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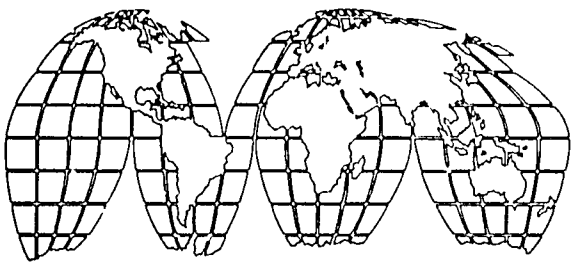

The Development of Civil Society in Thailand:
Donor Approaches and Issues

June 1994

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THAILAND

DONOR APPROACHES AND ISSUES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the past decade civil society has become a more active participant in the Thai polity, challenging in effect traditional notions of state dominance and power. Through its peak associations, the business sector has been in the forefront of demanding greater participation in the economic policy arena. Other elements of civil society, or what is known as the NGO sector are in an emergent condition and lag far behind the business sector in organizational strength and influence.

While relatively underdeveloped, NGOs in the non-business sector have played a crucial role in promoting the pro-democracy movement. Most importantly, however, the growth of civil society has been most strengthened through the capacity of NGOs to coalesce around and champion environmental issues. Success in this area can be attributed to improved NGO skills in networking, coalition-building and public relations. However, further growth of the NGO sector is constrained by skill and organizational deficiencies in the areas of advocacy, media production, strategic planning and fund raising.

For the past decade USAID and other donors have been the primary source of financial support for many NGOs who have assumed important advocacy roles. USAID supported the growth of business associations and continues funding for labor union development and environmental NGOs. However, USAID funding will soon terminate in Thailand, and other donors are reducing their presence as well.

Thailand has yet to put in place the policy, regulatory and institutional structures necessary to foster the growth of civil society. In particular, there is an absence of grant-making mechanisms to support public interest NGOs, most of which are quite small and lack the means to finance their own fund-raising. The Asia Foundation recently began to address some issues of macro-structural reform in the civil society sector, and USAID initiated an effort in this direction which is beginning to yield some incipient signs of progress. However, this activity will soon come to an end, thereby falling short of achieving a return on this investment.

In summary, civil society is emerging in an uneven and problematic fashion in Thailand. The business sector is well-organized in pressuring government to be more responsive and efficient in serving the needs of economic growth. Other sectors of civil society, particularly those NGOs which have an activist, public interest and advocacy orientation are for the most part still in the early stages of development and have yet to develop strong sectoral linkages with the business sector. In the end, with democratic institutions still weak and fragile, civil society will have to carry the load in strengthening these institutions and advancing the cause of good governance.

The following policy propositions emerge from the Thai study.

- USAID needs to further clarify the grounds for country graduation in order to not let robust economic performance on economic indicators supersede or overshadow much less promising performance on the political front.

- In the sequencing of investment strategies greater attention needs to be focussed on building intermediary institutions to mobilize funding for the civil society sector.

- Civil society strategies should be country tailored to build on issues which emanate from within a particular society and eschew approaches which support uniform blueprint strategies.

- There could be ample multiplier effects from incorporating civil society strategies as part of other sectoral investments.

- More regional networking may be a means for more advanced sectors within particular countries to assist their neighbor counterparts.

- USAID assistance to business associations demonstrates the value of building constituencies in support of policy reform agendas.

- USAID should place greater emphasis on strategic as opposed to input/output evaluations of democracy programs.

PREFACE

A longstanding tenet of USAID programs is that people ought to be empowered to participate and voice their preferences in the development process. In the past, this principle was applied primarily in social and economic programs, but in recent years it has assumed more primacy in the political sector where USAID and other donors are supporting a wide range of programs in democracy and governance. The strengthening of civil society is emerging as one of the core ingredients of this effort.

In order to widen the learning base and thereby enhance USAID programming in the democracy area, CDIE decided to assess the role and impact of external donor investments and strategies in supporting the development of civil society. This report is based on field research undertaken in Thailand during a one month period from mid March to mid April, 1994. A similar study was undertaken at the same time in Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh and Thailand studies were undertaken to pretest the conceptual framework and methodology designed for follow-on studies to be undertaken this summer (1994) in Kenya, El Salvador and Chile. Drawing on this five country experience a final synthesis report will be completed identifying issues and strategies which USAID will need to consider in supporting civil society.

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW: FROM BUREAUCRATIC POLITY TO SEMI-DEMOCRACY

The reader will ask why Thailand was selected to be included in the CDIE civil society assessment. There are several reasons. For the past several decades Thailand has been a major recipient of USAID and other donor investments. During this period thousands of Thais were sent to the U.S. for short and long term training and many now occupy important positions in government and business. At one time hundreds of A.I.D. staff and contractors were also resident in Thailand working on development projects across a wide range of sectors. While most of these projects, along with the training of Thais, frequently were not explicitly designed to support civil society objectives, the indirect impact of these efforts presumably has had immeasurable influence on the structures of Thai political beliefs and behavior.

USAID became more explicitly interested in contributing to the growth of civil society/cum democracy in Thailand in 1990, when the Asia Bureau launched its Democratic Pluralism Initiative (DPI). The initiative is scheduled to end this year with the closure of the USAID Mission. In addition, other donors are rapidly downsizing or terminating their presence in Thailand. In this context, it was felt that much could be learned by including Thailand as part of the study, particularly before many of the actors disappeared with the closing of donor programs.

There are other reasons which make Thailand an interesting case study. First, Thailand is in the midst of a transition, the trajectory of which still remains clouded and uncertain. It is unclear whether the May, 1992 uprising against the military represents an irreversible turning point in moving towards a more democratic polity. Thailand is struggling to undertake the structural reforms which underpin a democratic order, and it is only when this is accomplished that the period of democratic consolidation can begin in earnest.

In significant measure, civil society will play an important role in determining the outcome of political developments in Thailand. It was the NGO sector which helped turn the tide against the military in 1992. If civil society can continue to grow as it has over the last decade, this sector will constitute an important countervailing center of power against those elements wedded to more authoritarian modes of governance.

A skeptic may still ask why include the Thai case when so much of its history is atypical. It was never colonized; it is one of the few remaining constitutional monarchies; ethnically it is relatively homogeneous; and it has never experienced the ideological/political polarization and instability which has been the bane of most developing countries. These assets, however, have

to be counterposed against a historical legacy of authoritarian government, and in particular with the dominance of bureaucratic/military structures which have served to slow the growth of civil society. In this sense, Thailand shares many of the characteristics of other developing countries where military and government bureaucracies dominate the political arena.

In Thailand, the traditional posture of the military and government bureaucracy has been to

> define their interests as national interests, and (they) have not been willing to account for democratic interests, (that is, the interests of the "common people)." Concepts such as order, stability, tradition, hierarchy and knowing one's place in it, ...have defined the exercise of legitimate power (Hewison 1993:17).

The growth of civil society represents a challenge to this traditional doctrine, as it rests on the assumption that public polices should be debated publicly and that common citizens have as much right as the state to influence this debate.

For the past several months the Thai political scene has featured a contest over which of the above principles will hold sway in defining the nature of state-society relationships. In early 1994, the current government proposed 22 constitutional amendments. The amendments would constitutionally enshrine principles which are fundamental to the growth of civil society. They include the following:[1]

- Administrative Court: To be set up to handle disputes between the state and the public.

- Public Referendum: National referendums will be required on constitutional reform proposals which are rejected by the two chamber Parliament but approved by more than half of the elected MPs.

- Right to and Freedom of Information: The amendment empowers the public to monitor the work of government and state enterprise agencies if the work affects their daily lives.

- Parliamentary Inspector: A Parliamentary inspector will be nominated by Parliament and appointed by the King to receive complaints from the public and coordinate between the legislative and executive branches.

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[1]See The Nation, March 25, 1994 for a full list of the amendments.

Most of the other proposed constitutional amendments would strengthened the institutional foundation in support of civil society. Thus, the power of parliament would be enhanced in relationship to the executive branch, and seats in the upper house (senate) would be reduced in number and subject to indirect election rather than appointment by the Prime Minister.

Opposition parties and a majority of the members of the Senate, all of whom were appointed under the NPKC regime, have joined forces to delay voting on the amendments. This represents an effort by the opposition to weaken the hold of the ruling coalition but reflects as well, resistance from more conservative forces seeking to stifle democratic reforms.

Pro-democracy NGOs have launched campaigns in support of the constitutional amendments. While many observers opine that most of the amendments eventually will be passed, there still remains the challenge of assuring that they are applied and enforced in practice. Much of the pressure to do so will have to emanate from a strong and vigilant civil society. Thus, we return to the core subject of this paper; the role of civil society as a harbinger of democracy and good governance.

The following chapters explore some of the issues surrounding the recent growth of civil society in Thailand and its contributions, or lack thereof, in fostering the process of democratization and improved governance. The role of some of the major donors will be examined, and the final chapter will suggest some wider policy implications based on the Thai case.

CHAPTER 2

PRODEMOCRACY GROUPS: ADJUSTING THE PARAMETERS OF DEMOCRACY

A broad array of groups and individuals have worked in Thailand on what we choose to call the "parameters" of democracy. They have tackled issues of: human rights, accountability of the governance system, the need for decentralization, women's political participation, workers' rights and, most basic of all, efforts to shift the Thai polity out of a generations-long pattern of alternation between more-or-less authoritarian and more-or-less open regimes. A variety of approaches have been used: street demonstrations and direct confrontations with armed troops, preparation of "people's drafts" of a constitution and crucial laws, research of various types, educational campaigns, publications, the courts. Critical elements in the current mix include: early work on human rights issues, a group of activist academics, gradual liberalization of the Thai polity in the 1980s, political events from the coup of February 1991 to the pro-democracy demonstrations of May 1992, and a broadening of efforts

since then.

Pioneering Human Rights Work

In polities that are less-than-democratic, most work on system improvement seems to focus on monitoring, and sometimes publicizing and critiquing, the state of human rights. Courageous individuals and groups, sometimes buttressed by international NGOs such as Amnesty International and Asia Watch, risk arbitrary persecution, incarceration, torture, etc. in order to record and expose cases of persecution, incarceration, and torture. Under the circumstances, the groups, largely underground and operating as loose congeries of committed individuals, hardly qualify as "NGOs" as we have come to know them, with permanent offices, full-time staff, and substantial grant funds from foreign organizations.

The evolution of Thailand's Union for Civil Liberties (UCL) examplifies many of these elements: The group was founded during 1973-76, as a committee of activist/volunteers. In a period when students were in the political forefront, this group of professionals and academics worked quietly, mainly in support of workers. They issued a few public statements against rural violence during a period when many headmen were being executed. After the coup in 1976, one member of the committee went underground, joined the Communist Party of Thailand, and announced his defection on a communist radio station. A few weeks later, "someone" entered and ransacked the group's office, taking away many documents. For the next few years, most members of the group chose to be inactive. There were a few activities as early as 1978.

In 1980, after promulgation of executive order 66/23 (setting out a strategy to "win the communists by political means"), the group decided to reactivate. While it took three years to achieve full government registration, they began a range of activities from the early years of the Prem Government. Major activities in the early 1980s included "paralegal" training for those willing to advise others on human rights issues and public seminars. In the mid-1980s they began a campaign for amnesty for political prisoners which finally succeeded in getting prisoners released in 1988-89. The group set up regional offices in 1984. The Prem and Chatichai years were a period of gradual evolution and political opening. UCL activists were unpleasantly surprised by the NPKC coup of February (?) 1991. Five days after the coup, UCL issued a public appeal for an immediate end to martial law. UCL staff were not persecuted, but were ignored.

In Fall 1991, a group called the Campaign for Popular Democracy was formed to campaign for early elections, and began operating from the UCL office. The group organized demonstrations in Bangkok and around the country and, perhaps in response, the government announced elections in March 1992. Soon after, the concept for a group called Pollwatch was developed by the Chairman of UCL, who

sold the idea to Prime Minister Anand. With government approval and funding, the group mounted a substantial voter education in late 1991/early 1992. Some critics felt activists sullied their reputations at this time by working too closely with the government in voter education efforts, in effect making themselves an extension of the very conservative Ministry of Interior. To some outside observers, the tone of the campaign seemed unnecessarily negative, emphasizing rural voters shouldn't sell their ballots, should be wary of politicians' promises, should only vote once, etc. Little attention was given to the positive side of campaigning and elections. What elected officials will do, what sort of behavior voters should expect of them, what questions and issues voters should raise with candidates, what parties are good for, etc., etc.

Activist Academics

Thailand has a cadre of activist academics who have played a variety of useful roles as human rights activists, pro-democracy campaigners, and proponents of system reforms to strengthen democratic processes. They have established NGOs, committees, foundations, and working groups, carried out action research and policy research, drafted proposed laws and policies, advised full-time NGO leaders, written articles and press releases, etc. We encountered and interviewed members of this group in Bangkok (Chulalongkorn, Thammasat, and Mahidol Universities) and Chiangmai (CMU-Main Campus, CMU-Medical Campus, Chiangmai Teachers' College), and believe similar individuals can be found in many universities, teachers' colleges, and technical institutes around the country.

They are committed individuals; most appear to be serious teachers and researchers, as well as activists. Many are involved in other parts of civil society as well, for example as active members of AIDS or environmental coalitions. Most have foreign training, typically graduate education in the U.S. They come from a variety of academic backgrounds, but in most cases it seems obvious how individuals in various disciplines were drawn into activist roles. Professors of government who teach and do research about politics, (as opposed to public administration), are more likely to be drawn into policy debates and activist roles. Anthropology reasearchers find themselves drawn into activism on behalf of exploited rural groups. Some law professors are naturally drawn in. It's less obvious how medical specialists become political activists, but worth noting that those involved seem to come disproportionately from public health/community medicine backgrounds. The "scope" of activists seems to be strongly affected by location. Bangkok professors work "naturally" on national issues at the national level. Chiangmai University professors work largely on regional issues. Perhaps those associated with lesser institutions work on local issues.

Liberalization During the 1980s

The Prem and Chatichai governments in their several avatars offered a period of gradual political liberalization. In a setting where NGOs, particularly indigenous groups, had not been strong, the Prem period offered increasing scope for NGOs. Even provocative, controversial groups like UCL (labeled "communists in the late 1970s) could gradually become more active and aggressive. A number of groups working on environmental issues, beginning to deal with an incipient AIDS epidemic, and dealing aggressively with problems of the rural poor, were first established or began operating effectively in this period. Thus Bangkok-based activists began working with farmers' groups in the Northeast, even supporting them in confrontations with security forces. Donors were eager to fund effective indigenous NGOs, and the government allowed it to happen. This was also a period when the press was given greater freedom, and the more activist, controversial groups found journalist allies who were willing to publish, if not necesarily support, their policy positions.

The late 1980s and the Chatichai government brought further breakthroughs, providing greater legitimacy for NGO than Thailand had ever seen. The Prime Minister's son, a professor of political science, had worked actively with farmer groups in the Northeast. His father asked him to set up a small advisory unit in the Prime Minister's office, staffed by academics and NGO people, to coordinate with NGOs and ensure their views were aired as part of the policy making process. Two early successes of the group were: articulation of a decision and plan to release political prisoners, and a revamped Forest Act that clearly recognized the legitimacy and value of community forestry. (The new Forest Act was overturned after the 1991 coup.) During this period, NGO leaders and other activists were given ready access to Parliament and senior politicians for the first time.

Pro-Democratic Activism during November 1991-May 1992

Although the coup and establishment of the National Peace Keeping Council (NPKC) in March 1991 didn't meet with an immediate public outcry, several events and circumstances in the period probably served to shift "informed" public opinion in favor of democratic governance and bring new activists onto the civil society scene: 1)The Campaign for Popular Democracy was active during the period, pressing the NPKC to set and election date, and organizing demostrations around the country. 2)The coup took many progressive (urban, middle class, professional, educated) individuals by surprise; they thought Thailand had "moved beyond" coups. 3)The Council gained popularity by appointing an Anand government that was largely honest, and highly successful in introducing needed reforms. But they also set a high standard against which to judge the machinations of conservative politicians after the March 1992 elections. 4)Even individuals not particularly committed to democratic values were shocked by the actions of coup makers. NPKC leaders promised only an elected MP would become Prime Minister,

and then reneged. They seized power to "clean up" a civilian government, then offered cabinet positions to some of those charged with possessing "unusual wealth". These offenses against the sensibilities of (at least) some Thais, set the stage for the events of May 1992.

When, after weeks of bureuacratic maneuvering, General Suchinda's name was proposed for the Prime Ministership in early May 1992, pro-democratic opposition forces felt impelled to act. A number of groups began organizing demonstrations and protests in Bangkok in early May. (Other groups, loosely affiliated, were organizing demonstrations up-country.) When those holding power promised a constitutional amendment guaranteeing future prime ministers would be chosen exlusively from elected MPs, demonstrators were temporarily mollified. But those assembled agreed to turn out again on May 17 if they were not satisfied with government actions. At a meeting of 150 people respresenting activist groups and coalitions on May 14, an action committee of seven members was selected. Each of the seven represented an informal constituency. Dr. Sant, the Chair, represented the medical profession and academics. Khru Prateep represented slum people and teachers. General Chamlong represented the people of Bangkok. Others represented labor, students, etc. The group was committed to leading direct social action in support of two goals: an elected prime minister and constitutional changes to make the Thai polity more democratic.

From May 14 to May 17, the group (calling itself the Confederation for Democracy) was together constantly, developing plans and policies and organizing demonstrations. Members anticipated they would be challenged with water hoses, barricades, and tear gas. They didn't anticipate shooting, though that's waht happened. Events of the period--demonstrations, water cannons, police charges, arrests, the famous TV sequence in which Generals Suchinda and Chamlong are prostrated before the King--received wide coverage in the international press. After a period of successful activism, in which those in power backed down and called for a new election, the group was faced with defining another role for itself.

Broader Advocacy Efforts

After a political campaign during The June-September 1992 period brought an election campaign pitting "angel" parties against the "devils". Some parties campaigned on the basis of specific political reform issues; e.g. the Palang Dharma promised to pursue new local government legislation. After formation of a reasonably "angelic" coalition government following the September election, there has been more extensive public discussion and debate on a wider range of policy issues than at any time in Thai history. Existing advocacy groups have broadened their agendas, new advocacy groups and coalitions have emerged, and service-oriented groups have begun to move into public advocacy. Some examples:

A Broader Agenda for the UCL: Since UCL was re-established in the early 1980s, it has grown into a larger, more formal, and presumably permanent organization. It has a full-time staff of 18, regular funding, mainly from European NGOs (several are church-affiliated), and a full agenda of programs and activities. The work of full-time employees is directed by an executive board.

UCL staff and board members have apparently decided many "classic" human rights concerns--release of political prisoners, freedom of speech--have been adequately addressed, at least for the present. Thus, their current "campaigns" cover a wide range of policy issues, all aimed at strengthening democratic process, but only a few directly addressing human rights. UCL campaigns are waged through policy research, newsletters, press releases, public seminars, radio programs (in northeastern Thailand), and training courses. Topics that were current at the time of our visit included: Strengthening tambon (subdistrict) councils by giving them a new legal status and enhanced powers; Issues in land reform and tenancy rights; Support for several innovations to enhance government accountability--administrative courts, introduction of ombudsmen, a new freedom of information act; Reform of the Judicial Commission and procedures for selecting judges; Workers rights and occupational health and safety; and Water pollution. In addition to organizing campaigns, staff members regularly provide legal literacy training, provide legal aid, and spend time "networking" with other organizations.

The Heroes of Democracy Foundation: In late 1992, active members of the informal Confederation for Democracy reconstituted themselves as the more formal Heroes of Democracy Foundation. After discussion in the Chuan cabinet specifically touching on the CFD/Heroes of Democracy case, the new foundation was officially registered. Since then the group has initiated a series of activities in civic education. The foundation provides support to the children of activists martyred during May 1992 protests and demonstrations. In addition, the program includes several civic education activities: 1.Civic education via radio and TV. 2.A civic education newsletter (with a subscription list of 8,000). 3.Public speeches by pro-democratic activists. 4.A "democratic communities" activity that promotes local accountability and participation through contests and publicity. 5.Training for teachers and community leaders (on getting more accountability from provincial polititicians. 6.A campaign against vote buying (to be targeted on a single province in the next election). 7.A democracy documentation project to collect information on earlier Thai experiments with democracy, including elected governments and constitutional reform.

Meanwhile, CFD leaders continue to pursue an informal agenda. The six active members have daily phone contacts, and meet once a week. Essentially, they pursue two interrelated goals: "coup proofing" the Thai polity and achieving essential constitutional reforms. Coup proofing has several elements: Demonstrating to the military

that the people have decided "never again". The May demonstrations, and follow-on campaigns in June-Augst 1992 to pursuade the interim (Anand II) government eliminate or sidetrack anti-democratic generals were one effort along these lines. State enterprise labor leaders are now committed to a general strike if there is another coup, shutting off electricity, mass media, transport, etc. CFD leaders also distribute a pamphlet on "how to bargain with the state".

Constitutional reform was very much on the parliamentary agenda and in the news during our stay in Thailand, as parliamentary committees were asked to consider a series of constitutional reforms sponsored by the government. The reforms under discussion had been tabled originally by CFD and their allies, the product of a "People's Draft" Constitution which proposes two dozen changes, mostly reflecting elements from earlier Thai constitutions, but including three new provisions: elimination of the Senate, a statement that the people and the MPs "must oppose coups", and a financial disclosure requirement. The People's Draft was prepared by representatives of five NGOs and coalitions, and "ratified" by 270 people representing pro-democracy groups throughout Thailand. Parliamentary and extra-parliamentary maneuvering by opposition parties and members of the appointed Senate ruled out serious discussion of constitutional issues during our stay.

The Campaign Coalition for Local Autonomy (CCLA): Chiangmai activists associated first with Pollwatch, then with the CFD, have supported recent efforts in "coup proofing", constitutional reform, and civic education, but are giving most of their time to a campaign for political decentralization and local government autonomy. Recent efforts have focussed on the Elected Governor campaign, though leaders are careful to point out that is the focus for <u>this year</u>. They are well aware that governor elections will be largely symbolic without corresponding changes at the district and subdistrict level, without substantial expansion of local government authorities to raise own-account revenues and control natural resources, and without such procedural changes as recall of public officials, public hearings, and referenda. The Elected Governor campaign is being pursued through several mechanisms, including: seminars (for educated people), a mobile exhibit (used at temple fairs), and a regular newsletter. Rather than campaigning for a <u>national</u> policy change, the CCLA focuses on developing province-specific plans for the more advanced provinces. Chiangmai activists are busy preparing a plan for Chiangmai, which was to be discussed in "people's assemblies" during May celebrations of the 1992 pro-democracy movement.

CCLA leaders are active networkers. Among them, they have been leaders of the Pollwatch Foundation, the Campaign for Popular Democracy, and local campaigns to protect the Ping River and prohibit further construction of high rise condominiums in Chiangmai. Their NGO collaborators include: UCL, For Chiangmai (an

urban environmental group), the Soybean Farmers' group, an activist lawyer's group, and community forestry and rural development committees associated with NGO-CORD, North. CCLA is producing its newsletter under a grant from The Asia Foundation (B200,000) and pursuing the decentralization campaign under a grant from the Friedrich Naumann Foundation.

The Campaign for Popular Democracy (CPD): CFD was established after the February 1991 coup. Many NGO leaders, union leaders, and academics joined as individual members. A couple of human rights NGOs (UCL and the Coordinating Group for Religion in Society) chose to affiliate as groups. The group was established largely to campaign for a more democratic constitution as the NPKC began to draft a new one. Between October 1991 and April 1992 there were demonstrations, workshops, and seminars nation-wide. A rally in November 1991 drew 50,000 people. They drafted proposed points for a new constitution. The interim government set up a "scrutiny committee" that, in the opinion of CPD members, "turned a good draft into a bad constitution".

After May 1992, CPD has operated more as a network than a formal organization. Active members have worked in support of stronger Tambon Councils. These subdistrict governments are to be strengthened by giving them an explicit juristic identity and greater control over local natural resources. CPD activists disagree with CCLA tactics, which prescribe working for elected governors first, feeling that civil and military bureaucrats "will never agree" t that reform. CPD is working closely with the UCL and the Pollwatch Foundation on civic education campaign. (During a visit to a rural pro-democracy activist in Chiangmai, we saw a copy of the newsletter this coalition distributes.)

Pollwatch Foundation: Pollwatch was a new organization that was active in voter education and campaign monitoring in the months before the March 1992 election. Critics offer three specific complaints: The effort was too-well funded (B200,000,000/ $8,000,000). Formerly respected leaders of the pro-democracy movement were coopted into working with an essentially-authoritarian regime. Despite widespread vote buying and corruption, the group didn't report a single case of corruption. Those affiliated with Pollwatch can presumably make plausible counter claims: The purpose of the exercise wasn't to bring vote buying to a screeching halt, but rather to begin changing democratic culture, to shame people and get people thinking. Besides, perhaps closer scrutiny by Pollwatch activists prevented some cases of vote buying.

The Pollwatch Foundation was founded after the September 1992 election, to organize a program of civic education reaching into rural areas. The group is actively pursuing its program and has respectable collaborators. Among dozens of organizations scrutinized during this study, Pollwatch was the only one for which

we were able to document an effective "reach" into the countryside. Pau Nauj Bun lives in Mae Wang District of Chiang Mai Province.He is a former monk committed to bringing "Buddhist principles to local governance". Mr. Bun was active in Pollwatch before the March 1992 election, brought into the group by an anthropologist from Chiangmai University who had done research in the area years earlier. He organized a 40 member committee with in the district, including Hmong and Karen mountain people. Committee members observed political campaigning, reported to Mr. Bun, and observed the voting on election day. There were clearly cases of vote buying. One candidate built a storage next to a well, and a local leader declared that only residents who voted for the candidate could use the tank. These incidents were reported to the provincial committee, but Mr. Bun admits that "not much was done with them". Despite this equivocal result, Mr. Bun continues to be active. He visits villagers regularly, organizing an average of three to four meetings a month, using materials received in newsletters from Bangkok to guide his presentations. Typical topics include: health, AIDS, forest and water conservation, and and the need for elected governors. He also talks to his fellow citizens, a missisionary for democracy, wakes, funerals, temple fairs, and ordination ceremonies.

Impacts on Thai Civil Society

It's virtually impossible to measure direct impacts of any one group and its activities. (Would the 'May events' have taken the same course without CFD? Did Pollwatch reduce vote buying?) But it's plausible that their joint impact has already been substantial. In any case, the implications of their work for the future of Thai democracy and civil society are enormous. They demonstrate to ordinary citizens that citizens' groups can collaborate with government, can influence government, can even go head-to-head with government on occasion (and sometimes win). By their actions and their successes they have expanded the conceptual boundaries of civic action.

CHAPTER 3

THE BUSINESS SECTOR

Over the past twenty years the business sector has emerged as the most powerful and affluent segment of Thai civil society.[2]

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[2]Along with interviews, this narrative on the role of business associations in civil society draws heavily on Anek Laothamatas, Business Associations and the New Political Economy of Thailand: From Bureaucratic Polity to Liberal Corporatism, Westview Press: Boulder, 1992; Scott R. Christensen and Ammar Siamwalla, Beyond Patronage: Tasks for the Thai State, Bangkok: The Thailand

Business associations have advocated and built a cooperative relationship with the government and used their influence to achieve the adoption of pro-business and pro-export public policies. These same associations have also pressured government bureaucracies to become more responsive, efficient and accountable in implementing these policies. In great measure the partnership which has evolved between business and government accounts for the steady economic advances of the past decade and in particular for the investment boom which has swept over Thailand the last several years

In brief, unlike some of the Asian tigers, where governments have taken the economic lead, and in many instances suborned and repressed civil society in so doing, in Thailand a vigorous civil society in the form of strong business associations appears to have been a prime mover in fostering the conditions of growth. This has allowed Thailand to follow a relatively less authoritarian path in its quest for economic growth, and for this reason, some discussion is warranted in understanding how the evolution of events contributed to this achievement.

A. Emergence of Business Associations

The earliest business associations in Thailand date back to the turn of the century. However, until the 1970s many of these organizations did not represent and advocate the collective interests of their members in government policy-making. Rather, individual businessmen employed traditional clientelist tactics of building personal networks within the government and military bureaucracy to secure favors and special treatment in advancing their commercial ventures.

The first organized representation of business interests in public policy occurred in the late 1960s when the government's national planning agency invited leaders of several of the larger business associations to serve in committees advising on private sector development. On the whole the government was more directive of these interactions with business associations remaining relatively weak in their capacity to prepare and articulate interests. In general, associations at the time were represented by undereducated leaders, were lacking in financial resources, and were not much interested in policy issues, concentrating rather on social and welfare activities.

Political developments in the 1970s contributed to a lessening of interactions between business associations and government.

Development Research Institute Foundation, 1993; Scott Christensen, Democracy Without Equity?: The Institutions and Political Consequences of Bangkok-based Development, The Thailand Development Research Institute, 1993.

However, during this time a more educated and activist leadership emerged in the in the business community. Thus, in 1977, the three dominant business associations (Association of Thai Industries (ATI), Thai Bankers Association (TBA), and Thai Chamber of Commerce (TCC) established the Joint Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking to serve as a forum for discussion and working out common positions, particularly with regard to ASEAN regional meetings on industrial and trade relations. In addition, the committee began courting the government, urging establishment of a joint government/business committee to address an emerging trade deficit.

The government agreed to establish such a committee in 1978, but it was disbanded after several unsatisfactory meetings. Business leaders felt their proposals and issues were not given serious and urgent, and government representatives viewed business leaders as "impatient and fond of accusation rather than consultation." In 1979, another informal government/business committee was established, but it fell into disuse for similar reasons.

A new government assumed power in 1980, and again with the urging of the Joint Standing Committee the Prime Minister established the Joint Public and Private Sector Consultative Committee (JPPCC) to formalize public/private sector cooperation in national economic matters. This was a turning point in Thailand's economic evolution, as the JPPCC assumed significant leadership in the adoption of export-led growth policies. It also led the government to perceive the value of business associations and to promote the spread of provincial chambers of commerce and JPPCCs throughout Thailand.

B. Business Associations: Agent of Structural Change

Why did the government and business sector, after some years of aborted efforts at cooperation, eventually converge around a common agenda for action in the early 1980s? There are several reasons. First, the severe economic difficulties of the late 1970s, when Thailand was suffering from major trade deficits and inflationary pressures, forced the government to reconsider its past commitment to import-substituting policies and reach out to the business community for new solutions. Because of its past efforts at self-organization, the Joint Standing Committee, representing the largest three business associations, was well-positioned to offer advice and leadership in adopting an export substitution agenda.

The structural transformation which turned the economy outward toward international markets was also a product of changes in the structure of ruling coalitions. Growing numbers of business leaders occupied seats in parliament and in the cabinet. While individual businessmen assumed a more important role in party politics and running for office, major business associations were careful to remain outside partisan politics, thereby preserving a

degree of autonomy and credibility which could have been put in jeopardy given the changing fortunes of Thai politics.

Other factors were present which expanded and strengthened the organization of the business sector as a reformist constituency. In particular, the associations were the recipients of major USAID funding. In 1983, USAID initiated a four year $3.5 million project helping the central JPPCC to upgrade the secretarial and policy research capabilities of the ATI, TCC, TBA and the Federation of the Thai Industries (FTI). In 1987, USAID provided additional funds ($300,000) to strengthen provincial JPPCCs and other business associations. A.I.D. also gave $1.0 million to the Institute of Management of Education for Thailand (IMET) which trained many businessmen in modern managerial techniques and in the value of business associations. The National Endowment for Democracy, through its affiliate, the Center for International Private Enterprise also provided a $97,000 grant to support provincial chambers of commerce.

Aside from USAID and NED, in the late 1970s the World Bank was urging Thailand to adopt a more export oriented development strategy. In the end, however, international donors only played a supporting role in the process of economic restructuring; the impetus for reform was primarily a product of changes in domestic political structures, and in particular the incorporation of business interests and constituencies into the ruling coalition.[3]

In the end, Thai business associations were a promoter as well as a beneficiary of structural change. They offered a practical operational agenda which the government could adopt in implementing the transition to a new economic order. For example, it was through their lobbying that customs and export formalities, which had been major barriers for exporters, were greatly simplified. Indeed, the associations were very active and effective in pressuring the bureaucracy to reduce redtape, liberalize government regulations, and reform tax and tariff codes. In addition, they frequently pressed for improvements in infrastructure, particularly roads, and air and land terminals, to facilitate the conduct of business and trade.

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[3]While developments internal to Thailand account for the structural transition initiated in the early 1980s, there was one external influence which inspired many business leaders to push forward with closer government/business cooperation. Many of these leaders had dealings with Japanese businesses and were impressed with the power of the Japan's Federation of Economic Organizations (Keidanren) and the ability of this organization in close collaboration with the Japanese government to win favorable terms in trade negotiations with foreign governments.

Business associations were also greatly strengthened in their bargaining position as a consequence of structural transition. As the economy became more outward-looking, businessmen found they had to enhance the technical specifications, quality, and marketing of their products to compete in the international arena. In many instances, it was business associations who met this need by upgrading and strengthening their services to members in the form of technical seminars/training workshops, newsletters and the organization of trade fairs. The national Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok offers 60 seminars and workshops annually to members on technical and policy topics.

In order to keep pace, the government itself has sponsored the establishment of government-business councils in sectors and product areas undergoing rapid technical change. In some instances, business associations have made direct financial contributions to particular government agencies in upgrading their technical services to industry.

C. Business and Democratization

Beyond their contributions to economic reform, what impacts have business associations had in fostering political development? In great measure, they have served as a countervailing force against a longstanding hegemonic, bureaucratic/military alliance. That alliance is gradually weakening with many in the bureaucracy gravitating closer to the interests and values and of the commercial sector. The decline in the number of military officers sitting on the boards of state corporations is an indication of this trend.

An indirect impact of business associations and their fostering of pro-growth policies, has been the growth of a middle class, which many would view as the midwife to the democratic movement in Thailand. For the most part, however, the middle class is politically apathetic: voter turnout in Bangkok is very low. If anything, members of this class seem to value good governance over an above participatory democracy.

In general, rural areas are still dominated by a highly centralized civil and military bureaucracy which constrains local initiative. In response to these constraints, there is growing public support for decentralization as a major policy goal, a goal which is fiercely opposed by some elements of the bureaucracy, particularly the Interior Ministry. Support for reform has several dimensions; administrative decentralization , election of provincial governors, and more autonomy for tambon government. Business interests generally support first reform, are ambivalent with regard to the second, and are indifferent to the third.

Some business leaders in the provinces and in Bangkok, as well as members of the new middle class, view decentralization, including

the transfer of taxing authority. as an important step toward better governance; presumably local government then would become more responsive and capable of providing essential services. However, there is much ambivalence about advancing the cause of democracy through elections of provincial governors, the fear being that incompetent and corrupt governors would be elected who might succumb to corrupt practices, and that there would be few mechanisms in place to hold them accountable.

In some measure, the tepid response to the issue of governor elections by many in the middle class and business community reflects a lack of confidence in rural voters. The latter is perceived by the former as frequently offering their votes for purchase to the highest bidder, and worse yet their judgements of candidates possibly being warped by demagogic appeals. This view puts the middle class and business at odds with many NGOs who, although frequently led by individuals from the middle class, have their roots in rural areas and see elections as a means of ridding the countryside from an overweening bureaucracy.

Business attitudes regarding proposed reforms in the areas of governance and democracy are vividly represented in interviews with executive officers and board members of Chiangmai's provincial Chamber of Commerce. These leaders indicated they remain aloof from partisan politics as any such association would "ruin the reputation" of the Chamber. In fact they go so far as to avoid lobbying MPs and instead voice their views within the government's executive branch.

Leaders of the Chamber were adamant against elections of governors. In their view, the lack of education among rural dwellers and the general political apathy of the middle class, would serve to increase the chances of electing unfit and unscrupulous governors. At the same time, however they bemoaned the fact that the recently replaced governor, who is part of the Interior Ministry's career service, was indifferent to their lobbying efforts and needs of the business sector. In their view, since governors are appointed from Bangkok, the appointee sees the province as a "stepping-stone" to higher positions in the national bureaucracy. Dependent as he is for promotions from patrons in Bangkok, governors tend to be conservative and overly cautious, eschewing innovation and risk, and for sure not vigorously defending the interests of the province against the wishes of Bangkok.

The Chamber of Commerce leaders were most seized with the need for decentralization. They had lobbied the government for ten years with little effect, to delegate greater authority to the provinces. They catalogued a litany of complaints concerning the over-centralization of services and authority in Bangkok, such as the inconvenience and expense of having to travel to Bangkok to secure a passport; that business permits sometimes take nearly a year to obtain; that the central government collects a lot more revenue

from the province than it returns in the form of investment; and while bank branches had been established in the provincial capital, major loans still have to be approved in Bangkok.

Interviews with officials in the national Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok reveal that they recognize decentralization as an issue for provincial businesses and that governors need to be more attentive to the needs of the business community. However, the constituency for the national chamber is primarily the Bangkok business community and thus, provincial chambers frequently do not figure prominently in their advocacy agendas. Since most provincial chambers are quite small they do not carry much weight in dealings with the national government.

In brief, the growth and role of business associations as an arm of civil society has contributed to the growth of good governance in some ways, primarily where the interests of the business sector intersect with the functions of government. Likewise, the incipient growth of business associations in the provinces is also contributing to growing pressures for greater administrative decentralization. However, beyond issues of administrative reform, there has been little overt interest on the part of business associations in advancing democratic reforms.

D. Summary

The historical growth of business associations is the only sector of civil society in Thailand, particularly with respect to its advocacy role, which has been analyzed in some depth by scholars. It seems warranted therefore to offer some of the following insights which might have relevance to the evolution of civil society in other countries. First, for a nearly a decade in the 1970s, the efforts of business associations to gain a voice and representation in the councils of government met with a frequent lack of patience and cooperation on the part of government. In brief, the supply of organizational resources in civil society frequently outpaced the demand for such resources, at least from government sources.

Second, when the demand did arise in the early 1980s, prompted as it was by economic distress, the major business associations were, in effect, prepositioned to enter the corridors of power, and help lead the transition to a new economic order. Third, many of these corridors were already occupied by business leaders who had run for a seat in parliament, been elected, frequently gained a cabinet position, and when the climate was favorable were receptive and sought out the counsel and aid of business associations.

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, business associations stayed clear of any organizational involvement in partisan politics. There has been a longstanding government ban which prohibits their affiliation with political parties, but business leaders recognized that given the changeable nature of Thai politics, such an

affiliation might undermine their efforts to gain a credible voice on behalf of their collective interests. As a consequence, business associations were able to maintain their autonomy and integrity as opposed to being captured or coopted by political parties or the government. In fact, the political parties took little interest in the associations.

CHAPTER 4

THE LABOR SECTOR

Historically, the Thai government has taken a very restrictive, and at times, repressive position with respect to labor unions. Unions were banned for long periods of time: 1935 -1943, 1948-1954 and 1958-1971.[4] Since the mid 1970s, the government has been less inclined to ban unions, and has rather employed a wider range of tactics, including restrictive labor laws, arrests and intimidation of union leaders, and coaptation and divide and rule measures in order to weaken the union movement and reduce its potential for becoming a competing power center.

Most importantly, the government has been lax and indifferent to enforcing labor laws which are designed to protect union rights. This has allowed the industrial and business sector to ride roughshod over efforts by unions to expand their membership and leverage in collective bargaining. Employers frequently dismiss and blacklist employees who seek to organize workers. Union busting and violence against union leaders are common practices, along with the use of short-term employment contracts, and the closing and then reopening of factories with new workers. With the balance of power decisively in favor of employers, workers frequently labor in an environment where there is no compensation for on-the-job injuries, where minimum wage laws are ignored and where occupational health and safety conditions are substandard.

A wide range of advocacy tactics have been employed by union leaders to enhance their power in negotiations with the government for more supportive labor laws and for their enforcement against recalcitrant employers. Street rallies and protest demonstrations along with lobbying of political leaders are commonly used strategies. In addition, tripartite committees, involving representatives from industry, government and labor, are forums where union leaders have sought to right the balance of power.

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[4]Aside from interviews this section also relies on research conducted by Andrew Brown and Kevin Hewison contained in their unpublshed paper, Struggle and Repression Under Captialism: Thailand's Union Movement. 1994.

The above advocacy measures have not yielded many returns for the union movement. This lack of success arises not only from the weight of opposition from government and business, but also from factors inherent within the larger social system and the union movement itself. A major constraining factor is that the union movement draws its limited power from a narrow and shallow social base. Total union membership in the industrial sector is 152,000 workers. Most of this sector consists of small and medium scale firms, the labor of which is difficult to unionize. As a consequence, most unions are located in larger industrial firms where they represent only a small portion of a burgeoning labor force.[5] In contrast, state enterprise sector is highly organized with unions having a total membership of 186,000. It is from this sector that the union movement draws most of its power and influence, with 8 of the 10 largest unions representing state enterprises.

The absence of a more encompassing social base deprives unions of the membership dues necessary to finance membership services and accordingly laborers are without the incentives to deepen their commitment to the union movement. With few services available, many members simply do not pay dues. The exception to this rule are state enterprise unions, which have been able to mobilize and maintain strong membership support.

Aside from its limited membership base, the union movement has also been hamstrung by divisions within their own ranks. Beginning in the 1980s, the state enterprise unions became increasingly focussed on opposing government proposals for privatization of state enterprises, and this served to diminish their attention to the needs of the union movement as a whole, and in particular the needs of weaker unions in the private sector. This division was compounded by ideological and factional rivalries, which contributed to a fragmentation of leadership and a proliferation of national labor congresses.

The divisive condition of the union movement has made it vulnerable to manipulation by the government and military. The latter have had a policy of sowing dissension with the ranks of union leadership and coopting those are prepared to serve their purposes. For example, the government frequently has been successful in inciting competition for seats on the various tripartite bodies, the result of which has been to render these instruments less effective in serving laborers' interest.

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[5]As indicated in a recent report of the U.S. Department of Labor, Thailand..."has one of the lowest levels of unionization in the region." U.S. Department of Labor, Foreign Labor Trends: Thailand. 1992, p. 14.

Divisions within the union movement surfaced conspicuously in the assumption of NKPC rule and the period that followed its overthrow. While there is still some debate about the role of unions in this critical period, it was apparent that some union leaders did align themselves in support of the NPKC. However, from the beginning of military rule in 1991, many labor leaders and workers openly opposed the NPKC and their support of the pro-democracy forces played an important role in the downfall of the military regime. It was during this period that a prominent leader from the opposition union camp disappeared, and others were threatened with physical violence.

The union movement is now in a period of recovery from the setbacks and trauma experienced during the NPKC period. In particular, their leaders are working to restore those union rights and structures which were taken away or seriously undermined by the NPKC government. It is in this context that AAFLI and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung have been the primary donors supporting the labor union movement in Thailand.

B. Asian-American Free Labor Institute (AAFLI)

AAFLI has operated a full-time field office in Bangkok since 1975. Much of its budget derives from regional grants funded by USAID's Asia Bureau. In recent years these grants have declined substantially, causing a significant retrenchment in Bangkok office staff and activities.

The AAFLI strategy focuses on strengthening labor union efforts through increased membership services, training of union leaders, achieving greater unity in the movement, and enfranchising union members. Thus, AAFLI has supported credit union services, day care centers and counseling services for industrial workers. In recent years large numbers of union members and leaders have been trained in democratic union procedures. AAFLI has also initiated voter registration campaigns for industrial labors.

These activities have produced variable results. Historically, substantial AAFLI resources have been invested in upgrading the skills and capacity of the state enterprise unions both as an end in itself but also as a means for using state enterprise leadership and skills in assisting the growth of unions in the private sector. Because of their higher level of education and above average salary structures, there has been progress in building a relatively strong, more democratic union movement in the state sector.

Major constraints have arisen, however, in the ability of the state enterprise sector to assist in the growth of private sector unions. In 1991, the Anand I government abolished state enterprise unions and also banned this sector from affiliating with private sector unions. With most union organizers and trainers coming from the state enterprise unions, the ban cut off a major lifeline of

support for the private sector union movement.

To overcome these obstacles the state enterprise unions have successfully advocated and lobbied the government to propose the restoration of many, if not most of the rights of union association and organization, thereby rescinding the restrictions of the Anand I government. This effort was supported by an AFL-CIO petition to the U.S. Trade Representative to remove Thailand's GSP privileges unless reforms were undertaken in existing labor laws. The government's proposed new labor law is still pending consideration in Parliament.

The labor law for private sector unions is also being revised by the government for submission to parliament. During the team's visit state enterprise leaders were assisting private sector union leaders to plan an advocacy strategy to assure the new law will be favorable to their interests. Their proposals center on more assertive public relation campaigns, lobbying the government's coalition parties and mobilizing support from the press and NGOs.

It is unclear whether private sector unions will be able to leverage much influence in drafting the government's labor law. While the state enterprise unions have demonstrated a capacity for exercising some political weight and muscle, this is much less apparent among private sector unions. In significant measure this weakness reflects the fact that the private industrial workforce is generally populated by first generation migrant labors from rural areas who have little knowledge of unions and what they might have to offer. These workers, many of them young women, frequently assume employment for several years in an urban industrial setting with the intent of returning to their home villages, and thus have little incentive to join a union.

In the private sector laborers risk losing their employment should they join or help in organizing unions or recruiting union members. Indeed, in interviews, labor leaders identified the lack of protection of labor organizers as a major obstacle to expanding union membership. The lack of organized worker representation is further accentuated by the fact that most workers are not represented in the electoral process. With many workers migrating from rural areas to Bangkok and other industrial areas, and looking upon their employment as a temporary sojourn before returning to their village, few are inclined to change their official house registration to Bangkok. As a consequence, most of the hundreds of thousands of workers now residing in the large industrial estates ringing metropolitan Bangkok are disenfranchised since Thailand has no system of absentee balloting.

AAFLI recently launched a campaign to help new labor entrants register changes in their residence, thereby giving them access to the ballot, but this effort met with little success. Many laborers still hope to return to their home village and are reluctant to

make an official change to urban residency. They fear that such a change in status might deny them inheritance rights and other traditional privileges associated with village registration.[6]

In brief, with many workers floating free of any union affiliation and lacking convenient access to the ballot, the union movement operates without a strong electoral constituency, and thereby starts from a weak position in exercising much influence over government policy. AAFLI has sought to strengthen the union movement's bargaining position by urging the consolidation of labor congresses into one national federation. Currently, there are seven labor congresses. AAFLI sees value in consolidating these congresses into one national federation. Resources could then be pooled in financing research efforts in support of labor interests, more aggressive advocacy and lobbying, or use of health and safety teams to conduct inspections of industrial sites.

Various obstacles have served to inhibit the growth of a more unified labor movement. Some congress leaders have resisted the potential loss of power and visibility in joining forces in a larger federation. Larger congresses would presumably insist on a proportional voting system which would diminish the voice of smaller congresses. Similarly, there has been a reluctance to absorb the additional dues which would need to be levied to support a federation.

C. Frederick Ebert Stiftung

The Ebert Stiftung has a major program in support of labor unions, and it frames its strategy in a way different from the AAFLI effort. The Stiftung strategy focuses on stimulating basic cultural change in raising the social standing of labor and unions, both within the workforce and society at large. Traditional cultural perceptions hold labor in low regard, and many of the political elite see little in a healthy, vibrant union movement. These perceptions translate into government indifference if not outright opposition to the labor movement and a corresponding lack of esteem and initiative from laborers and their leaders, particularly in the private sector.

The Ebert Stiftung addresses the status issue from several directions. First, it focuses on empowerment and building a greater sense of self-reliant, problem-solving capacities among union members and their leaders. A traditional mode of advocacy in

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[6]Some labor analysts suggest development of a more self-consciousness laboring class will have to await the emergence of a second generation workforce. Members of this second generation will be children of the current laborers who, although they might have aspirations to return to their home villages, will form the nucleus of a settled and more activist labor force.

the union movement, particularly in private sector unions, has been to seek out intermediary patrons among academics and the political elite to define the issue agenda and represent the union in dealing with government authorities and the public at large. The use of patron client ties is a traditional mode of social interaction in Thailand, effectively reducing the client to a passive supplicant's role, dependent on those more powerful who may have little real understanding of the client organization and the issues it faces in serving its members.

To move beyond paternalistic modes of advocacy the Stiftung is enhancing the skills of union leaders in problem analysis, public relations, negotiation, communication and networking with coalitions in an outside the union movement. The emphasis is on sharing and learning from each other and representing and advocating views directly to constituencies and authorities rather than mechanically looking to outside elites for answers and mediation services.

Building self-reliance is obviously a long-term process of cultural change, but the Stiftung can point to some progress. The leaders of the Durable Textile Workers Union recently organized a press conference on their own. Union leaders are also beginning to organize seminars on their own. The most spectacular development has been the emergence of a union-led women's movement which in the past year conducted a successful campaign in passing legislation to increase maternity leave. The effort was led by rank and file union members and leaders, along with a coalition of non-union women's NGOs, and employed a broad spectrum of advocacy tactics through the media, demonstrations and seminars with parliamentarians.

A second component of the Stiftung strategy aims to win greater recognition among government and political elites of unions as an important national resource, and to encourage greater face-to-face dialog (rather than through intermediaries) between these elites and union leaders. In this context, the Stiftung is sending government officials to Germany to observe how labor-management and government relations can be managed in a more constructive fashion. The Stiftung is also fostering informal interactions where Thai government and labor leaders join together, for example, in field trips and observations where dialog can take place in a more informal manner. This has served to create a more sympathetic response among some higher officials, but is too soon to see how this will be reflected in government behavior.

D. Summary

While there are differences between the AAFLI and Stiftung strategies, there are also major points of convergence. Each urges union leaders to expand their networks in building coalitions within and outside the labor movement and each encourages unions to

focus more attention on issues involving occupational health and safety, child labor, and the role of women in the union movement. Each donor recognizes the difficult reality within which they operate (As one donor representative indicated "Our presence is accepted but not wanted.") and that donor sponsored grassroots organizing to expand union membership would be a risky venture, even though many trade union leaders view expansion in membership and organization of unions in non-union factories as the primary challenge facing the union movement.[7]

Given the constraining context, after some debate, the Stiftung has convinced its home office that progress in building an effective union movement must be measured by qualitative indicators rather than quantitatively. Progress needs to be judged on such issues as whether unions are becoming more self-reliant in defining their agendas; whether they are employing more sophisticated advocacy strategies; whether politicians and government authorities are now entering in direct dialog with labor leaders; and if labor leaders are becoming more skilled in presenting their case with employers and government officials, and with the public at large? The measurable impact of these improvements on policy-making is minimal at this stage of development, but over the longer term fostering these skills is essential to advancing the interests of labor.

The near future of the labor movement in Thailand is uncertain. There are some signs of progress; for example, the Government recently created a Ministry of Labor. However, other dangers still lurk on the distant horizon. Many labor leaders came out in support of the pro-democracy forces in the protests of 1992, and many of the demonstrators were rank and file union members. Indeed, two of the seven leaders of the Confederation for Democracy are labor leaders and they continue to be in forefront of the democracy campaign. This close identification with pro-democracy forces carries some risk; should there be a reversion to a military backed government, the union movement could suffer some severe setbacks due to their very public opposition to military rule.

CHAPTER 5

THE NGO SECTOR

A. The Environmental Movement: NGOs in the Vanguard

A major finding of this study is that the environment and natural resource sector is the leading-edge of civil society development in

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[7]Indeed, at all union meetings and training sessions sponsored by the two donors there is a policeman or government security officer in attendance.

Thailand. Issues involving deforestation, pollution of air and water, land and water use, hazardous waste, coastal zone management and urban growth have become major points of conflict within the body politic. In particular, there has been a groundswell of grassroots activism, with rural and urban communities organizing to protest the impact of government and commercial practices which adversely impact on their environment and resource domains. NGOs have coalesced around these issues and are in the forefront of mobilizing public pressure on the government to adopt more activist and conservationist approaches in protecting Thailand's environment and natural resources.

The development of NGOs within the environment and natural resource sector began to emerge in the late 1980s. The death of several hundred villagers from major mudslides in 1988 was associated with rapid deforestation from commercial logging. Public outcry concerning the diminution of forest resources and the displacement of villages in areas undergoing commercial cutting led the government to impose a temporary ban on logging in 1989. In addition, industrial pollution, the social dislocations and adverse environmental impacts arising from hydroelectric dam construction, and the growing competition over land and water resources between rural dwellers and growing industrial and urban sectors, have generated community and public support for those NGOs who advocate greater public input and community control in decisions regarding the use and management of both local and national resources.

Beginning in the late 1980s, the national government, with initiatives coming primarily from the Prime Minister's office, has been responsive to public and NGO demands for more assertive measures to protect Thailand's natural resources. Some of the impacts in this area for which the NGO community can claim credit, include:

- successes in requiring the government to demonstrate the utility of new starts in dam construction and the adoption of measures to protect the rights of local inhabitants and their surrounding ecology

- obliging the government to end a large military sponsored land resettlement scheme in Northeast Thailand which was displacing thousands of rural dwellers

- securing acceptance of the concept of community forestry as part of the government's proposed new master plan for forestry resources

- convincing the government to abandon a proposal for transferring significant areas in national forest reserves and national parks to the Ministry of Tourism

A wide range of advocacy tactics were employed by NGOs in winning

policy changes and concessions from the government. Street rallies, marches on Parliament and media campaigns were a common means of mobilizing pressure. Alliances were formed with student associations, academics, monks and local communities. NGOs also become more sophisticated in generating support by bringing together in public fora representatives of parliament, government agencies, and business in addressing issues of common concern. The government has become more receptive, (albeit reluctantly at times), in recognizing that the NGO sector has a legitimate role in public policy debate.

Two examples of successful NGO efforts in marshalling advocacy resources demonstrate the growing acceptance and skills of NGO activism in the environmental sector. As mentioned above the NGOs were successful in pressuring the government to halt many village resettlement schemes underway in Northeast Thailand. Pressure was exercised through street demonstrations, (of which roads were sometimes blocked), lobbying MPs, organizing seminars, and working the media. The government eventually agreed to enter negotiation with a group of peasant leaders, and NGOs secured the assistance of several lawyers who advised the leaders on tactics during one week of intensive negotiations with the government.

In the second case, a senior official in the Prime Minister's office proposed that the Ministry of Tourism assume control of the national park system to promote the tourism industry. Fearing that such an action would effectively serve to further commercialization and destruction of forest reserves, NGOs organized a seminar to articulate their objections to the proposal. Government representatives were invited and attended, and after considerable discussion, agreed to withdraw the proposal.

B. NGOs: An Emergent Sector

The above examples demonstrate the capacity of the NGO sector to effectively champion their agendas, but these successes stand in contrast to the structural weaknesses which continue to constrain the sector and civil society in general. Public service NGOs of the kind which populate the environmental movement are a relatively new aspect of Thai society. As a consequence their skills and the social and institutional base for their support are still relatively underdeveloped. Their status can best be described as "emergent," with roots not yet firmly established in the Thai landscape.

The emergence and popularity of the environmental movement, which is substantially a product of NGO work, has been a major factor in strengthening public support for these organizations. Thus, new and old NGOs have capitalized on the popularity of the environmental movement by associating with issues in this area. For example, in 1989, several NGOs convened an annual environmental forum to discuss issues and propose recommendations for action.

The 1989 meeting was attended by 18 NGOs. The 1993 meeting included 122 NGOs and was attended by well over a thousand participants.

The growth of these NGOs is bringing gradual recognition within the business and governmental sector that environmental NGOs can play a valuable and constructive role in addressing environmental and natural resource issues. This is reflected in the fact that business and government are beginning to contribute modest financial support to environment NGOs. Thus, in 1993, the Thailand Environment Institute was established by major business leaders. Fifty subscribing companies each contribute annual dues of $10,000. In the public sector, the Ministry of Science and Environment has recently established a grant fund of $2.0 million for environmental NGOs.

Environmental groups have been in the vanguard of efforts opening and legitimating channels for greater communication with the executive branch. Thus, after repeated requests by NGO leaders the government recently agreed to establish a high level joint commission of government and NGO representatives to exchange views on major policy issues in the social sectors. The commission is chaired by the Prime Minister and is expected to function in a manner similar to the JPPCC.

Another advance is that the 1992 Environmental Law, passed by the government in 1992, mandates the participation of NGO representatives on review panels for environmental impact assessments (EIAs) conducted under the auspices of the government's National Environmental Board. The review panels have advisory status in evaluating technical merits of completed EIAs, and can propose that an EIA be redone if it is judged technically deficient.

Within the legislative branch, pressure and support from the NGO environmental constituency has strengthened the role and prominence of the House Committee on Environment which is taking a more active role in championing a pro-environment agenda and overseeing government performance in this sector.

Finally, NGO support for the environment is closely linked to demands for greater democracy in Thailand. NGO calls for empowering community resource management is reinforcing the demand for governmental decentralization. Likewise, the government's proposed constitutional amendment for introducing a freedom of information act reflects persistent environmental NGO pressures for public hearings on infrastructure projects and a recognition that the public wants greater transparency in government proceedings, such as EIA reviews.

Finally, environment NGOs made important contributions to the May, 1992 uprising against the military regime. Many NGOs aligned

themselves publicly with pro-democracy forces or worked behind the scenes in supporting the protest movement. Their role in events in Bangkok were well reported, but they were active in the other regions as well, which did not receive much reporting. Thus, many regional environmental NGOs affiliated with NGO-CORD (described below) were active in organizing forums to protest against the military regime, and then a few months later in educating the public on election issues and monitoring the election process.

C. Case Study: Helping Slum Dwellers.

One product of socioeconomic change in Thailand over the past couple of generations has been rapid expansion of slums, slum dwellers, and slum dwelling as a way of life. From the late 1950s, large numbers of migrants have migrated from rural areas in search of manufacturing and service sector jobs, often in the "informal" sector and mainly to Bangkok and adjacent provinces. Many migrants were (and are) temporary, intending to return to village areas after a few years of urban employment and savings accumulation. Other migrants are seasonal, intending to stay only a few months; young people from northeastern Thailand constitute a large portion of this group. But a large group are essentially permanent, married or in permanent alliances, and raising children.

Despite the low earnings and insecurity of many households in the permanent group, at present there are numerous advantages to urban residence, even in slums. Among them are: easier access to free or low cost medical care in government and charitable clinics; access (at a price) to drinking water, electricity, and TV; and ready access to education, notably better quality public primary schools, secondary schools, and pre-school programs. Given low prevailing earnings in manufacturing and service jobs, housing budgets must be very small. Many migrants build their own dwellings on under-used public land: along railway rights-of-way, under raised highways and overpasses, near the port. Despite a lack of secure tenure, "penny capitalists" among the migrants may also construct houses or additional rooms for rent to other migrants. Insecurity of tenure is but one symptom of the anomalous social/legal/political status of slum dwellers.

In the 1950s slum dwelling was an anomaly in Thai society. Before 40-50 years ago they didn't exist, and until quite recently, say 20 years ago,slum dwellers had few recognized rights. As illegal squatters on state or private land, they lacked the house registration (caud thabian baan)that is the fundamental marker of membership in Thai society. Thus residents couldn't vote in national elections, apply for aid under government programs, or expect basic services such as drinking water, electricity, or public schools.

Khlong Toey, Bangkok's best-known slum, is adjacent to Bangkok's major port, and is roughly representative of the conditions of slum

life in Thailand in the '90s. Observers of developing country slums, familiar, say, with the bustees of Calcutta or favelas of Rio, may have some difficulty in recognizing Khlong Toey as a proper slum. While few roads are paved and houses have a "homemade" look, most homes have wooden walls and floors, metal roofs, electric connections, and TV aerials. Many children go to school, even to secondary schools. Despite their relatively moderate poverty and some improvements in social/legal rights in recent years, residents of Khlong Toey face "classic" problems of slum dwellers: higher morbidity, mortality, and crime rates; problems with AIDS, prostitution, and drugs.

The Duang Prateep Foundation

The Duang Prateep Foundation is a multi-faceted, service-oriented NGO that addresses many of the problems of residents Khlong Toey. The DPF had its origins in the mid-1970s, when a young resident of the Khlong Toey started an informal school for children denied formal schooling because they and their parents were residing illegally on Port Authority land. The school was declared illegal and initially opposed by education and port officials, who presumably feared administrative precedents, namely that illegal squatters were entitled to normal services (such as primary schooling), and perhaps that residents' claims to house land in Khlong Toey were legitimate. The mid-1970s were a "democratic interregnum", a period when a wide range of social experiments and political positions were countenanced by the authorities. The young woman (known as khru Prateep, "teacher Prateep") was able to establish and expand her school during the democratic period, and to keep it open despite opposition from the authoritarian government that came to power in late 1976. For her courage and entrepreneurial spirit she was awarded the Magsaysay Award in 1978, giving her and her growing organization an international reputation and a degree of protection against harrassment by the authorities.

When the team visited in 1994, we found a mature, broad-gauged, highly effective organization. The Duang Prateep Foundation (DPF) still operates under the daily supervision of Khru Prateep (a highly effective leader who combines a modest, cheerful demeanor with vision and great energy), but now has a large and effective staff. The financial future of DPF seems assured. Funds come from dozens of organizations and individuals in several countries, and the foundation has received significant support from Thai foundations and individuals. DPF has received very little support from USAID. A regional project for Asia, the Regional Narcotics Education Project provided $___ between 19__ and 19__. Funds were used for _____. Several ongoing programs benefit from the donated labor of volunteers, both Thai academics and international volunteers. A new building ensures adequate work space for the foreseeable future.

The bulk of DPF's work is in social programs for slum dwellers--

preschool and nutrition services, secondary school scholarships, training/handicraft/counseling programs for young women, drug education and treatment, AIDS prevention--and there is growing emphasis on activities outside Bangkok, including work camps for slum boys with drug problems, and community development programs for villagers. [?] Sociopolitical advocacy is not the major activity of DPF. Nevertheless, it is a significant activity, and integral to the organization's work. Advocacy was on the agenda almost from the beginning, as Khru Prateep fought for the right of slum children to be educated in state-supported schools.

Khru Prateep is herself the chief advocate on the DPF staff. There are apparently several reasons for this: She's fearless, and has a strong personal commitment to democratic change. Her international prominence over 15 years ensures any public position she takes will be covered in the press and mass media. She has a flair for public relations. She takes a broad, integrated approach to social change, not limiting her efforts to managing ongoing programs for "her" slum dwellers, though she does this very well. Her vision and sense of responsibility are far broader. Thus in recent years she could be found: "on the barricades" as one of seven elected leaders of the spontaneous movement (Confederation for Democracy) opposing authoritarian forces forming a new government in May 1992; active, as a board member of the Martyrs Foundation, in planning civic education activities across the country; protesting the deaths, danger, and health problems caused by a chemical fire in the Khlong Toey slum.

But her efforts and those of DPF didn't end with public protests. These were followed up with sustained efforts in public dialogue and policy change, including: seminars, press releases, a hearing in conjunction with Parliament's Environmental Committee, and concrete proposals for safer storage of chemical waste (outside urban areas).

The advocacy strategy of DPF and Khru Prateep can be summarized as a series of techniques and implicit tactics. Major elements include:

Sensible opportunism: Khru Prateep and DFP have sound ongoing programs,but react quickly and sensibly to key events, such as the chemical fire in _____ and the political movement in May 1992. The former event brought a well-orchestrated campaign to call attention to urban environmental issues and and the problems of slum dwellers. The democracy movement brought a fully-public response from Khru Prateep, who risked jail in order to bring the weight of her organization and public image behind the movement.

Coopting elites: Until recently, DFP achieved an aura of legitimacy through close association with representatives of two powerful Thai institutions, the royalty and the military/police. Foundation programs were supported by a Foundation operated by the King's

sister, and a retired police general served as chairman of the DFP board. Both individuals have severed their formal relationships with the foundation since Khru Prateep's direct, conspicuous involvement in the May 1992 democracy movement. The princess' foundation declined to provide new funding and the general resigned from the board. But Khru Prateep still manages to coopt both individuals from time to time, inviting them to open seminars or attend ceremonies, arranging press coverage of their visits, etc.

Shared responsibility for public relations: There is no office tasked specifically with public relations work. Instead, second echelon managers who head DFP's half dozen program offices are all "PR-conscious". They've been trained to identify opportunities for press releases, interviews, seminars, photo opportunities, placement of newspaper and magazine stories, etc. as an inegral part of their normal responsibilities for running programs in pre-school education,drug education, etc. Opportunities for public relations are routinely discussed at weekly meetings of senior managers,and these discussions routinely lead to placement of at least one story per week in local magazines and newspapers. They also arrange for frequent TV and radio coverage. Press coverage sometimes publicizes ongoing programs, sometimes directly addresses policy issues but, in any case, keeps DPF in the public eye.

Publications: DFP produces several publications each year, including newsletters (mainly reporting on programs, but indirectly highlighting such problems as drugs, prostitution, AIDS, and unsafe chemical storage) and issues-oriented pamphlets (which directly address social problems and sketch solutions).

PR files: DFP staff regularly clip newspaper and magazine articles covering the organization, its activities, and its policy agenda by: examining ongoing programs, quoting a staff member, editorializing in support of a policy position of theirs, etc.

Effective collaboration: Academics and scientists are asked to donate their professional services and lend the weight of their professional reputations to the service delivery and advocacy work of the foundation. They carry out modest research projects, develop policy prescriptions, co-sponsor seminars, and give public testimony. Similarly, foreign volunteers are asked to do small research projects and prepare pamphlets discussing policy issues. DFP staff are active in NGO coalitions, notably those working on environment and AIDS, and Khru Prateep is personally active in the Confederation for Democracy and the Martyr's Foundation.

Keeping advocacy activities off-budget: Despite controversial advocacy activities undertaken by DFP and Khru Prateep, potential donors have the option of supporting "safe" activities in pre-school education, AIDS prevention, treatment of patients affected by chemical pollution, etc. <u>These</u> activities are reflected on the foundation's budget. Advocacy activities, mainly dependent on the

time and energy of Khru Prateep and second level managers, are not directly reflected in the budget.

Impacts on Thai Civil Society

The DPF impacts positively on democratization and civil society in several ways:

Skills in Organzing at the Community Level: Most DPF activities are "service-oriented", but even in such cases Khlong Toey residents are not merely passive recipients of programs planned elsewhere and implemented by outsiders. The area is divided into neighborhoods with elected leaders and resident councils, and councils are active in planning and implementing most activities. In addition, many full-time employees of the Foundation are residents or former residents of the slum. Through concrete experiences as council members, program volunteers, and foundation employees, many local residents have gained solid skills in democratic organization, management, and leadership.

Enhanced Faith in the Democratic Process: Over the years the DPF has achieved real successes in establishing and sustaining programs, and in challenging and shaping public policy. Successes in both areas have no doubt convinced slum dwellers, and some outside observers of the "efficacy of civic action", and important step toward wide acceptance of the value of civil society.

Skills in Public Advocacy: Khru Prateep is a brilliant, largely self-taught practitioner of public advocacy. In addition, second line managers at DPF, and academic advisors to Khru Prateep, have learned much about the strategy and tactics of NGO advocacy. This growing pool of advocacy skills is a very real resource for civil society in Thailand.

D. Case Study: AIDS Prevention and Treatment

Thailand is in the grip of an AIDS epidemic. First generation (admitting a problem exists) and second generation (mobilizing the private and public sectors for action) responses have already been made, and over the longer term it's possible to imagine reasonable success in controlling the epidemic. But the realities of the present and near future are frightening. Current estimates of HIV/AIDS cases are on the order of 600,000 to 1,000,000. Some areas, notably the six northern provinces, suffer from incidence levels several times higher than the rest of the country. For example, of young men called for military induction physicals in the north, about __% test positive for HIV. In other parts of the country, the figure is __%.

Although Thailand has enjoyed very substantial economic success, and can better "afford" to deal with AIDS than most other developing countries, the epidemic will force stark economic and

social choices on her government and citizens: For example, without massive investment in hospital/hospice services, most Thai AIDS patients can probably expect to die at home. Unfortunately, this implies levels of openness and support many families and communities, through ignorance and fear, are currently unwilling to give. Furthermore, the course of the disease is likely to be quite different than it would be in Europe or the U.S. In particular, AIDS patients are likely to die sooner, succumbing to their first or second serious infection, rather than experiencing a longer series of illnesses, treatments, and remissions. There are rumors in northern Thailand of individuals, and even entire families, that have died with the illness undiagnosed and unacknowledged.

Broadly, NGO work on AIDS falls into three areas:

Education/Public Awaremnes: NGOs and some government units are working on a range of public education and awareness campaigns. We collected pamphlets that clearly outline the cause and transmission routes for the disease and lay out basic principles of safe sex. The epidemic is regularly reported in the press and broadcast media. It's clear many educated members of Thai society are knowledgable about the disease, and comfortable discussing it. It's less clear that knowledge is sufficient among ordinary citizens, or that education campaigns for teenagers, young adults, or married women have reached levels of concentration and effectiveness sufficient to slow and control the epidemic. One organization is operating a telephone hotline that seems mainly to serve the information and psychological needs of already-diagnosed HIV/AIDS patients, or those who fear they have the disease.

Treatment: Some NGOs, notably those in northern Thailand, are organizing home-and-community-based treatment systems. These provide guidance on home care to families, attempt to allay fears of patients in the family and community, and provide discussion group opportunities for families of AIDS victims.

Human Rights Issues: AIDS NGOs, particularly those in Bangkok, are currently seized with human rights issues, notably those of individuals already diagnosed as HIV positive. Since many firms have summarily dismissed those diagnosed with the virus, AIDS NGOs and human rights activists are working hard for legal recognition of the right of patients who are still fundamentally "healthy" to continue in their jobs. Recently, they have had considerable success in this area. Since few families have health insurance, unemployment benefits don't exist, and there are few funds for public welfare, it's also in the interest of the state to keep ambulatory patients working. To this point, there has been far less attention to the "rights" of healthy individuals who may be exposed to the disease by HIV/AIDS patients who are ignorant, careless, or unscrupulous. The Chairman of the national AIDS coalition noted this is an area that deserves attention in the future.

Dozens of NGOs, several NGO coalitions, and a number of government departments are active in AIDS prevention and treatment. Team members examined ongoing activities through interviews with NGOs and coalitions in Bangkok and Chiangmai, attendance at a Chiangmai AIDS conference, and review of information brochures and training materials produced by NGOs. We decided to examine ongoing work in this sector because AIDS is clearly a major social problem in Thailand, particularly in Chiangmai and the north. We found the bulk of current AIDS work focuses on effective, efficient, humane service delivery. Advocacy work is being pursued, but we found that efforts to alter public policy or programs represents a narrow band on a broad action spectrum.

Dozens of organizations are running small, apparently effective programs in public education/prevention, diagnosis and treatment, home care, and counseling. NGOS are achieving significant operating efficiencies by forming coalitions and working together; furthermore, coordination with government departments working in AIDS prevention and treatment seems quite good. We found broad sharing of information on operating strategies, frequent exchange of education and training materials, joint sponsorship of training-of-trainers sessions, and collaboration in designing training courses and drafting educational materials. An AIDS conference we attended in Chiangmai impressively demonstrated potential payoffs to collaboration. The session was jointly sponsored by _____, _____, _____, and _____. These efforts, valuable as they are for effective implementation and deserving of donor support, are not, however, the kind of activities we have chosen to emphasize in this study of "civil society organizations" or "advocacy NGOs".

One policy challenge that still looms in dozens of countries around the world, (getting government departments and sociopolitical elites to recognize a problem exists), was successfully met in Thailand several years ago. The media, politicians, bureaucrats, NGO leaders, and ordinary citizens generally agree that Thailand has a major AIDS problem.[8] We assume Thai NGOs played a significant role in achieving this perceptual transition, but didn't attempt to document the process.

Currently NGOs are addressing AIDS policy in two main areas:

Right to Privacy: As a result of efforts of AIDS groups and their allies who regularly human rights issues, employers have been enjoined from routine testing of new and current employees for HIV/AIDS. It's now widely recognized employees and job seekers can't be forced to have blood tests, though this "right" is probably abused in particular cases. *Patients' Rights to*

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[8]During our stay we heard and read estimates of HIV/AIDS cases ranging between 600,000 and 1,000,000 cases.

Employment: This issue was discussed above.

We also identified NGO efforts to establish new standards and practices in government service delivery. To the extent NGO efforts in system reform and enhanced accountability are successful, they seem consistent with our definition of "civil society organization". For example, staff of CARE and other network members in Chiangmai, (in their _____ project), are deliberately drawing public sector counterparts into collaborative working relationships, for example by providing clinic nurses and other health workers with AIDS training, educational materials, etc. By taking their public sector counterparts along on village visits, providing opportunities for them to meet patients at home, discuss problems and provide home care advice to their families, these bureaucratic service providers get a clearer picture of the AIDS challenge. These modest effort may yield significant payoffs, at least in Chiangmai, as workers in crucial departments become more collegial with NGO counterparts, and more receptive and accountable to ordinary clients. If these efforts lead to system change across the region, or throughout Thailand, CARE and other network members can be credited with a solid success in advocacy and policy change.

Contributions of AIDS NGOs to Thai Civil Society

AIDS NGOs are making a major contribution to civil society in Thailand by establishing new patterns of public/private collaboration in a crucial aspect of social life. In many areas--early recognition of an impending problem, public education/information campaigns, recognition of rights of patients and employees, efforts to work with families of AIDS patients--NGOs have taken the lead. But there has been consistent recognition of the need to collaborate with government, to take full advantage of facilities (hospitals, clinics, innumerable public health personnel) and services (blood testing, collection of morbidity and mortality data, research on the efficacy of traditional drugs in treating AIDS symptoms), and to pursue efforts in enhancing the quality and effiectiveness of government programs. With the exception of the business associations, which have worked exclusively on economic policy, and largely in pursuit of their own interests, NGOs have probably never taken such a strong lead position in public affairs.

E. Donor Investments in NGO Advocacy

While the rise of the NGO-led environmental movement by and large can be attributed to home-grown stresses associated with rapid

economic growth, external donor investments have played a role in strengthening their role in civil society. An important building block for the NGO movement was put in place in the mid 1980s when the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funded the establishment of the Local Development Institute. The Institute, headquartered in Bangkok, assumed a twofold responsibility of (1) funding grassroots, rural development NGOs and (2) helping with the networking of coalitions around rural development issues

The strategy employed was to fund numerous NGO projects as learning experiences, enhancing capacities in identifying, analyzing and addressing major rural development problems. Networking activities were designed to build partnerships among academics, NGOs, and villagers as participants in the learning endeavor, and to initiate forums and policy advocacy work in addressing rural issues.

The CIDA program operated through NGO coordinating committees (NGO-CORDS) in five major regions of Thailand. Each regional NGO-CORD consisted of member NGOs who paid small annual dues to participate in the network. The most active are the North NGO-CORD (currently with 52 NGO members), and the Northeast (with 67 members). The southern regions, except for the Bangkok metropolitan area, have much smaller memberships, ranging from 15 to 16 members. Each of these NGO-CORDs concentrate on topic areas which concern their region. Most have given priority to land, water and natural resource issues, and particularly community forestry.

The CIDA sponsored project assumed greater prominence in 1986 when the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) urged the establishment of a national coordinating committee to represent the interests of the NGO sector in planning sessions of the NESDB. Thus a national coordinating committee (National NGO-CORD), was established with a board of directors and a small support staff to help in networking with the NGO community and to articulate their views before the NESDB. The regional NGO-CORDS then became affiliated with the national NGO-CORD.

CIDA funding for this effort has been sustained for over a decade and was complemented as well with funding from the Ford Foundation, the Friedrich-Naumann Stiftung and the World Council of Churches. In 1990, USAID became a major funding source through the PVO-Co-Financing project, which was is major component of the Thailand Mission's new Democratic Pluralism Initiative (DPI) program. Private Agencies Collaborating Together (PACT) undertook the project, which goes under the name of "Strengthening NGO Institutions/Building NGO Coalitions: An Environmental and Self-Sustaining Approach," otherwise identified by the acronym--SPIRITED. Total A.I.D. funding for this four year effort, due to end in September 1994, is $1.6 million.

SPIRITED focuses on enhancing NGO capacities to address issues in the areas of environmental conservation, land use and community

forestry, and environmental health. PACT is focussing on improving NGO performance in skill areas relevant for advocacy work in each of these topics. The themes include improving skills in coalition-building, strategic planning, media production, public relations, fund raising, and policy advocacy. SPIRITED funding was supplemented in 1993, when USAID arranged for PACT to implement the Environmental Journalism Network project. This is a three year $600,000 effort to strengthen reporting of environmental issues.

The PACT strategy includes a focus on working with NGO-CORD networks, particularly the regional NGO-CORDs, and in this sense it builds on what was started in the mid 1980s by CIDA and other donors. In particular, it seeks to deepen and broaden policy advocacy capacities which remain relatively weak. However, the PACT approach is also different in several major respects. First, it concentrates on environmental issues which impact on urban as well as rural society, and thus, many of the NGOs which receive PACT assistance have been outside of the NGO CORD network, but are becoming linked together through PACT supported coalitions. Second, PACT concentrates on issues of NGO financial sustainability not included in any previous major, donor assisted NGO activities.

The role of PACT can best be described as that of a catalyst or broker in bringing together NGOs which otherwise might not come together around issues of common concern. NGO coalitions are formed to conduct action research, public awareness campaigns and policy advocacy. Most activities which PACT supports involve very small grants (typically from $1,000 to $15,000) for training workshops and seminars, pilot projects in action research, or public forums where representatives from the private and public sector, the media and academia are brought together to discuss important public issues.

In great measure PACT is seeking to address those factors which have most obviously limited the impact of NGOs in civil society. In particular, NGOs tend to define the development problems they address to narrowly; to employ a limited range of advocacy measures; to operate in a solitary fashion rather than in alliances with other NGOs; to not follow-up with practical and technically sound proposals; and to rely excessively on external donors for funding their activities.

An excellent example of problems which constrain NGO effectiveness were indicated by issues addressed in a recent PACT-supported advocacy training program. As part of this effort, a seminar was held to review several case studies of NGO efforts in public advocacy. The studies identified typical problems which hinder NGO representatives who engage government officials in policy dialog, including: "inadequate information on the technical and social aspects of the problem being addressed, poor understanding of relevant laws and regulations, and poor planning." This seminar was followed-up with a PACT-financed study tour for NGO leaders to

India and the Philippines to see how more advanced NGOs undertake policy advocacy work.

PACT is seeking to expand the array and sophistication of strategies the NGO sector can employ in becoming more effective agents of advocacy and change in the public policy arena. Thus, NGO leaders are trained to diagnose environment/natural resource issues from a more holistic and resource systems perspective. Likewise, NGOs are encouraged to reach out to each other and to other sectors, such as government and business, in building alliances which can be leveraged in influencing public policy. Finally, efforts are being made to enhance the technical and professional depth of the NGO community so that advocacy efforts can be conducted in a more professional manner with the public, and within the halls of parliament and executive agencies.

CHAPTER 6

MEASURING PROGRESS OF NGO DEVELOPMENT IN CIVIL SOCIETY

How does one measure progress and impact from donor investments in civil society of the kind the USAID/PACT effort is undertaking? In the early phase of such a project, which is now only four years old, PACT project managers stress that measures have to emphasize qualitative changes: Is their more cooperation and collaboration between NGOs and other sectors or society? Is the content of discussion more constructive and technically grounded? Are proposals more realistic and is there follow-up in assuring their adoption and implementation.

On most of these measures there are definite signs of progress in the PACT prject. In particular, there is greater collaboration between NGOs and important actors in government and non-government institutions. However, NGO experience in effective advocacy is still limited, and efforts in developing cross-sectoral cooperation and linkages with the business community are embryonic at best. Finally, PACT project managers acknowledge almost no progress has been made in creating a policy and institutional framework which would encourage the NGO sector to transfer their base of financial support from external to domestic sources.

A second measure of progress is the extent to which pilot projects and locally based NGO initiatives begin to take on a broader regional or national focus. In order to influence national policy and exercise pressure on the state bureaucracy, NGOs need to scale-up in size and reachout in alliances with other interested constituencies. This is beginning to happen in the area of industrial pollution and hazardous waste monitoring. PACT has been supporting a coalition of groups and organizations interested in

initiating a national program to enhance the community capacities in monitoring and enforcing regulations regarding waste management.

In several important ways the waste management initiative is precedent setting. First, it is national in scope. Second, it is the first initiative which brings together the usual partners of such endeavors (community organizations and activist NGOs) but also includes, for the first time, the weight of several national professional organizations. The Occupational and Environmental Medical Association, the Environmental Engineering Association, and the Law Society of Thailand have joined together with NGOs and community groups in sponsoring seminars and formulating a proposal for funding future work in this area.

A third characteristic which distinguishes this initiative is that the funding proposal calls for resources far exceeding what PACT is able to provide. $1.6 million is proposed over a three year period. This funding level is intended to transform the current working group into a full-fledged public interest coalition, and eventually a foundation. Funds would be used for the following purposes: enabling community organizations and NGOs to more effectively monitor industrial pollution and toxic waste management; broaden coalitions and strengthen linkages to other sectors of society, including business and government; raise public awareness; and enhance NGO participation and skills in policy advocacy to pressure for greater government transparency and accountability in enforcing regulatory practices.

Securing funds for the working group proposal will be a formidable task and points to a third measure in assessing progress under the PACT project and the NGO sector in general: namely, the growth in capacity of indigenous Thai institutions to serve as sources of funding support for the NGO sector, and particularly public interest NGOs. For numerous reasons, Thailand has been slow to establish the policy, regulatory and institutional infrastructure necessary for supporting this function.

Until recently, the NGOs sector has had a continuous and secure flow of funding from external donors and therefore it has been slow in taking initiatives to foster local funding systems and a more favorable environment for mobilizing funds from domestic sources. External donors have also been remiss in this regard. The CDIE team found little indication of donor dialog with the public and private sector on this issue, and no evidence of efforts to provide funding on a matching or other formula basis as an incentive for NGOs to raise local funds. The PACT project is only one of two externally funded efforts the CDIE team encountered which is designed to address issues of financial sustainability. The Asia Foundation is also pioneering an imaginative approach to this problem, mentioned below, and Ford Foundation staff also indicated awareness of this issue.

The absence of self-initiated NGO fund raising arises, in part, from the fact that most NGOs are very small. A survey conducted in the late 1980s found that half had staffs of fewer than five persons, and three quarters of the sample had annual budgets of less than $40,000. Most were not membership organizations, so they do not raise funds from annual dues. In brief, many organizations simply did not have sufficient funds, manpower or skills for launching and sustaining a viable funding campaign.

To outside observers it would seem reasonable for smaller NGOs to scale-up by merging their assets, thereby qualifying for government recognition as full-fledged foundations which would make them eligible to receive tax exempt contributions. However, a legacy of distrust and suspicion between government and NGOs has inclined few to take such action. Government procedures for registering as a foundation are seen as onerous and intrusive and few non-charity and non-welfare NGOs are registered. They therefore have no legal status, which frequently excludes them from receiving government funding and gives them no legal standing in courts should they want to engage in public interest litigation.

The problem of mobilizing domestic funding is further compounded by the fact that there is little precedent in Thailand of public or corporate contributions to public interest type NGOs. Potential contributors seem leery of NGOs who are engaged in contentious policy advocacy issues. There is a strong tradition of public and corporate giving to charitable and social welfare causes, and several NGOs in this sector have been able to build up a large and sustainable base of domestic funding through a diverse range of funding strategies including direct mail campaigns and profits from the sale of books, calendars and other items. Only a few public interest associations are beginning to explore these types of income generating activities, and public support for their efforts still remains incipient.

In order to address the larger issue of building a strong, financially self-sustaining NGO sector, particularly for those groups actively pursuing social and political change, intermediate institutions are needed which can attract significant funding and dispense these funds directly to individual NGOs. Such institutions serve a function equivalent to that of financial intermediaries in the banking and credit sector. The latter mobilize capital from diverse sources and assure investors they are credible and trustworthy fiduciaries. By serving as a mechanism which distances or separates the depositor from the eventual recipient of a loan, the intermediary is unencumbered by the biases of the former to invest in both conventional and more risking-taking ventures.

The need for this type of intermediary institution within the NGO sector is now recognized by a number of Thai leaders and a few initiatives are underway to address this issue. Two initiatives,

in particular, are worthy of mention. First, PACT is working with a group of prominent Thai leaders from the NGO, university and corporate world, who recently established The Thai Foundation, the mission of which is to mobilize sources of domestic funding and serve as a grant-making mechanism to the NGO sector. Grants would be targeted largely to those NGOs addressing cutting-edge development and policy advocacy issues and less to those who are engaged primarily in conventional social welfare activities. The Foundation is still in the very early stages of institutional design and strategizing to secure its funding base. Supporters hope to attract major domestic corporate and external donor contributions toward an endowment.

A recent survey funded by the Asia Foundation examined Thai corporate practices with respect to philanthropy and indicated a general receptivity to the concept of a foundation. The recent establishment of the Chaiyon Limthongkul Foundation represents a start in this area. The Foundation, which has a multi-million dollar budget endowed from the profits of a family owned corporation, will support activities in public policy, international affairs, arts and culture.

A second initiative is supported by the Asia Foundation. The Foundation is helping to establish a "green" mutual fund which will invest only in those Thai companies who have a record of observing environmental standards. Part of the earnings of the fund will be earmarked for distribution to environmental causes, including NGOs who are part of Thailand's environmental movement. Aside from serving as an intermediary institution as described above, the mutual fund joins an incentive for private profit with that of supporting a public interest.

The above initiatives come at a time of some peril for the NGO-CORD network, which has been largely dependent on CIDA, Ford and USAID/PACT project funds. CIDA has ended its funding, and is reducing its presence in Thailand, and A.I.D. is closing out altogether, with the PACT SPIRITED project scheduled to end in September, 1994. The National NGO-CORD office has not been able to attract replacement funding from other external donors and its staff is being reduced. There is some hope the newly established Thai Foundation, mentioned above, will be able to assume some of the roles which are now being suspended by the national NGO-CORD. Meanwhile, the regional NGO-CORDs are also at risk, dependent as they have been on grants from the national office. It appears some of the regional branches may be able carry on, largely through the strength of some of their member NGOs, who have external donor funding.

In summary, this section concludes on a note of uncertainty concerning the growth and role of the NGO sector in strengthening civil society and democracy in Thailand. As mentioned above, there is a need for institutional innovation in creating the

infrastructure and incentives necessary for supporting public interest NGOs. The demand for such innovation is only beginning to emerge, and therefore we return to a central thesis of the paper that the NGO sector is in an "emergent" condition. The transition beyond this phase may be difficult and some NGOs are already in a state of demise. For most donors, who have been quite generous in their past contributions, and of which many are now reducing their funding, there is little evidence that they are coming forward with a coherent strategy for assisting Thailand through the transition.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CIVIL SOCIETY

As this paper suggests, economic progress in Thailand is far outpacing changes in the social and political sector, a condition reflects an imbalance in the evolution of civil society. In the past decade, the business sector, through its peak associations, has gained a position of considerable weight in advocating its interests in the councils of government. As a consequence, business, along with the state bureaucracy and the military share the commanding heights of political power, although the latter two constituencies are experiencing a gradual erosion of their former dominance.

The state enterprise labor unions, and their counterparts in private industry, are the only other sector of civil society with any significant organizational strength. However, the exercise of this strength is narrowly constricted by the state, which in alliance with business has been able to stifle the emergence of an organized labor force in the industrial sector.

The remaining elements of civil society, which are still in their infancy, are emerging from a variety of sources. NGOs are multiplying in great numbers, particularly since the mid 1980s, but most are quite small, and are not membership organizations. They do have peak associations but they are quite weak in comparison to their analogues in the business sector. A few professional associations which are membership organizations, are just beginning to surface as important actors in civil society, as evidenced in the abovementioned hazardous waste project.

Aside from the non-governmental sector, universities are emerging as significant contributors to the growth of civil society. These institutions operate in the state sector but enjoy considerable autonomy and freedom from government control. This has allowed individual faculty members to act as spokesman for social and political change as evidenced by the fact that many advocacy NGOs have been started and are led by university faculty. The

universities themselves have been active in responding to social issues, as is evident, for example in university sponsored women's studies centers. Some faculty lament, however, that universities have neglected to articulate public service as a priority mission, and their contributions remain much less than what they could be. Student associations, the other segment of the university community, have figured prominently as actors in civil society, both at the local level in organizing community actions, and at the national level in supporting NGO campaigns.

In summary, except for the business sector, all of the above elements of civil society are relatively weak, and their reach seldom extends beyond a local or regional setting. These weaknesses are surmounted when they are able to coalesce around particular issues. Thus, civil society experienced an extraordinary and unprecedented surge with the pro-democracy movement in 1992, but this soon dissipated.

More durable coalitions have cohered around other issues, with the environment and natural resource agenda being the most powerful drawing card. Elements of this agenda frequently draw support from a wide range of constituencies which otherwise would have little in common. These coalitions can take on considerable dynamism in secondary cities, such as Chiangmai, where a growing urban population, joined with a regional university and local business interests, represents a strong countervailing power vis a vis an overcentralized government bureaucracy. In this regard, environmental issues carry with them farreaching implications and multiplier effects in bringing greater decentralization, transparency and accountability in government actions.

Other issues currently have much less potency in mobilizing coalitions for advocacy and activism. Thus, civil society has yet to draw much strength from those who advocate for the rights of women, the poor or labor unions. Those groups working on behalf of more effective government attention to the AIDS issue are making headway but still have some distance to travel.

In all cases, those NGOs who take on a more public interest orientation, and thereby enter the arena of policy advocacy, face the risk of losing financial and political support. The Prateep Foundation lost several of its board members when it went public in supporting the pro-democracy campaign in May, 1992. The Environmental Policy Institute initially has tried to assume an impartial stance in the policy arena, but is beginning to realize that it cannot avoid taking partisan positions. Given the corporate basis of its support it obviously must approach this issue with some caution.

The issue of partisanship and policy advocacy highlights the most glaring weakness in Thai civil society: the general absence of an institutional infrastructure necessary to support and strengthen

those elements within the NGO sector who are gravitating, by intent or otherwise, towards a public interest orientation. This condition is a product of long-standing government policies and cultural proclivities which have served to narrow the boundaries of civil society in favoring more conservative and non-partisan social welfare/economic development activities. There are some incipient signs of Thai public entrepreneurs who are working to expand these boundaries, but external donors, both public and private, which could have been an important source of support, have not taken much action in this area, and many are now leaving the scene.

CHAPTER 8

POLICY PROPOSITIONS

A range of strategy issues and lessons emerge from the Thailand case study. Since it is only a sample of one, generalizations are not warranted which extend beyond this individual case. However, the issues and lessons which follow, will merit close examination in the next series of CDIE country studies on civil society.

A. Sustainability

The new USAID policy assigns priority in helping countries to achieve sustainable development. The Thai case represents an interesting test case in the operationalization of this policy. Thailand, as this paper indicates, is moving vigorously towards a self-sustaining status with regard to economic growth. However, there is much less evidence of such self-sustaining capacity in the political arena. Indeed, strengthening civil society assumes even greater importance where, as in the Thai case, the institutions of democracy still remaining weak and fragile.

USAID could rationalize its impending termination of the Thailand bilateral program on grounds that current and future funding from external donors and domestic sources are sufficient to support the growth of civil society. This paper indicates that such a scenario is problematic at best, as other donors are downsizing their investments, with domestic funding institutions available to take their place. It may be that A.I.D. needs to further clarify the grounds for country terminations in order to not let robust performance on economic indicators, supersede or overshadow, less positive performance on the political front.

B. Sequencing

A major issue concerns the type and sequencing of civil society strategies which would seem most appropriate for countries at a level of development similar to that of Thailand. The PACT

strategy is placing major emphasis on a bottom-up, evolutionary approach, i.e. setting in place the building blocks of civil society by strengthening local and regional NGO networks, and facilitating their gradual extension to a national level, as epitomized in the hazardous waste NGO initiative. In brief, the PACT strategy is action and issue driven, in that it encourages NGOs to work together in addressing development problems and devising new institutional arrangements which support their efforts.

The PACT strategy is not a traditional institution building approach. Rather, it is expected that institutions will emerge as a consequence of the cooperative links, demands and needs generated through NGO coalitions, as evidenced for example, in the proposed Thai Foundation as well as the hazardous waste proposal. In this sense institutions become the product of a long-term process, patiently cultivated by PACT.

USAID and other donors are rapidly reducing or terminating their presence, thereby cutting short what would be needed to bring the PACT effort to fruition. In this case, fruition means an initial nucleus of intermediary institutions would be in place necessary to nurture and sustain an expanding civil society, particularly the public interest subsector.

The beginning elements of this infrastructure are prefigured in the form of the Thai Foundation and the hazardous waste initiative, neither which has any funding commitments. Thus, these two promising precursors may fall by the way side, and even if funded, a number of other such initiatives would need to be cultivated in order to build the broader range of intermediary institutions required to sustain the growth of civil society.

In brief, USAID faces the immediate prospect that with the impending termination of the PACT project, its investments in the civil society sector are at risk of producing few returns. In retrospect, this risk could have been reduced through one or two measures, or a combination thereof: (1) assigning a longer time horizon for the bottom-up evolutionary strategy as reflected in the PACT effort, or (2) focusing exclusively or in combination with the first strategy on building intermediary support institutions.

The second strategy would be more top-down and directive, with USAIDS working with elites from the corporate, government and NGO sectors. The emphasis would be on developing a strategic dialog between these representatives of very different worlds in order to dispel areas of mutual suspicion, identify areas of common concern, devise plans for building institutional intermediaries, and cooperate in their achievement.

The top down strategy would seek to create the structural reforms necessary to support a growing civil society. It has its analog in

the movement of the donor community towards economic structural adjustment policies in the 1970s, when it was realized that investments at the micro (firm or farm) level needs to be accompanied by macro changes which allow entrepreneurial behavior to grow and flourish.

Just as economic adjustment strategies require some degree of donor coordination and cooperation at the country level, reforms of a structural nature in civil society would also require donor collaboration. In the latter sector, macro reforms, such as for example, endowing foundations, will require joint investments from numerous donors in order to reach critical thresholds of capitalization.

Aside from marshalling limited donor funds for a macro push in the civil society sector, cooperation is also needed in order to assure that NGOs begin to act strategically and collectively in enhancing the future sustainability and growth of their sector. While this may or may not require the formation of strong NGO peak associations (in the U.S. the Council of Foundations serves as an important peak association for the foundation community) there will be the temptation for some NGOs to work out separate relationships and favors with particular donors, thereby reducing the incentive for many NGOs to labor on behalf of the larger goals of the sector. This can be avoided only if donors act in concert in supporting more collective endeavors.

C. Country Specificity

Public concerns over the environment and natural resource use have been the motivating force behind the growth of civil society in Thailand, and as with any market-driven change, NGOs have been both responsive in capitalizing on public concerns for reform in this sector, and entrepreneurial, as well, in expanding market demand for reform through educational and advocacy campaigns. Furthermore, USAID was prescient and astute in identifying this issue as a major growth sector and the medium through which it would support the growth of civil society. This experience would suggest that civil society strategies should be linked to those problems and issues endemic to a particular society, whatever they be, which are stimulating public demand for institutional reform. This approach stands in contrast to recipe or or blueprints which establish a uniform set of target sectors for all countries. More than one road can lead to the same destination.

C. Integrated Sectoral Approaches

The Thai study suggests there could be ample multiplier effects from incorporating more explicit civil society strategies as part of other sectoral activities. This paper has stressed the significant spinoffs for good governance from investments in public interest organizations involved with the environmental movement.

The same applies with respect to the education sector, where Thai universities, particularly those located in more urbanized settings, have become seeding grounds for the growth of civil society. They have accomplished this by virtue of the autonomy that universities have come to enjoy from governmental control.

The agenda for investments in university development as part of civil society/cum democracy program, needs to include not only an emphasis on achieving greater university autonomy and security of faculty positions. These efforts should also involve a more self-conscious assessment how university missions, structures and programs can be reconfigured to enhance the contribution of higher education in strengthening civil society. There is criticism that many Thai faculties have assumed such a narrow technocratic orientation as to seriously circumscribe their role as a medium for social and political reform.

D. Regional Networks

The Thailand case illuminates the need for USAID and other donors to consider a more regional perspective in their support for civil society programs. Southern China and Southeast Asia are undergoing rapid economic change which in turn is opening the way for accelerating processes of social and political reform. A.I.D. could capitalize on these dynamics by creating opportunities for exchange, cooperation and assistance between the countries in the region.

There is considerable variation in the development of the various sectors of civil society in each of the countries in Southeast Asia. More advanced sectors could be of assistance to their weaker counterparts in the region. This possibility is well illustrated in the case of the peak business associations in Thailand and their meetings with counterpart associations in other Southeast Asian countries in the regional ASEAN Chamber of Commerce and Industries forum. It was in these meetings in the mid 1970s that the Thai representatives realized how far behind they were with other ASEAN countries in having a well organized business association and advocacy agenda. Soon thereafter they took measures to address these weaknesses.

Regional networks can also assume value in helping the U.S. and other donors to keep a lower profile in supporting civil society. It is interesting to note in this regard that the Asia Foundation is supporting on leaders of the Thai women's movement to work with Vietnamese women's organizations in redefining the role of the latter as they move into a new era of more openness with regard to social and institutional change. Finally, regional, as opposed to bilateral projects, which do not have to pass through host-government approval processes, might open the way for more innovative programming in the civil society sector.

E. Business Associations

One of the most intriguing facets of the Thai experience has been the capacity of the business community, through the formation of peak associations, to effectively advocate a reform agenda on behalf of their interests. This has served Thailand well in helping to fuel the engine of economic growth and to bring about greater governmental accountability and performance in those areas of public policy and administration which affect the business sector. A.I.D. grants to Thai business associations were instrumental in helping them to become more competent in representing their interests in the councils of government. In brief, the Thai case demonstrates the value of investing resources in those associations which can work to support progressive policy agendas.

F. Labor

The Thailand case strongly suggests the need for rethinking the role of labor in the growth of civil society. Labor unions remain on the defensive in Thailand and their role and growth will continue to be constrained by an unsupportive government and repressive business practices. Donor support for a direct and frontal effort in expanding organized labor, under the banner of labor's rights, would likely be counterproductive, putting at risk past gains hardwon by a vulnerable and recently weakened labor movement.

Given the constraints on more direct donor involvement in the labor sector, the union movement, anemic as it is, still represents an important constituency which has the potential for either hastening or retarding the growth of civil society and democratic processes in Thailand. This was well illustrated in the May, 1992 demonstrations, when some unions supported the NPKC, while others joined forces with the prodemocracy movement. As an organized sector, leaders of the state enterprise unions, in particular, were able to quickly mobilize their members in opposition to the military regime.

The challenge for the donor community is to begin to think more imaginatively and strategically about the role of labor and in particular the kinds of more indirect approaches which could be employed in strengthening its contributions and reformist role in the Thai polity. For example, the Thai case indicates that there are several issues around which coalitions of labor and other groups can generate considerable synergy in the service of an action agenda. In particular, issues involving the role of women in Thailand are beginning to draw together labor and women's activist groups. This was demonstrated in the successful campaign extending maternity leave, an effort led by women labor leaders but joined by several women's activists NGOs. The same possibilities for cooperation between labor and other non-labor groups exists

with respect to industrial pollution and occupational safety.

In summary, support for labor may arise from sources outside the labor movement itself, such as women's rights groups and environmental organizations addressing issues integral to the concerns of labor. Donors could be instrumental in supporting the development of coalitions among these groups, thereby assuring that labor issues receive more attention than they would if simply confined and addressed within the narrow boundaries of support for organized labor.

G. Evaluation

The review of the Thailand experience suggests that A.I.D. needs to take a hard look at the type of program or project evaluation methodologies which it employs in the democracy sector. Basically, there are two types of evaluations; evaluations which look at performance with respect to input delivery and outcomes at the output level, the analysis of which may extend to the impact level; and evaluations which evaluate the relevance of a program or project strategy.

In many sectors within the larger A.I.D. portfolio, the Agency has built up a sufficient repertoire of experience to feel relatively confident about the development strategies it employs within these sectors. Thus, there is frequently some justification for utilizing input/output cum impact type evaluations, with lesser weight given to strategic evaluations. This same rule does not apply to most of the work being undertaken in the democracy area. This is a relatively new endeavor, and the Agency does not have a corpus of knowledge and experience to assume that its current country democracy strategies are appropriately specified and targeted. For this reason, much greater emphasis needs to be placed on strategic evaluations.

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