

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION, GENDER, AND ADAPTATION IN SOUTHERN THAILAND

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Buddhist Southern Thailand differs in politics, gender roles, and modal personality from the other three ethnic regions of the country. Other Thai stereotype southern men as violent, clannish, and aggressive, and suspect them of belonging to gangs ever-engaged in bloody feuds. The Southern Thai do have a distinct social life, even if most other Thai know it only in caricature. Here I explore some aspects of their social life in ways that made sense to the Southern Thai themselves, and offer an adaptive explanation for their social organization.¹ Social organization can only be understood historically, in a process generated by individuals and families acting for their own best welfare. Gender roles exemplify social organization, especially with respect to inheritance, residence, and political office. Attitudes and sentiments must also be considered to adequately understand social organization (see Foster 1975, 1977; Lehman 1963; and Keyes 1977).

Of the forces influencing Southern Thai gender roles the three strongest are: a tendency toward matrilocality; economic and political co-operation by kinsmen; and a settlement pattern along the coast in which ties between kinsmen are more obvious in the early stages while ties between kinswomen are more apparent in the later stages. The tendency toward matrilocality is shared with the rest of the nation but is modified by relations between kinsmen and by the settlement pattern. The settlement pattern can strengthen ties between kinsmen or kinswomen depending on local conditions, but in general augments ties between kinsmen.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND GENDER

Except for kinship terminology, the differences between Southern Thailand and the rest of the nation are not sharp, but they are pervasive. The accumulation of many moderate differences produces an overall marked change in the feel of social life that is clearly recognized by all Thais.

Until recently Thailand was an agricultural nation of peasants with small holdings. The basic crop is rice, usually grown through controlled immersion. The Thai nation is divided politically into four large regions, each dominated by a distinctive Thai ethnic group with its own speech and customs. In the Northern and Northeastern regions, villages were commonly nucleated and under the control of towns and an aristocracy to whom they had to pay taxes and work under corvee. Large-scale warfare was common. In the Central region, settlement was less nucleated, but the political organization was similar. Village life was played out in relations between stem families. Parents tried to bestow their land equally on all their children, but with a slightly greater share to the child who cared for them in their old age.

Southern Thailand also had stem families and an ideal of equal inheritance but differed otherwise. A few coastal towns controlled large-scale shipping yet they did not extend their power into the countryside. Apparently taxes and corvee were not common. Settlements dispersed on small sand bars were composed of kin clusters. Conflict at the local level was widespread and intense, but small in scale and not related to strife between the coastal towns and the aristocracy living in them.

Thailand shares its tendency toward matrilocality with the rest of Southeast Asia (Ong 1989; Cohen and Wijeyewardene 1984). Women hold much of the land and prefer to give it to their daughters. After marriage, husbands usually live with their wife's kin. Divorce is fairly common. Kinswomen often live in clusters or compounds. Ideally the last daughter lives with her aged parents, then inherits their house and a larger share of their land. Political office, such as the village head, is usually held by men but actually passes along a matrikin group by moving from an older in-marriage father to his younger in-marriage son-in-law. At least in Northern Thailand, co-resident clusters of kinswomen sometimes worship tutelary household spirits.

As the Southern Thai themselves recognize (Center for Southern Thai Studies 1982), gender roles in the South differ from other parts of Thailand. The public prominence of men stems in part from their role in conflict and violence and from their ability to hold new land when it becomes available. But neither men nor women hold most of the land. Men are the majority land holders early in the settlement process when parcels are large, and they prefer to give large parcels to their sons. As parcels eventually become smaller through inheritance, they are given to daughters, who prefer to give the parcels to their daughters. Residence in old age and postmarital residence also shift from a preference for kinsmen to a preference for kinswomen. No simple overall residence pattern is characteristic, but a tendency for kinsmen to live together appears in Southern Thailand that is not evident elsewhere. Thus clusters of co-resident kinsmen are at least as common as clusters of kinswomen and usually show strong economic and political ties. Divorce is not common and brings more hardship to the woman than to the man. In the past, local ties of nobility were often passed down among kinsmen. Now, local offices such as the sub-district head (*kamnan*) and village headman (*phu yai baan*) are also handed down in that manner. I found no evidence of female-centered cults.

Other Thai groups use four terms for ascending collateral kin (aunts and uncles). Parents' older siblings are distinguished by the sex of the sibling, while younger siblings are distinguished by ties through the mother (*na*) or father (*a*). The Central Thai also use *a* as the term of address for people outside the near family with ties to it. The Southern Thai omit *a* entirely, generalize *na* to the younger siblings of both parents, and use *na* as the term of address. Extending *na* entails not further matrilocality, but a removal of gender distinctions important for matrilocality, a clear contrast to matrilocal patterns elsewhere, and a shift toward at least neutrality in emphasis on gender in the family.

ECOLOGY AND SETTLEMENT

Southern Thailand is an inundated mountain range. The distance from the mountains to the sea varies between five and 100 kilometers, but is often only

about 30 kilometers. That short distance affects social life in many ways. Small braided rivers occur only a few kilometers apart throughout the landscape except in the high mountains. Sand bars and alluvial deposits occur at the mouth of all the rivers. Additional land is formed continually because of natural erosion, deposition, and the sudden drainage changes in the coastal wet lands, needing little reclamation effort to cultivate. A great variety of land types exist within close distances, making trading beneficial and common. The broken and wet terrain slowed movement over land and also allowed small groups to control trade by occupying strategic positions. Until recently, most of the population was concentrated along the coastal strip, from two to fifteen kilometers wide. The coastal strip has less malaria and also offers the greatest variety, most fertile land, and access to fishing and trading over the sea. People built their houses on old sand bars, and no single sand bar was large enough for more than about fifteen houses. Up to four adjacent sand bars could form residence areas I call neighborhoods.

CARAVEL, A COASTAL SETTLEMENT

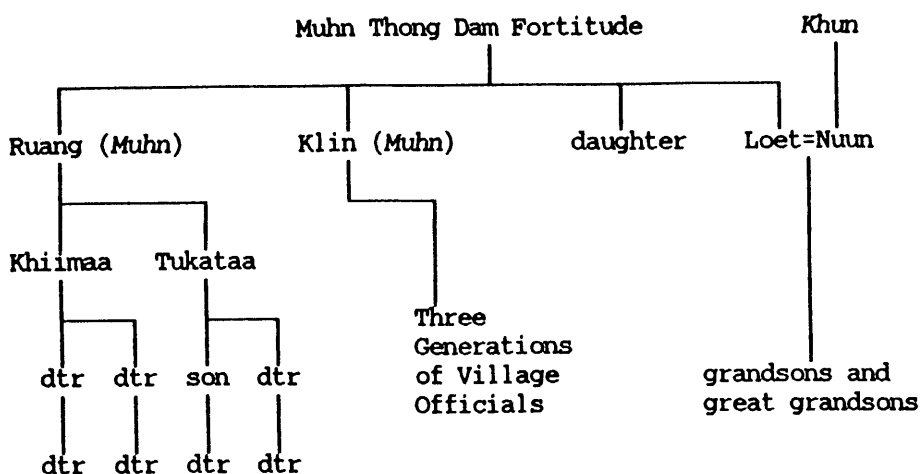
I worked in two historically related coastal villages, composed of 160 households, divided into six neighborhoods. The linked villages are together called Caravel (derived from a Thai word for a Chinese trading ship). I was in Thailand from October 1981 through September 1984 and at Caravel from March 1982 through July 1984. I collected data through several surveys and by mapping all structures, fields, roads, and waterways. I could trace ownership of land back as far as everyone's oldest ancestors, in some cases six generations before the oldest current residents. I collected and cross-checked complete genealogies for all current residents through three rounds of surveys, and also collected stories about their lives and those of their ancestors. These data form the basis for the following case histories and statistics.

Khun is a minor national title, the lowest title permitting the holder or his representative to appear at the national court. Local residents consider *Khun* a major title, equivalent at least to a present day district head (*nai amphoe*). *Muhn* (literally ten thousand) was a local title only, but considered to be next in importance to a *Khun* and equivalent to a present day sub-district head (*kamnan*). When men take titles they are given a separate title name by which they are officially known. For simplicity they will be referred to only by their given name. Residents also consider the village headman (*phu yai baan*) to be a title, about as much below a *kamnan* or *muhn* as those are below a *khun*.

In the following cases the number after a person's name indicates the years before present of their birth or probable birth, or their age if they are still alive.² For ease of comprehension, family names are roughly translated while personal names and titles are transliterated.

Case One. By looking at three closely related branches of Caravel's largest family, the Fortitudes, this case illustrates both ties between kinsmen and the development of clusters of kinswomen. The key point in the shift toward kinswomen occurs when land is partitioned by inheritance to the level at which parcels will only support a small extended family, for most of Caravel between 100 and 80 years ago.

Figure 1. The Fortitude Family



The Fortitudes began in Caravel with Muhn Thong Dam (180), who had nine children. His eldest child, a daughter, did not marry. The next two children, sons, received the title *Muhn* and established homes in their father's compound. A later daughter married the son of another landed family and established a household across a small stream near her father. Loet (134), the last child, inherited about half as much land as did his older brothers.

The second son, Klin, received the title of *Muhn*, lived in his father's compound, and received a large block of land. Small pieces of that land have been given as bequests, but the core of it, over twice the size needed to support a small extended family, remained intact in the hands of a single lineal descendant in each generation. His first major heir was a daughter, who married the son of a *Khun* from a neighboring area. His grandson by that couple was a sub-district head (*kamnan*) and his great grandson was a village headman (*phu yai*). That headman had only daughters, so his son-in-law succeeded him as headman. While women have facilitated some links, the transfer of power in Klin's family has been through men.

Loet married the daughter of a *Khun* and went to live on her extensive land holdings in another neighborhood of Caravel. One hundred years later their descendants there form a cluster of houses headed by four grandsons, two great grandsons, and one granddaughter. Each of the families has maintained a plot considerably larger than that needed to support a small extended family by limiting inheritance to one major heir when the holdings had reached that level. The Fortitude kinsmen lead their neighborhood, distinguishing themselves as teachers, ritual specialists, story tellers, and organizers. They maintain close economic and social ties with one another, helping each other's children to become drivers, herbalists, mechanics, mill operators, and business people.

The descendants of Thong Dam's eldest son, Muhn Ruang (149), are much more typical of family history in Caravel. Ruang's land from his father was originally substantial, equal to that received by Klin, but not as much as the combined

holdings of Loet and his wife. Ruang's land was first divided into two equal parcels for two children. Each parcel was later divided in two for the heirs in the next generations. Each final quarter was sufficient to support a small extended family and was not further subdivided.

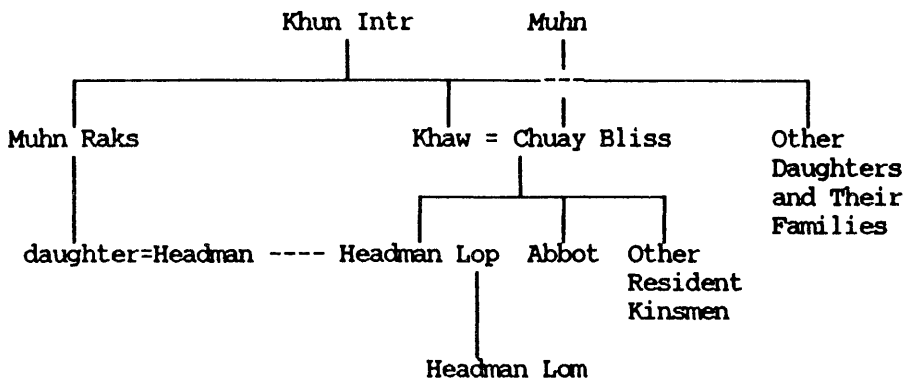
Ruang's heirs were daughters, Khiimaa (115) and Tukataa (100). Both had many sons and daughters. Their four heirs were three daughters and one son, Cho (69). All four heirs gave their land to a daughter middle in birth order among her siblings; eventually all of Ruang's land went to kinswomen. Those women are friendly, but have not helped each other to the same extent as have the descendants of Loet, probably because of the small size of their holdings.

This example demonstrates four tendencies. First, with a sibling set, land is not given to one child at a time but is apportioned among the set. Second, in earlier times fewer daughters of a set than sons were heirs. Although the amount that any daughter got might roughly equal that of any son, the total received by daughters was usually less than the total for sons. Third, political relations were important in marriage and inheritance. Children who got no land directly through inheritance might do so indirectly through marriage. Fourth, decisions concerning bequests often extend to the generation of grandchildren or beyond.

In sum, for the oldest generations sons early in the birth order inherited land, and sometimes titles and offices. Parents divided land equally among their several heirs. As land was fragmented through inheritance, fewer children inherited, and parents preferred daughters as heirs. Parents rarely subdivided land into parcels smaller than needed to support an extended family. In earlier times kinsmen lived near one another, while later kinswomen were neighbors.

Case Two. This case shows the coherence of kinsmen around land and power. Khun Intr (142) was Caravel's largest landowner and most prominent historical figure. He was roughly contemporary with Muhn Ruang and lived only a few houses away. Khun Intr's father was a *Khun* and a very large landowner in a nearby subdistrict (*amphoe*). Khun Intr's holdings lay both in the core of Caravel and also along the beach area where the port was.

Figure 2. Descendants of Khun Intr



Khun Intr had two wives, by whom he had two sons and nine daughters. His first and next-to-last child were sons. The youngest son's family died out. The first son received a huge tract of land along the coast, a larger share of rice land in the interior than any other children, and the title of Muhn Raks (120). His three children were all daughters so his title did not pass on directly. One of his daughters married an immigrant from a titled family who became the headman (*phu yai*). As with the descendants of Klin Fortitude, the transfer of political power here was from Muhn Raks in a relationship between men.

Each of Khun Intr's nine daughters married an immigrant, most of them from titled families. The daughters received equal shares of land. The eldest daughter, Khaw (116), married Chuay Bliss (118), whose father was a *Muhn* in a neighboring subdistrict (*amphoe*). Eight of Khun Intr's daughters had families in Caravel who continue to cohere around large plots of land and who participate actively in village politics.

Drainage in Caravel changed radically about 1930, opening up a large basin of land near the beach. Five of Khun Intr's grandsons, two of them through Chuay Bliss, took large tracts of land roughly equal in size and co-operated to defend their claims. Today the descendants of those men still live in a cluster on a ridge and provide leadership for three neighborhoods. One son of Chuay Bliss, Lop (80), married a daughter of Tukataa Fortitude (see Case One) and later became the headman who succeeded the son-in-law of Muhn Raks. Lop was succeeded by his eldest son, Lom Bliss (52), who also received all his father's land. The long-time abbot of Caravel temple, the most respected priest in the area, is a brother of Lop and the uncle of Headman Lom. A neighbor, Sawing Bliss (74), will give his own large parcel intact to his youngest son, a lesser village official.

Land, power, and groups of kinsmen sustain one another. Power need not be overtly political, but can be economic and social, as it was with the descendants of Loet Fortitude. When the original land base is large, and when conflict or political office are ingredients in the original coherence of kinsmen, then kinsmen continue to maintain political power as well. The time and social frames in which one looks at gender and social relations can distort the picture, as would have happened had attention been focused only on the daughters of Khun Intr or only on the kinsmen of Lop Bliss. The historical frame must be large enough to capture organization as process.

THE REGIONAL TREND TOWARD MEN

Four forces contribute to the public prominence of men in Southern Thailand, none of which alone is sufficient to determine gender roles.

1. Land Acquisition and Holding. As is clear from Case Two, groups of kinsmen can better acquire and hold land than can other groups. From the presence of old sand bars, new land has become available along the coastal strip at about 50 year intervals for at least several hundred years. Accordingly, groups of powerful kinsmen have been a common feature of Southern Thai social life.

2. Conflict and Violence. The importance of kinsmen in land acquisition is augmented by their role in conflict. Southern Thailand has long had the highest violent crime rates in the nation (see the Thai Statistical Yearbooks for any period after 1960), including house plundering, hijacking, smuggling, cattle rustling, and feuding. Southern Thai ecology promotes small groups and frequent conflict. An

impetus for conflict comes from the rich ecological and economic variety found in the South, which not only invites trade but also provides opportunities for robbery and smuggling.

The southern terrain, broken and marshy, limits the size of targets and attackers. The small house clusters on isolated sand bars make appealing targets for any force large enough to attempt the assault; but no force large enough to have easily succeeded in plundering house clusters could have moved quickly over the marshy ground that limited the size of such sites. Thus assaults were frequent but limited in size.

Under those conditions the best strategy was for kinsmen to live together and co-operate to defend their homes, especially since no centralized authority enforced order throughout the countryside. The same men who co-operate to defend their homes can also co-operate to attack elsewhere. That kinsmen formed the basis of both defenders and attackers contributed to the frequency of conflict.

Local office holders in Southern Thailand were responsible for justice and order, but were also involved in armed conflict. In almost all cases they were physically supported by their kinsmen. Caravel has a reputation for safety and quiet, yet at least ten people were murdered and many dozen head of cattle were stolen by thieves in the ten years before I lived there. All the murders, and many of the thefts, were answered by revenge killing.

Trading routes and places of rich natural resources are also the foci of control and conflict by gangs. For the same reasons as outlined above, gangs were numerous and gang activity was common and intense. Two of the most powerful in the south were led by a man and his sons. The Southern Thai deplore gangs, but gangs do demonstrate how southern Thai ecology can lead to sustained conflict among small groups of kinsmen.

3. Fishing. Until larger craft displaced them, families in the coastal zone usually kept small boats to fish in the Gulf of Thailand. Men say they prefer near-kinsmen to serve on their boats as crew.

4. Trade and Travel. Until modern times, trading parties always consisted of several men, either because they went in boats or for mutual protection. Many men told stories of going trading with their fathers or brothers. Trading groups need not consist of kinsmen, although the use of boats does favor kinsmen because of their ties through fishing. The absence of men from home because of fishing or trading affected domestic organization. Given the preference of kinsmen to live together and fish together, the periodic absence of a few kinsmen stimulates those left behind to closer co-operation. Residents say that before modern, large-scale fishing, most men made frequent, short trips, and that an important duty of the remaining kinsmen was to guard the house.

To summarize, both co-operation over land and the pattern of conflict lead directly to ties between kinsmen, which in turn provides an impetus for further ties around fishing and trading. Preference among kinsmen in each of the four situations bolsters the preference in the other three, linking all four.

THE CARAVEL SETTLEMENT PROCESS

Despite strong adaptive reasons for the public role of men, ties through kinswomen still play an important part in the settlement pattern. The mean size of plots available for inheritance declined over time because of land partitioning

that stopped at the level needed to support a small extended family, about 90 years ago. The number of siblings out of each set who were heirs also declined until it stabilized at about one per set near the same time.

Statistical description of gender roles during the settlement process shows two contrasts: between roles at high and low levels of land inheritance or between the early and later periods of Caravel history. A low level of land holding includes holdings up to the size needed to support a small extended family; large levels are usually at least twice as much. Caravel residents recognize two major kinds of land, that for growing rice or coconuts. As coconut land sold for about half the price of rice land, in calculating land holdings coconut land will count for half of rice land. The minimum needed to maintain a small extended family is about four *rai* each of rice land and coconut land (1 *rai* equals .4 acres or .16 hectares). If combined, minimal holdings of the two land types are equivalent to about six *rai* of wet rice land. Households now typically hold about five *rai* of each land type.

Inheritance Bias Towards Sons or Daughters. Table 1 indicates the amount of land received by sons or daughters from their fathers. Each land category is divided into high and low levels. Low levels exclude zero for accuracy; the argument is not affected. The table includes data for all years in which I could reliably trace ownership. The final column gives the probability values for a one-tailed t-test of the difference in the means of lands inherited by sons and daughters. Here and in subsequent comparisons of such means (Tables 1 through 4) a one-tailed test is used because one directional hypotheses are tested.

Table 1
Land Inherited from the Father (in *rai*)

Land Description		Heir Gender and Bequest Statistics				P value for 1- tailed t test of mean differ.
Type	Level of Bequest: High or Low	Sons		Daughters		
		N	Mean	N	Mean	
Rice	0.1-6.0	29	2.67	41	3.38	.0202
	12.1-up	15	23.67	16	18.69	.0294
Coconut	0.1-6.0	23	2.85	41	3.67	.0203
	6.1-up	20	24.40	24	11.74	.0186
Both	0.1-6.0	30	2.65	44	3.31	.0301
	6.1-up	44	18.68	47	15.47	.0186

If kinsmen co-operate around large tracts of land and if daughters are preferred as land is divided through inheritance, then fathers should favor sons at higher levels of bequests and favor daughters at lower levels.

Consider low levels of rice land. For those children who received six *rai* or less, daughters received larger plots (3.38) than did sons (2.67); more daughters received plots (41) than did sons (29); and the difference in the amount of land they received is statistically significant ($p=.0202$ by a one tailed Student's *t* test). For those children who received twelve *rai* or more of rice land from their fathers, sons received more land (23.67) than daughters (18.69) and the difference is significant ($p=.0294$). The data for coconut land and for the combination of rice and coconut lands show the same preference for daughters at low levels and for sons at middle and higher levels. No similar data for inheritance from mothers are presented because no statistically significant biases appeared for either sons or daughters at any level of land division. The importance of this apparent lack of a pattern for mothers will be clear on considering further data for inheritance and residence below.

Table 2 shows the data for inheritance from both parents. The mean of land inherited by sons at high levels is greater than that for daughters, indicating that they inherited more land at those levels; but the difference between the two means is not statistically significant. The tendency for daughters to inherit more of all kinds of land at low levels is significant for both parents.

Table 2
Land Inherited from Both Parents (in *rai*)

Land Description		Heir Gender and Bequest Statistics				P value for 1-tailed t test of mean differ.
Type	Level of Bequest: High or Low	Sons		Daughters		
		N	Mean	N	Mean	
Rice	0.1-6.0	92	4.14	110	4.81	.0139
	12.1-up	31	31.93	39	27.45	.2964
Coconut	0.1-7.0	77	3.07	100	3.64	.0116
	6.1-up	20	33.39	24	24.01	.1024
Both	0.1-7.0	49	2.79	56	3.31	.0349
	18.1-up	12	28.00	27	25.43	.1285

The mean size of land holdings had been diminishing until it stabilized at the size at which daughters are preferred. In the early stages of the settlement pattern land was owned by men who preferred to give it to their sons. In the stable later stages it is owned by women who prefer to give it to their daughters. Over the course of Caravel history land ownership changed hands from men to women. Confirmation of the change is found in Table 3, which looks at the ratio of land received from

fathers or mothers at the relevant periods of Caravel history.³ The contrast is made for people born before and after 1880, those who inherited before and after the time of change. (The ratio for one parent is equal to one minus the ratio for the other parent, but both ratios are given for convenience).

In the early period children received about 56 per cent of their inherited rice land from their father, while they received only about 44 per cent from their mother. In the later period the ratios are nearly reversed: children received only about 40 per cent of their rice land from their father, and about 60 per cent from their mother. The difference between the two periods is statistically significant (by a one tailed Student's t test with $p=.0241$). In the early period, since children were getting most of their land from fathers, it was men who held the land; in the later period children get land from mothers. Figures for coconut land and aggregate land are similar.

Table 3

The Ratio of Land Received from Father and Mother
Before and After the Change in Inheritance Patterns Around 1880

Land Designations		Before		After		1 tailed t test of means
Type	From	N	Mean of Ratios	N	Mean of Ratios	
Rice	Father	41	.561	249	.403	.0241
	Mother		.439		.597	
Coconut	Father	38	.571	207	.377	.0119
	Mother		.429		.623	
Both	Father	37	.653	234	.484	.0211
	Mother		.347		.516	

Table 4 presents data similar to Table 3, but doubled to separate sons from daughters. For sons, the switch from fathers to mothers is at least marginally statistically significant for all the lands. For daughters the switch is apparent but is not statistically significant for any of the land types. When land parcels diminished in size through inheritance, parents switched to prefer daughters. Women then came to hold the land and both sons and daughters received their land from mothers.

Old Age Living Preference for First or Last Child. Table 5 lists the preference of parents for living with a first-born child, a last-born child, or a child at some other stage in the birth order. The data are not at all statistically significant, which means that parents in Caravel do not prefer to live with a last-born child as they get older and thus do not prefer to live with the last daughter.⁴

Table 4

The Ratio of Land Received from Father and Mother
Before and After the Change in Inheritance Patterns Around 1880

Land Type	Heir Gender	Ratio of Land from Father to Land from Mother				1 tailed t test of means
		Before		After		
		N	Mean	N	Mean	
Rice	Sons	15	.601	116	.395	.058
	Dtrs	26	.538	133	.410	.105
Coconut	Sons	12	.641	99	.323	.015
	Dtrs	26	.538	108	.426	.148
Both	Sons	13	.704	111	.462	.041
	Dtrs	24	.625	123	.503	.123

Table 5

Parents' Preferences in Old Age for Living With
First-Born, Last-Born, or Other Child in the Birth Order

Parent	First Child	Last Child	Other Child
Father	34	39	34
Mother	42	42	34

If these data are divided according to land holdings, then a statistically weak pattern emerges. Parents who have enough land to provide for more than one heir prefer to live with a first-born child. Table 6 separates parents according to whether they had holdings of more or less than 30 *rai*. Those who were part of a couple with smaller holdings lived more often with a youngest child, while those who were part of a couple with larger holdings lived more often with a first child. The difference is marginally significant only when both parents are grouped together (by chi-square: $df=1$, $\chi^2=3.575$, $p=.0587$; Fisher's exact probability=.0292; maximum likelihood ratio=4.301, $p=.0381$).

The data suggest that parents with much land are likely to have many surviving children and likely to give land to several of them. Older children help administer the land and raise their younger siblings, getting more land and a dwelling as a reward. As land holdings become smaller, fewer children can inherit. In those cases parents keep the land intact to provide older children with whatever economic or marital help possible, thereby also saving the land and house for younger children.

Table 6

Land Effects on Old Age Living Preference

Parent	Land Level: Up to 30 <u>rai</u> - 30 <u>rai</u> or above	First Child	Last Child	Other Child
Fathers	Up to 30	16	27	22
	30 or Above	13	10	7
Mothers	Up to 30	25	31	20
	30 or Above	14	8	11
Both	Up to 30	41	58	42
Parents	30 or Above	27	18	18

Old Age Living Preference for Sons or Daughters. Overall, older parents preferred to live with their daughters, 144 choosing their daughters, and 71 choosing their sons. However, those figures hide an important trend. Table 7 shows the figures separated by the age of mothers and fathers. The older age group includes parents who lived during the time when land holdings were large and dominated by men, while the younger age group lived in the time of small holdings controlled by women. Those born in the early period preferred to live with their sons, while those born in the later period preferred to live with their daughters. In both cases the difference is clearly significant for men (by chi-square: $df=1$, $\chi^2=8.118$, $p=.0044$) and for women (by chi-square: $df=1$, $\chi^2=8.056$, $p=.0045$). The extent of the shift indicates that parents preferred to live with those children who controlled the land given them by the parents and the general preference for living with daughters.

Table 7

Parents' Preference for Living in Old Age With Sons or Daughters
Contrasted Across Two Age Periods

Parents	Period Before (age 180-111) After (age 110-50)	With Son	With Dtr
Fathers	Before	14	9
	After	20	57
Mothers	Before	14	10
	After	23	68

Postmarital Residence. After marriage, couples in Caravel almost always lived on the lands of one partner's parents, but not necessarily in their compound. Precisely where they lived at any stage in their lives depended on personalities and on considerations of land ownership. Caravel residents recognized a distinction between immediate and ultimate postmarital residence. Immediately after marriage couples usually lived with the family of the bride regardless of the relative economic circumstances of their families. Couples lived ultimately near the kin of that partner whose land holdings were greatest. The data that follow concern only those couples who were primary spouses to one another, and who were both native to Caravel.⁵ The land holdings referred to are those received by husbands or wives from their parents, either in Caravel or elsewhere. Since earliest settlement, nearly all land in and around Caravel has been transferred only through inheritance, so a comparison of land inherited gives a good indication of the comparative land wealth of spouses.

Table 8

Land Effects on Initial Postmarital Residence of Husbands

Reside with Kin of	Who Owns the Greater Amount of Land		
	Husband	Equal	Wife
Wife	15	11	22
Husband (self)	7	2	1

Table 9

Land Effects on Initial Postmarital Residence of Wives

Reside with Kin of	Who Owns the Greater Amount of Land		
	Husband	Equal	Wife
Husband	3	0	4
Wife (self)	19	12	33

Tables 8 and 9 show initial postmarital residence according to the comparative land holdings of the spouses. From Table 8, although husbands received the greater land holdings, still fifteen couples lived with the wife's kin immediately after marriage and only seven couples lived with kin of the husband. If holdings were equal, then eleven couples lived with kin of the wife and two with kin of the husband. When the wife received a greater holding, 22 couples lived with her kin and only one with the husband's kin. Regardless of assets, newly married couples tended to live with the kin of the bride.

Caravel residents interpret the preference for initial postmarital residence with the wife's kin both practically and in sentimental terms. They believe a woman should stay with her kin for at least a few months after the birth of her first child because of her need for them then. A husband should understand his wife's needs and show active sympathy for her. Previously, the period of residence could also

be a form of bride service, and it can still fit that purpose. The extent of the service depends on the relative circumstances of the bride and groom. In modern times, with more economic opportunities for both men and women, the stay is less amenable for bride service and cannot now be primarily interpreted in that way. Residents rarely interpret it now as bride service, instead citing the ties of the bride to her mother and her need for security. Even in pre-modern times, attitudes were a powerful force alongside the practical factors.

Table 10

Land Effects on Ultimate Postmarital Residence of Husbands

Reside with Kin of	Who Owns the Greater Amount of Land		
	Husband	Equal	Wife
Wife	13	15	28
Husband (self)	30	3	7

Table 11

Land Effects on Ultimate Postmarital Residence of Wives

Reside with Kin of	Who Owns the Greater Amount of Land		
	Husband	Equal	Wife
Husband	4	0	14
Wife (self)	28	18	39

Tables 10 and 11 present comparable data for ultimate postmarital residence, showing the determining force of land holdings.⁶ Of those husbands who had more land than their wives, thirteen couples lived near kin of the wife, while 30 couples lived near kin of the husband (Table 10). Couples eventually go to live near or with the kin of the spouse who has the greater land holdings. The effects are significant for husbands (by chi-square: $df=2$, chi-square=25.359, $p=.000$) and for wives (by chi-square: $df=2$, chi-square=7.298, $p=.0260$).

The implications are, first, that sentiment must influence initial postmarital residence. If comparative land holdings and economic relations are such a strong force in ultimate postmarital residence then the sentimental forces countering them in initial postmarital residence are equally strong. Where husband and wife had equal amounts of land they strongly preferred to live near the kin of the wife. Because they had equal land their decision must be based in attitudes. Second, as with inheritance, the full meaning of these data is only apparent through Caravel history, where kinsmen owned the land in the first period and kinswomen owned it in the second.

FAVORING SONS OR DAUGHTERS

At large levels of land ownership women would share some of the benefits of political co-operation between kinsmen, but not to the same extent as would the

men. If land is the focus of political power then mothers should invest less than fathers in their sons by large bequests of land. Since mothers could, more easily than fathers, become the focus of a group of daughters co-operating to work land they should invest more in daughters than do fathers. At higher land levels they do not prefer sons as much, but they do not prefer daughters either. At lower levels, that they do not prefer daughters indicates the limited scope for co-operation with small parcels of land. Mothers might benefit indirectly through their sons other than politically. If ownership of much land by sons led to greater family security, better jobs for descendants, larger family size, or better marital opportunities for family members, then mothers might still prefer sons when mothers had much land. At Caravel, sons could provide such benefits better than could daughters, so it is not clear why mothers would not have shared in those benefits by giving more land to sons when they had much land to give. Further research on the strategies of women is necessary.

Of course, men do not always partition their holdings through inheritance. The descendants of Klin Fortitude and Loet Fortitude (Case One) and Chuay Bliss (Case Two) kept their holdings intact through several generations, thereby benefitting their kin and benefitting themselves through their kin. Maintaining land parcels intact helps to hold kinsmen together to defend the land from claims by other groups. After the first generation possible claims by other have much less weight, so a large reason for maintaining the land together is soon removed.

Kinsmen have kept large tracts of land intact by providing alternatives for their children who did not directly inherit land, either marriage with a landed spouse or a vocation that did not require land. Until about twenty years ago economic alternatives to direct use of the land were not common. Further, such alternatives often depend on having a large tract of land, so there is a threshold effect. Once below the threshold the benefits of maintaining a large parcel intact are outweighed by the benefits provided to children through individual direct land inheritance.

Probably the strongest force for land partitioning through inheritance was the firmly stated desire among parents in Caravel to provide all their children with equal inheritances; land was the easiest way to do so until recently.

Parents favor daughters in the inheritance of small parcels largely because women have been their primary users. Traditionally, men did the initial heavy work and women did nearly all the rest. Caravel residents commonly gave practical reasons for the traditional division of labor, including the tendency for kinswomen to help one another. Parents said that daughters care for them in old age better than do sons, which is often true. Without other forces to sway their decision, parents are more likely to choose a daughter as their final heir, preferably the final daughter.

While these patterns have adaptive causes rooted in the benefits and costs to families, they also express the general tendency to recognize the value of women and connections between women. Burr (1972, 1974, 1978), described residence patterns as tending to matrilocality. However, her work was done in settled villages in a province bordering Malaysia where the population was largely Muslim. Piker's (1983:90-95) data on postmarital residence in a Central Thai community indicate a bias for the kin of the bride, which he interprets as a manifestation of a general Thai cultural matrifocality. His data show a change from initial to ultimate postmarital residence that weakens, but does not destroy, the bias. The change is more common among families with greater land, indicating that land

allocation plays a part in the decision. Piker argues that land alone does not constrain the decision but that material, personal, social, and economic factors, including the relative resources of the families, are involved. These conclusions completely agree with mine.

Also in the Central area, Kaufman (1960:71) notes the splitting of land through inheritance, but says that it ended through primogeniture for the oldest son. In commenting on Kaufman, Yatsushiro (1966:71) suggests that the proximity to Bangkok causes the switch to primogeniture, although he is not clear why. For his own study of a village in the Northeast Yatsushiro (1966:67-77), says that "the pattern of equal inheritance...is very susceptible to modification as circumstances dictate."

Similar factors lead to different effects in the distinct ethnic regions of Thailand. The interaction of these forces involves feedback relations that complicate analysis and make the need for historical data more acute. Likewise, simply to point out that one or a few of these factors exist in other ethnic areas of Thailand, where social relations are supposedly matrifocal, does not invalidate the analysis given here for the South.

The limited ability for movement over land, the great variety of land types and resources, and the regular availability of new land, are key to the social organization of Southern Thailand. In pre-modern times in regions other than the South, long-distance trading between large ecological regions did occur and new land became available because of demographic fluctuations. In modern times drainage changes have provided new land or made new land amenable to cultivation (Moerman 1968). But in other regions the ease with which armed men moved overland was certainly greater than in the South, while the degree of ecological diversity in a small area and the availability of new lands did not equal that found in the South. Possibly effects related to the size of land holdings (and other wealth) similar to those discussed here have influenced the tendency toward matrifocality in other areas of Thailand.

As an example of the need for context, consider Northern Thailand where men also engaged in trade and travel, but over long distances overland. There the terrain would support larger gatherings of people and large movements of arms. The appropriate defensive response was aggregation into large villages, concentration of power, conscription, and corvée; and villages there were often nucleated and walled. There the other three reasons for an association of kinsmen could not operate and long-distance travel by men might favor matrifocality because the resident women would co-operate.⁷

SEXUAL ALLOCATION

The situation in Southern Thailand calls for adaptive explanation, but none of the currently used materialist paradigms in anthropology presents principles which explain the family actions at Caravel. A paradigm that holds promise is sex allocation theory because it operates on the level of individuals and small kin groups. Modern sex allocation theory (Trivers 1972; Trivers and Willard 1973) grew out of evolutionary theory (Fisher 1930) after Bateman (1948) demonstrated the consequences of the greater variance in reproductive success of males over females. The theory predicts that parents will invest more in sons when resources are abundant, and also suggests that parents will invest more in daughters at low

levels of resources as long as the reproduction of daughters is more consistent than that of sons at those levels. Hrdy (1987, 1988) has given both a technical and a non-technical summary.

The findings at Caravel for inheritance from fathers are consistent with the theory at both upper levels of resources when they prefer sons and at subsistence levels when they prefer daughters. The findings for both parents together also accord with the theory, but the distinctions are not always significant. The situation at Caravel is important to an evaluation of the theory because it shows a switch in investment strategy in a single people over time at different resource levels.

The preference of parents to live with sons in old age in the early times and with daughters in the later times is also consistent with the theory - if residence with children in old age can be considered a continuation or validation of inheritance, or if the presence of the parents amounts to a continuation of investment through such benefits as child care or participation by descendants in the parents' social network (Betzig and Turke 1986). That parents do not subdivide plots of land below the size needed to support an extended family is in line with the emphasis of the theory on the consistency of reproduction by daughters. Plots of greater size would not lead to much greater family success for daughters, while plots of smaller size would jeopardize any reproduction.

CONCLUSIONS

Social organization and gender roles can only be understood historically and adaptively. While it might be possible to identify many of the forces or processes described above, their full effects on social organization must be seen historically, with a consideration for the full setting in which they operate. Ethnologists working in different single neighborhoods, or with different families, or at different times in Caravel history, would come to widely divergent conclusions about gender and social organization that might be valid for those situations but would not be accurate in general.

The conditions at Caravel are characteristic of much of Southern Thailand, where kin groups of separate villages and neighborhoods maintain many links between them that would accentuate most of the patterns described here. A thorough analysis of social organization in Southern Thailand would have to include an account of such links, based on the local forces already described.

Although cultural values and sentiments might have adaptive roots, they also have an autonomous force of their own and must be considered in any account of social organization or gender roles. General Thai matrifocality is indeed operative in the South even if it is modified by local circumstances. Adaptation is best understood through family life and the decisions made by families and individuals in the context of family interactions. Only in that way can the shifts in inheritance and residence be explained and the settlement pattern linked to features of social organization characteristic of the region.

Looking at adaptation through families and individuals requires considering the goals of action and the associated costs and benefits. The goals used here were land, power, and security. Cost and benefit reasoning need not imply crude reductionism. As long as the goals, costs, and benefits are few and intuitively reasonable they can be discussed without requiring that they be formally converted

into a single common factor. Even so, this kind of adaptive reasoning implies such a factor, which has not been clearly identified here and could not be definitely isolated with the available data. Sex allocation theory is a paradigm that fits much of the data presented here and offers a single concept, reproductive success, that unifies the disparate analytical goals, costs, and benefits. While all the actions discussed here cannot be analyzed only in terms of reproductive success, that idea still can serve as a useful device for thinking about them.

No absolute tie holds between resources and men or women, nor do any social patterns simply arise out of society or human nature. Patterns are relative to circumstances and to human choices and interactions. Gender roles are a major component of social organization and make a good avenue for analyzing organization.

NOTES

1. Research was supported by the Wenner-Gren Foundation, by the Rackham School of Graduate Studies of the University of Michigan, the Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies of the University of Michigan, a Fulbright-Hays Graduate Fellowship.

For help in Thailand I thank the faculty of Sociology and Anthropology of Thammasat University in Bangkok and the many people of Caravel, too numerous to mention individually. For help with this paper I thank Rob Burling, John Watanabe, Lee Cronk, Sarah Hrdy, Monique Borgerhoff-Mulder, John Hartung, and many others too numerous to mention individually.

2. By using birth years in the twelve year calendrical cycle I could reliably establish the birth date of all living people and of many of their deceased spouses, parents, and siblings. From that, I could extrapolate to the probable birth date of everyone in Caravel history. Extensive intermarriage made the process much more reliable by requiring concurrent agreement between several lines of extrapolation. The cycle in Southern Thailand differs from that in use in other regions, of which I took account.

3. A direct comparison is possible by summing up the land owned by men and women at various times. Because age at the time of land transfer and the date of death of owners are unknown, adding up land sums by gender can be misleading. Comparing ratios of lands received from fathers or mothers gives a more reliable indication of land ownership.

4. Families with only one child, and with only one son and one daughter, are excluded from comparison. The category of first-born child includes the actual first-born child of either sex if there is at least one other child of the same sex in the sibling set. Also included is the second child, if of the opposite sex, subject to the same restriction. The category of last-born child is defined in the same way, but in reverse order. By using an inclusive definition for this analysis there is no risk of masking a preference for either gender.

5. The analysis is restricted to those couples where the marriage was a first for at least the spouse for whom the statistics are figured, where neither spouse had any concurrent spouses, and the primary recognized residence of the partners was in Caravel. If all couples had identical marital histories then the data for both genders would be mirror images, but, because of divorce or death and occasional later remarriage, in some cases one partner in a couple is tabulated without the other. Except for a few cases not pertinent here, true neolocal residence is not a realistic option.

For numerical analysis criteria are needed to determine which spouse has acquired the greater quantity of land, or if both spouses have equal holdings. A normal curve with its apex on one is divided into three areas of roughly equal size by cuts at 0.69 and 1.44. A spouse has lesser, equal, or greater holdings than their partner depending on whether the ratio of their holdings is below, within, or above those points. Since couples both of whom had no land in Caravel rarely lived there, that condition was not included in the "equal" category and had no effect on the analysis.

6. Although not presented here, the differences between initial and ultimate residence for both men and women, for all conditions of land holding, are significant statistically (by chi-square with $p \leq .01$ for all cases).

7. I thank Chawiwn Prachuabmoh of the Anthropology faculty of Thammasat University in Bangkok for help in clarifying this comparison.

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