THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN INTERGENERATIONAL SOCIAL MOBILITY OF FORMER INDIAN PLANTATION BASED COMMUNITIES: A CASE STUDY OF THE MATANG PLANTATIONS.

By

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ABSTRAK

Tesis ini meneliti kesan sosio budaya, terhadap penstrukturan fabrik sosial komuniti pekerja ladang yang mengalami perubahan status dari segi hartanah, pengurusan dan bahan pengeluaran secara sosiomikro. Fabrik sosial masyarakat ladang terbentuk dalam ruang budaya yang bersifat kapsul yang melalui proses sejarah, ekploitasi, peminggiran dan persisihan.

Objektif utama tesis ini ialah untuk menunjukkan keadaan "budaya estet" yang menjanakan satu 'habitus' ladang yang mengongkong serta mengasingkan pekerja ladang dalam satu sistem yang menyukarkan interaksi luar. Kedua, tesis ini menunjukkan bahawa 'habitus' estet itu sendiri merupakan kekangan yang menyekatkan kebolehan mereka dalam membentuk rangkaian sosial yang baru diluar 'habitus' mereka.

Tesis ini yang berasaskan kajian etnografi mengikuti pengalaman pekerja ladang yang telah meninggalkan ladang dan yang masih menetap di sana untuk menentukkan faktor-faktor yang telah menyumbang kepada penyisihan mereka dari ikatan sosial luar ladang, serta ikatan sosial dan cengkaman budaya yang menarik mereka ke dalam sistem budaya estet sehingga tidak mampu menjalinkan jaringan sosial dan modal sosial.

Tesis ini mendapati bahawa pembentukan mobiliti sosial dalam komuniti ladang India ini adalah sangat terhad jika dibandingkan dengan komuniti lain. Mereka tersekat dari arus pembangunan disebabkan had-had dari segi pendidikan, kemahiran, serta siratan sosial yang tertakluk kepada sosio-kebudayaan komuniti mereka. Usaha untuk keluar dari jaringan ini memerlukan orientasi baru yang membolehkan mereka keluar dari cengkaman '*habitus* estet' dalam budaya mereka. Usaha ini memerlukan tindakan dari kerajaan, badan masyarakat madani dan tidak ketinggalan juga pemilik ladang sendiri.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN INTERGENERATIONAL SOCIAL MOBILITY OF FORMER INDIAN PLANTATION BASED COMMUNITIES: A CASE STUDY OF THE MATANG PLANTATIONS

ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a micro-sociological study of socio-cultural consequences of the changing landscape of the Malaysian plantation that have undergone significant development and restructuring. Changes in terms of recapitalisation and reorientation of the plantation towards capital intensive ventures has directly affected the social fabric of the plantation community. One of the most significant change is the displacement of workers when the plantation is restructured by closure.

The thesis seeks to analyse the extend and the capacity of the displaced workers, to adapt and adjust to the new social environment while burdened by the constraints of the historically embedded encapsulating social and cultural sub-system of the 'estate culture', noted for its culture of poverty habitus.

The main objective is to study the historical processes that contribute to the crystallisation of the 'estate culture' and the structure that encapsulate and at the same time marginalise plantation workers within the constraints of peripheral network of estate habitus.

Based on an ethnographic study of the experiences of former plantation workers, this thesis shows that the combined effect of the long history of exploitation and

peripheralisation subsequent condition of marginalisation has encapsulated the plantation in a convoluted close system, that retard significant social mobility through lack of significant social network and viable social capital.

Even though there are some who choose to leave the plantation, this thesis shows that it does not constitute social mobility. For those who still remain within the plantation vicinity, are relatively incapacitated by limited access to education, skills, training and access to networks and linkages. Attempt to integrate the ex-plantation workers into mainstream society necessitates a social reorientation from the historically crystallised capsule of the 'estate habitus.' This can only be achieved with the help of a safety net provided for by the government, civil society and the plantation owners notwithstanding.

CHAPTER ONE : THE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In recent decades many structural and organisational changes and development in the plantation sector have taken place. Principally there are three mutually interrelated components of the sector that have spurred a micro-level social transformation within the socio-economic and socio-cultural milieu of the plantation community that have escaped both public awareness as well as academic discussion. First, the structural changes, that involved changes in corporate structures as a result of mergers, buy-outs and transfers. Consequently, the changes in the structural landscape spurred changes in the orientation from a purely agricultural production to agro-based industries. The second change of greater and more direct social consequence within the plantation is the shift of rubber to palm oil in most of the plantations in Malaysia, which in itself has spurred changes in the nature of the workers conditions and working environment within the plantations.

Thirdly, is the shift of the orientation of the plantation from the estates to the 'real estate' and has consequently effected of social fabric of the plantations.

In most cases where the plantation is within the corridor of urban growth in the west coast of Peninsula Malaysia the plantations are developed into real estate property. One of the more well known conversion is the Bukit Jelutong Estate in Shah Alam which was a 2,200 acre Guthrie property till it was developed into a

massive urban development project converting the once plantation into a township. Another such project is the 3,200 acre Asiatic Kulai Besar Estate which is being developed into the mega Indahpura project in Kulai, Johor, which now come under the purview of the equally massive Iskandar Southern corridor. Similar changes and perhaps of a more significant scale at the corridor of the PLUS highway in the north eastern region of Perak and Kedah. For example the present Kulim High Tech Park and the Gurun Industrial Park was once rubber and palm oil plantations that was once owned by Guthrie and Sime Darby.

The third change contributes most significantly to processes of social transformation, which in many aspects can be regarded as a social upheaval albeit at a micro-sociological level. This thesis focuses on the human aspect of this "estate to real-estate" transformation based on ethnographic and case study of the workers and ex-workers of Matang Plantations, a plantation in the PLUS corridor in the district of Taiping, North Perak that have undergone structural changes of both the second and third type. The study was spurred by the initial and somewhat general question : whatever happened to those plantation workers that were displaced by these changes?

1.2 Aim and Scope

The main aim of this thesis guided by the initial question is to examine the cultural social consequences of experiences of ex- Plantation Workers of rubber plantations that have undergone the massive structural transformation. The social

fabric of plantations in Malaysia and elsewhere in the world is a colonial legacy. It is not due to historical accident that almost whole of the population composition of the plantation 'workers' (management not included) is made up of Indians, and predominantly South Indian Tamils. Through various systems of indenture, most significant is the Kangany system, Tamil workers were brought to work in plantations in various stages throughout the period of rapid plantation development in the era of colonial Malaya. Unlike other study of the Indians in Malaysian estates, this thesis looks into micro-sociological experiences of families and individuals as they "journey" out through social structural obstacle of being marginalised, and encapsulated for more than one generation in what anthropologist refer to as "close system."

The element of structural change within these estates and the consequential social impact, thereof, is affected by a complex dialectics of cultural, political as well as economic dimensions of relationship that form the base of social capital of the Tamil workers. As they are encapsulated within the dynamics of the shifting structures of the industry itself, the workers form part of the history of the transformation that have taken place and their experiences.

This research will focus on the social consequence the aforesaid changes with specific reference to families who chose to stay on in the plantation vicinity as well as those who have moved out. This study examines the extend of the effect of marginalisation borne of their encapsulated socio-cultural space and their consequent attempt to accumulate new social capital through establishing new networks as a

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result of their being "liberated" from the constraints of the encapsulated plantation socio-cultural space.

This thesis will explore specifically the extend of the human capital available the encapsulated system that is sufficiently suitable for development and enhancing the social capital of plantation workers and their children outside the plantation milieu. In a more specific term, this thesis seeks to understand by ethnographic study the processes and existing structure that contribute to the marginalisation of the ex-plantation workers and the cultural and structural constraint that affect social capital development.

1.3 Research Objectives

The very nature of the plantation industry is that it is self contained and socially and culturally encapsulating, thus limiting the worker's social, cultural as well as political sphere (Brannen, 1942, Baak, 1999). Historically, the worker within a socio-economic system that depend solely on the management, not only for food and lodging but also for the education of his children and medical needs. This is because the plantations are isolated in location, far away from towns and do not have the basic benefits that urban dwellers enjoy such as piped water, electricity and infrastructure. As such the quality of life of the worker is by design limited within the confines of the social amenities and facilities provided by the management. The confinement includes even aspect and level of education received and more so the extend of the social and political network.

The nature of plantation's being such that the entire sphere of workers livelihood constraint within or per-defined social fabric renders its own socio-cultural characteristics in a sort of 'convolution' sub-culture peculiar to the plantation (Sandhu, 1969, Arasaratnam, 1970). Geertz (1969) describes this process as cultural 'involution' whereby changes do take place but does not affect any positive change in the social organization and the cultural fabric of the system. This social-cultural condition which in essence describes "estate mentality" or "estate culture" akin to other encapsulated social sub-system referred to by earlier anthropological studies of 'culture of poverty' (Lewis, 1959, 1966); and sociological studies of 'street-corner society.'(Whyte, 1943).

Encapsulation is a condition that in Foucault term, has a "life-force" and it is also a process that generates a specific socio-cultural milieu, within the confining social sanctum or in Bordieu's term, 'habitus'. The process itself marginalises the member from the social extend of the outside world and 'in-breed' into subsystem of convoluted sub-culture peculiar to the plantation. Although the concept of encapsulation is normally used in a macro-structural term, this thesis renders the concept in very micro-sociological terms to refer to a process of 'convolution' that draw the workers into the plantation sub-culture and at the same time restricts their accessibility to other cultural elements that draws from other social network platform. Folk Hinduism, and the tacit infusion of caste structures, poverty and organised isolation encapsulate plantation 'society' within the vicious circle of the culture of poverty that constraint social mobility as well as the mindset of those within it. Thus, the research focuses on the micro level process at the inter personal level that

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lend towards some mark of the 'capsule being broken' so as to speak. This entails locating emerging platforms of relationships and social ties and networks as well as the effectiveness of the 'new link', if any, that the people have mustered in forging new social capital given the cultural, social and structural constraints that they have endured.

The search for signs of the 'break in the capsule', through analysis of micro level interaction draws two social-anthropological issues. Firstly, the search for patterns of social network and social support that have emerged as a result of the 'forced' change that have taken place in the last decades within the plantation as well as that available outside the plantation. Secondly, the extend to which change in the plantation management and orientation have affected the human aspect of the plantation and have generated a kind of micro revolution that transforms the social platform of social interaction.

The issue in question is in fact born out of attempt to answer the initial question and to forward a systematic explanation of the involution that have taken roots within the plantation milieu. In a more specific term, this thesis seeks to pursue by means of ethnographic study, the following objectives.

1) The historical processes that contribute to the crystallisation of the 'estate culture' and the structure that encapsulate and at the same time marginalise plantation workers within the constraints of peripheral network of estate habitus.

2) The extend and the capacity of the "ex-plantation" workers to draw away from the constraints of the historically embedded encapsulating social and cultural sub-system, and at the same time forge a new social network away from the 'margin' of culture poverty.

1.4 Research Area

Area of study is primarily around groups of individuals and families from Matang plantation specifically people who have worked in Matang and those who have left Matang and are currently residing in Simpang (in the vicinity of Matang), as well as those from the plantation that have left for more urban areas such as Penang and Kuala Lumpur.

Matang Plantation was established during the British occupation of Malaya. The original size of the Matang Plantation was 250 acres. At the height of its operation there was a record number of 200 workers. It also survived the Japanese occupation. After the independence, due to much uncertainty, the plantation was sold to a broker. The broker sold the land in parcels to local buyers.

The plantation workers have lost their homes and livelihood. Among the workers rose a few who would stand up against the management and to procure housing for

the workers. These few were then blacklisted for new jobs when the new management took over.

The Lutheran church wanting to gather its members in one locality procured around 82 acres of land in Matang. A small plot of land was given free of charge to the church to build its building. The church still stands. The land was to be divide into 10 acre plots for 8 families to work on. The families had to pay RM350.00 for the house and land on instalment basis. When the Swedish Missionaries left Malaysia, the church being in need of funds sold off 50 acres of the land leaving each family around 3 acres each. Due to mismanagement and poorly kept records, the families have yet to receive their grants for their home and land.

In conclusion the study of the Indian families in Matang would be the basis of this research.

1.5 Methodology

This study focuses on a group of individuals of current and former plantation workers of Indian origin. They also form the majority of plantation workers and been so since the opening up of plantation around the country from the colonial era.

This is a micro-sociological study through ethnographic research on lives of selected individuals that have undergone the process of transformation of the plantation. The method of data extraction for the purpose of this study is obtained from three sources.

The primary data is collected by following a select group of people and monitoring their interaction patterns. Secondly, an open-ended interview was conducted to specifically to trace their memories and past experiences in the plantation. A participant observation study was conducted in the manner of ethnographic research undertaken by residing with them and following them through their interactions.

A systematic tracer study approach was also undertaken through analysis of life-history of selected individuals and families. The study is to base the data on case studies include detail narratives and experiences of specific individuals. Through this study we would be able to see the processes involved from history in the stagnation of social capital. The effects encapsulation and marginalisation is created through a systematic historical process of migration and isolation.

The tracer study of the selected individuals deemed an exception to the rule was also conducted to explore where and what they did right to overcome their circumstances. In doing so, this research seeks to identify the particular situation whereby the social capital is achieved to the level that is acceptable or higher than the norm dictated by social economic status.

This research will follow and analyse the development of 12 families. 6 of which are still residing in the Matang plantation vicinity and 6 of which that have already moved out of the plantation. The study will be a comparative study to trace the journey of the first generation and the second generation. The first generation include those who came here from India and those born in the plantation. The second generation include the children of these first generation samples.

In general, this research adopts an ethnographical anthropological approach whereby data obtained are largely through observation. As it is anthropological in nature this research will be primarily based on qualitative data through conversations and observations. Although some form of quantitative data is utilised, it will not be of primary significance.

Besides this secondary data is needed to support this study. Past studies from other scholars will be utilised in the explanation of plantation history to the creation of the estate culture. The utilisation of past data will support the development of the study which describes history as the agent of social encapsulation.

1.6 Literature Review

There has been many works of literature written in the study of plantations in Malaysia and around the world. Various scholars have concentrated on different aspects of the plantation sector such as the wages, social conditions, health, education and so forth. With regard to this thesis, works of some of these scholars

have been taken into consideration for purposes of forming a parallel as well as creating a differential within the context.

In the area of historical studies, Sandhu Kernial Singh has given us a detail study into the migration and resettlement patterns of the Indian Diaspora particularly to the then Malaya. Scholars often quote Sandhu's work in relation to the historical aspects of the Indian migration. He gives a comprehensive account into the reasons for migration, the various waves of migration, the systems of migration adopted and the resettlement of the migrants in the country of choice. This thesis also adopts Sandhu's works to give a general idea of the historical migration systems and resettlements of South Indian migrant labourers to Malaya. This thesis however, takes a step further to invocate that the effect of the migration and resettlement of south Indian migrants has resulted in the creation of the plantation type. This phenomenon has in affect moulded the social and economic situation of the rural Indians. Jain (1970) and Lakshan Dias (2000) have also seen the parallel in the Sri Lankan landscape.

The Plantation has therefore played an important part in the creation of the South Indian community in Malaysia. The plantation being through geographical isolation and social neglect has produced a marginalised group of people. This was given attention by Colletta (1975) who referred to the plantation community namely the Indians as forgotten people. Selvakumaran (1994) also studied into the marginalisation of the plantation workers in Malaysia. In this thesis, emphasis would also be given to the aspect of marginalisation as seen through a historical process.

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Education being a key indicator of social distinction is also discussed in this thesis. With much reference given to the works of Ponniah (1970), Schiffman (1998). They contend that children from the plantation schools possess low levels of aspiration and motivation, low self esteem and feeling of frustration in the face of environmental insults. They focus on the Tamil language and education has found that the process of urbanisation has complicated the education dictates of the rural and urban Indians. Rural Indians who were displaced to the cities congregate to squatter settlements and are unable to cope with the urbanisation process. The issue of low marketable skills is a direct result of low education competency among plantation workers. The education available to these plantation based communities has been the bare minimal.

The Murad Report (1973) states that although the Razak Report (1956) had sought to address the issue of equal opportunity Malaysians through education reforms, the fact remained that rural children especially those from the plantation environment regardless of race have yet to receive the maximum benefit from such reforms. They are still under-achievers, drop outs, and acquire jobs of lower socio-economic status. For whatever reason these communities still choose Tamil medium, the general overall economic and cultural destitution of these groups means that Tamil medium prepares them for nothing but the substandard conditions they have always had—they work at part-time jobs, in factories at the lowest levels, as messengers and sweepers, and have the highest rate of single parent families, alcoholism, crime, prostitution and all the social evils of the modern urban

underclass. Thompson (1955) found that there were few channels of advancement in Malaysia by which Indian labourers could rise into the middle class. Susan Oorjitham (1987) also finds Indians are largely manual workers in the government and industrial sectors. They are marred by low income, lack of occupational mobility and basic amenities such as housing.

This study also contends that the extend of socio-economic mobility is greatly affected by the type of education received and the level of education received and also the lack in social and occupational skills.

Susan Oorjitham's (1987) research studies the socio-economic development of urban Indian workers. She finds that over the past years, the participation of Indians in the urban sector has increased considerably, particularly in the steady growth of industrialisation. Indians according to Susan are largely manual workers in the government and industrial sectors. Marred by socio-economic problems such as low income, lack of occupational mobility and other basic amenities linked to health and housing conditions. Historically, there were a few waves of Indian migration . the first wave were the traders who came before the Europeans. The second wave were the people brought in to Malaya by the British for urban development. They were brought in to do menial labour such as construction, road building, railway workers, sanitation workers and others. The third wave were the plantation workers. All these workers were given accommodation but in the event of retirement, retrenchment or reformation of land, they had to leave their homes. The basic need was to find cheap shelter and thus the formation of slums. Their low level of

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education and lack of skill further handicapped them in their ability to obtain better employment.

Lee Hock Guan's (2000) paper entitled *"Ethnic Relations in Peninsula Malaysia: The Cultural and Economic Dimensions"* looks at the changing ethnic relations in Peninsula Malaysia in terms of interaction between the state's policies to advance Malay cultural dominance and reduce ethnic economic inequality and the aspirations and actions of the Chinese community. The State of ethnic relations partly will depend on whether the majority of the ethnic members, in particular the ethnic elites, are pursuing separatist or amalgamated strategies and goals, and on whether the rival ethnic groups stand in positions of marked inequality or near equality to each other. Since the 1969 ethnic riots, rival ethnic communities have pursued mainly amalgamative strategies and goals, and in part because the economic inequality gap has narrowed between the Malays and non-Malays. However, the expanding pace of Islam in the Malay personal and collective, identity and the relative success in making social classes more multiethnic have added additional complexities to the future of ethnic relations. Lee also utilises the concept of relative deprivation. Generally, relative deprivation refers to the gap between what people have and what they believe they deserve, or have the right, to have. He concludes that ethnic relations in Malaysia have been relatively congenial precisely because extremism and intolerance, factors that can undermine the stability of society, have been soundly contained in Malaysian society. However, he warns that when ethnic members are besieged by a sudden wave of anxieties and frustrations, they could become susceptible to extremists' ranting (Lee Hock Guan, 2000).

Muzaffar Desmond Tate (2008) stated that Indian Malaysians are deeply concerned about the present status and future prospects of their community. There is a general feeling that the community as a whole is losing ground in the country economically, socially and politically, and that it is becoming steadily marginalised. The community remains divided, as it has always been, between the small, relatively affluent middle class and the proletariat that account for a greater number of Indians in the country. Their social and cultural gulf within the Indian ethnic groups (Mainly South Indians and North Indians) is as prominent as ever. Similarly, the problems of endemic hardcore poverty endured by plantation labourers in the 1950s still existed at the end of the century, aggravated by the unceasing process of fragmentation and sale of estates by large commercial enterprises that differed only in ownership but not in name or attitudes.

Thus, in terms of composition, structure and organization, as well as in the nature of their problems, little appears to have changed for the Indian Malaysian community despite the significant economic, social and political shifts since independence. The poverty syndrome of the estates is still present, but it is generally on the wane as the younger folk leave the estates for the cities and the elders live out their twilight years, impervious to the changes taking place around them. The problem of the rural areas, reflected in the steady increase in gangsterism, drug addiction and other forms of crime has transmuted itself to the squatter areas and slums of the towns where it festers and grows with formidable virulence. There are signs that these severe social ills can ever be overcome for the present Indian or any single ethnic group within the framework of the present

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political set-up in Malaysia. It is becoming increasingly obvious that these social problems can only be overcome by a concerted national effort that is not based on race. The Indian community's socio-economic problems can never be overcome within the present communal mould of Malaysian politics.

Another recent study was conducted by Jayanath Appadurai and G. A. David Dass (2008) gives new insight into the Indian dilemma. They cite that the descendants of the 'labour migrant class' have struggled to adapt, adjust and integrate into colonial and independent Malaysia. Their forefathers lived an almost isolated existence in the largely plantation sector and had very little opportunity to interact, develop and grow with their fellow citizens. Their children and grandchildren, however have been forced by economic transformation and circumstances to migrate to urban areas. A substantial majority have found refuge in squatter settlements, flats and tenements and low cost homes. They live on the periphery of modern Malaysia. They take up the underclass jobs in industries and services of the production economy. These Indians lack the education, knowledge and skills to survive and better their lot. The high rate of socially dysfunctional behaviour such as crime, school drop-out and substance abuse is the manifestation of their failures.

The Indians together with other minorities do not have the resources of dealing with their problems or to provide resources or opportunities to help members of their respectful communities. Indians have to be equipped with knowledge, skills and psycho-social fortitude to believe in themselves in order to embrace and integrate the 21st century. It is the onus of all parties (government, political and

NGO's) to help remove the yoke of 'indentured labour mentality' and liberate them to be truly free, equal and valued citizens of 21st century Malaysia.

1.7 Conceptual Construct

The main issues covered within the theme of the thesis operates on three interlocking concepts, namely encapsulation, marginalisation and the development of social capital among ex-plantation workers. Cultural or ethnic factors not withstanding, namely that the subject of the study are entirely Indians, the research however was geared toward the understanding the historical structure and processes present within the plantation social system that encapsulates the people within it and retard intergenerational economic mobility and social development of Indian plantation workers. Put within a more systematic framework, the historical processes embedded within the plantation habitus that marginalise the people within it from opportunity and freedom to engage in other relationships. Thus, in spite of economic and structural transformation that has occurred within the plantation sector in the lives and livelihood of the plantation based community, as well as those that have left the community, have not lend any significant addition or accumulation of social capital.

Conceptually, the link between encapsulation and marginalisation as experienced by the Indian plantation community and the lack of social capital amongst plantation workers arose from the nature of closed and localised work-based routine regiments that systematically undermine skill, retard education and restrict awareness and

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development of social cultural and human assets in the accumulation of social capital needed to gain social mobility in the wider society. This embedded yet dynamic structure of encapsulation borne out of historical indentured labour and semi-slavery will be dealt with in Chapter Two.

Subsequently, marginalisation in the areas of finance, education, employment and other basic amenities that have hampered the attempts of the plantation worker to develop social capital will be dealt with in Chapter Three.

Finally, the extend of social capital, especially in the form of social networks that have enhanced as well as impaired the ability of the plantation worker to obtain social mobility will be the final governing conceptual that draws into the nature of social involution that re-encapsulated them into a vicious cycle of encapsulation and under development. This process of vicious cycle of development is discussed and described thoroughly by Amin and Linden (1997). Similar concept is rendered within the ethnographical narratives of 'life-force' of actual experiences of social capitalisation will be presented in Chapter Four.

Robert Putnam (2000) in his writing of *Bowling Alone* refers to the collective value of all 'social networks' and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do anything for each other as social capital. Nan ling conceptualizes social capital as the "investment in social relations with expected returns in the marketplace." Francis Fukuyama (1995) states that "Social capital can be defined as the existence of a certain set of informal values or norms shared among members of a group

that permit cooperation among them." Carlos Garcia Timon (2006) describes that the structural dimensions of social capital relate to an individual ability to make weak and strong ties to others within a system. Granovetter (1973) argued that weak ties or dyadic ties had macro implications on small scale interactions. Arguably, the degree of overlap of two individuals' friendship networks varies directly with the strength of their tie to one another. He explores the impact of this principle on diffusion of influence and information, mobility opportunity, and community organization. He emphasises the cohesive power of weak ties rather than strong ties. Emphasis on weak ties lends itself to discussion of relations between groups and the analysis of segments of social structures not easily defined in terms of primary groups. Robert Putnam speaks of two main components of the concept being the bonding social capital and the bridging social capital. The bonding social capital refers to the value assigned to social networks between homogeneous groups of people while the bridging social capital refers to social networks between heterogeneous groups. While bonding social capital groups would include criminal gangs, bridging social capital groups would consist of choirs and clubs.

Narayan (1997) highlights that in defining social capital there seems to be a broader agreement in the literature about what social capital does, however there is a general consensus that social capital facilitates mutually beneficial collective action. Rose (1999) found that individuals form networks that are informal and diffuse social cooperation to compensate for the failures of the formal organisation in a social capital study in Russia. Meaning that when the formal structures fail to help

an individual, he will have no alternative but find other structures to promote himself.

Social capital can be of positive or negative nature. Positive social capital are those formal structures designed for the wellbeing of the society as a whole such as governmental organisations and political organisations (Olson, 1982). It is sometimes argued that social capital differs to other forms of capital because it leads to bad results such as hate groups or inbred bureaucracies. This is because group solidarity in human communities is often purchased at the price of hostility towards out-group members. There appears to be a natural human proclivity for dividing the world into friends and enemies that is the basis of all politics (Fukuyama, 1995).

Economist Glenn Loury (1977) has used the term " Social Capital" to capture the fundamental fact that racial segregation, coupled with socially inherited differences in community networks and norms, means that individually targeted "equal opportunity" policies may not eliminate racial inequality, even in the long run. Research suggests that the life chances of today's generation depend not only on their parents' social resources, but also on the social resources of their parents' ethnic group. Even workplace integration and upward mobility by successful members of minority groups cannot overcome these persistent effects of inequalities in social capital. Cooperation among members of a group creates habits and attitudes towards serving the greater good that carry over to members' interactions with non-members (Putman, 1993).

Sabel (1994) argues that the creation of social capital is instituted by actors committing themselves to ongoing negotiations based on a shared understanding of common goals, while Hechter (1987) suggests a multistage process for building group solidarity. He implies that in a group, members must devise rules and procedures, which get institutionalised over time. Internalising rules and procedures, members moderate their behaviour so that these correspond to the expectations others have. This build up of social capital, of formal rules and mutual expectations, facilitates extending group activities into previously unexplored areas. It is generally contended that participation into social networks rarely happen spontaneously, rather it involves a certain social preparation. Social preparation is necessary to facilitate a systematic pattern of action-reflection-action (Albee and Boyd, 1997).

Refinements of the concepts of social capital come from various fields notably philosophy (e.g. Bourdieu, 1986), social and economic historians (Fukuyama, 1999) and social geographers (Evers, 1998). Pierre Bourdieu (1986) for example distinguishes between three forms of capital being economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. Social capital according to him, is defined as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition."

Bourdieu (1990, 1977) describes cultural capital as an investment on the part of the dominant class in reproducing a set of symbols and meanings, which are misrecognised and internalised by the dominant class as their own. The investment according to this theory, is in the pedagogic actions of the reproduction process,

such as education, the purpose of which is to indoctrinate the masses to internalise the values of these symbols and meanings. Cultural capital theory also acknowledges that the masses (the dominant class) can invest and acquire these symbols and meanings, even if they misrecognise them as their own. The inference is that while cultural capital is mostly captured by the dominant class through inter-generational transmissions, even the masses (or at least some of them) may generate returns from such investment and acquisition. This rendition of capital can trace its lineage to Marx. The social relations described by Marx are also assumed; there is a class, capitalists, who control the means of production- the process of pedagogic action or the educational institutions (in the homes, in the school, etc.) in the production (schooling) process, labourers (students or children) invest in the educational process and internalise the dominant class culture. Acquisition of this culture permits or licenses the labourer to enter the labour market, earn payments and sustain expenditures for their lives. The capitalists, or the dominant class, gain cultural capital which supplement their economic capital and accumulative capital of both types in the circulation of the commodities (educated mass) and the domination of the means of production (education institutions). However, Bourdieu does not assume a perfect correspondence between the accumulation of economic capital and cultural capital. The reason being that some economic capitalists do not possess cultural capital while some cultural capitalists are not economically endowed. This less than perfect correspondence would seem to open the possible path for some of the labourers, using their "cultural habitus" to gain a foothold in the dominant class.

1.7.1 Encapsulating Network

The expansion of social network is the basic indicator of social mobility which underline the notion of accumulation of social capital. This form the fundamental platform for conceptual framework of this thesis. Principally, the social structure of plantation communities in Malaysia as a production of a 'close-circuit' structure that renders all networks within the "plantation cultural loci" with its own convoluted dynamics which restrict social network well within the confine of its own platform. This notion of confinement or in anthropological term 'social encapsulation' (Bailey, 1969) that produced a condition that Bourdieu (1999) refers to as 'cultural habitus.' Bourdieu's (1990) notion of habitus refers to socially acquired embodied systems of durable dispositions, tendencies and inclinations, which he terms as 'the embodied history of being in social life.' In essence he defines habitus as the generative principle of responses more or less adapted to the demands of a certain field, is the product of individual history, but also, through the formative experiences of the earliest infancy, of the whole collective history of family and class. It is a process of acculturation into certain social groups such as social class, a particular gender, our family, our peer group or even our nationality. Hitherto, habitus is a system of dispositions acquired through a relationship to a certain "field", "agents merely need to let themselves follow their own social 'nature,' that is, what history has made of them, to be as it were, 'naturally' adjusted to the historical world they are up against..." (Bourdieu, 1990: 90). He calls this an ontological complicity between embodies history in the habitus and objectified history in institutional roles (Scahill, 1993:5).

While there are numerous studies and conceptual formulation of notions of social capital accumulation and its direct link to extend and density of social network, there is a clear lack of study of the structures that underline the dynamics of that linked the two i.e. social capital and network. Specifically, the measure of social capital refer to 'social capital accumulation' of social and cultural capital garnered through 'accumulation' of 'network' linkages that could enhance human capacity. Framed in somewhat roundabout way, the 'accumulation' of social capital (through establishment of viable network) can be conceptually described as social mobility. The concept of social mobility, used in this differs somewhat from the normal use of the concept which refers to the movement of an individual or category from one stratum to another or to movement within a given social stratum. More commonly it is known as movement of an individual between social classes.

The dynamics of mobility are quite complicated. Various studies done by Jencks (1979) and Duncan & Featherman (1972) found that a host of factors influence the degree to which an individual may experience social mobility such as family background, cognitive and intellectual abilities, educational attainment, and personal characteristics. Blau and Duncan (1967) have found that men who remained in their hometowns throughout their lifetimes have predominantly lower-status positions in contrast to those who relocate in their teens. The best route to upward mobility is education and occupation, in that order. Higher rates of social mobility, especially for those social categories, can cause major social disorganisation and social changes that require extensive personal and social adjustments. It could have a major impact and effect on life chances and lifestyles.