

**New momentum to Bangkok's organic food movement:  
interspersed scenes led by mindful pioneers**

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## **List of abbreviations**

ASEAN – Association of Southeast Asian Nations

BMA – Bangkok Metropolitan Administration

CP – Charoen Pokphand

CSA – Community supported agriculture

GAP – Good agricultural practice

NGO – Non-governmental organisation

PGS – Participatory guarantee systems

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme

WHO – World Health Organization

i.e. - that is

e.g. - for example

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## **I Zusammenfassung der Studie**

Vorliegende Arbeit mit dem Titel *New momentum to Bangkok's organic food movement: interspersed scenes led by mindful pioneers* untersucht die aufkommende Bio-Szene in Bangkok und deren Akteure, die sich auf verschiedene Weise für die Verbreitung von Nahrungsmitteln aus biologischem Anbau einsetzen. Die Szene umfasst sowohl Bio-Anbau als auch Bio-Konsum; ihre Akteure verfolgen unterschiedliche Ziele, die es zu ermitteln gilt. Einige unter den Akteuren sind auf Grund ihres langjährigen Engagements Bio-Pioniere und funktionieren dementsprechend als Vorbilder für weitere Akteure. Ihren Einfluss gilt es herauszufinden.

Die Studie gibt eine Übersicht über die Situation des Bio-Anbaus in Thailand, die die verschiedenen regionalen Praktiken – nachhaltige oder natürliche Landwirtschaft – sowie die Wurzeln der Bio-Bewegung nachvollzieht. Ein Schwerpunkt liegt auf dem urbanen Kontext der Bewegung, der den Markt für Bio-Lebensmittel, urbane Bio-Gärten, die Akteurs-Netzwerke und unterschiedlichen Institutionen umfasst.

Auf räumlicher Ebene bewegt sich die Studie von Bio-Anbau vorwiegend in Bangkok und der nahen Umgebung, aber bezieht einige ländliche Bio-Projekte ein. Auf zeitlicher Ebene werden die dortigen landwirtschaftlichen Veränderungen der letzten Jahrzehnte bis heute erarbeitet, sowie die neueren gesellschaftlichen Entwicklungen hin zu wachsendem Gesundheits- und Ernährungsbewusstsein. Darüberhinaus werden die möglichen Aussichten für die Bio-Bewegung in Bangkok in der Zukunft abgeleitet.

## **II Abstract**

This thesis, titled *New momentum to Bangkok's organic food movement: interspersed scenes led by mindful pioneers* analyses the organic food scenes in Bangkok and their array of stakeholders. It includes emerging trends for organic foods – production and consumption – and continuous engagement of stakeholders in the organic movement. It further seeks to identify pioneers who notably shaped the organic movement or are shaping it, and to investigate their effects.

Apart from a general review of organic farming in Thailand, which comprehends diverse practices of sustainable or natural farming, and the origins of the local organic movement, the work examines their urban context: urban food outlets and other marketing platforms, urban gardening projects, networks and NGOs, social enterprises, governmental or educational institutions. The spatial scale of the study principally considers organic farming projects in and around Bangkok but extends to some observations on rural organic farms. On a temporal scale, it processes agricultural

changes from the past decades until now, as well as more recent trends towards food and health awareness; it further implies possible future outlook for organic food movements in Bangkok.

Two main objectives of the study lie in the motives of the various stakeholders to engage in organic activities, and in the possible interpretation of emerging organic scenes as a New Social Movement. Further research questions address relationships between the movement and common local ideologies, personal attitudes or spiritual beliefs; modelling effects of key stakeholders and pioneers; structural frames, particularly the mega-urban setting of the movement.

# 1. Derivations

## 1.1 Contextualization of the research

This study of emerging organic food movements in Bangkok is embedded in a general megacity research. While anchored in the field of urban and social geography, it elaborates anthropological and ethnological aspects.

Beginning with the structural settings including the mega-urban context in which the scenes range, the geographical dimension of the topic is examined. The actual phenomenon of the organic food scenes then follows with an interpretation for their anthropological aspects.

Observations, case studies and expert interviews approach the various relevant sets of stakeholders in the urban organic scenes empirically; they cover organic consumers and growers alike. Farm visits in several rural Thai regions give further insights into the organic farming practice.

The theoretical framework for the study borrows from a range of mostly sociological and psychological theories and concepts such as New Social Movement theories, social identity, self-identity, concepts of alternative food, and sociology of consumption.

Recognising how the emerging organic food scenes work in a megacity like Bangkok, and how these scenes reflect their local geographies to contribute to what is proposed to be a larger singular movement is one aim of the study.

### 1.1.1 Definitions

The study uses a number of verbal concepts that might require a brief introduction.

'Lifestyle', 'alternative living' and 'mindfulness'

The concept of 'lifestyle' goes beyond the simple way of how people live their daily routines. It can contain connotations of fashion, leisure and pleasure, especially in the urban world. This resonates with the observations gained from fieldwork which are that respondents often thought of 'lifestyle' as something luxury and fashionable. However, 'lifestyle' also includes a meaning of personal life aspiration, the way how individuals actively perform their living. The study refers mainly to 'lifestyle' for this aspirational notion; there is also allusion to 'sustainable' or 'alternative' living, both expressions linking to the organic scenes in Bangkok and referring to stakeholders whose attitudes lead them towards more conscious living, concerned with factors like health,

environment, well-being, mindfulness. 'Alternative' hence means ways of living differing from the common paths in Bangkok. 'Mindfulness' is a further term employed in the discourse of alternative lifestyles and the organic food scenes. Referring to one's attentiveness to his or her environment, it appears in this study in the context of mindful consumption and of Buddhist practice; also, in reference to psychological motivations guiding individuals' engagement.

#### Urban agriculture in the Bangkok context

*RUAF* Foundation<sup>1</sup> gives the following definition of 'urban agriculture':

*“Urban agriculture can be defined as the growing of plants and the raising of animals for food and other uses within and around cities and towns, and related activities such as the production and delivery of inputs, and the processing and marketing of products. Urban Agriculture is located within or on the fringe of a city and comprises of a variety of production systems, ranging from subsistence production and processing at household level to fully commercialised agriculture” (Veenhuizen 2006: 2).*

'Urban agriculture' is the most universal term to describe the cultivation of crops in and around cities, and equally seems appropriate for the Bangkok case. After the given definition, 'urban agriculture' implies peri-urban agriculture and can also include orchards, animal husbandry and fish or bee keeping. The interview respondents mostly use 'urban farming', as does literature on the topic, therefore this term is adopted. However, urban farming in Bangkok is rather small-scale, mostly on the scale of backyard and kitchen gardens, so the term 'urban gardening' is also used. Animal keeping, although existent, is hardly significant. The term 'city farming' derives from the local *Cityfarm* network, will hence frequently appear.

#### Organic agriculture in the Thai context

The international body IFOAM<sup>2</sup> defines 'organic agriculture' as:

*“a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of*

---

1 *RUAF* Foundation – Resource centres on urban agriculture & food security: A leading global network researching and promoting in the field of urban agriculture and rural-urban food strategies based in the Netherlands since 1999. It publishes regular magazines as well as books, guidelines and research papers (*RUAF* Foundation. About *RUAF*).

2 IFOAM – International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements: An umbrella organisation founded in 1972 promoting organic agriculture globally and connecting stakeholders from over 100 member countries. IFOAM set up organic agriculture principles that are applied by certification bodies in stakeholder countries (IFOAM. <http://www.ifoam.bio/>).

*inputs with adverse effects. Organic Agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved” (IFOAM. Definition of organic agriculture).*

The commonly used term 'organic agriculture' or 'organic farming' is ambiguous in the Thai context and prone to misinterpretation or misconception. While generally used by international bodies like IFOAM as a concept of guidelines that clarify internationally required standards, 'organic' risks to be understood as a commercial tool in Thailand. Looking at how standardised organic farming is carried out in Thailand helps understand this: Despite some exceptions, certified organic farms tend to produce in the commercial sphere, using industrial growing techniques in combination with organic inputs. Certification of organic produce is a costly and rather unreasonable process for small-scale growers who represent the predominant form of farming in many parts of the country. Therefore, most growers rarely afford the step of organic certification that is needed for the export market.

'Organic agriculture' or 'organic farming' in Thailand coexist with a number of other concepts that are namely, according to how they are commonly translated from Thai language, natural farming, traditional farming, ecological farming, sustainable farming, alternative agriculture, agro-ecology, and more. As these all originate in traditional farming practices adapted to their local contexts that can be seen equal or even going beyond the principles of organic agriculture, this study considers all of those concepts. It is therefore referred to organic farming, including the local concepts in Thailand.

### 1.1.2 Research matter and relevance

The access to healthy food has become a relevant topic in Bangkok. Urban citizens become more and more concerned about the quality of conventional foods that are ubiquitously available in supermarkets, on fresh markets or in restaurants. At the same time, wearying mega-urban living can cause stress to the urbanites, engendering the rethinking of their ways of living. KANTAMATURAPOJ (2012: 270) comments as follows: “The urban lifestyles may also increase psychic tension and create physical problems, which make people in Bangkok pay attention to health issues”. Cultivating food in the city becomes a possible aspiration for urbanites, for it allows them to maintain recreational activities, and partial independence from the conventional market. Concerning urban gardening in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the issue of food security can play a minor role as well.

Parallel to these trends, small-scale farmers in rural regions continue to suffer from the effects of (imposed) industrial agriculture which impact their health and natural environment, and entail financial bottlenecks. Many farmers, in order to provide their farming inputs, need to take out loans while the market price for their produce is low. On top of that, many have to cope with long-term ecological damages to their environment, as well as allergies and other health concerns due to sustained exposure to chemicals.

Food is an important matter in Thai culture, so it is not surprising that its provenance is being questioned by consumers. The growing consciousness about food origins is reflected in both, the nutritional quality of their foods and farmers rights. Organic agriculture can be considered as a possible alternative to conventional food production. Then again, fast foods are encroaching upon the traditional Thai cuisine increasingly, both, local street fast foods and international fast food chains. Fast foods are of more concern in relation to the nutrition and health of people, and are seen as directly related to the rise of non-communicable illnesses in Thailand (KOSULWAT 2002; CRAVEN & HAWKS 2006). The abundant opportunity for fast food consumption is changing not only nutritional patterns but also the local eating habits.

Principally, various sets of stakeholders determine the organic movement in Bangkok: consumers of organic food, urban gardeners including peri-urban farmers, organic farmers in the rural area, governmental and research institutions, NGOs and associations, and private entrepreneurs. They link within various networks that connect more or less to each other. Consumers are mostly urban individuals with aspirations for healthy lifestyles, and have relatively high purchasing power: “Consumers in Bangkok are modernized, urbanized, relatively rich, and rather concerned about food safety” (KANTAMATURAPOJ 2012: 270). Furthermore, there is an array of private entrepreneurs whose business is to negotiate between growers and consumers. Among them are social enterprises that own shops and brands selling farm produce, that guarantee fair prices to the growers and quality to their customers. Farmers' markets provide a direct sale platform that the organic growers physically attend. Various NGOs dedicate their work to the promotion of farmers' rights, ecological preservation or consumer information.

Organic farmers supplying their organic produce to Bangkok practice mostly in rural regions. There are some farming projects in proximity to Bangkok that grow organically or are in the process of conversion, whose incentive it is to cater to the urban consumers. They run, for example, under pilot projects integrated into university curricula or private initiatives. Their approaches to and motivations for growing organically are diverse. The effect upon their growing and marketing practices is explained further later in the study.

An important network mainly acting via social media is the *Cityfarm* network. It connects

urbanites who are interested in cultivating food in the city, and has a group of core members that creates regular gatherings, workshops, seed exchanges and other events. Their philosophy is to grow organically by creatively using spare urban space. Their position in the organic movement is transitional between consumer and grower.

While these stakeholder actions base on direct participation, governmental institutions act on building up frameworks: The Department of Agriculture has implemented the practice of organic agriculture in their National Development Plans, the Ministry of Public Health created the Thai Health Fund deriving funds from taxes in order to support health related private initiatives. Beyond that, certain universities in Thailand have integrated organic farming in their curricula.

People who become interested in organic activities, if they are not following mere trend, are usually those who already show a certain level of awareness of issues relating to human well-being such as health, environment, social justice, mindfulness. Although these persons each have their individual objectives, there are grounds for assuming higher, mutually shared ideological principals. These principals can act as driving forces as they exist in social movements. NGOs and private stakeholders in both the rural and the urban context attend themselves to sustainable farming measures for the sake of improvement of farmer's rights, environmental degradation, consumer safety, education, and health promotion. Their engagement can be traced back to the early 1980s when NGOs started sustainable farming projects in north-eastern Thailand. It has been accompanied by organic implementation strategies by the government. For several key stakeholders, their engagement goes beyond mere work or hobby; they have been, and still are, playing a pioneering role in the organic scene as either role models for their followers, or as significant figures communicating alternative attitudes that contribute to the organic food counter-trend.

The principal research area is mega-urban Bangkok and its periphery, where the demand for healthy food mainly generates.

Bangkok is considered within this study as the country's centre for emerging movements of consumer awareness and organic food consumption. However, the market for organic food is limited, difficult to access, and strongly dependent on the supply from other regions. Organic products can be found in some supermarkets and specialised shops (cf. KANTAMATURAPOJ 2012: 271, 277). During the past three years, a small number of farmers' markets have emerged and are held regularly to attract a growing number of sustainable lifestyle buyers. Besides organic farmers who sell their produce directly, processed and home-made food, cosmetics, crafts and lifestyle products are available. However, a number of initiatives have created linkages between urban consumers and organic farmers outside of Bangkok, mainly in rural areas but also in the peri-urban area; or they encourage private people to use their own spare space for growing vegetables. Despite the rather

unfavourable conditions for urban farming in Bangkok due to its dense built-up area and the high land prices for undeveloped land, plots are still cultured in the urban fringe, some of them organically, recalling times when Bangkok used to be an amphibious city with orchards and vegetable plantings alongside the canals, only a few decades ago (cf. SUTEETHORN 2009; McGRATH & THAITAKOO 2005: 43ff). In the city centre, spare spaces have started to be converted, such as backyards, balconies and rooftops into small plantations.

### Relevance

The study is embedded in a research focus on the urban geography of megacities. With over 5,6 million inhabitants in Bangkok Metropolis and over 10,5 million within the Bangkok Metropolitan Region (Bangkok Metropolitan Administration 2013: 6), Bangkok is an example of a dense and busy megacity whose food offer is shaped by existing market networks. Consumers strongly depend on the goods offered, especially as urban lifestyles – time-consuming traffic, commuting, work routine or distances between places of daily practice – leave consumers little time to dedicate their thoughts to the choice of foods, if not already committed to conscious eating.

Bangkok's urban environment, city climate, pollution, and growing cancer rates are topics that worry many citizens and contribute to their ambitions for healthy ways of living. The mega-urban lifestyles are broadly perceived as unhealthy and detached from nature.

Organic foods can be considered as one part of healthy living because their production involves no chemical inputs that may return harmful residues. Apart from the health aspect, there is an additional lifestyle dimension: Bangkok has a sufficient share of wealthy consumers with purchasing power and concern about food and health, making organic food provision pertinent. However, healthy food does not need to, and should not, aim exclusively at wealthy middle classes. Cultivation of organic foods in the urban sphere can enable people to access healthy food and can thus become a tool for low-income neighbourhoods. This could contribute to both an economic benefit to poor households and their physical and psychological well-being.

Growing food in Bangkok is certainly not a new trend. Situated on fertile alluvial plains of the Chao Phraya River, the city's amphibious ecology formerly favoured large orchards, paddy fields and vegetable cultivation. Most of the cultivated land gave way to uncontrolled, rapid urbanisation during the past 50 years (cf. VANNO 2012: 3/5). The recently emerging *Cityfarm* scene in Bangkok as described in this study recollects these former practices. It is committed to growing after organic principles as a relevant trend towards sustainability. Organic farming can generally be seen as a response to environmental pollution and health risks taken through conventional agriculture. In the city, it can furthermore function as a means to balance the urban ecology through

creating green areas as well as enhancing urban climate and air quality, and further, to mitigate climate change impacts. VANNO (2012) and SRIVANIT (2011, 2012) allude to the significance of urban greening measures. Natural disasters such as the big flood during the rainy season of 2011 raised awareness notably for urban ecology issues among many Bangkok citizens, who considered this as an alarming sign that their lifestyles should change towards more sustainable living. In this way the floods became an influential event for the *Cityfarm* scene.

Organic agriculture in Thailand has not yet been explored in the context of social movements. More knowledge about various stakeholders, their ideologies and motivations might contribute to investigating the current status of organic foods in Thai society. Motivations for different stakeholders to engage in the organic field are unknown, and yet is it relevant to know if their commitment can be sustain so that organic farming can establish in Thailand and compete with the influential industrial agriculture.

The results of our study can possibly serve stakeholders in the organic scene to create conceptional tools for connecting different entities involved to enhance representation.

Although being a megacity with its own sets of cultural and socio-economical urban features, Bangkok does represent the Southeast Asian regional context, whose cities face similar trends of continuous urbanisation, urban ecology and food security. Urban food cultivation becomes a conceivable option for various reasons and thus has potential to be adopted by Southeast Asian cities. Although the organic scene still is in an early stage, considerable dynamics and potentials for further growth become apparent. The study of the emerging organic movement is hence a very noteworthy aspect of Bangkok's mega-urban reality.

### 1.1.3 Research questions and objectives

Observing the organic scene in Bangkok leads to reflection on what motivates stakeholders to engage in organic activities and which attitudes or ideologies might drive them, possibly following higher shared objectives. On a structural level, questions about the environments of the organic scene and their effects, and options for sustainable living in Bangkok arise. Since some of the interview partners in this study revealed sustained engagement and commitment to their activism, it appears plausible to assume an overarching movement associating the stakeholders. Therefore it is imperative to examine the emerging organic food movements in a context of social movements.

A paramount research question derives from this reflection:

(1) How can the emerging organic movement in Bangkok be interpreted from a New Social Movement perspective?

Further attention will be paid on three subordinated questions of:

(2) What motivates different stakeholders to engage in the organic food scene?

(3) How do structural settings frame the organic movement?

(4) How can the organic food scene contribute to green urban living?

In order to tackle the issue of the emerging organic movement in Thailand, the regional context of organic and other sustainable farming practices needs to be introduced. It includes farmers' realities all over the country and the situation for organic agriculture. In a next step, the study concentrates on the context of Bangkok: the local current dispositions for organic foods with a focus on the perspective of urban stakeholders.

For the structural approach to the study of the organic scene in Bangkok, different sets of stakeholders and pioneers will be identified, and remarkable organic projects introduced. To discover stakeholder motives, insights into their attitudes and ideologies are required to understand their engagement. Personal or family's health, lifestyle, concerns about environment, compassion for farmer's predicaments, ideological convictions, or external incentives such as trend, public media, inspiration through friends, international movements can induce engagement. A further aspect taken into account is how the local geographic environment influences the organic scene: Bangkok's physical, natural, socio-economic and political disposition might contribute to stakeholder motivations.

Within the sets of stakeholders, some are widely known and have pioneer status for creating awareness for healthy foods, organic farming in the rural areas or urban organic gardening; the role of those pioneers in the organic movement needs to be identified.

One aspect in explaining individual motivations is the relation between religious ideologies and the attitude towards organic foods and environmental consciousness. Nature conceptions and typical Buddhist principles will be examined in this context, and how these affect the stakeholder ambitions.

To refer back to its geographical frame, the study finally elaborates options for urbanites to envisage sustainable ways of living in the megacity. The detailed analysis is necessary for the theorisation of the organic movements in Bangkok. By investigating whether the stakeholder engagement goes beyond work or hobby to encompass an ideological conviction that gathers like-

mindful around a shared objective, allows for an appraisal of the organic scenes as a new social movement.

#### 1.1.4 Anticipated outcomes

The objective of the study is to look closer at the stakeholders in emerging organic scenes in Bangkok, their performances and personal motivations, and to conclude by giving ideas for conceptual suggestions. 'Is there an organic movement in Bangkok?' and 'Can you find organic food in Bangkok?' are common reactions when mentioning the topic to the non-experts, Thai or non-Thai. Even after thorough field research, the organic scene still seems to be small and limited to certain stakeholder typologies. However, when exploring different activities, one can find stakeholders' determined commitment and deep reflections on organic matters. Respondents often mention the defining role of pioneers for the organic scene. Talking to experts reveals their identification with activist groups or a social movement in many cases. Pioneers dedicate their engagement to the quest for societal transformation. It might be argued that the organic scene in Bangkok goes beyond mere trend, being the result of a movement that advocates for mindful consumption and right livelihood. For many young farmers or urban gardeners, organic farming is their personal choice of leaving behind an urban lifestyle, perceived as stressful, and instead living new ambitions. Several indicators can be used to conclude that these organic scenes are part of a new social movement:

- some respondents categorise themselves as part of a movement
- the activities are in great parts based on grass roots activity beginning over 30 years ago
- activist stakeholders have been advocating for their goals with persistence
- even though a trend for some, for many stakeholders, engagement has passed onto a level of activism and internalised sustainability ideologies
- the organic food issue contains a socio-political notion, especially for farmers and NGO activists
- there is a cultural, spiritual and social dimension involved, for example public health, community living, social responsibility, societal well-being
- the organic scene is a loose network with many subgroups, with differing activities but shared values

As a background to these indicators, this study will explore how NGOs and activist groups

engaged in the organic scene have expressed that their motivation comes from the protection of consumer's as well as farmer's health. One early NGO in this sector, the Alternative Agriculture Network combined farmer's health with programmes for relieving farmers from indebtedness, by introducing projects for sustainable farming methods. His Majesty the King Bhumibhol Adulyadej's Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy has played a significant role in promoting these projects and getting them established; awareness for the negative impacts of intensive farming introduced by the Green Revolution had already risen. Some respondents underline in this context that sustainable farming is not a new phenomenon, but one that has been practised inherently over centuries in Thailand, and some modern farmers maintain their own traditional kitchen garden separately from their cash crop fields, using minimal chemical sprays, while the field crops are often highly polluted with chemicals applied without any regulation. In the context of this study these dynamic social economic factors influence Thai farming practices and the emergence of organic scenes, and will be further discussed.

## 1.2 State of research

An initial, four-months field research in 2013 generated following observations:

- There is a growing number of organic activities, both on consumer's and on farmer's side.
- A number of stakeholders seem to have pioneer status, playing a considerable role in the emergence of the organic scene in Thailand.
- The number of individual or collective activities in the field of organic seems to be rising. These activities often coexist without having direct linkages or interaction.
- Organic activities are tightly related to growing concerns about (physical) health.
- They also reply directly to the very urban Bangkok lifestyle, often considered as wearying, stressful and unhealthy.
- For farmers, economic reasons and their negative experiences with conventional agriculture and agricultural policies (e.g. rice pledging) play a role.

Organic farming research with specific focus on Bangkok thus far covers several topics: consumers' perceptions of organic food, sustainable food markets, urban green and amphibious spaces, waste water reuse for possible agricultural use. McGRATH & THAITAKOO (2005, 2006) mention Bangkok's agricultural environment in former times, when orchards and plantations

alongside the numerous canals constituted the cityscape. Studies were found on an urban greening project of the years 2000 and 2001 (FRASER 2002, SEYMOAR 2010), promoting food cultivation in selected neighbourhoods in Bangkok. Although they were not visited during fieldwork observations, it was confirmed by participant interviews that the food cultivation was no longer maintained (cf. R-1, p.4; SEYMOAR 2010: 33). Aside from these above mentioned studies, there has been little knowledge gained on the emerging organic food movements or urban agriculture, but KANTAMATURAPOJ (2012, 2013a, 2013b) writes about emerging sustainable food markets in Bangkok, including organic foods. He reveals a number of local specialised shops and marketing networks, and organic consumer attitudes.

While urban agriculture movements are settled in many countries already, originating largely in Latin America, they are rather recent in Southeast Asia. This was confirmed at an urban agriculture convergence at a university in Bangkok, where experts from Asia shared their experiences, with experts reporting on their understanding of urban agriculture in Singapore (recent agriculture parks in the urban fringe), Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam (cf. field notes MCE-14/07-15/07/2015, data CD).

Many studies have been done on urban agriculture in Latin America, North America, Africa or Europe (cf. KILCHER 2006, HAIDE 2007, CLOUSE 2014, CRUZ & SÁNCHEZ MEDINA 2003, e.g).

From these studies different aspects are associated with urban agriculture movements: the political aspect (space appropriation, space hacking or guerilla gardening), the social aspect (poverty reduction, health), the cultural aspect (lifestyle, back-to-the-roots, nature conception). Urban agriculture acts as a means to achieving food security in cities. A prototype for this is seen in the urban gardens in Cuba's capital Havana, the so-called organopónicos (cf. CRUZ & MEDINA 2003; CLOUSE 2014; cf. section 2.4.2). Buenos Aires, Toronto, Dar es Salaam are prominent examples where urban agriculture is successfully integrated in the cityscape with primary aims of self-sufficiency and poverty reduction (cf. HAIDE 2007; ROSOL & WEISS 2005; MWALUKASA 2000). When food security is not the prevalent issue, and community is involved, urban gardens can turn into realms of recreational and social interaction. This is seen in the work of the German foundation *Stiftung Interkultur* that seeks to enhance exchange between diverse ethnic groups in German cities with 'intercultural gardens' (cf. MÜLLER 2007).

The global network RUAFF focusses on researching the field of urban agriculture, from the perspective of contributing “to the development of sustainable cities by facilitating awareness raising, knowledge generation and dissemination, capacity development, policy design and action planning for resilient and equitable urban food systems” (RUAFF Foundation, About RUAFF). Their work seems to be the most extensive at present and covers many possible dimensions of urban

agriculture: climate change adaptation, waste water reuse, food security, spatial planning, economical appraisal, social inclusion. Through continuous publications, RUAF makes strategies on both, the gardeners' and the planners' side globally available. Apart from regular magazine issues, their researchers edit case studies from their member countries (cf. VEENHUIZEN (Ed.) 2006). YASMEEN, a social sciences researcher, has her focus on urban foodscapes. Publishing on urban food security issues, she often mentions the role of urban agriculture which “has to be seen as a permanent component of the urban system” (YASMEEN 2001: 41). She also quotes other authors: “From the perspective of urban food security, nutrition and health, urban agriculture can potentially make a significant contribution” (id. *ibid.*). In another survey on urban agriculture in India on behalf of the IDRC (cf. chapter 2.4.2), YASMEEN (2001c: 39) specifically deals with relations between women in urban food production and food security. This gender aspect is also debated in HOVORKA (2009): “Women are in the majority among urban farmers in many cities around the world, but they tend to predominate in subsistence farming, whereas men play a greater role in urban food production for commercial purposes” (HOVORKA 2009: 1).

Organic food movements are an established element of society in Western countries and Japan, and studies relating to them can be relevant to developing countries. The FAO recognises organic agriculture as a sustainable tool not only for balancing but also for reversing ecological damage, and for the income generation of growers. Beyond this, its contribution to long-term food security is mentioned (cf. FAO 2004, p.1).

In Thailand, apart from market studies showing positive trends for organic foods (cf. PANYAKUL 1998), some related sociological aspects like consumers' attitudes, alternative lifestyles, and ecological movements have been explored (cf. POSRI, SHANKAR et al. 2007; SANKUMCHALIANG & HUANG 2012; ROITNER-SCHOBESBERGER, DARNHOFER et al. 2008).

Organic agriculture in Thailand has not yet been significantly examined in an anthropological dimension. The above mentioned existing studies mainly cover three aspects – agricultural technologies, consumer attitudes, for example their willingness to pay more for organic food, and the adoption of organic agriculture by farmers – but little is known about the organic movements themselves, regarding personal motivations and attitudes for their stakeholders. Studies conducted explore for example regional projects on the adoption of organic farming, or status and financial performance among organic vegetable farmers (cf. RATTANASUTEERAKUL 2012; id. 2011; KIRCHMAIR 2011; LORLOWHAKARN 2008; PATTANAPANT 2009; PORNPRATANSOMBAT 2011), further organic farming and market access, or consumer perceptions of and understanding for organic food (cf. BECCHETTI et al. 2012; SANGKUMCHALIANG 2012; ROITNER-SCHOBESBERGER 2008; WYATT 2010).

At the same time, the topic is present in the local media, the Bangkok Post regularly issues

portraits on organic growers, projects or markets (cf. BOONSONG 2015; CHINMANEEVONG 2015; HUCAL 2015; LAIYOK 2013) and television programmes talk about organic farming, too.

Studying the organic movements means getting familiar with the setting of social movements in Thailand. The Thai economist and author PHONGPAICHIT (1999; 2002) discusses the constitution of social movements in Thailand, and the applicability of classical social movement theories to Thai society. PAYULPITACK (1991) deals with religious movements while FORSYTH'S (2001) research is dedicated to environmental movements in Thailand.

As it is understood, organic agriculture in Thailand has not been explored in the context of social movements up to this point. More knowledge about various stakeholders, their ideologies, identification, social and spiritual motivations might help to investigate firstly the relevance of organic foods in Thai society, and secondly the momentum that food activism can give to Thai society.

## 2. Theoretical approach and literature review

The principal theoretical approaches to organic movements in Bangkok applied to this study are the theories of New Social Movements. However, the organic movement can be theorised from an ideological, socio-political, psychological and agricultural perspective. Therefore, a range of concepts and theories will be considered:

New Social Movements deduct collective action from cultural, ideological or identity changes in post-industrial societies (cf. SCOTT 1990: 16-19; KENDALL 2013: 615; PICHARDO 1997: 411ff), which can possibly help to explain the context of organic scenes in Bangkok. As New Social Movements have been developed for the North American and European context, it needs to be discussed if they are transferable to the local settings in Bangkok. And from an understanding of these movements, frameworks can be ascertained and adapted to develop adequate conclusions. MELUCCI's concept of 'collective identity' as one element of movements that could also be relevant for this study, as it suggests that collective as opposed to individual action plays a major role in social movements. Besides this, other concepts are used to help understand further the nuances of the movements. Considering the constitution of organic movements in Bangkok, especially of how its stakeholders perform and interact within the movements and outwards, 'Social Identity Theory' after HOGG & TERRY and 'Self-Determination' approaches after RYAN & DECI are considered; a further approach, KASSER's 'Voluntary Simplicity', examines alternative lifestyles motivating the organic stakeholders. Further perspectives specifically address consumers' behaviours, and consumption sociology or the 'New Consumers' (MYERS & KENT) approach, connects recent consumption patterns and lifestyles with priorities for sustainable consumption. These will be investigated as possible frameworks to explain incentives for consumers to purchase organic foods. Perspectives on food sociology and food movements, namely the work of GUTHMAN, a food activism researcher, will be discussed in the context of Thai organic food movements. GUTHMAN describes what makes food movements emerge in societies, and how individual food concerns can gain more acceptance through individuals' activism.

### 2.1 New Social Movements

Models of New Social Movements emerged in European setting during the 1970s, when then class-based Marxist models of social movements could not aptly describe societal collective action any more. BUECHLER (1995: 443ff) in his review of New Social Movements identifies four

classical European theorists, namely CASTELLS, TOURAINE, HABERMAS and MELUCCI with each of them emphasising different aspects. Contemporary issues and their relevance to the classical social movement theories are debated: the question of what is old and what is new in new movements, the defensive versus reactive nature of new movements as social forces, distinctions between cultural and political movements, and the social base in new movements (cf. BUECHLER 1995: 447).

While French sociologist TOURAINE reveals the increasing knowledge and capacity of individual social actors as an incentive to intervention in their interest ('self-production of society') which often spins around a major conflict inherent in each society, Spanish CASTELLS puts a focus on the state and external political dynamics for the regulation of social action. Recognising the impact of precisely capitalist dynamics on the urban sphere, he argues that urban social movements become more relevant against the backdrop of collective consumption. He also recognises both, political and cultural orientations as relevant for social action (cf. BUECHLER 1995: 443ff).

HABERMAS pays attention to the social structures in modern societies. He sees the 'colonization' (BUECHLER 1995: 445) of people's lifeworlds – as opposition to the politico-economic system – through money and power, regulating not only politics but also their identities and norms, as a primary concern for modern societies. For MELUCCI, new forms of social control come along with postmodernism when new conflicts including symbolic codes or personal and expressive claims trigger movements. In the New Social Movement debate, central issues for him are identities in modern collective action as inspiring instances for stakeholders to become involved (cf. BUECHLER 1995: 445ff). “Social movements, too, seem to shift their focus from class, race, and other more traditional political issues toward the cultural ground” (MELUCCI 1995: 41).

Ever since, the definitions of New Social Movements have adapted according to the evolution of priorities in the civil society. The current debate is directed towards more emphasis on individual lifestyles, identities, cultural values and attitudes, and away from mere structural societal settings that determine stakeholders seeking for societal change. Sociologist KENDALL gives the following general explanations on New Social Movements: “New social movement theory looks at a diverse array of collective actions and the manner in which those actions are based on politics, ideology, and culture. It also incorporates factors of identity, including race, class, gender, and sexuality, as sources of collective action and social movements” (KENDALL 2013: 615). She cites ecofeminism or environmental justice as typical examples.

New Social Movements seem to be chiefly cultural and not political, although they can be both. A rigid distinction between both appears inappropriate and would lead to a generalisation of motives for social action whereas such vary from case to case. BUECHLER sees herein the flaws of rising dichotomies: “One danger in these discussions is that such terminology can create and

perpetuate unfortunate dichotomies that obscure more than they reveal about movements” (BUECHLER 1995: 451).

SCOTT considers New Social Movements foremost social or cultural rather than political, with an emphasis being on value and lifestyle matters. In his understanding, one aim of stakeholders in New Social Movements is to mobilise civil society for collective action – a concept debated by MELUCCI and also relevant for the Thai context – more than challenging the state: New movements are, “in contrast to older movements, primarily social or cultural in nature and only secondarily, if at all, political.”, and “located within civil society” (SCOTT 1990: 16ff). Another objective he points out is that of the achievement of societal change: “New movements attempt to bring about change through changing values and developing alternative lifestyles (id.:17). This goes in line with BUECHLER's assumption of a shift from “the personal is political” to the personal life as substitution of political action in the pursuance of social change (BUECHLER 1995: 452).

Alternative lifestyles, cultural values and urban identities were found to be essential matters for Bangkok's organic scenes. The question now is whether the multiple local emerging organic scenes reflect the phenomena of New Social Movements, or whether the Thai context is too different to match with the original models. Thai academic and publisher PHONGPAICHIT (1999, 2002) undertook a number of studies on social movements in Thailand. In her extensive research, she reflects perspectives of socio-political structures, development strategies and social action in Thai society among other topics, and will therefore be quoted in the following.

### 2.1.1 New Social Movements in the Thai context

Different facets of social movements in Thailand are described in PHONGPAICHIT's (1999, 2002) research: With reference to TOURAINE, she quotes difficulties in transferring European models of New Social Movements to Thailand as they strongly follow growing individual action, which is not applicable to a culture where local “traditions of philosophy [...] place more emphasis on the role of communities and groups” (PHONGPAICHIT 1999: 7). However, PHONGPAICHIT also sees the merits of European models of New Social Movements, as the general structural dispositions contested by social movements and forms of protest can equally occur in the non-post-industrial or non-post-modern world as the “dominance of state structures, market forces and communications [...] are clearly present in societies which cannot yet be called post-modern” (id.: 6).

She further goes on to explain that “this domination is a global process. Hence the diminution of liberty which this dominance entails is also present in non-western societies, and also needs to be opposed” (id. *ibid.*) stressing the importance of transferring of Europeans New Social

Movements to Bangkok as a global city, while remaining conscious of their limitations.

Regarding stakeholders in emerging organic scenes, Bangkok's middle classes can be identified as significant drivers. Regardless, they are not the exclusive stakeholders, as poor rural farmers have their own interest in participating. The scenes seem to gather stakeholders in different socio-economic situations and beyond to cover a variety of themes including: health, ecology, poverty reduction, representation of their views, economic benefit, innovation, lifestyle, and trends. It could be argued that the presence of marginalised stakeholders in social movements advocating for their livelihoods was not typical for New Social Movements, as the latter respond to less tangible matters of identity and quality of life, with main stakeholders being middle classes, however New Social Movements are not necessarily class-based (cf. SCOTT 1990: 29). The observation that organic scenes in Thailand embrace wealthy middle classes as well as marginalised urban and the rural people supports the actual presence of New Social Movements in Thai society, symbolising their participation towards shared objectives beyond the boundaries of class. PHONGPAICHT confirms in her case study on several social movements in Thailand in the 1990s that the “new movements in Thailand include a wide variety of social groups” and stresses “the large participation of the 'little people'” (PHONGPAICHT 2002: 11). At the same time, she mentions that the independence of social movements from class concepts allows for common purposes to help all, mobilising stakeholders and the mutual support between them: The “fact that these [social] movements are *not* founded explicitly on class concepts [...] makes it easier for them to mobilise support from a broader public. Appeals to universally acceptable concepts – protection of the environment, health for all, no corruption – make it possible for movements of the underprivileged to build support from the educated middle class” (id.: 12). Thus, different stakeholder groups can be mutually supportive.

In his analysis of contemporary social movements, MELUCCI introduces the concept of collective identity as explanation for social action; this is his response to the common dualistic analyses that see individual motivations in movements as opposing structural preconditions, because these explanations ignore “how acting together makes sense for the participants in a social movement”, and “how the meaning of collective action derives from [both, the] structural preconditions or from the sum of individual motives” (MELUCCI: 42). In collective identity, he sees a dynamic process “through which actors negotiate, understand and construct their action through shared repeated interaction” (FLESHER FOMINAYA 2010: 394). This aspect can be useful for debating the constitution of social action and stakeholder identification within the organic scenes in Bangkok. Even though developed for emerging European new movements in the 1980s and 1990s, the concept of collective identity has general substance to transfer to the Bangkok case.

Thai society has modernised in various aspects over the past decades, with the result that New Social Movements can now be considered an adequate approach in understanding the driving force behind organic scenes. Despite the reality that Thailand does not entirely represent a post-industrial society, the city of Bangkok merges features of developing and of post-modern societies – capitalism, mass consumption, a blend of local and global functions, re-arrangement of urban economies, intricate urban landscapes, opposition to functionalism in architecture, social polarisation, spatial fragmentations, and altered lifestyles (cf. DEAR & FLUSTY 1998: 54, 58, 67; SASSEN 2001: 171). Bangkok should hence be viewed as a unique microcosm with its distinct inherent societal features for itself.

On the basis that the existence of organic scenes in Bangkok is a part of a social movement, the term 'organic movement' will be used in the following. As the organic movement in Bangkok shares common traits with New Social Movements, it can be concluded that New Social Movement concepts are adequate for transference to the Thai context. To refer to PHONGPAICHIT as well as this study's findings, it should nevertheless be added that New Social Movement concepts cannot be literally transferred, but their framework can be adjusted to localities and particularities, for specific perspectives to be developed. This matter will be taken up again in the synthesis in chapter 5.

Resource mobilisation theories that emerged in the North American context as alternative explanations to social movements are not considered in this study. They are popular tools for establishing individual motivations of engagement as they emphasise economic incentives, yet underemphasise the social component of movements.

### 2.1.2 Traditions of social movements – a brief discussion

Social movements are a “collective attempt to further a common interest or secure a common goal, largely through actions outside the sphere of formal, established political institutions” (GIDDENS & SUTTON 2014: 212). BLUMER (cf. id. *ibid.*) in the late 1960s read social movements as agents of societal change rather than as its products. Their aim is to attain changes in certain aspects of societies, their action often being triggered by significant events or general external structural factors. Networks and mobilisation are typical features in the progressed state of the movements (cf. id.: 212/213). Social movements are seeking for change, and change through social movements can only occur in societies where the expression of disagreement or a call for alternative paths is possible. Social movements started to be recognised in Western societies in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the process of their democratisation. Initially, social movements often responded to class-based conflicts, and have been interpreted with Marxist aspects. This is the case

for labour movements contesting for better wages, working conditions, access to education among other objectives. Social movements have further implications, namely equality of rights, opposition to state war politics, political repression or societal values. Examples of this in Western societies has been the equalisation of voting rights, women's suffrage, civil rights movement and student movements. Social movements began to rise when societies became restructured by industrialisation, urbanisation, capitalism and technical reforms such as telecommunication (cf. id.: 213-215; KENDALL 2013: 608).

However, social action itself has probably always been cause for or consequence of societal dynamics, and can be assumed as being inherent in societies. It becomes relevant if a dominant political, exploitation or moral societal system discriminates against its citizens. In European history, several eras have been prone to social action, namely feudalism, industrialisation, capitalism, among others. Examples for collective social action are peasants' revolts within the feudal system that dominated the European continent in medieval times, workers' strikes and class revolts in response to industrialisation, as well as anarchist and socialist movements, among others.

KENDALL states that “[c]ontemporary forms of collective behaviour, particularly social protests, are variations on the themes that originated during the transition from feudalism to capitalism and the rise of modernity in Europe” (KENDALL 2013: 598). Social movements describe the shared engagement of groups or individuals in order to reach common objectives rooted in their conflicts with societal interests. According to GIDDENS (2014: 213), social movements give a momentum for change to society and can therefore be powerful instruments for the collective actor to achieve new policies or public attitudes. Common objectives or ideologies are usually what stakeholders share in social movements, while maintaining their independence in terms of personal lifestyles. The social bases between different social movements and within the movements vary, and depend on the type of objective that stakeholders seek to realise. Today, media and specifically social media help gathering participants; change can be attained on institutional level for example through contesting existing policies, or on an individual level by transforming patterns of attitudes.

Theorising social movements implies that the structural settings these movements are embedded in are understood. The plurality of situations in different countries underlying the study of social movements in the Western context caused numerous approaches evolved. SCOTT reviews two general philosophical approaches to social movements, one being functionalism, another being Marxism. These are principally distinguished by their methodological approach to social movements and their understanding of normative principles. He explains that social movements in functionalism are disruptive of societal stability that is presupposed as norm, while Marxist explanations focus on steady social transformations in which social movements take place (cf.

SCOTT 1990: 38). Generally, in Marxism, normative principles are seen as agents for social transformation, and social movements being endemic from within society, whereas in functionalism, social movements are deviant from institutional behaviour, therefore “non-routine behaviour” (SCOTT 1990: 38).

CASTELLS who theorises contemporary social movements in their urban context<sup>3</sup> quotes collective consumption in the urban sphere as a manifestation of capitalism. He thinks that urban social movements could “influence structural social change” and “transform the urban meanings” (CASTELLS 1983: 305). Explaining why contemporary social movements are “urban in character”, he states a shift of conflict areas from the factory (in early capitalism) to the urban space (in contemporary capitalism), justifying his idea of the city as “consumption unit”: “Whereas in liberal capitalist society, the focus of conflict is the factory, and the object of conflict wages, working time, etc., in late capitalist societies conflict comes around increasingly to derive from such issues as housing, schooling, health” (SCOTT 1990: 47).

TOURAINE subsequently introduces a contemporary analysis of social movements, with more emphasis on the content of and social relations within these. As societal dispositions are in constant change, theorists eventually embarked on new debates which adapted to post-industrial societies and are described as New Social Movements. As explained in the previous chapters, these theories assume more significance of cultural values, lifestyles, and identity in the nature of conflicts; they also pay more attention to the individual stakeholders and social processes within the movements. A main reason given for these new interpretations is a shift from industrial to post-industrial societal structure which alters the movements in pace and scale. A diminishing fabrication industry in favour of a growing service sector alters definitions of work routine and personal lifestyle, entailing new causes of (social) friction, and consequently new forms of social conditions and actions. A number of questions arise from this, and need to be challenged in the New Social Movement debate: What are structural settings, and how significant are these in shaping the movements? What is the social base, and which substance does it have? What are core themes and objectives? What are motivations and objectives for individual stakeholders to engage? What is the nature of conflicts in post-industrial societies? What is the nature of actions tackling these conflicts? How is networking characterised? What is the role of (social) media in the process of New Social Movements?

#### Elements pertinent to this study

Although these briefly discussed theories describe a Western background, several elements are transferable to the Thai context. Our study focusses on an emerging organic movement in

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<sup>3</sup> CASTELLS' book “The City and the Grassroots” was published in 1983 and examines to urban social movements during the 1960s and 1970s. Much of the contemporary urbanism research refers back to this work.

Bangkok which happen to imply a number of ideological representations as manifested in both, the city and rural areas. The movement around farmers' and consumers' rights from the early beginnings has widened to include themes of anti-consumption, environmental, physical and mental health, lifestyles, participation in the urban living, and community building, for example, which underpin the significance of cultural values, lifestyles or identity in New Social Movements: alternative urban and rural movements, the identity aspect in New Social Movements, equally the lifestyle aspect, equalisation of rights (farmers rights and consumers rights), and societal values.

A common theme in social movements in general and in Bangkok is a change in individual attitudes. Stakeholders in the organic movement in Bangkok express their objectives in lifestyles and consumption that are alternative to the mainstream, and seek to attain alterations in the general public's attitudes. Organic movements arguably represent alternative movements; and alternative movements are commonly discussed in the context of social movements: "Movements that seek limited change in some aspect of people's behaviour are referred to as alternative movements" (KENDALL 2013: 619).

The social base for the organic movement in Thailand was found to be diverse and formed of different scenes; the stakeholders are different in terms of social background and age, for example rural small-scale farmers, educated urban middle classes and the urban poor of all ages. In this way, Bangkok becomes a microcosm of this where all possible social situations are happening; the organic movement can therefore be recognised by a variety of social actors, and is not limited to a certain social class.

The subject of the research is the urban sphere where green lifestyles and mindful consumption are generated. It is strongly interconnected with the rural areas in that farmers are the source of organic production, and act as both performers of organic growing method and manifestation of sustainable thinking. CASTELLS' argument in his digression on urban phenomena concerns the "role of the agglomeration as consumption unit" and the role of capitalism as being one matter to oppose to in social movements (CASTELLS in SCOTT 1990: 47). And because Bangkok is a realm of consumption, anti-consumerist attitudes can be developed. KENDALL mentions aspects about the social actors in movements, namely "[s]ocial movements are most likely to spring up when people come to see their personal troubles as public issues that cannot be solved without a collective response", "[s]ocial movements make democracy more available to excluded groups", and "[m]ost social movements rely on volunteers [...] to carry out work" (KENDALL 2013: 608) which was found to be matching the context of this study.

### 2.1.3 The 'newness' of New Social Movements

After having presented general traits of social movements that are relevant for this research, a definition of the 'newness' of New Social Movements should follow. To anticipate, some authors refuse the distinct detachment of New Social Movements from preceding social movement models as New Social Movements may contain elements of its predecessors; KENDALL makes no distinction at the first place (cf. BUECHLER 1995: 459; GIDDENS 2014: 214; KENDALL 2013: 596-623). Some authors question the neglect of the working class on the research agendas, assuming their sustained relevance but suggesting their redefinition. HARTER (2011) for example, when researching social movements in relation to Greenpeace Canada, sees the roots of New Social Movement models as following Marxist tradition: "The roots of new social movement theory can be traced to the attempt by Marxists to explain different social formations within capitalism in the post-war era and the supposed "failure" of the working class in the pre- and post-war periods" (HARTER 2011: 9). SCOTT (1990: 2) equally makes reference to Marxist perspectives which presuppose that social movements are class movements per se, and social change is achieved by means of class consciousness.

The above mentioned authors (SCOTT 1990, KENDALL 2013, BUECHLER 1995, GIDDENS 2014) deal with the issue of 'newness' in relation to New Social Movements, and its possible application to the Thai context: In fact, all authors give similar definitions to New Social Movements. To quote KENDALL and BUECHLER, both find politics, culture and ideology to be the basis for collective action in New Social Movements. Collective behaviour can be voluntary and spontaneous (cf. KENDALL 2013: 598). In her eyes, social movements occur when personal troubles of individuals become public issues; factors for social action are thus located in matters of identity such as race, class, gender, etc. BUECHLER summarizes that objectives are realised by symbolic action that takes place in the cultural sphere; by participating in movements, stakeholders may find self-determination, which forms part of identity (cf. KENDALL 2013: 598, 608, 615; Buechler 1995: 442, 460). GIDDENS' (2014: 214) definition equally views new issues concerning cultural values and identity as driving factors for New Social Movements, and gives the concrete examples of student movements, civil right movements, anti-nuclear movements, ecology movements and gay rights movements. Also SCOTT (1990: 18) points out issues based on values, lifestyles and identity as objectives of collective action, he identifies "bringing about social change through the transformation of values, personal identities and symbols", as well as the defence of civil society. The change can "best be achieved through the creation of alternative life-styles and the discursive re-formation of individual and collective wills". Similar to GIDDENS, he refers to direct action as a typical vector of action.

Concerning the structure and social base of New Social Movements, SCOTT presents the

following traits: a network- or grass roots like organisation of collective action which is rooted in a contemporary society, non-institutionalisation, subjects across class boundaries, integrity and autonomy of stakeholders in articulating their interests; further, the relevance of both, class and identity (cf. id.: 3, 18, 19, 27). Also GIDDENS talks about loose networks, and about the presence of middle classes: “New Social Movements adopt loose organizational forms, use new action repertoires, including non-violent direct action, and involve the 'new' middle class, who work in welfare state bureaucracies, creative and artistic fields and education” (GIDDENS 2014: 214). GIDDENS (2014: 213) and KENDALL (2013: 421) describe four stages in movements, for KENDALL namely the initial stage of development, the preliminary stage, the coalescence stage, and the institutionalisation stage. Often, movements begin to vanish after their institutionalisation, losing their idealism, or develop into another movement. GIDDENS describes the same cycle while using different terminology.

SCOTT writes, New Social Movements were foremost social rather than political which means that the movement addresses the alteration of values and lifestyles rather than state power, policies, individuals' rights. BUECHLER does not explicitly use the term “social” but cultural ideologies. It is stressed that New Social Movements can be both, culturally and politically motivated, having some origins in the cultural sphere and political motivations, at least in a basic way. He indicates that a straight distinction between both concepts inhibits an effective discussion (cf. BUECHLER 1995: 451). Political objectives persist also in KENDALL's explanations (cf. KENDALL 2013: 616ff).

In relation to whether New Social Movements are actually as new as they present themselves to be, the authors are rather critical. GIDDENS finds that the features which are promoted as specifically constituting 'newness' in New Social Movements are equally prevalent in previous movements, and that new movements may also eventually adopt features typical for their predecessors: “All of the supposedly 'new' features [...] have been found in 'old' social movements. Post-material values were evident in small-scale communes of the nineteenth century, and many older movements began as loose networks before going on to become formal organizations. Some New Social Movement organizations have [...] become more bureaucratic than the theory suggested” (GIDDENS 2014: 214). SCOTT doubts that New Social Movements are new in a qualitative sense despite their new composition and issues they represent. He explains in what respect they resume previous movements: “they open up the political sphere, they articulate popular demands and they politicize issues previously confined to the private realm” (SCOTT 1990: 155). In fact, he finds that the movements that are commonly described as New Social Movements are too diverse to be subsumed under and defined as one category. He wonders “what, if anything, do these

movements have in common beyond the fact that they are roughly contemporaneous?” (id.: 14). In BUECHLER's opinion, too, New Social Movements are not as new as the debate around them might anticipate; and already the cut between old and new is too distinct. He refers to Sidney TARROW saying that “many new social movements aren't really all that new, because they often have grown out of preexisting organizations and have long histories that are obscured by new social movement discourse” (TARROW in BUECHLER 1995: 447), and concludes, “[t]he claim for newness can also be challenged by pointing [...] to how the category of new social movement obscures continuities and exaggerates differences between past and present movements” (BUECHLER 1995: 459).

These differentiations do hardly point out whether New Social Movement theories are new or not. However, it becomes apparent that they are not one homogeneous concept but arise from their societal context. It makes them a flexible approach that can be transferred to different local contexts if appropriately applied. A possibility for the analysis of New Social Movements is to sensibly use variable descriptive criteria while ensuring that the underlying settings of the case cover general New Social Movements criteria. With this in mind, the following criteria have been deduced from the study of organic movements in Bangkok:

- partially patterns of post-industrialism
- post-materialism, expressed for example in counter-movements to excessive consumption
- lifestyle as distinctive general criteria
- identity in both, the urban and the rural
- significant involvement of grass roots and NGO action
- general independence from class aspects despite major involvement of urban middle classes
- health and environment as principal concerns

#### 2.1.4 Collective identity and New Social Movements

Identity is a meaningful part of social movements as movements are brought into being by the identification of stakeholders with common objectives, aspirations, values, ideologies. Identification influences social processes, and a person's commitment can constitute the base for further engagement. Identification is a personalised, mostly voluntary notion originating in the individuals themselves; by generating feelings of empathy to tangible or intangible instances, notions of affiliation are reproduced. This notion may be incentive for the individuals to realise their objectives, and eventually extend to engagement or activism. Identification may be to social groups, political parties, places, persons, gender, or intangible instances like ideologies, cultural values,

religion and attitudes. If individuals are, for instance, attached to their neighbourhoods and identify with it, they will be more likely to participate in social events, to get involved with neighbours and to generate care for the well-being of the community. “As activists tend to forge identities within organizations, their allegiance is strong” (GIDDENS & SUTTON 2014: 141). Solidarity becomes a factor here. When identification with a group combines with personal objectives, action towards the realisation of ideologies can be pursued. Identification may thus become a condition for engagement that is conscious; for a movement to occur, it needs a number of stakeholders who identify with a shared set of ideologies. However, sustained identification with a group or ideology is not a guarantee for a sustained movement as the attainment of common goals requires the long-term commitment of many group members and importantly depends on the external factors.

Identity approaches can be found in (social) psychological interpretations of individual to group, and intergroup relations. The new social movement literature pays attention to identities of collective actors in movements, precisely the constitution and mechanisms of collective action, including mobilisation. For MELUCCI (1995: 51), the notion of collective identity became a central point in his theorisation of New Social Movements which he uses as a tool to analyse real phenomena. He sees New Social Movements – for being located in modern society blurring points of reference and personal identities – as processes of social constructions in which collective identity gives orientation to people (cf. BUECHLER 1995: 446). Backing also on the work of TOURAINE, MELUCCI derives his concept of collective identity from the European background of the 1980s, when social movements “could not be explained by member's shared class position” (FLESHER FOMINAYA 2010: 394) any more. His argumentation starts from a stated gap between the two opposing aspects of either structural conditions or individual subjective motivations for collective action in the common social movement debate. Hence, his concern is about investigating “how acting together makes sense for the participants in a social movement”, and “how the meaning of collective action derives from structural preconditions or from the sum of the individual motives” (MELUCCI 1995: 42). New social movements in his perception are “ongoing social constructions rather than [...] unitary empirical objects” (BUECHLER 1995: 446), and collective identity here is not given but a cognitive process; analysing New Social Movements hence implies to understand “how it became a movement in the first place” (FLESHER FOMINAYA 2010: 394).

Collective identity is enabler of movements, which in turn allows the participants of the movement to organise their action around what they have defined as their common objectives: “I call collective identity this process of “constructing” an action system. Collective identity is an interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals (or groups at a more complex level) and concerned with the orientations of action and the field of opportunities and constraints in

which the action takes place” (MELUCCI 1995: 44). This means, collective identity occurs when individuals match their own identification with certain objectives with the identification of others. Collective identities bring into being collective action when “[i]ndividuals acting collectively “construct” their action by means of “organized” investments” (id.: 43).

It is notable that MELUCCI comprehends collective identity as process attaching personal meanings to collective action. Within the frame of this process, individuals interact and adjust their implications in order to form a collective action. Seeing collective identity as a process requires – unlike a static, given concept – to approach it by action, for it bases on the active relationships between individuals. This implies that it involves “cognitive definitions concerning the ends, means, and fields of action” (id.: 44) of individuals. MELUCCI implies here that these cognitive definitions are not rigid but can embrace a multitude of different notions. In line with this, FLESHER FOMINAYA writes in her analysis on collective identity in social movements, that “actors do not necessarily have to be in complete agreement on ideologies, beliefs, interests or goals in order to come together and generate collective action” (FLESHER FOMINAYA 2010: 395).

A further implication of collective action as a process concerns the network character of interactions among participants, what MELUCCI describes as “a network of active relationships between the actors, who interact, communicate, influence each other, negotiate, and make decisions” (MELUCCI 1995: 45). He refers to the notion of identification representing feelings of affiliation and unity, calling it “emotional investment” (id. *ibid.*). “Movements are broadly based on collectivities focused around some central ideas or ideological preferences” (GIDDENS & SUTTON 2014: 140/141). Collective identity may help to explain how stakeholders in a movement interact and how these interactions can contribute to the pursuit of common shared objectives. To follow MELUCCI's understanding, the realisation of collective action by a movement may be the result of a steady, active process. He emphasises that “the concept of collective identity as defined here can precisely help to explain that what appears as a given reality, more or less permanent, is always the result, at least to a certain extent, of an active process that is not immediately visible” (MELUCCI 1995: 45ff, 49). Collective identity will therein become the instance that ensures continuity of a movement.

Although receiving criticism for being too abstract and not covering enough empirical grounding, MELUCCI's concept has established as a notable reference in the collective identity debate (FLESHER FOMINAYA 2010: 395).

The notion of collective identity can be applied to the context of this study, using it as a tool to analyse stakeholder engagement in the organic movement in Bangkok. Objectives are first to explore whether the organic stakeholders act all individually or whether collective identity guides

their engagement, thus if they identify with a movement sharing common objectives and ideologies. Second, there is need to explore whether stakeholders' collective identity refers to one single movement or respective sub-movements; third, whether the existing organic scenes and networks in the movement can be interpreted in terms of collective identity, thus whether interactions in those networks help stakeholders to build up collective identity; and fourth whether collective identity, hence stakeholder identification with the movement as collective actor has potential to enhance the efficiency of the organic movement.

## 2.2 Identity and motivation related with movements

Besides the collective identity, it is important to understand the evolution of personal identities in social movements, especially the interplay of personal identities between members beyond personal identities and motivation. Two basic psychological approaches are therefore chosen to provide appropriate insights. The notion of identity is pertinent for this study because personal identities shape and determine motivations, thus eventually induce engagement. People perhaps engage in organic movements because it provides them with a social identity within their environment. A social identity builds up confidence in individuals towards outsiders, and can positively influence attitudes towards causes of engagement, particularly when the engagement is shared with a social group, for example a movement. In reverse, finding a social identity in a social movement can reinforce stakeholder commitment to it, and consequently their action base. This chapter will first briefly present some reflections on the concept of identity before introducing Social Identity Theory after HOGG & TERRY and their predecessors TAJFEL & TURNER. Social Identity Theory describes perceived memberships to social groups and explains intergroup and in-group behaviour. In order to better understand the cultural frame to this study, this chapter will touch on individualistic and collectivist elements in societies. Besides social identity, attention will be given to DECI & RYAN's Self-Determination Theory which examines motivational behaviour by distinguishing different kinds of motivation. One concept as part of Self-Determination Theory, Voluntary Simplicity, refers to individual lifestyle aspirations and will be elaborated additionally.

### 2.2.1 Understanding the concept of identity

Identity, when referring to persons, is the representation of their distinct nature or characteristics that relates to the person's self.<sup>4</sup> A person's self could be permanently inherent in a being but a malleable entity. GIDDENS cites sociologist MEAD who says that the self “is formed in social interaction with others” (GIDDENS 2014: 138). To recall the notion of identification, it is a process describing individual empathy for an entity. Identification can be seen like a vector that enables individuals to build up personal identities, thus to produce affiliation to groups. An individual can perform multiple identities, according to the situations or social realities within which it performs. GIDDENS says about that: “Identities can be seen as pluralistic, quite unstable and subject to radical change over a lifetime” (id.: 140). Identities are personal in the first instance but are also social, for they reciprocate with those of other individuals through social interaction processes. GIDDENS states here that individuals happen to make clear distinctions between their identities, for example, “[f]or most people there is a clear divide between the identity they perform while at work and that which pertains in their private, home environment” (id. ibid.).

Social identity is the identity that an individual adopts when it enters and eventually belongs to a social group; it is flexible, thus can vary from group to group. It could be argued that one embraces a social identity voluntarily, or even actively constructs it, for oneself or the representation to outsiders. Thus, it allows individuals to experiment with social identities that match their notion of self or a projection of it. HOGG et al. see personal identity clearly detached from social identity despite their mutual influence: “Personal identity has little to do with group processes, although group life may well provide a context in which personal identities are formed (e.g., friendships and enmities)” (HOGG et al. 2004: 251).

A social group then is a number of individuals who form an entity in the social sense. Where  
a

*“social group is a collection of more than two people who have the same social identity – they identify themselves in the same way and have the same definition of who they are, what attributes they have, and how they relate to and differ from specific outgroups” (HOGG 2004: 251).*

Scales can vary from family, professional, community, society to virtual level, and its members can bond by means of concrete or ideological matters, for example can group identification evoke notions of pride or solidarity (cf. GIDDENS 2014: 139). As social group does not

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<sup>4</sup> By etymological explanation, “identity”, deriving from Latin “sameness” or “the same”, means the analogy of a person or entity with what it performs. In a psychological sense, “identity” then coincides with a person's self (cf. Duden. Rechtschreibung).

necessarily refer to a group in the material sense, we assume here that movements equally represent social groups, and keep this in mind when discussing social identity in the context of New Social Movements throughout this study.

Following observations can be stated in reference to Bangkok: Individuals adopt identities of which they think they could match their personalities, or they present a model that they wish to perform; this appropriation of identity then figures a sort of outline of the individual's own life, thus the realisation of aspired lifestyles. Creating one's own social identity is arguably a common process in Bangkok and may relate to mega-urban living in general. People seem to be constantly trying to manifest their individuality by projecting identities within their social environment. People may thus adopt certain lifestyles expressed for instance through fashion, social group preferences, work, education and leisure activities. This offers people a channel for their personality while being social, for instance family structures are rather hierarchical and allow little flexibility to experiment. Many therefore adopt identities beyond their roles at home or at work. These performances may happen analogously, without competing. Resigning from a well-paid employment position in favour of pursuing urban gardening for example, opens up a new social identity, of which their performances require conscious decisions over living preferences. These decisions do not always run smoothly for they might invite opposition; to give an example from this study, many young farmers face opposition from their families, even exclusion from the communities when they return from the city to their villages in order to start organic farms.

There arguably seems to be growing concern for individual social identities, especially in the competitive urban context where urbanites show needs to manifest their identities in delimitation to others (cf. WILLER 2008: 6). Further, identity is becoming, in the contemporary society, more flexible and intricate. At the same time, there is greater opportunity to create identity at the first place. GIDDENS quotes consumerism and individualisation as reasons for this: “previously solid collective sources have become weakened in the face of consumerism and a heightened individualization which allows for more flexibility in the shaping of identities” (GIDDENS 2014: 138/139).

Identity, whether individual self identity or collective identity, is hence a pertinent notion for the manifestation of self in a social environment. In social movements such as the organic movement in Bangkok, social identity is a major prospect for stakeholders, hence needs to be considered when appraising the motivations for their engagement with respect to the second research question of this study.

## 2.2.2 The social identity perspective

Being a major psychological concept, social identity became first conceptualised by social psychologist TAJFEL while he investigated the place of individuals in collective processes in the early 1960s (cf. HOGG, ABRAMS et al. 2004: 248). Further theorisation of social identity has been done by TAJFEL & TURNER on which the following concepts base: “Tajfel (1972) first introduced the concept of social identity, “the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership” (p. 292)” (Hogg 2001: 2). HOGG and TERRY eventually extended the original model by the perspective of social identity in relation to organisational contexts, and included a number of sub-concepts of which some will be presented in this chapter (self-categorisation, self-enhancement, prototypes).

As explained in the preceding chapter, social identity is relevant to the organic movement in Bangkok for engagement in movements can provide with social identity, and it can explain individual motivations and personal commitment. Social identity becomes relevant for it is “social identification that increases the probability of social action and collective protest” (HOGG et al. 2004: 266). By choosing social identity approaches, a clearer picture of social action within movements is hoped to be gained. The study intends to examine whether stakeholders engage in the organic movement for expected affiliation to respective social groups, and for the opportunity to experiment with their social identities as a vehicle for making bigger life choices.

### Social Identity Theory after HOGG & TERRY

Social Identity Theory embraces several components that are interrelated through its basic understanding of “relationship between self-concept and group behaviour”, of which the “original social identity theory” is one, and the “more recent self-categorization theory” is another (HOGG 2001: 2). Some characteristics according to HOGG & TERRY are that people can establish a number of social identities in correspondence to the several social groups they belong to, and that these may vary in their subjective values and other aspects, and that these are subject to contextual changes as well (cf. HOGG 2004: 252).

Social Identity Theory aims at elucidating how affiliation with social groups, for example social movements, affects individuals' identities and self-perception. “The basic idea of social identity theory is that a social category (e.g., nationality, political affiliation, organization, work group) within which one falls, and to which one feels one belongs, provides a definition of who one is in terms of the defining characteristics of the category – a self-definition that is a part of the self-concept” (HOGG & TERRY 2001: 3). Social Identity Theory is, despite its background of intergroup

behaviour, also a perspective on group membership and general group processes; and as such it analyses a range of social group-related elements, for instance “differentiation within groups; leadership; deviance; group decision making; organizations; computer mediated communication; mobilization, collective action, and social loafing; and group culture” (HOGG et al. 2004: 246). Thus, it might provide insights into the mechanisms that bind individuals to a group and allow them to identify, and in turn, the influence that norms in social groups have on the identity of its members. Beyond, it might explain how prototypical members become role models, hence behavioural reference points for other members; and further, the efficacy of group-related action. In their application of small groups, HOGG et al. (2004: 264) describe for example how decision making can be enhanced through actual differentiation within groups, saying “under the right conditions, dissent and diversity may enhance group decision making”. This aspect is relevant for the organic movement in Bangkok for being comprehensive of various sub-scenes.

A further relevant aspect is the one of computer support in group communication processes. Communication within or between groups in Bangkok has found to strongly rely on social media. HOGG et al. describe this aspect as computer mediated communication and state it had “a “participation equalization effect” that evens out many of the status effects that occur in face-to-face groups, and so people may feel less inhibited because they are less personally identifiable” (HOGG et al. 2004: 265).

Before we apply Social Identity Theory to the organic movement in Bangkok, we might need to clarify if a movement can be described by the notion of social group – obviously, the two notions are not identical but a social group could be considered an element of the movement. While stakeholders in a movement build up social networks as basis of mobilisation, the movement itself is their manifestation of ideologies and initiative. After HOGG et al. (2004: 260), Social Identity Theory is a “general approach to the analysis of group membership and group phenomena”, implying that it applies to a wide range of group phenomena. A social movement can be considered a group phenomenon in this sense. The relevant literature talks about group processes, which means that a group here is not necessarily a literal group (cf. HOGG 2004).

Two major psychological processes underlie the Social Identity Theory analysis, namely self-enhancement and self-categorisation. Self-enhancement is assumed to be a personal motivation and aiming at reducing subjective uncertainties. This can happen through manifestation of one's self, of a positive outwards image, of positioning within a group or comparison with others. Self-enhancement is closely linked to self-esteem, too. This plays on the effect that social identity, through affiliation to groups also generates self-esteem because behaviour is affirmed by like-

mind and positive distinction from others possibly happens.<sup>5</sup> Self-enhancement is said to guide the social categorisation process as the norms within groups are basically in favour of group members (cf. HOGG & TERRY 2001: 4). In this psychological process, social categorisation plays a role in uncertainty reduction, in a way that it makes individuals be more secure about their behaviour and of others.<sup>6</sup> Security about their social environment is described as crucial in the social identity process: “People strive to reduce subjective uncertainty about their social world and about their place within it – they like to know who they are and how to behave, and who others are and how they might behave” (HOGG et al. 2004: 256). We should understand self-categorisation as the result of individuals' identification with their preference groups by projecting their own attitudes, actions, or selves onto this group.

In the self-categorisation notion, cognitive representations of group attributes, for example attitudes, feelings, behaviours, are referred to as prototypes and therefore have a central meaning (cf. HOGG & TERRY 2001: 6). In social identity processes, “[s]elf-categorization reduces uncertainty by transforming self-conception and assimilating self to a prototype that describes and prescribes perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors”, thus prototypes “furnish moral support and consensual validation for one's self-concept and attendant cognitions and behaviors” (HOGG & TERRY 2001: 6). We may argue that role models and pioneers in the organic movement in Bangkok function as those prototypes, being personalised prototypes that model behaviours and attitudes. HOGG & TERRY say about prototypes, they often represent exemplary members. They “capture the context-dependent features of group membership often in the form of representations of exemplary members (actual group members who best embody the group) or ideal types (an abstraction of group features)” (HOGG & TERRY 2001: 5). Their effect of role models on the stakeholders in the organic movement will be further discussed in chapter 5.

By employing Social Identity Theory in this study, it is hoped to find insights into how movements produce individual social identities, how group-internal settings enable identification, and finally how prototypical pioneers model for the behaviours of other stakeholders. Social identity contributes to the individual motivations for stakeholder engagement who seek to manifest personal or group identities, and to find self-enhancement and the self-categorisation into their preference groups. Considering the fact that the organic movement in Bangkok consists of sub-groups, there is potential to transfer those identity processes to the different groups.

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5 The “self-esteem hypothesis” displays that “social identity and intergroup behavior is guided by the pursuit of evaluatively positive social identity through positive intergroup distinctiveness, which in turn is motivated by the need for positive self-esteem” (HOGG 2001: 6).

6 This “uncertainty reduction hypothesis” describes: “In addition to being motivated by self-enhancement, social identity processes are also motivated by a need to reduce subjective uncertainty about one's perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors, and ultimately one's self-concept and place within the social world” (HOGG 2001: 6).

### 2.2.3 About individualistic and collectivist societies

HOGG et al. (2004) mention an interesting point about social identity and cultural differences, precisely how group culture can differ between collectivist and individualistic societies. They conclude from different authors that “[f]rom a social identity perspective, we would expect that social identity processes [...] would be more evident in collectivist than individualist societies [...], and that people [...] with a strongly individualistic norm or local culture would, paradoxically, behave more individualistically as a function of increased identification” (HOGG et al. 2004: 267).

Saying this, they imply that the building up of social identity in contrast to personal or individual identity was more prominent in societies with collective thinking. For Thailand's society drawing largely on familial or other collective structures for backup, its general collective constitution could be concluded, in contrast to most Western societies. Some researchers point out Thailand's very collectivist social constitution that becomes apparent for example in close commitments to member groups such as family, even extended, and responsibility for fellow members (cf. PIMPA 2012, HOFSTEDE in PIMPA 2012).

Individualism-collectivism comparisons are often chosen in transcultural research. Researchers use them to detect cultural differences in the social constitution of societies in relation to various factors. A brief look to notions of personality in transcultural studies shows several aspects: First, individualist societies have emphasis on the personal self, on the consistency of the self, on self-enhancement; their self is a rather stable instance. In collectivist societies in turn, personality is rather flexible, less concern is on self-enhancement, and people are likely to define themselves via a collective self (cf. TRIANDIS 2001: 907, 908, 920). Second, personality distinctions become already apparent at the young age of individuals: “In collectivist cultures, child rearing emphasizes conformity, obedience, security, and reliability; in individualist cultures, child rearing emphasizes independence, exploration, creativity, and self-reliance” (TRIANDIS 2001: 912). Third, in terms of individual action, collectivist cultures show interdependence with their in-groups, for example family, and therefore “behave in a communal way” (TRIANDIS 2001: 909), whereas individualist cultures allow individuals more independence and the pursuit of their personal goals. TRIANDIS is very aware of that this framework describes ideal types and may vary in its details, and despite all of these tendencies, individuals can represent attitudes from both types: “Rather, people sample from both the individualist and collectivist cognitive structures, depending on the situation” (TRIANDIS 2001: 909). Beyond, he gives a definition of four types of culture in vertical-horizontal dimension for specification, while making clear that “there are many other dimensions defining different varieties of individualism and collectivism” (TRIANDIS 2001: 910). He concludes by a

remark on links between local natural environments and personality: “Changes in the ecology result in changes in culture which result in changes in personality” (TRIANDIS 2001: 920).

Individualism in the Thai context is an intriguing matter. Our case studies of Bangkok's organic scenes shows individualist tendencies among the organic stakeholders that seem to contrast with the collectivist environment. We may reckon Thailand, particularly Bangkok, being a distinct case of collectivist culture – while people are generally embedded in and behaving according to tight kinship structures, many individuals seem to pursue their own personal business, representative for their individuality. Curiously, it seems to be accepted, as long as the family affairs are not neglected. As a result, this study argues that parallel personal realities seem to arise from that; further, general collective culture does not exclude individual adaptations which will become apparent in chapter 5.

To summarise, it seems appropriate to conclude on the Thai context “[i]n collectivist cultures, [...] a central goal of the individual is not to distinguish herself or himself from others but to maintain harmony with them” (DIENER 1999: 284), but whether “personal desires often are subordinated to those of the group” (id. *ibid.*) needs further precision, and will be elucidated in chapter 5.

Collective culture can entail strong links of solidarity. During field research for this study, solidarity has been found to be a factor within organic groups, especially among small-scale farmers in the rural area who group together to build producer communities. Solidarity also appears the basis for distinct NGO engagement tackling poverty reduction, land access, consumer or farmer rights. It is further one reason for consumer-producer networks to emerge which supply via direct links between the two sides.

#### 2.2.4 Self-determination Theory – a psychological approach to stakeholder motivations

This chapter addresses a further matter of individual motivations on a psychological level, with reference to the second research question of what motivates stakeholders to engage in the organic movement. Motivation and self-determination are reciprocal elements of individual action. Self-determination indicates the extent to which an individual is in control of its action, hence guided by its own intentions and preferences. Self-Determination Theory, developed by RYAN & DECI since the 1970s, seems to explain appropriately: Basing on the “assumption that people are active organisms”, and “centrally concerned with motivation”, Self-Determination Theory distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations driving human action. Social and cultural influences on human behaviour, e.g. type of society, social or ecological environment – an aspect

that in fact refers back to the individualism-collectivism debate – can influence individual's perception, their well-being, and perception of social situations, thus personal aspirations. RYAN & DECI say about Self-Determination Theory: “Self-determination theory is an empirically based theory of human motivation, development, and wellness” (DECI & RYAN 2008: 182). The motivational framework comprises a variety of sub-theories to approach motivation by actually differentiating different types of it. “People have [...] different kinds of motivation. That is, they vary not only in *level* of motivation (i.e., how much motivation), but also in the *orientation* of that motivation (i.e., what type of motivation)” (DECI & RYAN 2000a: 54). It leads them to two basic scales, autonomous and controlled motivations, which they break down again. The first articulates free and volitional behaviour (generating in one's self), the latter represents control or pressure in contrast to the expression of self (cf. DECI & RYAN 2000a: 65). Self-Determination Theory assumes that motivations root in a set of basic psychological needs of individuals “that must be satisfied for effective functioning and psychological health” (DECI & RYAN 2008: 183), namely the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness which guide and influence the processes of identification and motivation: “the degrees to which basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are supported versus thwarted affect both the type and strength of motivation” (DECI & RYAN 2008: 182). The performance of personal aspirations relates to the need of satisfaction and in turn to psychological health, and the realisation of psychological needs, for example autonomous behaviour, leads to greater satisfaction: “Autonomy of action mostly enhances motivation and is perhaps related to need satisfaction: The *why* of goal pursuits does indeed matter, and we argue that this is because autonomous regulation involves greater need satisfaction” (DECI & RYAN 2000b: 242). DECI & RYAN (2000b: 236) also mention how the factor of identification plays a role in motivational processes for it enables internalisation of certain behaviours, and how identification can favour commitment. Identification becomes here a part of autonomous or self-determined motivation as it requires that individuals perceive certain behaviours as relevant. An example clarifies: “A boy who memorizes spelling lists because he sees it as relevant to writing, which he values as a life goal, has identified with the value of this learning activity” (DECI & RYAN 2000a: 62). The theory thus contains several aspects that are able to account for stakeholder motivations in the organic movement in Bangkok: Whereas most organic consumers and organic entrepreneurs are most likely intrinsically motivated to engage in the organic scenes, and find therein fulfilled what DECI & RYAN call the psychological needs, some organic growers may be controlled – for example by a body imposing organic farming implementation – or guided by external incentives such as economic benefit. In fact, most farmers are driven by their delicate social situations when they commence organic farming, so it needs to be discussed if their motivations are intrinsic or rather

extrinsic. The level of autonomy in their decisions is a factor here and does indeed determine their level of satisfaction with organic farming, as will be further explained in the chapters 4 and 5.

#### Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations

A concept for intrinsic and extrinsic motivations was the initial intention of Self-Determination Theory. In order to receive a sound picture of what motivates individuals, and why, the notion of motivation should be differentiated according to how much they derive from the individual's own incentive. Within the organic scenes in Bangkok, motivations can vary significantly, from those that are clearly intrinsic to others that are guided by external incentives. DECI & RYAN refine this twofold distinction by condensing more specific conditions: Intrinsic motivation is doing something “for its inherent satisfactions” (DECI & RYAN 2000a: 56) rather than for “external prods, pressures, or rewards” (ibid.). Intrinsic motivation is the actual prototype of self-determined behaviour, and may be encouraged by a naturally given element of curiosity: “This natural motivational tendency is a critical element in cognitive, social, and physical development because it is through acting on one’s inherent interests that one grows in knowledge and skills” (DECI & RYAN 2000a: 56). It also attempts to meet competence and autonomy (cf. DECI & RYAN 2000a: 65). In relation to extrinsic motivation they explain that it usually anticipates certain outcomes, meaning that behaviours are not just adopted for the sake of inherent satisfaction, but transform into an instrument to reach certain objectives. Extrinsic motivations can either be more or less self-determined, but internalisation of behaviours can increase self-determination (cf. id.: 60, 65). An important factor that directs extrinsic motivations to a certain extent is the one of relatedness to social environments. Relatedness refers here to personal links: “Because extrinsically motivated behaviors are not inherently interesting [...], the primary reason people are likely to be willing to do the behaviors is that they are valued by significant others to whom they feel (or would like to feel) connected, whether that be a family, a peer group, or a society” (id.: 64). Further reference is made to competence, a notion that individuals generate when their internalised behaviour results in positive outcomes. It is a precondition when individuals choose to adopt an extrinsic objective. This aspect is very relevant for organic stakeholders in Bangkok. For instance, it is more likely that urbanites begin gardening after attending an encouraging workshop that enhances their competence; or, a farmer will grow organically after acquiring the necessary skills. Therefore it is of interest to this study how stakeholder motivations are geared towards intrinsic and extrinsic behaviour.

## Self-fulfilment and personal well-being

To refer back to the research question: what motivates stakeholders to engage in organic matters, allows for the identification of various aspects placed within the range of intrinsically to extrinsically motivated behaviour. One aspect of intrinsic motivation that concerns the individual's self, and at the time resumes social identity, is self-fulfilment. Self-fulfilment takes place when individuals are able to realise their aspirations – personal projects, skills – and usually evokes affirmative feelings. We can assume that self-fulfilment and intrinsic motivation root in the same principles, in a way that self-fulfilment is a consequence of free and voluntary behaviour. KASSER (2009: 178), who researches about psychological needs satisfaction, writes: “Intrinsic goals involve concerns that are inherently satisfying in and of themselves because they satisfy people's psychological needs” involving “personal growth/self-acceptance”, a precondition for fulfilment. Self-fulfilment can connect to related social phenomena like self-enhancement or positive self-esteem in the social identity concept. Apart from affiliation to social groups and external incentives, this is relevant for organic stakeholders.

Two further notable aspects recently integrated in Self-Determination Theory explanations are transferable to the organic movement, namely mindfulness and well-being (cf. RYAN & DECI 2008, KASSER 2009). Mindfulness equally derives from personal, autonomous motivations, and has been defined “as an open awareness and interested attention to what is happening within and around oneself” (DECI & RYAN 2008: 184). BROWN et al. add, it requires no reflexive consciousness but concerns awareness through “simple noticing of what is taking place” (BROWN et al. 2009: 728).

Well-being “concerns the experience of psychological health and life satisfaction” (DECI & RYAN 2000b: 242) that individuals aim at through their actions. In the context of this study, this means that organic stakeholders in Bangkok are likely motivated by lifestyles that enhance their well-being, to balance the stressful and unhealthy mega-urban living. Lifestyle aspirations towards well-being and health are personal, therefore certainly supported in great parts by intrinsic motivations. We may assume that stakeholders, when they for instance start a city garden because they wish to enhance their personal well-being do this by free choice. KASSER (2009: 175/176) regards relationships of ecological sustainability and well-being by a psychological, need-based approach, asking two questions: “First [...] whether the experience of living in ecologically sustainable (vs. degrading) environments is conducive to psychological need satisfaction. Second [...] whether the kinds of behaviors that promote ecological sustainability can also generally satisfy the psychological needs crucial for well-being”. He finds that living sustainably supports in parts the four defined psychological needs of safety, competence, relatedness and autonomy. For instance, for insecurity about environment, if ecological problems were publicly tackled, it would result in

more confidence about environmental improvement, successively providing the feeling of safety and well-being (cf. KASSER 2009: 176). Or, an example that is transferable to the Bangkok case: “becoming involved in community-supported agriculture programs, co-ops of various sorts, and even local currencies are each likely to lead individuals to spend more time interacting with others who share common interests and values. Such interactions might then build [...] relatedness that in turn will satisfy this psychological need and thus improve personal well-being at the same time that ecologically sustainable behavior is promoted” (KASSER 2009: 177).

#### 2.2.5 When simplicity motivates lifestyle aspirations – voluntary simplicity by KASSER

Many stakeholders in the organic scenes in Bangkok represent ideas of simple or sustainable living. In the course of various studies, KASSER (2009) and others find positive correlations between ecologically conscious behaviour and personal well-being, and state that sustainable living not necessarily requires great sacrifice: “These data speak against the common assumption that living in an ecologically sustainable fashion must involve sacrifices that will interfere with personal well-being and instead suggest that living in an ecologically sustainable way can promote personal well-being” (KASSER 2009: 176). KASSER chooses the voluntary simplicity approach to illustrate how happiness and ecological sustainability harmonise. He defines voluntary simplicity as a “rather flexible lifestyle that can encompass rural or urban lifestyles, spiritual or nonspiritual attitudes” (KASSER 2009: 178), and states that voluntary simplicity involves a focus on personal values like “personal growth, family, community, spirituality, and communion with nature” (id. *ibid.*) rather than on consumption and material goods. Persons who realise voluntary simplicity find well-being from inward satisfaction rather than from external impetus (professional success, wealth, status). Maintaining this lifestyle is not necessarily natural, for capitalist structures in most societies “encourage materialism and discourage intrinsically oriented goals” (id. *ibid.*). However, studies reveal that “voluntary simplicity people were able to live more lightly on the earth while remaining happy” (id. *ibid.*), and that this corresponds to the representation of their intrinsic values: “extrinsically oriented, materialistic individuals report lower personal well-being, whereas those with strong intrinsic values are happier and healthier” (id. *ibid.*). KASSER further demonstrates mutual relationships between intrinsic motivation, greater happiness and ecologically responsible behaviour of individuals (cf. id. *ibid.*).

Transferring these explanations to the city farming movement in Bangkok, patterns of voluntary simplicity in many stakeholders' lifestyles can be found. Going back to farming or being more self-reliant means choosing a simpler lifestyle, just as it implies awareness for nature, health,

mind, or social environment. When aiming at such lifestyles, stakeholders may first face difficulties to realise respective behaviours. Social groups or workshops are often supportive in providing knowledge and skills. KASSER stresses how important this support is for it eventually contributes to the satisfaction of psychological needs, thus well-being: “[I]t seems crucial to help individuals overcome initial feelings of incompetence so that they might eventually feel greater competence that will both sustain the new ecologically friendly behaviors and promote higher levels of well-being” (KASSER 2009: 177).

Section 2.2 made reference to sets of motivations that affect stakeholder engagement. Motivations are directed towards individuals themselves (social identity, individualistic distinction from others, self-enhancement, intrinsic and extrinsic self-determination, self-fulfilment, personal well-being, voluntary simplicity) or to social groups (solidarity, relatedness to social environment, community thinking). Beyond, the notion of prototype might be able to account for modelling effects of pioneers in the movement who further motivate stakeholders to imitate them. As those motivations underlie psychological processes, they are able to explain the organic stakeholders' attitudes, their individual actions and interaction with others in the movements and beyond. Section 2.2 backs the interpretation of the second research question, and partially the fourth which envisages the realisation of green urban lifestyles by the concept of voluntary simplicity. The following sections introduce additional knowledge on current food and consumption trends and notions of urban space in relation to its elements of urban farming, which account for the third and fourth research questions about structural settings of the organic movement and the realisation of green lifestyles.

### 2.3 Approaches to consumption and food

The preceding new social movement theories and motivational approaches building a solid theoretical base to the empirical analysis of this study, three further interests should here be explored: First, current consumption patterns in Thai society and general consumption counter-trends, as organic foods allude to mindful consumption (cf. chapter 2.3); second, the demand for healthy food as a mega-urban phenomenon requiring a brief presentation of Bangkok's mega-urban lifestyles (cf. chapter 2.6); and third, the rethinking of rural-urban relationships, since city farmers bring back rural activities to the urban sphere, and organic food exchange in Bangkok partially functions on the base of direct consumer-producer links (cf. chapters 2.4 and 2.5).

Relevant literature and complementary concepts are presented – the organic movement in Bangkok displays two principal facets: the one of production and the one of consumption of organic

foods. A number of research papers have appeared on organic production methods, adaptation of farmers, and markets for organic foods (cf. e.g. BECCHETTI et al. 2012, KASTERINE et al. 2010, KAWASAKI et al. 2009, PATTANAPANT et al. 2009, KANTAMATURAPOJ 2012, 2013a, 2013b), but hardly any study captures the reasons and patterns behind organic food consumption, or considers specifically mega-urban consumption. It can be assumed that Bangkok represents typical lifestyles which affect considerably the manner and extent of organic food consumption, even of urban farming practices; and as a consequence organic production in rural spheres for urban supply. It is hence sensible to comprise approaches to current consumption trends, food movements as well as alternative economies that play a role in the organic food scene in Bangkok.

### 2.3.1 Consumer society and the individual consumer

Consumption seems to be a prevailing slogan of Bangkok, at least for a great part of the population. Enormous shopping malls of different price range and offer proliferate along the major traffic axes as well as in central locations of most of Bangkok's neighbourhoods. Consumption is possible practically any day of the week and nearly any time of the day. While shopping malls invite for extended shopping trips and leisure activities, small shops, markets and street vendors still enjoy popularity among most urbanites, regardless their budgets. Whereas expensive malls attract affluent consumers with purchasing power to buy expensive labels and other global brands, a vast weekend market in the northern outskirts offers all kinds of fashions at affordable prices, including young local designers. Shopping is clearly encouraged by means of omnipresent advertisement in streets, on public transport and above all on television channels. Shopping in Bangkok seems to be a popular leisure activity, obviously going beyond mere satisfaction of the basic needs. To quote anthropologist VORNG, as the Thai language contains no equivalent concept for “shopping”, it has adopted the English word, and means “the purchase of any nonessential items” (VORNG 2011a, 78).

What are general patterns behind this? Bangkok is the trendsetting centre of the country and has sufficient affluent consumers able and willing to enjoy the offer of the market. Fashion, referred to various goods, seems to be firmly settled in Thai culture, not least because of its distinctive function. This function might prevail even more among urban populations where processes of identity are more complex, competitive and therefore more difficult to sustain. Indeed, consumption can be identity-forming. Sociologist WILLER states that:

*“The Southeast Asian countries are, because of their cultural imprint, socially considerably more hierarchical, thus show a much stronger, inherent need for distinction from others or*

*identification with others in nearly any situation. In a mega-city where people hardly know each other, this need is even stronger, and the most apparent option to distinguish oneself from others and to indicate one's own social status is to consume goods that will be recognised by others.” (WILLER 2008: 6, translated from German)*

Also HELLMANN indicates the identity function of consumption that can result in either differentiation or integration among consumers (cf. HELLMANN 2013: 10). Further, he finds that consumption habits have a considerable effect on people's lifestyles, and can even cause health, traffic or environmental problems (cf. id.: 18). He attributes an active and effective role to the consumer within these consumption processes: “However, it is unquestionable that consumers have developed an extremely powerful role over the past two centuries which is performed mostly independently compared to other roles” (ibid.: 11, translated from German). JÄCKEL (2004: 155) though finds the concept of the independent and sovereign consumer one-sided for it argues too much on the grounds of observed demand by consumers. He objects that consumer sovereignty does not equal individual purchase decisions. The latter are also influenced by group processes in which the consumers' personal decisions are interrelated and reflect cultural values and social norms (cf. id.: 78). Regardless, JÄCKEL observes a new marketing concept in growing trends towards individualisation in societies that responds to people's need for individuality, expressed via consumption (cf. id.: 250/251).

The authors show how consumption strongly links to identity, (urban) lifestyles, cultural norms, decision making and socialisation processes; these typical urban phenomena are revealed in Bangkok.

There is general discourse with consumption being a major purpose of our contemporary societies. JÄCKEL (2004: 19) in fact writes about consumer societies becoming apparent in the pre-industrial period. A typical trait of such consumer society is the transition of consumption from the satisfaction of primarily physical needs to “consumption as imaginary trying of possibilities”, with consumption being a “room of possibilities” (HELLMANN 2013: 106/107, translated from German). BAUDRILLARD in his “Consumer Society” goes further, saying the consumer society is actually “the society of the learning of consumption, the social training of consumption – meaning a new and specific mode of *socialisation*” (BAUDRILLARD 1970: 114, translated from French). It reflects the social and inventive function of consumption.

One could argue that Thailand has not reached post-industrial status; however, the megacity Bangkok is a microcosm that asks for unique criteria. Due to the city's diverse social nature – for instance high income disparities – on one side and its wide range of consumable offers on the other

side, consumption processes adopt all imaginable shapes.

How is mass consumption in Bangkok and the development of an organic movement possibly related? And how does it affect the production of organic goods? To anticipate some insights acquired during field work, a growing number of people are critical about current consumption trends, and are inspired to build up what may be called a critical consumer society. We may suspect here that attitudes and lifestyles of people are changing and orienting towards more sustainable consumption. This often implies focus on quality instead of quantity, and may include visions of simple life and detachment from material goods. One obvious characteristic of current consumption patterns, which is precisely reason for the critical consumers to voice doubts, is luxury lifestyle. Luxury refers to the circulation of goods that are not inherently necessary for the purchaser's survival. JÄCKEL says about luxury, “[a]lso after present-day linguistic comprehension, the word luxury describes things and behaviours that exceed the measure of fulfilment of one's needs recognised as necessary” (JÄCKEL 2004: 28, translated from German). Mass consumption is often discussed as naturally occurring in modern societies, even though there is no agreement on whether mass consumption equalises or separates social structures: BAUDRILLARD philosophises about how every society creates internal differentiations and social discriminations based upon the unequal distribution of money, and how the capitalist system, as soon as a country enters a period of industrial growth, even reinforces and manifests this gradient by rationalising and generalising differentiation (cf. BAUDRILLARD 1970: 66, translated from French). HELLMANN reasons that at the same time, mass consumption can help overcome class structures because the consumption of goods becomes universal and accessible to everyone; it gives “anyone the feeling of full participation in the luxury of living” (HELLMANN 2013: 102, translated from German).

An intriguing matter is now to find out – and this is again relevant for the discussion of critical consumers in Bangkok – how consumers influence the production by their demand. BAUDRILLARD is very clear in attributing consumers only a passive role: “We can [...] only agree to Galbraith (and others) in his opinion that consumer liberty and sovereignty are nothing but mystifications” (BAUDRILLARD 1970: 99, translated from French). According to this, consumers are not sufficiently equipped to impact the market with their participation. However, this view might be outdated and might need further discussion, for in some societies, consumers do indeed have the capacity to impose changes. HELLMANN quotes here “Consumer Movements” arising globally as the “most apparent sign for active consumer democracies” (HELLMANN 2013: 120, translated from German), an aspect that is alluded to in many participant interviews and discussed in chapter 4.

“The new consumers” in MYERS and KENT

A great share of consumers in Bangkok may currently be described by what MYERS & KENT (2004)<sup>7</sup> call “the new consumers”. With the publishing of their work in the mid 2000s, they first explained the impact of these new consumers on the environment by their new lifestyles and new affluence. Giving various indicators – predominantly the possession of private cars and meat consumption – they identify around twenty countries (developing and transition countries) where these new consumers have recently reached sizeable number. A number of interesting tendencies and examples can be extracted from their book that match well with recent consumption trends and lifestyle conversions in Thai society. MYERS & KENT conclude a new trend from the early 1980s onwards within which consumers started to exhaust their new consumption possibilities thanks to newly gained affluence. According to statistics from the year 2000, Thailand ranks among the new consumer countries with a share of 53% of new consumers within the total population (MYERS & KENT 2004: 17). It is interesting that “[t]his outburst of new-consumer affluence became apparent in the form of modern housing, designer goods, fashion clothing, quality restaurants, department stores, international hotels, classy cars and other perquisites of Western lifestyles” (id.: 14), a trend equally noticed in Bangkok. In terms of affluence, MYERS & KENT define the new consumers as “within an average of four-member households who possess purchasing power of at least PPP\$10,000 per year, or at least PPP\$2500 per person” (id.: 8), with adds to their environmental impact (cf. id.: 10). MYERS & KENT also mention the actual menace of overconsumption, and approach the question of how to level out its consequences by adopting more sustainable lifestyles.<sup>8</sup> Concerning possible policy strategies, they first observe that “Consumers are induced to move up the food chain through dietary fads, taught taste, and social status” and second suggest that they could “be shifted toward healthier diets through fiscal incentives such as a “food conversion efficiency” tax” (MYERS & KENT 2003: 4967). Concerning options for individual households, they also make reference to concepts of voluntary simplicity which they describe as “downshifting, or shifting to a more simple and relaxed, albeit less affluent, lifestyle” (MYERS & KENT 2004: 136).

Changing lifestyles and consumption patterns of consumers who have just begun to benefit from their newly acquired affluence seems to be a challenging issue. Actually, HELLMANN (2013: 11) identifies a recent appealing connotation of alternative consumption as it encourages to people to change their lifestyles in favour to more sustainable consumption. He quotes in this context consumption expert MILLER who criticises the critique of consumerism through affluent Westerners

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<sup>7</sup> Myers & Kent 2004: *The new consumers: The influence of affluence on the environment*

<sup>8</sup> To sustainable consumption, they refer to as following: “sustainable consumption amounts to the use of materials and energy that (a) enhances present-day’s quality of life and (b) will not generate protests from our grandchildren that we have cut the environmental ground from under their feet” (id.: 24).

and underlines an important implication of consumption, namely its identity stimulated property: “Because here, the global newcomers is simply refused their participation in certain blessings of civilisation, namely exactly by these successful and saturated persons whose quality of life can merely be beaten. It angered MILLER even more that these consumption critics are misjudging the existential function of consumption, which is to provide humans with identity” (HELLMANN 2013: 39, translated from German)

According to HELLMANN, following sustainable lifestyles in a consequent manner is barely possible, at best superficially, because consumers have few opportunities to control the sustainability of their purchase (cf. HELLMANN 2013: 49). Talking of consumer sovereignty, he observes that consumers act surprisingly irresponsibly despite greater liberties in their choice of what to consume, and that they act responsibly, above all, as much as their lifestyles allow them, and as long as sustainable consumption does not exceed a certain acceptable level of annoyance (cf. id.: 11; 43). This can be observed in most societies that try to realise sustainable behaviours. However, there are elements which people can choose to implement within the framing of their environments, and within the options offered to them. A mega-urban environment might not obviously favour the implementation of sustainable, green, or healthy ways of living, in contrast to rural environments that allow gardening where possible and in which local farmers can provide organically grown food. Urban constraints may lie in the difficulties of health food supply, general unhealthy living conditions due to pollution, long and traffic prone distances, price of sustainable offer, dominance of motorised transportation and relative danger in the use of alternative, non-motorised transportation, low prices and ease of access to conventional foods, psychological stress, and other factors. All those factors are relevant for the emergence of organic scenes in Bangkok, for regardless and perhaps because of these constraints, urbanites express growing concern about the quality of living and the urge to live more sustainably. As HELLMANN (2013: 120) states, consumers globally claim active consumer democracy, represented in “consumer movements”.

Against this backdrop, and to take up with the line of this study, it becomes even more intriguing to investigate sustainable consumption and aspirations towards simplistic lifestyles among some Bangkok urbanites in the organic scene.

### 2.3.2 Reflections on food

Food can be studied in the context of consumption, and sustainable consumption includes food from sustainable production. Sustainable ways of living therefore instantly relate to food, hence the emerging organic food movement in Bangkok is likewise reflecting consumer

democracies, changing urban lifestyles, growing concerns for health and environment, or identity matters. Even though food consumption being a topic that concerns every person, research on it still seems neglected. Especially social and cultural meanings of food and food related movements received – in contrast to food production – until recently little attention. Food research pioneer BELASCO suspects that it is because “intellectuals are heirs to a classical dualism that prizes mind over body” (BELASCO 2008: 2). Indeed, food consumption is a rather physical affair, directly linked to the nutritional functioning of our bodies. However, it also has a dimension beyond the satisfaction of physical needs, which is a social and cultural value of food (cf. e.g. BELL & VALENTINE 1997: 61/62). Exploring the current literature about the nature of food reveals various perspectives: “food is perfectly suited to enterprise” but it also is “something that binds people together and transcends personal desire or profit”, and contributes to that “social and cultural values are lived and reproduced” (LUETCHFORD 2014: 49); or “[f]ood is an important mean of expression for social relationships and communication. Food can signal friendship, affiliation and closeness, but can also indicate social status, power, hierarchy and exclusion” (BARLÖSIUS 1995: 293, translated from German). Here, a another perspective on food, the one of identity, is suggested. By the food we as individuals or social groups eat, identity is received and likewise indicated. Also the way we eat food – food habits or manners, eating places – contributes to this identity. Food-based identification may occur on individual or on societal level, for example in the form of regional recipes or national cuisines. “Like language, a cuisine is a medium by which a society establishes its special identity” (BELASCO 2007: 44). BELL & VALENTINE (1997) published 'Consuming Geographies' that solely regard the perspective of food, claiming that we are what we eat. It examines possible scales of relevance of food, namely body, home, community, city, region, nation and global. Food can express identity on these scales, or vice versa: “changes in identity [...] are articulated on individuals' plates – affecting not only what is bought to eat and the places from where it is purchased, but also who has prepared it and the spatial dynamics of when and where it is consumed within the home“ (BELL & VALENTINE 1997: 77). Some authors attribute a memory function to food, in the way that memory of food constitutes the “key” to understanding it as more than an individual need but locating “people in time and place” (LUETCHFORD 2014: 60). Typical dishes of a country can induce identity: “national identity is expressed through food consumption” (BELL & VALENTINE 1997: 18), and typical ingredients or staples are often clearly attributed to certain places. Indeed, Thai cuisine is a good example for a distinct national cuisine, promoted – even by the Thai government – as “kitchen of the world” (MURRAY 2007: 21/22). In the same manner that food creates identity, it can promote distinction between social or cultural groups, or individuals – “a nation's diet can have a key role to play in nationalistic sentiments” (BELL &

VALENTINE 1997: 162), and “food consumption does not just mark groups; differences between foods underpin hierarchies” (PRATT 2014: 50).

Identity and distinction are often created through eating habits or eating styles and as a consequence point to certain lifestyles. Attention should here be given to food sociologist BARLÖSIUS who thoroughly reflects nutrition from the perspective of lifestyles, a perspective which is relevant with regard to organic food movements in Bangkok, too. It is assumed that organic food consumption has an identity stimulating effect on urbanites, and directly relates to mega-urban environments thus typical urban ways of living. Referring to previous definitions in consumption sociology, BARLÖSIUS argues that lifestyles are consumption patterns enunciated through consumption preferences; further that lifestyles are increasingly applied to food consumption matters because the latter are experiencing modernisation and dissolution from traditional nutrition patterns, resulting in alternating eating habits. She states as a result of this increasing hedonistic eating behaviours on the one hand, and the emergence of health oriented eating on the other hand. (cf. BARLÖSIUS 1995: 316). This aspect is found to be transferable to Bangkok, and probably many other megacities, where preferences for fast foods, Western style coffee shop and global dining culture expand, while counter movements for healthy or locally oriented foods begin to be settled. Basing on this trend, BARLÖSIUS (1995: 318/319) argues for a dissolution of eating habits from class relations towards lifestyles as distinguishing factor. For this study, it will be especially interesting to find out mutual influences between the urban environment and food consumption in Bangkok. Eating practices have certainly changed over the past decades parallel to the variation of forms of urban identities. Due to the steady generation and adoption of new trends of any kind in the urban spheres, cityscapes are constantly changing and adapting to service the preferences of the urbanites, and “food plays an increasingly important role in their cultures” (BELL & VALENTINE 1997: 143). For cities being the centres of consumption, urban lifestyles, compared to rural lifestyles, can immediately react to new trends and food fads. In Bangkok, the availability of street foods and typical restaurant culture help developing particular eating styles. Consequently, it can be assumed that – in combination with general unhealthy and stressful lifestyles – there is fast food culture rising on one hand and its counter-culture on the other hand, providing an opening for new urban identities and ways of living. Fast food chains are often cited as significant vectors to alter the cityscape, certainly global chains like McDonald's (cf. HELLMANN 2013; JENKS 2003; BELL & VALENTINE 1997): “the significance of fast-food provision in the urban context as something which has had a profound effect on city life” (BELL & VALENTINE 1997: 134). This effect expresses in both, their material presence and in their immense attraction for urbanites. Generally, restaurants can turn into places where feelings of home and relaxation are reproduced while away from the personal

household, at least for those who enjoy eating out; that way, McDonald's does arguably represent a concept of closeness, stability and convenience for some consumers, which reverses the actual fast food concept intended to provide short stays over a fast meal. Instead, McDonald's turns into a venue for business meeting of after-school homework in Bangkok.

#### Food activism and food movements

These tendencies indicate an urban divide between various food choices: “On the one hand, the urban food economy is the space where demand is most intense for 'value-added' food products from the agro-industrial system”, “On the other hand, the city is the space [...] where demand is also greatest for alternative food products” (DONALD & BLAY-PALMER 2006: 1904).

A counter-culture to this can be observed in many urban societies which brings along the emergence of alternative foods including so-called slow foods, health foods or organic foods. Methodically, this involves, apart from organic food consumption, an approach to those Bangkokians who become growers of organic food themselves. Beyond, this implies determining rural elements in the urban space, in a material as well as a symbolic sense. Indeed, wearying urban life may make some feel a “nostalgia for the countryside” and long for plain foods, “the 'plain fare' associated with simple rural life” (BELL & VALENTINE 1997: 142).

At this point, it is also relevant to appraise Bangkokian consumer (and grower) profiles; further, whether organic food represents a temporary fad, possibly nourishing the luxury taste for some, and nostalgia for the rural for some others, or whether we are actually dealing with grounded food movements.

Several studies consider middle classes as modelling food preferences, by trend setting or their moral discernment (cf. BARLÖSIUS 1999: 117), and mark them as “‘taste-makers' in society” (BELL & VALENTINE 1997: 172). Others think that alternative foods are easily dismissed “as a middle-class neurosis about health and body image” (LUETCHFORD 2014: 58) as they often have individualist attitudes. Putting aside the class-based argumentation, it can be concluded that consumers, specifically urban consumers, are key stakeholders in pushing forward concerns for alternative foods by their own consumption preferences (cf. PRATT & LUETCHFORD 2014: 176). A theme that these green consumers often share is their “conscious rejection of the open economy and support for alternative systems of production and consumption” (LUETCHFORD 2014: 69).

The demand for organic food can be directly linked to a critique of the quality of processed foods that are found abundantly in the cities, supported by numerous scandals about polluted foods in the past. BARLÖSIUS describes here the phenomenon of “malbouffe” – bad food – which is a lateral result of the globalisation of food production coming along with the standardisation of tastes.

It is critical that two factors, economical efficiency and convenience of food products, have been prioritised over food quality, not mentioning the cultural value of foods (cf. BARLÖSIUS 1999: 235; BELASCO 2008: 78). In this sense, alternative consumption can reflect concerns about unethical global production methods (cf. BELL & VALENTINE 1997: 187; 196).

On a rather personal level, care for the health of the family is mentioned as one reason for organic food consumption and production: “uncertainties about mainstream food and its effects on the body and health are transposed onto social forms, in the first instance the family: as important as not poisoning oneself is not poisoning the kids” (LUETCHFORD 2014: 58/59). This health aspect is notable in the organic movement in Bangkok. BELASCO further observed, while studying counter-cultures to the food industry, that organic foods gather three meanings: “therapeutic self-enhancement, consumerist self-protection, and alternative production” (BELASCO 2007: 69).

Apart from these personal orientations, organic food movements often carry a societal component, for instance solidarity with growers, ecological concerns, resistance against industrial production, mass consumption and liberal economy. They may advocate for small-scale and local farming systems and close consumer-producer-relationships in order to cut out profit-making middle men. Alternative food systems focus on “reversing differentiations and detachment of food from its cultural, regional and ecological bonds and contexts” by emphasising the two processes of “territorialisation and localisation” (BARLÖSIUS 1999: 296/299, translated from German).

Urban gardening is part of urban alternative food movements for it offers urbanites some control over the food they consume by growing parts of their own foods, and equally the opportunity to fulfil their ideas of reconnecting to nature and simple, back-to-the-roots lifestyles, while contributing to their well-being. Urban gardens can give “possibilities for households to establish self-sufficiency in food in various degrees” for reasons of “outright rejection of a capitalist lifestyle”, or reflect lifestyles “motivated by concerns about the way in which commercial foods are processed” (BELL & VALENTINE 1997: 86). According to LUETCHFORD, for growers in the rural, organic farming can have two meanings: “They can draw on the values of closure to generate more money value, and compete in the open economy. For others it is much more of a political project of escape from the terms imposed by the open market“ (LUETCHFORD 2014: 70).

General critique about recent alternative food movements concerns its exclusivity because of relatively higher prices of organic food or food at farmers' markets. It means restricted accessibility of healthy foods, purchased only by those buyers who can afford it:

*“And so basically [...] those who can't afford to buy all that stuff are left [...] to buy the rest of the stuff, and the rest of the stuff is unconscionably under regulated. So what we're getting is this*

*[...] kind of bifurcated food supply where we have some folks with money and will to do so getting some very high quality food and [...] the rest of this stuff is under-regulated” (GUTHMAN, Interview in REAL 2012: 19:23min.)*

This effects food justice movements following in the steps of alternative food movements (cf. GRILLOT & LARCHET 2014: 4). However, this critique is about food movements in California, and accessibility is differently constituted in Bangkok. For this study, no extensive or detailed relevant literature on alternative food movements in Thailand could be found. This study thus seeks to conceptually capture these kinds of movements that have developed recently in Bangkok. It will analyse namely how and why these food movements evolve in the urban sphere, and how the specific regional context influences these movements.

#### 2.4 Disentangling the rural-urban divide

This chapter is dedicated to a further major theme of the study – urban farming – which is one component of the organic food movement in Bangkok. It seeks to investigate what role the rural-urban divide has in food movements and vice versa. Before introducing general concepts of urban farming, a philosophical deduction of the notion of rural-urban divide and some conceptional reflections on bridging this divide are proposed.

Farming being commonly defined as a rural activity is brought back into the urban sphere through urban farming. This presupposes that an actual (physical and symbolic) distinction has divided functions of the cities from functions of the countryside. There is reason to wonder if a distinction is not artificial, and if farming activities have not historically been a part of the urban sphere. Given this, it can be argued that bringing farming back into the city is a way of reproducing former agricultural patterns. This argumentation requires a closer look behind general nature-culture relationships, to better assess where to place farming within this symbolic opposition to urbanity.

Such a digression is essential for the understanding of the dissolution of rural and urban elements through urban farming specifically, and through the ongoing food movements generally.

The notion of a physical rural-urban divide (cf. for example ANDERSSON et al. 2009) draws upon oppositional conceptions of the natural sphere and culture, agriculture and non-agriculture, and city and countryside lifestyles among others. Interestingly, the rural-urban dichotomy seems to be a historically firmly established phenomenon which may adequately be called “[o]ne of the most influential thought figures throughout history” (ANDERSSON et al. 2009: 2). Tracing the two concepts etymologically already reveals two distinct environments with respective attributes. “Urban”

derives from Latin “urbānus” where it means “pertaining to the city”; and it makes specific reference to the city of Rome, thus contains the second meaning of “cultivated, refined, elegant” (KLEIN 1971: 797). In contrast, “rural”, from Latin “rūrālis”, denotes “pertaining to the country” and is equally cognate with Old Irish “rōi, rōe”, referring to the “plain field” (KLEIN 1971: 647). Thus, the word choice in itself marks an opposition between the cultivated, elegant city and the plain countryside, in physical as well as symbolic sense. The “idea that cities and urban living take on a distinctive character of form of life is a sociological thesis traceable to the late nineteenth century” (GIDDENS 2014: 64). Rural-urban distinctions became consequently entrenched in various academic disciplines, especially in rural and urban sociology, when attention was put increasingly on rural studies as supplement to urban studies. This new debate can be interpreted against the backdrop of modernity: Just as modern urbanism marked a distinct new form of living, it required a rural counterpart (cf. ANDERSSON et al. 2009: 2; WIRTH 1938: 2/3; GIDDENS 2014: 64).

The course of global modernisation and urbanisation entailed shifts from rural lifestyles to largely urban lifestyles. “It is these changes and their ramifications that invite the attention of the sociologist to the study of the differences between the rural and the urban mode of living” (WIRTH 1938: 2/3). At the same time, the distinction between rural and urban reflects an attempt to condense the context into classifiable indicators for national censuses to apply for the description of demographic changes and transformations (cf. ANDERSSON et al. 2009: 4; STEWART 1958: 152).

The practical conception of the rural-urban divide received critique particularly for its inadequacy and rigidity (cf. WIRTH 1938: 3; WOOD 2005: 9; RIGG 1998: 515; SCHAEFFER et al. 2012: 81). “Dichotomies of this type over-emphasized the contrast between urban and rural societies” (WOOD 2005: 9). Especially a distinction after demographic factors “has limited value” (STEWART 1958: 152) for the extending mobility of people blurs the limits of work and social space and residence, as Stewart states already in 1958. Between the 1950s and the 1970s, a rural-urban continuum obtained a moderating position in sociological debate that was later criticised for simplifying the facts (cf. WOOD 2005: 9/21). Similar further critique is presented: “The rural-urban dichotomy is often used as a crude yardstick for international socioeconomic comparisons” (STEWART 1958: 152), or a “definition which calls a large peasant settlement “urban” and a small mining town [...] “rural” is clearly inappropriate for sociology” (id.: 155). It is suggested that “modernisation has created a “space” in between the rural and the urban that the paradigm has poorly addressed” (ANDERSSON et al. 2009: 6), that “the relationships between city and countryside become ever more closely entwined so it is becoming ever harder to talk of discrete 'rural' and 'urban' worlds” (RIGG 1998: 515), and that “in-between-categories increasingly replace stereotypical categories of *the* local and *the* global, *the* rural and *the* urban, and *the* modern and *the* traditional”

(CLAUSEN 2004: 51). This indicates, rural-urban relationships imply complex interconnections and interactions among the dwellers.

The question is whether the rural-urban divide is an actual divide or a notional one. Talking of rural and urban elements (cf. 2.4.1) as elements of one system rather than of actual delimited spaces might be a more flexible approach. These semantic elements, that carry typically rural or typically urban symbols, may inherently pertain to both, city regions or the countryside. This approach might depict reality better.

#### 2.4.1 The return of the rural into the urban space

The notion of the rural-urban divide plays a role for urban alternative food movements because the latter include the (re)connection of both spaces and hence contributes to the urban farming debate.

The city is cultured environment, a built-up surface in contrast to rural areas. However, the bounds of nature are vague, mostly intertwining with civilisation. Thus, settlements encroach upon the natural sphere just as nature encroaches anthropogenic settlement in a bidirectional manner.



Image 1: Trees growing into a town house  
(from own source)

Nature “claiming back” the city can be observed on many plots that have stayed abandoned for a while to be overgrown by plants. Most megacities show little evidence of unspoilt nature yet try to provide natural elements in the form of parks, green space, trees or shrubs along traffic axes. The unbuilt space has various functions to the urban environment, for it enhances ventilation and the general urban climate and counteracts heat islands in dense built-up areas. Green belts and green buffer zones are common in the larger surroundings to the city or in vicinity to city centres, often

with aim of preventing uncontrolled urban encroachment into the peri-urban.

Conversely, rural space is not equal nature, and it is it rarely in the surroundings of bigger cities. The peri-urban is marked by intermeshing of settlements, agricultural use and often industrial areas, as another form of cultured space. It could be claimed that all human appropriation of land is culturation of nature. Thus, from the point of view of a nature-culture pair, a rigid distinction between rural and urban sphere does not picture reality. Particularly when looking at contemporary settlement, boundaries become unsettled: Urbanisation is expanding into the rural sphere, the peri-urban compounds of mixed use areas with urban elements which are transferred to regional towns in the countryside. In turn mobility brings the rural closer to the urban. As a result the countryside is not solely rural any more, and the city not solely urban (cf. WINKLERPRINS 2002: 43).

This takes place analogously to the formation of lifestyles and identities which are neither rural or urban, but often pertain to both. ANDERSSON et al. even mention that emerging food and energy crises might result in a rethinking of agriculture and transportation, hence of the entire set of rural-urban relationships (cf. ANDERSSON et al. 2009: 5/6, 18). Nature might experience a new revaluation and open opportunity to experiment with a blended version of rural and urban lifestyles.

It should be asked what is the role of urban farming in this scenario. To clarify this process responding to the modern perception of urbanity, MÜLLER (2007) may be cited:

*“Applied to the level of the tangible space, [...] a “theory of modernity” means to be able to interpret the globally testified phenomenon of agricultural use of urban ground not as a contradictory or outdated but rather “authentic” and thus urban phenomenon in the genuine sense; particularly as urbanisation goes on on rapid pace not only on the mental and cultural level but just as well on the spatial-material level, so that we may wonder whether it is still appropriate to talk of the existence of the “province” as phenomenon” (MÜLLER 2007: 1, translated from German).*

MÜLLER demonstrates here that modernity asks for distancing from the traditional separation and to consider rural elements, for example farming, as something inherent in the urban sphere, instead of contradictory. Regardless, it is important to note that urban farming is not solely an achievement of modernity as rural activity seems to have been part of city life in tandem with urbanisation.

Demographically, the fact of migration flows from the countryside towards cities applies globally to most megacities. Urban populations are therefore in great parts of rural origin, and many “new” urbanites continue their habits, traditions, and skills maintaining active links to their rural

origins. Many come with farming or gardening skills which they abandon in order to take an occupation in the city. On a socio-cultural level, rural lifestyle and food patterns are often transferred. This leads to the question of how to return the rural back to the urban? And what can be the role of recent alternative food movements in doing this? Urban and peri-urban gardening is one way of linking urban and rural realities which has regained popularity in cities around the globe (cf. WINKLERPRINS 2002: 43, 53). “[P]eople can be both urban and rural at the same time” (ibid.), and urban gardens can function as “transition zone[s]” (id.: 44). For people who have rural background, gardening can become a sort of recollection of former practices, for the urbanites an additional activity or new way of living closer to nature. Even though urban gardens are often misconceived as imitations of rural gardens (cf. WINKLERPRINS 2002: 45/46), agriculture is an occupation which is not per se contracted to the rural: “[I]n any given city, at any given time, agriculture will be found that is rural, peri-urban, and intraurban in nature, the three interacting and complementing each other to varying extents” (MOUGEOT 2000).

The return of rural elements into the city means for example to turn vacant land or unused private zones into garden plots. Most cities historically provide an agricultural surface, or gardening plots within the city bounds or its close surroundings (cf. DIXON et al. 2009: 16; e.g.). Also keeping animals is a common practice to some extent. A recent trend in many cities are community gardens, rooftop or backyard gardens, or demonstration farms for educational purpose. Another option addresses policy making for it concerns the preservation of agricultural surface in peri-urban areas. Urban gardening often contains an awareness factor reminding urbanites of the rural world. It can have the effect, too of growing interest in and interaction with the countryside, in a way that urbanites visit farms, or moving out of town temporarily or permanently.

Alternative food movements can link the rural with the urban in several manners: Awareness for healthy and locally grown food can make people consider growing their own food, or to get supply from farmers in the city's surroundings. The alternative food scene often connects producers and consumers directly by encouraging direct marketing systems, either through farmers' markets or through membership subscriptions.

The following chart abstracts rural-urban linkages through the mentioned factors:

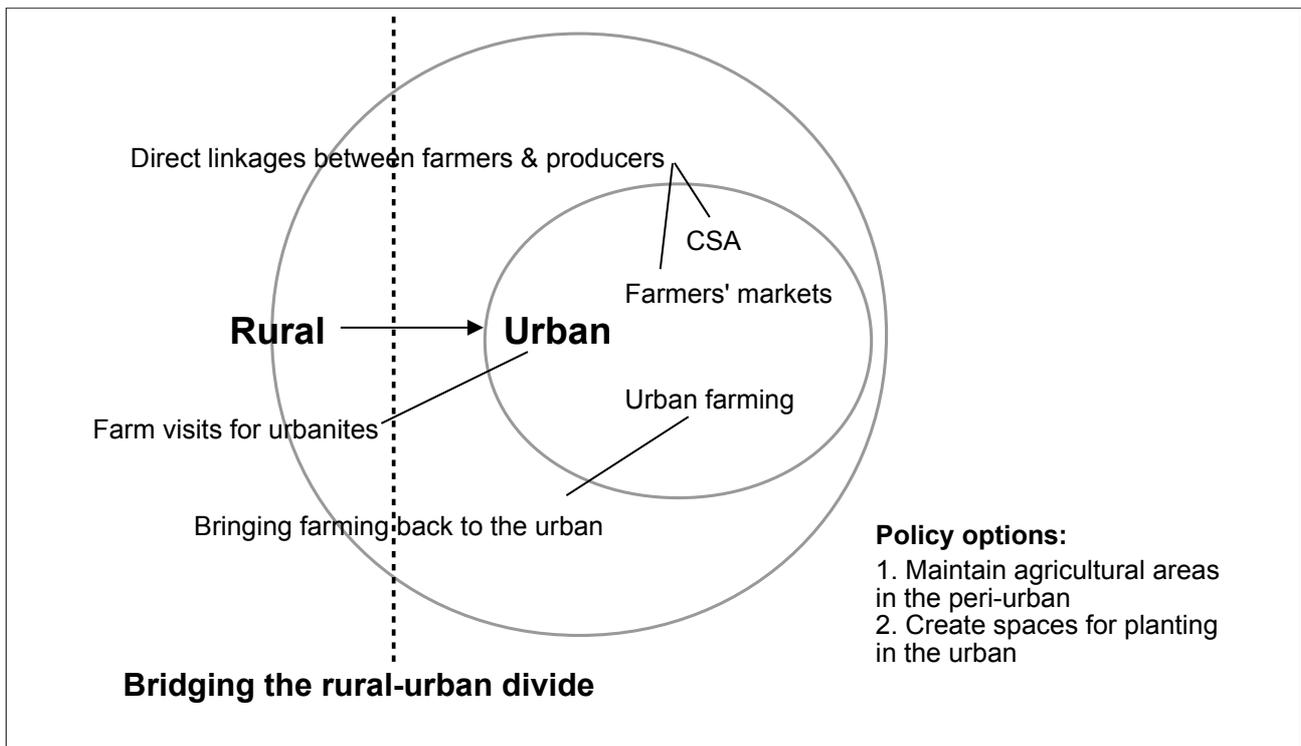


Figure 1: Connecting rural and urban spaces in the organic movement (from own source)

By transgressing the artificial divide, rural elements return into the urban by means of urban farming (production), farmers' markets (marketing) or membership schemes such as community supported agriculture CSA (production – marketing with participation). In spatial terms, this offers three options: First, growers grow in rural areas and send their produce to the city; second, growers grow in rural areas and come to the city to sell their produce directly; and third, urbanites grow their own produce in the city. At the same time, in oppositional direction, there is opportunity for urbanites for farm visits in the countryside and for knowing the producers of their food. In terms of policies, two strategies need to be pursued, namely the maintenance of agricultural surface in the peri-urban fringe, and the creation of open space for growing in the urban.

This scheme is conceptionally appropriate to match with the current opportunities for Bangkok.

#### 2.4.2 Urban gardening movements

“Urban agriculture or intra-urban gardens have existed since the beginning of cities, for the first settlements evolved around gardens” (HAIDE 2007: 1, translated from German). HAIDE reminds us of that urban gardens are not a new matter but have always added an authentic character to city households (cf. MOUGEOT 2006: 3). Cultivating plants may be for subsistence, occupation, leisure or

simply the embellishment of one's immediate environment. The garden recalls the idea of the realm of abundance, leisure and well-being, or the paradisaical garden for some cultures (cf. STRASSEL 2000: 123/124).

In many places, the urban garden “has historically inhabited a variety of spaces, taking the form of allotments and community gardens, backyards, urban and peri-urban farms, vacant lots, schools and public land” (DIXON et al. 2009: 16); apart from private gardens, it has been embedded in town plans and urban land management.

However, modernisation and urbanisation in the past century made urban food cultivation retire until crises called for its resurgence, in both formal or informal setting, for instance during times of war or economic depression (cf. HAIDE 2007: 1; HOU et al. 2009: 13). “While the larger problem reaches beyond the control of individuals, an individual can make a difference in his or her own life and community by gardening” (HOU et al. 2009: 14), therefore receiving personal fulfilment. It is worth mentioning the aspect of subsistence in the history of urban gardens, too. In the course of industrialisation in Europe for example, social reforms met worker's households and increasing urban poor population with low-rent allotments (cf. DIXON et al. 2009: 16). The Cuban urban agriculture movement, as probably the most prominent example for urban agriculture, began in response to the country's post-Soviet crisis which imposed severe food insecurity (cf. PREMAT 2005: 153; CLOUSE 2014). Starting with the collapse of the Soviet block in the late 1980s, the loss of trade advantages and access to credits called the government for policies to strengthen self-reliance and self-provisioning. Particularly as fuel and fertilisers were among the cut off supplies, the country had to rely on minimal external input, thus consequently introduced organic farming and systems (cf. KILCHER 2006: 55; CRUZ & MEDINA 2003: 3). At the same time, the capital city of Havana played an important role in promoting urban agriculture by making state-owned vacant land available to people (cf. CRUZ & MEDINA 2003: 24). Urban agriculture still is a means for the urban poor to reduce income expenditure and food insecurity (cf. MOUGEOT in MOUGEOT (Ed.) 2005: 8; 268).

On institutional level, the integration of urban farming has been consistent with climate change strategies for cities of the UN-Habitat programme, and with the UN's general engagement in promoting the sustainable and liveable city (cf. UN-Habitat 2014; UNEP 2012: 42).

Regardless a lack of coherent concepts or globally approved definitions, urban agriculture wherever it is practised, shares similar objectives (cf. FAO, Urban and Peri-urban agriculture; MOUGEOT 2000). Traits in common are for instance the cultivation of edible ingredients which can include plants as well as livestock, a scale that embraces a city's boundaries and its peri-urban fringe beyond, local use of products and services (cf. MOUGEOT 2005: 3; FAO, Urban and Peri-urban

agriculture; VEENHUIZEN 2006: 2). Even though sometimes referred to as “industry” (MOUGEOT 2005: 3), urban agriculture works on different scales, “ranging from subsistence production and processing at household level to fully commercialised agriculture” (VEENHUIZEN 2006: 2), and demonstrates creativity in designing and adapting usable plots. It can be observed that urban agriculture, the way it is practised now in many cities of the world, is about to experience a new phase. Although regional designs and purposes may alter, it appears appropriate to talk of a coherent movement; its origins are contemporary issues of urban food security, social inclusion, and personal well-being. “At the beginning of the 21st century, more people from wildly different walks of life are engaging in forms of UA, either for therapy, recreation, self-provisioning or income – or a combination thereof” (MOUGEOT in MOUGEOT (Ed.) 2005: 25). It is, above all, a civil movement that depends on the engagement of individual persons or communities to improve their own living situations and well-being.

Urban agriculture therefore often reflects a political dimension. Especially where plots are not made available by the municipalities, people take over spaces informally, or voluntarily squat them.<sup>9</sup> Perceived insecurity about general unstable financial conditions or the food industry gives people reason to turn cities into foodscapes: “a growing number of people of any segment of society is formulating for some time already their unease about the current situation of this world” (MÜLLER 2010). Likewise, many urbanites claim their wish to help shape their own neighbourhood. Ideologically, urban gardens help associating ecology, local economies, nature experience and personal well-being (cf. *ibid.*).

#### Activities worldwide

Research literature reveals a number of prototype cities in South and North America, Africa and Europe in particular. Research on the Asian context has not yet produced any extended studies, even though some insights from urban China, India, Southeast Asia or Middle East are known.<sup>10</sup>

Different continents have different traditions. In North American and European cities, urban gardening has a strong social and educational component. Community gardens are common there, and they are often supported by institutions that also give practical advice.<sup>11</sup> The city of Seattle coordinates organic urban community gardens with the help of a programme called “P-Patch

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9 Squatting abandoned or unused land is a common practice in many parts of the world. It is also referred to as “guerilla gardening”, named after the Green Guerilla grassroot group that emerged in the 1970s in New York. Their initial idea was to oppose urban decay by greening vacant lots; gradually, they gathered more members to establish community gardens as a mean to claim urban land (cf. Green Guerillas).

10 YASMEEN published the proceedings of a regional seminar by the FAO on food distribution in Asian cities (cf. YASMEEN 2001a) and a report on urban agriculture in India (YASMEEN 2001c); there are further a study on marketing peri-urban vegetables in Vietnam (cf. MOUSTIER & NGUYEN 2010), and on nutrient cycling in urban agriculture in Kabul (cf. SAFI 2011, e.g.);

11 In America e.g. by the American Community Gardening Association (ACGA) (cf. HOU 2009: 12)

Program” (HOU 2009: 51; seattle.gov) in collaboration with the local Department of Human Resources. Being “a model of community open space that provides multiple environmental, social, economic, and health benefits” (HOU 2009: 3), the concept often widens to include “farmers' markets, local food industries, grocery store cooperatives, and school gardens” (id.: 22).

ROSOL & WEISS (2005) observe a similar case for Toronto where they counted about 100 community gardens, organised by private people and supported by local municipal programmes and NGOs. Due to a lack of unused land available, the growers have to fall back upon public parks or green areas around public institutions (cf. ROSOL & WEISS 2005: 2). A remarkable aspect is the programme's motto of providing “fresh and healthy foods” ('Toronto is hungry') as urban poverty is a real issue in Toronto (id.: 4); it comes together with a food share initiative.

Since the mid 1990s, the initiative of intercultural gardens draws attention in German cities. The aim was to give migrants, specifically women who had fled from the Bosnian War, the opportunity to practice their gardening skills for a useful cause, and by doing this to realise “intercultural communication and integration on the base of a resource-oriented approach” (MÜLLER 2007: 3).

Rosario, a city in Northern Argentina, is, aside from Havana, an often cited urban farming prototype in Latin America (cf. DUBBELING 2006, IDRC 2006a). High unemployment, strong rural-urban migration flows and a lack of social welfare made a great part of the population vulnerable, so that NGOs pushed forward social programmes and policies, in collaboration with the municipality. As Rosario has a high share – about 35% – of vacant lands available, these policies were in favour for urban agriculture, which resulted in the creation of Rosario's 'Programa de Agricultura Urbana' in 2002 (DUBBELING 2006: 44; IDRC 2006a). This opportunity helped many to sustain their livelihoods during the economic crisis in recent years. “Cuba, Argentina and Brazil (Zero Hunger Campaign) are well known examples of countries where substantial government support is given to the development of urban agriculture” (VEENHUIZEN in VEENHUIZEN (Ed.) 2006: 4).

In African cities, urban agriculture primarily addresses food security and income generation for the urban poor (cf. MOUGEOT in MOUGEOT (Ed.) 2005: 268). A notable share (about 40%) of food supply of Dar es Salaam, the Tanzanian megacity, derives from urban or peri-urban production, but according to a general local understanding, farming is an occupation that should take in the rural areas which gives reason for government opposition, and inhibits land accessibility (cf. IDRC 2006b). Starting in the 1990s, the “Sustainable Dar es Salaam Project” (ibid.) was introduced, and urban agriculture successively integrated in urban development strategies.

The cases show how the regional situation determines how urban farming is received by

both population and authorities, and implemented and coordinated. “In the North, there is a clear division between urban and rural. In the South, however, the division is not so clear – agriculture production is not limited to the rural areas. Although it is often frowned upon by the authorities, urban agriculture (UA) is a reality in most Southern cities” (MOUGEOT 2006: 1/2).

Many studies on urban agriculture are done on behalf of two main research bodies, of which the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is one. Embedded in sustainable international development strategies, it elaborates globally case studies and works jointly with the UN-Habitat's or FAO's programmes for urban agriculture (cf. MOUGEOT 2006: xi). Another one is the Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture & Food Security (RUAF), an organisation that works on both research and implementation of urban farming projects in a sound and extensive approach; and both organisations are very active in publishing on field experiences.<sup>12</sup>

Research literature generally describes strengths and potentials of urban agriculture, but there are also negative implications (cf. VEENHUIZEN in VEENHUIZEN (Ed.) 2006: 3). A major concern is health risks for growers, consumers or people who live close to urban gardening sites. Risk factors might be untreated water, chemical fertilisers, or conditions of livestock in dense urban area, and are most likely related back to improper handling of urban farming. Regions in hot climates or with insufficient infrastructural facilities are usually more prone to complications of urban farming (cf. MOUGEOT in DSE 2000: 25). Urban farming can perhaps pollute the urban ecosystem, for instance when residues from fertiliser reach the groundwater. Some gardening movements include therefore organic or other sustainable methods.

#### Urban and peri-urban farming in Thailand

As stated previously, the Southeast Asian context has not produced so many prominent urban gardening projects as other continents; or rather not much research thus far has been dedicated to it. Except for some contributions, no scientific research paper focussing specifically on Bangkok has been found.<sup>13</sup>

The field research for this study reveals urban farming in Bangkok as having a diverse character. Particularly one group of city farmers is fairly enthusiastic, resuming on one hand an activity that has traditionally been integral part of the cityscape, while creating a totally new kind of movement on the other. The setting for Bangkok's urban agriculture today is indeed rather sobering:

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12 Some of RUAF's topics concerning urban agriculture are: urban food systems, planning processes, policies and financment, waste recycling, technology and climate change adaptation, urban horticulture, forestry and aquaculture, livestock, food security and health (cf. RUAF Foundation).

13 Cf. YOONPUNDH et al. 2006 about aquatic food production in Bangkok; SUTEETHORN 2009 on ecological functions of urban agriculture; FRASER 2002 about community participation and urban agriculture; SEYMOAR et al 2010 about a comparative study on urban greening projects in low-income communities in Bangkok and Sri Lanka

Due to rapid urbanisation, sprawl into the city's fringe and beyond the peri-urban (agricultural) plains, high inner-city land value, density of built-up area allow only limited open space, or close interaction with nature (cf. THAITAKOO 2013: 435). Before, the cultivation of rice and other crops was a usual characteristic of the city; fields and orchards were connected through elaborated canals that “radiated outward from the center of the city” (THAITAKOO et al. 2013: 428) into the hinterland of the old city centre, and marked an established component of the city: “From the 1890s the space of the capital increasingly assumed a dual character, with the small eastern territorial core around the palace spreading over a semi-aquatic landscape dominated by waterways, villages, gardens and ricefields” (ASKEW 2002: 41). For that reason, Bangkok was a “rural-urban network” (MCGRATH & THAITAKOO 2006: 35) combining civic functions with food security in nearest neighbourhood.

While the dense city centre does not offer much suitable land for gardening – even though town properties with green surfaces do exist, there are also suitable plots and irrigation canals and facilities in mixed land use area in the outskirts surrounding Bangkok. The peri-urban could hence fairly serve city farming. According to SUTEETHORN (2009), Bangkok's topography and geographical location on the fluvial sediments is a predestined setting to urban agriculture, and the loss of urban agriculture over the past decades has been particularly detrimental to the food quality, urban biodiversity and cultural assets. Not without mentioning constraints (lack of vacant land, land use policies, micro climate, maintenance), she suggests new patterns for urban agriculture, namely institutional city gardens, plantings in streets, public space and rooftops, or private kitchen gardens as possible spots, adjusted to and interwoven with the urban environment.

To conclude, this study seeks to explore an urban farming case study in a different regional context. Bangkok's former agricultural surface has widely retired in favour to building projects and clearly been relocated into the rural scenery. The recent resurgence of farming within the city bounds can be understood as a symbolic civil demonstration of repatriation of traditional urban gardening practices and the need for green and natural urban spaces. Against the backdrop of rural-urban distinction, it means to overcome once set physical and mental barriers, and challenge new hybrid lifestyles. Conceptionally, an appraisal of the possibilities for urban farming in Bangkok, considering the irreversible urbanisation and land prices, is needed. The urban farming scene in Bangkok covers different ways of implementation, and stakeholders with various social backgrounds and motives. The rather common practice of organic method is particular and possibly reflects food safety concerns of the growers. Thus far, “little research has concentrated on the links between UA, socio-biodiversity and the safe-food agenda. What are the niche markets for these local specialty products?” (MOUGEOT in MOUGEOT (Ed.) 2005: 276). For that reason, the study wishes to put a focus on urban farming after sustainable methods.



Image 2: 1930s city market along a canal in Bangkok, water front living and orchard in Thonburi (now Western Bangkok)  
 (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries. Digital Collections (a), (b), (c))



Image 3: Traditional cultivation with canal irrigation in peri-urban and Eastern Bangkok, and an urban house garden with inactive canal system  
 (from own source)

## 2.5 The inclusion of sustainable farming practices in Thailand

Worldwide, there are movements using sustainable farming methods to oppose intensive agriculture. These are natural ways of cultivation that often derive from traditional farming which is small-scale, diversified, locally sourced and adopting natural cycles, mostly. Sustainable farming methods vary according to their regional contexts, so different styles can be found throughout the world. Especially in tropical climates, like in Thailand, soil fertility is traditionally improved by the application of organic fertilisers which is ecologically more viable than the use of synthetic fertilisers that damage soils and make them prone to erosion and nutrient loss (cf. RATTANASUTEERAKUL & THAPA 2011: 201; National Research Council 1993: 1 /2).

Organic farming can be considered as one style among these: for Thailand, “[o]rganic agriculture is one of the sustainable agriculture approaches that are being promoted” (SANGKUMCHALIANG & HUANG 2012: 88). Some authors might indeed quote it as synonymous with sustainable farming (cf. RATTANASUTEERAKUL & THAPA 2011: 201), or use the term “alternative agriculture” (WYATT 2010: 92). The concept has been diffused to many countries where it serves as an organic standard. Growers can obtain permit to declare their produce as organic after passing the certification process. “Certification of organic agriculture includes the certification of products and the certification of quality systems” (RUNDGREN 2007: 23). In many cases, certification through accredited third-party bodies helps building up trust in the organic product (cf. ROITNER-SCHOBESBERGER et al. 2008: 119). The organic standard, however, is accepted only partly in Thailand and thus not consistently used to declare the products. For various reasons, there is reluctance towards the labelling process, which results in the emergence of a multitude of labels or, more generally, of self-claim declarations on proofing the organic quality of products. Supposing that different natural farming concepts from abroad have modelled, and anyway traditional Thai agriculture is inherently sustainable, a multitude of sustainable farming styles have settled to be effective in Thai agriculture.

Organic farming applies on two levels: small-scale agriculture, mostly done by villagers or within growers communities, and business oriented agriculture working large-scale but with organic inputs (cf. CHINSATHIT 2012). Many growers are therefore critical about whether the large-scale business orientated organic farming justifies the term sustainable.

However, organic certification still is the choice for producers or companies who wish to sell in supermarkets and to a certain range of consumers that built up trust in the product by seeing the respective labels; equally, it is required for the export to most countries such as the major organic import markets of EU, USA, Canada and Japan (cf. FiBL; IFOAM 2014: 140).

Governments can play a role in advancing organic farming by policies, financial allowances, or promotion schemes. In Thailand, organic farming has officially been included in the National Economic and Social Development Plan since 1997 and promoted through a promotion programme (cf. RATTANASUTEERAKUL & THAPA 2011: 202). The government of Bhutan has declared to become 100% organic as part of its Gross National Happiness programme (cf. COFINO 2014). Indeed, agriculture there uses barely any external inputs, for financial reason on one hand, for environmental reason on the other hand: The mountainous state is a vulnerable ecosystem prone to degradation. The government's objective with this declaration is to prevent the further progress of chemical farming since the option of synthetic fertiliser is available in recent years.

Other than that, NGOs are usually active in supporting organic farming projects, so in Thailand. A number of NGOs have started grass roots activity since the 1980s. Their work addresses to growers or farming communities in remote rural areas that struggle with degraded land and sparse benefits from conventional agriculture. A significant actor is the Alternative Agriculture Network which started in the early 1980s “to foster sustainable agriculture activism in Thailand” (TOTA 2011); it is an umbrella organisation for a several NGOs.

For the further course of this work, it has to be noted that using the term of organic directs to the different sustainable farming techniques specified and found to be adequate.

### 2.5.1 The concept of organic farming and the role of international bodies

The concept of the organic agriculture traces back roughly to the 1960s in Europe and the USA where pioneers, not necessarily farmers, were looking for alternative lifestyles. We have to see these movements as a direct response to the detriments of conventional agriculture that had been widely established and created impact on humans' health (cf. KÄLLANDER & RUNDGREN 2008: 19/20). Other initiatives had certainly emerged previous to that, for example around 1925 when Rudolf Steiner elaborated an anthroposophical philosophy of farming that treated all the elements of a farm as one organism. Known as biodynamic agriculture, it is highly integral for it emphasises vitality of soils, biodiversity, closed material cycles, harmonisation with lunar phase and planets, adjustment to the local settings and the usage of farm internal fertiliser such as manure (cf. Demeter, what is Demeter?). Far east, in Japan, a similarly holistic concept was developed by Masanobu Fukuoka: natural farming. His farming techniques, based on “do-nothing” (KORN & AGGARWAL 2014: xxvi) principles, refuse essentially ploughing or tilling of soils and any chemical inputs (cf. id.: 33/34). His book 'One-Straw Revolution', appeared in 1972, in which he describes his philosophy and farming methods, has found wide recognition and application notably in Asian

countries.

These and many other “traditional agriculture methods from around the world have [...] inspired today's modern organic agriculture” (KÄLLANDER & RUNDGREN 2008: 19), and continue to be practised simultaneously. The principles of organic agriculture should be seen as a set of minimum general requirements that guarantee: the sustaining and enhancement of soils, plants, animals, humans and the planet as an indivisible entity (principle of health), the harmonisation with ecological systems and cycles (principle of ecology), fairness for all involved living beings (principle of fairness), and precaution and responsibility for “current and future generations and the environment” (principle of care) (cf. IFOAM Principles of Organic Agriculture). In practice, this means to avoid “fertilizers, pesticides, animal drugs and food additives that may have adverse health effects”, to design in a way that climate, agricultural diversity, landscape, air and water are preserved, to keep production, trade and remuneration socially fair, and to take decisions with consideration of all parties involved (IFOAM Principles of Organic Agriculture). Organic agriculture as defined by IFOAM has been explained in chapter 1.1.1.

IFOAM has been playing a major role in both, advocating organic farming globally and setting the standard as reference for the national certification bodies to carry out the certification process and to issue the labelling of organic foods (cf. KÄLLANDER & RUNDGREN 2008: 42). After local certification initiatives of different shapes have developed in many states since the 1980s, and organic certification became of interest for the international trade of organic foods, IFOAM worked out a consensus, so that “by the end of the 1990s there was broad global agreement regarding what constitutes organic food production and processing” (id.: 43) despite significant variations in the different countries.

These standards might be realised more for some productions but less for others. The concept allows for certain flexibility in its realisation. In fact, IFOAM's position is to include the full diversity of organic farming which means to include also non-certified organic agriculture: “Any system using the methods of Organic Agriculture and being based on the Principles of Organic Agriculture is regarded by IFOAM as ‘Organic Agriculture’ and any farmer practising such system can be called an ‘organic farmer’” (IFOAM Position on the full diversity of organic agriculture).



Image 4: IFOAM label  
(IFOAM)

### 2.5.2 Further practices and adaptations of the organic farming concept

In Thailand, organic farming is widely recognised as a concept, and implemented as a standard. Besides a certification given by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives – 'Organic Thailand' label – there is the independent certification body ACT (cf. CHINSATHIT 2012). The latter acts under the non-profit 'Foundation of Organic Agriculture Certification' (cf. ACT, General information about ACT and organic inspection-certification services). ACT adheres to the international regulations set through IFOAM and matches with many foreign organic standards. ACT points out precisely that organic agriculture in Thailand should embrace “natural farming and ecological farming” (ACT 2014: 10).

Organic certification seems to apply in Thailand mainly on export products and a limited range of domestic products, but it is not compulsory for the sales. As the certification process implies in the first place higher expenses for producers, many of them decide to go along without official certification. Indeed, this gave grounds for a dual system of certified and non-certified organic products on the market to establish, of which the non-certified are often sold under individual or regional guarantee systems. Thai farmers apply a variety of methods which, if going by the regulations for organic, fulfil the factual standard or even go beyond it, but are named differently (cf. SANGKUMCHALIANG & HUANG 2012: 88). One reason for that is that the organic farming standard has been designed for Western countries before it expanded; it might therefore not be entirely applicable in other ecosystems. Eastern countries tend to have other role models in the Eastern World. Another reason concerns organic farming as a standard: having standards implies simplifying farming guidelines, and growers with deep commitment to a natural and mindful way of farming might perceive it as inconsistent or compromising.

Some sustainable farming practices found to be applied in Thailand are natural farming, ecological farming or agro-ecology, Permaculture. Natural farming as developed by Fukuoka has been introduced to Thailand but later been adapted to the local ecosystems by Korean agriculturalist Dr. Cho Han Kyu (cf. Thai Natural Farming) which will be further clarified in section 4.

At this point, it is interesting to make a reference to the Thai language which has several ways to deal with the concept of organic: First of all, there does not seem to be one consistent usage; *kaset insee* is often used for organic farming although, when referring to certified organic produce, the English term 'organic' is borrowed. Another, very common attribute is *thammachart* which translates to 'natural but non-certified farming' when used for labelling. The term *thammachart* is used as a synecdoche, as in the Thai language denotes a wider meaning of 'the natural law' or 'the way of nature' to encompass all things not constructed by man, extending also to include the Buddhist's perception of the universe. In the Thai context, it may occur that the term 'organic' actually has a negative connotation as people relate it with the organic business.

A key word for sustainable farming in Thailand is self-sufficiency. It is directly attributed to the 'Sufficiency Economy', an alternative economical approach used to securing rural precarious livelihoods that bases on reversing the wide-spread intensive agriculture into community strengthening smallholder models.

### 2.5.3 The 'Sufficiency Economy' philosophy and its propagation through Thailand's King

*“Economic development must be pursued sequentially step by step. It should begin with the strengthening of our economic foundation, by assuring that the majority of our population has enough to live on. ... Once reasonable progress has been achieved, we should then embark on the next steps, by pursuing more advanced levels of economic development.”* (Royal Speech, 1974)” (SATHIRATHAI & PIBOOLSRAVUT 2004: 8/9)

Sufficiency Economy philosophy has indeed been developed by the country's current King, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej since the 1970s. Originating in the King's previous reflections on gradual development and self-reliance, the concept emerged to become a public topic through a famous speech of his in 1997, in reaction to Thailand's distressing economic crisis. Expanded and revised in the subsequent years, Sufficiency Economy was said to be a measure for recovery from the crisis and adaptation to the challenges of globalisation (cf. SATHIRATHAI & PIBOOLSRAVUT 2004: 8/9). Indeed, in His Majesty the King's speech from 1974, he anticipates the possibility of a state crisis “if one focuses only on rapid economic expansion without making sure that such plan is appropriate” (ibid.). In the following, the Sufficiency Economy experienced unsettledness, but was initiated again in 2007, after the political coup (cf. ROSSI 2012: 281).

Although Sufficiency Economy is an alternative economic model at its base, it concerns the society in general as it suggests to follow the middle path as an “overriding principle” (SATHIRATHAI

& PIBOOLSRAVUT 2004: 9). The middle path, by recalling moderation it may influence the society's ways of living, development, handling of crises and global dynamics, and plays at the interface of the multiple societal scales such as individual, household, community, project, state. Essential principles of Sufficiency Economy are moderation, reasonableness and self-immunity (three pillars) that are supposed to help coping with internal or external impacts (cf. SATHIRATHAI & PIBOOLSRAVUT 2004: 9; United Nations Development Programme 2007: 30).

A field in which Sufficiency Economy notably has been effective is agriculture – the approach is called The New Theory. When transferred to agriculture, the essential principles of Sufficiency Economy translate into mixed sustainable farming including the conservation of water resources and soils, and the self-reliance of communities (cf. The Chaipattana Foundation). In praxis, “[f]arming communities are encouraged to diversify their production and enhance their self sufficiency. The emphasis is on not growing just one product for the market but instead combining growing a variety of cash crops with fruits and vegetables for household consumption as well as practicing low chemical sustainable agriculture” (SEUBSMAN 2013: 58). Thai farmers in the rural areas currently face a sequence of problems that New Theory tries to tackle: income insecurity due to price fluctuations on the market, degradation of their environments, unpredictable extreme weather conditions like droughts, floods, storms, increasingly pest infestation of crops, insecurity with land tenure, migration away from the countryside (cf. The Chaipattana Foundation). Sufficiency Economy philosophy also operates many of the Royal Projects<sup>14</sup>. The UNDP recognise Sufficiency Economy as pertinent for the development of the Thai society and incorporates Sufficiency Economy in their programme; their Thailand Human Development Report 2007 is entirely dedicated to applications and prospects of the Sufficiency Economy (cf. United Nations Development Programme 2007; ROSSI 2012: 281).

Considering that Sufficiency Economy is a royal initiative, one should expect that the concept is prone to political and ideological controversy. Critical voices reproach Sufficiency Economy for being royal propaganda as well-directed against the political red movement, notably represented in Northern and Northeastern countryside in Thailand. ROSSI argues “that the new spate of Royal Projects represents an attempt by the conservative elite to counter the influence of the [...] Red Shirts movement in Nan” (ROSSI 2012: 276/277), a Northern province; she further interprets a moralising connotation: “the efforts of the royal family to moralise the environmental behaviour of

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14 The Royal Projects are an initiative by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej dedicated to sound and sustainable development in the Northern highlands since 1969. Originally aiming at the replacement of opium cultivation widespread in that area by fruit trees, the concept has widened to include different kinds of crops apt to the temperate climate; it further improved social infrastructure and access to education and health care for the local population (cf. The Royal Project Foundation 2007: 9) While sustainable farming methods have been envisaged since the beginning, recent years have besides generated entirely organic plantations.

their subjects in the name of the Sufficiency Economy philosophy” (id.: 275). SEUBSMAN et al. (2013) in their case study of Sufficiency Economy implementation mention an interesting point about the current situation of farmers in Northeastern Thailand, which regards their modernising cultural practices and which are controversial to the principles of Sufficiency Economy: Farmers “increasingly need to earn cash incomes to support modern lifestyles and this means producing food for a global market rather than for their own consumption” (SEUBSMAN et al. 2013: 57), and have hopes they “feel for their children to [...] be more educated and have better work opportunities” (id.: 63). This shows discrepancy between the farmers' hopes for their own future and the principles of sufficiency; Sufficiency Economy thus is perhaps not apt to meet farmers' necessities consistently.

Being aware of potential ideological and practical implications of Sufficiency Economy, and the possibility that it is defying critical discourse in Thailand, Sufficiency Economy has reason to be considered in this study. In fact, it has been declared as a role model by many sustainable farmers, hence is a justified component of the organic movement. In this study, the questions of how Sufficiency Economy relates to Buddhist philosophies and, in a more figurative sense, what aspects Sufficiency Economy, Buddhist philosophies and organic movements share should be followed.

#### 2.5.4 'Small is beautiful' – an excursus on Buddhist Economics after E.F. SCHUMACHER

It is useful to present in this context an approach that reflects a Buddhist view on economics. Many of the organic stakeholders in Thailand make reference to E.F. Schumacher, and Sufficiency Economy probably borrows in parts from his ideas, especially in terms of self-reliance, moderation, or land-use.

E.F. Schumacher was an economist by training who had the chance to work in Myanmar where he became exposed to Buddhism. Inspired by the Buddhist philosophy (and preceding thinkers like Gandhi), he began to work out several essays on world economies that integrate Buddhist ethics. His reflections are written down in his book 'Small is beautiful' which first appeared in 1973, and although Schumacher debates the situation of his time, he projects a universal picture which in fact describes our reality nowadays (cf. SCHUMACHER 1993).

Schumacher covers the different issues that arise from the economies of the modern world – such as production, resources, global development, societal forms of organisation and ownership – (cf. SCHUMACHER 1993: v / vi). For this study, some focus will be given to what is said about Buddhist economics, land use and farming notably; it will also be kept in mind for later analysis the question of how Schumacher's narrative matches with the current reality of our study case, of

movements towards sustainable farming, self-sufficiency, consumer and producer harmonisation and personal well-being.

A relevant point is made on the meaning of rural activity: “instead of searching for means to accelerate the drift out of agriculture, we should be searching for policies to reconstruct rural culture, to open the land for the gainful occupation to larger numbers of people [...] and to orientate all our actions on the land towards the threefold ideal of health, beauty, and permanence” (SCHUMACHER 1993: 92). The ongoing migration to the cities and rural exodus can be explained by a lack of exactly this ideal being displaced by large-scale mechanisation and intensification of agriculture that “support all the most dangerous modern tendencies of violence, alienation, and environmental destruction” (ibid). It would be sensible to assume that human in such hostile environment finds himself deprived from the links with nature and from a genuine sense of his work force.

This is where Schumacher quotes a Buddhist perspective on livelihood which sees it “at least threefold: to give a man a chance to utilise and develop his faculties; to enable him to overcome his egocentredness by joining with other people in a common task; and to bring forth the goods and services needed for a becoming existence” (SCHUMACHER 1993: 39). He adds that indeed, to “organise work in such a manner that it becomes meaningless [...] would be little short of criminal” (id. ibid).

In relation to modern conceptions and uses of land, Schumacher argues critically as he sees therein the menace of the greatest of our material resources (cf. SCHUMACHER 1993: 81). Knowing that the ecological imbalance is not a new problem, and that the accelerating growing global population adds another challenge, Schumacher reminds the reader of the importance of taking good care for our land: “Conversely, where people imagined that they could not 'afford' to care for the soil and work with nature, instead of against it, the resultant sickness of the soil has invariably imparted sickness to all the other factors of civilisation” (id.: 87). He then points out why agriculture should not be treated as an industry, as agriculture naturally involves “the whole relationship between man and nature, the whole life-style of a society, the health, happiness and harmony of man, as well as the beauty of his habitat” (id.: 89). In this context, Schumacher makes a note about the distorted meaning of being a farmer in industrial agriculture where they have hardly any chance to properly take care for their land as their role is to produce efficiently while cutting costs (cf. id.: 84/85). This arises the question of whether land, including its habitat, is simply a means of production or a purpose by itself (cf. id.: 83).

To bring up the topic of self-sufficiency once again, in Buddhist economics terms, it signifies to produce “a high degree of human satisfaction by means of a relatively low rate of

consumption” (id.: 43), reducing the pressure of competition on people, and the burden of over-production for the purpose of over-consumption. It also reflects the interrelation of two key principles of Buddhism, simplicity and non-violence (cf. *ibid.*). We find here again the notion of the middle path which is also included in the Sufficiency Economy: Buddhist economics merge modernisation with tradition, growth with modesty, so that finding the middle path becomes a challenge in also finding the right livelihood (cf. id.: 46).

'Small is beautiful' is interesting as it blends Western perspectives with Buddhist principles. In Buddhist countries, many organic stakeholders seem to refer to it as it alludes to a sustainable system that aspires ethics and well-being for all entities involved.

## 2.6 Organic food movements in Bangkok – approaching the local scope of the study

Research programme, analytical scope and research literature in the preceding chapters prepared for the following analysis. Before analysing the field work data, it is sensible to introduce the local and regional scope of the study for better understanding of the analysis and the choice of methodologies. Reference to available research literature will be made alongside.

There is general opinion that Bangkok does not offer any opportunities for urban farming or availability of organic foods. One reason for this study is hence to demonstrate that these options exist. To fully understand the matter of the organic movement in Bangkok, it is useful to study it both conceptionally and socially, therefore the typical spatial, cultural and socio-political aspects of the megacity Bangkok should be understood; then, at the nature of foodscapes and general accessibility of food, as well as city climate and ecology which build the thematic backdrop to the issue of organic movements.

### 2.6.1 The study area

It might be observed that it is the mega-urban reality of Bangkok that triggers urban farming and interest in organic foods. The city's ecology (city climate, pollution, lack of green space or access to natural sites) give instance to health concerns and new perspectives on personal lifestyles; and both are main reasons for organic movements to gain momentum. Socio-political factors might play a secondary role as well.

The study area comprises Bangkok metropolis and its peri-urban fringe, which approximately corresponds to the administrative area of Bangkok Metropolitan Region (BMR).

It is sensible to give some explanations on design and planning of Bangkok first.

## Bangkok megacity

Bangkok is a megacity of around 5,6 million inhabitants for the metropolis and around 10,5 million for the BMR<sup>15</sup> in 2013 (Bangkok Metropolitan Administration 2013: 6); it also has one of the highest primacy indices in the world (cf. DANIERE & NARANONG in DANIERE & DOUGLASS (Ed.) 2009: 73). Most prominent features about the city's nature and design are arguably the speed and lack of control with which urbanisation took place especially since the economic boom in the late 1980s (cf. KRAAS 2003: 49); also, a generally overloaded traffic system despite the alleviation of a sky-train and a metro system that causes significant pollution; and furthermore, the central area of Bangkok provides few public spaces – though, appropriation of spaces through the citizens is a common practice – or green areas.

During the past decades, marked socio-political changes occurred in the Southeast Asian countries, including remarkable urbanisation: In 2002, their urbanisation rate was at nearly 58% (KRAAS 2004b: 2). Bangkok is Thailand's primate city in administrative and functional terms (cf. KRAAS 2003: 47; ASKEW 2002: 84/95). Apart from holding the political and legal seat, the BMR is a dense urban system that extends to major industrial sites and transportation and employment centrality. Also symbolically, Bangkok is the influential centre of the country, where cultural norms and trends are set. Anthropologist ASKEW mentions this intention of centrality when Bangkok was established “to resemble the old capital and thus to perpetuate the idea of a traditional Siamese royal centre” (ASKEW in ASKEW & LOGAN 1994: 91).

The economic boom starting from the mid 1980s and the Asian financial crisis in 1997 were two events that impacted Bangkok in various ways (cf. PILNY 2008: 185/186; KRAAS 2003: 55). While the boom set off in Thailand a period of industrialisation maintained by international investment, as well as the settling of foreign manufacturing industries, the crisis exposed not only “the city's financial sector, but decades of unsustainable, shallow and dependent economic development” (ASKEW 2002: 90/91). However, as JENKS observes, that in many aspects, Bangkok kept its basic structure, especially streets and layout Bangkok despite the construction boom (cf. JENKS 2003: 550).

Looking back on the past three decades of urban development reveals the following: expansion into the peri-urban fringe, further urbanisation of the central city, a “rapidly degrading urban environment” (DANIERE et al. 2002b: 454).

In the city's surroundings, the transformation to urban and industrial use – often along sectors – engendered mixed land-use patterns on former agricultural land, and a general extension

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<sup>15</sup> The Bangkok Metropolitan Region is composed of Bangkok metropolis and five adjacent provinces, namely Pathum Thani, Samut Prakan, Samut Sakhon, Nakhon Pathom and Nonthaburi ((Bangkok Metropolitan Administration 2013)

of local road infrastructure. New housing projects created space for the urban newcomers (cf. SAJOR 2007: 789/790).

In the central city, the number of new housing projects, mostly condominium towers, and office complexes multiplied rapidly. To alleviate the relentless traffic situation, the city endeavoured the construction of express ways and public mass transit systems (cf. KRAAS 2003: 57/59/62).

Set around the old core of Rattanakosin island, the first extensions spread “over a semi-aquatic landscape dominated by waterways, villages, gardens and ricefields” (ASKEW 2002: 41), and subsequently began to disperse alongside traffic axes or in patches among already existing landmarks. The extensions generally lack an underlying structural development plan, hence hardly allow for the identification of any neighbourhoods (cf. KRAAS 2003: 52). This also leads to the reality of one clear designated city centre missing in Bangkok; rather, there are various central areas with diverse functions spread over the entire city. Instead, continuously emerging giant shopping malls are taking over the role of reliable landmarks. “Shopping malls, in particular, became the vital foci of modern life in Bangkok – no doubt a result of their multifunctionality” (VORNG 2011a: 80). Today, prestigious objects are meant to attract wealthy clients from Thailand and abroad. In fact, the number of shopping tourists seems to be rising.

Indeed, the Bangkok of nowadays is “a stark example of uncontrolled growth” that “has outpaced the ability of public entities to manage [...] basic services” (DANIERE et al. 2002b: 454; 453). Public space is a limited good in Bangkok, and where it exists, it is often created by private developers for instance in or around malls (cf. id.: 15). The excessive and inconsistently regulated land-uses complicate the urban governance, and challenge urban planning in various manner: in making affordable housing and basic supply for any income group available – especially as socio-economic disparities increase, and informal settlements persist; in securing public and recreational spaces, likewise green spaces for improved urban climate; in saving areas for agricultural purpose in the peri-urban fringe; in establishing efficient transportation systems that reach out to different zones; in regulating the further progress of private construction.

The past decades brought socio-political changes, too. Socio-political aspects are generally hard to appraise as consequences might only be seen in the long run. Increasing wealth is one such consequence that produced new middle classes manifesting their place in the urban reality (cf. KRAAS 2004b: 2/4; ASKEW 2002: 58). Their contribution to the shaping of the urban space are “the intense development of commercial consumption space and residential enclaves catering to the elite and the new middle classes” (VORNG 2011a: 69). However, VORNG also stresses how it is hard to tangibly categorise the middle classes in Thailand, for one reason because they are distinctly heterogeneous – typical middle class occupations (public official, employee, etc.) can bring a wide

range of income, lifestyle and origins are diverse (cf. VORNG 2011b: 677/687). Hence, middle classes in Bangkok might in fact, “have numerous common *and* competing interests” (VORNG 2011b: 698). VORNG alludes to socio-political territorial divisions of different centres where the stratification of the Thai society and power manifest. “City centre and outskirts, mall and market, condominium and slum, are each axes which reflect a trend of separation of space and locality along the lines of wealth, status, and power” (VORNG 2011a: 67/68). In terms of housing, Bangkok is highly unequal. Between modern, luxury apartments and squatter shelters, all housing categories are available to similar extent. Slums still exist and seem to be hardly tackled by the responsible authorities (cf. DANIERE 2009: 73). The existence of different realities in distinction to each other, but coexisting simultaneously, too appear to be a characteristic of Bangkok. JENKS in his paper on socio-spatial implications of the sky-train argues that “both the local and global co-exist, and that globalization may not always be the winner” (JENKS 2003: 547).

Culturally, Bangkok pertains to be the centre of modernity for Thailand where trends are set and where global influences enter the country. DANIERE argues that nonetheless, “while the physical landscape in the city of Bangkok appears quite modern, the internal social life of the Thai people remains strongly tied to traditional socio-cultural norms” (DANIERE 2002a: 52), a reality in which Bangkok certainly differs from other global cities.

#### City climate and environment

As noted before, Bangkok citizens have to deal with a couple of pollution problems. Air pollution caused by traffic volume and congestions can cause problems to the public health (cf. DANIERE 2002a: 52). After WHO definition, public health “refers to all organized measures” with the aim of providing “conditions in which people can be healthy” (WHO: Public Health). Thus, this is meant to include urban climate, green and recreational spaces, and beyond, access to healthy foods. According to SRIVANIT, the rapid urbanisation of Bangkok “has led to [...] air pollution, water pollution, land subsidence as well as the effect of urban heat island” (SRIVANIT et al. 2012: 244). The latter is a phenomenon of clusters of extreme heat in the urban centres. Urban heat island effects directly link to land cover by heat-absorbing materials and are caused among other reasons by the “reflection of heat waves between walls, or/and between ground and walls” (BOONJAWAT et al. 2000: 50). Further, the decrease of green and unbuilt areas encourages these effects. Excessive temperature peaks have been identified for several highly dense urban areas in Bangkok (cf. BOONJAWAT 2000: 53; SRIVANIT 2012: 243).

Ooi (2008) in her study about sustainability planning measures in Southeast Asian cities states, mega-urban planning challenges and lacking coordination between the responsible entities

delays or inhibits the implementation of environmental infrastructure. Also, urban budgets are often diverted in favour of prestigious and touristic constructions (cf. OOI 2008: 196; 197).

As VANNO observes, the planning of Bangkok's green infrastructure, for example parks, alleys, gardens and other plantations, has not been able to keep pace with urbanisation. Likewise, the former aquatic structure gave way to road systems (cf. VANNO 2012: 1). A ratio of the surface of public parks per person registers 0.70m<sup>2</sup> per person for Bangkok, while 10.12m<sup>2</sup> per person for New York in comparison (id.: 5). In Bangkok, there is a mandate to provide public space for citizens, yet thus far, the municipality seems to inhibit the securing of such tangible or intangible spaces, or these public spaces are located in the midst of polluted traffic areas (cf. DANIERE 2009: 86).

However, the BMA Department of City Planning endeavours to tackle the issue of green public space – the Bangkok Comprehensive Plan (1999) includes missions to promote the urban environment as well as to preserve rural and agricultural areas in the city's surroundings (cf. Department of City Planning: The Bangkok Comprehensive Plan).

Indeed, a great potential for the greening of Bangkok appears in the preservation of its not yet densely populated peri-urban areas. In these areas, some land is vacant and could be turned into parks or gardens (cf. also FRASER 2002: 39). DANIERE (2002b: 454) also observes the “degrading urban environment” of Bangkok. In the central areas, there is little space to spare for urban greening. Other than land availability, land accessibility is a problem: even where some plots are abandoned, ownership might not be clear, hence inaccessible. Otherwise, the value of land is so immense that it is sold to private investors mainly, who hardly invest in green spaces. Later in this study, it will be shown how city farming initiatives attempt to change common perspectives on the use of urban lands.

THAITAKOO mentions “Bangkok's status as one of the most vulnerable and at risk cities in the world” that is “already experiencing severe effects of rapid and unpredictable climate change” (THAITAKOO 2013: 427/ 428; 428). In fact, the city is located only a few metres above sea level, and even below in some areas. The general significant gradual sinking of the city's surface is a risk factor (cf. DANIERE 2002a: 52).

The city of Bangkok increasingly has issues with the management of its waters, whether groundwater or surface waters.<sup>16</sup> A study reveals that increased groundwater pumping has led to the declining groundwater potential and to land subsidence in Asian cities. On top of that, the groundwater depression is likely to contaminants inflows (cf. ONODERA et al. 2008: 401, 409). A very critical period for Bangkok was in the 1980s when the annual subsidence rate was at 12 cm (cf.

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<sup>16</sup> THAITAKOO says about this: Bangkok “presents a degraded, but still vibrant indigenous water-based urbanism” (THAITAKOO 2013: 427/428).

id.: 402).

Groundwater in Bangkok is also vulnerable to the infiltration of polluted surface waters. This happens for example when untreated urban waste waters, industrial and agricultural sewage leak into aquifers (cf. JAGO-ON et al. 2009: 3089/3090).

“When an area is at almost sea level with natural ground elevation, the most serious impact of land subsidence is flooding” (id.: 3093), thus Bangkok and surroundings are particularly prone to it. The big flood of 2011 in the aftermath of the yearly monsoon rains, lasting for about three months, demonstrated how a natural event can cause a catastrophe. Even though the annual rains were particularly heavy in 2011, the extent of the flooding gives reason for it to be interpreted as an anthropogenic event (cf. KRAAS 2012: 58).

These examples hint at the city's vulnerable environment, and megacities are inherently vulnerable due to their ecology, density, social composition and challenging governability.

#### Foodscales and access to food

Food retailing in Thailand has altered within very short period from uniquely fresh market distribution to a remarkable share of supermarket retailing (cf. GORTON et al. 2011). The fresh market in Thailand offers fresh produce such as fruit, vegetables, meat, condiments; grocery shops are usually included, too. “The food market in Bangkok has developed from traditional to a combination of traditional and modern sectors. Until the 1970s, fresh markets accounted for hundred percent of all food retail in Bangkok (YASMEEN, 2000)” (KANTAMATURAPOJ et al. 2012: 270).

Apparently, there is a consumer led orientation towards supermarkets. As SHANNON states, “consumers seem to have little problem adapting to the new shopping formats in general” (SHANNON 2009: 91). Consumers appreciate convenience, hygiene and freshness as assets of the supermarkets, and these are becoming more numerous, as they are easier to reach. According to a consumer study “supermarkets, overall, outperform wet markets on all salient attributes” (GORTON et al. 2011: 1636). DIXON et al. (2007: 123) found out that fresh markets can price-wise often not compete with special offers at the supermarkets though cater better for traditional Thai diets.

Nonetheless, other authors investigated “that supermarkets and hypermarkets sell vegetables at significantly higher prices than wet markets, so they are not competitive based on price” (SCHIPMANN & QAIM 2011: 359); and, many consumers still do their regular purchases, especially for fresh foods at local fresh markets: “Wet markets continued to be the place where consumers buy fresh food. But the visits dropped from 17 trips per month to 12 trips per month” (PRACHASON 2009: 27).

It seems as if, in turn, hypermarkets such as Makro, Tesco or Big C are replacing not only many of the small local grocery stores but also supermarkets that had previously settled in shopping centres (cf. PRACHASON 2009: 27). On the other hand, hypermarkets invite the bulk purchase shopper, whereas many people prefer smaller shops for their daily use. These shops are preferably convenient and easy to reach. Indeed, the American franchise 7-Eleven has become very successful in Thailand.<sup>17</sup> 7-Eleven shops open 24 hours, are densely distributed not only over Bangkok but all over the country, and offer a comfortable range of groceries including ready-to-eat and prepared food and beverages. In line with this, SHANNON observes that the “new format discount convenience stores are basically tiny supermarkets, and appear to be well suited to Thai consumers, who tend to shop frequently but spend small amounts each time” (SHANNON 2009: 91).

Seemingly, any endeavour to give a clear picture of retail in Thailand seems ambitious. As ISAACS et al. (2010) comment, supermarkets generally meet the approval of consumers but do not necessarily drive out the traditional retail. “Instead, the picture is a far more complex one of convention competition, appropriation and contradictory co-existence” (ISAACS et al. 2010: 429).

Fresh markets are located in most neighbourhoods in Bangkok, among them a few bigger ones have a central position. These, for example the Talat Khlong Toei on Rama IV Road, also function as resource for various kinds of restaurant businesses. Smaller outdoor or indoor market places or single stalls mostly open to different times of the day; these can be found almost anywhere and are frequented often by local residents. Most of the markets' supply sources from a wholesale monopole, Talat Thai in Pathum Thani, in the Northern outskirts of the BMA. Talat Thai is apparently the biggest wholesale food market in Southeast Asia with a surface of 72 hectares and about 3400 regular traders (cf. Talaad Thai: Talaad Thai Wholesale Market; The Numbers). Within Bangkok, it is rare to find actual producers selling their own produce on fresh markets – most items have been collected by resellers. This reality might pose potential issues with the quality of fresh market produce: the origins of food are hardly traceable but certainly source to industrial farming, hence might contain chemical residues. There is also dependence on few influential food distributors that dominate the market (cf. PRACHASON 2009: 17).

Eating out is popular among Bangkokians, and is convenient thanks to an abundance of restaurants and food stalls of any kind and price range. PRACHASON explains that in “urban areas, changes are faster because people have less time to cook, so they shift to ready-to-eat meals. [...] 43% and 44% frequently and occasionally ate out or bought ready-to-eat meal through food shops,

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<sup>17</sup> 7-Eleven in Thailand is run by CP All Plc., flagship company of the Charoen Pokphand Group (cf. CP All. History). There are currently around 8500 branches all over Thailand, of which the first one opened in 1989 (cf. 7-Eleven Inc. International Licensing). “Seven-Eleven’s average basket spending is currently [in 2007] 30 baht” (Shannon 2009: 84).

restaurants and food store” (PRACHASON 2009: 27). Popular are also food courts, for example in shopping centres or outside in areas frequented by office workers. Thai traditional dishes have timeless appeal; internationally inspired dining places gained relevance, particularly Korean and Japanese, but also different kinds of Western food. Restaurant chains are typically attracted to settle in malls, or around the main shopping districts in central Bangkok. As common in most megacities around the globe, the usual fast food chains came to settle in Bangkok: “In the urban and tourist centres though, they enrich the country's culinary variety with another facet” (TRENK 2012a: 119, translated from German).

YASMEEN<sup>18</sup> (2001b: 91-94) points out that street foods and night markets in Southeast Asian cities are an indispensable reality. She also mentions street food vending as strategy in times of economic crisis, when it becomes a relatively safe source of income for vendors and an important access to inexpensive food, especially as many households have double-income couples. “Growing urban communities in Bangkok – from office workers living in condominium buildings to students living in dormitories in expanding universities – also rely upon street food vendors, which suggests that such operations have a lengthy future” (WALSH 2012: 259).

Indeed, street food being an affordable choice for many people, it is also consumed by those who are able to spend more money on food but who enjoy the convenience and the offer of Thai dishes. While some stalls offer snacks, mostly fried meat, papaya salad, noodle soups, stir-fries, fruit, or *khanom* (sweet snacks), others sell cooked curries and rice.

Concerning food security in Thai society, it is not a prevalent issue though does exist for low-income households. Especially as (affordable) food seems abundant in Thailand, lack of food is not necessarily visible for the public. According to PRACHASON, about 35% of the Thai population spend at least 60% of their income on food which poses vulnerability to variations of food prices. However and curiously, food insecurity is a foremost rural issue (cf. PRACHASON 2009: 19). In a study on urban low-income households, PIASEU (2004: 615) reveals that food insecurity does exist in Bangkok. Her respondents cited limited means to access food in terms of quantity and quality as their preoccupations. Having little time to cook at home, they rely on street foods of which they stated doubts about possible negative health aspects (cf. id.: 612).

Accessing healthy foods (of which we consider organic foods to be included) in Bangkok is not obvious. A first challenge is to become aware of what healthy food is. Multiple food declarations for instance in supermarkets make the identification more difficult. A second challenge is limited availability of health foods in specialised shops and some supermarket chains or seeming

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<sup>18</sup> YASMEEN, a Canadian scholar and entrepreneur, studied the informal urban food sector in several Asian countries, and is very familiar with Bangkokian street food culture.

absence on the regular fresh market. Accessibility should include affordable prices; indeed, for a great range of organic foods, these can be about double or triple of the price for conventional foods. Furthermore, also specialised shops rarely sell the complete range so that the consumer perhaps needs to invest more time in shopping.

Further, sustainable foods may not meet the taste of Thai consumers as supermarkets usually offer a range of imported organic foods for non-Thai costumers (cf. KANTAMATURAPOJ et al. 2012: 277). At the same time, not too many people seem to be actively searching for healthy foods. Whether this is due to a general missing of knowledge about the quality of available food, of incentive to purchase it, or of the ability to access it for example for economic reasons needs to be found out.

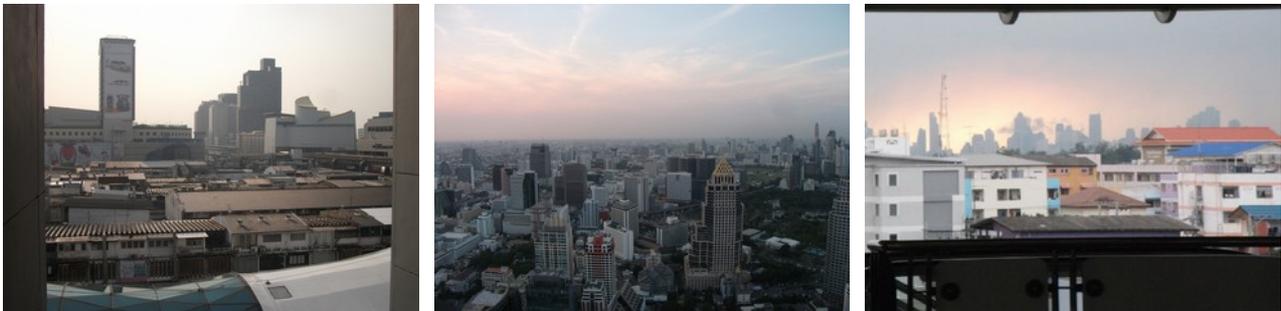


Image 5: Density, extension and skyline of Bangkok  
(from own source)

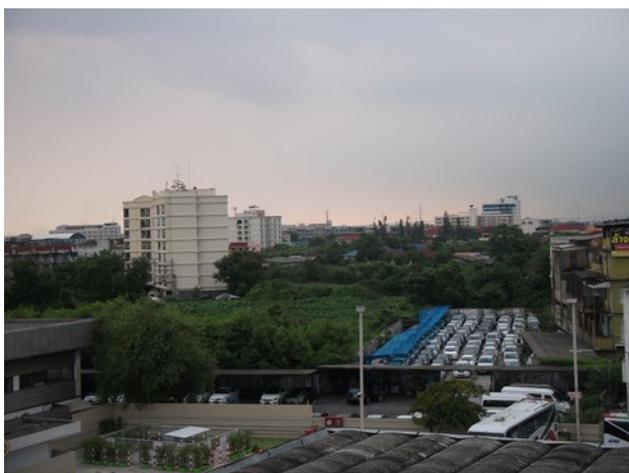


Image 6: Mixed land-use towards the outskirts, and new housing projects  
(from own source)



Image 7: Shopping malls – sophisticated interior, construction of a new mall, and lifestyle shoppers at a recently opened mall (from own source)



Image 8: Business district in the city centre, and modern skytrain system (from own source)

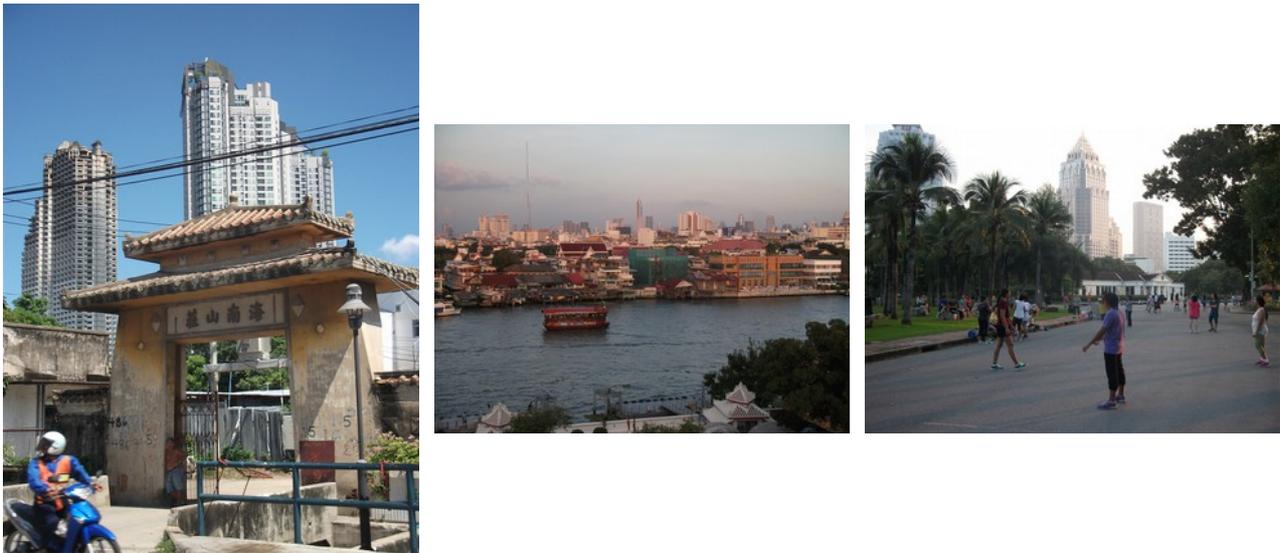


Image 9: Contrasting cityscape, and public space in a central park  
(from own source)



Image 10: Daily traffic situation, transportation boat on a sewage canal, and private waste recycling  
(from own source)

## 2.6.2 Thailand's agricultural characteristics and food issues

We have already learned about alternative food movements in previous chapters and know the topics they address. People with engagement in the organic food scenes in Bangkok are likewise concerned with the quality and ethics of industrial foods, the regulations of the conventional food market or the access to healthy products. Understanding organic movements in Bangkok better, their fundamental roots in Thai agriculture need to be elicited.

Organic or sustainable forms of farming in Thailand can be traced back a few decades, before the promotion of agrochemicals during the Green Revolution had started. The (re)consideration of organic food has become an issue when the misuse of chemical inputs and their

detrimental effects upon people's health became public. Growing cancer rates on one hand, degrading environment and farmer's indebtedness on the other hand made the awareness for healthy food hence organic food rise. A great part of demand for organic food originates in Bangkok where urbanites are missing options to grow or to have control over their own food.

Consumers' credulity has been strained repeatedly by food safety scandals whether pesticide-polluted fruit and vegetables or disease outbreaks. As PRACHASON (2009: 30) states that in food related policy making, "Thailand's primary concern is related to food hazards due to chemical contamination or diseases". A food hazard, he describes as caused by contamination through chemical residues, heavy metals, germs or diseases which is possible at any stage along the food chain. In the street food business, sanitary measures started to be taken seriously in the 1990s with the intention of reducing health risks through food-borne illnesses (cf. WALSH 2012: 256; YASMEEN 2001d: 38). Particularly suspicious to Thai health authorities available all over are Northeastern "Isan" dishes for raw meats and molluscs are traditionally added to it (cf. TRENK 2010: 260). While food safety has been promoted ever since, food scandals continue to occur occasionally. PRACHASON refers to several surveys conducted by diverse ministries discovering pesticide residues in vegetables – even those sold under the 'chemical free' label – in safety exceeding amounts<sup>19</sup>. He also criticises that the official food safety programmes have expanded only lately to include the farming process (cf. PRACHASON 2009: 31; 34). He further reports a case from 2008 where heavy metal contamination was affirmed for rice noodles. Retracing the case revealed that used motor oil had been used in production (cf. PRACHASON 2009: 31/32).

The latest outbreak of avian flu in Asia not only unsettled Thai consumers between 2003 and 2005 but also extended to an economic and political issue. First reported on a chicken farm in central Thailand in late 2003, avian flu spread swiftly to affect about 50 provinces, culminating in three outbreaks. In the course of two years, fourteen persons died and over 63 million of poultry had to be slaughtered out of necessity (cf. PRACHASON 2009: 32/33). The disease was initially denied by the authorities and information on it held back, until finally admitted in January 2004 (cf. DELFORGE 2007). Campaigns to reclaim consumers' confidence, including "a televised program showing prime minister and ministers eating cooked chicken", and free distributed chicken and chicken eating competitions by the industry; a national committee was also created (cf. PRACHASON 2009: 32). Chicken being a major business for some of the big Thai companies, the disease resulted in a "national crisis" (DELFORGE 2007). It gained a political nuance especially with the appearance of then prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his implausible defence of the agribusiness (cf. *ibid.*).

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<sup>19</sup> During a random inspection, 11% of vegetable and beans were found to contain residues exceeding the maximum residue limits standard (Prachason 2009: 31)

The reality of the avian flu epidemic in sum demonstrated irresponsible actions of the authorities who accepted to expose producers and consumers to risk.

Consumers know about food related risks as the topic has been raised repeatedly by the media and by public and private food safety advocating bodies, like NGOs or the Ministry of Public Health. Pesticides are mostly imported with some of them categorised as extremely hazardous after WHO classification. Often, they are applied by Thai farmers in exceeding and arbitrary amount due to a lack of information on appropriate usage. Some of these substances are legal in Thailand while being illegal in the neighbouring countries, others are generally banned yet illegally applied (cf. POSRI et al. 2007: 82). A major Thai NGO in farmer empowerment and food safety issues for instance endeavours regular food tests and beyond has a pesticide alert network<sup>20</sup> for public consumer awareness; recently published results of the amount of residues above the maximum residue limits show alarming results (in a sample from 2014, 100% of oranges, about 69% of guavas, about 58% of apples exceeded the limits) (cf. Biothai, Toxic fruit ranking).

The government reacted to consumers' rising awareness and reputation among international trading partners by setting up a new framework for food agricultural safety, and announced 2004 as food safety year (cf. ROITNER-SCHOBESBERGER et al. 2008: 114). Two initiatives followed analogously in subsequent years before organic farming started to be promoted also by government bodies, namely the 'Hygienic Pesticide Free Vegetable' project by the Department of Agricultural Extension and the 'Pesticide Free Vegetable' project by the Department of Agriculture. Those targeted only the elimination of pesticides (cf. POSRI et al. 2007: 83). It was Thai NGOs acting on behalf of environment, farmers' or consumer's safety, who “attempted to create alternative channels for sustainable agriculture, including organic farming” (ibid.), and equally the Royal Projects for organic agriculture.

### Agriculture in Thailand

A brief outline of farming in Thailand needs to include its historical course and the region's general suitability for farming.

In an analysis on sustainable farming systems in the humid tropics, it has been examined that the “efficiency of tropical agriculture is determined by a combination of environmental factors (including climate, soil, and biological conditions) and social, cultural, and economic factors” (National Research Council 1993: 7) and that farming systems evolved over the time in accordance to their special environment. Some of these typical systems are “paddy rice systems of Southeast Asia; terrace, mound, and drained field systems; raised bed systems [...], and a variety of

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20 Thai-PAN: Thailand Pesticide Alert Network

agroforestry, shifting cultivation, home garden, and natural forest systems” (ibid.).

Considering the long founded prevalence of farming activities in Thai society, there is reason to call Thailand an agricultural country; a fact that is time consistent and key to the cultural meanings of farming and food production. Under the influence of a humid tropical monsoonal climate with three basic seasons, all-year-round growing and harvesting are possible in many regions of Thailand. Four agroecological zones are formed by the climatic conditions, namely the equatorial zone (South) with up to 11 humid months, and the three monsoon zones (Centre, North, Northeast) with up to 8 humid months (cf. FAO Country Pasture / Forage Profile).

Paddy and upland crop areas exist. The temperate mountainous climate allows the cultivation of adapted upland rice, maize, perennials like coffee, tea, or special crops. The Northeastern plateau has a distinct dry season and is prone to both, droughts and floods yet is suitable for farming. Land is suitable for paddy rice, upland field crops, forests and grazing lands for cattle raising (cf. FAO Country Pasture / Forage Profile).

FALVEY (2000: 19) describes that sustainable agriculture is possible thanks to abundant natural resources like land, water, soils and a favourable climate which have shaped the civilisation of the area of nowadays Thailand. However, it has also been stated that some soils are deficient in certain nutrients such as phosphorus, potassium, sulphur, nitrogen, reducing the productivity of particularly legumes. Further are many soils in the South infertile, and Northeastern podzolics, latosols and regosols typically sandy with low organic matter content (cf. FAO Country Pasture / Forage Profile). Concerning water resources, farming relies largely on rainfall (cf. FALVEY 2000: 20).

In the first place, thanks to its high share of arable land, the country could always sustain its society through farming: “By about the eighth century, a wet rice production system including fish and coconut production seemed to be preferred across all suitable areas of Southeast Asia, with taro, yam, sago, and vegetables maintained as mere standby reserves” (FALVEY 2000: 24). The availability of this nutritional base, prosperity and central role of rice fields and waters in proximity to the village settlements finds expression in a Thai saying found on a stone inscription: 'In the water there is fish, in the fields there is rice'; as long as there are fish and rice, there is no worry for hunger (cf. Thai Food & Travel, A fish and rice culture). The saying conveys perhaps the understanding of farming and food as ubiquitously accessible. “Even in recent times up to the 1960s, the majority of Thai farmers in irrigated areas elected to produce only one rice crop per year. Central Thailand populations during the Dvaravati and Lopburi periods, while high by contemporary regional standards, appear to have produced a surplus of food” (FALVEY 2000: 25).

Thailand today has an export-oriented economy. Its agriculture plays an important role in the

international market for rice and sugar and since more recently also frozen shrimps, canned tuna and pineapple.

Agribusiness in Thailand started off with the dynamics of the export of raw materials and agricultural commodities (rice, timber) by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when neighbouring countries became colonised. This trade, mainly oriented towards China and Europe, thus encouraged exploitation of farm land and environmental degradation at a time when the country with a population of then 5 million still operated “almost entirely on a subsistence basis” (MÜLLER 1996: 33; cf. also FALVEY 2000: 97).

Thailand then modernised. Tax alleviations for smallholders which made many return to self-sufficient farming, after a period of deterioration of prices for agricultural commodities and subsequent financial crisis had occurred in the 1920s and 1930s. Yet, this trend was reversed in the following decades: Rice production experienced a shift towards market inclusion, multi-cropping and livestock were encouraged, and overall aspirations of international competitiveness and adoption of foreign technologies took place (cf. FALVEY 2000: 98, 99). In consequence, rural land development, road and irrigation facilitation, and cash crop extension encouraged agricultural growth notably until the 1970s, as one strategy in the first National Economic and Social Development Plan (NEDP) (1961-1966). While the agriculture was gradually intensified, rural poverty and the traces of overexploitation of the rural environment began to be apparent (cf. MÜLLER 1996: 34, 45). The Royal Project initiatives sought to relieve poverty of rural populations in the Northern mountains who sourced a great part of their livelihoods from commitments in opium cultivation. In fact, the “intensification and commercialization of highland agriculture has brought economic benefits to previously marginalized communities in mountainous parts of Southeast Asia [...] but has also raised concerns about sustainability, notably the intensive use of agrochemicals” (SCHREINEMACHERS et al. 2011: 1430).

Pertaining rural poverty and environmental degradation can be retraced along the following effects: When Thai agriculture industrialised from the first NESDP on, the emphasis was initially on accelerating agricultural production; the growth was facilitated by high yielding crops, modern farm equipment, inorganic fertilizers and pesticides under the name of Green Revolution technology. Eventually, the cash crops became less profitable, investment in the agricultural sector dropped, and the national economy was weakened by the 1997 crisis (cf. KASEM & THAPA 2012: 102). In environmental terms, soils sustained long-term damages due to intense land development application of inorganic substances over long periods: “Conversion of natural forest to agricultural land use has significantly lowered the soil organic matter” (VITYAKON 2007: 567) as the repeated appliance of organic matter was not taken care of. It affected in particular the Northeastern regions

of sandy soils inherently low in organic matter, and consequently their farmers.

Reference is found saying that Thailand did not adopt Green Revolution technologies to equal extent as neighbouring countries (cf. MÜLLER 1996: 182); or that “there has been no sudden green revolution attack on the natural environment” (FALVEY 2000: 108). Yet, Thai agricultural policies favoured the use of pesticides to notable extent: “Intensive pesticide application has played an important role in Thai success in raising agricultural output to achieve food self-sufficiency and strong export growth since the 1970s” (POSRI et al. 2007: 82).

PRANEETVATAKUL et al. (2013: 105) confirm the “aerial spraying of organochlorine pesticides” and “[h]eavy use of carbamate insecticides”. These substances prevented from pest outbreaks in paddy fields and insect infestations but impaired the natural auto-control of the rice ecosystem likewise. Beyond, in combination with homogenised rice breeds, the ecosystems developed resistance to insecticides (cf. *ibid.*). Another problematic consequence was the gradual deterioration of water resources including the major rivers as final points of all drainage basins, leading into the ocean (cf. KASEM & THAPA 2012: 102). FALVEY states several further impacts: decreasing yields because of declining soils, soil compaction, nutrient loss through burning and nutrient extracting crops, air pollution, changes in water management, loss of biodiversity, etc. (cf. FALVEY 2000: 109).

The social implications for farmers are manifold: The excessive use of agrochemicals not only caused health problems to Thai farmers but also put them eventually into a state of indebtedness. Most farm inputs like gasoline, fertilisers, pesticides, insecticides, and many seeds and appliances are imported goods, of which their prices rise continuously (cf. PORNPRATANSOMBAT et al. 2011: 4). Once cultivation is used to the chemical inputs, farmers rely on these and need to spend a part of their income on them. At the same time, market prices for agricultural goods continue to drop, therefore are farmers “driven into indebtedness and forced out of their farmlands” (*id.*: 5).

A lateral product of the above mentioned agricultural policies in Thailand has been contract farming, with a pioneer being the giant agribusiness CP, which arguably not only broke with traditional farming but also eating patterns of an entire society. Contract farming is a “system where the company purchases the crop from a large number of small farmers and processes [...] and markets the product” (DELFORGE 2007: 4). The system is a way to integrate small-scale farmers in the international business for their economic benefit, but for Thailand, it has been found that farmers' incomes – for instance in the case of rice farming – did not increase since the end of the 1970s; instead, the farm input prices steadily increased despite the contracts with the agribusiness.

DELFORGE confirms that “this system raises serious concerns regarding social justice, environmental sustainability and corporate control. Very often, instead of being the win-win agreement promised by its promoters, it becomes an elaborate way of exploiting small farmers” for it leaves the farmer powerless to any negotiations (DELFORGE 2007: 5). The concerns on detrimental effects on the rural ecosystems go in line.

Pesticide application continues to be alarming. In 2013, an “annual growth in pesticide use of about 10%” for export-oriented agriculture has been reported (PRANEETVATAKUL et al. 2013: 103). This steady growth has several reasons: Costs for farm labour increase, land use patterns change in favour to high value crop plantations, higher revenues, loans and subsidised chemical inputs animate farmers to purchase them (cf. id.: 104). “The highest levels of pesticide use were observed with the cultivation of cut flowers and greenhouse vegetables” (SCHREINEMACHERS et al. 2011: 1430).

The Thai authorities started to regain interest in sustainable ways of farming since about 1997 and integrated measures in subsequent NESDPs. These measures were supported by His Majesty the King's effort about his concepts of sufficiency economy (cf. KASEM & THAPA 2012: 99). The outcomes of these measures are best explained by the analysis of the field research data.

### 3. Conceptualisation

Conceptualising the research process requires close alignment with the intentions of the study: The coordination of methods and analytical tools on the one hand, content of the research questions on the other hand are momentous (cf. MEIER KRUKER & RAUH 2005: 14).

To recall the focus of the study, emerging organic scenes in Bangkok are conceptualised: Motivations for various stakeholders to engage in the organic scenes in Bangkok are investigated; equally, whether stakeholders commonly agree on the existing of an organic food movement. It appears sensible to empirically elaborate the data on site, in Bangkok. It means for research methodology to match the design with the qualitative character of research questions. Hence, the method proposes a mix of field work and document analysis, of which field work is meant to include observation and verbal approach to experts and lay persons. By this approach, two perspectives are hoped for: that of the outsider perspective (observation) and the stakeholder perspective (interview). As for the entities in this study, intangible instances like the stakeholder motivations, relations to nature, awareness, projection of lifestyles, and tangible instances like key stakeholders and pioneers in the organic scene, they each congregate in the aspect of stakeholder perceptions of their urban reality, being the point of departure for further analysis. It is assumed that the urban reality triggers stakeholders' manifold responses (urban farming, organic food consumption, voluntary simplicity, health awareness). How do stakeholders perceive and interpret their city? And what are implied responses? In practice, we will use qualitative interviews, usually open and unstandardised, and detailed observation to have high exposure to the stakeholders' realities.

A theoretical constructivist perspective lies herein: The dimensions of urban space that the study accesses by selecting according methods are products of individually constructed realities that, in turn, represent subjective perceptions (cf. FLICK 2014a: 76). This study however will take into account both implicit and explicit realities of urban space as a starting point for analysis: The geographical or factual space, the notional space how it exists for the stakeholders, and beyond, the potential produced space that can be filled with individual meanings.

It may be assumed, any phenomenon to study involving human action will be embedded in and influenced by each, social, cultural, historical, political, geographical settings, and a hyper-reality beyond. The multiple facets of this study demonstrate that it is hardly possible to base it on just one theoretical approach. Consequently, this study comprehends perspectives from three disciplines. Basing on the kind of our study – geographical with anthropological and

psychoanalytical elements – geographical features account for the local setting such as spatial layout and suitability for organic farming, urban living. Socio-political conditions might account for the emergence of organic movements on a macro-level; individual psychological processes and cultural aspects might explain organic movements on a micro-level, as well as individuals' motivations, establishing links to the research questions. The theoretical base to this study as outlined in chapter 2 reflects this perspective by combining theories on matters of new social movements, identity and personal lifestyles with concepts of sustainable farming and urban gardening. Accordingly, the study chooses research questions instead of hypotheses as frame to empirical investigation. The study then applies respective research methods to back the data analysis.

To enter into ongoing debates in philosophy of science, it can be deduced that data naturally contains an instantaneous dimension (in accordance with positivist views), and a dimension beyond. The latter may be deciphered through interpretations, and interpretations base on contextual knowledge, which detailed and long term field observations arguably support. Similarly, and because the attempt to deduce theories empirically – in antithesis to logical deductions – met difficulties, qualitative social research has moved away from a positivist quality towards methodologies that include notional realities imagined by both, the researcher and the research object. Constructivist approaches in philosophy of science are among these methodologies (cf. SCHNELL et al. 2011: 102/103). Those are manifold but agree in the way they explore how individuals perceive and arrange their realities (cf. id: 103).

The attempt within philosophy of science to derive the nature of reality and knowledge let emerge an often cited paradigm that continues to guide qualitative social research. There is among researchers divergence in particular about the notion of reality that is to be analysed and the role of the researcher in the process of data generation (cf. ROLLER & LAVRAKAS 2015: 2, 3). Disregarding the continuous debate that includes the currents of positivism, post-positivism, constructivism or critical theory, qualitative researchers share common objectives and “face the same challenge of making sense of the [...] world of human beings” (id.: 3).

The constructivist approach to research design will be used hereafter. To summarise, these nuances mentioned above indicate that quantitative methods are hardly viable for our research, but invite to its approach by qualitative means. The investigation of organic movements transfers to the research design as suggested in the following, with research entities and elements of investigation (cf. chapter 3.2). Chapter 3.1 presents theories underlying qualitative research followed by chapter 3.2 discussing conceptional scheme with the details of our research including design and research questions. The ensuing chapter 3.3 elucidates methods sets chosen, and their application in practice.

Chapter 3.4 shows the limitations found during this research and ethical implications; chapter 3.5 concludes on conceptualisation in relation to empirical practice.

### 3.1 Theories underlying the research

If we want to retrace the choice of methods implied in the study, we need to account for some of philosophical grounds of qualitative thinking:

Qualitative social research centres meaning in social action. It implies that empirical studies should likewise start from the meaning of phenomena which may be explored by methods like observation, measuring, interviews. This approach partially derives – for the European context – from classical sociological understanding of social actions (cf. MEIER KRUKER & RAUH 2005: 23).

Researchers began to emphasise qualitative ways of collecting data and interpretation-aided analysis in the past century, some following the observational studies of the Chicago School (cf. MAYRING 2002: 10). Various disciplines were under this influence, for instance the critical psychology hence turning away from mere quantitative methodology, claiming more grounded and socio-historical reasoning (cf. id.: 11). Tracing back intellectual history identifies the qualitative notion in Aristotelian tradition for it sees phenomena as dynamic and intentional, and suggests inductive schemes for their interpretation, in contrast to Galilei's deductive logic (cf. id.: 12). As another science, hermeneutics – originally applied in historical science and theology principally – contributed to qualitative thinking by developing methods of text analysis based on subjective understandings and interpretations in the humanities and social sciences. Similarly, descriptive psychology focusses on individuals' emotional causalities (cf. id.: 13/14). All of these approaches share their realities of meaning beyond the factual phenomena, or their “being” (id.: 12, translated from German).

A number of theoretical approaches are commonly cited in qualitative social research of which we will particularly apply social constructivism and hermeneutics while phenomenological and ethnomethodological elements pertain to small extent. Hermeneutics aim at processing meanings inherent to texts, for example meanings of human behaviours, interests, motivations, views, etc., and at deducing explanations. Social constructivism assumes socially constructed realities (cf. MEIER KRUKER & RAUH 2005: 26; 28).

Qualitative research literature typically deals with two general theoretical views: positivism and constructivism. Positivism represents the study of observable facts and occurrences, hence tends to link methodologically to natural sciences which prefer measurable data, standardisation and objectivity. Constructivism understands that individuals, through their subjective perceptions and

cognitions construct multiple realities (cf. FLICK 2014a: 75, 76; ROLLER & LAVRAKAS 2015: 3). The distinction between both views is likewise a distinction between qualitative research and natural sciences (cf. FLICK 2014a: 92). However, the combination of various approaches is encouraged in qualitative research, for different theoretical perspectives may be just alternative ways to access phenomena and may be applied to the extent they are able to generate information and understanding (cf. id.: 90). Both views seem relevant for the clarification of the study content because they can describe the situational settings and discern cultural meanings beyond. Thus, a positivist perspective is adequate for this research when it comprehends the dimension of sense-making of the observed realities, too. We may claim that a researcher should practice both, observing (as objectively as possible) by mere visual and acoustic sense and observing by allowing reflection. It signifies, we develop our research by describing phenomena as well as interpreting the implicit dimension of phenomena (cf. FLICK 2014b: 6). We argue here that for effective research, differing perspectives “on the philosophical constructs related to the nature of reality [...] and that of knowledge” (ROLLER & LAVRAKAS 2015: 2) should be reconciled. Indeed, CUPCHIK (2001) for example proposes an approach that “accommodates positivism and constructivism” through “constructivist realism” (CUPCHIK 2001). He stresses the processes underlying social phenomena and the understanding of social phenomena as multi-layered events requiring respective methods set in both approaches (cf. *ibid.*).

In a next step, we will present criteria the qualitative research process actually relies on. To begin with, a distinctive aspect of qualitative research is that it includes meaning, context, subjectivity. This particularly involves the researcher and makes him a tool for his own data collection (cf. ROLLER & LAVRAKAS 2015: 5). Context, hence meaning, changes along the course of the project, so does the researcher, especially in a long-term project. For this factually restrains objectivity, the importance of acquiring subjective data resulting from interaction in the field should be accentuated (cf. MAYRING 2002: 32).

Reflections on theoretical grounding of the qualitative thinking lead MAYRING (2002) to the extraction of five principles, namely reference to subjects, description of phenomena under study, the interpretation of these, examination in the vernacular setting, and final generalisation of results. (cf. MAYRING 2002: 19).

The first principle derives from the experience that social science research happen to get distracted from the actual research matter, humans, by methods or theories that loose attachment to the topic. The research should therefore provide direct access to the subjects under study. This also takes into consideration the holistic examination of phenomena including their historical settings in which they are embedded, and to be oriented towards tangible real life situations. The second

principle means that any analysis should begin with a detailed description of phenomena, and give additional information from various sources. Description requires openness for steadily occurring changes and new findings, orientation on individual cases instead of big samples, while providing a sound methodological structure. Third, knowledge becomes accessible by interpretation, for instance with hermeneutics. This implies pre-understanding of the study content, the researcher's introspection to let impressions and reasoning merge into the analysis, and finally processes of interaction between researcher and research object. The fourth principle assumes that research aspires exploration of local realities, it thus requires the researcher to assist to natural environments and daily-life situations, as done by field work. However, this is only possible up to a certain extent. Finally, a generalisation of results is envisioned – this is possible if generalisation departs from the specific case and is carried out gradually, all this by following clear argumentation and context-based rules. It may be open for later quantification of the results (cf. MAYRING 2002: 19-26).

We seek to implement MAYRING's criteria for qualitative research in our study by using respective strategies for data collection, processing and analysis. The following chapters will introduce the methodology, combining constructivist and positivist ideas, as well as hermeneutics throughout the different steps of the research.

### 3.2 Conceptual scheme and elements of the study

The following scheme is supposed to reflect the research design conceptually:

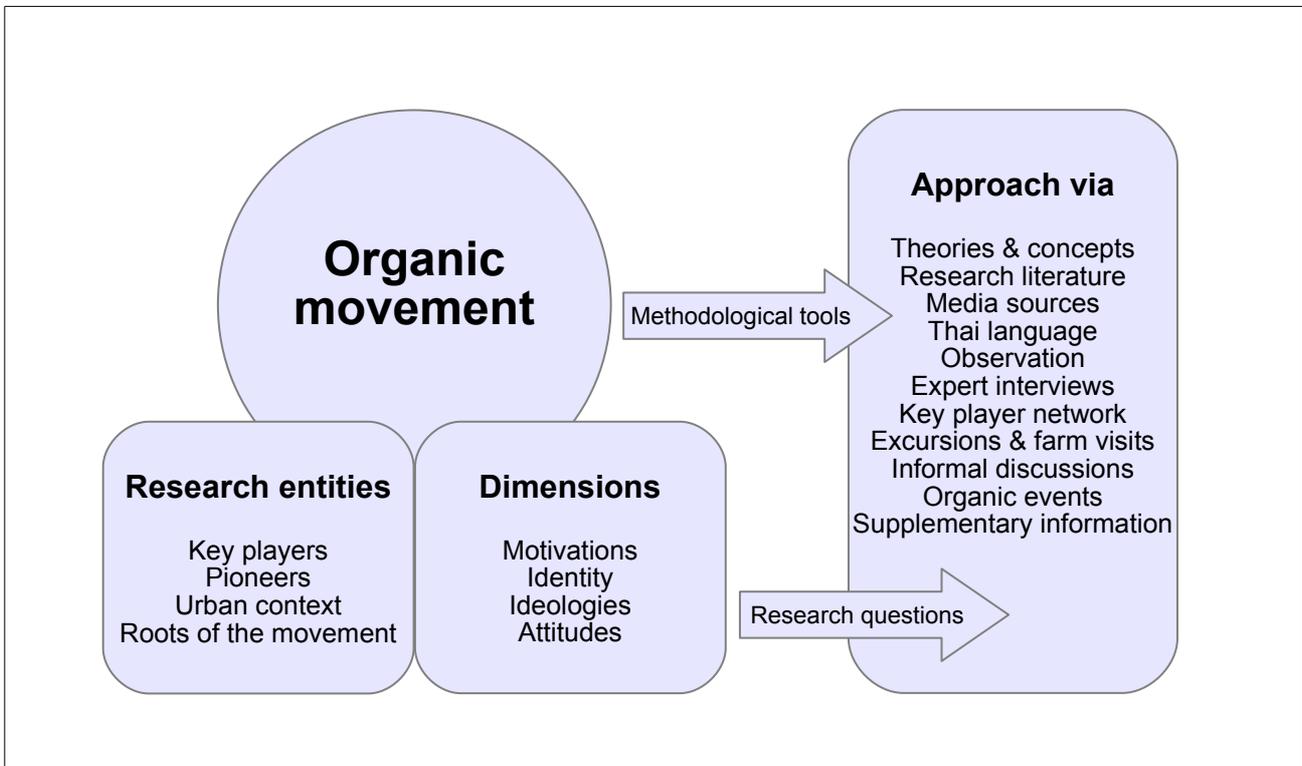


Figure 2: Conceptual scheme and research elements  
(from own source)

The organic movement as core of our research bases on two pillars, namely the research entities and dimensions of the organic movement. These are the topical elements around which the research questions spin. The latter determine the elements of research approach supporting the generation of information about all research entities, hence data collection. The general research topic, the organic movement, decides on the methodological tools needed to realise the approach in practice. Research entities have been called the various elements that constitute the organic food movements in Bangkok and that our study primarily deals with – they are first the key stakeholders and pioneers, and second the urban setting in which organic movements take place, third their roots.

Dimensions of the organic movement refer to personal and cultural factors that give impulse to stakeholders, such as motivations, identification, ideologies, attitudes. They will be tackled by means of the research questions (cf. chapter 3.2.2).

Concerning the approach to the organic movement, it follows various steps: Acquiring knowledge about the topic and gathering relevant theories and concepts, supporting the research by

learning Thai language and getting familiar with key stakeholders, entering the field for primary data collection (interviews, observation), gathering additional information during farm visits, informal discussions, seminars and other events.

It means for the practice to investigate the research entities by means of primary data sets, and to conclude in the following on the motivational and identity processes, awareness and ideologies; interpretation is supported by the theoretical foundations all along the research process.

### 3.2.1 Research design

One objective of research design is to join research entities and research questions for the practice. It aims at defining research procedures in respect of the methods applied. These definitions are means for translating qualitative theoretical ideas into actual methods (cf. MAYRING 2002: 40; FLICK 2014a: 112).

A qualitative research design can contribute to the understanding of socio-cultural dimensions pertaining in the organic movements in Bangkok. This experience presumes that general social phenomena like social movements are problematic to access via quantitative criteria. Nonetheless, any research design usually contains qualitative and quantitative fashions (cf. MAYRING 2002: 19). “In our own research, we often have interviews and observations or interviews and routine statistical data [...] in a single project” (FLICK 2014b: 11). Our research features quantitative data in very small measure as little reliable or relevant statistical resource was discerned. As for the design of this research, we would like to refer to MAYRING (2002) because his outline appears very plausible. Reference is also made to FLICK (2014a) for additional details.

From a range of possible procedures, we have chosen extended fieldwork and document analysis, as they probably generate most comprehensive outcomes to the qualitative intentions. Document analysis generally treats any kind of document which allows its interpretation, hence insight into human behaviour and thinking. It is material beyond the data gathered by the researcher (cf. MAYRING 2002: 47). We consider this type of analysis particularly because of large data volume in form of documents. According to FLICK, documents are “data beyond talk” (FLICK 2014a: 293) because researchers mostly analyse written documents used “as a means for communication” (id.: 355). In line with MAYRING, we refer to a broader definition of document, and include namely texts (newspaper articles, brochures, websites, social media content), pictures, maps, garden and farm design sketches. Depending on the type of document, we need to accord questions to investigate certain aspects of the research. Therefore, the method suits the analysis of printed or online media, for instance to interpret the view of media on the organic movements. Document analysis provides a

supplement mostly to situations that do not support the researcher's actual access by observation or interview (cf. MAYRING 2002: 49). Especially some maps of urban garden plots in Bangkok inform about activity that was impossible to access.

Field work is crucial procedure in qualitative studies and commonly includes qualitative and interpretative methods (cf. id.: 56). It facilitates the researcher's familiarisation with the reality of the study context which is not possible by mere document analysis. It means access to sites, stakeholders and their environments. The objective is here to experience the study object in their natural environment and routine, to track their itineraries and interactions, and to do additional, mostly participative observations. Field work especially suggests methods like qualitative interview and participative observation. Qualitative interviews can benefit from the access to the field, in such way that researcher and interview partners meet in person – a situation that normally builds up confidence and willingness to talk. Apart from mere information, this also conveys relevant impressions to the researcher which can be reflected in field notes. MAYRING (2002: 55) says about this, field work helps avoiding bias because of standardised research methods such as survey or experiment. However, field work can also be a sensitive endeavour as access to the field is not necessarily facilitated and depends on several factors, for instance getting to know relevant contact persons, communicating in different languages and cultural understandings should the occasion arise, building up trust, but also being aware of the researcher's own status in the field (cf. chapter 3.4).

Biographies are an addition to field work, of which the study would like to include in certain elements. As another element of research design, it was chosen to work with certain aspects of case studies, for instance presenting relevant pioneers for organic movements. With an actual period of more than two years, the field work to this study is rather extended. As MAYRING (2002: 55) explains, field work has potential to link different perspectives of research: “a descriptive, a naturalistic-ecological and a qualitative-phenomenological”, because the researcher gets opportunity to do formal descriptions of his experience in the field and to go beyond formality via qualitative interpretations.

### 3.2.2 Research questions

The research questions to our study (cf. chapter 1.1.3) follow the pattern of one paramount question, and three subordinated question. The first one links to the overarching theme of organic food movements in Bangkok that the New Social Movements framework rests upon. Further questions direct to attributes of organic movements (motivational processes for engagement,

structural framing, urban living, identity).

They follow typologies in accordance to their information they direct to. The principal question explores previously unknown dimensions of organic foods and urban farming and links them with a theoretical frame beyond the research. The second one is investigative, examining the cause for stakeholder initiative to engage in the organic scene. While the third question elaborates structural processes of structural settings impacting the movement, the last question clearly aims at potential strategies that people develop to adopt sustainable living in the city (cf. FLICK 2014a: 150).

There is visible emphasis on qualitative investigation. This emphasis is faithful with ROLLER & LAVRAKAS' (2015: 1) view on research questions in qualitative research aiming at “the individual and the role that context and relationships play in forming thoughts and behaviors” and being accompanied by “a host of related questions or issues pertaining to deeply seeded aspects of humanity”. The research questions frame all elements of the overall study (cf. FLICK 2014a: 146). They have been developed, reflected and adjusted all along the course of research. Their first draft came mostly from pre-research reading and personal notion of the topic. To the degree that the topic became clearer and reference points changed with each field work, the research questions adapted for more coherence. Reformulating according to FLICK is a central aspect during different steps of the research process (cf. id.: 113, 146/147). FLICK references in that context to MAXWELL who argues that research questions may in fact result from, not induce research design (cf. id.: 113).

Objects and dimension of our research, as well as research questions have been described in the preceding theoretical chapters. We will now move on to the tools that are used to approach the organic movements.

### 3.3 Tools to approach the organic movements

As for research design, we have used extended fieldwork and document analysis for they appear most viable to address research questions that focus on alternative food scenes and motivations of key stakeholders in a megacity context like Bangkok. The research requires a supportive set of methods in coherence with theory and research design. In terms of methodological tools, a qualitative framework featuring foremost qualitative methods from social sciences appears most suitable. The approach will refer MAYRING (2002) who sensibly distinguishes their three steps of application: data collection, data processing and data analysis (cf. MAYRING 2002: 65). After explaining the sets of methods used, we will move to these methods in practice, and subsequently our data material collected during the field work.

### 3.3.1 Method sets used

Our data collection grounds on qualitative expert interviews and observation, partly participative. Those primary data have been supplemented to some extent by secondary data; furthermore, by literature extracted from respective websites and newspapers such as Bangkok Post. With focus on motivations of organic stakeholders of the organic scenes in Bangkok (growers and consumers), qualitative interviews are found to be apt to elaborate their personal statements and notions concerning the given topics. They are designed to be open and unstandardised what results in opportunity for their qualitative analysis. However, standardisation varied depending on the interview situation, thus some of the conducted interviews are more structured, others rather narrative. The experts interviewed compound two groups: First, experts who are related to the topic through professional or private engagement (researchers, NGO experts, officers in respective ministries, vendors, farmers, hobby farmers, private people, entrepreneurs, other supporters of the movement), second consumers of organic food. Concerning Bangkok's consumers, mainly their understanding of the organic food matter is elaborated which could be covered by short open, semi-standardised interviews. Besides this, the study included aspects of group discussions in informal settings, however, the groups were too small to fall under the category of group interview.

A usual interview course began with a brief explanations on the research, and an opening, explanatory question. Subsequent questions blended into respondents' narratives and were meant to provide frame and guidance. Regardless, some interview partners preferred a clearly structured interview with preset questions. Here, the openness of the interviews helped adjust to each interview situation. In the philosophy of mixed method approaches (cf. FLICK 2014a: 35/36), more standardisation was considered with our consumer interviews. They were short interviews with preset questions, although some respondents made use of explanation beyond.

We agree to MAYRING (2002: 68) regarding openness of the interview situation who stresses that the absence of preset answers liberates the respondent from inhibition hence make him free to talk. Openness also encourages respondents to develop their own understandings and to unfold their subjective views. Consumer interviews normally featured about five open questions about experience with and access to organic foods, purchase habits (cf. Appendix III.2). In addition and contrary to expert interviews, they asked for age and gender as these are considered meaningful in view of interpretation.

Audio-recording of the interview situation is common, and has been widely accepted in the research. Interview notes are additional; written protocols were made when respondents did not agree to the recording.

Observation, or ethnography in the recent debates (FLICK 2014a: 296), during field research had a significant role in complementing the verbal data: Visits of spots where different organic activity is taking place, visual and written documentation (pictures, field notes), spontaneous talk to random persons and listening to their narratives, or observation at seminars and other events accompany the research. The focus of observation being on people, looking at who participates in what manner, with which purpose; setting and ambiance at the locality were equally noticed. Places observed were farms, urban gardens of different kinds, organic shops and markets, fairs.

By the help of active participation, our own position as researcher in the field experienced a second dimension, for instance when participating to set up a community rooftop garden, joining organic farm work, volunteering for a farmers' market in Bangkok. According to MAYRING, maximising proximity to and revealing the “inner perspective” (MAYRING 2002: 81; translated from German) of the study object are principles of participative observation. As a method, it corresponds well to our exploratory research questions (cf. id.: 81/83). All senses are involved in observation; throughout this study, notes have been taken to document personal impressions which complement the data interpretation (cf. FLICK 2014a: 308). A technical concern with this method though is whether observation were not manipulated through participation (cf. id.: 310; ROLLER & LAVRAKAS 2015: 5). Insights and access to new key stakeholders were gained by this method. In sum, the collected data set comprises 43 expert interviews and 25 consumer interviews. Numerous informal discussions and notes from observations add to the data. The sample size of collected data is considered as apt to a sound performance.

A sketch map visualises location of urban and peri-urban farms in Bangkok (cf. chapter 4.6.1).

#### Data processing

A next step is to define the methods employed for data processing. Qualitative research differentiates tools for (re)presentation, tools for recording and tools for descriptive data systems. As this research is presented in written document, text is the main kind of presentation. Graphic elements – mainly matrices and charts – are added to the text or in appendix in order to support important passages or theoretical matter and to present results. There are complementary images taken in the field (cf. MAYRING 2002: 85/87). Recording refers to processing the recorded interviews and all notes taken along the field work in such way that it is presentable and facilitates analysis and interpretation. Observations have been written out; some comments were audio-recorded and later transcribed. Field notes have been summarised and scanned for analysis relevant information. Extracts of field notes are presented in matrices, distinguishing the four categories farm visits;

meetings, discussion, encounters; observations; interview situation. Images and sketch maps add visual observations. For the expert interviews, verbatim transcription including highlighted utterances was used. This is because we found that the transcript should reproduce the speech as accurate as possible in order to be analysed soundly afterwards, the spoken word containing the relevant content for interpretation. Most interjections (for example approving sounds, 'uh', 'um', 'yeah', 'you know') were transferred whereas some others, seeming of little meaning, were omitted. Other utterances like 'laughter', 'chuckle', 'pause' were written out in square brackets, and stressed words were italic, and cut words were written as such (cf. MAYRING 2002: 91/92; ROULSTON in FLICK 2014b: 299/ 300). The transcript is done in standard English language though might involve grammatical mistakes, sometimes incorrect sentence structure, as typical for non native English speaking. For interviews conducted in Thai, the interpreter was instructed to transcribe and translate literally into English. Most of the consumer interviews were transcribed alike but the interviews conducted in Thai language have been condensed to relevant answers by our translator.

Making the interviews available as transcripts is necessary for efficient commenting and comparing, thus prepares for further analysis and interpretation. MAYRING (2002) proposes textual categories along which to build up the analysis, which basically attribute categories to segments of transcript. On the basis of codes, the text is reduced and given a certain order (cf. MAYRING 2002: 99/100). It is argued that this technique likely omits important information if applied uniquely. We make therefore use of it in the beginning only, for generalising purpose, while the actual interpretation operates with the original transcripts.

Each of the interview files are indexed by labels as they come in chronological order. The labels follow the pattern R-1, R-2, etc. for the respondents, G-1, G-2, etc. for interviews with groups even if small, and C-1, C-2, etc. for consumer interviews. Each interview partner receives just one of these labels, thus, if one partner has been interviewed several times, or the file is split in several segments, an extra numeral is added to the label (e.g. R-12-1, R-12-2, etc.) (cf. FLICK 2014a: 393). The files are indexed for better management but above all for their ethical handling: In order to treat the data body confidentially, respondents and institutions including interview files must be anonymised. Exception is made for the names of a couple of bigger institutions and networks.

### Data analysis

There are several options for tackling the data body that have their origin in theoretical approaches to social science research. Analytical tools, type and content of the research questions and the methods applied should be consensual. Defining features of qualitative data analysis are classification and interpretation of implicit and explicit meanings in material (cf. FLICK 2014b: 5).

As common in qualitative research, elements are blended from various of these theoretical perspectives: from grounded theory (meanings of data are continuously reflected and redefined), from social science hermeneutics (a pre-understanding is altered consecutively) and from phenomenological and psychoanalytical analysis. FLICK (2014b: 11) mentions about two strategies: First, condensing big data sets for less complexity through coding, applied in content analysis or grounded theory; and second, expanding the existing data by extensive interpretation like in hermeneutic or phenomenological approaches. However, as the field research has generated different kinds of data already, a combination of theoretical approaches appears productive (cf. MAYRING 2002: 133/134).

Grounded theory is analysis that involves anticipated theorisation and conceptualisation parallel to data collection. The idea behind is that field work usually triggers first reflections on the potential analysis. In doing so, research questions, conceptual and theoretical frame and methodology grow along the research process through constant modification and readjustment. Objectives are discovery and theory development, in contrast to application and confirmation (cf. FLICK 2014a: 401). Data collection finishes when the theoretical frame is considered complete, or grounded (cf. MAYRING 2002: 103/104). Remarkable occurrences and observations during field work or any state of the research are noted ('memo'), subsequently pre-analysed, and they give impulse in turn to the succeeding cycle of data collection and pre-analysis. "Memo writing [...] is a process of writing about initial codes and aid in theoretical development" (ROULSTON in FLICK 2014b: 303). This framework applies to fieldwork with participative observation in particular; it is argued that it corresponds well to the explorative research questions of how it can interpret organic activity in the context of new social movements, and how do key stakeholders impact the movement.

As for social science hermeneutics, it is found to be a plausible tool for analysing the open interviews, especially the more narrative ones, or protocols. The hermeneutic view departs from the premise of the human who acts according to their individual experiences and ambitions, with regards to their cultural contexts (cf. MEIER KRUKER 2005: 22). Elements that this study adopts include building up pre-understanding of the global research context through scientific literature or personal experience with the topic, integration of subjective perspectives of the interview partners, anticipated interpretations. For analysis, there is a repetitive process of revision of steadily emerging findings with the pre-understanding, as explained by hermeneutic circles (cf. ROULSTON in FLICK 2014b: 302).

Principles of this technique are to produce meaningful segments of a text and to create a second layer of new data based on these for further interpretation. These segments are discussed

again with some of the key stakeholders for falsification, mainly with regard to the research question on new social movements (FLICK 2014a: 457). The understanding of subjective perspectives of the respondents is included (cf. MAYRING 2002: 111/113).

Besides, there is also a psychoanalytical dimension involved in our analysis: one research focus being on factors of personal motivations and identity, and a theoretical frame directed towards those factors, it makes sense to adopt psychological interpretations too. This view proved itself to be useful where respondents did not answer precisely on what motivates them to engage in organic activities, or whether they feel identification for organic movements (cf. MAYRING 126/127).

Instead of systematic coding, the study works with key comments extracted from the interview files, field notes and other documents. This goes in line with ROLLER & LAVRAKAS (2015) who write that the qualitative data analysis is a multi-layered process “that continually builds upon itself until a meaningful and verifiable interpretation” and “does not follow a straight line” (ROLLER & LAVRAKAS 2015: 7). The study also did not use any computer-assisted analysis, as it was found that the researcher's own “ability to find meaning in context” (id.: 8) is more critical and productive in terms of research outcome.

For presentation, we assemble these key comments in separate matrices, condensing the information while keeping explanatory key quotations to add to the written text. Concerning the field notes, we extract relevant notes before placing them in tables in appendix. After thorough data analysis, data is interpreted according to key themes of the research question; then generalisations are derived from the results.

To conclude, all generated texts – transcripts, field notes, protocols – are analysed as such. Text analysis is particularly suitable for observational data, and elements from grounded theory, social science hermeneutics and psychoanalysis for the interview transcripts. A next step shows how these methods were put into practice.

### 3.3.2 Methods in practice

The realisation of this research extends over a four-years period split between preparation time in Cologne and field work in Bangkok. Before entering the field for the first time, a year of preliminary research at University of Cologne has been spent on tackling literature research, outlining methodological and theoretical frame and first drafts. During four months of initial field work (February to June 2013), a notion about the organic scene in Bangkok could be gained, several projects visited, and about 15 interviews conducted. A second and a third field work period from 2014 to 2015, each for about one year, allowed to advance the data collection continuously.

Analogously, interview transcription was finished and first writings began; tentative deductions and outcomes ensued from the field work that were brought to bear in the research design in the interim of the two field periods. In accordance with grounded theory research strategies of constant discovery and conceptualisation, our research elements and objectives were then revised and advanced, hence could be taken into account in the ensuing research processes. The study could be finalised in Bangkok because the periods in the field were extended beyond the actual data collection – advantageous to the research because it left the opportunity open for more supplementary observation, farm visits or interviews.

Certainly, this aided long-term observation of certain projects, and the overall exposure to and absorption of Thai culture and society. It can be assumed that especially in qualitative research with ethnographic elements, contextual understanding can deepen the more the researcher immerses into the local culture. In methodological terms, this also allowed to meet interview partners again and discuss anticipated outcomes (social science hermeneutics).

The access to the field was possible thanks to one key stakeholder that had been contacted prior to the first field work. This contact helped to get into an extended network of stakeholders, to arrange several interviews and visits of urban farming sites, and to generally get first insights into the organic and city farmer scene. At the same time, an unforeseen encounter with a Master student equally doing a study on urban farming in Bangkok resulted in a couple of joint farm visits and interviews. A doctoral student at a local university was also able to arrange another urban farm visit. Once established in the network, access to more key stakeholders was possible. One premise for this study was to cover stakeholders from different levels: private persons, stakeholders who do business with organic food or city farming, NGOs, institutions including ministry levels – which could be realised. At public events, seminars or lectures, potential interview partners could be approached. Besides this, a short period of volunteering at a regular organic farmers' market in Bangkok offered opportunity to get to know farmers as well as consumers. In open interviews, researcher and interviewed person get automatically closer than in a quantitative survey (cf. FLICK 2014a: 157). Beyond the physical access to the field, the researcher's long-term stay as well as the nature of the research topic made it easier to build up confidence between researcher and interview partners which was positive to the interview situation.

A Thai language class has been followed both before and while staying in Bangkok in expectation that it would facilitate the research. Learning the local language is a part of dealing with the study context and culture. It supports accessibility to the object to study, and yet, time frame was insufficient to attain full comprehension of the Thai language, so that an interpreter – a local student – helped out with the non English speaking interview partners. However, it was found that the basic

knowledge of the language helped indeed to guess semantic concepts of words thus the manner how certain English expressions or how common word orders occur. It was beneficial to the interpretation.

Chapter 3.3.1 described nature of interviews and observation – it is worth adding here that the interviews usually started with an introducing question about the occupation of the respondent or their involvement in the organic scene, followed by some guiding questions depending on which interview style was better received by the respondent. Because the first field work revealed more willingness to share information in an open interview situation, interview style was adjusted correspondingly for the next period, except for when respondents obviously preferred clearly defined questions. Concerning observations, they were partly selective, partly spontaneous. After all, some of the observations happened subtly, without the intention, by being exposed to the organic scene naturally. Observational notes were taken immediately, and pictures added to documentation. Observation specifically included visits of urban farms, peri-urban farms, fairs, seminars, lectures, other special events organised in the context of city farming, food sovereignty, sustainability and related topics, organic and farmers' markets, supermarkets, health or specialised shops and restaurants.

For the general exploration of organic farming in Thailand, excursions to organic projects and farm visits in several provinces in the South, East and North of Thailand have been realized. Special attention has been paid to Thailand's Northern city Chiang Mai where the organic and environmental scene has experienced momentum in recent years, and stakeholders demonstrate remarkable coherence.

### 3.3.3 Data material

The body of data underlying this study compounds primary data which has been collected during field work and complementary secondary data accessed via websites, reports, etc. In accordance with FLICK (2014b: 10) we can differentiate methods-produced data – through interview, observation, ethnography, field notes – and naturally occurring data – daily life interaction, work routines. As outlined in the preceding chapters, our primary data comprises: material from qualitative interviews, (participative) observation, photographs, visual material as presented on websites and social media. As for statistical resources, we fall back upon secondary data as their extra gathering would exceed the scope of research. They are: Thai agricultural statistics, statistics on Thai organic farming, health and food related statistics on the organic food network in Bangkok, mostly provided by NGOs and private actors, and maps.

Topical knowledge on each domain of this study is attained mainly by specialised scientific literature – including newspaper articles, websites – or by discussions with expert or lay persons. Other relevant events such as expositions and fairs, seminars or lectures added information.

### 3.4 Limitations to the methods and ethical considerations

Any research might entail concerns about the adequacy of methods and final outcomes. Following aspects possibly pose limits in meaning to our study, in spite of thorough work.

First, in terms of secondary data, there is restraint in the availability of statistical data on organic farming. Unless production is under the official Thai organic standard it is not registered as organic production in agricultural figures. Most stakeholders in this study are hence not recorded as organic farmers. To our knowledge, there is no complete statistical overview on organic land use in Thailand. Information is gathered individually by single stakeholders from the side of NGOs or organic business. Second, the research sample might be unequally composed of many private stakeholders and NGOs but few official stakeholders from the ministries. This is due to certain reservedness of officials towards the research project, hence the access to them. It could make that activist views prevail in the study. Third, during the extended field work, a notable amount of data has been generated. Time-wise, it may not be able to consider all data. Data density might also reduce clear rules for interpretation. Fourth, cultural factors are usually prone to inaccuracy; there are a couple of aspects that might limit our study: In spite of a three-year stay in Bangkok, the exposure to and immersion into the Thai culture, attitudes, being, language are arguably insufficient to allow a holistic vision of it. It might therefore be one-sided as based on a pre-understanding from secondary sources, or on personal experiences of Thai culture that lack authenticity. The researcher likely misses out on meanings of society that would have relevance for data interpretation. Concerning the research objects, notions about interview situations differ culturally, further, the language barrier causes unforeseen conceptions about words and expressions on both, the researcher's side and the respondent's side. Like this, respondents' answers might be less authentic, they might feel inhibition, might give prepared answers – some interview partners on official side had asked to see a questionnaire beforehand – some others might take the chance for their narrative and avoid answers. Regardless the linguistic level, communication took place in a foreign language context for both sides, using either English or Thai with an interpreter, thus could pose difficulties to transmit some thematic concepts. The concept of social movement for example, turned out to be difficult to find its corresponding meaning, perhaps for cultural reasons. In these cases, the researcher's intuition for cultural nuances is needed.

Generally, employing participative observation in a research project, as done in this study, can be a delicate matter: It encourages the observer's subjective judgement and is a useful tool for valuable insights in the participants' action as it makes the observer a part of it, stimulating possible collective identification. It also creates close ties between researcher and stakeholders. Close ties and subjective judgement influence the interview situation. As ROLLER & LAVRAKAS (2015: 5) state, it “poses both strengths and limitations to the qualitative approach” as closeness promotes deep understanding beneficial for the analysis but likewise bias in the researcher. We found that researchers' accuracy is needed in order to be faithful to their objective statement on the research situation as far as possible.

### Ethical considerations

Ethics guidelines aim at protecting all stakeholders of a research from inappropriate occurrence. The researcher must hence “strive to protect subjects from undue harm arising as a consequence of their participation in research. This requires that subjects' participation should be voluntary and as fully informed as possible and no group should be disadvantaged by routinely being excluded from consideration” (Social Research Association 2003: 14). “Social researchers should help subjects to protect their own interests by giving them prior information about the consequences of participating” (id.: 35).

These premises mean that no identity is revealed in the final version of study but also in front of other participants throughout the study for the security of both, researcher and participant. As for exceptions, consent needs to be asked from the participants explicitly although possible consequences for the research or the participants should be reflected beforehand (cf. id.: 30). In practice, anonymising interview files, informing participants about the intention of the research including possible risks, keeping all data confidentially, and treating all participants equally are respective strategies (cf. id.: 35; FLICK 2014a: 51; 54; 59). For confidentiality, FLICK (2014a: 59) suggests to “encrypt the specific details [...] to protect identities”. The research should be generally transparent so that no relevant procedures are withheld. Apart from these rules, we argue that the researcher needs to be familiar with common moral and ethical standards.

### 3.5 Joining conceptualisation with the empirical practice

Before beginning the empirical part of the study, it is wise to reflect briefly on what has been introduced thus far. Research context and questions have been outlined – emerging organic movements in Bangkok are meant to be interpreted against the backdrop of New Social Movements

theories. A couple of other theories and concepts (collective identity, social identity, self-determination, voluntary simplicity) have been presented; they try to investigate what motivates stakeholders in organic movements, what are roles of pioneers in those movements and what are the options for urbanites to implement sustainable living. Concepts and research literature specific on food and sustainable and urban agriculture support background knowledge. The research design including the set methods have been shown in chapter 3.

The theoretical frame and background knowledge guide the empirical investigation thematically, while the methodological frame provide structure and tools for the data analysis.

As indicated, we use ethnographic observation and qualitative interviews on 43 experts and 25 consumers to investigate facets of the organic movements in Bangkok. The empirical investigation seeks to find answers to the research questions; therefore, the interviews cover for instance stakeholder involvement in the organic or urban farming scene, their motivations, their views on status for organic food in Thailand, on healthy lifestyles, media coverage on the topic, and on organic food movements. The consumer interviews cover understanding of and reasons for being interested in organic food, purchase habits as well as opinions on organic certification, consumer movements and sustainable living in Bangkok.

The set of tools for the entire research process and data analysis are chosen to fit the qualitative conception of our study: Its descriptive and explorative research questions envision individuals and social groups, ideologies and attitudes in different cultural and geographical settings. Thus, they require in-depth interviews and sustained field work beyond the mere quantitative representation, and thorough interpretation during data analysis. Primarily documents are interpreted after social science hermeneutics, comprising the interview transcripts, field notes, visual material and tools.

In relation to theory developing, the theoretical frame of this study derives from preliminary conclusions after each period of field work respectively, after grounded theory method. Notes taken during field work initiated the re-thinking of basic assumptions and the tuning of research questions and theoretical content, as part of the grounded theory reasoning.

#### **4. Outcomes from the empirical analysis: Bangkok's organic food movements**

The original design of this study, prior to commencing fieldwork, intended to deal uniquely with urban and peri-urban farming activities in Bangkok. However, during the first period of field work, fourfold information relating to these activities altered this approach: First, neither the actual urban surface covered by urban farming nor the number of urban farms were very substantial, mainly for reasons of feasibility (restraining land issues) or lack of (sustained) interest; second, the actual urban gardeners demonstrate their strong commitment to urban farming; third, urban farming in Bangkok embraces mostly the organic method, hence has relevance for the local urban organic food supply; fourth, urban gardeners happen to link with organic networks that span the rural and the urban areas, rather than just Bangkok. These insights lead to a focus of interest on emerging organic food movements in Bangkok. Against the scepticism of outsiders' views on this topic, these organic movements were found to be relevant, consisting of a complex interplay between stakeholders, philosophies and settings that nonetheless share similar objectives mostly situated in personal and societal concerns.

This chapter first presents general findings about organic food movements in Bangkok before introducing the realities of organic farming in Thailand in chapter 4.2.

Engaging stakeholders and the structural settings that influence those stakeholders are illustrated in 4.3 and 4.4. Chapter 4.5 explains attitudes and ideologies that prevail among stakeholders, and includes an analysis of practices and motivations in order to trace potential underlying origins to Buddhist philosophy. Chapter 4.6 then goes into detail on the urban farming scene in Bangkok as a key scene in the organic movements. Chapter 4.7 and 4.8 finally specify findings on new urban lifestyles, and organic networks in Bangkok.

The following final outcomes are accumulated from three field work periods during the study. In line with the Grounded Theory method, previous findings have been repeatedly revised to contribute to the final outcomes. To recall what has been described in the methodology, the findings base on long-term observation, site visits, expert and consumer interviews and spontaneous discussions. The information extracted from the data is presented in tables, quotes and graphs in the chapters 4 and 5. Respondents' statements are sorted after topical themes relevant for the analytical understanding of organic movements, and added into the respective chapters. Extracts from the field notes are condensed in several matrices, farms and sites, observations, interview situation, and meetings, discussions, encounters. Interpretations and conclusions drawn from the analysis will be discussed in chapter 5. All tables with the respondents' statements are found in the appendix III.1.

## 4.1 General findings

An initial concern needs to be clarified before the findings are analysed in the context of social movement theories, namely whether the local organic scene was substantial enough to classify as a social movement, or was rather a transient trend of individual actions. A mix of statements can be extracted from the interview files that comprise experts and consumers (cf. R-1-43, G-1,2): A small number of respondents commented that an organic movement does not exist in Bangkok or Thailand, while others explicitly state that the organic network in Bangkok is either a trend or individuals' actions. Others' responses acknowledged organic activities in Bangkok as both a trend and a movement, while some respondents firmly agreed to the existence of an organic movement in Bangkok (cf. 4.1.2.). This range of answers might derive from individual conceptual understandings of the term 'movement' that varies between the respondents, their respective levels of involvement in the organic scene, and from the perception that trend and movement coexist. R-6 for example uses the terms “movement” and “network” concurrently: “And also, the main movement, main network to promote that is [...] Alternative Agriculture Network” (R-6, p.46).

Among the interviewed experts, three explicitly mention trend or individual action driving the organic scene, and four mention both. A further 23 actively speak about the existence of an organic movement or various sub-movements, whereas eight do not mention or are unsure about it (cf. R-1-43, G-1, 2). For example R-26 states that an organic movement has not yet started, but will gain momentum in the future (R-26: #00:40:55-9#).

The consumers interviewed are found to identify with a movement, although some mention it is not yet very distinct or visible, but they feel part of it by buying organic products; 12 affirm the existence of an organic movement, seven had no opinion on organic movements and did not acknowledge its existence in Bangkok, whereas three thought of it as a trend. For one, the organic movement concerns only certain groups of people, and for one it could be both a trend and movement (cf. Table 8).

In summary, the question of whether Bangkok's organic scenes constitute a movement or not, cannot be deduced from the stakeholders' direct statements alone, but require a wider perspective on the entire interview situation. The said reasons of differing understandings about the conception of movements result in a variety of statements. The analysis and interpretation of interview files must be complemented by the application of theoretical definitions and field observations acquired throughout the research process to form an overview reaching beyond respondent attitudes. Having these data as basis, the presence of organic movements in Bangkok is presupposed as a fact (cf. chapter 5.1).

From thorough reflection on the data set of this study, the following general findings on the organic movement in Bangkok, as elucidated throughout this analysis, are deduced:

- (a) There is a strong relation to the rural situation, an empathy and awareness towards farmers' disadvantage and ecological degradation
- (b) Impulse is driven by a variety of stakeholders – urban consumers, farmers, city farmers, NGOs, government or municipality, organic business and social enterprise, public health, media, religious groups
- (c) The movement is neither class-based nor dependent on particular locations, yet middle classes are significant and Bangkok is a centre of action
- (d) Social media is crucial for connection and exchange between stakeholders
- (e) Stakeholders do not necessarily interact, many are loosely connected
- (f) They are framed by structural settings (farmer's situation, policies, urban living, health and environment, dominating food systems, monopolistic companies)
- (g) Motivations vary according to the stakeholders but include health, environmental, social, spiritual and lifestyle aspects
- (h) Practices consist of different approaches to organic farming and various sub-movements, but share higher objectives
- (i) City farming is a sub-movement and amongst key stakeholders
- (j) The movement is predominantly a civil society movement
- (k) Practices may seem of little significance at first sight, but demonstrate sustained commitment over the past 30 years

These findings are supported in the following chapters by the narratives of our interview partners and by additional comments from observation notes. Key comments about most of the findings are listed in tables for each of its aspects.

#### 4.1.1 Setting and scope of the organic movements

The focus of the study are the organic food scenes that form part of a larger movement in Bangkok, situated in the urban setting. However, these scenes cannot be isolated from organic farming in the rural areas of Thailand. The creation of the first organic food practices was rooted in sustainable rural development, so it is necessary to understand the interrelation between rural and urban settings. In the 1980s NGOs started by promoting organic farming methods as means to stabilise farmer's livelihoods, parallel to the establishment of an urban consumer cooperative selling

farmers' organic produce in Bangkok, and these early NGOs showed sustained commitment over 30 years. The three major aspects that give impulse to NGO activities are: the critical social and socio-economic situations of farmers in many regions of Thailand, degraded rural landscapes, and public health. These aspects are direct consequences of the farming and food systems becoming industrialised since the period of modern agriculture. A number of the organic pioneers in the study have been active since this beginning, whether individually or with an organisation, with some having established organic businesses. There are more recent pioneers too, with stakeholders in the urban organic movements ranging from different situations and social backgrounds. The extent and impact of today's networks' activities can be hard to gauge from the outside, for example the Thai City Farm group has active members and passive members on their Facebook group. As for the present situation, the organic scenes span private households, NGOs, schools, universities, organic or health shops, farmers' markets, organic suppliers, research centres, the Thai Health Promotion Foundation, agricultural and commercial governmental policies, and two district offices. There exists within the organic movement several sub-movements or sub-scenes. According to interview partners, Thailand's organic scene has been moving forward slowly since its early days. However, the last decade has certainly widened the scene for new stakeholders and activities, and has enhanced consumers' alertness. Alternative ways of living and green lifestyles are emerging in response to trends or shifts in personal attitudes. Not only has the rural situation become unviable for many farmers, but also urban living has for some reached limits where alternative paths are preferred.

#### Bangkok, centre of impulse and trend

Bangkok as capital and primate city certainly has the role of centre for societal impulses. Trends are set here; and it is also where most organic activity in Thailand converges. Organic trends especially concern food styles and lifestyles. Eating habits in Bangkok depart from traditional dishes with steadily arriving new food trends. It is common that often foreign dishes are blended with Thai formula, or regional dishes – north-eastern and southern dishes are popular – adapted to the taste of the central region (cf. TRENK 2008: 31/32; id. 2010: 245).

Being in trend is natural to many Thai urbanites, so they are susceptible for new trends and the modelling role of trend-setters, and noted by stakeholders:

*“Thailand [...] it's very [...] fad driven, like people follow trends, [...] how to say it politely, a lot of sheep” (R-33: #00:12:29-6#).*

*“A lot of followers, like something is cool and then all of a sudden, every one is doing. But I think in a way, that's also a good thing because eventually those sheep will be like 'oh why are we doing it? Ah' and then they start thinking about, so their following does actually enlighten them a little and making them more conscious about what they're doing” (R-33: #00:12:47-7#).*

Media and advertising clearly support this attitude. With urban gardening broadcast on television, reality shows with organic farmers as protagonists or Thai celebrities promoting healthy diets or abandoning careers to become organic farmers, leading it to become a much discussed and trendy topic.

*“[T]here's a famous people coming into [...] growing organic area. And I think the trend started, [...] I know a DJ, I know a singer who do it. And people [...] follow these people. And people start doing things because it looks cool but at the end, I think it's good” (R-26: #00:35:14-7#).*

*“And we see Phi Um, she's [...] a star. [...] she buy a land in Supanburi and she grow rice and that is very motivating” (R-26: #00:04:35-8#).*

Whether new trends will sustain on a longer running basis still depends on the individuals and on the practicability of these trends. But as these two respondents say, people's fad-driven attitudes can be positive as eventually enhancing awareness. R-35, who runs a health shop and alternative medicine centre confirms, that certainly, alternative lifestyles are emerging in the city –

*“it's a very good trend, you know. Healthy eating is the new in-thing at the moment” (R-35: #00:09:34-0#).*

#### 4.1.2 Structure and organisation of the organic movement in Bangkok

The organic movements in Bangkok are structured by their stakeholders, locations, activities and settings. The movement takes place at many different spots in the city and its outskirts which hardly cluster or coincide with any specific neighbourhood; rather, they are mostly private homes, therefore disconnected from each other. The urban movement reaches out beyond to the rural sphere in such sense that business or direct sale systems establish links to rural organic producers, or rural

producers let urbanites visit their sites. As for the locations in the urban, they are organic city gardens on different scales – private or public – and peri-urban farm sites, markets, health shops, supermarkets and other outlets, restaurants, educational institutions. Beyond, the urban organic food movements are enabled by and originate in organic farming in the rural sphere. This study therefore retraces their roots and present a number of rural organic projects.

The study found no uniform social base in the organic movement in spite of distinct involvement of middle class stakeholders. The active organic city farmers for instance range from low-income residents of informal neighbourhoods to well-off middle classes. Because of the high income disparities within middle classes in Bangkok themselves, we found the categorisation of the organic stakeholders by social indicators not plausible. However, it is salient that the movement originates in civil society as governments interfere with little impact.

Remarkably, the organic movement in Bangkok is not one single entity but consists of several smaller movements. This is due to the multitude of stakeholders that started to engage in the scene at different times, with different motivations in different locations. Most NGOs and activists work on farmer's level, on consumer awareness and education, or on consumer-producer links. Organic businesses engage in organic food production on a larger scale, or in the marketing of organic products, and social enterprises base their intervention on direct and fair relationships to farmers in the rural area. Organic farmers grow mainly for their personal interest, and most of the produce comes from rural areas but the number of urban and peri-urban garden sites is rising. The organic consumers are mostly urban. Spiritual groups base their motivation for growing organically on ideologies related to Buddhism, such as the belief that farming should not harm any environment, and on simple living. There is a budget by the public health sector that supports generally health-related projects, and among them a number of organic farming and city farm projects. Government agencies and ministries act on a policy level and on project funding to some extent, and a couple of universities have research centres and limited curricula on organic production.

Even today, after the organic movement has gained momentum, their stakeholders act rather independently, although sharing their overarching intentions. Several sub-movements thus make up the organic movement; and likewise, their network figures as various groups in which the stakeholders interact more or less, being connected loosely.

Some groups function as connectors; they can be the instance to support other stakeholders by information, funding or coordination. Social media like Facebook help coordinate stakeholders. As virtual mean of communication, they can replace face-to-face meetings to great extent. These just mentioned structural features of the organic movements in Bangkok are further analysed in the

next chapters.

## 4.2 Organic farming in Thailand

As seen in chapter 2.5, organic farming in Thailand is not one consistent concept but different approaches to the implementation of sustainable farming methods. This is why some interview partners show different attitudes towards organic farming, or mention other methods in the context of organic farming. (Cf. Table 1, Appendix III.1)

### 4.2.1 Shared objectives with variety of approaches

From the conversations regarding the current situation for organic farming in Thailand, most respondents understand the concept but soon refer to other terms as well. R-1 explains that terminology is rather vague and under steady change. The Thai word *kaset insee*, translation for organic farming, means *living thing* and has become part of recent terminology. R-1 further explains that different ways of sustainable farming were promoted in Thailand after the Green Revolution. Integrated farming is a traditional local style featuring mixed farming methods. R-6 mentions integrated farming as a model deriving from alternative agriculture which was a broader approach introduced in the early days of the sustainable farming movements in rural Thailand (R-6; R-28, Table 1); he enumerates sustainable farming, natural farming, organic or agroforestry as similar models in this context.

The interviews revealed a range of approaches, for example R-18 revealed that the farming method used aspects from various approaches and developed them into an individual concept of holistic organic farming (*kaset insee ong ruam*), based on bio-tillage as technique to cultivate deep root systems that allow plants to absorb the whole spectrum of micronutrients contained in the organic matter of soils. It is a method to restore soil structures by indigenous microorganisms by using neither tillage nor ploughing (cf. R-18: #01:19:45-6#). R-13 likes to call the organic farming traditional or original farming; R-25 sees organic farming as part of an alternative thinking which in turn comprehends traditional farming; R-27, a pioneer for the promotion of natural farming, emphasises organic farming came after natural farming and became popular only over the years, being actually easier to implement and aiming at production more than natural farming. We observe that natural farming – in fact tracing back to Fukuoka's philosophy (cf. 2.5.1) – is first widely employed under the Thai term *kaset thammachard*, second commonly alternates in its use with sustainable farming, alternative farming, ecological farming, subsistence farming and other names.

Most respondents agree that organic farming has been practised in Thailand traditionally, long before the beginning of monoculture industrial farming, but 13 respondents indicate other terms for it. Indeed, there is reference to two paths of organic farming in Thailand, the subsistence farming which is also close to agro-ecology and the commercial one (R-29, Table 1), or natural farming as practised in the past and organic farming as a practice from abroad (R-37, Table 1). Therein lies a popular view of organic farming as a means to commercial production contrary to the natural or traditional path for the farmer's subsistence. These explanations suggest that organic farming is widely perceived as a farming system that comes from abroad, specifically from Western countries, but is similar to all the other methods practised traditionally in Thailand before becoming unpopular during the Green Revolution. This may witness a confusing clash of concepts of various origins; nevertheless, we can recognise common objectives which these concepts represent, namely the intention to alternate from the current industrial agriculture and to endeavour farmers' rights and agrarian reforms (R-17, table 1). Despite slight distinctions, the main difference between these concepts appears to be their terminology. To our understanding, they are all ways to realise organic farming principles, some going beyond, some being less binding.

#### 4.2.2 Re-emergence of organic farming

*“[Y]ou know, because we have in our history about Sustainable Agriculture Foundation, [...] in Thailand, we different from many countries because I think it's about this, because we start from the farmers' side not start from the consumers' side” (R-1, p.34).*

This response points to seeing the traditional way of Thai agriculture as small-scale farming after basically organic principles, and besides those already embedded in both Thai cities and the countryside, the current extent of organic farms and gardens is more akin to a re-emergence rather than new trend. R-10 and R-23 both accentuate that organic farming is a return to traditional Thai farming. Whether organic farmers are now recollecting traditional knowledge or learning anew arguably depends on their individual cases. R-23 argues that former knowledge has become lost over one generation of industrial agriculture. Whereas, R-21 observes a later shift from traditional and self-reliant farming to mono-cropping in north-east Thailand compared to the North.

*“They've been [...] more like self-reliant living on the land because in recent history, they needed to provide all their needs from their land. Well, so that kind of wisdom and knowledge is really still quite present. [...] Whereas when we came to our village in the North, nobody grew their*

*own kitchen vegetables. They are farmers but they don't grow chilli, lemongrass, stuff like that, right” (R-21: #00:10:40-6#).*

*“Like 30 years ago, [...] many people still living the organic way” (R-21: #00:11:43-5#).*

In this case, the knowledge about traditional farming might still persist. They find this to be the reason why north-eastern farmers turn towards organic farming more easily than else where, while other farmers generally think it impossible to go back to organic farming (R-21, Table 1)<sup>21</sup>.

Many farmers, formerly growing kitchen gardens, neither have space nor time to grow for their home use, especially as few farmers own the land they cultivate. It is said that Thai people grow a small variety of plants (ingredients for the daily cooking, medicinal herbs, fruit) where ever possible (G-1, Table 1). It is all the more relevant for conventional farmers who witness the abuse of chemical inputs in terms of their food quality instantly. R-5 states, small-scale farmers do not eat what they produce for the market but rather grow their kitchen gardens, and R-24 that farmers eat their produce again as soon as they start with organic farming. R-31's and R-32's views correspond.

The dominance of the industrial agriculture over self-reliant small-scale farming has been explained in chapter 2.6.2. Depleted rural ecologies and farmer livelihoods are consequences of the Green Revolution (R-22 / R-23 / R-25 / R-31, Table 1) which Thailand had adopted since the 1960s, and which shifted farming patterns towards contract farming, mono-cropping, large quantity produce and high mechanisation. R-18 says, Thailand gave up its prosperous agriculture in favour to the Green Revolution. He adds that in fact, farmers became spoilt with the modern easy-to-handle techniques and mechanisation during this period which makes it harder for them to turn away from it now. R-19, a young urban farmer, agrees to that many farmers are unwilling to change to organic farming. She explains that particularly rice farmers since the rice crisis 2014 (cf. chapter 4.4.4) want to make the change because they have no other solution to make their living; and even though television talks about it, and “some of the neighbours doing it, [...] some of them still scared enough to leave their comfort zone. [They] feel comfortable there” (R-19: #00:19:22-1#). On the other side, other respondents find farmers willing to reduce their chemical inputs (R-20, Table 1), and organic farming becoming generally more popular among farmers (R-27, Table 1). R-31 (Table 1), a monk engaging in farmer training tells from his own experience that restarting organic farming in Thailand is not too difficult for favourable local growing conditions. R-25 (Table 1) who has researched the rural situation in Thailand explains that there are many organic farming projects in all regions. The change often proceeds step by step, starting off from a kitchen garden, eventually

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21 R-21, a couple, is living near Chiang Mai since about 10 years since moving from Isan.

followed by the entire farm. R-25 adds, when the first farmer starts, others are more likely to follow. It often comes together with other aspirations such as financial stability, self-reliance, and living close to nature, however this might need time and external assistance.

Quite positive examples for new organic farming projects exist throughout the country, and the growing organic scene offers new opportunities. Thus, organic farming is re-emerging in Thailand. The number of certified organic farmers is still below 1% of the total households, but while modern agriculture is far from being unsettled, organic farms of varying nature and scope that are not recorded in the agricultural statistics seem to entrench the agricultural landscape. R-6 sees herein a positive status – organic farming provides a model, like a best practice that can encourage more people to learn from it, and engages local authorities at provincial or national level (cf. R-6, Table 1). The re-emergence of organic farming might be able to answer the rural crisis and peoples' increasingly delicate health situations.

An anecdote was repeatedly communicated during interviews, with slightly varying contents. One version is about a northern cabbage farmer who grows conventionally with the usually assigned amount of chemical sprays. It happened that one season, he was not able to harvest all of his cabbage and was indecisive about what to do with his harvest. His neighbour thus suggested to feed the cabbage to his pigs, which the farmer replied angrily with 'are you crazy, it will kill my pigs!' (cf. R-5, p.12). The anecdote is a representation of what happens regularly on farms throughout Thailand, and transmits the seriousness with which food quality needs be handled.

#### Organic projects in the rural

The nature and scope of the organic farming in Thailand is better understood when illustrated with examples. Several projects in five regions of Thailand have been observed during fieldwork. These five cases may be useful to demonstrate the variety of approaches to organic farming that exist throughout Thailand, and further their implications for farmers lifestyles, natural farm environment, harvest, products and marketing.

#### **A North: organic farm site of the Royal Project Foundation, Chiang Mai province**

The flat farm site is situated in a valley, surrounded by rocks. Soil is fertile here just as in the whole northern region, and farmers use extra compost, microorganisms and manure from their on-site production for improvement. Farmers produce organic sprays for weed control. The site has its own nursery, further does the Royal Project Foundation research and breeds adapted varieties. Some of the many trees have been there before the organic project started. Otherwise, all produce is sent directly to the Royal Project packaging centre in town. The organic produce adapts widely to the demand of the market and goes to Bangkok, or even

Singapore. There is a variety of fruit – mango, chayote, longan, banana, and avocado for the local sale; banana trees seem huge – and vegetables. A field of Pak Choi with ten rows yields 100kg for sale and takes four weeks to grow after seeding. Bushes and herbs like lemongrass, egg plant, wild rose apple grow along the paths, equally grass for animal feed in the farmer's villages. Farmers pick manually and use simple carry and pull vehicles. Irrigation is partially done through a canal. There are no animals on the site. The farmers who maintain the site are from surrounding villages and grew conventionally before. They are aged person as hardly any young farmers are available. They cannot use the produce from the site but have their own fields separately. According to the Royal Project Foundation staff, farmers are usually eager to grow organically and can earn 20% more from organic compared to GAP produce.

Box 1: North: organic farm site of the Royal Project Foundation, Chiang Mai province

This is an example of organic farmers contracted to grow for a set market demand. The contractor is the Royal Project Foundation (cf. chapter 2.5.3) which maintains several agricultural projects with hill tribes, 15 of them are organic. Organic farming in this case was introduced to the farmers by the initiative of the Royal Project Foundation, thus is not result of their own initiative, although according to R-20 (cf. Table 1), there is general interest in reducing the use of chemicals. It thus means the production process is wholly controlled by an external body. The products supply the Royal Project outlets in Chiang Mai and Bangkok mainly, and certain supermarkets to some extent. Organic farmers are trained internally, the crops at the site adapt to the market. Some farmers have their home-use cultivation apart from the field for market produce. The Highland Research and Development Institute is a public organisation attached to the Ministry of Agriculture that conducts research on organic farming development and optimisation, for instance plant varieties, pest control, microorganisms. It coordinates work with the Royal Project Foundation; it works closely with farmers and local staff of the organic projects, coordinates internal controls as well as the external audits (ACT, Department of Agriculture). (Cf. R-20: #00:15:49-7# - #00:19:20-8#)

#### **B North-east: Srisa Asoke, Kantalarak, Srisaket province**

A little road is leading from the main road to a couple of villages. The entry to Srisa Asoke is right next to the street; an open community shop, vegetarian food stalls and a small vending space at the entrance area is frequented by members and visitors alike. The shop sells community products, cloths, second hand items, stationary, household appliances and tools at low price. The community is a branch of the Santi Asoke, a spiritually motivated living and working community doing organic subsistence farming. (Cf. chapter 4.5.4)

There is vast farming area inside and around the community: a rice field yields 45 tonnes of rice per year, sold to other branches including Bangkok; next to it, a factory produces organic compost and fermented liquid fertilizers. Trees and fruit trees including longan, lamyai, durian, jackfruit, mangosteen and banana spread throughout the area. There are flowers and vegetables likewise, partly in tunnels or greenhouses. Irrigation systems are used for some cultivation; leguminous plants follow the rice harvest on the fields for soil improvement. Production at Srisa Asoke does not comprehend any chemical substance. Medicinal herbs are grown to supply the own herbal medicine factory and health centre. Living at Srisa Asoke witnesses simplicity and spirituality: simple wooden houses with kitchen gardens, collective bathrooms, meditation space, waste recycling, instructions suggesting to fix things; many community members walk barefoot, use bicycles and wear simple cloths often mended several times. Six monks stay at the community.

Box 2: North-east: Srisa Asoke, Kantalarak, Srisaket province

This branch of the Asoke community (cf. chapter 4.5.4) bases their philosophy of living and of farming on Buddhist principles. In order to be respectful towards nature and other beings, farming there is inherently organic. Another of their principles is simple life which comprehends a self-sufficient hence low-input agriculture. As R-31 (cf. Table 1), a monk at Santi Asoke states, there are ambitions to strengthen their surrounding ecosystem through diversity and an abundance of plants. Community members here are entirely intrinsically motivated, and organic farming responds to their spiritual life attitude.

### **C East: Self-sufficient orchard and farm, Chantaburi province**

The 100 rai private property lies in an uneven area, partly covered by natural forest. The young farmer with his family grows his organic orchard and subsistence vegetable garden since eight years. Most trees have been on the property before. Soil conditions are rather insufficient hence need improvement, mainly done through mulching, manure, charcoal and ground cover plants. Fruit have only one season but his family helps out during that and with for processing of his produce. His produce, mainly banana, lamyai, longan, rambutan and corn is sold at an organic farmers' market in Bangkok without organic certificate. He sells his fruit at a fair price of 70 Baht/kg, not much more than for conventional (60 Baht/kg).

Having grown up in Bangkok and graduated in the U.S., he started his organic farm for reasons of personal health and also refuses chemicals for being harmful to nature. His farming knowledge comes from books but mostly from own experiences. For his orchard, he is successful with a technique to enhance growth and taste.

He is eager to keep livestock, yet has not found time to realise this plan. He finds inspiration also in self-reliant and traditional Thai farming, and beyond is interested in herbal medicine, nutritional values and healing

properties of plants. “If I grow good food for me, why should I grow bad food for others?” is his attitude. Still facing many challenges on his farm, he finds organic farming not easy though sees in it the only way out of the misery of farming in Thailand. He points out how the deforestation has affected the local ecosystem that receives eight months of rain per year: Flooding becomes more typical and severe, resulting in blocked water tubes and a broken dam in recent years; weather conditions generally become unpredictable.

Box 3: East: A self-sufficient orchard and farm, Chantaburi province

This case shows similar attitudes towards organic farming as the previous one. The farmer's motivations are personal health, health of others, and respect for nature – he is also trying to become self-sufficient. Set on rather infertile due to degraded soil, he was able to reach improvement with the help of natural farming methods that also derive from traditional Thai farming such as mulching, manure and straw, ground cover. Yet, he regrets that he still needs to buy some inputs externally. Interestingly, weather events, namely floods are becoming an issue for him. He sees as one major problem of chemical farming that yields were high over a period of about ten years but then declined rapidly; plants became addicted to the chemicals, a reason why few farmers dare to go back to organic now. He thinks himself lucky to sell at the farmers' market in Bangkok where he can get a premium price for his produce, especially when considering that other farmers would like to try organic farming but cannot find access to the market. (Cf. field notes farm visits, Chantaburi, data CD)

#### **D South: Orphanage and organic farm, Phang Nga province**

The farm is located next to the highway connecting Ranong and Phuket in an area that had been seriously hit by the Tsunami in 2004. The family runs an orphanage of 18 children between four and 20 years with the help of mostly international funds, volunteers, and the sale from their organic farm produce. The children help out, too. Their idea being to feed their family first and to sell the overproduce, they grow a diversity of fruit and vegetables, keep chicken and fish, and do home made soaps, too. Their main business is the currently 700 chicken for egg and meat. These run freely in a spacious pen most of the time. Catfish elevation is for home use mostly. An organic palm oil plantation gives palm fruit, though for the regular market; there is ambition to invest in a palm oil press. A bamboo forest yields shoots to eat and wood for construction. There is a variety of fruit all over the property: 300 pineapples, rose apple, durian, mangosteen, banana, cashew, rambutan, jackfruit, coconut. On a small field and around trees, herbs and vegetables grow. “The first years were hard”, the couple says. The soil needed three to five years to improve. Inspired by Fukuoka and Permaculture ideas, they plough just a shallow soil layer, work with leguminous and ground cover plants, microorganisms and mulch. The couple

can sell produce at farmers' markets and other events in Phuket and Bangkok; some of their eggs are sold in supermarkets, and even send to Singapore. They exchange some products with organic rice from their farmer friend. There is no chemical use on the site – this is better for environment and the family's health, and saves costs for inputs and medical treatment on a long-run, too. They are content about the premium that they can make from organic.

Box 4: South: Orphanage and organic farm, Phang Nga province

The couple's ambitions in this example are to grow vegetables for the large family's needs. Organic produce does not harm the environment and also keeps the family healthy. They explain that they have not visited a doctor for two years, since they use good ingredients (cf. field notes farm visits, Phang Nga, data CD). They equally take inspiration from Fukuoka's natural farming, a book that has seemingly influenced the organic farming scene in Thailand. In this way, farm site soil conditions could be improved considerably, and their plants look lush and healthy. Farm produce here generates an important part of their income as there is enough to supply farmers' markets in Bangkok and Phuket. They sell especially organic eggs and meat but also their surplus of vegetables. Sale at the farmers' market is direct, thus allows the full profit.

**E Centre: Organic community project, Nakhon Pathum province**

A hotel owner initiated an organic farming community project with the local farmers in Nakhon Pathum province. With the help of organisations, a university and consultants, they are about to establish a PGS system for the area. The area is known for its abundant orchards but generally conventionally. Farmers in the group cultivate their orchards and vegetable gardens organically. Their farm produce is mainly sold at a local farmers' market that takes place at the coordinator's hotel site, and at selected spots in Bangkok. There is plan to extend the market, by supplying hotels, restaurants, office buildings, e.g. The farmers grow organically, officially being in temporary conversion period while waiting for the final certificate through ACT. Most farmers also grow subsistence gardens for their families, as according to the concept of self-sufficiency farming. There is a community centre where the group maintains a plant nursery and organic cow dung fertilizer production. The centre hosts regular meetings between farmers and project staff. The project is supposed to act as a model for others, and PGS was found to be a reliable way to strengthen the identity of the farming community and mutual quality controls among the farmers. The commitment of farmers to organic usually works out well but can be a challenge for the newcomers. The farmers benefit economically: One kilogram of guava for instance is sold at 20 Baht on the regular market while at 40 Baht at the farmers' market and could even bring more. The price is mere profit as no middlemen are involved. The coordinator is eager to build up commitment among the farmers

to enable trust relationships between farmers and consumers; he considers bondages between people as the base for happiness and healthy society.

Box 5: Centre: Organic community project, Nakhon Pathum province

Case E is another community project where individual farmers grow their own plantation but organise in a group. The group is embedded in an externally framed and financially supported project of an organic producer model region. The project adheres to organic method rather than natural farming, and receives the ACT certification. In spite of the certification, the project aims at fair prices for all parties and direct sale at a locally organised farmers' market. It is appreciated as a way for consumers and growers to meet and exchange.

These five examples demonstrate different cases varying in their aspects of growing techniques and philosophy, farm type and organisation, and marketing. Case A and E derive their techniques from the organic standards while B, C and D declare to grow organically but rely on natural farming and seek to attain sufficiency. A difference in their application might lie in the treatment of soils – soil recovery and improvement rather than application of organic fertilizer – and diversification of crops with other plants; or, might root in their perception of nature-human interaction in farming.

Farm A, B and E are organised as communities, C and D as individual households. Organisation within the communities varies: Srisa Asoke plants communally, just as the produce serves the community as a whole, too. Further, all processes of farming, harvesting and consuming are community practice here. Their remarkable features are certainly community practice, spiritual and intrinsic motivations. Farm A, the Royal Projects, and E are both projects that gather individual farmers within farmers groups. For case E, farmers own their properties and household at the time but at the Royal Projects, farmers do not own or live at the site. It makes sense to underline here that compared to the other projects, this one is mostly controlled externally; the organic projects in E get assistance to organise themselves and each other.

On farm C, just one person mainly cultivates the farm site which he finds challenging, considering the immensity of the property. Besides, he finds organic farming hard, but the only way out of the agricultural crisis in Thailand. Farm D is an individual household, too, but there are more people employed to help out.

Approaches to marketing can be fairly different between farms: Some hand their produce over to middle men, others get physically involved in the sale. Direct marketing is principally pointed out as beneficial by many farmers, as also in the five cases above. Except for the Royal Projects, all persons sell their own produce, either by joining a farmers' market themselves or by

asking family members to sell it on their behalf. Srisa Asoke members sell in on-site community shops or the outlets in Bangkok. Direct sale has the advantage to set the prices and get clear profit. Nonetheless, despite their lack of direct market access, farming for the Royal Projects is said to be profitable for the producers.

It is noted that all of the farmers get their knowledge from books and other media, or are briefed in external trainings as they have no background in organic farming.

#### 4.2.3 Models for the organic stakeholders

Farmers in the five examples and other respondents state influential role models for them who developed concepts for sustainable farming of which they either incorporate certain parts, or state their inspiration by them. Table 2 indicates extracts from what respondents think about roots and models for organic farming in Thailand.

We find that Eastern practitioners like Japanese Fukuoka, Korean guru and natural farmer Cho Han Kyo significantly model for the Thai organic farming scene, but also Australian Permaculture specialist Bill Mollison – some stakeholders have been inspired by Western models. Eleven respondents unambiguously declare Fukuoka as a role model to the Thai organic farming scene (cf. Table 2); seven declare the Santi Asoke community (cf. Table 4), six persons Dr. Cho and three persons Mollison (cf. Table 2). Concepts commonly stated by the respondents are Fukuoka's natural farming, King Rama IX's Sufficiency Economy, Bill Mollison's Permaculture, Dr. Cho's indigenous microorganisms and the Asoke community for their local adaptation of natural farming. Two Thai pioneers are eventually stated in the context of agroforestry concepts, as well as an American organic farming organisation. Fukuoka is probably the most quoted model among farmers and respondents. R-27 had the chance to learn at the Asian Rural Institute and Fukuoka's farm in Japan, and her translation of his *One Straw Revolution* into Thai language became a classic read for many Thai experts in the field of organic agriculture (cf. R-27: #00:00:20-3#). The farmer's parents from Phang Nga province (cf. Box 4) have a conventional rubber farm but for her own farm, she preferred non-chemical farming, therefore took inspiration from the book about 20 years ago. She considers natural farming as healthier (cf. field notes farm visits, Phang Nga, data CD). R-8 says about this:

*“I have discussed with a lot of friends about the organic farming movement, that been in Thailand maybe for more than 30 years, [...] maybe because of one influential book written by Japanese, Revolution with one straw, Fukuoka” (cf. field notes R-8).*

For R-12, the publication of Fukuoka's book into Thai in 1987 was inspiring and Fukuoka's visit to Thailand in the early 1990s indeed empowering the local knowledge of Thai natural farming (cf. field notes R-12). In contrast, R-32 affirmed doubts about suitability of the Fukuoka approach for the tropical Thai climate (cf. Table 2). Agricultural expert FALVEY (2000: 292) agrees to that: Developed “in a temperate climate, its application to Thailand suffered from rapid tropical weed growth”. Regardless of the restraints in its applicability, natural farming has principally been adopted, altered, rehearsed by many farmers or theorists, and blended with existing local Thai techniques. The Asoke community for instance demonstrates the appropriation and blending of various techniques, borrowing from Fukuoka's ideas at the beginning; they now use their own version of natural farming to fit local conditions after dealing with declining yields and pest troubles (cf. R-14: #00:11:31-8#). They are now familiarising themselves with bio-agriculture and the cultivation of microorganisms (cf. R-31: #00:30:18-8#). In his interview, R-31, a monk at Santi Asoke, points out that “they also study from many gurus like Fukuoka, Bill Mollison, Han Kyo Cho from Korea. And they also consider themselves as a pioneer as well. And [...] in Thailand, there is so many organic farming practices [...] already. So they just follow the technique” (R-31: #00:27:49-1#). Thai farming uses versions of integrated farming and agroforestry, thus may inherently comprehend patterns of natural farming (cf. R-17: #00:01:20-8#).

Mollison's Permaculture handbook and Cho Han Kyo from Korea are stated as two great role models apart from Fukuoka (cf. field notes R-23 / R-16: #00:27:28-4# / Table 2). Dr. Cho's natural farming foundation in Korea develop local microorganism approach, whereby microorganisms are taken from local soils and then reproduced. After multiplying, they can be applied to soils and add to the organic matter in soils. These are called – in contrast to effective microorganisms that are not reproduced from local soils – indigenous microorganisms (cf. R-16a-c: #00:27:28-4#). R-16 had introduced the Permaculture idea to Thailand by translating passages of Mollison's handbook into Thai and organised a first local Permaculture convergence that Mollison was invited to talk at.

Permaculture is of interest but found to be difficult to implement. Due to its complexity, it requires the comprehensive knowledge of farm-environment relationships, is hence complicated to handle. R-23 for instance describes how he includes aspects of Permaculture by using local materials, adjusting beds to wind and sun exposure (cf. R-23 field notes). FALVEY (2000: 292/293) adds, it “has been tried with limited impact in Thailand, possibly because it is hard to distinguish its benefits from those of existing integrated agriculture”. In contrast, R-25 (Table 2) quotes a permaculture project in northern Thailand as a pioneer example. Similar case for biodynamic

agriculture as developed in Germany to which R-28 refers (cf. Table 2): as based on a holistic, partly spiritual approach to farming, it tends to be sophisticated and hard to adopt.

One aspect emerging from the debate is the origin of all of these inspirations. It can be concluded that foreign approaches have evolved along with Thai indigenous concepts. Organic farming roots in both, Thailand and abroad (cf. Table 2). We have seen that organic farming has traditionally been practised in Thailand, but pronounced inspiration came from Japan, Korea and Australia (cf. R-23 field notes). Also the international organic farming movement plays a role, for instance IFOAM (cf. R-4 / R-22, Table 2). “IFOAM was one [...] motivation for us. So [...] we can't deny that we are motivated because of these foreign influential” (R-22a,b: #00:18:28-5#). Volunteers from abroad who come to work in rural projects in Thailand equally bring ideas about organic farming and eventually raise environmental awareness among local farmers (R-25, Table 2). Even though some models have not directly been transferred onto the Thai context, they have arguably given impulse to adjusted models; re-emergence and new impulse hence coincide.

#### 4.2.4 Recent trends

After seeing different sources and rural case studies for organic farming in Thailand, next is analysis of recent trends. One of the general findings is that many different approaches constitute Thai organic farming (cf. chapter 4.1), and these discontinuities bring rise to the question whether an actual split is marking the organic movements. As for the current situation, we are able to distinguish three kinds of organic farming: business oriented, small-scale or community-based in rural regions, and organic gardens as practised by urban farmers. Understandably, they differ in organisation and objectives. Urban organic farming is a case apart and will be illustrated in chapter 4.6; the small-scale farming and organic business differences appear particularly distinct. R-29 talks about two levels of organic farming – commercial and subsistence, or agro-ecology farming, and R-25 distinguishes the industrial organic farming which has pure economic incentive and is rather detached from the idea of care taking for the earth (cf. R-29; R-25 Table 1). Around five Thai companies have seized the opportunity of organic business, in response to the growing organic demand the market offers. They notably differ from organic small-scale farming in terms of farming system and organisation, which affects the way growers live with their farms. Still using organic methods and inputs, cultivation here tends to farm bigger fields, with higher mechanisation, and less diversification. Plant varieties and quantity highly coincide with the market demand and livestock is rarely included. Due to the farm size, harvesting machines and external farm labour are employed on regular basis, in contrast to many smaller farms that employ workers seasonally. The fact that

these agricultural sites usually are not based on individual households – the farm manager might for example not live at the site – might induce depersonalisation and oppose the farmers' commitment typical on small-scale organic farms. It has the effect that farm owners may be farm managers rather than actual farmers, and their knowledge possibly more theoretical than practical. A respondent refers to this effect on industrial organic farming in which the farmer is more or less detached from a caring for the earth, and has a purely economic incentive (cf. R-25, p.2). It is hence the profit orientation of farms that may induce money incentives to all stakeholders, in comparison to the sufficiency-oriented small-scale farms. There is also a tendency of the organic business in Thailand aiming either at the export or the domestic premium markets, such as organic supermarket segments, in consequence, at third-party certification. These are tendencies and by no means absolute, and both kinds of farming were represented at farmers' markets, and farmers of both kinds can potentially have money-driven disposition.

Some respondents have doubts about whether organic enterprises can be sustainable, especially considering their use of external inputs such as organic fertilizers or insect sprays where farm-produced manure, compost, fermented plant infusions or microorganisms replace them on small-scale farms, and fuel for machines if used. In contrast to this, there is small-scale organic farming as promoted in sustainable farming methods and described in the preceding chapters.

The marketing of their organic produce currently seems farmers' primary concern. The divide of the organic farming scene hence draws through the way of farming into market and consumers. Many farmers hesitate to convert to organic method due to the impermeability of the market: finding a way to earn their justified premium compared to the conventional product is not obvious, unless there is option for direct sale or other fair price assurance. The trade with supermarkets sometimes puts farmers in a vulnerable position for they need to arrange themselves with demand and instabilities of the markets (cf. R-29, Table 1). Direct or cooperative sale is a different situation: Here, farmers sell according to the availability of produce.

So-called 'self-claim' of organic quality is usually effective when consumers personally know the farmer, or they trust the vendors of these self-claim products. R-13 for example, an organic rice distributor, maintains direct contact with the grower community. Before the rice got an organic certificate, their collaboration gave the seller and consumers a guarantee. The seller knows, that it is possible to “ trust them because when [...] they make a community in the rice farm, they support each other” (cf. R-13: #00:16:40-4#).

### **Organic produce on order**

An idea for organic produce marketing is a delivery scheme based on order. A producer at *Taling Chan* district, Bangkok started his business over ten years ago. Having himself just a small cultivation at his home – fish, lotus stem – he collects organic produce from several farmers or farming communities and distributes it via an order-based scheme to his customers all over Bangkok. A vegetable list is sent out once a week and delivery on a small pick-up truck takes place at different days of the week depending on each neighbourhood. The produce arrives at his distribution centre every week in ice trucks from various regions in Thailand. Some produce comes from the North where the temperate local climate allows to grow special crops such as asparagus, potatoes, carrots, avocado. The farms are preferred to be as local as possible; however, he chooses the communities that fulfil his own commitment, for their internalisation of the organic philosophy must be their guarantee to consumers, as none of the products is certified by any third-party. The farmer and entrepreneur himself grew up with his father's natural fish farm in *Samut Prakan* province using no chemical inputs at all. His university studies in agriculture allow him to combine theoretical and practical knowledge. The vegetable list is regularly updated according to the availability of the products which allows the farmers to deliver what they can seasonally offer. Farmers set the prices by themselves which makes them benefit from fair prices. Prices are still stable and comparably low as only about 10% of price per kilo are deducted for the business maintenance. The products are mainly vegetables, mostly typical Thai, seasonal fruit, eggs, fish and meat, rice, and some processed products like chilli pastes. More than 100 households order on this scheme regularly.

#### **Box 6: Organic vegetable order scheme**

This order scheme gives an example that is well-received by Bangkokians who care for fresh and organic food and who would like to support organic small-scale farmers. There is the advantage of affordability, as prices, especially for the local Thai vegetables and herbs, are just little higher than at the regular market. Besides the delivery business, the seller also trades at a local farmers' market and has regular stalls inside a shopping centre in Ekamai area and at an alternative health centre. These are run with the help of a community who also prepare ready-to-eat dishes for the market. There is also an idea to widen the offer into certain supermarkets. The farmer seems credible to consumers, which probably comes from his humble appearance and his attitude that “organic does not come from a label, it comes from inside, the farmer's mind” (cf. field notes MCE-08/11/2014, data CD). The author's own personal knowledge of the farmer and subscription to his delivery scheme may confirm this impression.

The divide between organic business and small-scale farming is sometimes referred to as an opposition of local natural farming as conducted in the past. In addition, organic farming standards are imposed from bodies outside of Thailand with international certification, which is judged as an

intrinsic problem (cf. R-37, Table 1). In fact, certified organic farms are not necessarily large-scale sites, but the international certification is costly for the individual farmers (cf. R-5, Table 1), one reason for the emergence of regional standards in Thailand, and another being the success of trust-based consumer-producer links. Mutual controls within farmers' communities are often a successful guarantee tool (cf. R-5, Table 1) when they enhance communal commitment and identification as organic group. There currently are local standards in several Thai regions, among which the largest group is in the North. Many groups therefore opt for local standards, or IFOAM accredited ACT, the national Thai standard besides the governmental one, the latter widely considered unreliable; but many farmers groups do without any certification at all (cf. R-4, Table 2), which is one factor in why the number of certified organic farmer households has still not reached 1% (cf. R-2, Table 2).

The civil society movement currently prefers small-scale organic farming to the profit-oriented organic production (cf. R-8, Table 1) which explains a lot of the NGO engagement in the former. Currently, business ideas are often refused in favour of self-sufficiency thinking. Representatives of the organic business underline that organic farming can be hard and less efficient, hence needs industry and technological improvement in order to be sustainable (cf. R-9, Table 2).

The small-scale organisation is a very typical disposition of Thai agriculture and probably the adequate form of farming to sustain in the future. Nonetheless, R-10 whose research advocates small-scale farmers and organic business alike criticises that organic farming technologies have so far found no middle way, being either very modern when aiming at export or very old for the domestic market (cf. R-10, Table 1). “Intensive small-holder agriculture permits production of high quality produce, efficient use of by- and waste-products in integrated systems, and maintenance of cultural values which may be periodically recalled by urban society, although in need of an ennobling of views of agricultural production activities and lifestyle” (FALVEY 2000: 269).

The two models can have implications for consumer relations, in a way that small farmers often link directly to their costumers which stimulates personal relationships and trust, whereas organic supermarket shopping is anonymous. Anonymous shopping entails the necessity for third-party certification which is otherwise replaced by personal relationships. Most cases of organic city farming automatically categorise under small-scale farming, firstly because limited space hardly allows commercial cultivation, and secondly because most city farm members have altering aspirations (for example simple living, self-sufficiency, leisure).

Apart from mere structural features, the split likewise touches farmer's ways of living. Realising small-scale organic farming in the rural or the urban often relates to simple living. The split hence translates into either expansion of production or sufficiency.

We can conclude by the coexistence of the two tendencies which perhaps spring from different philosophies, although both attached to organic farming. It is both possible and probable that they continue to coexist, and it finally is according to the farmer's decision whether he prefers large-scale produce or subsistence farming with a small surplus. R-10 affirms that Thailand employs at present imported hybrid seeds at nearly 100% and chemical fertilizer at 100%. Organic agriculture therefore is not an alternative, but essential for the survival of Thailand (cf. R-10: #01:21:42-6#). Regardless all potential benefits, many stakeholders see the growth of the organic sector rather restrained. R-6, a long-term activist in the Northern NGO scene, predicts not more than 10% for organic farming on the total agricultural surface during the next five years (cf. R-6, Table 1). Others imagine it expanding in the rural areas but generally slowly (cf. R-2, Table 1). A former government employee at the Ministry of Agriculture and now NGO founder, is certain that there is no future for organic in the sense of international standards, but only for domestic sustainable farming that combines with consumer-producer links for marketing (cf. R-37, Table 1).

At present, conventional agriculture dominates in Thailand, for agribusiness control the market for agricultural inputs and other structural settings inhibit the starting of organic farming (cf. section 2.6.2; section 4.4). In attempting an outlook for organic farming in Thailand, a point of curiosity therefore lies in whether organic farming has remerged to become established, or whether modern agriculture and agro-industries will maintain dominance over the agricultural landscapes.

#### 4.2.5 Self-reliance, self-sufficiency

One repeated aspect during our farm visits and interviews is the one of self-sufficiency, or self-reliance. The farmer in Chantaburi in Box 3 talks about the Sufficiency Economy as assistance for many farmers as it allows them to become self-reliant before producing surplus. The name of his farm in fact translates with *self-sufficient garden* (cf. field notes farm visits, Chantaburi, data CD). R-21 is co-founder of a rural community for self-reliant living that specifically incorporates earth building and seed saving from indigenous varieties (cf. R-21: #00:00:05-6#). Self-sufficiency is subsistence farming: self-sufficiency in farming means to secure subsistence as a base for the farmer's household; and in that way the household will be able to rely entirely on what the farm produces and has low risk of being in debt. After being self-reliant, the farm can generate income by over-produce. Automatically, self-reliant farming comes close to sustainable farming as external inputs (fertilizer, petrol for farm machines) are intentionally kept low. After R-6, self-sufficiency is one of the principles of major local sustainable farming concepts in Thailand, together with biodiversity on farm sites and local plant varieties (R-6: Table 1). Consequently, organic farming

can be a tool to reach food sufficiency (cf. R-19: #00:31:16-9#), even though not necessarily given – self-sufficient farming does allow but does not encourage chemical inputs. However, organic farming is often preferred in self-sufficiency as when organic fertilizer is prepared on-site, costs can be saved (cf. R-19: #00:33:50-6#). Table 1 comprehends that organic farmers are able to sustain themselves (R-8), and that Thai farmers in the past used to have perfect growing conditions to grow organically and to be self-sufficient (R-13), adding collected edible forest leaves to their dishes (R-20); further, there are many kinds of organic farming in Thailand, namely self-reliant or self-sufficient farming, and the New Theory of Agriculture (R-21). The reality that most conventional farmers intrinsically grow their own natural kitchen garden demonstrates that no reliance can be given on what they produce for the market, in terms of both health – it has been treated with chemicals – and diversity – monoculture does not provide the variety of ingredients needed. On top of that, monoculture and dependence on external inputs has put many conventional farmers into situations of economic risk (cf. chapter 4.4.1). Backing farmers through self-reliance on food and seeds, local wisdom for farm improvement, and fair price negotiations is on the agenda of NGOs, for instance the Alternative Agriculture Network (cf. R-17: #01:09:34-3#). Besides biodiversity including local varieties on the farm site, self-sufficiency is one motivation for organic farmers (cf. R-6, Table 5).

As a former director of the planning division at the Department of Agriculture, R-39 was able to observe which challenges farmers face: Those practising monoculture often end soon in bankruptcy whereas those practising integrated farming are well-off and self-sufficient (cf. R-39, Table 9). Also R-25 (Table 1) indicates that self-reliance, traditional farming and financial stability are factors that can be reached through organic farming.

R-19, an urban rice farmer, promotes sustainable farming with her colleague. For their field work, they elaborated a self-reliant model that borrows from the Sufficiency Economy of the Chaipattana Foundation. As they practice directly with the farmers, they condensed the theory into a practical model. Her colleague explains following nine steps towards self-sufficiency:

*“first four step is like the foundation. [...] you have to find sufficient food, sufficient shelter or household [...] use. And then you need the [...] good environment, to breathe, to live. Ok this is basic foundation. And then, after you have, you sufficient on this [...], you can step up to giving. It's merit. [...] then you share to the one who need more. You give it to the people who need it. [...] After you have enough, then you have, you have access to things. You know, and then this is level six. And then, level seven, you start to preserve. After that, you go for commercial. You go for trade, trading. Because then, even you have, you suffer from*

*the commercial, even you don't go bankrupt, you still have a very strong foundation. You never go bankrupt this way. And then after that, instead of doing it alone, you do a network. [...] So with these nine step, if you practice all this, it's almost guarantee that you never fall down” (R-19: #00:28:25-3# - #00:31:10-6#).*

Self-sufficiency is not limited to the rural space but equally appears in the urban gardening discourse.

*“[W]e promote the organic farming approach to a gardening and we have another programme like a self-sufficiency [...]. We promote them to [...] start from the concept [...] why you should grow vegetable by yourself, na. Because ah, maybe many [...] situation like food security, food sovereignty and ah many things, like a climate change adaptation, something like that” (R-1, p. 13/14)*

R-12 argues with potential benefits of urban and peri-urban farming and of CSA-based consumer-producer links in the future food scenario:

*“In the first way is good that the urbaners, they think about their self-reliance of their own food, that they [...] eat what they grow – that's fantastic, the concept of self-reliance. Ah, and we look into a food scenario, I think, if you can grow what of your own, it's fantastic but if not, I think that CSA might be good” (R-12).*

In a low-income community in Bangkok, people grow a community garden as a way for self-support and engage in cooperation with rural communities to advance self-sufficiency farming (cf. G-2: #01:05:57-1#; #01:08:30-8#). An urban farmer's narrative reveals a website providing information on sufficiency farming where he found advice himself when he was just about to start his garden (cf. R-26: #00:09:48-4#).

Certainly, we need to think of urban self-sufficiency on a smaller scope. Full sufficiency can hardly be reached in an urban environment where space is limited and farm inputs need to be purchased but is in the urban farmer's objectives. R-17's opinion is:

*“They cannot have self-reliance 100% I think [...], for Cityfarm. But we are trying to thinking how to [...] strengthen this movement. Have more self-reliance on food” (R-17: #00:16:47-1#).*

#### 4.2.6 The impact of the Sufficiency Economy concept

The concept of Sufficiency Economy is described in chapter 2.5.3, its impact is viewed differently among respondents. While many stakeholders view Sufficiency Economy as influential or inspiring, almost no respondent instantly refers to it when asked for role models for the organic farming scene (cf. Table 2). When asking about its impact specifically, twofold views become apparent.

Generally, Sufficiency Economy seems to be known by most people in our field of research. As explained in 2.5.3, the concept was promoted in the King's famous speech addressed to his people in the aftermath of the 1997 economic crisis. Indeed, more people seem to follow Sufficiency Economy since the crisis (R-16, Table 9); media is presenting it, for example on a distant learning television channel (R-8, Table 15), thus television and radio are often the way farmers hear about it (R-19, Table 15). The King's Sufficiency Economy comprehends models for practical implementation, as seen with urban farmer R-26 who adopted for a site a design made for one rai<sup>22</sup> which he came across on the internet (cf. R-26: #00:08:13-9#). Generally loyal to the King, the farmer believes that the King's ideas must “kick” (R-26: #00:08:02-4#) some people because he has developed so many models. Also R-19 agrees to a certain impact that Sufficiency Economy had on farmers:

*“I guess because the King has been doing it for a long time already, and Thai people love the King. So, we try to follow [...] the thinking [...], so it's, for many people, it's the inspiration to change. For many people” (R-19: #00:24:19-4#).*

The urban farmer also explains there is an impact on organic farming and the way farmers deal with the environment, as this is what Sufficiency Economy tries to promote (cf. id.: #00:24:43-4#). Sufficiency Economy seems to work out well where farmers follow it (R-7, Table 9), but it stays unclear where and how many farmers do follow it. R-21, who is very familiar with the farmer's situation in the North and North-East states that Sufficiency Economy does influence farmers but only a few of them. First because it is above all a model hence theoretical, second because the government, while implementing it, continues to promote chemicals to farmers:

*“[N]obody bring it into practical. It become theory. And then the government try to talk about that but [...] they do something opposite. Like [...] they talk about self-reliance, talk*

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<sup>22</sup> Rai, a Thai square measure, corresponds to 0,16 hectare

*about organic farming but they support the people to use more chemical” (R-21: #00:16:13-6#).*

They cite one positive case of New Theory adoption which is the concrete agricultural design part of the Sufficiency Economy, a rural learning centre in Chonburi province (St.9, cf. Table 6) that works in a dense network and projects local models of sustainable farming for each regions (cf. R-21: #00:14:49-9#). R-39, a former official at the Ministry of Agriculture and currently advisor for New Theory agriculture agrees to that Sufficiency Economy has had little impact thus far although a big budget is allocated by the government (cf. R-39: #00:12:23-5#). The movement apparently comes from rural farmers rather than from the government: “The King has ordered but officials did not do anything. The villagers have realised that if they do not do anything, a little more, they would have nothing left to their families” (R-37, p.5).

Finally, there seem to be at least two sides for the influence of Sufficiency Economy: In theory, the model has inspired and still does inspire some farmers and particularly NGOs who work in rural areas. In reality, it has limited impact. Some farmers might also borrow from it without knowing or declaring it. After all, and as alluded to in 2.5.3 (Rossi 2012), the acceptance of the concept might imply an unforeseen political dimension.

### The Royal Projects

The Royal Projects are agricultural projects under the Royal Project Foundation. Its research section is supported by the Highland Research and Development Institute (HRDI) which is part of the Ministry of Agriculture (cf. R-20: #00:19:20-8#) and features volunteer university researchers, among others (HRDI 2007: 157). The government is involved in the Royal Projects with a yearly fund of 150 million Baht and several departments and other bodies for different responsibilities (policies, project management, implementation) (cf. HRDI 2007: 155/156, 161). There are four work sections: research, development or extension, marketing and finances (cf. R-20: #00:05:29-5#). Established in 1969 initially to replace opium cultivation in the Northern Thai hill tribe areas through specialised crops, their objective is mainly to provide reliable sources of income to small-scale farmer households. In parts, they also embed the King's sufficiency model, including chemical reduction (cf. R-16: #00:00:22-1#). The Royal Projects maintain GAP<sup>23</sup> farms and fifteen organic farms, set apart from each other (cf. R-20: #00:12:34-3#). Organic cultivation was enabled about ten years ago on His Serene Highness Prince Phisadet Ratchani's initiative, who is the president of the foundation. Initially certified by Department of Agriculture, the projects are now ACT

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<sup>23</sup> GAP – good agricultural practice, a strategy by Ministry of Agriculture to provide a guarantee line for production with reduced or controlled chemical input.

accredited (cf. R-20: #00:11:16-1# - #00:15:17-7#). The organic sites started with an objective of chemical reduction and access to new markets for farmers. Organic farming is meant to improve farmer's health – regular blood tests had revealed chemical residues for the non-organic project farmers (cf. R-20, Table 9); indeed, one customer at an organic shop confirms having found through testing that Royal Project vegetables contain chemicals (cf. C-8, Table 8). The respondents get different impressions from the Royal Projects: R-4 discovers that free chemicals were given out to farmers in the beginning but ceased to be efficient after a while (cf. R4, p.13). R-1 appraises they are organic to some extent but most of their produce are so-called 'safety' products, as the foundation's first priority is on drug replacement. He finds that there is common understanding of the Royal Projects being entirely organic just because they are royal projects, by the King (cf. R-1, Table 7). R-7 gets a similar impression, to be precise, that the Royal Project produce is not so much orientated towards being organic due to their objective on changing hill tribes livelihood from growing drugs to highland crops (cf. R-7:#00:59:17-5#; Table 7). R-5 affirms that some consumers think the products are organic, whereas they maybe not necessarily be (cf. R-5, Table 7). Field observations confirm some of these impressions (cf. chapter 4.3???)

At the occasion of an interview and farm visit at the Royal Project Foundation in Chiang Mai, Sufficiency Economy or any sufficiency background have not explicitly been mentioned. The farms are maintained according to principles of organic farming and produce compost, fertilizers and other treatments at the site, or bring additional manure from the farmers' villages. Also, farmers at these sites each farm one rai, one of designs in New Theory agriculture; plant diversity is provided but there is no husbandry. Otherwise, planning and marketing system probably do not correspond to self-sufficient concepts – the farmers earn money from their actual produce but are not supposed to keep any for themselves, further the produce grown is dictated by the foundation.

### The Royal Chitralada Projects

The Chitralada Projects is a demonstration and experimental site of a series of agricultural innovations initiated by King IX in the context of rural development. With a size of 1km<sup>2</sup>, they make up nearly half of the royal Chitralada Palace compound where they are set. They employ 700, including tour guides that manoeuvre on request daily visitor groups and individuals through the site. These innovations root in Sufficiency Economy, having the objective of helping small-scale farmers out of delicate financial situations towards sufficiency and income. They are supposed to witness the King's designs instructed to be carried out by his engineers. The Chitralada Projects consist of different production sites of which some are reconstructed for demonstration purpose and some are semi-commercial. For the actual agricultural area, there are a paddy field (dry highland

rice), a fish pond, flower beds, green areas with a windmill and the dairy cow station. Crop rotation of bean, corn, sesame is shown on the field. The windmill generates energy to run the water pump. There is another focus on technical appliances: a tractor (the first one being introduced in 1969), rice hulling mill and milk processing plant. The rice hulling mill demonstrates communal use in a village cooperative, how the remaining rice husk is burned into charcoal and how the rice bran can be further used for mushroom culture. There is a typical village paddy storage and silo, plant tissue culture and germ plasma bank for the reproduction of selected plants. Other stations display how to turn corn, cassava and sugar cane into ethanol (for E85 gasohol), or palm oil or recycled cooking oil into biodiesel, and drying fruit by solar energy. A couple of commercial productions are covered, among them a milk processing plant. In 1962, the King had introduced milk cows from Switzerland in order to start milk promotion in Thailand, to enhance nutrition. The plant processes milk from the cows at the palace and from outside into milk powder, UHT milk, fresh milk products and milk tablets. Other productions are for instance beeswax candles, spirulina farm, organic fertilizer or sa paper. The Chitralada Palace products are sold in a shop within the compound at a reasonable price, some of them in Royal Project shops. A couple of milk products are available in supermarkets as well as 7-Eleven branches.

The site seems to be a popular destination for school classes, thus has some educational benefit. It demonstrates opportunities that exist for farmers to become more self-reliant within their household or community. It basically is an experimental site that simulates and steadily develops farmers' realities, especially happening during early years. In that sense, it might actually be the biggest urban farm in Bangkok, and certainly the only one that includes dairy production. One respondent refers to the Chitralada Palace as place where Sufficiency Economy is implemented (cf. R-8: #00:35:29-0#).



Image 11: Thai organic farms – experimental farm in Prachinburi, orchard in Chantaburi (case C), and fish farm in Samut Prakan (from own source)



Image 12: Vegetable cultivation at the Royal Projects in Chiang Mai  
(from own source)



Image 13: Product from the Royal Chitralada Projects in Bangkok  
(from own source)

#### 4.3 The stakeholders in the organic movements

After outlining current realities for organic farming in Thailand, we now analyse a couple of segments of the organic scenes, beginning with their stakeholders.

It is a reality that the organic movement is a foremost civil society movement. This also underlines the importance of individual stakeholders, civil groups and NGOs. It means that the motivations of individual persons and their networks notably gear the movements. Thus far, there is not much involvement from the side of public institutions; neither are policies reaching out far, which reflects both, a bottom-up nature and strategy of the movement. It is therefore important to

examine the organic stakeholders in depth. There will first be an attempt to characterise indicative stakeholders for the urban organic movements. A number of decisive pioneers or influential stakeholders have been found during field research and named throughout interviews and discussions. Engagement of these will be presented in brief case studies. Organic consumers are very pertinent to the movements in several ways: Their number grows steadily, especially urban consumers; their lifestyles make insertions and give reason to growers to keep up with the demand; their lifestyles inspire others; organic business emerge as additional stakeholders; media seeks opportunity to please them; some start their own urban garden; and some become the active consumers who network directly with organic growers. The organic consumers will therefore be examined in a separate chapter.

We already found out that the urban stakeholders in the organic movements source from different social backgrounds and intentions. No uniform social base can be affirmed in spite of distinct involvement of middle class stakeholders. The city farm network for instance spans low-income communities as well as well-off private gardeners, and the many middle class stakeholders appear to be people with a modest lifestyle. One example is R-43 and her husband who, practising as an architect, describes themselves as working, simple people (cf. R-43). Our second research question concerns what motivates different stakeholders to engage in the organic food scene in Bangkok. When asked about motivations, respondents give their personal view and what they think would be other people's intentions. Respondents usually depart from themselves, their own well-being being the point of reference, and the most formulated motivation is personal health and health of friends or family. Some import their care for the farmers' well-being and environment. Some interest is also embedded in people's general attitude towards urban living, seeking for lifestyle change. Bangkok's city farmers are found to be very eminent for the local organic scenes, and will be presented in detail in chapter 4.6.

#### 4.3.1 Impulse from a variety of stakeholders

A variety of stakeholders can be observed. As explained in the previous chapters, the organic scenes in Bangkok are diverse which holds for their organisation as well as for their participants: the persons who engage may have different backgrounds and different approaches to organic food, hence motivations for their engagement may be diverse also.

R-22 adequately describes parts of the movement as the CSA movement, commercial farms, city farming, rural organic farming, farmers' markets, NGOs and government. R-8 equally points out a number of stakeholders that have potential to give impulse to the movement, namely

government, local governments, mass media and social media, NGOs and researchers, when all sharing the two common objectives of public participation and natural food. (Cf. R-22, R-8 Table 3)

This section aims to classify the descriptive entities functioning as either individual units or bodies from an array of different stakeholders including private households, public networks and semi-public bodies, NGOs, educational institution and research bodies, organic food outlets, government and municipal departments.

The strong presence of civil society stakeholders, thus many private households, for instance urban and peri-urban farmers, rural farmers<sup>24</sup>, green consumers, participating neighbourhoods, private companies is observed. The latter could be private organic food retailers – we found green shops, supermarkets, CSA and food delivery service, vendors of home garden produce, large-scale organic retail business including exporters; private companies are also suppliers of organic farm inputs, or organic farming consultants, or social enterprises.

The organic produce outlet is generally split between individual marketing and community run or institutional marketing. This is why there are green shops of private persons on the one hand, foundation, NGO or institution based farmers' markets, cooperatives shops, or farm produce outlets in regular shops or supermarkets on the other hand. Public networks and NGOs play an important role in the organic scenes: Networks among green consumers sharing information, those that link producer and consumer in order to create mutual knowledge and trust, those between city farmers, and those connecting like-minded people for alternative living and food sharing. A great part of the networking takes place via internet and particularly social media as a virtual platform for meeting and exchange, although some groups manage to have casual gatherings regularly. Many NGOs in the organic scene work on the improvement of farmers' livelihoods and sustainable farming technologies of which organic farming is one tool. Often, it consequently embraces marketing of farm products. Other NGOs focus on consumer awareness, health and rights, or have more social emphasis, with intervention for example with urban poor populations. While the government side usually covers policy level, the public health sector launches health campaigns and in this context organic food promotion. On municipality level, district offices plan neighbourhood greening and potentially community gardening. Media acts more or less in the background, but there are various television and radio channels broadcasting programmes related to organic topics, newspapers and magazines.

Table 6 describes the pertinent stakeholders for this study and their functions. Among them, some are considered having a pioneer status (cf. chapter 4.3.3). We were able to empirically cover

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<sup>24</sup> We consider rural farmers for urban organic movements partly depart from the rural sphere; consumer-producer network span both spaces

most of the stakeholders by interviews, meetings, discussions and observations but we need to rely for some on respondents' indications and secondary sources (cf. 'n.e.c' for 'not empirically covered' in column 'Coverage').

A number of these bodies give notable impulse to the organic movements in Bangkok, and coincide with those who have been mutually connected over a long period already. Several of the today's stakeholders participated in rural pioneer networks in the beginning, merged or created new ones. For some, an extension from rural intervention to urban involvement took place. Two of the early projects starting during the 1980s are St.34 and St.35. The Alternative Agriculture Network exists until now, providing assistance for alternative farming methods in the North-East particularly. Most of the NGO directors interviewed during field research, but also Thailand's organic trade pioneer (St.58) are or have been involved at some point. NGO St.34 dissolved when the initiators split to create three other bodies: St.33, St.40, St.54. St.40 has its beginning in integrated farming with local appropriate technologies in the late 1980s when the initiator worked with several other of our key stakeholders. One core issue is the promotion of biodiversity which they seek to fulfil by conserving and reproducing indigenous seeds. Since the early 1990s, a second focus is policies and the accessibility of alternative agriculture for university students and the general public. A regular fair with expert meeting and discussion forum is set on the agenda. Now, it is umbrella to an alternative food and consumer information network and an alert network about pesticides residues in foods that pursues and publicises regular tests; research and issuing of consumer information are further activities. St.40 has recently been prominent in anti-GMO campaigns together with Greenpeace Southeast Asia, Thai *Cityfarm* among others (cf. field notes observations O-09/12/2015, data CD). Another major NGO (St.39) acting since 1989 in advocacy of sustainable farming techniques adapted to local rural environments and species (integrated farming, agroforestry, natural farming, organic farming). The empowerment of farmers is central. The field of action eventually extended to Bangkok, first to provide rural farmers an outlet for their produce, second to begin city farming (cf. R-17: #00:03:22-4#). St.39 was co-founder of Thai *Cityfarm* – and still collaborates – in the aftermath of a fair hosted by the principal health related NGOs at that time. A young urban gardening pioneer then had a performance on growing herbs and vegetables in the city and could be convinced about demonstrating the possibilities of city farming on a wider scope. Finally, several stakeholders including a magazine for natural farming joined action to launch Thai *Cityfarm* in 2009. There is emphasis on learning processes and involving many different groups and individuals (cf. R-1, p.8). Many urban farming projects are within the Thai *Cityfarm* extended network.

In Bangkok, the School for Wellbeing (St.61) is a social enterprise starting as organic cotton initiative with artisan products from northern and north-eastern provinces, and publishing house.

There are close links to the Centre for Bhutan Studies and Gross National Happiness Research and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, and a conceptual focus on critical holism (cf. School for Wellbeing). In order to reach a broader public, they initiated a green marketing campaign featuring then organic stakeholders St.58 and St.62. It soon followed a regular exchange forum for organic growers, eventually a green shop and weekly so-called green markets that provide organic growers, also non-certified, a vending platform. The School for Wellbeing thus became umbrella organisation to a number of sub-networks, for instance St.42, a network for green consumers and markets. With so-called green markets, they offer organic farmers a market platform where to sell directly, and consumers a regular source for organic products and chance to personally meet with growers. In the background, the network also intervenes with individual farmers to build organic growers' communities to facilitate direct arrangements with potential consumers (cf. R-1, p.21). R-3 identifies the network as key stakeholder for consumers awareness (cf. R-3, p.6).

St.19 seeks at finding paths for Asian development (cf. R-10: #00:33:02-4#) by means of research on innovations in organic agriculture technologies; they provide also financial support for organic business start-ups under the condition of operating innovation. Many funds for organic projects, for example organic city farming come from Thai Health Promotion Foundation (St.20), often referred to as Sososo. Being an autonomous government agency, it is a foundation of the Ministry of Public Health, deducting a vast budget on health promotion from excise taxes on tobacco and alcohol, namely 2% (cf. chapter 4.4.5).

On the side of private organic food suppliers, St.58 is active since the early years of the movement. The cooperative is certainly the first of its scale for the Thai domestic and export market. It began with the initiative to improve rural livelihoods by training farmers on organic methods in order to provide them with a stable market, which usually constitutes a barrier to them. The cooperative uses organic labelling, especially needed for export, hence is one body to give organic certification in Thailand a push. With their attached foundation, they also tackle the fields of research, consumer and environmental education.

A further stakeholder in the Thai organic scene is the Buddhist Asoke community (St.8). The group is noteworthy for developing and disseminating organic farming techniques while inspired by spiritual motives (cf. chapter 4.5).

Two respondents mention private companies as stakeholders for including sustainability issues in their CSR programmes (cf. R-16: #00:24:37-4#), or social enterprises: The young social enterprise St.64 who specialises on processing organic ingredients grown in the city, or the urban gardens of Colgate and other factories in Bangkok (cf. R-1, p. 26; interview notes). The Bangchak refinery started social enterprise St.62 (cf. R-8, p.5), a green shop which is a long term active body

for health awareness raising among consumers (cf. R-4; p.22). Schools and universities can be active stakeholders (St.23, St.24) although not many have been unveiled: A university in Nonthaburi province organises regular meetings and green markets for consumers and producers near Bangkok (cf. R-4, p.11), academics at other universities specifically advance organic research, alternative schools (a Waldorf school, a Buddhist school) invite organic farmers to sell within their compounds. The active stakeholders are here mainly parents of school children (cf. R-11, p.12).

The interview partners indicated a number of key stakeholders which largely correspond to those identified throughout the field research. Stakeholders will be characterised in the following in relation to the respondents' descriptions.

#### 4.3.2 Stakeholders, descriptive

Having displayed diverse stakeholders identified during field research and equally during interviews and discussions, there is need for their typologies. Most interview partners are able to describe the organic stakeholders in the organic movements quite precisely thanks to their own experiences. Their thoughts are revealed in Table 3.

To start with, six respondents think of urbanites, particularly Bangkokians: Most organic consumers are urban people (R-19) who can support rural farmers through direct order schemes (R-4), Bangkokians become interested in rural activities (R-21), have taste, income and knowledge (R-37). Five respondents think of stakeholders from the countryside: stakeholders are also the farmers in the rural regions who are aware of organic concepts, although they are sufficiently numerous (R-4), the rural organic farmers complement the organic scene as they largely supply the city, and some rural people join *Cityfarm* workshops (G-1). Two respondents find that especially families or parents are involved, four others that the movements largely depart or will depart in the future from younger generations. (Cf. Table 3)

We observe that the social base of the movement is not necessarily integral though we find many stakeholders in a middle class environment, at least among the urban stakeholders. They typically have higher education, graduated from university, professional stability, employment or their own business. Many work in an office on daily base, or used to do that before departing to do organic farming. From G-1's perspective of the *Cityfarm* network, many office workers become organic stakeholders. This is a reason why urban farmers are often "weekend farmers" (G-1, p.12), working in an office during the week and taking care for their city gardens or farms outside the city in the weekends (cf. Table 3). R-19 tells of an individual story, having been a city and office person before turning to urban gardening and engaging in farmers trainings. R-34 reveals that a previous

busy life as a news reporter led to learning about rural farmers and the harmful pollution of farm products, so to become a green consumer, eventually working in the field of consumer awareness (cf. R-34a-c: #00:11:05-6#). The respondent imagines that young graduates might be interested in starting-up green businesses:

*“Maybe a new graduated people have their own business, green business. They concern, they can do the green catering, green shop” (R-34a-c: #00:27:00-3#).*

Interior designers, sales manager, flight attendants are also city farmer professions in R-26's typology. R-1 tells how urban middle classes modelled for the early organic movements in Bangkok by becoming green consumers and starting organic farms outside of Bangkok. We find herein indication for lifestyles matters and personal identity. R-12 knows that organic stakeholders may be politically involved, and R-26 confirms this. Two respondents clearly quote middle classes as pertinent stakeholders: R-2 indeed thinks urban farmers are not real farmers but middle classes; it resonates with R-17 who says the *Cityfarm* network consists mainly of middle classes. At the same time, R-17 works on city farming with both, urban poor communities and middle classes. Adding that, urban poor are more likely to face constraints, in terms of access to information (internet) and resources (land, water, seeds, etc). R-9 counts on the intellectuals, or the knowledge generation, for their potential to give momentum to organic movements. Similar to that, R-33 discovers that it is the already well-informed and conscious people who regularly show interest in organic events. R-32 and R-34 think it is the conscious consumers themselves who are key stakeholders. (Cf. Table 3)

Concluding from observations, these tendencies can be confirmed. In fact, stakeholders who engage in the organic scene in one way or another usually do it with consciousness, hence are aware of and already have information about it. An exception is found with some consumers who buy organic products without any distinct purpose. Their consciousness is found to be related to the type of food outlet they prefer. For example, there are those consumers who were recommended to buy organic products, for instance by friends or through media, and pay attention to the food labelling, but usually not to the provenance of the product.

For the social base, the stakeholders surely differ: On the side of consumers, NGO activity, city farmers, middle classes – even though a hardly definable category in Bangkok – tend to be most represented. In the rural communities, organic farmers earn modest income even though most seem self-sufficient. However, attempted typologies blur when considering that some rural organic farmers are retired middle class urbanites, that some urban farmers are low-income households, and organic consumers are health-conscious people of differing social background. R-10 for example

tells of former urban NGO employees who quit their jobs to start off their own farms (cf. R-10: #01:40:10-2#). There is hence need to explore incentives, attitudes and lifestyles behind stakeholder engagement in order to define typologies of stakeholders. Conclusion on stakeholders cannot be drawn from their social backgrounds solely. However, the persistence of civil society in comparison to governmental bodies in the organic scene is typical. While there is little government support, civil society mobilises to contest their rights for clean food and health (cf. R-10, Table 3). R-29 explains

*“the development of organic farming have been pushed forward by [...] private business and NGO, civil societies, not by the government” (R-29: #00:38:32-4#).*

R-8, R-19 and R-33 mention anti-stakeholders, stakeholders that act against the scenes, intentionally or unintentionally: R-8 quotes Thai monopolistic company CP, R-19 food producers in general, spoiling people's habits and thus awareness, and R-33 food giants for their influence on anti-organic policies. (Cf. Table 3)

To conclude on the individual stakeholders involved, respondents characterise them as urbanites, rural farmers, families, young people, green consumers, office people and stable salaried professionals, middle classes, urban poor, well-informed, conscious and pro-active.

#### 4.3.3 Pioneers in the organic scene

It soon becomes apparent that a number of organic stakeholders have pioneer status for the organic scene by twofold analysis: From observations and notions gained throughout the field research and by the statements of many respondents throughout the expert interviews. These pioneers stand out because they have been involved since the early beginnings or actively engage in sustaining different parts of the movement. Pioneers may be significant groups but also individual stakeholders: We can see urban farmers, rural farming projects, young individual entrepreneurs on the one hand, public and semi-public networks, local governments and NGOs on the other hand. Sustained commitment, initiative and capacity to inspire many people are traits that make pioneers relevant for the movement. They constitute influential key figures in the dynamics of transmitting and modelling objectives, in figurative sense maintaining members and engaging new followers. Their pioneering role, in general and in our study, does not need to be intentional – some pioneers seem realising their personal aspirations while other stakeholders point them out as the marked initiators of organic or city farming groups; they might unintentionally slip into their role, which is

in dependence of the public, whose response to key stakeholders can be unpredictable. This is the case especially for most of our individual pioneers. Table 4 indicates stakeholders for which analysis revealed their pioneer status. When asked, respondents named a number of concrete persons, remarkably quite unanimously, whose identity cannot be revealed here for reasons of anonymity. Most of these pioneers are interview partners in this study themselves. 16 individuals or bodies are named, among them R-32 (NGO for farmers empowerment through optimisation of local rice breeds, cf. St.33, Table 6) and Santi Asoke the most. R-32 is called “the very pioneer” (R-17: #01:11:01-1#), Santi Asoke “the most powerful group in Thailand that change people into organic” (R-21: #00:39:53-9#). Also R-27 (early rural NGO engagement, first producer-consumer cooperative and consumer awareness, cf. NGOs St.37, St.38; St.45, Table 6), R-2 (early pioneer for farmers' trainings and organic trade, cf. St.58, *ibid.*) and R-28 (early farmers' empowerment through appropriate technologies, biodiversity and consumer safety issues, cf. NGO St.40, *ibid.*) are enumerated repeatedly. R-1 (city farm pioneer and organic expert) and related to R-1 the Thai *Cityfarm* network are stated as important pioneers for urbanites, encouraging many people to grow at their homes and having the actual potential to attain mindset changes in the public (cf. Table 4). It is here also referred to the Laksi District Office, for their urban farming engagement started soon after the economic crisis of 1997; equally R-19, a young urban farmer and ex-office person. For the parts of the organic movement that take place in the rural areas, there are the rural networks and learning centres, the Alternative Agriculture Network, St.9 and St.10 (cf. Table 6), R-6 as personality of organic and academic scene in the North, and natural farming and bio-tillage expert R-18. R-10 for the integration of organic farming in research, social enterprise St.62 as well as the networks under the School for Wellbeing are uttered.

Other pioneering movements are verbally described: There is an ongoing back-to-the-land movement in Thailand of which its first generation has become a pioneer and of which a more recent foundation (St.17, Table 6) is part (cf. R-25, p.1). The latter provides a network for urbanites who want to start a life in the countryside or who are born there and wish to move back to start their organic farms. People find assistance concerning land acquisition, farming technologies and most importantly their (re)integration into the rural life. Indeed, some homecomers meet difficulties to integrate into village life or even familial animosity for returning from the city – considered as failure – for farming, especially organic farming (cf. chapter 4.7.4). Besides, rural farmers themselves who developed their own sustainable farming strategies can be pioneers in organic movements (cf. R-1, p.34), consumers, for example networks of school parents, the government, NGOs and commercial farms (cf. R-22: #00:12:38-2#), and especially city people (R-21: #00:26:37-9#). Reflecting on the provenance of organic in Thailand, two respondents come up with

their grandparents' generation who intuitively practised organic farming (cf. R-22: #00:25:31-4#; R-31: #01:39:14-8#). R-8 and R-25 make reference to the role of Buddhist perspectives on the organic farming debate and mention in this context one Thai Buddhist philosopher who is very engaged locally and in the international network. Representing a rather holistic and global view on organic farming, he also works closely with and is a model for the School for Wellbeing (R-25, p.1; R-8: #00:59:47-3#).

Respondents reason about these pioneers, young pioneers and networks are the future (cf. R-4), encourage people to grow at home (R-7) and are models for Thai lifestyles (R-10); further are these pioneers the first to recognise local wisdom in farming method after the Green Revolution (R-12), educate consumers (R-6), connect people and empower communities (R-13; R-16; R-43), supply organic food for consumers (R-27), push organic farming policies in Thailand (R-28), introduce modern the concepts of organic farming (R-29), or create prototype models for gardening (R-38). (Cf. Table 4)

It is a reality that the contemporary organic scene in Thailand has been evolving ever since the 1980s, at first in the rural sphere and soon after widening to the city as well. A small number of individual pioneers from then connects and joins their actions; it is the time when they build first networks. A couple of organisations spring from their action with some of them existing until now, and some others merging into new organisations or bodies. Their provenance being principally in the rural development and consumers health, these pioneers are civil society or grass-root activists. Besides, there are other groups who promote natural farming techniques on individual base with more or less impact on the organic scene as a whole, or, who seek to direct rural development towards business. One organic retailer becomes evident as first green shop (St.62) and green entrepreneur in Thailand, both bringing organically grown rural produce to an urban market and setting up an urban community garden (cf. R-1, p.3):

*“They work with the consumer who concern about on health since long time. So consumer will realise about their plan. And then, they start working [on] some organic products, they sell or they contact with their own farmers. And later, they also have their new organic restaurant” (R-4, p. 22).*

Thai City farm and the School for Wellbeing networks are two pioneers when it comes to growing organic food in or bringing organic food to the city, demonstrating health conscious living, and building mindful consumer communities.

*“We try to find this network [...]. Like some connection about health foundation or agriculture foundation” (G-1, p.4).*

The Buddhist Asoke community has been mentioned by a number of respondents as a pioneer for organic farming. Although they act independently from other organisations as a community with currently nine main centres in most Thai regions, they need to be seen in the light of the organic movement. In fact, during early years, Santi Asoke contributed with an extended farmer's training programme meant to assist farmer's conversion to organic farming. The group received primarily attention in Thailand but trained also some international guests, for instance a Nigerian group (cf. R-31: #00:52:16-0#). The Asoke community does thoroughly adhere to not using any chemical fertilizers, pesticides or insecticides for ideological reasons, further illustrated in chapter 4.5.4. Generally spoken, they are a key stakeholder for the Thai rural development, often in close interaction with the NGO movement towards the improvement of farmer's livelihoods from about the 1980s onwards (cf. R-8-5a-c: #01:00:37-0#). R-31 for instance started farmer's trainings in the early years. As a monk, he is not supposed to work the fields himself, thus became a trainer instead. Among our respondents, R-14 and R-16 used to be long-term members of the community, in the function of farmer or editor for the community's publishing house respectively.

It shows that some of the key stakeholders and pioneers of today have been working on organic movements since the 1980, with some of them starting as individual stakeholders and some of them as groups. Meanwhile, collaboration took place, and new networks with different agendas have been brought into being. On the other side, we have seen pioneer groups that work independently from others but sustained until now, such as the Asoke community. They all have in common to be experts for the organic scene, to disseminate knowledge and skills, and to encourage the newcomers.

#### 4.3.4 Motivations for engaging in organic activity

The second research question concerns motivations for the different stakeholders to engage in the organic food scene. The results are remarkably consistent, with five factors coming up in the majority of conversations. The chart below shows how often respondents quote the five factors health, environment, network / community, economic improvement, lifestyle, with regards to all, their personal, their organisation's or the general public's motivations (cf. Table 5):

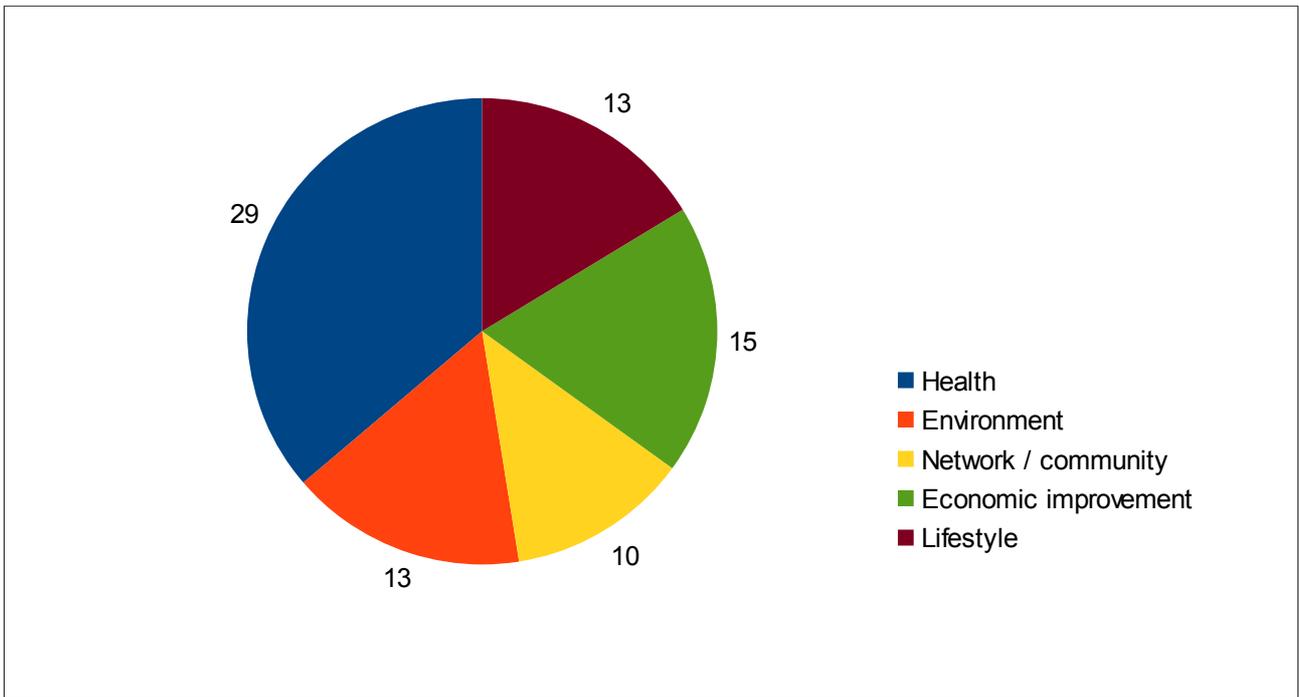


Figure 3: Distribution of selected motivations  
(from own source)

Usually, the 45 respondents state several factors because they find different motivations relevant or they refer to their own opinion and to what they think about others. Health is the clear motive in the eyes of 29 respondents; 15 think of organic farming as a tool for economic improvement of livelihoods, whether in the urban or the rural space. Motivations related to environment and lifestyle are expressed by thirteen respondents respectively, and ten think network and community building play a role. While the chart shows reliable tendencies, the respondents' interview statements discriminate further. For instance, most state health as priority, and environment on subordinate position: R-2 finds the factor environment less strong compared to health, nutrition and food quality, R-9 that consumers think in health terms at 90%, R-7 that it is mostly health, and environment is second priority and R-22 that environment takes up 5-10% of people's motivation. In contrast to that, environment and health come together and cannot be split apart for R-15. (Cf. Table 5)

In the interview situations, health is mostly quoted instantly and as general motive, before others follow. Health in the context of organic food or organic farming has several dimensions: Respondents worry about food quality; polluted food accounts for rising cancer rates in their environment; organic farming contributes to personal well-being and good mental health from a grower's point of view; personal or family health and care for the health of others; holistic perspective: healthy ecological systems provide human health; physical and mental health can improve work capacity; and healthy eating is trendy. Respondents tell how studies report the rise of

cancer and non-communicable disease rates in Thailand; apart, food tests continuously proof chemical residues in fresh fruit and vegetables, hormone or antibiotics residue in meat products.

The conscious consumer who exposes himself to respective media is aware of the possible health risks through foods. Conventional produce contains chemicals (cf. R-13 / R-23; Table 5), thus the conventional market is not safe (cf. R-31). Therefore, people seek for safe food when they or their family members become ill (cf. R-1 / R-35) or in prevention of illness. Growing organic vegetables helps for good health and work capacity, eventually leading to more financial stability for a low-income community in Bangkok (cf. G-2). Because health starts with food and food is part of holistic health (cf. R-30), organic food can be a means to preventive health (cf. R-8). For R-13, food and positive life attitude are precondition for good health (cf. R-13). Health care may be bilateral, personal and directed at fellows, in a sense that some organic farmers firstly wish to improve personal health but then to treat their consumers just as well; and for some green consumers, their family's health is a priority, and care about their producer's situation equally (cf. R-13 / R-22). (Cf. Table 5), (cf. also field notes farm visits, data CD; chapter 4.4.5; 5.2.2).

Economic improvement refers to rural organic growers or urban gardeners. The study has already explained that organic farming in Thailand often comes with self-sufficiency approaches and with this spares much internal farm inputs. Along with premium prices on the market – often realised by avoiding middle men – farmers have the possibility to save money or ensure their economic stability. R-21 argues the farmers' economic problems arise from increasing prices for chemicals and petrol, and their necessary objective of reducing internal costs and selling their surplus as their chance to survive (cf. R-21). Input expenses and deteriorating health is what drives many farmers to organic farming (cf. R-24). Various projects intend to improve farmers' livelihoods because organic farming can be self-sufficient and generate income (cf. R-2, R-6, R-14, R-20, R-25, R-28, R-29, R-30). Some urban gardeners can save money from their gardens, or even earn money from it in case of surplus. Respondents reason beyond that growers can indirectly save money for medical expenses from growing organic produce. R-43 has less relied on the market ever since (cf. G-2, R-11, R-17, R-43). (Cf. Table 5)

Environmentally friendly behaviour is probably a side effect of organic farming rather than a main purpose; care for environment is one aspect of motivations, and definitely ranks behind health. Even though uttered in the context of motivation, most qualify by saying it is not yet significant, it is second priority. However, the topic rises in many conversations with respondents who are conscious about green living (cf. R-21). Environment might affect rural farmers more instantly than urbanites as they are exposed to the ecological damage happening in the countryside (cf. R-23) and they often have a responsibility as “caretaker” of the land (cf. R-25). Besides, also urban gardeners

and green consumers think about how to balance their urban environment. R-8 states that those identifying with the “philosophy of living” embrace health and environmentalism in their thinking; they also seek to experience nature (cf. R-8). In relation to the general public though it is unclear if a focus is on environment at all (cf. R-4). Those farmers who borrow from Buddhist principles about human and nature interaction are strongly environmentally motivated – which applies to the Asoke community (cf. R-14). R-33, a restaurant manager and chef, realises an environmentally and culturally sustainable theme, sourcing preferably the local organic market and using seasonal indigenous ingredients. R-29 with NGO work and own farm finds a way to link the improvement of farmers livelihoods, consumer education, health and environmental aspects with organic farming. Strengthening social communities and networks is another aspect that people in the organic scene aspire (cf. R-26). (Cf. Table 5)

Community thinking may be achieved through organic food networks, concretely supporting the organic producers, producer-consumer links or links between urban and rural people, farm visits, sharing of information for example of health risks in food to the network (cf. G-1, R-1, R-5, R-9, R-17, R-22, G-2). In today's modern social fabric, it makes sense to resettle communities and at the time connect rural communities with the urban ones (cf. R-9). Growing or consuming organic contains lifestyle dimensions that are indeed motivation to many, and community life might be one form of their expression. Lifestyle can actually include all factors health, environment, community and livelihood. Respondents argue with a back-to-the-land or back-to-nature movement within the organic movement: Urbanites, feeling disconnected from nature, like to move to the countryside where they can reconnect (cf. R-25). One reason is, “the officer, they work only in the building, they have a office syndrome. Like they have to relax to another place” (R-1, p.22). R-17 confirms that urban farming enables urbanites to develop themselves a certain lifestyle. (Cf. Table 5)

A city farmer's narrative reveals:

*“when I come back to my home [...] Bangkok, I want to work in this field about [...] sustainable agriculture, [...] I decided to grow my vegetables because if I cannot work in organic agriculture organisation [...] I want to do something that closely to organic farming” (R-1, p.6).*

It is possible to see farming as a new lifestyle choice (cf. R-34). Organic movement means moving towards sustainable ways of living too, so it contains notions of simple living and going back to basics (cf. R-7, R-8, R-9, R-23, R-28). People also seek for spirituality which they find in alternative lifestyles that come along for example with yoga, meditation, vegetarian diet, organic food (R-5). Healthy eating is becoming trendy and fits with this kind of lifestyle (cf. R-33, R-35).

(Cf. Table 5)

It can be concluded that even though very individual, it is also multi-faceted when looking at the details, the motivations can be condensed into a few major motives with health being the prevalent one. Generally, motives firstly refer to a self-level, thus applying to the individuals themselves; in a second instance, they refer to others.

#### 4.3.5 The organic consumers

The consumer is a major entity of the organic movement determining the dynamics of the organic food market. While the Bangkokian society is fairly consumption driven, the organic consumer tends to follow other objectives than mere consumption. The organic consumer profile still is diversified. As shown in Table 6 (St.12), Bangkok's green consumers covered by this study shop at green shops, on organic markets, in supermarkets and attend organic and other fairs, seminars and events. Expert interviews normally included a question on the appraisal of consumer profiles and consumer awareness for organic matters, health along with environment; consumer interviews added with the consumers' personal understandings.

The typical consumer as outlined by respondents is a city person and cares about health and gradually more about environment (R-2, R-3, R-29). Consumers are family households, often with children and elderly members, pregnant women who look for safe food as they are realising the contamination of regular foods (R-7, R-8, R-10, R-24, R-29). A majority is middle class, has decent education, is willing to pay more for food; many NGO employees and younger generations are green consumers (cf. R-9, R-18, R-31) (cf. Table 7). Customers “from all walks of life” come to R-33's sustainable restaurant, and visitors at an urban garden demonstration site are families with children at pre-school age from all over Bangkok, also tourists (cf. R-33, R-38, Table 10). We notice that foreigners have certain interest in organic food markets, mostly those who settle in Bangkok over a longer period, for example Western and Japanese expats. They are represented more at certain markets. Wealthy people and foreigners come to a farmers' market on Sukhumvit Road which is the area where many of them live (R-26, Table 7). One early prototype farmers' market in 2013 in the same area had foremost Western clientele and a few Thai who certainly are exposed already to Western culture. (Cf. O-02/03/2013 field notes observations, data CD)

R-29's first CSA consumers' group was arranged by Japanese housewives in Bangkok (R-29); R-12 points out that the first subscribers for the CSA scheme in Chiang Mai were expats. R-34 has the comparison with green markets that the School for Wellbeing organises and that is frequented mostly by Thai consumers. R-33 states 40-50% Thai, otherwise expats and tourists

coming to his sustainable restaurant, R-35 customers of mixed nationality, Thai, expats and a share of the Indian community in Bangkok in her health shop. R-13 adds that consumers are motivated by the prospect of finding social exchange in the organic community. (Cf. Table 7)

Regarding consumers' awareness, several respondents notice a lack of knowledge but related to it a general lack of or misleading information. In point of fact, it was observed in one supermarket three kinds of alleged quality labelling, 'hygienic', 'hydroponic' and 'organic', displayed on respective shelves. It could further be observed that customers did not distinguish much between the three grades, except for a few that aimed at the organic shelf with determination (cf. C-15-25; field notes interview situation). It might happen that consumers buy organic products without being fully aware of organic agriculture, misinterpreting it, simply ignoring it or because they heard positive things about it. Associations made by consumers themselves are diverging: organic is fresh, naturally grown, little processed, no preservatives, chemical free or reduced, safer, toxin free, healthy and clean. Organic should mean natural because human comes from nature, is one reasoning (C-15, Table 8), and, the original intention of organic food products is to return to how people used to grow food years ago before chemicals were introduced (C-4, Table 8). The most frequent answer was chemical free or toxin free. This might be due to the fact that organic produce in Thai language is often declared as *mai san kemi* (no chemicals) or *mai san pit* (no toxins). Curiously, one consumer understands organic as hydroponic thus grown without any soil (C-13, Table 8) which goes in line with G-2's (cf. Table 7) first understanding.

This points towards trends relating to rising concern about nutrition and health on a personal level, and to a certain extent about the social and environmental background on the farmers' level, but on the whole still a lack of knowledge (cf. R-3, R-4, R-18). Indeed, there is confusion and this also results from a confusing number of different labels introduced by the government supposed to ensure product quality but mistaken for organic products by the less informed consumer (cf. R-18). Vegetables from hydroponic culture gives one example. There is especially confusion about the terminologies 'safe from chemicals' and 'organic', hence need for better consumer information even though consumer education has made progress recently (cf. R-3). R-1 and R-5 for example was that consumers commonly believe Royal Project products are all organically grown which they are not necessarily, probably just because of their royal provenance. (Cf. Table 7)

From their experience with certification, R-5 knows that Asian consumers tend to focus more on health than on environment, but finds the health focus justified considering the alarming quality at the regular market (cf. Table 7). Respondents mention growing awareness (cf. R-18, R-21, Table 7) among people but also awareness that is not going deep enough: It is mostly about people's personal health but rarely envisages causes for illness, interrelations with environment and with the

farmers' situation in the rural areas, at least for the general consumer. R-38's experience is that people think little about farmers when they purchase organic food (cf. Table 7). R-12 worry about the “way that they don't care about long term and being the active consumer to really act of their own” (R-12, p.47), caring mainly about their own health. Their work experience with consumers makes them feel hopeless many times: While France apparently built up 3000 CSA schemes, and China 400, Thailand reached only five during ten years of promotion.

R-17 (Table 7) sights some consumers who are familiar with the rural situation and wish to support farmers with their purchase, and more and more familiarity with food quality issues for health but on the whole lack knowledge on food and nutrition. Consumer awareness is related to personal priorities which are for many a cheap price of products (cf. R-4, Table 10). Interestingly, people are in many cases willing to pay a premium price for organic seasonal fruits but not for year-round vegetables consumed on daily bases (cf. R-20, *ibid.*). Consumers seem more aware of organic farming in the North (R-21, Table 7) and our observations of the green consumer community in Chiang Mai confirm this impression: A total of at least four organic produce farmers' and green markets all over the city are very frequented. The Chiang Mai organic scene seems blooming compared to Bangkok, in terms of organic cafés and restaurants, often vegetarian friendly. Green consumers organise themselves very well, are active consumers and internalise environmentally friendly behaviour earlier. A discussion with an academic and activist couple from Chiang Mai reveals that the local organic movements are growing steadily thanks to people who identify with it. Acting rather individually on a self-level, they still share common mindsets and attitudes towards nature, environmental preservation, sustainability, with the most important factor being love and brotherhood (cf. O-30/05/2015 field notes observations, data CD).

There is the popular perception that organic products are inherently expensive or luxurious, thus unaffordable for many (cf. R-1, R-7, G-2, R-37). As a consequence, consumer power is rather low in Bangkok where income disparities are high and great parts of the population are poor:

*“[T]he people who just work day by day or work for to give a living day by day, it's a lot. They don't interested where [...] the food come from” (R-39: #01:17:02-3#).*

Farmers' markets where producers come to sell directly provide a more affordable market for organic products. Consumers,

*“when they try to buy the organic product especially in the supermarket, they think [...] it's very high prize. [...] That's why we want to promote closer [...] relationship with the consumer by*

*the farmers' markets [...] to make it cheaper, too” (R-1 p.36).*

R-19 (cf. Table 7) estimates consumers generally powerful for their purchasing power and attitude changes yet still lacking knowledge. More information needs to address the general consumer. Availability of organic foods in supermarkets, fairs and events can show people options and make them more conscious (cf. R-22). It may have already happened that the conscious consumer is better informed than the organic vendor himself; the consumer therefore has an active role in designing the organic movement and sustainable living movement (cf. R-9). The active consumer is an aspect that also other respondents find pertinent: Consumers should be more responsible for their own food provision, for example by participating in farm visits and consumer-producer schemes like PGS; consumers often know very little about provenance and production of their food compared to the organic small-scale farmers (cf. R-12, R-20). Also the development of organic policies needs active support: “We cannot achieve our policy development unless we have strong support from consumer and [farmers]” (R-28: #01:31:05-2#). The capacity of being an active consumer depends on accessible information; consumer networks and friendships can enable better information, consequently better health (cf. R-8). A problem lies in the reality that “most consumer get the information from the mass media”, and “mass media [is] controlled by the government, by the big company” (R-32: #01:07:06-9#). So far, few consumers question this source and search for independent information. This leads to the majority of consumers having little awareness for organic products, thus blindly trusting any label praised by the advertisement, finally compromising by buying just GAP products or hydroponics that uses chemical inputs, thinking they were organic quality (cf. R-32: #01:03:54-5# - #01:05:07-0#). On the other side, farmers are generally harder to convince on the merits of organic farming, so that there is more demand than supply at present. As a consequence, consumers are offered little genuine organic produce which poses a barrier to their potential to induce change (cf. R-32: #00:30:48-7#). (Cf. Table 7)

The current situation is that many people are sick and seek for organic produce, but the organic market is first hard to access, second has not much variety (cf. R-31, R-20, R-13, R-2). A problem of the market moreover is the abuse of certificates in the past: people know that supermarkets have recurrently faked labels; proper marketing hence is the main aspect to gain new consumers (cf. R-7, R-6). (Cf. Table 7)

Awareness for healthy living has just started and depends on people's educational background (cf. R-11, Table 7). A consumer group shows responsible health behaviour since the beginning of consumer education:

*“[It] mainly start from the people who concern their health. [...] before this consumer*

*foundation start, they have also a project. And that project is that they are checking all this food, there are pesticide, there are herbicide, there are many kind of chemical in the food. And [...] from the beginning [...], they try to attack the government that 'you have to come to check all this, or that'“ (R-27: #00:33:34-7#).*

### Consumer declarations

A total of 25 consumers have been brief-interviewed at five different locations, including two farmers' market, the Santi Asoke health shop and two supermarkets. Most of them declared to be regular buyers (cf. C-3, C-4, C-6, C-7, C-8, C-16, C-20, C-22, C-24, C-25, Table 8), purchasing organic food often, several times per week, where ever there is opportunity, or around 30% of their total purchase. About six persons always buy organic products, or almost every day (cf. C-10, C-15, C-17, C-18, C-21, C-24). Six other persons buy occasionally or usually buy but impose restrictions (cf. C-1, C-5, C-11, C-13, C-19, C-23): C-5 if given the chance, but generally is not in charge of the grocery shopping, C-11 depending on the kind of product with more importance to vegetables than cosmetics, C-19 just started, C-23 once a week. Some consumers rarely buy organic products (cf. C-7, C-9, C-14). Following attributes are brought up regarding purchase motivations: just trying (C-1), better taste (C-1, C-6, C-16), better feeling (C-1, C-18), better for health (C-2, C-3, C-5, C-7, C-8, C-9, C-11, C-16, C-21), environmentally friendly and sustainable (C-3, C-8), natural (C-4, C-22), fresh and clean (C-6, C-10, C-12, C-16, C-21), safe or worried of chemicals (C-13, C-14, C-17, C-19, C-21, C-23, C-24). Just as in the expert interviews, a predominant health focus is found, with consumers either directly speaking out organic produce as better for health or indirectly being concerned about chemical or toxic residues in their food. Only two consumers instantly state environmental motivations. Some others prefer freshness and taste of organic vegetables or simply feel better with it. (Cf. Table 8)

Consumers were furthermore asked for their appraisal on organic food accessibility and on organic movements in Bangkok: The majority of consumers find organic food accessible while six persons find difficulties. Access probably depends on the desired amount of organic supply, and the location in Bangkok (cf. C-3, C-11). Accessibility is not difficult once purchase opportunities are located. C-12 has no opinion on whether access is easy or difficult though finds it easier compared to before. (Cf. Table 8)

The appraisal of organic movements in Bangkok varies among the consumers; the understanding of a movement can be close to a trend, or a conclusion on how present the topic is in people's consciousness (cf. C-1). Consumers also feel differently involved in the organic movement. Some consumers have no intention to follow a movement or do not feel a member of it for organic

food simply is their personal choice (cf. C-2, C-8, C-16, C-17, C-18, C-19, C-22). Curiously, four out of five customers of the Santi Asoke health shop share this opinion. A number of people feel that it is becoming stronger now: It is becoming a big trend now and might become a movement (cf. C-3, C-13), it exists for example in consumer awareness in the media and similar campaigns (cf. C-6, C-17, C-20, C-25), it exists, there is more of it now and people talk about it (cf. C-9, C-10, C-12). Others feel there is a movement which is still not distinct (cf. C-14, C-22): It is not yet successful because the public is not very aware (cf. C-5), only some groups of people support it (cf. C-11), there is not much yet but will be stronger in the future for the general public is better informed (cf. C-15). Two supermarket customers curiously remark both, they have not heard much about an organic movement; yet feel participating in one by their mere organic purchase (cf. C-23, C-24). Besides, C-4 makes allusion to recent implausible government involvement inhibiting the movement. (Cf. Table 8)

#### Attitudes towards certification

At present, third-party certification by international bodies is not needed nor desired for the domestic market in the eyes of some experts. At the beginnings of organic farming in Thailand, before consumers acquired a more global understanding, the IFOAM certificate was necessary, posing a bottle neck situation for the promotion (cf. R-10: #00:49:54-2#). People who search specifically for certified organic products are identified as foreigners, academics, health conscious people, often with family or elderly household members (cf. R-4, Table 7).

Generally, consumers' perceptions about certification labels, groups, brands differ much (cf. R-2), probably depending on which kind of consumer, which intentions, which terms of familiarity with the organic matter and on the market. Self-claim organic products would sell on local markets but can happen to be fake, too (cf. id.). The confusing number of labels meant to ensure quality levels is detrimental to consumers overall view on certification. Generally, organic quality labels are preferred to the governmental 'chemical free' one (cf. R-4). The 'Organic Thailand' label has fallen into disrepute in the eyes of many (cf. R-5, R-6), who start to orientate themselves by other reliable sources. These can be certain shops, alternative brands or local standards. The green market in Chiang Mai for instance fully relies on self-claim lines; a northern local standard guarantees organic quality on local and domestic markets (cf. R-6). Organic growing community Santi Asoke works without any certification but their line is known to their customers as organic brand (cf. R-31). R-37, ex-official at Ministry of Agriculture, now promoter of a regional participatory standard, has concrete objections against the organic standard as introduced by the international certification bodies, saying that Thai consumers preferred local standards while the organic certification was

demanding uniquely by foreigners, hence Thai taxes should not be spent on it (cf. R-37). Also R-39 has slight doubts about the suitability of the international standards accorded ACT certification for Thailand where the reality is the impact on poor farmers' livelihoods. In contrast, an interview with Royal Project Foundation displayed their consumers' preference of the ACT to the governmental certificate used at first (cf. R-20). These conditions demonstrate that perceptions of certification are strongly market-dependent. (Cf. Table 7)

The principle behind certification should be to reassure consumers. Yet, consumers might not be fully familiar with labels, and other means can be just as trust-building. Bringing consumers closer to the organic growers might be more effectual (cf. R-5, p.2). The alert consumer knows about low quality food, often imported from China, on the regular market but faces difficulties to find organic food. CSA based links where consumers have insight into their producers' routine are seen as an alternative with mutual benefit: Consumers need access to organic food and producers access to the market. Knowing the origin of the food chain can have the advantage of better trust, as self-claim organic is not fully trustworthy when not knowing the producer (cf. R-4). Other respondents also have good experience with the self-claim marketing structure under the condition that the production process is transparent and the farmer known (cf. R-5, R-9, R-17, R-22, R-27, R-32, R-39). A manager of one of the commercial Thai organic farms even sees a primary goal in direct sales, as consumers might not trust organic labels 100% (cf. R-9). A green shop social entrepreneur had introduced his own labelling system before finding out that there was no more need as customers trusted the owner and the farmers that supply the products already (cf. R-22). R-27 objects here that community size matters: the mega-urban context where people are not familiar with each other might need certification as a proof; smaller communities can go without for there is potentially mutual trust. A CSA could potentially feature such community. However, the respondent is afraid some consumers might not trust it (cf. R-22). (Cf. Table 7)

In the study, the consumers themselves have different attitudes. 23 consumers gave their statements, and 12 of them showed a positive attitude towards certification: It does matter or can give a guarantee, gives important details about the production of a product, is more expensive but reassuring (cf. C-8, C-7, C-11, C-13, C-14, C-15, C-19, C-21, C-25, Table 8). Some persons seem to understand certification not in the sense of one of the official organic labels by the government, ACT or an international body. C-15 estimates certification very important quoting the Santi Asoke production line which has no external certification was the best guarantee. Five persons find certification rather positive though are sceptical: C-4 is sceptical when a product does not have any, but is generally sceptical, C-10 finds it better than nothing but the controls for the Organic Thailand label unreliable, C-16 finds certification very important but trusts no labels, instead searches

information on it before buying, similarly C-18 who trusts in the Royal Project and another popular health shop, C-24 thinks it helps but does not proof for 100% as it is not issued by any institute. Certification is not a matter for C-6, C-7, C-9, C-12, C-20 and C-22, some adding that it was important to rely on the vendor's attitude, on price and quality, or expiry date. Statements apart are that the Thai organic label was not good enough but self-claim organic was another option; and an organic certification has never been noticed, only a “safe and healthy” label (cf. C-5, C-23). (Cf. Table 8)

Some insights from our field note observations may be added here: Consumers seem to have differing levels of consciousness, the Santi Asoke consumers being more conscious than others. Some declare every product to be of organic quality, even soaps and shampoos; one customer mentions Santi Asoke's trustworthiness because they make good products to provide health instead of for money causes. (Cf. field notes interview situation C-15-25, data CD)



Image 14: Stakeholders in the organic scenes I – urban gardeners in a low-income community, a health shop and social enterprise, an organic farming pioneer with experimental rice field (from own source)



Image 15: Stakeholders in the organic scenes II – consumers and vendors at farmers' markets, urbanites at a farm visit in Chaiyaphum province (from own source)



Image 16: Stakeholder motivations I – food safety and awareness, healthy living, self-reliance (from own source)



Image 17: Stakeholder motivations II – building up environmental awareness and solidarity with farmers' rights (from own source)



Image 18: Stakeholder motivations III – creative use of urban spare spaces (from own source)

#### 4.4 Structural settings of the organic movements

Every entity is subjected to external and internal influences; so is it the intentions of individual stakeholders together with external structures that bring social movements into being. Historical, political, socio-cultural events compose external factors.

To recall this study's third research question, it examines how structural settings frame the organic movements in Bangkok. Pre-analysis results revealed that an array of structural arrangements influence the latter. They may be the overall farmer's situation in rural Thailand, policies – favourable or unfavourable to the advance of sustainable farming – the urban environment and living situation, health and environment, the dominant food systems, the interests of private large-scale companies, political events, availability and accessibility of consumer information. Details on the influence of structural settings can be partly extracted from respondents' reasoning about roots of the organic movements, and field notes.

On the whole, Bangkok's organic movements are less framed by political than by social, socio-political and environmental factors. However, some tangible political events, notably the economic crisis in 1997, gave impulse: “Deeply shocked by the economic crisis triggered by the foreign-investment-led growth of the non-agricultural sector during the mid-1990s, many developing countries, including Thailand, have been reemphasizing agricultural development” (KASEM & THAPA 2012: 99). The crisis prevailed upon a growing number of farmers to rethink in terms of self-sufficiency and also marked the emergence of a green movement in Bangkok (cf. R-16, R-1, Table 9); and indirectly the agricultural policies that had prepared industrial farming. Social factors are financial and health risks troubling farmers' livelihoods in the rural sphere, and to some extent poverty in urban communities. Environmental factors refer to depleted rural and urban ecological systems that the organic movement tries to embark upon.

In global terms, organic movements in Thailand span a structural turn in the global organisation: unfeasibility for farmers to continue industrial farming, aspirations towards community based living, awareness about materialism, stepping back towards ways of living closer to nature (cf. R-25, p.2).

##### 4.4.1 Farmer's and the rural situation

*“[W]e in Thailand, we [are] different from many countries because [...] we start from the farmers' side, not start from the consumers' side” (R-1, p.34).*

Organic movements in Thailand strongly relate to rural realities, starting from farmers' disadvantages and degraded ecological environments. In fact, in about the 1980s, farmers started to recall ancient local concepts of integrated farming to help themselves out of the first symptoms of agricultural crisis as repercussions of the industrial farming period (cf. R-1, p. 34).

In the background, Thailand received the World Bank's assistance during the 1960s to strengthen their National Economic Plan through conventional mono-crop agriculture. Yields increased at first thanks to the application of chemical fertilizers and pesticides on the fields. Two or three decades later, the chemical inputs ceased giving high yields and beyond, mono-cropping did not spare any produce for the farmers' own consumption, so some farmers, mostly in remote rural areas took up their own, integrated cultivations again (cf. R-1, p. 34). Indeed, from about the 1970s on, farmers started to shift to new plant varieties, animals and the use of fertilizers and to target on sale in accordance to new agricultural development models, as well as taking first loans for their investment. A just established train line connecting Bangkok with Chiang Mai facilitated the spread of agrochemicals to the North (cf. R-6, p. 2/3). Today's conventional agriculture is not efficient any more and will soon collapse if the current system continues to exist (cf. R-39, R-18 Table 9).

*“You know, the cost of chemical fertilizer increase 100% during the past ten years. [...] Whereas the price of rice only a few percentage. This [...] is the reason why we face the problem of high cost of investment, with less price [...] for the commodity“ (R-39: #00:50:24-9#).*

The narrative of an NGO activist conveys consequences for rural farmers from the Green Revolution, leading into agricultural crisis:

*“They have a lot of debts. They are very poor health and they are no hope in the future. Is very crisis. And we found that because the new technology, the Green Revolution, that they use about more than 20 year, bring them to this situation. Because they don't [...] get any benefit from the Green Revolution. Even the high yield, they can grow two or three times per year, but [...] the input is a lot. They must buy everything. And the [...] rice that they can produce very cheap because it's plenty, it's no quality. Even the farmer themselves don't, don't eat their own rice” (R-32, #00:09:06-9#).*

Farmers are therefore lacking appropriate technologies to handle their situation.<sup>25</sup> Four major problems of modern agriculture are that the technologies used are costly, are too complicated,

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<sup>25</sup> R-32 refers here to appropriate technologies for rural farmers described by E.F Schumacher in *Small is beautiful*

allowing the farmer only to buy inputs, are too large for Thai small-scale farmers, and have detrimental impact on the environment with chemicals destroying locations (cf. R-32: #00:13:12-9#). R-32 predicts a soon coming crisis to hit Thai farmers massively and to impact agricultural systems, as he sees chemical farmers successively going bankrupt. By the launching of the Asean Economic Community, Thai rice farmers will not be able to compete any longer with its neighbouring countries Vietnam, Cambodia or Myanmar whose production costs are lower at around 4000 Baht per ton (cf. R-32: #00:36:16-5# - #00:37:26-8#, in 2014).

Experts statements expand on the rural realities (cf. Table 9): When conventional agriculture was introduced in Thailand, mixed farming turned into monoculture (cf. R-1) whereas rural small-scale farming entities with subsistence cultivation and surplus sale, completing their diets with edible field and forest leaves, used to be the typical patterns, and part of the farmer's lifestyle (cf. R-5, R-20). As described in previous chapters, conditions for cultivation are inherently suitable in Thailand, year-round growing is possible (cf. R-8, R-13, R-18, R-31). R-16, aged nearly 80, remembers how land used to be fertile during childhood compared to the desperate sight these days. Global food shortage redistributing food production was one factor for the Green Revolution to come into being (cf. R-8) during which once fertile land was given up in favour to industrial agriculture (cf. R-18). Instead of one regular rice harvest per year, chemical farming allows up to three per year but negatively impacts soils, water drainage and long-term productivity in environmental terms, farmers' physical health and livelihoods in social terms. Intensive monocropping led notably to soil damages: Soils are widely destroyed by chemicals and deep ploughing (cf. R-14), soils solidified thus are deprived of any living organisms (cf. R-15), vast areas face deforestation (cf. R-16) with the prominent examples of *Naan* or *Phrae* provinces. Today's situation is that farmers experience the effects of gradual deterioration of their farmland and water resources, overall environmental degradation and their indebtedness (cf. C-25; Kasem & Thapa 2012: 102). Parallel to organic farming policies, the government continues to support agrochemical business (cf. R-29). More and more studies report the ever increasing use of chemical inputs in conventional agriculture (cf. R-43). After the Green Revolution, some educated people reconsider the natural way of farming as the right way (cf. R-13), but while many farmers want to react to the impact of industrial farming, they face difficulties to initiate the shift. It is a reality that most Thai farmers are poor and the agrarian change from natural to industrial farming brought along social problems (cf. R-31), rendering livelihoods vulnerable for social and ecological risk (cf. R-23). (Cf. Table 9)

Few farmers are landowners (cf. R-2, R-4, Table 9), hence have the twofold load of paying rent and farm inputs including labour. A common farmer's reality currently is indebtedness. Apart from their delicate financial situations, sustained exposure to chemical substances had negative

impact on farmers' health (cf. Kasem & Thapa 2012: 102 / 103).

Events like the rice crisis 2014 (cf. chapter 4.4.4) that made rice farmers country-wide loose enormous revenues, exposed their vulnerability; with regular expenses of the current extent, farmers are not capable to sustain their livelihoods (cf. R-19, Table 9). R-39's experience is, monoculture farmers are going bankrupt while those practising integrated farming are well-off and self-sufficient.

Just around 20% of Thai farmers own the land they cultivate, thus about 80% rent it out but do not farm their land by themselves. There is risk that corporations will come to rent this land for purposes else than farming in the future, with the opening for the ASEAN community (cf. R-6, p. 38).

Pest outbreaks and climate related events with unforeseeable outcome such as extreme floods or draughts mark recent environmental risks (cf. R-39) and potentially pose problem of future climate changes. Yields are already predicted to drastically decrease (cf. R-18). In fact, plants become addicted to chemical inputs which results in continuous dependency on external inputs on the one hand, a barrier for the implementation of non-chemical methods on the other hand (cf. R-21). Seeds currently are a risk factor in a way that CP company controls their usage, quality and variety used overall on farms throughout the country. Seeds, nearly 100% imported hybrids (cf. R-10), are introduced from abroad, mostly China, and promoted to farmers who are hardly able to save their own varieties (cf. R-6). Seed saving activists know that there are not any organic seeds in Thailand thus far which probably translates into hardly any organic farmer in Thailand is using organic seeds at present (cf. R-21). Commercial organic farm director R-9 confirms that not enough organic seeds are available on the market. Local rice breeds are resistant qualities although low yielding (cf. R-32: #00:15:20-1#). (Cf. Table 9)

Socially, some farmers already experience feelings of being lower class against urban populations (cf. R-12). On top of that, they frequently find themselves victimised by fertilizer companies cheating with “placebo” fertilizer (cf. R-8). NGO activists know, chemical farming and adverse rice policies inflict injustice onto farmers (cf. R-28). Illiteracy can be an issue in remote areas or among elderly farmers (cf. R-24) which make many vulnerable in administrative affairs, and could invite companies to take advantage of it. (Cf. Table 9)

Beyond, Green Revolution technologies spoilt farmers (cf. R-18, Table 9) in such way that any compromise to distance from these technologies causes them discomfort; a further problem is actually posed by the farmers' themselves: Many farmers wish to stop chemical farming and seek external advice. NGOs can help with advice and technology but farmers need to adjust their attitudes first to internalise sustainable farming approaches, as they require commitment and altered

ways of living (cf. R-32: #00:24:04-7#). R-32 therefore feels impotent as few farmers are unwilling to try organic farming although he knows some famous success stories like the one of a rice farmer in *Supanburi* province who became a government awarded millionaire farmer from growing organic rice, having big yields while low expense (cf. R-32: #00:19:49-7#).

*“It's [...] more easy to change our religion than stop using chemical” (R-32: #00:25:10-2#).*

Herein lies an attitude problem with this apathy: Thailand is

*“crazy about chemical, crazy about the hydroponics, whatsoever. Because it's [...] the way of education in Thailand. We just follow American. So, we just throw our own ancient way to do agriculture [...]. They have [...] taught to our farmer to be greedy farmers” (R-18: #00:07:11-0# - #00:09:48-4#).*

R-22 resonates, blaming both, farmers and government for being ignorant enough to trust global agricultural corporations like Monsanto.

Chemical residues obviously threaten consumers and producers alike. The farmers in our case studies (cf. chapter 4.2.2) reason their shift to organic farming by health reasons for they want to avoid the exposure to chemical substances troubling their physical health (cf. R-20, Table 9). Thailand is facing a health crisis (cf. R-21: #00:48:26-8#, chapter 5.2.2)

The organic movements begin with the rural crisis, and basically from the need of the people (cf. R-19). The impact from the chemical abuse during the Green Revolution about three decades ago is instantly linked to the emergence of counter-movements (cf. R-22) as for many, organic farming is the only possible exit from social and ecological risks (cf. R-39, R-8). For instance can farmers' health problems from modern agriculture awaken interest in organic farming as an alternative (cf. R-29). (Cf. Table 9)

Thailand nowadays has many organic producers measured against its size, compared to other countries but weakly organised among each other. Contract farming is posing unfair trade conditions between farmers and companies, a reason why some farmers consider the change to organic farming. Governmental promotion programmes offer additional incentive; if there is government supports, farmers are more likely to follow. However, due to weak community organisation, farmers need external support through NGOs, government or private stakeholders (cf. R-10, #00:28:48-6# - #00:33:52-2#). Despite their disadvantages, participants state that farmers have difficulties to change their situations. R-32 explains:

*“Still have like a hardware in the computer. Yeah OK, it's normal, it's common. But the software that control, it put by the chemical fertilizer company. By the government, application, all chemical. So, the software said is chemical, only chemical. So they cannot stop chemical. Because they put this information all day by commercial advertising. Everywhere. So when they see everybody use the chemical, information come, they cannot stop. Only one way, we we try but not success” (R-32: #00:26:06-8#).*

#### 4.4.2 The NGO scene

Pre-analysis discovered impulse for the organic movements from a variety of stakeholders, rooting predominantly in civil society action, of which the contribution of NGOs is marked (cf. R-4, Table 3). “The promotion of organic agriculture was initiated by NGOs, academe and farmers' leaders during the early 1990s” (KASEM & THAPA 2012: 106). Section 4.3 illustrated the set of stakeholders who engage in the organic movements, and derived a brief provenance line; Table 6 lists a number of NGOs with main activities. In the same measure as the manifestation of organic farming methods basically traces back to the rural crisis, NGO's contribution is in ushering in the emergence of organic movements by institutionalising them. “Government, individuals, NGOs and then [...] business sectors” (R-22: #00:13:19-8#) are stakeholders that the movement features.

The organic movement partly originates in NGO activities. R-6's group in the North was already promoting integrated farming to improve farmer livelihoods, yet still using chemical pesticides. Impulse towards organic farming methods then came from a conference in 1989 at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University where some of the early NGOs met, and a committee for alternative agriculture was set up with representatives from all Thai regions, including Bangkok, gearing towards organic farming. In the following, also foreign partners came to promote it, and concurrently the Asoke community. (Cf. R-6, p. 45)

Most NGOs encountered during the study work fairly close to grass-roots level, that is in interaction with farmers or consumers, on slightly different issues respectively (cf. R-28: #00:05:26-6#): the Alternative Agriculture Network and two others develop alternative farming models, locally adapted technologies and rice breeds with farmers, further NGOs work on accessing markets hence are at the interface between consumers and producers, and others again focus on consumer rights and health promotion (cf. Table 6). St. 34 began activity with appropriate technologies in response to the miserable farmers' livelihoods (cf. R-32, Table 5), another NGO in the 1990s to work with farmers and to link them with urban consumers, setting up first cooperative schemes in Bangkok

(cf. R-1 / R-27, Table 7). The first CSA in Bangkok started from St.54's group in West Thailand (cf. R-12, Table 7). R-16's early foundation was one of the first stakeholders in rural villages on women's empowerment, sustainable rice cultivation and reforestation programmes, the latter at that time even supported by the government (cf. R-16, Table 9).

R-38's NGO represents landless rural farmers at an urban garden site in Bangkok where they share information on land issues of rural people. Their objective is to design and pass four laws for improvement through the government, therefore to advise on legal and administrative concerns. Another principle is help with the management of abandoned land that remains temporarily unexploited by the owner (cf. R-38: #00:01:36-4# - #00:04:54-9#). Private organic certification foundation ACT, starting in 1995 as one movement with Alternative Agriculture Network, focusses on international markets but still hopes to “help the small farmers or NGOs to push the communities, the rural development [...] how to reduce the fertilizers or chemicals [...] in agriculture” (R-4, p. 18).

The Thai NGO scene is otherwise rather small and stakeholders know each other (cf. R-32: #00:58:39-8#); but some are quite active, for example some organic groups in the North around Alternative Agriculture Network (cf. R-39: #01:06:48-2#). Actually, NGOs are also umbrella organisations for a variety of networks representing the civil society. St. 39 (Table 6) for example organises 14 different networks, among others for resource management, for urban poor households, elderly or youth (cf. R-17: #00:10:23-3#).

Notable participation in awareness raising and consumer education comes from NGOs (cf. R-10: #01:58:19-9#). Since 1990, a regular fair for alternative markets and discussion forum is taking place in Bangkok (cf. R-28, Table 7).

International intervention has partly played a role in starting organic movements, too: The organic rice projects in north eastern province Surin were enabled by foreign NGOs providing likewise export opportunities to Europe (cf. R-28: #00:23:59-6#). Lacking support from civil society or institutions despite positive agendas can be troubling NGOs (cf. R-39: #01:12:40-5#).

In Chiang Mai region, the first green market came into being through the dialogue between a number of northern NGOs and the local farmers. To spare small-scale farmers from the advance of agricultural business coming to promote mono-crop farming in the area, local NGOs sought to empower them by community-like village organisations and direct networks with people in the regional urban centres (cf. R-5, p. 5, R-6, p.6).

Other experts prefer the self-organisation of farmers to NGO intervention.

*“[T]he NGO and many government try to come to the village and support people to start,*

*set up the coop, set up the organic farmer group, and then after they left, everything is collapsed” (R-21: #00:34:01-6#).*

NGOs tend to criticise governmental institutions intervening on farmers' behalf, yet there are positive examples in Thailand: Market access is an important factor for small-scale farmers, and they prefer to access it directly. State-controlled cooperatives enabled many small-scale farmers to have direct access to markets, farm appliances and loans and this way positively the persistence of small-scale farming structures in the region (cf. R-5, p. 34).

However, another view is that the NGOs often inhibit other stakeholders in the organic scene when suspecting conflicting interests. R-10 regrets that the respondent's network (St.19, Table 6), funding young NGOs but also organic business start-ups, is occasionally confronted with suspicion from the NGO side for being involved with the business sector (cf. R-10: #01:46:24-9#). And further criticises the missing cooperation among the single NGOs, a typical trait of the scene (cf. id.: #00:53:01-4#). R-9, director of a commercial organic farm, has similar complaints: NGOs often function by means of external support and are in risk of failure when funding breaks off. They are also prone to external crises, hence have troubles to be sustaining (cf. R-9: #01:11:08-4#).

#### 4.4.3 The mega-urban environment

Urban environments clearly structure the way people live, move, eat, repose, connect in the city. The mega-urban environment might thus have effect upon how urbanites engage in realising sustainable living in the city. Many of our respondents are Bangkokians and experience their surrounding manifold. There is tendency to perceive Bangkok as polluted, exhausting, unnatural or unhealthy. This image particularly prevails among people in the organic scene as they actively quest for lifestyles alternative to that. At the same time, Bangkok is a centre of information, where social exchange is taking place, new trends arrive and lifestyles patterns are modelled and configured. Nonetheless, the physical layout of the city can as well give rise to barriers to the realisation of sustainable living. Still with regards to the organic movements, the urban environment does probably both constrain and encourage it.

#### **“Expansion of green areas will improve city life.**

The green area per person ratio in Bangkok is only 3.3 square meters per person, very low compared to other metropolis in Asia, and two times lower than the standard by WHO. The lack of green spaces affects people both physically and mentally, resulting in health and pollution problems. Spaces for recreation and relaxation

are also lacking. Moreover, Bangkok has become a heat island. Currently, Thailand has put importance in creating green spaces in city areas, as can be seen from the addition of green areas development plans in both regional and country level development plans. Moreover, Bangkok initiated projects to increase green spaces according to the green metropolis policy, with the goal to have 7 percent of Bangkok as green areas in 2016” (National Economic and Social Development Board 2015: 4).

#### Box 7: Green areas in Bangkok

In terms of constraints, respondents (cf. Table 10) mention the city's proportions and long distances as inhibiting the networking among members. Instead of meeting in person, many fall back on conversations via phone and internet (cf. R-10). Traffic is bad most of the time in Bangkok, and green consumers feel discouraged to go to green markets and specialised shops to get their organic supplies (cf. R-12). Farmers, too rarely want to bother with the traffic to drive into town to sell at markets. A barrier might be the immensity of population for environmental measures and care are hard to implement for the whole city (cf. R-22). Urban planning has failed in Bangkok for the surface is completely covered by concrete, leaving hardly any garden lots or active canals (cf. R-23). Another factor is land price: In the centre, they are too high to spare space for parks or gardens (cf. G-2; R-1, p. 26). This makes that land is generally hard to access but even more for poor communities, and thus far there are not many assisting policies (cf. R-17). R-19 thinks against this that the city does not pose any obstacle for people to meet as many of the *Cityfarm* group gather every month. (Cf. Table 10)

Bangkok is very urbanised and one needs to go far out to find pure rural areas (cf. R-12); rapid encroachment into the suburbs made the local farmers leave their orchards in favour to new buildings under the pressure of growing population, among others migrant labour from the countryside, turning Thailand into an urban society (cf. R-34, R-17). Rural-to-urban migration also entails poor populations in Bangkok cut from their rural families (cf. R-16). (Cf. Table 10)

There is a problem of pollution in Bangkok, in terms of garbage, air, water, ground, and even food (cf. R-10, R-12, R-17). This could be a constraint to urban or peri-urban farming: Respondents acknowledge water access and quality, contamination of soils and city climate as limiting (cf. R-9), and the built-up area too dense (cf. R-17). (Cf. Table 10)

Increasingly cases of illnesses, cancer rates, allergies, exposure to chemicals and hormones in food are reported (R-7, R-11, R-10) and trust in the quality of market products is not obvious (cf. R-27). (Cf. Table 10)

Living in the megacity is pronounced as following: These days, people in Bangkok work “like a machine” (cf. R-11), are missing the real life behind their computers and experience time

shortage, stress and depression (cf. R-32). The city itself is capitalist and consumption driven, so people follow the principle of earning money to spend it again, which fails to hit the function of a healthy society (cf. R-30). Simple life is slightly impossible apart from the fact that nobody is trying either (cf. R-16). There is a tendency in the urban mentality that goes towards individualist attitude, missing human relations, resigned contact to neighbours, with exception of urban poor neighbourhoods that may demonstrate intact networks (cf. R-26, R-17, R-27, R-32). Having grown up in Bangkok, R-23 finds living there unhealthy and is tired of it. Finally, even though many people aspire different lifestyles, internalised daily routines complicate change (cf. R-19). Others see the mega-urban location as advantageous in some aspects: It is easier in Bangkok to access information compared to other areas, for example on health or organic matters, and municipalities could benefit from this by encouraging healthy living (cf. R-8). Urbanites use informational technologies and social networks, could therefore use them for organic farming or urban farming initiative (cf. R-9: #02:10:46-5#). (Cf. Table 10)

How can sustainable living be facilitated in Bangkok? Impact needs to come from municipal policies, for example by instructing citizens, particularly schools, in garbage management, biogas, composting projects (cf. R-27). Sustainable living may be to inspire urbanites to produce their own food, despite limited space (cf. R-38). There are options to spare space around the house for small plantations (cf. R-43). With reference to growing in the city, R-26's opinion is that sustainability is feasible in the city if farm size is not too big and produce is processed. It is generally hard to think environmentally when surrounded by tall buildings, and policies need to encourage people externally. However, each person may start by their personal attitudes (cf. R-33). (Cf. Table 10)

From a consumer's perspective, realising healthy living or green living in Bangkok is rather desperate for green space, natural and recreational environments are limited, the city is polluted and might conceal perilous situations, and corruptive politics inhibit sustainable living (cf. C-2, C-3, C-6, C-7, C-8, C-15) but individual people have options to support sustainable rural farmers instead (cf. C-2). It is all the more important to internalise preventive behaviour on personal level by taking care for oneself, exercising, cooking at home, eating healthy, buying organic food, staying informed or being a conscious consumer (cf. C-8, C-10, C-11, C-12, C-14, C-20). C-13 suggests to practice mutual help. In environmental terms, it is possible to grow a kitchen garden and to avoid to use plastic when shopping (cf. C-9, C-10). (Cf. Table 8)

In turn, we may twist the argument and say that these described, rather unfavourable living conditions drive people into the quest for alternative ways of living, including the organic movements. A city farmer explains, office employees persistently show "office syndrome", hence seek for relaxation which some find in urban gardening (cf. R-1). Where it is difficult to find calm

places in Bangkok, rooftop gardens and backyard plantations can provide relaxing ambiance and comfortable local climate (cf. R-11). (Cf. Table 10)

#### 4.4.4 Policies and the dominance of major companies

Thus far, no specific policies address urban farming and not many policies address organic or other sustainable farming methodology in Thailand, especially none taken into action. According to research literature, sustainable agriculture is on the agenda in Thailand since the 7<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) from 1992 to 1996, and organic agriculture appeared in the ensuing NESDP, including crop diversification and a preference of organic farm inputs (cf. KASEM & THAPA 2012: 99-106). Speculating economic and environmental benefits from organic farming, the government launched a five years lasting promotional scheme in 2005, of which one objective was to turn nearly 14 million hectares into organically farmed land.<sup>26</sup> As a consequence, government agencies along with NGOs implemented particularly organic farming projects in several regions in Thailand and provided certification service (cf. RATTANASUTEERAKUL & THAPA 2011: 202). As the authors notice, “the results of the efforts in promoting organic agriculture in Thailand had not been impressive at all” (RATTANASUTEERAKUL & THAPA 2011: 202).<sup>27</sup> One reason lies in the inconsistency of respective policies – continuous, extensive promotion and subsidisation of inorganic farm inputs do not resonate with organic policies (cf. KASEM & THAPA 2012: 110).

The current NESDP hints at envisioned measures that regard our research topic:

<b>11<sup>th</sup> NESDP 2012-2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation and protection of productive agricultural land</li> <li>• Support for small-scale farmers in landownership or the right to cultivate arable land</li> <li>• Expropriation of private land for land reforms</li> <li>• Utilisation of government-owned land for agriculture</li> <li>• Development of the natural resource base (land, water management)</li> <li>• Encouragement of sustainable farming lifestyles</li> <li>• Agricultural production adapted to local geographies and climate change including soils, irrigation, markets</li> <li>• Support of production ensuring basic biodiversity (including genetic engineering for</li> </ul>
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<sup>26</sup> The main approach to organic farming being here the substitution of synthetic farm inputs by organic fertilizers and pesticides.

<sup>27</sup> Among other reasons, large-scale organic vegetable production could not provide adequate financial incentives.

	<p>competitiveness)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard controls for chemical use; support of organic farm materials for cost reduction</li> <li>• Increase quality of agricultural products</li> <li>• Increase and standardise livestock production</li> <li>• Incentives for farmers to fulfil specific standards, e.g. organic practice</li> <li>• Provision of adequate incomes and social welfare for farmers through sustainable production</li> <li>• Promotion of farming to young farmers</li> <li>• Enhance self-reliance and sustainability of farmers</li> <li>• Food security by inclusion of forest trees on farm site, sustainable agriculture (organic farming, integrated farming, New Theory agriculture), knowledge sharing, community-based infrastructure</li> <li>• Promotion of direct relationships between consumers and producers to strengthen communities</li> <li>• On-site zero waste principles through re-utilisation of farm wastes</li> </ul>
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Figure 4: Excerpts from the 11th National Economic and Social Development Plan Thailand (after National Economic and Social Development Board 2012-2016)

As for the 11<sup>th</sup> NESDP, it is specific about improvements in land access for landless farmer households, sustainability on farm sites and general stability of ecological systems. It specifies organic farming practices along with integrated farming or New Theory farming as a means to self-reliance, income and social well-being of farmers, along with ecological benefits from the integration of forest trees and the adaptation to the local settings. On top of that, promotion addresses young people to recourse to rural farming, as well as the redistribution of unused private and governmental surface for farming purpose.

In many cases, policies do not correspond to reality; and likewise, to our experience, this current NESDP is not seen to be effective thus far which is found confirmed in the experts narratives (cf. Table 11). They think, “mostly the development of organic farming have been pushed forward by [...] private business and NGO, civil societies, not by the government” (R-29: #00:38:32-4#).

Public attention on organic farming is already given, and still, there is a gap for its further implementation, mostly due to a lack of policy envisioning. Many policies exist but mostly on paper, or aim in the main at the international organic market. (Cf. R-6, R-12, R-29, Table 11)

Despite its consideration on national agendas, Thailand still does not designate any subsidies compared to other countries (cf. R-10: #01:03:49-0#); on the contrary, conventional farming continues to be encouraged with the help of government promoted chemical inputs and hybrid seeds; in many cases, fertilizers are promoted “for the conversion period” (cf. R-10), distributed for little money, for free or as part of loan packages<sup>28</sup>; imported chemical inputs are tax-free (cf. G-1, R-8, R-20, R-21, R-32, R-38). Several respondents hence find the inefficiency of existing organic policies remarkable:

*“Like they do, they talk about self-reliance, talk about organic farming but they support the people to use more chemical” (R-21: #00:16:37-3#).*

Policies already aim at domestic markets but support mostly export (cf. R-6, R-10), and insufficient implementation may be excused by its high investment costs (cf. R-12), the yearly budget at Department of Agriculture for GAP cultivation is at 14 million Baht compared to just one million for the organic production line, states Department of Agriculture official R-24. Inefficiency is likely to root in internal mismanagement within or between ministries or their lacking cooperation with other organic stakeholders (cf. R-12, R-37, R-39). (Cf. Table 11)

In many cases, insufficient coordination between different concerned ministries hamper the advance of NGO projects:

*“[T]he Ministry of Agriculture have to work with the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Education. So [...] if you want to make organic food for all, [...] health for all, education for all [...], you have to change at the policy to coordinate between the ministries” (R-12: 00:43:25).*

Insufficient coordination even occurs within the ministries:

*“[S]ome time, they say that they have the consumer budget in the drawer of the general director - 500 Million. And then, the deputy don't know where it is gone. [...] And they say, they cannot use this 500 million for consumer activity, it is locked at the drawer” (R-12: 00:45:20).*

Apart from inefficiency, actions taken by ministries, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture

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<sup>28</sup> The Agricultural Bank designs loan packages for farmers in which one part of the loan is given in form of fertilizers (cf. R-8, Table 13).

in the past are considered as unsustainable for example for mixed farms that farm one part organically only with the possible effect that farmers apply the same amount of synthetic fertilizers on the reduced inorganic farm site. By experience, farmers trainings carried out by the Department of Agriculture have little sustained impact (cf. R-3, R-5, R-21, R-25). (Cf. Table 11)

Some experts think the governmental engagement in organic policies to be an obstacle rather than help for budgets are spent on promotion but barriers are created through complicated certification regulations (cf. R-39: #00:33:52-7#). Repeated food tests discovered residues in the governmental safety brand. In reaction to that, there was endeavour to adjust product quality accordingly – regardless, no progress has begun (cf. R-28: #01:04:03-1#). In the contrary, there is active resistance against the residue tests carried out by R-28's NGO from Ministry of Agriculture side which is enforced by R-37's statement; consumers had no other choice than eating contaminated food (cf. R-28, R-37). An organic shop owner in Bangkok perceives the government actively playing against organic shops (cf. R-35). (Cf. Table 11)

There is indication that once created organic policies are misinterpreted or not taken seriously: When R-12 reminded the Ministry of Public Health of health food agenda for hospitals, the answer was that they provide safety food already which in fact is the lowest food safety standard available in Thailand at present (cf. R-12: 50:23). The ministries are lacking interest for, as well as competence in the organic farming concept, further a connection to the farmers as they hardly ever visit the field (cf. R-18, R-29, R-30, R-32, R-39). One interview with a Department of Agriculture official in charge of the extension of both, GAP and organic practices reveals that this official had just recently been delegated to this position but was going to retire only few months later. (Cf. Table 11)

Major companies influence the political landscape in Thailand, to the extent that it affects the progress of organic farming (cf. R-8, R-32, R-33, R-37, Table 11). Policy making in Thailand was economic driven and “very little of it is based on what's good” (R-33: #00:17:18-0#). One of local major companies is Charoen Pokphand (CP), agribusiness and food distributor, and parent company to a number of formerly independent firms, including seed and fertilizer brands (cf. Charoen Pokphand Foods PCL. About CPF). With the business sector intermingling with the ministries, policy making sways with the interests of a small number of dominant Thai or international companies; and as a consequence, farmers find themselves exposed to their interests and involved in conflicts with them, too (cf. R-6, p.6). Powerful chemical companies use television advertisement or local radio stations to influence farmers, backed by the governments and consequently overwrite local knowledge (cf. R-32: #00:31:36-0#, R-39: #01:08:01-7#; R-8-3, p.1). Moreover, the government is likely to accept payments from these companies, a reason why the

civil society currently arises for structural changes (cf. R-8-4: #00:17:16-9#; #00:28:47-6#). Apparently, retired 7-Eleven – an enterprise of the CP Group, likewise major seed producer Chia Tai – chain chairperson has recently become Minister of the Interior (cf. R-32: #00:33:42-1#); representatives of the Thai chemical fertilizer business are in the government (cf. R-21, Table 11); “CP has so much overwriting” (R-21: #00:17:33-4#). Major companies effect farmers and consumers alike (cf. R-32: #01:07:09-9#).

The business oriented side usually denies feasibility of organic farming, saying it could not make economical sense (cf. R-9: #01:38:43-8#), hence the implementation of policies is dismissed. R-28 explains, CP finds organic farming suitable for poor farmers but not as alternative for the country (cf. R-28: #00:15:28-9#), so the future for organic farming in Thailand is uncertain as long as chemical companies as well as the government are in opposition (cf. R-4, p.17).

In turn, policies should play a supporting role in organic movements in respondents' eyes for their objectives are for the good of citizens, addressing improved health, livelihoods, community life and ecology. There are policies needed to preserve urban areas for food cultivation hence should be major supporters for urban farming, just as some of Bangkok's district offices already demonstrate (cf. G-1, R-1, R-17); the government should be involved in introducing organic foods in canteens and schools (cf. R-9, R-34). The accordance between respective government bodies needs to be endeavoured for consistent and active policies, and in order to have potential to attain change, policies are important (R-12, R-27, R-28). R-18 is convinced that the movement requires top down approaches which is the successful tool for Bhutan's organic model. Farmers need protection of their livelihoods (R-32), and also sustainability could be notably pushed forward by government intervention (R-33); however the situation might not change “until the [...] real crisis that all chemical farmer bankrupt” (R-32: #00:36:22-0#). (Cf. Table 11)

Regardless of rather consistent critique, some respondents still see positive achievements: Urban farming engagement at district offices in Bangkok are “one of good action from the government side” (R-1), National Innovation Agency mainly organises the organic movement together with the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Public Health in organising consumers and organic traders (R-4, R-10, R-17). *Tambon*-level<sup>29</sup> bodies sometimes do involve farmers in policy decision (R-6). In contrast to the Ministry of Agriculture, the Rice Department supports organic agriculture in some aspects (R-28); it also hosts an organic farming NGO in its compounds. (Cf. Table 11)

Apart from governmental action, experts state that research on organic farming is not sufficiently encouraged, possibly because their direct benefits are not perceived (G-1). However,

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<sup>29</sup> Tambon, an administrative unit below district and province

universities started to include organic farming programmes in their curricula, or maintain external farmers training programmes (R-4, R-6). (Cf. Table 11)

#### **New act for land attribution to rural landless people**

Just recently, several pilot projects were implemented according to the policies on acquisition of land ownership for landless villagers, announced in the 11<sup>th</sup> NESDP (cf. Figure 4) in about 47 of Thai provinces. There is objective to reach out to each of 76 provinces. On a weekly radio broadcast, the Office of the Prime Minister informed about the progress of the projects, drafted by a major NGO (cf. St. 39), that are planned and carried out in joint initiative of several ministries and governmental bodies, notably the Ministries of Agriculture, Social Development and Human Security, Commerce, Education. It was said that rural governmental areas, mostly land adjoining forests that villagers had illegally encroached upon by slash-and-burn for agricultural purpose, are retaken, and the ownership transferred to local disadvantaged persons. Condition for the ownership is to cultivate their newly gained land organically. Seeds and other inputs are meant to source from the government's means, for example from their local seeds breeding section; all steps of production and processing are meant to be carried out communally; assistance is provided by expert bodies from the respective ministries. One part of the harvest supplies to the families and local markets, another part supplies the organic export market, and receives organic labelling. The encouragement of community members to organise themselves as a group carries a social aspect of the initiative. (Cf. Royal Thai Government, PM's Weekly Address)

Box 8: New act for land attribution to rural landless people

#### **The Rice Pledging Scheme 2014**

*“In the first quarter of 2015, [...] [a]gricultural employment fell by 4.4 percent due to unfavorable weather with droughts in many areas, being the time after the end of harvest season and farmers' downward adjustment in response to the expiration of the government's Rice Pledging Scheme” (National Economic and Social Development Board 2015: 1).*

This recent rice scheme was supposed to subsidise Thai rice farmers to ensure their incomes on a competitive Asian rice market but turned out to put the rice producers at risk. In this scheme, farmers sold their produce to the government, getting paid at a subsidised rate. This endeavour ended in 2014 when the government failed to fulfil the rates (cf. R-14: #00:41:37-7#; R-28: #01:12:20-5#). With a seven-months delay, they were finally paid by the following, interim government. The subsidised price of 15000 Baht per ton exceeded the rate at the export market,

with the effect that Thai rice could not compete (cf. Finch 2014, no page number). R-19 talks about it as a rice crisis in Thailand becoming a motivation for chemical-based rice farmers to experiment with organic methods, in fact considered as the only solution out of the crisis (cf. R-19: #00:17:22-1#), another view is that farmers faced this situation rather passively, still believing in the scheme (cf. R-32: #00:36:48-0#).

The rice scheme reminds of previous situations, when Thai orange and garlic farmers went bankrupt in great numbers after the cultivation had shifted to other countries. It was a result of the country's agreement to the Free Trade Area with China in 2002. It can be observed on the regular Thai market that garlic and oranges mostly are produced in China (cf. R-32: #00:37:42-1#; #01:13:00-7#).

The rice scheme underlines the vulnerability of farmers when they are exposed to the dynamics of the free market. It was an alarming sign for some farmers and networks in the organic movement to react.

#### 4.4.5 Food and health

City lifestyles change eating habits and nutrition patterns. Trends concerning eating habits are conveyed by food items, and food is a cultural vector in Thailand (cf. R-21: #00:49:53-7#; R-33: #00:16:00-1#). There is a trend in Thai diets towards a fading variety of local vegetables, “the Thai vegetables, the people don't like to eat them any more” (G-1, p.33), but also towards consumers' unfamiliarity with the local biodiversity (cf. R-33: #00:00:07-4#) whereas Thai cuisine normally finds use for many health beneficial herbs and greens. Consumers might have forgotten the better taste of a free range egg compared to a caging egg or the taste of naturally grown brown rice compared to polished industrial rice (cf. R-15: #00:02:54-3#), or how to cook with local vegetables (cf. R-6, p.22). R-26's mother grows vegetables in her city garden because by this, she recalls former days and prefers cooking with the local vegetables instead of market produce (cf. R-26: #00:07:06-2#). It is possible to trace back this reality to the beginnings of commercial farming in Thailand which gave favour to varieties that are easy to sell at the market. Necessarily, eating habits had to change accordingly. Being aware of the fact that traditional Thai food might be a vague term for Thai food blends with and borrows from various culinary cultures, commercial farming and fast food trends are mutually supportive in increasingly replacing local foods (cf. G-1, p.33). Especially the “[n]ew generation is addicted to KFC and that” (R-21: #00:50:36-7#; cf. R-17: #01:18:43-6#). Consumption patterns have changed compared to the past, starting from fewer vegetable intake among children after what studies discover (cf. R-17: #01:18:43-6#), and G-1 derive why this trend

relates to lifestyle issues, particularly pertinent to the modern urban living:

*“I think that the trend, how we cook, how we eat has changed from the past. Because when our society is more [...] hurry, [...] faster than the past, the traditional food cannot [...] answer this point, but the fast food can answer this point because you have to hurry all the time and you have to do something that [...] can eat right now” (G-1, p. 34).*

*“Recent findings suggest that Thailand may have progressed further along the nutrition transition model, in terms of unhealthy eating styles, than would be expected based on economic development” (Craven & Hawks 2006: 14).*

Information on pesticide residues in vegetables and fruits, hormone or antibiotic residues in meat products is released more and more persistently. St.40 (cf. Table 6) at the consumer-producer interface releases the results of their food testing online. Their toxic fruit ranking indicates the percentage of exceeding amounts of chemical pesticide residues in fruit samples. It shows six popular fruits in Thailand sampled from different markets in four major Thai cities. They were tested for a number of chemical substances that were found to be contaminated in amounts that exceed official maximum residue limits in 2014. Particularly worrying are the samples of oranges for which residues were discovered at 100%. In fact, it is alarming already that excessive amounts were found at all.

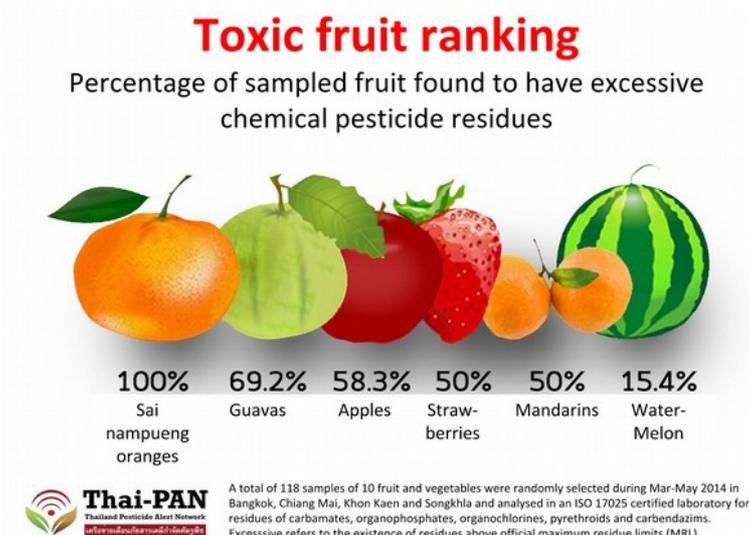


Figure 5: Toxic fruit ranking  
(Biothai)

As another food item, meat from ethical animal husbandry practice is troublesome to find,

knows a sustainable restaurant chef (cf. R-33: #00:05:40-2#). Thailand is currently facing a health crisis, with apparent accumulation of ill people with degenerative diseases, emerging from the background of food and environmental pollution as well as of adverse eating patterns and nutrition (cf. R-17: #01:17:37-0#; R-18: #00:40:01-6#; R-21: #00:48:41-8#; R-17: #01:17:29-6#; G-2: #01:18:10-9#; R-8-5a-c: #00:03:15-0#; R-24: #00:41:49-4#). “The chemical they use in the field that are very harmful to our people” (R-18: #00:40:37-2#), and good health must derive from good food (cf. R-27: #00:19:07-4#). “People now [are] not that healthy. More and more people getting cancer [...] because we accumulate toxic for [...] long term” (R-31: #00:57:33-3#). Nutrition at schools and the snacks sold around these schools are worrying: Artificially coloured sweet drinks, French fries, fish and meats fried in low quality oils are popular items (cf. R-34: #00:18:29-3#). General fast and junk food consumption is an eating pattern that among other factors already translates into altered physical appearance, in terms of body size and physical fitness; there is allusion to increasing obesity (cf. R-15: #00:03:33-5#; R-17: #01:17:37-0#; KOSULWAT 2002: 183; JITNARIN et al. 2011: 242).

A representative of a Chiang Mai based organic certification body has experience with the handling of chemical inputs on the farmers' fields, and explains about the average pollution of products on regular markets: “You should not eat anything any more over here if you know how vegetables are produced” (R-5, p.11, translated from German). It happens regularly that farmers apply about 15 different chemical sprays, possibly adulterated or containing substances banned in other countries, on their fields, even at harvesting time, that spraying intervals are reduced; further that some farmers use post-harvest spraying on the products. The impression that small-scale farmers supplying local fresh markets might use less chemicals than industrial farms is easily illusionary; in fact, these often face the reality of being without proper instruction in usage of chemical sprays, thus are likely to miss the right dosage. As a result, food related illness is menacing in Asia compared to other continents due to its agriculture. (Cf. R-5, p.11-13)

Other respondents make further allusion to their experiences with harmful chemical spraying and residues in food (cf. R-11, p. 5, R-14: #00:28:02-8#; R-31: #00:17:38-6#; R-37, p. 2). R-28's NGO publishing regular food tests, they know that watermelon growers used to apply high amounts of pesticides, among it carbofuran. It has been made illegal in the following, so that recent tests were safe from the harmful substance. Still, other fruit tests discovered exceeding amounts of pesticides for many samples (cf. R-28: #01:17:13-6#). A health consumer group of the early days checked food for chemical residues in order to urge the government to check production sites (cf. R-27: #00:33:34-7#).

Hormone residues in foods are likely to affect the human hormonal system: Recent

phenomena such as early puberty is one reaction of the body. “There's so many incidence about hormones, early puberty and all these things [...] happening right now” (R-9: #01:05:08-0#). Besides early puberty, it might account for hormone gland dysfunctionality among children and even third gender (cf. R-10: #01:09:11-6#). Residues in fresh foods pose health risk, but also the overall nutrition featuring processed foods, fast foods and snacks with high contents of refined sugar and oils. They are said to link to the increase of non-communicable diseases. To quote an example, social statistics indicate about one million of high blood pressure cases in 2012, about 80000 cases more than in 2011. Concerning diabetes, the number between the two years increased at about 53000 to about 674000 cases; as for cancer cases, their number increased at about 26000 to about 434000 in total (National Economic and Social Development Board, 2013, p.5). High amounts of intake of refined sugars are supposed to be harmful (cf. R-12: 00:29:06).

Two respondents underline increasing cancer rates and about 60000 fatalities every year, and both report on several recent cancer deaths in their close surroundings (cf. R-32: #00:29:07-8#; R-24: #00:41:35-1#; #00:43:33-1#). Further, cancer incubation periods take a couple of years until the cancer is effective. Thus, many cases present themselves now as a consequence of sustained exposure, already present among the younger generation (cf. R-22: #00:19:38-1#).

Health embraces food and beyond life attitude: before becoming organic urban farmer, R-26 used to work hard, to earn a lot and to spend a lot of money but had health issues (cf. R-26: #00:50:00-7#). An organic shop owner's view is that supporting the organic movement is a personal choice of taking care for personal and others' health, for good food and attitude towards life bring about health (cf. R-13: #00:02:22-5#). Food therefore builds the basic structure for healthy body and mind (cf. R-27 #00:05:02-7#), thus “is very important” (R-34: #00:45:13-5#).

It is not only food but also polluted environments that affect health, and the occurrence of non-communicable diseases (cf. R-27: #01:20:01-8#; R-37, p.5). Food, environment and the human body are interconnected for depleted soils will carry contamination onto the plants grown in this soil, hence the food taken from it, and eventually imported into the human organism (cf. R-27: #01:19:01-8#). A reality is that illness nowadays tends to combine different ailments, for example diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiac disease. Beyond, the phenomena extends to the rural communities where eating habits are adjusting and the exposure to sources of contamination is as high as or for farmers possibly higher than in the city (cf. R-17: #01:16:56-7#).

Healthy lifestyles are rather difficult to realise in Bangkok, already because it is common to buy from the streets or to eat out rather than to cook at home (cf. R-35: #00:14:15-0#). Eating healthy is nonetheless becoming fashionable in Bangkok, in big parts among the younger urbanites. Analogously to consumers' growing awareness and claims for healthy food, food producers start to

concern more about food quality, too (cf. R-35: #00:06:26-7#; #00:09:43-5#). Health food trends interplay with the emergence of organic movements in Bangkok. Organic food appeals to more persons because they face personal illness (cf. R-22: #00:08:22-1#; #00:19:14-4#). “[A]t the moment, organic [...] means healthy food” for it “can help stop cancer” (R-22: #00:13:25-7#).

We have seen that the advance of illnesses links to food quality. The rising cancer rates stressed by many of the respondents are attributed to chemical residues found in products from conventional agriculture and to unhealthy additions in processed foods. Also the rise of non-communicable disease is acknowledged to be resulting from food habits shifting towards an overconsumption of fast and processed foods, sugar and oils. On this account, food and health need to be seen as structures framing the organic movements happening in Bangkok at present.

#### Health promotion and Thai Health Promotion Fund

Organic food as prevention and alternative medicine as medication are ways to maintain good health (cf. R-18: #01:09:06-2#). Some respondents argue that organic can reduce medical expenses as inherently healthier (R-8, G-2 Table 5).

*“[S]ometimes, the people think the vegetable is so expensive for organic food. But for people who can afford it, it's cheaper than buying medicine” (R-8: 01:18:25).*

Although a country where herbal therapies are common, Thailand's public health system heads for modern medicine using drugs which is criticised by some:

*“We have to spend a lot of money on [...] healing by chemical. We have to import a lot of chemical drug from abroad. Instead of we use the food as the medicine by organic farming” (R-18: #00:43:53-4#).*

Health promotion in Thailand partially serves the information about the benefits of cautious nutrition. It is in the responsibility of peculiarly public health foundations, among which St.37, St.38 (cf. Table 6) and Thai Health Promotion Foundation under the Ministry of Public Health. St.37 is settled in the field of holistic medicine, emphasising curation at the base of an integer body and mind perspective, which includes wholesome nutrition and also traditional herbal medicine from Thailand. One of their actions is an annual fair (cf. Box 9, chapter 4.4.6). St.38 dedicates their activity to consumer rights and education, mainly via an internet platform or featuring guests demonstration hosted by other organisations. Thai Health Promotion Foundation manages a health

fund, Sososo, deducted from the 'sin tax' on tobacco and alcohol which provides since about ten years the budget for health related pilot projects, as for some of the organic or urban farming projects in our study. Another of their responsibilities lies in consumer education and protection from food and other sources of health risk (cf. R-8-5a-c: #00:11:15-0# - #00:12:49-2#). Sososo is viewed in a couple of interviews as very supportive of the organic scene, mainly when stakeholders receive their budget or have received it in the past, for example the Thai *Cityfarm* Project (cf. R-13: #00:09:10-3#; R-1 p.7/8; R-11, p.7; R-17: #00:03:50-9#; R-26: #00:31:58-8#; R-34: #00:27:36-4#). R-28 says about Thai Health Promotion Foundation that “SoSoSo, they have a lot of money, [...] 1000 Million per year at least” (#00:45:11-4#), and that their consumer activities would not be feasible without their support (cf. #01:02:23-5#). After a respondent's narrative, Sososo was brought into being after the said civil society green movement appeared and developed to be major support for the network. Being a national umbrella for health in Thailand, it enables small organisations to achieve impact on society (cf. G-1, p.4/5). Indeed, the foundation's logo appears on many visited events and project descriptions. The foundation just moved into a new six-story complex in recent years that accommodates the offices, library, educational space with changing exhibitions, fitness room, information desk, canteen and health shop. An urban gardening demonstration site is situated on the rooftop and a park attached outside. The accuracy in user-friendly design and material and frank presentation of health related topics are noteworthy.



Image 19: Health promotion at Thai Health Promotion Foundation  
(from own source)

In December 2014, the Thai Health Promotion Foundation centre hosted a press conference on behalf of two organisations in the organic food scene in formal appearance (cf. O-18/12/2014 field notes observations, data CD). Their role indicates that the organic movement gets more backup

from the health institutions – at least as patron – than from their agricultural counterparts.

#### 4.4.6 Consumer education

With reference to alarming nutritional trends, there is need to make Thai consumers aware of inevitable dietary side effects (cf. CRAVEN & HAWKS 2006: 14). Consumer education must also be concerned with raising awareness on environmental topics (cf. R-22: #00:17:23-3#). Education needs to play an active role in making “people aware how dependent we are to the environment” (R-9: #00:59:54-8#). There is “awareness of the people who would like to have the better [...] food, more quality” (R-17: #00:54:21-6#), “but they lack of the knowledge” (R-18: #01:03:34-1#). It seems as if there was a gap between a general interest in healthy food and the information to reach out to the public, although a number of organisations and consumer networks already pursue consumer education.

Apart from the said Thai Health Promotion Foundation, the study covers five pronounced organisations in the field of consumer education, including participatory guarantee systems between consumers and producers (cf. St.37, St.38, St.40, St.41, St.42, Table 6). Besides, a number of private initiatives maintain an additional focus on it, for example organic markets, health shops or learning centres from what experts declare in the interviews. NGO St.42 has an agenda on green markets, farm visits, CSA programmes. Considering nutritional education very relevant for young age groups, they are trying to reach out to schools, though facing difficulties until now (cf. R-34: #00:16:13-9#). St.41 intervenes at the interface between consumer and producer. St.40 also organises food fairs with changing activity, for example food tasting. Their intention is firstly to demonstrate problems of the food system, second to let them compare the tastes of naturally prepared food compared to industrial food (cf. R-28: #00:48:10-2# - #00:50:19-0#).

Making relevant information accessible to consumers gives them the chance to practise their responsibility as conscious consumers both, individually and by exchange within consumer groups. Effectively, a consumer movement and consumer protection exists in Thailand (cf. R-8: 02:45:50).

However, it happens that wrong information is given which is the case for certain labelling, not distinguishing organic vegetables from hydroponic or GAP produce for instance (cf. R-18: #01:03:50-0#; R-3, R-4, R-11, R-20, R-27, R-29, Table 7). Many experts agree with the view that the general public lacks adequate knowledge for responsible behaviour regardless of apparent health food trends (cf. R-18: #01:03:35-8#; R-26: #00:44:40-2#; R-4, R-6, R-8, R-12, R-17, R-19, R-32, Table 7). Children are likely to get used to unhealthy eating habits when their parents have little nutritional knowledge (cf. R-17: #01:19:12-7#). From observations, it is confirmed that firstly,

many consumers do not distinguish between organic products and general health products, and are easy to convince by any label declaring 'green', 'clean' or 'safe', secondly, many organic food outlets insufficiently assist to make consumers understand about different qualities, for example supermarkets with organic food section. What is obvious for an already conscious person might be unfamiliar to the general consumer.

Different possible channels exist to reach the consumer. Our research found media, especially television programmes or health and lifestyle magazines notably successful but depending on their target (cf. R-22: #00:09:06-2#). A Bangkok based publishing house covers topics like healthy living, do-it-yourself, gardening, cooking, hence several stakeholders from the organic scene have been taken in their lines. Public fairs seem to have fair outreach, for they please the visitor's perspective combining visual experience with informational content, with leisure, exchange, eating and shopping (cf. R-22: #00:09:29-5#). Several of the major of this study's stakeholders are usually represented at these fairs.

#### **Health-related fairs in Bangkok**

A couple of regular, admission free fairs are taking place at three different exhibition centres in Bangkok. St.37 co-organises an annual, Thai Health Foundation supported health fair. One large section demonstrates all items associated with herbal medicine including literature, another section spares room for organic producers from 20 Thai provinces, demonstration sites for Thai *Cityfarm* members and an organic supermarket model, energy saving, and beyond, food stalls, discussion forum, workshops and seminar rooms. It is foremost a NGO and social enterprise event representing most stakeholders of the organic scene. Mostly elderly persons are among the visitors; visitors seem familiar with the topic and generally health-concerned.

The national herb fair exhibits a herbal medicinal section including shaman healers and medicine making ups. Other sections display agricultural products from many Thai regions, a library and food education zone.

A house and garden fair in 2014 features garden and household items but also a farmers' market, small farm demonstration, yoga, energy healing and book section with home gardening and DIY books. Thai *Cityfarm* is represented among other organic vendors. Compared to the health fair, this one is rather commercial; however a platform for urban farming and organic food promotion.

The Organic Expo has been organised by the Ministry of Commerce in the city centre. Their first objective being “[t]o promote the image of Thai organic products and services both domestically and internationally” (Organic & Natural Expo: 2015) it is foremost the annual gathering of food providers – there is a producer section and a distributor section – most of them organic. It aims at traders and visitors alike; there is also a symposium with expert guest speakers. With gaining popularity, the venue space apparently is too small now

to host all applicants. The concept of the fair pervades certain inconsistency, for instance a *Dunkin' Donuts* booth right next to the main entrance; while the Expo have a small green fair and symposium by the NGO scene in 2013, they are missing in the consequent years. Expo partners are among others the Ministry of Public Health, Department of Agriculture or Department of Land Development.

Box 9: Health-related fairs and events in Bangkok

Other, private initiatives strengthen consumer knowledge in the organic scene. They are the urban farming learning centres (cf. St.55, St.65, Table 6) with some of them drawing attention widely (Laksi District Office learning centre), green shops (cf. St.48, St.49, St.50, St.63, Table 6), farmers' markets (cf. St.51, St.52, Table 6), a public urban garden site in the Sukhumvit area. St.16 (cf. Table 6) is a distinct network of persons who share the experience of alternative living in Bangkok. They have emerged from the Thai *Cityfarm* core group. With their focus on organic eating, they are one stakeholder in filling the informational gap; “if we inform people and create more awareness and that will drive the whole thing” (R-26: #00:44:40-2#).

Consumer education is partially present though should be enforced and directed at a broader public. After all, awareness does not only depend on external sources of information. In order to make impact, consumers need to provide certain susceptibility.



Image 20: Urban infrastructure - daily traffic situation, public transportation on a sewage canal, and private waste recycling  
(from own source)



Image 21: Organic supermarket products, partly imported and showing different kinds of organic declaration  
(from own source)



Image 22: Consumer education at a green fair, the annual Organic Expo, and a symposium with organic stakeholders  
(from own source)



Image 23: An annual health fair with organic products  
(from own source)

#### 4.5 Attitudes, cultural understandings and ideologies

Attitudes and ideologies are probably the structural setting and attribute of the organic movements at the time; being cultural assets, they prevail on the behaviour of the individuals who are exposed to them or create them. In terms of structural setting, the ideologies specific to Thai culture favour or disfavour the movement externally. From an individual's perspective, certain attitudes of people might explain the emergence of the movement.

The interview partners were asked about ideologies and attitudes of individual persons that are driving the organic movements in Thailand; and how typical cultural understandings or spirituality relate to these movements. While some respondents point out here the role of Buddhist teaching, being the prevailing spiritual belief in Thailand, there is no correlation for others. Stakeholders either directly transfer certain Buddhist principles to organic farming, or indirectly via conceptions of nature together with moral attitudes. Statements concerning organic farmer's mentality have also been given by non farmers among the respondents.

What are the attitudes and ideologies behind our stakeholders' engagement? (Cf. in the following Table 12) The former manager of an exporting Thai agribusiness was tired of business attitudes and started experimenting with organic farming on hearing about the effects of chemical farming. The respondent's ideology is to dedicate himself to sustainable farming techniques efficient for farmers and to pass on expertise onto the next generation (cf. R-18). Leading a simple life should be an important part of sustainable thinking: "if I don't follow simple life, I will not have time, I will not have energy, I will not have money to spend for the others" (R-16). Sustainability should be taught as a life skill and is also what motivates R-12's consumer awareness focus (cf. R-12). Two respondents have a clear ideology of living in harmony with nature: Loving nature creates awareness for the way to sustain her; observing nature allows to respond by adequate environmentally conscious behaviour (cf. R-15). The human is no isolated entity in the biosphere, and "mother Earth that she save or she hold, embrace all of us. And how can we help, the Mother Earth to live?" (R-27: #01:00:22-6#). Human's behaviour must hence direct at preserving the natural environments. Others have visions of community living by creating organic farmers communities, embracing consumers, too (cf. R-21, R-30). So created bondings of people contribute to a healthy society (cf. R-30). R-30 beliefs in happiness, just as R-43 although not declaring any major ideology behind the interest in organic home gardening. (Cf. Table 12)

What is revealed about personal ideologies happens to differ from what is said about the general public. Environmental consciousness is not present among the general public; waste management for example hardly is in the urbanites' minds (cf. R-7). This is partly because Thai

consumers still feel need to catch up in material terms (cf. R-5). An organic shop owner tries insistently to educate customers by avoiding giving out plastic bags. The idea mostly fails because “everyone wants a bag. Nobody carries their bag. So, environment, I think, will still need to take a bit of time” (R-35: #00:10:43-6#). Consumerism is very common in Thai society: consumption, cheapness, convenience and calculative mind (cf. R-26, R-12, R-11) are quoted assets. Many persons become organic consumers in the moment they learn about their own illness. “And if you don't have cancer, you don't do anything” (R-12) is said about persons who practice ignorance or are unable to realise about the flaws of conventional food unless they are personally concerned. Thus far, people hardly look beyond, to the origin of our foods (cf. R-12). The general's people nature is ignorance, overconsumption and individualism (cf. R-8). This may account for a certain egocentricity in the motives of existing organic consumers: “People want good things for themselves” (R-7). (Cf. Table 12)

Thinking in terms of sustainability requires the general public to change their behaviours, as a societal change will not happen unless individuals start caring about it (cf. R-33, R-26). The time after the great flood in 2011 is a period where slight mindset shifts become observable. The event demonstrates an extreme situation for many and induces a certain survival aspect, and slowly concerns about environment, social communities and urban health (cf. R-17). Considering the general mass though, awareness and understanding of challenges in our society and the future of food are still lacking (cf. R-12). Apart, lack of passion and patience as well as a convenience oriented mind are attributes for which many people give up quickly after trying to implement sustainability in their daily lives, for instance some of those who are trying urban gardening (cf. R-11, R-16). R-32 made the experience that Thai people are not above external judgement hence are lacking the confidence to be different. Together with a tendency towards conservatism, it constitutes the rationale for the unwillingness for an attitude change, and not endeavouring the step towards organic farming.

Our respondents become specific about farmers, too. In terms of attitudes and farming, many respondents accord with their understandings that organic farming requires solid morals and commitment of the farmers (cf. R-4, R-9, R-15, R-25, R-31). The farmers need, in order to realise and reliably apply sustainable farming principles, to really commit to the idea and to believe in its benefits: Farmers need to commit to organic (cf. R-4), they need good ethics and strong moral (cf. R-31), and an attitude shift needs to come from inside the farmers themselves (cf. R-25). As farmers have mostly internalised the industrial agriculture methods over a long period of time, the change to organic farming cannot happen immediately, neither without any attitude shift, reappraising notions of agriculture in farmers' minds. A reason lies in the reality that firstly, the organic principles go

beyond mere farming methods over to an ecology comprehensive notion in which farming embraces the cultivation of plants as well the cultivation of the human being, and an occupation that helps balance the ecological system in which the farmer lives with nature instead of against her like in the industrial farming concept (cf. R-27; R-18). Indeed, a sustainable farmer's responsibility can become to take care of the land (cf. R-25); a Buddhist farming philosophy regards the human body as coming from nature, farming is hence supposed to grow plants as if they were limbs of a body (cf. R-28). Second, they are less convenient than conventional farming, and possibly harder to implement as prone to failure, low harvest, pest disease, especially during conversion period; organic farmers might initially struggle.

This attitude change is hard to implement (cf. R-5), among other reasons because the general farmer prefers convenience and easy money (cf. R-18), or because farming demands patience which few people have (cf. R-16). From a farmer's point of view, organic farming is not only about awareness but also about income benefits providing education for their children and means to repay their debts (cf. R-6), due to their disadvantageous positions. Organic farming is not necessarily their choice (cf. R-2) but driven by their external conditions. For the organic farmers that grow for the Royal Projects, there is slight risk of missing commitment, consequently recurrent pesticide use (cf. R-20). On the flip side, farmers who are already committed to the organic way of farming demonstrate positive attitude. Those have already realised attitudes shifted accordingly (cf. R-25). R-15 even finds that for those who devote to organic farming, it attains a level of religion (cf. R-15). In a large-scale project of organic farmers in conversion, one farmer has been found to repeatedly having cheated by using chemicals because he is not able to discern the reason why all chemicals should be banned from the fields. The project organiser explains that this said farmer has, compared to the others, maintained a money-driven attitude from before. In spite of this single case, the remaining farmers demonstrate positive adoption of organic principles, and feelings of pride about transformation (cf. R-30). (Cf. Table 12)

#### 4.5.1 Conceptions of nature in Thai society

*“I think [...] organic is not only chemical free but it's work with the nature [...]. But the nature in Thailand, we call [...] Thammachart. Thammachart, it's mean [...] a nature law or something like that” (R-1, p. 35).*

Cultural specific conceptions of nature are likely to influence the manner how people interact with latter. The Thai term for nature *Thammachart*, a Buddhist determination, translates

with the law of nature. The term also appears in *kaset thammachart*, natural farming, hence is a way of farming in accordance to the laws of nature. It is plausible that industrial farming does not resonate with the laws of nature, incidentally, just as genetically modified organisms in agriculture are against these laws according to different religions (cf. R-32). Organic farming is a philosophy of living (cf. R-8) where the farmer lives in a “friendship” with nature (cf. R-18). And this is what R-15 means when saying that realisation about living comes from the observation and understanding the nature: People who are spiritually aware are more likely to be aware for health and environment (cf. R-15). (Cf. Table 12)

It would be interesting to find out how sustainable farming on the one hand and environmentally conscious behaviours in Thailand relate to people's perception of nature. Literature brings understanding about Thai notions of environment and nature, the first being a term recently introduced, suggesting a human-centred model, the latter “as an ordered system of harmony and balance”, a “complex world” in which humans “are only a small part” (PANYA & SIRISAI 2003: 65). The human-nature pair is a reciprocal pair, and acting with bad intention against nature spoils environments (cf. id.: 63; 65; 67). Reciprocity signifies mutual interdependence of nature and all elements, and in reality, any action of humans cause effect on nature: “In short, Buddhists hold that nothing in nature is entirely independent of anything else, but that all things are intimately related” (JAMES 2009: 60).

The notion of whether the human is set as one with the nature is ambiguously debated by authors. In PANYA & SIRISAI's (2003) study, their key sources see nature as the world around them, which would come close to the anthropocentric concept of environment; but others, especially rural people and NGO leaders, speak of one single entity in which human and nature exist (63; 65). JAMES (2009) writes, ecological Buddhism proponents hold that humans are “‘one' with all things, 'one' with nature“, even though the Buddhist teachings do not imply this perception (60; 62).

Moreover and curiously, what does not appear explicitly extracted from Buddhist teaching is whether humans effectively are nature. R-28 in fact makes allusion to this unity when explaining the essence of Buddhist farming: The founder of Buddhist farming, a local natural farming philosophy, gained the insight the human body evolves from and virtually is nature, indeed from the fruit grown and harvesting from the field ingested by the human. He resolved that farming hence must constitute a sustainable cultivation just as if cultivating the human body itself. Using chemical in farming would be equal to consuming chemicals (cf. R-28: #01:40:31-6#).

Regardless of the actual conception of nature in the early Buddhist teachings, the latter imply recommendation for how to behave towards our surroundings by virtues which could imply our environment also. These virtues are loving-kindness, empathic joy, mindfulness and the

destruction of pride (cf. JAMES 2009: 65). Considering this, Buddhist religious persons could play a role in modelling environmentally conscious behaviours (cf. id.: 66). Initiative is needed to complete environmental awareness in order reach change but is found to be missing among most people: PANYA & SIRISAI (2003) conclude about an “inactive environmentalism“ in Thailand: “people know about and are aware of environmental problems, but lack individual efficacy and collective action“ (74). “Most Thai people interviewed, more so in the urban setting, see themselves as “victims” rather than “agents” of environmental change and management” (id.: 66).

#### 4.5.2 Spirituality, morality and the Buddhist principles of “no killing” and “no harming”

That said, moral guidelines implicit in Buddhist teachings are able to support sustainability and in this sense organic farming, too. AS NUMRICH (2001: 3) explains, the basic principles are “not to destroy life, not to steal, not to engage in sexual misconduct, not to tell falsehood, not to take intoxicants that cause careless behaviour. Some consider the principle of non-harm to living beings, encapsulated in the first precept to be the heart of Buddhist ethics”, and the four states to aspire of “loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. Cultivation of these sublime states will root out the fundamental causes of evil actions in human beings, namely, ignorance and delusion” (id.: 4).

In fact, Buddhist social or environmental activism is an established institution. “After all, the Buddhist notion of dependent-origination, the idea that all phenomena arise in dependence on an interwoven web of causes and conditions, resonates quite well with the basic tenets of deep ecology” (BLUMENTHAL 2006: 20). One could claim that Buddhist tradition implies a notion of personal responsibility towards other life that directs towards the individual engagement of each for being aware of and for preventing injustices menacing our communities. The activist mind is hence a typical trait of engaged Buddhists (cf. id.: 20; 21). Incidentally, the School for Wellbeing in our study derives its activism from engaged Buddhism, too; their founder is also founder of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, advocating different kinds of societal interests. He had warned of a future threat of consumerism coming up to Thai society many years ago (cf. R-12, p.46). Respondents mention that spirituality happens to link to environmental activism: Some temples set up preservation programmes (cf. R-22), monks maintain organic cultivations (cf. R-13).

As a consequence, respect for nature and environment can be religiously motivated which is partly comprised in the expert interviews (cf. Table 12). Organic farming demonstrates to some extent the presence of Buddhist principles: “So, in Buddhism, you caring about everything, not caring for only men but you caring for every living being, and also you caring for non-living being”

which alludes to the connectivity, harmony, interdependence of things in the Buddhists' world views (cf. R-8). A few respondents make restrictions: Organic movements have not much relation to Buddhism but rather to the actual needs of individuals (cf. R-19). An urban farming pioneer declares not being religious himself but sees a link via the King Rama IX's agricultural models which in turn take inspiration from Buddhist principles (cf. R-26). Buddhism does not affect the organic movement as a whole much but it does for some groups, such as Santi Asoke (cf. R-27). It plays a role for some organic practitioners, for others less, simple life definitely being one aspect of its outreach (cf. R-17). Other respondents see clear parallels between organic farming and spirituality (cf. R-28). R-23 dedicates a daily meditation to the plants at his farm. Frequently cited principles are simple life, mindfulness and a middle way of action (cf. R-7, R-16, R-25, R-32) – indeed, within the organic movements, common objectives are to search for basic lifestyles close to nature, often including meditation to achieve consciousness in daily life. For some, an entire lifestyle aspect of Buddhism, meditation, yoga, sometimes vegetarianism is connected to organic living (cf. R-7). Religions suggest simple life, respect for the nature and finding spirituality by linking with nature, finds R-25. Buddhism apparently contains notions about health: “the base of the health is self-help”. Religions offer medicinal knowledge, and healing can be attained through adequate health behaviour, eating and meditation (cf. R-8). Holistic medicine specialist R-27 therefore underlines that human life is composed of several elements earth, water, air, fire and others, which are in turn the elements of nature (cf. R-27). (Cf. Table 12)

A couple of moral recommendations are in Buddhist precepts – the *Sila* - that can be extracted from the expert interviews. These are to practice *metta*, a kind of service to society, to abstain from killing and from harming any beings and moreover, practice patience, empathy and modesty (no greed) (cf. R-32, R-22). The precept of not specifically harming may extend to environment. Being in fact equally in various religions, making religion a tool for ecological activism depends on their interpretation (cf. R-22). (Cf. Table 12)

Not harming translates into individuals' professions that they choose. R-32, after retiring from livestock breeding, needed to select a mindful work that practises Buddhism: Work was supposed to not harm anybody nor himself, to support himself as well as others, and finally, to reduce the three causes of human suffering greed, anger and ignorance (cf. R-32: #00:06:22-0#).

Transferred to the context of organic farming, several implications are mentioned. R-32 concludes that organic farming is suitable for those persons who follow the Dhamma. Organic business owner R-13 knows that Buddhist teachings suggest to “think good, do good, speak good” (R-13: #00:24:56-1#). In terms of organic food, this signifies a threefold consideration of providing good food for oneself and eventually for others (cf. id. *ibid.*). (Cf. Table 12)

Considering that PGS, green market, self-claim sale structures replace in great parts third-party certification in Thailand, one must wonder about the reliability of these commitments. Trust-based guarantee presupposes farmers' integrity and morals. Mutual knowledge is the base for trust in Thailand, thinks R-13. In general, the personal relationship between people here is important, thus trust-based consumer-producer or trader-producer relationships are effective and reliable if these personal links are given. The Thai notion of trust might derive from religion. Typical attitudes are mutual trust and support, and also to not blame others (cf. R-13: #00:19:56-6# - #00:20:31-9#). The mutual support after Buddhist thinking implies to do good to yourself, then to give good things to monks and eventually to other persons, according to the principle what you give will reflect to you (cf. R-13: #00:23:15-0#).

R-30 is Buddhist but has a different view on that, compared to many other respondents. Regardless of Buddhism, thinking that trust may be problematic for the very reason that blame is uncommon. A village farmer would probably not blame his neighbour who is cheating on the organic principles as for the prevailing “close-your-eyes” attitude (cf. R-30, p.3).

The “Dhamma, the teaching of the Buddha is the law of nature” and we “just follow the law of nature” says an NGO person (R-32: #01:17:06-3#). Another principle is the constant change that all elements are subjected to, implying that those elements not following the laws of nature are not determined to sustain (cf. id., ibid.).

#### 4.5.3 Spiritually motivated environmentalism – The Asoke community

Following the Buddhist precepts is especially relevant for some spiritual groups, for example Santi Asoke. Living up to one's full potential, not following one's basic unrefined conditioning, abstaining from drugs and other vices is enumerated by R-14; farming is considered a respectable profession (cf. R-14, Table 12). The Asoke community is one Buddhist group rigorously bound to the precepts of no killing and no harming, transferring them onto their organic cultivation style. The group was founded in 1975 by Bodhiraksa who had, as a lay person, gained wealth and fame in Thai television entertainment before becoming intrigued by black magic and eventually Buddhism (cf. HEIKKILÄ-HORN, 1997: 43). Santi Asoke as an independent group for itself with their own interpretations about Buddhist practice, had arisen from Bodhiraksa's critique against the pretentiousness of the *Sangha*, the clerical instance in Thailand, resulting in mutual reservation and even persecution during their initial phase (id.: 10). HEIKKILÄ-HORN (1997) argues for underlying political motives relating to the anti-military movements in the 1970s and Asoke's collective backing of the Palang Dharma Party. An ex-governor of Bangkok who is their prominent lay

supporter was elected to the parliament in 1992, when he started his campaign against the nomination as of then, pro-military Prime Minister candidate, which ended in the bloody demonstrations in May of the same year (cf. id.: 11, 13).

Santi Asoke's political involvement could be confirmed during field work in 2014: Santi Asoke adherents supported the protests and catered free meals to the protesters during the four-months lasting occupation of Bangkok which preceded another coup d'état in May 2014 by General Prayut Chan-o-cha. Their shop and attached restaurant in Chatuchak district broadcast a political channel.

In the respondent's narrative about involvement in the Asoke community, R-16 draws on distancing from the group after their political support had radicalised:

*“I was one of the group who started Khongthaptam. Khongthaptam [...] now is in the mob. [...] It was started a long time ago but after that, I feel something and I started to draw back. [...] My reason is their interest in politics and their, their way of fighting with – I think it's far from [...] the Lord Buddha's teaching. It's even against the Lord Buddha, for me” (R-16: #01:00:16-3# - #01:02:28-3#).*

In terms of farming, the groups has been taking inspiration from natural farming by Fukuoka among others although distancing from it when difficulties in transferring his methods and decrease in yields occurred (cf. R-14: #00:11:29-0#). Indeed, “in Thailand, [...] so many organic farming practices exist already. So they just follow the technique” (R-31: #00:27:49-1#). Some of their centres being located on very poor and degraded ground, the Asoke community needs to work on soil improvement and re-balancing depleted rural ecosystems. They work with crop and tree alteration to maintain biodiversity. Local varieties are meant to be more resistant to pest infestation. For the improvement of soils, different kinds of microorganisms or *Nam Mak*, a liquid fermentation from vegetable remaining, are widely applied and promoted. R-31, a monk in the community, refers to their farming concept as “toxic free farming” with similar principles to the organic farming. No chemicals are used which makes it “100% natural”. Each Asoke centre produces enough food for their local community, and sells their surplus in their shops. Thus, their concept comes close to the King's Sufficiency Economy. It sometimes involves the local neighbouring community that can receive their organic farming training and sell at the Asoke markets. Production at the centres includes food processing (oils, dried fruits, chilli pastes) and herbal medicine. Their medical products are sold nation-wide considering that many hospitals practice herbal treatments, and to neighbouring countries (cf. R-31: #00:08:53-8# - #00:15:22-2#).

Lifestyles in the community refer to Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* hence incorporate principles of simplicity, natural life, modesty and work as a meditation.

*“This place is not [...] profit-oriented, it's merit-oriented. So everything is for [...] the sake of benefiting the society” (R-31: #00:59:45-0#).*

They clearly declare anti-materialism (HEIKKILÄ-HORN 1997: 156) Also their temples do widely without any decoration or images of Buddha as considered as unnecessary or luxury, and their spiritual ceremonies are kept rather plain.

Each of their rural centres has farm land to provide for the community needs and to distribute the surplus among other the groups or their community shops, two of which are located in Bangkok. The centres include private living and community space, facilities to host guests and seminars, and often schools, medical services, a canteen, too. “The Asoke ideology, for its part, emphasises conservation an environmental values by encouraging ecologically sound agriculture, rejecting chemicals and recycling garbage” (HEIKKILÄ-HORN, 1997: 205).

Santi Asoke members' lifestyles are automatically sustainable in such way that they include self-sufficiency (in foods, medical care, education e.g.), sharing and community spirit, ecologically sensitive behaviour (natural farming, repair and recycling, minimalist consumption, resistance to agricultural machines, preference to all natural materials), karmic improvement.

Maintaining a strict vegetarian, mostly vegan diet is part of living the Buddhist precepts of no killing and no harming, thus a way of making merit: “Having animals killed by others for food is seen to be clearly against the first precept” (id.: 156), and milking or taking eggs would harm animals. Santi Asoke's rigorous commitment to these precepts translates into their way of farming, too: “Asoke are very active people to integrate organic farming with Buddhism” (R-8-5a-c: #00:17:35-2#). This also links to their interpretation of nature: Seeing humankind and nature as a unity assumes living according to the nature. Doing harm to the earth means in turn harming human livelihood. In farming, no-killing inherently excludes insecticides as those destroy the fauna in the fields, and no-harm excludes pesticides and fertilizers likewise as they harm soils and disturb ecosystems. Therefore, all farming at Santi Asoke is organic, or with no chemical inputs.



Image 24: Organic cultivation and herbal medicine production at the Srisa Asoke, Asoke community (from own source)



Image 25: Organic food outlets of the Santi Asoke in Bangkok (from own source)

#### 4.6 The urban farming scene – a movement within the movement

Our study intends a focus on Bangkok's city farming scene for being noteworthy constituent in the organic movements. In 4.1, we announce that it is a sub-movement within the organic movement, and at the time their key stakeholder. Field research on the urban farming activity in Bangkok reveals after short period the prevalence of groups advocating organic gardening and green urban living. We find that the local urban farming scene should be appraised in the context of a higher movement. This higher movement should appropriately be called an organic movement that addresses personal, societal, environmental concerns. *Cityfarm* is a positive movement in the field of organic agriculture (cf. R-13: #00:47:27-6#). It has future for it allows people better control over their food (cf. R-10: #01:08:53-3#). Urban farming is a sub-movement within another

movement for it is actually significant enough to be a movement for itself but embedded in the motives and ideologies of organic movements. Thus, it is urban-centred but connected to rural issues. Beyond, their stakeholders overlap, and some urban gardeners are engaged in other pro-organic groups, for instance, those advocating for re-insertion of young organic farmers into rural villages, those advocating PGS-based organic farming systems to enable rural organic farmers and the organic consumers. A reason for why urban farming overlaps with organic farming might lie in its general purpose and cause, not centred on food security but on lifestyle issues, about how to make healthier food environments possible against the low quality of conventional foods and pollution in the megacity.

The urban farmers encountered during research belong only to small extent to the generation of long-term professional farmers who were able to maintain their urban fields while the urban encroachment advanced. Instead, most of them accompany a new generation of urban farming which derives their motivations globally from lifestyle issues. The Thai *Cityfarm* Project (cf. chapter 4.6.3) is a network for urban farmers representing this new generation quite comprehensively, gathering most urban farmer stakeholders of our research. We also know that it is an offspring of one major sustainable agriculture NGO – which probably is one reason for Thai *Cityfarm* to promote the organic gardening to the city. Starting off from organic farming in the rural regions, the NGO tried to get hold of a niche in the city, too, initially aiming at empowering urban poor households. At the same time was the encounter with our young urban garden pioneer who has education in organic farming. “[W]e promote the sustainable agriculture and also organic farming, too. But when we start to promote this in [...] urban area, it's look like we [...] promote the [...] city farming as a tool, as a tool for the urban people to learn [...] what is organic farming” (G-1, p. 2) – urban farming becomes a tool for the demonstration of organic methods. It is added, in the recent past, organic farming has not necessarily been practised on urban plots but was now found to be the more flexible technique for the urban garden environments limited in space, for being simpler and more appealing to the general public (cf. G-1, p.2).

Motives for urban farming resonate with those affirmed for the general organic movement in chapter 4.3.4 (health, environment, community, economic benefit, lifestyle, cf. Table 5). To give an example, a low-income community grows their own vegetables to prevent health and money issues. Having rural backgrounds, the community members enjoy the gardening activity. The community garden is well received and strengthens community living. Their skills and health related knowledge are shared with other communities, too. For R-26, urban farming opened opportunity to meet like-minded people, and appreciates reaching out to more people and widen the organic community (cf. Table 5). Urban farming is for many about creating themselves lifestyles, and in a way identity.

Besides, there are economic benefits especially through processing harvest, and the prospect of community activation through food exchanges, even between rural and urban organic grower groups (cf. R-17, Table 5). Thai *Cityfarm* draws upon a range of motivations combining health, mental health, recreation with education, to open people's eyes on the opportunities of urban farming, to create food networks in which growers can also link with the consumers and eventually to advance urban farming to a profitable business level (cf. G-1, R-1, Table 5). There are *Cityfarm* members who want to grow their own produce because their children have food allergies. Vegetable gardening has potential to recall neighbourhood organisation in societies; further to be included in school curricula as “edible education” or as tool to reduce food expenditure (cf. R-1, p. 21).

A range of motives for, purposes and attributes of urban farming are elucidated in our expert interviews (cf. Table 13). Urban farming is one possible approach to happiness in the urban context, and is actually easier to realise when organic (cf. G-1). There is vision of self-sufficiency behind including apart from food production elements of solar energy use and waste water recycling; natural materials like cow manure, compost, straw are preferred (cf. R-1). Urban gardens and learning centres raise awareness (cf. R-23) for inspiring other people to grow kitchen gardens at their homes (cf. R-38, C-2). In fact, it does not need to require much daily dedication (cf. R-38), and in case no land is available, terraces, rooftops, pots, hanging items, shelves and other spare spots may serve (R-8, R-38, R-43). In reality, especially elderly and retired people seem to adopt urban gardening with ease (cf. R-10). As factors influencing the urban farming consciousness, respondents quote exposure to contaminated foods and pollution (cf. R-10), proceeding illness, allergies to food additives (cf. R-11), stressful lifestyle, depression, loneliness in the city (cf. R-32), prominent capitalism and unhealthy society (cf. R-30). It may be read from this, health and lifestyle issues are typical for the organic scene, as both correlate. Effectively, the urban gardening trend induces many to rethink their lifestyles and to move to the countryside. Referring to Bangkok, one respondent describes the reality,

*“there's so many people going there, for school or for like early jobs in their 20s, 30s, right? And then they come to this point whether it's a question of if they gonna just stay there and like have the family there and retire there and all that, or they gonna do something else” (R-21: #00:32:08-5#).*

“Urban agriculture is a mega trend” (G-1, p.5) but despite growing popularity – the *Cityfarm* pioneer appears regularly on television (cf. *ibid.*) – the city farming concept is deficiently perceived. Assuming that it can function just as rural agriculture systems, many academics ignore the necessity

to adapt to the urban settings, and few see it actually as a sort of city metabolism, hence few integrate urban farming in university curricula (cf. G-1, p.16). From the side of ministries and institutions “we just see a very shallow [...] action” whereas they “should be the main actors [...] to support about this” (G-1, p.15).

#### 4.6.1 Scope and locations

A local attitude is to cultivate some edible plants where ever the locations allow for it, traditionally also in the urban environment (cf. G-1, R-17, Table 13). Urban farming in Bangkok nowadays deals with challenges but also numerous advantages.

It deals concretely with available space, land ownership, price and accessibility, water and soil pollution, urban climate, different forms of application, resistance from authorities or private people. Overall, there is little space for urban gardens in the city centre (cf. R-1, G-2), but this is where people can make use of rooftops, balconies, small backyards or pot planting (cf. R-38, R-43). Dense urbanisation hampers authentic farming in Bangkok (cf. R-17); individuals can grow around their houses though – herbs and vegetables for the home use in fact little space – communities may find a location in their neighbourhood (cf. R-8). Community gardens in Bangkok find space in the suburbs, around temples or on factory sites; R-1 states:

*“for example [...] in a Buddhist temple, a Muslim temple and catholic temple, they grow vegetables and we have a volunteer activity like this [...]. And [...] some factory, some office, like if you know Colgate, [...] toothpaste” (R-1, p.22).*

Urban farming is possible in the suburbs of Bangkok even though urbanisation progresses in the typical boroughs of mixed land use like Taling Chan in the western part of the city; and there are suitable plots where residents combine for instance planting with garbage management and community development (Prawet district, e.g.) (cf. R-17). (Cf. Table 13)

Bangkok is expanding into its suburban districts at rapid pace, just as the local agricultural surface reduces, with the effect that food production in vicinity gradually disappears (cf. R-34, Table 13). This resonates with R-2's observation that there was not much farming around Bangkok because land prices are high. Land prices, as described in chapter 2.4.2, are an obstacle to the multiplication of urban gardens that need much space – the economic outcome of an urban farm can realistically not cover the investment costs for acquiring land in Bangkok or close by. R-1 says about himself and his gardening neighbour, “we are crazy people. Land prices are high so we could

sell our land for much money” (cf. field notes farms and sites 04/03/2013). A community garden in a low-income community is unlikely to extend as the existing area is needed for residence (cf. G-2). High land prices are one factor of land accessibility for urban farmers, but there are also restraining issues with land ownership (cf. R-1, G-1): Most gardens are on private land, but some on claimed abandoned land (cf. G-1), which generally seems to exist. A series of Sososo funded urban gardening projects counts significant loss when they cannot be continued for reasons of unsolved land ownership conditions (cf. field notes MCE-06/03/2013). For the landless urbanites, the legal access to potential garden plots is troublesome, particularly as the Bangkok municipality does not provide regulations favouring land attribution to the non-land owners (cf. R-17). For tenants, it is not given that the actual owner accepts the agricultural use – “some people cannot grow here [...] because the land owner don't agree about” it – or that already set up gardens can be maintained: “The big point I think is the land ownership. We cannot make sure [...] we can take care this land in a longer time” as the “land owner, they want to manage by themselves” among other reasons (G-1, p.12). (Cf. Table 13)

There are a number of environmental factors Bangkok's urban farmers need or potentially will need to deal with: Water can be a limiting factor in terms of availability as well as quality (cf. R-9, Table 13). The study has found that once ubiquitous canals for watering have been cut or covered (cf. chapter 2.6) – a long-term business-scale urban farm site in an otherwise residential area in the outer Eastern centre of Bangkok probably is one of the last remaining of its kind, being water-fed by irrigation canals (cf. field notes farms and sites Khlong Tan, data CD). In contrast, R-7 still maintain the family's traditional house garden, though the old irrigation canal travelling through the neighbourhood has been disconnected in the course of nearby construction works (cf. field notes MCE-07/05/2013, data CD). Large-scale rain water collection requires ponds or tanks which consume space and electricity for water pumping, tap water contains chlorine which could harm the plants (cf. R-26: #00:27:33-9#); waste water is also used for irrigating urban gardens but should be further examined for toxic contamination to appraise suitability (cf. R-1, p.23). Soils are possibly contaminated (cf. G-2), for example as a consequence of intensive farming and other, industrial issuances in peri-urban area (cf. R-9). Moreover, general urban pollution (air, water, ground) and garbage volume are problematic (cf. R-17, G-2) (cf. Table 13). An urban gardener feels climate related challenges with periods of increasing heat and unpredictable rainfall (cf. field notes farms and sites Laksi community gardens n°4, data CD). This poses limitations in terms of growing in the city: There is a space-related limit to urban farming, “they can't really grow everything” (R-22: #00:04:04-1#), hence plant varieties require adjustment to the local urban environment (cf. R-8) or complementation with organic products from rural production via direct consumer-producer

cooperation (cf. R-10). Urban gardening may require constant occupation, and finding the right supplies, for example soil, water, mulching materials, and predators can be challenging (cf. R-26); some projects are not able to sustain (cf. G-1) – “You have to work, all the time [...] and it's change all the time” (G-1, p.12). However, there is opportunity. A sustainable garden can work out in Bangkok if the farm is not too big (cf. R-26), it may combine planting area with a fish pond, mushroom cultivation, kitchen waste composting and organic fertilizer production (cf. G-2), and it may provide ingredients on daily basis (cf. R-43). Towards the edges of the city, where bigger plots are practicable, planting patterns can almost imitate the rural farming: A private gardener at the Laksi district in Bangkok is familiar with rural farming and has studied agriculture hence brings according skill and knowledge (cf. field notes farms and sites Laksi community gardens, n°4, data CD). The rooftop garden and learning centre at Laksi district is already giving a good example in demonstrating opportunities for urbanites through urban gardening (cf. R-12). (Cf. Table 13)

*“[C]ity farming will be our landscape, of the city, modern city. Nowadays, there are rooftop garden. It's small space in between you grow vegetable. I think that might be a future of how people have their food consumption” (R-12, p.34).*

Moreover, urban gardening has social functions: “some benefit from our project is like a family activity. Some hospital use as a therapy programme [...] for [...] psychological disorder patient” (R-1 p.21). Rooftop or terrace gardens and backyard trees contribute to an ecological urban layout, with the potential to enhance the city greening and climate (cf. R-9, R-11), especially local micro climates. A major potential lies beyond in the usage of the peri-urban space (cf. R-18): conventional farms could be turned into organic farms to supply the city from optimal distance (cf. R-9). As institutional support is still missing, more impact needs to go out from municipal policies, and also the mass of the citizens themselves in the future (cf. R-27). (Cf. Table 13)

So what is a challenge for growing? What is a restraint? What does it make hard to grow organic? What are the reasons why people give up for example? Possible challenges are time and space: People live in smaller units compared to before, for example in condominiums, and need to adjust planting to the urban conditions. Growing takes time; and the output might be small compared to the efforts (cf. R-11, p.8/9).

## Locations

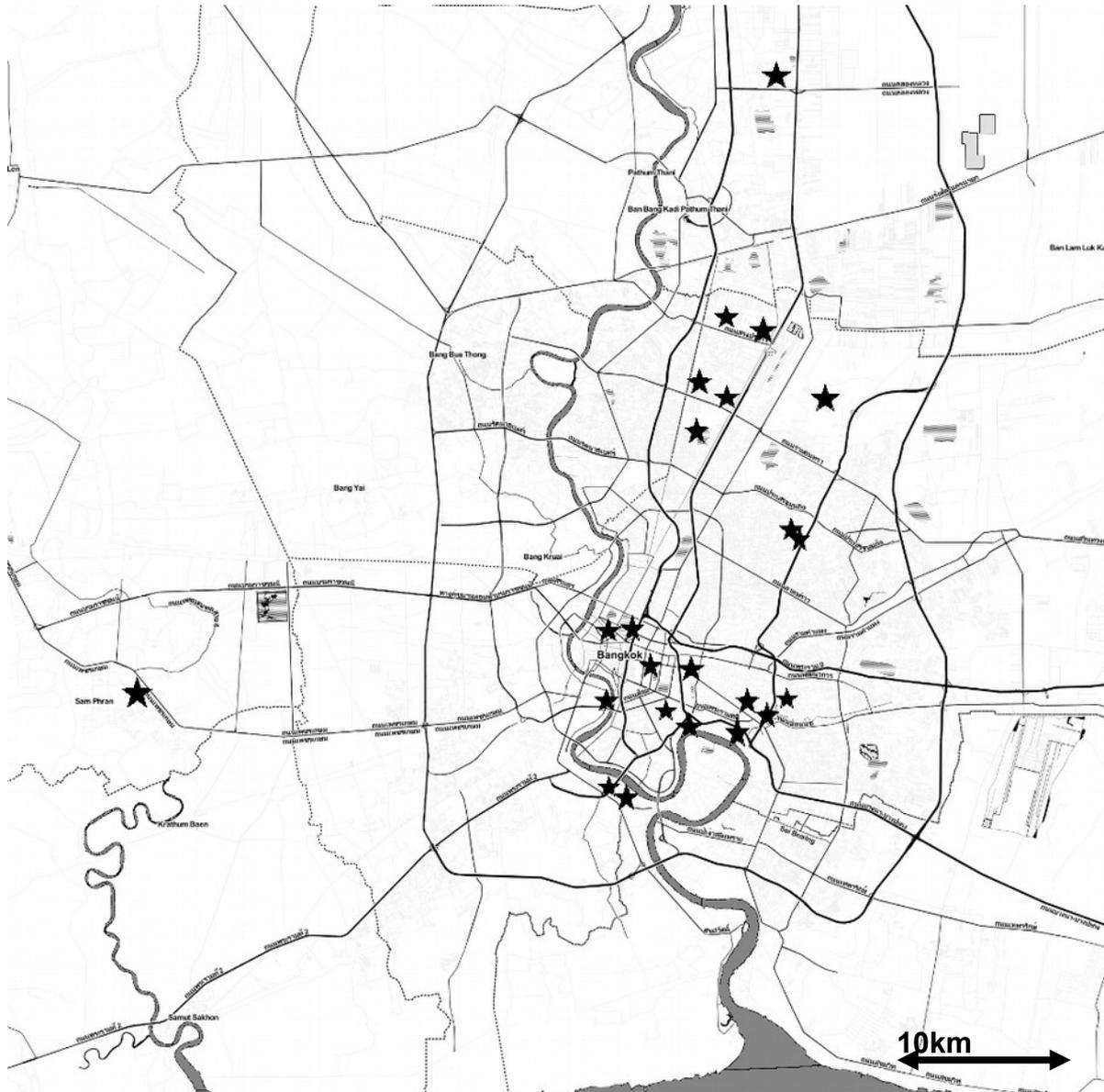


Figure 6: Locations of urban and peri-urban gardens and farm sites (from own source based on Stamen Design)

This map shows all urban farming sites and urban gardens that have been visited during the field research. While 13 sites are located within the central areas of Bangkok, eight are in the northern outskirts, and two in the peri-urban, reaching the adjoining the provinces. The sites vary according to size and nature, as there is generally less space available in the city centre, and houses are more likely to have backyards the further they are located outwards. However, some of the central sites are private town houses or vacant lots, too.

The following map shows the central city more detailed. Most sites are independent of each other; there is no typical dispersion.

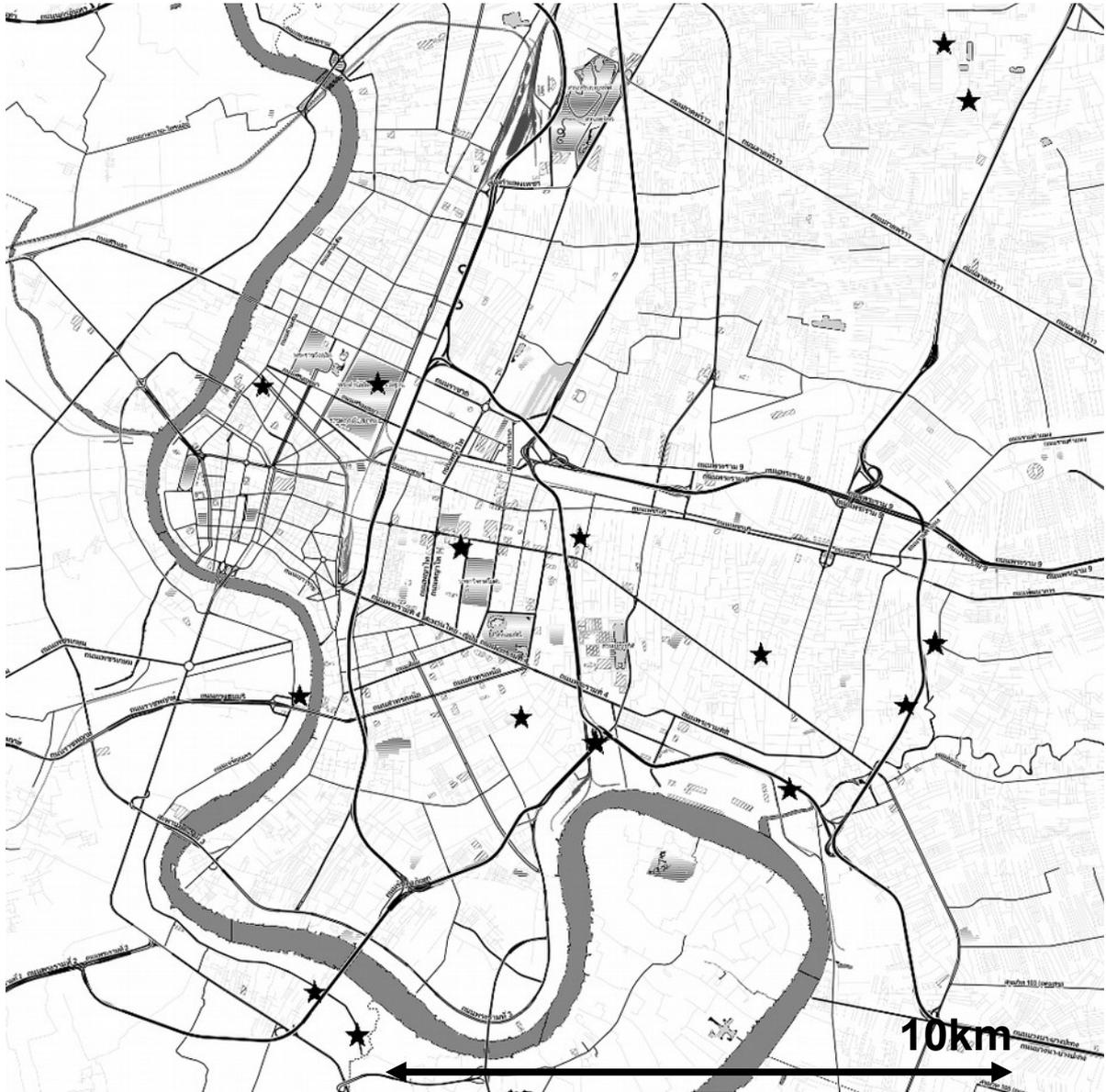


Figure 7: Inner-urban garden and farm sites  
(from own source based on Stamen Design)

#### 4.6.2 Three waves of the urban farming

A key informant narrates the unfolding of the organic urban farming scene in Bangkok. The contemporary movement has evolved in three waves:

*“The first wave is after World War II. After World War II, we have a campaign from the government, because at that time, the prize of the food is very high. But after, we rehabilitate our economic. It's happen again after the economic crisis. In around 15 years ago. And at that time is*

*the emerging of the green movement, we have a lot of green shop. And it's the emerging of the [first health shop and social enterprise, St.62]. It's like, the second wave, it is not come from the government sector; it's come from the people society, like a NGO, like a environmentalist. The emerging of [St.62], the emerging of [a magazine for natural farming, St.74], two important organisation with office. At that time, they try to sell the organic vegetable into the city, and they want to promote to the urban people; there are some trends of the macrobiotic. [St.62] and [St.74] promote a lot how to grow vegetable in your home: [St.62] used a land in the city and set up a community garden, for the people who wants to join growing vegetable. After that, they already start off the government sector; too, especially Laksi, Laksi Rooftop Garden. It's a government officer building. It's like a district office. This is a second wave of Thai City farm or Thai urban gardening. And some of the urban people who learn how to grow vegetables from many resources that I say to you, they start to plan to be a organic farmer in a rural area, middle class people. They are a Bangkokian, and after they learn how to grow vegetable in Bangkok, they test a little bit in a small area and increase the area year by year and now they turned to be the very big name of the organic farmer in Thailand. And this is the one of example that relate with the second wave of urban farming in Thailand. And after that until now, around four years ago, we have the third wave or the third campaign about the promoting of growing vegetable on your own by the movement of many people, from the second wave like the Laksi Rooftop Garden. They grow for 15 years ago now, and maybe now it's 17, 18, I don't remember exactly. But they grow a rooftop garden, they are very famous in Thai and also in international level too, because Food and Agriculture Organisation, they gave a prize to them to be a one of inspiration in the city. So this is the one of good action from the government side. And at that time, I start to grow my vegetable in my garden, too" (R-1, p.1-6, edited).*

We extract from the narrative that urban gardening in Thailand, apart from the traditionally attached garden patches around Thai houses, has been promoted since the post World War II period with changing objectives. The first campaign brought in urban gardens as tool for individual households to balance the country's economic instability. While this first campaign is a government initiative, the second one in reaction to the economic crisis beginning in 1997 was ushered in by civil society. This second wave of urban gardening coincided with the unfolding of the green movement or organic food movement during which a food cooperative and social enterprises began to link rural organic farmers with urban consumers, NGO activism became relevant and the organic food topic introduced to a broader public. To be precise, this second campaign not only coincided with but was integral element of the emerging organic movements. The third, a contemporary

generation of urban gardening in Bangkok departed from the variety of stakeholders identified during preceding chapters. The oldest of this contemporary wave is probably the governmental Laksi District office, actually the last remaining site of the second generation, post-crisis campaign of the early 2000s.

The narrative contains notion about twofold tendency regarding Bangkok's urban gardens: On the one hand, urbanisation continuously forces back the traditional urban house gardens, on the other hand, a new and independent urban gardening scene emerges that is an urban co-product of organic farming movements. “Cityfarm, we founded all together, and next month, I think, we will [talk about] the PGS movement in Thailand” (R-10: #00:51:30-3#), says a stakeholder from an organic agriculture research and funding network about the participation of different institutions and private persons in the movement. Proceeding with: urban gardening slowly accompanied urbanisation, and finds acceptance particularly among persons about to retire. Regular trainings are happening at the various learning centres (cf. R-10: #01:07:49-8#).

#### The impact of the Bangkok flood events 2011

A great flood struck Thailand in 2011 and inundated Bangkok for three months. The flood disrupted production and supply of commodities and foods, causing actual shortage, and stark price elevation; drinking water especially became a scarce product in some areas. The flood had an impact on local ecosystems and on agricultural landscapes. Soil constitution changed in affected areas after the long-term exposure to the waters, accumulating debris and industrial effluents. The imbalanced farm lands became prone to unpredictable and uncontrollable pests in the aftermath: “A lot of pests, and some of them cannot fight the pest at that time” (G-1, p.13). The abundant orchards in Bangkok's adjoining province Nakhon Pathom were notably affected. Particularly the region's pomelo plantations were ruined and the local pomelo gene pool nearly extinct. The following period faced the reality of insufficient saplings to replant (cf. TANGWISUTIJIT 2015). The event demonstrates above all the vulnerability that farmers are exposed to.

G-2's community in a northern Bangkok district stayed flooded over months. The ladies representing the community recall how they swam during two months to a government station to pick up free meals for the neighbourhood. At the time, the water was black and evil-smelling. The rent for a boat was very expensive (cf. G-2: #00:57:43-3#). In fact, soil quality collapsed with the waters banked with garbage; it took three consequent growing periods to recover the soil before being able to start over planting (cf. G-2: #00:50:44-5#).

Also a private garden of the Laksi initiative remained flooded at one meter (cf. field notes farms and sites, Laksi community gardens n<sup>o</sup>2, data CD).

A *Cityfarm* group was engaged in activities to help the flood victims: They made microorganism dirt balls and distributed them in the flood affected areas where insalubrious waters had banked. The balls contain indigenous microorganisms that help purifying waters. Another activity was to grow vegetables around their houses to share it among the affected people, and also to demonstrate how to cook on solar cookers. After the waters withdrew, the group was active with a seed sharing action for urbanites to start over food cultivation, and urban gardening instructions (cf. R-1, p.18). At the Khlong Toei District Office, their terrace cultivation was already giving vegetables. During the flood though, the gardeners delayed their harvest as long as possible, waiting to give them out when people in the neighbourhood were in need of it. Like the *Cityfarm* group, they made use of their home made bio liquid fertilizer for water sanitation (cf. R-40: #01:07:07-9#; #01:10:25-4#).

Indeed, more urbanites gained interest in urban farming as survival strategy, as they had just experienced a critical situation (cf. R-17, Table 16).

*“During the flood, I was afraid that all [...] don't want to grow. Because it flooded and most of them have to leave the house and travel to the rural area, to the province. Escape the water. But after the flooding, I, we found that all so many city people interested in agriculture because they think they have to survive” (R-17: #00:18:28-6#).*

The flood was definitely and extreme situation, an influential event for many urbanites (cf. R-26, Table 10). Those who were able to left the city to stay with family members in the countryside. R-26, whose house was unaffected, hosted his mother during the flood. His narrative reveals how his occupation as city farmer arose from those days:

*“And when she stay here and she start cooking things, cooking like really good food from the plants that grow by itself, of the backyard. And it was like amazing food. So, I think that was a quite a good life. Before that, I have a football pitch which I, I'm a bit bored of it because I have to fix the grass all the time, and I was thinking to invest more in making it artificial grass, artificial lawns. [...] So, I sit down with my mum and doing nothing because it was like the rainy season, we have to close down the pitch, three months, during the rainy season to fix the grass. And we have time watching television, so we see people growing things, see Jon Jandai. And we see Phi Um, she's a, a star. Um Siriyakorn. Ah, she grow rice, she buy a land in Supanburi and she grow rice and that is very motivating. [...] So, I found, might be nice if I start growing things. Because, my mum started growing vegetables*

*at the, at, in in a very small piece of land at the back of the house. She start growing like four by four meters. Growing what, very small. And we start eating good food. So, the whole thing, it motivates. My dad talk to me all the time, he want to grow organic. [...] So, everything comes at the same time. Jon Jandai is on the television at the same time as my mum is here and we see what the King does, and my father was talking. So, everything just pushed me and I start growing first banana in the football pitch. And I start doing bananas and start designing things. [...] It was the situation that brings everything together” (R-26: #00:02:29-8# - #00:06:13-5#).*

Also the pomelo farmers at Nakhon Pathom province reacted to the disaster: Considering changing weather normalities, farmers need to think ahead, preserve seeds and rely on their own local sources (cf. TANGWISUTIJIT 2015).

These details show the impacts of an extreme weather event that possibly contributed to the further evolution of urban gardening in Bangkok.

#### 4.6.3 *Suan Pak Kon Mueng* – Thai *Cityfarm* Project

“The City Farm Project is an exciting and relatively new initiative that has emerged as central to urban transformation in Bangkok. The ‘city of angels’ is taking steps to becoming a city of farmers!” can we read in an article (Mekong Commons 2014). Most urban gardens found in Bangkok happen to be members of the Thai *Cityfarm* Project (*Suan Pak Kon Mueang*). It belongs to the third generation of urban gardeners in Bangkok and was initiated by NGOs and R-1 (cf. chapter 4.3.1) whose university studies had led to work in the rural development with local organic farming communities before (cf. R-1, p.6). In 2013, the project is managed by three full time coordinators; a main activity are regular gardening workshops held at six learning centres in different boroughs, of which one is the Laksi Rooftop Garden and another one a mobile unit. There is a focus on techniques for organic growing (space-adaptive design, seeding, planting, composting, organic fertilizer making) mixed with ideas of self-sufficiency, to allow urbanites to learn how urban gardening can provide food security. It includes a “green living course” too, where people learn about soap and detergent making from garden plants (cf. R-1, p.12, 13, 20).

A *Cityfarm* coordinator said in 2013, the project is still small-scale although many persons are interested in their work, and many became active members already (cf. G-1, Table 13).

*“I think, Thai Cityfarm project is just small project and we work just only, this our third*

*year. So, I think we still in a small [...] position and [...] also trying to connect with different issue, [...] like health and mental health and school [...]. But is not the real network yet [...], we still some kind of trying to find some best practice or model” (G-1, p.4).*

An estimated number of 50000 persons support the network as actual farmers, network members or using their social media platform as to discuss the topic (cf. Mekong Commons 2014). However, there is no complete recording on members as it is overall difficult to tell who are active gardeners and who are passive or virtual members (cf. field notes MCE-06/03/2013, data CD).

The project includes gardens of different range – mostly private gardens, a couple of community gardens, public gardens, maintained full-time or as a sideline by gardeners of different social situations, in different parts of the city or the peri-urban areas. Most of them are “weekend farmer” (G-1, p.12) who are still working full-time. After what could be observed, they follow organic farming techniques as much as allows the urban environment. Thai *Cityfarm* also has community activity taking place partially on via internet platforms, and partially on the occasion of regular open meetings joined mostly by core members. A monthly picnic day is organised where members bring and share home-made food and exchange seeds, seedlings or information (cf. R-1, p.19).

A yearly forum and festival draws attention on the group, although R-1 regrets that there is hardly any attention from academia (cf. R-1, p.20).

They receive funds from Thai Health Promotion Foundation, and have the small workshop fee as an extra income (cf. R-1, p.19). Starting from 2009, *Cityfarm* had an initiative together with Sososo where urban communities could submit their proposals and receive a small fund for their gardening projects. 50 participated in the first year but this reduced to 30 in the third year due to missing capacity to train all gardeners accordingly (cf. R-1, p.8, 9).

R-17 along with the NGO co-founder and an umbrella organisation of *Cityfarm* talks about her experience:

*“Our experience during 4 years. At first, we think we focus to the food, self-sufficiency to the city people. And we found they have more self-sufficiency on food, but not only the food. We found the other like the garbage management. And also the, we found that this activity is related to [...] people who have [...] mental problem” (R-17: #00:29:09-2#).*

G-1 describes the urban gardening scene as a tree of which its core is Thai *Cityfarm* and its branches are all the new learners. Those gardeners who are already successful are the fruits of this

tree who might be able to inspire further persons by their positive experience. They add, the group is lucky as they happened to emerge in the right moment, and to have the financial backing of Sososo. (Cf. G-1, p.6)

At present, the project is steadily growing as a group and reaching out to additional activities. In the interview, G-1 explained:

*“when I start to do this project, I predict that [...] maybe in third year or in fourth year, [...] Cityfarm, [...] we meet some point with the some work of another network [...] because we have to grow up [...] to increase the topic, not only a gardening level” (G-1, p.9).*

They now go beyond this to solidifying the alternative food systems in and around the city, seizing on the inclusion of peri-urban agriculture as potential source for organic food. There are farmers' trainings to give advice during their conversion period towards organic practices, and organisation of product outlets, partially in collaboration with local universities and other networks for green markets. There is an aspect of empowerment too, as farmers often lack the confidence to grow organically, to organise their marketing to contact possible customers (cf. R-1, p. 25).

Their outreach has been growing since the network was founded in 2009. It seems as if newly acquired urban gardeners automatically become *Cityfarm* members. It seems therefore the contemporary representative of urban gardening in Bangkok and at the time promoter of organic practices, health food systems and green urban living while connecting to the peri-urban and rural space as well. Thai *Cityfarm* raises awareness (cf. R-23, Table 13). The network has above all the function of the connector of all different stakeholders from institutional to private gardener level. A couple of new learning centres became *Cityfarm* members, for example a university co-organised one on the rooftop of a shopping mall right in the centre of Bangkok, and another temporary garden in the Sukhumvit Road area. Furthermore, it is relatively famous thanks to public presence in media or at fairs. For example, it is represented at two annual fairs in the field of health and food, but also more commercial lifestyles fairs as explained in chapter 4.4.6. The network organisers are engaged in fortifying their presence by organising their own small events, too. “But after Thai *Cityfarm* support the learning centres, is growing better [...] than the past because it depends on the mass [...] communication, too” (G-1, p.7). There is knowledge of, and links to the international urban scene too. G-1 are eager to widen the city farm movement from a rather recreational purpose to a level where urban farming can actually be business opportunity. To reach this, government policies need to play a role in making abandoned plots available for cultivation and to involve more poor communities (cf. G-1, p. 29).

Although some exist, community gardens are not very common; the majority of city gardens is private (cf. G-1, p. 10).

#### 4.6.4 The urban gardeners – selected projects and profiles

With reference to the sketch map in 4.6.1, we would like to present next a range of urban gardens of different scales and purposes encountered during field research. We observe different categories of urban gardens, among others private households, educational, institutional, business, learning centre, community, traditional.

##### **N°1 Private backyard garden and learning centre**

The epitome of urban garden pioneers maintains his garden at his concrete backyard. The garden became like a prototype for followers, with typical brick-ringed raised beds and bucket plantings. Located in an urbanised former village, the street has mainly detached houses with backyards. Following an integrated farming approach adapted to the urban environment, he uses organic inputs, like his own compost, plant-based fertilizers and mulching with straw. On about 40m<sup>2</sup> of garden surface grow fruit trees, flowers, chilli, herbs, lettuce and different kinds of most leafy vegetables. There is space for seedlings and fertilizer production, and a covered area where workshops are hold. (Cf. R-1 field notes interview situation, data CD)

##### **N°2 Private house garden**

This 1 rai big garden is on a former football pitch, hence has, uncommonly for the urban gardens, soil as ground – a layer of over 2 metres. Starting off in 2012 with 20 chicken, five banana varieties and local trees, the owner calls his garden an organic experiment. He follows the self-sufficiency concept, growing for his own need first, giving away or selling the surplus; he sees processing as a tool to generate income. At another site visit over a year later, the plants looked lush and the soil had improved markedly thanks to compost layering and mulching; the area for chicken keeping was also extended. There is a field in the middle of the garden which is sunflower field during spring time and rice field during rice season between August and December. The grown-up banana plants give a big yield, forest trees are set in the back of the property, fruit trees, herbs and vegetables on beds are spread over the remaining land. Major crop curiously is Italian basil which the owner processes into pesto to deliver it to his customers – the pesto business is decent. In contrast to its environment – more and more residential buildings arising – the garden seems to come close to an intact biotope. In fact, snakes and many birds are around his house which can be problematic when they eat the rice harvest, or kill the chicken. Whereas no watering is necessary during rainy season, it can be troublesome during dry season. (Cf. R-26, R-26 field notes interview situation, data CD)

### **N°3 Urban demonstration farm in dense high price neighbourhood**

The farm includes plants and animals which is unique among the urban garden sites in Bangkok and is in fact a curious undertaking. Apart from a wet rice field in the back of the property, there are raised vegetable beds in the manner of the prototype from N°1, herbs in pots, and beyond chicken and goats, rabbits, and a fish pond. The site is demonstration site and event space for a number of activities. Farmers' markets are held on some weekends, otherwise workshops, cultural and informational events. A coffee shop is open daily for which natural materials are used. Set next to a dense high price residential street in the Sukhumvit Road area, the garden is well received by local residents and other Bangkokians alike. The concept is really to raise awareness about the reality of rural landless farmers specifically among urbanites who do not have this issue. Managed by an NGO, there is a main objective to achieve revision of the Thai law about land access in rural areas. The foundation who was given the property is obliged to rent the land for educational or charitable purpose; the former owner's remains are placed in a tomb on the property – an obligation to leave it undeveloped. (Cf. R-38 field notes interview situation, data CD)

### **N°4 Rooftop garden on a hotel in the old town centre**

Set up on the rooftop of three-story hotel in the old town, this garden is inspired by the Laksi Rooftop Garden. The owners, a young family have set up their hotel with a slow life concept, are choosing organic ingredients for the catering, and natural materials in design. Their background is in environmental education which explains their business focus on this. Also the backyard is greened by trees. The garden had about 60m<sup>2</sup> surface with eight raised beds and containers in which grow herbs, corn, limes, leafy vegetables among others. There is a compost that recycles the kitchen wastes. The yield are for the hotel catering or home consumption. A challenge is still though that growing larger amounts might exceed both, maintenance capacity and load of the building. The garden has an educational and recreational purpose and involves hotel guests in small gardening activities or cooking classes. The owners are beyond ambitious to involve the neighbours in growing kitchen gardens for themselves or the hotel. Neither has succeeded thus far. (Cf. field notes R-11 interview situation, data CD)

### **N°5 Backyard garden for home consumption and sale, with attached learning centre and restaurant**

This backyard garden in residential neighbourhood is set on a parking lot and serves home consumption, sale of surplus harvest and learning centre. The owner who is renting the plot combines her business with an organic vegetarian restaurant with small attached health shop. As an extra, she runs a CSA distribution programme. The organic products are collected from different farms and packed in ecological materials in a

refrigerated storage on-site, then delivered to 95 members. At the time of a previous visit almost two years before, the number of CSA customers nearly quadrupled. Her own and occasionally her neighbour's produce contribute, too. Her second occupation are the gardening, crafting, cooking, other do-it-yourself workshops that take place in the garden. Especially children groups from kindergartens and elementary school come for nature and gardening experience. Set on a concrete surface, the garden has container beds using recycled materials such as boards or bamboo, pending crops, rice bags, baskets and many, smaller containers. There are several compost sites and vermiculture. The site has become renowned as one of major urban gardening learning centres; the owner now employs a gardener, and gets volunteers. (Cf. field notes farms sites 28/03/2013; MCE-12/12/2014, data CD)

#### **N°6 Terrace garden at an international hospital for therapeutical purpose**

This garden on the sixth floor of an international hospital right in the centre of Bangkok gathers about 35 members of staff from the different departments to participate in garden work. The organic garden with attached compost has been established with the help of the *Cityfarm* network. There is a purpose of strengthening teamwork and the staff's satisfaction. Patients are meant to find recreation there.

#### **N°7 University designed demonstration rooftop garden on central shopping mall**

It is the most recent of our case studies, opened in 2015. Located on the seventh floor rooftop of a new shopping mall in central *Siam* area, this urban gardening demonstration belongs to and has been designed by a local university. Gardening workshops and expert talks are organised here. Vegetable and rice beds are laid out mostly in slant terraces, but there are no shade trees or other plants to prevent strong sunlight. The garden demonstrates an ecological function: As the setting is in the central urban area where high density builds up heat clusters, rooftop greening can help decreasing the local temperature. Engineers have been involved in designing a waterproof membrane under the garden, and future water recycling from the building. The water pumps are partially run by solar panels. The site has more of an ecological building design that a sustainable garden; though demonstrates possibilities to improve local micro-climates, and appeals to many visitors, among them school classes. (Cf. Field notes farms and sites 24/05/2015, data CD)

#### **N°8 Community garden in low-income neighbourhood**

This project is a garden for communal use in a resettlement area of formerly homeless persons. The group is well connected to a major social and environmental NGO in Bangkok and national network of low-income residents. Size of this community garden is limited because space is needed for residency. At the time of the site visit, the beds are still in recovery from the big flood in 2011 which had covered the area for two month

and left soil damaged from the polluted waters. Plants still do not grow well. However, the fish pond with fish for consumption is active again, and banana trees together with chillies, herbs and some vegetables are growing. The community has the plan to build a food distribution centre on the plot, and a mushroom cultivation. Although the garden is open to the community, it is mainly several gardeners who maintain the site. However, anybody can come and pick ingredients for free. The gardeners, a group of ladies, grow organically, using liquid plant fertilizers. Their motivation for growing the garden is mainly health care although they are able to have a slight economic benefit from it. Seemingly, the activity brings above all well-being to the residents. (Cf. field notes farms and sites 09/09/2014; G-2 interview notes, data CD)

#### **N°9 Long-term, family-based commercial urban farm**

This farm is the only non-organic one among our case studies but is noteworthy as it is also one of the last remaining commercial farms family-run over three generations. Situated near eastern outbound Pattanakan Road on 20000m<sup>2</sup>, the property belongs to relatives of the current farmers and would be able to sell at high price. They farm it in a community and rent out one patch to another farmer. The land is surrounded by residential buildings, and a big road is visible in the backdrop. The farmers grow typical Thai market vegetables in the traditional canal-dyke-pattern that date back to his grandparents; the canals have fish and shrimp for the home consumption. He needs to buy chemical fertilizers from outside and regrets high inputs costs, though thanks to decent plant diversity, not much pesticides are needed. He had considered growing organically but found that sale is more difficult. In contrast to that, he never sprays the trees and herbs that his family picks. The produce is sold at a local fresh market and to the wholesale market, but prices are very competitive. As his production costs are higher than for monoculture grown products from the province, he needs to ask for higher prices. Middle men use to cut prices a lot, which makes that his income is low, although enough to sustain his household. His biggest challenge for growing in the city is that he can hardly compete with rural monoculture. Also, there is an unsolved issue of succession as the younger generation does not seek to continue. (Cf. Field notes farms and sites Khlong Tan 08/06/2013, data CD)

Box 10: Examples of urban farming sites in Bangkok

#### 4.6.5 Municipal involvement

Overall, governmental involvement is limited considering that no policies exist that undertake the institutionalisation of urban gardening. Thus far, the benefits of urban farming are not officially recognised nor is it encouraged. Moreover, no policies address areas for food cultivation spared from urbanisation of the suburbs (cf. R-17: #00:47:49-5#). Urban gardening is in reality taking place on a municipal sub-level, namely under the responsibility of two of Bangkok's districts,

Laksi and Khlong Toei.

Certainly, the urban gardening initiative at Laksi District Office is the most prominent and comprehensive municipal engagement. It comprises a rooftop garden and learning centre, and further several garden plots in the surrounding neighbourhoods, of which four were visited. The Khlong Toei rooftop garden initiative followed later but attempts to build up a separate community garden for the participation of local participants.

The Laksi initiative started early, when a group of ladies – until now employed as gardeners at Laksi – had to leave their organic gardens that they maintained on abandoned land in the neighbourhood. The group, called ‘Pluk gab Raksa’, which translates to ‘Plant and Preserve’, moved on suggestion of the district administration to the rooftop on their office building. There are two major motivations for the district office, first to improve the garbage management in the district as the garden recycles certain materials, second to pioneer food production in the urban setting. Indeed, the rooftop garden was a by-product of the need to find a big surface to sort and recycle the district's garbage. The idea of reusing the disposed containers, baskets and election boards among other items for planting came successively. The Laksi team executed their mission with determination, their message to visitors being that anyone can manage to grow their own food. The initiative is well-known in Thailand because it was one of the first to demonstrate urban gardening in this third generation, and receives much attention from print media or television. The fact that the initiative is municipal helps their popularity.

The garden has a strong focus on fertilizer production, which they call effective microorganisms or plant hormone, apparently still within the range of the organic method. It can be made from sugar, egg, bean, coconut and is meant to improve taste of the vegetables when applied. The Laksi garden prototype used raised beds with a ring of bamboo and plastic board, plants in pots, worn-out hampers, car tyres and other items. Shading plants wind around arches made from plastic tubes. A total of 130 different kinds of typical vegetables, herbs and fruits grow on the rooftop, and beyond the situation even allows to grow high altitude varieties like strawberry, cabbage or grapes. However, there are issues with the wind and sun exposure of the garden. The rooftop produce is sold in front of the office building at very reasonable price (10 Baht for one bag of vegetable compared to around 15 to 20 at the regular market), together with products from the organic gardens in the district maintained by the same group. Two site visits allowed for confirmation that the setting and planting has been constant over two years. However, the project seems to be better organised and demonstrations more routine at the second visit.

The Laksi initiative comprises:

- a rooftop garden of 70-80m<sup>2</sup> on the district office building
- vegetable beds, nursery, herbs and flower arrangements, mushroom cultivation, sprouting
- organic liquid fertilizer manufacturing
- an outlet for the vegetable produce, fertilizer and earthworm cultivation
- a renowned learning centre having trained about 3000 people from Bangkok and other provinces in six years since opening
- maintenance and supervision of private organic gardens within the district
- integration in *Cityfarm* network as platform for knowledge exchange

Once the rooftop garden was established, the initiative was taken to widen their action to the neighbourhood. Four organic gardens in Laksi and the adjoining Don Mueang district have been displayed to us at a field visit in 2013. They are found to be noteworthy for their integration in the Laksi urban gardening initiative. All four depart from different conditions of land access but all use organic method. Several sites are run by Laksi garden staff members, and the others all received their trainings.

A local community garden has run on the property of an electricity company in Laksi district for around ten years. Their story is that they sought to make this abandoned plot useful in terms of food security and neighbourhood greening. Ten persons take care for the garden each day. They grow organically because using chemical sprays had caused them headaches, and also because encouragement of it came from the Laksi team. There are banana plants, vegetables, chilli and herbs, mainly, and a compost area where the residents can dispose their kitchen wastes. Some of the beds remain unmaintained due to lack of time. Residents can come to buy the produce at a low price which funds the costs for seeds. The group would like to expand the garden surface as at present, it does not yield enough for all. Though, there are several limitations: Insufficient garden caretakers are available; the plot is rented from the electricity company but on temporary basis which means the risk to be expelled at any moment; it is not allowed to build on the land except for a little shelter and shade area. Nonetheless, the ladies who take care for the garden are rather positive about the future of their garden, and even have the vision to expand to cater the city. They feel that organic food is becoming a trend now which is visible with a growing number of backyard gardens emerging all around. They make allusion to many abandoned properties in the area that could be cultivated.

Another site at Laksi district belongs to a dentist who lives nearby but was unused or misused by residents to dump their wastes whereupon the owner sought the Laksi group to cultivate

a garden on the plot. In fact, the private owner is able to reduce his tax by its utilisation (cf. R-1, p.24). Laksi staff takes complete care for the 200m<sup>2</sup> garden and also sells the organic produce to their benefit at the district office. No resident is involved in this project; main intentions are neighbourhood greening and an extra source of vegetables for the caretakers. Beyond, they feel the garden brings happiness and healthy food to others.

There is a garden on the site of army barracks, of which one part is grown organically by the Laksi staff gardeners, and another part by the soldiers' wives. The project's name is 'from rooftop to the ground' following the Laksi rooftop initiative. The enormous plot consists of several elements including vegetable beds, a diversity of trees, a lotus pond, a canal, a little shed and compost production. At the time of our visit, the garden had just started a year before, but already looked lush. The background of the project is to provide occupation and leisure for the soldiers' families, and to make use of the vast area. The produce is sold to the local families, equally at the district office, in case of surplus at local markets.

The last site visited at Laksi is a private house garden on about 800m<sup>2</sup> which the owner keeps part-time. The owner grows common fruits and vegetables, enriches the soil with compost and plant fertilizers, mulches with coconut husk and applies crop rotation. The owner originates from the countryside and indeed has a background in agricultural studies, and gardening is passion so help from the Laksi district office was sought for the initial phase. The setting up of the garden took three to four weeks initially. The main motivation of this organic garden is food safety; and the owner appreciates producing healthy food for consumption, which can also be given away to other people. This also improves the living situation by bringing happiness, extra money, better health and relationship with family members. The owner would like to make further people interested in growing food and mentions that the Laksi initiative has become a kind of brand among the neighbourhoods.

The district of Khlong Toei established a similar garden on the terrace of their office building in about 2003. In contrast to Laksi, the district is situated in a dense area of buildings that hardly have any external space, close to the river port. Plot size, plants, methods are similar but bed arrangements slightly different from Laksi Rooftop Garden. The initiative equally combined district garbage recycling with the greening of the building, on top of that, liquid fertilizer is produced for source of income. The garden seemed to happen as a by-product as well, as the liquid fertilizer was already available, it suited the purpose of growing. In an interview the translator explains:

*“she do this garden because she want to demonstrate how her bio liquid fertilizer can be used in household or in, in the operation. That's why she spend time doing all the vegetable.*

*But for she, herself, she just never eaten any vegetable in here” (R-40: #00:47:10-2#).*

Apart from this balcony garden, the caretakers redesigned a worn out park in Khlong Toei belonging to the tollway authority, which had apparently become the scene of drug trafficking, drug consumption and crimes. The district bought the property, initially with intention to place recycling materials and to park their garbage trucks. One part of the site was eventually turned into garden beds including composting. Roads and an elevated express way surround the plot.

The notable objective of this garden was at the time of the first visit in 2013, to make it a community garden for the local residents to find leisure and participation. As the visit is just after opening of the garden, this community concept is not yet implemented. Yet, on returning almost two years later, the situation is unchanged. It was observed that the garden seems to be taken good care for, though a brief discussion with a random visitor from the neighbourhoods reveals that residents are not involved in the garden: People “just see and walk around” but are not allowed to pick any vegetables. It is “the people from the district office Khlong Toei who take care for it. [...] They do everything, watering, planting” and are also the ones who do the harvest (R-36, translated from Thai). The resident further states that some people come to walk around in the garden, but the site is not well maintained and looks sad. He assumes that the district administration is lacking money for appropriate maintenance. He regrets that it does not really serve the use of the community in contrast to before when the site was a popular football pitch attracting locals (cf. R-36, translated from Thai).

This goes in line with impression from visiting the site. It seems maintained by the district but residents can neither participate nor benefit from the harvest. This reality might describe why there is generally little knowledge about urban community gardens. Apparently, “there are community gardens but I've never seen them” (R-12, p.34).

These examples picture municipal involvement. The Laksi case is well-known among Bangkok's urban gardeners and the study's respondents. For example, “[t]he most beautiful case of secret garden is at Laksi. They're very very known. Unbelievable in the cement high-rise floor” (R-12, p.35). They seem to have inspired many urban gardeners in growing organically, and some of those known to us have received their initial training there.

At Khlong Toei, the interview participant suspects that Laksi staff used to grow organically in the beginning but now employ chemicals as they are more production-oriented than before (cf. R-40: #01:00:24-5#).



Image 26: Organic urban prototype garden with raised beds and brick frames  
(from own source)



Image 27: Urban house gardens in backyards on soil or in beds on concrete  
(from own source)



Image 28: A rooftop garden on a slow-life hotel, and private urban planting in pots and containers  
(from own source)



Image 29: Inauguration of an urban balcony garden at a hospital in Bangkok  
(from own source)



Image 30: A rooftop learning centre in Siam area, an educative public urban garden, and urban chicken  
(from own source)



Image 31: Impressions from the Khlong Toei initiative  
(from own source)



Image 32: The Laksi Rooftop Garden learning centre I  
(from own source)



Image 33: The Laksi Rooftop Garden learning centre II  
(from own source)

#### 4.7 New paths of urban living

In 4.1, we quote that reasons for people engaging in the organic scene include health, environment, social, spiritual and lifestyle aspects. Having discussed ideologies, attitudes and spirituality in chapter 4.5, the lifestyle aspect should be additionally elucidated. Simple life, back-to-nature, home-made, alternative or green living, community, well-being, happiness, self-sufficiency, freedom are attributes itemised in the context of lifestyles. An organic business owner and rural farming expert says about urban farmers, they were not real farmers as concerned by

different issues (cf. R-2, Table 17). One such issue might be that most urban gardeners, at least in our study, are consciously looking for ways of living that are alternative to those lifestyles that would typically match their curricula. A fourth research question being how the organic food scene in Bangkok might contribute to realising green urban living, we need to view causes and effects of the organic food scene, or the connections that are made between stakeholder motives and their individual aspirations in terms of living. (Cf. Table 14 in the following)

The research participants have confirmed already (cf. chapter 4.4.5) that urbanites' lifestyles are undergoing changes at the moment, for example in eating patterns. Among new trends in the ways urbanites figure their living, for example cycling and healthy living, or gardening and home produce and cooking (cf. G-1). Within this trend of healthy living, organic food is becoming a fashion, too (cf. R-10: #01:57:27-9#; R-35), driven by unhealthy living and the menace of cancer (cf. R-22), not least because Thai society is facing a health crisis (cf. R-21). There is change in terms of lifestyle and it is partially about leading sustainable, organic lifestyles (cf. R-19). People search more independence in their lives, among other aspects from the conventional market products, hence if they have the choice, they will choose the best quality for themselves (cf. R-10). R-43 is a suitable example for a full-time urban gardener producing and processing many things at home. The case is also interesting from an urban greening and ecology aspect: Now, the respondent rarely needs to shop at the supermarkets, even making their own medicine (cf. R-43).

Healthy living may link for some to an entire philosophy of living, a mindset that is prepared for alternative thinking which includes the elements of self-reliant living, connecting with the nature, seeking happiness in life (cf. R-25). It could refer back to what was described as the concept of Voluntary Simplicity in chapter 2.2.5. (Cf. Table 14)

While searching for happiness, R-26 narrates in 4.6.2 how the change from successful professional life to being an organic urban farmer was made because money and partying did not bring happiness any more (cf. R-26: #00:50:00-7#); R-19 had similar mindset change, in fact when experiencing a physical breakdown:

*“I didn't really sleep at that time, [...] I ate to make my stomach full but then, I didn't care about nutrition. So one day, [...] my body just shut down” (R-19: #00:01:03-9#).*

There are more, similar examples: A sales manager at Kodak resigning to start up with farming, first in the city, now on a new plot in the province; a former flight attendant starting her farm; a trainer at a communication company doing alike (cf. R-26: #00:52:48-7#). Full time urban gardener R-43 affirms that many people in the *Cityfarm* network seek for this kind of fulfilment of

happiness and simple living (cf. R-43). (Cf. Table 14)

People may miss an important aspect of life when driven by the cycle of earning and spending money, which is as if working for something uncertain. Instead, creating happiness and bonds between people can be the remedy for a healthy society and holistic personal health (cf. R-30, p.5).

#### 4.7.1 “Back-to-nature“ and “do-it-yourself” visions

*“[N]ow, it's like a new trend [...], it's a paradox you know, in the rural area, young people [...] from the farmers families don't want to be a farmer. But young people in the urban area wants to be the farmers. It's a paradox. And most of the students in many curriculums in the university interested about the organic farming” (R-1: p. 26).*

Respondents say, many people are talking about organic agriculture and the idea of “returning” lifestyles (cf. R-10: #01:22:10-8#), about individuals who change their lifestyles to “turn to be the organic farmer, [...] organic farming entrepreneur” (R-1, p.5). In this context, the recall of what is missing in the urbanites' lives is momentous, and it is often the aspect of nature that is difficult to find in the megacity. This has been uttered by various consumers – green living in Bangkok is difficult to realise for its lacking access to nature due to confined living space, pollution, food issues. On the other hand, others positively describe the options that individuals have by taking good care of themselves, choosing the right food channels, exercising and practising a happy mind (cf. Table 8). Many respondents report of urbanites who go one step further to realise their garden in the city, or even settle down as rural organic farmers. People who change their lifestyle to become a farmer scarcely do it in order to gain money but because they can find freedom therein. City life misses freedom and contact to nature, hence contact to the real life (cf. R-32: #00:43:08-6#). Nowadays, technologies make rural life with home office possible.

*“So why the new generation choose to be the farmer because they can earn money, not by the farming but another way” (R-32: #00:44:27-3#).*

The reality is that our respondents feel urban lifestyles are quite individualist, and many people are bored by their work and daily routines and might aspire different life experience; furthermore office employees show the “office syndrome” and need relaxing environments (cf. R-1). It resonates with R-22's personal experience: Tired of working employed for companies, he

wanted to change his lifestyle. Instead, “we found that [...] city people who grow city farm, they development themselves lifestyle” (cf. R-17). From the perspective of the overall Thai society, organic is not yet integral of people's daily living (cf. R-4), but farming is, for a certain clientele that aspires green living, a new lifestyle matter: Celebrities like Thai actress Um Siriyakorn are modelling it (cf. R-34), other Bangkokians, educated middle classes are buying land to retire from city life to be rural farmers (cf. R-39). By the experience of an organic farming expert in the rural area, Bangkokians are looking for alternatives, and some with determination: “some of them are really grew in, they never know anything about farming but they want to change their life” (cf. R-21). The new generation needs the nature and space around them, knows R-32, and they even “want the time back” (cf. R-32). Rural living brings a certain freedom and creativity which is what younger people are looking for. The organic movements are hence correspondingly movements of sustainable living (cf. R-9). Those interested in organic farming quest after independence, nature experience and recalling the basic living (cf. R-8). These quested lifestyles include for instance self-reliance elements of making things at home, which the *Cityfarm* group transmits in their workshops (making of soaps, shampoos, detergents from garden plants) (cf. R-1) and R-11 with their hotel concept of slow life. (Cf. Table 14)

#### 4.7.2 Simple living and community

The quest for happiness through simple life and community (cf. R-43, R-23, R-16, R-31, R-17, Table 14) draws through the individual visions. Simple life provides more time to dedicate to others (cf. R-16). It was said that many urbanites take their opportunity to start simple living in the rural area; it is not an option for anyone to leave the city – how can these lifestyles be realised in the city though?

A public network (St.16, Table 6) started off from a core group of city farmers who are determined to experiment with alternative paths of living, personal well-being through holistic nutrition, community spirit, and appear as such on public events. They meet up regularly as a community to discuss and exchange. On regular workshops, they often invite guest speakers to talk for example about organic farming topics, screen educative films, demonstrate healthy cuisine or baking. The workshops and gatherings are public and are advertised mainly via social media, and the Thai *Cityfarm* group. The network is present at most organic food and health-related fairs (cf. field notes observations). Remarkable about this network is, it seems to represent a group of like-minded members who manage to realise both community living and sustainability as much as the urban environment allows. From the outside, most members appear as what could possibly be called

alternative, creative and nature-loving. One member divulges about the network:

*“And as I told you, it's really different from the other kind of network. [...] This is like the old farmer, Thai farmer; when they have a farm next to each other, they go and give the food. They bring the food from that house. When they walk out the street, they talk along the street and say hello to every house. That's the old way of doing Thai agriculture” (R-26: #00:46:05-9#).*

This being said, the community aspect is repeatedly mentioned throughout our interviews as aspiration whether it concerns rural farmers' communities or urban communities, and whether it be for a lifestyle or an economic rational.

*“I think [...] being alone is a big problem. I think the farmer, as long as they're still buying chemical stuff, they're not gonna make money. As long as they're gonna sell the rice to the big rice company and I think that's not the answer. If people [...] started to do that, a very small community, they have all the equipment to process their rice, packaging, and do the label of the groups. I think that's the answer” (R-26: #00:48:37-9#).*

Also R-32 stresses the community aspect, saying that anonymity in big cities can create feelings of loneliness among urbanites, rural living in turn bonds and stability through community life (cf. R-32: #00:44:51-1#).

Recently, urbanites have brought into being a foundation for people who want start over a farmer's life in the countryside (cf. St.17, Table 6). Various challenges arise from the circumstances that few urbanites own rural land and that many face familial resistance. At a seminar about alternative food markets in 2015, we have the chance to talk to representatives of the network. From the field notes can be extracted:

At the seminar, we meet a marketing professional in his 40s, who we had encountered two years before at another symposium organised by the School for Wellbeing. At that time, he was still working in his profession but already considering an alternative life as a farmer. Now, he is just about to start his own farm, a bit out of Bangkok. As he is urbanite, he has no land but was offered a government grant: The government allocates him a plot under the condition that he can start a farm there within six months. As he is still working part-time in Bangkok, he commutes but cannot wait to be back on his farm any time he is in the city. He found the support of the foundation of which he is a member now.

On the following day, we meet a foundation responsible who must be in her early 40s. She and her partner, both wearing an “alternative” outfit with fisherman pants and handwoven scarves, just started their own farm in Ayutthaya province. They equally still have a work in Bangkok, hence leave their garden be grown with fruit and forest trees before starting the farm. According to her information, the project started only in January 2015, though already has 780 members, 680 of them having started their farm already. Their advertising intentionally is defensive because they want to appraise the first year's evolution before launching a campaign – proofing first the concept before encouraging people to follow.

The project content is to facilitate urbanites who had once come to Bangkok for study and work purpose their return to their home town for farming. Most of them have university degree but manifold motives to go back: to join their families, to support them directly instead of funding them from the distance, to escape the city life perceived as wearying, to live healthier, to recollect farming because they miss it, to give their home towns something back. They include organic farming and the Sufficiency Economy as a model and try to reach out additionally to farmers in the area. The project's members share similar personal stories: their families invest much to facilitate their children's studies and a more comfortable life. Most of their families are cash crop farmers and indebted. Although missing their far away children, they prefer them to have a stable profession in the cities. When their children decide to return, they usually find their parents reserved and neighbours looking down on them. They often experience exclusion: quitting a stable profession can be interpreted as failure. Returning to the village to continue farming does not suffice the common pretensions, and particularly organic farming is considered as an unreasonable endeavour. Our foundation responsible affirms high pressure from Thai communities. The foundation tackles here the root of the problem which is to make families and villagers understand the notion of self-sufficiency and organic farming. The aim is to build up trust, back the members and try to reconcile the families. Their involvement is hence very personal and close to the individual cases. The foundation's concept finds inspiration in Adam Kahane's 'Power and Love', aiming at social change. Some urbanites have no access to land when they leave the city, but there is a governmental programme for the redistribution of abandoned land. Members have the chance to be allocated a plot; there is option for lease after a first year of approval. The foundation itself is apolitical.

Our responsible considers this evolution as a movement, being integrated in a higher movement around the School for Wellbeing. (Cf. field notes MCE-01/09/2015)

Box 11: Foundation for the promotion of rural organic farming

The foundation and other quotes demonstrate reactions to urban living that lead to new aspirations of projecting one's own life. For all examples, it is the contemporary urban lifestyles quoted as new challenge, as cause for mindset changes.

### 4.7.3 Urban greening

The effect of urban gardening on the urban ecology does not appear often as an explicit motive in the interviews, although respondents occasionally allude to it saying that urban gardens contribute to neighbourhood greening or better micro-climate. The rooftop demonstration garden on a central shopping mall (n°7 chapter 4.6.4) is found to be the only gardening project explicitly devoted to the decrease of the urban heat island effect in the dense central locations in Bangkok, and the potential for the general urban climate if greening was more consistently integrated in vernacular design. Their ecology aspect appears plausible as it is embedded in a university landscape architecture programme.

We observe that urbanites direct their aspirations of new ways of living towards two options: First to arrange green living in the urban sphere, or second to outsource them into the rural sphere.

## 4.8 The organic networks within the movement

One of preliminary results of our first field work period in 2013 was that a range of stakeholders is involved in the organic scenes in Bangkok, though it is missing consistent interaction, sometimes even missing knowledge of each other. R-10's work is about making different groups meet, knowing how challenging it is: "Why will the NGOs not collaborate? [...] I think it is one of my most difficult tasks to gather all in one room" (R-10: #00:53:05-7#, translated from German).

Since the second, long-term field work period, we find this globally still valid although stakeholders do interact within smaller sub-networks more regularly. For a number of reasons that concern the constitution of the city, but also the way how urbanites make use of media and technology, virtual communications compose the organic network significantly. Social media communication, mostly within sub-networks, is found to be the preferable means to topical exchange, announcements, for example.

The networks how they currently exist in the organic movement should be briefly introduced in the following. Our stakeholders give their personal opinions on the networks, mostly consistently (cf. Table 15): "We have different networks now" (R-10). Principally, some organic groups are organised within networks, there is mutual knowledge but not a single whole. For example, there are still the pioneer groups who were inspired by Fukuoka in the early years of the movement but share not much with the contemporary groups (cf. R-10). Each group works individually so that no overarching network has become apparent so far (cf. R-19), some stakeholders try to connect but

are hard to bring together on the same level because of differing interests, for example the activist movement and the industrial or commercial movement (cf. R-13). Two respondents find that it is not yet the right time to achieve one network (cf. R-13, R-27) because some might not yet be prepared for it; “technocrats” in the ministries or universities can be a nuisance with coordination (cf. R-18). Others in turn, do agree on positive effects of coordination among the organic groups but prefer that it keeps the scale of smaller groups (cf. R-32); it could be on neighbourhood level as on higher levels, relationships can be difficult (cf. R-17). (Cf. Table 15)

This small-scale interaction is implied in the respondents' comments about how they personally handle it: a slow-life hotel in a network of five other green hotels in Thailand (cf. R-11), a northern NGO attaching to local governments and universities (cf. R-6), the urban farming groups having some exchange with other cities but attempting more networking, also on international level (G-1), R-35 with other alternative health experts, a public urban garden with further organic farmers for sharing a fresh produce market (cf. R-38), organic farming expert R-39 occasionally with individual stakeholders, an organic farmer in the South connecting to the local NGOs (cf. R-15) and a low-income community to nation-wide organisations for homeless people (cf. G-2). This is probably what R-8 means when saying, organic stakeholders are interconnected and just loosely connected at the time (cf. R-8). (Cf. Table 15)

It becomes apparent that the networking backs upon smaller scale organisations rather than one consistent base.

At the moment, many stakeholders organise their own projects. Although they share a common objective, their outreach could be more effective if work and competencies were shared, and all groups congregated yearly or half-yearly (cf. R-10: #01:28:50-2#). Apart from the reality that physical meetings are time-wise difficult to arrange, some stakeholder agendas differ too much from others' to find a common point of view – it happens that NGO and business meeting does not produce any fruitful results (cf. R-10: #01:46:12-8#). On the other hand, it seems to exist in some of the coordinating sub-networks in the organic movements: The School for Wellbeing which gathers various sub-networks functions as a connector in the movement, for it is the instance to which many other stakeholders attach, having the higher objective to build up a green consumer society. They coordinate with NGOs and other institutions, and support many projects of individual stakeholders (cf. R-4). It is beyond a key stakeholder in connecting consumers and growers (cf. R-25). (Cf. Table 15)

The organic farming model project near Bangkok (St.11, Table 6), tries to involve local universities, *Cityfarm* experts, an organic farming NGO, a certification body as well as government agencies in the project (cf. R-30, Table 15). An organic farming research and funding network

(St.19, Table 6) coordinates among NGOs, the School for Wellbeing, Thai *Cityfarm* among others (cf. R-10). Other of these connecting instances are arguably the Thai Health Promotion Fund for enabling many private projects financially, of ACT private certification body (cf. R-4), the Alternative Agriculture Network whose offspring many NGOs are (cf. R-2), the Thai *Cityfarm* as elucidated in 4.6.3 (cf. R-1, R-11), and a major NGO in the field of sustainable farming implementation (St.39, Table 6) that consists of 14 other NGOs (cf. R-17). (Cf. Table 15)

A few respondents are explicit that improved stakeholder cooperation is likely to strengthen the organic scenes to form a more unified movement (cf. R-18, R-19); fairs and other public gatherings are a positive move already being seen (cf. R-9, R-22, R-26). Networking is important for R-33 who maintains a sustainable restaurant in the city. In order to find preferred ingredients and to realise the concept requires dependence on the organic scene (cf. R-33: #00:04:18-6#). Network does not mean that all of their actions need to be synchronised, but it can mean that groups work individually on a shared topic and build one network (cf. R-32: #00:57:28-6#). (Cf. Table 15)

It is interesting to have closer look to some of the network's agendas for some seem to constitute key aspects of organic movements. One organic food network (St.53) under the School for Wellbeing aims at building up a concept mindful consumers, or a “new green society” (R-4, p.8).

#### 4.8.1 Mindful consumption

“Thailand especially [is a] very consumerist society, [...] easy, cheap, cheap and easy and this is all” (R-12, p.46). The counter-concept of mindfulness is being promoted among Buddhist scholars, and in this context also among a couple of organic stakeholders. The “Mindful Markets” 2014 is a forum organised by the School for Wellbeing with the purpose “to empower the emerging consumers movement in Asia in support of its small-scale farmers” (WILLENSWAARD 2015: 7). The movement raises the question of whether we as consumers prefer the free market or food sovereignty as underlying market base, and raises awareness of food sources

*“Where does my food actually come from? How has it been grown? Who grew my food? Did these farmers grow my food because he and she want to bring me and my family health, and nutrition for my soul? Do the persons who grow my food enjoy a healthy and meaningful life themselves? Can they maintain their livelihood with dignity and joy?” (id.: 14).*

A mindful market hence means to provide consumers – which includes the food growers as

well – with healthy food; and healthy food includes that it has been produced in ethically correct manner. It hence must ensure health and economic viability for producers, and a sustainable handling with the local environments, too. Health ideally refers to both, physical and mental health, which is synonymous to well-being. Consequently, the organic movement is a constituent part of mindful market.

The public network (St.16, Table 6), a group of engaged city farmers, endeavours the mindful urban consumers. Giving consumers deeper knowledge about organic nutrition, the food quality of regular products, or the options of participating in food systems is on the group's agenda (cf. R-26: #00:24:54-6#).

A spontaneous encounter with a couple of network members opened us their perspectives on food and health. As noted in the field notes, “we engage in a conversation about nutritional values of food and alternative medicine, and [a member] starts to talk about [the network's] activity on *Vitaforce* in foods: foods have varying *vitaforce* properties according to their digestion especially by liver and thyroid. “That is what organic is about – organic has better value, better *vitaforce*, and also tastes better”. [Another member] does healing workshops with 20 participants each time; [we observe that the group] sincerely feels bad about the spaghetti lunch from the food chain we eat at. Their technique is a blend of Thai and Japanese method. (Cf. field notes MCE 20/06/2015, data CD)

Box 12: Mindful consumers

On another occasion, R-26 explains about their idea that embraces the healthy living in general:

*“So, the core of [our group] is not just growing vegetables, also living. Also if you know the information, you don't have to grow yourself, but if you know the information, you can know what to buy and what [...] not to buy. That's the core of the group” (R-26: #00:25:49-7#).*

A way to ensure food quality to consumers while appropriate income to producers is via PGS systems. To recall, “Participatory Guarantee Systems are locally focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange” (IFOAM, Definition of Participatory Guarantee Systems). Discussed on various forums, PGS generally find approval among organic farmers and many NGOs in the field. Farmers are already questioning third-party certification as it involves higher investment, or they simply prefer the most viable way. St.41 (cf. Table 6) is a

foundation actively promoting PGS systems. The foundation's founder knows:

*“I think it's not very suitable for the situation in Thailand. Where the farmer are very poor. And the income very, very less. That's why here, you have a lot of debts, you know. And how they manage to pay for the [...] certification. And the P[GS] [...], it has already guarantee system” (R-39: #00:57:52-6#).*

PGS systems require commitment from the growers and trust from the consumers, a pair that seems to work for the Thai case. St.19, the organic agriculture research and funding network is trying to achieve PGS implementation in the agricultural policies, having negotiations with the government at the time of research (cf. R-10). PGS is less economically interesting than it has benefit for empowering communities (cf. R-30 p.3). Even though working on PGS system, R-30 remains slightly sceptic about trust relationships, because obligation among communities in Thai mentality would require to cover a farmer who is misusing the organic principles. Nevertheless, the system is becoming a base for guarantee systems for the organic farming community, replacing third-party certification. Different organic marketing channels in Thailand rely on these trust-based guarantees.

#### The present situation of the organic market

To recall what the respondents have to say about the market (cf. Table 7): There is insufficient organic produce available and green market systems is a viable additional organic food source (cf. R-3), the conventional market offers low quality products, often imports (cf. R-4), concerning certified organic produce, consumer-grower links can be more efficient (cf. R-5), there are health shops selling organic products but supermarkets sometimes fake organic labels (cf. R-7), GAP certified products have been found to show residues (cf. R-37), for example. (Cf. Table 7)

It was the general market situation that made R-30 consider growing and induce local farmers to grow organically to be able to cater for the hotel with organic food:

*“Well if you want to see it from the business point of view, I wanted to serve organic but couldn't find enough organic food on the market” (R-30, p.3).*

To give a brief overview on the existing forms of organic food sale, shops with organic food range are commonly referred to as green shop or health shop among the stakeholders. Hardly any shop sells uniquely organic, but handicrafts or goods from sustainable fabrication alike. Apart from

a number of health shops and organic traders that exist since the first emerging of green consumer movement, there are more outlets recently gaining momentum. Among the health shops, the first model has several branches in Bangkok, selling under their own organic brand or retailing others. They sell also non-organic, but related health products. Some of the latter are foreign brands regularly sold on the conventional market, too. The outlets of Royal Project production have similar range of goods but usually fewer genuinely organic products. Conscious organic consumers may have reservations against these shops as their products are often under-declared. There are individual health shops, too, which retail certain organic brands or the products they obtain from the rural communities they deal with. Supermarkets increasingly dedicate a limited share to organic products, with a certification label to provide guarantee. These are mainly vegetables and a small range of basic food, depending on their clientele, and possibly imported goods. However, some supermarkets also sell local organic brands, one of which is organic trade pioneer St.58 (cf. Table 6). Given the circumstances that firstly, supermarkets sell a limited range and at multiple higher prices, secondly health shops are often small and inconveniently situated, and thirdly, farmers need reliable, regular and profitable outlet for their produce, farmers' markets and other direct sale platforms have found to be a viable alternative for both, consumers and farmers.

Farmers' markets are where growers bring their fresh produce to the market location and sell directly. This has some advantages, for example, personal knowledge and eventually trust is established, growers might pay a reasonable membership fee but get full profit from the sale, growers learn consumers' preferences and can adjust, consumers can improve their food awareness, mutual knowledge can widen to consumer activities like farm visits.

There is another concept, very similar, the green market. Its initiative comes from the green marketing groups around the School for Wellbeing. Having an intervention focus on farmers' assistance to commence organic farming, the green market is meant to be their direct sale outlet. As the green markets in Bangkok have the idea of farmers' support, they equally offer products from during their organic conversion period. Considering that growers face lower yields, and difficulties to find their market niche, this usually is a demanding period for them. The green markets in Bangkok have originally been held in office buildings or hospitals, but some of the original markets are currently in decline. Apparently, there are still many markets but they have less consumers, often because the locations are hard to reach for the growers [...]. The organisers found other channels to be more viable:

*“And now we are try to develop that green market to be a movement. So the markets that not means the physical markets, you know. [...] But maybe CSA is some kind of movements. Or the*

RDC, DC [...] distribution centre. Is a centre to collect the products. And deliver to many shop” (R-34: #00:06:58-1#).

Some alternative schools happen to host small-scale green markets, often organised by school parents;

*“there was this man who was a farmer. He would come every Thursday to sell vegetables. Organic. Straight from the field to you. So it doesn't go through a middleman, through supermarket, packed in a package. Everybody had their own cloth bags, it was all very nice, and. So, I had been buying from him”* (R-35: #00:02:36-2#).

Bangkok's so-called farmers' market scene started from the initiative of one stakeholder, a sustainable restaurant (St.68, Table 6), gathering in the bounds of his restaurant on Sukhumvit Road in early 2013. Idea was here to create a platform for fresh produce vendors and sustainable business. The farmers' markets eventually changed location and management, and seem to become more and more popular. The stakeholder who hosted the first market regrets they became too big, and their offer has changed:

*“It just disappoints me that there's not as much fresh produce, Thai, fresh Thai produce, but you know it's definitely serves a market here”* (R-33: #00:11:48-0#).

Indeed, the markets widened to include handicrafts, fashion, ready-to-eat food and many different kinds of home made goods.

*“The reason why we sort of stopped doing the farmers' market is because it changed from what we wanted to something that we didn't want. [...] all of a sudden, it just turned into a lot of Westerners selling westernised products, all being organic or whatever, but the reason why [...] I started the market, because we wanted Thai products”* (R-33: #00:10:13-8#).

It was also observed that a great share of offer is not organic, and this accounts especially for the processed products. Despite of this, there is effort to ensure the organic quality – certified or non-certified – of the fresh fruits and vegetables; and the growers still sell physically. Organic fruit farmer R-23 appreciated the farmers' market as an opportunity of outlet for seasonal fruits, considering there has been troubles to find a market niche before. The farmer also appreciates the

market in the sense of a community as the vendors maintain good relationship and exchange (cf. R-23, p.1). Since its beginnings, the farmers' markets developed itself a reputation of organic produce outlet, hence is known among consumers as source of organic and health foods, as well as sustainable produce to some extent. At some point in 2014, the then only core market group split to become two separate farmers' markets at different locations but with similar concept. The base location of the first market moved to be hosted by mostly shopping centres in different neighbourhoods.

Conceptionally, there is not much difference between green markets and farmers' markets in Bangkok but they rather differ in terms of their clientele. The green markets tend to represent mostly Thai customers, the farmers' market mixed nationalities.

Apart from these physical markets on set locations, delivery schemes are gaining popularity; they work on people's order or on base of regular vegetable boxes that contain a fixed amount but varying range of farmer's produce. Presently four of these delivery schemes are known for Bangkok. They are called CSA programmes, *community supported agriculture*, even though not necessarily following the CSA principles of consumer groups ensuring their farmers' arranged yearly income besides the order. The first order and delivery scheme was a cooperative in the early years of the movement selling organic rice from a north-eastern farmers group to a Bangkok-based customer group.

Other remarkable markets are the two Santi Asoke bases in Bangkok. Both feature health shops with the community's production line, as described in chapter 4.5.4. A small green market of one or two vendors is attached to the centres where Asoke members or farmers who were trained by Asoke sell.

Affordability of organic food is one aspect of accessibility, and when consumers worry about excessive prices, it refers to certified products most of the time which are available in supermarkets, to some extent on farmers' markets, too. The advantages of both, the existing green markets and cooperative or delivery schemes in Bangkok is that organic farmers can sell without third-party certification and mostly directly, so the market price is almost their profit. And the consumer avoids paying the surplus for middle men, hence the products become very affordable. To quote an example, our organic farming model project in a province in vicinity to Bangkok (cf. St.11, Table 6) gathers the project's farmers every weekend at a green market, visited by many Bangkokian day-trippers. The project coordinator tells, guava fruit can be at 20 Baht per kilo during high season on the regular fresh market and even 80 Baht in high-end supermarkets of which the actual producers receives in both cases just a small share. Organic guava is sold at 40 Baht per kilo at this local green market which convenes consumers and growers. In fact, growers could ask for a

much higher price though refuse to do so (cf. R-30, p.4).

Our respondents share many different views on the current situation of organic foods on the Bangkok market. In reality, Thailand already has a range of green shops, different kinds with different flaws (cf. R-4, p.7). There is no healthy bakery in Bangkok, utters a health shop owner (cf. R-35: #00:07:29-2#). There is for example scepticism from organic business stakeholders towards green market systems: R-9 thinks, the latter lack sustainable business policies and often rely on external funding (cf. R-9: #01:11:10-4#). One green market in Bangkok indeed seems to receive support from Thai Health Promotion Foundation. Others are doing very well and independently. There is concern about the organic quality in supermarkets, too:

*“[P]eople are just like more concern about the food that is more organic but somehow, as we going to the market is not real organic you know, [...] the product in the supermarket, they just like claim that they are organic but sometimes they are not real organic” (R-11, p.1).*

Other respondents see the inclusion of organic products in the modern trade market less problematic: Amused, R-13 says “in my idea, they should have 7-Eleven and organic shop together” (R-13: #00:42:40-1#), which could, in fact, be realistic: in a canal bank neighbourhood in Bangkok's Ladphrao area that is about to be renovated, there are plans to preserve surface for urban gardens. Yet, currently without a 7-Eleven chain shop, it is planning to open branches there in the future, retailing the urban garden produce.

Farmers' markets in Bangkok aim at growing the local sustainable consumer community; the group around green markets defines the mindful consumers; stakeholders talk about the importance of supporting the conscious consumers. Consumers as subscribers to a CSA programme to sustainably support the farmers' incomes, is a reasonable market alternative:

*“CSA is another body, [...] a system that try to make a bridge between producer and consumers. Especially for the small farmers, how they can send their products to Bangkok? And that is like a many organisation try. [C]onsumers like [...] to buy organic products and producers also, they like to produce organic products but they cannot find markets [...]. So CSA help with that” (R-4, p.6).*

Many middle class people currently use the CSA programmes, with positive experience: Farm visits, support and participation lead to good relations; supermarket sale in contrast imposes additional costs for consumers and income cuts for farmers:

*“that's where you have the middle men. Like when you put your product in the chain store, they take your money, and the consumer must pay. Not necessary” (R-32: #01:02:17-0#).*

That way, CSA is a way to meet consumers' and growers' needs. In the narrative of a young organic farmer in northern Thailand, reference is made on the positive opportunity that a community-supported farming can be successful. The farmer's parents had already learned about and converted to organic farming after facing health issues from the chemical sprays.

*“But the problem was that we had no market and we could only bring our products to be sold at the flea market. [...] One time we had just returned from the weekly green market and we had a car accident. Luckily no one was injured. But since then we young farmers have realized that being farmers, we have no security in our lives, no life insurance, no social security. From there the idea emerged to communicate our need for security to the public and particularly to consumers. We learned about the concept of CSA from America and in Thailand from CSA pioneers [...]. The way that consumers really are partners with farmers and are willing to pay in advance is very supportive and caring and ensures our security” (WILLENSWAARD 2015: 120).*

CSA thus functions as a social security for farmers as it guarantees stable income by the consumers' advanced payments. At the same time, the CSA contributes to the consumer awareness:

*“There is a big trend of city people starting their own urban gardens. And when people grow their own vegetable they realize that it is not easy at all and that CSA is a very good way to teach consumers about the value of farmers, especially organic farmers. Consumers can realize that eating according to season is important and a very basic thing to do” (id: 121).*

Within a small community of organic farmers, they started the CSA with 11 growers at first. Every consumer member engages with 300 Baht per week which have to be paid ten weeks in advance to give the farmers more financial stability. A vegetable box with seasonal fruit and vegetables, as available at the day of harvest, is delivered weekly. About one half of the price is for the actual produce, another half covers delivery, packaging and the management of the project. The project in fact includes regular meetings as the members have become of group of interest and friends with the farmers. Three basic principles of his CSA are mutual dependence and help, organic produce from wholly sustainable method, and friendship.

The “mindful markets” as defined by the School for Wellbeing should fulfil the vision to provide organic, healthy food for all income groups and at the time be marketable and economically viable:

*“So there is an enormous challenge to build and scale up producer-consumer “networks of networks” in such a way that the characteristics of independent small-scale farmers’ and consumers’ initiatives are not diluted, but keep their unique ethical and activist spirit; while they are at the same time economically feasible and effective” (WILLENSWAARD 2015: 28).*



Image 34: Mindful living at the green markets and fairs (from own source)



Image 35: The Mindful Markets as slogan for a fair and forum linking farmers, consumers and social enterprise (after Mindful Markets Forum #2)



Image 36: Farmers' market in Bangkok offering organic and home-made products I  
(from own source)



Image 37: Farmers' market in Bangkok offering organic and home-made products II  
(from own source)



Image 38: Farmers' market of an organic community farming project near Bangkok, and organic vendors at a green fair in Bangkok  
(from own source)

#### 4.8.2 Social media as enabler for the movements

The young farmer in our example actually finds, as these marketing programmes are based on communication, social media today are more facilitating. “Luckily now we have more capacity to communicate than our parents. We use one click in social media and our information can reach out to so many people. We can create a consumer group, a network and access more public” (WILLENSWAARD 2015: 122).

Our field research and interview partners largely confirm the role of social media in enabling the organic network; social media seems crucial for the connection of and the exchange between stakeholders (cf. chapter 4; Table 15 in the following). Thai citizens being typically fairly well connected via internet platforms and instant messaging services, social media are a helpful means to share experience, give advice, inform and discuss relevant matters, for example (cf. G-1, R-1, R-8, R-11, R-17, R-21, R-26, R-34, R-38, R-43). Topics like food security for instance are discussed on social media (cf. R-34) and they help the organic network sharing their activities – R-17's NGO fan page counts 100000 persons; R-43 is popular for urban gardening and gets friend requests on Facebook every day; and R-21 explains about the green markets:

*“we have website, we have social media, our team are very good at using Facebook. They know how to reach everyone. So, that's how it spread the news” (R-12, p.9).*

Mostly social media platform Facebook is used for connection (cf. R-1), unintentionally becoming the nation-wide network (cf. R-21). Thai *Cityfarm* for example has a website but Facebook is a more successful means (cf. G-1). Information about the urban garden site in Sukhumvit area is shared via website and Facebook (cf. R-38). In the eyes of retired official at the Ministry of Health, it is the ultimate information tool for the general public which can “[m]ake the impossible possible” for people can link and the global organic promotion can happen (cf. R-8). R-26 narrows down that social media are effective at present but have limitations (cf. R-26). These quotes demonstrate first the presence of social media in the communication between stakeholders, and then their positive employment for the current networking in the organic movements. The general media is also playing a role, although limited in some respondents' view. For the urban farmers, book, magazine, newspaper publications, radio and television programmes are just as social media powerful tools of knowledge dissemination and potentially imitated by the broad public (cf. G-1, R-1, R-7) as the media reaches masses and convinces many (cf. R-35, R-43). Television shows raise general consumer awareness and are a means to encourage more people (cf.

R-4, R-26), and there are internet or television-based sale schemes for organic produce (cf. R-4). A new reality show for example features a popular Thai actress as organic farmer (cf. R-34). (Cf. Table 15)

There is media attention on health issues and in that light organic farming these days, and advertisement, too (cf. R-9, R-10, R-15, R-19, G-2). R-22 finds media one of the most important stakeholders in educating people and attaining attitude change. The Asoke community uses their own television channel to promote organic farming (cf. R-31).

Other stakeholders confirm a general presence of organic farming on the media but doubt its effectiveness: It is mostly only talking (cf. R-5), often one-dimensional (cf. R-6), has little impact (cf. R-18), or is not directly treated but via the topic of general health care (cf. R-13). There is promotion of organic food yet not enough (cf. R-8).

*“Yeah, it seem a lot of ministries talk about the word organic agriculture and you go on the TV and you hear all these kind of thing but we don't know [...] how effective it will be” (cf. R-11).*

R-8 and R-39 beyond explain that at the same time as organic farming is promoted on television and newspapers, the rural local media channels continue to advertise chemical fertilizers. (Cf. Table 15)

The analysis has displayed the participants' statements towards a range of topics that the research questions cover. The following section 5 serves their interpretation.



Image 39: Facebook page of the Cityfarm network  
(after Facebook. สวนผักคนเมือง)

## 5. Understandings and synthesis

The synthesis deduces understandings from the theoretical, methodological, empirical and analytical elements of this study. The results of analysis have been organised according to key themes and can now be applied to the four research questions. Respondents' statements reply to key themes either directly or will be interpreted correspondingly.

The preceding analysis presented relevant research results that allow the dimensions and nature of organic food scenes in Bangkok to be seized. The results range from the realities of organic farming in Thailand – background of agriculture, recent trends, structural settings – to the stakeholders of the organic movements, including their motivations, and networks. In a last step, this study will assemble all of the research components to bring them to synthesis: What are the understandings of the results? How do the results transfer to initial theories and concepts? What are interpretations made from these results, and how do they apply to our research questions? With respect to theoretical argumentation and research questions, this will be explained in respect of how the organic scenes in Bangkok are understood from a new social movement perspective, to include motives for stakeholder engagement, the role of identity matters, self-determination and self-fulfilment in stakeholder motivations, and the voluntary choices of alternative lifestyles.

To recall the theories and concepts chosen to frame the empirical analysis, there are first New Social Movements theories. It needs to be discussed whether their applicability to the Thai context is viable. Initially, it was understood that there is not one consistent concept that points to a movement, rather the organic scenes gather several characteristics that constitute a new movement. This is in comparison to common social movements that continue to occur analogously. There is, in New Social Movements, emphasis on individual lifestyles, identities, cultural values and attitudes replacing the classical structural societal settings that induce stakeholders to engage for societal change. Their objective can be the mobilisation of the civil society for collective action, and precisely, civil society action is not class-based but comprehensive of a broader public, even though middle classes can be the directing element. MELUCCI is specific about collective identity in New Social Movements, meaning the process in which the stakeholders coordinate their objectives through interaction, with collective action deriving from structural influence along with individual motivations. A common theme for stakeholders can be public awareness raising and attitude shifts, in the case of the organic movements generally for health and sustainability matters. The network-like nature of stakeholder interaction is another relevant point about the collective identity.

A second theoretical frame spins around the notion of identity. There is personal identity, for

example identities that persons perform privately, and social identity which is identity performed in social groups and which reciprocates with this of other individuals through social interaction processes. We assume that movements constitute social groups in an organisational sense. This study's intention is to find the interplay of identity and social group attachment. Precisely stakeholder self-categorisation into social groups is a psychological process that might account for this interplay. Social Identity Theory assumes that social identities refer to social categories and are self-defining, thus define who one is within a certain group. They can possibly enable collective action such as movements.

A third set of concepts deals with individual motivations: Self-determination indicates how persons are directed by intrinsic or extrinsic motivations, and how the motivations adjust with people's personal environments. To get to the bottom of personal motivations, Self-Determination Theory suggests a set of basic psychological needs; self-fulfilment and personal well-being are two of those needs that individuals likely represent in our organic food movements. Further psychological needs examined in its context are mindfulness and the concept of Voluntary Simplicity.

Our analysis accounts for various aspects of the theoretical framework. They will be elucidated after, completed with statements from the expert interviews along with observations. To anticipate, it may be argued from the results that organic scenes are settling in Bangkok, and that this scene, including its committed and less committed stakeholders, obtains the status of a social movement, precisely a social movement as defined after criteria of New Social Movements. Although Thailand's disposition differs from the geographical context New Social Movements have been described for, they can be transferred in most respects, especially as Bangkok needs to be regarded as a sphere for itself.

In chapter 2.1.2, the concept of new social movements is introduced into the debate, and derive several points to be discussed here, namely: what are structural settings, and what are their impacts on the organic scenes? What is their social base, and which substance does it have? What are core themes of the scenes and what are the motivations for individual stakeholders to engage? What could cause friction in the contemporary society of Bangkok? What is the nature of stakeholder engagement? How is the nature of networking? And what is the role of (social) media?

## 5.1 Discussing the movement

To call to mind a key informant's quote, regarding the Thai setting:

*“we different from many countries because I think it's about this, because we start from the farmers' side not start from the consumers' side. [...] We start from most of a farmers. Because in the past, around 30 years ago, we found the very intelligence farmer in the rural area that they can create their own concept about the integrated farming” (R-1, p.34).*

It tells about the situation of rural farmers becoming the incentive for farmers and NGOs to recollect sustainable farming methods as a first move for the contemporary local organic movement. The consumers' movement succeeds gradually, with a first consumer-grower cooperative as outlet for the new rural produce. These early activities have to be seen in light of the current tendencies; they underline that the contemporary organic movement in Bangkok is more than a trend, having a background of continuous engagement from different parties, mainly civil society, evolving in various waves. As explained by one respondent:

*“[The] movement is a bottom-up approach. We started off from a grass roots, from different [...] interest of individuals, different organisations, different business, different schools, different parent, different consumers, so it's really is a bottom up approach while the government kind of realise that this is important and they started to make it a policy. [...] But health was the first initial motivation” (R-22: #00:29:51-3#).*

Another key stakeholder and pioneer for notably directing NGOs and consumer protection gives details about this bottom-up approach: NGOs dealing with rural farmers' empowerment started to design appropriate technologies to overcome the farmers' crisis and introduced sustainable farming in this context. For the need of a market for the produce, mainly rice, a cooperative with consumers in Bangkok was created. It became the first link between farmer and consumer groups. Besides rice, farmers supplied the pioneer's traditional medicine business with herbs and medicinal plants. At that time, some pioneers were already convened, and urban pioneers retired for farming in the countryside such as a Bangkok post journalist (cf. R-27).

A number of organic food outlets have emerged ever since these first cooperatives (cf. chapter 4.8.1), and organic consumers both multiplied and diversified (cf. chapter 4.3.5). The green consumer society requires the consumers' routine awareness; and a number of NGOs, public networks and private people are currently working on it. Fairs, discussion forums, promotional events are supporting. A positive step towards the mindful consumer society are CSA programmes, green markets and other direct sale schemes which allow consumers and growers to meet and to build up trust relationships which seem to meet acceptance. They have beyond proven to be viable

marketing systems compared to other, often inefficient or unfair systems. Growing presence of the organic food matter in the public certainly contributes to people's awareness. An organic ready-to-eat salad vending machine placed on the ground floor of a busy office building for instance, might not turn everybody into organic eaters but can allow organic produce to feature in a person's mind just by regularly seeing the machine.

Concerning the urban gardening movement in Bangkok, the key informant retraces it by three consequent waves – post World War II, post 1997 crisis, and recent since about 2007 – and explains how they coincide with the Thai organic food scenes emerging from movements for rural sustainability. The contemporary urban gardeners grow organic gardens because they are widely concerned about their health. During the times of crises, urban farming certainly fulfilled a purpose of food security, the latest years took their inspiration increasingly from new urban lifestyles. After what this respondent reveals, generation matters in this discussion: this new generation has in many ways different mindsets from their parents' generation. This makes it certain among them that they are induced by green living, hence distance themselves from their professional careers to experience alternatives. Green, healthy, simple living becomes attributes to new identities and lifestyles for some stakeholders, for example the alternative living network (cf. section 4.7).

In the course of the analysis, many elements of the movement demonstrate its multi-layered nature: regarding structural conditions the departure from the complex rural farmers' situation, food pollution, environmental degradation, agricultural policies, economic and political crises, regarding then, on the side of stakeholders, NGO engagement, organic enterprise, and individual motivations and representations of urban living.

In a reflection on the position of organic farming method, it is often quoted as a sustainable alternative to modern agriculture. A couple of respondents yet point out that organic is not an alternative for Thailand but the only option to avoid bigger crisis (cf. R-18, R-32, R-10: #01:22:13-4#).

Respondents' statements offer a couple of conclusions on the organic scenes: The urban gardening and the organic farming scenes ally; R-27 remembers how a group of Bangkokian weekend farmers cultivated a lot in the province on their days off work. The place does not exist any more but urbanites have found new ways to follow the gardening hobby in the city (cf. R-10: #00:44:18-2#). R-1 explains how the contemporary movement starts from “a people society, like a NGO, like a environmentalist” (R-1, p.2). Much action happens analogously at that time, such as rural action for sustainable farming, promotion of health foods to urbanites in Bangkok, publication in two magazines for healthy lifestyles and natural farming, and a first social enterprise at the interface of farmer and consumer. It “is the first green shop, first [...] green entrepreneur in

Thailand. They want to promote the organic farming [...] in a urban market” (R-1, p. 3).

R-10 mentions about the organic movement as consisting of different smaller movements. Regarding the social base of these, they found mainly civil society instead of public policy support (cf. R-10: #00:11:59-3#). The inclusion of organic farming in the agendas of public institutions, although hardly implemented, suggests a movement in the eyes of some:

*“It's a group, it's not individual. It is the organic movement in Bangkok, like the universities. Because after Thai has set up their [...] National Organic Agenda, since 2003, [...] many ministries, [...] universities, [...] they must have some organic programmes” (R-4, p.22).*

Indeed, some groups react accordingly. Our network for organic farming research and innovations (cf. St.19) just submitted a project proposal that involves a local university in an organic community farming model (cf. R-10: #00:51:49-1#).

For R-43, it is the media coverage of organic and urban farming that hint at a movement; In the respondent's view, a movement apparently exists because television, magazines, newspaper raise awareness all the time (R-43, p.2).

Observing the urban gardening scene and talking to stakeholders reveals its present dynamics:

*“I can tell from the first time I went to events, [...] not very many people go there, join there [...] two years ago. And the last year one was [...] full of people. And also [our network for alternative living] can tell from the more city people, more famous people joins in and start doing their own serious growing, farming at home. And is, many things can be indicate it” (R-26: #00:33:03-4#).*

*“Is trend as well. I know some one, she 'ah we growing, start growing vegetables now, is trend' [...] And health issues I think is the most. [...] It's good. I think at the end, they find what is good about it “(R-26: #00:34:14-1#).*

A field note hints at urban gardening as an educational tool for urban people; it has become a mega trend but still, it departed from civil society action (cf. field notes MCE-06/03/2013, data CD). The trend demonstrates that many people start to participate initially, but many quit early (cf. R-26: #00:34:35-6#). This present organic scene represents probably both, a trend for some stakeholders, a movement for others, depending on their level of commitment. It may be argued that a social movement does not need to gather exclusively the committed, but lives on the general mass

as well, which is likely to feature the less committed to a certain extent; that way, it may well be viewed as a movement on a higher level. The organic stakeholders do not necessarily need to agree in all their ideas but can share a couple of objectives (cf. FLESHER FOMINAYA 2010).

*“Well, it's hard to say, is it a trend or is it a movement. I hope it's not a trend cause trends end. And this [...] movement, if it is that, then it's the only logical way forward in my mind, for not just Thai society, any society” (R-33: #00:14:37-8#), yet other key informants: It “[a]lready passed the beginning and it's about the awareness of the people in the health term and in food safety term. It's about that area and it's growing increasingly” (R-26: #00:41:02-2#).*

### Networking and coordination of stakeholders

Concerning the coordination between the various stakeholders in the organic food scene, our analysis detects stakeholder networks, although no tight ones. These rather loosely connect different groups and individuals. Some groups internally network very efficiently, often supported by social media, for example the *Cityfarm* network, the Asoke community, the network for alternative living, and foundation for sustainable farming. Whereas inter-group connections exist, there is yet no consistent coordination of the movement as a whole. R-32 points out a typical feature, namely that sub-groups often act individually but have the higher network that connects and represents them (cf. R-32: #00:57:38-6#). Exceptionally, urban life tends to be individualistic but urban poor communities appear to have quite efficient networks. City farming has the effect of reconnecting urbanites through shared activities, exchange of experiences, plants, produce, and others. It happens automatically via virtual platforms or is organised by the *Cityfarm* network or sub-groups.

*“And people start to connect with Facebook all the time [...] they do sharing things in there. Even informations, and even, we have seeds, 'give me the address, I send you for free'. Or '[...] you send me the envelop with the stamp, I send you for free'” (R-26: #00:12:04-9#).*

Nevertheless, the networking capacity does not get fully exploited; stakeholders could coordinate their work better, and could benefit more from each other. In our opinion, there is a certain passivity which could be related to Bangkok physiognomy. In comparison, the green scene in northern Thai city Chiang Mai is much more dynamic because its stakeholders are very active in convening, according their activities with each other, with the common vision to make a liveable city. A reason might be that Chiang Mai is much smaller in size, consequently the movement more

manageable. The network is curious though: despite missing coordination as a whole, respondents often declare feeling part of an organic community (cf. R-33: #00:16:33-9#), especially some of the interviewed consumers. Regarding feeling part of a movement, R-28 says “Sure, we're part of this. I think. And more and more people and consumer are joining us” (R-28: #01:44:59-2#). To conclude, the interview with two rural pioneers reveals:

*“I think more individuals start to do organic farming and in the same time, they start to connect together, loosely. Not very tight network [...] because different people do different thing”*

*“some people aren't very formally in a network [...]. But a lot of people, even if were not in a formal network but there are so many connections between different ideas and exchange” (R-21: #00:25:22-0#).*

The coordinator of a peri-urban organic community farming project seeks to involve different bodies in the project, so that academics, officials and farmers get the chance of mutual exchange. The coordinator hopes to create identification when all involved parties meet and familiarise (cf. R-30, p.1).

Referring back to the theory chapter, next examination of what aspects the case matches with New Social Movement criteria; chapter 2.1.3 already sketches five recognised criteria. Firstly, New Social Movements are said to settle in post-industrial societies. It is argued that Bangkok is big and socially diverse enough to assemble an array of societal patterns and rhythms, among which post-industrial patterns subsist. Many urbanites' lifestyles are prototypes of post-industrial societies, existing alongside with working class, small business, manufacturing, industrial services, or informal sector realities. Shopping opportunity is omnipresent, and as learned from informants Bangkok society is materialist; along with consumerism trends, there are now anti-consumerist counter-movements which respective groups try to be bring about by their mindful consumption philosophies. That way, some of our stakeholders actually personify what sociologist WILLER (2008: 6) would probably call post-hedonism, which includes the recollection of locality or simplicity.

Secondly, motives in New Social Movements are located in lifestyles, ideologies, cultural values rather than in politics. Health and environment are two major concerns of most organic stakeholders. It can be confirmed that lifestyles are a matter of engagement for many stakeholders, and will explain more about their motives in the following chapter. The lifestyle aspect is very pertinent as especially urbanites are consciously seeking for alternatives for their daily routines because they find their routine unfulfilling, and have at the same time the means to afford a change.

There are a couple of common ideologies involved, mainly locality, health, care for nature, solidarity. On a personal level, we have hence lifestyles, ideologies; on societal level, common cultural values are envisaged which range from food, local plant varieties, community, to ethics. Political incentive becomes relevant in the support of farmers' livelihoods, fair market mechanisms, the right to access healthy, non-polluted food, the opposition of monopolising fertilizer or seed companies, among others.

Thirdly, we discovered identity generation in the organic movement. There are on the one hand personal and social identities, on the other hand collective identity. The latter has been described as typical for New Social Movements (cf. chapter 2.1.4). Sociologist MELUCCI (1995) quotes New Social Movements as social constructions in which collective action designates a network of coordination between stakeholders. This aspect may account for the findings that an organic food movement does exist in Bangkok although it is not one single consistent entity, but consists of several sub-scenes and perhaps ideological currents, or simply individual actions, which are still connected via common objectives. It makes sense to say that the movement is, in this way, not a set collective actor but a transmitter of what MELUCCI (1995) names social constructions, in which individuals make sense of their lifestyle and identity aspirations. It can be confirmed moreover, that coordinated action between various organic stakeholders makes up the collective action. It should be added though, the collective action is partial, it does not embrace all stakeholders in the organic movement. This is because some stakeholders prefer to work individually, or are not aware of collectivity; hence some may be part of the movement but not participating in collective action. According to MELUCCI (1995), collective identity occurs in New Social Movements, namely when stakeholder identifications with certain higher objectives match with those of others. This means, stakeholder identification with a movement generates or enhances collective action. FLESHER FOMINAYA (2010) thinks collective identity is free from the need of stakeholders' complete agreement on ideologies. It resonates with the study's impressions; the organic movement accords in some ideologies, but collective action happens to exist beyond stakeholders' personal interests, for example business side and NGO side. The identity aspect comprehends rural as well as urban stakeholders.

Fourthly, engagement derives significantly from the grass roots, together with NGO action. It has been repeated in many of the experts' narratives when tracing back the roots of the movement, for which governmental action imports little.

Fifthly, despite a strong presence of urban middle classes, the organic movement is generally independent from social categories, hence not class-based, a notable aspect of New Social Movements in contrast to preceding classical social movements. Rural farmer realities or urban

poor stakeholders are represented likewise. The intention with this outline is to examine whether our stakeholders engage in the organic movements for expected affiliation to respective social groups, and for the opportunity to experiment with their social identities.

### 5.1.1 The individual in the organic movement

It has been previously discussed in section 2 how a person's ideas about how to live can be identity generating. For the most committed among the organic stakeholders in the study, they actively realise certain aspired lifestyles, or life philosophies regarding how they realise. That being so, the ideal of green living can provide stakeholders with identity, either personal or social by projecting the image they choose to represent towards the exterior. Green living can come along with a number of representative symbols such as outfit, food style, circle of friends, and attitudes in respect to real-life situations. The act of deciding on the kind of lifestyle to represent happens to be both, following a trend or intrinsically motivated, but either kind can solidify gradually.

In relation to the idea of trends in the organic scenes, an expert finds that it goes beyond temporary fashions:

*“This [...] trend of the change, eat organic, eat [...] good for your health, [...] it's not like another trend, in Bangkok, like a bicycle, like a hipster, like a street wear, like a hip-hop. Hip-hop come and now hip-hop gone. [...] But I think this [...] trend [...] will be go stronger, more than this. Because people want to improve their own health” (R-38: #00:39:14-3#).*

As WILLER (2008: 6) writes, it is likely that the urban living accentuates the need to distinguish oneself from others because of competition among the urbanites. This distinction might account for identity swapping, perhaps to greater extent among younger people who tend to be still unsettled regarding life choices. It was observed that in Bangkok, outwardly articulated personal styles are notably flexible. Especially as younger Thais get creative with experimental identities and fashions, often perfectly imitating certain styles – vintage fashions, hipster style, Japanese style, yoga, hippie, grunge and other. It could be argued that being a farmer represents one kind of style, too. As a result, the farmer style could constitute a part of this trend, as R-1 experienced that being a farmer becomes trendy among urbanites and university students:

*“we found [...] that city people who grow city farm, they development themselves lifestyle” (R-17: #00:32:54-7#).*

*“now it's like a new trend. The new trend, it's a paradox [...] in the rural area, young people [...] from the farmers families don't want to be a farmer. But young people in the urban area wants to be the farmers. [...] And most of the students in many curriculums in the university interest about the organic farming” (R-1 p.26).*

There is room for conjecture about farming being a trend or style; regardless, it is certain that there is an identity aspect in representations of the committed stakeholders. These go beyond mere trend; trend and identification might not be mutually exclusive though.

It is also certain that there exist different levels of commitment among the organic stakeholders in our study which has been experienced in our interviews. The less committed stakeholders tend to be consumers who purchase organic food for its assumed benefits but often have just a vague idea about what organic means. They tend to not pursue any higher objective with it or identify with an organic movement or green consumer society.

The identity change is described in many interviews, and new identities direct towards independence. The aspect of personal freedom is repeated many times:

*“lifestyle on a farm level is much of relaxing [a]nd there's more free to do and creative works and everything” (R-9: #00:24:11-0#).*

And as another respondent explains, Bangkokians are looking for alternative ways of living (cf. R-21: #00:29:17-2#). With the same motivation R-23 equally left the city in favour to a rural life where he finds peace and relaxation.

Many NGO workers in the field of organic farming decide to be independent from salary and start their own farm (cf. R-10: #01:40:51-7#). Independence from employment are prevalent motives here. The quest for happiness is also mentioned by others (cf. R-26, R-43). R-22 was inspired to take a change as a response to unsatisfactory employment:

*“I wanna change my lifestyle, [...] I was tired of working for [...] companies or for [...] salary, I want to do [...] the self-run” (R-22: #00:04:36-2#).*

All these examples in fact stand for increasing individualism, in the sense of self-realisation, a reality that would oppose assumptions of collectivist organisation of societies as PIMPA (2012)

wrote (cf. chapter 2.2.3). One reason could be, Thailand has a general collective society, but structures have loosened in Bangkok. Another explanation refers back to transcultural studies by TRIANDIS (2001) that report tendencies of flexible personalities in collective societies which partially matches our observations. However, TRIANDIS also detects their interdependence within groups and communal behaviour in contrast to individualist societies in which individuals have more opportunity to pursue their personal interests. The study finds both tendencies in the case studies. There is tendency that collective cultures link to solidarity. Solidarity has been found to be motivation for some organic groups – organic farmers communities, NGOs at the interface of farmer and consumer, in the mind of some conscious consumers – but less for others. Especially the less committed organic consumers for example do not think much about the farmers' situation, so their consumption is self-directed.

R-26's identity change was quite resolute, giving away all his clothes and stopping to go out:

*“I don't want to go out any more. All the cloths, the shoes, nothing left. And I have to stay home, only [laughing], I cannot go anywhere. I have only shorts and T-Shirts” (R-26: #00:54:30-9#).*

Two further stakeholders have undertaken similar significant changes of their life philosophies – R-18 turned away from his international vegetable cannery business to experiment with organic method, when realising that the business, based on industrial method, contributed to the ecological damage and people's health problems. R-32 had a similar experience with the food business, starting out in a career as a pig breeder. A period of monkhood lead to feelings of remorse for the profession that involved taking the life of animals; as a consequence, choosing to practice more mindfulness, he became an organic farmer and rural activist. This demonstrates a clearly voluntary life change that brings about new personal identity. It can be recognised herein a spiritual perspective, because both persons found their occupation to have moral flaws. Becoming organic farmers means for both their karmic improvement, hence liberation from previous unethical behaviour. Their behaviour could be interpreted as either outwards directed – merit, giving something to society – or inwards directed – liberation from remorse, self-fulfilment – but probably mixes both.

Some stakeholders in our movements were found to have pioneer status for their engagement determined the movement notably. The pioneers named by our respondents are those who initiated the early organic movements back in the 1980s or have determined the scene through their NGO engagement or as individuals such as R-21 who co-founded a rural seed saving and

organic farming centre. Moreover, they function as role models to the newcomers. This applies to a couple of urban garden pioneers who are the marked representatives, kind of prototypes of their movement.

Relating to the debate on pioneers in the organic scenes in Bangkok, two respondents make an interesting allusion to the question of organic as a recent or an old practice, namely that their grandparents were the real pioneers as they inherently did organic farming the traditional way (cf. R-22: #00:25:08-1#; R-31: #01:39:14-8#).

Another detail of the discussion about the individual in the organic movement is the identity of farmer. 'Farmers want a better life for their children' is a common reality, hence children from farming families are typically send to schools and university to eventually be able to begin a position perceived as better in the cities. It relates to a common stigma of the profession of a farmer in Thai society. It links in turn the one of the stakeholders that currently organises, in response to that, a movement that resettles young urbanites in rural villages where they commence organic farming. R-14 refers to the appreciation of farming in Thai society. Commonly, farming is not seen as a reputable profession, and especially younger generations prefer more comfortable occupations:

*“A lot of young people will avoid, will not go into farming. They wanna work in an office, or, aircon, sabai, sabai. [...] they wanna do something which is not this grind of working in the fields” (R-14: #00:40:54-3#).*

*Sabai* is a Thai word for the feeling of comfort and peace. This attitude contrasts sharply with the Asoke community that values farming as the second most meritorious occupation. It seems as if, at present, rural farming families continue to imagine the comfortable urban life for their children whereas a couple a young urbanites want to escape because they imagine rural living to be more comfortable.

Lifestyles can transfer to new social identities if internalised. Thus far, consumerism particularly determines urban lifestyles, and strongly marks Bangkok's urban identity. For identities are personal, it is possible that individuals in the organic movements actively create theirs, and concretely choose to escape mainstream behaviour towards moderate consumption. The movement could thus be viewed in light of anti-consumerism or alternative consumption.

To view the results of analysis in the light of the set of theories, Social Identity Theory (cf. chapter 2.2.2) might be referred to here. Social identity in contrast to mere personal identity builds up along a social category. That can be any institution that gathers individuals, such as a network or movement. That means, affiliation with the organic consumer movement creates the social identity

of an organic consumer. This effect becomes apparent in the many examples of lifestyle changes in our study. Social Identity Theory bases upon two major psychological processes that are self-enhancement – referring to personal motivation – and self-categorisation. The latter is of interest with regards to our analysis, as it describes how individuals identify with their preference groups by projecting their personal attitudes onto this group. In reality, we observed little stringent self-categorisation of individuals into groups. Even though participating in and identifying with their groups, the stakeholders widely maintained their independence instead of assimilating with it. This equally applies to movements in the sense of social groups: Networking, physical gatherings, exchange within groups are given but stakeholders are loyal to their personal identities rather than a group identity. An exception might be the mindful consumers community described in chapter 4.8.1.

Prototypes though are cognitive representations of attitudes of social groups and have relevance for the organic movement (cf. HOGG & TERRY 2001). A number of pioneers have been pointed out that model behaviours to further stakeholders. They hence become personified prototypes by suggesting sustainable lifestyles, organic farming or environmentally sensitive behaviours. It was found that most of those pioneers are unintentional models, for their primary objective is to personally realise their aspirations. In many cases, it is the media that boosts their popularity, in combination with a general susceptibility of Thai people for the imitation of role models and trendsetters.

### 5.1.2 Realising alternative living

Many of these stakeholders who change their priorities in life are located in the urban area, some of them leave in favour to the countryside. Space determines the manner how alternative or green living is achieved, hence their imaginations need to adapt to the urbanity. A city as Bangkok hardly facilitates green living. To define aspects of urban green living, it could be, in reference to individual behaviours, to use public or non-polluting transportation, to green one's personal environment, to support sustainable food production and distribution, to reduce waste, to recycle, to avoid over-consumption, to create consumer communities, to enhance social exchange and sharing, to encourage more people to act alike, among other aspects. Verifying these parameters in the case of Bangkok discovered not much of their encouragement thus far, neither do public policies contribute. This means, where green living happens, people had to search for niches, and beyond must have been intrinsically motivated to do so. The observation is that the organic stakeholders find these niches and achieve green living to the extent that the megacity allows at this current state.

*Cityfarm* gardeners are currently implementing a number of the above stated parameters, namely neighbourhood greening, community living, sharing and social exchange, empowerment, simple living, health awareness, garbage recycling and support of sustainable food systems. Due to limited space for gardening, the city farmers make use of backyards, pots, rooftops, balconies, shelves and spaces for hanging plants; some additionally commit to organic supply from outside the city, for instance CSA schemes or farmers' markets. Beyond, they are realising urban community by gathering before individuals for various activities (cf. R-17: #00:32:35-2#). Our network for alternative living described in chapter 4.7.4 embodies these parameters quite seriously, including many health awareness activities, healing, yoga, simple living and communal activities.

Chapter 4.7 showed what different stakeholders think about their living situation in Bangkok and how they imagine ways of living alternative to that.

A couple of examples were given. R-26, one of urban garden pioneers with a private garden site on a former football pitch, personifies the realisation of personal inspiration by altering identity. The change from his professional life as designer, photographer and singer to an urban farmer is in fact a literal lifestyle conversion, bringing about not only his new occupation but an attitude: Giving away most clothes, sufficing with lower income, committing to a new daily routine, giving up most outside leisure activities, entering a new circle of friends, which constitutes in brief simple living.

Becoming an urban gardener, does that imply a shift to a farmer's identity? R-2 says about this that urban farmers cannot be real farmers because they stay urbanites, and urbanites have different mentality compared to rural farmers. Their social provenance means that they have differing life concerns and priorities. Adding that rural farmer priorities are given to their delicate socio-economic situations pressuring their livelihoods; organic farming is hence primarily a financial hope. This might be true for some farmers and has been mentioned by several respondents. However, this argument is discriminative for it puts all farmers under one category, whereas the reality is that many rural farmers voluntarily choose to incorporate organic method, just as they bring about more ecological, healthy and natural living. It is hence not the exclusive privilege of the urban middle classes to fulfil back-to-nature and simple living fantasies.

It raises the question whether lifestyle transformations as experienced by R-26 can be vectors towards status transition. It might be reckoned that lifestyle transformations can provide social identities in the sense of representation of roles in the social environment of individuals, yet might not erase existing identities.

### 5.1.3 Motives for the engagement in the organic scene

Health is a prevalent motivation among stakeholders in our study, for farmers, consumers as well as third parties, and needs to be viewed against the backdrop of the troubling health situation in Thailand, quoted as health crisis by certain respondents (cf. R-18: #00:40:01-6#, R-21: #00:48:26-8#, R-32: #00:53:38-6#). The advance of illnesses is linked to the quality of foods on the regular market. In this way, the rising cancer rates refer back to residues of fertilizers and pesticides, antibiotics or growth hormones found in many agricultural products, and to synthetic ingredients in processed foods. Other non-communicable ailments such as obesity, cardiac diseases, diabetes, high blood pressure, are widely acknowledged to be a result of eating habits shifting towards fast foods and processed foods, with high content of refined sugars and fats (cf. R-12, p. 17). Especially the Thai cuisine finds use of curing plants or traditional medicine, yet is employing them less and less. Food must be considered as medicine, is what various respondents point out; and in turn, organic food constitutes preventive medicine by which individuals – and eventually also the public health care system – can thus reduce their medical expenses. Organic food is generally affirmed to be healthier by respondents. The current health crisis must be related to low food quality, changing eating patterns, finally return to the industrial agriculture.

Farmers need to be concerned about their personal health as their sustained exposure to chemicals recurrently causes illness, rashes or allergies in the farmers' households.

Consumers are gradually more informed thanks to television programmes, magazine issues on health risks in our environment. These educational programmes comprehend health facts. In sum, there are more information and public events available to the general public. Regardless, information still reaches out primarily to the already conscious consumers hence populations with limited access to the respective media channels have fewer chances to learn about health risks, thus adopt preventive behaviours. However, a majority of citizens generates their information via internet and smart phones, accessing various social media platforms where these topics are discussed. A precondition for this consumer information is that their general interest is given.

Organic food is still new for the majority of Thai people, at least for those who generally are little familiar with food safety issues. In contrast to that, there is the aspect of fashion behind which makes that many wealthy urbanites buy it, thinking about health. It is a trend now being passed on into television and advertisements (cf. R-10: #01:57:27-9#).

Analysis displayed environmental awareness as a secondary motivation. Even though many people are familiar with current environmental problems, and especially most farmers face them regularly, it does not seem to determine their activism. It is quoted by about one third of

respondents, but usually as of subordinate relevance.

*“[A]t the moment, organic [...] means healthy food. I think that's it related to organic is healthy food, organic can help stop cancer, you be healthy, you eat organic food. It stays as that. I wish [...] it can be extended to biodiversity and also the environment. [...] I mean obviously, percentage of preserving nature and environment is along with organic consumption but it's not the most of the motivation” (R-22: #00:13:25-7#; #00:16:35-8#).*

It appears paradoxical but environmental awareness seems to be a typical urban attitude deduced from higher exposure to environmental education and perhaps personal concern. R-4 founds for a Northern Thai city that the local organic sector is not yet distinct but people who demand organic food are former Bangkokians who have moved up North (cf. R-4, p.24). Environmentally conscious behaviours are often conjoined with respective nature oriented lifestyles, for city persons and rural persons alike. The analysis (chapter 4.7.1 / 4.7.2) elucidated the back-to-the-roots and simple life visions of many urbanites, but also rural farmers.

Economic stability was quoted as another factor motivating particularly rural farmers to grow organically, as many of them are in financial difficulties. The questions rises whether those farmers are still intrinsically motivated, or motivated by external, financial incentive. Some apparently change to organic farming method with the following motivation:

*“not without the conditions, [...] not without the exchange. They interested to get a [...] secure market, a better price. [...] I will say 'okay, you want a better price, you want a secure market, you have to convert to organic'. So organic is not their choice” (R-2, p.7).*

However, those farmers supply an organic business; and it may be argued that many others in the study do organic farming by their own choice, and beyond find therein various benefits including financial stability, care for health and ecology, and control over their own lifestyles. A statement may add to the circumstances that economic incentive and internalised organic behaviour can come together:

*“I think a lot of the organic shop are somewhat shop owners and somewhat pioneers because of course, you wanna change everyone to be organic consumers. Better for your business. [chuckling]” (R-27: #00:24:51-8#).*

An organic farmers' group that has incorporated the ecological among other motives, is surely the Asoke community who “are one of the pioneers that are well educated in terms of environment, ecology, religion and eating healthy food together” (R-22: #00:20:41-3#). Their ideologies preclude doing harm to one's environment.

From a community point of view, particularly city farmers have made the organic living their motivation; they organise community gatherings with the ambiance of sharing, something that, as R-30 knows from his experience as a company's employee, is missing from the routine Bangkok life.

*“When we meet up in the events, they 'Oh I have food for you, I have seeds for you, I have a plants, take it home, plant it'. Everyone is giving away the plants and sharing stuff, and that really makes people stick to this environment, I think” (R-26: #00:15:14-7#).*

*“I was working for this as well for 13 years and of course it was okay, it was good. But people are missing something, some bonding between people is missing. To know what you are eating, to make the food chain as short as possible is better. To go and grow yourself or put your hands into soil from time to time can help to reconnect. Also knowing the people who are growing for you” (R-30, p.5).*

The organic scenes thus embraces social relations between the urban individuals, and stakeholders become motivated by this prospect. To add another example concerning motivations, from field notes on the garden sites at Laksi district, a private gardener grows for the sake of food safety and home production, and can grow healthier food compared to the regular market with enough food for own consumption, as well as to give away to others, a central aspect in self-sufficiency concepts. Gardening has a number of personal benefits for the gardener, such as a better living situation, with more happiness, extra money, better health and good relationships with family members. R-43 finds happiness and simple life in urban gardening; and further examples have been given. We discern herein self-fulfilment, hence intrinsic motivations as base for engaging in the hobby gardening. Beyond, the search for happiness is an ambition rooted in Voluntary Simplicity as described in chapter 2.2.4 / 2.2.5.

Motivations for engaging in a matter depend largely on the individuals' psychological processes directed either inwards, concerning themselves, or outwards in interaction with others. Self-determination Theory (cf. chapter 2.2.4) deduces that autonomous motivations are crucial for individual actions, determining them, and must thus determine individuals' level of commitment in movements. Motivations root in a set of basic psychological needs, among which are the notions of self-fulfilment, personal well-being, autonomy, competence. Self-determination directs us to the

notion of identification again, for a person who identifies with a cause will be more likely determined to engage in it. Self-determination Theory also distinguishes between intrinsically and extrinsically motivated action by appraising persons' incentives to take action. It is said that extrinsic motivations is in expectation of certain outcomes while intrinsic motivations imply inherently satisfying goals. Little was found of this distinction suitable for this study: Although the stakeholder cases indicated differing levels of motivation – for instance the pair of money incentive as opposed to personal well-being in organic farming, or mere health benefit as opposed to holistic view of organic food for body, mind and environment from a consumer's point of view – motivations were often a combination of both. In fact, we suppose that intrinsic motivation happens to turn into external motivation and in reverse: Personal health by organic food consumption appears to be both, cause and effect, and that way contains an intrinsic (inherent personal satisfaction) and an extrinsic notion (expected outcome of improved health). R-22 retraces how organic food embraces different levels of motivations from self-level to global concern:

*“it [...] entails to health and healthy lifestyle, body, and you know, that's still kind of greedy, [...] at the greedy level. [...] And then community level in terms of supporting [...] the producers, supporting the farmers, it is almost reaching out to the point where environment is [...] the key thing” (R-22: #00:13:54-4#).*

Under the given circumstances, this distinction is less relevant but self-fulfilment all the more. Self-fulfilment refers to intrinsic motivation too, and can be considered a psychological need (cf. KASSER 2009). It goes along with psychological well-being and has found to be notably inducing many of our stakeholders. Firstly, health is physical as well as psychological well-being, and thus is incentive to buy organic food. And then, community is quoted by respondents as enhancing personal relationships, urban gardening as bringing happiness and satisfaction. Solidarity, for instance urban consumers with growers, could be seen in the light of self-fulfilment. Mindful lifestyles contribute to karmic improvement. Ecological sustainability can be conducive to well-being, as exposure to degraded environments erodes physical and psychological health. Sustainable farming has the effect of improving rural ecologies and likewise rural farmers' overall livelihoods. On a smaller scale, city farmers are embodying it: By creating natural environments within their framed conditions, they fulfil their needs for sustainable living which eventually conducts well-being. To many in the mindful society scene, Voluntary Simplicity concept applies (cf. chapter 2.2.5). Inward satisfaction instead of external incentive such as professional success, wealth, status are ideas that resonate much with most of our case studies of urban gardeners or NGO stakeholders;

moreover, to many growers that were encountered in the organic scene, especially the pioneers. Those inward satisfaction refer in the theories to personal well-being (cf. DECI & RYAN 2000b), community, realisation of personal aspirations, reconnection with nature and possibly spirituality (cf. KASSER 2009), aspects that can be confirmed for the committed organic stakeholders in this study.

#### 5.1.4 Retracing the roots of organic movements: external influences

In the course of the analysis, a number of structural determinants were discovered in the organic food scenes in Bangkok. Health is their main impetus: growing cancer rates, residues in food, genetically modified plant varieties are one point, the control over foods of the modern market is another. The reality is, policies and public institutions, support with almost no exception the large-scale food and agribusiness; business representatives in turn feature politics (cf. R-32: #00:33:58-5#, R-28: #00:15:53-7#). The National Development Plans have adopted organic agriculture but the designated government budget is insignificant, knows an employee at Department of Agriculture (cf. R-24: #00:54:15-8#). Previous chapters described the relations between the emergence of organic movements and the situation for rural farmers in Thailand (debts, health problems, land ownership, social crisis). Policies have thus far not been effective in envisaging those problems, and perhaps even aggravating it (rice pledging scheme, continuous encouragement of fertilizer import). In response, NGOs engage the more in improving rural farmers' livelihoods. Their measures often include organic farming or other sustainable farming methods. The organic farming scene has produced positive as well as negative examples as the model does not work out for all farmers, or they have not been appropriately instructed. Farmers are very vulnerable to political instability and have little protection against the state market decisions.

It seems that many farmers change their farming method according to market opportunities: When organic seems profitable, they change to organic farming, otherwise they will stay with the conventional farming which is currently more convenient. This inhibits reliable cooperation with farmers from the NGO perspective. In contrast, some farmers realise their need to change and long-term benefits of organic farming. However, several experts have pointed out that conventional farming is not efficient any more; it will not be able to sustain livelihoods and will lead, on a state level, to agricultural crisis. They stress, organic farming is therefore not an alternative - but the only possible way. Those farmers who internalised the organic method have become major stakeholders for the organic food movements, have created identification with it and have become in some cases role models – perhaps prototypes in line with Social Identity Theory – to new farmers. The organic

farmers are heterogeneous for their differing social backgrounds; they feature nevertheless many rural low-income households, which makes the social base of the organic movements be heterogeneous, too.

R-25 has witnessed the effects of chemical farming when working with north-eastern farmers, and saw environmental degradation and indebted livelihoods. For farmer households, the shift to organic farming comes along with a whole concept of alternative living, as it can empower them. R-13 gives explanations on reasons why industrial farming was able to settle in Thailand although natural farming has been traditionally practised before:

*“Since the company who sell the chemical start, [...] they promote, our people [...] we are just listen and trust. [...] But, lucky that we have part of people that they are educate. They know that is not the good way to use chemical. The good way is local, the good way is natural. For life, should be like this” (R-13: #00:27:45-7#).*

On the initiative of NGOs, farmers eventually started to grow organically, and “natural farming is [...] inspiring people to change from the chemical farming to this” (R-27: #00:48:52-0#). In fact, in most Thai regions, the period of exposure to industrial farming was long enough to loose indigenous knowledge about traditional farming, because it skipped one or more farmer generations. This brings to mind the reality that the traditional farming in Thailand is small-scale, diversified and natural, and in any case were pre-industrial ways of farming supposedly close to organic method anywhere. The period of industrial agriculture then rendered farm biodiversity and local farming patterns fading. It not only affected the farm environment notably but entailed lifestyle transformations and domestic migration.

In the city, we have learned that it is the urban lifestyles that contribute to the emergence of organic movements: dependence on the regular market produce, polluted environment, lack of natural experience, individualism and anonymity. People's urban living situations influence their personal health. When asked about how sustainable or healthy living in Bangkok was possible, respondents find that difficult to realise because of its overall pollution.

A last significant cause for organic movements is media, including social media which many respondents referred to (cf. chapter 4.8.2). R-26 affirms the importance of social media for the movement's dynamics in relation to themselves. When starting to grow the urban garden, the gardener had no idea but found helpful information on the virtual networks (cf. R-26: #00:13:17-3#). Likewise, television programmes, radio, newspapers and magazines talk about organic food more and more. Nonetheless, integrity of these media and their outreach are limited because

opposing food trends are advertised at the same time; further people who are already health conscious follow these programmes. Media too can have an indirect influence, for instance when individuals are not personally exposed but informed by others. According to BANDURA (1994) who examined social cognitive behaviour after exposure to media, friends, family, colleagues that way become transmitters of behaviours: “That is, people who have had no exposure to the media are influenced by adopters who have had the exposure and then, themselves, become the transmitters of the new ways” (BANDURA 1994: 79/80). It may be confirmed for the organic movements in Bangkok that media directly or indirectly embodies the function of a transmitter, though particularly the virtual social networks. They are the platform where information is processed, discussed, adapted and transformed.

## 5.2 Discussions and reflections

Expert interviews describe many environmental conditions and operations for the organic movements, and the roots of organic farming in Thailand; they divulge their own motivations to engage in the organic food scene as well as the motivations of others, represented ideologies, and aspirations about living.

Before embarking on the discussion of our results, we should briefly explain the interest in investigating the organic movements in Bangkok. Several aspects become apparent: It allows us to appraise the gradual development of local organic food related activities, their momentum and prospects; to discover which stakeholders are involved, and what makes them commit; to realise how socio-political and societal matters import to the movement, along with local geographical dispositions; to realise which societal conversion the organic stakeholders are urging; to demonstrate the possible outreach of the civil society action within the limits of the given external structures; and, to make suppositions about whether the new generations will be able to maintain achievements and advance further changes in the sense of organic food movements.

There is potential to make policy makers react to the urges of the organic scene if they see the reality of their health and environment concerns that are not fads but serious troubles affecting the entire society. In order to pre-empt social, environment and health crisis, rural and urban livelihoods alike need to be secured and enhanced. The case of the organic food movement in Bangkok finally can give an example to other cities, as well as ideas from other cities can be imported to strengthen the organic movement in Bangkok when its gaps are recognised.

The research methodology bases on assumptions of social constructivism and hermeneutics (cf. chapter 3.1): The constructivism view claims that individuals construct the realities in which

they act and move. Subjective production and sense-making of space is hence a result. This argumentation appears sensible in view of stakeholders in the organic scene, and analysis shows subjective interpretations. The organic stakeholders for instance view their urban surroundings as tiring, unnatural, little liveable, whereas others might appreciate Bangkok for its vibrancy, modernity, opportunities. Under these circumstances, the organic movement should be the construct of a network of like-minded stakeholders which implies their individual understandings of cultural meanings of space. The analysis of this study took into account individuals' subjective meanings by hermeneutic interpretation of the interviews, and moreover my personal observations on the scene. The study added a second analytical layer by looking at structural settings that frame the movement. Although purely objective description is impracticable, and knowing that structural settings are subjectively designated by each stakeholder, it is assumed that certain realities are given facts – at least for the temporary period in which the organic movement evolves. Those facts have been described as rural situation, policies, food crisis, etc., but have been envisaged by the same analysis methods. The hermeneutic approach provided a frame to the interpretation of the qualitative interviews. It allowed specifically for insights about the psychological processes that occur in the movement, for instance identity processes, motivations and lifestyle decisions.

The preceding chapters treated our research questions on the basis of our theoretical work concept. It may be summarised – how can emerging organic movements in Bangkok be interpreted from a New Social Movement perspective? At the outset, the premise of this study departed from the observation that Bangkok's organic food scene is a movement. It is a new social movement for fulfilling main factors, to be precise, it has sustained for about 30 years, it is currently gaining momentum, it has societal relevance, it gathers stakeholders of different social situations with different ambitions around a common objective, it spins around individual well-being, identity, lifestyles, ecology, ideologies, it is determined by structural settings, it gets mainly support from the grass roots. Stakeholders have ambition to induce societal change and to pre-empt a social crisis.

The explanations blend into the second question on what motivates different stakeholders to engage in the organic food scene. As principal motivations were stated health, environment, economic improvement, lifestyle changes which includes community. Some stakeholders commit to their engagement more than others; those often build up a social identity around their cause. There is moreover identification with the movement or its sub-networks. The prevailing consumerism is opposed by mindfulness and voluntary simplicity as components of their stakeholder motivations.

Concerning the third question of how do structural settings frame the organic movements, there are notably the rural and the public health crises, the passivity of governmental institutions and the urban living situation in Bangkok. Stakeholders in the organic movement demonstrate what

the fourth question addresses, how can the organic food scene contribute to green urban living? The organic food scene directly links with urban gardening – more and more private households maintain small lots where they cultivate plants without additional chemicals inputs. Organic food often correlates with elements of sustainable lifestyles such as mindful consumption, recycling, producing things at home. The urban organic mindful consumption furthermore transfers to more sustainable practice in the rural sphere. There is potential to align green living more with environmental goals.

These reflections evoke some conclusions on the study title. Bangkok's pioneers for mindful foods and green urban living are all those stakeholders who notably shape the organic movement by giving opportunity to organic farming, organic food markets and networks, consumer awareness, or by inspiring urbanites to urban gardening, simple living, etc. These stakeholders are NGOs but mostly private persons and networks. Tracing back this current organic movement to its origins in the 1980s makes us realise that it is not as recent as it appears on the first side. It has seen dynamic periods as well as less active periods. The current organic food trends hence reflect not a newly emerging movement but an existing one that is gaining momentum since recent years.

Reflecting the topic evokes a number of further thoughts: Urban grown foods repeatedly raise doubts about the quality of urban grown food, a reality that is under-emphasised among the stakeholders in our study. Only few respondents mention quality restraints due to urban pollution, whereas there are potentials for it. Sources of pollution can be water, air, soils (cf. R-1, p.23); kitchen wastes from conventional foods constitute organic composts and could leave residues; the liquid bio-fertilizers are made of conventional ingredients; It could be argued that urban grown vegetables are not that healthy after all; however, even if people compromise in that point, they are still avoiding exposure to the polluted market produce. At the same time, they can demonstrate independence from the market, neighbourhood greening, space conversion, urban community, alternative living. Compared to what we know about the global urban farming perspective, the Bangkok case is perhaps not very significant in terms of actual food production, hence the contribution to urban food security is minute. Some urban growers do aim at sufficiency though, and demonstrate that a significant share of daily consumption can be grown on the condition that a small plot is available. The principal motive for growers is grounded in the way of living that is implied in urban gardening, thus growing for the sake of leisure, well-being, sharing with others, and so on. Another trait is that Bangkok's growers apply organic method quite consistently which does not seem explicit in other cities, except for Havana. These aspects are probably what typifies the Bangkok urban garden scene.

Urban gardening should also be regarded in the context of rural-urban divide debates (cf. chapter 2.4). There is common notion foremost in rural and urban sociology about a divide that distinctly splits apart functions of the urban space and functions of the rural space. The notion transfers to opposition of natural and cultural sphere, or urban lifestyles and rural lifestyles. In previous chapters, we have already raised doubts on this conception; in both spheres, rural and urban features mix, just as lifestyles do. In fact, in following, constructivist discussions, scholars “drew upon ideas of identity and representation to examine the ways in which rurality is discursively constructed” (WOODS 2005: 24). We agree on the perspective that individual identities should be taken into account when discussing geographical affiliation. Urban identity might indeed be in the rural sphere and in reverse. It was suggested in 2.4 semantic rural and urban elements potentially pertain in both spheres. The study presents exactly this effect: For example do urbanites start to grow gardens on urban land, that way transfer elements considered as rural to the city; or they leave in favour to the rural areas to start farming over there; further, some rural people who had moved to Bangkok start urban gardening, which happens rarely, but our urban poor community case study is one example. As another aspect of the organic food scene in Bangkok, do rural-urban food networks contribute to the blending of functions. Direct marketing or CSA schemes make rural farmers come to sell in the city and in turn invite urbanites to farm visits in the countryside. In a beyond physical sense, the food networks bring city people more exposure to rural elements, and vice versa; they proof the transgressing of the artificial divide, or rather proof that the divide is fictional.

Organic food networks in Bangkok gather mindful consumers, and mindful consumption directs us to the topic of food movements. In line with DONALD & BLAY-PALMER (2006: 1904) are urban spheres where mass food trends and alternative food trends take place at the same time. Urban societies are globally producing slow food, health food, organic food tendencies. Some authors argue, these tendencies were self-centred fads of middle classes concerned about health and body image (cf. LUETCHFORD 2014: 58) – the study confirms this to a certain extent, but also knows that the mindful consumer is concerned about the origin of their foods, the food growers, the methods they use, which moves the organic food issue onto an activist level, particularly as a direct response to the dominant polluted market produce that continues to be encouraged by food industries and agricultural policies. Food has a strong lifestyle component, too, for the food we eat can give us identity, consequently organic food in Bangkok's food movements is to some persons means to the sustainable living conception typified in preceding chapters. “Eating can signal friendship, affiliation and closeness” (BARLÖSIUS 1995: 293, translated from German), which we see in some group in the organic food network, for example the city farmers or a farmers' market

community. There has been critique that alternative food systems were exclusive for high-income households, as organic food prices are normally higher than for conventional food (cf. GUTHMAN in REAL 2012). It is true in some measure regarding the Bangkok case: Organic, certified supermarket products are significantly more expensive, and some vendors at farmers' markets, too. They are mostly farms that go through the process of third-party certification. Compared to that, all marketing systems working on direct sale schemes sell at very reasonable price; observations and interviews revealed that some green markets where farmers sell physically without middle men are frequented by middle class and low-income customers alike. Hence, there are ways to avoid exclusivity. Another typical trait of the mindful consumers is their “conscious rejection of the open economy and support for alternative systems of production and consumption” (LUETCHFORD 2014: 69) that we have discussed in chapter 4.8.1. The current dominant reality in Bangkok however is this of a consumer society as explained in section 2.3. To recall, it is typical for consumer societies that consumption there clearly transcends mere satisfaction of physical needs and is engraved in the socialisation processes (cf. HELLMANN 2013: 106/107; BAUDRILLARD 1970: 114). Just as food, consumption is often identity building and relates this way to persons' lifestyles. The study suggests seeing it as both, individual as well as social group oriented, in line with JÄCKEL, individuals' purchase decisions are interrelated and reflect social and cultural values and the alignment with the social sphere (cf. JÄCKEL 2004: 78). MYERS & KENT (2003, 2004) have examined the effects of consumption on global environmental harm and found that growing numbers of affluent consumers – the 'new consumers' – in emerging industrialised countries are notably contributing by overconsumption, and Thailand is among those countries. Their overconsumption affects local dietary patterns as they go along with the imitation of global food trends. The organic food scene in Bangkok should be seen as emerging from this situation. The overconsumption of the mass is apparent and has passed onto urbanites' daily routines. The mindful consumer society as an ambition of the local organic food movement evidently attempts the counter-trend to the overconsumption. As an effect of it, it has opened urbanites the alteration of lifestyles and opportunity for new urban identities.

In that manner have the organic consumers found their niche in Bangkok's consumer society – the next question to answer would be about their possible impact. Consumer sovereignty is mystification (cf. BAUDRILLARD 1970: 99), but consumers globally claim more consumer democracy; there is “a central function of those consumer movements as widely visible symptoms of the transfer from a mostly passive economic public to collectively protesting economic citizens” (HELLMANN 2013: 120). Nevertheless, we find that consumer democracy should be an instrument for consumers to keep control over their food but that its effectiveness is currently framed by the

given market settings and national, even global, food policies. In our opinion, it is actually reasonable to organise consumers on the small scale just as the local mindful consumers in Bangkok do by making their own networks. By doing so, consumers exchange information among each other and coordinate with growers within small consumers' groups, instead of awaiting respective food policies.

What are the prospects of our organic food movements in Bangkok? The organic food movement should be able to sustain itself, is a restaurant chef's perspective:

*“So if we can use food to awaking people's ideals, to make people see how detrimental we are to the rest of the society, and to the world, than yeah I think this movement should on, will continue, and grow and expand” (R-33: #00:16:14-0#).*

R-10 is certain that Bangkokians will choose the alternative way if they have the choice. Knowing already about the generally low quality of foods, they will choose organic products if possible, especially as healthy eating has become like a fashion recently (cf. R-10: #01:11:45-7#).

*“You need to have the member, good customer to understand that message. [...] I feel that you have to communicate your story” (R-10, p.49).*

R-12 knows the challenges of running a health shop, but they are hopeful to eventually make impact on a broader public.

When comparing to food movements in other countries, the scene in Bangkok seems to miss dynamism. Several interview partners explain that movements are taking time to gain momentum, and from observations, the local reality seems to resonate with this. Significant were the insights into the green scene in Chiang Mai which seems much more activist. We might want to guess that activism takes more time in large cities, first because size poses barriers to the dimension of impact, and second because the opposition is too small compared to the big mass of citizens.

Further reason could be in personal attitudes, credibility of the movement's interests, political or cultural fabric affecting the feasibility of alternative movements. Certainly, there are more factors but out of reach for speculation.

*“Hopefully, [the future for the organic movement is] very bright. It's [...] slow here but it's getting there, we're getting there” (R-35: #00:17:17-9#).*

However, when entering into the details of the organic food scene, dynamics and stakeholder commitment evoke potential for development beyond the current state. It should not be forgotten to mention the societal role of this movement for it is urging people's rights to clean food. The matter of food pollution is too pressing to be ignored by population and authorities. Health crisis on the one hand, agricultural crisis on the other hand are predicted.

### 5.2.1 Summarising the empirical results

The results show the growing presence of an organic food movement in Bangkok that has been existing since the 1980s. The movement as examined in the urban contexts is in relation to urban societal concerns and the rural social political and environmental situation. A number of stakeholders convey their concerns about organic foods through different kinds of activities: urban gardening, rural organic farming – differentiated between small-scale and industrial – NGO engagement, marketing, private business. The stakeholders personal motives root in their personal ideologies and lifestyles aspirations, healthy living being an overarching motivation that spans the entire movement. General objectives of stakeholders in the movement are to make organic food accessible for the aspect of preventive health, to enable farmers to overcome the social crisis, to stimulate sustainable development and sustainable individual behaviours, to create an organic community to eventually reach the mindful consumer society. The stakeholder motivations derive for one part from spiritual, to be precise, mostly Buddhist philosophies, for another part in the mere conviction that organic food is the alternative for the present health crisis. The current lack of supportive policies and the dominance of major food and agribusiness account for the existence of civil society stakeholders as the action base for the movement. In relation to the mega-urban context of the study, a number of groups are modelling sustainable lifestyles towards voluntary simplicity, mindfulness and social well-being.

### 5.3 Practice and prospects

The study shows how civil society groups mobilise to advance an alternative food movement. Their objective is to expand the current niches for healthy food in a mega-urban environment that is actually naturally unfavourable to these trends. Their actions are diverse but manifest that:

- citizens should have the right to safe foods
- suggested by the right to safe foods, citizens need to be informed about health risks from

food pollution, the causes of these risks and the risks implied for food growers;

- it is possible to realise certain elements of sustainable living in the megacity;
- urban living should overcome over-consumption and go beyond individual living;
- policies should be supportive but in reality are often uncertain;
- the citizens' concerns are represented by civil society action in Thailand being the more efficient part of the local social movement;
- role models have a very positive influence on the civil action;
- collective action can be effective and positively identity generating;
- urban gardening brings more independence from the regular food market, moreover improves well-being and social relationships

In practice, Bangkok's organic food scene proves various conceptional measures thanks to the participation of different stakeholders. They presently spin around four major fields of application: the rural sphere, consumers, urban living, marketing. That means, for the rural sphere there are conceptional tools to improve rural ecologies and livelihoods, notably sustainable farming methods including organic farming. For consumers, there exist concepts of consumer education (fairs, forum, markets, etc.), consumer activity (farm visits, workshops). In terms of urban living, especially the city farming group has practical advice about setting up urban gardens or pot cultivation, recycling, composting, organic fertilizer, etc. Beyond the gardening, they have the know-how to promote community activities. Finally, the study found quite elaborated marketing concepts which mostly have in common their direct sale scheme (CSA, delivery on order, farmers' markets). Some of the schemes avoid third-party certification (PGS systems, trust-based guarantee, or local non-profit certifiers).

It can be realised that the scene already provides and employs a number of tools. Although developed for the local context, they have potential to wider outreach when applied to other cities. Whereas urban gardening has settled on other continents, it can reach much more potential in Asian cities.

Especially the combination of rural and urban measures that the organic movements embrace actually undertake social development in a comprehensive way. Other Asian countries deal with similar problematic of chemical intensive agriculture, consequent health and ecological impact, loss of young farmer generations in rural areas. And cities experience similar trends of urbanisation, health troubles, expanding interest for health foods. Considering that the organic movements adapt to the traditionally small-scale structure of Thai agriculture would suggest their

transfer to similar settings.

In practice, the organic movements in Bangkok need a more solid base in order to be sustaining. At present and despite the presence of many individual stakeholders, the movements have not yet much outreach and evolve slowly. For further achievements, reliable support from either institutional side or the majority of the civil society, or both, is necessary. The Thai Public Health Foundation as a semi-public institution is already assuring financial support and beyond undertaking a part of health and food related consumer education, even engaging in city farming workshops. Policies must follow so the movement can have more societal impact. At present, as observed, and as stated by most respondents, even the government officials confirmed a gap between first, policies and actual implementation, and second between policies and the people's action, or rather, active resistance of some government institutions. Apart from this, major companies for seeds and agricultural inputs are active counter-players.

It was talked about measures that are realised so far and that have potential to extend in the future. In view of the seriousness of environmental problems that Thailand is facing now, better adaptation of sustainable behaviours by the individuals urges. At present, attitudes commonly go towards overconsumption and excessive use disposable goods, causing unresolved waste rubbish problems. Especially the use of plastic materials seems to be manifested throughout Thailand and often passes mere functionality. For example are plastic dishes, shopping bags, sophisticated wrapping items of convenience, hygiene, or even politeness. They often symbolise a person's care for others. Environmentally friendly attitudes can hardly be realised unless they are internalised and preferred over convenience. This is where lifestyle choices matter: sustainable lifestyles would include reducing recyclable materials. The internalisation of environmentally friendly attitudes increases where identification with those is given. On a social political level, people need to truly realise potential health risk they are exposed to in relation to food and their environment, and more importantly, that they have the option to actively oppose it. The stakeholders in the organic scenes demonstrate reactionary representation of their entitlements for healthy food economic stability, unlike the general public which remain in passivity although many of them lament their food quality and environmental pollution. There is necessity for the public to claim their entitlements if a change is actually aspired.

At the same time must incentives come from the policy side to back the civil action in order to make environmental measures reach out effectively to the Thai society. In relation to agriculture, the handling of chemical sprays must be controlled more consistently in order to provide the food safety of conventional farm products, and organic farming method should be seriously promoted. Better coordination between the government bodies and farmers or NGOs that work with farmers is

important herein. Simultaneously, it needs to be ensured that oppositional interests of the major agro-industries do not have the control over the governmental action.

As a matter of outreach of activism in the organic movement in Bangkok, it would be useful if the action base showed more coherence. Several respondents indicated that the coordination between the different activist groups is a weakness and needs to be strengthened in order to provide a solid base of action, for negotiations with opposing stakeholders can be improved if the organic scenes appearing as one whole group. This way, coordination of the sub-groups could be improved to counter a wider range of specific issues that commonly affect Bangkok citizens. The sub-group of city farmers, the network for alternative living, and the group of anti-GMO campaigners are three examples of sub-groups that efficiently envisage specific issues. Also, the movement can convey a clearer message to the general public, as well as the already active stakeholders.

In the organic food movements in Bangkok, it is remarkable how the scenes work on individual and community level alike: Health concern from a consumer's point of view is primarily self-oriented but secondarily extends to concern about the health of food growers and in reverse. Therein lies a certain dimension of solidarity. For personal karma being an element of local ideas about personality development, solidarity could be interpreted in the light of karmic improvement. Indeed, the engagement of some stakeholders is motivated by aspirations for karmic improvement. The personal karma in turn influences the ideologies of individuals. Karmic improvement in practise was found to be the choice of a profession that does no harm to other beings or to the environment. In relation to the organic consumers, it can be to buy organic products by solidarity to the growers (cf. R-32; R-18; Santi Asoke chapter 4.5.3). Personal karma can thus contribute to activism for organic movements – to realise for sustainable lifestyle for examples, identification with their causes is useful, hence incentives for this identification should be provided. Karmic improvement can be one incentive, and becomes thus a very relevant motive for movements in the Thai context.

On a societal level, the stakeholders in the organic food scenes in Bangkok are vectors of strategies towards sustainability. Where policies and governmental action usually have an affect on macro-structures (on the social system, laws, institutions), the realised lifestyles of organic stakeholders give impulse to societal changes on a micro-level. That way, they could be initiators of transitions by breaking up microstructures in societies.

The study has demonstrated how the current organic food scenes in Bangkok are embedded in a higher organic movement that exists since three decades. While the organic scenes are rather fragmented so far, as most scenes act on their individual agendas, their stakeholders are connected through common goals towards sustainable and healthy living. The organic scenes are notably led

by a number of pioneers who model to the active stakeholders and the newcomers.

### III Appendix

#### III.1 Tables of the analysis

Abbreviations used for the tables:

OF – organic farming; OM – organic movement; TH – Thailand; Bkk – Bangkok; CNX – Chiang Mai; CF – Cityfarm; THF – Thai Cityfarm network; CSA – community supported agriculture; PGS – participatory guarantee systems; AAN – Alternative Agriculture Network; NF – natural farming; RP – Royal Projects; SE – Sufficiency Economy; GM – green market; FB – Facebook; GAP – good agricultural practice; cons. – consumer, resp. – respondent; mm. – movement; st. – stakeholder; n.e.c. – not empirically covered; yrs. – years; gvt. – government; DOAE – Department of Agricultural Extension; MoA – Ministry of Agriculture; MoC – Ministry of Commerce; MoPH – Ministry of Public Health;

<b>Table 1: Interpretations of and attitude towards organic farming in Thailand</b>	
Resp.	Interpretations of and attitude towards OF in Thailand
G-1	Traditionally, people grow plants where ever possible OF seems easy to realise in the city
R-1	Integrated farming is local wisdom, esp. in Bkk Farming changed from mixed farming to monoculture After Green Revolution, promotion of many different kinds of SF Terminology in steady change; today, <i>kaset insee</i> (for OF) means living thing
R-2	Certified farmers still 0,15% Self-claim organic: some farmers might do OF in conscious way
R-4	Many farmers groups do OF without certification
R-5	Small-scale farmers would not eat their produce for market; most farmers naturally grow their own kitchen garden Organic rice in NE mainly export OF popular but confusion about terminology International certification is too expensive for individual farmer Some local standards (Bio Surin) allow small amounts of synthetic fertilizer Successful mutual controls in many farmers communities
R-6	Many models derive from alternative agriculture: sustainable farming, natural farming, OF, agroforestry, integrated farming, Sufficiency Economy; Principles: biodiversity on farm site, local varieties, self-sufficiency

R-7	OF lower yields
R-8	OF in old times, before Green Revolution Organic farmers can sustain themselves Civil society mm prefers small-scale OF to profit-oriented OF
R-9	OF needs the right people OF hard & inefficient OF farmers sometimes refuse business ideas as thinking in self-sufficiency terms OF needs industry & technological improvement to be sustainable
R-10	TH many small-scale organic producers OF technologies: no middle way – very modern for export, very old for domestic OF is going back to traditional farming
R-13	Trust in farmers under organic conversion through direct links Term original / traditional for OF possible Perfect growing conditions in TH; self-sufficiency & OF before start of agribusiness
R-14	Asoke: NF (Fukuoka) no high yields & bad adaptation after a while
R-16	Fertile land in TH before agro-industry, now desperate Local microorganism after Dr. Cho Biodiversity & integration of big trees, adaptation to local conditions
R-17	Common objectives for AA & OF: changing farm system; others: land issues, farmers rights & agrarian reforms
R-18	TH gave up prosperous agriculture for Green Revolution; Rural farmers hard to convince of OF; Green Revolution spoilt farmers Reliable technique: holistic organic farming, bio-tillage
R-19	Farmers usually unwilling to change (scared to leave comfort zone)
R-20	Hill tribes collect edible leaves from forest Farmers usually willing to reduce chemicals (OF can reduce input costs) Commercial seeds
R-21	No organic seeds in TH; no organic farmer so far uses them Many kinds OF: self-reliant farming, self-sufficiency farming, New Theory Many farmers think going back to OF impossible
R-22	Impact from chemical abuse during Green Revolution
R-23	Chemical farming > land degradation, debts Improvement through microorganisms, fermented plant juice Traditional Thai farming basically organic but knowledge lost over 1 generation
R-24	When farmers change to OF, they eat their market produce again
R-25	OF part of alternative thinking and often coming together with other factors (lifestyle, self-reliance, back-to-nature, trad. farming, financial stability)

	<p>Farmers experience effects of chemical farming, environmental degradation, indebtedness</p> <p>OF needs time &amp; external assistance (training, community &amp; financial support); community &amp; sharing</p> <p>OF can pose insecurities: market access, growing &amp; processing techniques</p> <p>Change to OF step by step: start with own kitchen garden; when 1 farmer starts OF, others follow more easily; many OF projects in all regions</p> <p>"Industrial" OF different concept &gt;less care for earth, purely economic incentive</p>
R-27	<p>OF easier to implement compared to NF (Fukuoka philosophy does not emphasise production but cultivation)</p> <p>OF after NF; beginning unpopular but coming now, as easy to sell &amp; export; ACT facilitates with OF standards</p>
R-28	Start with term AA as broad approach to different concepts of SF
R-29	<p>2 levels of OF: commercial, subsistence (or agro-ecology) farming;</p> <p>Sometimes instability for organic farmers selling to supermarkets</p> <p>Farmer's decision between large-scale produce or subsistence with small surplus</p>
R-31	<p>Conventional farmers don't eat their own vegetable for use of chemicals on farm</p> <p>Social problems for farmers when changing from NF to Green Revolution</p> <p>Their philosophy: diversity &amp; abundance to strengthen the ecosystem; advance of microorganism, bio-agriculture</p> <p>TH good growing conditions; restart is not too difficult</p>
R-32	Conventional farmers don't eat their own rice
R-37	<p>2 ways of OF in TH: NF like in the past, OF from abroad</p> <p>OF started to have problems for global certification system (high cost, dominance by importing country)</p> <p>Villagers own produce by sustainable techniques</p>
R-39	OF solution to overcome bad agricultural situation

**Table 2: Roots and models for organic farming in Thailand**

Resp.	Roots and models for OF in Thailand
G-1	Origin in Thai OF & from abroad
R-1	30 yrs. ago, still intelligent rural farmer having their own concept of integrated farming
R-4	Role models in Japan (NF), IFOAM
R-5	Thai & Western role models
R-6	Thai NF influenced by Fukuoka & Dr. Cho; partly by OF in U.S & Europe
R-8	<p>International &amp; national mm</p> <p>Fukuoka's <i>One Straw Revolution</i></p>

R-12	Thai OF pioneers influenced by abroad (CSA America, Teikei Japan; Europe) Books: <i>Silent Spring</i> , <i>Bringing the Food Economy</i> (Helena Norberg-Hodge), <i>Small is beautiful</i> (Schumacher), Vandana Shiva Role models Bhutan for 100% organic policy; Europe for green consumer awareness
R-14	Fukuoka in early years, Dr. Cho
R-16	Fukuoka, Mollison, Dr. Cho; some American farming initiative King (only followed by RP & a few groups until '97 crisis)
R-18	OF trends around the world, inspiration by Dr. Cho
R-19	Fukuoka one of her inspirations
R-22	Role models: Fukuoka (NF), IFOAM; however, urge for healthy food is internal, many people sick R-22's grandparent's generation naturally did OF
R-23	Japan, Korea, Australia; Fukuoka, SE
R-25	Jon Jandai, King IX, Panya permaculture project Volunteers bring idea of OF to villagers
R-27	Fukuoka's NF inspiration OF started from NF; R-27's group brought NF to TH
R-28	2 sources of models: Fukuoka & biodynamics in Europe, U.S, permaculture & Thai farmer's traditional knowledge, Buddhist farming
R-29	Vitoon pushed modern OF idea in TH
R-31	Gurus like Fukuoka, Mollison, Dr.Cho R-31's grandparents pioneers for OF, long time before the Green Revolution
R-32	Teikei model <i>Small is Beautiful</i> (Schumacher) Fukuoka pioneer in early years but his technique not appropriate for tropical climate

**Table 3: Stakeholders in the organic movements**

Resp.	Description of the stakeholders in the organic movement
G-1	Urbanites, parents, teenagers, office workers, some rural people (CF workshops) Most city farmers are "weekend farmers"
R-1	Bangkokians, urban middle classes who start OF in rural area; one city farmer is former pop singer
R-2	Urban farmers: middle class people, not farmers
R-4	Some rural farmers who are aware of OF, though not enough Urbanites & younger people >support of rural farmers through food distribution schemes

	2 parts of OM: people / NGO mm & business mm
R-8	Possible players: government, local governments, mass media, NGO, social media, researcher with common goal of public participation & natural food Anti-player CP
R-9	E.g. intellectuals (knowledge generation) >can be master force of mm if willing "to get hands dirty"
R-10	Civil society (fighting for clean food & health when no gvt support) NGO members begin OF themselves
R-12	Some players politically involved
R-14	Government: some organic programmes but generally supports conventional agriculture
R-15	Farmers groups in South
R-17	CF approach for urban poor & middle classes; CF mostly middle classes; CF with urban poor needs different strategy as more limitations
R-18	Determined youngsters going back to previous way of living, only few though
R-19	R-19 herself: city & office person before changing to UF Food producers spoil people's habits City people big role in OM as most organic consumers are urban (e.g. in rice farmer lobby group, most volunteers are city people)
R-21	Bkkians come to R-21's trainings in CNX
R-22	CSA mm, commercial farms, CF (feeding the city & gathers consciously minded people), rural OF (supply to city), FM (aim to create community); gvt (Laksi, Min. of Commerce), NGOs for consumer awareness
R-23	Thai Cityfarm key player, emerging with flood 2011; Santi Asoke, St.10
R-24	DOAE (new unit OF & GAP promotion)
R-25	School for Wellbeing (key player for consumer-grower links)
R-26	Interior designers, sales manager, flight attendant
R-29	Private sector, NGOs, civil society, not government
R-32	Consumer groups
R-33	Already conscious people (mostly same people going to organic events); solution: get Hi-sos involved (trend setters); anti-players food giants (influencing policies)
R-34	Green consumers
R-37	Universities should be involved Bangkok people (have taste, income, good health & knowledge >people from outside not aware)
R-38	Government should support farmers (e.g. with organic seeds) Visitors at Root Garden: mostly families with children (pre-school age), from all over Bangkok, stable visitors & tourists

R-43	Many young people getting interested
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<b>Table 4: Pioneers in the organic movements</b>	
Resp.	Statements on the pioneers in the organic movement
R-1	St.62 first green entrepreneur in TH, promoting OF on urban market; Laksi District Office (starts organic UF soon after '97 crisis); Early rural farmers who found their own concepts on integrated farming
R-2	R-2 pioneer in farmers assistance towards OF
R-4	R-10 (network initiatives & research involvement in OM) Young pioneers like R-1, St. 61, networks under School for Wellbeing are future
R-6	R-32 and NGOs around this resp. since early 90s; Asoke community (early pioneers); AAN main network; R-27 (foundation for holistic health, consumer programmes)
R-7	G-1, R-1 (encouragement of people to grow at home)
R-8	R-27, R-2, R-32, network for Buddhist activist
R-10	"[R-27] is a model for Thai lifestyle" (influence on many Bkkians)
R-12	R-21 (rural learning and seed saving centre), R-32 (first to recognise local wisdom after Green Revolution), R-27 & AAN; R-6 (NGO North); R-28 (consumer awareness) 1 pillar
R-13	R-1 (connecting communities; came at right time & uses right approach)
R-14	Asoke community
R-16	An early NGO for major role as supporter in OF or NF community
R-17	R-32 ("the very pioneer"), R-28 , R-2, R-18
R-21	"New organic people will be city people"; an agroforestry expert, Asoke community (most powerful group to change people to OF)
R-22	UF (actually changing people), commercial farms (help to sustain OM), consumers (e.g. school parents networks), gvt, individuals, NGOs, Asoke (1 of first, influential, sustaining pioneer for OF in TH), organic shop owners (want to change people to be organic consumers); R-22's grandparents (naturally doing OF)
R-23	Asoke community, R-21 important players
R-25	R-21, permaculture projects in the North, network for Buddhist activists; Back-to-the-land mm with 1 <sup>st</sup> generation around a Thai actress
R-26	R-21, R-1 (a scientist but talks like farmer), St. 9 rural OF learning centre, experts at Asoke community, R-32, a Thai actress
R-27	R-27's group pioneer (bringing org. food to people)

R-28	R-28's group (pushing of OF policies in TH)
R-29	Foundation for rural technologies and ecology, organic trade bodies, R-32, a NGO promoting PGS, R-2 (pushed modern OF idea in TH)
R-31	Asoke community as pioneer, R-31's grandparents are pioneers for OF
R-38	R-1's (urban garden pioneer) garden prototype model
R-43	Young pioneers like R-19, G-1 Thai Cityfarm (for city people - connecting, networking, initiatives)

<b>Table 5: Individual motivations</b>	
Resp.	Statements on motivations for engaging in organic scenes
G-1	TCF: connect health, mental health, educational issues; prepare people's mindsets for UF; create food network, recreation; expand to business level in the future
R-1	TCF: link farmers & consumers closely to make organic more affordable; find committed organic consumers; create family activities General: health for their families, e.g. when family members get ill
R-2	Personal: collaboration with rural farmers for OF; provision of market access; improving farmers' livelihoods General: health, nutrition, quality; environment (less strong); urban farmers have health ambitions
R-4	General: health, knowledge about chemical residues in foods; no focus on environment
R-5	General: health aspect for consumers; spiritual aspect for some (alternative lifestyle - yoga - meditation – vegetarian - organic)
R-6	Green consumer network (St.42): build up consumer-producer networks >empowerment, confidence, exchange with the city, health, economic stability for farmers; empowerment of female farmers Biodiversity on farm site, local varieties, self-sufficiency Personal: collaborate with university to spread the idea, be a social entrepreneur, consumers' health
R-7	Personal: vision to bring farmers from neighbouring area to sell at their place >Green consumer network (St.42); R-7 used to grow vegetables at home in their childhood General: mostly health, environment second priority "It's a basic thing: People want the safe food and want the green food, so back to the basic"
R-8	R-8's carrier in public health gave understanding of importance of OF >OF links to food, good health & preventive health (reducing risk taking behaviour, perceiving benefit, perceiving threat) Personal: inspiration by the world, knowledge about the harm of chemicals General: identification with philosophy of living, health, environmentalism; search for independence, nature experience, going back to basic
R-9	Personal: develop rural area & provide organic market, bring communities back to their bases, organise stakeholders, connect rural communities with the urban

	R-9 believes in the mm >“peace mission”: not money driven any more Consumers: 90% health reason OM is also a sustainable living mm
R-10	R-10's network: promote PGS / CSA systems >balance between consumer & producer General: OF & UF for people who concern about their lives, health
R-11	General: more concern about organic food but market has no real organic, even for the labelled organic food in supermarkets City farmers: personal health, premium price by growing organically, home embellishment; often lack of passion Personal: combine business & environmental consciousness
R-12	Personal: organic food for all, not only for elite; effective coordination between ministries & policies needed; move forward PGS (improvement needed) >Organic food systems need to involve all parties (farmers, consumers, entrepreneurs) & need to meet half way
R-13	Personal: health (conventional products dangerous, filled up with chemicals); care for her growers' community (food, life attitude are base for good health); business aspect (OF growing opportunity) > R-13 jumped onto organic business because market offer insufficient
R-14	Asoke members: OF for environmental reasons >Buddhist-based (“we are killing the earth”) Farmers: financial reasons (cannot afford chemical input); personal health (same reasons as USA)
R-15	Personal: interest in OF since childhood; avoids harming life; environment & health come together (“I think you cannot split”)
R-16	Personal: finding out how to cultivate land without chemicals, helping her motherland >studying literature on it & writing own books; learning for personal interest and knowledge sharing; psn. contribution to OF is reading & writing Biodiversity & integration of big trees, adapted to local conditions Farmers: some just want to do it
R-17	OF objective: change of farming system Other network members: land issues & rights, agrarian reforms There is 1 mm but different motives
R-18	Personal: sharing knowledge to help his country; raising awareness among gvt officials & universities
R-19	General: natural / political crisis makes people want to change; main concern health; also sustainable lifestyle
R-20	For the RPs: provide market access to farmers >growth & harvest according to RP order For local small-scale farmers: household consumption
R-21	Personal: create network of seed savers, raise awareness through discussions For farmers: reduce own cost, sell the surplus >economic problems: chemical / petrol prices rising, no chance to survive General: health, environment, household budget; lifestyle
R-22	A farmers' market (St.51): creating community

	<p>General: health (self-level), 5-10% environment, community (supporting producers)</p> <p>Personal: business &amp; community; educational background – bringing students to farmers brought R-22 awareness &amp; attitude change; healthy food for himself &amp; consumers</p>
R-23	<p>Farmers: well-being, independence, self-sufficiency, environment</p> <p>Personal: health (conventional produce has chemicals), back to simple life, self-sufficiency, sell surplus &gt;idea of having learning centre, involve local farmers; daily eating out made him reflect nutrition; tried conventional farming first but harvest low &gt;change to OF</p>
R-24	<p>Farmers: Hard to convince of OF but price for chemical inputs &amp; personal health drive them</p> <p>Gvt: 2004 food safety declaration, development from GAP to OF (National Plan, agencies)</p>
R-25	<p>General: back-to-the-land, connection with nature (city people often disconnected), health, community life</p> <p>Farmers: health, unreliability of market produce &gt;start own kitchen garden &amp; eventually OF (step by step); responsibility of “caretaker” of the land</p>
G-2	<p>2 strategies for G-2's community: health &amp; saving money (healthy body &gt;better work &gt;less debts)</p> <p>Skills &amp; passion for gardening as rural background of many &gt;UF daily routine, no burden</p> <p>Idea: plant for own consumption, sell surplus &gt;wish to be self-sufficient</p> <p>Communication of health risks to residents &amp; other communities</p>
R-26	<p>General: people first think for themselves then extend to others; health issues</p> <p>Personal: awareness raising for food safety, widen the organic community; organic as it is simply good; R-26's group: sustainably living in the city</p>
R-27	<p>General: health concern, for some farmers support &amp; ecology</p>
R-28	<p>Personal: start NGO after graduation when realising farmers' problems &amp; CP encroachment &gt;improve farmers situation (problem of chemical farming is also problem of justice)</p> <p>Shared objectives in OM: sustainable way of living, health</p>
R-29	<p>R-29 from farmer family, knowledge about impact of conventional agriculture, rural development studies &gt;wish to work with farming communities &amp; to educate consumers about OF, links between health, environment, farmers</p> <p>For farmers: health, income</p>
R-30	<p>Personal: 3 motivations (business, hotel management, personal interest)</p> <p>Interest in holistic health (health starts with food), in helping farmers, connecting people</p> <p>Knowing what you eat, making food chain as short as possible, putting your hands in soil, knowing growers of your food help reconnect</p> <p>R-30's farmers' market: create countryside feeling, producer-consumer trust relationships</p>
R-31	<p>Santi Asoke: no use of chemicals, 100% natural, clean, organic vegetables for their vegetarian diet (conventional market not safe)</p> <p>Personal: growing up with healthy food, always being interested in nutrition</p>
R-32	<p>Personal: change of life perspective after monkhood &gt;seeking for happiness only &gt;&gt;work should harm nobody</p> <p>Duty "help ourselves first, until we can help another"; use our strength to help others</p>

	R-32's NGO started from the bad farmer's situation
R-33	Personal: gap in market for sustainable Thai restaurant (environmental & cultural approach; link food heritage to organic food); organic produce important but not the certificate as direct link with farmers Conscious cooking makes R-33 feel better less guilty General: Healthy eating trend can eventually create consumer consciousness
R-34	Personal: green consumer before work at green consumer NGO; passion for promoting & eating health food; farming as new lifestyle matter
R-35	Personal: children's health (sick child >need for healthy food & alternative medicine, back in 90s difficult to find & expensive); passion for organic food General: being trendy (friends eating organic, people talking about it)
R-38	R-38's urban demonstration garden site: communicate to & make impact on urban people in heart of the city; make urban people who have land access aware for landless rural people
R-39	Personal: need for holistic approach in agriculture; sustainable farming & OF under same roof
R-43	Personal: city person looking for happy, simple, healthy living >avoid chemicals, rely less on market, use traditional Thai plants for food & medicine General: health

**Table 6: List of selected bodies with functions and coverage by the study**

St.	Entity	Stakeholders' description	Status	Coverage
	Private household			
1	-Urban farmers	Several individual households with backyard garden within Thai City Farm network		Interviews, observations
2		Young city farmer, ex-office worker; involved in self-sufficiency farming (pioneer)	Pioneer	Interview
3		Young city farmer, ex-entrepreneur and musician	Pioneer	Site visit, interview
4		Community garden in low-income neighbourhood, run as cooperative		Site visit, interview
5		Property with family run company and traditional Bangkok style garden plot		Site visit, interview
6		Community garden on a site of barracks, run by soldiers' wives in collaboration of Laksi District Office		Site visit, discussion
7		Professional, long-term urban farmer on vast family property, one of last remaining farming		Site visit, discussion

		areas in the East of Bangkok on this scale; non-organic		
8	-Farming communities	Buddhist group Santi Asoke, living and organic farming community, pioneer in large-scale farmers trainings towards sustainable farming methods since the 1970s; vegetarian community, herbal medicine; rural production centres and green shops in Bangkok	Pioneers	Sites visits, interview, discussions; interviews with customers
9		Rural learning centre for sustainable farming methods and pioneer for the implementation of New Theory farming; farming models for each Thai region	Pioneer	N.e.c
10		Rural indigenous seed saving, organic farming and earth building centre; restaurants and produce outlets in Chiang Mai	Pioneer	Interview
11		Organic farming model project with local farmers east of Bangkok, PGS building, involvement of organic farming experts and universities; weekly organic farmers' market		Sites visits, interview
12	-Green consumers	Individuals at green shops, organic markets, supermarkets, the Organic Fair and other fairs, seminars, events		Interviews, observations
13	-Local residents	Resident around a community garden, asked about opportunity to participate in the garden		Discussion
14	Public network	Group in representation of landless rural farmers' rights with urban garden site in central Bangkok; demonstration garden and awareness raising purpose; 1-year lease on property of a social foundation		Interview, observations
15		Thai City Farm Project, the biggest network of urban gardeners of different scales in Bangkok; for hobby gardeners or professionals with active members meeting on regular basis and passive members using the online community	Pioneer	Interview
16		Group of like-minded for alternative living, organic foods, well-being and community gatherings		Interview, discussion, observation
17		Recent network for urbanites who wish to realise rural living as organic farmers; support with family and land access issues		Discussion
18		Community gardening project for Bangkok		Observations
19	Semi-public institution	Organic agriculture research and funding network; funding of innovative technologies or		Interview

		start-ups, among others TCF and others of the study's players		
20		Thai Health Promotion Foundation, autonomous government agency with budget for health-related projects		Observations
21		Chaipattana Foundation: Umbrella Foundation for King Rama IX's innovations, among them the SE concept and Royal Projects		N.e.c
22		Royal Project Foundation, manages agricultural projects with hill tribes mainly, on initiative of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej; maintenance of organic cultivations, and retail of the products		Site visit, interview
23	-Educational institution	Alternative schools		N.e.c
24		Universities		Observation, discussion
25	-Hospital	Bumrungrat Hospital		Observation
26		Sriracha Hospital		N.e.c
27	Governmental institution	MoA, organic farming policies		Interview
28		DOAE, extension body for GAP and organic farming between policy level and farmers training		Interview
29		Ministry of Public Health, initiator for Thai Health Fund, health related campaign including healthy eating		Interview
30		Ministry of Commerce, launched the annual Organic Fair and promotes organic business		Observations
31	-Municipality	Laksi District Office, long-term rooftop garden and learning centre, organic urban farming sites throughout the district		Site visits, interview,
32		Khlong Teoi District Office, rooftop garden and learning centre, experimental community garden site in the district		Site visits, interview
	NGO			
33	-Rural technologies	Early rural NGO for farmers empowerment through appropriate technologies; pioneer for rice seed saving and breeding, co-founder of alternative farming networks; connection to other pioneers	Pioneer	Site visit, interview
34		NGO of the early days of the organic movements and source for more recent NGOs;		N.e.c

		focus on farmers empowerment through appropriate technologies		
35		Alternative Agriculture Network (AAN), pioneer of empowerment of rural farmers after Green Revolution that exists until now, source for many following NGOs in rural intervention		N.e.c
36		Network for young organic farmers in Southeast Asia under the School for Wellbeing		Observations
37	-Consumer rights	Health related foundation, active for consumer education in holistic health and promotion of traditional herbal medicine in Thailand	Pioneer	Interview
38		Foundation for consumer rights and education		N.e.c
39	-Urban farming	NGO for sustainable farming application in the rural and pioneer group for the promotion of city farming, projects with urban poor communities; co-founder of alternative farming networks; connection to other pioneers	Pioneer	Interview
40	-Consumer-producer interface	NGO for farmers empowerment, preservation of biodiversity, seed saving, consumer awareness; umbrella organisation for food safety programmes; connection to other pioneers	Pioneer	Interview
41		NGO for the promotion and implementation of participatory guarantee systems		Interview
42		Activity under the umbrella of School for Wellbeing for green consumers, organic market opportunities and consumer-producer networks		Interview
43	-Social improvement	Network under [urban farming NGO] for empowerment of urban poor communities		Observations, interview
	Organic suppliers			
44	-Commercial farms	Four main commercial organic suppliers, large-scale compared to individual farmers, company with farm employees; products: fruit, vegetables or dairy; represented in selected supermarkets, green shops and on farmers' markets; certified organic		Discussions, interview
45	-Cooperatives	Early cooperative scheme set up by NGO [n°] as outlet of organic farm produce to a group of urban consumers in Bangkok		Interview
46	-Retailers	Supermarkets: Villa Market, Gourmet Market, Tops Supermarket,		Consumer Interviews
47		Golden Place / Royal Project Shop are shops		Observations

		with conventional and products from the Royal Projects, some of it organic.		
48		Private business, wholesale with organic shop and farmers' market stall, selling mainly rice and handicrafts from a farmers' community in Surin		Interview
49		Green shop and coffee shop under School for Wellbeing with products from partner farmers		Observations
50		Alternative health centre and health shop with own organic bakery; sale of Thai and imported organic ingredients and cosmetics; hosts a weekly organic market stall		Interview
51	-Farmers' markets	Weekend farmers' market at different spots throughout Bangkok in direct sale structure; fresh produce vendors are mostly organic, some of them the commercial provider; ready-to-eat food, grocery, handicrafts		Observations
52		Monthly farmers' market and offspring of St. 51, similar range and offer		Observations
53		Green markets at different spots in Bangkok, often in office buildings or hospitals direct sale structure		Observations
54	-Food distribution schemes	Organic farmer in West Thailand with programme for social inclusion of rural migrants; pioneer for CSA programme (vegetable box scheme)		Interview
55		Urban farm and learning centre with CSA business (vegetable box scheme) to about 100 subscribers; sale of own plus additional produce		Site visit, discussion
56		Vegetable box delivery scheme with Thai and Western vegetables		N.e.c
57		Organic farmer with vegetable delivery business; also several farmers' market stalls		Discussion
58	Private enterprise	Organic trade pioneer including export, farmers trainings, background in rural NGO work		Interview
59		Bangchak refinery, launched an early social enterprise with health shop St.62		N.e.c
60		Colgate maintains an urban garden for employees		N.e.c
61	-Social enterprise	School for Wellbeing, pioneers for alternative thinking, mindful consumer society; umbrella for various programmes in the field of organic	Pioneer	Interview

62		First big range health shop in Bangkok with several branches; background: empowerment of rural farmers and consumer awareness raising for healthy foods; retail of several organic brands, fresh produce, cosmetics; some non-organic products; restaurant	Pioneer	Observations
63		Green shop owner and farmers' market vendor; pioneer for young creative entrepreneurs, organic farmer empowerment and health / slow food expert	Pioneer	Interview
64		Young urban business processing organic produce about direct buy from farmers; fair prices for farmers together with consumer education for healthy eating; focus on healthy snacks and beverages		N.e.c
65	-Service provider	City farmer and pioneer of the modern city farming movement with urban gardening learning centre and consultancy; contact person in the network, organic farming expert	Pioneer	Site visit, interview, discussions
66		cf. St.55		
67		A.C.T organic certification with IFOAM; started from rural intervention with farmers	Pioneer	Interview
68		Restaurant using with low carbon footprint concept; using mostly organic ingredients from selected farmers, player for consumer education		Interview
69		Slow life hotel with rooftop garden, partly using home-grown produce and other organic ingredients to serve to the guests		Site visit, interview
70		Natural farming expert with rural demonstration farm; developer of soil improvement methods		Site visit, interview
71		Pioneer for permaculture and agroforestry concepts in Thailand, advisor and author of manuals		Interview
72	Media	A TV channel promoting sustainable farming		N.e.c
73		A magazine for healthy lifestyle		N.e.c
74		A magazine for natural farming, involved in the founding of TCF		N.e.c

<b>Table 7: Organic consumption</b>	
Resp.	Organic consumers, market and certification
R-1	TCF and NGO St.39 aim at urban cons. interested in organic food >Organic supermarket produce expensive Cons. commonly understand RP as organic, just because they are royal projects
R-2	Certification & trust: consumers' perceptions about trust in groups, brands, labels differ; R-2's self-claim products would sell on local markets Generally, some self-claim products may not be genuine (probably no internal controls) Enough demand (e.g quality products); organic cons. city people; Bkk market bigger than CNX
R-3	Cons. concern about health & environment now Insufficient organic produce >GM for better producer-consumer connection; challenge for GM: how to build trust in product? Confusion about terminology (non chemical-organic) at beginning, now better consumer education (green fair)
R-4	Cons. need organic produce & producers need market >CSA as link Cons. need better information; still confusion about terminology Cons. prefer organic to chemical free label & trust if they know producer Cons. awareness is related to their individual priority (for many, it is cheap price) Profile for certified organic: foreigners, academics, health conscious, people with family or elderly household members Market: low quality foods (often imported from China); difficulties to find organic food R-4 trusts self-claimed organic only if producer or group membership is known
R-5	Consumer-producer links can be more efficient than certification CNX: GM cons. trust self-claimed organic; poor & wealthy cons. (prices mostly similar to regular market) Some cons. think, RP products organic >not necessarily Asian cons. focus more on health than environment; health focus is justified Organic Thailand label is unrecognised, rightly
R-6	Certification: Northern certification standard introduced to provide a trust guarantee; certification depends on market (no need for local market, Northern certification standard for Singapore, a private foreign standard for Europe) Market in CNX: CSA not successful for R-6's group, first GM and retail shop in 1993 failed; GM price stable for same inputs all year round & cons. of different income groups R-6's motto: animals grow, plants grow, farmer / consumer should grow in mind & body Cons. still lack understanding; good marketing is main aspect to gain organic cons.
R-7	Cons. want safe & green food, esp. families with babies (safe food for children); high demand but products not affordable for some Market: Golden Place as health shop; some supermarkets fake the organic labels; RP is not so much organic
R-8	Cons. realise dangers of chemicals

	<p>Situation of organic depends on cons. behaviour which depends on their information &gt;networks, friendships among cons. help to information &amp; better health</p> <p>Awareness hard for general people &gt;easier for those who already have time to read, no worries about money, more stability</p>
R-9	<p>Direct sale as primary goal: trust if consumer knows farm &amp; farmer; cons. might not trust the organic label 100%</p> <p>Certification: PGS interesting, certification just formality, does not really matter; take certification seriously, not as a barrier</p> <p>Availability, price, health/environment influence organic cons.</p> <p>Cons.: majority middle classes, mostly with children, education / information on healthy food &gt;can afford premium price; younger generation, also Japanese housewives in Bangkok</p> <p>Often more knowledge than vendor; active role in designing the OM / sustainable living</p> <p>~5% cons. aspire healthy lifestyles (+Yoga, clean eating, illness)</p>
R-10	<p>Certification: important for export but not so much for domestic markets; IFOAM or third-party certification not needed (cons. are better informed about OF now compared to beginning)</p> <p>Challenge for organic discourse: How to build up cons. trust?</p> <p>Cons. profile: NGO people, elderly, mothers &amp; pregnant women</p>
R-11	<p>Awareness of healthy living just started; depends on people's educational background</p> <p>Organic products are reaction of parents with sick children</p> <p>Confusion about different labels</p>
R-12	<p>Cons. need to be involved &gt;e.g. farm visits, participation of consumer &amp; producer representatives like in PGS; cons. education focus</p> <p>R-12 sometimes feel hopeless about cons.: still very few compared to 3000 CSAs in France, 400 in China (only 5 in TH over 10 years of promotion)</p> <p>Cons. are aware for their own health &gt;should be more long-term thinking, until now, they don't care about the long term or being active cons. to make it happen</p> <p>CSA in CNX: first subscribers are expats</p> <p>CSA mm starting from St.54 in Western Thailand</p>
R-13	<p>R-13 trying to embrace cons.'s view in her business</p> <p>Cons. more interested in organic than before</p> <p>When cons. herself, R-13 found good offer at organic fair but did not know where to buy</p> <p>Cons. motivated by prospect of organic community, social exchange, activities</p>
R-17	<p>Cons.: some awareness for farmers' situation &amp; wish to help; awareness for food quality &amp; health rising (cancer rate) but general lack of knowledge on food &amp; nutrition</p> <p>Certification needed when farmer not known</p>
R-18	<p>Cons.: growing health awareness but lack of knowledge; government creates confusion with different labels &amp; hydroponic</p> <p>Often well educated people who want "the real" organic &amp; are willing to pay but not enough supply</p>
R-19	<p>Cons.: not enough knowledge yet but generally cons. power (purchase power &amp; attitude change &gt;&gt;supply will adapt</p>

R-20	<p>Certification: RP had DOA certification first, since 4 yrs. A.C.T as some customers ask for IFOAM certificate</p> <p>Market: Organic ready-to-eat salads go to Bangkok; organic produce not enough for market</p> <p>Cons.: more demand for organic now compared to 2 yrs. ago; confusion about organic &amp; GAP; willingness to pay high price for seasonal fruits but not for vegetables; stable customers for RP</p> <p>Organic small-scale farmers have better understanding than cons.</p>
R-21	<p>People are very aware now about OF &amp; traditional farming, esp. in the North</p> <p>Nobody trusts the government organic label but self-organised farmers group</p>
R-22	<p>Availability in supermarkets makes people conscious for organic; fairs &amp; events mark importance of organic consumption, open people's eyes, show options</p> <p>R-22 had own standard first but cons. trust him &gt;no more need</p>
R-24	<p>Cons.: seeking safe food for themselves</p>
G-2	<p>G-2's first impression of OF: luxurious, hydroponic &gt;now understanding that chemicals free</p> <p>Local term <i>pak rai san pit</i> (free from chemicals) instead of OF</p>
R-26	<p>Bkkfm cons.: wealthy people &amp; foreigners in that area &gt;more people need to touch organic, need to encourage consumer-producer links &gt;delivery service</p>
R-27	<p>Certification: if cons. know more about organic, products need certification; confusion about organic labels by the government</p> <p>Community size matters – mega urban needs certification as people don't know each other; in smaller communities, people know each other and trust (like for CSA)</p> <p>R-27: some doubts about PGS, people might not trust it</p> <p>Organic food is safer by common sense</p> <p>R-27's foundation: rural farmers support + cooperative distribution to urban consumers</p>
R-28	<p>Policy development needs support from consumer &amp; people</p> <p>Fair &amp; Forum since 1990s for alternative markets; Herbal medicine fair in collaboration with Ministry of Public Health</p>
R-29	<p>R-29's CSA cons.: mainly Bangkokians, families with children &amp; concern about health, mostly committed for +5 years, have understanding about OF; 50% of new members have been recommended by existing members; those who learn about it through media, mostly quit soon</p> <p>R-29 offers meetings with farmers &amp; farm visits</p> <p>First CSA was arranged by group of Japanese women group in Bkk</p> <p>Generally confusion among consumers about labels</p>
R-30	<p>Sukjai market: create countryside feeling, producer-consumer trust relationships</p>
R-31	<p>Cons.: smarter now &amp; realising the benefits of organic produce, esp. middle classes; also willing to pay more &gt;good incentive to farmers</p> <p>Santi Asoke cons. know about their good quality; Asoke brand is known as organic brand</p> <p>Situation now: many sick people, organic market hard to access, not much variety</p>
R-32	<p>Market: bringing farmers &amp; cons. together, Japanese <i>Teikei</i> model</p> <p>Certification: needed for export but not for Thai market, unless the elite cons. refuse to connect with farmers; CSA good model for middle classes (farm visits, mutual knowledge &amp; support)</p>

	Cons.: mostly hardly aware or willing to go into detail
R-33	R-33's customers from all walks of life, some aware of their concept, some not; ~40-50% Thai, others expats & tourists (wealthy Asian tourists)
R-34	Schools activities as part of consumer movement >very hard to get organic or healthy food for school children Active parents in alternative school are green consumers (collective buying) Cons.: now concern & information on products; challenge: how to connect them with producers? Green market cons. are mostly Thai
R-35	Parents at Tawsi school: cloth bags instead of plastic; organic vendors come to school Cons.: getting more aware of organic foods >"consumer's awareness is the biggest thing"; not very environmentally aware yet R-35's costumers of mixed nationality (many Thais, many expats, Indian community)
R-37	Cons.: domestic cons. question the organic standard; certified organic cons. are foreigners >why spending Thai taxes for it? General cons. not enough income; high-income cons. have money but perhaps no taste for organic food, expats should be target for premium price food Promotion of a local standard & encouragement to meet the farmers Market: residues found in GAP products
R-38	Visitors are mostly families with children at pre-school age, from all over Bangkok; steady visitors or tourists Cons. don't think much about farmers when they buy organic food
R-39	Certification: ACT certification not suitable for Thai situation where farmers are poor >PGS might be solution Cons.: have not as much influence on OM as in Europe as politicians don't listen to them in TH; Cons. power not very high as income disparities in Bangkok very wide, many people poor

Issue Cons.	Location	Knowledge about outlet	Frequency of purchase	Understanding of organic	Motivation for purchase	Certification	Organic food accessibility	Organic movement	Green living in Bangkok
C-1	Farmers' Market K-Village	First time, knows organiser	Occasionally	Freshly, naturally grown, no preservatives	Just trying it out, quite inexpensive, better taste & better feeling		Yes, can be difficult as just not many	More present in people's consciousness; also trend, lifestyle	
C-2 (3 psns)	Farmers' Market K-Village	First time, about friends			Healthier than normal food, willing to pay more for organic food		Very difficult	Just a personal choice, no intention to follow a cult	Difficult, small condos, limited space >supporting sustainable farmers possible
C-3	Farmers' Market K-Village		Any time he has a chance (not if packed in too much plastic)	Very familiar with this issue, writes on it	Environment and health conscious		Not that much if you know where	Becoming a big trend now, might become a movement	Tough as city polluted, not much green space >>getting out, wellness
C-4	Farmers' Market K-Village		~30% of his general purchase	Original organic like years ago was real organic	Looking for natural, organic, quality products for his restaurant	Sceptical if no certification, but generally sceptical		No movement as in the politics now but not trustfully involved	
C-5	Farmers' Market Gateway Ekamai	Passing by randomly, attracted his attention it,	Not a shopping person; usually he buys at Golden Place; if	Natural ( <i>thammachart</i> ), little processed	Less chemicals >better for health	Thai organic not good enough; but there is also	Yes, for real organic	Not yet successful; people not very aware	Good food, exercise, happy mind

		Western style	he has a chance, he buys organic			self-claim organic			
C-6	Farmers' Market Gateway Ekamai	Facebook	Regularly	Chemical free	Clean, better, sweet taste	No matter, but the vendor's attitude, price and value	No, in every supermarket available	Existent, e.g. Campaigns for consumers' knowledge	Need for more green space, natural environment for exercise
C-7 (2psns)	Farmers' Market Gateway Ekamai	Passing by randomly, never heard of it	Often / rarely	Chemical free / biological	No chemical residue in your body / does not care	It does matter / no matter, but price and quality	No, there is more offer now	A trend	Very difficult / Be careful, avoid dangerous situations
C-8	Farmers' Market Gateway Ekamai	Knows K-Village branch	Very often; lost trust in Royal Projects after residue issues	Chemical free / natural product	Good for health, sustainable, Chinese vegetables are dangerous; family eats organic, home made food	Important for details about production	No	Not aware of it as a conscious consumer since young age	Honesty in selling or business, taking care of one-self, political corruption destroys C-8 willing to pay more
C-9	Farmers' Market K-Village	Works there	Rarely	Chemical free	Very good for health	No matter but you need to trust the shop	No	Existent, there is more now	Grow your own kitchen garden
C-10	Farmers' Market K-Village	Friend of the owner	Eats only organic food	Natural, less chemical > thinks that organic may contain	Fresher	Better than nothing but unreliable controls by Thai Organic label	No	Existent, everyone talks about it, pays attention	Exercise, more organic food, avoid plastic

				chemicals but people have wrong understanding					
C-11	Farmers' Market K-Village	Professional reasons, journalist for healthy lifestyle magazine	Depends on the product, vegetables important, shampoo less	Chemical free or just in little amount	Beneficial to health	Good but not many products have it	Yes, depending on the area	Only some groups of people	Care for oneself (health food, exercise)
C-12	Farmers' Market K-Village	Regular customer	Her family shops here	Chemical free	Cleaner	No matter	Easier now	Existent, more than before	Eat clean food, exercise
C-13	Farmers' Market K-Village	Lives in this area	If he gets a chance to	Chemical free and grown without soil	Safe	Important, it can guarantee	No	Movement becoming stronger	Love yourself and help each other
C-14	Farmers' Market K-Village	Internet	Rarely	Chemical free, naturally grown	Afraid of chemicals	Does matter	Very hard to find	More now but still not enough	Cook and choose ingredients by yourself
C-15	Santi Asoke health shop, Chatuchak	Regular customer	Always comes here for shopping	Non-chemical, natural, "we come from nature as well, so I think that all the organic thing is nature as well."		Very important; "Santi Asoke [...] is the best certification because they do [...] for not the money [but] the benefit of the people's health"		Not so much but stronger in the future, people informed	There is danger in our health

C-16	Santi Asoke health shop, Chatuchak	Looking for place to buy safe food	2-3 times per week	Organic is safer	Care for nutrition, health, taste, freshness	Very important, no trust in all labels, looks up information before		C-16 heard about movement but does not feel part of it	
C-17	Santi Asoke health shop, Chatuchak	Knows the shop since 20yrs	Comes here everyday for his meals & shopping	Toxic free, RP organic products also safe	High standard and safe, regular market has many toxic products			Follows on TV and a health magazine; Interest in movement but not a member	
C-18	Santi Asoke health shop, Chatuchak	Reading about organic products many years ago	Very often, also at a certain health shop; always chooses organic even more expensive	Cleaner, grown naturally, no toxin	Feels good about it, better than non-organic	Important but not always trustful; Trust in LF, RP;		Heard about it but is not active	Her family uses all organic products
C-19	Santi Asoke health shop, Chatuchak	About a friend who is vegetarian	Once in 2 or 3 weeks; just starting	No toxin or chemical; did not know before buying it	"I am getting old, so I care more about my health but I am not serious about consuming organic products"	Important, it reassures		Did not hear much, few people care about it; C-19 does not feel part of it	
C-20	Villa Market, Aree		Twice a week, whenever he can		Good for health, other places use chemicals, "We	No, C-20 just picks the product	No	Existent, RP, Sososo promote health to people;	Listen to the radio; soak vegetables in alkaline water

					have to take care for ourselves, right?"			Consumers and farmers are waking up	
C-21	Villa Market, Aree	From others, new trend of the decade	Always, once in 2 weeks	Healthy, clean, No chemicals	Clean, convenient, wants to loose weight	Very important, also the aspect of packaging		It is a trend and C-21 feels part of it	
C-22	Villa Market, Aree	Social media and TV	Every 2 or 3 days	Natural food	Comfortable, no need to wash product many times	Not really, looking rather for expiry date times		Heard of it but not much, not part of it	
C-23	Villa Market, Aree	Awareness about organic by reading labels	Once a week	No chemical toxins	Safe, buys for her children	Never noticed, only the organic label saying safe & healthy		Not heard of it but feels participating by buying	
C-24	Gourmet Market Paragon	Print media, advertisement, TV; buys from different places	Almost everyday	Non toxic	Care for herself; heard on media about contaminated food on fresh market	It helps but no 100% trust as no guarantee from any institute Gourmet m. change labels sometimes		Movement not very visible but C-24 feels part of it	
C-25	Gourmet Market Paragon		Regularly		Better than regular market (chemical residues); unsure if	Paying attention to it; more expensive but she can trust	Yes, C-25 buys everything organic, even meat	People realise more thanks to food tests; C-25 knows farmer who uses	Be careful about what you buy

					trustworthy but she feels happy to buy it			formalin	
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<b>Table 9: The rural setting</b>	
Resp.	Structural settings I: the farmers' situation (chapter 4.4.1)
R-1	Yields decreasing now after sustained chemical application; when conventional agriculture was introduced, TH changed from mixed farming to monoculture
R-2	Farmers need market access with premium price, no change to organic if no financial incentive Rural farmers often not land owners
R-4	Many farmers not landowners and indebted; many farmers groups work organically but do not go for the certification
R-5	Kitchen garden for daily use as part of their lifestyle (useful & pleasure); farmers in N are small-scale and sell their surplus Organic rice in NE mainly for export, some for domestic; organic vegetable for export stagnating OF: many stopped after ACT became certification body and took fees; conversion time can be a restraint; for local certification mostly shorter
R-6	CP introduced Chinese seeds >farmers try to keep their own seeds Only 21% of Thai farmers own their land Sustainable agriculture started by NGOs during contract farming; then, no farmer wanted OF
R-7	SE seems to work out quite well where farmers follow it
R-8	All year round growing possible in warm countries Global situation turned into food shortage and Green Revolution came Farmers are victims, fertilizer companies sell "placebo" fertilizer; OF economically sustaining People realise, OF might be better
R-9	Not enough organic seeds on the market Farmers are busy, no time to search for a market by themselves
R-10	Thai farmers are badly organised and do their own business Contract farming: unfair coordination between farmers and business >farmers would start OF TH uses nearly 100% imported hybrid seeds & 100% imported chemical fertilizer
R-12	Big gap between middle classes and farmers; lower class feeling of farmers
R-13	After Green Revolution, some educated people see the natural way as the right way Origin of OM in suitable geographical local conditions
R-14	Soils in TH destroyed by chemicals and ploughing
R-15	Southern farming: chemical fertilizer hardened soil, no more worm or organism;
R-16	Deforestation in many areas but farmers not interested in big trees R-16's NGO first group on rice cultivation, women handicraft, reforestation >gvt. then positive towards reforestation but farmers reluctant Land looks desperate compared to her childhood when TH used to be fertile After crisis, more people follow SE
R-18	Every body is crazy about chemicals, hydroponics, whatsoever because of education in TH

	<p>following American models and “because we are greedy”</p> <p>TH once fertile but gave it up for the Green Revolution; Green Revolution technology spoilt farmers &gt;OF seems hard now</p> <p>Yields will decrease drastically</p>
R-19	<p>Rice crisis affects farmers, no other solution than OF now &gt;farmers cannot make a living with what their expenses for fertilizer</p> <p>Mm starting from crisis, from need of people</p>
R-20	<p>Hill tribe people usually pick edible leaves from the forest for consumption</p> <p>Blood test among conventional farmers in RP: chemical residues</p> <p>Farmers usually want to reduce chemicals, OF reduces cost for inputs</p>
R-21	<p>No organic seeds in TH and no organic farmer who uses organic seeds so far</p> <p>Now many farmers think they cannot go back to OF &gt;plants get addicted to chemicals</p>
R-22	<p>Farmers and government are ignorant enough to trust Monsanto</p> <p>OM in TH started 2, 3 decades ago with impact from chemical abuse during Green Revolution</p>
R-23	<p>Chemical farming leads to land degradation and debts</p>
R-24	<p>Some farmers are illiterate</p>
R-25	<p>Farmers experience effects of chemical farming, environmental degradation, indebtedness</p>
R-26	<p>Farmers cannot survive if they continue buying inputs or selling products to big companies; organisation in farmers groups and sharing equipment as answer</p>
R-28	<p>Chemical farming and rice policies pose injustice to farmers</p>
R-29	<p>Farmer's personal decision: large amount produce or subsistence with small surplus</p> <p>Vicious circle for farmers &gt;health problem from modern agricultural but cannot go back to the traditional way as lacking income and good food &gt;interest in OF</p> <p>Continuous support from government of the agrochemical business</p>
R-31	<p>Most Thai farmers are poor &gt;agrarian change from NF to Green Revolution brought social problems to farmers</p> <p>TH conditions are good for growing</p>
R-32	<p>Farmers' problem: they have no immune system, don't follow OF because brainwashed</p>
R-39	<p>R-39's experience: monoculture farmers went bankrupt, integrated farming farmers well-off and self-sufficient</p> <p>Origin of OM: government's support of export &amp; mono-cropping &gt;&gt;deforestation, pest outbreak, draught, flood</p> <p>Conventional agriculture not efficient; fertilizer costs increased about 100% over last 10 years; agriculture will collapse if current system continues</p> <p>Global economics puts pressure on agricultural policies</p>
R-43	<p>More and more studies about conventional agriculture using more and more chemicals</p>

<b>Table 10: The urban setting</b>	
Resp.	Structural settings II: the urban setting (chapter 4.4.3)
R-1	Office employees show office syndrome and need to find a place to relax
R-7	Growing cancer rates
R-8	It is easier to find information on health and organic in Bangkok than in other areas; Municipality needs to have vision of healthy living in Bangkok to enable OM
R-9	OF in the peri-urban has limitations in water access and quality, contamination of soils, habit of conventional farming use rooftop to grow your vegetables, even though difficult access to things in TH; ecological building at the same time, city climate
R-10	exposure to contaminated food (chemicals, hormones) and pollution long distances in Bangkok inhibit networking >>Skype meetings
R-11	Difficult in Bangkok to find a place with relaxing atmosphere and comfortable climate rooftop garden and trees in the yard > greening concept urban life now: people work “like a machine”, not enough time more cases of illness, allergies in reaction to chemicals in food
R-12	Discouraging traffic situation is barrier to green consumers Bkk very urbanised, need to go far to find pure rural area; pollution everywhere consumerism in Thai society, consumers want cheap and easy only; calculative mind
R-16	Simple living impossible in Bangkok and no one is really trying either Many poor people in Bangkok are cut from their rural families and cannot go back
R-17	Bangkok used to have many orchards, this is the history >changed when rural people moved to Bangkok, also suburbs get buildings now Land hard to access, esp. for poor communities, and municipality often does not assist TH developed into urban society; many urban people think about land in the suburbs Pollution, garbage problems, too many high buildings for UF Urban lifestyles are quite individualist, people are not organised in network except for e.g. urban poor
R-19	She does not think that the city can be an obstacle to meet R-43's group e.g. gathers every month Daily routine, traffic, repetitive lifestyle, but still hard to change
R-21	Concerning Bangkok: “I think that, I mean there's so many people going there, for school or for like early jobs in their 20s, 30s, right? And then they come to this point whether it's a question of if they gonna just stay there and like have the family there and retire there and all that, or they gonna do sth. else”
R-22	Barriers in Bkk and big populations, basic examples of environmental care not fulfilled, e.g. Garbage separating
R-23	Bangkok urban planning failure, gardens & canals destroyed, covering total surface in concrete tiredness of urban life; grew up in Bangkok, finds living there unhealthy,
G-2	Urban land too expensive to extend garden surface, G-2 need space for living rather

R-26	Tendency of urban mentality: everyone for himself, locked doors, hardly any contact with neighbours; flood 2011 as influential event >extreme situation How to realise sustainable living in Bangkok? Just start and find out, being sustainable can work out in the city if you process your produce >farm should not be too big
R-27	Urban society has not enough human relations; for food, it is difficult to trust the market quality Realising healthy lifestyles in Bkk: impact from municipal policies >garbage management, biogas, compost, involve schools and the mass of citizens
R-30	Bangkok is capitalist, people running behind idea of earning and spending money >> unhealthy society
R-32	Relation to IT: life in illusion, missing the real life >stress, depression, suicide Big city is lonely as no community
R-33	Big city >hard to think environmentally when surrounded by tall buildings People could make choices, e.g. stopping to drive cars around >gvt should be involved to people's encouragement
R-34	Rapid expansion into suburbs, local small-scale farmers have to sell their land >Bkk has no more food producers around
R-35	Healthy lifestyle in Bangkok hard because people don't cook at home
R-38	Sustainable living in Bangkok: inspire people to produce their own food
R-43	Make use of space around house; space limited but pending pots, shelves, walls, street possible

<b>Table 11: Government, policies, institutions</b>	
Rep.	Structural settings III: Government, policies, institutions
G-1	Sososo big support for TCF Government should play important role in UF, e.g. in providing abandoned land to urban poor for farming; government should not promote chemical inputs without any taxes MoA should be the main actor to support UF yet their action is "shallow" Universities hardly treat topic of UF; institutions' interest is one-dimensional
R-1	A hospital uses gardening as therapy programme Government campaign for UF after WW II Laksi district office started UF soon after 1997 crisis (cleaning department campaign 'cleaner Bangkok') >"one of good action from the government side" Sososo gives funds to TCF
R-2	R-2' business is self-sustaining, no support
R-3	ACT NGO based standard, government has their own organic standard; no control for

	organic label in Thailand, farmer can self-claim it
R-4	<p>National Innovation Agency organiser of OM, including business part; an organic agriculture research and funding body joins economic and research</p> <p>MoC, MoPH quite active &gt;fairs, road show</p> <p>MoA has plans and national budget to promote OF countrywide; national organic agenda since 2003 but did not work well in the beginning</p> <p>Sososo budget for food safety and organic promotion</p> <p>Organic label not legally protected &gt;confusion among consumers</p> <p>A university in Bkk: organic farmer training programme</p>
R-5	<p>Policies and promotion, but not sustainable: farmers allowed to grow small part organically only &gt;possible negative impact: farmers apply manure on the organic area but the same amount of chemicals as before on the remaining non-organic</p>
R-6	<p>Government not interested in promoting OF, only food safety; policies aim at domestic market but OF support only for export; promotion of some techniques but no holistic OF</p> <p>A northern organic standard group is registered as governmental cooperative, former funds Tambon Administrative Organisation includes local farmers in committee &gt;&gt;policy decisions</p> <p>Maejo University road map to be organic university</p> <p>MoPH more open for health related policies than MoA</p>
R-7	Sososo budget for healthy environment awareness
R-8	<p>Big fertilizer brands collaborate with high rank officials at MoA;</p> <p>Agricultural Bank gives out loan packages that include fertilizers as one part of loan; still, they support TV programme on OF</p> <p>Fertilizers are promoted just as the drugs in hospitals by DOAE</p> <p>Policies derive from strategic interest with companies (multi-national companies), and corruption among policy makers</p> <p>CP is buying government</p> <p>Sososo player for consumer protection</p>
R-9	Government should be involved, e.g. to bring organic food into canteens; research for better education of people needed
R-10	<p>Agency under Min. of Science &amp; Technology allocates 55 million Baht / year to an organic agriculture research and funding body OF is one part of National Strategy Programme</p> <p>National Strategy for organic: 1. sector - domestic consumption (70% production, 30% export)</p> <p>MoA provides no funding to other organisations</p> <p>Not much research done on OF, only some on traditional farming, including technology; it needs interdisciplinary approach to OF</p> <p>Research can help for the opposition of conventional agriculture lobby</p> <p>Political situation: Thaksin not favouring OF</p> <p>Government subsidies palm oil production but no local OF &gt;support only for export</p>
R-11	Sososo supported her business

	Government is cheating on Thai farmers
R-12	<p>Consistent policies and accordance of all involved ministries needed</p> <p>Organic on national agenda since 10 years but governments keeps investing in more chemicals, "for the conversion period, they say"</p> <p>Mismanagement at MoA</p> <p>Min of Natural resources and Environment maintains green consumer society project (same name as R-12's) but no consistent strategy yet</p> <p>Ministries talk a lot about organic now but unsure how effective it will be &gt;&gt;policies exist but no implementation; their defence mechanism "it's too expensive"</p> <p>IFOAM, ACT and an organic trade body confirm that Organic TH certification is not real organic</p>
R-13	Sososo to support for health related research and entrepreneur that interesting
R-16	CSR now at some big companies (e.g. electricity, cement company, some others) for reforestation and protection
R-17	<p>Policies needed to preserve urban food cultivation area</p> <p>Government, universities now trying campaigns for vegetable consumption</p> <p>Challenge for CF: get policy that recognises UF as beneficial</p>
R-18	<p>No future for organics because government does not care; officials don't know much about OF; though, government top down approach needed</p> <p>No organic experts in TH</p>
R-20	Land Development Bank gives out organic fertilizer to farmers
R-21	<p>Top down policies impossible for farmers – no change, unsustainable, wasting money</p> <p>Many people don't have trust in political system</p> <p>Government giving out cheap fertilizer to farmers</p> <p>CP has overwriting; politicians are owner of chemical business</p>
R-22	<p>UF promotion by district offices,</p> <p>MoC positively organises organic consumer fairs</p> <p>Min. of Environment's Environmental Day action not authentic, using junk materials</p>
R-24	<p>New group for quality and standard management at DOA (OF and GAP)</p> <p>Plan to expand GAP TH to GAP ASEAN</p> <p>Government supports OF but has small budget only (14million for GAP - 1 million for OF)</p>
R-25	DOA trainings & consequent NGO support not much sustained impact
R-27	<p>Need for more active policies; right now only funding &gt;potential to change if gvt is visionary</p> <p>Government terminology for labels is vague ("safe from chemical" - "chemical free")</p>
R-28	<p>CP: OF for poor farmers but not as alternative for the country</p> <p>Rice dpt.: first no support for local rice varieties, now yes, after campaigns</p> <p>Sososo permanent support</p> <p>Thai Agriculture &amp; Food Standard office wanted to suppress pesticide test results against their Q-mark</p>

	<p>Policies very important</p> <p>Resistance against their residue tests from MoA, support from Rice Department</p>
R-29	<p>Existing policies for OF promotion mostly for international market;</p> <p>Many policies but little concrete action, too many parties involved &gt;confusion</p> <p>Officials at government agencies have little understanding of OF &amp; do not believe in it</p>
R-30	<p>A.C.T certificate for farmers during 1-3 years conversion period possible</p> <p>TOAF staff "stiff" &gt; miscommunication with farmers</p> <p>Funds from Sososo &amp; Thai Research Institute</p>
R-32	<p>Now, no tax on imported chemicals; companies pay gvt &amp; sit in MoA</p> <p>MoC has interest in exporting organic &gt;&gt;promotion; MoA prefers to promote chemicals</p> <p>Chairman of 7/11 is in Min. of Interieur; 7/11 belongs to CP (fertilizer &amp; seed monopole)</p> <p>&gt;danger of big companies</p> <p>No farmers protection by government</p>
R-33	<p>Policy making is economic driven "very little of it is based on what's good" &gt;big companies control food network</p> <p>Government could be important player for sustainability mm if policies</p>
R-34	<p>Min. of Education has no budget to provide organic meals for schools</p>
R-35	<p>Government sabotages, not helpful at all, no support for organic, even actively against R-35</p>
R-37	<p>1<sup>st</sup> National Plan mentions sustainable farming / NF in contrast to the certified OF</p> <p>Everybody wants to eat organically but people are forced to eat contaminated food &gt;TH determined by chemical industries</p> <p>No government support as chemical company directors are in MoA; no real cooperation in the past, "they only store data", formal support since 2002 but money has been misused</p> <p>Officials no understanding of farmer's situation (rice schemes, e.g.)</p>
R-38	<p>Government should support organic seeds or stop promoting hybrid seeds</p>
R-39	<p>Government spent big budget on SE implementation without much impact; investment in OF but obstacles(certification); MoA officials never take field visits to meet farmers</p> <p>Ministries separate various departments of agriculture: rice, horticulture, rubber, soil, water</p> <p>Current prime minister shows pro OF attitude</p>

<b>Table 12: Mindsets and ideologies in the organic movements</b>	
Resp.	Mindsets, ideologies
R-2	For farmers: "organic is not their choice"
R-4	Farmers need to commit to organic
R-5	Environmental consciousness: people want to catch up in material terms first Changing farmers' mindsets is hard to implement
R-6	For farmers, OF is about awareness but also income, education for children, repaying debts
R-7	Environmental consciousness: waste management not in Bkkian's mindsets "people want good things for themselves" Buddhism: back to basic, back to nature, meditation, achieve consciousness & transfer to daily life >lifestyle aspect for some: Buddhism, meditation, yoga, food, vegetarian
R-8	Buddhism says: "the best thing, the base of the health is self-help" Religions have knowledge about medicine, healing through health behaviour, meditation or eating OF is philosophy of living "So, in Buddhism, you caring about everything, not caring for only men but you caring for every living being, and also you caring for non-living being" >connectivity, harmony, interdependence of things People's nature: ignorance, overconsumption, individualism; CF demands dedication
R-9	Farmers: mindset change and commitment needed for OF
R-11	General people: limited time, not much patience for e.g. UF >give up easily (too difficult or lack passion); main objective: cheap
R-12	"sustainability should be part of our life skills" but understanding about future of our food and challenges of our society still lacking; people don't look beyond to origin of food Moral: consumerism in Thai society, cheap and easy, calculative mind; "And if you don't have cancer, you don't do anything"
R-13	Thai attitude totally different from others because of Buddhism: mutual trust and support Monks doing OF follow Buddhism Trust-based sale: people give good food to monks, means produce good food for others, too >what you give reflects back to you Buddhist teaching: speak good, think good, do good >good for yourself, do good for others (metta)
R-14	Buddhist principles for Asoke: do no harm (chemicals harm environment and human body), live up to your full potential, do not follow your basic unrefined conditioning ("go beyond nature"), no drugs, no vices Farming as respectable way of living
R-15	Nature perception: "from the observation of how the nature is, make me feel and see that and respond that way to the nature" >loving nature creates awareness Spiritually aware persons are more likely to be aware for health and environment Morals: for farmers who put their life into OF that is their religion
R-16	Morals: farming needs patience which few people have

	Buddhism: suggests simple life (“if I don't follow simple life, I will not have time, I will not have energy, I will not have money to spend for the others”)
R-17	Mindset change right after flood: survival aspect Present change of mindsets: towards environment, social interaction, health in the city Buddhism: for some more, for some less; simple life is one aspect
R-18	Farmers mindset: easy way, easy money With NF, the farmer lives with nature, like in friendship; “But the chemical thing, we kill everything” Personal mindset: enough of business, gain expertise to pass onto next generation
R-19	Buddhism: not much related, more to people's need
R-20	Farmers' moral: risk that they apply chemicals to organic field in RP
R-21	“A lot of people looking for community that way, right.”
R-22	Asoke bringing ecology, religion and eating together Spirituality: some temples link it to environment >preservation programmes Buddhism: no killing, no harming, possibly to extend it environment >exists in other religions, too >>making religion useful for ecology depends on their interpretation
R-23	Buddhism: R-23 dedicates meditation to his plants
R-25	OF needs farmers' mindset change (change from inside) >mindset shift when start OF Farmers' responsibility as caretaker of the land Religion: simple life, respect for nature; spirituality through nature link
R-26	Buddhism: many people in organic scene respect the King who derives his philosophies from Buddhism >automatically related Moral: personally, R-26 will not kill his animals at farm General mindset: cheap consumption >mindset change needed
R-27	Fukuoka: cultivation of plants and of human being Personal mindset: “The mother Earth that she save or she hold, embrace all of us. And how can we help, the Mother Earth to live?”; human is not isolated entity, life is composition of earth, water, air, fire at least Buddhism: not much for OM as a whole, except for Santi Asoke
R-28	Buddhist farming: Human body, blood, bones come from nature >farm as if plants were body limbs Buddhism: very related to sustainable farming; health goes beyond body to embrace spirit
R-30	Personal mindset: belief in happiness, bonding between people, healthy society OF in R-30's project: one farmer is cheating but others feel proud to grow not for money only >mindset change in farmers working out Moral: in TH, mentality tends to “close your eyes” and cover neighbours who cheat >trust possibly hard to establish
R-31	Farmers: need good ethics, strong moral for OF Asoke principle: <i>Metta</i> , for society Buddhist <i>Sila</i> precepts: not harming other beings, patience, empathy, no greed >>OF suitable for

	people who follow <i>Dhamma</i>
R-32	What doesn't follow the nature will not last for long; GMO against the law of nature (in many religions) Religions: mindfulness, middle way; Moral: Thai people care about other's judgement, no confidence to be different, conservative
R-33	Change requires mindset change in people
R-43	No major ideology behind, just happy living

**Table 13: The scope of urban farming in Bangkok**

Resp.	Structural setting IV: Scope of urban farming in Bangkok
G-1	UF: possible approach to happiness in the urban context; possible on concrete ground Traditional Thai way is to grow plants where possible TCF: still small-scale project although many interested, many stakeholders; mostly private gardens, some on abandoned land; CF requires much maintenance >some projects cannot be sustained Constraint: land ownership In the city, OF easier to realise "Urban agriculture is a mega trend"; "urban agriculture is the some of city metabolism"
R-1	Space for community gardens: in the centre little but around temples & factories; but access to land restraining factor Flood 2011: CF active with microorganism balls for water cleaning, supply with home grown vegetables, teaching about solar cooking; post-flood: seed sharing & UF instruction TCF 2013: currently 6 learning centres, including mobile unit Self-sufficiency vision; solar energy, waste (water) recycling, cow manure, straw & compost
R-2	Not much farming around Bangkok (land too expensive) Rural farmers different class from urban farmers (often not land owners e.g.)
R-8	UF options: individual at home, in community; growing for home consumption needs little space CF solution but needs varieties adapted to urban
R-9	Peri-urban OF: limitations in water access & quality, soil contamination, habit of conventional farming >potential for conversion to OF; UF and peri-urban farming optimal equilibrium distance Rooftops aspects of growing vegetables, ecological building >city climate
R-10	Especially elderly people at retiring age adopt UF easily; background of exposure to contaminated food (chemicals, hormones), pollution Bangkok has few organic suppliers nearby >PGS model could adjust (in 2013)
R-11	Rooftop garden, backyard trees >greening concept More cases of illness, allergies in reaction to chemicals in food

R-12	<p>Laksi gardens good example of city life</p> <p>"city farming will be our landscape, of the city, modern city, nowadays there are rooftop garden. It's small space inbetween you grow vegetable. I think that might be a future of how people have their food consumption"</p> <p>Pollution in Bangkok and pure rural areas are far out</p>
R-16	<p>Simple living impossible in Bangkok and no one is really trying to live simply</p> <p>many poor people in Bangkok have been cut from their rural families and cannot go back; but being a farmer is no option for them</p>
R-17	<p>History: Bangkok used to have many orchards</p> <p>CF: possible in the suburbs; should be practised like in past; too many buildings to farm; suburbs like Dtaling Chan used to have UF but housing progressing now</p> <p>Some areas very suitable; combination of activities: UF, garbage management, community development (e.g. Prawet)</p> <p>Post-flood 2011: many urbanites interested in CF (survival aspect)</p> <p>Constraints: land access (esp. for poor communities), little municipality assistance; pollution, garbage problems</p>
R-18	<p>Peri-urban OF best solution for Bkk</p>
R-21	<p>Bangkok: "I think that, I mean there's so many people going there, for school or for like early jobs in their 20s, 30s, right? And then they come to this point whether it's a question of if they gonna just stay there and like have the family there and retire there and all that, or they gonna do sth else"</p>
R-22	<p>Constraints for Bkk &amp; big populations, "the basic example of caring for the environment is separate your garbage. It's not done. And that's a proof. You can like "Oh I separate garbage" but you can say that but if the actual action is not there, there's no prof"</p> <p>CF: there is a space related limit to UF as you cannot grow everything</p>
R-23	<p>TCF raises awareness</p> <p>Bangkok is urban planning failure (gardens &amp; canals destroyed, covered surface)</p>
G-2	<p>Urban land too expensive to extend garden surface, G-2 need space for living rather</p> <p>Project has plantation &amp; fish pond, plan for mushroom cultivation</p> <p>Problems with soil, esp. after flood (garbage &amp; residues) &gt;no big plants now, still recovering</p> <p>Organic fertilizer production <i>pui insee</i></p> <p>Challenges land size &amp; soil</p> <p>Promotion of kitchen gardens among residents</p>
R-26	<p>Flood 2011: influential event, extreme situation</p> <p>Sustainable living in Bangkok can work out if farm not too big</p> <p>Challenges for UF: supply (water, straw, manure, soil), birds</p>
R-27	<p>Healthy living in Bkk: impact needed from municipal policies and mass of citizens</p>
R-30	<p>Bangkok is capitalist, unhealthy society</p>
R-32	<p>Lifestyles now: stress, depression; big city is lonely; no community</p>
R-33	<p>Hard to think environmentally when surrounded by tall buildings</p>

	Individual can make choices: stop driving cars >gvt needs to encourage people
R-34	Bangkok expanding rapidly in the suburbs, so local small-scale farmers sell their land >Bkk no more food producers around
R-38	Sustainable living in Bangkok: inspire people to grow food at home; if no land, plant in pots, use terrace At R-38's public urban farm: not much work with plants, quickly done
R-43	Use space around the house >pending pots, shelves, walls and street planting bands Harvest almost every day in small amount to add to her meal

**Table 14: Living in Bangkok**

Resp.	Urban lifestyles
G-1	Changes in people's lifestyle (food habits, fast food trend, commercial food) 2 new trends: cycling and healthy living ("healthy lifestyle maybe is too wide. Maybe is like a gardening or cooking or sth. like that")
R-1	TCF encourages "green living" e.g. herbal shampoo, soap making R-11's hotel promotes slow life concept Office syndrome among office employees >need for place to relax
R-2	Urban farmers are not really farmers, they have different issues
R-4	Organic not in people's daily lives >not their lifestyle yet
R-8	Persons interested in OF seek independence, nature experience, going back to basic "You know, we should have a healthy society where people are friendly, where people are in harmoniously to each other like the brotherhood" >healthy mind, healthy body
R-9	Freedom and creativity with rural living >young people start to search for this OM is also sustainable lifestyle, mindset, growing own vegetables, eco-tourism, farm stay, human well-being >> sustainable living mm
R-10	Changes in people's lifestyles: search for independence, e.g. from market products "If they have the chance to choose, they will choose the best quality for themselves" "if people have health troubles, they would choose automatically the alternative way, in Bkk"
R-11	Their hotel has slow-life concept, no TV, no smoking, home made chemical free cleaners, organic breakfast,
R-14	Farming as respectable way of living but negative reputation for general Thai society Young people prefer office work over farming >"A/C, sabai, sabai"
R-16	Simple life brings more dedication to others
R-17	Urban lifestyles: quite individualist, people not organised in networks except for e.g.urban poor

	CFers develop themselves a lifestyle, relating to nature, social activities, community Many people are bored from their work & daily routine “we found that that city people who grow city farm, they development themselves lifestyle”
R-18	Trend towards healthy food by the health conscious people
R-19	There is change in terms of lifestyle, partly about being sustainable, organic lifestyle
R-21	“village life and Bangkok life is such an extreme contrast” >Bangkokians looking for alternatives, including farming; lifestyle aspect about going back to farming: “some of them are really grew in the city, they never know anything about farming but they want to change their life” Many urbanites own a piece of land somewhere in the countryside Health crisis in TH now, new generation addicted to fast food; food important for Thai (cultural aspect)
R-22	Aspirations of healthy lifestyle and body >still on self-level, greedy Cancer and unhealthy living driving OM R-22: wanted change of lifestyle, tired of working for companies for salary People want comfortable life >challenge now how to make our comfortable life environmentally friendly
R-23	Back to simple life, self-sufficiency, tiredness of urban life; unhealthy Bangkok living
R-25	Alternative thinking, together with education, self-reliant living, back to nature idea, traditional farming, health, awareness to change lifestyle, seeking of happiness, connection to and respect for nature, awareness
R-26	People recollect with old times automatically, less consciously R-26: farm makes small living & brings happiness >no need for more; being alone can be problem >>More and more people giving up their profession to find happiness
R-27	Policies need to encourage and demonstrate sustainable lifestyles
R-28	OF can provide higher happiness
R-31	Living at Santi Asoke: everybody learns how to sustain himself and their community
R-32	New generation needs land and nature; “they want the time back”; awareness that this values more than money, that fame & power are illusion >”It’s a common for the new age”
R-33	TH is very fad driven, people follow trends
R-34	Farming new lifestyle matter: actress Um Siriyakorn modelling it
R-35	Her healthy bakery became a fashion now, consumers claim more
R-39	Some Bkkians, educated & middle class with good salary bought land & retired themselves to be the farmer
R-43	Gardening for her is full time City people want happy & simple life, at least those who join the network

<b>Table 15: Stakeholder networking and media in the organic movement</b>	
Resp.	Stakeholder networks in the organic movement
G-1	Some exchange with UF networks in other Thai cities (CNX, Surin) >looking for more networking, also international Mass media, TV, social media powerful tool for knowledge and imitation of UF; R-1 is on TV often Social media: TCF uses website and FB (most successfully)
R-1	TCF started as individual group, eventually became network with others; R-1 lifestyle provokes curiosity; a journal for natural farming reports about OM since early days; TCF publishes in books, magazines, journals Social media: FB mostly used for connection
R-2	AAN network connection for different stakeholder groups
R-4	School for Wellbeing networks connect many projects and NGOs >aim: green consumer society Many stakeholders connected to Sososo; NGOs work with A.C.T Organic sale programmes, promotion, and TV shows raise awareness among consumers; internet sale of organic products
R-5	Organic represented rather positively in media (TV, radio) but mostly only talking
R-6	R-6 networks with government, university; field work to Japan Many columns on organic in media now, but promotion often one-dimensional as not developing the human being
R-7	About R-1: on TV often Need for networking between single urban farmers >>growing community UF friends grow mushrooms, connect to neighbourhood directly at harvest time
R-8	OF stakeholders both interconnected and loosely connected Social media: FB as information tool for general public >“Make the impossible possible through the social media” Not enough mass media promoting organic yet; SE on distant learning TV Mass advertisement on TV and rural radio promotes chemical fertilizers Opportunity digital media: people connect easily to FB, Youtube, email >people can link and global organic farming promotion can happen
R-9	Organic fairs good platform Organic as health issue in newspapers and media; much media attention now
R-10	R-10's research and funding network: network with R-6, School for Wellbeing, TCF, others >negotiation about PGS with the government; proposal on university involvement Most NGOs do not connect “We have many different networks now” ASTV talk about organic life >positive trend (Santi Asoke's political leader) Events and fairs getting popular; health topics on TV; advertisement, magazines >important means to information
R-11	R-11 in small network of 5 green hotels in Thai regions

	<p>CF network: information exchange, e.g. finding organic seeds</p> <p>School for Wellbeing publishes quarterly magazines, and books</p> <p>“Yeah, it seem a lot of ministries talk about the word organic agriculture and you go on the TV and you hear all these kind of thing but we don't know [...] how effective it will be”</p>
R-13	<p>No connection of all but some stakeholders try &gt;not yet right time to connect with each other because of many separate parts (commercial mm, industrial mm, etc); no adaptation to consumer</p> <p>Organic not treated directly on TV, but health, med-doctor programme; magazines</p> <p>Communication about events also mouth-to-mouth</p>
R-15	<p>Connection to some local NGO activists; school classes come for farm visit</p> <p>TV talks about organic</p>
R-17	<p>R-17's network comprises 14 other NGOs</p> <p>potential for UF and rural farmers to learn from each other</p> <p>Bangkok: networking, relationships difficult (e.g. city immensity) &gt;more neighbourhood action</p> <p>Social media: network for sharing &gt;R-17's NGO fan page 100000 people</p> <p>Information: food and health fair; middle classes unlike urban poor find and share information on internet</p>
R-18	<p>Weak connection among stakeholders; “technocrats” can be hindering; stakeholders should cooperate</p> <p>Not much impact from radio or magazine</p>
R-19	<p>So far no network of people interested in OF; each group works separately; collaboration should strengthen OM</p> <p>Network member meet online, no need for physical meeting</p> <p>Farmers often hear about SE on TV, radio</p>
R-21	<p>Free seed distribution, seed exchange &gt;enhance networking among the interested &gt;“It creates network by itself, you don't need to organise it”</p> <p>No tight formal network but much connection between people (CNX)</p> <p>Social media: FB became unintentionally nation-wide network</p>
R-22	<p>Fairs regularly bring organic communities together</p> <p>Media and programmes one of most important key players in educating and changing people</p>
R-23	<p>Connection and good relationships among farmers' market vendors, community</p>
R-24	<p>Organic marketing responsibility of Ministry of Commerce</p>
R-25	<p>School for Wellbeing as key player in connecting consumers &amp; growers</p>
G-2	<p>Connection to R-17's NGO and other, members all over Thailand; network and food sharing with homeless people</p> <p>Media attention on cancer &amp; OF now</p>
R-26	<p>Networking through fairs, events, invite people to your urban garden &gt;friends and network make organic community</p> <p>TV shows: mean to encourage more people; self-sufficiency website for advice; food, seed / plant sharing</p>

	Social media: good and effective now, but limited
R-27	Not the right time to bring all stakeholders together Some have network, mutual knowledge but not one single organisation; still organic stakeholders who became inspired by Fukuoka (early mm)
R-28	Started his appropriate technology NGO with R-32
R-29	Information about CSA mouth-to-mouth, friends Consumer awareness possibly coming from media
R-30	Connect a local university, an NGO promoting PGS, ACT and Sososo e.g.
R-31	Santi Asoke no interaction with other farmers; own TV channel for OF trainings Media as promoter
R-32	Players connection through network >connection needed but should be small groups Mass media: consumer information but not much on organic
R-33	R-33 networks with a green shop for know-how about processing cooking oils into soaps >need for working with organic network, local community, farmers
R-34	Social media: people talk about food security; TV reality show: actress featuring farmer
R-35	Networks with alternative medicine experts Instagram: medium of role modelling TV shows reach masses, many watch accidentally >curiosity
R-37	Media on OF and food safety
R-38	R-38's urban garden in organic farmers network (Bkk and surrounding) >sale of their organic produce; TCF involved for assistance Information: shared on website and FB
R-39	Exchange with individual other stakeholders OF promotion on TV and newspaper, but TV and radio station for chemical fertilizer
R-43	Media convinces many people Social media: FB helpful mean - people announce, share experiences, advice; R-43 gets new fried requests everyday Connection to TCF network, e.g for initial training

### III.2 Model of the consumer short interviews

- What does the organic food mean to you?
- How did you hear about it?
- Why do you buy organic product?
- How often do you buy organic product?
- How important is certification of organic products for you?
- Have you heard of an organic consumer movement in Bangkok?
- Do you feel part of a movement?

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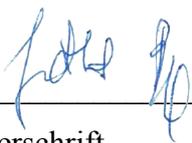
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