

Changing borders of the management unit: an effect of decentralization and formalization in communal forest management, Yasothon, Thailand¹

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Abstract

Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) is often regarded as one of the vital options to achieve environmental protection and social justice in rural area. Here local communities are assumed to be more effective than state in managing their resources, and the smallness of communities and resources themselves partly presuppose this assumption. In many cases, decentralization of natural resource management thus aims to “scale-down” formal operational management unit in order to achieve better resource governance. On the other hand, recent administrative reforms in developing countries sometimes require larger area as a management unit, in order to formalize local management institutions. Through the coordination of these contradicting forces regarding management units, it appears that communities and authorities try to establish “nested enterprises” of resource management. How then can communities and authorities institutionalize these “nested enterprises”? What problems will arise in the process? And how will the process affect potentiality of management performance? Taking two contrasting processes of the “scaling-up” attempts in communal forest management in Thailand as examples, this study examined similarities and differences in the process of coordination of management units.

The study found that, firstly, both cases had experienced two-stage process of development in resource management institutions, although the influential actors in the process were different. Second, each process had faced its unique set of problems in resource management, indicating their path dependency. Third, local enclosure or “territorialization” process, which is prone to broke off existing network of resource use, was more representative than internal institutional evolution process within the community. This process is considered to be one of the key concepts in understanding current coordination process of community resource management in Thailand, as well as “networking” process in the case of community forest movements in the Northern area.

Key words: *community-based forest management, coordination, decentralization, Thailand*

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Introduction: the coordination of management units in CBNRM

Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) is often regarded as one of the vital options to achieve environmental protection and social justice in rural area. Here local communities are assumed to be more effective than state in managing their surrounding resources.

The proponents of CBNRM point out that, in many cases, CPR regime can evade CPR dilemmas, as communities can develop institutions to monitor and sanction free riders with low transaction costs (Wade 1988, Ostrom 1990, Bromley 1992, Baland and Platteau 1996). In this regard, the smallness of the community and resources can have an important effect in reducing these transaction costs. For example, villagers can easily communicate with each other in a small community³, which enable their situation to transform cooperative game from non-cooperative game (Ostrom et al. 1994). In many cases, decentralization of natural resource management thus aims to “scale-down” formal operational management unit in order to achieve better resource governance.

On the other hand, there are some factors that prefer larger units of management. First, the benefits from resources may sometimes have an economy of scale, which requires larger area as a management unit. Second, the communities with abundant resources may face difficulties in motivating resource conservation, which justify strong governmental intervention that sometimes results in enlargement of the management unit⁴. Third, formalization of resource management or involvement of local government may sometimes require unification of management institutions in some level, mainly due to administrative simplification.

Thus we can consider two contradicting forces in determining a unit of resource management. This necessitates some form of coordination among communities and upper authorities through institutional design. Through such a formal and informal coordination of management units, it appears that communities and authorities try to “optimize” the size of the management unit, or to establish “nested enterprises (Ostrom 1990)” of resource management. How then can the communities and authorities institutionalize these “nested enterprises”? What problems will arise in the process? And how will the process affect potentiality of management performance? These questions appear to be important when we consider how we can construct a system which effectively connects local resource governance with that in regional, national, and global level. Taking the two contrasting processes of the “scaling-up” attempts in communal forest management in Thailand as examples, this study examined similarities and differences in the process of coordination of management units.

In the paper, I first introduce the current trend of community forests in Thailand, as well as the study area and method. Here I propose an importance of Tambon (sub-district) level coordination, particularly that of the Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAOs). Second, I focus on two contrasting cases of resource management reform: the top-down process in

³ Heterogeneity of the community can be another factor that strongly affects the level of transaction costs. However, existing studies suggest mixed results on how it affects the CPR management. Varughese and Ostrom (2001) refer to it in their introduction section.

⁴ Tachibana et al. (2001) refer to it as “dilemma of forest management policy (p. 311).”

Tambon NK and the bottom-up process in Tambon KJ. Third, I try to examine some notable differences and characteristics of these processes, in order to conceptualize coordination processes of institutional design.

1. The “TAO” as an arena for coordination in communal forest management

In Thailand, communal forests are the forests managed collectively by the community members to serve various activities in the community⁵. For instance, sacred forest (*don puta*) and cremation forest (*pa cha*) are basically conserved for ritual purposes. Other communal forests are conserved for the villagers’ daily use: gathering forest products, grazing, etc. These are commonly observed in rural areas of Thailand, particularly in the northern and northeastern regions. In many cases, the management unit of communal forest coincides with a village or several villages which share the same identity⁶.

In the past, like most developing countries, official legislation and policies supporting management of communal forests were weak. For example, few public land titles (*no so lo*) were issued for these communal forests until the 1980s (Shigetomi 1997). Therefore, most were informally managed by the community members and how these forests are managed simply depended on the community. Most of their management rules were also implicit, and relied on cultural beliefs and community norms. The boundaries of the forests were not clearly defined, although there was some consensus among the villagers.

These situations have been gradually changing, however. First, villagers themselves have introduced “tighter” management rules. Shigetomi (1996) refers to resource scarcity as a primary reason for such institutionalization⁷. On the other hand, some anthropologists taking “right-based approach” explain that community forest movement was initiated as a tool for villagers to negotiate with the state, in order to defend their customary rights of resource utilization from the state’s threat (Ganjanapan, 2000). In any sense, it is clear that many villagers are coming to take collective action to manage or claim their resources⁸.

Second, the central government has been trying to formalize rules in order to narrow the gap between *de jure* and *de facto* rights of the management. Since the late 1980s (particularly since the 1990s), forest department has gradually supported communal forest management including registration, material supply, training, etc. The Ministry of Interior has also increased the issuing of public land titles for communal land.

⁵ “Community forest” is another word indicating forest managed collectively by the community members. In fact this word is more commonly used in Thai academic and policy frameworks. In the community, it sometimes suggests communal forests with official registration. As my analysis includes both informal and formal management, I have applied the term “communal forest” for the paper.

⁶ I regard these “village groups” as a community in this study.

⁷ This view is similar to the induced institutional innovation theory, which Otsuka and Place (2001) applied in their comparative study of Asia and Africa.

⁸ Another change is that the villagers’ resource use patterns themselves have changed in accordance with the rapid socioeconomic changes. For instance, some villagers have gradually substituted natural products with industrial products (Tongpan et al. 1990).

The existence of these “bottom-up” and “top-down” forces suggests the necessity of coordination of management unit among communities and authorities, as I described in the introductory section. In this regard, the role of intermediate level organizations and local autonomy is considered to be critical. The Tambon Administrative Organization (TAO), a local autonomy entity in sub-district level, is thus expected to provide an arena to coordinate these forces in determining a unit of local resource management⁹.

The TAO was officially established after the enactment of the Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Organization Act of 1994¹⁰. It has been expected to serve as an engine to promote public participation toward the rural development and democracy. The TAO consists of a council and an executive board. The villagers in each village elect two council members for the former. While for the latter, a head of the TAO is directly elected by the people in the Tambon.

After the enactment of the 1997 Constitution and the Determining Plan and Process of Decentralization Act of 1999 (referred as the Decentralization Act), the government has implemented the process of decentralization step by step in order to enhance the strength of participation by the people in local communities (Bureekul, 2006). The government granted some level of budgetary and administrative autonomy to the TAO, and has delegated various local development tasks that were previously implemented by the central government agencies to it.

Together with the development planning and the provision of local public goods such as public infrastructure and public health, supporting participation to natural resource management is considered as one of the important tasks of the TAO. However, the degree of participation of the TAO or the villagers in the Tambon varies among cases, which appears to affect problems and potentialities of the CBNRM. The two case studies, followed by the description of the study area, exemplify the contrast coordination processes of the resource management unit.

2. The study area

The study area is in K district, Yasothon province of northeast Thailand. It is located 25 km southeast of the provincial capital, Yasothon city. The accessibility is relatively good, as a highway connecting Yasothon and Ubon Ratchathani city runs through the center of the district. The topography consists of lowlands (approx. 120m above sea level), gently undulating hills scattered in the lowlands (approx. 140m above sea level), and flood plains of the Sebai and Chi rivers which flow along the eastern and western district borders, respectively. Most of the forest patches are distributed in the flood plains, natural levees and hills, while paddy fields are dominated in the lowland area.

The villagers' basic occupation is agriculture, particularly rice production in the lowland. Most of the paddy fields are rainfed and planted with both

⁹ The local administration in Thailand consists of province (*changwat*), district (*amphoe*), sub-district (*tambon*), and village (*muban*).

¹⁰ Prior to the enactment in 1994, the local administration in Thailand was generally centralized through the vertical administrative line of the Ministry of Interior. Local autonomy was therefore very limited both in terms of quality and quantity.

glutinous rice for self consumption and non-glutinous rice for commercial purposes. Other field crops such as cassava and rubber are planted on the largest hill located in the northern part of the district. In addition, the current cattle boom has drastically increased the number of cattle being bred, and the areas under fodder production are also increasing.

There are few non-farm industries in the district. In fact, Yasothon province is one of the poorest provinces in Thailand. According to the NSO (2003), the average monthly income per household in the province was THB 6,045 (USD 151), the lowest in Thailand in 2002. Therefore, many villagers migrate to Bangkok for non-farm income during off-farm seasons. On the other hand, the villagers' dependency on natural resources is higher. Official data suggests that 80.6 percent of the households in the province use fuelwood or charcoal for cooking, while the regional average in the northeast is 62.4 percent (NSO 2001a; 2001b). Together with paddy fields and water bodies, most of the forest patches distributed in the district are important sources of natural products necessary in the daily life of the villagers. Moreover, most of them belong to communal land according to villagers' land classification.

Main field information utilized in the paper was obtained during August – September 2005. Some complementary surveys were also conducted during January – February 2007. Information was obtained from a series of interviews with the villagers, local officers and members of TAO council, and from secondary sources. In the paper, I focus on two notable cases as a case study: Tambon NK and KJ. The former is located in the southeast of the district, and the latter in the northeast. As shown in Table 1, both two Tambons have a similar level of land and forest area, although the population is larger in Tambon KJ. Actually, these areas are among the most forested areas in K district. The process of coordination, however, had taken contrasting ways in these cases. Top-down institutionalization had dominated in Tambon NK, while bottom-up motivation had induced the unification of management in Tambon KJ.

Table 1: Comparison of Some Basic Statistics in Tambon NK and Tambon KJ

Items	Tambon NK	Tambon KJ
Population	3,668	6,231
Number of villages	8	12
Total area (ha)	5,980	5,400
Total paddy field area (ha)	2,262	2,823
Total forest area (ha)	1,493	1,229
Major cultivation crops	Rice	Rice
Major livestock	Cattle	Cattle
Total number of communal forests	13*	25**
Total area of communal forests (ha)	653*	520**

Source: Sun Borikan Thaithot... Tambon NK 2004, and Sun Borikan Thaithot... Tambon KJ 2004 except stated figure. The total forest area in Tambon NK is a sum of "forest area" and "communal land area."

*Khana Kamakan Phitcharana... n.d. As a significant part of communal land is non-forest, the total communal land is larger than this figure.

**Based on my field interview in 2005.

3. A top-down “scaling-up” process: the case of Tambon NK

Institutionalization of resource management in Tambon NK started with PI villages. PI villages, consisting of 202 households, are located in the center of the Tambon¹¹. There are abundant forests in the area, including along the flood plain of the Sebai river and scattered hills. Most of them are communal lands utilized by the villagers. There are 7 communal forests in the PI village, covering more than 270 ha. Of them, the forest named “*ban kao* (old village)” is particularly famous for its richness¹².

As the name tells us, this forest is located where the old village once stood. In 1932 the village was abandoned because malaria broke out and many villagers died there. At that time, some moved to the current location, 4 km away. The area has been communal land ever since. Like the other communal lands in the village, it was a source of forest products, and in some parts, villagers planted various crops such as beans and gourd by shifting cultivation. During the kenaf boom in the 1960s, kenaf was planted in the area and some parts of the forest were degraded.

The situation changed in 1983. A monk came to live in the forest and started meditation there. He initiated forest conservation, and after that shifting cultivation stopped¹³. Under his initiative, communal forests in the village were managed by a forest care committee. Managing rules with sanctions were formed to punish violators. The remaining forest was well conserved and the degraded area gradually recovered.

Then the year 1999 became another turning point. The provincial forest office noticed that the forest here was well conserved, and chose it as a target of the “Forest Conservation Volunteer Training Project (*ro so tho po*)¹⁴”. The officers then nominated the forest for the award. To meet the project standard, certain conditions had to be met, including forming a forest care committee, management rules, violation controls, volunteer patrols. In all, about 100 people from PI and neighboring villages in the two Tambons (Tambon NK and DY) participated in the training project. After the training, a new committee consisting of forest conservation volunteers in the 9 villages was established and new, unified management rules were formed. The volunteers build signboards and firebreaks, and “educated” villagers on the importance of the forests. As a result, they were awarded a royal flag by the Queen in 1999¹⁵.

¹¹ There are 2 villages (*muban*); village no.2 and no.8, which share the same name and origin. Village no.8 diverged from village no.2 in 1978. They also share the same school, temple and communal lands. In the description, therefore, I regard them as a single community.

¹² There are other local names for this forest; *wat kao* (old temple), *pa cha kao* (old cremation forest) and so on.

¹³ He was born in the PI village. After living in Bangkok as a taxi driver and a while in a military camp in Lopburi, he decided to become a monk at the age of 30. He is a pupil of a famous abbot residing in Ubon Ratchathani, and many city-dwellers come to worship and contribute to the temple. During the interview, the village head told me that the forest would have disappeared if this monk had not initiate conservation at the time.

¹⁴ This is the project started by the military in 1989 which “educates” villagers to understand the importance of the forest and awards royal flags from the Queen to the forests with good governance.

¹⁵ The Queen came to the forest and gave a flag directly to them. This was a significantly honorable event in the history of the village.

The forest was renamed "*Pa chum chon charoem prakiat 72 pansa* (the community forest in honor of H. R. H. the Queen's 72nd birthday)". In 2002 the conservation area was expanded to 20 plots (around 700 ha) in 16 villages, and at the same time the committee was re-organized (Khana Kamakan Phitcharana... n.d.). These plots were then registered as "community forests" by the forest department.

This is a brief history of the Tambon NK case. The institutionalization process here is, in short, outsider-oriented. The first-stage rule formation was from the monk's initiative, and during the second stage the government expanded its area and formalized its management. The whole process was underpinned by a cultural apparatus such as religion, and a state apparatus such as the royal family. Throughout the second stage of institutionalization, people's participations in decision making or TAO's involvements are minimal, although they are generally cooperative to such "top-down" forces.

The villagers' everyday life is much more pragmatic, however. Thus there is a wide gap between such cultural and state discourses and everyday life. During the survey, a village elite and his wife in NK village, one of the neighboring villages of PI villages, asked me how they could increase benefits from the forest. They told me, "We wish to get something from the forest, but now we cannot fully utilize it because of the strict management rules. We are now discussing this issue and if you have some good ideas please tell us."

In fact, NK village participated in the forest care committee in 1999, but did not participate in the re-organization of the committee or register its communal forests in 2002. According to them, "Registration causes other problems. When we registered (the communal forests in Tambon NK and DY), we had conflicts concerning which Tambon to register first. Management by committee members results in the villagers being uncooperative, as they rely entirely on the committee members. We have successfully managed (the forest) for a long time, and we will continue to do so. We do not have to register.¹⁶"

Thus they felt that their communal forests would be beyond their control if they accepted formalization. In this context, ironically, the formalization may deprive villagers' access to the forest. The names of the communal forest in PI village, "*pa chum chon charoem prakiat 72 pansa*" and "*ban kao*" seem to symbolize the gap between the discourse and everyday life, and the dilemma of formalization. The NK villagers might become critical due to this dilemma.

4. A bottom-up initiative in the unification of management: the case of Tambon KJ

Tambon KJ, which is located in the northeast of the district, consists of 12 villages with 1,065 households¹⁷. The forests here are distributed along the natural levees of the Sebai river and on a hill in the western part of the Tambon. Some of these forests are communal forests, and villagers have utilized them for a long time. Up to now, the management of these forests was

¹⁶ A citation from field note by Ms. Yuki Onodera (2004). I thank her kind acceptance of using the information.

¹⁷ The population and household data are based on Sun Borikan Thaithot... Tambon KJ (2004).

done by each village (or villages). Therefore, there were significant differences of management rules among them¹⁸. Even with the variation in the rules, the forests here were not seriously depleted because of the mild pressure of land and forest (Kono et al. 1994).

The situation, however, has changed recently. New road constructions and repairs in the 1990s improved access to the Tambon. After access improved, many outsiders from various places came into the forests and extracted significant amounts of forest products for selling in the market. Especially during the beginning of the rainy season (May – June), they come by pick-up trucks in groups of 10 or more. They often arrive early in the morning and look for mushrooms in the forests¹⁹. As a result, many villagers in the Tambon have felt uneasy, for “*the outsiders are benefiting from our forests while we, the owners, are still poor.*” In addition, the outsiders often disturbed the forests by cutting, setting fires, disposing the waste, and so on. The village leaders felt that something must be done to save the forests from this destruction.

As the outsiders come by vehicles, the accessible range is large, and the conventional management was not effective. Members of the TAO council then started to discuss the unification of the management rules in the Tambon. After several rounds of discussion, they decided to join a training session held by the forest department. After the training, a public meeting was held on June 3, 2005. The attendants included members of the TAO council, village heads, TAO officers, school teachers, district forest officers and ordinary villagers. After the meeting, a new unified management rule was introduced over the individual rule of each communal forest, and a forest volunteer committee was formed by 61 members from 12 villages.

The new rule consists of 11 articles. It prohibits tree cutting, fires and cultivation in the communal forests in the Tambon. Villagers can ask the committee for construction poles from the forests. The articles also regulate hunting in the forests and fishing in the water bodies²⁰. Violators are fined by the committee, according to the nature of the violations.

The most unique point of the rule lies in its regulations on outsiders. It stipulates that outsiders need to ask permission to the committee before they obtain resources, and they pay fees of 20 baht each. Resources are also limited to 4 kg each (Khana Kamakan Klum Rasadon... 2005). Violators are penalized up to THB 1,000 (USD 25) and informants are rewarded 25% of this. Fines and fees collected are a part of the committee's revenue, and are utilized for conservation activities. Some measures are to be taken for collecting fees. For example, the members of the committee patrol the Tambon regularly. Many signboards stating the rule are posted at check points.

Quite naturally, this rule created a stir among the villages nearby. For a long time they had utilized the forests and water bodies in the Tambon to obtain natural products for their livelihoods. With this rule, however, they

¹⁸ For instance, NG village, located in the western part of the Tambon has had strict rules since 1989, while there were no such rules in KS village, located along the Sebai river.

¹⁹ Some of the mushrooms have a high value. According to the villagers, a mushroom called *het puak* is valued at THB 170-200 (USD 4-5) per kilogram in the local market. They say there are a lot of such mushrooms in the forests there.

²⁰ It bans the capture of aquatic animals during periods of fertility (May – July). Illegal means of capture both in the forests and water bodies are also prohibited.

became “outsiders” and were excluded. Some of them appealed to the district to allow them use of the resources, but the district and TAO tried to defend themselves, explaining that they do not totally exclude outsiders²¹.

On the other hand, some villagers were also against the rules. Outside influences varied significantly across the villages and the motivations were different. Some villagers also utilized resources in other Tambons. For example, some NG villagers often fish in the Tambon LH, which has a lot of marshes in the flood plain of the Sebai river. They feared that the introduction of such rules would anger Tambon LH villagers and result in the same kind of rule formation there. After all, they accepted the proposals because they were in the minority.

In the case of Tambon KJ, I can point out three notable points. First, there was strong motivation for the rule unification by the villagers, even though the resources were abundant. The improvement of access induced outside disturbances in the forest, and this led to high motivations for the rule formation. The involvement of the TAO in the process was also high, indicating active people participations in decision making. As in this case, many anthropologists studying in Thailand reported that outsiders’ threats triggered villagers’ collective action (Wittayapak and Dearden 1999, Ganjanapan 2000, Johnson 2001). Moreover, this logic is also easy to explain using the game theory (Ubukata 2007a).

Second, the villagers did not recognize “scarcity” but rather the “affluence” of the forest resources in the area during the process. In other words, they were suddenly incorporated into the broader system of “scarcity” by the invasion of outsiders whose resources were already scarce. In this sense, “scarcity” is not necessarily an actual concept that is identical to the physical amount of resources. As Aguilera-Klink et al. (2000) and Mehta (2001) pointed out, it is a human perception, which is socially and politically constructed, and depends heavily on the social context itself. It seems, at least, that something should be mediated between the physical amount of resources and the recognition of scarcity (or recognition of the need for rule making) by the villagers. Some events, or a diffusion of ideas or feelings create a common recognition among the people. In this case, “a sense of deprivation” by the outsiders was diffused in the Tambon. This constructed a “Tambon identity” (i.e. *we* as forest owners and *they* as invaders), and created incentive structures for rule making.

Third, the introduction of the rule created conflicts both inside and outside the Tambon. This is because the villagers’ original resource use pattern was not territorially restricted, but rather created geographical networks with various options. The attempts to “territorialize” the resources, as in this case, necessarily forced the networks to change²². It is very likely that the neighboring Tambons will take on similar measures, and at the same time,

²¹ When the issue was raised during interviews, the villagers around the Tambon often passionately appealed to me regarding the current situation. In fact, during the year 2005, the committee only cautioned outsiders and did not collect fees. This may have been a temporal compromise by the committee. And in 2006, villagers in Tambon LH gained silent approval (*anulom*) in their forest use, for their forests are adjacent to Tambon KJ’s forests.

²² Tubtim and Hirsch (2005) introduce a similar instance in a backswamp in southern Laos. Peluso (2005) also comments that “the politics of both commons and CPRs are becoming increasingly territorialized (p.1).”

such conflicts will also increase.

5. The characteristics of the coordination processes

The above case studies exemplify the contrasting (scaling-up) coordination processes in the district. The logic of Tambon NK case is similar to other cases where there are conflicts in forest use between the government and villages (ex. national park etc.). In Tambon KJ, both internal and external factors seem to be well-mixed. Villagers' motivation was high enough to take the initiative in institutionalization, and government aid helped them. Several comments can be pointed out in comparison with these cases.

First, both cases had experienced two-stage (from community level to Tambon level) process of development in resource management institutions, although the influential actors in the process were different. In Tambon NK, strong external forces such as cultural and state apparatus took initiatives, while the TAO and villagers' attitudes were somewhat passive. In Tambon KJ, the outsiders' threat induced local collective action, and villagers actively discussed the issue in the TAO. In this context, the coordinative roles of TAOs were important. It appears that the TAO more or less offered an "arena" of coordination of the management unit as well as institutional formations.

Second, recent social, economic, and cultural transformation in the villages had caused new type of problems in resource management, which has prompted villagers and authorities to coordinate management unit of communal forest. In Tambon KJ, access improvement had caused outsiders' commercial exploitation of forest products, while in Tambon NK villagers were forced to cope with recent governmental intervention. In both cases, social changes and state interventions during the 1990s had created necessities to develop "Tambon-ization" of the management from the management by individual communities.

Third, each coordination process had faced its own patterns of problems in resource management, though both cases are regarded as "successful cases" in the district. In Tambon NK, external interventions have created some fears among village elites for losing villagers' customary management rights. In Tambon KJ, villagers are facing difficulties in explaining why they had to limit resource exploitations by the neighboring villagers. As their coordination processes differed according to the type of interactions between community members and external actors (namely, the government and outsiders), this led to different consequences and problems in managing the resources.

Such a path dependency also implies different potential measures in the coordination process. For example, it is necessary for the Tambon NK case to enhance internal motivations through consciousness raising and through the investment in social capital. Long term soft projects other than resource management, e.g. microcredit, may nurture social capital both in intra and inter community. For Tambon KJ where both internal motivations and external forces are high, it is important to consider whether the direction or strategy of both can be consistent with each other. Otherwise serious conflict may occur between community and aid agents. Besides, it is necessary to communicate with the neighboring villages or TAOs for the conflict resolution.

Forth, "territorialization" or local enclosure is one of the key concepts in understanding current coordination process of community resource

management in Thailand. As in the case of Tambon KJ, the process of local enclosure is currently much more important than internal institutional evolution process within the community, particularly in considering the “scaling-up” type of the coordination process. This also suggests that some of the current coordination process in Thailand is likely to confront with existing network of resource use through such “territorialization.” This appears to be unavoidable as far as the process is based on the formal autonomous entity such as the TAO and the central government agencies.

In this context, the comparison with the cases of the community forest movement in the northern part of Thailand can provide us some notable differences. First, in the northern case, the “scaling-up” process was not done through territorialization but through networking, as the collective action and coordination directed to the political movement (cf. Narintarangkul Na Ayuthaya 1997). In addition, some NGOs also supported the movement, while the involvement of the TAO was limited (Bureekul 2006). The second difference lies in the governmental action itself. In Tambon KJ, the government had a supportive role in their institutionalization process, while main argument of right-based approach basically regarded government as outsider and intruder. Whether the governmental action is “benevolent” or “oppressive” may depend on various factors. Site effect or Zoning effect is one of them. Currently it is not likely that the government behaves as consistent “benevolent” actor to villagers in national parks or wildlife sanctuaries (cf. Sato, 2002).

6. Conclusion

Taking the two contrasting cases of the communal forest management reform in Thai communities as examples, this study examined the coordination process of resource management unit and its path dependency. The study found that, firstly, both cases had experienced two-stage process of development in resource management institutions, although the influential actors in the process were different. Particularly, social changes and state interventions during the 1990s had created opportunities to develop “scaling-up” and formalization of the management unit in these cases.

Secondly, each process had faced its own patterns of problems in resource management, though both cases are regarded as “successful cases” in the district. In Tambon NK, external interventions have created some fears among village elites for losing villagers’ management rights. In Tambon KJ, villagers are facing difficulties in explaining why they had to limit resource exploitations by the neighboring villagers. Such a path dependency also implies different potential measures in the process.

Third, the local enclosure or the “territorialization,” which is prone to broke off the existing network of resource use, was more representative than internal institutional evolution within the community. This is considered to be one of the key concepts in understanding current coordination process of community resource management in Thailand, as well as “networking” process in the case of community forest movements in the Northern area.

Finally, the study implies that the management unit is not a given condition in the actual institutionalization process of CBNRM, but a variable which is decided as a result of the coordination process mentioned above. In

the current globalizing world, we can no longer assume “isolated communities,” but should examine how the global, national and local external actors affect collective action in contemporary “connected communities.” In this sense, the “scaling-up” attempt of community resource management, as well as the decentralization of resource management, is regarded as one of the important attempts when we consider how different stakeholders can coordinate each other within one institutional design. It is strongly necessary for us to examine dynamic relationship between community, management unit, and its governance in our rapidly changing society.

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