceremonies and medicinal plants. The *Kazaepha* is the village headman who governs the village and encourages the villagers to follow their tradition. The *Neetezaw* provides treatment to the sick with some ceremonies, if he cannot handle it, the *Kaelupa* will be asked to deal with the case. *Chalipa*, the blacksmith, who makes and repairs the agricultural tools for the whole village.

Since the hill people communities have been integrated into state administration, informal leaders, particular the village headman, become the formal leaders who link the village and the state. His role expanded and he also has more responsibilities. Being integrated into state administration entails related knowledge on laws and regulations. This knowledge sometimes is used to serve personal benefits. For example, the village headman asks for bribe as a payment for his cooperation in order to apply for Thai nationality. Some cases occurred in which the village headman used his authority to assist immigrants in obtaining their Thai nationality for a large sum of money in return.

The creation of the Tambon (sub-district) Administrative Organization (TAO) in 1994 brought about significant change to the hill people community. It is considered a historical shift of the local government administration system in Thailand, as it attempts for the first time to decentralize a central power in terms of decision making and resource allocation for the people at the sub-district level (Raksasataya 1990). In principle, TAOs provide the chance for indigenous people who legally live in Thailand to become village representatives of the TAO council through elections and thus play a part in local administration. However, in reality, many highlander representatives lack understanding of their roles in the TAO. Some members have joined just for the purpose of promoting their individual interests. Larger villages with better access to infrastructure and more contacts to government officials usually get more advantages than other remote villages (Bechstedt and Nawichai 2002). A negative change is that the TAO election leads towards disharmony among the village members which results from the candidates' competition. Rumours are spread in order to discredit each other. Buying votes happens in the intensive competition. This problem generally occurs in the larger villages. The small villages distant from the district centre, usually, have fewer problems. They often have the exact number of candidates defined by the Department of Local Administration (DOLA), therefore, they do not have any competitors.

Resulting from having been educated about citizenship rights, duties and local administration, most of the hill people in Pangmapha district participate in political affairs, at least in voting. There are four sub-districts in Pangmapha district and each village has two elected representatives in the TAO. Its chairman is directly elected from the villagers in each sub-district and this person needs to have the qualifications defined by law such as age and education. One of the TAO chairman prepared himself for years by attending non-formal education. Although two others were illiterate, they are qualified because they used to be members of the TAO as defined by law. The remaining man, though not a hill person, settled down in the area a long time ago. It is found that ethnicity is useful in terms of influencing the group to vote as shown with the example from Pangmapha, where there are diverse ethnic groups, and the elected chairman usually belongs to the largest ethnic group in the district. In case of the TAO chairman election in Pangmapha district in 2005, the ones who were elected are members of the largest ethnic groups, i.e., Lisu, Shan, Lahu and Shan from the district of Soppong, Pangmapha, Thamlod and Napupom, respectively. However, in case of Pangmapha sub-district, the elected person was not Shan. He is a lowlander from another province but got married to the local Shan and lived there for over ten years and has always had a leading role both at the village and sub-district level.

In conclusion, the hill people try to get access to the state administration system and utilize the logic of decentralization. Their effort to be elected as TAO members or TAO chairman, generally, derived from their two majority purposes, i.e., to access to the state's resources in terms of salary, allowance, and knowledge and to be part of the state's power. To attach oneself to the state implies being part of the source that accumulate most of powers in the society. As Foucault (1984: 64) points out, the state is not the main source of power. Its extreme power derives from its capability to gather other sources of power and it becomes a centre of power sources. In other words, the state operates on the basis of another power relation already in existence. Therefore, to be part of the source of power the hill people must also receive such power in terms of authority. This authority creates a feeling of being included in the state and is transformed to bargaining power in which, at least, their voices are heard by the state.

The Moken do not have any role in the TAO because they lack qualifications, i.e., Thai nationality and house registration. Although they have permanently settled down many years ago, their residential area on the Surin Islands is not regarded as a formal village due to the whole area being addressed as the national park. Moreover, the Moken themselves do not pay attention neither to the land title nor the state administration. Earning a living is much more crucial for them than political issues.

Nevertheless, it is possible for them to participate in the TAO in the future because many of them are literate and have been granted Thai nationality.

#### **4. State Integration through Development Programmes**

The idea of development, which formed from growth, evolution and maturation, was outlined by US president Harry S. Truman in 1949 during his inauguration speech. Since then, “development” has become a magic word. It always implies a favourable change, a step from the simple to the complex, from the inferior to the superior, from worse to better (Sach 1992, 2000; Esteva 1992).

Following the western ideology of development, the degree of civilization in a country can be measured by its economic performance. The gross national product (GNP) has become an indicator for the level of development of countries. An economic worldview and a statistic have influenced on experts to define development as growth in output and income per capita (Arndt 1987 in Sachs 2000). In other words, development refers to the economic development. Therefore, the countries labelled as underdeveloped do not hesitate to join the world market in expectation of a higher GNP. The ideology of development based on economic growth has been diffused throughout the world. International organizations, particularly the World Bank, have played a crucial role in assisting the third world countries aiming at economic development. Recommendations from the countries’ economic survey by the World Bank become the development model for such countries, also for Thailand.

Additionally, the Bowring Treaty, signed in 1855, brought Thailand into the international market and colonial network (Kanjanchitra 1985, Korff 1986). The first national economic development plan of Thailand from 1961 was based on the idea that the market and capital was the core to positive change. The first to the third plan (1961-1976) were employed in the country, rapid national economic growth was the main goal achieved through enormous exploitation of natural resources, particularly the forest areas. However, since the forth plan, the development plans place more emphasis on the people, aiming to distribute growth and services to the peripheral areas in order to diminish the wide gap between rich and poor. From the central governments point of view, rural people are uncivilized and have less potentiality to shift to better conditions by themselves. Supports from the government through development programmes are seen as a necessity to modernize the rural people.

The discourse of rural development relates greatly to the power relation between the centre and periphery. Additionally, ethnic groups living in the periphery are usually

viewed as uncivilized. Therefore, many development programmes have been launched intending to improve their living conditions.

Moreover, shifting to the better stage through development is the main agenda of many organizations, particularly in world organizations such as United Nations. Its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were setup with the aim of developing a universal living standard. These goals range from halting extreme poverty to stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing worldwide compulsory primary education, all by the target date of 2015. Precisely, the 8 Millennium Development Goals comprise eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equity and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, and develop a global partnership for development<sup>30</sup>.

However, if the projects implemented are top-down and lack local participation, i.e., the locals are only the objects not the main actors, those flowery projects will hardly achieve their grandiose goals. The projects will serve merely the needs of the organization and their staff, not the real needs of the local people. Questions to be discussed in the following section are what and why various development programmes were/are launched in the Moken and hill people communities and how these people respond to such programmes.

#### **4.1 Development Programmes and the Moken**

The Moken have few possibilities to maintain their nomadic lifestyle. They were convinced to settle down permanently in the defined bay particularly after the Tsunami in 2004. After defining specific settlement areas, houses were placed in an order to be able to control Moken activity, as mentioned previously in the section of administration. This regulation can be viewed as part of the development programmes applied on the Moken society. Therefore, the state's intervention is intervening with their livelihood system particularly regarding the traditional migration from island to island either within the state boundary or transnational movement. Since the territory has been defined and the border between Thailand and Burma had been delineated, free movement is restricted and communication, both on the individual level and the village level, is limited. Visits from relatives hardly ever happen because of regulations and expenses. Hence, distance and regulations create further alienation. Visiting relatives or friends of the Moken in Burma and those at Surin Islands scarcely take place, both in terms of frequency and total number of visitors. The spirit

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<sup>30</sup> [Online] Available: [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals). Access date: October 25, 2006.

poles celebration in 2005 gave a clear example. No Moken from Burma joined the celebration, which was different from the years before. However, 4-5 Moken from other villages in Thailand attended.

Generally, the development programmes for the Moken people on the Surin Islands concentrate on education and healthcare. For education, the Marine Fisheries Conservation Unit organized “*Suraswadee*”, the first school, in 1994. Its office is located on the northern Surin Island. Its main concern is to prevent illegal fishing and trawling in the northern Andaman Sea. Basic education in Thai language skills and about the importance of marine conservation was provided to the Moken children. Later, the school received support from Thailand’s Non-Formal Education Department. After the Tsunami, the school building was rebuilt, supported mainly by the project of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, and was relocated next to the Moken village. Thai language, Buddhist religion, and loyalty to the Thai monarchy, as the notion of Thai nation state are applied to the Moken society through education. It is also a tool of the state to exercise its power over the minority groups. Therefore, the Moken take in the Thai-ness unconsciously. However, questions arise whether this non-formal education serves their livelihood system, whether it isolates their traditional wisdom and practices, and widens the gap between the generations, and if it can be applied for their future.

Since the Moken livelihood is associated with the sea and the national park, they are willing to continue living on the Surin Islands. The issue is what the non-formal education should provide for them in order to prepare them to handle the upcoming uncertainty without losing their identity.

Nonetheless, some parents who do not want their children to continue living in the Moken fashion, so they send their children to schools on the mainland expecting that their offspring will be better educated. The schools there are said to have a higher quality than that in the village. They also expect that their children will be able to get a good job in town. This situation illustrates that some Moken see better opportunities for their children on the mainland. Having a good formal education is regarded as a channel to good occupation.

In terms of healthcare, the focus lies on the fight against malaria. Malaria is the most serious disease in this area, hence, the authorities tried to control and prevent further infections. The Malaria Control Unit regularly sends its officers to the islands at least once a year to carry out blood testing and to spray insecticide around the settled areas.



Another threat for the Moken health is the lack of sanitation. Therefore, garbage management and toilets were introduced into their community. Garbage pits were dug out and the idea of “throwing the garbage into the right place” is spread. This programme is successful because the Moken accept that having a clean village is useful in order to attract tourists who are relevant for their economic survival. The presences of the tourists in the village generate income from selling handicrafts. Nonetheless, food remains are still thrown on the beach and the tide sweep them into the sea, feeding marine creatures.

One of the most significant changes in their community regarding the sanitary situation came with having toilets. Although it is still new, most villagers prefer to use the toilets. The toilets are defined as common property which everyone can use, nonetheless, ideas of maintaining the common property is not familiar to them. This perception is important for them because the common property is a new idea in their society. Due to the lack of understanding, many people use the toilets but no one pays any attention in keeping them clean. Related authorities pointed out that “*the Moken dislike using toilets because they are not accustomed to them*”. This indicates that the Moken are considered by the authorities as being unable to adapt to the new circumstance. However, from discussions and observations, it is found that they are willing to use the toilets. Reason for rejecting them is that not all toilets are in a usable condition<sup>31</sup>. Suggestions from their leaders are not taken into account as there is lack of respected leaders who can encourage the villagers to cooperate and solve the problems by themselves. Therefore, guidance from outside particularly from the park authority, who are more or less the patron of the Moken, is necessary since the management of common assets is a new situation and has not existed in their everyday life before.

As mentioned previously, all development programmes organized in the Moken village at the SIMNP focus mainly on the health and living standard, including economic support in terms of employment and permission to extract natural resources for making handicraft products to sell to the tourists. After the Tsunami, the programmes emphasized on assistance in terms of materials such as houses, cloths and boats. Aid organizations play a role merely as donors who try to fulfil the Moken’s requests. The Moken adapted to the situation and tried to ask for donations from the visitors.

The capabilities of the Moken are not taken into account as a focal point of the development programmes. The only programmes going beyond the supplying of

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<sup>31</sup> One can imagine the condition of the only 9 toilets serving 51 households with almost 200 people.

material is organized by the Office of Public Health, which provided useful knowledge. It trained some villagers to be “public health volunteers” to get basic diagnosis knowledge to be able to dispense the right pharmaceuticals for some symptoms. The volunteers were actually selected by the authority based on their literacy to be state’s representatives in order to provide basic health service to the community, and strengthen solidarity among the village members.

Another is the Andaman Pilot Project (APP), which has put an effort to demonstrate how to work together in groups and how to distribute a group’s resources<sup>32</sup>. Nonetheless, villagers join the group not because they want to learn about group organizing, but rather because of the relative benefit. They explained that “*compared with working for the SIMNP, the APP pays the same salary and the workload is less. We can take a rest whenever we want*”. They further stated that they are not willing to work in a group if that work is related to private benefit. They explained that “*when working in a group, revenues or products have to be shared, which always leads to arguments. Individual work provides a better income and less conflict*”. From this point of view, one can see why they are unwilling to share the donated boats as a common asset. However, if the work is not related to a monetary income, such as felling dried trees in the village to prevent them falling on the houses, they prefer to team up because the work can be done faster.

Some authorities pointed out their static point of view that “*outside intervention particularly within the framework of development programmes is a principal cause of change and might be a threat to the Morgan society*”. Actually, changes take place all the time although there were no interventions in terms of development programmes. Even though their place of living is quite isolated, they are not separated from the main society in terms of communication or social contact. Both media, particularly radio and television, and interethnic relationships play a significant role in transferring national and global events to the local level.

The Moken themselves are also unwilling to live in hardship. For a good life, in their opinion to have money is crucial. They explained that “*without money, our life will not be good. We need money more than other things else because it can be used to buy everything we want*”. However, not only money is regarded as an important factor for a good life. Living on the Surin Islands is also seen as another component for a good life because they feel free and familiar with surrounding environment. Hence, money in their opinion does not function as a means for status classification; it

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<sup>32</sup> By initiating group work comprise 10 members (8 male and 2 female), later a man left the group to work with tourism company as a boat man

plays a role primarily as a medium for the consumption of goods. Their wage is usually rapidly spent on food and drinks<sup>33</sup>.

NGOs or any others organizations which do not relate to government agencies may find difficulties running their development programmes with the Moken on the SIMNP because the park is under special control of the National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. There are several rules and regulations which restrict activities, actually, including permanent constructions. The only permanent structure at the Moken village is the school building which is supported by the royal family. Other projects which are popular among the hill people, such as crop and animal husbandry, cannot be practiced here due to some limitations, i.e., space condition and related laws.

Furthermore, development is often viewed in terms of constructing visible material artefacts. However, development should not emphasize solely visible results such as concrete school buildings, etc. In contrast, it should also deal with the villagers showing them how they should make their living, how to utilize natural resources in a sustainable way as well as how to encounter the mainstream culture and maintain their ethnic identities at the same time.

Even though laws prohibit the Moken to use natural resources, the regulations applied to them are not very strict. Therefore, they are able to utilize them for their livelihood. Conflict over natural resources between the Moken and other groups (the fishermen) occurs to a lesser degree because they have different purposes and their extraction areas are also different. The Moken are littoral gatherers and use simple tools such as harpoons and knives, while the sources of the fishermen are further away in the deep sea, extracted with modern technologies.

The Moken have less pressure than the hill people who have to compete both within their own and with other ethnic groups in gaining access to scarce resources. It was necessary for the hill people to group together and find solutions, which, later, became a network of cooperation, as is the case in the Pangmapha district. This collaboration functions not only as a tool in preventing conflict but also enables the hill people to negotiate with the state in order to maintain their customary right of utilizing the natural resources. For the Moken, cooperation between them or establishing networks, as a means to gain bargaining power, has not yet taken place. This is, perhaps, because they are not exposed to that much pressure which would induce them to find ways out. Until now, they have more or less maintained their livelihood system.

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<sup>33</sup> Particularly, snacks and sweets are provided to their children almost every time they ask for

Additionally, the Moken lack of group-work experience in order to deal with the state power. Although they stay together in the same community, they do not pay attention to group/community management. The nuclear family is the most significant unit and all related activities are emphasized mainly on the family's welfare. The main activities regarded as significant for the family's income, such as diving and harpooning, do not need much cooperation. In contrast, the hill people need mutual support among the village members particularly for the cultivation of field crops. Hence, having cooperation experience leads towards the establishment of networks. Nevertheless, it does not mean that cooperation does not occur in the Moken community. Their cooperation depends on the task and underlines the close relatives and friends such as boat construction (in the past) and house construction.

#### **4.2 Development Programmes and the Hill People**

The early development programmes for the hill people in Thailand have been aimed at integrating them into the larger Thai society through education. The first establishment of a school in the mountainous areas was in 1956<sup>34</sup>. Since then, the hill people have continually been paid attention to by the government. The Committee for Hill Tribe was established in 1959 to provide welfare and development with animal husbandry, new crops and education. In 1968, the government started to underline national security along border areas due to the communist expansion. As a result, resettlement programmes were initiated to relocate a number of tribal people to lowland areas. When insurgent activities decreased, the government put more emphasis on the eradication of opium and a number of agencies were set up to prevent and suppress opium production and promote substitute crops. Different policies have been applied on them each period. They were encouraged to serve as a united front and were enlisted as allies for information and coordination and some highlander villages were relocated to lowland areas. Currently, the integration policy is employed and the hill people are accepted as a part of Thailand with the proviso that they are loyal to the Thai nation (Chotichaipiboon 1997).

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<sup>34</sup> The first school in the mountainous remote area, the so call "the Border Patrol Police School 1", was established on January 7, 1956 at the Donmahawan village, Chiangkhong district, Chiangrai province by the Border Patrol Police Bureau, Royal Thai Police. The school was taken into the concern when the border patrol police (BPP) units and border patrol police airborne units made a visit to those areas and observed that nobody could speak Thai and despite a large number of school-age children, there were no schools. In view that the situation might have impacts on the security of the country, the border patrol police came up with an idea of setting up schools for the hill tribe people in order to teach them Thai language and customs. The school aimed to familiarize the locals with the BPP so as to promote trust between one another, which would eventually enhance the goal of sustainable development in all aspects in the future. [Online] Available: [http://www.bpp.go.th/healthzone/clip% 20art/bpp\\_school Eng.htm](http://www.bpp.go.th/healthzone/clip%20art/bpp_school_Eng.htm). Access date: December 10, 2007.

Development programmes from the state for the hill people derive from the perception that they are the origin of the problems. Once they were seen as a threat to the nation's security in times of the communist rebellions, the government was afraid that they might ally with the opposition. Besides, they have been seen as menace to ecology resulting from growing opium and slash and burn and shifting cultivation. Their livelihood system has been characterized as savage and unhygienic; therefore, they had to be assisted to become civilized people through various development programmes. The hill people have received continually consideration from the state and this concern was underlined in the 5<sup>th</sup> national economic and social development plan (1982-1986). Family planning, providing education, creating Thai consciousness, promoting cash crops as opium substitution were the principal purposes in this plan. Nevertheless, government policies on the hill people related to international concerns. In the case of opium, it was legal during Ayuttaya Kingdom until early Rattanakosin. After 1959, all activities related to opium had been declared as illegal according to international regulations. Since then, opium eradication has taken place. The most effected people were the hill people because most of them (H'mong, Mien, Akha, Lisu, Lahu) cultivated opium as cash crops. Thence, mono cropping, such as cabbage, kidney beans, and maize were encouraged. The hill people seem to accept what the developers recommend; lands have been cleared to cultivate new crops. However, since environment issues spread worldwide, the mono cropping system is seen as a threat to the environment and the development programmes headed towards subsistence production.

Furthermore, the hill people have been paid attention to not only by the government but also by non-government organizations (NGOs). Even though they are different in terms of goals and management, the common objective is to assist the hill people in coping with new situations and simultaneously maintaining their cultures. The significant difference between the projects of the government and that of NGOs is that the former usually emphasize a top-down policy whilst the latter focus more on community participation. The hill people, anyhow, are not passive receivers. They select and apply what they regard as useful and resist what they consider as incompatible with their livelihood system.

In the case of the Pangmapha district (Maehongson Province), due to the geographic distance and being difficulty to reach, it was not as well known as today. The road was constructed by the Japanese army during the Second World War as a passageway to Burma via Pai, Soppong and Maehongson and it was improved by the Thai government afterwards. It became one out of two main roads from Chiangmai to Maehongson province. Pangmapha has been inhabited by various ethnic groups, i.e.,

Shan, Karen, Lua, Lahu, Lisu and Hmong. Each group immigrated into the area separately. Most of them earned income from opium as cash crop. However, since opium had been regarded as a threat to the whole society, they were forced to terminate opium cultivation. Hence, Thai and German government set up cooperation under the Thai-German Highland Development Program, TG-HDP (1981-1998), which entailed both economic and social change in the areas. Main purpose of the TG-HDP was to restrict and limit access to and utilization of the natural resources by reducing opium cultivation areas and prohibiting shifting cultivation. Meanwhile, substitute cash crops were promoted. The hill people have been provided education, public services, and knowledge about local administration and group establishment and management. Resulting from the project, the hill people are able to communicate with the local official, understand political aspects, and establish various groups such as Pangmapha Thai hill people network and Lahu Shehle network.

Generally, TG-HDP was highly successful in terms of eradicating opium fields and combating opium addiction. The hill people have a positive opinion about this project. Most of them believe that it is good and reasonable. However, their levels of understanding differ greatly. Some of them agree to practice what they learnt from the project because they understand the main purposes of the project. Other villagers do not pay much attention to the actual aims of the development project and are more interested in the benefit they gain from it. In other words, the development projects are seen as source of off-farm income<sup>35</sup>. They do not attend training courses for gaining knowledge to apply in their livelihood system, but for the per diem allowance, for example, in the Pangmapha Thai hill people network participants received 100 Baht for attending the monthly meeting. However, not everybody paid attention to what was going on in the meeting, some left the meeting place while others slept nearby. When the meeting was over, everyone presented her/himself to ask for the allowance.

Moreover, in the case of the development programmes, promoting cash crops as opium substitution incited many villagers to accept a change to cash crops. However, it meant dependence on external factors such as market and inputs. Although some hill people had been selected to be under contract farming to ensure stable product prices, they could not get a guaranteed price because their crop quality did not reach the standard requirements. Incomes from substitution cash crops did not cover the investments of labour and other inputs. Some of the hill people turned to their former cultivation patterns which provided better income and less investment, i.e., opium.

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<sup>35</sup> Pointed out by Prof.Dr. Rüdiger Korff.

Opium gives maximum profit because it needs low inputs but has a high price, is easy to transport, storable and has high demand on market. Therefore, it is extremely suitable for remote areas. The cultivation plots are usually on distant mountains as far as on the Thai-Burma boundary. If the fields are found by the authorities, they are destroyed. Nonetheless, the owners of such fields are never arrested because the fields are far away from any villages and it is quite difficult for the authorities to find out the owners.

Nevertheless, beside TG-HDP, there are other development programmes in the Pangmapha district. Setting up a village fund is one of the poverty eradication programmes applied by the government and non-government, which is expected to create a learning process for the villagers to strengthen their communities because the funds are managed by the villagers themselves. Moreover, it is expected to bring a better life to the villagers if the funds are used for profitable activities such as crop cultivation, livestock raising, weaving, etc. This is obviously different from the Moken on the Surin Islands. They do not receive any support from the government in terms of village funds. Although the “Moken fund” was initiated by the national park to receive donation from the tourists, it was discontinued due to scepticism. There was a rumour that the park did not distribute this fund to the Moken. The park was unsatisfied and stopped this project. In Pangmapha, there are more than 10 village funds in each sub-district supported by the government agencies such as the Department of Community Development, Department of Agricultural Extension, Department of Public Welfare, Ministry of Public Health, and Tambon Administration Office. These funds are diverse in terms of their objectives, many of them focus on saving and borrowing out the money while others focus on rice stock (the so-called “rice bank”) and animal husbandry. However, it is found that problems have occurred from lack of interest both from the authorities and the villagers. On behalf of the government agencies monitoring and evaluating was insufficient. The funds management were left to the villagers to be handled themselves without continual monitoring from the authorities. In principle, the village funds committees play a crucial role in managing and distributing the funds equally to the qualified villagers under strict rules. Nevertheless, in reality, the committees were mostly lacking management capability, did not understand the objectives of the funds, and corrupted them. As well as the villagers, they were reluctant to return the money because they understood that the funds belonged to the government, hence, they did not feel responsible for it. In other words, it was unnecessary to give back. Although there are management problem, village funds are viewed from the government as a means to enhance the quality of life of the villagers through economic incentive.

However, if the villagers truly understand the aims of the fund, are honest, and utilize it in the right way, their household economy may improve.

In general, the development programmes of the state usually focus on the technical solutions. The members of ethnic groups have a chance to participate in the programmes only as passive actors, i.e., doing what the specialists advise or counsel. They have never been considered active players or stakeholders in the project design processes. Instead, this is done by experts as authorized personnel. In other words, development programmes promoted either by the state or by NGOs are based on the assumption that the ethnic groups lack capabilities. Therefore, outside inputs which are viewed as better off are applied to the local, as pointed by Long.

*“...the injection of external inputs will provide a better solution to problems than those means that already exist, thereby opening up new opportunities and improving people’s living conditions and welfare”*  
(Long 2001: 34)

Since the development programmes are based on outside specialists, top down planning and the developers follow merely the central policies without concerning the local potential, they do not correspond to the actual needs of the ethnic groups. As the previous development discourse could not serve the peoples needs, the new development discourse, the so called “community cultures” emerged as a counter discourse. It draws attention to community, people participation and local knowledge as the principal issue for development programmes.

Both the Moken and the hill people generally cooperate with all development programmes, though sometimes these programmes are inappropriate to their conditions, such as livelihood systems and place of living. The answer to the question why they accept to follow such development programmes lies in the development discourses. The development discourses constructed in Thai society focus only on the optimistic sides, therefore, to be in the cycle of development is expected to bring positive results.



## CHAPTER IV

### ETHNIC IDENTITIES

#### 1. Exploring the Meaning of Ethnic Identity from Its Root

To understand what ethnic identity is, the origin of the term should be taken into account. The first part, “ethnic”, has Latin and Greek origins- *ethnicus* and *ethnikas*, both meaning nation. Ethnic has been used historically to refer to heathen. *Ethnos*, in Greek, means custom, disposition or trail. *Ethnikas and ethnos* taken together mean a band of people (nation) living together who share and acknowledge common customs (Trimble and Dickson 2004). In English, ethnic was used in the sense of heathen or pagan from the mid-fourteenth century until the mid-nineteenth century, when it gradually began to refer to “racial” characteristics. In the United States, “ethnics” came to be used around the Second World War as a polite term referring to Jews, Italians, Irish and other people considered inferior to the dominant group of largely British descent (Eriksen 1997: 3-4). The second part, “identity”, is derived from *identitas*, which is formed from *idem* meaning “same”. The term is used to express the similarity and unity. More specifically, identity means “the sameness of a person or thing at all time in all circumstances; the condition or fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else” (Simpson and Weiner 1989 in Trimble and Dickson 2004). Combining the definitions and interpretations of ethnic and identity, therefore, refers to the sameness of a band or nation of people, who share common customs, traditions, historical experiences and in some instances geographical residence. It is stated that identity is generally conceptualized and used to understand ethno-cultural influences on its formation and development. Furthermore, ethnic identity is almost synonymous with ethnicity. Therefore, in this dissertation, these two words are used interchangeably.

#### 2. Ethnic Groups and Ethnicities/Ethnic Identities

In anthropology and sociology, ethnic identity was first mentioned in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with reference to the study of non-western cultures. This term was used to refer to people assumed to affiliate themselves with the same cultural group and who share common customs, languages and traditions. Thus, the conventional concept of ethnic groups and ethnicity, i.e., ethnic identity is somehow constructed where an individual views oneself and is viewed by others, as belonging to a particular ethnic or cultural group. In other words, cultural traits are usually taken into account when ethnic categories and ethnicity are to be considered. However, this primordial concept has been challenged by Leach (1964: 16-17). According to him ethnic groups should

be conceived of, as social not cultural entities. Although cultural differences are structurally significant, different cultures of people groups unnecessarily imply that they belong to different social systems. The same structural relationships may exist in different cultures and can be symbolized in different ways. For example, marriage is a structural relationship which is common in English and Kachin society; it is symbolized differently, by a ring in the former and a turban in the latter case.

Barth (1969:10-14) views ethnicity as a continuing ascription, which classifies a person in terms of general identity, determined by origin and background. The continuity of ethnicity depends on the maintenance of a boundary. An ethnic boundary entails organization of behaviour and social relation. Sharing criteria for evaluation and judgement happen when identification is applied to another person as a member of an ethnic group. A dichotomization of others as members of another group implies the recognition of limitations on shared understandings, different criteria for judgement of values and performances and a restriction of interaction of common understanding and interest. In other words, determination of group membership is not a function of a shared common culture but of ascription and identification by the actors themselves. Although ethnic categories take cultural differences into account, only some cultural features are used by the actors as signals and emblems of differences, others are ignored, played down or denied. Furthermore, Barth distinguishes two cultural contents of ethnic dichotomies. Firstly, overt signals or signs, features that people look for and exhibit to show their identity, such as dress, language, house-forms and lifestyle. Secondly, a basic value orientation, the moral standards by which the behaviour is judged. In other words, belonging to an ethnic category implies to judge oneself and to be judged by standards that are related to that identity. Ethnic identities are used by actors to categorize themselves and others for social interaction. Therefore, ethnic groups are a form of social organization.

However, individuals may carry more than one ethnic identity. For example, the villagers in northeastern Thailand sometimes identify themselves as Lao when interacting with Thai government officials or with others from central Thailand due to a common history with Laos. On the other hand, when such villagers visit Laos, they identify themselves as Thai. Believing in common origin, they identify themselves as Lao while other issues such as what they learned from school and rituals that link them to the king of Siam lead to identify themselves as Thai (Keyes 1979: 4).

As mentioned by Eriksen (1993: 12) that ethnicity is related to the relationship and mutual contact between groups, i.e., a social relationship between agents who consider themselves as culturally distinctive from members of other groups with

whom they have a minimum regular interaction. However, neither culture nor ethnicity is something that people have or to which they belong. Rather, they are complex repertoires which people experience and use in their everyday lives. In this sense, a continuing perception of themselves and an understanding of their fellows is constructed. The construction of ethnicity is a tool to characterize others rather than oneself (Jenkins 1998: 13-14). More precisely, ethnicity is the process by which the sense of 'us' is enhanced by 'their' difference, aiming for organization or identification. Therefore, ethnicity happens at the boundary of 'us'. Shifting of the sense of "us" leads to changes in boundaries between "us" and "them". This implies that ethnicity is transactional, shifting and impermanent (Wallman 1979 in Jenkins 1998: 19-20). In other words, ethnic identity is the result of a dialectical process involving internal and external processes as the individual's self identification and the ethnic designations by the outsiders'. Hence, ethnicity is dynamic and involves both individual identity and group organizations. External social, economic and political process and actors also play a role in shaping and reshaping ethnic categories and definition (Nagel 2000: 83). A vivid example is displayed in the work on the Karen people. The Karen identities derive not only from their cultural belief or their identification of being members of Karen groups, but also because they have self-perpetuating relationships with non-Karen which entails differences between them and their neighbouring groups (Kunstadter 1979: 122-123, Keyes 1979: 11).

Ethnicity is viewed not only under boundary and relationship aspects, but also relates to power. In a positive point of view, ethnicity is regarded as a means for disadvantaged groups to claim a set of rights and privileges which the existing power structures have denied them (Bell 1975 in Trimble and Dickson 2004). In contrast, ethnic classification is a powerful tool used by the state or the majority to maintain uneven power and dominant discourses on ethnicity and minority groups. Nevertheless, it creates an opportunity for individuals or groups to redefine themselves in terms of power representations, promoting a collective identity and group unity. The group responds to the classification by negotiation and adaptation. In other words, the identity emerges within specific modalities of power and is more the product of creating difference and exclusion, rather than naturally constituted unity, i.e., an identity in its traditional meaning which is an all inclusive sameness, seamless, internal similarity (Leach 1979, Hall 1996 in Rickson 2004).

Although there are various concepts about ethnicity/ethnic identity, this research focuses on the partaker's perspective, consciousness and inter-relationship between groups. Combining leading concepts, ethnicity or ethnic identity is not something that already exists; rather it is constructed both by oneself and others. Cultural traits are

usually taken into account to mark the differences between ethnic groups. Moreover, ethnicity relates to inter-relationship between those who consider themselves different from other ethnic group members, which leads to a sense of them and us and gears towards inclusion and exclusion. An ethnic boundary comes into existence when the members of an ethnic group (as actors) insist they are different from other groups by expressing what they regard as their unique identity. The main questions are 1) what criteria and why they are selected and regarded by the actors themselves as defining Moken and hill people identities 2) how these selected identities play a role in relation to power issues.

### **3. Defining Moken-ness**

Group interaction plays a crucial role in defining ethnic groups. If this precondition is not met, an ethnic group is presumably unable to consider itself different from others. Without relations between groups, no comparison can take place.

In the Moken society, they view themselves as distinct from other groups based on comparison between themselves and others. Their perspectives on Moken-ness consists of four major aspects: speak the Moken language, live on the Surin Islands, collect sea snails for trading, and personal abilities and characteristics.

#### **3.1 Speak the Moken Language**

Although a distinct language is not a “must have” criterion to distinguish ethnic groups, it is usually taken into account as a marker of ethnic boundary. Barth (1969) points out that ethnic and linguistic units tend to coincide because language, as cultural criterion, is used as the primary indicator of an ethnic boundary, i.e., the boundaries between ethnic groups are created by their difference in terms of language. Moreover, language is generally viewed in relation to culture and history as stated by Leach that

*“It has usually been accepted as dogma that those who speak a particular language form a unique definable unit, and this unit group of people has always had a particular culture and a particular history”*

*(Leach 1986: 48)*

A state populated by various ethnic groups inevitably has a variety of languages. Hence, the language of the majority is applied to the entire country in order to unify the language multiplicity. The national language which derives from the majority group becomes a necessary skill for the entire state population. It is extended till the state boundaries, mostly inhabited by minority groups, through the language policy.

The most apparent example is the school system and the exclusive use of the majority language for administration in which the national language has been imposed on linguistic minorities (Gellner 1981 and Ra'anan 1989 in Sclee 2001).

Nonetheless, since the language of the majority group becomes the national language and those of the minorities are ignored, it illustrates that there is a relationship between language and political system in which language groups are ordered into classes and the higher one is likely to cover the lower one. As mentioned by Leach that

*“...a political system which embraces several language groups and these language groups are ranked in a class hierarchy, superior and inferior, there is a prima facie probability that the language situation is unstable and that the higher ranking language groups are tending to assimilate the lower ranking groups”*  
(Leach 1986: 50)

Nevertheless, ethnic minority groups are likely to maintain their language as one crucial aspect of their ethnic identities. To speak the same language illustrates group solidarity, therefore, it signifies inclusion and exclusion. In other words, speaking the same language is assumed to be “us”. However, different ethnic groups may speak the same language (except the national language) according to their close relationship, attending the same market or even due to intermarriage. Moreover, language and social relations are viewed as an associated issue, as indicated by Leach that

*“To speak the same language as one’s neighbours expresses solidarity with those neighbours. To speak a different language from one’s neighbours expresses social distance or even hostility”*  
(Leach 1986: 50)

For the Moken, they take their distinct language as one of the most crucial aspect to identify their Moken-ness. They emphasized that *“We, Morgan<sup>36</sup> people, are different from others because we speak Morgan language”*.

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<sup>36</sup> The Moken on the Surin Island pronounce their name “Morgan” which may derive from Thai pronunciation. However, Ivanoff argues that it is mispronunciation. It should be Moken (from the Gaman folktale). While White maintains that this group of people call themselves “Mawken” which he found an explanation from their language.

Speaking in Moken within their group when they are on the mainland does not entail a feeling of being ashamed. At the village level, everyone speaks in Moken; however, almost all of them can speak Thai with a southern dialect. The young are able to read and write in Thai because they attend the village school. Though the children are in the school all day, they speak Thai only with teachers and outsiders. Speaking Moken with friends is not prohibited in school. When they are at home or are speaking with their friends, it is always in the Moken language. They are not forced to use solely Thai unlike some of the other hill people villages where they are forced to speak only Thai in school, if not, their teachers punish them. Although the Thai language becomes important for their livelihood, their own language maintains its dominant role. The Moken language maintains its central role as an indicator of ethnicity because the Moken people perceive it as strongly relevant for their life, particularly for their internal social relations, i.e., in group communication. However, as soon as it is viewed as irrelevant in their personal interest, it will gradually become abandoned and another dominant language, which in most case is the national language, will replace it. Many Moken parents want their children to speak Thai fluently. They explained that *“speak Thai fluently is good because our children will not be teased from their mainland friends”*. This view shows that being able to speak the national language fluently leads to acceptance from the ethnic majority, i.e., the Thai. In another case, a boy, from a Moken mother and a Thai father, cannot understand any Moken words because he was sent to stay with his father’s relative on the mainland only occasionally visiting his parents at the island. It is clearly noticeable that a gap between the generations, particularly with close relatives such as grandparents who cannot speak Thai, is created. His Thai father argued that *“being unable to speak Morgan language is good because my son will be fluent in Thai. Morgan language is useless on the mainland. No one speaks it”*. This point of view exhibits the perception that the ethnic minority language is inferior to the national language and irrelevant for the livelihood system, therefore, should be ignored and replaced by the language of the majority. Moreover, it also illustrates that the mainstream culture is valued as superior giving it dominant power over minority cultures. Although the Moken parents want their children to speak Thai fluently, they do not view speaking their own language as useless. Being able to speak Thai matters to them because it is helpful for interethnic relation.

The Moken youth prefer to speak Moken with their Moken friends because it gives them a feeling of familiarity<sup>37</sup>. They are proud to be able to speak both Moken and

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<sup>37</sup> By comparison, some adolescents among the hill people view their language as backward and feel ashamed of it. Many of them ignore their first language and speak only Thai, even with their parents. This does not mean that they cannot speak their own language; rather, they are unwilling to do so. It

Thai. They added that *“being Morgan one has to be able to speak Morgan fluently”*. From their point of view, ethnic identity and language are seen as interrelated aspects. They further explained that with their language ability *“it is not difficult for us to understand the Morglen<sup>38</sup> language. But the Morglen cannot understand us because our language is shorter and faster than that of the Morglen”*. These two languages actually fall into the same language-family group, Austronesian. However, from other informants, many Moklen can speak Moken language.

But being able to speak Moken alone does not indicate being a true Moken. There are still other criteria to identify true Moken-ness.

### **3.2 Live on the Surin Islands**

Geography, in terms of the place of living, has great significance for ethnic identity. Therefore, being aware of their boundaries and being able to spot it in a map is necessary as an explicit means of control, access and utilization.

The Moken also affiliate themselves with a particular space. In the early stage, their central places of living were boats. Later, this place had mostly been abandoned and replaced with geographic sites. In the past, the *kabang*, the boat, functioned as house and means of transportation; it was regarded as a symbol of the real Moken. They pointed out that *“previously our symbol was the kabang but it disappeared. The real Morgan live in Kabang. Now we live in houses, may be we are only 50 percent Morgan”*.

Apart from being a floating house and a means for transportation and production, the *kabang* also played a role as evidence of the Moken’s technical ingenuity and was also important for ritual ceremonies. Ivanoff (1999) explains that the boat is linked to ritual respects such that the model boat is thrown out to the sea during religious ceremonies and the boat is also considered as a coffin. Their boat, additionally, is regarded as equal to human beings. The monoxylon (*log-boat*) is given a similar name as the human body, as illustrated in table 6.

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usually happens after they attend school for a few periods where they learn that Thais have to be able to speak Thai fluently. When attending the school with other lowland children, comparison between the different ethnic groups takes place. If one cannot speak Thai well, one will be humiliated and feel embarrassed.

<sup>38</sup> The Moklen group who also speak Austronesian language but developed distinct spoken language. They are approximate 2,500 people and have settled permanently for more than 100 years ago in Phang-nga and Phuket province (UNESCO 2001).

Table 6: The Boat and the Human Body

Monoxyton	Human body	Explanation
<i>Lake</i>	belly	total inner face
<i>Ok</i>	diaphragm	bottom of the monoxyton
<i>Tabing</i>	Rib	curved timbers going round the exterior of the monoxyton
<i>kang data</i>	upper jaw	upper notch
<i>kang lebuk</i>	lower jaw	lower notch
<i>Tebin</i>	cheek	Exterior hollow situated behind the mouth (forward notch) and the anus (back notch)
<i>Tuko</i>	neck	full width of the monoxyton behind the mouth
<i>Bahoy</i>	shoulder	point where sides meet near the end of the monoxyton
<i>Mum</i>	flank	beginning of the rounded exterior of the monoxyton
<i>Badjang</i>	back flank	side
<i>Bulut</i>	back	total outer face
<i>Kang</i>	mouth opening	hollowed-out notch

Source: Ivanoff 1999: 109-110

Although the *kabang* was regarded as a crucial part of ethnic identity, no one is willing to live on the boat in this day and age. They explained that “*we prefer to live in the house rather than on the boat because it is more comfortable*”. Hence, the boat was important for them merely in the past. Nowadays, it is replaced by the house and motor boat. It illustrates that their ethnic identity is redefined and shifts from “nomad” to “sedentary”. The place without place is replaced by geographical sites. Resulting from redefining their identity, the place of living becomes the most essential criterion to identify themselves as real Moken. Both house style and their location are taken into account to elaborate Moken-ness.

The style of their houses is different from other groups as they mentioned that “*Morgan houses have to be next to the sea and they will be in the water when there is high tide and there is about 2-3 feet between the sea level and the house’s floor. Materials for the house especially roofs and walls are made of palm leaves*”.



However, after the Tsunami of 2004, all the houses were rebuilt with the help of government agencies and volunteers. Materials for constructing the houses were brought from the mainland. Placing the houses next to the sea and in order like the Moken had done was no longer possible because the government agencies were more concerned with neatness (more beautiful) and safety. Therefore, all houses now have the same appearance with a square shape (approximately 16x16 feet), 9 posts, a door and a window. However, the house style was more or less, maintained in the Moken fashion and they seemed to be satisfied with it. The only disappointment was that each house is placed in the same column, those who have their houses in the second row always complain that the first row of houses block the wind from the sea. They cannot do anything except adapt to the new situation. So, sleeping on the ground under the house or on the beach is their choice in sultry nights.

Living in permanent settlements on specific locations defined by the authorities may result in losing their indigenous knowledge about selecting sites to build their houses. The young generation tend to disregard these criteria when searching for suitable places for their houses or actually have no chance finding a proper place.

### **3.2.1 Place of Living and Internal Differences: They are the People of...**

After the Tsunami 2004, the Moken village was formed by placing two villages together. By grouping them together or confining them to stay in one place as was done by the authorities may interfere with mechanisms to avoid confrontation. Village formation previously was based on flotillas in which relatives and friends grouped together. When serious opposition occurred, leaving the group was the mechanism to resolve the conflict. Reunification might have happened when the irritation diminished after some time. Nowadays, two villages are gathered together, placed on one site, and are not allowed to settle in other bays. Although they accept living together in the same village, this does not mean that all of them are satisfied doing so. This can be observed through the arrangement of houses. Who previously lived together in the same village continue to group together. Therefore, the present village is roughly divided into 2 parts; one includes the Moken from *Ao Saiend* while another consists of the ones from *Ao Bonlek*. Not all of them regularly get in contact with each other, some families rarely communicate with others who are from the different village. They stay and have activities only with their group in their part of the village. This situation illustrates that although there is one ethnic group, the feeling of “us” and “them” does exist. This internal difference of the Moken has its origin in the near past. Previously, approximately 10 years ago, all of them inhabited together the island *Ao Bonyai*. Because of deaths caused by cholera and malaria, they moved to settle in

other bays. While some of them have selected to stay in an adjacent bay, at *Ao Bonlek*, the others preferred to build their shelters in another bay of the island, *Ao Saiend*, which is larger but further away. Therefore, their village formation is based on blood ties and close relationships. Although they stayed at the different bays, the annual celebration of the spirit poles, *ne-en lobong*, is organized together. Since quarrels occurred, resulting from too much drinking, they decided to have the celebration separately on each island.

At that time, living and making the rituals separately minimized confrontation. Moreover, an intra-group consciousness established based on the previous place of living and has embedded in each group. Hence, “us” and “them” are the product of group identification referring to the bay where they used to live earlier. They usually talk about each other or themselves as “*the Ao Bonlek or the Ao Saiend people*”. After the Tsunami in 2004, the Moken from *Ao Bonlek* and *Ao Saiend*, were convinced by the authorities to group together and they have been placed on *Ao Bonyai*, where they have to live together again after they were separated for several years. Even though they have lived together this time since 2005, an embedded feeling of “us” and “them” remains. The Moken from the same bay prefer to stay in the same part. In other words, the ones from *Ao Saiend* grouped together on one side where as others stay on another side. Although no formal land marks separating both sides exists, remarkable boundaries can be observed, i.e., two adjacent houses from different bays, serve as a boundary line to identify who belongs to which group or bay.

Generally, the Moken stay together peacefully and normal communication takes place. However, inappropriate behaviour, such as drinking and gambling, are the main factors evoking the embedded feeling of inclusion and exclusion. Although both groups have a level of family violence within their intimate group, the aspect of “us” and “them” matters when problems occur between the two groups. The most crucial event that emphasized an existence of “internal disunion” was the spirit poles ceremony in 2006. Resulting from too much alcohol consumption and following disputes, the second day of the celebration was separated in two spots; one was continually done by the Moken from *Ao Saiend* while another was organized by the *Ao Bonlek* Moken. Noticeably, the Moken enjoyed the celebration done by the group of *Ao Bonlek* more. Many of them joined in smiling, singing and dancing around the poles. No one got drunk which differed greatly from the celebration organized by the *Ao Saiend* group, in which the shamans were heavily drunk and unable to control themselves. Many Moken, from both groups (bays), who did not join the celebration organized by the *Ao Saiend* people, came and enjoyed themselves with other people in

the celebration done by the *Ao Bonlek*. The Moken from both groups pointed out that “*we don’t like to join them- the Ao Saiend- because they drink too much and always create problems*”.

Therefore, “us” and “them” derive from desirable and undesirable behaviour. Undesirable behaviour or bad Moken, as viewed by them, are the drunken Moken who usually create trouble with one another. The *Ao Bonlek*, group regard themselves as the ones with appropriate behaviour because most of them do not drink. Although some drink, they do not cause any problems when they get drunk. The *Ao Saiend* people are always blamed not only to be heavy drinkers but also to have introduced gambling. Playing cards, with 50-1,000 Baht bets, is a favourite activity for most of the Moken women and also a few men occasionally join. Who spread this game is not obvious, however, some old men insist that “*previously when we lived on separate islands, no one at Ao Bonlek played cards, only the ones at Ao Saiend did. After we have been grouped to stay together on the same island, the Ao Bonlek learn how to play it from the Ao Saiend Moken*”. Of course, it does not mean that everyone from *Ao Saiend* is a drinker and gambler and that the *Ao Bonlek* are without any vice. Many from *Ao Saiend* feel disturbed by their drunken neighbours, thence, they moved to stay on the opposite side, i.e., on the same side as the *Ao Bonlek* group.

Additionally, to blame others for their undesirable behaviour but regard oneself as better exemplifies a form of self-protection. In other words, they want to exclude themselves from what is considered inappropriate as previously mentioned. This highlights that they want to maintain their purity as well as construct a boundary in which to prevent negative stereotype. What they want to express is “*though we are Morgan, we are not the same. We behave well, and are not like them*”. To differentiate themselves from other Moken of the SIMNP, the previous place of living is found to serve as their explanation.

Their original living- or birthplaces outside Thai territory are not considered indicators in identifying the “us” and “them”. This is probably because if the Moken, as subjects of the Thai state, link themselves to other places outside the Thai boundaries, their rights to claim Thai territory (the Surin Islands) will be limited or even lost. Furthermore, their ancestors’ original living- or birthplaces gradually vanish from the memory of the new generation who were mostly born on the Surin Islands. Even though many of them have relatives on some islands at Mergui archipelago in Burma territories such as *Dung* and *Chadiek*, they have no regular contact. Due to the rules and regulations of cross border travelling, which entail complex and high fees, the journey is rarely undertaken. The old Moken (65-70 years old) told that “*I have*

*not met my relative for almost 40 years, to go there I have to pay a lot and the Burmese soldiers are so cruel. Some Morgan were slapped by them without doing any mistake”*

### **3.2.2 Place of Living and External Differences: People of the Surin Islands**

External differences or dissimilarity between them and other ethnic groups are always referring to a distinct language and place of living. The Moken regard “other groups” as Thai people who live on the mainland. Even when considering other Moken people, they refer only to themselves as the real Moken who live on the SIMNP not others who live in Burma or on the Thai coastal areas. They respond to the answer “who are you?” by referring to their place of living “*we are the Morgan of the Surin Islands. Our ancestors lived here for a long time*”. This implies that

- 1) their parents were born here, or
- 2) their forefathers used to stay here, later moved to stay at other places and the descendants come back to live here, or
- 3) their ancestors were born somewhere else but later moved to stay here long time ago.

Anyone who falls into one of these categories will be regarded as a real Moken of the Surin Islands. Other Moken who live in other places or the Moken who recently moved in are also considered as Moken but the name of their previous place of residence (in case of newcomers) or their current place of living (in the case that they are not the inhabitants of the Surin Islands) will be put as suffix to the name, i.e., “name + Moken + place”, for example, *Tad Moken of Burma* or *Sri Moken of Thungwa*. It exhibits that the previous place of residence plays an important role in identifying who is who and who is included in the “us”.

From the fact that Moken do not only exist on the Surin Islands but also on other islands/coastal areas both in Thailand and Burma, therefore, they differentiate themselves from the other Moken by identifying themselves with the Surin Islands. In other words, to identify themselves in relation to the Surin Islands implies that the idea of locality is applied. The Surin Islands, the home of the Moken is also considered in association to the real Moken, i.e., the real Moken are those who inhabit this locality and they view themselves as “*the people of the Surin Islands*”. Furthermore, in Thailand, they are regarded as the most primitive Moken because they still maintain their traditions and practices. They are the sole group allowed to have permanent settlement on the Surin Islands and utilize the surrounding natural

resources for their livelihood. This permission resulted from the history of access to and settlement on the islands long before a declaration of the Surin Islands as the marine national park. Though there are some rules which restrict the extraction of natural resources, the park authority is quite lenient and does not apply strict regulations on them. Thence, the Moken make use of these exclusive rights to exclude the Moken from other places from the “us”. Therefore, the “us” are only the Moken who have lived on the Surin Islands for generations. They emphasized that *“though others are Morgan, they do not belong to “our group” because they are not inhabitants of the Surin Islands”*. This claim involves aspects of rights and exclusion. On the other hand, they employ their history of the first inhabitants of the islands to maintain their rights to further live on the islands and make sure they are not expelled.

The idea of the real Moken of the Surin Islands is institutionalized not only in the Moken society but it is accepted and reproduced by authorities and media. The park authority as well as the Moken pointed in the similar direction that *“the real Morgan are only on the Surin Islands, while others who claim to be Morgan are not real Morgan. They are “Thai Mai”, new Thai, who have been registered and granted Thai nationality”*. Why those groups define themselves as being Moken is believed to have to do with the aid, particularly after the Tsunami. However, it is not clear whether those people de facto make use of the Moken identity for their personal advantage. Additionally, the general understanding that being Moken means receiving more help, implies the stereotype about the Moken which views them as poor people who are unable to help themselves.

### **3.3 Collect Sea Snails for Trading**

The Moken indicated that *“if we are prohibited to dive for gathering sea snails or sea cucumbers, it means the Morgan-ness disappears”*. Unlike the *kabang*, gathering sea snails remains important and is still practiced. The Moken income in the dry season derives not only from selling sea snails but also mainly from the national park, tourism and construction companies. Working as labourers on the Surin Islands is a result of state policies regarding natural resources conservation and tourism development. Network analysis using UCINET<sup>39</sup> manifests that the main sources of

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<sup>39</sup> UCINET is a computer software programme for Social Network Analysis. It has been developed by a group of network analysts at the University of California. It is a general-purpose programme that covers the basic graph theoretical concepts, positional analysis and multidimensional scaling, covering procedures for the identification of cohesion, components, centrality, subgroups (cliques and clans), structural equivalence (roles and positions), and its metric and non-metric multidimensional scaling allows for cluster analysis, factor analysis and correspondence analysis. In this dissertation, UCINET was used merely to illustrate the basic graph of the relationship between the Moken families and their main sources of income.

income are national park and tourism. Figure 5 (in appendix) shows that most households who work for the park also produce handicrafts to sell to tourists. Moreover, handicrafts production is a supplementary source of income for the Moken who are shopkeepers (SAL) and who work for other employers, i.e., tourism companies (TOU), construction companies (CON) or the Andaman Pilot Project (APP). Noticeably, there are merely 2 households earning from fishing in the dry season. Actually fishing is not allowed in the conservation zone according to the marine national park rules. Nonetheless, these 2 households are allowed to fish within the prohibited areas due to the simple methods used by them (hook and string) and the low amount of extraction. This fish is sold to the park staff.

Furthermore, most household members who are labourers in construction do not take part in handicrafts production because they spend most of their time at the construction site which is on the north Surin island (*Surin Nua*) while their village is in the south (*Surin Tai*). Travelling between the village and the construction site everyday is inconvenient, hence, most of them build temporary shelters next to their place of work and go back only occasionally to the village.

Working for the national park, the Moken are aware of their unfair wage. Their wage rate is 100 Baht a day which is lower than the minimum wage rate of the country (159 Baht per day)<sup>40</sup>. However, the park authority insist that 100 Baht is enough for the Moken because they are additionally provided 2 meals a day including drinks and they are also allowed to take food back home which is left over from selling to the tourists (See Chapter II 4.3.8). According to the Moken who do not have Thai identity cards, the park authority cannot pay the standard rate and the park also does not receive extra funds from the state for employing the Moken. From this point, the Moken have found that having a Thai identity card may provide more opportunities for obtaining a higher wage. They expect to receive 150 Baht after being granted identity cards. Having an identity card implies that they are of Thai nationality and are entitled to receive the minimum wage rate of the country. Nevertheless, since the park authority links the wage rate to Thai nationality, it is doubtful why some Moken who were granted Thai identity for a long time because they live on the mainland and were assisted by their employers in gaining the identity card, receive the same wage as other non-Thai identity card holders. The question is whether it is the identity card or the ethnic group that play such an important role in defining the wage rate. It seems that it does not matter to the park authority whether the Moken have a Thai identity card or not, as long as they are Moken, they will be unequally treated (or paid).

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<sup>40</sup> [Online] Available: [www.moneychannel.co.th](http://www.moneychannel.co.th). Access date: November 13, 2007.

Nonetheless, under the gender aspect, the Moken women and men receive the same wage rate (except in the construction companies where men receive more). It demonstrates that both women and men are equal in the park authority's view, therefore, paid equally. In contrast, under the ethnic aspect, the Moken ethnic group is categorized as a minority who is subordinate; hence, their wage rate is lower than that of the majority.

Even though the Moken feel oppressed in terms of wage rates, they continue to work for the park and expect to be employed regularly. In the past, many traders were patrons of the Moken and their relationship was based on a bartering and/or trading system. Decades ago, the national park authority has become the new patron of the Moken; however, their relationship shifted from bartering/trading to employer-employee. Because the park authority is authorized to control all activities taking place on the islands and surrounded areas, another sort of relationship between them and the Moken is created, i.e., controller and controlled. It is a power relation that legitimates the park authority to restrict all Moken activities. Although the Moken work for the park which is under the employment system, resistance can be observed such as gossiping, ignoring the order, and sneaking diesel oil from the park's boats.

Although gathering sea snails is illegal, (risk of being arrested) and they have alternative sources of income from working with the national park, tourism companies and construction units, they do not hesitate to leave their regular work to join other Moken to dive for sea snails. The sea snail shells are used as table decoration, spoons or buttons. The reasons why this activity is given extreme importance and the Moken are willing to do it, should not be simply considered merely in terms of economic reasons. Other features, such as reminiscences and resistance, should be taken into account.

The primary reason is that the sale of sea snails' shells provides more income than other work. To earn 3,000 Baht, they have to work for the park everyday for the whole month, in contrast, on each dive, roughly calculated, they will get at least two snails (about half kilogram but if they are lucky, they may get a bigger one which can be more than a kilogram). One kilogram of the shell provides 600-2,000 Baht. The additional income from selling sea snails in the dry season becomes important in the monsoon season when they are not employed by either the national park or the tourism companies, except those who work as non-skilled labourers in the construction business at the Marine Fisheries Conservation Unit or on the mainland. Moreover, the income from selling sea snails is expected to cover all year round spending. They emphasized that *"we have enough money to spend for the whole year*

*because we have income from selling sea snails*". This is evidently illustrated by their annual income and expenditure in table 2 (Chapter II). In addition, there are some practices which relate to the gathering of sea snails. Some of them do not eat its meat to ensure that they can find more sea snails on the next dive. Kissing the shell as soon as it is found is believed to bring good luck in their search.

Another reason for gathering sea snails is reminiscence. The most pleasant event in the past for the Moken was freely travelling from island to island to dive for marine products or hunting other animals, which were the main activities in their everyday life. This has become a custom which is institutionalized in their society. They do not raise questions such as why the Moken should have the ability to dive for gathering sea products. Instead, they mentioned that *"we are Morgan, so we earn our livelihood from the sea particularly from the sea snails. It has been done since our ancestors and we will continue to do it and want our children to do it, too"*. In other words, the Moken-ness and diving for sea snails represent each other; they cannot be considered separately.

Moreover, in continuing to gather sea snails, they are symbolizing resistance against the state. Resistance, here, refers to collective actions in everyday life aiming to counter what the people regard as unfair to them and usually relates to self-interest. Since laws and regulations have been applied in order to restrict access and utilization of natural resources, exploiting them has to be done secretly. Gathering sea snails is usually organized in small groups of 8-12 people, which are able to fit in one boat, to avoid being noticed by the authorities and elude confrontation.

According to the national park administration, a new intendant will be sent from the central department or moved from another national park. A new intendant usually applies stricter regulations in his area. Hence, the Moken activities which relate to natural resources exploitation had been allowed by the former intendant while it may be strictly controlled and prohibited by the next intendant. Nowadays, the Moken feel that they face more difficulties in getting access to the marine resources than in the past. They have observed that the new chief always applies stricter control. They understand that the park intendant defines his own rules and regulations, not the central policies. Comparison between each personnel, previous and present, takes place. Presently, there is always gossip about the park authority, particularly the chief and his assistants. They are called "stingy people" because they do not allow the Moken to collect sea snails.



### 3.4 Personal Abilities and Characteristics

#### 3.4.1 Personal Abilities

Family, a set of institutions, in the Moken's point of view, is the most significant unit. Having a family means having responsibility for family members by providing them with all necessities. Anyone who wants to have a family has to have some qualities to ensure the survival of the family members. This idea has been institutionalized in their society, which leads toward related practices to maintain their primary important social unit. These practices are boat construction and gathering sea products particularly sea snails and sea cucumbers. They are regarded as the most crucial skills and a precondition for, Moken men in particular, having a family. It is a custom in their society that every man has to learn how to build a boat and how to dive for sea products. This custom has become a part of their common identity, which serves to define "Moken-ness". However, the definition of Moken-ness has shifted from time to time, as identities are constructed and dynamic.

Formerly the *kabang*, the boat, was very essential for every Moken family because it functioned as house and means of transportation. Therefore, at that time, the skill to build the boat was necessary for every man. As stated by them that "*in the old time, Morgan men had to be able to build kabang, if not they would not get wives*". However, since they have permanently settled on the Surin Islands and used the engine boat instead of *kabang*, their traditional boat does not have any role in their modern life. The *kabang* only appears as the symbol of their past and a memory of nomadic life. Although they remember good experiences that took place while living on the *kabang*, no one wants to live this way anymore. Due to some difficulties such as inconvenient conditions on the boat and the time consuming construction, the *kabang* plays a minor role in the current situation. Therefore, the shifting situation leads to the disappearance of the *kabang* and the related skills gradually get lost because the ability to build a good *kabang* derives from experiences that in turn result from learning and practicing or training. Nowadays, the *kabang* construction skills do not matter because they are no longer relevant in their daily lives. Moreover, most of the Moken, the new generation in particular, do not know exactly how to build the right *kabang*. The skills for boat construction are not longer regarded as essential for having a family. One can find a wife as long as one can earn for his family.

Because of the lack of motivation to build and use *kabang*, the APP initiated the *kabang* construction project. Some selected Moken of different ages were encouraged to construct a *kabang* together in order to pass on the knowledge to the younger generations as well as to promote teamwork. Data on boat construction, including the

process, indigenous knowledge and beliefs, were collected and published. This boat is planned to be a common property for the Moken and will be used for tourism purposes, traveling to the mainland and fishing. For the tourism aspect, a “Morgan Tour”<sup>41</sup>, was set up by the APP. However, there is a misunderstanding by the park authority. The “Morgan tour” is perceived as a competitor who will snatch the tourists from the park. Additionally, the boat construction project is seen as forest destruction. The park authority stated that “*the APP uses the Morgan to cut the tree to avoid regulations because the Morgan, more or less, are tolerated to utilize the tree*”. Why the park authority at the local level are in conflict with the APP, possibly, derives from a lack of communication on both sides.

Moreover, other *kabangs* are also constructed with the support of other foreign projects. It illustrates that outsiders try to revive the Moken’s tradition of constructing the *kabang*, which has disappeared from their society. However, the question raised here is whether the Moken really perceive *the kabang* construction as necessary in maintaining their culture and passing on their wisdom to the new generation (or the young Moken who are willing to learn from the elderly Moken) or if it is viewed as income generation, receiving money from the projects.

Another custom that relates to personal ability, which is still significant and maintains its role in the Moken society, is diving. They are proud to explain “*we can dive deep into the sea to collect the snails from 5-10 wa (1 wa is approximately 2 metres). All men have this ability, nonetheless, women can do too but not as deep as men do and they prefer to collect some sea products along the coast*”. Diving for the sea products is done by free diving without any equipment. Since trade has taken place, most use at least a diving-mask. The ones who can afford fins have more of an advantage accessing the sea snails because they can swim faster and are able to reach the snails before others. Therefore, the ability to dive for sea products has played a continual role in Moken society. On the one hand, this skill is needed to earn for the family and, as previously mentioned, is regarded as a most important part of their identity.

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<sup>41</sup> It offers touring programmes including a visit to the interpretive centre and the village, trekking, and snorkelling. Each tourist will be charged 200 Baht. Other charges such as for the national park fee, food and drinks and accommodation are not included. Moreover, the tourists cannot stay overnight at the village; instead they have to follow the park’s rules.

### 3.4.2 Personal Characteristics

Apparent characteristics of the Moken-ness, pointed out by the Moken themselves, consist of peacefulness, freedom-loving, openness, non-flattery, and fondness of private assets. Foremost, they regard themselves as peace loving people. Leaving the group (as has happened in the past) or avoiding confrontation when an argument takes place is an obvious example of this. Having an argument with an elder rarely occurs, even when the elder behaves inappropriately. Their reason is that *“he is old already; we don’t want to argue with him or hit him. It is not good to do as such”*. The most common case of everyday argument usually occurs within the family as a result of heavy drinking. Alcohol consumption, both before and after the Tsunami, frequently led to violence within the family. Two serious cases happened that were caused by drinking. The first case was a drunken couple that quarrelled and fought. The result was that the wife was beaten and had her arm broken. However, they still live together drinking and quarrelling on a daily basis. A second case recently transpired about another couple. After drinking 8 bottles of liquor bought from the park shop, they started to fight. The husband ended up cutting his wife’s chin, neck and waist causing her to bleed seriously. Although the Moken are aware of the negative results of drinking, they continue to drink and some maintained that *“drinking make us happy, why we should stop it”*.

However, the majority of the Moken consider liquor to be a main cause of argument and fighting both in the family as well as in the village. They insist that liquor is brought in by the park staff and tourists. However, the park staff argued that *“the Moken have drunk for a long time for many generations before the national park existed. They got the liquor both from trading, from the mainland or even from Burma”*. Other Moken that drank since they had lived on some islands in Burma support this argument. Some said that *“Burmese liquor is not good because it burns our stomach and hurts our chest, but this does not happen with the Thai liquor”*. It is not obvious whether they drink on a regular basis for the sole fun of it or are under stress and want to forget hardship and unpleasant situations.

Another characteristic is freedom, which is expressed in terms of satisfaction and happiness. This is seen as the most significant. They insist that they do not like being forced into doing what they are unwilling to do. Travelling from island to island is preferable because it creates a lot of fun. They emphasized that *“we love to have fun, wander from place to place. Being at the same place as happens to us nowadays is very boring”*. Seeing that happiness comes first, some Moken construction workers,

sometimes, despite missing the day's pay, are absent from work in order to go drinking and having fun in the village.

Although they love freedom, they have to adapt to the new situation, which is full of rules and regulations. The Moken who work for the park or a tourism company have to adjust to a system, which consists of time schedules, orders, rules and regulations. All these adjustments are made in order to satisfy their employers. However, occasionally, they are willing to slack on their duties and secretly, for their own pleasure, go diving for sea snails outside of the SIMNP territory. It seems they want to free themselves from the rules and regulations that frame them. Although where they go for sea snails is under another national park territory, they feel more relaxed to be far away from the regulations of the SIMNP.

With regard to their characteristic of openness, this can be seen in their secret activity, diving for sea snails. The park authority always knows when the Moken go diving for sea snails by noting the number of the Moken labourers who show up for work in the park. Even when many of them are absent at the same time, no one reports it to the park authority; the explanation is obvious. Other Moken, who do not join in gathering sea-snails will act normal and continue with their duties in the park. When the park authority asks about their absent colleagues, they do not hide the story. The intendant of the SIMNP is irritated every time he knows what is happening. Even when they go to prostitutes on the mainland and contract diseases, the group always knows about it. They tell their friends how much they had to pay. The information is passed from close friends to other villagers; in the end, everyone knows the story.

The Moken also view themselves as honest people. They said that "*we are honest and do not steal other's belongings, we believe that if we do as such we will be cursed by the owner which will cause illness*". Nonetheless, the Moken do not keep their promises in every single case. This is the case with some agreements between locals and a known shop that provides them with a boat engine in advance which in return, is paid with dried sea cucumbers. Since the sea cucumbers are limited in supply, the Moken could not collect many of them. Therefore, their solution was that they never went to that shop again. Previously, trading was based on trust under a patronage system. The Moken could take necessities such as boat engines, rice, food, etc. from their patron and paid him back with sea products. This system exists no longer. Money plays an important role and all of the Moken insist that they only want the money because with this magic paper, they can have everything they want.

Non-flattery is another characteristic of the Moken. Flattery is not commonly practiced by the Moken. It becomes very obvious when some high-rank officers visit their village. When the vice-governor visited the village (observed in 2006), all high-ranking officers at district level and the intendant of the park presented themselves, welcomed him and followed him step by step, while the Moken continued with what they were doing. They did not even “wai”, meaning to salute by placing the hands palm against palm and bow the head. There was only a village headman who did it and tried to explain the village’s situation and he also offered a big model boat to the vice-governor. The villagers pointed out that he is the one who deals with the authorities in such a manner, while they prefer not to do so.

Another characteristic of the Moken is that they are fond of their private assets. Their boats and toilets are vivid examples. Due to the Tsunami, all of the Moken people lost their properties including their boats. They refused to have a common boat<sup>42</sup>. They argued that it is impracticable for maintenances. Therefore, the boat should be under private property. One of them explained that *“I don’t want to work very hard alone and then I have to share what I get with my commoners who do nothing. The boat and engine might be broken resulting from others but they keep quiet. When it comes to my turn to use it they might say that I broke the engine. Therefore, I want to have my private boat and engine for which I will take all responsibility myself and earn for my family”*.

Toilets are another story: as they are common property, no one cleans them. There are nine toilets for an entire village and they are not in a usable condition. Their idea of how to manage this situation is no different from that of the boats, “privatization”. They emphasized that *“common toilets are not suitable for the Morgan because no one cleans them, they just use them. We want to have a private toilet for every family which we can lock, and when it is full we will manage it ourselves because it belongs to our families. You see, now all public toilets are full of waste and no one manages them, so we go to the big rocks, like we did in the old time, instead of the toilet.”*

Besides, they further state that they do not like to work in groups if the work is beneficial. Working with others is viewed as a disadvantage because benefits or products have to be shared and always lead to arguments. Individual work entails more money. This view, possibly, derives from their personal characteristic which emphasizes individual ability, independence, and conflict avoidance. However, if the work is not related to money such as felling a dried tree in the village to prevent it

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<sup>42</sup> one boat for 2-3 families

falling over the houses, the Moken prefer to work in groups because it is faster and can be finished within a shorter period of time.

Additionally, the Moken define a good Moken as possessing several credentials, i.e., respectful of elders, diligent, taking good care of their families and concerned about their relatives. Undesirable behaviour or a bad Moken is the drunk who usually creates problems. A Moken gave his opinion of drinkers, *“although I drink every day, it does not mean that I am a bad man because I am still working for the family. If I don’t drink, I cannot work. Even if I drink a lot I never created any problems to others”*.

The question is why only the aspects of language, place of residence, earning for a living, personal abilities and characteristics are taken into account as the main components of Moken-ness. In other words, these factors serve to mark off the “us” from “them”. Why is the aspect of unique cultural practice, the so-called “*ne-en lobong*”, spirit poles ceremony, not regarded as one of their identity markers? To find out the answer, their ideas about Moken-ness and everyday life practices are taken into account.

There are 4 principal aspects considered as causes of neglecting the group’s custom or the practice of spirit poles ceremony, which are depreciation, routine work, behaviour and common activity. Firstly, the spirit poles ceremony, previously was not only used to worship the ancestor spirits but also to reunite the Moken from other Islands with their friends and relatives. Since the concept of territory has been applied by the state, freely crossing the boundary is controlled under many rules and regulations, such as check-points and fees, which make travelling more difficult in terms of the journey’s cost. Besides, the Moken of the Surin Islands are encouraged by the authorities not to invite their relatives or friends from Burma to visit them because many of them may carry some diseases such as elephantiasis, which is non-existent in Thailand. Therefore, the spirit poles ceremony seldom has visitors from Burma. However, the Moken’s main shaman from the Surin Islands often joins the spirit poles ceremony organized by the other village on the mainland (Thailand) where her relatives live.

Secondly, formerly, the Moken would abstain from working for 3 days and 3 nights. During the ceremonial days, it was believed that dangers would happen to anyone who continues to work, including diving for gathering sea snails, climbing for bird’s nests or any other labour. In this sense, risks and dangers were applied as a tool to unite people and encourage them to stay in the village and assist one another in preparing the ceremony. Since many years, the SIMNP, construction units, and tourism companies have employed them. Their wage is based on the number of

workdays, except for the latter, where monthly payment is established (but they have to stand by for tourists sent from the companies which can be any day). Therefore, absence from work implies a loss of income. Furthermore, the ceremony takes place on the full moon day of the fifth lunar month, which is during the high tourist season. Hence, the Moken labourers are demanded to navigate diving boats, assist in kitchen and cleaning work; they are persuaded into not being absent by receiving extra money for their overtime. For the Moken part, they are also not willing to be absent from their regular work for the park because their income is crucial for their families and they also do not show much interest in staying in the village in order to attend their annual ceremony. However, some of them, particularly the medium/the shaman will join the ceremony after finishing their routine work for the park, while others prefer to stay at home and relax from a whole day of work.

The third reason is too much drinking during the ceremony, which is a cause of quarrel. Liquor is one of the offerings to the spirits and is then drunk by the participants and becomes the most needed ingredient for the ceremony. The main shamans who lead the ceremony always ask for liquor from the park authority, villagers, or any others they know. They drink all day and are hardly able to control themselves, which leads to disputes among the ceremony participants. As a result of quarrels, the ceremony was separated as mentioned previously. Instead of worshipping the ancestor spirits and creating a sense of group unity, there is a lot of drinking and quarrelling, which gives the spirit poles ceremony a negative flair. Many Moken ignore the ceremony because they want to avoid unpleasant situations created by other drunken Moken. Not only the Moken see the negative image of the ceremony, the relevant authorities have noticed what is going on and they give a new name which is changed from “*spirit poles ceremony*” to “*drink and get drunk ceremony*”.

Liquor is important in the ceremony not only as an offering but is also consumed in order to go into trance (a state where the spirit inhabits the body of a medium, or a shaman). It is foreseen that, in the future, the offering for the ancestor spirits will remain in practice though going into trance might disappear because no one wants to be a shaman who will be inhabited by spirits on some occasions, such as to heal the sick and to take part in the *ne-en lobong*. Another form of entertainment, such as karaoke, may be used in the ceremony instead of the drum and gong.

The last reason relates to common preparation for the ceremony. In other words, related activities are jointly practiced by the group members and what is produced by

these activities will be used in the ceremony<sup>43</sup>. Offerings used in the spirit poles ceremony of the Moken are not prepared by every household. Only some village members who mostly are the shaman's relatives prepare what they need for the ceremony. They do not have special costumes for the ceremony; therefore, nothing has to be done in advance. In other words, none of the ceremony related activities exist in their everyday life, hence, the feeling of doing something for the ceremony is not created.

Generally, the annual ceremony plays a crucial role in ethnic groups because it is a field to express themselves through costumes, performances, music, food, etc. The ceremony includes most of their identity markers and presents all conspicuous and positive aspects. Although some practices have been prohibited due to state laws and regulations, the ethnic groups adapt to the new situation by shifting their exercises. For example, chicken is used instead of turtles when worshipping.

In case of the Moken, the reasons why they do not see their unique ceremony as a significant entity to define themselves can be concluded from the 4 reasons mentioned above in that the ceremony does not create a sense of belonging among the village members. The arrangement is done only by a few people who directly relate to the ceremony such as the shamans and their relatives. Ordinary villagers do not have any special articles for the ceremony; therefore, it does not need continuous actions in order to achieve a particular goal and make things, which will be used in the celebration. In other words, the process of preparation for the ceremony does not become part of their everyday life. Thus, a common awareness to achieve the same goal is not created. The villagers do not share a common aim in taking part in the ceremony. Ceremony participation depends on individual awareness and how necessary they consider it to join in. However, non-participation does not mean that the villagers disregard the ceremony's meaning. Yet, some of the practices that take place during the ceremonial process are viewed as negative, such as the excessive drinking that leads to quarrels among the participants. Quarrelling and fighting are

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<sup>43</sup> Among the hill people, the most significant celebration, in general, is the New Year celebration. The preparation can be separated into 2 parts; individual and village. At the individual level, new costumes will be prepared and embroidered for the family members. Embroidery is time-consuming work, therefore, it is prepared several months ahead of time (before the New Year). Whenever they, particularly the women, have free time they continue their needlework. This becomes part of their daily life for the sole purpose of wearing it in the New Year ceremony. Moreover, it is necessary for each household to bring offerings in order to join the village ceremony. Family members are usually willing to take part in preparing the offerings. Sticky rice cakes are the basic offerings for many hill people, which require a lot of energy pounding the cooked sticky rice. After the men do this, the women form the rice into particular shapes. This help gears them toward a better relationship within the family. At the village level, in order to adapt to the Thai administration system, they have a village meeting to set the date of the ceremony, synchronise activities and share duties. Outsiders play fewer roles in organizing the ceremony since they are mostly visitors.



inconsistent with some aspects of the Moken identity, i.e., peacefulness and the avoidance of all disputes. In order to avoid the undesirable situations that occur during the ceremony, many Moken prefer to stay at home rather than being present. This means that they deny non-Moken identity markers and create a boundary between desirable and undesirable behaviour. They exclude themselves from the negative image of the spirit poles ceremony, i.e., a drunken party. Therefore, ceremony participation is overlooked and excluded from individual interest. Nonetheless, belief in ancestor spirits and paying homage to them are considered an important social identity marker of the Moken. Although they do not involve themselves in the ceremony, due to the reasons mentioned above, they are aware of an existence of the spirits and try to satisfy them.

#### **4. Hill People and Ethnic Boundaries**

For the ethnic groups in Pangmapha, aspects of culture such as language, costumes and traditional practices play important roles in identifying each particular group. Although inter-ethnic relationship entails cultural exchange, some core cultural practices are perceived as relevant for their livelihood and are continuously exercised within each group, particularly beliefs and related practices.

When it comes to the aspect of language, each hill people has their own words and type of slang; the inter-affiliation between the groups leads to the learning of each other's languages. In the Pangmapha district, where various ethnic groups exist, the Dai (or Shan) language is used to communicate between the different ethnic groups. Dai were the first group who had permanent settlements in this area long before any of the other groups, such as *Maelana* village which is more than 200 years old and the *Maihung* and *Mailun* village are no less than 190 and 160 years old<sup>44</sup>. The Dai have played roles in trading and administration, particularly when Pangmapha was integrated into the state administration. The Dai leaders are usually selected to be *kamnan*, district chairmen, and they receive respect from other ethnic groups. The Dai culture, for example, *khokhama*, asking for forgiveness, is employed by other groups to show their respect to the Dai leaders. Acceptance of the spoken language and of the practices of the Dai ceremonies implies that other ethnic groups express solidarity with the Dai.

Since state institutions have been established in these areas, particularly schools, the Thai language has played an increasing role in Pangmapha. The hill people have tried to learn Thai, mostly the northern dialect, because it is necessary for communication

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<sup>44</sup>Office of Primary Education, Maehongson province. 1997.

with the state authorities who work in the district office, hospital, public health centre and with outsiders such as traders and tourists. Even though they learn the national language of the mainstream culture, their ethnic group languages maintain their roles at the village level in order to communicate within their own ethnic groups. However, some young people are unwilling to speak their language, because it is regarded as old fashioned and something to be ashamed of, which is a result of the influence of the national language. It often happens with the youngsters who study in the city, where they have to study with other Thai students. The inability to speak Thai fluently leads to teasing from others; as a result, they ignore their own ethnic language. Nonetheless, when they are in their private circles, such as in their family, community or another close group, the ethnic group language is used for communication. Generally, most of the youth in Pangmapha speak their ethnic group language within their own group. Thai northern dialect or Dai (Shan) is used for interethnic contact. Moreover, media also play an important role in language. Their influence is not limited to the hill people but also on the entire country's population. Imitation of words or phrases usually occurs in the younger groups, where speaking thus is perceived as "modern".

Traditional costume is an obvious marker of members of an ethnic group and it implies inclusion and exclusion. This identity does not exist in the Moken society because they do not have such unique costumes. Although many hill people disregard wearing their traditional costume in daily life during special occasions, such as their New Year's celebration, most dress traditionally. Therefore, dressing traditionally depends on events. However, it also depends heavily on the level of awareness of each ethnic group, for instance the Lisu who are well-known for their willingness to adapt to change and the ability to maintain their ethnic identities at the same time. Most of them usually wear traditional clothing (at least when they are at home) because of social control within their village. One who does not wear Lisu attire will be criticized by relatives and neighbours "*being Lisu but act as if you are not Lisu because you do not dress like Lisu*". Furthermore, other ethnic groups, sometimes, dress in the traditional costume of a different ethnic group. For example, some black Lahu dress in red Lahu costume because the shorter blouse is more convenient when working in the field. Besides, traditional costume is utilized for an economic purpose in order to attract tourists. Though they occasionally dress in traditional style because of monetary benefit and pay no attention to the actual cultural meaning, at least their ethnicity is carried on.

Regarding beliefs and traditional practices, the hill people are not much different from the Moken. They believe in the super natural and worship to please spirits. The only apparent difference between the Moken and the hill people is that the Moken only have one important ceremony a year, the so-called *ne-en lobong*, while the hill people have many ceremonies per year and most of these ceremonies are connected to agriculture. Table 7 illustrates different annual celebrations of the Moken and the hill people.

Furthermore, ceremony illustrates social stratification in each ethnic group. In the Moken society, they emphasize equality and dignity, which can be observed in the ceremony process. The greatest difference from other ethnic groups is that Moken shamans can be both women and men and it is not an inherited position. It depends on the supernatural world in which the spirits will select their mediators and these people cannot deny being the next shamans. The Moken shamans are regarded as the ones who have duties to do some things for other villagers, such as find out causes of sickness and provide treatment, because they are selected by the ancestor spirits. The shamans have authority only when they are on duty, in other words, when they contact spirits or when the spirits inhabit their bodies, because at that moment they are legitimated by the superior power and, therefore, able to command ordinary people who will follow their orders without any doubt. However, when the spirits leave, the shamans become ordinary people and are treated as normal villagers. In former times, the shamans would receive special offerings such as turtle meat or other kind of fish and edible plants. This contribution projects worship to the spirits not the shaman. Offering food or other things to the spirits requires the assistance of the shaman as a mediator between the villagers and the spirits. Therefore, the shaman plays the role in order to convey the villagers' respect to the spirits. After the processes of worship, the offerings are offered to the shaman in order to acknowledge her/him. To give worship to the spirits, moreover, illustrates an affiliation between villagers, shamans, and spirits.

In contrast to the Moken, the shamans of the hill people are usually male and the position is inherited from father to son. For example, Lisu have *Nipha* to heal the sick. This position evidently illustrates that it is reserved merely for male because *ni* refers to spirits and *pha* is a man (a man who is able to communicate with spirits). In addition, the shamans are well respected by all villagers as role models because of their personal qualifications. *Kaelupha*, Lahu sheleh's shaman, is the most important person because he has all kinds of knowledge and abilities which are needed in the Lahu society, for instance the ability to practice all kinds of ceremonies, the ability to communicate with the highest spirit, give treatments to the sick, wisdom about herbal

medicine, a desirable behaviour and he is unbiased. Having various responsibilities in the village, the *Kaelupha* has less time for his family, the villagers, who, therefore, have to provide their labour to work in his field for 3 days a year or distribute to him 2 buckets of rice or 200 Baht in return for his work. Social stratification in highlander communities is based on tasks, such as ceremonies, governance, occupation (blacksmith), etc., which leads to interdependency and creates affiliation among group members. Clans and ancestors provide intense relationships among villagers such as in the Hmong and Lisu communities. Social affiliation of the hill people also derives from the need to exchange agricultural labour. For the Moken, although they live together as a village, they do not have such an intensive affiliation. Their high individuality, perhaps, derives from their social entity, i.e., hunting and gathering in which the personal abilities are more essential than external labour. However, it does not mean that they are extremely individualistic. Intensive relationships exist particularly in their families. Co-operation occurs when they feel comfortable to do so or if it is asked by their parents or parents-in-law. Although the Moken social unit is based on the nuclear family, in which family members are the centre, parents maintain roles in their children's decisions. An example of such a situation can be found in the case of a Moken man who quit his job with the APP to work for a tourism company to serve his mother-in-law's will.

### **5. *Satdeunsip* Ceremony and Ethnic Group Expression of the Moken**

*Satdeunsip*, an annual religious ceremony held by southern Thai Buddhists during the waning moon days of the tenth lunar month at the mainland, illustrates the relationship between ethnic groups, i.e., the Thai and the Moken, who have a different background and history. The reason why the Moken join the *Satdeunsip* can also be explained in different ways. Presenting themselves at the ceremony shows that they declare themselves in the public space without any shame. At this social event, they show their double identity. On the one hand, they regard themselves as members of Thai society which can be viewed from their expression when they ask for donation at the house door, "*peenong (relatives) arrive*". The term "*peenong*" illustrates that the Moken assume themselves to be descendants of the Thai. On the other hand, they also highlight their Moken-ness and geographical origin from the Surin Islands; "the real Moken only exist on the Surin Islands". In other words, they utilize their ethnic identity and the term "*peenong*" to gain advantages in terms of donations. This notion is perceived and reproduced by outsiders because they are willing to donate to the ones who claim to be Moken from Surin Islands because they believe that the Moken there are the poorest, hence, donations should be distributed to them.

However, parallel with announcing themselves in the public sphere, they accept being called beggars. There is a power relationship between donors and receivers in which the aspects of the ethnic majority and economy are usually taken into account. The donors who come to make merit at the temple are Thai while the receivers are Moken or others who are regarded as inferior. Being on the periphery, both in terms of residency and economic space, creates a stereotype of poor people who need help from the economically more successful people. This stereotype serves as logic to donate to the poor not only to help them but also to gain luck from donation. According to Buddhism, the donation is considered as good practice that will bring happiness to the donors in return.

Although *Satdeunsip* is similar to the Moken belief of making merit mainly to ancestor spirits, the Moken take part in this ceremony regardless of its actual meaning. The ceremony serves merely as a reason for the common annual travel from the Surin Islands to the mainland to enjoy themselves at the temple fair and to obtain additional income, as well as food and other materials like kitchen utensil and cloths.

Moreover, it emphasizes that everybody in the society is affected by capitalism. Demand for goods is induced when the Moken see them in the fair and the markets. Marketing strategies such as advertisements, special prices and giveaways accelerate their desire. Even though the Moken are quite isolated in terms of residence and (some) hardly even come to the mainland, they are affected by the media, particularly television and radio, which principally have very abundant advertisements.

## **6. Gender Roles in Moken Society**

Gender roles in the Moken society should be considered from the standpoint of their organization of social structure, which is based on cooperation between men and women. However, this co-operation should be regarded separately from group organization which is another issue. Since there are some preferences to join hands in some activities, therefore, co-operation in terms of teamwork depends on their experiences and what they perceive as advantages and disadvantages of working in a group (see Chapter IV 3.4.2).

The co-operation between the Moken women and men is not subject to power relations, which take social hierarchy and control into account. Moreover, their social structure of gathering and hunting also provides equality in terms of gender status and roles; both women and men cooperate in most activities. Although it is institutionalized that men take the responsibility to earn for their families, the women's abilities to gather and dive for sea products are not ignored by the men.

Instead, they regard that the women's work as just as important when it comes to supporting their families.

The Moken insist that there are no customary prohibitions concerning gender. In the household unit, they share all types of work, from taking care of children to gathering littoral food and diving for sea products. This illustrates that, in the Moken society, domestic and non-domestic work is not completely separated and that both women and men can take part.

Even though both women and men can do domestic and non-domestic work, gender roles exist in Moken society. Women play crucial roles both in the household environment and village ceremonies while men continue their roles as providers. The women play a dominant role in household economy because they manage the money earned by the men and control the expenditure of their families. It is an obligation that men have to take care of and earn for their families as they themselves have mentioned (see Chapter II 4.3.6 and Chapter IV 3.4.2).

Furthermore, the women's roles in the household setting can be viewed from the so-called "bride-price", money and gold ornaments, that is particularly offered to the mother-in-law while other non-monetary items, such as clothing and liquor, are provided for the father-in-law. After marriage, the man moves into the woman's family or if there are already too many members in the household, they build their own houses. Moreover, the woman's power is illustrated through their folktale about Queen Sibian who cursed her sister to be immersed in the sea.

At the community level, both women and men have equal opportunities to participate in every ceremony, particularly in the *ne-en lobong*, which is the most important ceremony for the Moken group. Women are not excluded from this ceremony; instead they play significant roles as shamans. Seven out of the eleven shamans are women and the most important shaman, who is regarded as a medium of their highest spirit, is also a woman. Being shaman in the Moken society is not inherited from the previous generation.

Gender equality in the Moken society credibly derives from gender socialization. The Moken's attitude towards human equality leads to non-discriminatory practices, i.e., both women and men are treated equally and none of them are excluded from household/village activities. This perception is handed down from generation to generation, illustrated in their daily lives. Therefore, non-discrimination becomes a custom that the Moken have grown accustomed to and continue to practice without question.

Despite their important roles both in the household and at the community level, women still have fewer roles in village governing/administration. Community leaders are usually men. Though women and men express their opinions openly within their community, men play the dominant role in interethnic communication. This derives from the male roles as community leaders; hence, they become village representatives. Moreover, it is also derived from the partnership between the Thai and themselves, particularly because the Thai officials, who mostly are just men, usually accept men as their partners. Nonetheless, many Moken women who have experience dealing with non-Moken members do not hesitate to negotiate with outsiders.

Although women play significant roles in the family, it is difficult to conclude that the Moken society is a matriarchal society in which women exercise political and/or social dominance (Colhoun eds. 2002: 300). Moreover, there is disagreement among anthropologists as to whether there have been any societies with a real matriarchal family system (Theodorson 1969: 149). However, in the Moken's customs women and men both play significant roles and are considered equal. It might be possible to conclude, that the Moken social system on the Surin Islands is family-centred in which women and men cooperate together in regards to most activities. Nevertheless, there is a degree of women/mother orientation.

Table: 7 Principal Annual Ceremonies of Some Ethnic Groups in Thailand

Ethnic Group	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Notes
Moken				Spirit poles ceremony									
Kayah (Bwe)	Water spirit ceremony			Village spirit ceremony					Field spirit ceremony				
Karen (Sgaw)		New Year ceremony and first blessing ceremony				Water spirit ceremony	Village spirit ceremony	Second blessing ceremony					
Lahu (Red)		New year ceremony			Offering pavilion to spirit for high yield						New rice ceremony		Abstain from work 2 days/ month according to waxing and waning moon
Lahu (Black)		New year ceremony and water spirit ceremony				Rice's soul blessing ceremony	Chase away the field's pest		New rice ceremony				Abstain from work, similar to Red Lahu
Dai (Shan)		Offer rice and food to monks	Offer 'yaku' sweet rice to monk and villagers, offer fuel wood to temple	Ordination	New year ceremony	Water ceremony	Village spirit ceremony	Offer cloths and flowers to monk	Go to temple every holy day	Make merit to the dead, Offer 1,000 candles to temple		New rice ceremony	
Lisu	First new year		Second new year						New corn ceremony				

Sources: Interview 2005 and modified from Santasombat 2001



## **7. Tourism and Cultural Commodity**

### **7.1 Why are such Areas Taken into Account for Tourism?**

Tourism, as well as development programmes, is viewed only positively in terms of income generation and economic growth. Many places, particularly the nature spots, are developed to serve tourism. The unique characteristics of each location are presented to the public in order to attract tourists. Fertile forest, white beach, fauna and flora diversities including ethnic groups, who are viewed as having exotic livelihood and cultures, are the main focus of tourist attraction in many places. Common government policy concerning tourism is to advertise such sites and make them become well known in order to attract more tourists in the expectation of generating higher income for the state. At the entrepreneurs' level, they focus on tourist satisfaction and income generation for their business. The communities that are visited, usually, have fewer roles in tourism management and development. However, for the past few decades, ecotourism has become well known because it emphasizes local roles and participation in tourism and natural resources management. The concepts of ecotourism are well acknowledged among the tourism industry and the magic word "ecotourism" is used to highlight tour programmes.

### **7.2 Moken and Tourism**

The ecotourism of the Surin Islands is under state control through the rules and regulations of the marine national park. The SIMNP is isolated from the mainland and the definite time for visiting is defined according to the weather. Apart from this time, tourists are not allowed to visit the islands between 16 May - 14 November because of safety reasons (southwest monsoon- strong wind and rough sea). Consequently, during this time, nature can restore itself from the intensive utilization.

Although the state is the main organizer, through the park authority, entrepreneurs can run their businesses under the national park rules. For example, one can provide private ferryboats and package tours if one pays a fee for the park. The park provides accommodation (camping sites and bungalows), restaurants, and island/sea related activities (snorkelling, natural trail, canoeing-kayaking, visits to the Moken village). All visitors are obliged to follow all regulations, particularly the aspect of natural resource conservation. The SIMNP tourism policies derive from central policies but the park defines its own annual plan. This plan mainly focuses on construction to serve the needs of tourists.

According to the park leaflet, the main tourist attractions and activities revolve mainly around snorkelling and diving. Nevertheless, there are two lines available for the Moken story “...small populations of Morgan Sea gypsies who still practice their own traditions and culture...are culturally interesting and is a local attraction worth visiting”. This view illustrates that the Moken are only mentioned and given any importance because they are considered an attraction. Visiting their village is under close observation from the park. There are 2 possibilities for visiting the Moken village, join the boat trip provided by the park or with a package tour from one of the tourism companies. However, tourists who travel by private boat usually stop over at the Moken village without informing the park of their visit. In actuality, visiting the Moken village is not that complicated a matter. The only restriction is that the tourists are not allowed to stay over-night in the village for safety reasons. The Moken, in contrast to the tourism companies, are not allowed to take part in the tourism. They are only wage labourers, supervised by the park authority. Although they are famous for being experts of the sea, they cannot run any tourism-related business according to their lack of authority and management skills. Nonetheless, the APP initiated the “Morgan Tour”, as mentioned previously, which uses the logic of ecotourism discourse and is subject to community management.

The tourists who visit the Moken village can be divided into 2 groups. The first group consists of those who follow a program set by the park or by a tourism company. They enjoy their time in the village, taking photos and buying handicrafts before leaving the village. They have no idea about the Moken; they just go there and walk around. The other category of tourists are the ones who have some information about the Moken and go to the village to prove their beliefs. One reason to visit the Moken village was “we go to see the Morgan because they are primitive people and have simple life”. However, many tourists do not pay enough attention to visit the Moken village. Some said that “we don’t like to go there because it looks like a zoo”. Most of the tourists prefer spending their time swimming and snorkelling rather than visiting the village. “The sea is much more interesting, we don’t see any necessity to go to see the Morgan”, as explained by some tourists.

The tourists’ ideas after visiting the Moken village fall into 5 categories. The first, the ones who have visited the Moken village several times over the years, notice the extreme change to the Moken livelihood and their life style becomes more or less similar to that of the city people. In contrast, the tourists who visit the Moken village for the first time feel that the Moken life is unique, simple and peaceful; hence, they hope that this life style will be maintained forever. The third idea that comes from tourists is that the Moken are part of the Surin Islands. They are a symbol of these

islands. Therefore, the Moken should be allowed to continue living on the Surin Islands. Another opinion is that the tourists regard themselves as outsiders who are interfering with the primitive life of the Moken. Finally, some tourists feel dissatisfied during the visit to the village because it is dirty and does not have any proper (clean) facilities for them to use.

Although the Moken play few roles in state tourism policy and are defined to be one of the tourist attractions, they gain some advantages from the tourism. Some benefits are distributed to the Moken via employment. Many Moken men are employed as boatmen and garbage collectors, while women work as cleaners. Though not everyone is employed to work with the park, more than 50 percent of the total households earn their living from the SIMNP and some of them work with the tourism companies as boatmen. Even though they are employed only in the dry season, approximately 7 months (Nov.-May), which is considered high tourist season, they are willing to continue to work for the park or the company in the next season. The Moken who are not employed or are not willing to be employed make use of being visited by presenting their exotic life through their livelihood and handicrafts in order to share in the benefits of the tourism. Their everyday life becomes public, i.e., the tourists can visit and observe their activities. Their livelihood is viewed as primitive, strange, and totally different from city life. Thence, they maintain some aspects of their primitive life for their survival in the capitalist society. The apparent example is that after the Tsunami in 2004 they chose to maintain their house styles and use natural material, i.e., palm leaves instead of carved tiles which would be provided by the authorities. Therefore, the style of houses and materials used express authentic Moken-ness. Although some Moken want to have more permanent houses with carved tiles, other Moken who foresee an advantage in maintaining a natural look for the houses try to convince them otherwise. They explained that *“we should maintain our house style with palm leaf roofs and walls because it represents our Morgan-ness. If the houses are in other styles and without palm leaf roofs, our village will not be attractive any more and tourists will not come to see our Morgan village, then we cannot sell our handicrafts”*. From the Moken viewpoint, it illustrates that their cultural objects (houses) together with their way of life will serve the need of the tourists who want to see something exotic, authentic and original. Although producing handicrafts for sale was initiated by the park and APP, their acceptance by the Moken as such illustrates that they agree to make use of their identity. Therefore, their identity markers are commoditized, i.e., some handicrafts and appliances mainly used in the past are reproduced for sale. Model boats, carved from hard wood, bandboxes and mats woven from palm leaves become unique products that are interesting to the tourists. Although the details of these handicrafts are different, they contain similar hidden

meanings, i.e., all of these products have been used in their everyday life when they lived on the boat. Therefore, these handicrafts and the Moken's past experiences represent each other. In other words, the handicrafts remind them of their past and these past experiences are presented again in the form of the products. This handiwork plays roles not only in terms of money generation but they also pass the message to the new generation who never experienced life on the boat. According to the Moken handicrafts relate to their past, have unique patterns and are no mass products therefore owning these products gives a feeling of privilege. The reasons why the tourists buy the Moken products fall into 2 categories. Firstly, it illustrates the dominant economic power of the tourists over the Moken. Therefore, they want to help the Moken who are inferior by buying their handicrafts. Secondly, it is a symbolic consumption in which the tourists remember their pleasant experiences and to insist that they have really visited the Moken village through related articles. This symbolic consumption is also supported by the park authority, tourism companies, and related agencies, for example, the Moken are allowed to sell their handicrafts at the park station and even the guides from the tourism companies encourage their customers to buy the handicrafts by emphasising that "*come to the Morgan village without buying their handicrafts means you have not yet arrived at their village*". Moreover, the APP distributes colorant to the Moken to dye pandanus leaves. Applying colour to their products is integration between traditional products and market trends in order to diversify the products and provide the tourists more choices which entails more selling opportunities because there is an in-group competition to gain the major share from the sale. However, many tourists prefer the natural colour handicrafts because they give a feeling of purity, primitivity and authenticity.

Where their annual ceremony, *ne-en lobong*, is concerned, it is still maintained for their group which only takes place during the full moon day of the fifth lunar month. They insist that this ceremony is organized mainly for the Moken people; if they do not make worship to their ancestor spirits they will suffer from sickness or misadventure. Although outsiders or tourists are not prohibited to observe or join in their ceremony, the opportunity to see it is quite difficult. The proper date is set very shortly before the ceremony takes place. The ceremony date can be any day within the period of the waxing moon in the fifth lunar month. To organize the ceremony exactly on the full moon day may lead to inconvenience because there will be abundance of tourists. Resulting from the Thai New Year holiday, many tourists spend their holiday on the SIMNP. Changing the ceremony date is advised by the APP coordinator who has studied the Moken for more than 10 years and is the main supporter in providing the necessary offerings (chicken, coconut, flour, liquor) used in the ceremony. It is noticeable that the Moken are very dependent on outsiders. Their *ne-en lobong* is an

important annual ceremony but the offerings used in the ceremony are asked from others.

Their acceptance of changing the ceremony date shows that they want to maintain this ceremony only for the members of their ethnic group and also want to exclude others from their private sphere. Even though the tourists are important as generators of income, they (the tourists) do not belong to “our” group (Moken). Besides, this ceremony is not organized beyond the period of the waxing moon in the fifth lunar month. It is not performed to satisfy the tourists. Therefore, this ceremony maintains its cultural meaning and is not yet practiced for economic reasons.

Tourism not only generates income for the Moken but also brings about change in their society. Formerly, they depended heavily on natural resources and their activities were based on a hunting and gathering livelihood system. Their economy, at that time, related to a patronage system in which the traders were their patrons who provided them all necessities. The Moken, in return, exchanged their products, gathered from the sea, with their patrons. Therefore, their mutual relationship is based on common benefit. Since tourism has spread into their community, their patrons have changed from the traders to the park authority, who has different interests. Thence, their relationship is no longer based on common benefit. A new relationship form of employer and labourer was introduced into their society. However, the park authority is expected to act as patron and support the Moken.

Consumption patterns have also changed; the park authority, tourists, and other outsiders are blamed for introducing a new life style. They are criticized as the ones who have brought a negative impact to the Moken society, particularly when it comes to consumerism and materialism. Many goods are needed but because of lack of money, the Moken find that they can get what they want by asking the tourists/visitors directly and they often succeed. Then, they keep begging again and again. This becomes a new characteristic, a huge change from a shy people to a fearless one who dares to beg from visitors. The tourists are viewed as better off; therefore, they are expected to provide something to the Moken.

### 7.3 Hill People and Tourism

For the tourism in Pangmapha, there are 2 main attractions; natural resources and ethnic groups. The first one focuses on forest fertility including fauna, flora and natural attractions such as caves and waterfalls while the latter emphasizes more the ethnic groups' cultures. Visiting Pangmapha area can, to some extent, be freely done, i.e., it is a public space where everyone can generously access without time limits (opening and closing time) as in some marine national parks such as the SIMNP. Access to attraction sites of this region does not depend much on state policies; it rather relies on topography and weather conditions. For example, it might be inaccessible in the rainy season because of damaged roads.

Policies concerning tourism development in this area are viewed as less clear cut, particularly with regard to the hill people who are the target of sightseeing. The distribution of benefits to these people is still vague. Private companies generally, dominate the tourism industry in this area and therefore, share the most benefit. At the village level, at the attraction sites, profits go to a few households who run related activities such as shops, restaurants, guesthouses (or home stay in which the house owners have closed contracts with the tour operators).

Since ecotourism is trendy, communities/ethnic groups who are the targets of sightseeing gradually play a management role. Group management is the prominent role to do with ecotourism. For example, the villagers of *Tamlod* village in Pangmapha district grouped together in order to manage the attraction site *Tamlod*, the cave. It is organized mainly to distribute benefit earnings from the cave to the *Tamlod* villagers and exclude non-village members from utilizing their resources. Although a similar management has not taken place in other areas of the Pangmapha district, many communities are aware of ecotourism management by themselves and try to define regulations, which mostly relate to ecotourism particularly to natural resources preservation and income distribution.

Unique features of the mountainous ethnic groups are used in order to attract the tourists and to have market share from the ecotourism business. Their ethnic identities become cultural commodities because they are viewed as something exotic and are interesting for outsiders. In the case of Pangmapha, it was once a very remote area and difficult to access, however, it has been well known since state administration was set up in the area in 1974 including the presence of the collaboration project (Thai-German Highland Development Programmes, TGHDP) and the discovery of

*Tam peeman*<sup>45</sup>, the cave, in 1976. Mountain, forest, and various ethnic groups are distinctive characteristics of this area, which attracts numerous visitors.

Because of its wealth of natural resources and various ethnic groups, Pangmapha became well-known and is continually visited by many tourists. These tourists can be categorized into 2 groups: The ones who make use of tourism companies and those who travel independently to this area (backpackers). The tourists in the first group can select from a variety of tour programmes. The guided tours include visits to *Tamlod*, a famous cave in Pangmapha, to some hill people villages, as well as further travels to Maehongson or Chiangmai. They can also stay overnight in the villages or in the guesthouses. The second group of tourists are similar to the first group in terms of travelling routes. However, most of them who stay overnight in Pangmapha usually prefer to stay in the guesthouses along the main road. The main purpose for tourists (particularly the Thais) visiting Pangmapha is to see the caves, which are as abundant as expressed in Pangmapha's slogan "*area of Peeman and hundred caves*". Besides, visiting the hill people villages and trekking through the highland are other possible activities in this area. Since tourists intensively visit many villages both directly and indirectly, many villagers are dissatisfied with tourists. The Israeli tourists are the ones blamed most for disturbing the villagers' lives and destroying the villagers' properties. The villagers pointed out that "*these Israelis come in groups with jeeps, sometimes about 20 jeeps. Their guides tell us that the Israelis just finished their military services and they like to drive around. We don't like them very much because they drive very fast through our village and sometime they ran over our chickens. We are afraid that they would run over our kids. See, our road is destroyed by them*". This guided tour is offered by a tourism company based in Chiangmai and the Israelis are their main customers. The villages, which this group passes by, mostly do not get any benefit from this sort of tourism. Only the restaurants in some villages, such as Tamlod, which have close contact with the tour-guides can earn from preparing and serving food to these tourists.

In Pangmapha, generally, there are two main groups gaining advantage from tourism. Local people, who stay along the main road, usually benefit most from their groceries

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<sup>45</sup> Peeman is the local name referring to the human beings who inhabited the caves in the ancient time. Moreover, several prehistoric sites are known within the Pangmapha area. The most famous one is the Spirit Cave, discovered by Chester Gorman in the mid 1960s, and was occupied from about 9000 till 5500 BC by Hoabinhian hunters and gatherers. Two other significant sites nearby are the Banyan Valley Cave and the Steep Cliff Cave. Much more recent are the coffin caves like Tham Lod. [Online] Available: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amphoe\\_Pangmapha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amphoe_Pangmapha). Access date: November 20, 2007.

or food stalls as well as gas stations. Other villagers who are involved in related tourism activities such as porters, handicraft producers, and home stay/guesthouse owners also benefit from tourism. Non-local people who mostly run guesthouses alongside with selling handicrafts and providing trekking service are supposed to earn the highest share from tourism because they offer various activities and are also business partners with tourism companies. Moreover, they also have good relationship with the local villagers. When it comes to trekking activities, the tourists will be taken to particular villages and stay there over night in the house of their partners. The owners of the guesthouses are mostly Thai women married to foreigners. Many of them decided to run the business after they had visited Pangmapha as tourists themselves.

Although the local villagers seem to benefit less from tourism than the other groups, they find possible channels to get some shares from this new situation. Therefore, ethnic identities are employed to present themselves in the context of tourism. For example, ecology, way of life and handicrafts are the main focuses of the Karen at *Muangpam* village. The main activities are riding elephants through the forest, rafting and presenting their rotation fields. However, only some households can earn from this tourism. Moreover, other villagers criticize the riding of elephants because the elephants damage plants. The elephants in *Muangpam* village do not belong to the villagers, they are rented from Maesarieng district (the west of Maehongson).

The Lahu at *Bokrai*, *Lukhawlam* and *Jabo* set up the stalls in front of the entrance to their village to sell non-timber forest products and their cultivated vegetables to the travellers. Handicraft products are sold both in the villages and at the stalls.

For the Lisu, some of them (particularly men) earn their income as guides for trekking tours while many women participate in selling handicrafts such as bags, hats and cases for glasses and mobile phones. These products are typically sold at the viewpoints where the tourists stop to take photos.

Ethnic expression of the hill people in Pangmapha, in the context of tourism, is dynamic, depending on situations and benefits. Moreover, ethnic identities both from within and outside the groups are commoditized. Many hill people earn from souvenirs which, previously, were related to their actual identities and were household production. Resulting from competition both within the same ethnic group and between others who produce/sell similar products, other features of different ethnic groups, such as embroidery and pattern, are mixed and used to produce various products to serve the different needs of the tourists. Using several ethnic identities to produce various artefacts with the purpose of gaining economic share implies that an



overlapping of ethnic identities is taking place and their ethnic boundaries become vague. Moreover, the production is not limited only in the household, where each ethnic group tries to create and improve designs and quality continually, both the ready produced and materials are imported from outside to be sold in the area. A vivid example is the case of Lisu and Lahu who produce similar products and duplicate each other's goods. Some of them buy several handicrafts from nearby provinces such as Chiangmai, Chiangrai and Maehongson to sell to the tourists who stop over at Pangmapha.

Another pattern of cultural commoditization that results from tourism is ritual performance. It is exhibited particularly for the tourists, regardless of cultural meaning and whether it is the proper time. In case of the *Borkrai* village, for instance, *Jakue*, a typical Lahu dance around a fire, is often arranged to entertain the tourists. The commoditization of culture, additionally, is largely practiced not only in Pangmapha but in other places as well. Some Akha villages perform the swing ceremony for the tourists. This ceremony, generally, is held only during the New Year. Moreover, some hill people are paid by tourism companies to wear their traditional costume to satisfy tourists, who usually expect to see authenticity. Therefore, to present their ethnic identities in the tourism context is merely for economic reasons. Tourism companies and government agencies also play a large role in persuading hill people to perform their traditional practices and the hill people are usually convinced because they are promised to receive a profit in return. In other words, cultures are defined in monetary terms because they are perceived as commodities, which can be sold and generate income. Therefore, the cultures in the sense of goods are irrelevant to their actual value and meaning.

Though tourism plays a crucial role and becomes part of the ethnic groups, it is still considered as the "other". The boundary between tourists and local people is maintained. In other words, the locals perceive that "they" (tourists) come to see "us" (Moken/hill people). As well as the tourists, they also have a boundary, i.e., "we" (tourists) go to see "them" (Moken/hill people) because "we" want to know how "they" are.

Moreover, tourism, generally, is blamed for its negative impacts on ethnic groups. It is argued that many village members follow what they have seen from tourists and city inhabitants; this leads to change in their livelihood patterns. For instance, consumption patterns are changed from subsistence to material orientation. Some traditional practices are diminished because they are viewed as outdated, particularly the traditional costumes and language. Change from labour exchange systems to wage

labour also occurs. Therefore, tourists are viewed as those who distort or devalue the ethnic groups' culture. Nonetheless, this view is too naïve because the ethnic groups themselves are not static, instead they are dynamic and changes in their society have happened continually. Hence, it depends on ethnic group members how they are willing to present themselves in society to cope with tourism. Furthermore, identities are constructed thence they can be changed all the time in order to deal with new situations and to better serve in new circumstances.

In conclusion, both the Moken and the hill people do not benefit much from tourism. The money from tourism usually falls into the hands of tourism companies who utilize ethnic identities as tools to attract tourists to use their services. The Moken and the hill people are not considered stakeholders in the process of defining the tourism policies and plans. Thus, impacts of tourism on these people are always ignored by the policy makers. Their status remains “the people who are visited and value added objects”. Nevertheless, an emergence of tourism in these areas leads to awareness in the society. At least, the majority perceives that there are other ethnic groups existing within the Thai territory. This leads to support for the rights of the indigenous people to further enable them to inhabit such areas. This is obvious in the Moken community on the Surin Islands who connect the aspect of spaces and Moken-ness together and use it to negotiate with the state in order to maintain their traditional rights to inhabit the Surin Islands. For the hill people, they applied the concept of “community based tourism” to gain rights over resources management by the community members through group establishment.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Integration into the Thai state based on citizenship, has ambivalent effects on the minorities. Because the Thai state follows a policy of regulating access and use of natural resources, on which the livelihoods of all minorities strongly depend, integration into the state, expressed by citizenship, affects their basic livelihood strategies and limits opportunities. At the same time, citizenship provides the minorities with new opportunities, outside of their former everyday life. Taking the Moken as example, their system of hunting-gathering is strongly limited due to prohibitions, such as those with regards to the collection of sea snails. Furthermore, their livelihood depends on mobility, in this case crossing state borders, which is limited by citizenship. Nonetheless, new opportunities through tourism (e.g. employment) and the state administration (e.g. Thai nationality) are provided.

This ambivalence is obvious for the hill people as well. Their practices of shifting cultivation and opium production as extension of subsistence production have been forbidden. In addition, their access to space to be used for agriculture was limited by the establishment of wildlife sanctuaries. But citizenship provides a level of legal security, including security of property titles. What is probably even more important, citizenship allows them to participate in the local administration particularly the TAO, which partly provides income sources, but provides relative administrative security and autonomy.

This ambivalence is itself a result of negotiation processes in which besides the administration and the minorities other actors like development programmes, disaster relieve etc. are involved. On the one hand, these negotiations are formalized, namely if external organizations are involved, in the TAO, or through a public sphere where representatives of the minorities are engaged. This is well established among the hill people, who have, since the eighties, been affected by administrative policies and development projects (Korff et al. 2006). For the Moken no own representative organizations have evolved so far. On the other hand, the negotiations are part of everyday life strategies described by Scott (1986) as “weapons of the weak” or as “off stage” resistance. Because the Moken, unlike the hill people, lack formal organization for self-representation of interests these weapons of the weak are even more relevant.

One crucial aspect in these negotiations is access to space as base for their livelihood because both groups are strongly affected by the establishment of national parks/wildlife sanctuaries, which endanger their access to space. Here we have an

important difference though. For the hill people, land is needed not only for residence but also for subsistence production and for generating an income. Since land relates to well-being, it becomes a crucial factor for the hill people to maintain their status. Owning more pieces of land implies being better off. For the Moken the land was not relevant for their everyday life; they lived on their boats and collected food in the sea. It played a role merely as a temporary dwelling place, site for the annual reunions and graveyards. Their perspective on the land changed when the state applied the concept of boundaries as well as the concept of ecological conservation. Only since their mobility had been prohibited, land became fundamental for their everyday life, but still primarily only for residence.

This difference in the relevance of land as a base for everyday life is well expressed with regards to negotiations over property rights and land deeds. The Moken, so far, have not raised this issues at all. In contrast, for the hill people in Pangmapha, ownership of land, particularly a land deed, is demanded in order to ensure their right of access and investments. However, inhabiting wildlife sanctuaries, which were defined as such later by the state, limits the possibility of legal ownership. The establishment of these “sacred spaces” of the state, therefore, becomes a threat to the hill people’s traditional rights over the land.

Since citizenship plays a crucial role as fundamental criterion to gain other rights of being a legal citizen, it is relevant for making a claim over the land. Therefore, the hill people demand the citizenship in order to ensure their agricultural based livelihood. For the Moken citizenship seems less important than ethnic identity in their negotiation with the state over the land of the Surin Islands. While the hill people strongly demand citizenship, the Moken perceive it even as disadvantageous. They want to continue practices, such as collecting sea snails, which are prohibited by Thai laws. Not having citizenship, they argue, prevents them from having to follow the laws and regulations. They simply pretend not to know anything about the regulations and restrictions. They worry that if they have Thai citizenship, they will not be able to refer to their ignorance anymore. From this point of view Thai citizenship becomes an ambivalent aspect for the Moken. On the one hand, it is expected to provide more opportunities. On the other hand, it also limits their traditional pattern of life and of avoiding state regulations.

The issue of citizenship is part of a larger context concerning cultural recognition of the minorities by the Thais. The hill people want to be accepted as Thai and try not the least through their organizations, to establish a positive image instead of being seen as destroyers of the environment, drug producers, uneducated etc. Interestingly,

this attempt to be seen as Thai is accompanied by the demand for recognition of cultural differences. This might be due to the fact that for the hill people it is important too to distinguish themselves from other minorities within the same region.

In the case of the Moken this interest to establish a positive image is far less pronounced. This is possibly the case because they are not seen as a threat as the hill people, but only as stupid and primitive (what facilitates avoidance of regulations). Hence, they have less pressure to highlight a positive image. The Moken want to be recognized as Moken and Thai together. Because being recognized as Thai is expected to reduce discrimination by the majority and to provide equal rights. At the same time, they also want to be seen as Moken, because they want to maintain their customary rights and exceptional treatment. This can be observed from that they do not attempt to obliterate the stereotypes of being poor and stupid people and not having any ideas about laws and regulations. They accept these stereotypes in order to benefit from exceptions, such as not being arrested when collecting sea snails illegally, or being able to use the ferryboats to the mainland for free as well as hospital services.

Additionally, development projects also play a central role in providing knowledge on citizenship as well as on cultural awareness. Most of the development projects/programmes launched in the Moken village emphasize assistance in terms of material assistance and donation, and not capacity building (such as providing knowledge on citizenship or group cooperation) or cultural awareness. Therefore, the Moken are accustomed to receive something from donors and expect to gain direct benefits (e.g. money, rice, etc.). Self-organization in order to negotiate with the state is not a motivation of the Moken for group co-operation. Instead, the members of the group are selected by the development/research projects to fulfil their specific objectives. The Moken themselves respond actively to these projects of external organizations due to the promised income and other benefits they would receive from their participation. The objectives as formulated by the donors are neither known nor understood. Nevertheless, it represents interdependencies between the needs and interests of the Moken striving to make a living by attempting to meet their economic and social necessities as well as responding to new opportunities.

In contrast, the projects launched in the communities of the hill people, mostly highlight human capital. The hill people are provided both, knowledge and material assistance. One such capacity provided by the development projects is the ability of self-organization. This self-organization is based on a need to solve problems of their common interests, for example, to handle conflicts over natural resources both

between hill people themselves and between hill people and the state. Furthermore, to formalize their self-organization, the organizational structure of the state administrative system is adopted in which responsibilities of the members are clearly defined. The hill people own organizations together with support from development projects of external organizations such as NGOs create not only collective bargaining power to negotiate with the state, but they also widen their livelihood possibilities. Moreover, affiliations with other organizations and networks are part of the livelihood strategies of the hill people, who share common interests and needs.

Besides from being granted ownership over their land, the hill people in Pangmapha see other advantages from Thai citizenship. The decentralized administrative structures like the TAO open new opportunities for them to participate in local affairs. Those who are Thai citizens can, through elections, become village representatives of the TAO and thus, play a part in local administration. From this decentralization policy the hill people are able to use the administrative channel as means to bargain with the state, because the central power, in terms of decision-making and resource allocation, is devolved to the local people. Since a membership in the TAO depends on being elected, a form of social cohesion is necessary. At the village level, in villages which are inhabited by the same ethnic group, usually ethnic cohesion is less important than the cohesion within the sub-groups. Each sub-group, such as clans and lineages usually support their own representative. Here, the aspect of cultural identity and distinction plays a central role for enhancing social cohesion. However, for the TAO chairman election at the district level, the degree of cohesion within the same ethnic group or ethnic consciousness plays a dominant role. In other words, in the village the villagers vote for their relatives and in the district, they vote for members of their own ethnic group.

The Moken are unable to negotiate with the state through the TAO due to their lack of citizenship and education, which are necessary qualifications. Although some of them were granted Thai citizenship and are literate, they do not pay attention to the local administration. Spending time to earn a living is more relevant to them than to participate in the TAO. Though the Moken do not express their social cohesion through self-organization and a membership in TAO as happen in the hill people communities, they are united by their ethnic identities, which provide a feeling of “us”. These ethnic group identities also play a dominant role in bargaining with the state in order to maintain their traditional livelihood system. Even though they are provided employment and Thai citizenship, their mobility is prohibited. The most obvious change is that their livelihood system shifted from nomadic to sedentary life. To cope with the new situation, their identities are redefined. The *kabang*, their

traditional boat, which was an important ethnic marker, is no longer regarded as part of their Moken-ness since travelling by *kabang* is not relevant for their everyday life. The new identity of being “the people of the Surin Islands” emerges from adapting to the new circumstance of permanent settlement on these islands. This new identity is understood to secure their access to the islands and surrounding natural resources since these geographical spaces become relevant for their everyday life.

Since restrictions on mobility affects their custom, besides language, gathering sea snails is the only activity underlining their Moken-ness and their traditional life. In other words, this activity plays a role as linkage between the past and the present. Therefore, by continuing to collect sea snails their accustomed practice is maintained. This institutionalized practice will be continued in the future, because the new generation also accepts it.

Interestingly the *ne-en lobong*, spirit poles ceremony, which is most relevant as claim for space, is not an element for the definition of Moken-ness. One reason given is that too many quarrels and fights occurred during this ritual. These behaviours contravene their self-concept of peace-loving and conflict-avoiding people. Even though the *lobong* is not taken to define the Moken-ness, it is important to identify their geographical territories in terms of pioneer groups who first entered the islands. Moreover, it indicates that the identities of the Moken are not fixed. They are rather fluid and adaptable to the changing conditions. Though the Moken do not make use of the *kabang* and *lobong* in defining their Moken-ness, the state uses both of them in the context of tourism in order to attract tourists.

Recognition of culture of the Moken and the hill people connects to the Thai state. On the one hand, they appreciate their identities and try to maintain them in order to illustrate their distinctiveness. On the other hand, some identities are modified with the intention of being included in the Thai nation state.

The strategies selected to negotiate with the state and other groups are the decisions made by the Moken and the hill people themselves. Aspects selected for bargaining are determined by their degrees of support, i.e., provide more possibilities to convince the state or other groups to accept what the Moken or the hill people claim for. The aims of their negotiation are to ease their livelihoods through risks reduction as well as the diversification of opportunities. Moreover, external influences such as policies, economy, the role of related agencies from both government and non-government agencies also play a role in defining which aspects should be applied in order to succeed in the negotiation.

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**Figure 1: Pangmapha Sub-District and Surin Islands**

Source: Thailand Administrative Divisions

[http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle\\_east\\_and\\_asia/thailand\\_admin\\_2005.pdf](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/thailand_admin_2005.pdf);modified

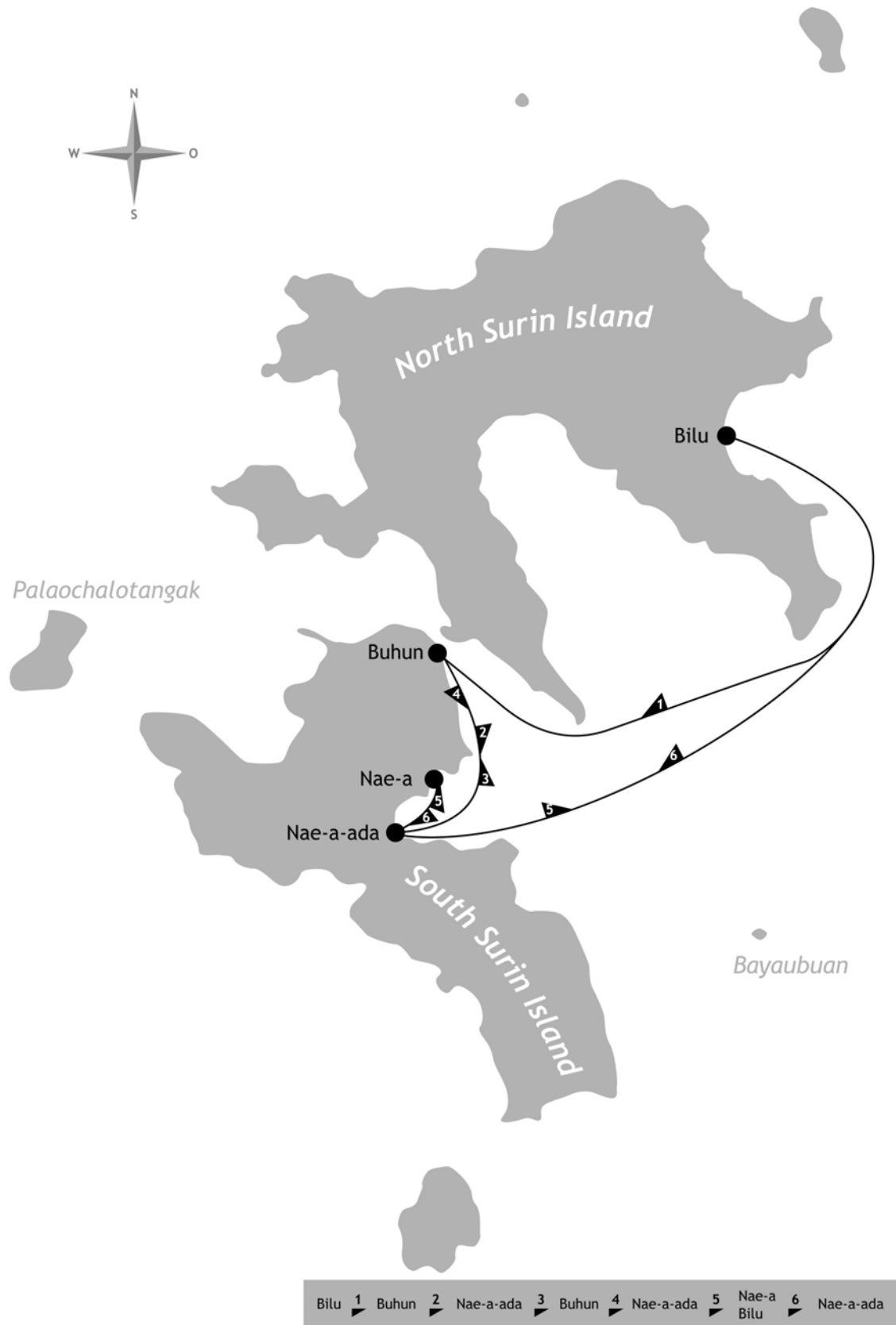
APPENDIX



**Figure 2: The Surin Islands (Selected Places) in Moken Language**

Source: Modified from APP, Design: Nawichai, Cartography: Einzenberger, Hulan





**Figure 3: The Movement of the Moken around the Surin Islands**

Source: Interview 2006, Design: Nawichai, Cartography: Einzenberger, Hulan

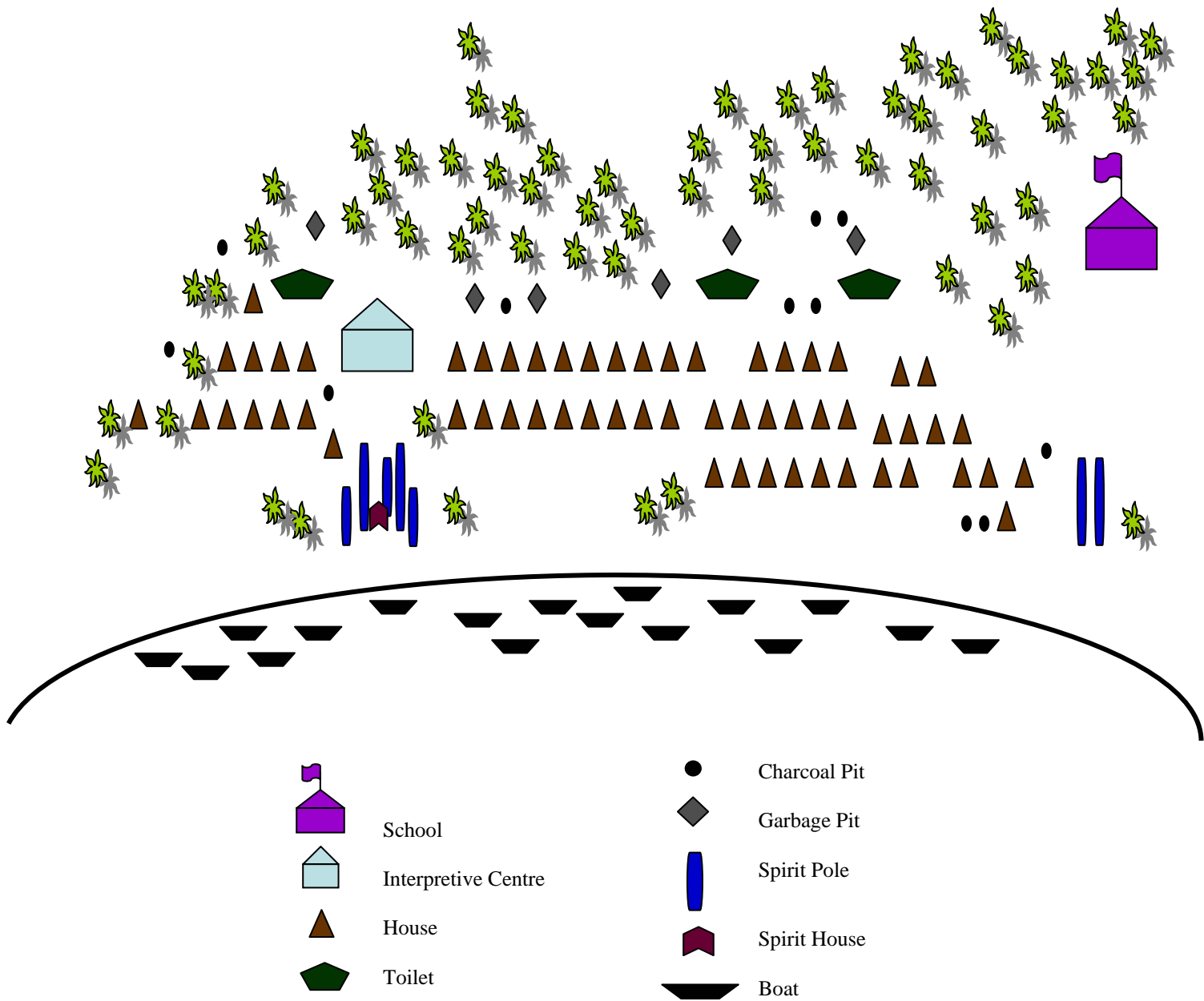
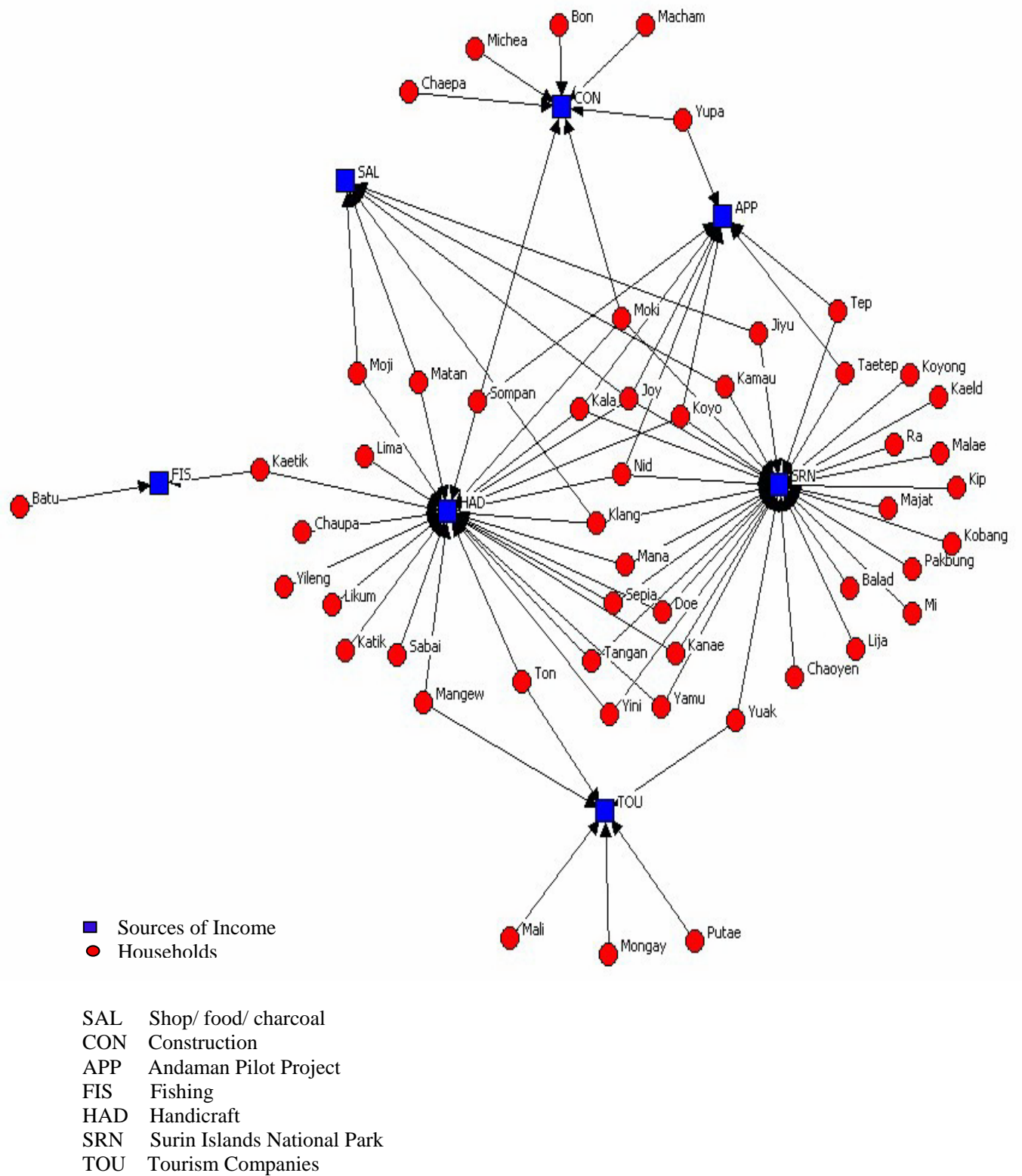


Figure 4: The Moken Village on the South Surin Island (*Ao Bonyai*)



**Figure 5: The Moken Families and their Sources of Income in the Dry Season**

## **Eidesstattliche Erklärung**

1. Die vorliegende Arbeit wurde selbständig angefertigt. Es wurden außer den im Schriftenverzeichnis sowie den Anmerkungen genannten Hilfsmitteln keine weiteren benützt und die Herkunft der Stellen, die wörtlich oder sinngemäß aus anderen Werken übernommen sind, wurden bezeichnet.
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