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AND SOCIAL SCIENCE:**

Co-Production of Knowledge
Linking Academic and Non-Academic Actors

12 - 13 July 2019

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**Fostering Multi-Lateral Knowledge Networks of Transdisciplinary Studies to Tackle
Global Challenges (KNOTS Project) Funded by European Commission**

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Introduction

Transdisciplinary studies are vital in understanding this fast-changing world. While many disciplines have their own methodology to guide academics to understand or solve certain problems, they did not explore other possible methodologies that could help them understand those same issues better. The issues the world encounter today are complex, multi-layered, and mostly impossible or outdated to address them unidirectionally. They are complex because one issue at a certain area could be the issue of the world, as it may have affected people across borders and nationalities. They are multi-layered because it could involve actors from various institutions of the society, be it the people, the national government, or international actors. Development issues, for example, can be address as political issue, environmental issue, or anthropology issue. Having neglect to apply or include one of the exemplified methodologies would already weakens or lessen the solidity of the work.

Being inter-discipline alone does not entirely make us understand or get to the base of the issues better. Instead, what could make transdisciplinary more effective is for academics to be hands-on. Academics employ methodologies to try to tackle or better understand the issues, but only by collaborating with non-academic actors can they be more effective in solving or learn more effectively about the issues, be it the people, the government, or other imaginable, unlabeled, uncategorized actors. The work of the academics, in the end, should be serving the people, not distanced from them.

In hope to create and explore the combinations of trans-methodologies to be use in researches from the connection between academic and non-academic actors, KNOTS project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, in collaboration with The Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy in International Development Studies (MAIDS-GRID Program) , and Center for Social Development Studies (CSDS) , hosted this "Transdisciplinary Studies and Social Science: Co-Production of Knowledge Linking Academic and Non-academic Actors" forum as a channel to pool together, academic and non-academic actors across disciplines to share their work that could introduce new trends or raise new issues on development studies. The forum is expected to be the exploration of the possibilities to employ various methods to be used in studying development studies.

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Media and Freedom of Expression in Contemporary Bangladesh

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Abstract

Freedom of expression is universally recognized as one of the core tenets of human rights grounded both in history and contemporary experiences around the world. Barriers to attaining freedom of expression in media in the context of a developing country like Bangladesh, which also happens to be a rising democracy, need greater attention for further research. From the empirical study of victims' accounts, this paper would explore the freedom of expression in the realm of media and how a legitimate instrument called Digital Security Act 2018 is constraining the freedom of expression. This research aims to identify the impact of Digital Security Act 2018 on freedom of expression in media, the journalist, and activists in particular by examining the existing laws like constitutional acts, penal code and other national and international standards along with the analytical textual study of these instruments, and interviews of key informants as the case study. The research concluded that through misuse and arbitrary use of law, the current regime is consolidating power to rule by law. In addition, the Digital Security Act 2018 has created a culture of fear which has inevitably brought about self-censorship among journalists, activists and people. Furthermore, the research shows that the gaps in existing laws and their adverse impacts on freedom of expression results in a deficit of democracy in a country where laws are used as tools of repression.

Keyword: Civil Society; Democracy; Digital Security Act; Human Rights; Rule of Law

1. Introduction

“Freedom of expression is the basis of human rights, the source of humanity and the mother of truth. To block freedom of speech is to trample on human rights, to strangle humanity and to suppress the truth.”¹

Liu Xiaobo (Conan, 2010)

Freedom of expression (FOE) is a must for a thriving, free, and just society which is grounded both in history and contemporary experiences around the world. According to the Article 19 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), “Freedom of expression is the right of every individual to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers” (Nation, 1948). It signifies that freedom of expression is applicable worldwide, and that human beings shall have the right to FOE and that nothing can create barriers to this with the exception of a few cases which are according to law. But practicing this concept in our daily lives become problematic while people’s expression are forcefully restricted through state regulations (Habiba et al., 2017).

Although technology can be both a catalyst and enabler and in the stated objective of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act 2006 which is the previous version of Digital Security Act (DSA) 2018, it was told that the act would provide legal recognition and secure the ICT and it’s use in Bangladesh. It has been observed that the act was designed to stifle the legitimate exercise of public criticism and to subject various persons including journalists, bloggers, and human rights defenders to arbitrary detention (Chu, 2001). The act authorizes police to arrest without a warrant when someone is charged for committing offenses using digital means. Alongside social media users, a number of journalists have been arrested by police under the section 57 of the ICT Act 2006. Between 2012 and June 2017 a total number of 1,417 cases on cybercrime charges were filed with police, and during that period only 179 of them have been dismissed so far (Rabbi, 2018). The act is also incompatible with article 39 of the constitution of Bangladesh (Bangladesh, 1972), article 19 of UDHR² and article 19 of International Covenant on

¹From the translation of a “final statement” which Liu Xiaobo wrote two days before his 11 years of incarceration began in December 2009? Liu is the most famous dissident of China, a pro-democracy campaigner who won the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his long and non-violent struggle for human rights.

² According to article 19 of UDHR, “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)³ which Bangladesh has ratified in the year 2000. Finally, after much criticism from different quarters at the national and international level, the government decided to annul the ICT Act 2006 and introduced the Digital Security Act (DSA) 2018 which has been passed by the parliament on 19th September, 2018. The new act seems to be nothing but the modified version of the section 57 of the ICT Act 2006 and still helps the government to suppress dissidents.

This paper would attempt to discuss the impact of DSA 2018 on democracy and human rights situation in contemporary Bangladesh. After that, the paper would discuss research justification, methods, and the law itself. Finally, the paper concludes with the salient findings of this research study.

2. Justification of the Research

Scholarships on the issue of 'freedom of media and press' in Bangladesh lack circumstantial demonstrative analysis on DSA 2018 and other relevant laws and regulation. There was no similar or enough research undertaken to evaluate the actual detrimental effect caused by the exercise (both use and abuse) of the law by the government and other echelons of the society which ultimately deter the rule of law and dent the democracy heavily. Mainly the journalists, human rights defenders, and civil society members are the victims of the Act. Data revealing the voice of the human rights defenders in Bangladesh are scarce. Therefore, two main reasons make this research necessary; 1) a general lack of reliable analysis on the level of implementation success in Bangladesh 2) the absence of data which discloses the voice of the human rights defenders in the media and among the writers, bloggers, and journalists who are the victims of the Act.

3. Research Scope

The research focuses on the issues in the arena of media, that includes electronic, print and social media which have become a direct threat to civil liberty and FOE in Bangladesh when the government amended ICT Act 2006 in the year 2013 and subsequently introduced the draft of DSA 2018 which poses a serious challenge to free expression in media. This research has examined the challenges and other discriminatory factors that cause serious violation of the FOE in Bangladesh since the year 2013. Although the DSA 2018 was passed in the parliament of Bangladesh in 2018 but its legacy started in the year 2006 with ICT ACT 2006 and for the purpose of this research, everything will be named as DSA 2018. The research has analyzed the particular sections of the

³ According to article 19 of ICCPR, "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers".

DSA 2018 which are not complying with the national constitution and international standard. Particularly, it investigates the challenges arising from the misuse or abuse of the law by ordinary people who are politically biased and a group of law enforcement members who are both corrupt, politically biased to the ruling regime, and unskilled to handle the law itself. Thus, the following figure shows the links of challenges in Bangladesh which has escalated from the incorporation of this law and ultimately causes serious violation of fundamental human rights.

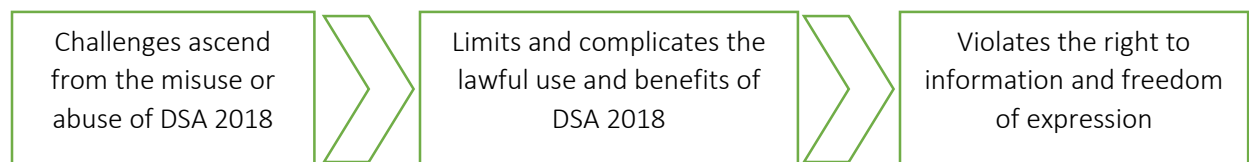


Figure 1: Violation of Freedom of Expression

4. Research Objectives

The proposed study aims at taking rights analysis in understanding the dynamics of the state's control over FOE. The main objective of the study is to analyze the DSA 2018 and how much effective role it plays to secure the use of ICT in public and private spheres. The research also focusses to examine the DSA 2018 and how it is constraining the FOE in media through misuse and abuse of the law.

5. Methods

Qualitative research was conducted to collect both primary and secondary data where the semi-structured in-depth interview was used as its tool for primary data collection. To achieve the objectives and purposes, this research followed two main directions. First, a close and critical analysis of the textual study, which encompasses the examination of all relevant legal and policy documents, newspaper articles, online and publicly available documents, reports, and any other relevant information. This phase ensures a comprehensive understanding of the legal framework.

In the second slant, through in-depth interviews of key informants that includes the victims of the act, legal experts, eminent civil society actors, media professionals, and human rights defenders the research focused on the application and role of the act in encroaching peoples' FOE in media. Selection of interviewees were based on their expertise and understanding of the effects resulting from the application of the Act and also the abuse of the Act by individual citizen and law enforcement agencies. Accordingly, among the victims, only a few who are very influential were contacted at first then through snowballing method, the researcher identified journalists, media

professionals, and bloggers who are either already charged with cases or a victim of the Act. The table (Table 1) below demonstrates the schedule of this project at a glance where the researcher's mapping of the project is reflected.

Ser	Task	Description	Time
01	Thesis proposal preparation and confirmation	From different discipline of interests 'freedom of expression in Bangladesh has been chosen after discussing with advisor and co-advisor.	June 2018 - April 2019
02	Literature Review	Reviewing different literatures and analyze the concept from those literatures.	June 2018 - June 2019
03	Preparation and confirmation of questionnaire	Dividing the samples in four professional groups, the questionnaire was prepared to answer the research objective.	Jan 2019 - April 2019.
04	Ethical Permission and other Institutional formalities	Applying to Institutional Review Board (IRB) for necessary permission and obtaining ethics workshop certification and finally approval of different forms etc.	March 2019 - April 2019
05	Field study and primary data collection	Interviewing different respondents either on line or face to face.	April 2019 - May 2019
06	Data coding, transcribing and analyzing raw data.	Detail analysis of all transcripts and coding of data to get the findings of the research. Checking for any incoherence on research questions and detail analysis of every interviews to find the result.	June 2019 - Continued

Table 1: Schedule of the Research

6. Research Framework

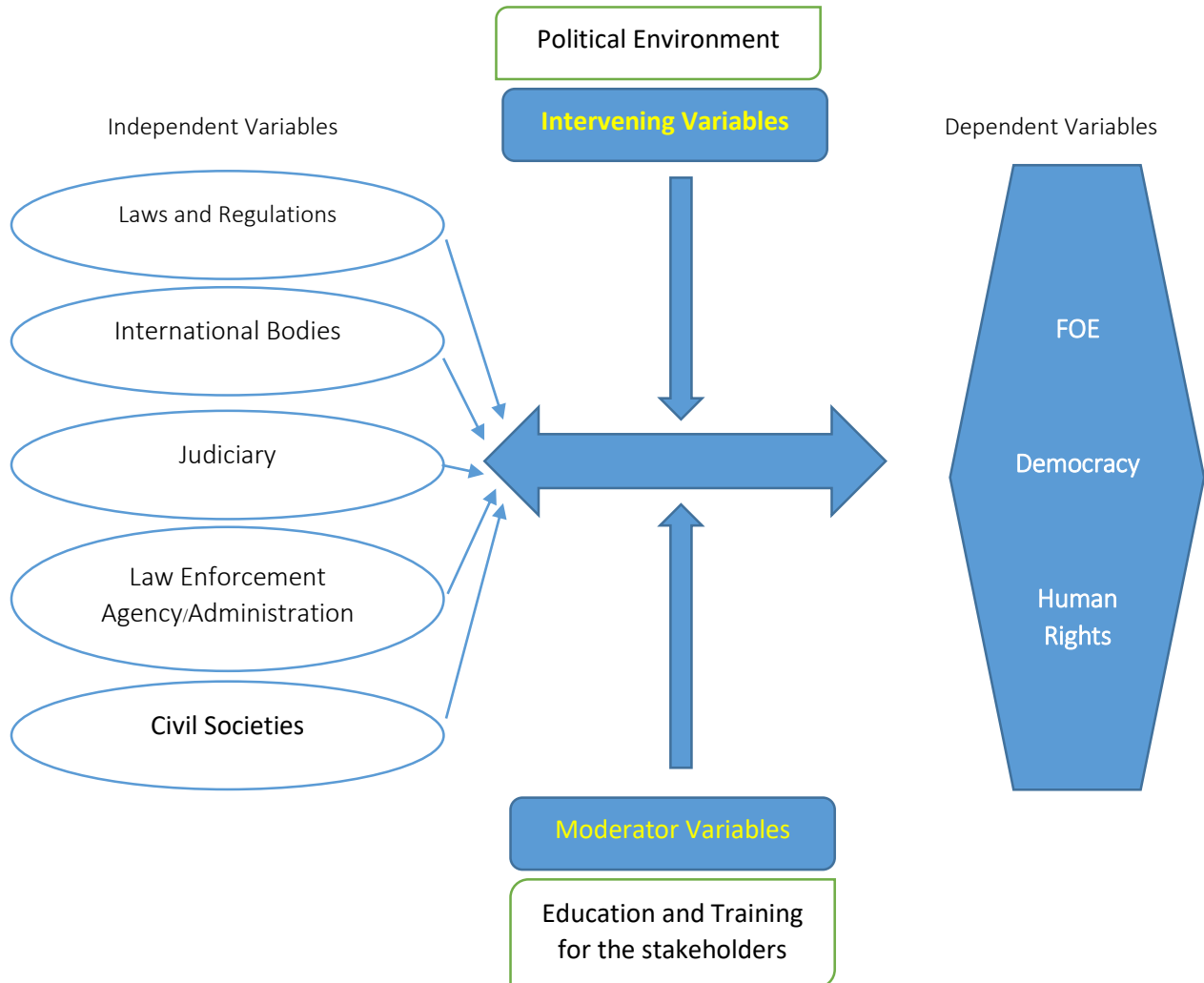


Figure 2: Research Framework

The subject research aimed to explore the utility of the DSA 2018 and its role to secure the use of ICT among the people and assess the situation of FOE in Bangladesh since the amendment of the previous 'ICT Act 2006' in the year 2013. In the figure 2 above, it is shown that the researcher, after considering the overall situation and analyzing the scholarships available in this field, has decided to make laws and regulations, international right bodies (e.g. UN, AI, HRW), Judiciary and administration concerning legal system, and the most significantly civil society actors as 'independent variables' which has both direct and indirect effect to establish a free and just society. After that, FOE, Democracy, and Human Rights have become a dependent variable which

is also influenced by intervening variables (e.g. political environment) and moderator variables (e.g. education and training of the stakeholders).

7. Findings and Discussion

From the research findings, the study demonstrates that the varieties of legal suffering of the victims of draconian section 57 of the ICT Act which was morphed into DSA 2018 in Bangladesh. The findings of the research demonstrate the poor condition of freedom of expression and democratic situation in Bangladesh. According to one of the respondents who is also the chief editor of a daily newspaper in Dhaka;

"There is no existence of freedom of expression in Bangladesh. How can you even think of this right (FOE)!!!! (Satire). Where the politics and democracy are absent in a state then there can be no question of FOE. A citizens' protest is absolutely rare in Bangladesh. At best you can find a 'human chain' which is formed by only a few people in Dhaka⁴."

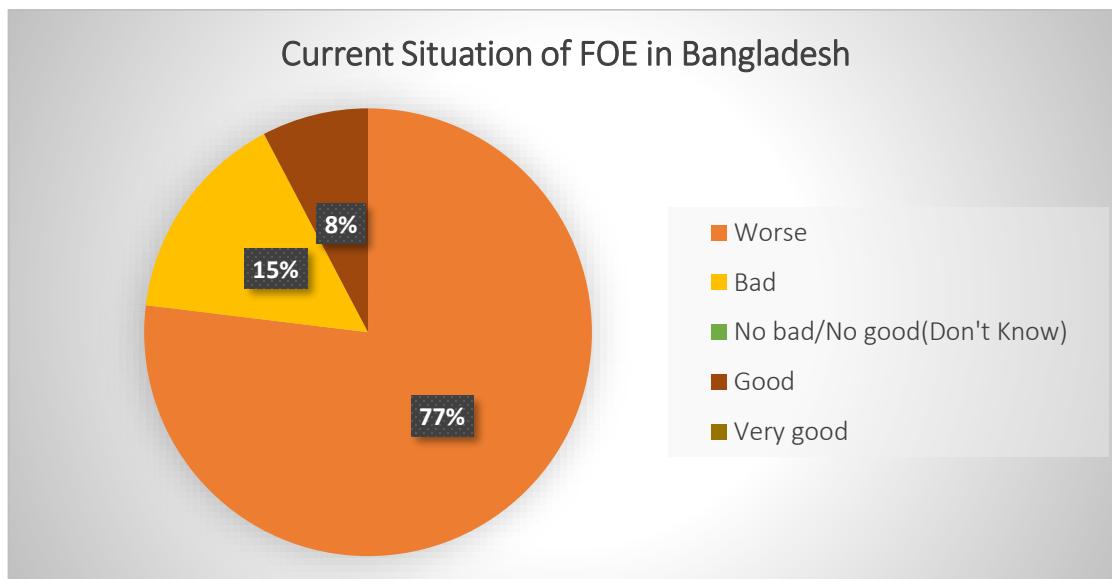


Figure 3: FOE in Bangladesh

The pie chart in figure 3 above shows the result after the in-depth interview of 13 respondents. The respondents were selected by purposive sampling and keeping in mind the professional engagement that the respondents have in regards to FOE in Bangladesh.

⁴ Respondent Number 9, Interviewed face to face on 28 May 2019.

Out of total 13 respondents, 10(77%) think that the situation of FOE is worse whereas 2(15%) respondents see the situation as bad and only 1(8%) respondent thinks that a good environment of FOE is prevailing in the country.

The new law seems to replace and violates the country's international obligation to protect free speech. 'The law totally undermines the government's claim that it has no intention of curbing the right to freedom of speech' said Brad Adams, Asia director of Human Rights Watch(HRW) and added that '...with at least five different provisions criminalizing vaguely defined types of speech; the law is a license for wide-ranging suppression of critical voices.'(Watch, 2018). As mentioned in the government gazette, Section 28 would enforce up to five years in prison for speech which injures other religious feelings or sentiment. While this provision, unlike section 57 of the ICT Act, requires intent, that addition is inadequate to bring it into compliance with universal norms.

Section 28 says,

"If in any website or electronic system publishes or broadcasts anything that hurts religious values and religious sentiments etc.: (1) if any person or group deliberately and knowingly and with the intention of hurting religious values or sentiments or with the intention to provoke such sentiment publishes or broadcasts information then such actions will be considered a crime (Parliament, 2018)."

According to Section 29,

"Publishing and distributing defamatory information, etc. — 1) If a person publishes or distributes any defamatory information mentioned in section 499 of the Penal Code (Act XLV of 1860) via a website or any other electronic format, they will get a maximum penalty of 3 years in jail or Taka 5 lakh in fine or both (Parliament, 2018)"

Section 32 of DSA 2018 describes,

"Offence and penalty for breach of Official Secrets— 1) If a person commits a crime or assists someone in committing a crime under the Official Secrets Act, 1923 (Act No XIX of 1923) via a computer, digital device, computer network, digital network or any other digital media, they will get a maximum penalty of 14 years in jail or Taka 2.5 million in fines, or both.2) If a person commits a crime mentioned in the sub-clause (1) for a second time or repeatedly, they will be sentenced to life in prison or a maximum fine of Taka 10 million, or both (Parliament, 2018)."

In this juncture of debate, the proposed research will focus on Sections 28, 29 and 32 and 43 of the DSA 2018 which has criminalized free speech and violates international standards on free expression. Moreover, the course of the law questions the State's stance for freedom of speech and undermines the democratic spirit of the government.

Bangladesh government had introduced the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act in 2006 with an aim to regulate and bring uniformity regarding the use of ICT throughout the country. According to Sultana Kamal, an eminent rights activist in Bangladesh and chairperson of Ain-o-Salish Kendra⁵ "The act is contradictory with the constitution because section 57 of the ICT Act 2006 deprives us of our right to freedom of speech. So, we want its repeal." (Correspondence, 2015).

On 8 October 2006, Bangladeshi Parliament first passed the ICT Act, of which sections 46 and 57 were used to ban the social networking site Facebook. Later these two Sections were challenged in the Bangladesh High Court by Barrister Arafat Husen Khan, Kazi Ataul-Osman, and Rokeya Chowdhury⁶. In July 2010, the High Court asked the Government to show why the sections of the ICT Act should not be held unconstitutional for violating the right to freedom of expression. Instead of amending the ICT Act to ensure compliance with the Bangladeshi Constitution and Bangladesh's international law obligations, the Government revised the ICT Act through an Ordinance⁷ on 20 August 2013 so as to make the law even fewer human rights compliant. On 6 October 2013; the Bangladeshi Parliament amended ICT Act, 2006. The amendments made many offenses under the Act non-bailable and cognizable. The amendments also imposed a minimum prison sentence of seven years for offenses and increased the maximum penalty for offenses from 10 to 14 years imprisonment (Jurists, 2013)

The present constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh which is also known as the original constitution came into force on 16 December 1972 is famous for its human rights provisions. Chapter I and Chapter II of the constitution, {Incorporating certain provisions regarding human rights in the constitution has become an established norm of constitutionalism in the 20th

⁵Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), a national legal aid and human rights organization, provides legal and social support to the disempowered, particularly women, working children, and workers. Its goal is to create a society based on equality, social and gender justice and rule of law. It seeks to create an environment for accountability and transparency of governance institutions.

⁶Arafat Hosen Khan and others vs. Bangladesh and others (Writ Petition No 4719 of 2010).

⁷Article 19 of the Bangladeshi Constitution of 1972, provides that an Ordinance promulgated by the President shall be laid before Parliament at its first meeting following the promulgation and shall, unless it is earlier repealed, cease to have effect at the expiration of thirty days after it is so laid or, if a resolution disapproving of the Ordinance is passed by Parliament before such expiration, upon the passing of the resolution.

century. Human rights have been incorporated in national constitutions both in justifiable and unjustifiable forms. The Constitution of Bangladesh was adopted in 1972, the middle of the latter half of the 20th century, when the International Bill of Rights has already been adorned by its three-stage lock of the UDHR in 1948, ICCPR in 1966 and the ICESCR in 1966. At the time of adoption of the Constitution of Bangladesh, 'there was a marked global increase in awareness for the need to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Since the advent of the two Covenants in 1966, very few of any national constitutions have been adopted that have failed to include human rights provisions. The insertion of different human rights provisions into the Constitution of Bangladesh was not a unique event in the context of the development of human rights (Haque, 2011).

The above mentioned context and data have also helped the researcher to compare the distinct opinion of civil society and activists which would assert the people's perception about DSA 2018. Through the textual study of the Act, and interviewing the legal experts, the research would make discourse analysis of the specific part of the Act which is problematic and incoherence with national and international human rights and legal standard. Here we must take into cognizance the opinion of one of the respondents who is a human rights lawyer and has personally worked with clients who are charged with DSA 2018 said;

"There is a clear misunderstanding about the DSA 2018 even among the Judges, lawyers, and police. There must be training conducted to educate all who are involved in the process. Even a mass level publicity and awareness on digital media and it's used should be started to stop its abuse and misuse"⁸

According to Section 43 of DSA 2018 which is a direct violation of existing law and breach of fundamental human rights and also incoherence with certain sections of the Constitution of Bangladesh reads as follows:

43) Search, Seizure and Arrest without Warrant: - (1) If a police officer has a reason to believe that an offence under this Act has been or is being or will be committed in any place, or there is a possibility of it happening, or if there is a possibility of evidence being lost, destroyed, deleted or altered or possibility of it being made scarce in some other way, then the officer, upon recording the reason for his/her belief, can undertake the following tasks: - a. Enter and search the

⁸ Respondent Number 7, Interviewed face to face on 25 May 2019.

said place and, if interrupted, take necessary action in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure; b. Seize the computer, computer systems, computer network, data-information or other objects which were used in committing the offence or documents that can aid in proving the offence that are found in that place while conducting the search; c. Conduct physical search of any person present in that place; d. Arrest anyone present in the said place if suspected of committing or having committed an offence under this Act. (2)) After conducting a search under subsection (1), the police officer will submit a search report to the Tribunal. (Parliament, 2018).

Amnesty International report on DSA 2018 says that section 43 allows police in Bangladesh to arrest an individual if they believe that an offence under the law has been or is being committed or there is a possibility of committing crimes or destroying evidence. The law allows for up to 10-year imprisonment for spreading propaganda against Bangladesh's Liberation War, the national anthem and national flag using digital devices. Repeated offences carry the maximum penalty of life imprisonment. The Editors Council on 17 September 2018 rejected the draft Digital Security Act as it did not make the changes that were recommended in eight sections of the law. The law fails to uphold the FOE and freedom of the press that is guaranteed in the Constitution of Bangladesh in Articles 39(2) A and B and international treaties ratified by the country. (International, Bangladesh: New Digital Security Act imposes dangerous restrictions on freedom of expression, 2018).

Finally, after analyzing the law, following fundamental weaknesses of the law were discovered:

- (1) Instead of preventing crimes committed by digital means and offer security in the digital domain, the Act actually regulate media freedom by censoring and monitoring media which is encroaching freedom of speech and expression as guaranteed by our constitution.
- (2) According to the Act police can arrest anybody on doubt without warrant and without permission of any authorities. The Act provides infinite power to the police to enter sites, search offices, body search of a persons, seize computers, computer networks, servers, and all related to the digital arena.
- (3) The Act has enormous ambiguity which makes media vulnerable to be misused and misunderstood.
- (4) DSA 2018 has created an environment of fear and coercion which will make journalism and especially investigative journalism almost impossible and frightful.
- (5) DSA 2018 has panicked the media professionals in particular along with others who use digital platform to express themselves. (Parishad, 2018).

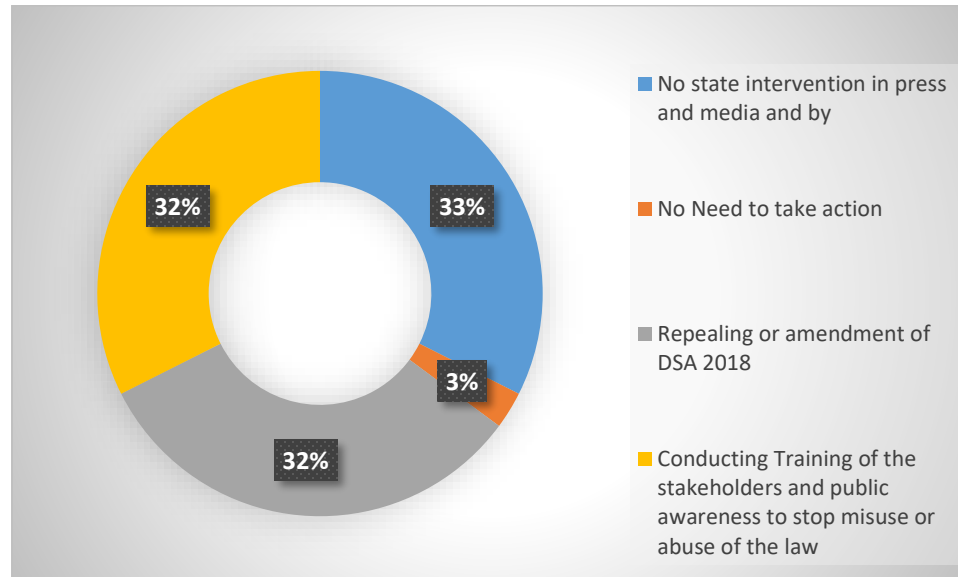


Figure 4: Solution to the Problem of FOE

Figure 4 illustrates the answer received from the respondents while the question was how to solve the problem arises from DSA 2018. Out of 13 respondents, 12 (33%) think that solution of the problem can come by firstly, no governmental interference in press and media then by repealing or amend the particular sections of the Act and finally, by educating the stakeholders through training and awareness program at different levels. Only 1 respondent (3%) believe that there is no requirement to take any action because the freedom of expression situation is good. However, the dough chart above also confirms the ultimate negative result and impact of DSA 2018 which is quite detrimental to the democracy and human rights situation in Bangladesh. The research finding in this regard is reinforced by different comments of the right bodies and human rights defenders while discussing about DSA 2018. Finally, the legal documents have unpacked the sufferings of the victims and legal repression reinforced through the misuse and abuse of the Act which is reflected in different reports and documents prepared by renowned human rights organizations. Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) executive director Iftekharuzzaman said,

"The law is worrisome for the country's citizens for a number of factors. In particular, it will curb citizens' constitutional and fundamental rights to freedom of speech. The law would not only affect journalists but also civil society and campaigners of good governance and no investigative journalism can be done under this law. The law will work to protect corruption and irregularities." (Tribune, 2018).

8. Conclusion

Freedom of the press and media are essential to a strong democracy. Almost the same is true for an emerging democratic country like Bangladesh where a multicultural, secular and progressive social harmony had been prevailing since the independence of the country. The core purpose of this research is to examine the effectiveness of those specific sections of the DSA 2018 which stifle the freedom of expression in media and provide practical suggestions to improve the efficacy of the Act by amendment or repealing those sections. The research determined that through the misapplication and subjective use of DSA 2018 the authoritarian government has consolidated power and created a culture of fear which has inevitably brought about self-censorship among all media, activists and people in Bangladesh recently. Further, the research shows that the gaps in existing laws and their adverse impacts on encroaching FOE results in a deficit of democracy and human rights deterioration in a country where regime uses laws to oppress dissidents.

This contribution will be extremely useful for many stakeholders in different work sectors and, therefore, would create significant impact for a number of direct and indirect beneficiaries both in Bangladesh and in other countries experiencing similar contexts and challenges. All members of the society and civil society stakeholders working on FOE around the world, who stand up for justice and speak for a right cause, have the potential to benefit from this project.

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Election Coverage: An Analysis of Online Media During the Maldives Presidential Election 2013

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Abstract

An informed electorate, with access to accurate and unbiased information and news, is widely accepted as an essential precondition for the effective functioning of a democratic society. Media can play a crucial role in shaping public opinion on politics in general, and specifically during elections. This research studies media framing of Presidential candidates during the Maldives Presidential Election 2013. Given that press freedom was allowed in the country recently (when it was stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of Maldivian 2008), objectives of the study were to identify the tone (positive or negative) of media coverage in relation to the presidential candidates (namely *Gasim Ibrahim*, *President Mohamed Waheed*, *Abdulla Yameen* and *President Mohamed Nasheed*) in four online media outlets (CNM Online, Haveeru Online, Sun Online and MV Times) and the role played by journalists in their media coverage. The methodology used was Creswell's (2009) "mixed method" approach including a content analysis of four local online media's news articles and editorials relating to the election for the period from 1st September 2013 to 17th November 2013, and text analysis to explain how particular text gave its meaning. The main findings were that the media coverage has mostly negative frames associated with presidential candidates. Most of the frames were in fact rhetoric of politicians (to defame other candidates) which shows that journalists are not independent of their surroundings and they do attribute as an audience themselves. The study also found that investigative reporting was almost non-existence. Media also has played a very minimum role in disseminating election information. Rather media have played a huge role in spreading hate speech. Therefore, it was found that during the presidential election 2013 media played a very minimal role than expected from a democratic state.

Keyword: Democracy, Maldives Election 2013, Media Coverage, Online Media, Presidential Election 2013

1. Introduction

As Mullen (2010) states “[A]n informed electorate, with access to accurate and unbiased information and news, is widely accepted as an essential precondition for the effective functioning of a democratic society” (Mullen, 2010, p. 673). In recent years, many scholarly debates have increasingly focused on the concerns about the role of media in politics in general, and during election campaign in particular. Media undoubtedly play a huge role in educating public on issues and events that take place within their communities and outside the world. Especially, if it is via television and radio, the messages and information could pass even to the rural areas and to the illiterate population. Media can also be an effective tool to compel politicians to abide by their promises should they wish to remain in power. In a democracy, media is like a watchdog; and hence is expected to act as a matured and responsible entity. Active and neutral media perform as an informer and expose loopholes within a democratic system and build a system to make politicians more accountable and responsive.

According to research findings by Strömbäck and Kaid (2008), media in some democracies frame politics as a game rather than as issues. Chomsky articulates framing of media stories is important in ‘perception-shaping’ (cited in Sandberg, 2007, p. 193). In this regard, D’Angelo’s (2002) multiparadigmatic approach and Scheufele’s (1999) process model of framing research are fundamental to understanding the frames that the media covers to depict presidential candidates and the effectiveness of those frames on election results.

1.1 Journey towards democracy

Maldives is a state with a strong national identity considering its homogeneity in cultural terms; with a common religion (Islam) and a common language (*Dhivehi*). The Maldivian journey towards democratic transition was no different to many other countries struggles to gain democratic power. It was a process galvanized from the civil unrest that began in 2003 after the state responded with force to prison riots following the death in jail of a detainee, Evan Naseem. Those riots ended up as demonstrations demanding for political reform, democracy and respect for human rights, in the capital Male’ city. After a few daunting years of pressuring the 30 years of uninterrupted rule by the President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, in 2008 for the first time Maldives entered into the democratization process by adopting a new Constitution on 07th August 2008. In keeping with the promise to embody democratic principles in the country the then President Gayoom made when he took the oath for a sixth term in November 2003, political parties were introduced for the first time in 2005. Since then, sixteen political parties have been registered according to Election Commission’s information and are in operation today (EC, undated).

The 2008 Constitution for the first time separated powers inviting an independent judiciary and independent institutions (Thowfeek, 2014). The new constitution guaranteed civil and political rights, economic social and cultural rights and fundamental freedoms introducing or strengthening many new rights that were previously not accessible. Some of the prominent rights include: freedom of expression, freedom of media, freedom of acquiring and imparting knowledge, freedom to form political parties, freedom to assembly, right to strike, freedom from forced confession, right to legal aid, right to appeal, right to vote (voting age reduced to 18 from 21), right to adequate nutritious food and clean water, adequate access to sewerage and electricity, the right to adequate housing, the right to a good standard of health, right to enjoy pension and right to enjoy property (Thowfeek, 2014; Didi, 2012).

During the same year, after the adoption of the 2008 Constitution, the Maldives held its first free and fair multi-party presidential election in October 2008, which brought an end to the 30 years of ruling. When the presidential candidate from the largest opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) Mohamed Nasheed who was also a former political prisoner came into power on 11th November 2008, on a coalition platform, it revealed that majority of the citizens wanted a change. However, following the allegedly unconstitutional arrest and detention of the Chief Judge of the Criminal Court, Judge Abdulla Mohamed in November 2011, the political environment became increasingly unsettled, with rallies organized by some opposition parties and other groups to protest against the government (The Commonwealth, 2013). Tension escalated in mid-January 2012 and protests took place in Male' throughout the period of judge's detention (The Commonwealth, 2013). After angry protesters joined by the rebel police officers and unarmed soldiers had taken on to the streets demanding his resignation, Nasheed stepped down on 7 February 2012, just after three years of being elected as the first democratic president. In accordance with the Constitution, Vice President Waheed was sworn in as President. Nasheed's party described the incidence as a coup against a constitutionally elected government (Lang, 2012). As President Nasheed claims he was forced to resign the presidency at gunpoint during a coup organised by a coalition of his opposition parties (including President Gayoom and his supporters and radical Islamist groups). President Nasheed accused his successor President Mohamed Waheed Hassan, the vice-president during Nasheed's administration, of being part of the conspiracy to oust him, set up by the President Gayoom to root out dissidents during his dictatorship (Gaia, 2012). However, President Waheed denied the claims and stayed firm on the ground that all he wanted was to bring stability to the country (Lang, 2012). Similarly, on their report, the Commission of National Inquiry (CoNI) - which was set up to investigate the incidents that lead to the transfer of power - concluded their report on the ground that during the 7th

February incident of transfer of power, there was ‘no illegal coercion or intimidation nor any coup d’ état’ and that the Commission has received no evidence to support or validate the allegations (Shafeeu *et al.*, 2012, p. 60)

The country elected a full Parliament in May 2009. MDP, albeit winning the presidential election won only 26 seats in the parliamentary election. The ousted Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP) and its coalition, the People’s Alliance headed by Gayoom’s half-brother, won 35 seats in parliamentary elections gaining control over the Parliament (MDN, 2010; Didi, 2012). The outcome of having opposition majority in the parliament (which composed of 77 members for a five-year term) gave raise to political tension challenging President Nasheed to fulfill his election promises. Political dispute resulted in no-confidence motion being taken by the opposition party members, against the Foreign Minister in November 2009 and against the Education Minister in June 2010. The Auditor General was dismissed in March 2010, for investigating high-profile elites of the former regime for alleged embezzlement of millions of US dollars in state funds (Naseem, 2011). The fact that the opposition majority was calling for no-confidence motion against heads of independent institutions and cabinet ministers, “making it impossible for them to discharge their constitutional duties, the entire cabinet resigned en masse on 29 June 2010 as a protest against what they called the opposition members of parliament’s ‘hijacking’ of the powers of the executive” (Didi, 2012: 44).

What the country demanded from democracy - an independent judiciary, a body to adjudicate on the fairness of an election, to have a reformed criminal justice system, the police, enhanced media freedoms, an independent civil service, fully independent commissions and much entrenched anticorruption measures – were established (Moorcraft, 2009), the Maldives nonetheless being at its very infant stage of democracy, was experiencing unprecedented political and civil rights grapples along with socio-economic challenges (MDN, 2010). The transition to democracy has been difficult with the country facing significant challenges in consolidating initial process. In a country with a tenuous democracy, new to the human rights discourse and soaring public anticipation from democracy, currently its population is in anarchy. During the recent years, the country has seen endless public protests on almost every issue and threats and acts of political violence have become commonplace (MDN, 2011).

1.2 Background Information

The 2008 Constitution defines the term of president of the Maldives to be elected for five years and can serve a maximum of two terms. The president is elected in a single national

constituency on the basis of a majority system (The Commonwealth, 2013). During the presidential elections, a candidate need to secure more than half of all valid votes from the election, in order for the candidate to be elected from the first round. Had no candidate able to receive more than half of the valid votes in the first round then the two leading candidates contest a run-off election (The Commonwealth, 2013). In the run-off election which ever candidate secures the most votes wins.

1.2.1 National Electoral Legal Framework

The legal framework that regulates the presidential election are provided in the following documents:

- a) The Constitution (2008)
- b) The Presidential Elections Act (2008)
- c) The Elections (General) Act (2008)
- d) The Presidential Election Regulation (2013)
- e) The Political Parties Act (2013)

1.2.2 Presidential Election 2013

The Presidential Election 2013 was an eventful poll that has made history in this country. The country was finally able to declare a president after the sixth time the Election Commission (EC) attempted to hold the presidential election over two months (Malone, 2013). This was the first time in the country's history that a court had to get involved in making a decision with regards to an election and also the first time any election has been annulled (Naseer, 2013).

Maldives held its first presidential election 2013 polling day on 07 September 2013. There were local observers from political parties, local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO), the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives, International communities (such as Commonwealth and India) and monitors from different media present at each polling station.

1.2.3 Candidates of Presidential Election 2013

The four candidates who competed in the Maldives Presidential Election 2013 are as follows.

1.2.3.1 Gasim Ibrahim

Gasim Ibrahim is a well-known business tycoon in the country, Member of Parliament and leader of *Jumhooree Party (JP)*. JP contested the presidential election in coalition with *Dhivehi*

Gaume Party (DQP). Gasim's running mate was Dr. Hassan Saeed - the leader of DQP. Villa Group of companies - one of the largest private corporations in the country – is head by Gasim. Villa Group is involved in resort, shipping, aviation, airport, education and media. He owns one of the private television broadcaster- Villa TV (VTV) (Minivan News, 2013a). Gasim served as Finance Minister from 2005-2008 during President Gayoom's administration. During the drafting of the 2008 Constitution, Gasim was in charge as he was head of *Special Majlis* (Minivan News, 2013a). He was appointed as initial Home Minister during Nasheed's administration though he resigned 21 days into the new government (Minivan News, 2013a). He was also parliament's representative for Judicial Services Commission (JSC) until dismissed from the post in July 2013 (Minivan News, 2013a).

1.2.3.2 Dr. Mohamed Waheed Hassan Manik

Dr. Mohamed Waheed was serving as the president of the Maldives when he competed in the first round of presidential election 2013 as an independent candidate, following controversy that his *Gaumi Ithihaad Party (GIP)* did not have the minimum 10,000 members to qualify as a political party under the new regulation (Minivan News, 2013b). He received 5.13 percent from the annulled election held on 7th September 2013 and later withdrew from the re-run election scheduled for 19th October 2013. His running mate was Ahmed Thasmeen Ali – leader of the *Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP)* – who after the first round backed Nasheed and joined MDP. Dr. Waheed was vice-president under Nasheed's administration, and took Office following Nasheed's resignation. Hence, his ascension to the presidency was a controversial transfer of power, where he "presented himself as a force of stability heading a 'unity' government" (Minivan News, 2013c).

1.2.3.3 Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom

Abdulla Yameen was best known as former President Gayoom's half-brother. He contested in the presidential election 2013 as a candidate of *Progressive Party of the Maldives (PPM)* – which split off from the *Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP)* resulting from a falling out between Gayoom and his successor, Ahmed Thasmeen Ali (Minivan News, 2013c). His running mate for the presidential election of 2013 was Dr. Mohamed Jameel (a former Home Minister). Yameen was a Member of Parliament (MP). During Gayoom's administration he was Minister of Trade and headed two State run companies, the State Electric Company (STELCO) and the State Trading Organisation (STO) (Minivan News, 2013c).

1.2.3.4 Mohamed Nasheed

Mohamed Nasheed⁹ was the leader who came into power from the first multi-party election in 2008, after defeating Maumoon Abdul Gayoom who ruled uncontested for 30 years. In 2008 he was able to come into power following a second round run-off with 25 percent of the vote, backed by a coalition from different political parties for different motivations (Minivan News, 2013d). Nasheed lead *Maldives Democratic Party* (MDP), the single largest party with the highest number of registered members (BBC, 2013). His running mate for the election 2013 was Dr. Musthafa Luthfy, former Education Minister and Chancellor of Maldives National University. Nasheed who was heavily prosecuted under President Gayoom's administration, registered the first ever political party in the Maldives - Maldives Democratic Party or MDP - on 26 June 2005 once political parties were eventually allowed in June 2005. However, it was recorded that MDP was declared as an opposition party in November 2003, when Mohamed Nasheed fled to Sri Lanka in 2003 - following the incidences of Evan Naseem's death in custody – "and formed an opposition movement in exile, launching a massive campaign via the internet highlighting the brutality of Gayoom regime" (Didi, 2012: 2-3).

On 7 February 2012, Nasheed stepped down from Presidency following demands from opposition protestors calling for his resignation, which he later claimed was an organized coup d'état and he was 'forced at gunpoint' to resign.

1.2.4 Results from the Presidential Election 2013

Voter turnout for the 7th September 2013 election was a high 88.44 percent. Mohamed Nasheed garnered 45.45 percent, Abdulla Yameen 25.35 percent, Gasim Ibrahim 24.07 percent and Mohamed Waheed 5.13 percent. Since none of the candidate received a majority of the votes, EC announced a second round to be held on the 28th September 2013. Although the election was found free and fair by the observers, Jumhooree Party (JP) candidate Gasim Ibrahim filed a case at the Supreme Court (SC) citing fraud and vote rigging during the election. The run-off election scheduled for 28 September 2013 was put on hold just four days before by an indefinite ruling from SC. And ultimately just before 7th October 2013, SC issued an injunction to cancel the first round of election held on 7th September 2013, in a controversial 4:3 decision by the Supreme Court bench. "The 4:3 verdict cited a confidential police report submitted to the court allegedly

⁹In March 2015, Nasheed was sentenced to 13 years in prison, after he was convicted for terrorism charge. Maldives court's decision to uphold jail sentence against Nasheed was centerpiece to Nasheed's decision to arrest a judge for alleged corruption as well as for politically motivated ruling in 2012. Nasheed lived in exile in Britain after he won political asylum since 2016 where he went for urgent medical treatment. (Source: *The Guardian*, 27 June 2016).

claiming that 5600 votes were ineligible. The report has not previously been available to the public and was not shown to the Election Commission's defence lawyers" (Naseer, 2013). Supreme Court annulled the first round of election and ordered EC to follow 16 guidelines that the SC put forward. One of the guideline was to get signatures from all candidates that competed in the election verifying the voter list before holding the election, giving candidates veto power.

Thence, the incumbent President Waheed who received only 5% votes dropped out his candidacy for the re-run. EC then announced a re-run of the first round with the remaining three candidates to be held on 19th October 2013. Everything was made ready for the scheduled re-run election, however on the early hours of 19th October 2013, the eventual revote election was obstructed by the Maldives Police Service, claiming EC was going to go forward with the election against the SC order as candidates Yameen and Gasim refused to sign the voter registry.

EC again announced a re-run of the first round with the remaining three candidates, to be held on 9th November 2013 and a second round planned for 16th November 2013 if none of the candidates received majority of votes. There was a need to have a new President in place by 11th November 2013 as the Maldives Constitution requires a president to be elected before the term of the Presidency ends on 11th November 2013. However, the fear was that none of the candidates would get majority of votes during the first round. Therefore, the three candidates made a collective request to EC to have the first election on 2nd November 2013 and a second round any day before 11th November 2013. However, the request was denied by the EC stating that the date set (9th November 2013) was the earliest possible date that the EC can have an election given the time needed for preparations and re-registration. However, later EC did agree for a second round to be held on 10th November 2013 should none of the candidates get a majority.

The re-run first round of election was held on 9th November 2013 producing similar results to the annulled election. The voter turnout was high at 86 percent. Mohamed Nasheed was able to garner 46.93 percent of votes, which is only a 1.48 percent increase compared to the annulled election. Abdulla Yameen AbdulGayyom received 29.72 percent votes which is an increase by 4.37 percent compared to the annulled election. Gasim Ibrahim received 23.34 percent votes, which is 0.73 percent less than what he gained on the annulled election. Mohamed Nasheed was the candidate who scored the most percent of votes and there is a huge difference between his percentage of 46.93 and Abdul Yameen Abdul Gayoom's votes (who gained the second most votes) of 29.73 are a high 17.21 percent. In this election also, none of the candidates received the adequate 50 percent votes or above which is necessary to gain in order to be elected as the

president. Hence, the second round was planned for the next day, but EC could not hold the election as the Supreme Court ordered EC to postpone it to 16th November 2013, as candidate Yameen claimed he needed more time to verify and sign the voters list. Meanwhile Supreme Court passed a verdict that the President Waheed would be in power until and unless the second round could be held and a President could be in place.

In the final round of election held on 16th November 2017, Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayyoom won the election by garnering 51.39 percent of votes and Mohamed Nasheed was able to receive 48.61 percent of votes. He lost the election by 6022 votes in difference between the two candidates. Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayyoom received 1.39 percent above the 50 percent votes that is adequate in order to be eligible to be elected. The voter turnout rate was 91.41 percent (218,621); an increase of 5 percent from the first round. The higher turn-out in every round of the presidential elections was a clear indicative of the strong commitment and grit of the people to participate in the electoral process in choosing their President.

1.3 From Election 2013 till Election 2018

Within the presidential term from 2013 till 2018, the country was snatched out of many rights encompassed in the Constitution. When in July 2014, President Yameen's party won the majority of seats in the parliamentary election, he used his parliamentary majority to consolidate power, control a multitude of rights and pass laws (such as the Protection of Reputation and Freedom of Expression Act, the Anti-Terrorism Act, and amendments made to the Freedom of Assembly Act) in order to persecute political opponents, restrict political activities by the opposition, and control the media (TM, 2018). Under the Protection of Reputation and Freedom of Expression Act, opposition-aligned media and journalists faced large fines and jail terms for defamation as well as speech that deem threatens "social norms" or national security. Lack of protection for media stations and journalists therefore is a huge challenge. The Journalist Ahmed Rilwan, a strong advocate for human rights who was vocal on rights issues both in his writings and on social media, went missing in August 2014 and his whereabouts remain unknown (The Edition, 2018). Blogger Yameen Rasheed who led a public campaign to find Rilwan was found with multiple stab wounds in the stairwell of his home and died shortly after he was taken to hospital, in April 2017 (The Edition, 2018). In August 2016, Editor-in-chief of the Independent, Zaheera Rasheed and 16 other journalists were detained for protesting the law. In September 2016, Zaheena (colleague of Ahmed Rilwan who did an investigative documentary into Rilwan's disappearance) fled the country just before the another investigative documentary she appeared about President Yameen's corruption "Stealing Paradise" was released (Global Journalist, 2018).

Although this research did not study the Presidential Election 2018 in detail, by reading some random articles on presidential election in 2018 it is found that many journalists and media outlets has more articles that has investigative approach.

2. Research Problem

The Constitution of the Republic of Maldives 2008 (Constitution 2008) allows freedom to express, although it restricts speech deemed 'contrary to tenets of Islam' (Freedom House, 2013). Hence, it has allowed greater media diversity that has led to improvement in the coverage of major political issues and events. Although the concept of freedom of press was acknowledged, due to the prolonged oppression in the field, it became a wholly new area to the public. Only a handful of people in the country had the educational background to journalism and thus not all who started to work as journalists knew what they were actually doing or what they had to do. Due to fact that human rights language was merely crawling and language of democracy is raw to the major public, the content of the media materials was thought to lack the essence of responsible journalism. Media materials were alleged to contain very biased unethical content. Hence, Transparency Maldives (2011) after their study also recommends media outlets to work towards ensuring that the editorial positions are based on standards of professional journalism. Most of the media outlets were backed and hence, under direct or indirect control of a politician or a political party. These media outlets therefore are the avenues politicians deploy to spread their propaganda materials to favor them. For these reasons, one the recommendations on TM (2011) report was media outlets to curb the influence of owners and other persons who hold financial interest in the respective media company. Some of the times, media also faces the dilemma to cover certain issues due to restrictions in accessing information (Freedom House, 2013).

Legal framework that regulates media in the Maldives is considered rather weak and comprises only of few laws and regulations such as the chapter two of the Constitution of the Maldives (Fundamental Rights and freedoms), Broadcasting Act (16/2010), Maldives Media Council Act (15/2008) as main pieces of legislations governing media (TM, 2011). In addition to that, the legal framework to protect freedom of expression in the Maldives remains very weak, with many media reform bills yet to be passed (Freedom House, 2013). Therefore, the journalists are left without the proper protection that they often require. Often police interrogate journalists regarding their sources and authenticity of media reports sometimes undermining journalists' ability and their confidentiality (Freedom House, 2013). There were times media stations were attacked. Also the last couple of years saw an increase in number of attacks and threats towards

journalists. When the media outlets are threatened it restricts coverage or/and has a greater tendency to influence media coverage.

2.1 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to analyze the tone of media coverage during election period, given the context that press freedom was allowed in the country only recently. In this regards the assumption is that media outlets will play a crucial role during the election period in its media coverage, depicting positive or negative images of the candidates that would ultimately have its impact to the final results of the election

2.2 Research Questions

The research questions for the study is What is the tone of media coverage (positive or negative) by the selected online media outlets, in relation to the Presidential Candidates, and how can this influence the election?

2.3 Literature Review

The combination of the D'Angelo's (2002) multiparadigmatic research program and Scheufele's (1999) process model provide the knowledge to scrutinize media coverage studied in this research. Responding to Entman's (1993) call for the establishment of a paradigm of news framing research, D'Angelo (2002) argues that there is no need for a single paradigm and that framing should continue as a framework of diverse paradigm that guide both choice of theories and the research itself. D'Angelo's (2002) approach of *news framing as a multiparadigmatic research program* demonstrate how "[t]heoretical and paradigmatic diversity has led to a comprehensive view of the framing process, not fragmented findings in isolated research agendas" (D'Angelo, 2002, p. 871). I support Angelo's view quite contrary to Entman (1993) that there is not and need not be a unified paradigm of framing. Out of D'Angelo's (2002) four empirical goals and core conjectures, the two goals 'to identify thematic units called frames' and 'to investigate the antecedent conditions that produce frames' resonate with this research.

Scheufele (1999) offers combine social-constructive views of sociology and political communication, arguably the most crucial piece of literature to the contemporary framing research program. To illustrate that the mere presence of the frame basically devoid theoretical interest, he encompasses the ways in which frames are built and set, individual-level effects of framing, and journalists as audience to provide a common 'process model' as theoretical model; that serves valuable process model for this research. This study employed news frames rather

than audience frames, and conceives them as dependent rather than independent variables. Consequently, following the news coverage allowed me to seek an understanding of the process by which the competing frames were built and set. This allows me to analyze the structural factors that may have influenced the frames.

2.4 Methods

As content analysis seems to be a suitable method to apply when analyzing the frames of the online media content, content analysis was used as one of the method applied in this thesis. According to White and Marsh (2006) content analysis is a highly flexible research method that has been widely used. This research method can be applied in quantitative, qualitative and also mixed method approach and uses a wide range of analytical methods to generate findings (White & Marsh, 2006). It is a method that is “a systematic reading of a body of texts, images and symbolic matter, not necessary from an author’s or user’s perspective” (Krippendorff, 2003, p. 3).

Creswell’s (2009) ‘mixed method’ approach was used to analyze media contents, because statistics and text analysis were mixed. During the analysis process transformative mixed methods were followed using a theoretical lens (framing theory) as the overarching perspective within the design containing both quantitative and qualitative data derived from coverage (Creswell’s, 2009). In the process of analyzing frames, diversity of ideas, it was checked for alternative perspectives, and/ or different uses of texts by different media outlets.

The tone of the coverage was measured by making a sensible conclusion about whether or not a candidate was portrayed in an overall positive or negative manner. In assessing the tone of the coverage, the assessment was made on whether or not a viewer was offered a positive or negative impression of the candidate, regardless of truth or balance of the story. Although these assessments were subjective, efforts were made to uphold uniformity.

2.5 Data Collection

Purposive sample is used as a sample technique. Purposive sample, as its name itself reflects, is a sample used just because it is easily available and there is no better way to explore the content of interest. As for Maldives, Television is considered the most popular medium whilst Radio is less popular amongst Maldivians, although a growing medium and newspapers are widely read within the country while many newspapers are available online (The Commonwealth, 2013). The Maldivian population is very technology friendly as it has a very high literacy rate of over 97 percent in 2011 (The Commonwealth, 2013). Considering these facts, researching the Internet,

online or web content seemed to be advantageous as it can be easily obtained in minimum time. Four local based online web pages were randomly selected from the 13¹⁰ daily operating online outlets that were listed and functioning during 2013. As such, *CNM Online*, *Haveeru Online*, *Sun Online*, and *MV Times* were the outlets randomly selected. Although, censuses of all relevant contents are rarely used in any research, all the contents regarding Maldives Presidential Election 2013 (news, and editorials etc.) from the four online outlets were monitored and analyzed for the duration of the study - from 1 September 2013 till 17 November 2013. As such, there were a total of 2145 articles (news coverage and editorials) from the four selected online media outlets.

2.6 Data Analysis

Any research that involves framing analysis should begin with a discussion of how the researcher defines frames. In this study, frames are packages comprised of framing devices that are constructed via use of language, rhetorical strategies, and other structural elements. All news articles related to election were manually read through and the key phrases and text segments that correspond to the research questions and appeared relevant were noted and tagged. Thus the content of all articles were screened to identify the universe of words that mark the presence of frames. As the contents were in local language *Dhivehi*, none of the computer generated automatic content analysis software were used for the analysis. In contrast to machine coding, manual coding or human coding guided by prototypes instead of exact terminology allows greater flexibility to discover new frames that were not identified in the initial coding scheme. However, it is a limitation in that it can only be utilized for smaller samples size.

Some guideline frames were identified prior to analyzing the contents of articles related to presidential election 2013. The guideline frames listed some words that an outlet would use in their coverage that may show how different media outlets perceive or portray the four Presidential candidates. As such some positive frames associated to candidates listed were democratic, honesty, trustworthy, just, lawful, equality, and transparent. The negative frames associated to candidates listed were immoral, corrupt, fraud, bribery, unlawful and unethical. All data were then recorded according to identified categories. After few days into the data analysis more words were added as there appeared frames that were not anticipated initially, especially negative frames such as anti-nationalist, secular, un-Islamic, coup d'état, terrorism and threat to sovereignty.

¹⁰ Those operating 13 online news outlets were *Miadh Online*, *Haveeru Online*, *Atoll Times*, *Jazeera Daily*, *Manadhoo Live*, *Dhivehi Observer*, *Sun Online*, *Channel News Maldives (CNM)*, *Raajjelive*, *Maldives Today*, *Minivan News*, *Dhivehi news* and *MV Times*.

3. Media and Democracy

In an ideal democratic state where there are good practices of good governance, mass media is to live up to the democratic ideal function as; a) a watchdog, b) an information tool, and c) builder of peace and consensus (Coronel, n.d.). In this research, it is found that investigative reporting is almost non-existence. There was only one article by *MV Times* that played a watchdog role by reporting Gasim bribing some local community by sending them expensive electronics such as computer systems, indicating that Gasim uses his wealth to buy votes from powerless people. Other than this one particular article, none of the media outlets have reported any issue of concerns or exposed any corruption activities from candidates.

From the analysis it is found out that the journalists of the selected media outlets have played a very minimum role in voter education in order to increase voters turn out rate or educating the public on their rights and responsibilities of casting votes.

Although in some countries, it is very common to bribe journalists and editors to endorse their propaganda, from this study, it was difficult to identify that if any of the media outlets were assisting any candidate and parties to make their appeals and promote their propaganda. However, it is not unlikely that a media outlet may have the backing from any of the candidates or their parties, as from the information gathered it was evident that most of the media outlets were not financially viable to run independently.

In this study, it is evident that media have played a huge role in spreading hate speech frames during the Maldives Presidential Election 2013. Most of the media outlets have quoted hate speech frames used by opposition parties and candidates as anti-campaigning slogans. The outnumbered amount of articles reported on negative frames (frames that are highly sensitive in many cases) compared to positives frames is apparent to conclude that Maldives journalists cover unethical reporting. During the Presidential election 2013 campaigns, media can be blamed for spreading fear amongst the public for wrong things; as two of the most sensitive and concerning frames predominantly used were to spread fear amongst citizens for our sovereignty; and to fear for losing national homogeneity as being an Islamic State. From the analysis therefore, it can be said that Maldives can be added to the list of democratic countries where the mass media are not fulfilling its functions properly.

4. Discussion

In the frame building process, the third source of influence by Scheufele (1999) process model of framing research – that is external sources of influence (mostly political actors and elite influence) – is evident in the coverage during election period. This is said because frames adopted by journalists are sound bites of frames advocated or implied by the presidential candidates and political elites during election period that went straight into media coverage by all of the outlets. Especially in news coverage, frames were direct quotes of speech or interviews from elites and other interest group; which often times journalists make quoted headlines. Thus, very little effort from journalists' side is evident in building their own frames in their news coverage. So journalist-centered influence, where journalists do actively build frames of their media coverage is almost non-apparent. Although frame building amalgamates with view of political orientation of the medium would be heuristic value, due to the fact that political view or orientation of the outlet is concealed and outlets show hesitant to reveal this information makes it hard to explicate this relationship.

Although media outlets may claim that they practice ethical/responsible journalism, their inactiveness in constructing frames to structure and make sense of incoming information (or such harsh themes) and then to use those frames (used by politicians) in media coverage strongly show that Maldivian journalists as an audience are indeed cognitive misers. Therefore, it is apparent that the journalists are not independent to build 'individual frame' and that the framing are shaped out of the political issues within the public dialogue. What is seen by the journalists are that often times only few of the journalists try to actively engage in acquiring the knowledge democracy opens us, others indolently hear and judges the phrases. As other reports also suggest, due to the fact that many Maldivian journalists are new to the field with limited, proper and/or formal education on journalism, can be said that they are not independent to acquire the rightful knowledge to write materials; thus reflecting this well on their media coverage that lacks factual content and are biased to political rhetoric.

From the analysis of the media coverage from the four outlets, it is evident that during the campaign period, anti-campaign is more common. As abovementioned, when frames suggested by the presidential candidates and political elites are what went into the media coverage, it is no doubt that the articles were boosted with anti-campaigning frames. It was also highlighted in the Commonwealth Election Observation Report that some parties used negative rhetoric in reference to other candidates, that was not in the spirit of the code of conduct incorporated in the

Presidential Election Regulation 2013, yet, weak legal framework for electoral offenses combined with lack of clarity was regarded as a hindrance to addressing some electoral offenses (The Commonwealth, 2012).

Therefore, it was not surprising that, as the most common frames from the analysis appeared to be only negative frames. There were almost 2 percentages of positive articles compared to the almost 15 percentage of negative articles from the coverage. And out of those negative articles, almost 75 percentage of the negative articles were against Nasheed, while 13 percentage of the negative articles were against Yameen, compared to 5 percentage of negative articles against Waheed and only 4 percentage of negative articles against Gasim. The common frame to describe Gasim was 'troublemaker', in relation to the case he filed against Election Commission (EC) claiming they conducted fraudulence acts such as the problems attached with voter list. The most common frame attached with Waheed appeared to be 'illegitimate' as he was an unelected president who not only stayed in power after the coup, but also someone who refused to step-down when the presidential term ended on 11th November 2013, on the grounds of Supreme Court's (SC) directive to the solution of constitutional gap faced when Maldives were unable to declare a president due to the delay in election. The frame that were attached with Yameen was 'family ruling' to make the link with his brother Gayoom for his dictatorship administration of 30 years. He was viewed as one who would follow his brother's footsteps in bringing a monarch like ruling back to the country if he were to be elected as the next president. The most commonly used frame by the four media outlets in the contents of their media covering Nasheed were "*laadheenee*' (*un-Islamic*). The un-Islamic connotations attached to Nasheed dates back to the time when he was the president of the Maldives from 2008 till 2012. Nasheed government was more tolerant towards people of other faiths living in the Maldives as migrant workers since Maldives joined International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 2009 (Didi, 2012). Being a 100 percent Muslim country, from the time of the Gayoom's administration, Islam had been used as a political tool in the country to control the population (Didi, 2012). As such, any candidate supporting Western world or ideas that may interfere with the Islamic values and way of life, has been used against candidates to refer to them as having un-Islamic views, in a negative way. And anyone showing empathy to those views are attached with negative connotations such as being a threat to national security and thus labelled as a terrorist.

Interestingly, it was not anomalous to find that the mostly used frames 'Un-Islamic' and 'anti-national' that was used against Nasheed, could be considered as an effective medium for his loss in the run-off election in a very small margin to Yameen of about 6,000 votes. From the

qualitative observation of media content showed that all political parties, more than spreading their manifesto, continued to anti-campaign. As such, it could be argued that Yameen and his party *Progressive Part of Maldives (PPM)* anti-campaign strategy against their largest competitor Nasheed was the most effective. Their anti-campaign depicted Nasheed as a secular person using messages of '*laadheenee*' (which has many connotations such as irreligious, liberal and secular) who is a huge danger to the nation – which indeed was picked by other parties that made to the most of the news coverage. Hand in hand '*qawm*' (nation) was also used by Nasheed's opposers to advocate that all nationals follow Islam and the country would never want any religion other than Islam to be visible in the face of this society. And whoever is preaching for a secular view is connoted as a treason to the country. 'Irreligious', 'treason' and 'nation' were effectively used as a weapon against Nasheed (as an anti-campaigning strategy or tools) used by opposition parties that unfortunately or fortunately (for the opposers) went into media coverage. Therefore, what Didi (2012) highlighted in her study, how religion was used as a political tool for political gain, also applied to the election. During the presidential election 2013 what was evident in the political arena and the frames covered in media coverage tells us that there was a strong flavor of Islam and its association to politics in order for the society to be kept in fear.

5. Conclusion

The content analysis of media frames used during the election period to depict presidential candidates showed that the most prominent two frames that occurred in media coverage (including news coverage and editorials) were 'nation' and '*dheen*' (Islam), which were often used together during the election period. It was the dominant frames used against Nasheed. The most dominant frame associated with Yameen was 'family ruler' to show the relationship between him and his half-brother, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom who was the president of Maldives for 30 long years. The most prominent frame linked with Waheed was 'illegitimate' to designate him as a coup president. Also during the last stage of the election period, the same frame was associated with him as he did not step down from presidency after the presidential term ended on 11th November 2013, regardless of his claim not to allow for a constitutional gap. The most common frame in connection with Gasim is 'troublemaker', as he was the candidate who did not trust the first round of election (7 September 2013) results and filed a complaint to Supreme Court against Election Commission, which later resulted in the Supreme Court declaring the election as void.

Scrutinizing frame building process by the media outlets showed that the online media did not in fact accentuated these harsh negative frames as their own. Many times the phrases were used they were quoted with sources, showing that journalists are not independent of their

surroundings and they do attribute as an audience themselves - proving the theory that an 'individual frame' was non-existent. Most of the frames were in fact rhetoric of politicians, used in a strategic manner to defame the other candidates.

The mass media constitute the backbone of democracy. The notion that Democracy is impossible without a free press assumed it as the fourth branch of government. In an ideal democratic state where there are good practices of good governance, mass media is assumed to play the roles as; a) a watchdog, b) an information tool, and c) builder of peace and consensus. In this research, it is found that investigative reporting is almost non-existence. Media has played a very minimum role to disseminate election information that can assist citizens to make informed decisions. It has minimum coverage on voter education in order to increase voter turnout rate or educating the public on their rights and responsibilities of casting votes. It is also found that media have played a huge role in spreading hate speech, a total opposite of what it should do to act as a peace and consensus builder. Therefore, it was found that during the presidential election 2013, media have not played a very democratic role, as it should.

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The (Re)Production and Transfer of Knowledge in the Context of the ‘Summer School’ in Chiang Mai 2018: A Critical Approach

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Abstract

This paper analyzes how knowledge, knowledge production and transfer were understood and practiced within the context of the Summer School in Chiang Mai 2018. The Summer School was part of the KNOTS project, which is concerned with transdisciplinarity and intends to establish a network of knowledge exchange by linking partner universities from five countries from Europe and South-East Asia.

The transdisciplinary approach aims to produce knowledge in a “new” way, by including different perspectives and knowledge forms of academic and non-academic actors. The research paper demonstrates the attempt to shift knowledge production into a transdisciplinary direction and challenges that occurred. The empirical data gathered in KNOTS Summer School 2018 includes 7 semi-structured interviews, 6 observation protocols and 39 questionnaires. Whereas the sociology of knowledge, post-colonial and feminist approaches form its theoretical framework, the Grounded Theory and quantitative data evaluation were used to analyze the collected data.

As the sociology of knowledge has not been taken into sufficient consideration in transdisciplinary research so far, the results are a further contribution, particularly in regard to knowledge hierarchies. Even though the transdisciplinary approach and the KNOTS program aim to significantly reduce knowledge hierarchies by transforming knowledge production, the results show that this still remains a challenging task. Knowledge hierarchies and power relations were still visible and felt by most of the participants of KNOTS Summer School. The most strongly perceived asymmetries were between students and lecturers and between European and South-East Asian participants. Other forms that hindered an equal exchange of knowledge include language skills, educational differences and gender. The paper also discusses by the participants proposed solutions to reduce the still existing asymmetries.

Keyword: Transdisciplinarity, Sociology of Knowledge, Feminist and Post-Colonial Approaches, Knowledge Hierarchies, KNOTS Summer School

1. Introduction

This paper aims to get a better understanding of (the sociology of) knowledge in transdisciplinary research. This subject matter is of special importance as the term *knowledge* is often used in transdisciplinarity without a precise definition of its meaning. On the one hand, the research topic was chosen because the concept of transdisciplinarity itself plays and will continue to play an important role in Development Studies. However, we argue that most people working within the transdisciplinary domain have a concrete epistemological interest and are not primarily concerned with the sociology of knowledge. Therefore, the research is as a valuable addition to knowledge production in transdisciplinary research. Since transdisciplinarity is a “new” approach and work in progress, the paper brings new insights into how different forms of knowledge are valued and, therefore, contributes to enrich the approach.

The research took place in the KNOTS Summer School from July 17 to July 30, 2018 in Chiang Mai, Thailand under the framework of the KNOTS Project (“Fostering Multi-Lateral Knowledge Networks of Transdisciplinary Studies on Tackle Global Challenges (KNOTS)). The project is funded by the European Commission's Erasmus + Programme and connects partner universities from five countries¹¹ to address new challenges in a changing world. The Summer School and Field Trips in Chiang Mai 2018 evolved around the topics of social inequality, climate change and migration - issues that cannot be treated in a disciplinary way any longer. To tackle these challenges, not only academic, but also non-academic actors should participate in producing socially relevant knowledge. Regarding to this, the main aim of KNOTS is to establish knowledge networks on transdisciplinary research.

On that basis, the paper builds on the following research question: **How is knowledge conveyed and produced within the 'Summer School in Chiang Mai 2018' in terms of transdisciplinarity?** Following this research interest, the second chapter of the paper discusses the development of sciences and its present - day significance. It starts by explaining the evolution of modern knowledge systems and accompanying critiques, such as the sociology of knowledge and resulting expansions like feminist and postcolonial approaches. Chapter 2.3 discusses transdisciplinarity, while chapter 2.4 demonstrates the relevance of transdisciplinarity in the higher education sector. In chapter 3 the empirical investigation of the research is discussed in more detail. Chapter 4 analyzes the gathered data and explains the different forms of knowledge,

¹¹ From Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Thailand and Vietnam

the role of knowledge (production), existing knowledge hierarchies as well as attempts of reducing such hierarchies in the KNOTS Summer School in Chiang Mai 2018.

2. Theoretical Framework

Before 1500, an organic worldview dominated Europe and many other world regions. Spirituality and religion were the answers for problems at this time, as it was believed that the world was created for humankind. However, between 1500 and 1700, a new paradigm changed this pre-existing interpretation of the world. A new knowledge system, known as the modern knowledge paradigm, was created and gradually replaced the organic paradigm. (cf. Studley 1998: 5f.) This knowledge system is also known as “*western scientific knowledge*”. (Studley 1998: 2) This paradigm was and still is often thought to be analytical and objective. (cf. Studley 1998: 10f.) With modern knowledge, universities became more prominent. Disciplinary departments, which are present in every university today, emerged in this process. Disciplines were built around certain topics and problems. Problems that did not fit into a discipline were either “made” to fit into one or were often neglected. (cf. Stichweh 2013: 17f.) Scientists are usually part of a certain discipline. (cf. Huff 2017:20)

Not everything can be explained by modern science, neither in the past nor today, but modern science was and still often is the dominating form of knowledge. Because of this, a lot of critique and new paradigms emerged to try to better understand the complexity of reality. (cf. Studley 1998: 5f.)

2.1 Sociology of Knowledge and Expansion of its Traditional Approach

The sociology of knowledge emerged as a critique of the dominant knowledge system. Within this field, different viewpoints and approaches regarding knowledge exist. One example is, that knowledge can be seen as something that we take from others and is therefore socially derived. (Knoblauch 2014: 360f.) Knowledge is also considered to be socially constructed and thus, everyone in society is also part of a collectively shared and established knowledge. (Berger/Luckmann 2016: 3; 16-18) Francis Bacon, one of the earliest representatives of the sociology of knowledge, addressed that small elite groups often had access to the “truth” while the broad masses could not access it. He supposed that power structures and interests of certain social groups lie behind different institutions, who want to disguise their position of power. Therefore, when talking about knowledge, the question of who benefits the most from it needs to be raised. (Knoblauch 2014: 28)

The way knowledge often has been and is produced is criticised by feminist and postcolonial approaches, which can be understood as an extension of the knowledge - sociological perspectives. For a long time, women*¹² have been excluded from academic institutions such as Universities, which is why academic discourses frequently lack different perspectives and a position of objectivity. Feminist critique of science calls for counter-ideologies to change common ideologies that have already been firmly established in science. However, despite all the criticism and the fact that the reality of gender inequality has largely been recognized, science still remains dominated by males. (cf. Knoblauch 2014: 253f.)

Donna Haraway (1988:246) argues that all knowledge is embedded in an agonistic power field. In this context, she states that reflexivity to our own and to others' practices is essential to point out domination and inequality in terms of privilege and positions. Reflexivity and critical positioning produce science and can be understood as objectivity. (cf. Haraway 1988: 347; 349) This is in contrast to the dominant knowledge system, where objectivity is about measuring, explaining and proving data by the rules of nature. Neither reflexivity nor critical thinking finds space there. As knowledge depends on one's location, position and their situated knowledge¹³, knowledge therefore is not seen as universal (as it is done in dominant knowledge systems), but as partial. (cf. Haraway 1988: 348; 350) Hence, Haraway (1988: 348f.) suggests that we should be capable of learning how to see from another's point of view, including critical knowledges, solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology.

Moreover, feminist approaches criticise that knowledge, besides being embedded in power hierarchies, still remains scientific, technological, militarized, racist and male dominated. And even if women* produce knowledge, these women* are usually *white*. As a result, other forms of knowledge are excluded. (cf. Gillian 1997: 306f.) Additionally, there is no single feminist standpoint, as can be seen by the example of Rose Gillian, who argues not only from a feminist but also from a post-colonial perspective: axes of social identity like *gender, class, race, sexuality*, etc. mean that the positions of the scientists entail a situated knowledge which affects the whole process of knowledge production. (cf. Gillian 1997: 307)

¹² This word is marked as a quotation by the authors in order to distance themselves from the norm of the two-sex and also to draw attention to people who do not (want to) identify with a dichotomous *gender* image.

¹³ See full version of the research paper, chapter 2.3.1.

As another aim of situating academic knowledge, Rose Gillian (1997: 315) mentions the production of non-overgeneralizing knowledges that learn from other kinds of knowledge. As a consequence, academic knowledge is put into question by other knowledges. In this context, the author is referring to Donna Haraway who says that situated knowledge and research itself is a negotiation process between different knowledges. In other words: diverse knowledge should be recognized. (cf. Gillian 1997: 318) This viewpoint is of special importance for transdisciplinary research.

A further recent development of the sociology of knowledge is post-colonialism, which sharply criticizes global asymmetries and power mechanisms. Mona Singer (2005: 196) states that the postcolonial critique leads to a change of perspective within the sociology of knowledge, which is enrolled in the 'western' form of knowledge, the deconstruction of (neo-) colonial and Eurocentric discourses, and the analysis of the history of colonialism as an epistemic force. Postcolonial approaches particularly criticize the Eurocentric assumption that "scientific globalization" only goes in one direction, as well as the assumption that 'non-western' cultures are closed spaces in which 'western' sciences just arrive to expand their knowledge. The appropriation of other knowledge forms and techniques from the "new worlds" to expand "Western sciences" is not considered. (Singer 2005: 231f.)

To analyse power structures, Ramón Grosfoguel combines the postcolonial approach with feminist perspectives. In this context, he points out that *sex, gender, class, race* and *geography*, among other factors, influence one's position and that knowledge is always partial, not total. (cf. Grosfoguel 2007: 213) Referring to characteristics of postcolonial approaches, Hubert Knoblauch (2014: 287) also considers power asymmetries as intersectional¹⁴ and takes social categories, such as *women**, *colonized*, *migrants*, *homosexuals*, etc. into account. The aim is to avoid the so called "othering" processes¹⁵ and to involve different groups in the research and production of

¹⁴ Instead of a master category such as *woman*, the intersectionality, which means the overlap or interaction of different entangled differences such as *gender, sexuality, class, nationality/ethnicity, age, religion*, etc. is analysed empirically and theoretically. (cf. Burchardt/Tuider 2014:392) With this concept, which Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced in 1989, categories of inequality can be analyzed. These social categories are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from each other. Concerning scientific research, researchers should always consider how relations of oppression are (re)produced and accompany the whole research process. (see chapter 3) (cf. Klapeer 2014:57-71; McCorkel/Myers 2003:210f.;200f.)

¹⁵ "Othering" is a term that not only encompasses the many expressions of prejudice on the basis of group identities, but we argue that it provides a clarifying frame that reveals a set of common processes and conditions that propagate group-based inequality and marginality. [...] We define "othering" as a *set of dynamics, processes, and structures that engender marginality and persistent inequality across any of the full range of human differences based on group identities*. Dimensions of othering include, but are not limited to, *religion, sex, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status (class), disability, sexual orientation, and skin tone*. Although the axes of difference that undergird these expressions of othering vary considerably and are deeply contextual, they contain a similar set of underlying dynamics". (Powell, J. Menéndian, S., 2018)

knowledge. This would result in a relativization of the common *white*, ‘western’, male position. (cf. Knoblauch 2014: 287)

While the social embedding of knowledge should be considered, ‘western’ science and philosophy produce knowledge that is claimed to be universal, it is not mentioned who produced this knowledge. Even if the location of knowledge production would be considered, a further differentiation between the ‘epistemic location’ and the ‘social location’ of a person is necessary. A person who finds him or herself in a “disadvantaged” position may still think like people in dominant positions. This shows the success of the world-system that still adheres to colonial ways. (cf. Grosfoguel 2007: 213-214; Quijano 2007: 174)

2.2 The Transdisciplinary Approach

While some forms of criticism of the dominant knowledge paradigm were presented in the previous subchapter, another alternative form of knowledge production has emerged: Transdisciplinarity. Compared to the prevalence of disciplinarity, transdisciplinarity is a young development and was first used in 1970. The first definition of transdisciplinarity by Jean Piaget was still limited to science and did not consider the move beyond disciplines. Other definitions that followed changed the meaning of transdisciplinarity, but until today, there is no universally accepted definition; rather, discussion is still ongoing. (cf. Nicolescu 2006: 1f.; 5)

What most scholars today consider principle ideas of transdisciplinarity is the integration of different disciplines to solve complex societal problems. Transdisciplinarity breaks and transcends boundaries and by collaborating within different disciplines, different perspectives and insights can be gained. (cf. Choi et al. 2006: 351; 359) Overall, transdisciplinarity as a new approach within the academic field, involves different kinds of actors and networks, from different disciplines.

Regarding to knowledge production, transdisciplinarity aims to co-produce socially relevant knowledge that includes academic as well as non-academic actors. This represents a transition from disciplinary knowledge (“Mode 1”) to transdisciplinary knowledge, which has a more social character and is considered “Mode 2” knowledge.¹⁶ All actors should ideally be involved in all steps of the research process, starting with a co-created problem definition. (cf. Rosendahl et. al. 2015: 17)

¹⁶ See full version of the research paper, page 21f.

Andreas Novy (2012: 138) states that, although transdisciplinarity is “time-consuming” and a “never-ending process of translation and negotiation”, the integration of actors with diverse experiences and different expertise facilitates joint learning and research dynamics. Therefore, transdisciplinarity is a collaboration which values different “bodies of knowledge”. (Schmidt/Neuburger 2017: 54) Transdisciplinary research not only aims to include multiple perspectives, but also to produce knowledge which is locally embedded and applicable to a specific context. Hence, the concept of transdisciplinarity opens space for dialogue to jointly produce knowledge. (cf. Novy 2012: 138f.)

2.3 Transdisciplinarity in the Higher Education Sector

As learning and teaching plays a crucial role in applying transdisciplinarity, and because this paper is concerned with the KNOTS Summer School in Chiang Mai, this chapter contextualises transdisciplinarity in the field of higher education. The author Nicolescu (2013:21) addresses that universities do not have to be reinvented from the beginning but must be transformed by adopting transdisciplinary methodology. He also points out that transdisciplinarity means the emergence of connected beings, who can adapt themselves to changes. (cf. Nicolescu 2013: 21)

Since the KNOTS project itself has the aim to produce knowledge by transdisciplinary teaching, the (re)production- and transfer of knowledge in the Summer School in Chiang Mai is a highly relevant issue. Transdisciplinarity focuses on students’ learning experience in sharing their skills and experiences and producing new knowledge. Therefore, transdisciplinary learning is a new mode of knowledge production, which facilitates collaborative learning through a shared conceptual framework. In a transdisciplinary learning setting students participate and are interactively engaged in cooperation, based on shared learning objectives and problems, in contrast to disciplinary learning, where teachers deliver knowledge to the students (knowledge receivers). (cf. Park/Son, 2010: 82-84)

Therefore, transdisciplinary teaching can be understood not only as a critique of the hegemonic knowledge system, but also of the dominant teaching model, which Paulo Freire (2005: 72) titles the “banking concept of education”. In dominant education systems, teachers deposit contents and knowledge, while students are the depositories. Students partake only passively in knowledge production by “receiving, filling and storing the deposits”. (Freire, 2005: 72) Andreas Novy (2012: 139) combines the approach of Freire with transdisciplinarity, and adds that in a transdisciplinary learning format, not only pupils should learn, but also teachers. Thus, both are jointly taking part in producing knowledge, which means that different ways of thinking and living

have to be respected. To sum up, transdisciplinarity in higher education requires a concept of equal knowledge exchange, including the creation of space for dialogue and equal ways of communication. (cf. Novy 2012: 141)

3. Methodology

The transdisciplinary approach is a "work in progress"¹⁷ and will continue to play an important role in the future, particularly in the Higher Education sector and in Development Studies. The research itself could not include the whole Higher Education sector and therefore was carried out within a particular transdisciplinary project, namely the KNOTS project. Based on the KNOTS proposal that deals with knowledge production and knowledge transfer, knowledge asymmetries and the contribution to solve societal problems (cf. KNOTS application [n.d.]: 27-33), the following research questions were taken into account:

How is knowledge conveyed and produced within the 'Summer School in Chiang Mai 2018' in terms of transdisciplinarity? Four sub questions were also considered: a. What role does knowledge play within transdisciplinary projects such as KNOTS? b. Which actors contribute to the knowledge (re)production and transfer and to which extent? c. To what extent are knowledge hierarchies perceived by the participants of the "Summer School in Chiang Mai 2018"? d. How can other forms of knowledge and other approaches be integrated into the transdisciplinary approach?

3.1 Data Collection and Analysis

In the field a. guideline- based interviews, b. participatory observations and c. questionnaires were used as methods for empirical data collection. In addition, the KNOTS application for EU funding was analysed in order to point out differences and similarities between "theory" and "practice", relating to the role of knowledge within the KNOTS project.

Methodological triangulation, or mixed-methods approach, was applied to gain a more comprehensive answer to the research questions (cf. Johnson 2007:115f. / Thurmond 2001: 253-255). During the Summer School, seven guideline-based interviews with six lecturers from the participating universities¹⁸ and one person from the organizational team were conducted. To

¹⁷ New ideas and contributions that this paper provides can be included in the concept as it is still evolving.

¹⁸ Charles University, Chiang Mai University, Chulalongkorn University, Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Southern Institute of Social Sciences, University of Bonn, University of Vienna and the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences

obtain diverse perspectives, the professors were chosen by their different backgrounds: in terms of *gender, discipline/role in the KNOTS project, university and race*. Lecturers were chosen as our interview partners since they held all sessions during the Summer School and had the power to transfer knowledge to the participants by deciding on the format and the content of the sessions they held¹⁹. Seven sessions were observed as part of our participant observation, as this “*facilitates the collection of data on social interaction*” (Burges 1990: 79) and supports other methods of data collection by adding additional information (cf. Kearns 2010: 314f.). At the end of the Summer School, questionnaires with standardized and open questions were distributed to students and lecturers. The participants (see table 1) were asked about their experiences and their perception of hierarchies in the Summer School. In total, 39 questionnaires were collected. Since only lecturers were interviewed, the questionnaire allowed to include the perspectives of all participants²⁰.

To analyse the data the Grounded Theory and quantitative data evaluation were combined. All interviews, observation protocols and open questions of the questionnaires were coded. After coding, the data was condensed into concepts and then formed into categories by connecting and interpreting concepts (see Przyborski / Wohlrab-Sahr 2010: 195 ff.). The following categories were formulated: the role of knowledge in transdisciplinary research, power relations, the reduction of hierarchies, group dynamics, role allocation and teaching. The quantitative data was collected by including standardized questions, which consisted of a scale from one to six. The data evaluation took place in Excel and followed Udo Kuckartz (2014: 105). The results will be presented in our research findings.

¹⁹ See full version of the research paper, 6. Appendix

²⁰ The questionnaire allowed all the other participants of the Summer School (not only the lecturers and us) to contribute to our research. Almost all participants are therefore included in the research project, which ensured the representation of different views and perceptions. Due to a public holiday in Thailand, some students were not present during the last two days of the Summer School and could not fill out the questionnaire, hence some perspectives are missing.

Gender	University	Age
Male: 12	Charles University Prague: 1	20-25 years: 9
Female: 26	Chiang Mai University: 6	26-31 years: 14
Other: 1	Chulalongkorn University: 1	>31 years: 16
	Ho Chi Minh City Open University: 7	
	Southern Institute of Social Sciences: 1	
	Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences: 3	
	University of Bonn: 9	
	University of Vienna: 11	

Table 1: Overview of the participants' personal information in the questionnaires

3.2 Research Ethics

As part of the Grounded Theory, transparency and self-reflection are important aspects of research related to development. Moreover, as mentioned, all knowledge is situated, so that both researchers and their research are influenced by previous knowledge that results from social ascriptions and dominant discourses. (cf. Schultz 2014: 75) In this context, Gillian Rose (1997: 307) addresses the fact that due to axes of social identity such as *nationality, race, age, gender, social and economic status, sexuality* etc., the position of the researchers entails a situated knowledge and is embedded in power structures. Therefore, to redress presuppositions, previous knowledge, such as the "position of the researcher"²¹ itself, has to be reflected (self-) critically. (cf. Schultz 2014: 88)

The process of self-reflection accompanying our research focused on knowledge production, situated knowledge and positionality. Since we produced knowledge with our research, we were aware of the fact that, in contrast to our 'research objects', we held a privileged position (Gillian 1997: 307) to decide which kind of knowledge is produced and disseminated, because we not only decided on what questions to ask, but also how the collected data was to be interpreted and presented. Our previous theoretical sampling could have also influenced our observations or perceptions on how we perceived power structures, as well as the choice of interview partners and questions.

²¹ This is of special importance in our research, as it is based on developmental sociology research, where previous knowledge is often embedded in colonial discourses. Thus, during the conduction of our research we kept in mind that all data is embedded in dominant discourses which influenced our presuppositions. (cf. Schultz 2014: 88)

Moreover, conducting the interviews we were aware that, as young, female researchers from Europe, our positionality not only influences our perceptions, but also the respondent's answers. The other participants, such as our interview partners, framed us as students or young researchers from Europe, which might have changed their behavior and answers. For instance, one interview partner framed us as European students who have better English language skills and knowledge on transdisciplinary research than Thai colleagues. Without knowing us, our interview partner automatically gave us a higher level of authority (cf. Englert/Dannecker 2014: 244). This was even more challenging as we dealt with postcolonial and feminist approaches, as well as with the transdisciplinary approach itself, before attending the KNOTS project in Chiang Mai. Even if all these approaches aim to include different actors equally in producing and exchanging knowledge and we tried to abide by them, the mentioned ascriptions often hindered us to practice equal participation. Therefore, hierarchies remained.

4. Results

Taking postcolonial, feminist and transdisciplinary approaches as well as the KNOTS application form into consideration, we analyzed our gathered data from the interviews, the questionnaires and our observations in relation to three aspects: a. the participants' general understanding of the term knowledge, b. the role of knowledge in transdisciplinary research, and c. the embedding of power structures in knowledge production and transfer in the Summer School in Chiang Mai 2018.

4.1 Transdisciplinarity and Knowledge

To be able to discuss the subject of transdisciplinary, which is closely linked to "knowledge", the term had to be clarified and debated by the interview partners²². The research results confirm that knowledge is a very complex and abstract term without a clear definition. Therefore, different understandings of the term exist. However, most of the interview partners had a similar understanding of the term knowledge, although they focused on different forms, like academic or local knowledge, and on the interaction of different forms of knowledge. Some considered knowledge more from a "traditional" academic viewpoint, but generally acknowledged that knowledge is socially derived.

In the literature on transdisciplinarity, producing socially relevant knowledge is one of the main goals. Most interview partners state that knowledge within transdisciplinary research is (co-)produced through the interaction and exchange between different actors during the process of

²² See full version of the research paper, chapter 4.1

defining and working on a problem together. The produced knowledge should be internalized by the different actors and change their behavior. (cf. Interview 1) This understanding of transdisciplinarity largely coincides with the literature on this topic which defines transdisciplinarity as the collaboration between different actors from different disciplines and backgrounds, whereby different forms of knowledge are valued and included.

Overall, the interviewees do not only describe the knowledge production within transdisciplinary research projects as coproduction of knowledge, but more broadly as an interaction process. With regard to social interaction, two respondents mention that transdisciplinarity can be understood as a way of producing “actionable” knowledge. Transdisciplinarity is about transforming the power of knowledge by including other’s perspectives. (cf. Interview 3)

In general, it can be said that the interview partners gave answers that were very similar to the literature on Mode 2 knowledge production and transdisciplinarity²³. In particular, the interviewees focused almost exclusively on joint problem-solving as a goal of transdisciplinary research, rather than a common definition or clear methodology. Since there is no single definition of the term transdisciplinarity, there is some leeway for interpretation, which is also reflected in the answers of the respondents.

4.1.1. Differences in Understanding Transdisciplinarity

As was made clear in the theoretical framework and in the paragraph above, transdisciplinarity has a wide meaning. However, the KNOTS project itself defines the equal integration of all participating actors as the most important aim of transdisciplinarity “to encourage participation and to value and to honor all contributions in an equal manner”. (KNOTS application [n. d.]: 36) The idea of a strong inclusion, however, is not shared by all of the interviewed parties. For instance, one interviewee stated that transdisciplinarity does not need an equal participation of all actors, as long as all actors have a voice, there is a degree of co-production and as long as there is an agreement on the roles within the project. (cf. Interview 1)

As these two different viewpoints demonstrate, there is still some degree of unclarity concerning the actual meaning of ‘jointly produced knowledge’ within transdisciplinary projects like KNOTS. All interview partners agree about the importance of involving different actors, but

²³ See full version of the research paper, chapters 2.3.3. & 2.4

the extent to which this involvement is necessary and possible remains open for debate. Seeing how this issue matters to the success of a project such as KNOTS, all partners should optimally have a similar view on the extent to which different actors should be included.

4.1.2. Different Levels of Knowledge on Transdisciplinary Research

The participants had different knowledge on transdisciplinary research. On the first day of the Summer School an introduction game was played, where all participants had to rate their own degree of knowledge on transdisciplinary research (see observation protocol 3, July 2018). The results showed that according to the participants' own assessments, the knowledge on transdisciplinary research varied significantly. These findings were confirmed by the interviewees which mentioned the different levels of knowledge on transdisciplinary research repeatedly. Moreover, the interviewees itself also differed: Some lecturers had an extensive understanding of transdisciplinary research, whereas others admitted that the topic of transdisciplinary research was new and not yet fully understood. One interview partner for example mentioned that all the knowledge on transdisciplinary research she gained was due to joining KNOTS project. (cf. Interview 3)

This imbalance of knowledge on transdisciplinary research itself led to knowledge hierarchies among the lecturers (and students). Some lecturers were very comfortable talking about the subject, while others were more cautious. Also, the fact that some interviewees learned about transdisciplinary research through KNOTS indicates a knowledge transfer from those participants of KNOTS who had already gained knowledge on transdisciplinary research before they became part of the project to those who joined the project with little to no experience in transdisciplinary research. The three interview partners who mentioned that the concept was new to them and that they only learned about it over the course of the KNOTS project were lecturers from Thai and Vietnamese universities. Also, during the introduction game it could be observed that especially participants from South-East Asian institutions felt that they had little to no knowledge on transdisciplinary research. (cf. observation protocol 3, July 2018)

4.1.3. Reflection on the Usage of Transdisciplinarity and Not Including Other, Similar Concepts Like Thai Baan Research

The results demonstrate that in the KNOTS Summer School and Field Trips transdisciplinary research was the main topic, whereas other approaches, like the “Thai Baan Research”, were completely ignored. As it is a “*counter-hegemonic approach*” (Chainarong, n.d.) to “traditional” knowledge production and its principle idea is that local people do their own research to make

local knowledge visible (cf. Chainarong, n.d.), we argue that including the Thai Baan Research would have been an enrichment to the participants learning process.

Although this approach could enrich the transdisciplinary approach especially in terms of reducing (knowledge) hierarchies between academic and non-academic actors, during the Summer School transdisciplinarity as the guiding concept of KNOTS dominated. Therefore, assuming a critical perspective, it can be concluded that no alternative form of knowledge production other than transdisciplinarity was discussed during the Summer School. Not including concepts like Thai Baan Research was a missed opportunity, since the introduction of a 'non-western', counter-hegemonic approach that is in some ways similar to transdisciplinary research (although important differences exist) would have been a transfer of Thai knowledge to the 'western' students and lecturers and could have led to a real and equal knowledge exchange. Instead, the transfer of a 'western'²⁴ concept to all participants took place.

4.2 Knowledge and Power Relations

Although one aim of transdisciplinarity and the KNOTS project itself is to exchange knowledge equally by including as many perspectives as possible, the content of the collected data shows that knowledge hierarchies were still persistent in the KNOTS Summer School in Chiang Mai 2018. The data suggests that the strongest forms of power relations manifested between student and lecturers, and between South-East Asian and European participants. Further topics in regard to power relations were different levels of English language proficiency and the inequality between *men* and *women*. These findings are put into the context of feminist and postcolonial approaches, as well as the theory of critical pedagogy, which addresses hierarchies between *gender, race, language* and between students and teachers.

4.2.1. The Perception of Knowledge Hierarchies in KNOTS Summer School and Field Trips

By taking the intersectional concept into consideration, it can be seen that all forms of hierarchies that are mentioned in chapter 4.2 are interlinked. The mentioned types of hierarchies cannot be considered to be separate unrelated issues, as they are, in fact, interwoven. Power structures and hierarchies do not exist in isolation, meaning they never just exist between students or just because of language. Intersectionality has to be considered, as categories overlapped in the findings, which is exemplified by statements like "old white men" (Questionnaire 2, July 2018).

²⁴ See full version of the research paper, chapters 2.4 and 4.2.5.

Overall, the results show that the interviewed lecturers perceived various kinds of hierarchies within the Summer School. For them, student-teacher hierarchies were most noticeable. At this point, it has to be noted that the following analysis can only address power asymmetries between different academic actors, as non-academic actors were not included during the Summer School. This stands in contrast to the KNOTS application where it is stated that: *“throughout the project life-time, non-academic stakeholders will be included in field research, summer schools, and workshops to co-develop and test transdisciplinary research methodologies”*. (KNOTS application [n.d.]: 32)

Although some did not notice any hierarchies²⁵, they were indeed visible to most of the participants. Some participants (Questionnaires 8, 10, 13, 31, July 2018) believed that different universities, countries, (academic) backgrounds, and disciplines foster different mindsets, which were identified as a reason for the hierarchies they experienced. For some, this led to differences in the level of activity. In this regard, Vietnamese Students have been explicitly mentioned in some questionnaires. The hierarchies between some students from Vietnam and other participants was explained by their academic training, which was regarded to be less critical, and by stating that they do not want to undermine the opinions of the teachers/professors. (Questionnaire 12 & 15, July 2018) Three out of these four questionnaires were filled out by participants from Universities from Bonn and Vienna. This singling out of Vietnamese students is a form of “othering” (see chapter 2.1). In this regard, the topic of othering could be discussed more closely in future projects, as it came up a few times during the analysis.

4.2.2. Power Relations between Academic Actors in Knowledge Production and Transfer (Student-Teacher Hierarchies)

While the majority of the interviewed lecturers focused on the benefits of the students by identifying them as the primary beneficiaries of the Summer School, students’ opportunities for participation were limited. Therefore, a major finding in the analysis was that power relations were highly present within the academic sector, especially between students and teachers. Three out of seven interviewed persons mentioned that participating professors had more power in the Summer School than students. These student-teacher hierarchies were most focused on in the observation papers as well as in the questionnaires, where 16 out of 39 participants referred to this form of power relation. Moreover, four out of 16 people who stated in their questionnaires

²⁵ See full version of the research paper, chapter 4.3.1

that they did perceived hierarchies, criticized European professors for being particularly dominant. Referring to the dominant behavior of men, five out of the 16 participants who perceived hierarchies mentioned that in the Summer School, men dominated not only in knowledge production (Questionnaire 33, July 2018) , but also occupied “ *representative positions*” . (Questionnaire 18, July 2018)

Most sessions were presentations by lecturers, a very classical setting in which lecturers talked and students listened. Although there was generally room for questions and discussion after the presentations, the plan some lecturers had of including students actively did not translate into their actions. However, observation paper 2 (18th July 2018) references a smaller group discussion which took place apart of the regular lectures, describing how the interaction between all participants happened on an equal basis. Everybody had equal speaking time and equal chances to express and exchange their knowledge. In contrast, questionnaire 25 (July 2018) tells of a different experience on the smaller group discussion by suggesting that “[*I*]ecturers should step back a little bit more in group discussions in order to give space to participating students”. (Questionnaire 25) This clearly shows that the smaller group discussions were experienced quite differently²⁶.

For the most part, these findings are contradictory to the aim of transdisciplinarity in higher education. Contradictory to transdisciplinary learning settings, students could not participate that much; rather, teachers delivered knowledge to the students, as it is done in disciplinary learning settings. Therefore, students did not become knowledge producers themselves, but rather remained pure depositories, as Freire would say. In a transdisciplinary learning format, not only pupils should learn, but also teachers. Both, then, would collaborate in producing and exchanging knowledge. Transdisciplinarity in higher education aims for a concept of equal knowledge exchange, including the creation of space for dialogue, collective thinking and equal ways of communication. This was not fulfilled in the KNOTS Summer School.

4.2.3 Power Relations between Men and Women*²⁷

Moreover, (knowledge) hierarchies regarding *gender* were also part of the respondents’ observations and reflections. During the five days of Summer School most content-based sessions were led by male lecturers, as can be seen in the Summer School schedule. Historically, women*

²⁶ See full version of the research paper, chapter 4.3.2

²⁷ See full version of the research paper, 6. Appendix

have been excluded from University institutions. So far, despite criticism and the fact that gender inequality is now largely recognized, science remains dominated by males. To this, Haraway points out that the dominant position of man and *white* still remain uncontested.

Overall, power relations between men and women* did not seem to be one of the main issues regarding hierarchies during the Summer School. While the topic was not addressed at all in the interviews, some of the questionnaires indicate that five participants did perceive inequalities between male and female actors. This does not exclude the possibility that others did not implicitly refer to gender inequalities when they mentioned lecturer-student hierarchies, but since this cannot be verified, the focus was set on the five questionnaires, which were filled out by one male from Bonn, one male from Chiang Mai, and three females from Vienna. The fact that the only female participants who noticed the imbalances came from the same university is interesting, especially since female participants were in the majority during the Summer School²⁸. Presumably, the students of Development Studies of the University of Vienna were more sensitive to this issue, as gender studies and feminist approaches play a big role in the study program and are regularly discussed. However, without knowing the study programs and backgrounds of the other participants, this is just one of many possible explanations.

4.2.4. Power Asymmetries Through Language

Language plays an essential role in society and therefore has also been considered in connection to the production of knowledge²⁹. This was taken into consideration not only by some of the interviewed lecturers, but also by other participants of the Summer School. In interview 7, during which language was mentioned as another example of power relations, the interviewer and interviewee argued that it was challenging to use English, the common language of the project, as using a lingua franca is different from communicating in one's native language. The interviewee adds that being expected to use English, which is a second language for most participants, could have been the reason for low participation, but does not refer directly to asymmetries between participants from Europe and Southeast Asia. (cf. Interview 7)

Another language that sometimes dominated the settings of the Summer School was German, as many sessions were held by German lecturers. In two instances, the participatory observations show that German was used during sessions in the Summer School while participants

²⁸ See table 1

²⁹ See full version of the research paper, chapter 2.2

were present who did not speak it – once during a session led by a German speaker and once in another session during a group work assignment. It was especially noticeable in the latter case, because two group members, one of whom was a lecturer, stuck to German, although three non-German-speakers were also part of the group. With this, they dominated the whole group' working processes, like finding ideas and writing them down. (cf. Observation protocol 6, July 2018)

4.2.5. Power Relations Between European and Southeast Asian Participants

As already mentioned, power relations between different participating institutions play a major role in the collected data. The schedule of the Summer School³⁰ shows that especially men from the University of Bonn dominated topics such as transdisciplinary research and social inequality, whereas lecturers from Southeast Asian institutions were mainly responsible for presenting ongoing research in the region. Although regional lecturers presumably have more expertise on research in the region, the class on “field research methodology” was held by a professor from the University of Bonn. Moreover, the whole Summer School was moderated by a female staff person from the University of Vienna. These findings show that especially staff from European institutions dominated the Summer School by moderating, organizing, transferring contents and holding lectures.

In reference to role allocation within the Summer School, the schedule demonstrates that all facilitators, which were responsible for coordinating the lectures (divided into three topics: migration, inequality and environment) are from European institutions. Although the aim of the coordinator and the KNOTS programme in general was to include all participating higher institutions equally, the observations and the schedule of the Summer School prove that the opposite is the case, as indicated by the clear dominance of European staff.

Furthermore, not only the participatory observations, but also the results of the questionnaires and interviews confirm these hierarchies between European and Southeast Asian participants. This affects not only staff members but also students. Three of the interviewed lecturers argue that a difference between students from Southeast Asia and Europe during Summer School exist. For instance, it was mentioned that Southeast Asian students are more shy compared to European students and therefore participated less. Also, it was pointed out that even European students talked less than the students from Europe. One reason given for that were the knowledge levels in general and more particularly language skills. It was assumed that Southeast

³⁰ See full version of the research paper, 6. Appendix

Asian Students, especially Vietnamese students, were less skilled in the usage of the English language (cf. Interview 4) This statement combines the above-mentioned student-teacher hierarchies with power asymmetries between the students. This builds on the assumption that English is a language that is foreign to most Southeast Asians, while implying that this is not true for Europeans. This has to be seen critically as it is an ascription of abilities (see 3.2) to a certain group of people, namely 'western' educated staff and students.

A question on the inclusion of Southeast Asian scientists/authors in future sessions, as most sessions were dominated by 'western' sources, the answer was that Thai scientists can be considered. Nevertheless, they should have some form of Western education, as that would give them knowledge on modern theories and methods. (cf. Interview 4) This shows the speaker's appreciation of European scholars, and how the dominant knowledge system is still embedded to a certain extent in the minds of some academics. 'Western' academia is deemed to be more modern. Other forms of knowledge, or even scientific knowledge from other geographical locations, are considered inferior. The only way that Thai knowledge would have been considered equal under these conditions is if it had the epistemic location of 'western' academia³¹. The dominance of the "West" preserves its status by strengthening its own structures, like languages, theories, and methods. (Schmidt; Neuburger 2017: 63)

Another statement was made that elevated European participants above their Southeast Asian colleagues by stating that students and professors from European institutions were more eloquent, had more knowledge and even were considered "*better*" than their Southeast Asian counterparts. (cf. Interview 6) This is an external ascription by the interviewee, who assumed that the European lecturers and students are better and more articulate than the Southeast Asian participants. These ascribed characteristics put a certain group in a position of authority and power.

Overall, the questionnaires show that 14 participants confirmed that in the Summer School and Field Trips hierarchies between Europeans and Southeast Asian participants existed. The participants perceived hierarchies especially during discussions, stating that students as well as lecturers from Europe generally participated more and led most of the discussions and had longer speaking times. Students from Vienna & Bonn were mentioned in this context. (Questionnaire 16 & 25, July 2018)

³¹ See full version of the research paper, chapter 2.3.2.

In general, the existence of this form of hierarchy can be explained from a postcolonial perspective: “[W]e still live in a colonial world and we need to break from the narrow ways of thinking about colonial relations, in order to accomplish the unfinished and incomplete twentieth century dream of decolonisation”. (Grosfoguel 2007: 221) This statement by Grosfoguel is as important today as it was back then, as problematic statements regarding ‘western’ and ‘non-western’ knowledge were made by some interview partners.

The results so far contradict the theoretical arguments of how transdisciplinary research should work. They show that the critical approaches are valid and necessary, as the practical implementation of transdisciplinary research is far from optimal³². In transdisciplinarity, different groups should be involved in knowledge production. In this context, Knoblauch (2014: 287) states that this would result in a relativization of the dominant *white*, ‘western’, male position. An equal knowledge exchange in KNOTS Summer School did not take place between students and teachers or between participants from different countries. This becomes particularly apparent in the answers from the questionnaires, which were analyzed in detail in the following chapter.

4.2.6. Perceived Power Relations in the Quantitative Data

In the questionnaires, the participants were asked how much they were able to contribute their knowledge during the Summer School and how much their input was appreciated by the other participants. This data was gathered through standardized questions, which consisted of a scale from one (Very much / Very well) to six (Not at all).

The findings of the questionnaire show that 16 out of 39 participants could not contribute their knowledge well to the KNOTS Summer School, nor was their input appreciated that much by the other participants. It is noticeable that 12 out of these 16 are female and 14 are from South-East Asian Universities. However, 11 out of 39 indicated that they could contribute very well and their contribution was highly appreciated by the other participants. 9 out of these 11 are female students from the University of Vienna. This indicates that hierarchies existed especially between men and women* and between participants from South-East Asia and Europe. Whereas female students from Vienna could contribute well, especially female participants from South-East Asia could not or their input was not greatly appreciated. These results are a strong indication for the existence of inequality or power asymmetries, that emerge through different social axes like *gender* and *race*. Interestingly, no significant results could be found regarding “age”.

³² See full version of the research paper, chapter 2.2-2.4

The groups that were considered here, like “female students from Southeast Asia” or “female students from Europe” were quite heterogeneous. While female students from Vienna were the largest “group” who recognised male-female hierarchies and they also were among the participants who felt most appreciated. And while four out of the seven students who said they did not feel hierarchies in the Summer School were female participants from Southeast Asian universities³³, they also made up the majority of participants who stated that their input was not appreciated. Although there were a few instances of such ‘contradictions’ within the same questionnaire, this was generally not the case. Therefore, individual experiences cannot be easily explained by putting people into categories such as *gender, age or university*.

5. Conclusion

Since knowledge is a very complex and abstract term without a clear definition, the understanding of knowledge varies. And although science and research today try to expand their “traditional” knowledge approaches by including other approaches like postcolonial, feminists and transdisciplinary approaches, there is still potential for improvement. As explained in the paper, transdisciplinarity challenges old prevailing structures and conceptions of academic knowledge production. The question still arises how such a shift can effectively break already existing asymmetries and implement different perspectives and actions in an equal manner. The results of the research demonstrate that power hierarchies still exist in a transdisciplinary setting like the KNOTS Summer School. The most noticed hierarchies were student - teachers and between South-East Asian and European participants, language and gender aspects. These are interlinked hierarchies which cannot be looked at in isolation.

However, during KNOTS Summer School some attempts of reducing hierarchies took place by changing the formats and settings of certain sessions³⁴. Although “*power relations are everywhere*” (cf. Interview 7), it is possible to reduce them, but not to eliminate them completely³⁵. Since the Summer School 2018 in Chiang Mai has only been the second year of the KNOTS project, one respondent stated that every Summer School is a reflective learning experience. Lessons are

³³ See full version of the research paper, chapter 4.3.1.

³⁴ This attempts include changing seating positions and creating sitting circles, having smaller group discussions, the redirection of questions to non-lecturer participants. See full research paper, chapter 4.3.8.

³⁵ A paper by Schmidt; Neuburger 2017 states exactly this. The paper is a constructive critique of transdisciplinarity and correlates with our findings.

learned from these experiences and the newly gained insights and perspectives can be included in the Summer Schools to come. (cf. Interview 1)

In contrast to our research, articles on transdisciplinarity usually do not address power structures directly. (cf. Schmidt/Neuburger 2014: 54f.) Therefore, this research paper can be understood as a step towards approaching the concept of transdisciplinarity from a “new” perspective. Transdisciplinarity as the main topic of the KNOTS program dominated the setting. Other forms of knowledge production and knowledge exchange, such as the Thai Baan Research, were not included in the Summer School. Instead, the knowledge transfers of a ‘western’ concept dominated. To recognize power structures in transdisciplinary projects and to include other forms of knowledge into the approach are key results and should be considered in transdisciplinarity.

Even if power structures will always exist, they can at least be reduced by being self-reflective, trying to include other viewpoints, and by considering different critiques of the dominant knowledge system. The findings show that transdisciplinary settings can enable and promote such considerations to some extent, but there is still room for improvement and to make it more actionable. As this paper made clear, implementing transdisciplinary research is not an easy endeavor, but rather a work in progress. It is important to get all participants³⁶ on board with the idea of leaving behind the dominant knowledge system and the patriarchal, Eurocentric and (neo)colonial structures that are embedded therein and to value each input equally. Further, transdisciplinary research and projects should also be in a dialogue with other knowledge approaches. This paper demonstrates how transdisciplinarity could benefit from considering feminist and post-colonial approaches.

The goal of transdisciplinary, i.e. creating a space which is not only dialog-based, but also open for mutual-learning and critical reflection, (cf. Schmidt/Neuburger 2017: 54), is an attempt to lessen hierarchies and offers an opportunity for a new movement of knowledge production. Although transdisciplinarity “*represents a new thought style and a promising future for education and research*” (Darbellay 2015: 163), the approach still has to be evolved. For enhancing the approach and ensuring its potential, it is necessary to integrate constructive criticism.

³⁶ Involve students and non-academics more into the sessions

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The Roles Of SAARC (South Asian Association For Regional Cooperation) in Managing the Interstate Relations in South Asia

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Abstract

SAARC is the only regional organization in South Asia that incorporates all eight countries in South Asia as its members. As a regional institution, the evolution of SAARC is sometimes compared to the EU and/or ASEAN. With this, the role of SAARC sounds very important to South Asia, yet it is highly criticized. Despite having similar culture and history, they are vastly different from each other politically, economically. The turbulent history between the members reflect as the reasons behind its slow (or stagnant) progress. However, the strength of the institution lies in its components: its structure, principles and rules and norms. All this form a regime in an institution determining its working mechanism and capability. In this case, the inability of SAARC to manage the inter-state relations is frequently attributed to the hostility between the members rather than the institutional capability and its limitations within, which seems to be equally important. In IR, the perspective of Intergovernmentalism and its modified approaches, once used to explain the existence of the EU, resembles to SAARC, yet there has been lack of study presented through this lens. The importance of member states and the role of institutions has been reflected in SAARC and so has been explained through this lens, that terms the weak and rigid regimes in SAARC is the main hurdle for the stagnancy of the institution. Keeping in mind the recent events, the paper would highlight the pertinent issues where SAARC has intervened where necessary, and where it should have been. The paper takes in the internal aspects of the institution i.e. the principles in its Charter and elements of decision-making process. Meanwhile, the unique geography of the region, with India being the largest and the strongest reflecting the power dynamics is also analyzed.

Keyword: SAARC, Regimes and Institutions, South Asian Regionalism, Intergovernmentalism

1. Introduction

SAARC started up with 7 members initially when the idea of forming a regional alliance was proposed by the then President Zia-ur Rahman of Bangladesh. However, before deciding on its establishment on 1985, the idea was brought and discussed early in years (Iqbal, 2006). The late decision of establishing a regional organization in South Asia was due to the environment of doubt between the countries. Hesitant to sign in the charter in the beginning, each country built its doubt on the other, especially India and Pakistan, as India feared of the smaller states ganging up on it and Pakistan feared it was India's strategy against it. (Shahi, 2014) Geographically, India, covers 2/3rd portion of South Asia and is linked to all other member states, except Afghanistan. This influences the power dynamics in SAARC automatically. However, it is balanced by Pakistan, with whom India shares a very strong history. The frequent competition and/or confrontation between them has resulted in difficulty to harmonize the intra-regional relations within the region and move towards the production of an effective regionalism. But what makes SAARC important is that it is the only regional organization which incorporates all the South Asian countries as its members. This has been taken as the reason for it being the lowest integrated region amongst all the regional institutions in the world where ASEAN, EU and continental Africa holds the intra-regional trade ranges as about 30%, 60% and 12% respectively. (Prasai, 2016). Explaining the potential of South Asia, the World Bank ranks it the "world's fastest growing economic region in 2016", which remains still consistent, rated with 7.0% of growth in 2019 and predicted to be 7.1 in 2020 (The World Bank, 2019).

The working mechanism of SAARC is based on the Charter and the SAARC summits where important decisions are made by the member states and areas to cooperate are chosen. With the recent 19th Summit of SAARC which was boycotted by India, supported by Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Bhutan all accusing Pakistan of supporting the terrorist and involved in raid activities in Uri, Kashmir, one can analyze the importance of inter-state relations, while the role of the regional institution remains uncertain in this. The historical relations of the South Asian countries have often been taken into account to study the capability of the institution, rather than the institutions ability, defined by its norms and rules as mentioned in the Charter.

Adjoining this to the theory of International Relations, SAARC, as an intergovernmental institution bears the factors of intergovernmentalism that was used to explain the European phenomenon of regionalism during the 1960's and early 1970s. The study, thus, attempts to explain regionalism in South Asia through the lens of Intergovernmentalism, interlinking the capability of SAARC to manage the intra-regional relations amongst the member states, depending

on its Charter and the working mechanism. Furthermore, it takes into account the modified approaches of Intergovernmentalism explaining the processes within the institution while making decisions, as the theory alone may turn to be incomplete to show the link and between the inter-state relations and the institutional mechanism. For this, the concept of confederalism and 'locked in' are delved into with an attempt to explain the existence of SAARC despite what many have called it – 'failure'. This study adds up to the literature dealing with South Asia and SAARC seen through a new lens of Intergovernmentalism and cooperation in the field of IR. On a similar tangent, South Asian Regionalism has raised questions towards the concept of regionalism bringing it back to the study once again. The talks of regionalism would attempt to pave way for new research in this field.

2. Scholarly Review: Challenges for Development of SAARC as an Institution

First, the conflicting and hostile relations between the members are taken as the number one reason for the stagnancy of the institution, specially accounting to the Indo-Pak relations. The conflicts account to the institution turbulent history of South Asia with a series of conflicts; inter-regional, intra-regional and in-country as also mentioned in the book, "South Asia in the new decade". (Ahmed, 2013, *in eds by Palit and Spittel*: pg 100; Siddika, 2013) Matching up to the reasons, another scholar Praveen Bhalla takes into account the historical evidence of disputes since the colonial period that lays the ground still fertile for territorial and other disputes. He not only regards the dispute between Pakistan and India but India's relations with other nations as well as other conflicted relations among the SAARC members for being the reason for underdevelopment of SAARC. (Bhalla, 1990) This brings to the second reason of the political power influenced by the geographical space or element that has dominated the relations in the region. As a result, it has developed a sense of insecurity amongst the member states and has hence paralyzed the institutional mechanisms if it is to re-address the problem regionally. (Boone & Safi, 2016) In his topic 'Big is not Beautiful in South Asia' in the book *Regional Cooperation*, Kripa Sridharan writes that India's presence has propelled the smaller nations to perceive any act by it as an act of a bully creating fear within the region. This has compelled India to follow a benign policy of unilateralism in most cases. The asymmetrical geography of South Asia doesn't also provide a good picture to the member countries of South Asia and has thus casted a shadow on the intra-regional relations in South Asia. (Sridharan, 2007) An Indian Scholar noted further that the underlying reason behind the skirmishes has been the "cause of generating institutional decay and been the impediment to the desire economic integration and cooperation making South Asia the least integrated in the world." (Dash, 2014) He further accounts the geopolitics of the region to have a huge impact on the 'institutional profile' where the policy of each individual country

varies when it comes to two borders. Therefore, the states tend to remain sensitive to geopolitical issues concerning their national security comes to the question (Dash, 2014).

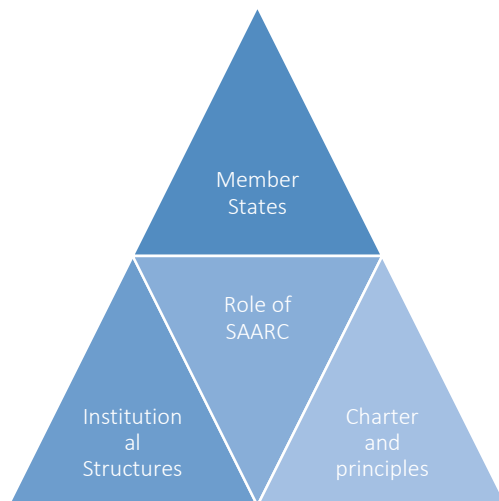
Similarly, some other reasons for the stagnant SAARC refer to the increased number of least developed countries as the members of SAARC, which has also affected the trade of the region (Kelegama, 2007), lack of political will (Hassan & Shafiqur Rahman, 2015), lack of democratization (Shahi, 2014) reflecting on the weak institutionalization of SAARC with ASEAN or EU (Sridharan, 2007; Manepalli, 2008), SAARC being more “sovereignty-based” (Sahasrabuddhe, 2010) and so on. However, it has been argued that each regional organization vary in terms of their structure, surrounding, geography, history and type of members. While contradicting these views, based on the notion of “Comparative Regionalism”, the comparison is not justified as each institution so formed are different. (Tavarez, 2010) He further mentions SAARC’s engagement in and as affected by Kashmir conflict due to the avoidance of talking about bilateral issues as mentioned in the Charter. (Tavarez, 2010) In a similar context, Shahi further clarifies, based on this domestic politics, about the principle of SAARC and the decision taken based on unanimity of the member states (Shahi, 2014).

In the context of theories, functionalism, neo-functionalism and Intergovernmentalism were brought about to explain different phases of regionalism in Europe, first. Stanley Hoffman with his own theory of Intergovernmentalism takes in the stance of a realist approach and challenges neo-functionalism approach in the field of regionalism. According to this new approach (Intergovernmentalism) regional integration would exist only when both parties are benefited by the integration- as a ‘rescue of the nation-state’. (Beeson & Stubbs, 2011) In addition, it has been argued that the phenomenon of European integration cannot be explained by a single theory, and thus explains it with the concept of Confederalism, Domestic politics and ‘locked in’ putting forward a few questions like why do states integrate or cooperate, when in benefit or not. In case of no benefit, states still join together due to the interdependence that has now developed between them in the region, a ‘complex interdependence’ model further explained by Keohane (Cini, 2013).

Each theory has/had its way of explaining the current situation and decision-making processes in SAARC but has been incomplete. The turning up of events and the response by the institution or its action and its relation to the inter-state relations have questioned the existence of theories in IR and Regionalism theories. The above stated major points of IR theories mostly lay down the base for other theories and thus, are not fully capable of explaining the complete

phenomenon. Amongst it all, the study would analyze the role of SAARC as a regional institution through the applicability of its regime i.e. decision-making process based on its institutional capacity guided by its principles and norms and rules. (Fig.1) The 3 elements in the triangle surrounding the “Role of SAARC” represent the pillar that make up the organization, and therefore builds upon it. This helps analyze the role of the institution to manage inter-state relations, even though it keeps on creating challenges for SAARC to develop.

a.



b.

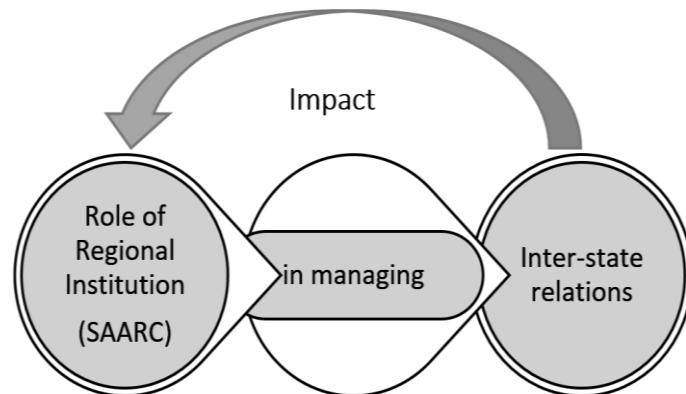


Figure 1: Elements(a) and process (b) of SAARC (to be studied)

3. Emergence of South Asian Regionalism

Mostly bounded by the feeling of national interest and nationalism, the countries in Asia rooted their principles in and around sovereignty the most. One reason for this is their historical experience of colonization and dominance from the west. Most of the South Asian States gained independence only after the Second World War. The important components and emergence of the institutions/conferences like Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and multiple conferences: The Bandung Conference (1955), Asian Relations Conference (1947), the Baguio Conference held (1950), the Colombo Conference (1954), helped develop the notion of creating a regional alliance in South Asia. The Bandung conference, where the whole idea of alliances came about, was based on the five principles of ‘peaceful co-existence’ brought about by India: self-determination, mutual respect for sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference and equality amongst the nation states. It not only imbued the seeds for the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), but also emphasized on the

importance of the intra- regional connections between the participatory Asian states in the Conference (Kumar, 2001).

As explained by realists, the actions of the state are mere reflections of pursuing their national interest and their own preferences. They create their own regime; rules and their actions are strictly based on the principles they built together by themselves. Here, the most powerful member(s) have a greater influence in making decisions based on the principles they collectively develop. The first initiation to form a regional alliance in Asia was brought out by the Late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India who started a vision of Asian Connectivity between India, Iran, Afghanistan and Burma. The smaller nations were, however, not included in the cooperation (Kumar, 2001).

After relentless effort of bringing some of the Asian Countries together, a couple of reasons motivated the leaders to agree for regional cooperation in South Asia. First was the wave of change in the domestic politics of individual countries in need to secure their 'internal legitimacy' in the new system. Second, an alliance was needed to guide the economy of South Asian countries as a result of economic (oil) crisis in the 1970's. Third, to jointly tackle the common problems like poverty, hunger, inequality, unemployment in South Asia, cooperation brought out the idea of sharing and developing through collaboration, where the less developed were inspired to catch up, while the developed encouraged them. Fourth, at a security level, the invasion of Soviet Union to Afghanistan made regional cooperation more than necessary to maintain peace and stability within the region. (Kumar, 2001) All these factors pointed out to the need of establishing a regional alliance in the current age of globalization and have a 'voice-out' in an international platform especially for the colonized nations in South Asia. This beginning of a regional cohesion was also hoped to bring a positive force to creating a harmonious environment conducive to a better perception of togetherness in the region. In 1983, New Delhi, the first South Asian Foreign Ministerial Conference launched the Integrated Programme of Action (IPA) based on mutually agreed areas of cooperation and formally adopted the declaration on Regional cooperation under the establishment of an organization named South Asian Regional Cooperation (SARC), which later changed into South Asian Association for regional Cooperation (SAARC). After at least 14 meetings by different committees and three meetings with the foreign ministers of the member countries held at Male, Thimphu and Dhaka in the years 1984, 1985 and 1985, again, respectively, the first SAARC Summit to be held in Dhaka in December 1985 was set. (Rastriya Samachar Samiti, 2014)

4. SAARC Charter and SAARC Summit

Through an interview, it was highlighted that the Charter and the Summit, both relied on the unanimous decision making of the member states; meaning that the decision had to be made in a consensus with the involvement and agreement of all 8-member states. The SAARC Charter is taken as the guidelines to the establishment of SAARC as a regional institution ranging from the roles and responsibilities for each committee or the working group to the way decision is taken in the organization or during the meetings. The principles in SAARC is derived from the principle of “*Panchasheel*” which was used as “an instrument for further advancing their respective national interests in the mid-1950’s”. (DasGupta, 2016) *Panchasheel*, also known as ‘peace principles’, are the five virtues of peaceful co-existence: “Mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty; Mutual non-aggression, Mutual non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, Equality and cooperation for mutual benefit and Peaceful co-existence”. (Panda, 2014) The norms and rules as mentioned in the Charter are strictly abided by the member states as they facilitate the decision-making process based on it along with a standard of any meeting or discussions held within the premises of SAARC or SAARC Summits.

Another important element is the SAARC Summit that facilitates or provides forum for the member states to discuss, negotiate and decide on formulation of changes/ activities or review of the existing ones. These Summits are comprised of meetings by the Head of the States that was supposed to be hosted every year, but now either annually or biennially. The cooperation is, however, limited to only the selected areas by the member states and is therefore, confined to only those areas. In his acknowledgement, published in the book by *Rastriya Samachar Samiti*, Late Prime Minister Sushil Koirala mentions SAARC Summits to be a ‘big foreign policy event’ and an integral part of the origination, development and further expansion of SAARC (*Rastriya Samachar Samiti*, 2014), (Annex I: Charter of SAARC).

5. South Asian Member States

Despite the promotion and promising values displayed and hailed in the SAARC Charter and during the Summit meetings by the member nations, the countries are embroiled in a few of the most intense political issues that remain the “heart of conversation” each time the organization would want to progress for a stronger cooperation. The most talked about issue- the India-Pakistan conflict has been present since the founding of the two countries in 1947. The major dissatisfaction arose from the border placement between the two countries, a territorial dispute that have led to severe animosity starting from the conflict over the control of the territory of Kashmir. (Khan, Shaheen & Tanveer, 2007) Ever since the partition, there has been the emergence

of four Indo-Pakistan war (1947, 1965, 1979, 1999) along with other low intensity conflicts that has been taking place every now and then in the borders of the two countries. The third war resulted in an independence to Bangladesh in 1971. The second Indo-Pak dispute deals with the Maritime boundary dispute between India and Pakistan which divides, Gujarat state of India and Sindh province of Pakistan known as "Sir Creek". (Dabas, 2016) It adds up to the constrained relation of the two countries. With such a complicated history between the two largest nations as members of SAARC, when summits were being held as a symbol for regional cooperation, a terror attack in Uri halted the trend of organizing summits all at once. Similarly, the most recent 'Pulwama' attack just a few months ago (in February 2019) further worsened the relations between the two and disturbed the security aspect of the whole region with all member states coming together a far cry. The talks of SAARC even have been replaced by other sub-regional initiatives like BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) and a more emphasis is being laid on BBIN (Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal) rather than SAARC. (Tandon & Slobodchikoff, 2019) As a remedy, in addition to several mechanisms (treaties and agreements), the UN has also additionally set up a commission as requested by India called United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) and established United Nations Military Observer Group for India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) in the 'Line of Control' for settling conflict specifically for the Kashmir issue. (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010) In addition to this, H.E. Maj. Gen. Qasim Qureshi, the Pakistani High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, also noted Kashmir issue to be a hurdle that has not only jeopardized the relation between the two states but has disturbed the development and peace of the region. He further added that the development of other regional organizations like ASEAN and the EU can well serve to be a role model for SAARC's economic integration. He noted that, "SAARC, if made more effective could also become an engine for growth for South Asia, which will be possible only after the resolution of the Kashmir Dispute." (The High Commission of Pakistan in Colombo, 2014)

In the case of others, as India shares the common border with most of the member states, the relations are often dealt with India in the context itself. It becomes involved even though, if it does not want to. Similarly, considered another worst border war is the border between Bangladesh and India. Out of several issue two of the issues have constrained the relation between the two countries. First issue related to the Bangladeshi enclaves in India and Indian enclaves of Bangladesh which was prominent until 2015 when India finally signed the agreement for the sake of prosperity. "The world's only "counter-counter-enclave": a patch of India surrounded by Bangladeshi territory, inside an Indian enclave within Bangladesh" as 'The Economist' referred to it, stating this as the world's most complicated boundary. (The Economist, 2015) Similarly, the

case of constructing a barrage in the Farakka River by India could be analyzed as an influence of India over Bangladesh. Third deals with the maritime border with the Bay of Bengal which both countries claim. These issues also fall as one of the reasons for not only Bangladesh seeking regional alliance but also Nepal wanting to regionally cooperate in the areas of water sharing between the member states. India shares an open border with Nepal and thus the conflict majorly concerns with the trafficking issues within the border and interference of India in Nepalese politics through influence the low land area of Nepal inhabited by the *Madhesis* or the *Terai* people as they are close geographically to India. Geographically, the areas in dispute between Nepal and India, however, does not affect the regional cooperation between them. Similar is the case with Sri Lanka and India as it is bounded by agreements and treaties as both abide by it but the relation often gets constrained with India's interference in the domestic politics of Sri Lanka; as a result of which India has cancelled one of the Summits to be held in Colombo due to insecurity as felt by India. With Bhutan and Maldives, India has had no border dispute but instead a good bilateral relation. Lastly, Afghanistan and Pakistani borders known as the 'Durand Line' as drawn by the British and has been troublesome ever since the partition. While Pakistan claims it an international border, Afghanistan claims it an artificial border drawn by the British and will continue to "highlight the unsettled and disputed nature as the root cause of the deteriorating Afghan- Pakistani relationship". (Akbari, 2019) These conflicts have given a leeway to other conflicts within and between the nation-states in South Asia and has developed mistrust and suspicion between the member states. Amongst all the conflicts the one that has developed animosity between India and Pakistan has had effects till today. Other issues like interference in domestic politics, trafficking, refugee problem between Nepal- Bhutan, Bangladesh-India or Afghanistan- Pakistan has also tampered relation in one way or the other as the countries lay in closer geographical proximity. The need for conflict resolution mechanism was even expressed during a few summits, however, was not taken too deeply by other Heads of the States. One can assume this negation or ignorance of this appeal is the will of the members.

6. SAARC as Seen from Theoretical Perspective

A) The Theory of Intergovernmentalism and Its Evolution

Following the key gist of the theory, the theory overall highlights three key points: First, it emphasizes on the importance of states as a sole decision-maker for their external policies. This inturn is determined by the will and determination to achieve one's national interest, leading us to the second pointer of intergovernmentalism critique i.e. inter-state negotiations. Striving to fulfill its national interest, the member-states negotiate and bargain with its members and take decisions that likely will favor all but mostly itself. This shows the continued dominance of nations

states in a regional negotiations and inter-state bargaining. The third relates to the notion of integration and disintegration within a region. This brings out the major criticism Hoffman poses to Neo-functional approach, rejecting the idea of spillover and integration contradicting it with the logic of diversity. (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 2006)

According to Hoffman, nation states play a dominant role in collaboration and cooperation, and still hold the highest position in making decisions and has the power to influence the processes. Secondly, Hoffman reflects on the importance of nationalism. Despite the different cultural and historical background that shape up the nationalist sentiment in a country or within an individual, it all conjoins to one simple rule: preserving the nation and its national interest, and this remains the top-most priority of policy makers. (Hoffman, 1966) Depending on this, the members decide whether to integrate or cooperate or not. This brings us to the idea of integration and disintegration that constitutes numerous claims explained through the logic of diversity, the notion of spillover effect, and therefore clarifying the importance of the role of nation states and the actions of supranationalism of institutions, other than states. While Neo-functional scholars support the “logic of integration” as an opportunity to bring together states of different cultures and identity with their own unique way to solve problems jointly through different innovative ideas. Criticized with the “logic of diversity”, Hoffman argues that diversity keeps them apart from sharing the same path of integration when it comes to their distinct nationality with an intention to preserve their own identity and diverse yet unique nature. (Hoffman, 1966). The diversity thus, plays a role that limits the functions of an institution through policies and principles, norms and rules drafted for the institution and its activities. As Hoffman puts it, “the interstate cooperation may lead to the set-up of European Institutions with a varying degree of autonomy, power, and legitimacy, but no transfer of allegiance or loyalty, and meanwhile the authority of the institutions is limited, conditional, dependent and reversible.” (Hoffman, 1966: 909) Advocating for states, the institutions now therefore, play the role of instruments or tools that guide them to achieve their national goal and objectives of growth and development along with peace and stability without jeopardizing their national security and sovereignty.

This factor further has been summarized into the differences between two levels: High Politics and Low politics, as identified by Stanley Hoffman, that deals with cooperation separately by the nation states within an institution. He contends that neo-functionalists missed out on two points: First, the analysis failed to take into context the external environment i.e. the international system and therefore had a narrow perspective. Second, due to the external influences, they failed to realize that the path to integration or spillover might not be the same to all the member states

and as the perspectives of the members do not match, the power sometimes does not fall into the support of the thought of integration and institutions. (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 2006) The areas of low politics are those where states are more willing to cooperate as they are not controversial and do not pose a threat to the identity of the nation states. While High politics includes areas that are dealt with issues of “national sovereignty and national identity” like foreign affairs or defense, most like a political sphere (Pan, 2015). According to Hoffman, “Once integration reaches to issues that affect the realm of power denoted by high politics, the agreement becomes difficult, if not impossible.” (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 2006; Part II: 99)

Similarly, some modified theories evolved through the base of Intergovernmentalism with an attempt to explain the relation between the institution and the nation states, where the latter still holds the importance in the decision-making processes; the phenomenon of confederalism, the concept of ‘locked-in’ and liberal intergovernmentalism emerged.

Confederalism was taken as a ‘revision’ of Intergovernmentalism that identified the presence of the system or a perception where the states remain integrated through a common policy while continuing to be intact with their national sovereignty. Like the concept of Intergovernmentalism, states use the institution as their tool to foster interstate relations and cooperation in order to solve their common problems, hence, also abiding by their national interest. (Pan, 2015) Confederalism was brought about by Paul Taylor in the 1970’s. He states that “each state perceived the benefits of membership in the club for its own interest, but also, was reminded of the costs of moving towards greater supranationalism in the procedures for coordination of foreign policy.” (Paul as cited on Pan, 2015) The emergence of confederalism breaks down into three main features: 1) maintaining a defensive position by the Governments in the institution (as more the regional constraints, the more defensive states get). 2). evolving pattern of a community within the region characterized by “Gesellschaft”. 3) the oscillation between these two, institution and sovereignty. In all three, the states tend to play the game as they want it to be played. This gives the idea of the importance of states and its authority. (Pan, 2015)

Similarly, one of the key features bring of the locked in through Joint Decision Trap model that looks into the idea of ‘locked in’ of states into an institution drawing upon from the concept of “interlocking politics”, one of the ideas of comparative politics. (Pan, 2015) Based on this concept, the idea of fear of the higher cost by the members if they retrieve from their current position in cooperation and agreements, results in continued membership within that institution

and cooperation. This explains the locked in of the states into cooperation or in any form. Fritz W. Scharpf takes in references of the relation of federal states in Germany based on their structures and relation with the central government and the patterns of decision making. He compares this form of decision-making process with the EU and thus takes note of two things; interstate bargaining within an institution and the unanimous decision being taken through unanimous voting. Based on these two methods, Scharpf puts forward the idea 'Joint Decision Trap'. (Scharpf, 1988) According to Scharpf, "it is the combination of unanimity rule and a bargaining style which explains the pathologies of public policy associated with joint decisions in Germany and in Europe" and thus is considered an "institutional arrangement" in which decisions and policies are made (Scharpf, 1988).

7. Regionalism within SAARC explained

The current phenomenon of regionalism in South Asia is most accurately explained by the 'traditional' Intergovernmental theory as the decisions are made by the Head of the Government of the member states. Despite the proliferation of agencies under or working with SAARC, the agreements signed, and the treaties introduced along with projects and programmes implemented does not guarantee the full amount of effectivity in the growing relation between South Asian countries. One can abide to this statement as despite being a summit-centric organization, it has been unable to host summit annually or consistently. The breakage of hosting summits has been the resulting factor of the political disagreements between the member states which creates rising tensions in the region and insecurities. Based on the primary interview conducted during the study, the cancellation of the SAARC summit has destroyed the momentum and has affected greatly to the functionality of the organization further diminishing its legality. On the other hand, this does not mean that SAARC has failed as an institution as this has not stopped the ongoing activities, projects and programmes aimed at fostering the cooperation within the region.

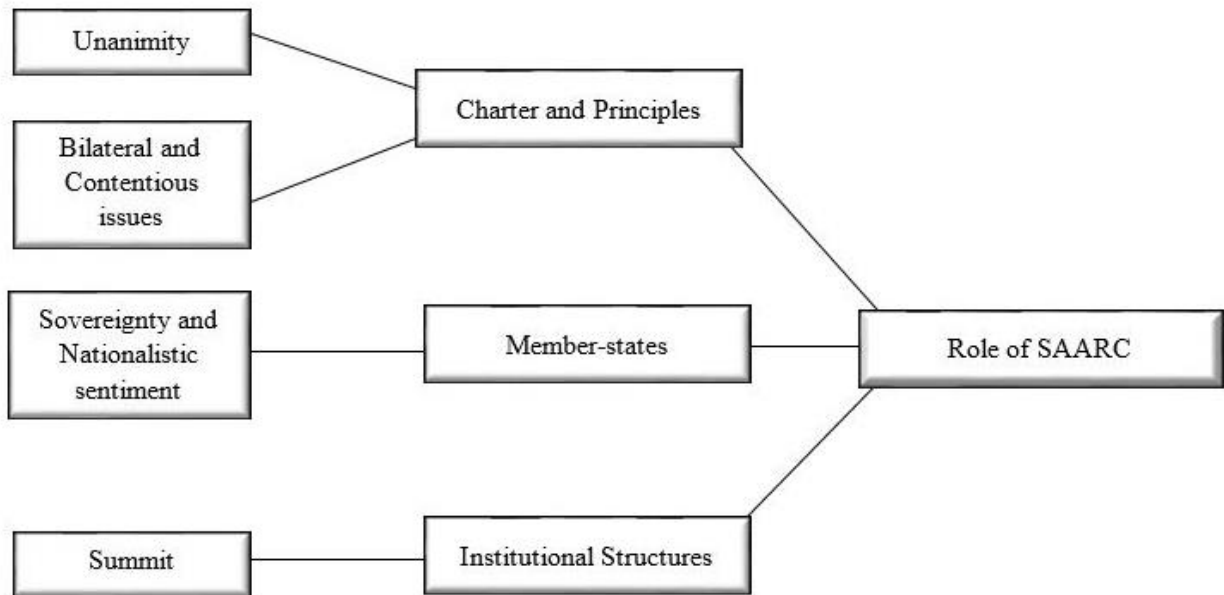


Figure 2: Link Showing the Connection Between Intergovernmentalism and The Institution (SAARC)

First, explaining the importance of member states and their principles of sovereignty in Hoffman's word, the feelings of nationalism, and the national sentiment has been going strong ever since the independence gained by the South Asian Countries. The principles of peaceful coexistence (Panchasheel) has not been applicable to only SAARC but most of the other regional institution regional and sub-regional institutions in Asia. While the institutions continue to stick by their sovereignty and the principles of non-interference, they are often criticized to be the challenges for the development of institutions. Only recently, during the 34th ASEAN summit being held in Bangkok, Thailand, the issue was brought up again (Frye, 2019). The aspect of non-interference is also relatable to SAARC. For instance, when enquired about SAARC's initiative to the recent 2019 April terrorist attack (bombings) in Sri Lanka, the norms in the Charter of non-interference and sovereignty was stated as it involved meddling with the domestic environment and sovereignty. Similarly, the holding of the principles also brings out the logic of diversity present in the member nations which they do not risk meshing in. The different national interest and characteristics of the members and their sovereignty compels them maintain their defensive posture. While it is also important to maintain one's sovereignty and national interest, when

countries cooperate in an institution, certain powers should also be transferred in order to build or sustain its legitimacy. This keeps up the worth of the institution.

In terms of SAARC, the holding of their sovereignty and the non-interference principle as mentioned in the Charter also reflects on the rigidity and inflexible or rather unadapting institution. With a rapidly changing world, this creates a major hurdle in SAARC and therefore, explains the loopholes in the institution. To this, many scholars have also criticized the inflexibility of the institutional structures of SAARC, which tends to give more space to their member states than needed that allows them to rule over the institution. The boycott of the summit not only shows the power dynamics, but also raises to the question of national security as the utmost priority to the region. This is not the first time the summits have been boycotted. In about 35 years of establishments there have been only 18 summits so far, and mostly by India (Balachandran, 2018). In addition, the summit is overall guided by the decision-making process and rules as mentioned in the Charter, that is in turn drafted by the states, relying heavily on the members. Therefore, the members in SAARC have the power to choose the areas they want to cooperate and communicate in where they are comfortable talking about and leave out the controversial areas. This halts the progress of any institution, as ultimately the sectors of the countries are interconnected to each other and the costs or the benefits cannot be limited only to one.

Second, the members in SAARC do not mesh the aspects of economic and social development and with the political (bilateral or argumentative issues) relations abiding by the Charter, Article X (2) (refer to table No. 1). Thus, the distinction that Hoffman stressed about the high and low politics is still prevalent in SAARC even though the importance of developing smooth and progressive political relations for peace and stability is mentioned in every summit. The existence of the newly formed Arbitration Council in SAARC touches upon the contentious issues holding upon two conditions but is voluntary as well as limited to the economic sector to foster smooth investment within the region. This makes it a not-so-effective agency (SAARC Conventions, Ministry of External Affairs). Being a voluntary organization, in SAARC even though the membership has been confirmed, most of the bodies and agencies of SAARC that are constantly used as a medium of exchange within the member states and to link outside world are voluntary and have been approached only if the member states want to. The mandates do not necessarily push for cooperation as the organization is approached by the states itself and does not bind the members to cooperate compulsively. This gives a liberty to the states to decide on their areas of cooperation, and step back if they do not want to cooperate.

Third, the Charter also highlights the roles and responsibilities of each working community and members within SAARC with Council of Ministers and Standing Committee, first and second in the hierarchy list, followed by the Secretariat. The role of the Secretariat and the Secretary General as identified by the former Secretary General Abul Ahsan of SAARC is, however, quite limited, unlike other regional organizations like the EU or the ASEAN whose prime authority lies in the hands of the Secretariat. He accounts to the unwillingness of the member states to let go off their sovereignty this soon, and mentions the lack of trust among the member states that has hurdled the progress of the organization. (Dash, 2012: 408) The Secretariat and the Secretary General must report to the Council of ministers and the Standing Committee. This reflects the weak institutionalization of SAARC with structured and mostly rigid framework for cooperation and the dominance of member states within the institution. SAARC as an institution has very limited power and is thus, bounded by the decision and undertakings or in other words, orders of its member states. The norms and rules are inflexible and rigid that are effective only under SAARC meetings incorporating activities, projects and programs.

And finally, the rule of unanimity. Willing to strive in this environment of insecurities, but not willing to give up the membership in SAARC. Why? Apart from the norms/rules of avoiding the contentious and bilateral issues, Article X (1) and Rule 9: Points of Order as one of the provisional rules hold another clause of 'Unanimity' as the decision-making process in SAARC. This has been another reason for the cancellation of summits as it clearly states in the Charter that the decision must be unanimous even though it has been allowed that atleast five of the members are present during the discussion. This can also explain the development of other initiatives like BBIN (Bhutan-Bangladesh-India-Nepal) or BIMSTEC which takes in members other than all the SAARC members. These initiatives have also been reached out as a replacement of SAARC, while some have negated it analyzing the importance of SAARC as the initial regional institution of all South Asian Countries, and a hope of South Asian Unity. The deciding factor enlisted in SAARC Charter emphasizes in consensus highlighting the matter of 'South Asian Unity'. However, it makes the member states participation compulsory in every decision-making process. This, sometimes, results in either no results or not-so-effective outcome when the interest of the member states collides with each other. This clause has also been mentioned for/during the conduct of Business within the South Asian member states (Rule 7). (SAARC Charter) To elaborate it better, the phenomenon explains the "locking-in" of states mostly suitably explained by 'Joint Decision Traps'. On a similar tangent, a recent data published by the LSE has analyzed how the total of about 44 treaties and agreements have helped India and Pakistan improve their relations and prevent war since 1947. As the year

grew and grew with it the number of treaties, the cooperation along with its benefits increased, also increasing the cost of withdrawal³⁷ (Tandon & Slobodchikoff, 2019).

As the points explain the regionalism being played by the member states, confederalism explains how the states take in the defensive position with a strong grasp of their sovereignty, but also cooperating on areas they want to within the institution of SAARC. As SAARC aims at forming a South Asian union in its future, the strong hold in their sovereignty and a developed feeling of insecurity due to lack of trust has been a strong hurdle for the regional cooperation to foster making it difficult to form a community, less a union. The feeling of insecurity made stronger by the lack of trust between members' forces the Governments to take defensive position against their own neighbors. Though building up a community, 'Gesellschaft' as the confederalists refer to, has been one of the goals of SAARC, the idea still remains far further without any meeting between the member states. Based on the explanation of the interviewee, the momentum gained during the SAARC Summit meetings is lost with the cancellations of the meetings and automatically allows more suspicion, and uncertainty in relation between them. Nevertheless, despite this, SAARC has targeted on physical connectivity through infrastructure development, energy and tourism.

8. Conclusion

The ability to come this far despite the political instability has been commendable. The establishment of agreements, treaties have paved the way of SAARC to become a regional institution- but a successful regional institution still remains a question. The main point of this study has been to contribute to the notion of a regional institution with its one of the determinants being the intra- regional relations. The institutions capability is not defined by its external environment alone but also depends on the way it strives in certain environment react to the constraints along with its nature and type. Through the case of SAARC, which has been a platform to negotiate and bargain for the South Asian countries, one can understand how important the strength and capability of an institution is in fostering the inter-state relations. However, this is a 'two-way route' where the capability and the functioning is also inturn affected by the relation of the member nations when the sole decision makers are the members, themselves (as reflected in Fig 1 (b)). In addition, with globalization, unless South Asian states act together, there is every possibility that they will be left behind. Regardless of the critics, Intergovernmentalism explains

³⁷ Note that all the treaties were not by SAARC. However, it helps to show the positive outcomes of cooperation through agreements and/or treaties and the additional cost, if the countries retrieved. This can be analyzed with the view of increasing agreements in SAARC and the promotion of SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Agreement) and the benefits that come with it, along with the cost of retrieval for the member states).

the on-going process of SAARC, its decision-making factors, and the fact that the member states in SAARC play an important role. This does not deny the fact that the other theories cannot.³⁸ All in all, the strict rigidity of the regimes in SAARC has been a major hurdle that poses a challenge to SAARC in realizing its full potential, and therefore giving out its full potential to boosting the regional cooperation. However, despite the halt in Summits and decision making, the institution has still taken its responsibility to cooperation regional through areas of low politics. This emphasizes on how important the institution can be for further development of the members. While each has a distinct capability, the member nations are to identify these capabilities and work for a shared journey turning this diversity into diverse ground of opportunity. In addition, the study encourages to research and study more on the modified models that is based in Intergovernmentalism framework, and provides a leeway for indepth study for further understanding of regional cooperation in South Asia.

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³⁸Though there are other evolved approaches that takes in the basis of Intergovernmentalism framework like the Liberal Intergovernmentalism or Pierson's Path Dependence model or even, Robert Putnam's two level theories, the current stage that especially reflects on SAARC's inability to manage intra-regional relations in the political sector and slower progress in the social and economic development due to its regime can be explained by the traditional Intergovernmentalism and other approaches that branch from this very idea of traditional Intergovernmentalism.

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10. Annex I: Charter of SAARC

Article II: Principles

Cooperation within the framework of the Association shall be based on respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and mutual benefit.

1. Such cooperation shall not be a substitute for bilateral and multilateral cooperation but shall complement them.
2. Such cooperation shall not be inconsistent with bilateral and multilateral obligations.

Article X: General Provisions

1. Decisions at all levels shall be taken on the basis of unanimity.
2. Bilateral and contentious issues shall be excluded from the deliberations.

Provisional Rules of Procedure

Conduct of Business (Rule 7)

The Chairperson may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed only when the representatives of at least five Member States are present. The presence of all the Member States shall be required for any decision to be taken.

Speeches (Rule 10)

2. Debate shall be confined to the question before the meeting and the Chairperson may call the speaker to order if his/her remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion

Decision Making (Rule 13)

The Meeting shall adopt its decisions and make recommendations on the basis of unanimity.

(Table No. 1) Major points in the Charter pertinent to the study. (SAARC Charter/www.saarcsec.org)

A Discourse Analysis of LGBTI and Homosexuality Representation in the Thai Secondary-Level Physical and Health Education Textbooks

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Abstract

Textbooks and national curriculum represent “official knowledge” or the set of ideas legitimised by the state and dominant groups in the society. The legitimate knowledge constitutes the oppressive structure that fosters and maintains social inequalities and injustice. For LGBTI people, the inequality and unfair treatments that they experience in the Thai society can be traced to what has been said about them – and gender and sexuality in general – in the textbooks. This paper integrates the approaches and knowledge of two disciplines, i.e. gender study and sociology of education, to find out how the Physical & Health Education (PE) textbooks represent the image of LGBTI people and homosexuality by using the concepts of heteronormativity and gender neutrality. The research explores the content of all secondary-level PE textbooks that are available in the market, comprising a total of 36 textbooks. These textbooks are written by 6 publishers – 1 governmental entity (the Ministry of Education – MOE) and 5 private publishers. The researcher selects only the chapters that deal specifically with sexual development, sexual behaviors, sexual values, family and marriage. The analysis found that, first, the level of LGBTI coverage and level of heteronormativity varies among the 6 publishers. While some publishers are more progressive in the sense that they discuss LGBTI separately and include content on families of same-sex couple, others remain very conservative. For example, some publishers still discuss LGBTI as a ‘deviant’ behavior that requires correction. Second, despite some evidence of inclusion of LGBTI and challenge to heteronormativity, the overall representation of LGBTI and homosexuality still reinforces the image of these people as “the others”. This otherness is implicit in the use of images and words that are based on gender dichotomy such as Num-Sao and Por-Mae a. Moreover, it constructs the LGBTI & homosexuality as “non-Thai” that is a threat to Thai culture. Therefore, the analysis concludes that Thai PE textbooks still largely reinforces heteronormativity and far from being gender-neutral.

Keyword: LGBTI, Homosexuality, Heteronormativity, Textbooks, Thailand, Gender Neutrality

1. Introduction

“Being a kathoey is no different than being a lunatic”, and that “kathoeyes are sexual deviants, they shouldn’t be teachers.”

(Chayanit Itthipongmaetee, 2019, para. 3)

One transgender university student from the faculty of education was commented by the instructor that being a Kathoey or a transgender woman is a mental illness and that she does not deserve being a teacher per the quote above. This incidence shows the homophobic assault of LGBTI in the schooling setting, where it is supposed to be a friendly place for everyone regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation. However, many of whom are so-called ‘Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex’ (LGBTI)³⁹ still face discrimination and homophobia in the schooling system (Pascoe, 2007; World Bank, 2018).

The textbooks and the national curriculum play a significant role in the schooling system. As textbooks are the essential material used in teaching during most of the class activity as well as that the student relies on the content in the textbooks in learning information (Blumberg, 2008). On the other hand, the national curriculum consists of the guidelines and standards written by the state for the school to follow and expect the student to meet specific indicators. However, it is claimed to be one of the mechanisms that maintained and reproduce inequality (Van Dijk, 1998).

The textbooks and the national curriculum are the place where they represent the ‘official knowledge’. The official knowledge is the knowledge, or a set of the idea legitimized by the dominant group of the society. That means, the minority’s knowledge is contested and oppressed by the dominant one. It is argued by the famous scholar, Apple, that the official knowledge construct, maintain and reproduce the structure of inequality within the society. Therefore, the schooling system is the representation of the dominant’s group’s knowledge in which it maintains and reproduces inequality within the society through the use of textbook and school curriculum (Apple, 1979).

Nowadays, LGBTI people are still facing inequality and discrimination in their life, including the schooling system as the quotation above. The inequality could be traced back to what it said

³⁹ In this paper, the author uses the term LGBTI to represent gender non-conforming as accordance with the UN approach to the equality of LGBTI rights. The UNFE argued that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex are facing challenges to human rights issues. However, according UNFE, there are many terms used referring to gender non-conforming across different cultures and places (UNFE, n.d.).

in the textbooks; therefore, it is interesting to examine the discourse on how LGBTI and homosexuality are represented in the school textbooks.

2. Theoretical concepts

This research has drawn on two main theoretical concepts to help in answering the research question. The concepts are gender neutrality and heteronormativity.

2.1 Gender neutrality

Gender neutrality is the approach of language, policy and social institution that attempt to eliminate all forms of discrimination of a person regarding gender identity. In other words, the concept aims to represent and treat everyone equally, regardless of gender identity. To eliminate discrimination, it challenges the existing system of gender norm and roles in the society, including the gender binary system, so it emphasises the diversity of gender identity that exists. No one gender is emphasised more than the others, or no one gender should be inferior or superior than the other. One example of gender neutrality is “a gender-neutral bathroom” since it is where bathroom that anyone can use without the condition of one’s gender identity.

2.2 Heteronormativity

Heteronormativity is the norm that assumes that heterosexuality is the only normal form of sexuality, meaning that it assumes that everyone is heterosexual in which they romantically attracted to *opposite-sex*.

“ Those **elements of social expectations** in which the [heterosexual] culture thinks of itself as the **elemental form of human association**, as the very model of inter-gender relations, as the invisible basis of all community, and **means of reproduction without which society wouldn’t exist.**” (Hickman & Porfilio, 2012, p. 72)

The definition of heteronormativity, as mentioned in the quotation above, it privileged the heterosexuality, that the heterosexuality is the elemental form of the sexual orientation of human being. Moreover, it emphasises the significance of the heterosexual relationship as necessary to society as to maintain the population. As a result, homosexuality is assigned with stigmatisation as it is not an ideal form of human association nor able to maintain the society and assigned as not an ideal form of sexuality. It creates the sense of “the other” and “abnormal” for homosexuality.

3. The methodology

3.1 Sample Selection

The researcher chose the PE subject as it is the subject that obviously and specifically deal with the content relevant to the representation of LGBTI and homosexuality. PE is the subject that comprises of chapters on sexual value, behaviour, sex educations, gender equality, sexual education that directly deal with the representation of LGBTI and homosexuality. Also, from the previous study of Buston and Hart (2001, p. 96) suggests that these chapters are the most obvious to research LGBTI, heteronormativity and homosexuality representation.

3.2 A Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is the critique approach to the language use and the concept that social fact is fixed innate meaning just by what is reflected through the language. It believes that language has the power to construct the meaning. Therefore, the language constitutes the social facts. Discourse is made up of textual statements and illustrations in which it has the power to construct how things are understood. As a result, the way we understand shapes the way we act. The discourse analysis then aims to understand what text and images claim as the truth and the social fact (Ortega-Alcázar, 2012). However, the discourse analysis method is varied, but this paper focuses on “all creation of meaning occurs discursively” (Boréus & Bergström, 2017, p. 209), including non-linguistic.

Therefore, discourse analysis is used in this research to identify the assumption of the textbook on the representation of LGBTI and homosexuality by looking at the language use - the word use, the grammar arrangement of the content with the visual arrangement within the textbooks. The analysis is on the meaning of the text in relation to the overall context of the language and illustrations.

3.3 Data Declaration

The research conducts an analysis of the discourse in 36 secondary level (grade 7-12) Physical and Health (PE) education textbooks which are available in the market. The textbooks are published by six publishers – 1 governmental publisher - the Ministry of Education (MOE) and 5 are the private publishers which are Aksorn Education publishing (Aksorn); Aimphan Press Co., Ltd (Aimphan); MAC Education Co., Ltd (MAC); Pathanawichakarnthai International Co. Ltd (PW); and Watana Panit Publishing Co. Ltd (Wattana). Noted that the shorten names in the parenthesis are used instead of the full name throughout the paper.

4. Findings and Analysis

This section of findings and analysis is divided into three main sections: 1.) the representation of LGBTI and homosexuality; 2.) homosexuality as “non-Thai”; and 3.) heteronormativity and gender binary system. The further details explained as follows:

4.1 The representation of LGBTI and homosexuality

The represent of LGBTI and homosexuality is varied based on the publishers. Based on the analysis of the content in the textbooks, the publishers could come up with two main groups – progressive and conservative publishers. The classification is based on the representation and inclusiveness of LGBTI and homosexual representation in the textbooks. The researcher classifies Aimphan and Aksorn as progressive publishers and MOE, Wattana, PW, and MAC as the conservative ones.

4.1.1 The references for LGBTI

The difference of words used and the definition of gender diversity and sexual orientation in the Thai language between two groups of publishers indicate how the textbooks look at LGBTI and homosexuality. The progressive publishers used a positive and neutral word for LGBTI people “หลากหลายทางเพศ” (gender diversity), while the conservative publishers use the word that has more negative meaning and implicitly indicates the binary system norm, “เบี่ยงเบนทางเพศ” or “พฤติกรรมเบี่ยงเบนทางเพศ” (sexual deviation).

“Gender diversity (ความหลากหลายทางเพศ) means **gender identity, sexual attraction, and gender expression** that is **different from the biological sex (เพศโดยกำเนิด)** such as female that is attracted to female is called **lesbians (เลสเบี้ยน)**, a male that is attracted to male is called **gay (เกย์)**, a person who is attracted to both male and female is called **bisexual (ไบเซ็กชวล)** (Aimphan, Grade 8, p. 28).“

The quotation above is the definition of gender diversity in Aimphan’s grade 8 that recognise the diversity of gender identity. Moreover, the definition emphasises that gender identity does not have to be accordant with biological sex.

“Sexual deviation (เบี่ยงเบนทางทางเพศ) is the behaviour of a person whose sexual behaviour **is distorted** from the **normal people** on the grounds of personality, thought, attitude, sexual desire, including the expression and behaviour that are **not relevant to the sex**. These are

perceived **as abnormal** sexual behaviour, also are **not accepted** in most of the society (Wattana, Grade 7, p.59).”

Whereas the definition of LGBTI and homosexuality largely in the conservative textbook used the term “sexual deviation” for LGBTI and homosexuality per the quotation above. “Deviant” implies the “abnormality” of non-conforming gender identities and sexual orientations. Also, it accentuates the *abnormality* and *minority* by the terms “*abnormal*” and “*normal*” people.

4.1.2 Normalisation of Intersex people

References of intersex people are minimal in the textbooks. Only 8 out of 36 textbooks mention the intersexual people.

“In case, a person with **ambiguous biological sex characteristics**, or **people with two sexes (intersex)**, National Health Security Office (NHSO) considers intersex people as people with **ambiguous sex**. Intersex people need **surgical treatment** to have a biological sex that fit as the **diagnose of the doctors...**” (Aksorn, Grade 7, p. 59)

The quotation above from Aksorn’s grade 7 textbooks indicate that one of the governmental institutions, NHSO, sees intersex people as a sexual disorder and needs surgical treatment to transform them into either typical male or female. Intersex people is one of the sexes among male and female; they have different sex characteristics such as hormones, chromosomes, and sexual anatomy. There is nothing wrong with “ambiguous” but “needing surgical treatment” involves an assumption that LGBTI needs intervention to their characteristics, even if born like that, is considered incorrect.

4.1.3 LGBTI and homosexuality as disadvantage identity and sexuality

Another construction/images of LGBTI & homosexuality that emerges from the reinforces of LGBTI & homosexuality is that of a disadvantage identity.

The MOE, grade 7 construct of LGBTI as disadvantaged to be treated with mercy rather than respect as mention in the quotation below:

“Friends are people that we have a close relationship with. That friend could be a person who has same-sex, different sex and gender diverse. Therefore, we should have an **appropriate** and polite manner as such:

1...

13. Should not bully or **look at them as different from the others** because it will **make them feel sad.**
14. Should not gossip or insult them and should see them just **as a human being like everyone.**
15. Female students should keep a distance from a feminine male friend as it is not proper to have a skin touch with a man-like body.” (MOE, Grade7, p. 78)

The quote above indicating on how to behave toward an LGBTI reveals the viewpoint that sees LGBTI as a disadvantaged group. It reproduces the image of these people as victims of the society such as gossiping and bullying. LGBTI, as a victim could also be implied that society usually discriminates and attack them through verbal and physical assault. Therefore, the textbooks attempt to convince the readers to avoid these behaviours because they are already victims. Moreover, the instruction on how to behave toward another person for gender binary people is different, as “normal” people, do not need sympathetic treatments. The interesting point is that the reason for avoiding mistreating LGBTI is not built upon the idea of equal rights and respect, rather being here calls for mercy and sympathetic treatment.

4.1.4 LGBTI as “the other”

Even though LGBTI and homosexuality are inclusive in updated publishers, however, they are looks as “the other” that discursively indicates the textbook’s point of view that see the society is based on the gender binary system. A grade 7 textbook of Aimphan Press Co., Ltd publisher mention one point on how to live together in a gender diversity society that:

“[1.] Accepting the gender right is a personal right. Therefore, **we** should follow and respect each other and **should not quickly assume or judge those who are different from us** as a sexual deviation.” (Aimphan, Grade 7, p.70)

From the quotation above, the statement that “we should not quickly assume or judge on those who are different from us...” reveals that the authors the textbook have the concept of what is similar and different from the authors’ point of view. Therefore, there are two points to highlight from this quotation. The first point, the authors based the definition of sameness and difference in author standpoint, those who are different, in terms of gender identity, is placed in a different position to the authors. The second point, the authors leave a room to classify a person under the label “sexual deviation” to those who are different from “us” or the authors. Overall, authors

position, LGBTI and homosexuality as those who are “the other” and not recognise LGBTI and homosexuality as unity as the authors' point of view.

The alternative message that the publisher might consider is “Accepting the gender right is a personal right. Therefore, we should follow and respect each other with the dignity of human regardless of gender identity”. As this alternative message encourages the readers not to judge anyone with any means regarding gender identity, but respect and treat everyone equally on the ground of being human.

“Nowadays, **society becomes more accepting toward LGBTI people**, for example, the Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS), respecting the civil right of gender diverse people, and processing on the non-discrimination act implementation... these help gender diverse people with the accessibility to social benefits...” (Aksorn, grade 7, page 62)

Similarly, the quotation above, it explicitly indicates the viewpoint that accentuates a position of LGBTI people belongs to a different domain as “before” they become more acceptable by society. LGBTI and the society are placed in a separate domain of community. It does not recognise the unity of LGBTI people as a complete part of the society, or LGBTI people is society. Instead, it is becoming one. While the statement calls for inclusion, it does evoke the image of excludable people – the “other”.

The publisher should consider the alternative message as “Nowadays, society becomes more progressive since it becomes more aware of the LGBTI rights issues. For example, the Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) is supported, the reinforcement of the non-discrimination act...these help gender diverse people with the accessibility to social benefits...”

4.1.5 Treatment of homosexuality

Some textbooks still have a stereotypical statement about a homosexual couple. An example can be found below.

“Homosexual is the sexual attraction with the same-sex person as a man with a man or a woman with a woman relationship. **They often are jealous of the partner and are aggressive when they are heart-broken**” (PW, Grade 7, p. 36)

From the quote, homosexuality is viewed as an aggressive form of relationship. Such a couple is normally jealous of each other, and when they broke up with each other, they would be aggressive.

Aksorn's Grade 7 is one of the publishers who explicitly deal with sexual diversity and differentiate sexuality from gender. It recognises diverse sexual orientation (เพศวิถี). As the authors explain that sexual orientation does not have to fit within accordance with biological sex. The authors intend to explain the separation between one's genitalia, sexual orientation, and gender expression. This acknowledgement of the complexity of diversity gives a better understanding to readers about homosexuality and other types of sexuality — for example, asexuality and pansexuality. However, the statement represents sexuality diversity as “the other” and still see that sexual orientation is inseparable from sex organs and the physical appearance of a person.

“Sexual orientation means **sexual attraction** and **gender expression**, which could be different; not everyone has to have a sexual orientation that fit their physical sex or the masculinity and femininity **as in general**. Sexual orientation is related to sexual mentality, behaviour, and society.” (Aksorn, Grade 7, p. 56)

The quotation above indicates two things: the author still perceives other sexual orientation as “deviant” or not commonly seen due to the phrase “as in general.” Implying that the authors notice that there are *general* and *not general* sexual identities, therefore using “*has to have... as in general*” implicitly shows perception that see sexual orientation diversity as “non-general”; and author perceives that the physical appearance of a person as masculinity and femininity has something to do with sexual orientation and gender expression.

4.2 Homosexuality as “non-Thai.”

Over one-third of the textbooks (15 out of 36) cover the topic of “culture and sexual behaviour”. Overall, the topic deal with the impact of Thai culture and other cultures' influence on the sexual behaviour of a person.

“**Thai culture** and **practice** are the indicators of Thainess such as the **cover-up dressing of a woman** and not revealing the skin, being reserved and **not let a man touch**. These are good value and appropriateness of today's society” (PW, Grade 8, p.25)

“**Men** and **women** should be reserved, **especially women**. Women should dress cover-up, dress modestly, behave **appropriately to the Thai culture** because revealing too much skin and not being reserved would **tempt the opposite sex**. As a result, it causes obscenity and rape” (PW, grade 11, p.21)

Both the quotations above imply a similar way of content. They highlight the Thai way of how people should behave in society to certain ways that considered appropriate; however, the

way a person should behave explicitly reveal heteronormativity as the norm in Thai society. That woman should cover up themselves so that it does not tempt the *opposite-sex* as in the PW, grade 11 textbooks above or *do not let the man touch*. Overall, Thai culture only recognises the relationship between men and women.

Thai culture is argued to be a mechanism that could prevent the sexual problems of teenagers, such as unwanted pregnancy, premature sex, and sexually transmitted diseases. The culture shapes the sexual attitude and behaviour of male and female in society not to have a relationship or intercourse when they are too young and not ready since heterosexual relationships could cause unwanted pregnancy. As a result, the content related to sexual and behaviours left out homosexuality.

Logically, heteronormativity is constructed as the norm of Thai culture. The textbooks evoke nationalist sentiment to discriminate homosexuality. Homosexuality, in this discourse, is against the Thai culture and become a threat to the nation.

“The influence of **Western culture** into Thai society also **impacts the sexual attitude** such as skin touching, kissing and hugging, having premature sex, or even **homosexual relationship** of a male and male couple, and female and female couple. Therefore, students should critically consider in adapting sexual norm of other cultures, whether it is good or bad, or appropriate or not because **it can cause further problems to oneself and the family in the long run.**” (PW, Grade 8, p.25)

Nonetheless, from the excerpt mentioned above indicates that homosexual is seen as the western norms, as seen as inappropriate in the light of Thai culture that could lead to a conflict or problem within the family. While at the same time, Western culture is seen as a threat to Thai culture. Per quotation from the PW’s grade 8 textbooks above also indicate that homosexuality is the influence of the western culture on Thai culture. It could further imply that Thailand holds a heteronormative norm, and the influence of western culture in Thailand, homosexuality emergence.

The quotation of PW’s grade 8 textbook could imply the sense of “others” of homosexuality since the textbooks categorise homosexuality as a “western” culture, not only to the sexual norm of Thailand but “the other” to the national identity, Thainess. It constructs the sentiment of LGBTI and homosexuality as non-patriotic identity and sexuality.

With the consideration of the previous image (*figure 1*) about Netherland as the origin of legalisation of same- sex marriage, it could be argued that the Thai textbooks portray homosexuality as the western culture.



Figure 1: Images Representing the Marriage Between Both the Heterosexual (Left Image) and Homosexual Couple (Right Image). (Aimphan, Grade 9, P.48)

The images in *Figure 1* also indicates homosexuality as a non-Thai or western culture. The image on the *left* describes the marriage according to *Thai culture*, while the image on the *right* explains that Netherland is the first country to legalise same-sex marriage. Comparing two images, the figure reinforces that same- sex marriage is represented as western culture, whereas the marriage, according to *Thai culture*, is a marriage between a man and a woman. That said, it constructs the sentiment that homosexuality is against the *Thai culture*.

4.3 Heteronormativity and gender binary system

Mostly, the textbooks still reinforce heteronormativity within the textbooks such as through the words used like opposite-sex, *Num-Sao*, and *Por-Mae*, the illustrations and the overall content.

4.3.1 Num-Sao

The state’s discourse in the textbooks represents the gender binary system through word use. The textbooks emphasise the transition of the people based on the assumption of male and female adolescent since the books often choose a word *Num-Sao* (หนุ่มสาว) to describe an adolescent stage. Examples of how the word *Num-Sao* is used in a sentence are as followed: “nowadays children develop to **Num-Sao** (adolescence) faster” (MOE, Grade 7, p.65) , “ ...when

children have reached puberty, or in general it is called *taek-near-num-sao* (แตกเนื้อหนุ่มสาว).” (Wattana, Grade 7, p.57) , and “the transition to puberty of each teenager is different; some people reach *num-sao* (puberty) earlier than the others” (Aimphan, Grade 7, p. 67) . Firstly, these reveal that the state’s recognition and the view of typical gender binary system, while ignoring the diversity of a person as *Num* give a sense of masculinity and *Sao* construct a feminine identity, in other words, people are classified base on binary gender system. As a result, the keywords leaves out the development of LGBTI people since LGBTI do not grow up to this dichotomy of gender classification; rather, they are on the scale of a gender spectrum.

4.3.2 Opposite-sex

The transition to the puberty stage, growing up from a child to a teenager involves many changes on physical, mental, and emotional, social change due to hormone changes within the body. Moreover, hormones during the puberty cause natural sexual drive in teenagers as they start to be attracted to another person and develop a relationship. However, most of the textbooks project the heteronormativity as mentioning the relationship between male and female or opposite sex is often discussed through the use of the word “opposite-sex.”

The word **opposite-sex**” emphasises the concept of a heterosexual relationship. Additionally, the textbooks favour the relationship between opposite sex as a natural practice of a human that occurred when puberty comes.

“Adolescent is a period of life that involves hormonal, physical, and environmental change. The mental and emotional change of teenagers is varied such as...starting **to attract sexually to the opposite sex**, like to stay in a group of friends, **desire to be accepted on their maleness and femaleness...**” (Aimphan, Grade 7, p. 65)

The statement of Aimphan’s grade 7 textbook mentioned above explicitly reinforces the discourse of heteronormativity. Not only it highlights the heterosexual relationship as in the word choice of “opposite sex” attraction between a straight male and female but also mentions the characteristics of teenagers – maleness and femaleness as necessary traits of teenagers to meet the social expectation from friends. The text implies that, if a person does not have these characteristics of maleness and femaleness, a person is not accepted in society.

“...when children have reached puberty, or in general, it is called **theak-near-num-sao** (แตกเนื้อหนุ่มสาว). Apart from natural physical change, the sexual development also occurs

both the genitals and **sexual desire** as teenagers become more attracted to **the opposite sex**" (Wattana, Grade 7, p. 57)

Similarly, as the quote above from Wattana's grade 7 textbook reinforces the norm of heteronormativity, the sentence describes the development and growth of children to the adolescent stage as either "straight" male and female or *num-sao*. It further argues that during the puberty, teenagers become more attracted to "opposite sex," this refers to an assumption that teenagers are inborn heterosexual, but the transition to puberty stage provokes the sexual desire to attract even more toward an opposite-sex partner. The statement ignores the existent of another gender identity in the first place, as it presumes that a baby is born "straight." Moreover, Wattana's grade 7 textbook points out that the heterosexuality is a natural change and development of a person on the ground of sexual development when they reach a puberty stage. That being said, other forms of sexuality are perceived to be an unnatural development.

The textbooks of PW's grade 10, Aimphan's grade 7 and MOE's grade 8 textbooks have mentioned a sentence similarly. During the puberty stage, teenagers start to be attracted to another person and develop a relationship with an **opposite-sex** partner. The textbook of MAC's grade 8 textbook directly mentions that the relationship and sexuality between male and female is a true incidence as followed "sex between **male and female is normal** when a person is ready on the grounds of physical, mental, emotional and social." (MAC, Grade 8, p.15)

The topic related to "*friendship and manner*" also largely represent the norm of heteronormativity. Physical & Health education subject comprise the content related to the manner with persons around them, whether they are classmates, friends, or strangers. The manner related content aims to educate students on how they should behave towards people around them, also how to make friends. These sections of the textbooks involve gender norms and the influence of Thai and Western culture on Thai sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation. There are 7 out of 36 textbooks that deal with the chapter on "manner."

The manners suggested in the textbooks toward surrounding people involves gender values and norms, and sexual orientation as the textbooks educate on how a person should be behaving in front of a person of "opposite-sex" and a person of a "same-sex". This part of the content is overall heteronormative since most of the textbooks construct the manner of a person behave toward opposite sex in a manner of making friends and a love relationship, while same-sex persons are positioned as friendship only. For example, "women showing a feeling of loving a

person of an opposite sex is considered inappropriate according to Thai culture” (Mac, Grade 8, p.29), while on the same page it starts a new topic on “how to build a good friendship with a friends of a same-sex and opposite-sex” (Mac, Grade 8, p.29). The opposite sex persons are taught to behave nicely and accurately as a way to create charisma and charm to oneself as this could lead to a love relationship and marriage. On the other hands, same-sex persons are taught to behave politely and respect to other persons, however, it is only limiting its content and relationship to friendship.

On the contrary, progressive textbooks have the section on “manner” on a gender-neutral content that is gender-free or less likely to mention one particular gender behave toward another person based on gender identity. In other words, the progressive textbooks only emphasise a manner between “two persons” and regardless of gender identity. For example, “Manner is a behaviour to build a good relationship with other people in all occasion appropriately...” (Aimphan, Grade 8, p. 32)

“Close friends could be both male and female. However, the manner or the types of behaviour is different depends on the sex of a person. A same-sex friend is male and male, or female and female friends, students can behave with them intimately. Whereas for an **opposite-sex** friend, **students must be more be careful and act appropriately...**” (MOE, Grade 7, p.74)

The quotation above indicates that the textbook does not see that there would be a possible relationship or having sex between friends of same-sex. Meanwhile, it sees that female and male should behave in a certain way and appropriately, that is, “not too intimately”. Also, the authors describe how to act appropriately for male and female students, such as male student should not touch a female, and a female student should keep a physical distance from a male student. The reason is given later in the same chapter on the sexual problems, for example, having premature sex, unwanted pregnancy, and rape. However, the textbook does not have the same content related to premature sex and rape with the same sex friendship.

4.3.3 Family

Family is one of the main topics in Physical & Health education, and it is related to gender identity and sexuality in many aspects. This session covers family members, the role of family on gender identity and sexuality, the marriage, and family planning. There are 12 out of 36 textbooks deal with the chapter on “family.”

4.3.3.1 Family member

One family consists of two or more family members. The relationship between the members could be lover partners, or parents and child or relatives. However, when talking about parents, most of the conservative textbooks only recognise heterosexual parent. That they refer to a parent of *the opposite sex*. It often mentions that family members consist of “father, mother, and a child” or a couple of “husband and wife,” for example, “children have **a father and a mother** as their first role model...” (Wattana, Grade 8, p.25), “The preparation of being a good parents, both **a father and a mother** should ready to have a child...” (Aimphan, Grade 9, 57), and “the conflict between **a husband** and **a wife** would impact **a child** and other family members” (Aksorn, Grade 9, p. 44)

“A single-family is a group of two or more people living together and having a relationship as a family. A family member consists of a couple of man and woman, or a father, a mother, and a child. Including **a gender diversity family** such as a couple of **man and a man’s spouse**, **a woman and a woman spouse**, **a man and kathoey**⁴⁰ who may have adopted a child.” (Aimphan, Grade 8, p. 31)

The progressive content above from Aimphan’s grade 8 textbook acknowledges the same-sex parents and a family in which the parents may consist of gender diverse persons, such as a man and *kathoey* (กะเทย) parents. Kathoey refers to a Male-to-Female transgender person in the Thai language; there the quotation above recognise the diverse types of the family as excursively limit the space for LGBTI parents. Moreover, it shows the procedure of how same-sex parents could have a child which adopting a kid is one of the ways because homosexual parents can not make a baby by sexual intercourse.

“Family members consist of a father, a mother, a child, or a father and a child, a mother and a child, grandparents, and grandchildren, ...however, some families consist of **a father, a child and a father’s spouse** (คู่ชีวิตของพ่อ), or **a mother and a mother’s spouse** (คู่ชีวิตของแม่)” (Aimphan, Grade 9, p.68)

Similarly, the quote above revealed the attempt of textbooks to recognise same-sex parents or homosexual parents such as “*a mother and a mother’s spouse* (คู่ชีวิตของแม่)”, that this statement recognises the relationship between two women or a lesbian couple, also recognises

⁴⁰ Kathoey refers to Male-to-Female transgender person in Thai language and in Thai society.

that a homosexual couple could make a family. Nevertheless, homosexual parents or LGBTI parents are not treated equally to heterosexual parents. Since the terms “a mother’s spouse (คู่ชีวิตของแม่) and a father’s spouse (คู่ชีวิตของพ่อ)” implies a sense of estranging bond to a child compared to the term “father” alone. For example, “a father” has a closer bond to a child compared to “a father’s spouse” and a child.

4.3.3.2 Family function

Most textbooks assume that family has the vital role of maintenance of species or producing a new baby. This assumption implicitly condemns homosexual couples as they could not reproduce a baby naturally without the help of medical procedure and adopting a child. So, “a significant role of a family is **to give birth to a baby and bring up a child as to maintain a human race**” (MAC, Grade 9, p. 27)

“**Every human being** is born from the love of **a man and a woman**. They get married and have a sexual relationship leading to pregnancy and giving birth, in which it is **the desire of every family**” (MAC, Grade 9, p. 40)

The quotation above from the MAC’s grade 9 textbooks could imply two points. First, it sees the heterosexual relationship and parent as the only form of relationship, and it is natural since it indicates that the relationship between male and female gives birth to “every” human being. As a result, LGBTI parents who depend on the medical procedure to have kid such as surrogacy would be stigmatised by the statement above. Moreover, the sperm cell and the egg cell are not from the persons that have a love relationship. The second point, it highlights that that the pregnancy and giving birth to a child is one thing that every family dream of. This statement casts not only infertile couples as abnormal but also homosexual parents as abnormal people because they are not able to get pregnancy by themselves.

“[A child at the age of 3-6 years old] begin to imitate the behaviour from the parents of the **same sex as them**, children will learn the identity of **masculinity** and **femininity**. This could only be accomplished by **having both a father and a mother**... a father and a mother should have **appropriate** sexual behaviour” (Wattana, Grade 10-12 volume 1, p. 46)

According to the quote above, Wattana’s grade 10-12 volume 1 textbook emphasises that an ideal family shall consist of a father and a mother to prevent the chance of having an inappropriate gender identity, a child that does not develop the gender identity that fits with the

biological sex. Since it is argued that a child will start to develop one's gender identity at around the age of 3 years, and the parent is a significant part in the process of developing a child's gender identity, sexuality and gender role. A father represents the role of masculinity, and a mother represents a role in the feminine gender. A boy will learn its identity from a father, and a girl will learn it from a mother. A child having gender and sexual orientation according to the biological sex is considered as proper behaviour. Conversely, if a family does not have parents of both sexes, then, a child will develop a deviant gender identity.

In short, the quote above implies two things. First, one-parent family, same-sex parents, a family that only have one sex parents are seen as not an ideal type of family as these would cause inappropriate sexual behaviour, such as an LGBTI child. Second, LGBTI is explicitly considered as a not suitable identity and sexual behaviour in the publisher's perspective.

“Child foster...parents should foster the values of a **gentleman** to a **male child**, and a value of a **gentlewoman** to a **girl child**” (PW, Grade 10, p. 35)

Moreover, the family is also a place where it is expected to foster heteronormativity to the child as in the quotation *above*. It implies the reinforcement of the binary system as boys are expected to be “gentlemen”, while young girls are expected to behave as gentlewomen. Gentlemen and gentlewomen reinforce the binary system and discursively exclude the identity of gender diversity.

“The parent's upbringing is important, especially to children's sexual behaviour and way of life. The example of parents who improperly rear a child or are a **bad role model is dressing up a child with a cloth that does not fit the sex of children**, parents fighting,...this may cause mislearning an appropriated sexual behaviour of a child...” (Wattana, Grade 10-12 edit 1, p.46)

The excerpt mentioned above emphasises how textbooks reinforce the norm of heteronormativity through the description of appropriate bringing up process. Parents are taught to be a role model or behave as a good role model for the children. Two points could be made from the quotation. First, the parent should dress up a child accordant to the sex of a child, or else it is considered not appropriate, and a child would perceive and develop a wrong gender identity that does not fit with the sex. The second point, the statement already assumes the gender identity of a child that it would be either of the gender binary systems. Similar content is also found in Wattana's grade 8 textbook, as quoted below:

“... Parents that bring up a child **inappropriately** or be a **bad role model**, for example, **dressing up a child with a cloth that does not fit with the child’s biological sex...**” (Wattana, Grade 8, p.26)

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the textbooks overall reinforce the heteronormativity and gender binary system such as though the word used, for example, *Num-Sao* and *opposite-sex* repeatedly when talking about physical and sexual development. The family ideally consist of *Por-Mae*, while LGBTI parents are only recognised in the progressive textbooks. Family is expected to produce a baby and reinforce the gender binary system to their newborn baby through *Por-Mae*.

LGBTI is constructed with the disadvantage identity, especially on a section that deals with a special treatment for LGBTI people. It sounds great, but it discursively reinforces the inferior position of LGBTI in society since ordinary people do not need special treatment. LGBTI is primarily discussed and mention in progressive textbooks, however, they are often constructed as “the other” in the society. Finally, LGBTI and homosexuality are constructed as “non-Thai”. Instead, it is western. It discursively constructs LGBTI and homosexuality against the identity of Thainess or threat to Thai culture.

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The Strength of the Oppressed Ethnic Minority in Vietnam: The Resistance from the Knowledge Absorb ⁴¹

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Abstract

Ethnic minority in Vietnam are always considered as a vulnerable group, under the management and assimilation of the central state, and the idea of modernisation follow the "lowlander lifestyle" or the Kinh. However, in the current context, ethnic minority groups seem to have changed their position, at least in the process of interacting with the state. This article will explore the link between the discourse produces by academia, and the government about ethnic minorities, and how the ethnic minorities "approve" and rationalised their behaviours and decision based on that discourse.

Accordingly, the paper argues the influence of the government discourse on the "backwardness", "poverty" and "underdevelopment" of the ethnic minorities, has become a standard label. Those stigmata spreading wide and not only the Kinh people but also the ethnic minorities believe in it. Hence, the ethnic minorities absorb that discourse turned into a reasonable reason for their migration movement. Furthermore, to take the following action to access land in the receiving destination for livelihood purposes in the Central Highlands without the fear of being "punishment" by Government and local authority. Moreover, they are well aware of their position, known as the power of minority, to build their advantage to negotiate or even oppose the local authority. The form of resistance in the implementation process shown the interaction of the discourse produced by the power group to the subjects; resulting by the self-transforming knowledge of the oppressed, which create the resistance act.

In conclusion, the article suggests the danger of one-sided discourse, imposing labels on disadvantaged groups, pushing them into low self-esteem, lowering their ability and becoming proactive. Instead of creating a policy for the current government development and discourse on ethnic minority groups, a barrier wall between government and ethnic minorities created "us and them" situation.

Keyword: Knowledge Discourse, Social Label, Ethnic Minority, Governmentality, Resistance

⁴¹ This paper was developed based on my Master thesis research on the governmentality of the resettlement projects for ethnic minority migrants in Viet Nam: A Case study of Cu Kbang commune, Ea Sup district, Dak Lak provinces

1. Introduction

Viet Nam, 44 years after the independents, 33 years after the reform, the whole country has gone into the transformation and spectacular development, there still a group left behind in the racing track toward modernity. Somehow, the left behind going to the roots will expose under the name of the oppression and discrimination. The people under the oppressed do not always notice the power put them down. They have been pushed to live under the label given by someone else long enough to start to believe and act like ones. The giving social position they not born to be with or work hard to get, but rather take from the generous of the majority.

The intertwined between old and new, modernity and traditional, the unfavorable comparing in social and economic structure from the dominant ethnicity - the Kinh. Ethnic minority in Viet Nam seem like being stuck under the label of the inferior, compare to the superior. Not only the label produces by the power holder, and the state within the history of building a relationship between ethnic minority and the Kinh people - the dominant ethnic city; but also, exist as the "blueprints" in most of the development policies, and in the will to improve toward the ethnic minorities.

Ethnic minorities in Viet Nam is the believer in that case, for an extended period taking care under the caring arm of the state who care for the equality of all ethnic in the country. They bind on to the idea that slowly becomes their character, "the backwards and under-development", which need support and helping hand from the welfare state. Soon enough the discourse drowns them under the ocean of charity, support policies, and the ethnic minorities, in the crisis of identity and the self-doubting ability, absorb the discourse as the reason to their actions, can be seen as the act of resistance.

The paper argues, the resistance act of ethnic minority migrants to Central Highlands, resulting in the absorb discourse knowledge the state has produced throughout the history of governance. Ethnic minority migrants, through three forms of resistance: insisted on migration, demanding the support from authorities, illegal taken lands and negotiate ownership on land. Even though the resistance is to fulfil their needs and rights, the process and behaviours to achieve the goal are against the law, create conflict, which has created more reason to the state on against the ethnic minority move to Central Highland.

This paper, through the research on the case study of ethnic minority migration to Ea Sup District, Dak Lak provinces, Central Highland Viet Nam, will examine the relationship between the discourse absorb of the oppressed and their action latter.

2. Oppression, Resistance, Ethnic Minority and Multilayer of Oppression Discourse

2.1 Ethnic minority terminology and the perspective of government toward them

In some mysterious ways, your name defined who you are. Viet Nam people have believed in the name that given to your children, would help your children grown up as the meaning the parents hoping for the best of the child. In that ideology, lead us to a question of, why we would call an ethnic different than us a minority, highland people, mountainous people, or "mọi rợ" (barbarian), or "dân tộc" (ethnic people)⁴²

Ethnic is a term about the feeling of aggregate having a place, as a gathering of individual's base on the sharing language, culture, history, race, or religions, gathering of individuals in similar ethnic gatherings regularly living with one another in the same geology zone with imagination border (or national border). Be that as it may, the country, which has the fringes jumping the general population living inside as the natives, ordinarily does not shape by just a single ethnic. That is the beginning step to the framing of "Indigenous people" and "Ethnic Minorities."

The expressions "indigenous people" and "ethnic minorities" are easy to distinguish." Indigenous people" signifies the assembling of individuals have the self-governance or are the relatives of the most punctual known occupants of a region. Occupants of ethnic minorities are commonly stronger to settlements with all the newer connects to a domain (regularly many years old) who offer a similar personality with gatherings in at any rate one other nation.

Thus, if utilizing the term indigenous people, it will be joined by a declaration of self-rule and opportunity of conviction, custom, culture, and so on. The Vietnamese government does not use this term to avoided from strife and struggle with philosophy, such as "national solidarity" and "ethnic unity" of the state. Vietnamese law does not utilize the expression "indigenous individuals" for any gathering of individuals even they have a long history of living and have the social structure and autonomy. The administration has characterized ethnic minorities as individuals have Vietnamese nationality, however, does not similar share highlights, for example, language, culture, and so forth with the fundamental ethnic – the Kinh.

⁴² Ethnic people (dân tộc). Which in normal daily communication of the Kinh people, can be understood as the underestimate someone as inferior, looking down and have a sense of discrimination.

Another aspect of the terminology is the existent of "minority". We use the minority in the contract of majority, to describe the variance in quantity of population. **Louis Wirth** a Sociologist, in his book "The Problem of minority" defined a **minority** group as "*a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination.*" (Wirth, 1945) extract from (Gleason, 1991). Taking from the concept of Wirth the minority notion has underlying the idea of different in management actions due to the discrimination, racism or prejudice. However, in Viet Nam state discourse, the term ethnic minority based on the statics of population of each ethnic. If the ethnic take up to 50% of the national population that ethnic will defined as majority and vice versa.⁴³

Besides, Viet Nam has not ratified the ILO Convention 169 and does not recognize the ethnic minorities in the country as an Indigenous People. Therefore, the definitions affect directly into the orientation and implementation of all national policy and strategies in development for the ethnic minority.⁴⁴

Using and thinking of the government in using this term instead of another term, has partly reflected the state's discourse on the differences of peoples. This difference has led to dissimilarities in treatment, perspective, perception, and how the power groups develop and enact policies toward the ethnic minority.

2.2 Oppressions and The Oppressed

The term oppressions usually exist in the binary relationship or hierarchy structure, between each actor in the pyramid with different power behold. These paradigms can refer to "*those attitudes, behaviours, and pervasive and systematic social arrangements by which members of one group are exploited ad subordinated while members of another group are granted privileges*"

⁴³ Ethnic minorities are defined in Clause 2, Article 4 of Decree No. 05/2011 / ND-CP on ethnic minorities as follows: "Ethnic minorities" are those with a lower population than the majority in the territory of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. With the defined in constitution, ethnic minority people in Viet Nam usually have these four following characteristics: (i) a language different from the national language; (ii) long traditional residence on, or relationship with land, and long traditional social institutional system; (iii) a production system closely identified with the group; and (iv) 'self-identification' as a distinct cultural group that is accepted by neighbouring ethnic groups.(Fujii, 2017)

⁴⁴ Viet Nam state has informed that the phrase "ethnic minorities" is uniformly used in the system of legal documents, administrative documents and does not use the concept of indigenous peoples. These come from the concern of hostile forces will exploit the loopholes of the law, or administrative documents to take advantage of propaganda and incite some ethnic minorities to against the state. They would use the arguments on the terms stated in the UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples (such as ownership of land, resources, autonomy, political and cultural self-determination, etc.) to destructing state unity policy, and threatening national security. "(Sam, 2018)

(Bohmer & Briggs, 1991), p. 155 extract from (Anh, Kim, & Ubukata, 2016). Moreover, the oppression not always lies between the exploited and the privilege but also the dominant and superior positions that can create discrimination or creating the class classification. However, the oppression, yet, can nurture inside the power to oppose the oppressed. These powers perform as an action call for resistance. Meanwhile, the oppressed have to stick with the rule of the match they have drawn out by the discourse produces; therefore, cannot take further actions to suppress the menace. The paradox has well described the relationship between ethnic minority migration to Central highland Viet Nam, and the local authorities as to the representative of the state.

2.3 Resistance

The notion of resistance has been long discussed between the scholar studies on political power. In which, the sharing understanding is a form of oppositional act, which "*like all acts, resistance is situated in a certain time, space and relations, and engages with different (types of) actors, techniques and discourses.*" (Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013). Mentions about discourse, the relationship between the powerholder and the oppression always tense, as Michel Foucault claims that "*Where there is power, there is resistance*". However, even though the idea of exploring power in the form of social structure is well known, yet, it remains unfulfilled if there is no analysis on the action of the oppressed.

"*Every day of resistance*" is an idea presented by James Scott in 1985 to spread another sort of obstruction; one that is not as sensational and noticeable as uprisings, riots, exhibits, upsets, common war or other such sorted out, aggregate or angry enunciations of obstruction. Scott demonstrates how certain regular conduct of subaltern gatherings (*for example, foot-dragging, escape, sarcasm, passivity, laziness, misunderstandings, disloyalty, slander, avoidance or theft*) is not generally what it is by all accounts, yet rather opposition. Scott contends these exercises are strategies that abused individuals use to both endure and undermine abusive mastery; particularly in settings when defiance is excessively unsafe (Scott, 1985).

However, daily resistance is spoken by Scott as a product of people who are aware of the position and oppressive actions of others on themselves. If in another dimension, the people are oppressed, but instead of realises the oppress of the vague oppression of discourse classes, they listen to those discourses and self-transforming it to a reason for their action. Those actions are beneficial to them but can break the laws, resulting in their actions exists as a form of resistance under the eyes of the powerholder.

3. The Story of Ingrowing Unpredictable Resistance

"The free migrants come here mostly from Ede, Gia Rai, or Hmong. When we are detecting people coming to live illegally in these areas, our police will send teams to grasp the situation. Since then, they will be starting to advocacy and told them that state policies are currently promulgated. To stop them from exploiting more untapped places. However, they do not listen! (Interviewee)"

The so-called disobedient, according to local authorities, is due to the behaviour of ethnic minorities, stubborn and opposing. However, when looking back on this resistance process, it seems that the problems facing the government come from their discourse of prejudice. The result of the process of believing in these temptations is a series of unintentional protests, but under the eyes of local governments, that is the behaviour, the reality of the characteristics of ethnic.

3.1 Migration and Development Discourse - Ethnic Minority and The Resistance on Returning

Migration can directly have affected the development of a society. Not only for the receiving but also the sending places. However, if we see the mobility movement of people as the mobility of human capital sources, tagging along with the idea of skills, knowledge, lifestyle. Hence, the idea of selective migration is become widely common understanding in the developing countries, in order to bring the *"best workers to develop the under developing regions"*.

In order to design the Central Highland as a *"dreamland for migrant"*, and encourage Kinh people to move here, a series of supportive migration and resettlement policies for them have been made. In most of the case, the resettlement will also link to the spontaneously or non-spontaneously movement of people to the new place, which has been designed and set up by the Government. The reason of resettlement typically will be attached with the political economy point of view, and the rural development policies, when the target group of resettlement can fall into two categories: the trusteeship, and the *"need to control"*. (Evrard & Goudineau, 2004)

Hence, The Kinh people was chosen as a trusteeship in Government strategies, to migrate the trustee groups to modernize and develop an area need to improve – the Central Highland. After 1975, once again, the central state (Socialist Republic of Viet Nam) developed new migration, settlement, economic plans, resulted in the influx of migrants moved to the Central Highlands.(Evans, 1992; Oscar, 2007). Highlands with the advantage of fertile land, becoming the destination of the influx of migrants seeking livelihoods and opportunities to change their lives.

These practices, following with the set of supportive policies for the migrants, have created the discourse on "migrate to Central Highland as an opportunity to have a better life". Which latter, bind on to the mind-set of thousands of people, not only Kinh people but also, the ethnic minority. Moreover, to resolve the problems of influx migration population are an ethnic minority, the Government and the local authorities have set up resettlement projects, aiming to settle down the migrants and governance of the situation. This solution, somehow, has become another reason for ethnic minorities to rationalize their reason for moving to Central Highland.

	Provinces	Total		Period		Period	
		(2005-2017)		2005-2012		2013-2017	
		Households	People	Households	People	Households	People
	Total	66,738	269,990	56,237	231,873	10,501	38,117
	C e n t r a l Highland	58,846	237,840	52,009	214,961	6,837	22,879
1	Đắk Lắk	7,129	28,516	7,035	28,105	94	411
2	Đắk Nông	14,163	56,652	13,368	54,555	795	2,097
3	Gia Lai	6,248	24,992	4,892	20,923	1,356	4,069
4	Kon Tum	7,243	28,972	5,755	24,984	1,488	3,988
5	Lâm Đồng	5,833	23,332	5,740	22,060	93	1,272

Table 1: Numbers of migrants to Central Highland

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development data on migrants 2018 (*reality and solutions to stabilize free migrants, 2018*)

Migration movement of ethnic minority partly was inspired by the movement of Kinh people to not only Central Highland but their homeland in the North. Moreover, the idea of all ethnic equal, and have the same rights, has reasonable the movement of them as an act of freedom of movement.

Ethnic minority migrants, in previous studies, were always linked to the word "poor". Especially with the "rural-rural" migration flows, when migrants background is mainly uneducated, often farmers, and have low incomes. (Dang, Goldstein, & McNally, 1997; Nam, 2009) Poverty comes with a dream of changing a life; it is a human instinct to a pursued better condition, better life. That is dream and motivation also existent as a core heart of development ideology. Therefore, the dream of the ethnic minorities to have a better life never should be considered as a threatening, but perhaps an opportunity.

“Our ethnic minorities migrate, just because of livelihood, because of the land. In here, the land is wide and flat; it is easier to plant trees than in the countryside (Interviewee).”

The government does not welcome this movement but rather imposed the movement by the intention to send the migrants back to their homeland. However, they insist on a comeback. The decisions on comeback and stay were the first act of resistance, and according to the local authorities, the migrants are stubborn and will never listen to the policies or what they said. Moreover, the government think the influx migration of the ethnic minority, especially the Hmong group, may be related to the anti-state activities of religious organizations, or groups of cross-border ethnic unions.

3.2 Under-Development, Poverty Discourse – Ethnic Minority and The Resistance Through Demanding

Prejudices about free migrants, or first of all ethnic minorities, have much influence from ethnographic studies from previous periods. Many researchers in Vietnam have conducted studies that confirm that ethnic minorities have lower development levels than Kinh people. One characteristic considered as the reason for this conclusion is the social form of the peoples.

First of all, the Vietnamese state, as well as the scientists in the previous period all, studied and believed in Marx's philosophy, especially historical materialism. In which Marx's thesis on socio-economic forms developed through stages, from low level to higher level. Inheriting and influencing from that point of view, scientists like Dang Nghiem Van and Be Viet Dang are both affected by this evolutionary point of view (Hoàng Cầm, 2012) Scientists believe that people's society Ethnic minorities are mostly in the pre-state stage, classification of class has not yet formed, economic activities also bear the original mark (Vạn, 1989).⁴⁵

From these prejudices, policymakers are also governed by that evolutionary and decentralised ideology, so for a long time, many social and cultural practices of ethnic minorities are considered 'backwards', 'less civilised'. Therefore, prejudices have been produced and deeply embedded in the subconscious of managers, Kinh people, and even ethnic minorities when they

⁴⁵ *“Socially, 54 ethnic groups of our country, until the modern period, do not belong to a unified level. At least there are three types of societies:*

o the society has not formed a class (e.g. ethnic groups in the Central Highlands)

o Society began to form class (e.g. Muong and Thai ethnic groups)

o Development class society (e.g. Kinh people) “And corresponding to those types of society there are three types of culture: Culture of pre-class; the culture of the newly formed class; culture of the developmental period” (Nhật, 2009, p. 11)

enjoy propaganda and policies with the purpose," *developing mountainous areas* ", " *building a new cultural life* ", " *bringing mountainous areas to catch up with the lowland* (Hoàng Cầm, 2012)."

Also, the commune people's committee, in coordination with the youth union, also regularly organizes charity gifts. Items such as rice, salt, clothes, will be given to households. However, there are too many opinions that the donation of this charity gift is only cured the temporary illness, does not solve the roots problem; it can also cause conflicts between people when distributing items.

"I'm poor, so, normally, I received support from the government". This mindset is not existing at that blunt sentence, but hidden in the back of their mind as normality. Because most of the ethnic minority migrants have the poor household certificate, besides, the areas they are living in the "Areas no 3"⁴⁶. Hence, the thoughts of receiving supports, charity gift is normal, the migrants in the resettlements areas have put themselves in the community conflicts. When, some households do not agree with the distributions of a gift, or supportive of the authorities or the head of villages, even though the distribution's base on the economic status and the consideration of who needs its more. The conflict can end up by physical violence, which demands the latter support need to consider on the equal and guarantee every household have a quota.

As the self-acknowledgement of their life status, the migrants have gained the confidence to practice the illegal land trading, or "occupation" as the Local authority claimed. "*The migrants will live and working at banned zone, for example, the areas of buffer zone next to the national forest reservation*" According to the national forest reservation law, the buffer zone is not allowed for any life, production activities. Therefore, the authority has issued the decisions of land eviction with the household practice illegal production. However, the migrants have negotiated to have support, compensation, for their crops they have grown, or the house they have built.

Surprisingly, some households even asked the authority to grants them the rights to manage the land similar to the "*Land and forest allocation*" for forestry farms or migrant Kinh households planned in the previous period. With that land allocation, they promised to replant and pay annual fees. When the state conducts recall, they use the argument "*I am poor, have invested in this field*

⁴⁶Area no 3: Zones I, II and III belong to ethnic minority and mountainous areas in the period of 2012-2015, especially difficult communes in coastal and island areas in the period of 2013-2015. Communes with special difficulties, border communes, communes in the scale of the invest of Program 135 in 2014 and 2015 according to current regulations.

with many capitals, so there is a need to support the number of trees we already planted or to give the forests to us to manage, we will plant forests, and pay fees (Interviewee)."

For households who are experiencing difficulties in household registration, or register for temporary absence with local police agencies due to incomplete paperwork. These households will not receive support policies, subsidies, or tuition waiver policies for their children, along with being aware of the relationship of them to the government. "*Caring for people like children*", or "*All nations are equal*," there have been cases where the migrants have refused to participate in the elections voting and negotiated with the authorities to give them the household registration⁴⁷.

3.3 We Are All Equal! – Ethnic Minority and The Resistance On Land

Land for all, the equality discourse is the fundamental ideology forming a resistance act of migrants regarding the resettlement. Since the change of the land, forest and land laws in the traditional custom of ethnic minorities, there has been almost no value. The relationship between the market economy, the possession and sale of private land has pushed ethnic minorities into losing the property.

After migration, the land is the first thing they want to get and do everything to have an area for production and living. Once again, it is the market discourse on land that gives migrants a viable option for their dreams.

"People do not have production land; they will naturally have to produce on an illegal forest clearance area; some will buy or transfer land. Ethnic minorities, arbitrarily encroaching, destroying forests for cultivation, buying and selling, illegally transferring from ethnic minority households (Ede), or entering forest areas of wood product processing companies, and forest area managed by People's Committees of communes to destroy forests for production land (Interviewee).

Migrants are well aware of their position. They know that they are a group of people supported by the state, and their position in the national security concern is vital. Especially when, in recent years, riots, or demanding establishment of autonomous kingdoms of the ethnic groups in the North (Mong kingdom), or indigenous groups in the Central Highlands (Degar state) has

⁴⁷, Needless to say, the mechanism of manage and control people on the household registration has long raising a discussion regarding the to violate on freedom of movement, and freedom of residents. The family does not have the household's registration will not allow to buying land, register children birth certificate, not qualified to receive social security policies, etc.

made the state very concerned in regulating the relations between ethnic minorities and the central state.

Since the migration of people to Ea Sup has conducted a series of land encroachment, illegal land trading and buying and selling in forbidden areas have occurred. Local authorities have also collaborated with functional units to inspect, handle and dismantle nearly 100 illegal construction camps on forestry land in forest sub-areas 172, 182, 192, 196 of The Forest Green Company and Cu Kbang Commune (Ea Sup district) with a total area of hundreds of square meters.

“In the village, each household owning 10 to 15 hectares of production land. At least, the minimum is 2 hectares per households (Interviewee).”

In this way, although functional forces repeatedly dismantled people, camps, even organised migrants to return their homeland. However, then again, the people just turned around and clung to this land. After months of refusing to pay the land, the local authorities finally had to "agree" to give the land to the people. So nearly a thousand free migrants also have land to live.

From that awareness, they are quite confident in the negotiation and resettling resistance process from the state. Typically, in the spontaneous settlement of the Hmong group in the national forest buffer forest area, the households here refused to pay forest land, and moved to the resettlement area, utilizing protests, use force, or report to the media about the authorities sending the group to coerce land acquisition. This resistance is completely spontaneous when they disagree with the amount of land, and the state's land position for resettlement. However, it must be frankly acknowledged, confidence in the resistance of these population groups. Because they believe in their position before the local government. Responding to how people in this spontaneous settlement responded to the government on the issue of banning farming on this land, a resident said, *"It is fine we no more do cultivation, but every month the authorities need to give us 20kg of rice per person (Interviewee)."*

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The resistance of migrant ethnic minorities does not stem from hatred or anti-state rhetoric that is propagated by foreign organizations like the Vietnamese state. On the contrary, it comes from the thought of those who believe in the discourse of justice, opportunity, and development that the government preached about the relationship between ethnic in the country. For migrants, they have confidence in the chance to change their lives from the previous migratory waves. They

listen and believe in the discourse of market mechanisms when a land is a form of legal property acquired through consensus trading relation. They think that the policies, or supports that the state currently applies to them, are from the hope that they will have a better life, and therefore, they believe in fair and negotiating power to enjoy those policies regarding their best interest.

The form of everyday resistance of the ethnic minorities migrants to Dak Lak, indeed, is a series of individual actions instead of the organized groups with an agenda of claiming for common goods. Their resistance act can be similar to each other, but the methods are different, and of course, the interest also stays distinctive.

The fall of the national state, is they impose the policies they think it would be the best solution, which out the concerning of two ways discussion and consultancy. In addition to the lack of public consultation, it is the one-way discourse that has been propagated and used by the state for many years to become labelled. Moreover, orienting to think of ethnic minorities during their crisis of traditional ethnic values. Restriction of interaction to create discourse, originating from the state's perspective on ethnic minorities. The state has refused to interact, learn, and accept the values, thoughts, and lifestyles of peoples. Instead, oppressing the perspective of a majority ethnic, to assess the relationship and social structure, how to govern peoples should be.

The resistance act of the ethnic minority toward the authority in the execution procedure demonstrated the reciprocation of the discourse delivered by the powerholders; represent the clashing between mainstream knowledge and the community. Hence, accumulation from the process of self-transformation the dominance discourse knowledge through their lens of value and mind, resulting in the astounding resistance act in contrast with the authority desire. Therefore, the government need to consider changing the lens of approach to an ethnic minority, and more specific manage the migrate issues of them.

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Towards Decent Work Agenda: A Case Study of Paid Care Workers in Thailand's Care Economy

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Abstract

While care economy is increasing, care work is perceived as indecent work. Moreover, whereas most of care policy emphasizes on care recipients, care workforces are excluded from the care policy. The purpose of this study is to examine whether paid domestic care work is decent work. It aims to give voice and enhance visibility of paid domestic care workers in Thailand. This qualitative research involves interpretative analysis of in-depth interviews of eight paid domestic care workers, who were recruited by snow ball approach. Using human right, economic and social perspectives, decent care work among paid domestic workers were explored. From human right viewpoint, rights at work of paid domestic workers were violated at the certain level. From economic standpoint, although they enjoyed the wage above minimum wage level, their family responsibilities were still the significant source of their financial burden. From social outlook, they reluctantly accept their working conditions, because of their lack of opportunity to access 'better job'. To achieve decent care works, care activities should be integrated within state care policy and care workers should have equal access to rights at work as general workers. State subsidization of care work by households or care workers should be provided. Furthermore, training of care workers should be highlighted and promoted to enhance caregivers' skills and quality of service.

Keyword: Decent Care, Care Work, Domestic Care Work, Paid Care Work, Care Economy

1. Introduction

Recently, an aging society is a global phenomenon. Accordingly, an aging population is drastically increased, while a working population is gradually declined. Hence, this demographic deficit has negative effects on labor markets and economic growth (Harper, 2014). Apart from economic activities, care activities, especially caring aging persons in the household, have considerably intensified its role. Whereas the worker population is responsible for both economic and care activities, the latter one is not counted as 'work' and mostly 'unpaid'. Furthermore, female workers, as the majority of global care worker population, have suffered most from the policies, which excludes care work from economic valuation.

Nevertheless, the aging society trend has risen the demand for elder person care work. Moreover, whereas the size of contemporary household is smaller, more workers live in nuclear families. As a result, the care job market is expanded and became an important source of employment (ILO & OECD, 2019). Even though global care workers have become significant driving force of the emerging care economy, unpaid care workers remain unrecognized and overlooked and paid care workers experiences poor working conditions involving low wage, less social security and hard work (ILO & OECD, 2019). Since indecent working conditions of care workers affect quality of care work, an investment in care policies and care jobs is reasonable.

Since 1999, the Decent Work initiative was promoted by the International Labour Organizations (International Labour Organization (ILO), 1999), by ensuring the decent working conditions, ILO believes that employment relationship will be improved and the work could be decent. Achieving decent care work became one of the most significant key challenge towards the Sustainable Development Goal's decent work and economic growth. Ensuring the decent work for care workers, who are one of the most vulnerable workers population, is one of the most ambitious goal of decent work for all.

In 2017, the proportion of population in Thailand comprising of persons aged 65 or older is 16.7%. Therefore, according to WHO Thailand is already an 'aged society' consisting of 11.3 aging population. Besides, it is expected that Thailand will reach the level of the 'super-aged society' in 2031, in which the aging rate surpasses 21% (National Statistical Office (NSO), 2014). Hereafter, its working population will shrink from 47 million to 40.5 million people, which is considered the highest shrinkage rate in the East Pacific countries including China.

In response to aged society, despite the fact that care policy in Thailand emphasizes on health and wellbeing of care recipients, economic and social right protection for care workforces are excluded from the policy. The purpose of this study is to examine decent work conditions of paid domestic care workers. It aims to give voice and enhance visibility of paid domestic care workers in Thailand. This article will begin with the exploration of care work, care workers and decent care work concept. Using human right, economic and social perspectives, decent care work among paid domestic workers will be analyzed. At the end, a set of policy recommendation to close the policy gap towards decent work will be proposed and discussed.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Care Work

Diverse meanings of 'work', which were explored from social and humanity science perspectives, comprise of burden, freedom, goods, utilities, personal desire, social relation, identity, service and caring for others (Budd, 2011). Therefore, apart from economic activities, work is social activity with democratic compensation and psychological dimensions.

However, an economy system put emphasis on activities with economic value and overlook other work, especially 'care work', which has been perceived as 'non-economic' activities that brings no wealth or economic growth. The mainstream worker right protection concept has disregarded the human relationship and has been gender blinded in parallel (Robinson, 2006). Furthermore, since the development of international labor standards is established mainly from male viewpoint, it focuses on rights and work in formal economy neglecting care workers, whose the large majority is performed by women (Elias & Stevenson, 2009). Respectively, the concept of care work began to gain more attention. At the global level, more complicated female labor concern is growing, particularly increasing number of migrant female care workers as the result of globalization (Okano Yayo, 2016).

In developing countries, care work is included within economic system and their citizens enjoy an autonomous and independent life with high quality of care provision. Care, thus, has integrated within citizenship rights, which are equivalent to all workers (Razavi, 2007).

In this article, *care work* is "activities and relations in meeting the physical, emotional and mental needs of children and adults, young and elderly, able-bodied and disabled" (Daly, 2003).

Generally, care work could be classified by sectors: health and social work, education, domestic work (Razavi & Staab, 2010). These care activities have established the significant part

of care economy. In the context of aged society, this study pays attentions mainly to domestic care work.

Since the cost of care workers are time and effort, care work could be paid or unpaid. *Paid care work*, according to ILO's Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE), is care work executed for compensation within a location, such as private households, private clinics, public hospitals, nursing home, schools, etc.

It was estimated in 2016 that 0.243 million Thai workers are domestic workers, of which 0.208 million or 86% are female (National Statistical Office (NSO), 2016). According to the Thailand Standard Industrial Classification (TSIC 2009), which is undistinguishable from the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC Rev.4. Class 9700), employed domestic work is defined under the undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of private households for own use (Ministry of Labour, 2009). Employed domestic work are diverse involving cleaning, cooking, driving, laundering gardening, guarding, driving, babysitter, caregiving, etc.

Although paid domestic care workers are subpopulation of domestic workers, care work for dependent elder person requires some specific skills including both direct and indirect care activities. Whereas the direct care activities encompass relational care work such as helping elderly person by sanitization or by health check-up or nursing a sick elderly person, the indirect care activities comprise of non-personal care such as cleaning, laundering, cooking, household tasks. Basically, both care activities categories are overlapped, because the indirect care activities are preconditions for the direct care activities (Razavi, 2007).

This study focuses mainly on *paid domestic care work*, whose care activities take place in a private household. Therefore, *paid domestic care worker* could be self-employed or has an employment relationship with the employer, who could be private individual or household, a private or public agency, a non-profit organization.

2.2 Decent Care Work

The first *decent work* initiative by ILO is launched in 1999 with the following statement “*The primary goal of the ILO today is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity*” (International Labour Organization (ILO), 1999).

The initial *Decent Work* concept is originated from the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which contributed to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization: “*to meet the universal aspiration for social justice, to reach full employment, to ensure the sustainability of open societies and the global economy, to achieve social cohesion and to combat poverty and rising inequalities*(ILO, 2008). ”

After the decent work has been embedded in the Goal 8 of Agenda for Sustainable Development, which has been adopted by all United Nation Member States in 2015 to achieve the better and sustainable future for all by 2030, one of its notable accomplishment was an integration of decent work as the right to just and favorable conditions of work within the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), 2016).

Ever since the demand for elder care work has risen as well as the concern for the working conditions of care workers has increased, ILO has introduced a ‘*5R Framework for Decent Care Work*’ as a strategical approach to implement the decent work conditions for care workers. (International Labour Office et al. , 2018). To achieve decent work for all care workers, three strategies comprising of: (i) Recognize, Reduce and Redistribution of unpaid care work, (ii) Rewards: more and decent work and (iii) Representations, social dialogue and collective bargaining of care workers.

This study will put an emphasis on two significant approaches relating to paid care workers, which are rewards and representations.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Nevertheless, apart from the international efforts towards decent work agenda, in global level, a large gap between reality and ideology takes place. Currently, there are 215 million care workers in health, education and social work sectors, of which 65 percent is female (International Labour Office et al., 2018). While domestic workers is confronted with abusive employment relationships (Wessels, Ong, & Daniel, 2017) and global care workers are struggled with overworked and underpaid (Razavi & Staab, 2010).

The first Thai legislation to protect the right of informal workers, who worked for business purpose in a private household, is the Home Worker Protection Act (B.E. 2553). The Ministerial Regulation Nr. 14 (B. E. 2555) , afterwards, provides more protection to domestic workers. The recent Labour

Protection Act (B.E. 2562) give more provision such as minimum wage protection and business leave rights to domestic workers as well.

However, the adjustment of the national legislation could not provide equal workers right protection to domestic worker. A study from legal perspective based on ILO's C189 Domestic Worker convention has recommended a design of Domestic Protection Act (Buraton, 2013), which emphasizes the precise definition of domestic work as 'all household activities, which benefit to a household or more and those benefits shall be non-profit and performed in regardless of any place. Furthermore, the LPA at that time could not provide sufficiency protection for domestic workers, because of its difference nature and characteristics of domestic work (Siripatthanakosol, 2016).

Therefore, to explore the gap between reality and policies in Thai context, this study will use worker right perspective based on Framework for Decent Care Work relating to paid domestic care worker. Additionally, from economical perspective, the adequate earnings will be examined as well. Moreover, the inspection from social viewpoint will be conducted by future perspective of the 'good work'.

3. Methodology

The research methodology involves collecting and analysis of qualitative findings. Eight in-depth interviews with Thai paid domestic care workers, especially for dependent elder or disable person are performed. By both snowballs and agencies approaches, the participants were recruited.

The interviews with the in-home hiring caregivers were conducted by phone, because the majority of paid domestic care are hardly allowed to take the regular weekly day off. Besides, the face to face interview with the live in care worker could affect relationship between employees and employers.

By beginning of the process, all interviewees are informed about the purpose of the study. Additionally, all informants are asked for consent to use their data with their name keeping as anonymous for this research.

The semi-structure 30 minutes' interview questions comprise of four main parts: demographic information, the reason they become caregivers, their working conditions relating to care activities and their future perspective.

Afterwards, interpretive description on qualitative data was conducted. Analysis of the interviews data will explore how participants became paid domestic care workers, their experiences of care working conditions and their future perspective reflecting their current situation and valuing of decent work.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1 Demographic Results

Among eight informants, seven are female and one is male. Two of them are migrant workers, one of them came from an ethnic community. The age ranges are from 25 to 55. Although all of them came from rural areas, they are working as live in caregiver in the households in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region. Three of them were single, two were married and the other three were separated from their couples. Five of them were hired directly, three were hired through caregiver agencies. The demographic information of the paid domestic care workers is presented in Table 1.

No.	Alias	Nationality / Ethnicity	Age	Gender	Hometown	Family status	Hiring Type
1	Tang	Lao	30	f	Nhongbok	married	direct
2	Mai	Thai	54	f	Uttaradit	separated	agency
3	Too	Myanmar	55	f	n/a	separated	direct
4	Pin	Thai	51	f	Khonkaen	married	agency
5	Tam	Thai	49	f	Rajburi	separated	agency
6	Tor	Thai	34	m	Songkla	single	direct
7	Por	Thai / Karen	25	f	Tak	single	direct
8	King	Thai	37	f	Buriram	single	direct

Table 2 Demographic Data of the Participants

4.2 Worker Rights Perspective

The working conditions of eight paid domestic care workers are shown in Table 2. According to the previous mentioned Rewards and Representation approach of Framework for Decent Work, three issues including (i) terms and conditions of employment, (ii) work environment and (iii) social dialogue and collective bargaining will be explored.

By terms and conditions of employment, whereas all of them earns more than minimum wage level, they are experiencing a huge amount of overworking time. The findings indicate that their

average working time is more than 15 hours a day. Although the food and housing cost are provided as supplementary, it is questionable that their compensations are equal with their overworking time payment rate, which is in general more than two times of normal working wage. Moreover, without signed employment contracts, their job is actually unsecure and have no legal protection for example lay off without compensation. Furthermore, employers are not obliged to pay social security fee for the paid domestic care workers. Though, according to the Article 39 of the Social Protection Act, these paid domestic caregivers have voluntarily right to apply for a social security scheme. Still, only two of participants have applied with the Social Security Fund. Therefore, the terms and conditions of employment for these domestic care workers could not be evaluated as decent.

Nr	Alias	Years	Work hours	Salary (Baht)	Daily Food	Separate Room / Bed	O.T.	Extra	Social Security
1	Tang	2 mo	15	15,000	provided	room	x	√	x
2	Mai	22 y	22	22,000	120 baht	bed	700 Baht	n/a	x
3	Too	20 y	≥15	15,000	partly provided	room	x	√	x
4	Pin	5 y	≥15	16,000	provided	room	x	√	√
5	Tam	1.5 y	14	18,000	120 baht	bed	700 Baht	√	x
6	Tor	12 y	≥12	15,000	provided	room	x	√	x
7	Por	3 y	17	9,000	provided	room	x	√	x
8	King	7.5 y	≥15	12,000	provided	room	x	√	√

Table 3 Working Conditions of Paid Domestic Care Workers

“From 6.30 am, apart from body cleaning and sanitation, blood collecting and medicine management, I have to reposition of the grandpa every two hours and conduct the enteral tube feeding every four hours. Sometimes, I assist grandma by house cleaning. These routine works will end around 9 pm, and the night shift caregiver will continue the care work.” (Tang)

“One of my client was in coma and bedridden patient. I have to change the patient body’s position every two hours. Between 3 am – 5 am I would have a ‘deep diving’, which means a real sleep.” (Mai)

“I was always being awoken at 5 or 6 pm, because the doctor grandma generally woke up at 7 am and had breakfast after that. I am responsible for body cleaning, sanitation and food as well as nutrient preparation. Since she suffered from dementia, she was able to move every 20 minutes, therefore I have to monitor her for 24 hours. Otherwise, she could walk and fall any time. While she was bedridden, I have to conduct tube feeding four times a day and reposition her body every 2-3 hours. I had no time to sleep and woke up even of the coughing sound of the doctor grandma.” (King)

“I have to wake up around 5.30 am to accompany the elderly lady to the morning market. She loved cooking, hence, I have to assist her in the kitchen and distribute all cooking food to others afterwards. Furthermore, I have to help her by bathing and sanitation as well. I have to be with her all the time. Around 9-10 pm, after the elderly fell asleep, I could sleep as well.” (Por)

By working environment, all of caregivers in this study have either separate room or bed. Still, some caregivers have to stay with their care recipient for 24 hours or sleep in the client room, as they are dependent and in need of being monitored closely. Care working in private household might be safer and have lower risk in comparison with other works, but living with employers most of the time without regularly resting time could not be healthy. Additionally, working more overtime will have less time for learning new skills or self-development. The working environments in this study, hence, is unhealthy and unstimulating for care workers.

By social dialogue and collective bargaining, all of paid domestic care givers in this study have no time left for association. They have trade-off their regular weekly day off with their vacation time and extra pocket money for their family visits. In case of care workers recruited by agency, their motivation of working overtime is acquiring more wage.

Also, from right based perspective, these findings exposed some levels of workers’ rights violation. With a large amount of overworking time and underpaid, indecent terms and conditions of employment are revealed. The lack of resting time as well as self-development time, paid domestic care workers have lessened opportunity to be healthy and learn new skills including association with other workers to attain public representation for future social dialogue and collective bargaining.

4.3 Economic Perspective

From economic perspectives, economic status of all informants before and after becoming paid domestic care workers are investigated.

Before becoming paid domestic care workers, all of informants in this study came from family in agricultural sector, and had worked since their childhood as farm workers (Table 3). Some have pointed out that their family economic status is the significant reason for their incapability to access high education.

“I have no opportunity to study. I have graduated only primary school, because my mother said that I have to help her by rice farming.” (Tim)

“I had never visit any school, because my mother told me that I had to be the nanny for younger siblings. My parents had 12 children, two were already died when they were very young. I am the eldest child, who has to take care of other children, while my parents went out to farming.” (Por)

Consequently, with their low level of education status, they could afford only paid domestic care works, since education qualification was not prerequisite for job accessibility.

“By the recruitment of caregiver agency, there was no request of any educational qualification. Hence, I have submitted my care job application.” (Mai)

“I am illiterate. Even though I could communicate in Thai by oral speaking, but I could not write. I have worked in a noodle restaurant, but I could not write any customary order. Later, I was told that a caregiving job for elderly person does not required such literacy. Hence, I accept the care job offer.” (Too)

Nr	Alias	Education Level	Family Responsibilities				Previous jobs	Channel of work Access
			Parents	Children	Couple	Depend. Fa. Mem.		
1	Tang	secondary s.	x	x			farming self-employed housemaid	relatives
2	Mai	jun. high s.		x		x	farming bike taxi	agency
3	Too	primary s.				x	farming self-employed	relatives
4	Pin	primary s.			x	x	factory work	agency*
5	Tam	primary s.		x			farming kitchen work housemaid	agency
6	Tor	sen. high s	x				student	relatives
7	Por	illiterate	x			x (10)	farming housemaid	relatives
8	King	bachelor	x			x (3)	farming accountant	relatives

Table 3: Educational Levels, Previous Jobs, Family Responsibilities and Channels of Paid Domestic Care Work Access

*Initially, the participant was employed through agency. After the 3 years' client passed away, she was employed directly by the client's daughter.

After becoming paid domestic care workers, although the monthly salary of paid domestic care workers participated with this study are ranged from 9,000 Baht to 22,000 Baht (Table 2), which is noticeable higher than their previous works compensation, especially in agriculture sector. In addition, all of paid domestic care workers, receives food and housing provided as in-kind payment in

case of direct employment and as supplementary food cost in case of employing through agencies. However, their family responsibilities are significant factor contributing to their financial hardship.

“My husband was a truck driver. He has been ill because of his alcoholic behaviors. A high amount of debt was an important reason that I left my factory job to become a live-in care worker. With my salary, we could pay for the debt. And before my husband passed away, I have sent money back to the family 10,000 Baht monthly and 1,000 Baht a day for his staying in hospital.” (Pin)

“I have ten siblings. I do not know why I have a lot of siblings. Every time I took a vacation to visit my family, my house is full of my siblings. I have to transfer a large part of my salary to my family. That’s why I do not have much savings.” (Por)

“Even if I am single, I have a lot of living cost. Apart from my phone bill, I have a lot of install payments for the family’s television, refrigerators, washing machines, etc. My mother is getting old and my aunt has Parkinson syndrome. A seven years old son of my sisters is living with me. I have a few amount of money for my saving.” (King)

Therefore, although becoming paid domestic care workers could earn more than their previous works, but their earning is still inadequate, because their family responsibilities are still highest financial burden. The lack of adequate income policy and social policy for dependent family members including aging parents, young children, sick couple and other dependent close relatives, are the significant cause of their economic hardships.

4.4 Social Perspectives

From social outlook, their future perspectives according to themselves and their descendants are inspected (Table 4).

By their self-future scenario, none of paid domestic care workers in this study planned to go back and live in their own house, whether alone or with their family. This future perspective about themselves reflects the way they thought about their present life as well. Therefore, all of them do not want to continue their job as ‘care worker’ further, although they have described their employment relationship as good and healthy.

“If A-Ma die, I will go back to my family. I have my house there. There is no need for me to stay here, even with other family member of A-Ma.” (Too)

“My mom told me not to work as the caregiver for elderly further. Since my aunt is suffered from Parkinson and my mom is getting old, caregiving job could not tolerate for taking a frequent and long leave for family business. I have to accompany her to the hospital. The elderly does not know what to do there. I will find any work, which allows me to take care of elderly person in the family.” (King)

Nr	Alias	Self-Future Plan	Future Perspective for descendants	
			Education	Work
1	Tang	Further 1 work year, 100,000 Baht	High school	n/a
2	Mai	No retirement plan	n/a	secure
3	Too	Back to family in Myanmar	n/a	n/a
4	Pin	400,000 – 500,000 Baht saving for one-story house	university	Soldier, police, medical doctor
5	Tam	Collect money for 3-4 years, back to family	n/a	n/a
6	Tor	Assist father by lottery selling	n/a	Private business
7	Por	Further 5 work years, new house, back to family	university	Teacher, medical doctor, nurse
8	King	Work and take care of elderly	Vocational	technicians

Table 4: Future Perspectives of Paid Domestic Care Workers

By their future perspectives of their descendants, the need to invest in their descendants' education is visibly immense. The wish for their offspring to get secure job with appropriate income for their own living and health insurance coverage for their family, has reflect their feeling of deficiency and inner poverty in the present life-experience. Additionally, from their perspectives, 'care workers' are not defined or recommended to their descendant as 'good job'.

“My children should have a high school education. And what should they want to do for their living, I do not know.” (Mai)

“I wish my grandchildren could achieve the university degree, so that they could get the good job, which are soldier, police, doctor. If their parents became ill, they could benefit from the state welfare.” (Pin)

“I hope that my siblings would get high education, especially the university degree. Thus, they could become teacher, medical doctor or nurse. If I had an opportunity to learn in the childhood, I would like to be medical doctor, so I could help other people.” (Por)

“Caregiving is a good job, because it is accessible for non-educated people.” (Pin)

These findings demonstrated that the paid domestic care workers in this study perceived their care work as ‘indecent work’, which echoes the social perspectives as well. In general, they accept their working conditions reluctantly, because of their lack of opportunity to access better job.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

Because of the necessity of the client health status as well as the requirement of daily care activities, all of paid domestic care workers have to work without regular weekly day-off. By skipping their weekly day-off, whereas paid domestic care workers employing through agencies are willing to work and receive supplementary 700 Baht a day, direct employed care workers had none of this benefit. Regardless of work motivations, all care workers in private household have no freedom of choice. From their educational and family economic background, all of them have no economic freedom, even though a certain level of their rights are protected by laws and regulations.

The lack of economic freedom is caused by indecent overworking time and the deficiency of social policy supporting workers with family responsibilities. Care workers without economic freedom have less hope for social mobility, thus, they tend to invest in their offspring education with the hope of achieving better quality of life. Considering a domestic care worker as an individual with less capital for self-development and huge family burden as source of financial hardships, to provide them economic freedom, a holistic approach for policy design and development is required. Moreover, the care worker should have equal rights as general workers. The emerging of care economy interweaving human relationship needs state subsidization of care work in households. Both care recipients and

caregivers, hence, should have more economic rights to enjoy economic freedom. More autonomous and independent citizen is essential productive workforce for the near future of super-aged society.

Besides, the societal value of decent care work is crucial as well. Even though care work requires none of educational qualification, necessary care skills for elderly and dependent care recipients are required. Provision of care workers training should be emphasized and promoted to enhance quality of care and valuation of decent care work.

Apart from social contracting approach to improve employment relationship between employers and employees, more capability approach to empowerment care workers without economic and societal freedom are mandatory. Provision of voicing or political freedom could be implemented through association for collective bargaining and social dialogue. However, the key challenge is still the protection of regular day off right, which could not be violated for the sake of utilitarian market based economy's efficiency.

In conclusion, the experiences of eight paid domestic care workers in Thailand have resonated the situation of the global care workers, who are overworked, underpaid and unprotected. To achieve decent care works, care activities should be integrated within state care policy and care workers should have equal access to rights at work as general workers. State subsidization of care work by households or care workers should be provided. Furthermore, training of care workers should be highlighted and promoted to enhance caregivers' skills and quality of service. More capability approach is considered, to develop care worker's visibility and voicing in policy development process.

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Hidden Dimensions of Poverty Identified by Co-Production of Knowledge

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Abstract

Central to ATD Fourth World's vision is the idea that all persons living in poverty have an untapped knowledge which is crucial for identifying how to effectively overcome their conditions. They can overcome their fear of the unknown and contribute with new understandings if they are given fair opportunities to reflect on their own life experience in a reciprocal setting. When complemented by the knowledge, representations and practices of other involved stakeholders, it can culminate in a comprehensive and holistic response, liable to make policies and programs more appropriate and efficient.

In this line, ATD Fourth World, in partnership with Oxford University, conducted a participatory international research project called "The Hidden Dimensions of Poverty". The project took place in six countries: Bangladesh, Bolivia, France, Tanzania, the United Kingdom and the United States. For three years, from 2016 to 2019, people living in poverty, professionals and academics worked together to clarify how they understand poverty and its multi-dimensional aspects. Outcomes were presented on May 10, 2019 at the OECD in Paris in a conference untitled: "Addressing the Hidden Dimensions of Poverty".

This paper intends to outline the implementation of this research in Bangladesh, following the methodology called "Merging of Knowledge":

- How research partner MATI Organization (based in Mymensingh, Bangladesh) established a National Research Team including people with experience of poverty, practitioners and academics, able to work on equal footing and involved in the whole process of co-production.
- How and in which conditions this research team involved several outreach peer groups from various subpopulations experiencing poverty as well as groups of practitioners and academics,
- How the co-creation of knowledge emerged from cross-analysing the outputs of each group in plenary sessions, while elaborating together final sets of dimensions of poverty with their characteristics.

Research teams finally defined nine (9) interdependent dimensions common to all participating countries. Three (3) specific dimensions make up the core experience of poverty: Disempowerment, Suffering in body mind and heart, Struggle and resistance. Three (3) other dimensions are rooted in everyday relationships between individuals, social groups of all kinds and

institutions. They are new in the sense that are not yet adequately captured in current multi-dimensional poverty indices.

This experience suggests that participatory research projects including people experiencing poverty are productive when they meet the specific conditions of ethics, time, space and means that will ensure a fair and non-exploitative dialogue, as defined by this research methodology.

Keyword: Poverty, Bangladesh, Participatory Research, Community, Peer group, Academics, Practitioners, Experience, Knowledge, Methodology, Workshop, Disempowerment, Resistance, Maltreatment

1. Introduction

Central to ATD Fourth World's vision is the idea that all persons living in poverty have an untapped knowledge which is crucial for identifying how to effectively overcome their conditions. They can overcome their fear of the unknown and contribute with new understandings if they are given fair opportunities to reflect on their own life experience in a reciprocal setting. When complemented by the knowledge, representations and practices of other involved stakeholders, it can culminate in a comprehensive and holistic response, liable to make policies and programs more appropriate and efficient.

The International Movement ATD Fourth World is a non-governmental organization with no religious or political affiliation which engages with individuals and institutions to find solutions to eradicate extreme poverty. ATD (All Together in Dignity) Fourth World is founded on a long-term commitment to—working with people and communities experiencing extreme poverty and social exclusion, in both urban and rural area. The guiding ethos of ATD is to promote the participation, and representation, of disadvantaged populations on key issues as a means of fostering their emancipation and eradicating poverty. Working in partnership with people in poverty, ATD Fourth World programs seek to impart the lessons and experiences of the poorest of the poor—engaging with them, valorizing them, and empowering them to take action toward changes, both at the individual and community level.

ATD Fourth World in Asia contributed to several international participatory research efforts led by its headquarters. Among these, a 12 country participatory action research project, which included the Philippines over the years of 2011 to 2013, sought to evaluate the progress and impact of the Millennium Development Goals in improving the quality of life of people experiencing extreme poverty. It culminated in the report '*Challenge 2015: Towards Sustainable Development That Leaves no One Behind*'⁴⁸ presented in New York in June 2013 ahead the UN General Assembly.

2. Presentation of The Participatory Research “The Hidden Dimensions of Poverty”

It is now widely recognized that poverty is multidimensional⁴⁹. Heretofore, however, these dimensions have not been well specified; certain dimensions have gone unrecognized, and the ways

⁴⁸ https://www.atd-fourthworld.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/07/Challenge_2015_-_ATD_Fourth_World.pdf

ATD Fourth World Philippines (2015): Partners in Development. <http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/partners-in-development-listening-to-the-voices-of-families-living-in-extreme-poverty/>

⁴⁹ See Multidimensional Poverty Index developed in 2010 by the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative and the United Nations Development Programme https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multidimensional_Poverty_Index

in which the dimensions interact to shape the experience of poverty has not been properly understood.

In this context ATD Fourth World, in partnership with Oxford University, set up the participatory international research project called “The Hidden Dimensions of Poverty”, from 2016 to 2019. This research has made efforts to refine the understanding and measurement of poverty by engaging with people directly experiencing poverty, in collaboration with practitioners and academics.

Research involved teams from Bangladesh, Bolivia, France, Tanzania, the United Kingdom and the USA. People with direct experience of poverty, as well as academics and practitioners, worked together as equals. The research process – termed Merging of Knowledge (see below) - has contributed to a transformation in thinking at the individual, community and national levels through the co-generation and sharing of knowledge.

By engaging with literally hundreds of people experiencing poverty around the world-- combining their knowledge with that of academics and practitioners-- broader understandings on the multidimensional nature of poverty has been collectively challenged and evaluated. The following paragraphs describe how this process was carried out in Bangladesh. Under the longer-term goal, ensuring such research informs more sensitive policy design at the national and international levels on the eradication of poverty.

2.1 The “Merging of Knowledge” Approach

In 1980, Joseph Wresinski, the founder of ATD Fourth World— having experienced poverty and social exclusion as a child himself — conveyed the following to a panel of specialist researchers at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris:

“[often] Scholars [...] regard [people living in extreme poverty] as sources of information to be used for their own purposes. [...] They have, to some extent, subordinated [people living in poverty] to their own exploration as outside observers. [...] More seriously, these researchers have often, unintentionally and unwittingly, upset or even paralyzed the thinking of their interlocutors. This happened essentially because they did not recognize that they were dealing with a thinking that followed its own path and goals.”⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Wresinski, Joseph (1980): A Knowledge that Leads to Action. ATD: <http://www.joseph-wresinski.org/en/a-knowledge-that-leads-to-combat/>

Inspired by and based on Wresinski's thinking, "Merging of Knowledge" (MOK)⁵¹ workshops feature collaborative work between people living in poverty (i.e., those with life experience), specific groups of actors with social, professional, political responsibilities (i.e., those with practical knowledge) and/or researchers (i.e., those with academic knowledge). The workshops provide options for concerned stakeholders to learn from one another in an intensive and long-term during manner (ranging from a few days, to several months, or even years). The workshops thus afford a venue for people living in poverty to discuss their lives, examine individual experiences as well as those of others with a view to propose practical actions, to imagine possible solutions and advance their own projects.

Merging of Knowledge is a technique to help people facing extreme poverty and social exclusion dialogue with policy makers, business leaders, social workers, and teachers. The goal is to overcome differences in speaking and thinking, life experience and perspective, so that constructive discussions can occur. Merging of Knowledge bridges gaps between people from different backgrounds by creating an environment of respect and patience.

On the other hand, the workshops also serve as a way for experts, practitioners and researchers to examine their knowledge by learning directly from people in poverty. It allows the latter to lead discussions informed by their own ideas and experiences.

MOK workshops are organized as follows:

- First, participant reference groups are defined. (e.g., group of parents, students, teachers, NGO workers, etc.) Each topic is initially discussed with respective participants, defining, building upon, and addressing key issues. A third party facilitator is assigned to groups of people with experiences of poverty, who works to ensure that all persons can express their point in their own words, without anyone speaking on their behalf.
- Plenary sessions feature cross-analysis and discussion, whereupon outputs from each group are presented. A facilitator is again tasked with guaranteeing all parties are equally listened to, engage in non-threatening questioning and avoid judgmental comments. The comments and reflections of those with experience of poverty serve as both the starting point and the guiding thread of the approach, which aims to arrive at fresh insights and inform new perspectives.
- Lastly, the co-creation of knowledge emerges from participants' identification of questions, points of agreement or disagreement, recommendations, proposals for action, etc. A shared output such as a poster, art creation, position paper, public statement, action plan, etc. serves as a report of key findings.

⁵¹<https://4thworldmovement.org/what-is-merging-knowledge/>

3. Implementation of The Participatory Research Project “The Hidden Dimensions of Poverty” in Bangladesh

In partnership with ATD Fourth World and researchers at the University of Oxford, the MATI Organization agreed to coordinate research in Bangladesh.

MATI is an independent non-governmental organization (NGO), which has been working since 1997 in the northern part of Bangladesh, namely the Sherpur and Mymensingh districts. MATI believes that any kind of development has to originate from the bottom up, led by community members, with aims and strategies formulated by those most concerned-- the people experiencing poverty themselves. As such, MATI programs are planned and implemented together with local residents. MATI Bangladesh is officially registered as an NGO in Bangladesh at the NGO Affairs Bureau Dhaka (NGOAB) and the Social Welfare Office Sherpur.

MATI and ATD had previously collaborated on participatory activities including the evaluation of one reputed “Millennium Village Project” in 2012 and 2016 with the participation of concerned villagers. In 2014 ATD and MATI jointly conducted a research seminar entitled “*Promoting cooperation among learners, parents and teachers for the success of each child*”, with students, parents from rural community, teachers and NGO practitioners, using the MOK methodology described above.

Under the current project, research work focused on exploring how poverty is interpreted among persons of different gender, age, origin, ethnicity and otherwise. The research was coordinated both in the Global North (France, UK and USA) and Global South (Bangladesh, Bolivia and Tanzania) simultaneously with same objectives, with all research activities directed by University of Oxford and ATD.

In Bangladesh, research work included 3 modules:

(1) Module 1 relates to the formation of the research team: how members learned to work together towards a common set of goals and were instructed on the use of the MOK methodology.

(2) Module 2 and 3 involves the mobilization of different peer groups comprised of working age adults who contributed to identifying varying characteristics and dimensions of poverty. The peer groups included a number of subpopulations:

- i. Module 2 focused on rural poverty and involved 5 peer-groups of working age “people with direct experience from poverty (PDEP)”⁵² from rural communities; 2 peer-groups of NGO practitioners/activists; 2 peer-groups of academics
- ii. Module 3 involved the same number of peer-groups but these groups were specifically working in the field of urban poverty.

Both modules 2 and 3 employed the MOK methodology at every step of the process, resulting in workshops where representatives of each peer group engaged in efforts to co-analyze and merge the sets of characteristics describing poverty and its dimensions previously identified.

3.1 How MATI Organization established a National Research Team (NRT): Module 1 of the research?

In September 2015, MATI’s Executive Director attended an introductory research seminar in Oxford. The seminar provided guidance on how to set up a national research team comprising people with direct experience of poverty, as well as practitioners and academics.

Some issues required specific debate:

- How to locate suitable facilitators for working with the peer groups with direct experiences of poverty? Who will be able to make their voice genuinely heard? These issues reflect the risk that the views of vulnerable people would be colored or suppressed by the facilitator’s own experience.
- Who could take over the role of research assistant among people who are not researchers?
- How to identify academics who are willing to work on equal footing with people in poverty? To listen to them? To take them seriously? To accept their arguments as valuable and worthy? To use words everybody can understand?

Discussions between the International Research Coordinators and MATI Executive Director ultimately resulted in the formation of National Research Team made up of 3 peer groups as follows:

- Five (5) members having a direct experience of poverty. These persons identified as coming from a poor family background and have since become students, or social activists working in smaller NGOs. Their families, on the other hand, were reported to still be living in poor conditions.

A question was raised whether to also include a someone earning a daily wage in the NRT, but was dismissed once it became clear that a person on daily wage might not be able to commit to

⁵² Which will be referred in this paper as “community people”

attending regular meetings. The thinking was that should an important opportunity to earn money arise, the person would have no choice but to accept which would perhaps affect his/her ability to attend NRT meetings, or thus lose the whole contract. An alternative arrangement was proposed: ensuring that one peer group be made up of day-laborers instead, in order to ensure their adequate representation.

- Six (6) activists: 4 from MATI who served as co-facilitators and sought to work closely with the peer groups. These persons supported and trained over the course of the research by the international coordinators and the regional delegate of ATD in Asia.

- Two (2) Academics from the Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) Mymensingh (a leading agricultural University in the country) expressed interest in the research and engaged in the NRT: *Dr. Akhtaruzzaman Khan*, Department of Agricultural Finance, and *Prof. Fakir Azmal Huda*, Department of Agricultural Economics, both from the Faculty of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, BAU.

- MATI Executive Director assumed the position of Coordinator with a research assistant tasked with coordination of the process as decided upon by MATI staff: *Mr Md Samiur Rahman KHAN* (previously Mati Computer Instructor).

As listed below, members of the NRT represented a wide range of different profiles:

- Gender: Female and male,
- Demography: Rural and urban
- Occupations: Academic, trained, semi-skilled, self-trained
- Age: Between 18 to 50 years
- Affiliation: Representatives of ethnic/religious minorities, representatives of persons with special needs/different abilities

When the newly appointed NRT convened participants for the first time, information was shared on the ideas and contents of the research. Questions included:

- Why are we doing this research?
- What do we hope to understand?
- Which approach are we going to use?
- What is MOK and what makes it different from other approaches?
- What is the difference between a research and a project?
- What will our role as NRT be?

It took a substantial amount of time for these questions to be fully understood by all member, ultimately extending throughout the first MOK workshop and the course of Module 2 before all members fully understood the process and its goals.

The primary task of Module 1 was to build solidarity among NRT participants, starting by familiarizing individual team members with each other. This included creating an environment where all members were able to interact in an open and impartial way, disavowing the social world that would typically prevent persons from different social stations to share details about their lives. An idea arose that all members would invite NRT members for tea and biscuits in their homes on a rotational basis, so everybody could observe the living conditions of all members of the team. Doing so also helped to foster rapport between all participants. As the project proceeded, even people who had been colleagues for years were able to learn new ideas from one another.

Below is an excerpt about one such a meeting at the house of Dr. Khan (academic):

“On 26.01.2017 NRT members were assembled at Dr K’s House. They practiced one of the exercise proposed for the research data collection: “What is good in your life” and “What is bad in your life” and if any of the bad points are connected to poverty and how/why. The group was divided into 2 peer groups (the academics and practitioners in one group, and the people with experience of poverty in the other group). Orally, everybody told about one good point and one bad point. It was agreed to do this exercise with post-it notes on posters, every group would get 2 posters and post-it notes so that everybody can write his points in keywords on a post-it note. [One interesting point] was that everyone, including academics, dare[d] to express about how she or he cope[s] with the feeling of poverty. After the practice all participants had [a] friendly dinner together.”

Other NRT meetings helped participants to to get better acquainted. During these meetings NRT members shared their personal stories. In the beginning seven members of the NRT who have direct experience of poverty and the younger members of NRT were reluctant to expose their personal life. However, when academics and fellow activists began to tell their stories also related to poverty, the more introverted participants started to open up and describe their own experiences.

3.1.1 Training workshop on Merging of Knowledge approach

Module 1 culminated with a MOK training session in the village of Huzurikanda/Sherpur District in December 2016, where MATI maintains a branch office with a Primary School and Daycare center. In addition, MATI also conducts agricultural projects on a neighboring compound with accommodation that allows for bigger groups to be hosted.

The session sought to demonstrate to participants how the MOK approach can work with people of different backgrounds. NRT facilitators learned what is important for the facilitation of such diverse groups. ATD regional delegates in Asia supported the planning and facilitation of the event. All members of the NRT took part in the workshop, together with other diverse stakeholders (including academics, NGO, practitioners and community people).

Over the three-full-day course, workshop participants were organized in five peer-groups, where they were encouraged to practice several of the exercises outlined by the MOK approach. Peer groups included Academics, Practitioners as well as 3 groups of people having an experience of poverty: students/volunteers, ethnic minority people, and daycare mothers.

3.2 How/under which conditions the National Research Team involved several outreach peer groups (Module 2 and 3 of the research)?

3.2.1 B-1 Selecting Peer Groups

The NRT contacted several organizations to propose contributions to the research. This resulted in the mobilization of five peer groups made up of rural community residents, and 5 groups of urban community residents.

(1) Rural Community Residents:

(1.1) **Huzurikanda Day-Labourer-Group:** This group was comprised of 10 farmers from Huzurikanda, a small village in Sherpur District 40 km from Mymensingh. Most villagers in this area are farmers. Approximately 90% are poor and extremely poor (according to the United Nations definition). The rate of the education among the adult generation in the village is very low.

(1.2) **Sherpur Mixed Adults Group:** This group was composed of 15 men and women, some landless, representing Pakkhimari village in Sherpur Sadar⁵³. People in the area are increasingly affected by floods as they settle close to the river Brahmaputra. The Executive director of the local organization CAP (Centre for Advancement Program) took part in the MOK training session and helped to organize this peer group.

(1.3) **Muktagacha Kalibari Group:** Comprised of 10 women and 1 man, of the members of this peer group were physically disabled or indicated that they possessed a physically disabled family member. This group largely resided in a poor area outside Muktagacha Town in Mymensingh District. Most people residing in this area did lack formal education. NRT member R.I. (activist with direct

⁵³ Sadar means “town area”, and defines the police station to which the village belongs: this description is always used in Bangladesh as part of an address.

experience of poverty), who founded a small organization to help people with disabilities, helped to form this group.

(1.4) **Kailakuri Ethnic Minority Group:** Kailakuri is a village in Madhupur Upazila⁵⁴ in Tangail District. Members of this group are indigenous women who are Christians or Hindus and belong to a non-Bengali ethnic group. All the participants from this group are day-labourers. NRT member Pigon (activist with direct experience of poverty) helped to form this group.

(1.5) **Gabura Tiger Widows Group:** This group was made up of 10 women from the Gabura Union⁵⁵, Shatkhira Distirct, located just beside the Sundarban. Tiger widow is actually a term reserved for a very special group of women from the Sundarban area who lost their husbands in the Forest because of tiger attacks. The NGO LEDARS estimates that there are more than 600 tiger victims' families in the area (240 just on Gabura Island). The designation carries a special stigma among affected families; namely, the belief that women are responsible for their husbands' death. As a result, some face social exclusion from activities such as hair dressing, cleaning houses, as well as being barred from conversing with other males in their community. Should their husband return, widows can still be excommunicated by family members, sometimes with no recourse but but to vacate their homes and relocate to their parents' house. Most of these women work as day-laborers.

While rural community peer groups 1-4 were formed through the connection of persons within the NRT, the Gabura Tiger Widows Group was formed through the connection of MATI with the NGO LEDARS whose Executive Director came to attend the first open MOK workshop in 2016 when the approach was initially tested. During a first visit of a delegation of MATI, he confirmed his interest to support forming and facilitating a peer-group with the Tiger widows. He explained: *"tiger widows are among the poorest adults with old people"*.

(2) Urban Community Residents:

(2.1) **Binpara Ethnic Minorities:** This group was made up of participants of Hindu origin belonging to low caste, who reside in precarious housing in a densely populated area near Brahmaputra. Many children lack access quality education; most parents are day laborers or household workers.

(2.2) **Kalibari Slum Area:** This group, representing an area near the Brahmaputra River in Mymensingh, is comprised of migrants from the different rural areas around Mymensingh (100 km

⁵⁴ Upazila is an administration entity that could be translated as sub-district.

⁵⁵ Union is an administrative term describing the political union of three villages under one chairman and village parliament.

radius). Many of these people live in cramped conditions, with sometimes two families residing in one tiny hut. Most of these residents work mainly as day laborers.

(2.3) **Women with Disabilities:** Made up of participants from the community organization Women's Club, which assists disabled women from disadvantaged backgrounds to work instead of street begging.

(2.4) **Bihari Camp:** This group was comprised of Bihari people-- one of the most disadvantaged groups in Bangladesh because they have yet to be recognized as citizens. The Urdu-speaking Biharis (many of which can also speak in Bangladeshi) are descendants of Muslim refugees who fled from India after the partition of 1947. Most are residing in a community with an extremely high population density and with substandard sanitation, reflected by the sharing of one toilet among 32 families.

(2.5) **Shankipara Day Laborers:** This group was mostly contained persons who are unable to work on a daily basis and as such are employed for approximately 20 days a month. A majority of these participants earn a living as building painters and construction workers, or alternatively work day-by-day depending on hiring opportunities available. On occasion some of the laborers wait an entire day without being hired for any work whatsoever.

NRT members who served as intermediaries for respective peer groups sought to approach each group together with MATI facilitators, explain the purpose of the research and secure agreement that each group would participate. This process, aimed at ensuring the full understanding and agreement of all participants about the research work, was an ethical imperative that required several consultation meetings with each group. A time-frame for the workshop was thereafter drawn up with each group. It was found that groups in or within close proximity to Mymensingh could gather easily, but groups further away such as the Tiger widows, required NRT facilitators to carry out special workshop arrangements. In general, it was important to have meetings of each group scheduled around 3 consecutive days, to ensure participants would not forget what had been discussed and agreed. This was particularly critical as many of the group members in community groups were illiterate.

On the other hand, there were also challenges with identifying a time slot for convening the groups of Academics and Practitioners. As these participants were capable of reading and writing, work was conducted over 1.5 days.

3.2.2 B-2- Defining Characteristics of Poverty with Each Working Age Peer Groups

Before working with the outreach peer groups, NRT members continued their personal training by jointly conducting the exercises of the methodology described below. In so doing, participants were encouraged to define their own multidimensional understanding of poverty.

NRT facilitators decided to mainly use the same exercises they had practiced within their team. Consequently, all peer groups, whether community residents, practitioners, or academics, were invited to identify characteristics related to poverty by way of:

- Picture exercises
- Word connection exercises
- Body map exercises

A notetaker was assigned to attend all meetings and record the most important outcomes of each meeting. Most of the participants were not accustomed to the methods used, and many were initially shy to engage.

(1) Description of the research exercises proposed to the peer groups:

(1.1) Picture Exercise

An array of pictures cut out of magazines were spread out on the floor. Participants were instructed to choose a picture they felt was related to poverty and explain why the particular picture was selected, including noting associated key words.

This exercise appeared to be very helpful to connect the participants with the subject:

- R., community woman chose a picture that showed children playing: for her it meant that although the children look poor, they can be full of joy

- N., woman from Bihari community took a picture of a stadium and around the stadium there was a many large buildings of which she said in her explanation, "We are poor therefore we have to stay in the camp. Rich people have a big building but we do not have any. We live in slums". Her key word was "No personal house"

- A community woman selected a picture of a day laborer with a shovel in his shoulder and indicated "My husband works almost whole day but his income is very low and with this little income he cannot fulfill family needs and children's educational costs." Her keyword was "Less income".

- A practitioner said: "In my picture a poor man is trying a tough work but nobody is helping him. Poor people do not get help from others". His keyword was "Lack of Cooperation".

- Another practitioner chose a picture of a small girl riding a boat alone. For him this meant "her parents go outside everyday for work, she has no one to take care of her. Therefore, she has to ride the boat which is dangerous".

- An academic participant conveyed: "My picture shows a person who is injured because of some kind of war. A normal civilian can be affected by political lack of social awareness and political war. This can create or affect poverty in the county." His keyword was "Lack of social awareness" and "Political chaos and political war."

(1.2) Word Connection

This simple exercise consists in listing down words one after another, starting with "Poverty", and then each word being inspired by the former one until people run out of energy or imagination. This game quickly generates a series of related words (usually synonyms) that can be discussed in greater detail. Participants can also be asked about why they responded with the words that they did. It happens to be very helpful for the people to find further aspects of poverty, relaying on findings coming from each others.

Words emerge as the following examples from the group of Women with disability:

- "Neglect" was the first word expressed, with the comment: "At the hospital when we want to talk, they do not want to listen, and they do not want to give us treatment. Sometimes they throw us out from the hospital"

- "Lack of courage" is the following word by another participant. She said "If we want to protest against injustice, then we need courage otherwise we cannot have our rights"

- "Lack of possibility to express opinion" continue another participant: "When I attend a meeting they do not let us express our opinion. They do not value my opinion because I am poor"

- "Feeling sad" goes forward another one: "When I cannot fulfill my wishes or purpose, I feel really bad". It creates mental depreciation/discredit".

(1.3) Body Map

In this exercise, participants were presented with a picture of a person or preferably are asked to draw a person. They are then told that the person is living in poverty and are posed the following questions: "What is on the person's mind? What is in their heart? What does their gut feel about poverty? What do their eyes notice about poverty? What about their nose, what does it smell? What do their legs think of poverty? What about their arms and their hands?" The process typically generates a list of thoughts and feelings about the nature of poverty which can be further discussed.

The findings by the Tiger widows group show it in a particularly relevant way:

Mind/Head	Eyes
There is no rice in the house, thinking of what we are going to eat for next meal	Emptiness/darkness/blank when thinking over and over again about poverty
Worried for lack of wood fuel, need to buy but no money, what to do?	Feeling bad because of children who cannot go to school because of lack of money
Because of being ill, not able to earn as before	Feeling bad when we see rich people being able to buy everything from the bazaar (market)
Worried for not having work	Poor students have to work while rich students are going to school and get jobs
Worried for food because of no rice in the house	Feeling bad when she sees her grand children having to go from door to door to ask for food
Worried for having no treatment despite health problem and how to pay back debts	Feeling bad because older son has head tumor, but still working for the family to earn money
Worried about how to take care of pregnant daughter and grand children	Feeling bad from seeing younger daughter who is suffering asthma, but still working in a brick kiln
Worried because grand daughter is ill, needs a blood test, but no money	In poor peoples house, many things are on the floor (bed, clothes) because no furniture to put them
Worried about how to earn money	When people are ill, we hear their complains, cries, screaming, moaning at home, but cannot send them to hospital, we have to see and hear and cannot do anything
Worried because her family has just rice to eat, but nothing with it	

Ears	Mouth
Sometimes we are told to go to chairman for a good job opportunity, but it's not true	When we do not have work for a long time, our face looks drier and darker
Sometimes we hear the government will build good houses for us, go to the chairman and it's not true	"Our face becomes darker" because we we cannot fulfill the wishes of our kids
Sometimes we go to chairman to ask for the card for old people welfare, and he asks bribe for it	"Our face becomes darker" when family members, kids, want good food and we cannot afford it.
Hear from childhood on that poor people cannot get justice	People say bad words/gossips (husband killed by tiger, you are the reason behind that, you bring bad luck, you are a witch)
We hear people's bad words/gossips (your husband killed by tiger, you are the reason behind that, you bring bad luck, you are a witch)	Poor people words have no value in the society

Table 1: Part of "Tiger Widows" Body Map

3.2.3 B-3- From the characteristics, defining dimensions of poverty:

The last step of the work with each peer group represented the most challenging exercise, as it involves the intellectual process of grouping different features of poverty (descriptive, easily visualized characteristics) into dimensions of poverty; in other words, a collection of characteristics or aspects of poverty that seem sensible to consider together because they are related to one another. A good test of whether a dimension made sense was to try to find a single word or short phrase that aptly described the various aspects that had been aggregated together.

With groups in which as many as 8 out of 10 participants were unable to read and write, such exercises required a wide degree of creativity to be sufficiently instructive. For example, each characteristic had to be read aloud, sometimes precisely, repeated, and explained again. In order to symbolize ways of grouping characteristics, some groups used banana leaves, such as for a meal; banana leaf dishes were displayed on a table, and the participants would display the various characteristics into the different banana plates, as when grouping the ingredients of a same dish. Once the characteristics were grouped together on leaves, participants would discuss the groups, sometimes they would redistribute the characteristics in more meaningful ways until agreement. Then they would suggest titles for each leaf. When everybody would agree on a title, it was written down to become the name of a dimension, and so on. When all titles were written down, the participants would check again every “plate”, until full agreement was reached.

As for most of other community people groups, this step was particularly challenging for the Tiger widows. First, they were required to ascertain the many characteristics produced. Some associations took shape, such as “not having good clothes”. They then identified how this privation affected many aspects of their lives. Another association of words highlighted the concerns related to the marriage of their daughters. They came up to the concern of having a nice skin, and what might damage their skin in life and what are the consequences. Later this dimension changed, and became part of other dimensions. One difficult moment arose when a number of characteristics were left without any clear answer as to how to group them. At that time facilitators sought to be more suggestive and prompt the participants, yet progressively the women became comfortable about agreeing on different dimensions including various pains, troubles, tensions and abilities, such as the ability to say no. When the women realized that this exercise ended up being so much about pain and troubles, it even made them laugh!

At this stage, all sets of dimensions with many associated characteristics defined by the peer groups were merged by NRT members into a coherent narrative: NRT members with experience of poverty merged the sets of 5 community people peer groups in one set. Academic members of NRT

merged the dimensions of 2 academic peer groups and the practitioners of the NRT merged the dimensions of the 2 practitioners peer groups. In order to do this, participants were required to reflect on the characteristics associated with every dimension. Dimensions were considered similar and merged into one set when they would be composed by a significant average of similar characteristics. Dimensions that were identified only by one group were also maintained. At the end the set of dimensions for each group (academic, practitioner or community people) consolidated all the different dimensions and characteristics originally produced.

Community people	Academics	Practitioners
Mental pain	Physical and psychological condition	Mental sadness and lack of happiness
Mental problem		
Unmet basic needs		Lack and misuse of money
Lack of money	Lack and misuse of money	Lack and misuse of money
Lack of toilet		
Lack of space		
		Lack of safe and nutritious food
Lack of education opportunities	Lack of education	
Lack of training		
Lack of employment		Lack of employment and unemployment
Lack of cooperation	Defective social state	Social and family discrimination
Lack of fairness		Lack of proper management and planning
Lack of law enforcement	Lack of good governance	Lack of good governance
Lack of health care	Lack of Health and Treatment Facilities	Lack of adequate medical care and obstruction
Illness		
Natural balance is being lost	Nature and environmental degradation	The effect of climate change and natural disaster
	Effect of war	War and political instability
Drug addicted society		Increase of poverty due to drug addiction
	The effect of increasing population	The effect of increasing population
	Effect of superstition	Effect of superstition

Table 2: The Dimensions Identified by Academics, Practitioners and Community People in Module 3 (Urban Poverty)

In both module 2 and 3, nearly all peer groups of Community Residents highlighted dimensions of poverty related to unmet basic needs, lack of money, mental pain and tension.

Conversely, Academics and Practitioners peer groups underlined dimensions related to governance. Academics also highlighted the dimensions of poverty related to mental states.

3.3 The Co-Creation of Knowledge Emerged From Cross-Analyzing The Outputs of Each Group

At the end of each module 2 and 3, a two day MOK meeting was organized with the participation of 2 nominees of each peer group (e.g. 10 representatives of community people peer groups, 4 representatives of academic peer groups and 4 representatives of the practitioners' peer groups). All NRT members also took part in the meeting.

3.3.1 C-1 Discovering, understanding dimensions of others:

As a result of this exercise, academics were introduced to the dimensions and characteristics of poverty put forward by the practitioners and community peer groups. Likewise, practitioners learned about the academics and community peer group's dimensions and characteristics; community peer groups understood the dimensions and characteristics put forward by academics and practitioners. Ultimately all participants were able to draw insights from the 3 sets of peer groups dimensions and characteristics.

As highlighted above, not all participants in the community peer group were literate. As such, the role of NRT facilitators was help them to understand, including by loudly reciting every associated characteristic or dimension to them. Participants would be invited to stop the process at anytime if there was any problem in understanding the characteristics and dimensions. Participants were also invited to comment on what interested them or what surprised them in terms of the characteristics and dimensions discussed by the other groups.

A number of questions came up in both module 2 and 3 regarding the wording used by academics and practitioners about dimensions related to governance and political/societal issues such as "lack of demographic planning", "limitation of resources", "unplanned infrastructure", "improper marketing channel", "lack of decentralization", "inappropriate preservation and utilization" etc. After these terms were explained in a more accessible way, it appears that everyone could relate these characteristics and dimensions to recognizable facts.

Merging dimensions, naming them together

In this step, participants were expected to merge 3 set of dimensions and characteristics (1 community, 1 practitioner, 1 academic) in one final, representative set of dimensions meaningful to all concerned.

To do so, all dimensions of the 3 sets were written each on an empty poster across a large surface of tables in the middle of the meeting room. A symbol was assigned to each dimension for people with reading difficulties to be able to identify them more easily. Subsequently all participants were instructed to redistribute characteristics of poverty identified originally by their peer group into the various empty posters, taking into account the dimensions produced by the other groups in the previous distribution. Given the large number of dimensions (15 to 19) and the 200+ characteristics identified by the various groups, the main role of the NRT facilitators support persons with reading difficulties to encouraging the group to complete the exercise. Once all characteristics on the dimensions were shared and distributed, discussions were initiated on efforts to reduce the number of dimensions. This step was a time-sensitive exercise, given that practitioners and academics tended to have a broader overview, and could readily envision more linkages and associations between the dimensions. The NRT facilitators worked towards ensuring equal contributions from representatives of each group.

Finally, if merging proposals on the dimensions were first derived from academics and practitioners, members of all groups took part in the following discussions. As the process advanced, participants were observed developing an improved attitude around the activity: this included a more equitable allocation of speaking time, and close consideration of all questions or comments put forward by everyone involved.

Dimensions linked to basic needs were the first to be grouped together. These included all the aspects related to health, housing, food, education and training. Moreover, these dimensions were apparent enough to allow people of each group to contribute in the discussion, which lent easily to agreement on reducing the number of different dimensions categorized under “unmet basic needs”.

Thereafter, factors linked with social and community life, behavior, relationships, cooperation and attitudes inspired more active discussions. Superstition was finally included into this set of dimensions. Academics proposed to also include drug addiction in this set, but practitioners and community people resisted firmly, arguing that this issue more concerned wider society and was not specific to poverty alone. This issue was defined as a specific characteristic separate from the others.

Discussions also explored barriers to expression and participation among people living in poverty and were categorized under the dimension entitled “lack of good governance.”

3.3.1 C-2 Comparing/Ranking the Dimensions

At this step people worked in peer groups on describing final dimensions of poverty in line with the question “Which dimension makes life the most intolerable?” The purpose was not necessarily to reach a complete ranking of all dimensions, but to try to compare dimensions between them. Most groups experienced difficulties with understanding the exercise because all dimensions of poverty appeared interrelated to them. For example, when comparing *unmet basic needs* and *physical and psychological states associated with poverty*, people from the community observed:

- “Most of the people become physically or mentally ill from having tension. When people cannot fulfill their basic needs then they have mental pressure and tension”.
- “It is possible to eliminate physical and psychological problems when basic needs are met.”
- “If I can give everything to my family I will be tension free. So reaching basic needs remains most important in my life.”

When comparing the *Lack of governance* and *unmet basic needs* they also expressed:

- “Due to lack of good governance people cannot get justice even if they are educated and they also cannot fulfill their basic needs.”
- “The absence of good governance create chaos in society.”
- “Any problem in the society could be resolved if there was good governance.”

Academic groups, referencing *physical and psychological states associated with poverty*, stated:

- “If peoples’ physical and psychological state is bad then they cannot work and can't earn money. Without money, people cannot do anything in life. And also if physical and psychological state is not good, people’s life cannot be better even though the social condition were good.”

Practitioners remarked:

- “Due to lack of good governance there is lack of employment and money. For getting a job most of us have to give a bribe. But there is no guarantee we will get the job after giving the bribe. This is happening due to lack of good governance.”

Merged Dimensions (module 3)		Academics	Practitioners	Comm (14 people)
A	Unmet basic needs	1	1	A>B: 2

B	Lack of Employment and money	3	3	B>A: 12
C	Defective Social State	6	5	A>C: All
D	Physical and Psychological state	2	6	A>D: all B>D: 12, D>B: 1
E	Lack of Good Governance	5	2	A>E: 6, E>A: 8 E>C: all
F	Nature and Environmental Degradation	4	9	
G	Drug Addiction	6	4	
H	Over Population	7	7	
I	Political Instability	7	8	

Table 3: the Ranking after module 3

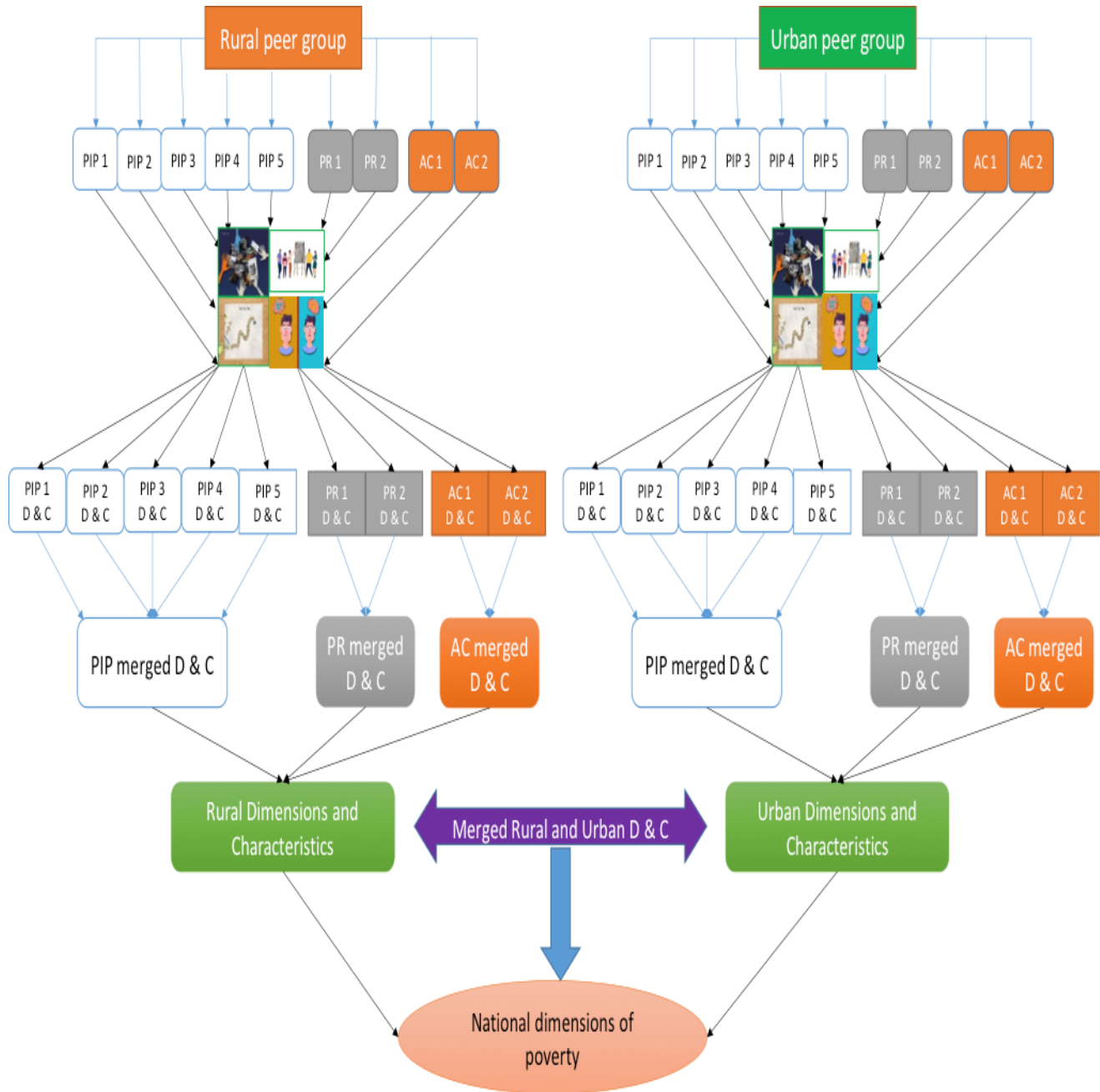


Figure 1: Summary of Data Collection and MOK Working Sessions Lead by The Bangladesh NRT:
 PIP: People in Poverty, PR: Practitioners, AC: Academics

Excerpts of the evaluation by peer groups participants of the various workshops in Bangladesh:

- Practitioner: “I have experienced working with a lot of various people on this question of dimensions of poverty. When we hear others opinion about poverty, poverty has many categories and many dimensions.”
- Woman from community group: “I liked it very much, it is good work to define poverty. Poverty is not only about money. It can be many people who are in the situation and who can help themselves better.”
- Bihari woman: “It was good to know and to learn something. We could see that there are people who are more deprived than us but we thought we were the most deprived ones.”
- Practitioner: “I thought that poverty was only about money. After the research work, I can see a lot of people are poor from different angles”
- Woman from rural group: “We are different kind of people: NGO, professors, housewives, I was happy to come here.”
- Academic professor: “Regarding poverty I knew about lack of money, lack of land. But mental problems were new to me.”
- Man, rural group: “Academics and practitioners were friendly and not arrogant, they behaved nicely with us”.
- Man, rural community: “It was good here because in the society people cannot talk, there is no value of what poor people are saying”

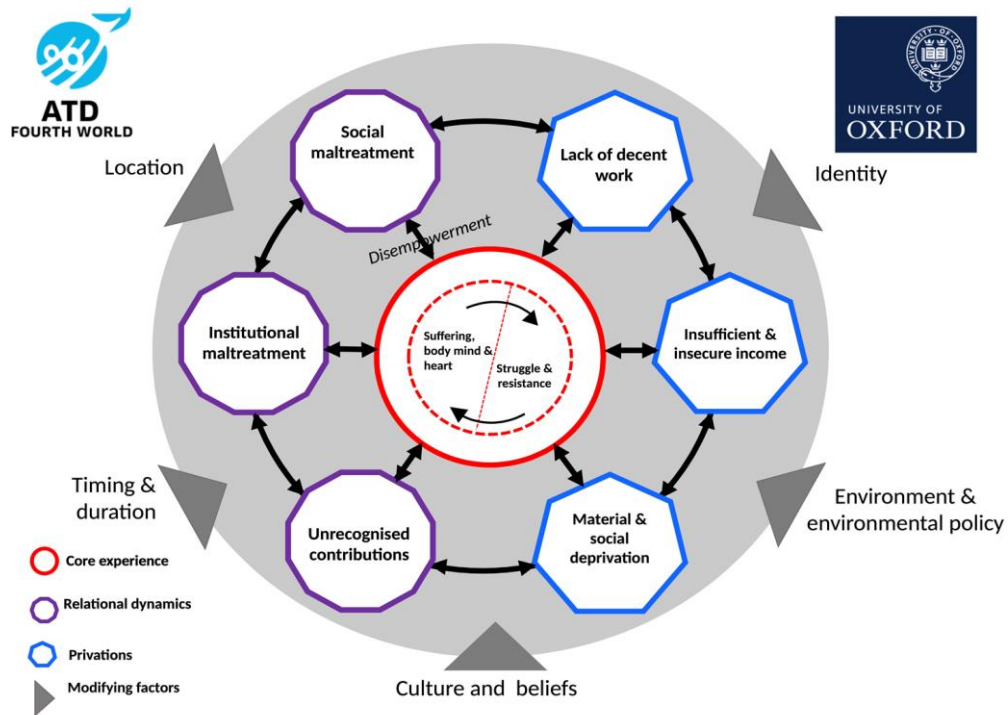
4. International Outputs of the Research: Identifying Nine (9) Interdependent Dimensions Common to All Participating Countries

4.1 International seminar to pool the findings

In September 2018, 32 delegates from the six NRTs-- six of them from Bangladesh-- assembled with the international coordination team to work together for one week. The six NRTs identified approximately 70 dimensions of poverty. Project participants were organized into two groups, comprising delegates from the global North and the global South, respectively, to examine whether there were common elements in the list of dimensions identified by each national team. The two groups then convened in plenary to compare their lists. Participants were surprised to discover that although the daily lives of poor people in the North and in the South are in many ways different, the list of dimensions they had identified also shared a number of similarities. At the end of a seven-day session, project participants drew up a list of nine dimensions of poverty that are common to all participating countries, comprising two country-specific dimensions and three modifying factors. All NRTs later refined their findings, complementing them with a written account of the new insights about poverty that had emerged from their research.

Final International Dimensions and Modifying Factors

The reports of the 6 countries enabled the international coordination team to draft the international synthesis titled 'The hidden dimensions of poverty' describing nine common dimensions, their interactions and five modifying factors. The synthesis was then validated by the 6 NRTs before completion.



Three (3) Specific Dimensions Make Up the Core Experience of Poverty: Disempowerment, Suffering in body, mind and heart, and Struggle and Resistance:

- Disempowerment refers to a lack of control and dependence on others resulting from severely constrained choices. Often, people have no say in decisions made on their behalf by those in positions of authority. As such, poverty is associated with forced compliance and reliance on others resulting in a loss of dignity and general dehumanization among those concerned; further, it can also undermine opportunities for escaping poverty

- Suffering in body, mind and heart: Living in poverty means experiencing intense physical, mental and emotional suffering accompanied by a sense of powerlessness to do anything about it. The suffering includes persistent negative thoughts and emotions that can be overwhelming: constant fear of what might happen, of exhausting scarce assets or resources, of how others will respond upon being 'found out' as poor; stress and anxiety caused by the difficulty of coping with uncertainty: when people internalize daily experiences of injustice and dehumanisation, this undermines their self-esteem.

- **Struggle and Resistance:** the ongoing struggle to survive among those living in extreme poverty includes actively resisting and counteracting the effects of attendant forms of suffering brought on by privation, abuse, and lack of recognition. Such perseverance is intimately connected to peoples' efforts to survive, achieve inner balance and to enable themselves, and particularly their children, to pursue a better life. This struggle takes different forms, many of which remain invisible to the rest of society.

Three (3) associated dimensions are rooted in everyday relationships of individuals, social groups and institutions, underlining the fact that poverty is shaped by how different groups in society perceive and engage with each other. Correspondingly, these dimensions are new in the sense that they do not feature in existing multidimensional indices of poverty:

- **Institutional maltreatment** is the failure of national and international institutions, whether through their actions or inaction, to respond appropriately and respectfully to the needs and circumstances of people in poverty-- which may ultimately ignore, humiliate and in other ways harm them. Formal institutions, both public and private, frame negative experiences of poverty both through public discourse and the design and implementation of policy interventions and associated services. This also factors into the neglect and failure to listen to people living in poverty.

- **Social maltreatment describes** the way that people in poverty are negatively perceived and treated by other individuals and informal groups. People living in poverty are often ignored or excluded, while the phenomenon of 'othering' (saying or thinking 'We're not like those people') is commonplace. Social maltreatment goes unchallenged because people in poverty are not recognised for what they bring to society.

- **Unrecognized contributions:** The knowledge and skills of people living in poverty are rarely seen, acknowledged or valued. Individually and collectively, people experiencing poverty are often wrongly presumed to be incompetent. People survive through their resourcefulness, finding different ways to produce goods or services against expectations. However, society ignores these contributions or views them with indifference, leading to a kind of self-fulfilling prophesy where people living in poverty may underestimate their own knowledge and skills.

The remaining dimensions all refer to a lack of resources: monetary, material, cultural and social. These deficits are already recognized in policy discourse and feature in some existing multi-dimensional indices of poverty. Further information regarding other related aspects, such as the aforementioned modifying factors are highlighted in the final report⁵⁶.

⁵⁶<https://www.atd-fourthworld.org/who-decides-how-we-define-poverty/>

These outcomes were presented on May 10, 2019 at the OECD in Paris in a conference untitled: “Addressing the Hidden Dimensions of Poverty”. This conference organized by the OECD Centre for Opportunity and Equality and the International Movement ATD Fourth World presented a forum to share relevant insights and questions raised by the project and to discuss them with participants. The conference sought to establish a dialogue among the six National Research Teams and participants on how to move forward in the areas of measurement, policy and action.

5. Conclusion: Meeting Specific Conditions to Design Productive Participatory Research Projects Together with People Experiencing Poverty

In addition to the outcomes described above, participatory research in Bangladesh and other countries has provided opportunities for more than 200 people from diverse backgrounds to take part in a research approach wherein the knowledge of people with an experience of poverty is valued and contributes to shaping wider social change. Further knowledge sharing and dissemination of lessons learned will follow as a next step.

ATD Fourth World has a long history of working in participatory way both with very poor people and communities. This work has enabled the organization to establish set of criteria outlining the conditions conducive to genuine participation.⁵⁷

Indeed, people living in extreme poverty cannot simply be inserted into standard research projects and expected to share their knowledge. Instead, a genuinely participatory research project must meet several conditions to ensure a fair and non-exploitative dialogue.

Firstly, actors occupying a position of power within the project – international organizations, NGOs or public authorities, academics and researchers – must be aware that policies and programs often fail to reach the most impoverished communities, and be willing to change the social, economic, and cultural realities that perpetuate extreme poverty and social exclusion. In much the same way, people living in poverty must be recognized as possessing a unique knowledge. They must not be defined by what they lack or need, but as active members of society who offer a valuable insight gained from life experience.

⁵⁷ Guidelines for the Merging of Knowledge and Practices When Working with People Living in Situations of Poverty and Social Exclusion” (2002). Published in *Le croisement des savoirs et des pratiques – Quand des personnes en situation de pauvreté, des universitaires et des professionnels pensent et se forment ensemble* Paris, France: Éditions de l’Atelier. In English, a different version of the Guidelines is available at: <http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/what-we-do/participation/merging-knowledge/>

Secondly, people living in poverty should not be marginalized or isolated within the project. These persons should be afforded the opportunity to communicate with others living in similar circumstances, and afforded space and time to discuss and consider issues as a group. Each person must feel that their opinions are respected in the project and be able to play an active role in all aspects of the research in question. As it can be seen in the above account about the research in Bangladesh, people living in poverty need to be offered sufficient space and time to clearly understand the approach, to reflect on the situation, to express themselves and to talk through issues as they arise. The role of the discussion facilitators is to help each of the people living in poverty to express themselves in their own words without interference or putting words in their mouths. Doing so involves creating the right conditions which will allow them to build on their own knowledge: to take a step back and evaluate their experience in view of others so that they can draw lessons, supporting them with efforts to understand the dynamic with other participants. All documentation, including words and writing generated by participants must be treated with care. In particular, the comments and observations made by those living in poverty often reflect a perspective brought about through adversity and suffering-- the people themselves may still feel very fragile. As such all participant responses must be protected by strict confidentiality agreements. This also fully applies to the academics and professionals.

The role of the discussion facilitators is to assist those stakeholders, including academics and professionals, in understanding the time and pace necessary for sharing knowledge and practices in a sequential manner. Each and every participant must feel that they are a co-researcher, co-trainer and co-actor with a role in identifying and formulating the questions, developing a common understanding and designing solutions together. Each and every participant has something to offer to driving the research agenda. Furthermore, the aim of these practices is to improve linkages and relationships between people living in poverty and wider society (including academics, professionals, and other institutional actors, such as politicians, trade unionists etc.). This goal, made possible by a methodology that is transparent and respected by all, informs and motivates the efforts of those participating. In this regard it is important to understand and identify disagreements. Without examining diverging views, there can be no way to build anything together. The best way to convene differing viewpoints is for each participant, wherever possible, to commit to a common output. Finally, to avoid people feeling as though they are involved in a tokenistic exercise, the project should work to build personal skills, enhance meaning in people's lives, strengthen existing relationships within the community as well as build new relationships within and outside of the community. The project should seek to be transparent and accountable to the participants involved, including by sharing any reports or other outputs produced by the research (ideally co-produced with participants)

as well as providing feedback about relevant project outcomes. Moreover, participatory research should also make efforts to ensure that participants' words are used appropriately with due consideration of the impact of their statements over the course of the study.

Collaborating with people living in extreme poverty stands not only as a moral obligation, simply because participation in public affairs is a fundamental human right. Doing so also represents a matter of efficiency: people living in extreme poverty possess insights into the operational problems that arise from the way development policies are often designed and applied, and have valuable ideas on how these problems might be addressed. Academics play a key role in documenting the observations of those living in extreme poverty through participatory research, increasing the likelihood that these considerations will be taken into account.

Trans-Disciplinary Practice as An Approach for Public Healthcare: A Case Study of Hepatitis C Screening and Linkage to Care in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

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Abstract

Vietnam is a developing country in Southeast Asia with a population of nearly 95 million and has one of the largest viral hepatitis disease burdens in the region and worldwide⁵⁸. Primary liver cancer is the third leading cause of deaths in Vietnam⁵⁹. Up to 90% of primary liver cancer in Vietnam is responsible by chronic HBV or HCV infection⁶⁰.

Hepatitis C virus (HCV) is an actual burden and a serious problem for the public healthcare in Ho Chi Minh City. The overall prevalence of HCV in Vietnam and in Ho Chi Minh City has been estimated to be in the range of 1 - 4.1%⁶¹⁻⁶². However, in high-risk groups, such as those who use injectable drugs, chronic HCV has been estimated to be nearly 60%. The number of HCV patients who should be on HCV therapy is unreachable, undetectable, and negligible. Additionally, there is still a large number of patients who have state insurance not knowing how to use it to access to appropriate healthcare providers and how to claim the state insurance company.

This finding indicates and demonstrates how the feasibility and effectiveness of trans-disciplinary approach can be implemented in the public healthcare practice in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam to eliminate a disease. The paper also presents a case study with a joint effort to freely screen Hepatitis C virus and find out carriers then link them to care. The case study has engaged various stakeholders from academic and non-academic institutes and organizations to provide support, consultancy and education in assisting them with state insurance claim and reimbursement to make

⁵⁸ Cooke GS et al. Accelerating the elimination of viral hepatitis: A Lancet Gastroenterology & Hepatology Commission. *Lancet Gastroenterol Hepatol*. 2019 Feb;4(2):135-184. doi: 10.1016/S2468-1253(18)30270.

⁵⁹ GBD 2013 Mortality and Causes of Death Collaborators. Global, regional, and national age-sex specific all-cause and cause-specific mortality for 240 causes of death, 1990-2013: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2013. *Lancet*. 2015 Jan 10;385(9963):117-71. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(14)61682-2. Epub 2014 Dec 18

⁶⁰ Song-Huy Nguyen-Dinh, et al. High burden of hepatocellular carcinoma and viral hepatitis in Southern and Central Vietnam: Experience of a large tertiary referral center, 2010 to 2016. *World Journal of Hepatology*. January 27, 2018 10(1): 116-123. 2-Ministry of Health --Plan for Prevention and Control of Viral Hepatitis, Period 2015-2019", Hanoi, 2015

⁶¹ World Health Organization, Vietnam Office and Vietnam's Ministry of Health, General Department of Preventive Medicine, 2017 (unpublished data)

⁶² Berto A Et al. Current challenges and possible solutions to improve access to care and treatment for hepatitis C infection in Vietnam: a systematic review. *BMC Infect Dis*. 2017 Apr 11;17(1):260. doi: 10.1186/s12879-017-2360-6.

the Hepatitis C treatment more accessible and affordable. From the outcome of the case study, the trans-disciplinary approach is relevant to the strategy of micro elimination of this specific and concrete infectious disease Hepatitis C in Ho Chi Minh City that may turn into a macro-elimination action plan for other diseases in Ho Chi Minh city and nationwide, contributing to policy making and assess to public policies and programs that promote population health and health equity.

Keyword: Public Healthcare Services, State Health Insurance, Hepatitis C, Linkage to Care and Treatment, Trans-Disciplinary Approach

1. Introduction

In Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), with a population of 12 million, the prevalence of, and formal continuum of care pathways for HCV, have not been established. The proposed Conquering Hepatitis via Micro-Elimination for Vietnam (*or CHIME for Vietnam*), a comprehensive screening and access to care program and protocol involving 20,000 representative adults in HCMC, will build a foundation to address and overcome the barriers to HCV surveillance, screening, and treatment leading to reduction in the rates of liver cancer among residents in HCMC in the decades following 2020 and beyond. This model is a good example for Trans-disciplinary approach in practicing health care and health policy in HCMC and in Viet Nam.

CHIME for Vietnam is being designed, developed and implemented by the Vietnam Viral Hepatitis Alliance (V- VHA) not-for-profit US-based non- governmental organization (NGO) whose sole purpose is to promote viral hepatitis elimination in Vietnam, Pham Ngoc Thach University of Medicine, Medic Medical Center, Ho Chi Minh City Open University, and under the auspices of HCMC Health Department.

V- VHA' s team and partners have successfully conducted research in HBV- HCV in HCMC, Vietnam over the past 3 years. We have conducted 25 screenings in community and 3 screenings in hospitals, and subsequently provide access to care, for a total of 3,000 adults in HCMC.

1.1 Primary Objectives

- Invite 20,000 eligible individuals by conventional mail, utilizing the probability proportional to sample size (PPS) methodology in Ho Chi Minh City over the two-year project period.
 - Provide no- cost serological screening to at least 15,000 of the 20,000 invited individuals (*assuming 75% response rate, as observed in previous programs*) within Ho Chi Minh City over the two-year project period.
 - Establish a clinical pathway for patients to navigate through the viral hepatitis care cascade or knowledge co-production once they are found to have positive HCV antibody.
 - Provide navigation support for HCV-positive patients to ensure access to care through V-VHA's referral network and other partnering healthcare centers, up to and including treatment in collaboration with pharmaceutical patient assistance programs.
 - Expand and establish linkage to HCV treatment therapy and evaluation program for patients diagnosed with HCV.
 - To determine, for the first time, with complete and rigorous epidemiological methodology, the prevalence of HCV in Ho Chi Minh City, the largest city in Vietnam.

□ Provide navigation services including guidance and strategies to claim insurance coverage for 500 HCV-positive patients to ensure access to care through V-VHA's referral network and other partnering community healthcare providers in HCMC.

1.2 Secondary Objectives

- Create the largest, most complete and readily analyzable database of demographic data and Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices regarding HCV in Vietnam's history.
- Continue implementation and documentation of every element in the hepatitis C Cascade of Care continuum from Testing through Enrollment in Care/ Starting Treatment, Maintained in Treatment, and Cured.
- Provide a highly credible and reliable foundation of accurate epidemiological information and knowledge- attitudes- and practices (KAP) , on which to build evidence- based and cost- effective national and regional public health programs to address awareness, education, identification, treatment, and surveillance of HCV on an appropriately massive scale.

At the outset and in concurrence with the program's operation, periodic awareness and education seminars including viral hepatitis education with linguistically and educationally tailored outreach materials will be implemented. Not only these combined educational efforts will enhance community education for HBV-HCV treatment, mobilizing screening participants but helping to further promote HCV linkage to care programs to be established at other non-V-VHA affiliated medical centers in HCMC. Taken together, the team is thus poised to accomplish this proposed large- scale access to care for 500 patients with HCV within 12 months.

2. Scientific Rationale and Preliminary Data

Vietnam has one of the highest viral hepatitis disease burdens in the world. With a population of 95 million, Vietnam has estimated HCV prevalence to be 3.3% to 4.7% ⁽¹⁻²⁾. In 2017, WHO's Vietnam Office and Vietnam's Ministry of Health projected that, without intervention, 14,923 cases of HCV decompensated cirrhosis, 8,923 cases of HCV-linked cancer, and 7,123 occurrences of HCV related mortality will be reported in 2030 and will continue to rise thereafter ⁽³⁾. It has been estimated that eight million Vietnamese (8.4% of the population) are chronic HBV carriers ⁽³⁾. Of those, 3.22 million are eligible for treatment, but only 1.34% (43,230/3,220,000) are on anti-viral therapy ⁽³⁾. V-VHA and its partners have also documented that Cho Ray Hospital, the largest tertiary hospital in HCMC, has seen a rising number of liver cancer cases from 2,793 cases reported in 2010 to 4,069 cases in 2016, yielding a total of 24,091 liver cancer cases that were reported during the 2010-2016 period ⁽⁴⁾. Of those, 25% and 62% were due to HCV and HBV, respectively ⁽⁴⁾.

Similar to the national viral hepatitis situation, Ho Chi Minh City, with a population of 12 million, has no formal or established HCV or HBV care pathways. In response to this urgent need, V-VHA has been partnering with Pham Ngoc Thach University of Medicine, Medic Medical Center and Ho Chi Minh City Open University under the auspice of HCMC Health Department with the aim to make Ho Chi Minh City the first HCV-free city in Vietnam. By using a probability proportional study (PPS) design, we have previously conducted 25 community screenings throughout the city and 3 in hospital settings. A total of 2,374 people of the 3,015 invited population (79%) reported to the screening sites; answered the Knowledge Attitude and Practice (KAP) questionnaires; and agreed to phlebotomy⁽⁵⁻⁶⁾. The screening results demonstrated: 3% (72/2,374) were positive for anti-HCV Ab (median age=43.50±13.60 (range 18-80)). The HCV Ab (+) individuals aged 55±14.30 vs. 47±15.03 in the HCV Ab (-) group (($p < 0.05$)) (6). Approximately, a quarter of HCV patients also reported having at least a family member with viral hepatitis⁽⁶⁾. Only a very small minority of HBsAg (+) patients reported having any medical care (13.7%) or had partner screened for HBV- HCV (26%)⁽⁶⁾. Twenty-seven percent of HBV patients also reported having a family member infected with viral hepatitis. For both HBV and HCV patients, only a third was aware of their infection status⁽⁵⁻⁶⁾.

In summary, our initial screening and access to care program has proven to be feasible and well-received in the community, as well as in hospital systems in HCMC. Its success supports using a rigorous PPS methodology for a larger comprehensive screening-access to care program for HBV- HCV in Ho Chi Minh City. Of course, simply identifying patients through testing is not enough; tailored interventional programs consisting of linguistically and socially appropriate educational strategies as well as aggressive navigation support in diverse settings are needed⁽⁵⁻⁶⁾.

The goal of HCV therapy is SVR (virologic cure), defined as the continued absence of detectable HCV RNA at least 8 weeks after completion of therapy. SVR, once achieved, has been shown to be durable, in large prospective studies, in more than 99% of patients followed up for 5 years or more. Numerous studies including multiple systematic reviews have demonstrated that HCV therapy and the achievement of an SVR in this population results in dramatic decreases in hepatic decompensation events, liver cancer, and liver-related mortality. Specifically, SVR is associated with a more than 70% reduction in the risk of liver cancer and a 90% reduction in the risk of liver-related mortality and liver transplantation. Fortunately, with the recent advent of direct acting antiviral agents (DAA) that became widely available in 2013, HCV cure is within reach, irrespective of clinical liver disease stage or viral genotype, for >95% of patients who undergo HCV treatment. Compared to historic interferon-based treatment, DAA therapy has minimal contraindications, only lasts 8-12 weeks in duration, and

has minimal side effects. Similar to the SVR's observed with IFN based treatment, successful treatment with DAA therapy reduces the risk of HCV-related complications including liver disease progression and HCC, and improves overall survival.

3. Demographics of the Area of Service-Why Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam?

Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC or Saigon) is an expansive area covering over 2,095 km² and includes approximately 12 million residents. The city has continued to attract a large population of 400,000 immigrants from all over Vietnam each year, making it the most diverse city in Vietnam and a significant microcosm of Vietnam's national profile. HCMC is further divided into 24 districts, including 19 urban and 5 sub-urban areas, which in turn are subdivided into 5 commune-level towns (or townlets), 58 communes, and 322 wards. Its population has a male to female ratio of 1:1.09, and its per capita income is about \$2,500 USD annually (in 2014). According to the HCMC's Public Insurance Department, in the mid of 2018, 82.6% of HCMC registered residents have insurance. The uninsured population is mostly immigrants. HCMC is considered a leading prototype in developments in Vietnam when it comes to health care innovation, technological advancement and healthcare disparity among population groups well as. Taken together, all these aspects make HCMC a very appropriate site for launching *CHIME for Vietnam*.

4. Program stakeholders

The **HCMC Health Department** supervises and sponsors the health care system of HCMC that operates with almost 100 government-owned hospitals or medical centers and more than 10 private clinics. The Health Department approves essentially all health-related programs, including hep B and C screening outreach programs in HCMC. The Health Department provides leadership, access and permission to collect, analyze, and disseminate the data on viral hepatitis in HCMC through screening and outreach programs. The Health Department has also agreed to mobilize other medical centers to participate in the program as needed. Our previous and continuing collaboration with the HCMC Health Department assures us that V-VHA and its partners have the necessary governmental support to achieve our objectives.

Furthermore, three of the long-standing and trusted local partners of V-VHA are Medic Medical Center (MMC) and Pham Ngoc Thach University of Medicine (PNTU) and Ho Chi Minh City Open University (HCMC OU). MMC is known as the pioneer of the first privately-owned major medical center with high quality service and facilities, high volume of patients, and affordable costs. The main campus is in HCMC where the screening and linkage to care elements of the V-VHA's ongoing programs occur, and where mobile phlebotomy screening and follow up testing as well as follow-up

care of the proposed “*CHIME for Vietnam*” will in part take place. MMC is staffed with a group of diverse specialties and well-experienced physicians, physician scientists, and other professional staff. With its well-equipped facilities, MMC is well positioned to perform and support translational and population science studies.

Pham Ngoc Thach University of Medicine (PNTU) is funded by the HCMC People’s Committee and supervised by the HCMC Health Department. PNTU has trained generations of physicians, physician scientists, as well as public health specialists for HCMC. The Division of Community Health, within the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, will be responsible for assembling outreach teams for screening and delivering access to care navigation services for the proposed program. The Division has extensive experience conducting longitudinal community outreach, community health research, community intervention, and international collaboration studies. Moreover, as a teaching medical school, PTNU has established connections and partnerships with several other health care facilities in HCMC.

Ho Chi Minh City Open University (HCMC OU) is a state university, with the mission of public engagement, strong with community health research, community intervention, sharing the same values with V-VHA and other program stakeholders. HCMC OU has trained generations of community project developers, social work experts, as well as public policy specialists. The Department of Sociology and Project Management team will be responsible for training outreach teams for screening and delivering access to care navigation services and insurance claim for the program participants. The two have extensive experience conducting longitudinal community outreach, community health research, community intervention, and international collaboration studies with other NGOs who work in public health intervention, education, and development in HCMC and other provinces in Viet Nam. HCMC OU students are serving as social workers, helping enrolling patients with the program and coordinating them with clinics as needed. *Thus, our efforts will bring together Vietnamese governmental, as well as private and academic entities to achieve our stated Objectives in eliminating virus Hepatitis C strategy.*

5. Program Design and Research Methods

5.1 Sample Size Calculation

The sample size justification is derived based on multiple factors including our capacity to scale up the proposed program and program partners as well as prior estimates of HBV-HCV prevalence. For this program, we primarily focused on HCV prevalence, so the sample size justification is based on HCV estimated prevalence. HBV screening and access to care is an extension of the program since the

two viral infections have significant similarities in disease progression and outcomes and thus screening and access to care.

From previous estimated prevalence studies ⁽¹⁾ and our own data ⁽⁵⁻⁶⁾, the prevalence of HCV (3%) is used to estimate sample size for this population-based study. Using the HCMC population statistics of 2016, a derivative sample size of 19,200 subjects is needed to estimate the seroprevalence of HCV in the general population (*with 95% confidence of ± 0.25 percentage points, assuming design effect of 2.5 and non-response rate of 25%*), and to generate meaningful demographic and socioeconomic data to systematically establish formal pathways for screening and linkage to care model in HCMC in the future.

5.1.1 Inclusion Criteria

- Adults aged 18 or older
- Both genders and all ethnicities
- Individuals already tested for or self-reports HCV infection
- Undergoing prior or current HCV treatment
- Individuals who already have hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) HCV, with or without HCC treatment
 - Individuals able and willing to provide consent and signs informed consent form (ICF)
 - Agree to follow up with clinical management if indicated
 - Reside in Ho Chi Minh City at the time of study and provides contact information (email and/or cell phone number for texting)
 - 2 phone numbers and personal identification numbers (CMND number)

5.1.2 Exclusion Criteria

- Individuals who cannot, do not want to, or refused by legal guardian to sign the ICF
- Any serious or active medical or psychiatric illness, which, in the opinion of the investigator, would interfere with patient treatment, assessment or compliance with the protocol

6. Program Methodology and Research Design

Using the probability proportional to size (PPS) methodology, 100 study sites (*also known as communes or wards, hereafter referred as "sites", representing selected commune, in the study design and operation*) will be selected based on a sampling frame of 322 sites of HCMC's population data as indicated above, according to the census data from 2009 which has been used to select 25 sites for the Cornerstone study. The Cornerstone Study is an ongoing HBV-HCV prevalence and linkage to care by the same team.

Sampling frame was sorted numerically then alphabetically by ascending order, with urban came before rural districts. The first random number and sampling interval from the Cornerstone study will be used to continue selecting seventy-five (75) remaining sites without replacement. Programs at twenty-five sites (5,000 individuals reached with at least 75% response rate) have been conducted through our Cornerstone program. Programs at the remaining seventy-five sites (below) will be conducted after getting the referral letters issued by the HCMC Health Department and approval from local authorities. If local authorities refuse to participate in the study, another site in the same district will be chosen in replacement. At each site, we will invite 200 people from 100 households (assuming each household has at least 2 adults) from at least 2 randomly selected neighborhoods within the index sites. For household recruitment, the first household will be selected randomly, the second household will be the one that is next to the right side of the first household. This procedure will be continued until 50 households per neighborhood have been invited. If there is a dead-end road or alley or no residential household, the first of the next to the right side of the last residential household will be invited. If a neighborhood has less than 50 households or the number of households invited does not add up to 100, an additional neighborhood will be selected. Each household will receive two invitation packages (including an invitation letter from PNTU with or without the stamp of the local authorities, brief study summary, informed consent form and KAP questionnaire developed by all team members) for two adults in each selected household. If there is only one adult in the household, only one invitation package will be sent. No restriction on the maximum number of adults from a household that can participate in the study, however, the third adult of the household needs to report at the screening site on the screening day in order to participate in the study.

This PPS has also been demonstrated as feasible in HCMC ⁽⁵⁻⁶⁾. Operational protocols will include KAP questionnaire surveys; informed consent; screening criteria; screening tests; further assessment tests and imaging studies for infected individuals; data collection, management and analysis; and linkage to care navigation services.

7. Program's Screening and Linkage to Care Procedure

7.1 Pre-Screening

Within the first 4 months (November 2018 to February 2019), V-VHA and partners will consolidate all aspects and requirements necessary to conduct *CHIME for Vietnam*, including acquiring approvals for the protocol by the Science and Technology Committee and Ethics Committee at PNTU, HCMC OU, HCMC Department of Health, as well as the HCMC People's Committee.

Training in outreach program processes: PNTU's and HCMC OU's outreach team and the outreach personnel are experienced on how to design, conduct, mobilize, and implement the screening protocol as demonstrated in V-VHA's prior programs.

Process for identifying the invited screening participants, including consent for blood draw, and responding to questionnaires: We will teach the screening outreach teams how to invite people who are chosen through the protocol's design. All invited participants will be listed during the recruitment phase at each site, which will be done 4-10 days before the screening date. Name, gender, and year of birth of all adults aged 18 or older in the index households will be recorded in case they wish to participate.

At the outset, the outreach team and phlebotomy team will develop a calendar with dates and locations where the screening will be implemented and subsequently contact the local clinic in advance for reservation so that the planned screenings can be set months in advance. This will avoid conflicting events at the local clinic (health-fairs, infant-childhood vaccination for new school year, etc.).

7.2 Screening

Screening events will be organized at the local health center during weekends, from 8AM to 4PM. Program screening period is approximately 24 months, from February 2019 to February 2021. Per the study design, a total of 20,000 individuals will be invited to participate in the program, based on the probability proportional to size (PPS) cluster sampling approach. Screening will not take place during weekdays or national holidays because of the concern of low response rate in recruiting the screening participants. Instead, the screening will happen during weekends (Saturday and/or Sunday) as needed. We will have 4 outreach teams. Each team will have 8 members that have undergone the necessary competency training program.

Invited screening participants who agreed to the screenings at the local medical center will be verified using their personal information and the national IDs. Participants will provide the signed consent forms (attached) before getting their bloods drawn by a certified phlebotomist from the Medic center. Those who missed the blood draw for screening tests will be notified about catch-up dates at the next venue for a field trip.

Each screening site will have one screening day, which will occur during weekends. If there is

less than 80% (160/200 invitees) people reported to the screening sites, then a second screening day (Saturday or Sunday) will be organized and potential participants will be notified about this “back up” day.

At the screening event, in-depth interviews will be done in-person at local health centers (depending on the situation, participants may answer the questionnaires themselves). Questionnaires are stored in REDCap and data will be entered using tablet/smartphone apps or computer. A local health center’s MD or nurse will be available on the screening day for emergencies. Each participant will have his/her Study ID, Lab_ID (screening tests) if complete the questionnaire and blood tests (more below). Blood samples will be processed and couriered to Medic for analysis. Lab results will be reviewed and approved by a medical doctor at Medic and sent to participants within 2 weeks.

Screening Tests: Anti-HCV antibody

7.3 Data Collection and Retention during Screening

Data to be collected include: demographics, socio-economic, Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice or Behavior (KAP) toward HCV questionnaire. Infected individuals will be asked to complete an additional survey on risk factors; needs for connecting to health care services; and barriers in accessing to care and to consent for phlebotomy for screening tests and follow-up labs, if indicated. Those with known sero-status may not need to come for the screening test but will be enrolled into the database if they consent. Those who are on treatment will be asked to provide lab tests (pre-treatment lab tests or recent lab tests).

An outreach team consisting of 4 data collectors, who are in turn under the supervision of a physician, will do the field work at local health centers and follow the following guidelines:

- Each data collector and research team member will be assigned a passcode and an ID to enter the database with restricted activities.
- Each participant will be granted a unique ID (Record_ID). This record ID and the national ID number will be used to match and validate participants and their profiles. Personal information is only used in linkage data or retrieving lab tests (not within the scope of this pilot program) and will “de-identified” (not be identified) when used for analysis and report.
- The questionnaire will be set up on REDCap, which can capture data directly from the computer or mobile app. If paper questionnaire is used, data will be entered into REDCap and the paper questionnaire will be scanned and saved, then shredded.
- Lab results will be sent out with the corresponding Record_ID from Medic Medical Center.

All data will be merged into DHIS2. Data cleaning and de-identifying will be done before exporting data for further analysis.

- Study progress will be reported to V-VHA on a monthly and quarterly basis. Ten percent (10%) of the cases will be checked randomly to evaluate the data entry quality and mode of data collection in order to have an overview of the feasibility of the planned timeline. Comments will be obtained from data collectors.
- At each site, the goal is to invite 200 adults (2 per household) and screen for at least 160 people for the first 2 day. If less than 160 people report to the screening site, the backup day
- Starting from April 2019, result turnaround every week, and from May 2019, first call for care coordinate will be made.

7.4 Post-Screening and Linkage to Care with Path to Cure model in Vietnam

Lab results will be interpreted and signed by certified Hepatologist. After processing, the screening results will be categorized into HCV status. Depending on the screening results, recommendations and provisions for follow up and management will be sent to participants' homes in a sealed envelope packages within 2-4 weeks after screening. Specifically, the sealed envelope packages include lab test results, viral serological markers self- interpretation instructions, or recommendations for clinical management based on individuals' results for HCV. Only those who are positive for anti- HCV will receive one coupon (with Coupon_ID) for one- time free " further examination" at Medic Medical Center. The free coupon will be included in the sealed envelope packages accordingly. The "further examination" coupons incentivize for Hepatology consultation by certified Hepatologist, liver function tests/INR, HCV viral load and fibroscan. Recipients' signatures will be collected as proof of receipt of results.

Furthermore, the program aims at providing navigation services including claiming national insurance reimbursements to link and cure 500 patients with hepatitis C (HCV) detected from the program from 09/2019 to 09/2020. Specifically, the project will employ a dedicated and well-trained team of clinical care coordinator and insurance claims specialist to accomplish the goals. Additionally, the project will take advantage of an established framework of trusted relationships between V-VHA and key partners in Vietnam to produce translational knowledge in public health education and services for population in HCMC for their liver health awareness and eventually awareness of other diseases.

PATH to Cure in Vietnam will be an important Demonstration Program that will further prove the feasibility and public health impact of a significant program, with grassroots community outreach

and case management as backbone, to provide access to care for HCV cure in Vietnam in the decade of 2020-2030 and beyond

(1) Pre-Enrollment into Care

Within the first 3 months of funding (provisionally September-December 2019), the program will consolidate all aspects and requirements necessary to conduct *PATH To Cure in Vietnam*.

- Formation of the Case Management Team: 03 clinical care coordinators and 1 insurance claim specialist, all under the supervision of an MD
- Training in case management processes (clinical care coordinators and insurance claim specialist). We will train the case management team on how to conduct follow up and claim insurance for those with HCV Ab+, HCV RNA +
 - Process for calling and inviting patients with HCV for treatment: Handholding protocol
 - Develop viral hepatitis curriculum for healthcare providers and patients with HCV
 - At the outset, the case management team will develop a calendar with dates and performance metrics to ensure the objectives are achieved on-time.

Plan for data collection and retention: Infected individuals will be asked to complete an additional survey on risk factors; needs for connecting to health care services; and barriers in accessing to care and to consent for phlebotomy for follow-up labs.

Data Management and Database: The compilation and monitoring of data and follow up elements will be managed by *eCare Software* (Figure 1) and will be centralized at V-VHA's Database. The database is an extension of previously developed database through V-VHA's Screening Programs and Bio-repository. The team will be involved in the collection of the data, entry into the database, study oversight, and reports on the project progress. The data required for inviting patients to care will be imported into the tracking database. The tracking database facilitates the day-to-day program activities and associated data collection, maintaining work lists of patients who have been contacted and are due for a follow up phone reminder to complete and return for clinical management. Using this database will enable the team to efficiently collect data and track program outcomes.

(2) Follow-up test for patients who are anti-HCV (+): HCV RNA

(3) Follow-up tests of patients with HCV antibody: Anti-HBc IgM (qualitative)

(4) Non-invasive indices: Fib-4 and APRI

Variables required: age, AST, ALT, and Platelet count.

The program team will link patients with positive HCV antibody tests for confirmatory testing or for further clinical evaluation. The linkage to care will be overseen by care coordinators under the supervision of experienced certified hepatologists and the program leadership. We will train the case

management team on how to conduct follow up for those with HCV Ab+, HCV RNA +

(5) Enrolled in Care/ Started in Treatment

The program team will link patients with positive HCV antibody tests for confirmatory testing (HCV RNA) patients for further clinical evaluation. Patients with a positive antibody require confirmatory testing with HCV viral load quantification (HCV RNA), as 15-20% of patients with a positive antibody will have a negative viral load and do not require treatment. Patients with HCV RNA positivity or will receive further advanced studies including complete blood count (CBC) , comprehensive metabolic panel (CMP), alpha fetoprotein (AFP), cholesterol panel, HCV viral load, HCV genotype, antiHBc IgM, and Fibroscan. The biochemical studies can be translated into non-invasive indices (APRI and Fib-4). For all confirmed HCV patients, two points of contact information will be collected. Depending on their insurance status, they will receive one of the two navigation services for clinical management:

- Patients **with** health insurance will be referred to their own physician or liver specialists in their respective areas as well as to those in the program's network of referral if preferred. If they do not have a physician, they will be connected to one of the program's referral centers automatically. They will have their HCV assessment labs as well as Fibroscan performed, and when indicated, anti-HCV therapy through the referral centers. The clinical coordinators and insurance claims specialist will provide handholding protocol

- Patients **without** health insurance will first be encouraged and guided to purchase insurance and follow up with the pathway as above once insurance is obtained. If they are unable to purchase insurance, these individuals will be navigated to receive a Fibroscan at the advanced liver assessment labs at Medic Medical Center at no cost. At present, the program has been negotiating to create a sustainable pathway with discounted prices for anti-HCV therapies to help these individuals.

Persons confirmed to have HCV infections will receive education about the disease; the importance and benefits of treatment (including liver cancer prevention); and counseling regarding other aspects of liver-related care. As part of training for program staff, education will be integrated specific to navigation, including the referral process and HCV treatment. During the learning process among stakeholders and patients, knowledge gained by program staff will translate into patient education and counseling to improve patient adherence and reduce potential barriers to care. HCV-infected persons will be educated about how to prevent further damage to their liver, including potential deleterious effects of alcohol. In turn, outreach team also learn from the patient how difficult the insurance claim process and inconvenience are and how their experience with care and treatment are.

8. Evaluation

The ultimate goals of the program are to determine the disease prevalence of hep C and to generate data so that a sustainable hep C linkage to care model can be developed and implemented within the service area of HCMC by synergizing efforts and contribution of all actors and stakeholders inside and outside academic and medicine. From micro scale of Hep C elimination in HCMC, it should be turned into macro strategy of elimination nationwide of Viet Nam. The purpose of the screening strategy is to identify a representative population of those who are HCV positive in the community and link them for clinical follow up. A combination of process measures, outcome measures, and patient-reported outcomes will support the program's rigorous and comprehensive Evaluation Strategy (**Table 1**). All selected measures are based on the SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely) program evaluation model. The evaluation strategy has been designed to provide the most interpretable and actionable results possible; these results will position public health officials to assess program impact and identify areas for improvement. Thus, the evaluation will be both formative (process) and summative (outcome-oriented) with identification of who will do what by when. To ensure maximum impact and correct completion of all the program goals, objectives and outcomes, all key program partners and stakeholders will participate in the beginning of research model design, research question development, evaluation and performance measurement planning process.

Type of Measure	Description	Comparison
Process Measures of Screening Program Success	Timetable to acquire all necessary approvals and permission to start the screening program	Not applicable
	Clinical staff assembling and training for screening and access to care programs	Not applicable
	Meeting among key program leaders and evaluator in December 2018	Not applicable
	Proportion of HCV screen-naïve patients who receive invitation and come to the screening sites to answer KAP questionnaires	Not applicable
	Proportion of HCV screen-naïve patients who come to the screening sites and accept phlebotomy and subsequent cascade of care	>75%
Outcome Measures of Screening Program Success	Target number of HCV screening participants for each site (total invited n=200)	160 (>75%)
	Target number of HCV screening participants who receive screening results by convention mail and phone call notification	20,000
	Proportion of HCV Ab+ patients receive educational materials/counseling and notification for follow up	Target >75%
Process Measures of Linkage to Care Program Success	Proportion of HCV Ab+ who receive confirmatory HCV RNA testing at Medic Medical Center or their preferred clinical centers	Target >75%
Outcome Measures		Target >75%

of Linkage to Care Program Success	Proportion of patients confirmed HCV RNA who are linked to HCV assessment labs and Fibrosocan at Medic Medical Center or their preferred clinical Centers and subsequently referral for clinical management	Target >75%
Outcome Measures of Linkage to Care Program Success	Proportion of liver cancer detected by Fibrosocan and referred to appropriate management	100%
	Patient satisfaction with screening and linkage to care programs by simple, short survey phone-based interviews	Not applicable
Patient-reported Outcomes Measure	Patient satisfaction with screening and linkage to care programs by simple, short survey phone-based interviews	Not applicable

Table 1: Evaluation Strategy

RE-AIM framework: The program success will be systematically evaluated using the RE-AIM conceptual framework, entailing the dimensions of Reach, Efficacy, Adoption, Implementation, and Maintenance. Lessons emerging from this rigorous evaluation process will inform maintenance of our screening and linkage to care programs in HCMC; presentation of findings to diverse audiences; and future dissemination efforts in various settings.

9. Innovation

The program has several innovative components. The program responds decisively to the newest recommendations from the Vietnam Viral Hepatitis Situation Analysis and Response 2019 by WHO Western Pacific Regional Office and Vietnam's Ministry of Health- National Action Plan for Viral Hepatitis 2019. The project is the first in HCMC and in Vietnam to exclusively devote to a large-scale and systematic approach in leveraging national insurance coverage for HCV treatment and cure by synergizing the joint-action and effort of various stakeholders to eliminate HCV. Under the trans-disciplinary approach as indicated in the program, micro elimination of HCV practice in HCM should be adopted and modeled into macro elimination of HCV and other diseases in Viet Nam. Critical elements included augmenting and establishing, developing as well as maintaining strong mutual learning with local clinical care providers, healthcare systems, locals, local authorities to make the program more efficacy, affordable and sustainable that have been established by the program. To our

knowledge, the program is also the first to integrate eCare software into our existing database to enroll, follow up and monitor for patients with HCV (*Figure 1 below*).

10. Significance and Impact

The implementers have had experiences and have documented evidence to demonstrate that this model can be done in HCMC. Additionally, the success of the program will help build a foundation of feasibility within the target populations with HCV— that is patients with HCV can navigate and use their insurance coverage for HCV treatment and cure in Vietnam. Given the enormous unmet need of HCV disease burden in the proposed service area, the successful implementation of the proposed project will further elucidate what could be learned about overcoming of some barriers towards scale-up efforts to deliver HCV continuum of care pathways and result in a considerable increase in the number of patients educated, treated and controlled or cured for HCV. Ultimately, this substantiates in a reduction in the morbidity and mortality related to chronic liver disease in HCMC and in Vietnam at large.

11. Program's Expected Outcomes:

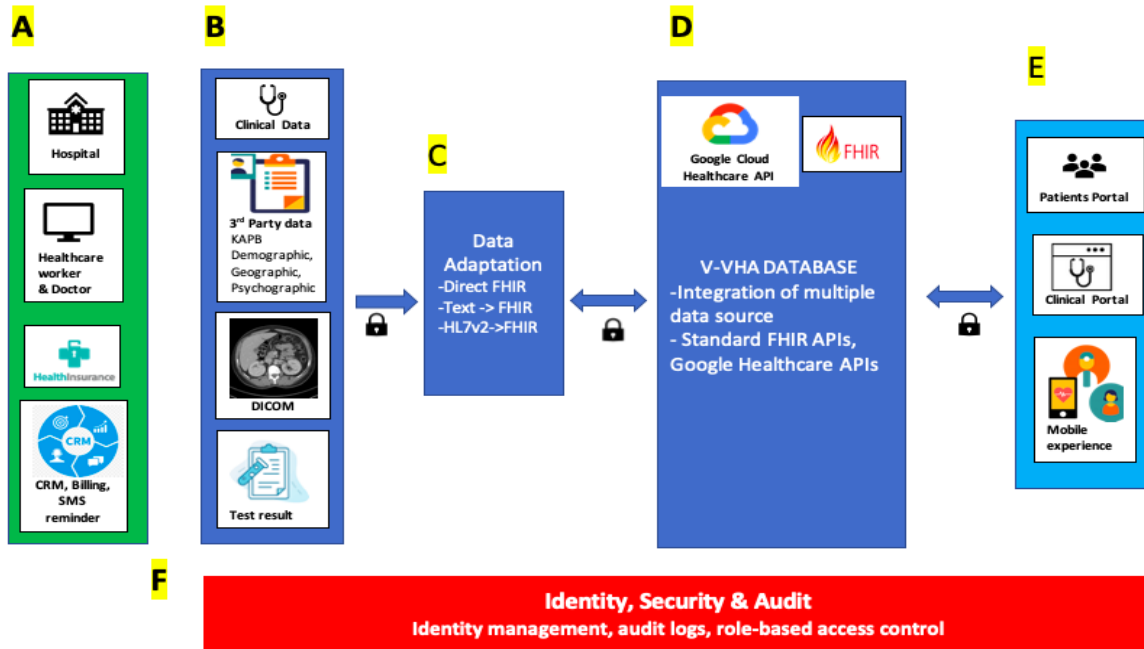
This *CHIME for Vietnam* will generate clinical, economic, and public health evidence necessary to further document feasibility and to establish a firm foundation for replicable and sustainable programs throughout Vietnam during the next 20 years. For the immediate future, the design, implementation, outcomes, and potential impact of this program will be a good example of trans-disciplinary approach in practicing public healthcare and health services that are thoroughly evaluated and widely publicized. Additionally, the results of the program will subsequently help in the design and implementation of a comprehensive screening/access to care model for viral hepatitis in HCMC and be contributing to the national policy development for viral hepatitis screening and treatment strategy. Notification Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4

Figure 1:

Diagram of eCare: Hepatitis B- C patients are enrolled from multiple settings including community screening (e.g. CHIME for Vietnam) or from health care professionals screening & access to care program, (**Panel A**). Patient clinical data, demographics, knowledge attitude practice (KAP) survey questionnaires, laboratory results and imaging studies are collected (**Panel B**). These data are then adapted (**Panel C**), imported and integrated into V-VHA Database (**Panel D**) which is stored in Google Cloud, a HIPPA certified platform for Healthcare services. **Panel E** represents clinical data output for patient portal as well as clinical portal for data query and analysis. **Panel F** indicates measures taken at each major

component of the Database algorithm (Panels A to E) for data security, audit and compliance monitoring.

V-VHA's Access to Care Program Database for Patient Treatment & Monitoring



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Beyond Simply 'Return': How IDP Movement, Agency and Self-Identification Undermine the Bases of Refugee Policy

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Abstract

By framing 'repatriation' and 'return' as the most common of the three 'durable solutions', the global framework for managing people in situations of protracted displacement accounts only for the limited mobility of individuals with refugee status back to the locality they fled. By its very nature, it places unrealistic efforts at achieving sustainable outcomes on broader processes of peace and resettlement, that are assumed to provide appropriate conditions for return, but rarely do so. The Internally Displaced People (IDPs) of Ee Tu Hta in Karen State, Myanmar, are a vivid representation of how this system fails to understand, let alone engage, with common experiences of mobility. After more than a decade of international assistance, the camp has faced a cessation in humanitarian food aid and as a result people are making strategic choices on how to sustain livelihoods for themselves and their families. While there are elements that are specific to this particular example, a glance at similar situations, both in Asia and beyond, suggests that people termed as 'displaced' are often in continuous movement - both within and across national boundaries - and, even while staying in a fixed location, their agency, political association and sense of place undermines the assumptions of the structures designed to manage the 'displaced'. This research explores the experiences of people in Ee Tu Hta vis-à-vis these assumptions. In doing so, the research questions the viability of a system that assumes that displaced people seek to return home in large numbers.

Keyword: IDPS, Migration, Mobility, Karen, Myanmar, Refugee Return, Repatriation, Displacement, Durable Solutions

1. Introduction

The durable solution framework is the UNHCR's 'core mandate' for providing long-term solutions to people with refugee status, providing three potential options; local integration, resettlement and voluntary repatriation. However, it has become increasingly clear, as Katy Long (2013, pp.10) explains, that in the present environment, where humanitarian intakes are being threatened by the surge in nativist politics, mass refugee exile will not be handled in large numbers by third country resettlement or local integration - leaving repatriation as supposedly the only viable large-scale solution in the international displacement regime. This point is emphasised by the reality that 65.4 million people are displaced globally, a figure higher than at any point since the Second World War. Of those numbers, around 40 million people remain within their own country (UNHCR, 2017). The wellbeing of IDPs, meanwhile, still primarily remains the responsibility of the national government of the country where the people remain. Regarding 'return', the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (2004), while urging foreign assistance places the primary onus on national authorities to establish safe conditions and provide the means for the return of people to their former residence, or another part of the country, 'in safety and with dignity'.

However, the complex strategies and agencies employed by people and communities to counter external pressures and forces are broadly disconnected from the overwhelming perception of the languishing, disconnected and de-territorialised refugee, perpetuated by forms of collective discourse (Malkki, 1992) which forms the premise of 'return' from which so much policy is based. While the task of fashioning a practical alternative to this failing system is an unenviable one, this research attempts to add to the growing evidence that an architecture needs to urgently be forged that more comprehensively acknowledges complex human choices, movements and strategies. The failure to do so will not only continue the pattern of unsustainable movements of people as part of a 'durable solution', but will add fuel

to the fire of nationalist politicians who regularly cite the flaws in the refugee framework as reason to close off borders to displaced people, irrespective of the nature of their flight from persecution⁶³.

Underpinning this needs to be an acknowledgement that, in the modern context, 'return' and 'repatriation' are not a natural consequence of supposed progress towards peace or efforts to end support to protracted refugees. The experience of Ee Tu Hta largely reflects the complexity found in other protracted displacement contexts around how refugees consider 'home' as a place of return, and the viability of returning to the actual locality they originally fled (Black, 2002, Tete, 2012). 'Home' here refers to the conventional understanding of one's home as a specific place of both secure orientation and belonging, rather than a different type of newly formed space such as a diaspora community.

As a broad range of experiences will attempt to show here, refugees and IDPs continually make attempts to forge livelihoods across transborder spaces, seeking economic opportunity while attempting to avoid detection by state technologies.⁶⁴ The goals and definition of repatriation should be realigned to reflect this changing reality. By centring the principle of agency as more than just a part of everyday development jargon (see Nyers (2006) on how refugee actors create hierarchies that unwittingly restrict refugees' degree of agency), but as a fundamental part of grounded responses to the livelihood challenges of displaced people, such a reconception can be genuinely lived out.

⁶³ In Australia, for instance, the mantra of 'stop the boats' that has informed the recent (illegal and inhumane) policy of mandatory offshore detention, is a direct response to the perception that the global mechanism for handling refugee flows is flawed.

⁶⁴ For a discussion of how Southeast Asian states form and utilize these technologies see: Ong, Aihwa 2008 "Scales of exception: Experiments with knowledge and sheer life in tropical", *Southeast Asia, Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 29: 117-129.

In academic circles, considerable critical attention is given to the notion of repatriation as a ‘durable’ – and in many cases, only – solution to issues of displacement. These critiques predominantly argue, rather convincingly, that even when the UNHCR has endorsed return, in most cases the physical return of people is not equated with sustainable political solutions to ensure genuine durability (Long, 2013 and Bradley, 2014). ‘Durable’ in refugee jargon has seemingly come to mean both permanent and sustainable, in contrast one supposes to the temporary and unsustainable livelihoods of the displaced. This paper falls into line with this general critique as undeniable in the present global climate. However, in acknowledging this fact and continuing to encourage the creation of more wholesome political solutions, it is also necessary to concurrently look at what actions can be taken at the local level to help people establish livelihoods amidst imperfect structures of return, and how political inclusion can be achieved through localised efforts. Similarly, there is an acute need to look beyond the assumption that people seek ‘repatriation’ or ‘return’, and rather towards how people who have different forms of continuous movement can likewise be supported and protected.

2. Background to The Study and The Research Process

This study is based on field research at the IDP camp at Ee Tu Hta – a settlement of around 2500 people situated on the banks of the Salween River at the border with Thailand. In early 2017, it was announced that in September that year, as previously foreshadowed, the providing of rations to people in Ee Tu Hta IDP camp would cease (Karen News, 2017). The Border Consortium (TBC), the major international provider of food to refugees and IDPs along the Thai-Myanmar border, no longer had the funds to support the people in Ee Tu Hta, citing a shift in donor priorities away from humanitarian assistance on the Southeast Myanmar borderlands, towards funding for development and sustainability programs in recovering parts of the country (Democratic Voice of Burma, 2017). The situation is not occurring in isolation, and is part of a wider trend of drastic funding cuts along the border. Six IDP camps in Shan

State face a similar predicament to Ee Tu Hta, while food rations have been continually cut in the refugee camps inside Thailand.

Along the Thai-Myanmar border, these people are victims of six decades of armed struggle between ethnic insurgent groups seeking various autonomous outcomes, and a central Burmese government ruthlessly pursuing assimilation within the bounded Myanmar nation state (South and Joliffe, 2015). While the positioning of people on either side of the national boundary impacts their access to support and rights mechanisms as refugees and IDPs respectively, these people are uniformly displaced due to state practices and the desire to impose 'national unity' in Myanmar (Grundy-Warr & Wong Siew Yin 2002, pp. 94).

Those in Ee Tu Hta were just one segment of the waves of people moving throughout the protracted Karen civil war, which has created a widespread crisis of displacement in Myanmar, as tens of thousands of civilians fled their homes over the course of several decades. Many of these people went to Thailand as migrants, integrating and forging informal protection arrangements in established Karen communities (Prasert, 2012) , while vast numbers faced uncertain futures in refugee camps across the border, or in IDP camps dotted around Karen State. The nature of the conflict is perhaps best characterised by South and Joliffe (2015, pp. 4) who traces the Burmese military's 'four cuts' counter-insurgency campaign, intended to deny the access of ethnic armed groups to civilian communities by targeting food supply, funding, intelligence and popular support, leading to pervasive violence and displacement.

Regarding refugee settlement, the UNHCR initiated relocation programs to third countries for many refugees in Thailand camps prior to 2006, and many other refugees have continued to pursue informal livelihoods within Thailand. The remaining refugee camp

population, totalling around 100,000, have long been told that resettlement is not an option open to them and plans have been put in place to repatriate them to Myanmar under a voluntary repatriation program, before mandatory repatriation is pursued as a last resort (UNHCR roadmap, 2014). However, this program stalled, with only scores of refugees taking up an initial offer in October 2016, and very few moving since then.

This paper is based on qualitative research at the Ee Tu Hta IDP camp, conducted as part of a broader study on refugee movement and strategies amid funding cuts. The intention was to examine the experiences of these people vis-à-vis the external policies (notably the assumption of repatriation), which impact them, and the conceptual underpinnings that inform these policies. This paper has isolated the policy doctrine of return for analysis here. 23 participants were selected for semi-structured in-depth interviews. The interview selection process involved ensuring that at least two interviews were conducted with people from each of the seven camp sections, with an equal balance achieved between male and female respondents, and participants were from a range of different ages – from high school students to elderly residents and all ages in between. All interviews were conducted in Karen language with the assistance of a translator.

Given the emphasis on self-reflection in the interviews, questions were asked to elicit responses on how people identified themselves, and in what ways they found meaning in their lives. Techniques from life-history interviews were often helpful here, encouraging participants to reflect on their childhood and lives in Karen state, and comparing that to both their current predicament and their thoughts for the future. In addition to these interviews, two focus group discussions were held. The first was with a group of around ten high school students living at a dormitory, and the second was with a group of five elderly people from a section of the neighbourhood. These opportunities enabled me to look in more depth at the

different lived experiences and perspectives from groups of people from very different age groups. While these methods were the formal aspects of this research, informal methods were also useful for understanding camp dynamics, everyday livelihoods and family life, by informally chatting to people and observing social settings such as the temple, boarding school and small shops.

Throughout the conduct of this research, I have made every reasonable effort to ensure ethical standards are met. In a project of this nature, undoubtedly the most important ethical consideration is the research participants. I was incredibly fortunate that the people of Ee Tu Hta opened up their homes to us and shared their life stories, which were often traumatic and sensitive in nature. It was essential that these interviews were conducted in the time, space and manner where they were the most comfortable, so we discussed these issues as they went about their daily lives.



Figure 1: Map of Salween River and Thai-Myanmar Border. Red Arrow Indicates Precise Location of Ee Tu Hta Camp (Google Maps)



Figure 2: Young people in particular regularly travel to and from Thailand and stay well-informed on political developments across the border

3. The Mythicism of 'Home' And The Discord Between the Ideal and the Practical

By framing refugees and IDPs as 'displaced', there is an assumption inherent in the language used that they have been removed from their 'homes', and have the desire to one-day return and be reacquainted with their homeland. Indeed, the very notion of 'repatriation' as a solution to displacement infers that there is a clear solution whereby, after peace is achieved, people will one day re-establish fruitful livelihoods in the same locality that they originally left behind. Among the people of Ee Tu Hta, there was a strong generational divide in how people view their homeland. The idea of home is revealed as something taking on an almost mythical character among many people, and while it seems they will never completely eliminate the possibility of return 'home', it largely exists in their minds as a way of reminiscing about days gone by - providing a central context for them to continue expressing their care towards the political and security situation.

For many Karen people who have grown up in Myanmar, the idea of the Karen homeland, referred to by many as 'Kawthoolei', is certainly at the forefront of their minds. This term has taken on a political importance that seemingly transcends its linguistic origins, and its actual geographic connotation is contested and unclear (ANU, 2011). The KNU leadership has for decades used the term to reference a separate Karen state within the bounded area of Myanmar, but independent from the Burmese state. These days, its meaning is less literal and more symbolic of the desire for peace and freedom for Karen people on the lands they once occupied, particularly for refugees and IDPs who are more concerned with their own security than a fanciful political construct. Nonetheless it continues to exist as a pertinent symbol of self-determination. Reflecting this intergenerational desire for Karen control over their own lives, a young woman told us that:

"The idea of Karen people having Karen land is still there. It is still in the minds of people here. The need to protect our homeland has passed through generations. I can't see the whole picture of Kawthoolei, but only a part of it".

It became apparent - through gauging the different reflections on what 'home' means and represents to the people of Ee Tu Hta - that while this construction of Kawthoolei was present in everything, there was a significant difference between older and younger generations in their actual attachment to the place they originally came from. Older respondents talked fondly of their former life and the halcyon days before the Burmese intrusion, while younger respondents who had often left home when they were very young, had no such reflections. When asked where her home was, one woman in her early 50s quickly exclaimed, *"I was born there! It is my home!"* - reacting with incredulity at the idea that there would be any other suggestion. A man in his 60s more deeply reflected a common sentiment among the older dwellers when speaking on the subject of their

homeland. He talked fondly of the ‘*mountain life*’ he had left behind, noting the ‘*freedom*’ and ‘*peacefulness*’ they enjoyed, before quickly adding that they no longer held much hope of ever returning to that sort of lifestyle. This was common – an expression of fondness for how life was, but a realisation that there was little hope of ever recreating that life:

“I think we might die here because when it is safe we will be too old... When I walk home I see the villages around us. Many people are still there, still living, but always in hiding. I do not want to meet the Burmese at all, its better to hide from them. If they weren’t there, then everyone would live peacefully. There’d be no need to run away.”

Another man, 56 years old and part of a similar generation, reflected on his former life with the same dual combination of nostalgia and sadness:

“I remember fondly growing up in the village. Before the Burmese came, we would joke and play around in the river, go fishing and enjoy life in the mountain rice fields. 24 years ago the Burmese came and our lives became a lot harder. For many years we would move in and out of the village trying to escape them. For a while we attempted to stay, even though we had lost our land and people around us had been killed. We had thought we could still live there when the Burmese left, but even when they had our rice stocks were entirely depleted. We had no option but to leave.”

We held a focus group with four members of what seemed to be the oldest generation with a significant camp presence – all aged in their 70s and 80s. These people were all some of the earliest settlers in the camp, and so they appeared to have claimed the best land – overlooking the river with relatively spacious surroundings. They too held a strong affinity with their former home, but barely held out any hope of ever re-establishing a life there. For them,

Ee Tu Hta will never be their home, but it's at least a place where they can live in relative peace with a caring community around them;

"This (Ee Tu Hta) is not my home because it is not my village, but it is still somewhere with a community I know. Still nothing is permanent here and people are always waiting for help or for things to get better. My home will always be my home and I will always wait to go back. I haven't been to my village since I fled because there are still lots of Burmese around, but I have been to nearby areas."

For others of the older generation, their home in Karen state is no longer a suitable place to forge a new life, but the attachment to home is so strong they at least wish to be there for a time before they pass away. A 46-year-old man told us he had no plans to return, but wanted to support his mother in her desire to be there at the end of her life;

"My mother is living back there in her home in Myanmar. She wants to die in the place she is from. My mother feels very attached to the homeland, but for me looking after my family is more important - I have to be sure that I can give them a life there."

While it is tempting to attach significance to such idealistic constructions, the reality for Karen IDPs for the most part is that attachment to their homeland is significant in their minds, but aside from those who simply wish to die there, the actions of people with families to support shows their need to be flexible and pragmatic in reacting to the opportunities available to them. Among younger people, who we can roughly categorise as having grown up in Karen State but not having lived a significant part of their adult life there, there is some attachment to this 'home', but it remains a relatively limited afterthought in comparison to their parents and grandparents. A young man in his late 20s reflected this disparity between generations:

“My parents have been there for a long time, but for me I have always moved around, so I do not miss being there at all really. There are BGF bases around them there, and its mostly Burmese there now. I do not really like living around them either.”

A young 27-year-old female, who teaches in one of the schools in Ee Tu Hta, talked with some candour about what ‘home’ represented for her. *“For me this (Ee Tu Hta) is my home. It’s where I grew up. Back in my original village there is nothing left.”* For her, there is no perfect outcome, but only a constant weighing up of different options. *“There is no guarantee of a safe life here or there. There’s been lots of recent fighting in district 5 where many of us are from.”*

A 24-year-old women also reflected on how she felt resigned to the fact that Ee Tu Hta was now her ‘home’:

“I have heard that the Burmese are back around there now and there is fighting again. It’s too hard to move around now, so I see myself staying here. This is home I guess. I would like to return to Myanmar but I do not think it’s really possible.”

A young couple, who now considered themselves quite fortunate as they had the opportunity to make a living by having a small shop on the riverbank, actually spoke with some fondness about the new community they had forged:

“We are happy to live here. It feels like home now and even though we are by the river we still are part of the community. When we have free time we walk around and visit friends houses around the camp...we do not want to go back to Myanmar because we

are already in Myanmar. Karen state is also Myanmar but there is still no peace there. Its just that here there are no Burmese.”

The young people who shared their own sense of identification with ‘home’ were generally far less interested with what the idea meant at all. Ee Tu Hta was no more their home than the place they had initially fled, but as they moved across borders to study or make a living, the whole idea of having a ‘home’ is less relevant than what was immediately in front of them. While older generations still possessed that longing for the sort of homeland they had in the past, this attachment seldom seemed to extend to an actual realistic prospect of recapturing what they had in their home in the past. This is a crucial aspect of refugee identity and livelihoods for policymakers and academics to grapple with. The notion of return implicitly references a movement back to a former home – this home may exist as a mythical ideal, but rarely is recognised as a place for one to re-establish a livelihood.

4. The false premise of ‘peace processes’ as a precursor to return

Understanding prospects of peace is critical because of the assumed connection between sustainable peace and achieving a ‘durable solution’ in situations of protracted displacement. through refugee and IDP return Bradley (2013pp ,. 5) argues that there is a strong consensus within the field that ‘repatriation’ should be pursued as a durable solution precisely because it has *‘the potential to help consolidate peace processes’*. The widely held assumption that peace deals act as a precursor to large-scale refugee and IDP return is, however, quite strikingly refuted by local perspectives and experiences. Firstly, what emerged was a broad range of scepticism over the relevance of any sort of large scale political processes at the local level, and secondly, even if such negotiations managed to achieve their improbable ambition of sustainable and lasting peace, for many others there were a range of other factors which prevented them countenancing return.

In Myanmar, the new government, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, has held two ‘21st century Panglong’ conferences, echoing the mid-20th century efforts to achieve unity in newly independent Myanmar. The modern iteration is widely seen to have failed to yield any substantial outcomes or any measurable progress towards a nationwide agreement, and in late 2018 the KNU temporarily suspended its participation in the process, citing a lack of progress (Frontier Myanmar, 2018). However, external actors continue to view these talks as the single biggest hope for Myanmar’s future, citing the relative success of the National Ceasefire Agreement and the need for comprehensive political reform.

The local scepticism towards the process is based in a feeling that, in spite of all the rhetoric by Burmese and international observers, the reality of continued action on the ground undermines any genuine negotiations. There is a feeling that this reality is not adequately accounted for in external media reports, and not given appropriate attention in the peace process negotiations. *“Now we have a peace process but they keep sending in more soldiers. So what should we believe!?”* exclaimed a 65-year-old man. A 56-year-old fellow resident of Ee Tu Hta also reflected this sentiment:

“For us, there is no real change. People seem more focused on how the peace process is going on in paper, and they aren’t actually interested in how many Burmese soldiers are still around our villages and even around this camp”

A 46-year-old man further referenced this perceived disconnect between the talk of peace and the lack of substance to support it:

“There is a peace process in official terms, but in real life the Burmese will still shoot us. They will still kill us. In reality there is no peace process and it is all a game as nobody knows what the future really holds.”

A senior KNU figure remarked, rather amusingly, that the lack of trust towards the Burmese meant Karen forces needed to keep wielding their stick (weapons) to fend off the snake (the Burmese):

“The news gets out that it is peaceful in Myanmar and it spreads so fast because there are people that want to drive that message. People can write whatever they want and it’s so easily believed without being seen. In 2012 when we agreed the ceasefire the Burmese thought they could get more from the Karen and so asked us to put down our weapons. But our weapons are our stick; we need it to protect us. If we are fighting off a snake, we need a stick – if we have nothing we will have to run away. If we give up our weapons we have nothing to protect us against the Burmese and will have to run away.”

Further to this frustration towards the lack of substantive outcomes from the peace negotiations, some respondents were very clear that even a successful political process wouldn’t address the myriad of other issues at hand preventing the thought of return. The locals argued that so many issues associated with return were highly localised, subject to specific political dynamics and security concerns across villages and townships back in Karen State. This would align with the general thesis that talk of large-scale divisions in Karen politics fails to understand how power is decentralised across the party (Hull 2009, Malcolm 2018). This is particularly important as people consider how they will regain access to farmable land – an essential part of the livelihood security consideration for almost all Karen households. The aforementioned couple that owned the riverside shop reflected this in one of their responses:

“So many of us lost our lands and now if we want to go back we have to buy it back. Even if there are no Burmese its still going to be hard for people to go back because there is nobody really helping people in the process...there are also local political issues where the ability to go back depends on each leader and the rules of each village. They will tell you whether you can and can’t do certain things then you have to find an alternative way to it, so it is different everywhere.”

While they generally remain engaged with the situation back ‘home’, most people view their immediate return as something they would be unlikely to contemplate, even if there were increased certainty and security in Karen State. Some of these factors relate to the challenging process of physically moving back, with the small number of people who decided to return facing threats to their safety...

“In May last year 20 families returned to Karen State. 50 people walked back in a group and four of the group were killed along the way. Once they got to the village it was safer, but the journey to get there is very dangerous.” (27 year old female)

In particular, some respondents said that, for IDPs, nobody was willing to guarantee their safety:

“ If they step on a landmine when they return, nobody will take responsibility or provide support, because they know its not really safe to go back – not the UN, not TBC, not anyone” (male in his 50s)

Some identified the lack of identification as a factor, which is a common issue for people along the Thai- Burma border more generally with the process often very localised and

applications citizenship often requiring a high burden of evidence of previous residence in Myanmar.

“People have started to return there quite often to see the real situation. Moving back doesn’t seem easy. I do not have a Burmese ID so if I went back I have no way of proving where I am from.” (female in her 50s).

For others, the lack of clear information was a severe issue preventing serious consideration of return:

There isn’t enough clear information to confirm that it is peaceful. People have bad experiences from when they had to flee their homes, so they are very hesitant to go back and we all continue to receive uncertain and worrying information from family back home.” (55 year old woman)

And for others, it was the continued militarization in Karen state and elsewhere that prevented even the thought of return:

“They are still fighting elsewhere in Myanmar, and the situation with Shan groups, the Kachin and the fighting between the BGF and DKBA shows they aren’t taking prospects of peace very seriously. Nobody who has moved back to their home has felt completely safe.” (65-year-old male):

Most apparent was the general sentiment, particularly among younger people who had a future to contemplate and often families to support, that however tough their life was, the border provided them with more potential opportunities to make a living beyond what any

peace deal could offer to the situation inside Karen State. A 28-year-old man was currently contemplating whether to travel illegally to Thailand for a period of several months to work as a labourer fruit picking or on a construction site. *“I would be happy to live here if it could develop more economically. If there is work I would love to stay here with my family, but otherwise I will need to find a way to support them, probably by going to Thailand and sending money home.”* he said, noting that the uncertainty over rice supply has made it necessary for him to be *“prepared to find any way to feed my family into the future.”* Contemplating this, he said *“Working outside is good to make some money, but I am worried about leaving my family at home.”*

5. Agency and Continuous Movement as The Lived Reality of ‘Return’

Likewise, there is a tendency to assume that a cessation in humanitarian funding will directly lead people towards the path of returning. If they have no support mechanism, it is assumed they will respond by returning back to the place where such support might still exist, however compromised it may be. In Ee Tu Hta, the major funders to the camp told me they conducted a series of ‘go and see’ visits with camp leadership, where they could see some potential resettlement sites. However, what has continued to emerge is a lived reality where funding cuts lead not to a simple process of return, but to a variety of dynamic responses across different sections of the community. With so few people desiring to return home, one has to wonder why resources were not directed to supporting people with the challenges of livelihood transition, rather than the return process.

The experience of one particular family who we spoke to in our first trip to Ee Tu Hta, and then visited again some months later, reflected a typical example of how people had adjusted their expectations and approach to their livelihood in response to the funding cuts, rather than seen it as an opportunity to return. A young couple, with three children all under

the age of ten, initially expressed grave concern about what the future held for them as the funding slowed to a trickle of support which was barely enough to feed their kids adequately with just rice. When we returned, they talked about how their sense of desperation had turned into a determination to establish a better life here, as they had no genuine prospect of returning home anytime soon. Instead of following the rules on forest use, which continued to prohibit small scale farming due to strict conservation laws, they had simply staked a claim over an area of cultivable land, and were preparing it for use in the coming wet season.

Many of their friends, they added, had done the same, describing a sort of frantic scramble for the best land available. Following instructions on land use for them was no longer an option – they had to begin growing their own crops. In a sense, this shift in mentality is further indicative of the transition from ‘camp’ to ‘village’ that was well underway, where the confines of a camp were giving away to the relative freedoms of village life, with people feeling free to roam the surrounding hills and cultivate the land.

A key aspect of the way people responded to the funding cuts, which further proved their willingness to be agents of their own future, were the various movements outside the camp construct that became increasingly crucial and more commonplace in this period of post funding transition. Given Ee Tu Hta’s proximity to Thailand and access to the river, the camp has always fostered small trading networks and there has always been a degree of movement of both goods and people across the river ‘border’, and further afield into villages in Karen State, accessible only by foot. However, from all accounts these movements ratcheted up considerably in the period following the cuts to funding, with people seeking any opportunity to create an income stream. These movements vary widely in time period, distance and purpose, but in their totality reflect a willingness to continually move around, but seldom back to the place they initially fled.

One of the first trends of movement that was beginning to emerge, and hopefully eventually flourish, were networks of goods trading across the river into Thailand. Many people expressed hope that these networks could be more easily facilitated and even encouraged, as they saw the economic potential in forming small-scale industries and agricultural production that could transport goods to nearby marketplaces in Thailand. Reflecting this, a 56-year-old man said:

“When we heard about the cuts to food aid we started to think about breeding pigs, ducks chickens and goats to sell to the Thai side so we could buy bags of rice. I’m also thinking about going to Thailand to buy things and bring them back over the river to sell in Karen villages around here. It’s about a day of walking before getting to the places we can sell to. I could try to do this trading trip once or twice a month. I’m not sure I can make enough money doing this. I have tried it a few times before and I can only get two or three hundred baht from a big effort. But we are always thinking about ways to make a living, and the cuts to funding have just made this a more urgent concern.”

A 37-year-old woman, who has two kids, was also very frustrated at the lack of opportunity to forge new livelihoods, and expressed her desire to just have a chance to work for a living, and her willingness to travel anywhere to do so. At the moment she is doing her best to take advantage of the limited trade networks that are slowly emerging:

“I am very worried about the funding cuts, particularly in trying to send the kids to school and feed them. Since last month they said you have to feed yourself now, so this month we haven’t received any rice. There is no work here other than small jobs like collecting the leaves at this time of year, but after that there will be nothing. I will go wherever there is opportunity to make a living and stay safe – maybe Thailand as we are so sick of running

away in Myanmar. Getting rice support is still the most important thing at the moment, or getting money to buy rice with. Some people are growing small crops like turmeric and selling into in Thailand. Thai Karen come into the camps to buy these small crops. We found some seeds in the jungle, and when the rain comes we will plant it in our land.”

In the dry season, an example of the new methods people was using to earn some income through this transition was collecting the leaves of the native dipterocarpus tree. During this short season, some members of each household would venture into the forest in the very early morning, spending hours foraging for these leaves. The leaves were brought back to the household, where the women would often spend the afternoon hours tying the leaves to thinly cut bamboo sticks. The leaves were used to construct roofs of houses, and those that weren't used in Ee Tu Hta were transported by boat to Thailand, where traders would often sell them into the refugee camps inside Thailand. This activity was a crucial seasonal income stream for large parts of the community, and indicative of the increased freedoms the people at Ee Tu Hta were being afforded, and their access to markets across the river.

While opportunities such as the collection of leaves can provide a small income, there was a common sense of frustration that policies and incentives weren't being provided to help people take advantage of these opportunities as the funding was stopped. This sentiment was expressed by a 46-year-old man:

“We cant do any farming here as there isn't enough land and so we do not know what the future holds. There are too many people here to grow enough rice with the small land here...I have had to borrow rice from people in Mae Sam Laep, so I will have to pay it back later. We have been earning some money by making the roof tiles out of Lah Ter

(dipterocarpus) leaves, but we need to make over 1000 just to cover the transport costs and paying off the rice we owe – so its really hard to make enough to live on. Even when people farm rice they have to pay 200 baht to the committee for every 20 litres they harvest.”

Given this willingness of people to transcend the camp construct and pursue new opportunities, both in Ee Tu Hta and one would assume more broadly in IDP settings in other contexts, it is a great concern that there is not more emphasis on programs and mechanisms that can help facilitate access to these opportunities. There must be recognition that connectivity is the best pathway to sustainable livelihood outcomes, but the prevailing assumption that people are simply waiting to return home has, without doubt, limited any efforts to support these different strategies.

6. Concluding Thoughts: Towards Viewing Refugees as Migrants, And Return as A Political Renegotiation That Transcends Physical Presence

In light of the findings shared here, Long’s (2012) call for a reimagining of ‘return’ as a political, rather than physical, process should be give further thought. It is this absence of political solutions to accompany physical movement that is picked up on in her argument that, far from the assumed experience, for many protracted refugees repatriation is not simply a movement to a final destination, but an open process where people keep moving in response to different forces. Long (2012pp ,. 205) questions the logic of the synonymy between ‘repatriation’ and ‘residency’ in the context of widespread global migration by arguing that a durable solution should include continued migration. In this sense, refugees can *‘end their exile by becoming migrant-repatriates, reclaiming citizenship but not physically returning’* to the locality they previously fled. It is evident, says Long, that refugees are already combining

'repatriation with continued movement in order to secure the best possible access to a full complement of realizable rights' (.ibid

In fact, this notion is closely related to the issue of political inclusion. By reimagining return as a more fluid phenomenon, there is increased opportunity and space for this category of people to remain engaged in the political processes that they feel attached to. One challenge with the doctrine of statelessness, which Bradley (2014) discusses with great nuance, is that it assumes and generally creates a severing of ties to the place from which one fled. Such ties cannot be reconnected until a process of return has taken place, involving a sort of reconciliation with the original structures and forces that led to one fleeing.

Of relevance here too is the finding that the connection of IDPs to 'home' likewise appears to exist more in mind than in action, and more in spirit than in corporeality. Bradley frequently references the political actions of diaspora communities as evidence for how physical presence need not be the equivalent of one's emotional connection to begin working towards fostering political involvement, even where this relationship is imperfect. In a similar vein, if we can move beyond the need to physically reside in something resembling 'home' to have a political relationship with that place, we can begin to countenance further possibilities.

The relationship between refugee and state can therefore be seen as something more fractured and in need of constant renegotiation, rather than an explicit disconnection. This enables us to begin looking at ways for refugees and IDPs to continue to participate in the political process, however challenging and, at first, limited this involvement may be. Hannah Arendt's (1951, pp. 267) remarkable depictions of the nature of statelessness during the Second World War are in a large part responsible for subsequent characterisations of refugeehood. The 'scum of the earth' she referred to referenced a class of unwanted people

who fell outside the nation state. While recognizing the enormous intellectual and lifetime contributions of Arendt, Bradley (2014) rightfully posits that her conflation of statelessness with refugeehood, and the general centrality of the state in her writing, while relevant to her era, is quite disconnected from the modern experience of the refugee. Elucidating this, contemporary refugeehood does not necessarily involve an explicit severing of ties between the refugee and the state they are fleeing. Bradley (2014: 101) argues for a *“broader conception of the refugee as a political actor bearing claims for the renegotiation of her relationship with the state”* - such is the complexity of modern conflict and movement, the refugee is in a constant process of negotiation with that state, however troublesome the circumstances surrounding their exit.

“Many refugees have proven themselves to be astute political actors in multiple arenas” argues Bradley in her positing that former conceptions of statelessness do not adequately represent the sorts of political involvement that continue to take form. My research has consistently shown the extent to which Karen IDPs desire political involvement, even if this is not equated with large-scale return. They are very well informed on local political issues, have access to a range of information sources, and yearn for an opportunity to participate in the decision-making processes that affect them – the conventional idea of ‘stateless’ as understood by Arendt, where the refugee is pushed so far outside the conscious realm of the state that their position within it becomes intractable, does not account for this new reality.

The durable solution framework is based on the inherent assumption that state authority should remain at the heart of any framework. Absurdly, IDPs remain under the authority of the very state they fled, with any additional actors seeking to support these communities technically allowed to only operate under the permission of the state. This paper seeks to call into question such state-centrism in the durable solution mantra through

exploring the lived reality as something that undermines, and often transgresses such forms of power.

At a broader level, such a re-imagining of return gives support to the notion that we need to shift towards viewing the people we understand as displaced to be a part of the broader migration phenomenon, hopefully giving further support to the conceptual re-positioning of refugees *as* migrants. Such a reimagining provides more scope for us to emphasise them as agents, as motivated and productive people searching for opportunity and political space, albeit with difficult circumstances which can simultaneously be acknowledged. Emphasizing these forms of agency can help move beyond the perception that refugees are simply 'biding their time' until conditions for return become realized.

As Long (2013) suggests, this proposed shift in thinking does not mean abandoning the notion that they have faced exceptional circumstances, but it means we can at least situate them within the global migration issue in a way that moves away from the image in the minds of the public - the falsehood, inevitably exploited upon by politicians, that these are helpless people in need of endless support. In the course of my interviews with people here, IDPs themselves were able to simultaneously describe the suffering that caused them to leave their villages, while also emphasising that their cause of flight is often no different from Karen refugees, Karen migrants, and even those who remained in their homes.

At the policy level, Nyers' (2006) work on the nature of 'refugeeness' reveals a disturbing paradox at the heart of reification mechanisms for displaced people. Nyers posits that, while the refugee convention and efforts at finding 'solutions' for refugees have at its heart the universality of humanity – where certain inalienable rights are central to its functioning – it places 'fear' as the central human experience. The idea of fear across popular

mediums has long been associated with social outcasts who lack autonomy. Nyers argues that this discursive notion provides the basis for exclusionary practices that reinforce restrictions and 'social and political hierarchies'. The conceptions that underpin policy and practice have the unwitting effect of stripping refugees of their agency and allocating them characteristics that are the 'obverse of sovereign identity' (Nyers, 2006, pp. xiv) – characteristics that afford a certain speechlessness that is hard to escape. Such a formulation naturally leads to an assumption that people are waiting, helplessly for external conditions to improve, rather than being proactive in seeking to improve their own situation.

In the Karen context, I believe this external fixation on peace as a prerequisite to refugee return is actually detracting from the ability to contemplate small-scale solutions that help people achieve better livelihoods - however they plan to do it, and wherever that may be. Unfortunately, this obsession with the broader context is so deeply entrenched in Myanmar through decades of extremely important ethnic insurgencies, to the extent that nationalist movements are, I believe, limiting the policy and program space for solutions that provide practical options for individuals in contexts such as Ee Tu Hta. Recalling the discussion of somewhat ambivalent constructions of home presented earlier, the desire for livelihood adaptation, rather than large-scale return, is something that appears to be fundamentally misunderstood. To an extent this is based on false assumptions about people's desires and the way they strategize the choices before them – again bringing to the fore how established and presumptive hierarchies seemingly trump agency.

Karen nationalist movements are now such an overwhelming component of any discussion of peace, and therefore refugee return, that it seems that people are waiting for the highly unlikely moment when Karen will achieve the degree of self-determination they are looking for. Even if, however unlikely the possibility, a far-reaching peace deal is struck, it is

apparent that there would still be large swathes of Karen who wouldn't seek to return 'home' as they seek greater opportunities either in their current location, or further afield.

Nonetheless, an encouraging development in refugee studies, from my perspective, is what seems to be a trend back towards recognising how refugees and IDPs seek to confound the politics of refugeehood, adapting and transcending its limitations and forging new political spaces. More specific to the objective here, there is a recent wave of analysis which complements Long's call for a reimagining of refugees as migrants and Bradley's call for new political spaces, by debating how the classification of refugees, far from empowering them as actors, simply plays into exclusionary state narratives. Nyers (2006) has written extensively on this subject, examining how states create categories to enable them to mark certain limits and form artificial boundaries to suit their respective agendas. Thomaz (2017, pp. 201) shows, as this paper obviously attests to, that the current ways of classifying refugees "*does not correspond to an actual description of the different motivations and experiences of mobility at stake*". Her article depicts how states seek to 'monopolise' what they deem as legitimate forms of movement, enabling them to politicise certain people according to how they fit into their own, often rather arbitrary, definition of sovereignty.

Thomaz (ibid) evidences how Haitian 'asylum seekers' are portrayed as 'deprived and racialized' as a way of excluding them from certain categories. This sentiment fits neatly with Long's (2013) analysis of refugees as migrants, in which she notes that the portrayal by refugee advocates of them as helpless and displaced and in need of assistance actually contributes to a pretext by which states can argue for the need to restrict migration intakes. Aside from a tiny allocation of places for humanitarian intakes, opportunities are otherwise restricted for those deemed as 'needy' - precisely because they are understood to offer no economic imperative to the state.

In the Myanmar context, such reimagining envisaged here could potentially constitute mechanisms to involve former residents of Karen State in the peace process, which, rather than just looking for wholesale political outcomes, could at least involve representatives from these communities. However, these forms of improved political inclusion might more effectively materialise at more local levels of governance. Many residents expressed concerns over local leadership back in their communities, but felt powerless to express their opinion. Expatriate citizenship mechanisms could be a further tangible path forward in this regard, working with the Myanmar government to enable people to gain Burmese ID cards without the requirement that they physically reside in the country. There is certainly scope for further enquiry here beyond what this research can offer.

At a broader level, studies such as this - however small they are in scope - need to begin grappling with these bigger questions of how refugees are categorised, depicted and subsequently affected by the mechanisms supposedly put in place to support them. Simply viewing the 'durable solution' framework as a sufficient and immovable structure is not satisfactory. Humanitarian intakes support an ever-dwindling number of people categorised as displaced, while the idealistic processes of return are time and time again shown to be out of touch with the movements and strategies taking place on the ground. Viewing refugees as migrants, and looking for solutions to foster political inclusion regardless of these migratory trends is a potential agenda to push forward with.

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From Bangkok to Issan: Financialization of Everyday Life as the ‘Right’ Kind of Financial Inclusion

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Abstract

Economic development theory posits that the lack of access to financial services impedes development at the national and local levels, and therefore, expanding access to financial services improves economic security and well-being. However, over ninety percent of the Thai population has access to a form of financial service, whether it be a banking account, access to credit, or a form of insurance, yet rural economic insecurity persists. Therefore, contemporary government policies and programs are contrived to provide the ‘right’ kind of financial services. This thesis analyzes the role government institutions have played in changing the financial landscape and financial services.

Using a mixed methods approach of interviews and discussions with leading academics, former government ministers, and Bank of Thailand officials, findings contribute new knowledge to the field of rural development in Thailand. Additionally, by applying a framework of complex interdependence, we see how an evolving environment at all levels of analysis determines varied and uncertain outcomes.

Preliminary analysis indicates a domestic deepening of financialization at the household level. As private debt continues to be a topic of concern for the economy, a new normal is emerging of low interests, inflation, and investment in unproductive enterprises. Lastly, as financial sector development continues and more individuals and households use financial services, a visible creditor-debtor financial landscape emerges, where the savings of the well-to-do socio-economic class, channeled through growing and a diverse set of financial

intermediaries, becomes the credit and subsequent debt for the lesser-off socio-economic classes.

Keyword: Financialization, Financial Inclusion, Fintech, Complex Interdependence.

1. Doubling Down On Finance

“The hand that gives is above the hand that receives⁶⁵.”

Napoléon I of France

The mainstream international development agenda of financial inclusion is supported by thousands of development workers, technocrats, and academics in an effort to bring important financial services to those currently without financial services as well as the modernization of services.⁶⁶ However, like previous mainstream development agendas, certain aspects of financial inclusion undermine the process because they are considered exogenous (outside) to the economic models guiding implementation. This paper critically assesses the recent and not so recent efforts of financial inclusion in Thailand. Using a perspective of complex interdependence, we examine how the process of financialization contorts financial services emphasized in financial inclusion, and how government institution, politicians, and private enterprise interact.

In the depths of the Great Financial Crisis (GFC), the Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI) was formed with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and several Central Banks, including the Bank of Thailand (BoT).⁶⁷ Since then, financial inclusion efforts have grown tremendously around the world. “Financial inclusion is the key enabler to reducing poverty and boosting prosperity” (World Bank, 2018). According to the World Bank: financial inclusion represents access to credit and financial services for non-banked communities. By contriving access to financial services such as credit, savings deposits, and payment systems, those in dire straits are enabled to improve their situation and plan for the future. The doubling down on

⁶⁵ (Napoléon I, 1998)

⁶⁶ This conference paper is based on ongoing research to meet the requirements for a Master of Philosophy in International Development.

This paper was subject to no peer review.

⁶⁷ <https://www.afi-global.org/afiturns10-a-decade-of-financial-inclusion>

the practices the lead to the GFC is one example supporting the statement made by Napoléon I during one of his many European adventures, those who wield financial power are above all others.

As a middle-income country, Thailand has a great deal of experience in expanding financial services to rural communities and the urban poor. The Thai government's modern efforts to expand financial services began with the founding of the Bank of Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives in 1966. The government's efforts in terms of simply providing financial services can be considered successful. Notably, 97.3% of Thai households in 2016 enjoyed access compared to 95.8% in 2013, conversely, 86.3% of those surveyed use financial services which is down from 87.99% in 2013 (Bank of Thailand, 2016). Comparatively, Thailand exhibits healthier access to financial services than other countries. However, setbacks are common in rural and agricultural development resulting in popular movements organizing to independently negotiate settlements with the government as well as support questionably motivated politicians with the political will necessary to transform the economic and social landscapes of (Baker, 2000).

The plight of the poor is still visible in urban dwellings and the rural country-side, and despite robust access to financial services, new issues such as high levels of income inequality and extreme levels of wealth inequality are emerging. Failure to reduce poverty and promote prosperity in hopes of generating a more egalitarian society carries potential repercussions of military coups and new populist politicians. Therefore, it is necessary to study and determine the problems or disconnect between financial inclusion and reducing poverty and boosting prosperity in Thailand. Research questions: How does financialization affect the development of financial services employed by the rural and urban poor and to what extent is Thailand in a new economic normal?

The essay proceeds as follows. The first section introduces a relatively new way to theorize about the political economy with a brief mention of the methods employed during research. Next, a further look at financialization and financial inclusion. Continuing, a brief mention of Thailand's economic development and how private debt has persisted through time shaping the politics of tomorrow. Penultimately, the domestic discussion, an overview of the financial sectors regulatory environment. And lastly, an analysis of the current economic situation and potential outcomes.

2. Theoretical Underpinning and Methods

The theoretical framework employed here sets out to conflate aspects of complexity and evolutionary science with economics and institutional change. However, no agreed upon procedural application exists for an analytical framework regarding the above concepts. Therefore, we apply the approach of complex interdependence to theorize about development in Thailand and the global economy with regards to access to financial services and the international movement of financial inclusion. For further explanatory power, we incorporate ideas from early and contemporary theories of evolutionary economics and institutionalism in the conceptually contested field of heterodox economics. The objective is to develop a coherent and analytical framework to provide explanatory power through the reification of relatively abstract perspectives and processes to identify the systemic change of various institutions surrounding the political process and financial sector in Thailand.

For simplification, we employ Oatley (2019), who progresses the theorization of a global political economy characterized by complex interdependence, originally juxtaposed by Keohane and Nye (1977) as an alternative for realist perspectives in international relations. The three core elements are as followed:

1. The whole is not the sum of its parts. The social world is a complex system, defined by Mitchell (2009) as “a system in which large networks of components with no central control and simple rules of operation give rise to complex collective behavior, sophisticated information processing, and adaptation via learning or evolution” (p. 13).

2. Social systems are fluid and rarely static if at all. System change or shocks are not attributed to exogenous outcomes.

3. Social systems are characterized by radical uncertainty where the outcome generator is rarely visible if at all, and outcomes are not normally distributed (Gaussian) (Blyth, 2009; Taleb, 2007; Taleb & Blyth, 2011; Taleb & Pilpel, 2004).

Furthermore, the Darwinian principles of selection, variation and replication, when applied to the social sciences, become “a function of environmental constraints interactions between entities, and a code carried by their replicators” (Blyth, Hodgson, Lewis, & Steinmo, 2011, pp. 300 - 302).

2.1 Methods

The methods employed in this research project are mixed. Over ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with former finance ministers, Bank of Thailand officials, Thai academics, two Thai politicians (one current and one former), and the current president of the Nong Khai Chamber of Commerce. Interview selection was determined by accessibility and association with the topic being researched.

One non-participatory field observation was held in Nong Khai province from June 16th to the 20th, 2019. In lieu of the above methods, secondary sources of associated literature, government reports, and data collected by government ministries and international organization were also employed.

3. Financialization and The Push for Global Financial Inclusion

In this section, we will review the literature on financialization, beginning with its early origins in the late nineteenth century to recent developments and the current situation with respect to emerging market economies. Specifically, the geopolitical relationships emerging markets governed by, to later relate through complex interdependence the situation in Thailand. Although financialization is a contested concept, concrete pillars are easily distinguished to differentiate between a highly financialized economy to one that is not. Next, we will position the rise of financial inclusion, which is precluded by the rise of neoliberal ideology and later academic literature associating financial sector development with economic growth, as an aspect of financialization. The underlying argument being made is how the unstoppable forces of international finance shape domestic economic policy.

The contemporary financialization turn was first recognized by Arrighi (1994) and Phillips (1993), the former is more recognized by his summation that financialized capitalism is a reoccurring stage of capitalism and the latter receiving recognition for coining neologizing financialization. However, a rich history exists in the Marxian and heterodox traditions of economics regarding finance in the early stage of capitalism. Across Marx's writings, especially his later publications, distinctions between industrial capital and other forms of capital, such as interest-bearing and fictitious (the latter term popularized by leftist ideologues), received forewarning due to their detrimental features to a societies well-being (Hudson, 2010). Hudson emphasizes the main point in Volume III of *Capital* by stating those inside the traditional productive economy "must see that asset-price inflation fueled by debt leveraging makes them poorer, not richer, and that financialization is the destroyer and exploiter of industrial capital as well as of labour" (2010, p. 443).

Following the Great Depression, the rise of fascism, and World War II, the allies agreed a cooperative framework was required to prevent a rehashing of events, and thus, a series of economic and trade systems were established to promote full employment, growth, and domestic economic stability. Those agreements, in addition to new domestic economic regulations to curb financial speculation and the business cycle, essentially eliminated the negative outcomes of finance capital described by Marx and Hilferding (1985 [1912]).

Contemporary financialization is limited to the fields of heterodox economics, political economy, sociology, and to a limited extent, geography. However, early conceptualization attempts by Epstein (2001, 2005) and Krippner (2005) contrive a diffuse definition by the former and broad spectrum of what constitutes financialization is by the latter, the result is a nearly unbounded field of research. Financialization, is “the increasing role of financial motives, financial markets, financial actors and financial institutions in the operations of the domestic and international economics” (Epstein, 2005). For the purpose of this paper, we focus on the body of literature developed under the subheading of *the financialization of everyday life*.

3.1 The Financialization of Everyday Life

Regarded as the increasing involvement of finance in the day-to-day activities apart from traditional banking for non-financial agents (labor). Here, financialization materializes as a transfer of ownership of personal retirement accounts protected by the state to the individuals discretion and faith in financial services and markets (Langley, 2007). Furthermore, the expansion of credit for the purposes of consumption beyond ones income and rising house prices, and later the securitization of private debt and home mortgages, are further aspects of financialization (Lavoie, 2012). Progressing Aalbers (2008), Fields (2017) indicates financialization is manifesting in post-crisis rental housing, where rental properties are actively being commodified and speculated. Finally, Martin, Rafferty, and Bryan (2008) analyze the constrictions of labor via the proliferation of financial instruments like derivatives and

securitization, to uncover price instability caused by said instruments. Clearly, financial services are becoming increasingly important in the shaping of daily activities of individual outside of the financial sector. Employing the popular definition by Epstein (2005), processes of financial inclusion falls into the subfield of the financialization of everyday life, especially with the advancement of increasingly more technical financial products and services being offered.

At the 2009 Pittsburgh Group of 20 (G20) Summit, a meeting of the worlds twenty leading economies, “leaders recognized the mutually reinforcing policy objectives of financial stability, financial inclusion, and consumer protection. Leaders committed to improving access to financial services for the poor by supporting the safe and sound expansion of new modes of financial service and formed the Financial Inclusion Experts Group (FIEG) to achieve this aim”.⁶⁸ Ten years later, financial inclusion efforts are enormous, supported by billions of dollars in assistance and backed by the largest International Organizations and hundreds of Non-Governmental Organizations worldwide. Various studies question the legitimacy and promises financial inclusion is meant to achieve (Buckland, 2018; Gabor & Brooks, 2017; Hembruff & Soederberg, 2015; Soederberg, 2013a, 2013b), and caution how certain types of financial services can increase the vulnerability of people in poverty and trigger cyclical debt traps. However, what exactly is financial inclusion, and where does the idea originate?

The theoretical underpinning for financial inclusion and based on the empirical findings regarding positive association between the development of a country’s financial system and economic growth. Much of the theoretical literature supporting financial inclusion rests on the theoretical and empirical work of Neoclassical and New Keynesian economists (King & Levine, 1993; Levine, 1997, 2001, 2005). However, none go as far as to say there is a direct causal relationship between financial sector development and a reduction in poverty, inequality, and

⁶⁸ <https://www.afi-global.org/gpfi-timeline>

promotion of prosperity, leading financial development economists Beck, Demirgüç-Kunt, and Levine (2007) conclude,

“Greater financial development induces the incomes of the poor to grow faster than average per capita GDP growth, which lowers income inequality. The results indicate that financial development helps the poorest quintile beyond finance’s affect on aggregate growth (p. 46).”

Despite the evidence by leading international organization associating between financial development and sustainable economic growth, a well-developed financial sector in Thailand has yet to fundamentally change the lives of those living at or near the poverty line.

4. Regulatory Fragmentation of the Thai Financial Sector

In this section, we provide details on the financial sector’s regulatory environment. How the a laxed regulatory framework has allowed for the emergence of finance companies that profit off the shortcoming of the financial sector. Furthermore, evidence indicates a growth in the financialization of everyday life as credit is readily available, causing rising private debt.

The political and institutional oversight regarding contemporary access to financial services in the financial sector can best be characterized by regulatory fragmentation amid the Thai bureaucracy.⁶⁹ More specifically, a regulatory bifurcation between the Bank of Thailand (BoT) and the Ministry of Finance (MoF) over crucial sections of the financial sector. Those sections being the large and dominant commercial banks and finance companies under the BoT’s control, and the state-owned banks, the Village Fund, Cooperatives, and small financial service providers under the MoF’s watch. However, the BoT can and often does monitor all of

⁶⁹ Author’s interview with Bank of Thailand officials and Thai Academics.

the financial institutions to ensure the stability of the financial sector and large commercial banks. Furthermore, the BoT routinely provides recommendations to the MoF regarding the granting of licenses for new financial institutions wishing to enter the market. Financial institutions are divided into three categories: formal, semi-formal, and informal.

Sector and regulator	Type/BoT and MoF Designation	Figure: Based on: Lewis, Tambunlertchai, Suesuwan, Adair, and Hickson (2013)
Formal I: BoT	Commercial Banks, Finance Companies, Credit Fonciers, and Non-Bank Financial Institutions (Shadow Banks).	
Formal II: MoF	Specialized Financial Institutions (State Banks)	
Semi-formal: MoF	Cooperatives and Occupational Savings and credit groups, Village Fund, Nano and Pico Finance companies	
Informal: no regulation	Moneylenders, community financial organization, village savings groups, etc.	

Although basic banking services are provided at a relatively low cost, the political process and the regulatory framework of the financial sector in Thailand does not support rural and urban poor communities.⁷⁰ The government controlled and operated Specialized Financial Institutions (SFIs) are on the forefront providing services to those who require them, however, dominant actors in the financial sector and conventional wisdom tie one hand behind the SFIs back. The end result is subsidized credit and other financial services provide more for the purposes of consumption rather than the development of productive forces. Furthermore, the talent is drawn away from the public to the private sector by ever-increasing salaries, and when the government takes on new duties, overall productivity decreases due to the lack of concrete Key Performance Indicators and objectives. The above dynamics ensure the political and economic situations do not change, which means, when political actors look to gain popular

⁷⁰ Author's interviews with Thai academics.

support, funds are distributed unproductively to those likely to place a vote in the right ballot box or otherwise known as vote buying.

The Thai economic environment has emerged a wide range of businesses that are involved in financial intermediation. These new non-bank financial institutions, with close association to the relatively new phenomenon of Financial Technology enterprises (FinTech), have emerged to profit on the shortcomings of individuals caught in a credit and debt cycle. One example is JMT Network Services, a subsidiary of the mobile phone provider Jaymart Public Company Limited, Thailand's leading debt collector of non-performing loans. With potentially lucrative margins, it is unclear exactly how profitable the debt collection business is in Thailand. However, Jaymart is particularly well suited for the endeavor with mobile phone shops throughout Thailand, the existing infrastructure makes collection easier.

The broad understanding of financialization as the dominance of finance as a solution to a variety of problems is generating a rise tide of FinTech euphoria as the country attempt to bridge the gap to becoming a digital economy.

5. The Historical Development of the Thai Economy: Politics of Credit and Debt

In this section we look back at Thai history in order to understand the high ratios of private debt to income in Thailand today. We specifically look at how debt shaped social relations and how the government's efforts for rural development in the early periods of the Thai developmental state, continues the legacy of private indebtedness. Furthermore, we further the argument that the financialization of everyday life is gaining traction.

Variations of debt uniquely appear in the fabric of social relations of early Thai history. The Sakdina system established a social order similar to the feudalism in Europe, with nobility land

rights granted by the Monarchy (Baker & Phongpaichit, 2014).⁷¹ A representation of debt appears in the social relations between Thai noblemen and the peasant masses in the form of labor otherwise known as *corvée*, where a designated amount of labor is required to fulfill ones duty to an overseer (Nai) and the crown (Hewison, 1989). The Sakdina system and *corvée* were slowly undermined overtime as peasants avoided their labor obligations by selling themselves into slavery, bribing officials, or entering monkhood, peasants caught fleeing were severely punished or killed; the Chinese were not subject to *corvée* obligations (Baker & Phongpaichit, 2014). The act of selling oneself into slavery or pledging a designated amount of labor to a Nai in exchange for funds (credit) to avoid obligatory labor signifies the origins of indebtedness in Thai culture. However, by the early nineteenth century, the existing dominant social relations had reached their end, and once the Palace found eliminating *corvée* to be in their own best interest, wage labor emerged as the new dominant social fabric between peasants and the upper classes of Thailand (Hewison, 1989).

Ingram (1971), Akira (1989), and Hewison (1989) narrate similar stories regarding economic development and the characteristics of early Thai capitalism.⁷² All recognize the 1855 Bowring Treaty as a critical point in the development of commerce and a variety of capitalism. Trade in teak, rice, and tin were the foundation of the Thai economy early on, tax-farming and other merchant activities supplemented the domestic economy. Major actors were foreign businessmen and their various enterprises, Chinese migrant merchants, Thais associated with monarchy, and the Royal Family. However, without the necessary supporting institutions that allowed capitalism to flourish elsewhere (property rights, transportation

⁷¹ Sakdina literally means power over fields.

⁷² Nartsupha (1978) and other Thai academics have conducted phenomenal research on early economic and capitalist development in Thailand.

infrastructure, capable government ministries, and an industrial labor pool), Thai capitalism emerged gradually and without much success from Bowen Treaty to the Revolution in 1932 (Hewison, 1989).

The 1932 Revolution symbolizes a near complete overhaul to the established order. The overthrowing the absolute monarchy allowed an emerging capitalist class to exert more influence over development policy and lay the foundation for new and powerful bureaucratic class. Moreover, Revolution and subsequent political changes made room for popular participation and social movements on the ground. Hewison (1989) notes,

“Four hundred Nakorn Nayok farmers, led by a police sergeant, called on the government in May 1933 to cancel their debts and to expropriate the lands of the rich and give them to the poor. In early 1935, hundreds of peasants from 15 provinces protested credit arrangements at the ministry of committee to examine debt. (p. 54)”

So, in a matter of less than a year, peasant movements organized around debt and credit emerged. However, formal financial institutions should not be seen on the ones responsible for this early discontent as they were largely separated from rural communities. On the other hand, peasant exploitation continued as the legacy of the Sakdina system and corvée remained visible, like similar feudal and slavery-based social organizations, well after they was abolished. It is unclear whether or not informal moneylenders and vested landholders were the source of credit, but the above evidence suggests a relationship. Until the 1950s, agricultural production remained cemented as the principal component in the Thai economy but being that its development was largely neglected by government bureaucrats, and with the introduction of markets and currency, village communities and their social order endured with limited progress and modernization (Baker, 2003).

Thai relations with the rest of the world fundamentally changed after World War II and throughout the Cold War. The Government's decision to side with the United States and her allies in the fight against communism ensured Thai bureaucrats and business elites continued support in the form of foreign aid and technical expertise. Furthermore, the Bretton Woods system insulated the Thai economy, and with the revenue from agricultural exports, an import substitution industrialization model flourished. It is during this developmental period that the Thai authorities first attempted to improve the livelihoods of rural villagers and farmers. However, efforts were not on a basis of egalitarian principals, but came as an effort to win the hearts and minds of farms and prevent a communist insurgency from firmly taking off.⁷³

5.1 Early Efforts of Thai Financial Inclusion

There were two primary motivations behind expanding financial services into the rural areas of Thailand. The first was to enhance savings to generate funds for further investment to continue the country's path towards industrialization. The other motivation was a two-fold, rooting out informal moneylenders while providing funds and services to farmers.⁷⁴ The early performance of a rural Thai credit system backed by the BAAC can be summarized as follows,

“From our analysis of the Thai rural credit market, we draw the implication that mere injection of funds into the rural areas does not lower informal sector interest rates or drive informal lenders out of business; funds are not the scarce factor. The injection of funds into the Thai rural credit market after 1976 did not achieve its objective of providing low-cost funds for most credit needs, although it was successful in the (very important) market for working capital. Despite repeated attempts, the Bank for

⁷³ Authors interview with a former finance minister.

⁷⁴ Authors interviews with academics and BoT officials.

Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC) has been unsuccessful in expanding its scope of activities. A successful formal credit program that can compete with informal lenders over a broad range of their activities requires innovations in institution-building to compete with the information-solving devices in place in the informal rural sector. (Siamwalla et al., 1990, p. 272)”

Based on a survey of households and moneylenders between 1984-1985, Siamwalla et al. (1990) determined that “The persistence of the informal sector is the result of the rich variety of contractual relations that enable informal lenders to solve the information problems that are currently beyond the ability of the banks and cooperatives” (pp. 271-272). We can conclude that borrowers were willing to accept higher interest rates by informal creditors in favor have flexible contracts based their already established relationship with informal creditors.

The BAAC’s dismal performance and the government’s failure to contrive remedies plus other policy blunders sent ripples through the political landscape that would emerge in the 1990s. Baker (2000) originates growing discontent among the farming population with the BAACs poor performance, farmer displacement from dam construction, new restrictions on access to forest products and saleable goods, and reclassification of large tracts of land as forests. Land rights and debt emerged as dominant grievances during this period of development. Efforts to remedy the grievances were continuous but often fell quite short, or in one case, when an agreement was achieved, it was merely canceled by the newly elected government out of its “principled, no free handouts” leadership style of Chuan Leekpai (Baker, 2000; Suehiro, 1981).⁷⁵

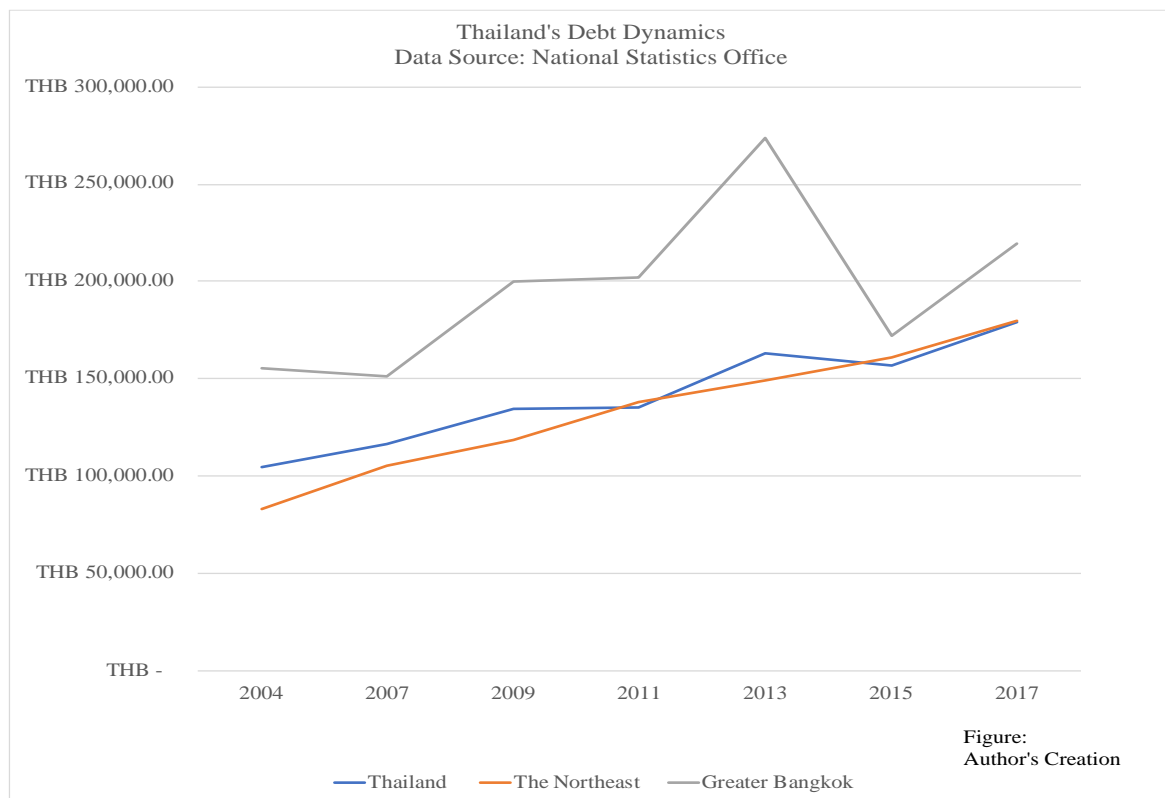
⁷⁵ Interview with former Finance Minister

Party politics fundamentally changed after the 1997 financial crisis and the ratification of the internationally influenced new constitution. What materialized from the crisis environment was a political party behemoth led by Thai-Chinese business mogul from modest origins, Thaksin Shinawatra. Before joining politics, Thaksin rose in the ranks of the Thai police force to later transition into business development, where he had minor success until winning a government telecommunications contract. After his Advance Info Services became a leading mobile phone operator, Thaksin had a relatively obscure few years in politics leading up to the 1997 financial crisis. The new Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party under Thaksin's leadership recognized growing and specific discontent following the total collapse of the Thai economy in 1997 and formulated a platform to help small business owners and entrepreneurs, improve agricultural prices for farmers, and eliminate debts incurred in the crises that was caused international speculators (Phongpaichit & Baker, 2004).

Data Source: National Statistics Office							
Year	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	
Indebted Households: Thailand	63.3%	60.9%	55.8%	53.8%	49.1%	50.7%	
Indebted Households: Northeast	75.6%	72.8%	70.1%	66.9%	64.0%	64.8%	

Support for Thaksin and the TRT party transformed from an enthusiasm for a brighter future among marginalized Thais to a cult-like following once he fulfilled his major campaign promises shortly after assuming power in 2001. Two fulfilled promises of particular importance are the Agricultural Debt Moratorium Project and the creation of The Village and Urban Community Fund Project (Village Fund), the former to provide a clean slate and the latter to help transform the Thai economy into one based on entrepreneurialism. It is interesting to note some of the influences and origins of these Thaksin's policies. His theoretical understanding of capitalist development can be traced to economist Hernando de Soto who emphasized property rights to start the process of capital accumulation; the formulation of

specific policies can be attributed to ex-leftists belonging to the *maquis* (Communists party members) (Anderson, 2016; Phongpaichit & Baker, 2004). The rise of Thaksin is a case where an agent's evolution is influenced by their surrounding environment, the actions of post-1997 Thaksin being entirely different from the pre-1997 Thaksin.



The debt moratorium program ran from 2001 to 2004 for households with less than Baht 100,000 owed to the BAAC and had never before entered into a legal debt settlement with the BAAC; once eligibility was determined, borrowers were enrolled into a specific scheme with matching incentives to encourage saving and future debt repayments (Kotikula, Pongsaparn, & Patrawimolpon, 2001).⁷⁶ On the other hand, the Village Fund acted as a decentralized microcredit program where Baht one million was allocated “to each of the

⁷⁶ In 2011 the average municipal debt for the northeast was 257,821 compared to 105,169 for the non-municipal; greater Bangkok had a difference of 18,208 (204,811-186,603)

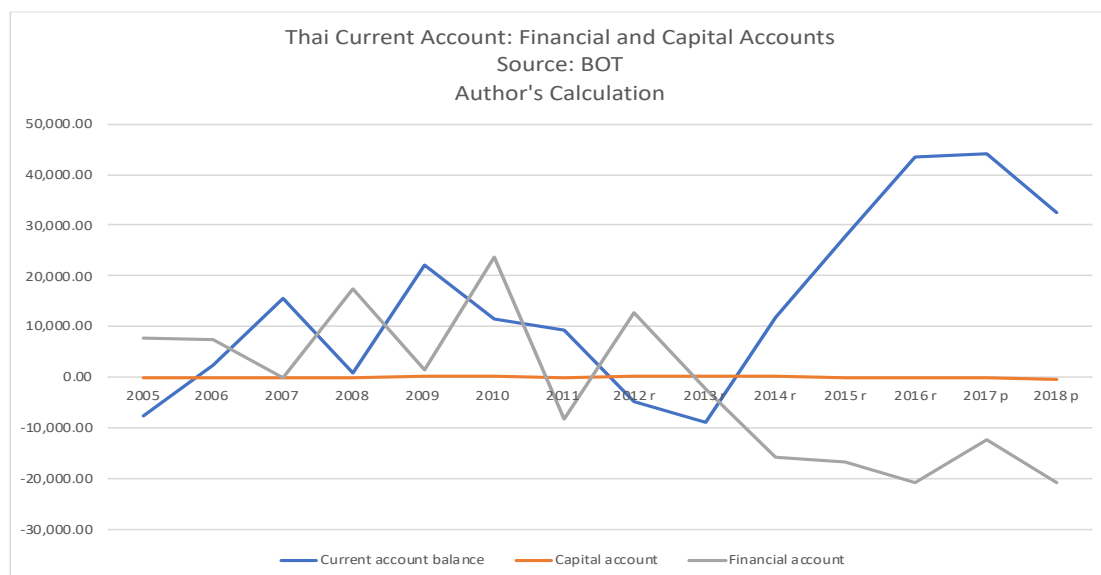
almost 75,000 villages nationwide” (Chandoevrit & Ashakul, 2008, p. 9). The Village Fund was formulated to be self-sustaining based on the returns from the initial capital injection, however, being almost entirely free from government oversight and additional rounds of disbursement have occurred. The objectives the Village Fund was established to achieve were three fold: 1) an additional source of finance for those who are potential excluded from financial services; 2) develop frugality among the participating villages; 3) promote village independence and sustainability (Chandoevrit & Ashakul, 2008).

Source: National Statistical Office	2004	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017
Average Monthly Income: Thailand	THB 14,963.00	THB 18,660.00	THB 20,903.00	THB 23,236.00	THB 25,194.00	THB 26,915.00	THB 26,946.00
Average Monthly Income: Northeast	THB 10,139.00	THB 12,995.00	THB 15,358.00	THB 18,217.00	THB 19,181.00	THB 21,094.00	THB 20,271.00
Average Monthly Income: Bangkok (greater)	THB 28,135.00	THB 35,007.00	THB 37,732.00	THB 41,631.00	THB 43,058.00	THB 41,002.00	THB 41,897.00

The effectiveness of both programs is called into question, especially by those highly critical of Thaksin. Furthermore, the two programs represent a break from the traditional Neoliberal framework as they involved heavy use of subsidized funds. Under financial inclusion, public sector involvement is largely limited to being services to those excluded and leaving the remaining actions to be determined by the financial market itself. Both outcomes can be attributed to the political and economic environment during the stages of development that ended with the 1997 crisis where the market failed tremendously. Without the longstanding history of indebtedness and political and economic marginalization of certain segments of the population in Thailand, the above-mentioned programs, and others like the thirty Baht healthcare scheme, would not have generated as much popular support as they did for Thaksin and the TRT party.

After making questionable political moves that worried the monarchy and greater establishment, oppositional forces moved on Thaksin when he sold his multi-billion-dollar AIS Corporation to Singapore tax-free. However, his economic legacy regarding improving the

livelihoods of his support base is embedded in the dynamics of debt and growing wealth inequality. “In December 2013, there were 111,517 bank deposits (current account, savings account or time deposit) with a value over 10 million baht apiece. These 111,517 deposits represented only 0.13% of the total number of bank deposits, but contained 49.24% of the total amount deposited” (Phongpaichit, 2016, p. 411). If we approach that basic statistic using rudimentary accounting practices in a *closed economy*, the savings held in just 0.13% of bank deposits provide a significant portion the credit for the 53.8% of the Thai population who are indebted with an average debt amount of THB 163,087.⁷⁷ In an *open economy* financial inflows from the rest of the world contribute to the domestic savings pool, research in the Minskian tradition now having gone mainstream conclude that large credit cycles correlate with periods of deregulation (Mian & Sufi, 2018; Oatley, 2019). By examining the Thai current account balance, we can see the negative sloping financial outflow of funds since 2012.



6. Complex Interdependence and The New ‘Normal’

In the last section we further the argument for using an approach of complex interdependence by explaining how global economic uncertainty and turmoil since the GFC

⁷⁷ 2013 Household Socio-economic Survey, National Statistical Office.

determines domestic outcomes by examining recent economic data in Thailand. Specifically, how a new normal low interest rates and low inflation has not appearing in Thailand and causing similar outcomes. We wrap up with a few words of caution regarding the continuation of current trends.

Thailand benefitted quite while by siding with the first world following World War II, it was a recipient of tremendous amounts of direct and indirect aid in the Wests' efforts in preventing the spread of Communism. Furthermore, after the Bretton Woods system and Fordist organization of domestic economies ended in the early 1970s, MNCs relocated production facilities and as already mentioned, the Thai economy registered high rates of growth. However, as new market socialist countries emerged with cheaper pools of labor and lucrative domestic markets, FDI in Thailand slowed. From nearly doubling its exports as a percentage of GDP from 1988 to 2000, Thai exports have effectively stalled. Between 2005 and 2017, exports as a percentage of GDP averaged 68.5% with a peak of 71.4% in 2008. Total investment and Foreign Direct Investment share similar trends. The 1980 transition away from technocracy and state lead development essentially removed capital controls and allowed new investment to flow inward, however, Thai investment (25% of GDP) dwarfed FDI (2% of GDP) (Pasuk & Baker, 1996, p. 35)

In terms of economic policy and management, Thailand transitioned from an investment-driven state managed economic model to one focused on price stability and free market orientated. The management change taking place in the late 1980s due in part to a rising middle class demanding political representation and growing strength of elected politicians (Pongsudhirak, 2002). Regarding the policy target transition, a BoT paper published in 1998 indicates that the BoT is not explicitly targeting inflation but at times, had emphasized and monitored aspects of a Monetary Conditions Index (Hataiseree, 1998). In contrast, (Pasuk

& Baker, 1996) highlight the Bank of Thailand's policy of managing inflation during the early years of state-led development, which "resulted in an average inflation of 5.6% compared to a world average of 61.8%" (p. 74) However, inflation was wild world-wide during that time frame and an average inflation rate of 5.6% is still comparatively high compared to the average core inflation of 1.18% from 1999 to 2018. Lastly, it wasn't until May 2000, when the BoT switched framework outright and started targeting monetary conditions with an emphasis on price stability.⁷⁸

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
GDP Growth	4.60%	4.5%	3.4%	6.1%	7.2%	6.3%	4.2%	5.0%	5.4%	1.7%	-0.7%
Headline Inflation	0.3%	1.6%	1.6%	0.7%	1.8%	2.7%	4.5%	4.7%	2.3%	5.5%	-0.90%
Core Inflation	1.80%	0.71%	1.30%	0.40%	0.20%	0.40%	1.60%	2.30%	1.1%	2.4%	0.3%

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
GDP Growth	7.5%	0.8%	7.2%	2.7%	1.0%	3.0%	3.3%	4.0%	4.10%	3.3%	3.7%
Headline Inflation	3.3%	3.8%	3.0%	2.2%	1.9%	-0.9%	0.19%	0.66%	1.07%	1.0%	1.0%
Core Inflation	1%	2.4%	2.1%	1.0%	1.6%	1.05%	0.74%	0.56%	0.71%	0.7%	0.9%

By 2001, Thailand had an entirely new macroeconomic regime where the market largely determined the direction of development, financial actors played held key positions, and hitting inflation targets were of utmost importance. If we apply analysis on the American and European political economic situation (Blyth, 2016; Blyth & Matthijs, 2017; Matthijs, 2016) limited variation in outcome, which we can attribute to development differences at the end of the twentieth century, Thailand may in fact be in a very similar situation to the countries in the West. Policy outcomes under the present macroeconomic regime include disinflation, capital owns a high share of GDP, stagnant and low wages, high inequality, globalized markets, weak labor unions, dominant financial (banking) sector, independent and strong central bank, managed democracy. What Blyth and Matthijs (2017) indicate is that the institutional

⁷⁸ <https://www.bot.or.th/English/MonetaryPolicy/MonetPolicyKnowledge/Pages/Target.aspx>

configuration regarding the macro economy among Western nations, which Thailand shares, is producing the above outcomes endogenously.

Year/baht	1979	1989	1999	2009	2019
Interest Rates: Prime Max	14.5%	13.50%	8.00%	6.25%	6.60%
Deposit Rate: Max	9.0%	9.50%	4.25%	1.00%	1.65%

Keeping with the topic of this paper, we can focus on a few of those policy outcomes and provide further explanation on the economic situation and relate it to the issue of financial inclusion. First, we can couple stagnant and low wages with weak labor unions. Pasuk and Baker (1996) state that during Thailand's boom years, labor suppression became institutionalized by the ministry of labor through a two-tier system where the upper tier enjoyed relative prosperity and a worse off lower tier to keep the upper tier thankful for their superior position and if member of the upper tier became too demanding, they could be replaced by members of the lower tier. Furthermore, as migrant labor became more readily available, it acted as a release valve if the domestic labor market became too demanding. The resulting situation regarding wages during Thailand's boom years was real wages barely outpacing inflation (Pasuk & Baker, 1996). Since Thailand's macroeconomic reconfiguration, the situation remains largely the same, minus inflationary pressures to increase wages.

It is difficult to discern exactly why the economy is not exhibiting any inflation despite the existence of a low unemployment, which is characteristically a mechanism that drives wages upwards, and thus, sparking inflation. However, these characteristics show striking similarity to the West, where labor militancy is weak and wages have been stagnant since their macroeconomic reconfiguration in the 1970s. Lastly, weak labor organization and stagnant wages ties into a different outcome cited about, labor and capitals share of GDP, which as persisted at x% since X date.

Source: National Statistical Office	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Average Wage Thailand	THB 6,663.25	THB 6,611.04	THB 6,758.52	THB 6,915.15	THB 7,389.44	THB 7,850.64	THB 8,085.15	THB 8,912.70	THB 8,694.22	THB 9,262.20
Percent Change		-0.78%	2.23%	2.32%	6.86%	6.24%	2.99%	10.24%	-2.45%	6.53%

The second set of outcomes include the deregulation of finance beginning in the 1980s and a dominant class of commercial banks that remain highly protected by an important and very independent central bank. Furthermore, each of the commercial banks has an investment and securities arm, otherwise known as a proprietary trading desk, to take advantage of financial markets and draw in new high earning customers.

Although investment to expand productivity and output has not ceased entirely, a slowing has occurred in favor of property development and mega-infrastructure projects. Examples being the development of a series of high-speed rail lines funded by Charoen Pokphand Group as well as the property development Bangkok One organized by Chareon Sirivadhanabhakdi, chairman of TCC Assets and Fraser Property. Both organizers are among Thailand's wealthiest. The interdependence of the global macroeconomy and uncertainty of investment. Property speculation through infrastructure development and Special Economic Zones. The Thai government promotes financial services but involvement in industrial development or control over private sector industry is forbidden under the neoliberal framework. If you do not have rising incomes or inflation, private debt levels will remain in place or even continue to grow.

7. Concluding Remarks

Above we presented some preliminary analysis based on a thesis research project looking at the development of financial services in Thailand and the recent international movement of towards universal financial inclusion. We also provided a brief explanation on the global economic slowdown characterized by historically low to negative interest rates and disinflation or even deflation since the GFC. Despite an already high level of access to financial

services, Thailand is still caught up in the international movement of financial inclusion, where a set of powerful agents are slightly influencing domestic policy, less so recently. Furthermore, and more noticeable, the lack of tangible investments on the ground at the Nong Khai special economic zone, an institutional arrange that has historically generated a conducive environment for investments, has spurred none despite very low interest rates. The outlook is bleak, and it seems that the Neoliberal economic model has run out of new tricks to restart the system and restore faith in markets. As wages remain stagnant and no signs of rising inflation, the ability to pay off rising levels of debt shrinks to zero, and soon the hand that gives will demand what it has given, back.

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Transnational Identity of Transnational Children in Taiwan: Perspective to Mothering and Child-rearing Practices of Vietnamese Migrant Women

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to identify the mothering experiences of migrant women from South East Asia, particularly, Vietnamese migrant women in Taiwan. The paper applied sociological perspective to explain the child-rearing practices to transnational children, who were Taiwanese-Vietnamese children, and expected educational goals are based on moral values and pursuing transnational identity to their children. However, the educational goals are prevented by social discrimination. As a result, this creates a great challenge in the mothering of these Vietnamese migrant mothers. Moreover, the potential research of transdisciplinarity must be studied for the further aim in solving the problem of mothering from Vietnamese migrant women. The paper argues that the cohesion of many other social sciences as transdisciplinary research creating more feasible consequences on wider areas. This will be demonstrated through the research results cited in a part of the master thesis conducted in Taiwan for covering 2 years with 16 samples for qualitative research. The characteristic of the problem indicates that the potential research such as transdisciplinary research is required for the provision of the increase in awareness of transnational families for mothering and child-rearing practices of Vietnamese migrant women to transnational children. The research concludes that the collaboration of related stakeholders, academic and non-academic actors for creating knowledge of mothering is significantly required with challenges on co-operation.

Keyword: Vietnamese migrant Women, Mothering, Transnational Identity, Child Rearing,

1. Research Background

In recent years, there are more and more foreign women from Southeast Asian countries, such as Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand, marrying Taiwanese men, and they are commonly called “foreign spouses”, “new immigrants” or “foreign brides” (Hsia, 2009; Wang, 2007). Especially, the number of Vietnamese immigrant brides have the highest proportion, about 61% (Ministry of Interior, 2003). They are often called “Vietnamese brides” or “Vietnamese female immigrants”. As Wang (2007) reported, these Vietnamese immigrant brides have a certain influence on the cultural structure in Taiwan. In 2005, transnational marriages accounted for one in every five marriages, and children of foreign brides accounted for 12.88% of births (Chin & Yu, 2009; Government Information Office of Taiwan, 2010). Until now, the number of children of Vietnamese brides have increased, and thus has led to a much more a multi-cultural country than Taiwan was with the traditional society in the old days (Liao & Wang, 2013).

In Taiwan, the reproductive activities of migrant women are not considered a fulfillment of patriotic duty but a potential threat to the nation. Because they are considered as “alien wombs” or “unfit mothers” who could not do national reproductive duty biologically and culturally (Lan, 2008:842). In the work of Yin (2004:2) showed that Vice Minister of Education of Taiwan Chou Tsan-Te expressed his worry about population quality for next generation from immigrants and said that “foreign brides should not have so many children” (as cited by Lan, 2008). In addition, “run away” is what the media described about immigrant brides after arriving in Taiwan and this causes broken families and influences the traditional family structure (Hsia, 2007). They “run away” because they came to Taiwan with the image of a “gold digger” who married Taiwanese men only to suck away these men's money and bring it to the natal family. Besides, there is a link between foreign brides and crimes because these did not registered in household records and immigrated to Taiwan to make disguised prostitution through marriages (Lan, 2008). With these social stigmas, it influences strongly to

mother of immigrant women. Following the report of China Times (11 December 1991) the mainstream media reported that immigrant women's negative impact on their children's education because they "have education much lower than average Taiwanese" which lead to endangers society and influence population quality (as cited by Hsia, 2007). As the result, an emphasis is placed on the immigrant wives' children having learning disabilities, and then people consider immigrant wives as the ones who are to be blamed (Hsieh & Wang, 2008). Moreover, although Taiwan has policies of globalization and national integration into the world, there are still social accusations for immigrant women with assumptions that class and race of the immigrant women is not suitable with these policies. In addition, Taiwanese education system has embraced internationalization ideas but focusing more on Western model of education than Eastern. Thus, the language skills and local knowledge of immigrant women are considered as burdens more than properties in transmitting their indigenous values to the next generations (Lan, 2008).

Within the literature on migration in the West, there is a consensus that "migrant families orient significant aspects of their lives around their country of origin" (Haller & Landolt, 2005, p. 1183). Along this line, segmented assimilation theorists treat the family as a social institution within which children of migrants receive an ethnic and linguistic socialization (Haller & Landolt, 2005; Portes & Zhou, 1993). Furthermore, according to recent scholarship on youth and transnationalism, the family plays a crucial part in the formation of transnational identities across different generations of migrants and their children (Goulbourne, Reynolds, & Zontini, 2009; Utomo, 2014). This interest on intergenerational identities of migrants has expanded across a wide range of disciplines in the social sciences.

Central to the discussion on identity formation in migrant families is the practice of mothering. In her decadal review of scholarly work on mothering, Terry Arendell (2000,

p.1192) concludes that in the interdisciplinary space, the definitions of mothering share a common theme. Mothering is “the social practices of nurturing and caring for dependent children [and] is associated with women because universally, it is women who do the work of mothering”. Through their practice of mothering, mothers shape the “transmission of culture”, the “constitution of kinship”, and the family and societal reproduction (Barlow & Chapin, 2010, p. 342; Gedalof, 2009)

There is a growing body of research on the effects of transnational migration on the family, kinship, and particularly on gender ideology and practices within the family as well as on the identity formation of migrants’ children (Coe, 2011; Ho, 2006; Levitt & Waters, 2006; Nora Chiang, 2008; Wu, 2009). At the same time, there are also studies that examine the effects of motherhood on cross-cultural adaptations of migrants (Moon, 2003; Sigad & Eisikovits, 2009; Tummala-Narra, 2004). While migration adds a layer of complexity to ideas of mothering, the scholarship on the topic of mothering among Vietnamese immigrant women is still limited (Tang & Wang, 2011; Hsieh & Wang, 2008; Lin & Hung, 2007; Hoang, 2016).

Language is one of the instruments for measuring one’s transnational identities from the first and later generation migrants in the host countries. However, the native language gradually decreases with following generation migrants (Utomo, 2014). For instance, the second-generation Dutch migrants spoke 96% English at home, but in contrast, the second-generation Indonesian migrants only spoke 30% Bahasa Indonesian while living in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). In Rumbaut’s research (2006), it showed that in the linguistic life expectancy (the expectation for fluently speaking in one’s mother tongue) of the migrant household members, it was found that no migrant language could be sustained more than a third generation. Although migrant mothers expect the preservation of native identities

for their children, they also express a desire for transnational identities in their children (Utomo, 2014; Park, 2009).

Han Nah, a migrant mother in US, shared her struggle in helping her children have Korean American identities. She did this by only speaking Korean at home and sacrificing her personal social networks, resulting with less outside friends (Park, 2009). A similar situation happens with Indonesian migrant mothers; they expect their children who can speak Bahasa Indonesia to simultaneously keep their ethnic identity, even though they live in the Western context (Utomo, 2014). It means that migrant mothers also expect somewhat natural transnational identities for their children, such as saying the words “I love you” to their children which they cited from a common practice in Australia, but at the same time have their children show the traditional filial piety by kissing or putting an elder’s hand on their forehead or nose which, which is a common practice in Indonesia (Utomo, 2014). In doing so, migrant mother’s choice in using language is related to the gender ideology of good mothering. Agreeing with this, Mills (2004, p.164) stated that “a mother’s language choices are related to her notions of mothering”.

Especially, we see a contrast in the culture of communication. Children talking to an elder with their arms crossed in front of their chest is regarded as a respectful and humble posture in Vietnamese culture, whereas in the Chinese culture such a body posture is considered disrespectful and aggressive (Yang, Kuo, Wang & Yang, 2014). Moreover, in the same research expressed above, children are supposed to be impacted more from their fathers than from their mothers, but the fathers may spend less time with their children due to a heavy workload or lack of relevant knowledge. Thus, the patriarchal culture and gender prejudice impacts the upbringing of children when children are in contact with their immigrant mothers

more than local fathers, but they are influenced more by fathers in the perceived context of Taiwanese society.

2. Methodology

This research is based upon a total of 14 months of fieldwork with Vietnamese immigrant women in the Southern area of Taiwan. This research separated into two periods. During the pilot period, I collected 6 in-depth interviews around June 2017. In the second phase of fieldwork, I collect 16 in-depth interviews including reinterviewing the previous 6 participants. All this was done from December 2017 to March 2018.

The research uses a semi-structured interview with an interview guide to collect data. The participants answer questions which are mentioned in the interview guide of the researcher. In qualitative research, the size of the sample can not be determined in advance. It is determined instead by a procedure called *theoretical saturation* (Charmaz, 2009). After the first interview, the collected data is immediately analyzed and the findings are used to refine this study's theoretical constructs and interview guide. After several interviews with new participants, if additional understanding is not found, the data collect process has achieved saturation. Following this point, when additional participants do not provide any new information, then there is enough data for the research.

In-depth interviews with 16 Vietnamese immigrant women in Taiwan were conducted and analysed. The collected data from these women show that they all lived in unhappy marriages and were labelled as "bad Vietnamese brides/mothers". This does not mean that all of Vietnamese immigrant women in Taiwan encounter such situations. Some are in more fortunate circumstances, enjoying a happy family life, getting support from family, friends and neighbors and being seen as good immigrant women in both family and society. But some are

in opposite circumstances and Vietnamese immigrant women in my study belong to the less fortunate group.

The core of my research is based upon systematic narrative and discourse analyses of the interviews with the 16 Vietnamese immigrant women. These interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim in Vietnamese. After that, I conducted line-by-line coding for each interview and linked the codes to field notes to have the most complete information for each transcription. In the process of analyzing the data, I translated verbatim the main responses of the respondents into English. I do not translate the entire transcriptions into English.

“Her mom is vietnamese, do not play with her”: stigmatization on mothering of vietnamese immigrant women

Chen (2011) mentions discrimination that Vietnamese immigrant women encountered in the workplace and in the community. As BiLi has heard the bad rumors about the Vietnamese immigrant women many time, and she remembered as the words of an older lady near her home: "*Vietnamese girls like you come here only to take money, to take the wealth of the Taiwanese and bring back to Vietnam, but all of you do not love your husband and children*". Such statement indicates that BiLi identifies as one of the Vietnamese women who appears in those words, in the eyes of the older lady. BiLi was self-identifying as the subject of such statements. Moreover, she heard that "*Vietnamese come here with the main duty becoming a 'reproduction machine' for Taiwanese, but they do not know how to mother well*". In her first period of time in Taiwan, BiLi felt really shocked by the negative ideas surrounding Vietnamese brides. Living in an area with bad rumors about the Vietnamese brides (she herself being one of them) was a shock and lead to competitive comparisons between families. It should be no surprise in these circumstances for people to compare mothering, working, living expenses,

etc., in ways that are shaped by the publicly declared prejudices against Vietnamese migrant mothers.

Vietnamese immigrant women suffer from stigmas not only from society but also in their home by family members in mothering. Teaching children in Vietnamese seems a good educational mission to bring a bright future for the next generation, but this is considered the worst thing a mother could do (Lan, 2008:844).

My mother-in-law said, *“Why do you teach him in Vietnamese? [Do you] teach him to speak something bad so that no one knows what you and he are talking [about]? My grandson is Taiwanese, teach Vietnamese for what? You two do not want to live in here any more? [Those] living in Taiwan must speak Chinese, but why speak Vietnamese?”*. Actually, my mother-in-law [was] just kidding, but I know her mentality. (PuTu)

Teaching Vietnamese to the next generation prevented by the husband's family. This is another aspect of the language barrier and perpetrates social stigma. It especially effects the boys who are supposed to be first paternal grandson. These grandsons receive much cover and protection from the husband's family. Their eating, sleeping, walking, and learning is all closely monitored, and no exception is granted for these boys to be able to learn Vietnamese. On the other hand, for girls, this problem is not serious. Vietnamese immigrant mothers can do mothering in their own way and are less supervised by their husband's families, so it is easier for Vietnamese immigrant mothers to teach daughters in their mother tongue. That is the reason why the percentage of daughters speaking Vietnamese well is higher than the sons. (see Table 1)

My husband's family does not like me to teach Vietnamese to the children. I am a wife, a daughter-in-law so I do not dare to argue... [M]y situation is unlucky but it's also lucky

because my mother-in-law does not care to my first daughter, so I took care of her myself. I gradually teach her Vietnamese a little day by day, now she can speak two language fluently.
 (BiLi)

Name	Age	Time in Taiwan	Occupation	Education	Children (boy)			Children (girl)		
					Age	Education	VNese language	Age	Education	VNese language
AnHo (Chiayi city)	54 (1963)	21	Tailor	12/12	21	University (junior)	None	X		
ThuTra (Chiayi city)	36 (1982)	10	Worker polishing brass burners	12/12	X			5	Kindergarten	Good
AnTu (Chiayi city)	37 (1981)	11	Selling pork in market	10/12	11	6/12	None	X		
BiTu (Chiayi city)	36 (1982)	11	Selling food at home	11/12	9	3/12	None	X		
TiHan (Chiayi city)	38 (1980)	18	Vegetable grower & greengrocer at market	6/12	10	4/12	None	X		
KiHo (Minxiong)	39 (1979)	18	Freelancer (documentary director, MC..)	5/12	5	Kindergarten	None	X		
BiLi (Minxiong)	40 (1978)	17	Planning baby orchid trees in glass bottles at home	4/12 (unfinished)	15	9/12	None	18	12/12	None
PuTu (Minxiong)	35 (1983)	12	Worker of company manufactures locks	College (unfinished)	2	At home	Good	17	11/12	Good
NuNo (Minxiong)	41 (1977)	20	Worker at company of powder	University (unfinished)	10	4/12	Basic	12	6/12	Good
NoLi (Minxiong)	37 (1981)	16	Farmer	10/12 (unfinished)	18	12/12	None	X		
KiNo (Douliu)	44 (1974)	20	Selling Vietnamese food in the store and night markets	6/12	15	9/12	None	X		
TiDu (Douliu)	40 (1978)	18	Worker at fabric company	12/12	16	10/12	None	15	8/12	None
TiNa (Douliu)	37 (1981)	10	Cooking dishes in elementary school	0/12	14	8/12	None	16	9/12	None
HoTa (Douliu)	36 (1982)	17	Selling Vietnamese food	11/12	X			10	4/12	None
TiHai (Douliu)	36 (1982)	18	warehouse manager at the paper company	Vocational training school (Accounting)	9	3/12	None	9	3/12	None
HoCu (Zhuqi)	42 (1976)	15,5	Selling Vietnamese food at home	9/12	13	7/12	None	17	11/12	None
					17	11/12	None	18	12/12	None
					15	9/12	None	X		

Table 1: Demographics

***Note: All names here are pseudonyms.

HoCu has lived in Zhuqi township for 15 years and runs a Vietnamese eatery. From the day her husband died, she has had to raise her children alone, a heavy burden placed on the shoulders of this physically smaller woman. She worked hard and wholeheartedly for the little son. One day, her son was playing the game continuously for hours and she asked him to stop but he disobeyed, so she said that *"If you do not listen to me, I will leave our home"*. Instead of responding with obedience, her only son uttered a sentence that she always remembers in her mind:

My son said, "*I am serious, all of you Vietnamese leave [their] children, it is not the first time I see this. If you want to go, you can go*". Oh my godness, that sentence makes me feel so angry, and at that time I cried a lot for several hours. I was furious with him but I love him so much...My neighbors introduce me to a single man but I refuse all; my family in the U.S wants me to come there to remarry with a man but I also refuse...I stay here because of him. (HoCu)

In the end her son apologized and promised not to say such words anymore. She shared with me that when her son becomes an adult, she will make public the amount of money which her son inherited from his father in order that he does not despise but rather appreciates Vietnamese immigrant mothers like her.

Social stigmas about Vietnamese immigrant women are ingrained in the consciousness of Taiwanese and this inadvertently affects the perception of the mixed-ethnic children about their mothers. KiHo is an activist promoting Vietnamese culture in Taiwan. She has come to many schools to lecture for students about Vietnamese culture. Once, she was invited to a juvenile detention center to motivate and guide them to the right orientation, in which most of them are children of Vietnamese immigrant women. She also asked, "*Today there are a lot of people in this class, but I do not know if anyone is a mixed-ethnic child. Could you raise your hand for me to know?*". Initially, no one admitted to their heritage; no one dared raise their hand. Later, through several private conversations with mixed-ethnic children, she learns the root cause of the problem:

They dare not identify themselves as mixed-ethnic children. That means that in this society, the mother was despised. The mother has been labeled as a bad mother, so this affects the next generation. Because they think that "*Well, people say foreign brides are not*

good, maybe I am also affected and people will think that I am not good, too" or "I am a person who is not well educated from my mother". So these children feel very complex. (KiHo)

The school is where the mixed-ethnic kids meet the most discrimination from their peers. HoTa recalled that her daughter confided in her about getting teased by her peers who said, *"Her mom is Vietnamese. Do not play with her."* She felt very sorry for her little daughter because of her condition.

3. Cultivation of Transnational Identity for Mixed-Ethnic Children

3.1 Mothering in Mother Tongue: The Taiwanese Context

Language is one of the instruments for measuring one's transnational identities from the first and later generation migrants in the host countries (Utomo, 2014). Legally, the children of Vietnamese immigrant mothers have Taiwanese citizenship and are recognized as legal Taiwanese. However, these mothers claim that by calling their children their given Vietnamese names helps them to realize their own part of Vietnam.

My first daughter [is] named Diem-Xeo-Xun [Vietnamese transliteration]. I often call her with [the] Vietnamese name, Yến Oanh; and my little son is Min-Min-Xin [Vietnamese transliteration], [but his] Vietnamese name is Lâm Minh Tâm. I call them in [their] Vietnamese names because I feel it closer. (BiLi)

Vietnamese immigrant women do not dream of their children being educated in a more developed country like the United States, England, Australia, etc. Their dream is simply that their children can learn Vietnamese and learn about Vietnamese culture. Beyond that is studying at a university in Vietnam.

I just hope that my children can speak well in Vietnamese. [N]ow the Taiwanese government is encouraging mixed-ethnic children to study Vietnamese and return to Vietnam every summer to learn the motherland. My daughter can speak fluently [in] Vietnamese now; hopefully, she has the opportunity to study at a university in Vietnam. (TiDu)

Another reason for the teaching of Vietnamese to children is about social networks. According to KiHo, although she has been in Taiwan for more than 18 years and can speak Chinese and Taiwanese fluently, she has not denied her origin in Vietnam; and that includes her daughter's underpinnings, too. If someday she passes away, Vietnam will be the place to support her daughter because her family is always available to help when needed.

My daughter it too naive.... My family is different from families here, my family is not Taiwanese.... If I die someday, my child is here alone, no relatives nearby.... This is also a reason for me to teach her in Vietnamese, [if she has] no mother, there are families in Vietnam [to] support her. (KiHo)

Language and culture are closely related. Language can be seen as a verbal expression of culture. It is used to maintain and communicate culture and cultural relationships. Language provides us with the variety we use to express our thoughts, so it is natural to assume that our thinking is influenced by the language we use. Our values and customs in our country shape the way we think to a certain extent (Ee Lin Lee, 2016). Language and culture are two concepts going hand in hand together. It is no wonder that Vietnamese mothers want their children to learn Vietnamese and at the same time learn more about culture and traditional customs in Vietnam.

Every night I tell stories for her, telling about how I live in Vietnam when I was a kid; she likes to hear about Vietnam. I tell in Vietnamese what kind of animals [we] have or what people do in Vietnam. (ThuTra)

At the present, my daughter wants to learn about Vietnamese language and history, but now her time is limited with a mountain of homework. But I told her “You spend a little time in the day to find out the meaning, [if] I say something if you do not understand, you can ask me again.” We just learn the meaning first, and then if we have time, we can learn vocabulary. (BiLi)

3.2 Cultural practice via traditional ritual

Culture in each country has different practices, so the children cannot bring the culture of Vietnam to apply in every part of life in Taiwan. Children talking to an elder with their arms crossed in front of their chest is regarded as a respectful and humble posture in Vietnamese culture, whereas in the Chinese culture such a body posture is considered disrespectful and aggressive (Yang, Kuo, Wang & Yang (2014)). This problem was labeled as spoiled children to become “gangster”, however, Vietnamese immigrant women explain that this action expresses the respect and patience of a child and the appliance of each circumstance.

I think this is our culture, I teach her to know the politeness. In Taiwan, crossing your arms in front of chest expresses you are as gangsters but we have to explain to everyone that it is our culture showing politeness in greeting adults.....Why do I teach her about this, I think crossing our arms is also showing our patience, showing a good and educated child... [Our] neighbors around here love my daughter very much because she nods her head to everyone with a smile in greeting adults. If she meets my friends or comes back Vietnam, she must cross her arms and say hello to them. (KiHo)

At the cultural center of KiHo where has regularly organized Taiwan-Vietnam cultural exchange activities and is also a destination for students and social activists interested in the activities of the Vietnamese community. She shared that:

Next time, I will open an exchange program for the second generation. They will share the experience about life in Vietnam, what they see, what they feel when they go to their mom's country, they can share it with Taiwanese. There is no need for me to share, but from the perspective of these children because their power is stronger. For example, recently my child has gone to Vietnam, she knew why our country's mid-autumn festival made a star-shaped lantern, she knew the cultural history of our country, so she shares her feeling which is more real than I share. (KiHo)

Another interesting thing that was discovered in this study is the sleep habits of the children of Vietnamese immigrant women. They said that most Taiwanese mothers will practice self-reliant behavior for their baby from childhood so they will put babies in a cradle and separate a room for the children. However, Vietnamese immigrant women thought that if they are separate from their children since childhood, it will be dangerous for children because they cannot manage babies' situation at night. *"If the baby [is] vomiting, then how can I know, [the] baby can easily suffocate.... I am afraid that baby is not warm enough because at 6 or 7 months old, [the] baby may [kick away] the blanket; they do not know how to cover the blanket themselves.... I absolutely do not agree to sleep separately"* (BiLi). Moreover, children will not feel the love from mothers and it is very difficult to increase the intimate relationship between mother and children. Therefore, they still keep the habit of sleeping with their children even if their children have attended secondary or high school. Likewise, sleeping with children helps control their behaviors and it is an opportunity to teach children about the moral values of life.

Before sleeping, I often told to him some moral stories.... [I say,] “The most important human qualities are to love everyone, kindness, and you must have the honest.” I always remind him about these... I am familiar to sleep [in the same bed] with him, I feel pleasant and peace of mind when sleeping [near] him. If he does not sleep [near] me, I do not feel peace in mind. Moreover, sleeping together he will understand how much I love him (NuNo)

3.3 Vietnamese Cuisine: “I love to eat the food having the smell of Vietnamese mothers.”

The interesting factor discovered in this study is Vietnamese cuisine. Most of the Vietnamese immigrant women cook traditional Vietnamese dishes for their husband’s families. Taiwanese can eat some, but cannot eat some other dishes due to improper taste. The introduction of traditional Vietnamese dishes in the family meals and guidance on how to make traditional Vietnamese food is believed by these mothers to remind their children about the homeland in Viet Nam as a part of their lives.

I said [to] my child, “every time I cook Vietnamese food, please come to the kitchen to help me” so that she can learn how to cook Vietnamese food. [S]omeday when she comes back Vietnam, she can help my family to prepare food; it is good. (PuTu)

According to sociologists, different food groups are divided for their purpose and meaning under the viewpoint of symbolic interactionist, there are many symbols that is relevant to the sociology of food. Food can bring people together and connect them in different levels. For example, when we eat dinner on the same table together, it expresses that food connect family members together. Or food can symbolize for a greater thing than it's meaning. For example, In America, fast food represent for busy families who need a simple and fast meal. However, it is also represent for consumption under the perspective of McDonaldization Theory (Germov & Williams, 2017). Fischler (1988) points out that food is

central to individual identity. In doing so, Vietnamese dishes interwoven into the daily menus of transnational families, on the one hand, can help Vietnamese immigrant women maintain the Vietnamese identity themselves. On the other hand, helping their children realize and acknowledge that part of their origin is the Vietnamese. A common feature of human culture is the idea that the absorption of a given food, especially when it occurs many times, may have the effect of transferring certain symbolic attributes of that food into personal eater (Beardsworth & Keil, 2002). In the case of AnHo, from childhood until her son go to university, every Lunar new year she has made a dish called "Thịt kho nước dừa" (a typical dish of Vietnamese on traditional Tet days) and gradually her son feels indispensable for the taste of that dish during the Tet holidays in Taiwan.

Last Lunar New Year, my son asked me "Why do not you cook Thịt kho nước dừa [caramelized pork and eggs]?" I said that I did not have free-time and I was tired, [and] cooking this dish was very elaborate. My son said, "I love to eat the food having the smell of Vietnamese mothers [cook]". When I heard I feel very sorry for my son because he still remembers to me, a Vietnamese mother. (AnHo)

However, cooking and teaching Vietnamese food is not always accepted in Taiwan. Although Vietnamese food is now more popular on Taiwanese streets because the number of Vietnamese to this country has increased rapidly in recent years, reaching 66,900 people mainly Vietnamese immigrant workers (Overseas Labor Administration, 2017) but in transnational families, cooking Vietnamese food is still quite limited.

Vietnamese food is not allowed to cook. They [Taiwanese] said that I shouldn't cook anything having Vietnamese smell. So I do not dare to buy fish sauce [featured in the daily meals of Vietnamese] or soy-bean sauce. I also did not have the blessing that my husband

drove to eat in Vietnamese stores, he said "do not eat those dishes, Taiwanese food is better". My husband never went to the grocery store selling Vietnamese goods, so I have seldom cooked Vietnamese food for my family because they do not like it. (BiLi)

3.4 The folk song of homeland

As Frith (1996: 124) mentioned, 'Music constructs our sense of identity through the direct experiences it offers of the body, time and sociability, experiences which enable us to place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives'. It means that music is not only a reflection of culture or identity, but also helps to form identity (Erol, 2012). For Vietnamese immigrant women, traditional hometown rhymes are measures of cultural value that they wish mixed-ethnic children to be able to realize. Music not only helps Vietnamese immigrant women maintain their national identity in the host country but it also helps the next generation to partly understand the situation of the Vietnamese community at Taiwan, especially the first generation immigrant women.

A few months ago I let my child went to Vietnamese class, the teacher also taught them folk songs in there. My daughter knows how to sing the song "Bắc kim thang" [Catch the dark brown horse] and the song "Nỗi buồn mẹ tôi" [The sadness of my mother]... at least my daughter has an origin, singing the song is to know the child of Vietnamese (laugh) (ThuTra)

I would like to quote a folk song of Vietnam called Quê Hương (homeland) by musician Do Trung Quan. Whenever I went to BiLi's house to visit her, I heard her sing her little son to sleep, while he was lying in the hammock. The song she sang was of the homeland in Vietnam. I asked her why she did not sing a Chinese song for her son. She replied, "*I think I am*

Vietnamese. [M]y son is also Vietnamese so I sing the song about homeland feeling more dear.

[B]y the way when I was a kid, my mother also sing this song for me".

Quê hương là chùm khế ngọt Cho con trèo hái mỗi ngày Quê hương là đường đi học Con về rợp bướm vàng bay Quê hương là con diều biếc Tuổi thơ con thả trên đồng Quê hương là con đò nhỏ Êm đềm khua nước ven sông Quê hương là cầu tre nhỏ Mẹ về nón lá nghiêng che Quê hương là đêm trăng tỏ Hoa cau rụng trắng ngoài thềm Quê hương mỗi người chỉ một Như là chỉ một Mẹ thôi Quê hương nếu ai không nhớ Sẽ không lớn nổi thành người !!!	Home land is where the sweet carambola grows Where you climb to pluck fruit everyday, Home land is the old path to school Where you run home chasing yellow butterflies. Home land is where a blue-green kite flies Happily in amongst the youth on grassy fields, Home land is where a little ferry lies Gently rippling the home rivers waters Home land is a little bamboo bridge With mother in a crooked Palm-leaf hat, Home land is the bright moon at night Where areca flowers scatter upon the veranda floor Everyone has only but one Home land Just like everyone only one birth mother, Home land if someone does not miss Won't become adults !!! ⁷⁹
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When I heard that Trinh (KiHo's daughter) was singing the song "Chim trắng mồ cô" [orphan white bird] (a Vietnamese folk song) from the kitchen during I was talking to KiHo, I realized immediately my hometown's melody. However, the words were not pronounced and I knew it was the song of a mixed-ethnic child. Trinh shared that "Singing Vietnamese song is fun and I can perform on stage for everyone [Vietnamese and Taiwanese] to enjoy". At the Vietnam Cultural Center established by KiHo in Mixiong in early 2017, although it is only a small rented house but with the dream of spreading Vietnamese culture widely to indigenous

⁽¹⁾ Translation by <http://lekhanhhufs.blogspot.tw/2010/10/que-huong-homeland.html>

people, she has brought her soul into that small house with traditional Vietnamese goods, traditional Vietnamese costumes and has regularly organized cultural activities here. For example, on the occasion of Lunar new year, besides doing the traditional rituals of Taiwanese families, she also does the similar rituals of Vietnamese families at the center. In addition, the Vietnamese songs of spring cover the whole house in the days of Tet. It can be said that the small center only 90m² is a miniature of Vietnam where the generations of Vietnamese immigrants come to practice and maintain their cultural identity.

As Beardsworth & Keil (2002) mentioned, the characteristic of human culture will be absorbed through the given food when it happens many times, which has a certain influence on the transmission of ethnic identity into personal eater. Thus, when Vietnamese dishes and songs are repeated many times to mixed-ethnic child, it will help them to perceive and increase their self-esteem as a part of the value of Vietnamese identity in their bodies.

4. Transdisciplinarity in Mothering Research

The term of transdisciplinarity appeared in 1970, during a seminar on interdisciplinary research in university, organized by the Nice University co-sponsored by Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the French Ministry of Education. Many scholars agree that the famous Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget was the first person to articulate the term of transdisciplinarity (Bernstein, 2015). Concluding his article on the types of interactions between disciplines, Piaget (1972:138) indicated that transdisciplinarity was really a "higher stage succeeding interdisciplinary relationships. . . which would not only cover interactions or reciprocities between specialised research projects, but would place these relationship within a total system without any firm boundaries between disciplines". Thus, transdisciplinary research is not a recent issue that has been formed and developed over the past 50 years.

There are many previous studies about mothering which appear potential factors related to interdisciplinarity/transdisciplinarity. For example in the study of negotiation with the transnational identity of migrant mothering, the authors offer a combination of interdisciplinarity in the use of modern technical equipment is a mobile phone in maintaining intimacies of Filipino immigrant mothers for children who stay from a distance. The mobile phone is a tool to negotiate and redefine identities and relationships that create fissures in their sense of self. (Chib, Malik, Aricat & Kadir, 2014). Or research on maintaining Alevi Community cultural identity in Canada, music and dance practices are the key to maintaining a separate identity in their country, while trying to integrate their families into Canadian society (Erol, 2012). And Utomo (2014) also mentioned on the cultural-linguistic maintenance rationales, efforts, and experiences of a group of Indonesian mothers to their children who residing in Canberra, Australia. Indonesian language and dancing classes are held in a small community which facilitates the production of shared transnational identities among migrant mothers and the mothers' collective aspirations for their children's transnational identities. Thus, we can see the emergence of interdisciplinary elements in previous studies on transnational identities for the next generation. However, there is a lack of participation from non-academic actors but only the argument made by researchers.

In the study on mothering of Vietnamese immigrant women in Taiwan, I recognize that it needs to be a combination of different social sciences as well as recognition from non-academic actors (government agencies, NGOs, cultural promoters, original Taiwanese families, mixed-ethnic children, etc) to solve the current problem that these Vietnamese immigrant women encounter in mothering in Taiwan society. These stakeholders really produce more practical solutions in eliminating social stigmas about Vietnamese immigrant women. For instance, in my fieldwork, I observed that Taiwan-Vietnam cultural exchange activities attracted the participation of many local people and this also creates opportunities for people

of the two countries to understand each other better. Although KiHo's education (the Vietnamese cultural promoter in Taiwan) is only at the elementary level, she has organized practical activities to remove the gap between Taiwanese and Vietnamese such as: class of making star-shaped lanterns for Mid-autumn Festival, making Vietnamese jelly, class of using Vietnamese filter coffee for Taiwanese, inviting singers who sing "Lô Tô" (a kind of folk art of South of Vietnam) from Vietnam to perform, cooking Vietnamese food in Lunar New Year, etc...all with the participation of the two ethnic groups. It means that when these meaningful activities are spread out, there will be significant cognitive improvements of mixed-ethnic children and Taiwanese about Vietnamese immigrant women. The image of Vietnamese immigrant women is good at mothering, thus the image of mixed-ethnic children can be improved. These children will be an ambassador for spreading beautiful images of their mother. This is a mutual and progressive relationship. If the image of one party is enhanced, the same result will be followed for the other and vice versa the image of one party is labeled, the other will have the same result.

5. Conclusion

The phenomenon of immigrant women has come to Taiwan through marriages that have paid much attention from researchers around the world from the 1990s until now. Most previous researches focused on economic issues (Wang & Chang, 2002; Hsieh & Wang, 2008; Chen, Tang, Liu, 2013), politics (Tsai, 2011), health (Chen, Tai, Chu, Han, Lin & Chien, 2010; Lin & Hung, 2007) second generation's adjustment (Chin & Yu, 2009; Liao & Wang, 2013), social development (Thi & Hugo, 2005; Tang & Wang, 2011), education (Chen, 2010; Chen, 2011) and stigmatization on immigrant women (Hsia, 2007; Lan, 2008). However, most of the previous studies only focused on the analysis from a perspective of discipline or multidisciplinary or interdisciplinarity without the involvement of outsiders. In my research, the collected data showed that social stigma is the major challenge which Vietnamese

immigrant women encounter in mothering which comes from unexpected norms of a patriarchal system with different gender ideologies and expectations. This has affected the perception of mixed-ethnic children about their Vietnamese immigrant mothers. The mainstream society has made certain distinctions for Vietnamese immigrant women, so it leads to mixed-ethnic children's inferiority and self-esteem of their condition as well as creating invisible barriers between these children and their mothers. In order to obtain a feasible and applicable solution, it is necessary for the stakeholders to discuss the results based on this research. Specifically, for Vietnamese immigrant women and mixed-ethnic children to identify research results that describe exactly what they are going through. After that, discussing together to come up with solutions to improve the image of Vietnamese immigrant women and then mothering of these mothers will be more favorable. Government and NGOs will be supporting agencies to promote constantly these activities in a larger area to create innovation in Taiwan society's awareness of this issue. It means that creating the next generation with transnational identities will remove the image of "bad Vietnamese mothers" and the discrimination for mixed-ethnic children. In summary, this study shows a comprehensive view of the mothering of Vietnamese immigrant women and the strong impact of social stigmas affecting the transmission of Vietnamese identity on mixed-ethnic children. In addition, the research points out the potential for transdisciplinarity when recognizing the essential non-academic actors, which are important factors for improving the problems of Vietnamese immigrant women. It is necessary to have a transdisciplinary research or beyond that is a transdisciplinary science for combining intellectuals to create multidimensional perspectives and aiming at "discovering hidden connections between different disciplines" (Madni, 2007:3) about mothering of Vietnamese immigrant women.

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Gender Inequality and “Wicked Problems” in Transnational Marriage: A Case Study of Vietnamese Women’s Marriage to Taiwanese

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Abstract

Transnational marriage in Vietnam under the process of marketization and globalization has emerged challenges and complexity of gender inequality which could exacerbate “wicked problems” in sensitive cases such as Vietnamese women’s marriage to Taiwanese. Based on a framework of gender inequality analysis, we focus on understanding the issues of transnational marriages as an intersection between gender inequality elements such as incomplete or contradictory knowledge, the variety of people involved, the economic conflict burden, and the interconnected nature of these problems with other problems. Moreover, our argument is that this problem avoids straightforward articulation and is impossible to solve in a way that is simple or final solutions-oriented to avoid false marriages to gain citizenship or conduct human trafficking. These characterizes seem to provide a potential research topic for transdisciplinarity which need creative solutions, its reliance on stakeholder involvement, and engaged socially responsible science.

Keyword: Gender Inequality, Transnational Marriage, Transdisciplinary, Wicked Problem

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1. Introduction

After the “Doi Moi” (Renovation policy) launched in the late 1980s, the policy refers to the economic reforms and international economic integration. The phenomenon of Vietnamese young girls from rural areas married to foreign men who are from Europe, Australia and North America (Thai, 2008). However, the most destination of Vietnamese women is mostly South Korea and Taiwan. In Taiwan and South Korea in the period 1995-2009, Vietnamese women are the second largest group of foreign wives after Mainland China (Bélanger et al., 2010). Can Tho province is considered as the place where migrant women the most in Vietnam between 1995-2002, 90 percent registered marriage with the men from these countries (Tran, 2008).

Vietnam is a country heavily influenced by Taoism. In cultural factors, the most prominent feature is that traditional gender stereotypes. It suggests that men are like pillars in the house, they must be the ones who decide everything or at least decide big things. The traditional concept of gender roles still exists in a small part of the population and has a great influence on the division of labor in the family. According to this concept, family work must be undertaken by women, while men must do important things (Dalton et al., 2002). Being heavily influenced by that traditional cultural conception, even some women say that no one but them can do good housework and family without the care of women. It will be difficult to be able to get on.

Any society with deep and persistent gender inequalities will have to pay with poverty, malnutrition, disease and social inequality. More seriously, gender inequality has been particularly severe in third world countries, and in each country, gender discrimination tends to be the most severe among the group of poor people (World Bank, 2001). Society is growing, gender equality rights are increasingly consolidated, but traditional values of gender are always

imprinted in people's thinking. Although the woman was able to work outside, they had to complete household chores (Gammeltoft, 2012). This paper will revolve around gender inequality as a wicked problem. Help readers understand more about malignancy that makes Vietnamese women increasingly feel weak in domestic and foreign society.

2. Theoretical framework

Core thoughts of feminist theories

Unlike other theories, the feminist theoretical foundation does not originate from a single theoretical formula. No theorists (Karl Marx, Gandhi or Susan Bordo, etc.) define feminist theories for all time. That being true, there is no specific theoretical definition of feminist theory which is suitable for every woman of each epoch. The definition, therefore, can and is always changing because feminism is based on concrete facts and levels of culture, the history of consciousness, perceptions, and actions. Thus, it could be said that the feminist theory that was used in the 1990s will be different from feminist theory that was used for the first time in the 18th century.

Kamla Bhasin (2000) defined feminist theory as the perception of patriarchal domination, exploitation, and oppression at the material and ideological levels of labour, reproduction, and sexuality of women in the family, workplace, and in society in general; and part of the theory is the conscious action of women and men that change that situation. Following this definition, regardless of who (male or female) recognizes the existence of discrimination based on sex, male domination and patriarchy, and those who take action against it, are called feminist. In doing so, theorists do not identify solely with women, but it is a term that is used by those who advocate for male and female equality.

Referring to feminist theory, it could be understood from the following levels:

□ *Theoretically*, feminism is a term referring to “the doctrine of fighting for equality between men and women” ; this was formed in eighteenth century and then developed with many different schools, such as liberal feminism, cultural feminism, radical feminism, marxist and socialist feminism, eco-feminism, etc. These different doctrines are a part of feminism.

□ *Practically*, the feminist movement’s initial target was to fight for women’s rights in the sphere of politics (the right to vote as men) and economy (equal pay as men). The development of the feminist movement has gone through different stages. The feminist movement is now in the third wave with a variety of fighting goals: protecting the dignity and honor of women (against sexual abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace), demanding men's faithfulness (only women must be faithful, but men may commit adultery), and decrying violence against women and girls. Moreover, the feminist movement also extends its struggle for human rights, environmental protection, anti-war, sustainable development, etc.

□ *Professionally*, there are those who are called feminists, who fight for the goal of equality between men and women (or gender equality). At a different level, some are more or less influenced by feminist perspectives who behave according to feminist ideologies and may support and participate in the feminist movement to varying degrees.

Sociologists define social movements as groups of actions that support or fight against social change. Movements often emerge because of the awareness of the members about injustices or wishing changes to modify the injustice which they have encountered. Social movements are related to the sustainability of organized groups, and they usually include a network of organizations; although they may have goals or other members, they have a similar understanding about what belongs to the movement. Sociologists studying social movements also try to distinguish social conditions that promote the development of that movement

(Kolmar & Bartkowski, 2000). In the case of contemporary feminist movement, the development of feminism can be seen coming from the development of the women's movement in nineteenth century.

A feminist framework considers gender inequality under the lens of the crux of social life. Feminists believe that via history and most societies, men have the greater power and have subordinated women so as to benefit themselves. Feminist theory builds the core thoughts of feminism through trying to understand the reasons behind gender inequality in societies and history's human development. Actually, there is not a unified ideology of feminist theory but feminists recognize gender difference is crucial in social change and women need to be empowered apropos men (Palkovitz, Trask & Adamsons, 2014). The following part analyzes gender inequality under three main perspectives: education, economy and family.

What is "wicked problems"?

Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber (1973) were the first authors to identify and define the concept of wicked problems, it came from a discussion part in policy sciences that has become a focus transdisciplinary literature in recent year. They wrote: "As distinguished from problems in the natural sciences, which are definable and separable and may have solutions that are findable, the problems of governmental planning--and especially those of social or policy planning--are ill-defined; and they rely upon elusive political judgment for resolution. (Not "solution." Social problems are never solved. At best they are only resolved over and over again.) Permit us to draw a cartoon that will help clarify the distinction we intend." (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p.160). The "tame" or "benign" problems are always focused by scientists. It is clear to know that whether it resolved or not. In contrast, wicked problems have no clearly these traits.

There is no complete definition of wicked problem, and no final solution for this problem, because it will create the new problem (Brown et al., 2010, p.2). These problems are not wicked in moral, but its wicked in the characteristic that it resists all common solutions to resolve them (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Following Rittel and Webber 1973, there are a total of 10 characteristics of wicked problems including: “(1) There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem; (2) Wicked problems have no stopping rule; (3) Solutions to wicked problems are not true-or-false, but good-or-bad; (4) There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem; (5) Every solution to a wicked problem is a "one-shot operation"; because there is no opportunity to learn by trial-and-error, every attempt counts significantly; (6) Wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan; (7) Every wicked problem is essentially unique; (8) Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem; (9) The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways. The choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem's resolution; (10) The planner has no right to be wrong” (p.161-166).

In 2009, after the work of Fittel, Conklin reduced to 6 essential characteristics:

□ It does not have a definitive statement of the problem. A problem is difficult to understand until a solution is developed. According to Rittel and Webber, the process of understanding problems and solving problems must happen simultaneously because the information needed to understand the problem depends on an idea of how to solve this problem. Different stakeholders will bring different perspectives on what the problem is and what solutions will be accepted.

□ There is no stopping rule. Because there is no definitive statement of the problem so it does not have a definitive solution. For “wicked problems”, some cases of those

responsible or committed to resolving them but they cease working because of external factors like lack of time, money, motivation or patient (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Without any exact statement about the problem, there are no criteria to determine that the solution has been found. There is always the possibility that the problem solver's next efforts can still bring a better solution

□ Solutions to wicked problems are not right or wrong, it may be good enough or not good enough. Often, many parties have the same the right to judge the solutions, although neither party has the right to make formal decision rules to determine the correctness. Their judgment may vary greatly to match their group interests or personal interests, their special values and their ideological prejudices. “ Their assessment of the proposed solutions is expressed as "good" or "bad" or, most likely, "better or worse" or "satisfying" or "good enough.” (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p.163)

□ There are no two similar problems, so every problem is unique. Rittel and Webber asserted that “ part of the art of dealing with wicked problems is the art of not knowing too early what type of solution to apply.” (p.165). Therefore, each problem will have its own unique characteristics even though they look the same

□ Solution is “one-shoot operator”. Every solution is valuable and it can last consequence that will generate new wicked problem. Solutions to tame problems can be developed in carefully calibrated iterations, but solutions to wicked problems cannot easily be tested. Every potential solution will have consequences, and the consequences will last for an indefinite period.

□ There are no certain alternatives. Hence, it is important to think a solution that it can done. In order to identify the solutions that should be implemented and pursued, it is necessary to propose the potential solutions to determine.

3. Gender Inequality in The Context of Vietnam

Over many generations, women have been disadvantaged in terms of access to education and development opportunities. This is the overcome of gender norms that put them in the role of mother and housewife. Nowadays, there is a lawful system to support gender equality, but women still remain at a disadvantage compared to men (Oxfam in Vietnam, 2017).

With Asian cultural traditions, Vietnamese women, especially women in ethnic minority and mountainous areas are also under pressure by traditional gender roles and patterns. For ethnic minority areas, due to the low educational level, backward customs or conceptions of the importance of men and women have been deeply embedded in gender bias. This is also a major challenge in changing awareness and implementing gender equality in our country in general and in ethnic minority and mountainous areas in particular. In term of education, according to the Vietnam Population and Housing Census 2019, the rate of ethnic minority mountainous areas girls who do not attend school is often higher than boys. For example, the rate of girls who have never attended school in the Northern Midlands and Mountains is double that of boys (14.1% versus 6.6%). In addition, the literacy of women aged 15 and over in this region is also the lowest in the whole country (82.8%), lower than the literacy rate of women in the Central Highlands (85.1%) and is far from the Red River Delta (95.6%). Compared to the literacy rate of men in the Northern mountainous region (92.0%), the literacy rate of women is quite large, i. e., lower than the male 9.2%. This shows that the level of access to education for girls in the Northern Midlands and Mountains also faces many barriers.

In the economic side, according to Nguyen Duy Loi's research, female workers are mostly unskilled and unskilled. They started working at an earlier age than men, many cases

started working after graduating from high school and even primary school. They mainly work in industries such as footwear and textiles (78.5%), food production and processing (66.8%), porcelain and glass (59.2%). In 2007, there were more than 2.5 million unemployed workers, of which 51% were female unemployed workers. This shows that the employment rate of women is lower than men. In rural areas, the number of unemployed workers is largely female.

In term of family, improper awareness of gender equality in the family will create hierarchism that reduces women's status, leading to gender inequality within the family itself. In traditional families, grandparents and parents teach their children the prototypes of expected concepts and behaviors that are appropriate for each gender and social expectations for men and women. In the family today, too, because the personality characteristics of women are gentle, men are strong and assertive. Therefore, women are conceived to be associated with the role of mother, wife, housewife; men become economic pillars, are moral examples of women and children, as family heads, representing families in social and community relations (Bác, 2010). In contemporary Vietnamese society, men continue to be considered the breadwinners, and women are considered reproductive instruments, mothers, and wives, although they also work outside and contribute economically to the family (Dalton et al, 2001; Kabeer et al, 2005) There is a Vietnamese proverb to mention the role of Vietnamese women in the family:

“Con hư tại mẹ, cháu hư tại bà”

(Women create spoiled children)

This proverb speaks of the responsibility of the mother and grandmother in teaching children and grandchildren. They are the ones who directly nurture and are responsible for teaching, are considered weak women and live by emotion. They always pampered and

covered the mistakes of their children. The father's responsibility in teaching children does not appear in the idiom. This further proves the responsibility of a housewife in the family.

Gender inequality is one of the reasons that motivate women to marry foreigners. Because they are women, they have to sacrifice for their families. Even from family members also think that girls should marry a foreigner to send money to the family. An elderly man with a daughter who married a Taiwanese husband in Tan Lap Ward, Can Tho City said:

“I have 2 daughters and 1 son. In the past, my home was very poor, so I asked my daughter to marry a foreigner to help our family. Now my family's economy is also better. I have 1 more daughter, and I asked her to marry Taiwanese husband but she refused... My son will get married and share a house with me. (data from fieldtrip 7, Summer School and Field Trip 2019)”

4. Gender inequality in transnational marriage between Vietnam and Taiwan

Almost all Vietnamese brides married to foreigners who come from poor rural areas where they help their family by farming. In the research of transnational marriage between Vietnam and Taiwan, the authors show that more than a half of Vietnamese brides are from the Mekong Delta: Can Tho (30%), Dong Thap (15%) and Tay Ninh (11%) (Hugo and Xoan, 2007). Women from rural areas want to get married to a foreign husband usually because of money. Women get caught up in the whirlpool of money, think that after coming to Taiwan they can earn a lot of money to help their families. In the eyes of everyone, women get married because of money, not for love (Wang, 2007). Economic reasons seem very important in their decision to marry foreigners. Besides economic reasons, it is also related to culture. Vietnamese women are very filial toward their parents; they want to fulfill the duty of a filial daughter. They get married to a foreign husband to earn money and send money to their parents (Tang & Wang, 2011). The education level of women joins transnational marriage

which is very low. Following the data from the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in Ho Chi Minh City from 1996 to 2000 records that the average age of brides is 23.3 and their education is 6.3 years (Wang, 2007). The above information proves that gender and economic inequality still affects to society today, especially women. They sacrifice their life for the family to find a way to escape poverty.

The inequality and discrimination in the received country make the woman's fate worse. Moreover, in the research of Hsia (2007), she cited many stigmas of foreign brides that social media portrayed them. In the China Times 1995a: 17, they mentioned that Taiwanese men continue bringing back women who "poorly-educated, dull, and sometimes even ugly Southeast Asian women". And because of their low education, they have the negative effect to the educational quality of next generations. Or in the United Daily 1992, they assumed that foreign brides negatively affect the quality of population, cultural and social structures. As Hsia (2007) mentioned the 'foreign brides' in the eyes of journalists as women who will make broken families and they will "run-away" after coming to Taiwan.

In the work "The Seeds of Rape", written by Liao Hui-ying, it shows the Taiwanese cultural and social attitudes regarding son preference and unfair gender discrimination. Liao states: "A girl's fate is similar to the seed of the rape plant: it grows where it falls; a daughter was only a daughter, no matter how good she was. Only a son could keep the family incense burning" (Chen, Tang & Liu, 2013:432; Glenn, Chang, & Forcey, 2016). Thus, men play a role as breadwinner and women play a role as traditional wives who have to be obedient and care for the family. For instance, Taiwanese encourage women to stay at home to take care of the whole family. One Taiwanese man complained that the Taiwanese government had never taught these Vietnamese women about Taiwan's customs and these women should not leave children alone and do whatever they like. He said this even though he knew that women went

out to work earning money in Vietnam and that only men go out and women must stay at home to care for children in Taiwan (Chen, Tang & Liu, 2013).

In Tuan's study, he mentioned some issues about the inequality of Vietnamese women in Taiwan. Vietnamese women are not allowed to leave the house without the permission of their husband's family, their job is to take care of their children and housewives. The main task of the woman in the family is reproductive work to the next generation, especially to have a son. In the first years in Taiwan, they could not go out to work but only do housework. After a few years, they can go out to work, but at the same time have to complete jobs at home. Sometimes they have to contribute to the family's finances.

5. Gender Inequality and “Wicked Problems” in Transnational Marriage

In Vietnam, the government has issued many policies to support gender equality such as: ensuring gender equality in all fields of politics, economy, culture, society and family; support and create conditions for men and women to develop their abilities and opportunities to participate in the process of developing and enjoying the fruits of development; Supporting gender equality activities in rural areas, ethnic minority areas, and areas with particularly difficult socio-economic conditions (gender equality law 2006). In fact, gender inequality in Vietnam has had better changes. Many studies in Vietnam have shown that gender inequality in Vietnam is declining, but still high compared to the world (Tiệp, 2015; Bắc, 2015). However, in rural areas, there are still many cultural factors that dominate the thinking of the roles of men and women in the family (Lợi, 1990; Dalton et al., 2002). Among rural people, both men and women think that housework is an obvious thing for women. Even the women in the house still think that housework is something for them, and obviously, they have to sacrifice for their families. As in the author's thesis, women still think that their family situation is very difficult, so they must be sacrificed for their families to marry foreign husbands and send money back

to Vietnam for supporting. Some of the participants in that research are a student at university or passed the entrance exam to go to university. But they had to stop their dream and go back home to help their parents. They worked hard but still could not escape poverty. That is when the problem of marrying foreigners emerged in the 1990s. Many immigrant wives send money back home and their families escaped poverty quickly. This is a strong motivation that encouraged Vietnamese women to marry foreigners.

“Naem: I sacrificed my life for my parents. I would like to see them happy. They sacrificed all their life for me and my younger brother. So this was time for me to repay their feeding (Tuan, 2018, p.50).”

When there is a solution to support gender equality rights. Another problem will arise in another way. That is the intersection between discrimination and gender inequality. It is not only inequality in the national region, but it has crossed the borders and is international. Until now, Taiwan also paid much attention to migrants as well as issuing support policies. But in fact, Vietnamese women in Taiwan have not yet reached all the policies (Tuan, 2018). This suggests that the problem will not be solved if only one solution is offered within a region, and when a solution is introduced, a new problem will continue to form. And of course, no solution will be considered complete, but only a solution that it can be done.

What makes women's problems more wicked is when some observers see it as a sex inequality, but some other observers look at the situation as non-gender issues, belong to poverty, colonization or racism. Each person will have a different perspective on transnational marriage. Therefore, problems of transnational marriage are impossible to solve in a way that is simple or final solutions-oriented to avoid false marriages to gain citizenship or conduct human trafficking. These characters seem to provide a potential research topic for

transdisciplinary which need creative solutions, its reliance on stakeholder involvement, and engaged socially responsible science. However, while there are many studies focus on this topic from inner-disciplines such as politic, culture, economy, anthropology, etc., its theoretical and practical aspects demand to pick up on a transdisciplinary perspective in order to explain as well as solve the problem more clearly and comprehensively through connection and integration of multiple disciplines and stakeholders. Accordingly, the next aim is to discuss on intriguing potential transdisciplinary approach in co- production of knowledge about transnational marriage in specific case study both in and outside the academy in order to identify not only challenges of articulation and internal disciplines, but also constraints of collaborative attempt between academia and real-world at the process of knowledge co-production.

6. Conclusion

Cultural factors have profoundly affected the concept of both men and women about their roles in the family as well as society, which is the main reason leading to gender inequality. Most people believe that the tasks of housework and childcare are the responsibility and duty of women. they do not consider it unequal, but an obvious life. The article proved that gender inequality is a wicked problem. This wicked problem surpasses all resources for a single-sector approach, even traditional interdisciplinary approach to finding solutions, which have become the leading source of work in the contemporary industry. These are issues of pressure, even crisis, metastasis or multifaceted, and involve not only academic disciplines but also intersection academics and stakeholders that try to find solutions in the real world. Thinking about the rich and dynamic nature of gender inequality is a “wicked problem” that can help us realize that evil problems cannot be solved just by tame them or study them.

Although gender equality can still be very far in the future, each repetition of the problem not only brings the potential opportunity that a fair world that women seek closer, but it also asserts a thing that where there is action, there is hope.

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Discrimination Against the Ethnic Minority Groups to Access Citizenship in Myanmar

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Abstract

Some small ethnic minorities in Myanmar are unable to achieve their full citizenship status as other ethnic majorities albeit recognition of 135 national races. The lack of citizenship status leads to the infringement of some of their fundamental rights including the right to education and the right to employment, which are associated with direct and indirect discrimination based on race, religion and language. This paper focuses on 11 individual interviews with the minorities among young- aged population, and the officials from the townships and regional departments of Ministry of Labor, Immigration and Population who are providing services to the public at the time of interview. The interview process probes how the different classifications of citizenship based on the 1982 Citizenship Law affect the accessibility to social rights. The 1982 Citizenship Law discriminates against some ethnic minorities in the conflict areas and deters them from their enjoyment of citizenship rights. This research finds that the ethnic minorities are stopped from achieving their citizenship rights due to poor law enforcement, improper management of citizenship law implementation, corruption, lack of awareness of citizenship application process, and administrative violence. Therefore, the research suggests that the government amend the current citizenship law to become more effective for prevention of discrimination against ethnic minorities in terms of citizenship status.

Keyword: Administrative Violence, Citizenship, Corruption, Discrimination, Ethnic Minorities

1. Introduction

Citizenship is first and foremost the most visible expression of a legal bond between an individual and a state and is thus important in fostering a sense of belonging to a political community. Citizenship is not only legal status; it also represents a collective identity, a bundle of rights and duties as well as a civil, legal, and customs-abiding attitude. The lack of such a social link obviously hinders overall social cohesion. When those excluded are territorially concentrated and living in large numbers, tensions may lead to armed conflicts (Arraiza & Vonk, 2017). This fact is evident in the post-colonial era in Myanmar.

Myanmar was a British colony in the Southeast Asian region. Among the negative impacts of post-colonial policies carried over from the British era, a legal framework imprinting has created and maintained racial discrimination, social and economic inequality and the underdevelopment of the country (Collste, 2015). In Myanmar, the British administration defined two distinct groups: the “Burmese,” as the majority, and “ethnic minorities” in more remote hilly regions within the country. The relationship between the majority “Burmese” and the minority “ethnic nationalities” was tense because of the geography, and the British application of different rules and regulations between these two groups. After regaining independence from the British, Myanmar became the least-developed country in a post-colonial era, which contributed to political instability, unequal distribution and income disparity in Southeast Asia (Bradley, 1997).

Myanmar is the most culturally diverse country in the Southeast Asia region, which has resulted in complex inter-ethnic relationships. Ethnic identity is an important dynamic in Myanmar’s political, social and economic society. Previous Myanmar governments,

unfortunately, did not display and promote diverse ethnic identity through the media for public attention and appreciation. Due to this lack of public understanding and appreciation, in many areas of Myanmar, conflict is unfortunately on the rise, creating situations of protracted and complex conflicts, including inter-communal violence. Long-term ethnic-based grievances now appear in society, leading to and maintaining conflict due to a lack of self-governance and resource-sharing with the Union government. In conjunction with this dynamic, discrimination and marginalization, suppression of religion, the lack of citizen ID card issuance, a lack of both social and economic infrastructure, and lack of education and health services for community members are highly evident in many “ethnic areas.”

The concept of administrative violence articulates the process of rights deprivation through the denial of identification papers, official forms and certificates. Before the promulgation of Myanmar’s 1982 Citizenship Law, there were two acts for citizenship in Myanmar: The Union Citizenship (Election) Act and the 1948 Union Citizenship Act. These two acts were used to put pressure on applicants to citizenship. This restrictive and complex history is increasingly traced in the applicable law concerning citizenship in Myanmar. The present 1982 Burma Citizenship law differs from the earlier 1948 Act, which deliberated equal rights for all citizens. The law creates three classes of citizen: full citizens, associate citizens and naturalized citizens. The law establishes a government-controlled “Central Body”, with broad power to determine specific citizenship issues. As an example, under Section 53, what rights associate and naturalized citizens may or may not enjoy are regulated. Sections 35(d) and 58(d) have a wider range of differences and clauses to revoke such citizenship on grounds that mention “dissatisfaction or disloyalty to the state by any act or speech or otherwise”, although an appeal may be made to the Council of Ministers under Section 71. But there is no appeal to an independent appeal body. Moreover, there is no requirement for either the Central Body or Council of Ministers to provide a reason for their decision.

Citizenship issues are becoming one of the major national concerns for the minority groups in Myanmar as the result of the Citizenship Law and Constitution. Woodiwiss (2012) considers human rights as a set of minimal standards of ethical behavior drawn up by states to protect their citizens from abuse by the same states and certain other dominant parties. The central problem in Myanmar is to implement the 1982 Citizenship Law and 2008 Constitution under the full control by the state free from all sources and interpretations of discriminatory practices against ethnic minority groups. Therefore, the discriminatory practices found in Myanmar produce profoundly negative impacts on rights to citizenship and the associated rights to education and employment services from the government. The negative consequences of the citizenship issue are based on the inequality between full citizen and legal citizen. According to this research, the inequality has denied social rights such as education, employment and land rights.

This study demonstrates two distinct forms of discriminatory practices: direct and indirect discrimination. The definition of direct discrimination means to treat someone unfavorably because of protected attributes or grounds. Direct discrimination characterizes the race, religion and ethnicity of the minority group. It includes the declining protection of both the group and individual, denying the rights and benefits, allowing opposing terms and conditions as unprotected characteristics. The definition of indirect discrimination happens when a requirement (or rule) that appears to be neutral and the same for everyone in fact has the effect of disadvantaging someone because they have an attribute covered by the Act. The effect has to be unreasonable. Indirect discrimination arises from an organization's practices, policies or procedures. There is no objective justification defense for cases through a legitimate purpose. The causes of discrimination are deep-rooted in the Burmanization process in history, the most rigid scrutinizing process in the implementation of the law, and the unscheduled

standards of reviewing of citizenship application. Therefore, the discrimination impact seriously disadvantages stateless and ethnic people, inequality of rights to the ethnic minority, denial of fundamental rights and fragility in the legislative and administrative system, as well as creating unstable political problems. The discriminatory system classifies different categories in scrutinizing the processes for such bifurcated citizenship, i. e. , associate citizenship and naturalized citizenship. Administrative violence occurs when the classification of citizens is done by ways of arbitrary decisions, lack of any appeal defense or complaints procedures for applicants, and lack of constitutionality and legality of the guiding provisions. The administrative violence links to the inflexibility of application procedures and steps, and to the limited rule to include citizens into public institutions. The painful institutional procedure places the burden of proof as pressure on claimants to gain citizenship, unavailable official support or services, corruption, and inaccessibility for its claimants. A framework for understanding this enigmatic public institution is needed to reveal improper management of civic documentation or registration, unnecessary steps and abnormal due processing time, as well as limited public information to applicants. The administrative violence creates threats, violence, and constraints to the ethnic minority groups, the stateless, and internally-displaced persons especially in the conflict areas. The absence of citizenship brings grave consequences or further problems in education, employment, and land ownership.

2. Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are the following:

- (a) To examine how the existing 1982 Citizenship Law has caused barriers to access of citizenship rights of minority groups in Myanmar.
- (b) To investigate how the classification of citizenship has affected the accessibility to social rights of ethnic minority groups in Myanmar.

3. Methodology and Methods

The research methodology applied includes the collection of qualitative data from individual interviews, published data, and reports. The data in this research has been validated via interviews and documentation analysis. The research used a qualitative research methodology and selection criteria for the interviewees, which determined in-depth interviews with the candidates who were as follows: (a) one regional officer and one township-level officer interviewed from the Ministry Of Immigration and Population (MoLIP) who have professional experience through their MOLIP employment, while directly working in the subject and service of issuing legal documentation including National Identity Card, birth certificates and household registrations forms; and (b) different types of citizenship citizens: nine selected persons who were of working-age and who held the different categories of citizenship card. Three persons under each card category were interviewed.

3.1 Study Area

The research area is focused on Kayah State, which is one of the most ethnically diverse states in the Union of Myanmar. The research site focused on two ethnic villages, in a township that is currently under the control of an ethnic armed organization (EAO) and not the state authorities. The reason for choosing this site was that different types of citizens could be found among the youth population. The chosen key informants were the following: one regional-level MoLIP representative, and one township-level MoLIP representative which is the legally-mandated Ministry holding the 1982 Citizenship Law for the Union. In relation to these interviewees, the regional and township offices were located in Kayah State, in keeping with the research interest to further explore the impact of the 1982 Citizenship Law in a diversity of geographical locations.

3.2 Data Analysis

Regarding the data analysis plan, five steps were taken in terms of a process of noticing, collecting and analyzing data; documenting of this data; organizing and categorizing the data into concepts. During the process, the analyzing of data was done systematically in order to record the findings as conducted in interviews with targeted interviewees and key informants. The study was done to explore the situations found under the 1982 Citizenship law in Myanmar and illustrates the discriminatory practices as well as the social and legal protection needs for the ethnic minority groups found in the Union.

4. Discussion and Findings

4.1 Differences between Majority and Minority Groups in Myanmar

The differences between majority and minority rules govern admittance to citizenship. The main source of citizenship policies is national identity. National identity precisely links inclusive citizenship rules that protect the right of citizenship to immigrants with a historically formed civic and territorial accepting of the nation and citizenship rules that exclude immigrants while including co-ethnics. The law defines the “national races” that settled in the territory of Myanmar, and descendants are eligible for full citizenship. The Lisu ethnic is recognized as a “native,” or national, race. The officially recognized ethnic and “minority” or “group” rights, as well as the ethnicity and racial identity, are important considerations for the multi-ethnic country. However, Myanmar as multi-ethnic fails to accommodate ethnicity of those living in conflict areas. The long-lasting ethnic conflict remains unresolved due to fact that the dominant majority rules the state. The majority is very dominant in the history (Aik, 1980), and the Burmanization policy has become embedded and has evolved into unfair institutions, as well as centralizing the structure in administration. The implementation of citizenship policy falls in line because of the application of the Burmanization process. Due to

the Burmanization policy and role of institution hegemonic expansion, the ethnic conflict has unstoppably remained. As a result of the long civil war, refugees and Internally Displaced Peoples have increased to more than one million people. The ethnic small groups are used to their way of life in isolation and are not welcomed by the State.

4.2 Citizenship and Related Discrimination

Through the collected data from nine participants, the categories of citizenship phenomenon become more obvious. This phenomenon and its related discriminatory situation influence their citizenship rights and cause the problem on the fulfillment of social rights of the ethnic minority. Using the notion of rights to citizenship, the minority cannot claim their rights to education, employment and land ownership. They are not aware of their rights. Lacking the awareness of their rights, the citizenship law and implementation barriers to receiving citizenship rights include slow implementation, and ignorance of the law by government officials as far as the minority are concerned. The government has discriminated against ethnic minority for the reason of documentation. The following interviews with Respondents A and B illustrate the issues members of these minorities face. "I have no evidence to prove that I live inside the country. I come from border area as an immigrant. I requested a recommendation letter from the village administrator for the proof of residence. I submitted necessary proof documents to DOIP. But the DOIP staff did not trust and delayed the issuance of citizen card. The Government did not make any particular effort to help in the process." Respondent B observed that "Burma is a majority group and the remaining seven groups are the minorities in Myanmar. There is a lack of discipline in the administration of government. Local government or township officers are not delegated to issue card for any type of citizen. If the ethnic group in the conflict area submitted the applications, DOIP repressed for many reasons".

The two respondents described that differences come from the area and history of time in Myanmar. Respondent A has lived for many years in Aik San village of Kayah state. "My parents and grandparents hold three-fold National Registration Card since 1947. The grandparents and parents belong to an indigenous race. The address and name of ethnicity are described in detail in the three-fold card. The ethnic name is mentioned as ethnic minority of 'Lisu'. The ethnic name and address must be filled in the application form in detail. I can prove the family history and birth registration in the application process. The staff did not believe the resident address and history of family." Respondent D explained that "I filled the forms in township immigration office for application. I filled Buddhist as my religion in the form. Staff suspected my ethnicity and residential area. I do not come from Burma racial background. My ancestors had lived in the remote and hilly region. The procedure identified that a person born of parent who holds a citizen and 135 minorities are created in the official announcement from state. I live in the hilly region and belong to Lisu ethnic group. The staff do not want to scrutinize family history and race in the ethnic area. The service delivery could not reach there and control over the other ethnic groups in hilly region. The processing time to receive my citizenship card was two years.

Another two respondents expressed that they were born inside Myanmar, but their grandmother and father lived near a border area. Their grandmother and father migrated from a border area. But they need to show the family history and documents that are proof of living inside the country as resident. Family history is required to be presented along with the application of the national registration card. Even though they tried to apply for the national registration card, their parental status is regarded as mixed blood and other religions. Therefore, the government discriminated against blood and non-native or immigrants in Myanmar.

4.3 Discriminatory Practices

The discrimination is based on blood and religion. The religion of rural communities is Christian and also other communities are Islamic, Nepalese and Hindu. The majority of people are Buddhists. Practitioners of the Buddhist religion number 80 percent in Myanmar (South & Lall, 2018, p. 188). The government has neglected other religions and cultures of the minority groups. The Buddhist community is dominant in Myanmar. Respondent F has painted an interesting picture of views on religions across Myanmar. “My mother is a Burmar Buddhist and my father is a Lisu Christian from Kayah state. I am a Christian. The immigration officer filed the record as Buddhist. My card recorded as a Lisu Buddhist. I requested to change as Lisu Christian, but the immigration officer announced that “we cannot identify either Buddhist or Christian.” The immigration officer neglected the religion identity for me. The similar case happened in Lisu area at Shan and Kayah state.”

The six respondents mentioned the difference comes from the ethnicity. These candidates are from one of the sub-groups of ethnic minorities and have lived for many years in Myanmar. The one of the Respondent B said that “I am a pink card holder. I am ethnically Lisu, living in Kayah state. Lisu ethnic group is a very small group and recognized as a Kachin sub-group. Kachin is the majority of ethnic groups and is constituted by eleven ethnic small groups. The Lisu ethnic group belong to a certain Kachin majority. Kachin is a very dominant group in politics in the northern area of Myanmar where natural resources are rich. The dominant group controlled the small ethnic groups in political and economic distribution. Again, I have seen the discrimination on social service provision as well.”

The 30-year-old Respondent E from Aik San village explained discriminatory travel restrictions in her area: “Over the last 10 years, the local authority imposed strict restriction on our movement. Our village was controlled by the military government. We used to travel

almost everywhere with a local travel pass from the village leader. We could not leave our village without permission from the local security office. It all depends on their respective commanders. In application of permission, we were required to show the citizenship card. If someone does not have citizenship card, he or she could not go out of the village. To go to town, we must get a local travel pass from local security office and pay 500 Kyat for the form and to get signature on it. I must bring the travel pass and citizenship card for travelling. If there is no citizenship card in hand, we could not go outside of the village.” The military government intended to take control in ethnic area during the conflict. Therefore, the local villagers are unable to travel, and their citizenship applications were delayed. The local communities stayed within the limits of their towns and villages in Kayah state. The limitation has caused the discrimination of the local communities experiencing the historical violence.

The mixed- blood category is one of the discriminatory practices in citizenship application. The two respondents highlighted the mixed-blood citizens who are facing the difficulty due to discriminatory practices: “Lisu ethnic group is one of the ethnic groups in China and Thailand. Dating to dynastic time, Chinese migrants arrived and lived in Myanmar from neighboring Yunnan province as traders. The government recognized Lisu ethnic group. One side of my grandfather’s hold the foreign registration card since 1949. My grandmother holds the pink card. My father was mixed with Lisu and Chinese. The family history must describe race, religion and ethnic name in application. The township officer declined to check mixed-blood applicants at township level. Then the township officer handed over my application to the regional level officer for approval. The process was delayed and they discriminated against mixed-blood persons in approval process. The institution finally issued blue card or naturalized citizen. The verification process took too long”. The institution finally issued blue card or naturalized citizen. The blue card holder or naturalized citizen is a second-class position within the village. The 1982 Citizenship Law is also discriminatory toward the vast majority of the

Indian and Chinese population in Myanmar. The 1982 Citizenship Law recognized ethnic group and identity, but the discrimination of law is on religion, race, and blood that affect the legal consciousness for the ethnic minority.

4.4 Barriers to Citizenship Application

The main barrier is that there is corruption involved in the citizenship application process. The township officer requires applicants to present the documents or forms. The officer needs to check the documents for completion. The township staff is mainly responsible to check and verify for further processing. Sometimes they officially decline the applicants based on racial and religious background. Some officials want to obtain the extra money from the applicants. The bribery tends to drive the administration. In addition, the government officials are unwilling to go to the conflict-affected areas. In many ways the institutional service prevents many ethnic people from applying for household certificate, birth certificate and ID card. The government officials ask unofficial fees or demand additional documents that are not legally required in the application. The general corruption includes having to offer unofficial money to staff of MoLIP at different levels. The applicant must pay form fees in all registrations and ID card application. Township offices are unable to provide the full support of documents and forms to all citizens. The applicants have to buy the form in township and regional offices. The government cannot provide documents and forms for the application for free.

In addition to the corrupt practices, there is little or no budget allocation from the central and state government. The township office does not receive the sufficient budget for distribution of documents and forms to citizens for application. The budget allocation is the crucial situation in implementation of the law. All interviewed candidates faced the same issue of bribery to institutional staff. The associate and naturalized citizens have paid the form fees for the legal citizenship, but they also had to bribe the officials to get their ID card. The staff

implicitly sell the forms that are unofficial to get income. Similarly, the staff are forced to pay the money for the birth registration, death registration and household registration. Staff demand the extra money for the delivery service for submitting the documents from the township to the regional office. Likewise, the ethnic people lack understanding of the importance of registration and are not aware of the process. The documentation is legally needed to register the birth, household registration in the process. The process is often difficult to be approved and delayed in the decision making. The township and regional officers determine associate and naturalized application process. This causes a failure in the registration process and encourages bribery, especially to ethnic minorities, which in turn drives the lack of full citizenship.

A second barrier is language. Myanmar is a multi-cultural and multi-lingual country. The official language is Burmese, but many ethnic people do not understand the Burmese language. Burmese dominates in the central government, and therefore ethnic minorities have gradually lost their rights while they maintained their national identities. And then regarding the problem of ethnic identity in Myanmar, there are some unavoidable situations because General Ne Win, the dictator and the real author of the Burma Citizenship Law of 1982, which created three classes of citizen and denied citizenship to minority groups, openly declared that only pure blood should be called nationals of Burma. "Burman" refers to the major ethnic group, and "Burmese" refers to all citizens of Burma as well as the name of the language spoken by Burmans (Myint Thein, 2012). The Respondent A and D described, "We speak my ethnic language. Most of our villagers do not know how to speak Burmar language. During the application process, the village leader helped to translate for communication. The township staff rescheduled the appointment 3 or 4 times. The ethnic communities have faced the difficulty to communicate many times at township level office." Thus, one of the problems is

communication with institutional staff in the application. The ethnicity and cultural identity is a key component of correctness.

Yet a third barrier stemming from the language obstacle is the dissemination of public information by the government. The township office publicizes the type of citizenship application procedures. As a consequence, ethnic people could not read any announcement or fill in the form from the office. Respondent G described that “The official process provides the public information in billboard in Burmese language. But I couldn’t read this public information. The government’s official information should be provided in ethnic language”. The issue with the application process is that many ethnic people lack the understanding of language and education. It is the importance of citizenship during the registration of the birth certificate and household registration especially, in the ethnic region. The lack of education and language remains to be the barrier for applying for citizenship. The official language is the “Myanmar” language in the government service in ethnic areas. Most of the ethnic people use their own language and have little education. It is challenging for the ethnic community to access education in conflict-affected areas. With regard to education and ethnic language use, the ethnic minorities do not reach out to get applications. The lack of education prevents the ethnic minority people who have citizenship in rural and conflict-affected area. The government service fails to reach the minority area. Without education, the hill tribes have little chance of obtaining legal documents, education, and employment and also breaking the series of armed conflict in which many of their families are trapped.

There are also difficulties in accessibility of citizenship information in the application. The accessibility is the significant obstacle to reach citizenship verification process. The main barrier is logistical: the far distance to reach the place of application. Most of the villager communities could not reach township offices from villages especially in the hilly regions. Some

rural villages had no accessible roads in earlier times. Military troops blocked all accessible roads for security reasons. Respondent G and H stated that “We live in a very far place and we are afraid of the military. The army and regional authorities controlled through the checkpoints in the conflict area. When we went to the immigration office, local authorities did not allow to go outside the village for security reasons. Our villagers did not receive the government service and support for many years.” The army and ethnic armed group controlled the village development in conflict-affected areas. Therefore, accessibility is a critical fact in the enjoyment of rights of the citizens overdue in the application process. The obligation of government is a critical role for providing citizenship with the full support of accessibility.

4.5 Denial of Social and Economic Rights Without Citizenship

In this study, all respondents expressed receiving different levels of social rights. This study focuses on social rights, particularly on education, employment and land rights. For the right to education, all candidates of pink, green and blue holders have equal opportunities in access to education. For the rights to employment, the pink card holders enjoy full opportunities in employment rights and conditions in government service departments. The green and blue card holders have different privileges based on citizenship category. This can also be seen when looking at the advertisement of vacancies for government jobs. The first point of announcement states that the “applicant must be a citizen of Myanmar.” The lack of citizenship card prevents many from finding a job in a government service department. A 30-year-old woman Respondent D who is a green card holder of associate citizenship noted, “I graduated and am a degree holder of a Bachelor of Arts (Myanmar). After my graduation, I tried to apply to the Education College at Taunggyi University. I submitted my application to the Education College. My dream was over when I received the reply from Education College. The response letter stated that my application was unacceptable on account of my holding

associate citizenship in Myanmar. I understood that there is no opportunity to get a job in a government department and I feel very sad for my career and my life.”

The government policy is restrictive and applies to associate citizens and naturalized citizens accordingly; thus, internal social policy has cemented inequality between citizen and associate citizen or naturalized citizen. The situation has resulted in the denial of the right to employment for associate and naturalized citizens in government service units. The entire administration procedure is executed with the systematic bureaucracy in controlling ethnic minority groups for the reason of local security concerns. The post-conflict violence remains relative to administration practices in this study. In the research areas where the conflict has been long-lasting, the local government is formed by the general administrative department, police, army and the various ministries. The security is controlled by the army and police, and marginalized communities live in conflict areas controlled by the army. The army and local authorities set up the checkpoints for incoming and outgoing people to and from these areas, and there is no freedom of movement at that time. Respondent G Candidate seven described the experience: “I passed two checkpoints when I went to the urban area. The local authorities, police and army examined citizenship cards for every single trip. At the checkpoint, ID cards must be shown. The authorities and army restrict movement from one place to another in the conflict-affected area. If there was no ID card, nobody could go outside of their village and thus no freedom of movement. The ethnic minority communities do not receive any assistance from the state government especially in health and education in conflict areas. Our villagers have raised the ID card problem with ethnic leaders and local heads of political parties. In the present situation, there is not much assistance for acquiring ID cards and the local authority does not pay attention to our communities in Kayah state.”

4.6 Lack of Data Availability

The current institutional structure has seven departments under the MoLIP. The citizenship card-issuing process is handled by the Department of National Registration and Citizenship. The Department of Population and the Department of Immigration are under the same umbrella of MoLIP. The Department of Population retains all population data from state and region. The personal history data, household member list, the individual cases with lost or damaged or renewed records and identity card registration records must be listed and recorded under age 12. The 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Law and the 1983 Procedures are based on examination of the records and registration system. The Citizenship Securitization Process is conducted upon birth and death registration. The township officer said that “The main task is providing citizenship services at the township level. The data-sharing system is very weak among different departments. The township office did not receive the proper record system of birth registration. The census population is not reliable to use in the township, state and region in the conflict areas. There is no population data for internal migrants.” The main gap is the population data collection for IDPs, returnees, and the small group of ethnic minorities and orphans.

The township office is at the lowest level of authority and responsible for approving Associate Citizenship and Naturalized Citizenship. The township officer and regional officer said, “We do not want to delay in the approval process. We have no clear guideline and delegation of authority and systematic record. The township office obtains the applicant of Associate Citizenship Scrutiny or Naturalized Citizenship applicant; the office has been checked for completeness of documentation. But we have insufficient data of personal history and registration records for IDPs and small ethnic minority.” Thus, the township office has the limitation of authority to approve in ACSC or NCSC cases. The central body prevents or rejects ethnic minorities from acquisition of citizenship under the centralized registration procedure.

The institutional structure is centralized as bureaucracy. The small ethnic minority groups lack of awareness of the registration procedures. Ethnic minority groups struggle to acquire citizenship through a complicated, non-transparent procedure and law, paperwork on documentation and bureaucracy. The Department of Population and Department of Immigration did not register and document people in the conflict areas. These two departments have obligation to register all children, IDPs and returnees in post-conflict areas. The necessary documentation and registration are to prove their citizenship eligibility. The acknowledgement of origin is important to those who are living in conflict areas. The necessary documentation is needed for undocumented people.

Another factor that delegitimizes the claim of citizenship for some minority ethnic groups and IDPs is also the absence of transparency and visibility in population data, as access to data respectively recorded or required by the administration is a key part of the way that naturalization is handled. For instance, there is no systematic counting of births and deaths amongst the general population. The Township officer said, "I started five years ago as a Township officer in Kayah state. The Department of Immigration and Population provides the services to communities in many areas. So the department should have records and documents of history for the IDPs and internal migrant communities or undocumented migrants. As a rule, naturalized and associate citizens are required to show and prove residential status and family history." The candidates for associate and naturalized citizenship are originally from remote areas, but these associated and naturalized citizens lack key documents such as household lists and birth certificates. As a result, they are moving around the region because of conflict, and the citizenship rights for associate and naturalized citizens are certainly degraded.

Another cause treated separately with quite a lot of opacity is conflict. The files of “Lisu” are dealt with by the Central Body for the affairs of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Established by the 1989 procedures, the body is responsible for collecting proof and presumption of origin, to identify original nationality. There is fundamental misalignment between “nationality,” the official state recognition, and origin referred from stated documents. The evidence of origin may be witness-based and emotionally biased. With basic information gathered from local authorities, some ethnic Lisu are regarded as second-class citizens. The state government formally acknowledges attributes of origin, but the formal claim is to drop pure citizenship. For example, when the state government opened to register vehicle licenses, second-class citizens were declined to register to get the legal document on the basis of “nationality.” The government authority acknowledges a status but rejects to fill with the name as illegal resident or IDP, imposing a contested identity through administrative means, while destructively buying time.

4.5 Administrative Violence

Administrative violence is stigmatizing and symbolic in that the state has complete power and full control in ethnic areas. The government service is absent in conflict areas, which is compounded by discrimination against race and religion. Moreover, implementation of the 1982 Citizenship Law is not strong enough to cover the sub-groups of minorities. The situation is facing a dangerous political, social and economic condition for sub-ethnic groups and mixed-blood individuals in Myanmar. Thus, domestic laws are the important part to protect citizens from exploitation by doing worst forms. Administrative violence has succeeded armed violence as it relates to the bureaucratic rules and regulations. Administrative rule has set out to control the direct violence of freedom of movement to ethnic communities in the post-conflict areas.

4.6 Implementation of the Law in Practice

Analyzing the application process of a registration card when implementing the law from the government shows the effect and benefit of native citizenship and legal citizenship. The native citizen as eight national majorities who are settled in the territory of Myanmar since 1823 and their descendants. The legal citizens who are not nationals qualify to become Myanmar citizens according to legal framework. There are two types of legal citizen categories such as Associate Citizen and Naturalized Citizen. The exclusionary legal structure and instrument service to systematically deny in claiming citizenship and also serve as the fundamental mistreatment. All of the candidates of pink, green and blue cards unanimously answered that “the Government does not follow rules and regulations and the law is not properly implemented.” Therefore, this research divides the three groups of citizens not by their card color, but rather according to the answers that they gave in response to the question on the different conditions of the application process.

The implementation of law seems unable to deliver an efficient approval process especially in the township and regional offices. The MoLIP is legally responsible in the governance structure. However, in reality, it is difficult to receive cards as the result of poor governance, and lack of responsibility by the MoLIP. The final check and approval authority are making the decision from the central body. The service provision of MoLIP is due diligence in implementation. All in all, the poor governance and lack of responsibility by MoLIP result in inefficiency in the citizenship verification process.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The research findings highlight the interaction of historical and geographical conditions that contribute to how law, society and space relate to produce ethnic marginalization in citizenship spaces. The national law and historical compound lead to the legal vulnerability of the minority. The diversity of the minority population in Myanmar and stereotypes signaled

are an indication of how social problems associated with co-ethnics can affect the safety of the rest. There is no adequate safeguard to prevent sub-groups of ethnic minorities from statelessness in the context of violence, and the deprivation of nationality. However, promoting access to personal documentation and access to birth registration is another straightforward and highly effective measure that can help to prevent statelessness. The registration of birth guarantees for the child's legal identity and provides official recognition of a child's date and place of birth as well as parentage. These are vital facts in determining the position of the ethnic children and communities under applicable nationality law; thus, birth registration can help to avoid nationality dispute and social inequality.

The Myanmar government should amend or repeal its Citizenship laws in order to make them in line with international standards. The law-makers should identify the full protection approach for all citizens. The law must make sure the protection of citizenship rights in all legal provision and decisions concerning citizenship are without any discrimination.

As for the administrative institution, the major gap is to identify the systematic record-keeping. The institution requires to monitor the process and conduct of the regular review internally and externally. Any decision to deny citizenship must be properly motivated and written reasons for such a decision should be given and communicated in a language that the applicant for citizenship understands. A person denied citizenship should be entitled to appeal alongside such a decision, and that appeal be heard by an independent and impartial review body. The power to maintain citizenship should be reviewed to ensure that an individual cannot be arbitrarily deprived of his or her citizenship.

The state obligations should support the public information about the birth registration awareness information and mobile registration team to individuals and communities who are

far away from the government services. The barrier requires a reduction in the cost set at the reasonable rate, and more convenient access centers need to be located within a reasonable distance. "One-Stop Service" should have an activity through which the MOLIP, with assistance from International Non-governmental Organization (INGO), travels to different village tracts and provides information and the Citizenship Scrutiny Card to eligible villagers. The "One-Stop Service" allows villagers to have their Citizenship Scrutiny Card free of charge and on the day of the application. The identification card system should provide a reliable source of information and public awareness through the media and public information campaigns. The official information should be provided as a piece of evidence for minimum basic steps and reduce the unnecessary steps from the state. Myanmar is legally obliged to take action to promote and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction of race, language and religion. Discrimination is being applied in every aspect of human rights.

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Livelihood Trainings for Kachin IDPs: Challenges, Opportunities and Expectations of Beneficiaries

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Abstract

In June 2011, over 100,000 of the population have been displaced internally in many towns within Kachin State, Myanmar. Starting from 2015, some agencies started providing livelihood related activity services for IDPs population in many campsites. The research is focusing on the Kachin Internally Displaced Persons' livelihood activities services which have been promoting with a variety of supporting activities from many humanitarian agencies.

There are four major objectives to learn better understand on IDPs' livelihood situation from the research findings. They are as follow; 1) To understand better the existing livelihood activities of IDPs in Kachin State. 2) To analyze whether the training program provided by humanitarian and development agencies applicable IDPs to pursue better livelihood opportunity in the future. 3) To examine the adoption and application of training IDPs received and their livelihood impacts.

Drawing on a qualitative research approach, this research examined two most effective livelihood training activities and two less successful livelihood training activities which helping IDPs to promote their income. The supporting livelihood activities give opportunities for IDPs to learn new skills through livelihood training. Majority of provided activities were business related ones which were different from the IDP experienced in their home villages. IDPs lost assets during the conflict and they need livelihood skill training as well as a financial grant to

start making income for betterment in the future. This paper also describes the possible recommendation for long term goal achievement of livelihood promoting activities. The participation for both service providers and recipients in designing the livelihood program is an essential need for the most relevant service in the long-term process. The establishment of coordination among state holders, international and local organization to identify the proper solutions for IDP livelihood improvement because each agency opposed different resources which need to be allocated in the right ways. The policy-making related to IDP issues need to invite the participation of the local government. The livelihood supporting training design needed to set as an adjustable program to apply in promoting the capacity of IDPs through livelihood promoting training services.

Keyword: Livelihood Training, Kachin

1. Introduction

The thesis examines the income generating livelihood training program for Internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Kachin State, Myanmar. Since June 2011, internal conflict in Kachin State, over 100,000 of population lost their properties, assets, land plots and any other resources to help them make a living. They belong to highland areas where livelihood activities were different from the city life style now where, they are being accommodate. Internally Displaced persons (IDPs) have been living in the camps almost eight years in June 2019. The camp management restricted rule for IDPs movement outside the camp areas for the security purpose and other protection issues and mine risks. However, some adult IDPs are getting daily available labor job opportunities in the local areas where they are being hosted. The maximum daily payment rate is in between 5000 to 6000 Myanmar Kyats. It is not available regularly and the available jobs based on the seasons agricultural working fields. During displacement in the camp, all basic needs such as shelters, water, food and non- food items have been assisting by humanitarian agencies. In generally, every Kachin displaced households have big family sizes and parents encountered financial difficulty to cover education fees for their children, health care and other family expenses. A long period of displacement, some adult IDPs started receiving different type of training activities opportunities in order to help them learn skills, knowledge under the project of generating income for individual household for the betterment of financial support in the future. The research is exploring on assisted livelihood activities opportunities for IDPs and figured out the perceptions of service recipients who participated in the training program. Both the service providers and beneficiaries have their concerns, expectations and lessons learn during program implementing regarding with the advancement of the program in the future. The thesis will be concluded with the appropriate

recommendations for the future long-term goal achievement of livelihood program which shape the sustainable livelihood for beneficiaries.

2. Methodology

Field Work in Kachin: Qualitative interview were conducted in Bhamo and Momauk townships, Kachin State, Myanmar for three weeks from 9th April to 9 May 2019. The researcher collected information through informal discussion with IDP community members in order to identify the most experiences individual beneficiaries and other IDP who engaged with livelihood related activities in the camp. Afterward getting recommendation informal discussion, the research figured out that two the most successful livelihood training activities and two less successful livelihood training activities which have been provided from the agencies. Those activities were identified as tailoring, carpentry, soap making and bamboo chair making training.

3. Conceptual

In the concept of Kachin IDPs received livelihood activities assistance by agencies under the objectives of the long-term goal of achievement in the program. There is one approach called Strength Based Approach which have been applying in many development agencies lately in worldwide. **Strength- Based Approach (SBA) or Asset- Based Approach (ABA)** defines assisting individual person or community to identify their own ability, skill, knowledge and talent in making self- decision for betterment in life (Lietz, 2009). ABA was created in late 1980s to early 1990s, in the building up the development of organizations, social work, community development, psychology and health program working field (Winterford, 2013). At the first stage application of SBA or ABA help humanitarians and development agencies in setting up the foundation of confidence for individual and communities to grow their capacity more in pursuing better changes in long run (Moten,1999). SBA or ABA encourage people to become

more independence and motivation for pursuing their career choices because it brings positive feeling for the people which urges them to be creative in seeking positive change (Saleebey, 2009). As this approach is more suitable for the long-term improvement in the development implementation which gaining the sustain change after many years of planning (Winterford,2013).

Having received the livelihood assistances, some IDPs learn new skills, knowledge and idea by getting involved in the livelihood activities as a greatest opportunity while some other IDPs are working outside the camps for livelihood opportunities on their own way. Among the livelihood activities service beneficiaries, some have the capacity to take advantages those chance to improve their condition in pursuing better livelihood situation. They started applying learnt knowledge in daily life and confidence to run the self-help small business activities to generate own income. However, some participants fail to apply those knowledges for many reasons during displacement condition. Unlike the success IDPs group, they might face some difficulties barriers which made them less confidence to seek for the way to make a living for betterment of their livelihood condition. It is worth to find out unknown pull and push factors which cause two different out comes from the same livelihood activities program among the beneficiaries. There are some opportunities which individual felt about the livelihood activities. They came from divest background, literacy levels, knowledge, skills and capacity to learn the same thing in different understanding. Their different perceptions on the livelihood activities shape them to see the challenges as difficult obstacles to give up or believe as a crucial opportunity to take it for improving live with what they have been offered. All those beneficiaries' perceptions on the livelihood activities such as opportunities, challenges and expectations need to be examined by the agencies. The agencies also learning the idea on how to make the better improvement for the upcoming program to be more comprehensive way combine with the feedback from the beneficiaries. Both the service providers and beneficiaries

have their concerns, expectations and lessons learned during program implementation regarding with the advancement of the program. Their feedback and perceptions need to be examined for a comprehensive recommendation to plan for the livelihood program which heading to a long-term goal achievement for IDPs in Kachin State.

4. Existing Livelihood Activities

In displacement period, around 9000- 10000 IDP population in Momauk and Bhamo townships seek for available income activities in hosted local residences (UNOCHA,2018). The collected data shows that during the period of displacement IDP possess three pillars of options as pathways for finding regular income by individual IDPs.

Livelihood training: The study showed that the livelihood training services programs initiated around 2013 and in 2015 significantly increases number of agencies supported livelihood trainings for IDPs in Momauk and Bhamo areas. Regarding with the training services, the assistance providers intended to give the beneficiary chances to learn new skill and provided money to generate income as well. Livelihood supporting agencies offered many trainings to different types of livelihood activities. Agencies hired trainers to support in training individual IDPs in order to help them get regular income. There are many kinds of livelihood assistances existing for IDPs camp such as Soap making, food preservation, snack making, plastic baskets, knitting, weaving traditional pattern textile, growing mushroom, growing vegetable, tailoring, carpentry, cement brick making, copper fencing, copper ropes, bamboo chairs, fishing nets, beauty salon and motorbike fixing. The training duration is ranking from days, months, years based on the different the type of training requirements. Respondent claimed that majority training took only short time and they do not feel confidence to carry on applying those skills. However, some training had been conducted formally to select IDPs and

assisted start-up financial package after the training by the agencies for IDPs living in Momauk and Bhamo townships.

Self-initiated income activities: small amount of financial assisted called business start-up assistance can be requested from agencies by every IDP. This aid targeted for the individual IDPs who want to start small business and a business entrepreneur as stepping stone to earn regular income. The agencies accept proposal from different IDP applicants for livelihood activities. The financial package for each activity is limited along with budget availability. According to the requirements of service providers, firstly every client need to submit the proposed small business to the respective agencies. It is one of the characterizes for livelihood program assisting agencies to check the detail before they provided cash, detail calculation the cost and detail item list in the proposal attached in the application. Some are running multiple goods selling centers, snack shops, hair salon center, motorbike fixing shop, noodle shop, pig raising, cement bricking producing, copper fencing producing, grocery shops, raising livestock in the camp sites or in the local residence areas. The study shows that two third of IDPs households from every camp requested proposal for pig raising activities especially home-stay female IDPs. They expect to take part time work as feeding pigs in the camp. They received some amount of grant and spend them to buy pigs, construct pig house and food to feed pigs for 6 months.

Casual works in local residences: In average, almost 80 percent of males individual IDPs are seeking for the daily available payment job outside the camps while. Some of them went to China- Myanmar border area where they can work on the plantation fields for a couple months and bring back their labor fees to support their family needs. Working in the plantation field is very dangerous but this is the only easily available jobs for uneducated IDPs. Sometimes, they have to compete with the local labors in the working field because there are many other workers from the lower part of Myanmar. The daily random labor works which is available

outside the camps location. IDPs looked that kinds of jobs by themselves and through social network, peer job seekers and brokers. Some being temporary migrated inside china for the sack of job opportunities. The geography proximity with China- Myanmar border town areas, small numbers of IDPs taking daily labor works inside china because the area is closed to China- Myanmar border town. In average one or two adults from every IDPs households are getting daily labor work such as cleaning bushes and trees in the plantation fields, daily job available higher than other seasons. Harvesting and colleting crops in the farmland as seasonal available daily labor works. The average labor wage is raking from 5000 to 6000 Myanmar kyats maximum equal to (5 Dollars) per day regardless of type of working field.

5. Most Successful and Less Successful Livelihood Trainings

According to the recommendations collected from key informant interview and informal conversations, findings there are two most relevant livelihood trainings and two least useful training among training opportunities. During individual interviews, each respondent pointed out divert reasons and perspectives point of views on the available training opportunities. Those are tailoring trainings and carpentry livelihood activities. The researcher interviewed two tailors and two carpenters' successful beneficiaries during the field work.

Successful livelihood activities: Among many livelihood training types tailoring and carpentry trainings were identified by research respondents as the most applicable ones for participants. Those two skills show potential positive outcomes for trained IDPs to earn regular income in a long run. Since 2015 after five years of displacement, many kinds of livelihood vocational trainings have been provided for different IDPs. There are two types of most applicable livelihood activities tailoring and carpentry from the recommendation of key informants' interviews. The researcher interviewed with four successful beneficiaries, two female tailors and two male carpenters. IDPs have learned these new skills. The training was

provided by the livelihood promoting agencies for individual IDPs. Regarding with the tailoring training, the agencies supported training cost, sewing machines, needed raw materials such as cloths, fabrics, measurements, tailoring tools and other accessories during the training. The tailoring training period lasted for three months for basic tailoring skill and three more months for advanced skill. In average every Kachin IDP house hold has at least five family members. All these big families are sharing available small shelters. In really, sewing activities need a broad space to make clothes. However, one tailor find space to run sewing clothes activities inside her own small shelters by the time learning the basic level of tailoring training. Both of the respondents were very eager to practice and apply their new skill as they were very interested in sewing. Receiving advanced tailoring training, they recruited as trainers by the agencies in order to teach new learners tailoring. During their free time, they find time making clothes regularly to supply their customers in local areas, neighboring IDPs, relatives from other areas and people from other towns as well. Both of them are supporting financial needs for the family expenses especially for the cost of education, food, health care and other social expenses. They are training many new generations since 2015 until current time and encouraging some other uneducated female IDPs to learn tailoring knowledge. One interview respondent claimed that, *“Several times practices are need to become a professional tailor.”* *“IDP might not become rich person immediately but this tailoring knowledge help a lot for my family daily survival”.* (Seng Nan, 2019)

Another mostly recognized as a successful livelihood training activity is carpentry work for male IDPs which identified from very different key informants during interview. They learn systematically the carpentry skill in the camp through on job training by participating in shelters building activity within the camp. Some already familiar with carpentry work since they were very young in the village, they learn basic knowledge on carpentry. Afterward receiving carpentry training, they have been provided start- up financial support and they founded in to

carpentry group with four or five members. The group spend financial assisted budget to buy all needed carpentry equipment, machineries and other working used supporting tools. Normally, humanitarian agencies provided budget to hire construction company for building shelters for IDPs in the camps. Now, those carpentry groups are getting construction work contract with service providers for new shelters construction works and they received daily labor fee after they accomplished their works. The contract payment usually divided into five shares among the members. The duration of construction work depends on the type of contract and numbers of shelter lines to undertake. It took a month to a few months to accomplish one contract. It was the regular income for the group members and save financial cost for regular maintaining equipment as well as expense to buy new tools in the future. Those activities are really need for the communities where the demand raising from local regular customers. They are providing chances for new learners by accepting them in the team to work together in order to teach them practically all the basic carpentry works in the construction field. Those trainers are planning to apply skill in the future when they returning process settlement back in the village or in reintegrating in the new environment. All the carpentry groups members are supporting financially to their family members' needs. In the camp majority are relying on the monthly ration distribution and big IDP family sizes households are not easy to cover all family expense with those regular assistances.

Less successful livelihood services: Interviewed key informants identified the less successful livelihood training activities were soap making and bamboo chairs making. The researcher interviewed three respondents who participated in those two training activities. Stating from 2013, in Robert camp the big group of IDPs were provided training on soap making activities. In the training, all participants learn to produce several kinds of soaps such as soap bar, shampoo, detergent liquid, creamy types of soap products which produced from natural. All needed ingredients are sour fruits, lemon, starch, water, fragrant, glue, sticky liquid, ash

and colors. The training period was only five days to a week to learn one aspect of soap making. The agencies hired a soap making trainer and covered the training cost, all raw materials, utilities items, equipment and ingredient during the training period. They end up with making soap liquid, detergent for family consumption. The primary objective was to produce many kinds of soap products to sell out them in the market. However, soap making business need large amount of investment to set up producing a wide range of soap products. At the beginning period of training, every participant is very active and eager to make many soap products. As a result, finally, they produced large numbers of soap products in stock. Some IDPs attend soap making training for months through tutorial with trainers.

The second less successful training activities were bamboo chairs making trainings. The bamboo chairs making training was conducted in Momauk camp for every interested IDPs. The training participant selection process was not so restricted like other trainings. The trainer was also from IDP camps who have been making a living with this knowledge. Bamboo chair training offered by one self-employer who is making a living by bamboo chair making business from the Momauk KBC camp. KBC organization hired him as a trainer for bamboo chair making training for nine male IDPs. The training is simple they only need bamboos, screw drivers, hammers, spinner and knife. Nine male IDPs attended the bamboo making training for a week and none of them applying their knowledge lately. The trainer was from the camp and it lasted for one month to learn making bamboo chairs. During the training period, the KBC provided the training cost, financial support to buy raw bamboos, equipment and other training material needs. The respondent also made 5 bamboo chairs after the training for a few months. The economics strategy such as social networking and customer services needed to be linked to sell out products. Normally, the bamboo chair maker received a small amount of profit when the chairs have been sold out. Regularly, one bamboo chair only 1000 MMK equal valance with 1Dollor profit earn but the money, they invest is 2000 MMK for one bamboo chair. It took for

a while to sell the chair and get profit for chair makers. One Bamboo maker said, *“at least IDPs learn how to make natural soap for family consumption even though we fail to do soap making business”*. *“It is very safe to use for health because we only use natural raw material to make soap”*. (Daw Labang Htu Nu, 2019)

6. Recommendation and Conclusion

Receiving livelihood related trainings program is one of the available opportunities for IDPs to learn new skills in the campsites. The training is targeted to help in promoting income for individual participants after the training. Therefore, all types of trainings were expected each trainee to apply trained skills for earning a living. In displacement setting, every IDP household is in need of income for the betterment of living standard and earning their lives. The trainings were conducted in the camp sites and IDP training participants need not to travel any other places. Attended IDPs expected those skills will be useful one day in their lives even though they have difficulties to apply in this condition. They accepted the newly learn skills can help them start doing business after the training but every business needs to invest financial to make more profit. The thesis data shows that IDPs have great opportunity to build up new skill through participating in the livelihood trainings. Especially the most vulnerable group who spend most of their time staying in the camp such as adult IDPs, women IDPs with many children also have chance to attend the training to upgrade their knowledge by doing domestic households and taking care of their children in the camp. They can learn new knowledge instead of searching for available job outside the camp. They are spending valuable time for capacity improvement in the camp and they can take care of children at the same time. After the training period, trained participants fail to run small business smoothly for lacking of knowledge on business skill. There are many pull factors which intervene trained IDPs against achieving livelihood training objectives of helping the capacities of IDPs through trainings in order to help them improve regular income in the future. They have little chance to become

professional in specific field for insufficient timeframe. They have no capital and lack of capacities to manage on functioning small business in a long run.

Based on the collected data, IDPs satisfied with receiving such kinds of opportunities during displacement period while they have no other proper employment. They feel very thankful to the service providers for bringing those valuable opportunities for them during their hard time in the camp. One interview respondent said, *“receiving the one kind of skill training in the camp is one of IDPs’ benefit from the conflict, if IDP were living in the village of original they won’t have chance to learn any kind of new knowledge”*. Receiving livelihood initiating supports from agencies is one of the greatest opportunity windows for ambitious IDPs. There are many kinds of trainings provided for IDPs and those are more or less applying by the trained IDPs. During the interview one respondent stated, *“If IDPs do not have opportunities to attend different kinds of livelihood trainings, they do not know what to do during displacement period (Roi Nu, 2019).”*

When looking into the case of soap making training, many interview respondents assumed it as the less useful training among other type of training in reality. However, there is also positive outcome found out that some soap making trained IDPs learn the knowledge on making various kinds of natural soap and they are able make soap for domestic used to save family expenses. The soap manufacturing use only natural, raw materials to produce soap liquid. In this case, the program provide chance to learn new skill for participants even though trained IDPs fail to run business because of lacking financial capacity recent time. Similarly, as soap making training snacks making training also only for additional knowledge for participants IDPs. Like motorbike fixing training also giving chance to learn new skill for the training participants because after the training they are able to fix their own motorbike or getting motorbike fixer for local motorbike repair employer. Gaining one chance of learning new skill

is better than spending time for doing nothing. Some trained IDPs tried to apply their knowledge after the training to earn living.

Majority of trained participants gave a trail on running small business with new knowledge after the trainings. They make soap, run snack making business and run motorbike fixing center within the camp compound. However, they fail to carry on the business after second or third round for facing financial problems and other unexpected family problems. At first, they invested start up kit financial assistance to run proposed business. However, they have no more money left to reinvest for the next round because no profit they made from the previous investment or they used up profit for other family needs. In the end, they give up on those small business because of some difficulties. Skill training alone is not helping out trainees to get income improvement after the training. Trained participants need some capacities to deal with the business barriers along the way while they are running small business for gaining regular income.

IDPs never had experiences in running private business back in the villages. They worked in the farmland and shifting cultivation for survival in native villages. Some IDPs are uneducated and lack of knowledge in financial management skill as well. Among providing livelihood trainings, many are business-oriented trainings which needed enough amount of financial to start own business with trained skills. Currently, findings show that trained IDPs learn skills on making products and gain knowledge on new skill but they are still lacking of knowledge on carrying on the business produced products. The trainings needed to complement with some other basic business management related skill required skills in order to help trained IDPs creating better income with those skills. For instead, seeing the outcomes of soap making training activities, they produced many products in stock but they fail to find customers. In this condition, the trained IDP produced large number of soap products but they did not manage to seek local demands and market. Therefore, the products were stuck in store

room and earned no more profit from soap producing business. Regular customers networking and marketing to link with local market for individual IDP for income. The livelihood training agencies provided livelihood training courses with supported training materials. After the training, the trainees are allowed to submit the proposal for financial grant to the agencies. but they fail to provide those kinds of basic business required skill training to run small business. Apart from tailoring training, many livelihood trainings implemented only a few days long within the available livelihood implementation six months or one-year short term project plan. The short time training timelines were only introduced the activities to the beneficiaries briefly. The training attendees learn the skills within a short period but they were not confidence enough to apply those skills.

Like sewing training, needs long training time than other livelihood training activities. The successful trainees seek for the chance to extend knowledge from agencies' livelihood program activity. So that individual can learn effective knowledge to pursue professional lives for IDPs. Short term training is not effective and limited time to practice for the trail of new ability. Learning new skill take sufficient enough time till becoming a professional in specific field. The trainees need lots of practice time to become a professional in specific field in order to a better income. Therefore, the training duration needed to set up enough time to learn something effectively until they reach to the way to get regular income. Individual effort is the most essential for the better outcomes of the training regardless of training types in the sustaining development planning. Some trained IDPs borrow financial capacity from relatives and friends to run small business following their goal of running business after the training. Successful tailor mentioned how they have to find the way to overcome the difficulties in doing small business as an IDP. Therefore, the participant selection system is important to choose the most passionate persons among IDPs population about the specific type of livelihood

activities. They follow after their passion through difficulties about specific activity and put effort to reach professional level.

When looking into the livelihood related activities supporting agencies, they run project under the humanitarian funding to response for emergency needs of IDPs and agencies only pay attention on their available project duration rather than the effectiveness of beneficiaries. They focus on the accomplishment of target activities before the end of project. In a short period, all planned activities supposed to be conducted to report back to donor on time. For instead during the one livelihood project last about (6) months to one year, the agencies tried to seek for the beneficiaries to provide starter- kits (or) financial support or to conduct targeted livelihood training activities in targeted IDP camps with limited timeframe.

The research data highlighted that IDPs left behind all their belongings and live in the camps they are lacking of financial resources are one of the constraints which halt trained IDP from doing small business. IDPs lost all assets such as capital, land spaces, housing and property when they fled from their home throughout the fighting battle. They become landless persons, lacking of property, capital and only possess of their own skills which the agencies can help strengthening for the future improvement. Livelihood training providers and many agencies offer limited amount of financial supported by agencies as a starter-kit is to run a small business as they proposed plan which included budget amount. The financial supporting assistance is like a stepping stone for every individual IDP to start small business. IDPs gained chances to submit the proposal for the interested small business to start making income for the proposed clients. The ceiling price for the small business proposal price maximum 300000 MMK equal to 250 dollars for each selected participant. It is partially enough amount to invest in small business for IDP. Supported recipients spend that financial amount to run business inside the camps especially such as grocery shops, vegetable vender business, pigs raising and snacks making business.

Similarly, some IDPs requested type of trainings and after the training trained participants were allowed to submit proposal for start-up financial services. It is help out trained IDPs to start small business as a first step to invest. Those trainings and business start-up financial support are linked each other in helping committed individual IDP in many ways. The recipients need to repay back with little interests to the financial management team which have been founded by agencies in order to manage the funded financial capacity on behalf of organization. Under the guidance of supported agency IDPs financial management teams were established with accountants, cashers, team leaders, secretary and treasures who have been trained on financial related management skill. IDP from same village of original are organized in the same financial saving team as the team were organized of IDPs who belongs to the same village of original. Therefore, they can easily operate the financial activities when they return back to their village together. The saving amount and financial mechanism are expected to carry along when they return to the villages in the future. Each financial recipient was delivered financial balance and interests financial record books and that records need to hand in to financial team for regularly checking. This small grant (or) start-up financial support helps out to solve the financial difficulties for IDPs practically. One interview respondent said, “IDP *can use the supported money firstly for a few months before they return the money back to the financial management team*” *She can manage to circulate the flow of my family expenses and run her small noodle shop in this way so far. But she cannot fore see how to carry on her noodle shop business smoothly. She received the financial assistance two months ago* (Htu san, 2019).” Both trainings and financial services are linked each other and useful for the recipient to circulate financial flow to cover some financial gaps in running business as there is no more other capital asset they own as IDPs. However, some respondents claimed that there are also some IDPs who did not pay back money with interest and disappeared without informing the difficulties to financial management team. Those kinds of problems usually be discussed and

second chance by giving oral warning to set up new deadline for repayment. Anyone who fail to repay the money with interest on the repayment due date, they will be punished or taken out of the team members. They are no longer allowed to take chances of withdraw or borrow money from the financial team in the future. This system is also one of the ways to promote the income situation for IDPs during displacement. First, round financial support for the investment should be provided large amount of money. Only little amount of financial supported by agencies can help at starting period of small business but beneficiaries need to keep carry on that business in a long process. One interview responded even stated, "*If IDPs do not have that opportunities, they do not know what to do during displacement period* (Daw Ji Tawng, 2013)."

The research data shows that agencies set up objectives for the purpose of providing livelihood related services to help IDPs' pursuing income in the hardship period. Responding to the need of IDPs is the responsibility of humanitarian agencies. During the displacement period IDPs faced economics, social and financial lost which are the essential means to earn a living smoothly or seek for the job opportunity. After eight years of displacement, agencies addressed for the need of livelihood training and they conducted several short-term livelihood trainings under the project planning.

The livelihood supporting agencies provided the livelihood related trainings what intending for the long-term sustainable solutions for IDPs. Mostly the objectives of agencies targeting to the development approaches which focusing on the individual capacity advancement and empowering their ability in the long run. In the displacement situation, where Human rights approaches made some beneficiaries enjoy depending only on the provided assistances at all time. Every IDP has the rights to be treated with respect and they have to have same opportunity under the statement of principles. The active agencies in Kachin

state apply the principles identified in guiding principles and they have to adopt those principles to ensure responding equally IDP's need. No IDP is discriminated against from receiving services from respective agencies for any assistances. In the development concept, people who is putting more effort will gain more benefit than others in their work improvement in the future. very IDPs is supposed to enquire their need from the humanitarian aids equally. Individual IDP's improvement livelihood is depend on their effort and capacity in coping up the situation with available resources. Applying Human rights main purpose is to ensure every IDPs' rights are protected well under the guidance of UN guiding principles. Among the entire IDP population, the most vulnerable people to attain their rights and be respected to duty bearers. However, business purpose and social empowerment services should be provided for IDP communities. The participants' existing capacity needed to be consideration specifically first before offering new livelihood training types.

Agencies are responding the needs of IDPs with limited financial capacities within a short period of available project term. The livelihood trainings were conducted in different schedule from one day, weeks and months respectively as the training conducting timeframe setup depend on the type of livelihood training in the camp. The service providers pay attention on the accomplishment of project during intervention period of six months or a yearlong. Many of livelihood training were conducted according to the plan and budget available. Therefore, defining the meaning of successfulness on the providing livelihood training is quite difficult. The projects are successful based on the provided number of trainings for IDPs in Momauk and Bhamo areas. Many kinds of livelihood trainings were conducted but only a few activities are applicable with the local economic demand and IDP's capacities.

Most of the livelihood related services were managed to finish based on the agencies' project planning. In this situation, there are two ways to describe the successfulness of

livelihood program. On the one hand, the program achievement could be measured by the total numbers of conducted trainings the budget amount that covered for those training within project implementation. The other possible way is to analyze the outcomes of the program intervention and beneficiaries' perspectives on the implemented livelihood training. Several types of trainings and activities undertook in IDP camps in Bhamo and Momauk for many years. Looking at the numbers of accomplished trainings type shows the positive outcomes of the program without knowing the capacity improvement of participants after the training. Project based livelihood program have time constrain to examine the effectiveness of services rather than tried to put effort on implementing project as planned. Those short period programs fail to make project adjustment during implementing rather than following project planning till the end. International agencies apply the international program designing which were developed with international concepts.

The program assisting the requirement of IDP but the program designed needed to be adjusted with the local concept contributed by beneficiaries to create the most relevance. Agencies' also faced challenges in implementing livelihood training to accomplish within available period. The participant selection process takes long time and less timeframe in monitoring as well as evaluation on the outcomes of beneficiaries' capacity. In the condition of IDPs in Bhamo and Momauk, agencies provided enough livelihood promoting assistances but the form the beneficiary's sides, IDPs only receiving available opportunity they have with no complaining against the program. The beneficiaries' participation is essential in decision making and designing plan in order to provide them some responsibility to take in the leading role in the future.

The interviewed experts claimed about the long-term sustainable development approaches and the challenges of setting up those approach in their implementation for IDPs

in the camp sites. The current existing camps were built during the emergencies period with the emergency humanitarians' findings. When the displacement period reach to many years and the emergency period to the development step forward during the transforming period. Sustainable livelihood training program for IDPs in Kachin State. The agencies apply development approach under the humanitarian aids to promote livelihood condition for IDP households. The Livelihood training activities are also one of the sections under the humanitarian agenda for IDPs in Bhamo and Momauk areas. Strengthen the existing the capacity of beneficiaries is one of the most applicable approach in every development implementation project design nationwide.

IDPs had experiences on the agriculture-based livelihood activities such as gardening and shifting cultivation work in the farmland activities are already know since a decade ago. Strengthening trainees' capacity by practicing toward sustaining livelihood for IDPs. Strengthen based approach the service providers are taking facilitation roles rather than leading role to strengthen the existing capacity of IDPs. When the researcher interviewed one agencies staff said, *"IDPs relied on their own capacity while they were in the villages and recently, they have been supported for so many years freely. Agency want to help them recall their past lives and to reduce dependency manner slowly by slowly. Agency are just showing the ways and they are the ones who doing practically. Showing them the way to work with their own capacity slowly by slowly. Showing their capacity to help them see the capacity to help them to get ownership sense promote self-reliance again"* (Jang Ma Gam Aung, 2019).

One of the objectives for livelihood supporting activities is to get rid of dependency on available aids. Agencies are planning to promote each IDPs household through giving them chances of livelihood supporting activities with available funding. One humanitarian interview respondent claimed, *"They believing that each IDP has unique capacity on their own but they*

need help to make them see their ability. Agencies assumed that IDPs are getting used to depending on the assistances which provided from different humanitarian agencies in the camps. They receiving those assistances for many years without seeking for any other self-reliance business activities on their own. Therefore, their inherent talent skills started forgetting because they stop doing what they used to do in the past. The agencies providing livelihood related services in order to make recalling their capacity like situation before conflict. The opportunities intending to show the way for restarting over their lives to get back to normal life. They use strategy to build up their existing capacity in order to help themselves up for betterment but for the camp program objectives, to support IDPS households for incomes improvement.”

According to the strength-based approach theories, agencies strengthening the capacity of participants who already skillful in something since before the displacement period. They implementing plan focusing on the long-term improvement to achieve sustainable livelihood for IDPs during displacement and post displacement period. Identifying current difficulties and challenges faced by the former livelihood assistance recipients would help for the creating the most relevance livelihood program for IDPs in Kachin State. Promote participatory approaches in the upcoming livelihood related training opportunities program implementation. Agencies taking role of facilitation for and giving IDP to take responsible in leading role to make planning for their own activities in the future. Participation of beneficiary is important for the program planning. They aware of possible positive and negative of current implementation. beneficiary participation to offer ownership for future responsibility. Some agencies approached to the beneficiaries' needs by inviting them to identify by discussing among the camp committee and IDPs. The agencies are trying to promote the existing capacity of individual IDPs. They asked the camp committee members to lead for camp related activities. Similarly, in the return process, the village leaders taking responsible for returnees.

(sabeel, 2001) the agencies taking role of the facilitator by putting the participants in the leader role to help them seeing themselves as a capable person for improving self-reliance in the long run. The livelihood program has been providing for the long-term planning. Organization invited participation from the beneficiaries and offer them the leader roles. Beneficiaries tried first and when they gave up on the difficulties, they faced then the organization conduct field work morning to discuss their challenges. Following up activities regularly conducting monitoring the progress on the implementation. The agencies provided capital for IDPs to run a small business was too limited and the freedom of movement needed to do business freely follow the customers' needs example IDP might need to travel to the economic zone. The major objectives for providing livelihood training to IDPs is to promote income and to run smoothly the economics activities where many demand available areas.

In the post displacement period, some agencies are planning for sustaining development planning for the choices of IDPs into three different stages returning, resettlement and reintegration planning. The make decision on selecting the most relevance services had better consult with the former services beneficiaries. They have capacity to feed in the experiences, their perceptions and lesson learn from the outcome of services. Another important one is to identify their existing capacity since their ancestor's time. Majority of IDPs belong to agriculture activities and shifting cultivation mainly primary raw production level. The land space provision for those IDP populations would be one of the appropriate solutions to create livelihood promoting program for some individual IDP.

The capacity of beneficiaries plays a crucial role for the success of livelihood training activities. The livelihood training available for Kachin IDPs was developed on the needs of IDPs and the training designed have not been conducted systematically. It is important to organize in a systematical way for livelihood trainings to ensure it effective for the recipients. To be so,

the service providers need to listen the voices of beneficiaries and conduct annually or quarterly evaluation process to consult about the services effectiveness. The study shows that, the agencies only interested in providing many types of livelihood trainings for IDPs and randomly consult with the beneficiaries for the outcomes of training services. The livelihood training types had better.

IDPs are being given chances to build up new capacity from livelihood training activities. The achievement of agencies goals, the training design also need improvement, service providers also to under mind the situation of IDPs. There are any other factors to empower in the long run for the complement financial resources, physical resources and capacities building, even though there are some limitation according to the international regulation. Only permanent livelihood training is effective and long enough training timeline needed to plan for a sustaining way for participants to promote self- reliance. Business related additional training recommended to be included in the livelihood training curriculum so as to the trained IDPs are able to pursue income activity smoothly.

In this final section of the research presents the recommendations for the possible solutions based on the collected data analyses. The strategies to promote livelihood situation of IDPs in Kachin State can be proceeded in two ways. The first possible way is to develop the proper trainings through participation from beneficiaries in designing the training plan to develop relevance trainings. The selected trainings types need to set up long enough time frame including learning time and practicing for participants during the training period. Afterward, the selected training types should deliver for small numbers of IDP as pilot activities for a certain month to know the effectiveness outcomes of those livelihood trainings. Based on the collected data insufficient of financial is one of the most factor which disrupt the small

business activities every time. The agencies need to consider to provide sufficient grant supports along with the type of small business.

The second way is to get involved state holders, non-state holders, national and international organizations in finding appropriate solutions for the betterment of livelihood for IDPs in Kachin State. Especially, Metta, DRC, NRC, KBC, KMSS and other international organizations played a major livelihood training services provider for IDPs in Kachin State. It would be more effective to create coordination mechanism among services providers in order to avoid overlapping issues and to support effectively with available assistance. The coordination among involved people such as service providers, local government, international agencies and local state holders is a crucial need for the achievement of sustaining livelihood program in the future implementation.

Among variety types of trainings some are helpful in upgrading capacity of IDPs to pursue better income practically. According to right based approach theories, agencies open chances for every IDPs to apply for the livelihood related activities services. Majority IDP population who meet the requirements of livelihood assistance categories are getting benefit from the current livelihood trainings. However, the livelihood training plan need to emphasize on the long-term solutions to promote income for trained IDPs till they become professional in specific area. In this situation, the training design need to be adjusted for long term effective outcome for IDPs and create the most relevance trainings for IDPs to apply them not only during the phrase of displacement but also for the rest of their life. Regarding with the training service, IDPs receiving only short time training livelihood related trainings and little amount of financial supports to start small business until recent time. Depending on the type of livelihood training, an appropriated length of schedule setting up for each type of livelihood training including learning period and practicing. The livelihood training period should be extended for the long period training is more effective than short ones. The process of empowering existing

capacity for IDPs take more effort and time in the long run to achieve the sustaining goal. In the theories of strength-based approach the options for pursuing the livelihood promoting through the experience the IDPs already have instead of feeding new trainings program in a short period. Another effective solution would be to set up long enough training schedule for IDP learning and practicing at the same time. IDP eager to seek for the opportunity to pursue available employment in the local areas and some attending the livelihood training with expectation to gain better career lives from the trainings. The livelihood trainings should be included complementary services such as sufficient enough training time duration to practice and apply before they do actually work. IDPs should be invited and the voices of pioneer services recipients for developing new livelihood training design. The participation of IDPs in the conducting livelihood need assessment survey and organizing consultation section with the previous livelihood assistance recipients to learn the lesson and better improvement and durable activities. The service providers need to conduct proper needs assessment survey and response on the results instead of coming with designed training plan. The service should be responded the real need of IDPs in this area and develop training design with local context especially in Kachin regional areas. The livelihood promoting strategy for IDPs in Kachin State should be based on the finding of need assessment survey result which participated all people who engaging with the livelihood program in Kachin State and IDP themselves. In this way, beneficiaries can feed in their constraints, challenges and lessons learn which is really useful to develop the most relevance newly design for livelihood supporting services. In the past, villagers only care about the agriculture works for regular shifting cultivation works the purpose of survival. Based on the collected data, IDPs belong to the villages where they only experienced in agriculture-based careers for entire of their life. The livelihood training need to included special business-related knowledge and financial management in order to become entrepreneur after receiving advance training on specific field. IDP need to study basic business knowledge and management to run small business smoothly achieving their goal of improving

the regular income in the future. Particularly, the business-related training to learn marketing skills and networking skill to seek for existing local demand as most of provided training were economic oriented livelihood trainings. Business related upgrade skills training such as marketing, social network, customer services and demand supply process. Agencies need to conducted pre-assessment on local demand for the type of training activities to ensure the trainings help promoting income for trained IDPs. They can start making living with trained knowledge. Through livelihood supporting training opportunity IDPs learn new skill but they fail to learn business skills which help to sustain small business management in a long run. For example, In soap manufacturing cases. They gave up on making soap after two- or three-time trials. They have to compete with other soap producing companies in local marketing. The quality of soap liquid quality is so different. The detergent from the market is better than our soap liquid made by IDPs. One interview soap maker stated, *“Maybe IDPs need to learn another technique to produce high quality products to seek for demand in the local market. In order to in line with market quality the training might need to learn same chemical ingredient for better quality. Soap bar quality also different as IDP produced soap from natural raw materials. IDP only used plastic water bottle and they do not have packaging materials to compete with local market.”*

Two third of interview respondents claimed that they rely on the agricultural, raising livestock and husbandry livelihood activities for DPs working history in home villages. Naturally, their past livelihood activities are the professional working fields for majority highland dweller IDPs possessed working experiences in agriculture related works and cultivation for crop plantation as inheritance careers. Therefore, another relevance services would be proving agriculture land spaces together with the agriculture related management on job training which targeting to the business initiate agriculture system for IDPs. To be so the large spaces of land availability is one of the services agencies and local government have to provide for IDP

especially those who are not possible to go back to the village of original. In the research collected data shows that majority of respondents prefer working in the farmland than looking for new careers. IDPs imagine themselves to keep on doing cultivation activities when they return to their home places or resettle in the new areas as well. Agriculture based livelihood training activities is matched with the existing capacity of some IDPs but land availability is one of the requirements for livelihood promoting activities for highland dwellers. Recently, some agencies already provide training on agriculture- based and non- agriculture livelihood activities with limited time and no space as well as enough financial support for practical purpose. For example, growing corns, delivered seeds, vegetable gardening, trainings but no place to cultivate. Those kinds of agriculture-based livelihood training activities require quite large land plot. In the camp, IDPs are sharing only small spaces inside the shelter with the big family members. There are no extra spaces to grow vegetable and create garden for growing plants. Living in the camp, IDP cannot get access to land space for plantation, they have no relatives and friends to ask for help in the new environment. According to the camp management rules IDP movement outside the camps is restricted for the security purpose and they only grow plants in the camp sites where no place to grow vegetable even for family consumption. Therefore, some IDPs rent the land in the local areas to grow crops for business for income. Allocating land plot for agriculture activities would be one of the solutions which support the livelihood activities of IDP population in the long run.

Collected data stated the current pigs raising system apply by grant recipients. Two third of IDPs have experiences in raising pigs and this activity is the normal work for them. The research data show that pig demand in Bhamo and Mamauk areas is high especially during the local festival. However, they IDPs need broad space to raise pig because the camps space has been sharing with large IDP population. According to my field observation, many camps were sited closed to the town area where they cannot feed many pigs. The spaces allocation for

raising pigs' activities would be one solution to empower existing capacity of IDPs for generating income. Same as training improvement, the individual IDP who raising pig need to be offer the livelihood trainings which included basic business skill trainings to manage pig raising business flow smoothly. Additionally, IDPs need to be trained to feed large number of pigs for business purpose. The recipient IDPs for pigs raising service should be trained the knowledge feeding pigs in healthy way to prevent ahead from transmitted disease.

Inclusive participation among all service providers, beneficiaries in developing appropriate livelihood training design for IDPs. The collected data indicated that agencies should take reconsideration on the current out puts of livelihood trainings. The former livelihood supporting assistance receivers have lessons learn from the constrains, challenges and opportunities throughout their lifetimes. Among the most successful and less successful training participants' perspectives need to be evaluation for the better solutions. Both types of livelihood services recipients can contribute inputs to help creating sustaining livelihood training program development. Agencies need to invite those experienced IDPs to identify and their idea for developing better training design for the future. The proper consultation sections need to be conducted by agencies to learn the challenges and difficulties of beneficiaries. The voices of beneficiaries need to be listened for further improvement in the long.

The influx IDPs in the specific areas of the town impacts the local population because both populations sharing the existing resources. The hosting communities need to share resources specificity spaces, water, market and economic as well as religious places in some hosting town. When planning for the sustaining way in the livelihood of IDPs, the resources available in hosting areas might need to take account for sharing together with local residences. In reality, it takes many efforts to get permission of using the local available resources for IDPs affairs unless the local government get involve in the implementing plan.

They are responsible persons to give secure protection for hosted IDPs same as local habitants. To do so, the camp management, the respective IDPs responding agencies and local government authorities need to be collaborate in planning for the better solution for IDP situation. The application of existing local resources in livelihood training program planning. IDP are being hosted in the new local environment throughout displacement period and the available local resources should be allowed to use for the purpose of improving IDPs livelihood. One good example the research figures out was, the carpentry school is available in Momauk town where half of respondent are being hosted. The agencies provide training cost for interested candidate to study there. In different regions, different sources of resources available which need not to spend large amount of money to be used. Those carpenters finish the courses can teach newly learners back in the camps after their learning period. Generally, in IDP community here are many different education levels, experiences and background among IDP population. Overall IDP populations, the IDP youths have capacities to explore the better chances through the guidance of parents and authorities. Regarding with IDP youths, supporting specific services for educated IDPs for the planning of better livelihood solution in the future. Both livelihood supporters and government are the most responsible people for well-being of IDPs during displacement. Among IDPs there are some graduated youths who are eager to seek opportunity for applying permanent employment in their interesting field such as working in the government departments, local companies, humanitarian agencies and local founded agencies respectively. The local humanitarians' agencies and local government need to found a platform to help graduated IDP finding the employment and to encourage becoming eligible applicants for applying in the interested field. This could be one of the possible solutions of graduated IDPs to get a proper job and supporting back to their family members. Mostly Some other kinds of mechanism to channel with other capacity upgrading program for IDP youth in order to give them chances of preparing themselves to fulfill with requirement ability for getting job. The job available/ livelihood opportunities should be

channel to respective government department to apply for official position for the future career. Some look down the IDP youth when they apply for the job and rejected for IDPs status compare with other local youth. Establishing coordination among camp management, services providers and local government can provide the good outcome for IDPs seeking job opportunity in local areas. They are educated and they should be given chance to apply relevance working fields with the local government's official recommendation as IDP status. Some graduated IDPs are very talented and passionate looking for available job opportunities to support back their parents.

Strengthening coordination among respective agencies, camp management team and state government is the most essential solution for providing sustain livelihood supports for IDPs. The cooperation among all service providers needed to be established for allocating properly toward the improvement of livelihood program in the long intervention (Jacobsen, 2015). They possess different assistances and resources to promote livelihood of IDPs most affectively. A strong coordination mechanism needs to set up as a bridge for IDPs. Recently, livelihood services providers are providing assistance on their own way through camp management discussion which created some overlapping beneficiaries. Some agencies are targeting to the development goal while some are adopted livelihood program activities as emergencies need to support better livelihood situation for IDPs in the camps compound. Regarding with the policy for IDPs, in the camp compound the camp committee set up the movement of IDPs especially in and out record. Besides, the agencies also restricted the rule for the areas of running small business for financial granted IDPs. They are allowed to run the business inside the camp where little consumers compare with local market areas. Some IDP intended to run business outside especially in the economic zone they business activities flowing can be smoothly be run for regular income for business entrepreneurs. However, they have to follow the principles from both camp management and agencies. The local

government policy and respective religious policies influences the well-being of IDPs as well as security during displacement. The policy of areas restriction might affect negatively to the expansion of business activities for IDPs. They need to explore the areas where they can get more customers to run business smoothly. Explore the economic life of IDP during the displacement. Local business and movement should not be limited and set freedom to choose areas to run business. Policy linked to IDP protection and business- Land spaces, provided should be not limited the areas and movement as well as the limitation of economic zones. The small business need buyers to make a good improvement or further investment.

All kinds of IDP assisting services mainstreaming right based approach and literacy levels is not important to apply for the financial started kit for every IDPs. Majority of IDPs are not educated and it is not very easy for them to manage the flow of small business financial management. Agencies field staff help to recipient propose financial grant for some illtreated IDPs to run small business and they fail to manage in the long run. Some uneducated IDPs are reluctant to apply for the available financial grant program and livelihood training program because of very complicated procedure. They would rather choose working outside for earning daily available job by working outside the camps.

The research data indicated that the agencies objectives for providing livelihood training is helping IDPs to increase income rate in the future. All the available livelihood trainings are intending to lead the income generation improvement for trained IDPs in the long run. Based on collected data only some agencies interested in making some development on the existing strategy or evaluation on the provided training activities which is the most important for the long run for sustaining and effective for the beneficiaries practically. There are some elements which are important for livelihood service providers to pay attention before providing business related livelihood training services. The training approaches, available

funding and time to run the activities, selection process of the training participants and assessment before they design the training planning.

The livelihood promoting training should be designed for the long-term approach for helping IDP household's increase income. Long term training is much more effective than short term training. The training schedule should set up Enough timeframe. The training needed be set up enough time to learn new knowledge with practicing time for participants. In order to help trained participants till they have confidence to pursue a professional life. Some agencies have time constraint to conduct monitoring section on the outcomes of livelihood services for the reason of short-term project implementation. Trained individual participant should be provided enough time to build up their skills to be qualified. When looking at her result of project achievement and the real achievement of beneficiaries would be quite different. The agencies need to take consideration of benefit for outcomes of the implementation not just only pay attention on the fulfillment of project. Practicing is the essential needs for professional life improvement after getting training. For example, the tailoring training lasted three months but it does not enough to become a professional tailor. It takes longer time to become qualified tailor and apply trained knowledge for getting regular income. Agency should give chance more time for beneficiaries to reach some level of qualification to get income with those knowledges. The qualification of trainee's capacity is also important thing to take consideration for the market requirement in long- term. The agencies empowered the IDPs' capacity through the training opportunities learning new skills to earn the living through the trained knowledge. Therefore, the duration of training is matter to trained and give time to practice to trainees in order to become professional in specific file ensuring to increase income after the training period.

The agencies should assess the local market and potential demand for the type of training activities or products before they conducting the training. The local demand is

essential for the flow of economic in the long duration. They should assess the background knowledge of participants. For instead, IDPs belong to the villages and they have experiences in primary production such as cultivation crops, working in the farm land and shifting cultivation. They need to learn business analysis, marketing skills as well as all the basic business skills and financial management if the livelihood training is proving for business purpose. So that they can learn basic business and management skill through the livelihood training to equip themselves up to handle the financial flow while they run a small business on their own. They have great chances to learn many types of vocational skills which can help them start doing income activities on their own in the camp or in their communities.

The livelihood initiating training objective is targeting to the business improvement the beneficiaries in sustainable achievement. The sufficiency funding is also one of the essential elements to prepare by the service providers to accomplished the long- term goals. Empowering the needed skills for IDPs especially in the giving skill is not enough to start business unless following with some cash assistance. For example, IDPs were forced to flee from their original villages, all their belongings had been left behind, taking refuge in the nearest safety places to avoid conflict. They are lacking of financial asset, networking resources and social relations pull them out from doing small business in the long run. The limited starter kit provided from livelihood agencies is not enough to set up the small business especially for IDP households.

To sum up, IDPs are receiving livelihood related training with some amount of budget to support on the income generating activities. Agencies delivered equal chances for every IDP by providing several kinds of livelihood supporting activities and starter- kit financial grant for selected individual IDP household. There are three pull factors which interrupt the fulfillment of agencies objectives to help IDPs' generating income activities. every livelihood services

provider needs to take serious consider for the improvement of the program. The beneficiaries' participation is the most crucial things in designing livelihood promoting program and their perceptions needed to take they should take some responsibility. The coordination among services providers, beneficiaries, state and international agencies is important in promoting the living condition of IDPs as they all have different capacity to contribute for IDPs. Every activity needs to think for the future sustaining and durable solutions.

Dissemination and Communication of the Transdisciplinary Project "KNOTS"

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Abstract

The project "KNOTS" is a three-year scheduled project financed by the European Union. The goal is the establishment of regional and international networks of transdisciplinary research as well as the development of transdisciplinary teaching methods. This paper analyses its internal and external communication and dissemination on the basis of qualitative interviews and observation protocols. It theoretically outlines Transdisciplinarity and organizational communication as well as scientific communication. The interviews and the protocol of a dissemination workshop have shown that the dissemination in the KNOTS project could still be described as work-in-progress, evidently seen in the different understandings of mainly dissemination and partly Transdisciplinarity. There was a general confusion about roles, division of work, responsibilities and the topic of dissemination specifically. It seems that there is not a mutual strategy for dissemination, but many different approaches – this counts especially for the time before the dissemination workshop. As one might expect, it resulted in mostly negatively reviewed dissemination activities as expressed by the respondents. An effective internal communication, however, as outlined in the theoretical framework, is key to an effective external communication. Further- more, there did not seem to be a lot of

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motivation to come up with sophisticated ideas for dissemination, because, as some interviewees mentioned, they thought of dissemination as a kind of chore to do because the European Union wants it – there was no understanding that it actually helps the project and all partners involved and is vital to the successfulness of KNOTS. The workshop may have helped to clarify the roles and expectations for each partner and get a better understanding for dissemination and its importance. It appears that the quality and processes of dissemination of project KNOTS will not change fundamentally for the last period of the project.

Keyword: KNOTS, Transdisciplinarity, Dissemination, Scientific Communication, Organizational Communication

1. Introduction

The project “KNOTS” (full title: “Fostering Multi- Lateral Knowledge Networks of Transdisciplinary Studies to Tackle Global Challenges) is a three- year scheduled project financed by the European Union with nearly one million Euro (European Commission 2018a). The goal is the establishment of regional and international networks of transdisciplinary research as well as the development of transdisciplinary teaching methods. The exchange of knowledge between academic and non-academic actors also poses an important aspect to the project. Therefore, the participating higher education institutions (in the following “HEIs”) hold tutorials, field trips and so-called “summer schools” as well as conferences together. The project follows educational (construction of teaching methodologies), scientific (founding of multi- lateral and transdisciplinary networks) and strategic (strengthening of the internationalization of HEI) goals (Call for Proposal EAC/A04/2015: 31-33). Part of this project are external communication respectively public relations or “dissemination” activities, as is specified in the “Call for Proposal” (2015: 38). The external communication is meant to bring the activities of the project to a more or less broad public and is also a way of showing the European Union, as the financing institution, on what matters the approved funding is spent on.

This work therefore deals with the dissemination- respectively PR- process of the “KNOTS” -project and tries to examine the activities through a qualitative research approach which aims more on a general picture than a specific aspect. The research process includes a participating observation as well as qualitative interviews with people involved in the dissemination process. It has to be noted that the field of interest concerns the communicators and their products and not, how these products affect the recipients. A level of analysis could

also be imposed on the dissemination plan in terms of the practical usage of the guidelines and specifications and if they are set in practice by the participating HEIs or the degree to which they are respected and considered by the partners.

The goal of this work is therefore a comprehensive and broad analysis of the dissemination-process of the project “KNOTS” based on Interviews of people who are responsible for it as well as a participating observation of a dissemination workshop held halfway through the project. The outcomes of this research could potentially be used by executive personnel of the project in terms of further dissemination activities or provide an overview and propose improvements as well as practice a critical approach towards the dissemination process.

Parts of the quality control and monitoring of the project “KNOTS” are conducted by students of the participating HEIs, who conduct research about the project embedded in seminars. This work is the result of such a seminar. The author was actively participating in a “summer school”, a field trip and a dissemination-workshop and can therefore not be categorized as independent respectively non-participating spectator. In terms of a research transparency, this should be cleared at this point.

After this brief introduction, what follows is a literature review to outline the theoretical framework, a description of the used methodology, followed by a discussion and analysis of the collected data and a conclusion.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter starts with a brief description of “KNOTS” and will then depict Transdisciplinarity (TD) and transdisciplinary research. What follows is an overview in the field

of organizational communication, including internal and external communication. The aim is to describe these terms, explain their differences/similarities and put them into context to the KNOTS project. Then it will specify and outline scientific communication including “dissemination” and describe its characteristics and reasons why it might differ from the ideas of “classic” public relations – combined with EU-regulations and guidelines such as “open access”. The aim is to combine theoretical perspectives with Transdisciplinarity and the project.

2.1. KNOTS

The transdisciplinary project “KNOTS” (full title: “Fostering multi-lateral knowledge networks of transdisciplinary studies to tackle global challenges) is a three-year scheduled project financed by the European Union with nearly one million Euro via the “Erasmus+”-programme (European Commission 2018a). The goal is the establishment of regional and international networks of transdisciplinary research as well as the development of transdisciplinary teaching methods, which are supposed to come to action in the participating institutions of higher education afterwards. The exchange of knowledge between academic and non-academic actors also poses an important aspect to the project, as already mentioned earlier. Therefore, the participating higher education institutions hold tutorials, field trips and so-called “summer schools” as well as conferences. The project follows educational (construction of teaching methodologies), scientific (founding of multi-lateral and transdisciplinary networks) and strategic (strengthening of the internationalization of HEI (Higher Education Institutions)) goals (see Call for Proposal EAC/A04/2015: 31-33).

2.2. Transdisciplinarity

Nowotny/Scott/Gibbons (2001: 89) place transdisciplinary research in their so-called “Mode- 2” way of knowledge production. They argue, that “Mode- 1” describes the

“ traditional” scientific knowledge production and characterize it (amongst others) as disciplinary, “ objective”, homogenous and elite, whereas “ Mode-2” would be transgressive, heterogenic, transcending disciplines and eventually transdisciplinary.

Transdisciplinarity “ generally rejects the separation and distribution of topics and scholarly approaches into disciplinary ‘ silos’ ” (Bernstein 2015: 7) and “ is needed when knowledge about a societally relevant problem field is uncertain ” (Pohl/Hirsch Hadorn 2008: 431). Hirsch Hadorn et al. (2008: 27-28) argue that disciplinary boundaries are changing and transdisciplinary is needed to solve problems in the “ life- world”, whereas they see four main commonalities towards definitions of Transdisciplinarity: “ first the focus on life- world problems; second the transcending and integrating of disciplinary paradigms; third participatory research; and fourth the search for unity of knowledge beyond disciplines” (Hirsch Hadorn et al. 2008: 29).

While interdisciplinarity gets two disciplines engaging and interacting with each other, bringing in the tools from each discipline, Transdisciplinarity can be split into two orientations: the first one describes the transcendency of disciplinary boundaries, reconfiguring divisions of disciplinarity; the other aims at bringing economic, political and societal actors (“ non-academics”) into the research process itself, where the goal is to solve a certain problem together with these actors (Darbellay 2015: 165-166). These problems, as Blassnigg/Punt (2013: 1) state, have become more and more complex (data overflow, demands for inclusion and societal engagement or various models of reality) and therefore need new forms of approach: “ Transdisciplinarity extends the scope, methods and perspectives of existing disciplines whilst at the same time respecting and using the existing disciplinary frameworks” (Blassnigg/Punt 2013: 2). KNOTS seems to operate in the second orientation, as it stresses (Universität Wien 2019) the importance of the collaboration with non-academic actors.

This also applies when it comes to dissemination of a transdisciplinary project: According to Kaufmann/Kasztler (2009: 218), the communication with these non-academics (e.g. via articles in newspapers or magazines) is very important in transdisciplinary projects, whereas it is not in disciplinary ones, because Transdisciplinarity implies other, further going expectations for communication and society. Therefore, it can be assumed that dissemination and communication activities are more complex in transdisciplinary projects, which again shows the relevance for systematic and well-planned communication.

2.3. Organizational Communication

The term “organization” is often used synonymously to “company” or “enterprise” (Rademacher 2009: 100), whereas the better and broader definition would be, as Miebach (2012: 11) describes it, that an organization is a social construct that follows a permanent goal and inherits a formal structure which is supposed to help its members reach said goal. This applies not only to profit-oriented companies, but also to non-profit organizations or, what will be relevant for this work, universities. This work will treat the KNOTS project in terms of the applied theories as somewhat of an organization within a complex array of organizations, as it fulfils the above-mentioned description of an organization to some extent, whereas it may not have openly clear hierarchies or a permanent goal, although the project officially ends by fall 2019 – the latter may be the biggest difference to a classical organization, because KNOTS only lasts a certain amount of time. It could be argued that in terms of KNOTS, the need for effective dissemination with clear roles and determined planning is even more important due to the limited time span of the project, in contrast to regular permanent organizations who can correct flaws and improve their dissemination or communication because they simply have more time available to do so.

Communication within an organization should help to reach its goals more efficiently, and the structure of it plays a major role in the amount of exchange between its members alongside tools and channels. It also creates some sort of culture which influences the means of communication, whereas a high number of individuals from different cultures could create problems or conflicts, as there may be different understandings on certain issues which have to be dealt with (Rogala/Bialowas 2016: 36). These may include values, belief systems or certain rules of communication. As this cultural mix is the case with the KNOTS project, it will be subject to this work to also examine the communication process in these aspects. In terms of external communication, according to Szyszka (2009: 135), an organization has to engage with the consequences to the environment and intervene if necessary if it wants to continue existing – he calls it “communication management.”

Implementing an organizational communication strategy is an extraordinary difficult task as one has to consider a vast range and interest of recipients and adapt the output to a variety of interest groups (Rogala/Bialowas 2016: 37). This certainly applies to KNOTS, as the target groups range from individual students to university lecturers and an interested scientific community in general as well as public institutions such as the European Union. Considering these interest groups and the adaptations necessary, it is probably a time-consuming and complex task that requires a somewhat professional approach.

2.3.1 Internal communication

According to Rogala/Bialowas (2016: 37), four areas of needs for interaction within an organization can be distinguished: “Between individuals, between an individual and a social sub-system, within a given sub-system and between social sub-systems”. In terms of the KNOTS project, a sub-system might be the team of each participating university – maybe

certain cultural borders could also form a sub-system. In the empirical part, these areas of interaction ought to be analysed using the data available.

There is a range of theoretical approaches towards internal communication, the one that seems to be applicable for this work is one created by Gros and is described by Rogala/Bialowas (2016: 40) as “main organizational process in which information is exchanged among various participants, and this process binds together the organizational units of the company as well as connecting the company with the environment”. Amongst others this quote shows, how business-focused this area of research is, the term “company” can be seen synonymous with “organization”. This approach has been chosen because it seems applicable to KNOTS in the sense that many of the people responsible for dissemination have not known each other before the project and therefore may need to establish personal connections to effectively communicate with each other.

According to Rogala/Bialowas (2016: 50) organizational communication “involves the flow of both formal and informal information within a closed, hierarchical structure” – it can be argued here that this does not apply to the KNOTS project, as it aims at cooperation at the same level, not in a hierarchical manner. However, it might be possible that there is a certain informal hierarchy, which will be examined later on in this work.

Important to a successful internal communication is a set goal of objectives, which fulfil four fundamental functions: they form the foundation of the norms to scale the efficiency, provide coordination and planning, create guidelines for the members of the organization so they can see the progress and their part to it and help lower level members of the organization to remember the goal – amongst the others, the last point does seem to be applicable to KNOTS as well because of the fact that funding is coming from the European Union, the

University of Vienna is essentially the main manager of the project and therefore there might be a certain North- South- divide in terms of power and access to some information. Additionally, the objectives of internal communication can be divided into three groups: related to unifying with the organization, motivation and informing (Rogala/Bialowas 2016: 66).

Aspects that might be relevant for the internal communication of KNOTS are, what Rogala/ Bialowas (2016: 70) describe amongst others as possible objectives of internal communication, organizational culture – consisting of common values, norms, ideas or patterns –, management in terms of setting the goals and mission and the political aspect. Combined, these aspects could be vital for the project, as there are various people from various cultures and mind- sets involved which additionally have to operate in different political environments.

However, there can be obstacles and barriers that can interfere internal communication and it is one aim of this work to examine if some of those (or others that pop up during data analysis) occur in KNOTS. These are, according to Rogala/Bialowas (2016: 89) “ interpersonal barriers relating to the sender and the receiver; barriers resulting from inadequate awareness and communication skills of interlocutors; barriers relating to the quality of information; barriers generated by the physical and social environment; organizational barriers.” Obviously, if an organization aims at eliminating these barriers, it needs to improve the communication qualities of its members. It could be argued here, that the “ dissemination workshop” held in Chiang Mai in July 2018, which is part of the empirical examination, was an attempt to remove certain barriers that might have prevented an effective communication of the project – not just internal but also external. The patterns of organizational communication, as described by Rogala/Bialowas (2016: 108) should also be

part of the analysis: Amongst others these include power hierarchies, similarities of cultural patterns and feedback culture.

To put these objectives into practise, a communication strategy is needed that includes internal and external communication. It consists of defining target groups, choose suitable instruments and channels to reach those groups and other stakeholders and invent specific messages that aim at different receivers (see Rogala/Bialowas 2016: 154). Project KNOTS has developed a “dissemination plan” at the beginning and part of this work will be to examine the effectiveness of this plan and its role in the communication process. Now that it is outlined that the basis for an external communication is an effective internal communication, this section will discuss the issue of public relations respectively external communication.

2.3.2 External Communication/ “Public Relations”

A systematic approach towards public relations-theory begun in the 70s, whereas two big approaches can be distinguished: an organizational theoretical that understands public relations as a communicative function of an organization. The second focuses on societal theoretical implications and primarily ask for the meaning and function of public relations in the reproduction process of contemporary, commonly referred to as “modern”, societies (Zerfaß 2010: 47).

While business-oriented approaches see public relations more in a support role of marketing, communication science approaches are more diverse, as they describe its societal function and its role as communication of an organization – while its central function is to legitimize the organization towards its stakeholders (Röttger 2009: 10). Preusse et al. (2013: 121- 122) also mention this legitimization role as essential point in most of PR-related literature. This certainly applies to KNOTS, as it is funded by the European Union with nearly

one million Euro (European Commission 2018a) and thus from the public and has to justify the financial support by writing reports to the EU and fulfil the tasks outlined in the proposal. Because of this it can be argued at this point that the project has a high interest to this legitimization task.

As this work aims at analysing the communication of project KNOTS, one useful theory to evaluate the effectiveness of public relations is the “excellent theory” developed by James Grunig and others, which followed after they conducted an interdisciplinary study over 15 years in the Anglo-American area, which consists of a literature review and a multi-level empirical analysis. The terms “effectiveness” and “excellence” were key: They first asked how, why and to what extent communication contributes to the successfulness of an organization, then tried to answer the question, how the communicative function has to be organized and carried out practically to be as effective as possible. The theory covers not just controlling and planning of PR-programmes but also with the foundations of organizing and steering PR as well as the organizational requirements to do so (Zerfaß 2010: 62-63).

Effective public relations can therefore, according to Grunig et al. (2006: 33), be divided in four major categories: the first one describes an empowerment of public relations functions within organizations, meaning that it has to become a powerful unit in the management of an organization. The second is about the role of public relations-staff – Grunig et al. (2006: 36) argue that communicators take the role as manager, technician, senior adviser and media relations and an excellent public relations-department is headed by a manager and not a technician, the latter doing day-to-day tasks. According to them, this is a vital aspect, going hand-in-hand with both men and women have equal chances of getting into this management position. The third category, as again outlined by Grunig et al. (2006: 38), states “the theoretical principal that organizations must have an integrated communication function.”

They continue by arguing that an excellent public relations function integrates all public relations programs into a single department” or provides cooperation if more departments are involved. The fourth and last category describes the models of public relations and argues that the best for an effective communication process is a two-way symmetrical model, which “produces better long-term relationships with publics than do the other models of public relations” (Grunig/Grunig 2008: 337). It is based on the premise that members of the organization have an active role in decision-making and are thus empowered.

These characteristics by Grunig and colleagues will be used for the empirical analysis of this work when applicable because they provide action-oriented tools resulting from a somewhat sophisticated empirical long-term study to measure the effectiveness (in the sense they describe it) of public relations, therefore it seems meaningful to evaluate the communication practice of KNOTS with these categories, although it may be possible that a lack of data might prevent an in-depth investigation. Another issue might be that since the study by Grunig and colleagues was conducted in the Anglo-American area, some of their results could not be applied in societies that have a different political or cultural setting. As these differences might be present in the project, the analysis has to be conducted careful in these manners and adapted to the data if necessary.

2.3.3 Scientific Communication and “Dissemination”

The European Commission separates between communication and dissemination: In its social media guide for “Horizon 2020”, which is a research funding program with a budget of about 80 billion Euro (European Commission 2018b), communication is described as covering the whole project, starts at the beginning, aims at multiple audiences as well as informs and engages with society. Dissemination is described as covering only results, happening just when results are achieved, aims at special audiences such as people who use

the results for their work and just enables the use and take-up of the results (European Commission 2018c). The importance of dissemination and the exploitation of research results is moreover stressed out in the Guide for the Erasmus+ programme by the European Union – KNOTS is funded by this programme (European Commission 2018a). The guide says “dissemination and exploitation of results are crucial areas of the Erasmus+ project lifecycle” (European Commission 2017: 7) and would require a necessary thought for a successful dissemination and exploitation. They also point out, that it is important to always refer back to the European Union as funder, to “justify the European added value”. However, dissemination, as outlined by the EU in the guide for Horizon 2020, is, as this paragraph will show, not the best option for an effective science communication. Since KNOTS started with their communication activities from the start on, it can be assumed that they moved beyond simple “dissemination” as described above and tried to implement a broader and more complex communication work. “Dissemination” is therefore understood as a part of scientific communication.

According to Weitze/Heckl (2016: 25), the scientific world is moving to a more open approach toward other parts of society and would increasingly come out of the so-called “ivory tower”. Pfenning (2012: 342) shares a likewise viewpoint and states that a sophisticated and elaborated science communication is still standing at the beginning but is very inter- and transdisciplinary oriented. Universities and research institutions have increased their PR and external communications personell (Rödder 2017: 66). Generally speaking, as Peters (2012: 332) points out, the expectations of scientific communication are the recruitment of new, young scientists, increase the acceptance of science and technology, legitimize the public funding of universities and research and to realize a positive and rationalized impact towards society and politics. He moreover argues that if one mentions differences between scientists and society or parts of it and combines them with the idea that a lack of acceptance of science

would lead to a dark future, it happens out of the thinking that only science and technology can guarantee international economic competitiveness, thus operating within and with a certain capitalistic logic. However, this discussion will not be held here since it would require a few additional pages and is also not the main topic.

Weitze/Heckl (2016: 48) argue that a “broad public” is often named as target group of science communication, this term is however unspecific, as there are diverse publics that could be characterized and/or differentiated in political, cultural, national etc. In the case of KNOTS, these publics can be seen as the target groups, which are, according to the Dissemination and Exploitation Plan (KNOTS 2017: 3), the participating higher education institutions (HEIs) and the involved programs, their academic staff and young academics, PhD candidates (from the participating HEIs) and non-academic actors that are concerned with discussed topics. This might be a difference to the public relations work that a usual profit-oriented company does: because scientific work can be very complex and hard to read, it has to be adapted to the different target groups, or “publics”. A fellow senior researcher has probably to be addressed differently than a student or a non-academic actor.

Dernbach/ Kleinert/ Munder (2012: 3) differ between three levels of scientific communication: On the macro, meso and micro-level. The first would communicate aspects of the whole scientific systems to publics, on the meso-level, where stances on certain political or economic processes are distributed and the micro-level, which describe the work of the single scientist that researches topics, sets up projects and later communicate the results of the project.

Knowingly or unknowingly, the responsible people at KNOTS for external communication, who are mainly scientists or academic staff, follow a trend which is, according

to Weitze/Heckl (2016: 139) that the scientists themselves do this task. Since they are not professionals in the field of public relations, it could be argued that this might come across with difficulties, problems or challenges. This will also be a perspective used in the empirical part of this work because, as outlined in the previous chapter, it is important for an effective communication that the people involved know what they are doing. The dissemination workshop mentioned earlier could be a hint that there might be challenges that had to or have been addressed.

An important aspect that is probably relevant for KNOTS is the knowledge about science amongst the publics or target groups. They have to know, how a scientific production of knowledge works and get a look behind the curtains, because it would otherwise result in scepticism and maybe even falsely thought of as the production of “truth” (Weitze/Heckl 2016: 170-171). This is especially important for the project, as it works with non-academic actors in the research process itself as well as these group as a target for communication. Therefore, a strong interest in transparency and insight has to be a premise for all involved in the project. However, because of the fact that the main targets of KNOTS are related with academia, this is probably not the most important point.

New channels for a dialogue between science and publics have emerged in the last decades with the rise of the world wide web – these are e.g. social networks or blogs that can provide direct feedback channels with interested areas of the public or target groups (see Weitze/ Heckl 2016: 190-191). For example, the KNOTS project operates a Facebook-Page (KNOTS 2018) posting regular updates during the summer school in July 2018; or participating HEIs produce blog-posts about project activities (example: Chulalongkorn University 2018). The empirical part of this work will examine the channels used by the project members. In this context, dialogue and participation, as described by Weitze/ Heckl (2016: 212-213) becomes

important: KNOTS already does this partially as they let students attend summer schools or seminars that attach them to the ideas of the project and provide an interculturality and interdisciplinary exchange between students, lecturers and interested individuals on its topics, thus probably gaining important information and other forms of input from outsiders.

Winter (2012: 29) also stresses that dialogue is vital and has to be strengthened in the field of scientific communication, as progress here is being made but has to be increased vastly. Especially with the rise of new media, scientists can directly communicate with their audience and do not necessarily need news media outlets who act as gatekeeper and therefore can choose not to publish what a scientist would think is important for publics or even worse – shorten and/or misinterpret research results. A cheap and easy usable option there-fore would be social media. He complains that many scientists still think in an outdated sender-receiver model, whereas dialogue is the path for the future. KNOTS might be a role-model here, as it formally incorporates non-academic into some of its processes, the empirical examination will tell, in what ways the project engages in dialogue and/or participation with its target groups.

Gantenberg (2018: 58-59) argues about a new phase of science that aims at a bigger incorporation of societies and which focuses its research on topics that are specifically relevant for big parts of society. This increases the public relevance and provides a certain transparency (Gantenberg 2018: 58-59). This is closely related to Transdisciplinarity, as will be later shown, and may be important for the KNOTS project.

This participation of non-academics is outlined by Fähnrich (2017: 170-171) as so-called “citizen science”, which are events where citizens engage in dialogue with scientist, evaluate outcomes and even participate in the production of knowledge. That is closely related to KNOTS, as Transdisciplinarity, as we will see later, is amongst others characterized by an active

participation of non-academics and the goal is to find a solution for a problem together with academics in mutual research – therefore it can be stated that communication is a determined and necessary part of transdisciplinary research and must be seen as equally important as other characteristics by scientists that engage in this kind of research. This engagement of non-academics can be seen as a way of communication and lead to an enhanced interest in science. The ambitious intention can however be slowed down due to scientific routines and hierarchies as well as a certain knowledge gap between scientists and non-scientists. These challenges could be tackled with a long-term orientation of projects, increased transparency, increased factual interaction and special training for the actors involved. Obviously, this has to be done carefully, respectfully and is a time-consuming process if it wants to be successful. However, as Fähnrich (2017: 172) points out, more participation does not necessarily lead to more acceptance of scientific topics and thus should not be overrated when it comes to new relationships between science and publics.

A possible approach towards the evaluation of online science-communication activities is e.g. outlined by Dernbach/Schreiber (2012: 365), who cite several possible criteria: timeliness, objectivity, originality, relevancy, transparency, understandability, reliability and completeness. Where it makes sense, some of these will be used in aspect of the online-activities by the KNOTS project.

As Rödder (2017: 66) notes, an important issue of the successfulness of scientific communication concerns the topics: While some might easily attract attention, others, such as theoretical or methodological questions, do not. This could be a serious challenge for KNOTS, as it is engaging with Transdisciplinarity aspects and methods and could thus face a fate of unattractiveness (from a communicational point of view, of course). Rhomberg (2017: 412) therefore suggests that scientist should have an interest in learning strategic and effective

communication. This is also stressed by Könneker (2017: 467), who argues that especially researches need training and education in these aspects because politics and science organization would demand more understandable communication – they should know about the complexity of actors, interests, channels etc. and would therefore need professional training.

The internal communication in science (known as “scholarly communication”) has not yet been extensively researched, as Lüthje (2017: 110) points out; she notes that the focus lies on the external communication. This scholarly communication can be split into formal and informal: while formal means publications, writing articles or books, the informal (basically the unwritten) part is the rest and is based on unwritten rules that are incorporated and settled in during a researcher’s life but relevant so build ideas and socially engage with other scientists (see Lüthje 2017: 111-112).

A relatively new form of scientific communication is so-called “open access”, which means, that research results can be publicly viewed by everybody who is interested in them and has internet access. According to Rhomberg (2017: 409), it is already beginning to fundamentally change the nature of scientific communication. KNOTS is part of this, as Erasmus+ requires its projects to make their results open access and thus easily retrievable and accessible: “In particular, Erasmus+ beneficiaries are committed to make any educational resources and tools which are produced in the context of projects supported by the Programme [...] freely available for the public under an open license” (European Commission 2017: 8).

What should also be mentioned is the so-called “Third-Mission-Strategy” imposed by the University of Vienna (Universität Wien 2018a), which has – according to the University –

two main objectives: “The targeted use of scientific findings to cope with the broad variety of societal challenges” [translated by the author] and “the transfer of technology and innovation by cooperation with the economy” [translated by the author]. The second part is not really important for “KNOTS”, whereas the first one probably is. The University of Vienna divides this “Third-Mission-Strategy” into three categories: social and societal engagement, knowledge transfer as well as transfer of technology and innovation (Universität Wien 2018b). The “KNOTS” project is placed in the first category, where it is called “EU-Capacity Building Project in Higher Education.” There is also a link titled “Beschreibung” (meaning “description”) which leads to a three-page document, where the project is summarized. It also contains the internet address, but there is not Hyperlink that would lead to it (Universität Wien 2018c).

Since most of the literature engages with science communication in a disciplinary or interdisciplinary way, often separates between natural sciences and sciences of arts, the next chapter will describe Transdisciplinarity and its possible specialities in terms of scientific communication and will moreover discuss this in relation to the KNOTS project.

3. Methodology

The methodology to answer the research question derives from qualitative social sciences, whose programmatical character can, according to Lamnek (2010: 19), be described with the terms openness, research as communication, a processual character of research and subject, reflectivity of subject and analysis, explication and flexibility. According to Flick (2017: 26), the most important characteristics are the suitability of methods and theory concerning the subject, the analysis and consideration of various perspectives as well as the reflection by the researcher when it comes to research as part of scientific findings.

This methodological approach has been selected because of the open nature of this research and the given uncertainty before gathering empirical data, as this research tries to look at the broad picture of the dissemination of KNOTS and not just a certain single feature of it. The data used for the empirical analysis has been collected via interviews and a participating observation. Therefore, the methods used will be interview and participatory observation.

In terms of research ethics, as described by Flick (2009: 41-42) it is important to have consent by the research subjects and inform them about your overall research interest. In the case of this work, this includes the participants of the “dissemination”-workshop as well as interview partners. Moreover, confidentiality and anonymity play a major role, especially when it comes to the interviews. For example, if an interviewee frames a certain issue negatively, it should not be clear who that comes from, since the people involved in dissemination in the KNOTS project know each other and anonymous criticism that can be traced back to a person may cause conflicts. Therefore, and to guarantee that the interviewees will speak openly, this has to be made clear before the interview.

3.1. Interview

Qualitative interviews are, according to Lamnek (2010: 301) increasingly popular among researchers of various fields, one reason is, as he argues, that content analysis and interpretation of texts is dominant among qualitative sciences and therefore there is a vast number of techniques already available. Qualitative interviews are moreover, according to the same author, unbiased-authentic, intersubjectively comprehensible, and can be reproduced at will. These are advantages, a participatory observation does not have (Lamnek 2010: 301). However, especially a possible reproduction at will may be not easy to accomplish, as the surrounding conditions of an interview or other factors might influence follow-up interviews. Every interview is a social encounter and requires a minimum of trust on both sides. The

interviewee must be sure, that whatever they say will not be used against them in any way (Reichertz 2016: 188-189).

With reference to a diagram by Lamnek (2010: 303) the five interviews conducted for this paper can be characterized as qualitative, as they were non-standardized, verbal, soft/neutral, open, and face-to-face. Moreover, the interviews were analytical (Lamnek 2010: 305), meaning that they aim at examining a specific social issue. The interviews have been conducted openly and partly-standardized, and took between 15 and 25 Minutes. This type of interview is moreover characterized by open questions that the interviewee can answer in a broad manner, meaning that they can choose their answers and frames freely in a given context. This means, that the starting question is somewhat of a request to freely talk about a topic, the interviewer then proceeds to build the interview upon the answers or has similar open questions for back-up in case the interviewee runs out of ideas or stops talking (Lamnek 2010: 310). As Dannecker/ Vossemer (2014: 159) describe, this type of interview is characterized by open questions and a flexible nature, resulting in a possible dynamic interview. The interviews turned out to be just slightly dynamic, as there have been just a few meanderings to the questions prepared before the interview.

Two interviews for this research paper have been conducted during a dissemination workshop on 15 and 16 July, one during the summer school in Chiang Mai on 17 July and one after the field trips on July, 29 – they lasted between 15 and 23 minutes. These dates have not been systematically chosen; the interviews took place when there was a suitable opportunity to do so. The initial aim was to interview one partner from each participating HEI, but this was dismissed soon because it seemed that one person from each origin country was within research resources. Therefore, one participant from each origin country involved was interviewed, which resulted in interviews with one person from Austria, Germany, Czech

Republic, Thailand and Vietnam. It probably would have been better to interview one person from each HEI, as there are two from Thailand and three from Vietnam, but only one person from each of those interviewed. Three interviews have been conducted during breaks in the dissemination seminars and were therefore time-limited – there should have been a setting chosen where there was more time available. The first interview, for example, has been interrupted by the seminar lecturer and had to be continued in the next break. This rooted in a need by the author to get interviews fast to focus on the summer school, but turned out to be not a suitable strategy, as the rest of the interviews were conducted after the workshop, which means that two people have been interviewed with the additional knowledge from the workshop, whereas three during the workshop, which may have had effects on certain answers, perspectives or knowledge issues. It is also uncertain, if and to what possible extent the personal relationship between author and interviewees might have had an impact on certain answers, as the author was part of the dissemination workshop and was on a first-name basis with all respondents. It is also possible that the author got influenced in one way or another by the surroundings, which also may have an impact on the research. Getting assurance of this, is however practically impossible and can therefore only be kept in mind. So, for future research, these matters have to be improved. Moreover, language difficulties by some interviewees posed a challenge for the empirical analysis, as many parts were not understandable for the author and could therefore not be used for analysis.

3.2. Participatory Observation

According to Brüsemeister (2000: 83) various forms of observations can be distinguished: participatory and non-participatory, hidden and open, systematic and un-systematic. During the dissemination workshop in Chiang Mai, the observation was participatory, open and probably un-systematic. During the summer school, it was probably hidden because not all participants knew about the research project. In participatory terms,

there can be various forms, ranging from total participator to total observer (Brüsemeister 2000: 84). He mentions that usually researchers apply a mixture of these approaches and vary them situationally. An important aspect Brüsemeister (2000: 86-87) stresses, is the fact that a (self-) reflection of the consequences of the participation of the researchers has to be done, since the acts of the scientist could affect the other participants and vice versa. Lüders (2004: 386) indicates the dilemma of being a distant observer that follows scientific standards and acting socially and culturally appropriate in the role as participant. Therefore, a (self-)reflection will be part of the empirical analysis.

Most importantly, a detailed protocol, consisting of notes, impressions and methodological and theoretical considerations, guarantees a meaningful and distant analysis after the observation, experiences that are not written in the protocol cannot be used scientifically. It provides the basis for intersubjective comparativeness. Reichertz (2016: 213-214) argues that a researcher should see themselves as some form of camera, that films what is happening from a distance and then takes it all home for analysis.

In terms of analysis, a researcher is confronted with her or his own subjectivity and material they gathered by her- or himself, thus not only the observation of other participants is relevant but also the researcher's behaviour ought to be analysed. (Self-)reflectivity can relieve these problems and dilemmas, and therefore impose an important part of the empirical analysis. Of course, these methodological problems can never be fully overcome (Reichertz 2016: 215).

The dissemination workshop took place on July, 15 and 16 in Chiang Mai, where a person, responsible for dissemination, from each partner HEI participated. The author partly participated in the workshop and wrote a protocol. Participation and reporting posed a

challenge but delivered valuable insights in the dissemination team and processes. However, as the observation protocol fluctuates in terms of details, it would have been reasonable to get more familiar with the method of participatory observation beforehand, which would doubtless have increased the quality of the protocol.

3.3. Content Analysis

A content analysis systematically examines written data, the differentiation between quantitative and qualitative is mostly tough, as they usually, according to Deutschmann (2014: 95) incorporate aspects and approaches of each other. However, quantitative approaches have been dominant for a long time and criticized for being positivistic and hypothesis-following. Qualitative content analysis-approaches were then established, as they aim more towards the finding of latent structures of meaning (Deutschmann 2014: 95-96). Key is a systematic organization and structuring of data and a transparency concerning the rules and processes that have been engaged – this should guarantee an intersubjective comprehension (Deutschmann 2014: 97).

A central approach should be the development of categories derived from the data, meaning an inductive way of analysis. A mixture of deductive and inductive analysis, as the theoretical framework will most likely inspire or deliver a certain extent of categories, is also possible. A text is carefully scanned while looked for suitable categories. For example, as Deutschmann (2014: 101) writes, a category can come from a key term or sentence. It is possible that a number of categories can be put together, subsumed or summarized.

A vital part that has to be done before building categories, is, according to Mayring (2015: 55), an analysis of the person that has gathered the data and the circumstances under it has been produced: This includes the author, their emotional and cognitive behavioural

background, the target group (for which the material has been gathered), the situation where the data has been collected and the sociocultural background. The steps for an effective content analysis are outlined by Mayring (2015: 62) and will serve as basic reference to the empirical analysis of this work.

A crucial step for the analysis will be the interpretation of the gathered data: For this work, a structuring approach, as outlined by Mayring (2015: 67), seems to be suitable, as the goal here is to filter certain aspects of the material or to evaluate the material based on (pre-made) structuring criteria. As already mentioned, a mixture of both types seems to be applicable for this work. Part of the empirical analysis is moreover a constant process of (Self) reflection, which, as outlined above, is vital for good qualitative research.

4. Empirical Analysis

The empirical analysis resulted in three main categories with three to four sub-categories and will be described in the following section. However, as these categories seem to have many interlinkages, they will be synthesised afterwards and connected between theoretical assumptions and the analysis of the gathered data. What follows, is a short depiction of the dissemination activities of the project until Mid-February, 2019. For reasons of anonymity, the interviewees will be described as “European” and “Asian” because there may be differences in perception due to possible relations of power or understandings of certain issues.

4.1. Categories

4.1.1 Surrounding Conditions

This category describes the surrounding conditions of dissemination in the KNOTS project, including EU-policy (e.g. guidelines), the respective universities and institutes, KNOTS

itself and time (the latter may be present in most of the categories, however, and is therefore hard to assign a certain category – it is therefore implemented in the respective categories when suitable).

(1) EU-Policy

One interviewee from a European country explains, that certain criteria have to be fulfilled, otherwise the EU would not accept it as dissemination and there has not been enough time in the project to discuss this properly. The same interviewee also mentions a certain top-down attitude by the EU, saying that it has the understanding that the European universities would bring the expertise to the partners in Asia, whereas from his point of view, the latter would have more knowledge on the relevant topics, such as TD. Another interviewee, also from Europe, says that in the beginning of the project, the general understanding of the need to disseminate was to do it simply because the EU demands it – dissemination was a “mechanic” process. Moreover, he explains, that also his university partly told them to do dissemination because of the demands by the EU, divesting responsibilities. This means that the project partners did not think of dissemination as a valuable part of the project, but as a necessity for the European Union who provides funding. This might indicate, why there may have been little effort for proper dissemination in the beginning of the project. However, the second interviewee mentions, that a midterm report assigned the project an “excellent dissemination” – he finds this “interesting”. He furthermore suggests to change this attitude and to highlight the advantages of dissemination for the respective universities, institutes and for oneself. During the dissemination workshop, the participants outlined the issue of EU regulation and guidelines and suggested, that everyone involved in dissemination has to know these formal criteria.

(2) Universities and Institutes

The conditions in the respective universities and institutes also affect the dissemination process and activities, as the interviews have shown. One European interviewee says that his Institute is bad at dissemination and that he has little experience in dissemination. He therefore wishes for more support or even training from departments of his university that are responsible for dissemination. Another European interviewee thinks that their university is glad to be in the project and their institute director is happy about it, “but it’s not that someone comes to us and says ‘this is such a great thing’”. An Asian interviewee wishes to have more support from her university concerning the dissemination process. She says, she has to persuade the university director, make the project more appealing and highlight the benefits for the university to get support and better funding. Another interviewee from Asia says that the executives at her institute do not understand what Transdisciplinarity means, which makes it hard to properly explain the project and say why it might be important. The language barrier also imposes a challenge at her university, as most of the KNOTS content is written in English.

This could mean that respective universities and institutions should more engage in the projects and support their staff, maybe motivate them by providing platforms to share their research or improve their dissemination skills by offering training. It seems that there are executives in some universities that have problems with the concept of Transdisciplinarity and may not understand the purpose of the project, which may be an additional barrier for effective dissemination of KNOTS. However, there is need for more detailed data to analyse this aspect properly.

(3) KNOTS

The conditions in the context of KNOTS itself consist of interlinked categories such as organization, coordination, planning, internal communication and division of work. A European interviewee mentions that there has been no real plan in the beginning of the project and that

they did not outline who does what, which resulted in a lack of coordination, as no dissemination schedule was formed or discussed – everyone relied on each other that they know what to do. Both, he and another European respondent, see time as important here, as there was not enough available to properly discuss these issues. This became evident during the dissemination workshop, as a number of participants from both continents still did not know about the roles they are supposed to play respectively what kind of work they ought to do – halfway into the project. When finding people to be responsible for future dissemination, there were initially only three people volunteering. An Asian respondent for example says that at the beginning of the project she thought that her university would not be expected to do dissemination and just coordinate other activities. An Asian interviewee also mentions time being too short. The partners did not know each other at the beginning, so it was more important to get to know each other than to discuss dissemination in detail. This led to a lack of internal communication, what both another European and an Asian interviewee confirm by stating that they were not really connected to each other and it was not visible who disseminates what. This correlates with the division of work, as the same interviewee says that it is not clear who does dissemination. A respondent from Asia furthermore says that some partners are more involved in dissemination than others and that one could force nobody to do more. Another interviewee from Asia says that there is not really a collaborative dissemination happening, meaning that each partner only does dissemination in their respective universities. This may indicate a need for better cooperation and clearance in regards to division of work. This lack of cooperation or coordination was exemplified during the summer school, when a group of students published live-videos on Facebook without prior asking – this led to a short discussion and caused some turbulence because some participants did not want their oral contribution publicly displayed because there were political issues discussed, which could become problematic. Many participants voiced concerns about openness.

There has been some kind of dissemination plan, which has been written by a person from the University of Vienna. This plan, however, was, according to an interviewee from Europe, more some kind of documentation of a variety of activities than a clear dissemination plan. His sole contribution to this plan was agreeing on certain dates for activities like the summer school. He says, that it has not been very useful and it played a very small role for his activities. An interviewee from Asia states that there are not many activities at the plan, that they are behind the timeline and that the plan is not very specific – it also did not play a role in her dissemination activities. Another interviewee from Europe, who got late into the project, did not even know that this plan existed. However, during the dissemination workshop, a new idea for a more comprehensive plan with all partners involved emerged, which, according to an interviewee from Europe, could become useful. This plan goes with a responsible core-team that has been formed during the workshop, where one person from each partner was assigned as responsible for dissemination, while the rest is in a supportive function – and all partners agreed to work together more closely to make this work. A different one from the same continent hopes that this somewhat enhanced approach, where everybody knows their roles and expectations could improve all aspects of dissemination – only if all partners are willing to think about what they can do in their respective context. It is unclear if this approach is going to work out, since they tried similar things in the beginning such as a monthly reminder for participation or a mutual google-docs-file, but both failed because of a lack of commitment by the partners.

4.1.2 State of Knowledge

This category is about the knowledge in dissemination and Transdisciplinarity among the partners and their effects on dissemination activities. Power relations is furthermore put in this category, as they might result from a lack of knowledge or from different ways of knowledge productions, given the mixed cultural backgrounds of the partners. However, as

the field of knowledge production is a very complex one, it will not go too deep here and focus primarily on the power relations itself and not on the reasons for them.

(1) Dissemination and Transdisciplinarity

One respondent from Europe says that there have been many different understandings of what dissemination and Transdisciplinarity is and that they should have been discussed at the beginning so everybody knew what these terms mean. A different European respondent argues similar by saying that nobody was really experienced in dissemination, himself included: “There was a basic lack of understanding the importance of dissemination, somehow it just perished at the beginning”. Another interviewee from Europe mentions a lack of knowledge concerning Transdisciplinarity and dissemination and therefore feels unsecure to disseminate transdisciplinary matters for example via a lecture. According to this person, there was a general lack of understanding these terms and most of the people involved have not been familiar with Transdisciplinarity prior to KNOTS. A respondent from Asia says that the non-understanding of it poses a constant challenge, as this is the number one question she receives from people outside the project or during train- the- trainer sessions: “What is Transdisciplinarity?” Many would mix it up with other things or think it is the same as Interdisciplinarity, even their own staff at her university: “They still see TD as a knowledge network, so they put everything in the knowledge”. She adds, that people understand the project KNOTS, but not that it is linked to Transdisciplinarity. She sees it as a possible task for the dissemination team to come up with ideas of how to explain it properly so everybody understands. A European respondent thinks that the dissemination workshop helped to improve the understanding of dissemination, its purpose and benefits for all as well as its importance in the context of Transdisciplinarity. The more one understands something, the better will the dissemination about it be.

The workshop itself depicted the need for it, as many participants expressed their lack of knowledge towards dissemination, as most had no experience in it and did not put too much thought in it. Some thought that they would just make some social media posts or write some texts, and it will be enough. Most of them also did not consult the initial plan and did not seem to know the actual target groups of the project, as there was some confusion during the workshop. It seems that the workshop has sharpened and expanded their knowledge, and it is up to them to further enhance this knowledge, as a two-day workshop is not enough to develop skills in this field.

(2) Power Relations

As previously mentioned, power relations might result from different levels of knowledge, access to certain sources or different ways of knowledge production and might correlate with cultural backgrounds of the people involved. The general lack of knowledge concerning dissemination and/ or Transdisciplinarity among most of the participants interviewed have already been outlined. What all respondents agree with is, that debates happen on an equal level – but besides that, experiences differ. One interviewee from Europe says that he does not feel that there are different levels of power, but different levels of understanding. However, he says that the European Union thinks of the European partners bringing the knowledge to the Asian partners, meaning that there would be not a mutual exchange of knowledge intended, but a one-sided – this may result from the EU providing funding for the project. When it comes to the dissemination process, another interviewee from Europe also says that there are no power hierarchies. One respondent from Asia, however, does feel a power hierarchy in the process of dissemination. Another interviewee from Asia answers similar, saying that she feels a power relation also on an institutional level, as many would see that it is the European universities that “tell us what we have to do”. She moreover mentions the midterm-report and explains that it is not her work that is rated there, but mostly

that from the European universities – she would have liked to get more involved in the activities. Another interviewee from Europe also feels power hierarchies and mentions the term “ownership”, which is probably linked to these experiences. He says that it did not go well, as many partners thought that they have to disseminate because the European universities expect it from them. He therefore says that this idea of ownership should have been pushed more in the beginning and that he himself also reckoned this top-down approach and let all partners do what they thought was suitable.

But there are more visible power relations: During the field trips executed in Thailand, in July 2018, every group had to assign a “responsible person” (a student) and a “responsible person quality report” (an academic senior). Although every group consisted of people from nearly all partner institutions, only a person from Europe could be assigned to one of these positions. This means that people from Asia were excluded and could not become responsible for these reports.

It appears that there are (slightly) different views on power hierarchies between Asian and European interviewees. The reason may be a combination of institutional conditions, ownership and access to/levels of knowledge. Levels of knowledge concerning dissemination is similarly small among nearly all partners. It could be that a lack of skills and knowledge in this field prevented a formation of ownership, which means that the partners independently disseminate in their environments, knowing what they do. Instead, it seems that they waited for someone telling them how to act or simply disseminate at will, without a sophisticated plan. This basic understanding is a key factor for self-motivation and the successfulness of dissemination, as one respondent from Europe mentioned. However, as already outlined previously, power relations have to be examined in greater detail and from other perspectives

to guarantee a valuable analysis. Therefore, this section could be seen as a starting point for future research in this direction.

4.1.3 External Communication

This category describes the external communication done by the project members and is based on the interviews as well as a general description of what has been disseminated so far (or: what has been recorded and sighted by the author). It starts off with the sub-category “Channels”, proceeds to “Target groups” and then outlines the dissemination activities so far.

(1) Channels

This sub-category is about the channels used for dissemination, and goes hand-in-hand with other categories, such as knowledge (as extensive knowledge on dissemination probably influences the choice of channel). Facebook is mentioned by a number of interviewees and seems to be important – one interviewee from Europe says that at the beginning of the project many people thought that sharing information, for example on Facebook, would be enough for dissemination. Another respondent from Europe mentions that his Institute has a quite modest website and no Facebook- Account and wishes to have greater access to the communication channels of his university, for example the university newspaper. Another respondent from Europe used E-Mail-groups, the Facebook-page of the Institute and the website to disseminate some information. An interviewee from Asia mentions the Facebook page and the website of her institute as well. The same counts for a different interviewee from Asia who refers to an online blog run by her institute to disseminate certain texts; she additionally says that each project partner would have their own dissemination channel, but they barely communicate them with each other – she calls for a change, as the choice of channel is important to reach the intended audience.

During the dissemination workshop, the attendees discussed the creation of an open access-platform where relevant project outcomes or other material is put online for everyone interested. According to a European person involved in the project, this platform is currently [February 2019] under construction and is expected to go online by Autumn 2019. The platform is ought to provide a basis for network building and should serve as an important channel for dissemination activities. The main problem, according to the same person, as he said during an interview, is to finance the maintenance of this platform and keep it updated.

It therefore seems that online channels are in the focus of the partners, as almost all of them mentioned their Facebook-activities when asked about channels. The main KNOTS-channel is hosted by the University of Vienna, while from the other partners (except one, who have no Facebook-account) one person has full access to the page. Some interviewees moreover mentioned that they use the channels of their institutions or universities for communication.

(2) Target Groups

This category describes, how the interviewees understood and approached the target groups and how these affected their dissemination habits. One respondent from Europe says that he finds that there were misconceptions about the target groups, because the whole project would be about Transdisciplinarity and not about a specific topic, such as migration. Therefore, he argues, the main target groups are students and faculty members in the Asian partner institutions (he specifically mentions Asian here because he refers to his prior arguments about the top-down approach by the EU).

Another European interviewee mentions that there was no feedback received from target groups addressed and not strategy for dissemination used at all: "I didn't get any

reactions for dissemination that we did because I think people saw it and said ‘O.K.’, but that’s it”. However, as the interviewee continues, they tried different approaches on different target groups, such as talking with fellow researchers and giving them information (which they then put on their website) or trying to bring a student to the next summer school. A respondent from Asia says that the executives at her university are interested in the project because she talked and explained it to them quite often. She also targeted students who are in Master- or PhD-programmes and lecturers to implement Transdisciplinarity into their research. One task was also the recruitment of students for the summer school and field trips. Another interviewee from Asia thinks that in her university and institute, the messages need to be simple, understandable and linked with local people, then more will know about the idea of Transdisciplinarity and the project. This call for simplification is also mentioned by a European interviewee, which adds that the content needs to be adapted in relation to the target groups. He sees the target group of students, recruiting them for the summer school in both Europe and Asia, as successfully addressed, as they may incorporate Transdisciplinarity in their future research. Apart from the student group, he says that he also received positive feedback from other academic staff. He moreover emphasizes the need to consider non-academic actors as an important target group for dissemination and ask them about the content they want. During the workshop, the participants agreed to some sort of consensus to simply talk more about the project, mention and cite it.

It appears that the experiences of the respondents from their target groups were mixed, as it seems that especially on an institutional level, their activities have just been taken note of and not supported too well. One problem, as many interviewees explained, could be the complex and maybe abstract nature of Transdisciplinarity, which might be hard to explain to a person not involved in the project – this should probably be tackled soon, as explaining this to the different target groups may be vital for an effective dissemination. This means, that

relevant content has to be adapted to the respective target group because a non-academic actor might need to be addressed differently than a senior academic staff. It also seems that the specific target groups have been considered just partially, as some mentioned their approaches toward students and fellow researchers, and others, in correlation with channels, have just posted something online or on Facebook to a “broader” audience. The target group of non-academic actors has not been mentioned by any interviewee and does not seem to be an intended receiver of specific dissemination activities. However, if there was an interaction with target groups such as students or fellow researchers, especially during the summer schools and field trips, a push for dialogue and participation can be asserted, which, according to the theoretical framework, is important for an effective scientific communication. This, again, does not count for non-academic actors, who have not participated in a mentionable way.

(3) Dissemination Activities

This category is about the dissemination activities, as outlined by the interviewees and will then head to a short overview of the reported activities, based on internal documents forwarded to the author. All respondents mentioned Facebook as their main channel for communicating their activities, some added their respective websites. An interviewee from Europe says that nearly all activities have been planned in the beginning of the project, which led to a lack of innovation and ownership because this approach did not support the idea that everybody considers, what they might do in their respective context and how. A different interviewee from Europe describes two seminars he held together with a colleague about the summer school and the issue of Transdisciplinarity/KNOTS. He initially didn't think of it as dissemination, but changed this view during the workshop. He moreover mentions documentation work as dissemination, such as writing protocols or creating photo protocols. He specifically mentions the staff from the University of Vienna and says that they did good

work during the summer school by posting regular updates on Facebook. His activities furthermore include information evenings, where he informed (and persuaded) students about the summer school. Generally, he rates the dissemination activities until the dissemination workshop as insufficient. Another respondent from Europe rates their dissemination as very low – sending some information to E-Mail-groups and posting it on the department's Facebook page. The person would therefore be interested in receiving some information on what other project partners, especially in Asia, disseminate. One interviewee from Asia also states that the general dissemination activities would not be good so far because they are behind the timeline. She says that her dissemination activities were publishing Facebook-posts, posting something on the website and recruiting students for the summer school. Another respondent from Asia adds that the dissemination activities between the eight partners still do not happen systematically. She says that besides Facebook-posts and website-updates, her institute also runs a blog with articles written by students about the summer schools. She furthermore thinks that the dissemination activities have slightly improved before and during the second summer school and were successful in a way that now at least more people understand, what Transdisciplinarity may be.

According to a person with access to the KNOTS Facebook-page, there have been 226 Postings made between 15/05/2017 and 19/02/2019, whereas each post had at least one picture or video. Ten videos have been produced and posted in nearly one-week intervals on the Facebook page from November 2018 to Mid-January 2019. These videos gained a median of 55.5 views and 2.5 likes and do not seem to be professionally produced, as the quality of audio, video and editing does not appear to be very high. Moreover, according to the same source, 340 pictures have been posted. The frequent use of pictures, regular postings on current events and quick reply to Facebook-messages may be a sign for an effective use of

Social Media, as it fulfils quality criteria for online science-communication such as timeliness, originality, completeness or relevancy, as depicted in the theoretical framework.

According to the dissemination plan, which displays dissemination activities and has been updated after the dissemination workshop by adding some columns in an Excel-sheet (which are now: What – To Whom – How – When – Who is responsible – Planned Metrics – Actual Metrics – Documentation), there are currently [End of February, 2019] 80 dissemination activities reported for the whole project. These include seminars, articles, blog posts, talks, workshops, flyers or postings with pictures and videos on Facebook. It seems that there is still either a lack of documentation or a lack of equally distributed dissemination activities, as the numbers highly differ between the project partners. The university of Vienna, for example, logged 24 activities, while CMU logged only three, SISS 11 or CU six. It may be that these numbers do not depict the actual dissemination activities, as it is likely that many activities are not documented, such as talks with colleagues or university executives. It is therefore hard to tell, how much dissemination each partner actually does because of a lack of documentation – about half of the logged activities, moreover, do not show the actual metrics. However, it appears that this updated approach, rooting in the dissemination workshop, led to a bit more coordination and clearer division of roles, as it is now apparent, which person is responsible for a certain activity and what the goal of this activity should be. But, as already outlined, with only a partial documentation it is hard to get a grip on the activities of all partners.

4.2. Synthesis of Categories

The categories outlined above have many interlinkages, it therefore seems suitable to connect them. The most pivotal category is probably the state of knowledge concerning Transdisciplinarity and dissemination, as all respondents said that they had little knowledge on dissemination and not enough on Transdisciplinarity to properly communicate its matters. This

lack of knowledge affected the external communication in particular, as there was no sophisticated plan or strategy applied. It also may be the reason for some power relations, because somebody who knows little about a certain topic may easily be directed by others – therefore having negative impact on ownership, relying on actors that have presumably more knowledge. This, again, may be caused by a lack of time, as many interviewees have complained about. It seems that there is a general consensus that more time would have led to a more detailed discussion about dissemination and Transdisciplinarity, which would then lead to an improved dissemination. Many respondents have also mentioned power relations on an institutional level, saying that many university executives or some EU-contact persons may have little understanding of Transdisciplinarity – improving this costs time that could be used for the project instead. Moreover, there are also internal power relations mentioned especially by interviewees from Asia: Some feel that the European partners, especially the University of Vienna, do the most and that they would tell them what to do, they feel somewhat excluded – this may be rooted in the University of Vienna being somewhat of a general manager for the project. Therefore, for a successful dissemination, it would probably be wise to reduce these power gaps to increase ownership of the partners, which may lead to an improved motivation and self-confidence among the project partners. It would also improve the internal communication between the project partners, because, as outlined previously, some interviewees see much potential there for improvement (some have argued that they would not know what the other partners were doing). This is, again, linked with knowledge and the surrounding conditions of the project, because, as outlined in the theoretical part of this work, a proper internal communication heavily affects the outcomes produced.

5. Summary and Outlook

The interviews and the protocol of the dissemination workshop have shown that the dissemination in the KNOTS project could still be described as work-in-progress, evidently seen

in the different understandings of mainly dissemination and partly Transdisciplinarity, which serve as obstacles for an effective dissemination strategy and implementation. During the dissemination workshop, there was a general confusion observable, about roles, division of work, responsibilities and the topic of dissemination specifically. It seems that there is not a mutual strategy for dissemination, but many different approaches – this counts especially for the time before the dissemination workshop: A European partner wrote an initial dissemination plan, which he created on the basis of other projects, the partners inserted some activities and time stamps and then everybody did what they thought would be suitable as dissemination. As one might expect, it resulted in the mostly negatively reviewed dissemination activities, including internal communication, as expressed by the respondents. An effective internal communication, however, as outlined in the theoretical framework, is key to an effective external communication. Furthermore, there did not seem to be a lot of motivation to get creative and come up with sophisticated ideas for dissemination, because, as some interviewees mentioned, they thought of dissemination as a kind of chore to do because the European Union wants it – there was no understanding, that it actually helps the project and all partners involved and is vital to the successfulness of project KNOTS. The workshop was therefore needed and may have helped to clarify the roles and expectations for each partner and get a better understanding for dissemination and its importance; it also includes a basic goal-setting of the activities by adding target groups, channels, responsible person and metrics. After the workshop, the participants seemed to have a better understanding, which may increase the quality and organization of future activities. It could also help to empower the role of communicators within an organization, as Grunig et al. describe it, which is outlined in the theoretical framework; empowerment of communicators involved is therefore a key for an effective dissemination. It seems that there is still some work to do to get full empowerment and ownership in the project, as some complained about power hierarchies, but if all partners try to get rid of them, it may increase the quality of

dissemination. However, as the document, where the dissemination activities are recorded shows, there still [six months after the workshop] seems to be not too much effort in letting the project partners know what everyone is doing and how the actual metrics are, as some partners seem to disseminate way more than others. But: These numbers probably do not tell much about the quality of the dissemination activities, which may be more important than just the quantity of activities.

Finally, it appears that the quality and processes of dissemination of project KNOTS will not change fundamentally for the last period of the project, although the workshop may have improved it slightly. This is due to the little time left and the time that has already gone past. Moreover, the people responsible for dissemination have little experience in this field and learning the necessary skills takes time. However, the experiences from KNOTS can be very useful for future projects, where the aspects of dissemination are greatly discussed and outlined at the beginning, so everyone is on the same denominator. This may include the help of external communication experts, which could guide future project partners and be in constant touch with them.

This quality of the activities can, however, not be analysed in detail, as there is no specific data available for many activities. The many various forms of dissemination, such as the high number of Facebook-posts, a number of articles or presentations posed a challenge for this work; the analysis of each of them would have been very resource intense and therefore it was not done as planned in the beginning of this research. The interviews have been the main source for analysis. It should therefore be analysed in a more comprehensive follow-up study. Or: A new series of interviews, six months after the first ones, with similar but further going questions, would be great for a comparison between the dissemination activities and organizational aspects between pre- and post- workshop, to see if it had an actual impact.

This, however, is far beyond the resources and demands of this work. The same counts for a detailed analysis of all the dissemination activities by the project partners, such as posts, articles or reports. This work can therefore provide a basis for future and more in-depth analysis of the dissemination by the KNOTS project or provide a basis for the research on similar transdisciplinary projects' dissemination. Following this, another interesting aspect, which was also beyond the research logistics for this work, would be the comparison between KNOTS and other transdisciplinary projects in terms of dissemination: How does KNOTS disseminate, and how does Project X or Y disseminate, who does what well or not so well and how do they each understand and implement their dissemination?

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Application of Transdisciplinary Approach in Studying Social Inequality between Migrants and Non-migrants in Binh Tan district Binh Tan District, Ho Chi Minh City and Environment Issues in Tra Cu District, Tra Vinh, Vietnam

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Abstract

Transdisciplinary is a new approach which is the bridge between different disciplines to directly participate in making and using non-academic knowledge. What makes this approach special is the participation of academic and non-academic sectors throughout the research process. Social inequality and environment issues require more than a single discipline to solve the problems, hence, transdisciplinary research is considered the best approach. This paper aims to clarify transdisciplinary approach and the application of this approach in studying social inequality in Binh Tan district, Ho Chi Minh city and environment issues in Tra Cu district, Tra Vinh, Vietnam, from which some discussions are made on the effectiveness as well as prospective challenges in the setting of a specific research. Using mainly qualitative methods, data collection and observation was implemented during the Summer School and Field Trip programme under KNOTS project in March 2019.

Keyword: Transdisciplinarity, Transdisciplinary research, Social Inequality, Migrant Worker, Environment

1. Introduction

Migration plays an important role in developing household, regional and national economy. What is more, migrants' remittance to their hometown is one of the main resources for rural development. Remittance is a main source of income for many rural households and contributes to improving living standards (Nguyen et al., 2008). Besides, a large number of migrant feels that after migrating, their job and income are much better compared before migrating. However, apart from beneficial aspects of migration, migrants are also facing difficulties in accessing social services such as housing, children's schooling, applying for loan for production development, lacking in emotional, elderly and children health care (UNFPA, 2016). Those difficulties have created inequality in access to social services between migrants and local residents.

Binh Tan District is located in the west of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam as a peri-urban area characterized by a combination of rural and urban activities. Binh Tan has seen rapid industrialization and urbanization with the development of industrial parks, household businesses and high labor demand. Binh Tan population grew from 253,364 people in 2003 to 629,368 people in 2012 and 702,650 people in 2018, making the district the most populated in Ho Chi Minh City. Migrants contribute more than half of the population (51.1%), 70% of whom are originally from the Mekong River Delta.

On the other hand, under the impact of climate change, Vietnam is reported to be one of the most vulnerable countries to sea level increase. As a result, various areas in the country have endured natural disasters, including floods, drought, saltwater intrusion, and landslides. The Mekong River Delta, located in the southwest of Vietnam, is the largest area in the country to be negatively affected by this phenomenon due to its unique geographical and social characteristics. Among the 13 provinces of the delta, Tra Vinh is a coastal province with the

highest poverty rate (GSO, 2011), and a large number of Khmer and Hoa people living beside the dominant Kinh ethnic group. These characteristics make the province a suitable place to study vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. Tra Cu district is one of the coastal districts in the province and among poorest districts in the area. Salinity intrusion and water scarcity have been persistent issues for years, affecting agriculture production and livelihoods of local people. Tra Cu has a diversified social characteristics and agricultural activities with three ethnic groups Kinh, Hoa and Khmer doing practicing different farming based on the salinity level in water.

Various adaptation measures from collective, large-scale to small-scale, individual methods have been implemented in the area in order to mitigate the situation, however, the area remained vulnerable to salinity risks. In the year 2016, saline level measured in main rivers in Tra Vinh was ranging from 7.5‰ to 13.6‰, damaging 23,690 hectares of rice crops, bringing diseases to shrimps and snakehead fishes in many districts with Tra Cu being among most severely affected districts (Hien, 2016).

Both social inequality and environment issues concerns different aspects and the involvement of various stakeholders. Hence, transdisciplinary approach turned out to be the suitable approach to study, but also to find out real life solution to these issues.

2. KNOTS Project and Data Sources

KNOTS Project (Fostering multi-lateral knowledge networks of transdisciplinary studies to tackle global challenges) was established in October 2016 and funded by the European Commission's Erasmus+ programme. This project aims to initiate a new perspective on transdisciplinary research in social sciences, hence strengthen the methodology, build capacity in social science research and training, at the same time consult development policy as well as

develop teaching manuals and learning material on transdisciplinary research in participant countries, including Vietnam.

The project has organized three summer school programs in the period 2017-2019 with the participation of researchers, experts and scholars from research institutes and universities from Austria, Germany, Czech Republic, Thailand and Vietnam. The first summer school took place in Hanoi (Vietnam) in 2017, the second in Chiangmai (Thailand) in 2018. The third and last summer school was held in Ho Chi Minh city in March 2019. Each program consists of two parts: theory (lectures, presentation, teamwork) and practice (fieldwork). Project KNOTS evolves around the topic of social inequality, climate change and migration.

In the last summer school, we spent 5 days in Binh Tan district, Ho Chi Minh city and Tra Cu district, Tra Vinh province to learn about social inequality and salinity intrusion in selected areas with transdisciplinary approach. We were two groups of 13 and 12 members each, who were staff and students participating the program from different countries. We also had two translators for each group throughout the fieldwork process. Hence, findings on the application of transdisciplinary approach in this paper were based on the data collected after 5 days in Binh Tan and Tra Vinh by two groups of which the authors were members.

3. Conceptualization and transdisciplinary research process

3.1 Transdisciplinary Research

Transdisciplinary research is a new term and concept that is widely used nowadays in various fields in the world. The term 'transdisciplinary research' has been used ambiguously when the academia has not agreed on a shared conceptualization. According to Stokols et al. (2013), transdisciplinary research is an integrated process where scientists, non-scientists and non-academic participants work together to build and use a new approach to concept and

methodology in order to synthesize and broaden perspectives, theories and methods of specific disciplines. Besides, the aim is also to come up with innovative solutions to scientific and specific practical problems.

3.2 Transdisciplinary Research Process

Transdisciplinary research process is an integration of a ‘real-world-focused approach’ and a ‘science-focused approach’ (Bergmann M. et al., 2012). That means it combines the participation of experts from practical, social fields and scientists throughout the research process. In other words, it is the engagement of non-academic actors and academic actors. In that process, researchers and practice actors need to work together (Bergmann M. et al, 2012). Besides, if solutions to real world problems are to achieve, participants also have to solve them together with scientific problems. This outcome adds to the body of knowledge and can be used to solve real social issues.

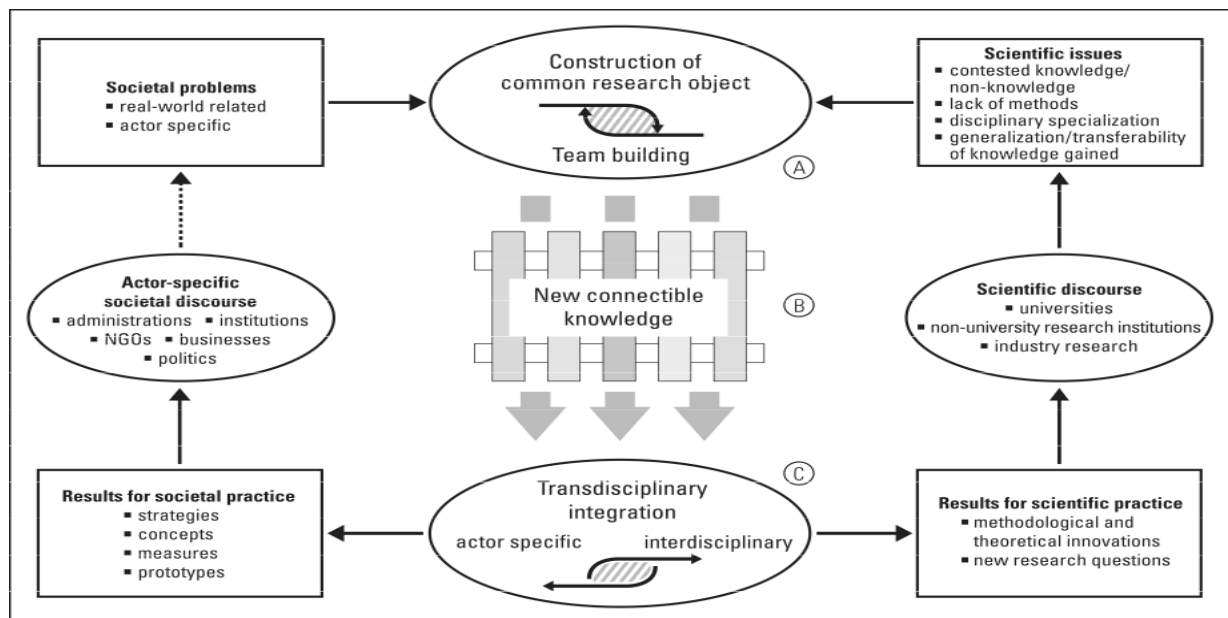


Figure 1: Transdisciplinary Research Process – An Integrated Approach

Source: Jahn, Th. (2008)

All in all, transdisciplinary process consists of three stages: (A) Framing; (B) Research process implementation; (C) Outcome. In step A, the collaborative research team (including scientists and related stakeholders) work together to decide on the research problem from which research methods can be implemented. In this stage, it is necessary to form a research team of both academics and non-academics. Through discussion among team members, research questions are also developed during this stage. In stage B, appropriate roles being assigned to academics and non-academics according to their interests, need, wishes as well as fear is emphasized. Especially, new knowledge will be produced by the collaboration of academics and non-academics. In stage C, the outcome of the research process can be different knowledge: system knowledge that provides understanding of a complex problem, target knowledge that orients the understanding of an issue, or transformative knowledge that transforms a certain issue towards a desired outcome (Ruppert-Winkel et al., 2015). The most important thing in this stage is the participation of non-academics (practitioners), which they can use created knowledge in policy making discussion or in direct actions. For academics (scientists), the point is they can use the outcome to have influence on policy making discussion and the produce new knowledge by publicizing papers in journals.

4. The application of transdisciplinary approach

4.1. Analytical framework

With data collected in the field, the authors have built and used two analytical frameworks for analyzing data, which can be seen below. We bear in mind that the research process was implemented in an experimental context, hence findings we will present later in this paper are just initial, and further usage as well as implications of this data should be taken with careful consideration.

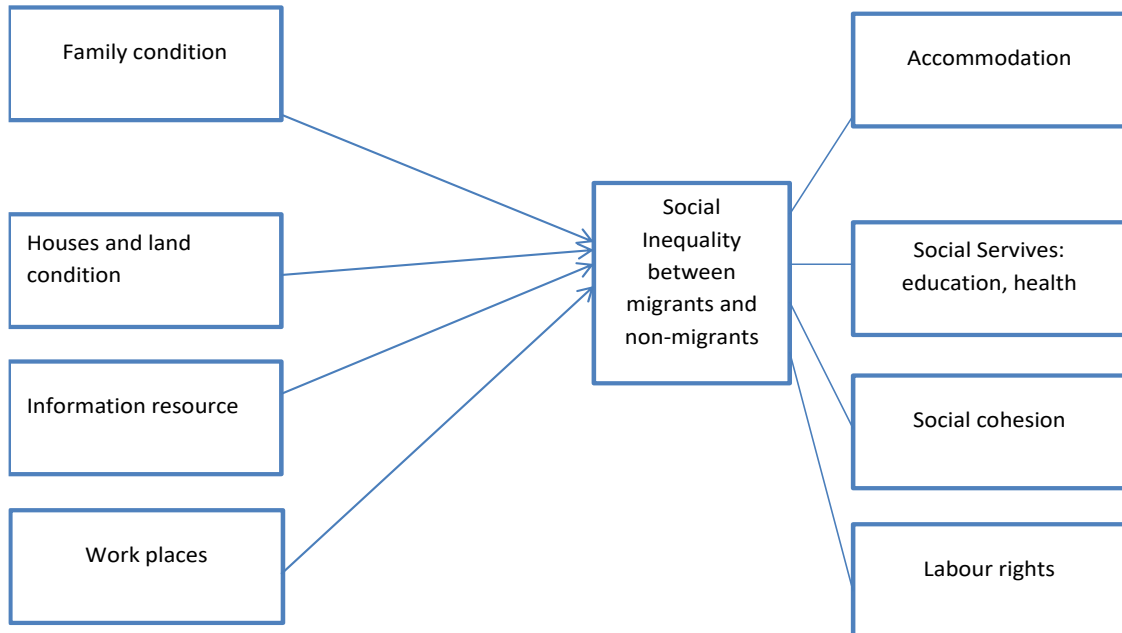


Diagram 1: Analytical framework for social inequality research

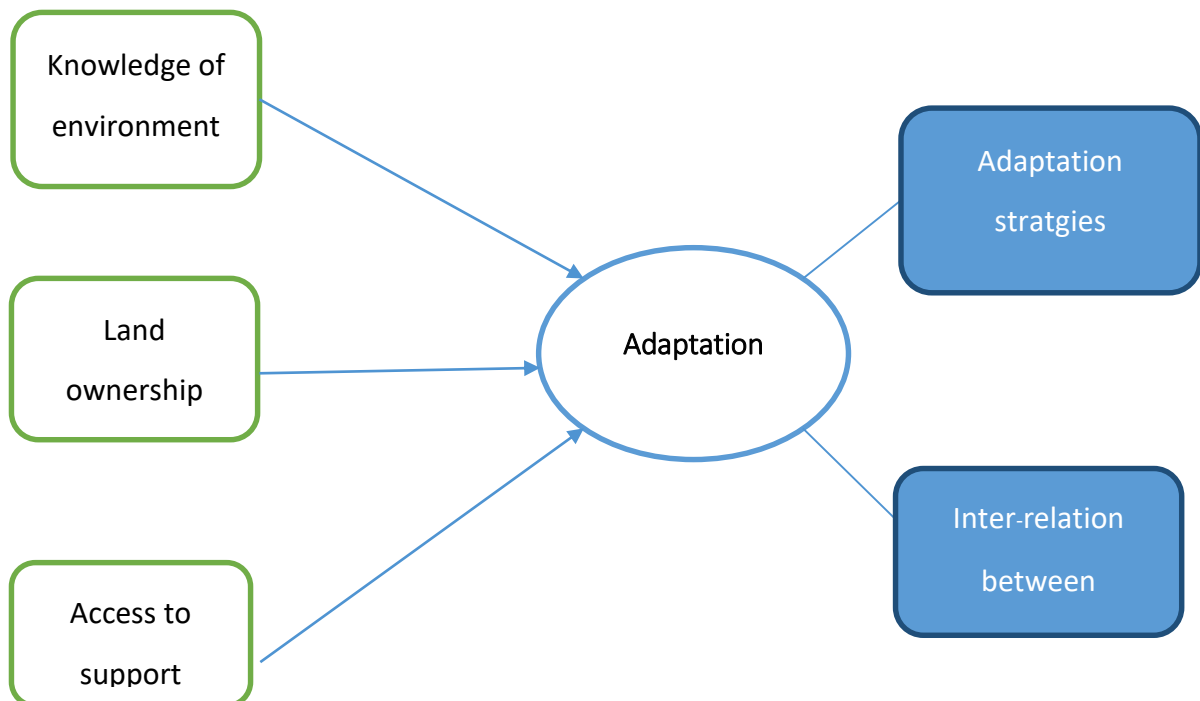


Diagram 2: Analytical Framework for Environment Research

4.2. Transdisciplinary Approach Implementation in Binh Tan District, Ho Chi Minh City

After initial observation, the first group of 13 members decided on investigating social inequality in Binh Tan district. We then met and invited 03 non-academics from 03 different organizations in Binh Tan district who were working in fields related to migrant workers, including: an officer from propaganda department, an officer from center for youth worker support and a household business owner employing migrant workers. Through meetings with non-academics, we discussed on developing research questions, research methods and implementation, etc. finally, we formed a research group of both academics and non-academics with three research questions on social inequality among migrant workers in Binh Tan district, Ho Chi Minh city. Three research questions we agreed on were: What are aspects of social inequality in Binh Tan district? What are reason(s) behind these aspects? How have these aspects affected Binh Tan people's life?

Throughout the stages, from framing to research process implementation and reflections, academics, non-academic stakeholders, migrant workers and local authorities had collaborated for the co-production of knowledge. Indigenous knowledge related to research problem was used during this process. Besides, we analyzed secondary documents from related research projects and papers. We also used qualitative methods including in-depth interview and focus group discussion in order to collect data to answer our research questions.

During our fieldwork in Binh Tan, we had identified some aspects of social inequality among migrant workers: housing, access to public services, social cohesion and labor rights.

Housing: Housing size, conditions and locations are practical factors behind inequality between migrant workers and local people. Most migrant workers in Binh Tan live in apartment buildings with low conditions: too small, too hot and lack of space for all members...

meanwhile, local people have more spacious housing of better conditions. For example, toilets and bathrooms in migrants' apartments of 10 to 20 square meter do not have ventilation system, which negatively affects residents' health and living space⁸³. Besides, apartment buildings are usually located far from center location, in the remote area, as a result it greatly affects access to social services an infrastructure like hospitals, schools, malls, etc. A female migrant labor working in a recycling company told us that her 13-year-old son did not go to school because she never got any information on any schools in the area where he could attend. What is more, during 9 years living in this apartment, her family only went to hospital once when her husband had pneumonia.

Hence, after discussion with non-academics and related stakeholders, the finding was that the availability of housing was not the main factor of social inequality between migrant workers and local people, but housing structure, size, location and living conditions.

Education: The increase in elderly and children residents as a result of migration has had a great impact on the education system in Binh Tan. There were not enough schools for children, hence, there were too many students in one class and in many cases, migrants' children had to go to school in a different district. Another problem is that the working hour and the need to increase income of migrants who are parents have influenced children's development, especially the emotional connection between parents and kids. A part of migrant workers, who do not have time to take care of their children and want to work overtime to earn more income, have let their children go to school in their hometown and assigned childcare to their parents. On the other hand, local people take care of their own children and care more about children's study compared to migrants. Besides, some migrants bringing their

⁸³ A group member who was an architect made a view on inequality in terms of housing conditions

children to Binh Tan have to send them to private school and even pay extra childcare fee when they work overtime or on holidays.

Social cohesion: According to Anatolii Hrynenko and Volodimir Kirilyuk (2015), social inequality is a main problem of modern society that negatively affects social cohesion, as a result it creates barriers to economic and social development. Social inequality can be understood as an effect of economic and social discrepancy, which is the reason why some people have power, reputation and asset while other social groups do not. Income is usually used to measure economic inequality in society. Inequality also links with social cohesion, social integration and social trust. Excessive social inequality often leads to social division and hinders social development as well as social progress.

In Binh Tan district, migrant workers seem to be excluded from the community. Although there are socio-political organizations such as the Women Union, Youth Union willing to provide support with various social activities, migrant workers are not aware of the existence of these organizations. This shows that migrant workers are lacking opportunities, interaction with and understanding of the community.

Labor rights: We recognized there was a difference between workers working in formal and informal sector. Those working in formal sector have labor contract and social insurance with the financial support of social welfare. Meanwhile, workers working in informal sector usually have neither labor contract or social insurance with limited supporting policy. For example, when workers with social insurance are pregnant and give birth, they will receive many rights, for example female pregnant employees can have shorter working hour, have 6 months of parental leave after giving birth and 7 to 10 days for their husband with parental allowance. In contrast, those without social insurance do not have these rights. Besides

parental benefits, there are other support policies like training programs in English and Chinese, vocational training in beauty, design, etc. with a typical example being the Taiwanese company Pou Yuen. These training programs will create more job opportunities when employees leave or transfer their jobs. Another particular benefits of employees working in formal sector is the connection with Labor Union, while those working in informal sector do not have that affiliation. Besides, large companies usually entitle their employees to housing and other services like health care and schooling for children, to which informal sector workers do not have access.

One of the main factors behind this discrepancy is that in some cases, employers do not comply with the regulations of the Law on Labor Vietnam. Workers' deficient awareness of their own rights and obligations when working is another reason. Besides, labor authorities' lack of control also facilitates the disobedience of law on labor among employers.

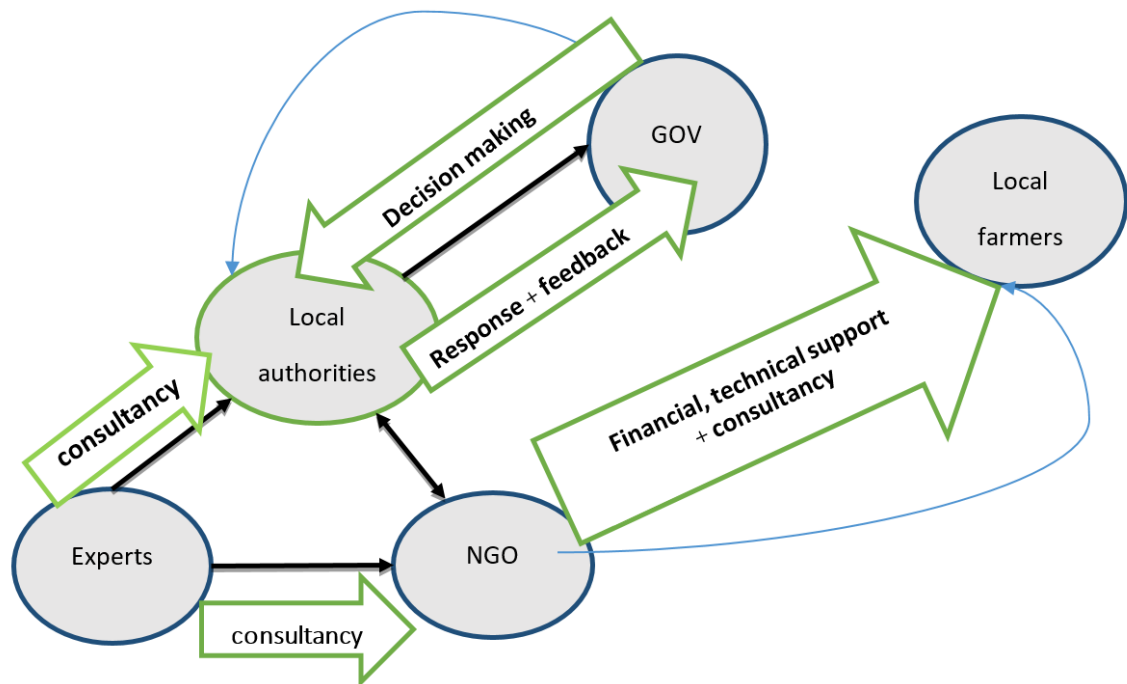
4.3. Transdisciplinary Approach Implementation In Tra Cu District, Tra Vinh

While social inequality is more of a social research topic, the topic of environment is originally more under the science categories, hence the application of transdisciplinary approach to study environment issues involves different participants from different disciplines. Compared to the migration-themed group with a more 'structured' research, the students in the environment topic had a different way of implementing transdisciplinary approach in Tra Cu district, Tra Vinh. In fact, detailed research questions were not raised, but we were on the looking at different aspects of the selected main topic, which was salinity intrusion in Tra Vinh: perception of climate change and salinity intrusion, adaptation strategies, and the inter-relation of different stakeholder in the adaptation process. The participation of both academics and non-academics was achieved, when the group worked with practitioner from a local non-governmental organization working on climate change adaptation, local agricultural officers,

local governmental officers, researcher from an academic institute, and local farmers. Using mainly interview methods with variation of formality and contexts, besides specific questions for specific participants, similar questions were raised to different stakeholders to see the relation between them and whether climate change and salinity intrusion is perceived in the same way with different parties.

Knowledge/ perception of climate change and salinity intrusion: Grouped into two groups with scientists, NGO, and authorities together as academic, and local farmers as non-academic, it can be said that there is a difference in the way two groups see climate change. While the academic group has a systematic understanding of climate change, ranging from when, how, and why it happens, the other group see climate change as specific natural phenomena, such as rainfall, water scarcity, water quality, soil deterioration, etc. This could be the associated factor leading to differences in opinion on adaptation strategies and agriculture practice in salinity intrusion and climate change context, which will be discussed later in this paper.

Inter- relation between stakeholders in adaptation: During the research process implementation, the group worked together to see the roles of different stakeholders in adaptation and made a diagram showing the interactive, mutual relation between them:



The exchange of knowledge between academics and non-academics was examined, and it was shown that while knowledge exchange has been going consistently from academics to farmers, the other way round is still rather limited. One interviewee who was a researcher from an institute studying climate change adaptation at a university pointed out that local farmer's awareness was the main issue in adapting to climate change. On the other hand, an agriculture officer claimed that his knowledge and experience was gained from both what he learned back in university and the local knowledge farmers on how to use herbs and natural ingredients to cure diseases and strengthen the immunity of shrimps and fish.

Adaptation strategies: According to the action plan to respond to climate change for agricultural and rural development in the period of 2008-2020 issued by Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, one of the mitigation measure is to develop adaptive farming technologies, for example crop varieties, farming techniques and farming systems (Nhan et al., 2012). In Tra Cu district, with their expertise, local NGO and government work together to make adaptation strategies in terms of agriculture practice in the area. In the

context of freshwater scarcity and increased brackish water area, shrimp and snakehead fish farming has been implemented on area of land that used to be paddy field. Adaptive crop models, including taro, sugarcane and salinity tolerant rice varieties received mainly positive feedback in bringing livelihoods and income to farmers as we interviewed on the field; however, the efficiency of these models still requires further consideration. On the other hand, this status quo raised a question of whether there are 'climate change winners' and 'climate change losers' as adaptive models were applied in certain areas, hence the number of farmers with access to knowledge and resources to adapt to and even make use of climate change remained limited. What is more, according to local authorities, there were a number of farmers who did not own land, hence we raised the question of whether land ownership could lead to inequality in climate change adaptation.

An aspect that needs further study is the sustainability of adaptation models. Chemical use in aquaculture and crop farming is not regulated, hence it can contaminate the already salted soil and water and reduce the quality of products. Water saving is another concerns when it comes to sustainable adaptation strategies, as it was reported that a participating scientist criticized these models created by an NGO to be not water saving efficient, which might be a sign of disagreement between stakeholders during the adaptation process. Connecting to the perception of climate change of different stakeholder mentioned above, this can be an explanation to how non-academics and academics cope with the situation. When farmers understand climate change as deteriorated soil, low rainfall or lack of fresh water, they tend to resort to more immediate and short-term solutions, such as using chemicals, while scientist and experts, with systematic knowledge of climate change, have an orientation towards more long-term solutions.

6. Discussion

Through the learning and practicing of transdisciplinary approach during the two-week program, we were able to see the potential of the approach and see ourselves using it in future research. However, we also realized the difficulties and challenges during transdisciplinary implementation that need to be taken into consideration if we want to make a good research out of the approach.

Time

Time was a main and crucial element that we saw of importance throughout the fieldwork. Due to limited time in the field of only five days for each group, we were not able to establish a relationship close enough to stakeholders in the area, especially migrants and farmers. We believed that with more time spending, we would be able to observe and hear more voices and opinions from the directly affected parties, which is equally important to these of responsible government and scientists. Also, in the case of the environment group, with more time, we would be able to engage more stakeholders from other disciplines than agriculture, such as hydrologists, engineers, economists, political scientists, and social scientists.

The integration of knowledge

One of the key of transdisciplinarity is the working together of members from different disciplines as well as different stakeholders using a shared conceptual framework. This came out as one of the most challenging and time consuming step during the process, when various understandings need to come together in order to form a shared framework. As mentioned above, there were different perception of social inequality and climate change recorded, hence this integration of knowledge requires enormous preparation and attention when implementing a transdisciplinary research.

Language

Language was undeniably a difficulty for both the students and staff. Even when the group had the support of translators/ interpreters, the translated version was not able to convey the nature of information, together with the attitude and reaction of participants. As a result, the quality of information might have been affected. Moreover, the presence of local police and authorities during interviews on social inequality with migrants could have had an impact on the openness of shared information, hence the findings might have not been accurate as we wanted to be.

Funding

Since a real and complete transdisciplinary research involves the participation of various stakeholders and would take months to implement, an adequate amount of funding is also an integral part in order to complete a project entirely and comprehensively.

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The Rationale Behind Plastic-related Companies Behavior to Support Recycled Plastic for Food Packaging in Thailand

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Abstract

Currently, some plastic-related companies propose a solution of using recycled plastic (rPET) for food packaging such as beverage bottles as a solution for plastic problem in Thailand. Because of the restriction of recycled food packaging by the Thai FDA, some company today are trying to lobby the government to allow it. This research focuses on studying business behavior by looking at various factors of internal environment and external environment to understand the actual rationale of why those companies need to use rPET for food packaging in Thailand.

The finding indicates that there are a few environmental factors from the internal and external environment that influence company to promote rPET food packaging. Firstly, it is the internal companies' mission that creates a huge influence factor for a particular company to promote rPET for food packaging in Thailand, especially global companies. This is also because global companies are more likely to received social pressure from civil society such as NGOs than local companies. In term of the external environment, findings reveal the combination between two potential factors. The first is the availability of financial resource and feedstock of post-consumer PET bottle. Because rPET is a very new topic in Thailand combining with poor waste segregation system, the market of rPET packaging and the feedstock of post-consumer PET bottle are not guaranteed. For a company to change from virgin plastic to rPET, it is not easy. This can be well explained by the second factor which is recycling technology for rPET packaging. For the company who have no recycling technology for food-grade rPET, a huge

investment is required for technological investment. If there is no clear market for rPET packaging and enough feedstock of post-consumer PET bottle, they definitely not dare to take a risk in investing in the new technology and switching to rPET. If any company which does not have headquarters mission-driven or receive high pressure from NGOs or whatever, it is unlikely for them to change from virgin plastic, which production cost is cheaper, to rPET which has higher production cost and do not know when they can cover the cost of technological investment.

Keyword: rPET, Business behavior, Recycled Food Packaging, Circular Plastics Economy

1. Introduction

Regarding plastic use in Thailand, because of its convenience and free of charge, Thai people have become addicted to plastic for everything. According to an Opinion Piece in the Bangkok Post by Danny Mark, a researcher at Hong Kong University, it is unsurprising that last year in 2018 one of the ashamed reputations of Thailand was that the country became one of the top five largest contributors of the ocean plastic waste in Asia and also fall behind many countries in Asian to solve the plastic waste problem such as Japan and China which have higher plastic consumption because these two countries have better waste management system (Marks, 2018). Reported by the Pollution Control Department (PCD), plastic waste in Thailand over the last 10 years has continuously increased by 12 percent annually which accounts for 2 million tons increasing every year. The most widely used of plastic products is packaging, and Thai people use about eight plastic bags per day. Plastic will not become a problem if there is proper management. The thing is, in Thailand only a small fraction of plastic packaging waste is brought back to be recycled (Marks, 2018; PCD, 2016).

Focusing on the specific type of plastic packaging, Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) is normally used for food contact packaging such as liquid bottles. Apart from the plastic bag, the plastic bottle is another single-use packaging that Thai people use a lot. Annually, there are 4.4 billion of PET plastic bottles supplied to the beverage market in Thailand (Wipatayotin, 2018). For this reason, some industries foresee that plastic problem in the country can be alleviated by recycling strategy. For example, using recycled PET plastic (rPET) can be one of the mechanisms for sustainable plastic waste management (Wipatayotin, 2018). However, there is a challenge for using rPET food packaging in Thailand because there is a restriction stated in the Notification No. 295 B.E. 2548 of the Ministry of Public Health which particularly specify qualities for food packaging made from plastic. Clause 8 of the Notification highlights that “it

is prohibited to use the plastic container made from reused plastic exempt using for packing fruits with peel” (Ministry of Public Health, Thailand, 2005).

Many industries and companies in Thailand, previously, do not pay much attention to rPET plastic as food packaging, and their businesses are still able to grow in Thailand. However, it seems that today there is a shift in business behavior of plastic-related companies, namely PET plastic producers and companies using PET plastic as packaging, to promote rPET plastic for food packaging. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to study the transformation of businesses behavior toward plastic recycle for food packaging, it can be assumed that there might be influence factors of internal and external environments of businesses that effect to the decision-making of companies, making them more concerned about the plastic problem and more enthusiastic to shift from producing and using virgin plastic for food packaging to rPET.

2. Conceptual Framework

The objective of this thesis is to study the transformation of plastic industry behaviors toward rPET for food packaging in the context of government regulation and social expectation. For this reason, it is important to identify factors that influence their performance and decision making. To study the relationship between the business and their environment, organizational environment theory is useful to describe this relationship because theory explains internal and external forces or institutions surrounding organizations that affect the performance and operation of organizations. However, in this paper, the overarching conceptual framework is the organizational environment theory, but the author also modifies the theory to incorporate with the institutional theory of CSR because, for plastic issues, social responsibility is one of the main key factors that put pressure on businesses to deal with the impact of their products on the environment. Applying the concept of organizational

environment theory alone, which does not mention anything about CSR, might not efficient and sufficient enough to explain social pressure that plastic businesses nowadays have been experienced.

3. Research Methodology

For this research, the qualitative method was applied to examine case studies of plastic-related companies to understand the factors that influence companies to move forward for rPET for food packaging in Thailand. Two main sources of data were collected for answering the research question. First, in-depth interviews with key informants who are relevant to plastic problem and recycling in Thailand. To be a critical analysis of this topic, different actors were interviewed in this research which is categorized into 4 groups. First, the governmental agencies which are a department under the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Environment Natural Resource, and the Ministry of Public Health. These departments are relevant to address plastic debris in Thailand. Secondly, the plastic-related businesses which are Indorama Venture, Coca-Cola Company. These two companies are the main leading companies that pioneer strategy of rPET food packaging and trying to lobby the government to allow recycled content in food packaging. The third is the group of non-governmental organizations which are Greenpeace, Thai Beverage Association (TBA) and Stockholm Environmental Institute (SEI). The fourth group is referred to a group of civil society which is an environmental journalist from the Nation, academic experts from Chulalongkorn University who have experience in plastic and waste management issues. Moreover, a focus group interview with environmentalist people, which are personnel from Chula Zero Waste department, was conducted to examine their attitude toward plastic recycling for food packaging and also business performance toward the plastic problem in Thailand.

Apart from primary sources, secondary sources were collected to analyze business behavior analysis. Some research question such as the question of internal factors required information from plastic-related companies' websites to understand their internal activities. Importantly, secondary sources were applied for gathering data for another two PET plastic companies because there was a limitation for the author to approach these two companies to have an in-depth interview as they were not willing to give an interview. For this reason, companies were made to be anonymous and named as Company X and Company Y. Thus, the report of companies and the press became the main source of data for those companies. These companies are selected as comparative cases of the company which does not obviously promote rPET food packaging. These would help to understand the challenge facing by these companies to move forward to rPET food packaging.

All data and information getting from interviews with key informants, the focus group and secondary sources were combined and analyzed for understanding external and internal factor influencing the businesses to change or resist to change from using virgin plastic to rPET packaging. Then, the paper was concluded to draw out the most significant factor that motivates plastic-related business to favor rPET food packaging in Thailand

4. Finding result

4.1 The influence of the internal factor

4.1.1 Mission and vision of companies

Mission and vision of the four companies are very useful to analyze the direction and operation of each company. It can show that whether or not mission and vision influence business behavior after analyzing the business performance of each company and looking at what each company is doing regarding recycling business.

“To be a world-class chemical company making great products for society” is a vision of the Indorama Venture (Indorama Ventures Annual Report 2018, 2018). From this statement, it is very explicit that the company want to be the world leader of the plastic industry, and it also implies the responsibility of product stewardship toward society. For the Coca-Cola company, it might not obviously imply the commitment of the company in term of environmental responsibility. The mission statement of the company is more focusing on giving people happiness and joy such as “To inspire a moment of optimism and happiness” (The Coca-Cola Company, n.d.). However, after having an interview with Coca-Cola, it found that Coca-Cola has a strong commitment relevant to the plastic problem. The company has a work philosophy which helps to shape the commitment of the company regarding plastic waste. the company believes that if the growth of the company means exploitation of the environment, society, and community, it will consider as unsustainable growth of the business. For this reason, the Coca-Cola company has a commitment that the company must generate harm to the environment and society as less as they can. For the X company, the latest vision and mission of the company was reviewed in 2018 with the goal that the company wants to be the global largest melamine producer of household products and also the leading company in ASEAN for plastic injection. The vision of company Y is the intention of being the leading company in manufacturing and selling of packaging products and services such as glass packaging, plastic packaging, and container in ASEAN

Seeing from the mission and vision of the four companies, it is obvious to see some similarity and difference between them. The similarity becomes clear between Indorama and Coca-Cola. These two companies have a strong mission, vision, or a principle that is specially set for environmental responsibility. On the other hand, there is no precise statement about the environmental mission found in company X and Y. However, it does not mean these two companies have not engaged in environmental responsibility because both of them also

engage in CSR activities, but it is not about plastic recycling. All four companies try to take responsibility in some way. Indorama and Coca-Cola want to support rPET for food packaging as their environmental strategy while the other two companies take different strategies. The Y company is supporting biodegradable plastic while the X company is trying to reduce the impact of the plastic bottle by producing thin-wall packaging,

What else influences some company to feel more willing to support rPET for food packaging in Thailand while others are not. This can be explained by looking at the nature of companies. Indorama and Coca-Cola are considered as global and international companies while X company and Y company are local Thai companies. A researcher from SEI gave the opinion that there are differences between the global company and the local company. Switching from virgin plastic to rPET seems not a good choice for any company with no global commitment because rPET materials are more expensive in Thailand. Most of the people think that plastic recycling cost less than producing virgin plastic which is not true. To produce virgin plastic, oil is raw material, so the cost of making virgin plastic depends upon the fluctuation of the global oil price. On the other hands, the process of making rPET requires additional cost such as post-consumer PET bottle collection and transportation of plastic waste to supply recycling industries. However, for a global company, if there is a headquarter driven corporate social responsibility goal of global companies, all branch of the company in every country must follow. Take the Coca-Cola company as the best example, in this case, the company has a policy called “World Without Waste” which aims to solve plastic problem by having 100% recycled content on bottle. When “World Without Waste” policy of the company was globally announced in 2018, it was the time when Coca-Cola Thailand starts to promote rPET for food packaging. Because of having a global commitment, it is a duty of Coca-Cola Thailand to propose any policy or strategy helping them to reach its global mission in the country the company is operating

4.1.2 Culture

Besides the mission and vision, organizational culture can tell what company is emphasizing. Actually, organizational culture is partly implied in the mission and vision of the company because it shows the norm and value that the company has believed. It is obvious that Coca-Cola and Indorama have sustainable development in term of the environmental issue as the practice that the company needs to commit for a long period of time. This can be seen from what they express in their company report. For Indorama, the company states that “Sustainability has always been a critical element of our strategy” (Indorama Ventures Annual Report 2018, 2018). Coca-Cola also emphasizes that “Sustainability will, of course, remain a central focus for our company” (The Coca-Cola Company, 2018)

For the X company, the company seems to emphasis on the human development of personnel because the company realizes that good personnel with high quality of work would help the organization to reach its commitment. For this reason, the company creates a corporate culture, which becomes the philosophy of working, to enhance the capability of personnel to work in a sustainable manner. Moreover, the company report that the 3 Saves principle which aims to save material, energy, and the environment is their guiding principle of the company which later become the organizational culture. For Y company, it is quite difficult to examine the business culture of the company because the internal information of this company is very limited. However, judging from the statement reported in the annual report, Y company also give an important to human development. The company always develops recruitment policy to be consistent with changing the environment and the need of the business at that. However, due to limited information, the exiting information of the organization's culture of these four companies collected during data collection might not accurate enough to be analyzed.

4. 1. 3 Role of leadership and Personnel engagement to the commitment on recycling strategy

The policy of rPET food packaging, switching from virgin plastic to rPET is considered as a major change of the companies' operation. Definitely, it needs to be approved by the leadership. The information of the internal factor of personal engagement of leadership is also limited, especially for X company and Y company. For this reason, the factor of leadership and engagement of employee are mainly applied to Indorama and Coca-Cola company

For Indorama, the assistance of the vice president said that the CEO of the company is ready to invest if there is a demand for rPET in the market. Like Indorama, CEO and the chairman of the board director of the Coca-Cola company, James Quincey expressed to media that all company in the world has experienced the same issue about packaging, and Coca-Cola wants to help solve this problem. World Without Waste is going to be one of the solutions for the plastic waste problem in the world (Jirapa, 2018). For the director of Coca-Cola Thailand who is pushing rPET, he also seems to be very passionate to create a new strategy to solve the plastic problem in Thailand. He expressed that Thailand has used too much PR, so he needs something more practical that can solve the problem from the origin.

From interviews and examining companies' report of each company, there is not much information about the engagement of employees. During interviews with Indorama and Coca-Cola, the question about how employees or staffs help to promote recycling activities of the company was asked. Unfortunately, there is no clear answer for this, but companies, especially Indorama and Coca-Cola, explained that they have tried to educate and inform employees to aware of what the company is doing currently. For Indorama, the company has internal activity at the head office every month and the campaign of collecting PET bottle

4.2 The influence of the external factor

4.2.1 Political and law enforcement on producer responsibility

One of the plastic waste plans to watch in this period of time in Thailand is the Plastic Waste Management Road Map 2018-2030 drafting by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. This plan will deal with plastic waste in the country through a plastic life cycle from production, consumption, to post-consumption and waste management. Within this plan, the measure for reduce or stop using plastic at the consumption level provides the timeline for 100% banning seven types of single-use plastic in the country which are cap seal, plastic with Oxo, bag less than 36 microns, foam packaging, single-use plastic cup, and plastic straw. At the same time, banning will take place with the support of the circular economy. In other words, there are two objectives of banning strategy which stops using seven types of single-use plastic and brings back plastic waste to recycle or reuse again as much as possible.

Regarding producer responsibility, there is a measure of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for plastic production in the Road Map, and rPET food packaging will be put in the measure promoting producers to use eco-design of plastic product to be 100% recyclable. Unfortunately, this Roadmap will not create any effect on plastic producers because it was told not to be enforced by law. The government will only ask for cooperation from producers by explaining the environmental impact of plastic to make sure that companies have a common understanding of what they should do. This will be done by signing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between companies which are not legally binding. There is no legal power to influence plastic-related companies to shift to eco-packaging in Thailand. For this reason, the expert from the Environmental Research Institute of Chulalongkorn University commented on this plan that this Road Map was weak. It is mainly a voluntary base. Eventually, if producers do not comply with the target, nothing happens.

4.2.2 Availability of resources

These four companies – Indorama, Coca-Cola, X company, and Y company – are considered as successful companies in the market. In the global market, Indorama is a leading company in plastic recycling while Coca-Cola is one of the biggest soft drink companies in the world. In Thailand, X company and Y company are also among plastic producers which are large and have several well-known companies as customers.

In term of financial, when any company wants to use rPET, it definitely that they need to make sure that their economic situation can be maintained or still get profit. Having a few companies to start using rPET food packaging, those company might be suffered. The researcher from the environmental research institute Chulalongkorn University explained that when the cost of recycled material is high, the price of products should be increased so that profit can cover the cost of investment. However, the company might unable to increase the price of their product because consumers will shift to buy products of another brand which has a similar product at a cheaper price. For this reason, any company using eco-packaging eventually become too suffering that they cannot do it for a long period of time

Regarding the availability of material resource which refers to post-consumer PET, rPET food packaging for Thailand is something very new as it has been forbidden for a decade, so many companies have a lot of questions about this such as availability of feedstocks of post-consumer PET bottles, stable demand for rPET food packaging in the market, and cost of investment for rPET food packaging production. A limited resource of post-consumer PET becomes a problem making industries reluctant to change because waste sorting in Thailand is not good, leading to limited feedstock for rPET. The Communications Director of Coca-Cola who is also a director of the TBA said that there are 3 big beverage companies, including Coca-Cola companies who are lobbying for rPET food packaging. However, when asking about the

plastic producers within the beverage association, he said that none of the plastic producers is obviously interested in producing rPET, except Indorama. He stressed that some might be interested in rPET food packaging, but the supply of post-consumer PET bottles is not realistic for now. Profit gain is not ensured making many companies do not dare to take a risk. In this case, it was told by the interviewee from PCD that Indorama has a lot of dealers who can find materials for the company, so this can assume as a reason why the company ready to move toward rPET food packaging than any other companies

4.2.3 Knowhow technology for plastic recycling

Recycling business requires some additional technology to produce clean recycling plastic. To produce food packaging from recycled material, the technology must be guaranteed that it can decontaminate 100% chemical substance or dirt from post-consumer bottles. This is what FDA Thailand concerns, and they still not sure if any company will be able to eliminate all contaminant from post-consumer bottles. Today, recycling technology for packaging is divided into two types which are mechanical recycling which is most widely used in recycling business because of cost- efficiency. However, there is another technology that is more suitable to produce food- grade recycled pallet which is chemical recycling. However, technology is not a problem because companies can purchase recycling technology for rPET food packaging and install into their industries. In this point, it is not about the availability of technology, but it is worthwhile for technological investment. In other words, in Thailand plastic industries still hesitate to invest in recycling technology which requires large capital investment for rPET because they do not know if it will make a profit or when their companies can reach the break-even point.

Analyzing the capability of the 3 plastic industries in this study which are Indorama, Company X, and company Y, the only company having best recycling plant and technology is

Indorama. From an interview with Indorama, the company is very ready for the recycling business, and they are very sure that their technologies are safe enough to produce bottle-to-bottle recycling. Indorama purchased technology from Ioniqa Technologies from Netherland and Loop's industry from Canada ("Indorama Venture Sustainability Report", 2018). For rPET food packaging in to be made, it requires only clear color of post-consumer bottle. However, with the technology of Ioniqa, it can transform all color PET waste to virgin-grade and food-grade resin which is safe for food ("Indorama Venture Sustainability Report", 2018). With Loop's industry, Indorama purchased chemical recycling technology from Loop's industry which is called 'Depolymerization Technology' which also allow for better decontamination process than conventional recycling (Pourriahi, 2018). Together with these two recycling technology companies, it can be assumed that Indorama will become the readiest company for rPET business in Thailand, and even in the world. Any company such as beverage companies like Coca-Cola who want rPET packaging definitely purchase rPET packaging from Indorama which is the most specialized company for rPET.

4.2.4 Socio-Cultural dimension

As it has described in media, Thai society become plastic addiction, and plastic consumption of Thai society is more than necessary such as wrapped fruit which its peel is peeled off. Because of addicted to plastic, stop using plastic is very hard because it has become a normal thing in their daily life. When there are only a few groups of people aware of the plastic problem, and rPET is very new for Thai society, the incentive for several plastic-related businesses to change to eco-packaging has hardly happened. In addition, many Thai people and also concern about the price of the product than the environment, compared to other countries such as Europe and Japan. In other words, they might not be willing to pay higher for eco-products. For example, In the interview with the focus group, interviewees are asked to choose between normal products at a low price and eco-products with a higher price which

one they choose. All of them agree to choose the lower price product although that product is not good for the environment. From this situation, many companies might perceive that Thai people do not care much about plastic issue and eco-packaging, so there is no reason for them to use rPET food packaging or other kinds of packaging that is better for the environment.

4.2.5 Customers demand for rPET packaging

Customers are one of the most factors that companies need to concern because business's profit comes from purchasing of customers. This means whatever consumers want, companies need to listen. In this research, customers are referred to two types in order to explain the relation in the plastic chain. First is customers or consumers of final products sold in the market. Another group is customers of plastic producers such as beverage companies which use plastic packaging which can refer to business partners.

In this research, although the author cannot interview consumer's perspective and preference of rPET for food packaging to analyze how much they feel about this, there was a poll done by Facebook Page called 'Drama Addict' which create a poll asking people about the readiness for using rPET. Searching the poll on the Drama Addict Page, the poll was created on 1 November 2018 asking if they feel comfortable to use plastic bottle made from recycled plastic in order to help reduce the plastic problem in Thailand. There were about 15,700 people answering this question. The result of the poll is 87% accept and 13% reject. Within the poll, about 200 people also expressed their thought in the comment under the Poll. There were both negative comments and positive comments. Regarding negative perspective comment, most mentioned about hygiene, their feeling, and other ways to use rPET. They gave their opinion that it was fine to use rPET packaging as long as it was not for food packaging. rPET can be used to fill such as washing liquid or whatever.

While some people who give negative expression about the hygiene and appropriation of making rPET for food packaging, some people said that there are so many types of food packaging that are dirtier than recycled plastic, and Thai people have accepted for a long time. In fact, people who did not express negative thought over rPET, their expression does not obviously support. However, they do not reject it. Also, the director of Coca-Cola said that Coca-Cola Thailand also has an official survey for consumer preferences on rPET food packaging. This research was designed with a sample size of approximately 2000 Thai people all over the country. The result was found to be satisfying as more than half of the respondents did not reject rPET. Moreover, some of those who disagreed with rPET in the first place, when the company explained the contamination process for making rPET bottle, their perspective changed and became more comfortable with rPET. As already mentioned in the socio-culture of Thai society over eco-product, the proportion of consumer who would prefer recycled products over non-recycle products is limited in Thailand. Consumers who are actually responsible consumers and want to use eco-products has to be large enough to create impact or influence companies to switch to an alternative product such as rPET packaging.

Regarding the demand of business partner, PET bottles are mostly used by beverage companies, so beverage companies are considered as one of the main customers of plastic producers for PET packaging. For this reason, it can be assumed that if some business partner of any plastic producer has a demand to use rPET or any eco-packaging, the plastic producer needs to find some way to meet the demand of their partners otherwise they lose profit. It can be worst if plastic producers cannot produce material that partners need and that customer is the main customer of the company. Being plastic producers, Indorama, X company, and Y company has its own business partners that they have supplied PET packaging. For Indorama, the Coca-Cola company is one of the main business partners of Indorama globally. In this case, the company can ensure the demand for rPET from the Coca-Cola company because Loop

industry also signed a multiyear supply agreement with Coca-Cola bottler in the United States. Loop will supply rPET packaging producing by its joint venture, Indorama, to help Coca-Cola achieving the mission of using recycled content in beverage bottle (Toto, 2018). For this situation, it can predict that when the Coca-Cola headquarters at the United States agreed to use rPET from Indorama, there is a high possibility if rPET packaging in Thailand is allowed, Indorama will become the only company supplying beverage bottle to Coca-Cola.

Unlike Indorama, customers of X company and Y company tend to be local beverage companies which do not focus on CSR strategy in term of recycling. For example, one of the common customers of X company and Y company for PET bottle is Sermasuk Public Company Limited whose business consists of several beverage brands such as Crytal drinking water, Est, and Oishi. Sermasuk was one of the local brands that were ranked in the top of whose plastic debris was found in a selected area of Thailand that Greenpeace observed (Greenpeace, 2018). Examining the activity of Crytal drinking water regarding plastic waste, the recent strategy that the company has done is involving in 'No plastic Bottle Cap Seal' in 2018. Moreover, the company also focus on the project of reducing the carbon footprint (Sermasuk Public Company Limited, n.d.). Seeing from the projects and campaigns of Crystal who purchase PET bottle from the X company, there is still no sign of intention of the company to use rPET bottle. It can be assumed that there is an absence of the demand for using eco-packaging such as rPET food packaging from the business partner of company X and Y

4.2.4 Competition in rPET business

Many industrial sectors can be driven by competition among companies producing a similar product. However, after collecting information from different actors, rPET business today shows some sign of a monopoly market by only one company, Indorama. Even if there is competition in this type of business, there are not many companies competing in this sector

because it requires large capital investment. The director of Coca-Cola and TBA explained that petrochemical business is very investment incentive. Not everyone can easily involve in, so there are not many companies who have enough capital capacity to open a new production line such as rPET food packaging. If there is any company wants to produce rPET food packaging, these companies are probably those who already in the petrochemical sector, and rPET food packaging is the company's extension of plastic production such as PTT Global Chemical Company (PTTGC) which is investing in a new recycling business.

Currently, there is only Indorama that can supply the demand of rPET food packaging of big companies, so not many producers intend to compete with Indorama. This indicates that if there will be any competition around rPET business, it is the competition between the two biggest petrochemical companies in Thailand which are Indorama and PTTGC. Even though Indorama today is considered as the only rPET producer in Thailand, the actual competition is not fully happening because the restriction of the FDA is still there. Whenever rPET is allowed, these two companies will be the first two company competing in the recycling business. They are probably competing with one another to become a significant player in the recycling business in Thailand.

4.2.5 Pressure from civil society to plastic companies regarding plastic debris

The role of Greenpeace as one of the biggest NGOs campaign about plastic problem in Thailand. From the interview with the head of plastic project of Greenpeace Thailand, the organization has a project called Break Free from Plastic which is a global project that the organization has gone to many places where the waste management is ineffective. Last year in 2018, Greenpeace in Thailand did the Brand Audit at Chonburi coastal area to identify whose plastic packaging were polluting the environment, especially the Ocean. The result of the brand audit found that top 5 companies whose plastic bottles were found were food packaging from

Dutch Mill Group, Coca-Cola, and CP group (Greenpeace, 2018). After the organization got the result of the brand audit, what they did in order to communicate with companies is by using a press release. The organization organized a press conference to share the Audit's result, and the organization still plan to do this again in 2019 in order to attack Fast Moving Consumer Goods companies.

Seeing from the result of the brand audit, Coca-Cola is one of them, and Coke has become a target of Greenpeace not only in Thailand but around the world. The company has faced a massive pressure from Greenpeace after Greenpeace published the Greenpeace Impact Report of Coke called 'Choke' with the phrase of 'Do not let Coke choke our oceans'. In the report, it was discovered that in 2017 Coke was unable to achieve what they promised that the company would increase recycling and recovery rate in developed countries to 75% by 2020. However, it showed a sign of declining not increasing because analyzing from Coke's data in 2013 to 2015 recycling and recovery rate was declined by 4% in 2016 (Greenpeace, n.d.). Accordingly, Greenpeace volunteers gathered at Coca-Cola's headquarter in various countries to put pressure on the company to come up with a strategy to do something with their plastic bottles (Brown, 2018). Judging from the timeline, it is found that right after this petition of Greenpeace was demonstrated, the Coca-Cola company announced "World Without Waste" strategy to tackle their plastic bottles. Definitely, this strategy has to be implemented by every Coca-Cola branches in the world.

During an interview with Communications Director of Coca-Cola, he expressed that NGOs is one of the significant players that impact the direction of the company because NGOs always raise awareness of people and either directly or indirectly attack companies. Also, he admitted that big companies such as Coke are attacked by Greenpeace because the company produces a large volume of a plastic bottle. He expressed that none of the companies wants

to be evil in the eye of people. Today, Coke is the company that has received massive complaints about its plastic bottle, so it makes sense for the company to take responsibility for their action. Unlike the Coca-Cola company around the world, other brands, especially local beverage company such as company X and Y, might not get massive pressure as much as Coke, so they might not think that eco-packaging is the priority of the company. However, whenever they have faced the same situation as Coke, they will respond to it just like what Coke is doing today.

5. Conclusion

From the interview with several key actors who are part of the committees reviewing notification of FDA – the Ministry of Industry, FDA, Department of health, TBA, and the two leading companies – and people from civil society such as academic experts in the environmental field, environmental researcher and NGOs, it was found that external factor really influence business behavior by shaping internal operation within the business. Some factor creates a huge impact. Some create little impact. However, those factors influencing some company to move forward to rPET for the food packaging, at the same time, can become obstacles for other companies to move into the recycling business for rPET as well.

5.1. Being a global company with a global mission and getting a direct attack from civil society such as international NGOs

First and foremost, in order to be attacked by NGOs such as Greenpeace, that company need to large enough to create a wide impact on the environment on a global scale or at a national scale. For this reason, after done with the research finding with Greenpeace, it was found that international beverage company such as Coca-Cola company and big beverage company of Thailand such as CP group mostly become the target of NGOs. The bigger companies are, the more they are watched by civil society. In this thesis, it found that the Coca-

Cola company has received the heaviest attack than any other international beverage companies from Greenpeace and environmental activists around the world. Coca-Cola company has experienced the complaint and petition from people that their plastic bottle is polluting the Ocean. Greenpeace even published a special report to reveal the performance of the company, showing that the company fails to address the plastic issue as they promised. For this reason, the project of the World Without Waste was developed as product stewardship and global commitment of the company. This is to respond to the petition of global society, showing that the company does not ignore the problem and is taking up the responsibility to reduce the impact of the Coca-Cola bottle. As a global company, it means the company is operating in many different parts of the world, including Thailand. For the Coca-Cola company, Thailand is one of the most significant markets, so the company needs to make sure that their product will cause less environmental impact as much as possible otherwise it risks losing a big market share in Thailand. With the external force from social pressure, it helps the company like Coca-Cola company generate a global mission. World Without Waste has become the driving force of internal factor for the Coca-Cola company in the different part of the world to make sure that all branch of the company is operating in the way that complies with headquarters mission.

Once the internal force like the mission of the company was created, the direction of the company become clear what exactly Coca-Cola Thailand has to do. Recycling content in a plastic bottle as one of the commitments of the Coca-Cola company has already achieved in many countries, except in Thailand. Recycling materials in food packaging is forbidden in Thailand for about 14 years. To achieve the commitment of the company's mission, it is a duty of Coca-Cola Thailand to push all effort to lobby the government, especially FDA, to revise the regulation and allow for food packaging made from recycled materials. In short, there is a correlation between the external factor and internal factor surrounding the company. It can

be understood that it is the external factor of social pressure from the society that shapes the mission of the company, which is an internal factor, to be consistent with the external pressure. Because of getting pressure from Greenpeace to take responsibility on its own product, it shapes the mission of the Coca-Cola company to meet the expectation of what society demand

5.1.1 Being driven by the demand of customers with its own capability to support rPET production

Regarding the position of plastic producers such as Indorama, X company, and Y company, it would be concluded that they are more likely to be driven by the external factor of the business partner's demand on eco-packaging, not social pressure like the Coca-Cola company. In other words, if a plastic producer has business partners who aim to switch from using virgin plastic packaging to rPET packaging, and the producer has the capability in terms of financial and technological, they would not reluctant to change its production. It is obvious in the cause of Indorama company. In fact, it might not be reasonable to compare Indorama who already have recycling technology with X company and Y company who have not to invest much in the recycling business. However, the thesis aims to show that the matter of customer demand in term of business partners is one of the significant factors that motivate companies to invest and involve in rPET business. As mentioned before, recycling technology such as chemical technology requires huge investment from plastic producers to install decontaminated process in its production. It is undeniable that a large company will have more capital investment to open the new product line such as rPET. They have the financial resources to purchase new technology to support rPET production. However, after interviewing with several interviewees, cost of technological investment is not the main problem. As long as there is a demand from the customer such as beverage companies who want to use rPET bottle, it is more likely that those businesses, who today do not have recycling technology, will

feel more willing to invest in recycling technology because they know that there will be demand from their customers.

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Transdisciplinary Research in Social Inequality: The Case Study In Long Thuan, Vietnam

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Abstract

This paper provides applied research in social inequality on transdisciplinary perspectives. Transdisciplinary Research (TDR) is often promoted as a mode of knowledge production that is effective in addressing and solving current sustainability challenges. This effectiveness stems from its closeness to practice-based/ situated expertise and real-life problem contexts. The results discuss how to apply transdisciplinary knowledge in social problem, particularly in inequality issues. Long Thuan island, which is in Me Kong Delta, Vietnam, is the best case study in which social inequality is clearly seen. Firstly, inequality in regime structure, the residents are powerless, by contrast, the government is powerful. The second thing is about social inequality in terms of community level, rich people and government officers have priorities over local people in general. The third thing is about gender inequality, women's rights here receive less attention. Furthermore, women's power is reduced after marriage and women have lower voice when making important decisions in the family. Finally, examining all inequality dimensions, women's rights have been forced to be disappeared gradually.

To sum up, transdisciplinary research is fairly a privileged and innovative method, but it is slightly noticeable in the research area in Vietnam. Since it requires the unity and respect among disciplines to find out the most effective outcome which meets the demand of each

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stakeholder or actor. Conducting the research in a place where social inequality is such a popular issue causes TDR harder to implement; however, the research somehow underpins further studies to build up the practicality and effectiveness when applying TDR in seeking solutions for social problems as well as sustainable development.

Keyword: Transdisciplinary, Social Inequality, Sustainable Development

1. Introduction

Transdisciplinary research is often seen as an effective way of producing knowledge in addressing the challenge to a sustainable future. To achieve this result, transdisciplinary research must originate from practical/ contextual issues rather than starting theory like other studies. The global social situation is facing more and more serious social and environmental challenges related to climate change, poverty, resource scarcity and widening the gap between rich and poor (Bammer, 2013; Blättel-Mink & Kastenholz, 2005). The multi-dimensional nature of these challenges is increasingly being addressed by the participation of actors from organizations in different areas of activity. Since then, the results from the research have been completely applied in practice and highly effective for the stakeholders in the study, this is an outstanding advantage of cross-sectional research compared to other types of research (Scott & Gibbons, 2001).

The idea of transdisciplinary research was begun from the 1970s (Dannecker, 2017). Since then, there have been countless studies of overview, theory, method, and experimentation across the industry. For a starting point for thinking and discussion, the definition of working on multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and cross-disciplinary research should be raised (Hadorn, Gertrude Hirsch, et al., 2007). Transdisciplinary research is the approach to a problem from the perceptions of some scientific disciplines, but each discipline works in a molded manner within itself, with little cross-sectional interdisciplinary, or synergies in output. Transdisciplinary research refers to a form of co-working and collaborative orientation among researchers from different scientific disciplines.

Transdisciplinary research was defined in different ways. The definition applied in this article focuses on participatory knowledge production patterns and stakeholders, characterized by the inclusion of multiple disciplines and knowledge and expertise based on practices in knowledge production process (Gibbons et al., 1994; Lang et al., 2012). Similar approaches include: action research, interactive social studies, participatory and interdisciplinary research, problem-oriented

(Caswell & Shove, 2000; Robinson & Tansey, 2006; Robinson, 2008; Talwar et al., 2011; Watson, 2014). The role of science in all these examples is considered to be developed to support more contextual research processes, in which the participation and cooperation of different stakeholders and users is important. The focus of research to create scientific knowledge and is related to science (Funtowicz & Ravetz, 1993; Nowotny et al., 2001; Wiek et al., 2012). Co-creating scientific value is a term used in many meanings in various scientific and practical research articles.

In Vietnam, transdisciplinary research has had a long history and has certain achievements; there is clearly a lot of work to be done to improve the scale, scope and quality of research inter-branch/ inter-industry rescue in our country. Since then, it is necessary to continue to promote knowledge of interdisciplinary and especially cross-disciplinary research, creating a clear change in the attitudes and awareness of academia, practice and public opinion for this type of research.

Transdisciplinary research was often used to research and support solving problems in projects that combine research and action on sustainable home improvement, sustainability and urban design, forecasting water demand (Bergmann et al., 2012). Such projects generally require division of labor in the group, meeting each other to discuss results and breakthrough solutions. The concerns of global climate change have been the focal point for the transdisciplinary research movement. Many people try to build science about sustainability, which is closely linked to the cross-industry movement (Brandt et al., 2013, Hirsch Hadorn et al., 2006).

Long Thuan is an island of Hong Ngu district where economy focuses on both agricultural and aquaculture production. Long Thuan is the first commune selected by Hong Ngu District as a model for the new village model which is managed by the community. There are 104 households doing fish farming with over 700 cages. These cages are located along 2 km of Tien River (one branch of Mekong

Delta). Although Long Thuan aims to develop fish cage farming as a crucial economic model, Hong Ngu district also tries to make Long Thuan as an attractive destination for ecological tours.

Long Thuan island, which is in Me Kong Delta, Vietnam, has also facing with the social inequality in gender, social class as figuring out through applying transdisciplinary research in KNOTS project. The result not only reflects the truth of the society but also puts a new perspective to the Vietnamese researchers on the transdisciplinary approach in social science.

2. Research Methods and Theoretical Standpoint

2.1. Research Methods

To make progress in contributing to the solution of complex real-world problems, transdisciplinary research has come to the forefront. By integrating multiple disciplines as well as the expertise of partners from societal practice, transdisciplinary researchers are able to look at a problem from many angles, with the goal of making both societal and scientific advances. Many types of “knowledge” such as scientific knowledge, local knowledge, practical knowledge and political knowledge are integrated into both a better understanding of the problem and more effective ways of addressing it.

Transdisciplinary is not a method, it is a way of doing science, a mode producing knowledge that requires research methods developed and adapted to its own specific approach. The methods of a transdisciplinary knowledge integration are normally described as relating to a specific societal problem and in the context of the specific constellation of a given research team, one composed of various disciplines, scientific fields and societal experts - that is, as case-related (Robert G. Burgess, 1984).

Transdisciplinarity provides new ways to use existing methods and tools as well as to develop new creative methods/ tools; Qualitative vs. Quantitative or Mix methods - Issues of contextualization and generalization (harmonizing science and practical needs); Issues of units of analysis (can be multiple levels); Time frame and resource constraints; Scope and sequence of qualitative and/ or quantitative methods?); Developing tools for data collection (Not one-time event which can be refined as recursive design process going on); Participation of non-academic team members are very important; Developing tools for M&E of social impacts (especially for target and transformation knowledge) (Stokols et al., 2013).

Matthias Bergmann with his colleagues collected 43 methods from a number of transdisciplinary research projects dealing with a variety of research topics. They grouped them into seven classes following an epistemological hierarchy and started with methods in the narrower sense, progressing to integration instruments (Matthias Bergmann, 2017). They are: Integration through conceptual clarification and theoretical framing; Integration through research questions and hypothesis formulation; Integration through research questions and hypothesis formulation; Screening, using, refining, and further developing effective integrative scientific methods; Integrative assessment procedures; Integration through development and application of models; Integration through artifacts, services and products as boundary objects; Integrative procedures and instruments of research organizations (Bergmann et al., 2012).

The research approach presented and tested in this paper originated from the process of KNOTS project to Vietnam. The requirements for the call included collaboration between and among academic, public and many stakeholders involved in Long Thuan islands. Transdisciplinary research gives an opportunity for academic in different disciplines and non-academic fields to work together to solve problems which humanity is facing in modern world.

In fact, transdisciplinary research integrates multiple data collection methods and analysis. During the field trip, all members were actively and seriously involved in every stage of the study. Before conducting research in the field, the researcher team - including advisors, team leader, interpreters, and student - was focusing on water issue, the topic was raised by the summer school which matched with the local geography and livelihood. In the preparation process, although the team decided to not make research questions at first, we discussed about the community in details and worked out on identifying stakeholders who should be interviewed and had meeting with. We combined different practical methodologies including formal and informal observation, interview, formally conversation and group discussion to collect the significant data.

- **Observation:** Observational research is defined as the method of viewing and recording the actions and behaviors of participants. It is described as being a systematic observation method, which implies that the observation techniques are sensible and replicable procedures so that the research could be reproduced. As the name describes, “observational” methods are all about observing the participants. There is no experiment conducted and no variables are manipulated. The observations are made without disturbing, influencing or altering the environment or the participants in any way. Researchers simply use all of their senses to observe participants in either a natural setting or a naturally occurring situation.⁸⁷

There are three main types of observational methods: Naturalistic Observation (non-participant observation), Participant Observation and Controlled Observation. In Long Thuan, we had an observation at the river through cycling trips along Long Thuan riverside and short trips to vegetable garden such as melon and salad, organic vegetable farming, local fish cage and Pangasius Production

⁸⁷ https://cirt.gcu.edu/research/developmentresources/research_ready/descriptive/observational

Company and we also had an opportunity to observe the fish production there. Most of these observations are non-participant observation.

- **Interview:** Interviews were an essential method to conduct information during our field trip. Interviews can be defined as a qualitative research technique which involves “conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation”. There are three different formats of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Boyce, C. & Neale, P., 2006).

We started with informal interviews to get to know some people and first insights into their daily life. Afterwards, we conducted formal interviews, semi-structural and in-depth interviews in order to get more specific information related to a chosen topic. This way, we did lots of interviews with local people, authorities like head of local fish-caged farming association, the representative of the People’s Council of Dong Thap Province, the head of Vietnam Pangasius Association, and the Management Board of the Phat Tien Pangasius Company.

- **Narrative interview (formally conversation):** Narrative interviewing is an approach to eliciting people’s accounts, or stories of their experiences. A narrative interview’s aim is to gather data on an individual’s particular experiences by asking them questions designed to have the participant respond in a narrative – a summary of events that are bound together by a common theme or meaning. Widely used in social science research, it has gained prominence in health research since the late 1990s. Narrative interviewing contrasts with semi-structured and structured techniques which tend to focus on specific topics introduced by the researcher. Narrative interviewing is mostly valued as a style of interview that seeks to get close to what is most important to participants through allowing them to focus on their own perspectives and priorities, using the language and terms that they prefer. The respondent may be seen as more in control than in a more structured interview, since they decide how

to present their account, what they want to say and, of course, what not to say. The success of a study that uses narrative interviewing depends largely on the inter-personal and analytic skills of the researcher. Analytic approaches may examine how the participant talks about the topic as well as categorising what is said. Analysts may explore performance and presentation in a single account, or identify themes across a number of interviews. Critics of the method warn against naive readings of the data and caution that a desire to collect 'successful' narratives could privilege certain groups while excluding or alienating other important perspectives from research (Sue Ziebland et al., 2013).

We tried with two local women about their daily life. With this method, we want to get some insights into the villagers' points of view about the most important things in their life. We asked about daily activities by letting people describe their livelihoods, their opinion in person. By doing so, we learned about routines and the daily life of local women.

- **Group discussion** is formed by combining two different words: group and discussion. Here, group means a number of people or things that are put together considered as a unit whereas the word 'discuss' is derived from the Latin 'discutere', which means to shake or strike. Thus 'discussion' refers to examine the topic thoroughly to reach a conclusion. Collectively, it is called group discussion which means the exchange of ideas by participated candidates on a specific subject or topic. The whole concept is to bring collectively a unit of people on a common platform to share their ideas.⁸⁸

The literal definition of a group discussion is obvious: a critical conversation about a particular topic, or perhaps a range of topics, conducted in a group of a size that allows participation by all members. Group discussions are common in a democratic society. There are some points of group discussion: Gives everyone involved a voice; Allows for a variety of ideas to be expressed and discussed; Is generally a democratic, egalitarian process; Leads to group ownership of whatever

⁸⁸ <https://targetstudy.com/articles/importance-of-group-discussion.html>

conclusions, plans, or action the group decides upon; Encourages those who might normally be reluctant to speak their minds; Can often open communication channels among people who might not communicate in any other way.

A group discussion is a type of meeting, but it differs from the formal meetings in a number of ways: It may not have a specific goal; It's less formal, and may have no time constraints, or structured order, or agenda; It emphasizes process (the consideration of ideas) over product (specific tasks to be accomplished within the confines of the meeting itself; Leading a discussion group is not the same as running a meeting. It's much closer to acting as a facilitator, but not exactly the same as that either (Johnson, D., & Frank P., 2002). In the field trip, we had very often group discussion in all situations, both with local women and others.

At the beginning of the field visit, the team was going to figure out water and environmental issues. However, during the field trip, the main problems which caught the researchers' attention were landslides and social inequality. While paying attention to what the summer school had mentioned, the research questions were found based on the information gaining in field. For example, the team agreed to focus more social inequality especially gender inequality. We found that women didn't feel confident to respond to researcher questions. While we were searching on the summer school topic and local issues in general, we were also observing inequality matter. Therefore, the day after, the team decided into two groups, women and men which we strongly believed that it would allow women to talk freely. After all, it was such a useful approach.

2.2. Theoretical Standpoint

Theory makes clear what transdisciplinary researchers value and stand for; we therefore have a responsibility to build and articulate it.⁸⁹

If we think about transdisciplinary research as a space situated between different epistemic cultures and practices, as well as being culturally contextualized, we can expect different theories of transdisciplinary research, as well as different significance and functions of theory, and different ways of working with theories, in transdisciplinary research.

Theory can contribute to the identity and development of transdisciplinary research. Theory or conceptual models can provide practical guidance to the challenging problems transdisciplinary research tackles. These can help guide the transdisciplinary research process.

Theory can make certain research fields visible, giving them a place in the landscape of knowledge. It can also make transdisciplinary research more 'approachable' for scientists and decision makers for whom transdisciplinarity is not a major interest.

It is important to hold theory lightly and to approach and use it pragmatically. The aim is to produce effective action rather than ideas in books.

⁸⁹ Workshop Group on Theory at 2015 Basel International Transdisciplinary Conference. 2016. What is the role of theory in transdisciplinary research? <https://i2insights.org/2016/02/17/role-of-theory-in-transdisciplinary-research/>

Workshop on "Significance and relevance of theory and theory building in transdisciplinary research. A discursive, praxeological approach" at the International Transdisciplinary Conference 2015 (8 - 10 September 2015 Basel, Switzerland).

Some functions of theory in transdisciplinary research:

- Theory can be a framework, a way to provide a scaffolding for ideas that may not be well entrenched, and a conceptual model to build bridges between concepts.
- Theory can be used to understand the situation or problem, to test relationships among components of a problem or among stakeholders, and to help explain dynamics in co-operative undertakings.
- Theory can help identify which knowledge is important and how it connects to other knowledge.
- Theory provides a signal to others about how a problem is being viewed.

3. Findings

3.1. Problem Identification

Throughout our field trip, we made attempts to interview or study about environmental issues in Long Thuan island. We wanted to raise and find answers for our research questions but the thing which caught our attention and in some way challenged us from the beginning was related to inequality issue.

Inequality is largely defined by an unequal access to various social resources, from natural resources to education, work, credit, etc. It is a basic dimension of social organization in any kind of historical society. Thus, understanding society or particular communities, networks etc. necessarily includes a grasp on patterns of social inequality. The most outstanding types of social inequality as we could observe here in Long Thuan are political, genders and wealth inequality.

3.2. Political/ Power issue

We were under observation by a warden or a police officer as what we called him after completing all the procedures and documentation needed to stay over in the village on the first day we arrived. We were all aware that it was understandable since we were a group of different background and nationalities who came to the area to study about the local people and the environment. However, having the police officer who followed us in all interviewing activities we had with the villagers was quite a problem. Since it was unable for us to get genuine information and all the answers we expected to hear from the local people. Although the officer did not put any pressure on us or tried to make us comfortable with his presence, he silently observed and made notes to report about our activities at the end of the day.

3.3. Gender inequality

On the third day of our field trip in Long Thuan island we split into two groups to have some focus group discussions with the local villagers. While the male participants went to meet a monk at the local pagoda, the women stayed at the homestay and invited Ms. Ngoc and Ms. Tiep for a laid-back talk with some cookies and drinks to lighten the atmosphere. The idea for the gender-separated group interview was drawn when we noticed that only men or male leaders had joined us for the formal interviews during the first two days of our visit. We also caught the local women's attention and were asked some greeting questions by them. However, when we gathered as small groups and had some more talk with them about the landslides or water issues, they were given signals by their husbands for not to talk or go into details about these things.

In terms of our two female interviewees, Ngoc is a 26-year-old former teacher who moved from Ho Chi Minh City to Long Thuan island after she married her husband, and now lives with her husband's family and their daughter. Tiep is a 58-year-old single lady, who was

born in Long Thuan island and lives with her relatives. After the questioning, we wanted the ladies to talk about their daily life, so we could learn things we wouldn't have learned if we just asked them questions. In summary, it's their main duty to do household chores such as preparing the dishes, cleaning and take care of their family. Besides, they also help with the farming and raising stocks. While men here usually gather in the evening for drinking wine and playing games after some hard work on the fields, women have no entertainment at all since they have much time for that. The ladies in return asked us about our daily lives and they were very interested in our free-time activities. Ngoc said, for example, that she wished she could have that much freedom and could visit her family and friends more often so that she would enjoy life a bit more.

3.4. Wealth inequality

As farming and fishing has been the livelihood of most people in Long Thuan, we arranged our time to interview vegetable farmers, the director of the Production cooperative consume safe vegetables in Long Thuan, fishing farmers and the representatives of Long Thuan fish cage association.

Regarding the farming industry, there are 80 households who are farmers with 160 hectares farming land in the cooperation. They often have a monthly meeting to share and update information about the farming techniques. If they have a big order for the products, they will meet regularly and find ways to complete the order. In an area of 1000 square meters, they can harvest 3 tons of vegetables each season. But the investment for building the membrane and automatic irrigation adopted by Israel technology is around 1 billion VND, which is approximately 50000 USD). However, if farmers do not want to use this expensive technology and only build the membrane, they will spend around 150 million VND. If they can do that by themselves, the government will finance them 50 per cent of the cost. Nevertheless,

most of the farmers here are not willing to invest such a big amount of money for something which they hardly see the instant profit. They choose traditional farming in which they use pesticides for immediate effect so that they can earn some profit to make ends meet.

With regard to fishing farms, Cambodian people are the main traders here in Long Thuan. They will buy fish directly at the fish cage. Some of the fish are exported to the regional market. Most of the fishing households compete each other to sell their fish to the traders, which create a chance for traders to bargain and reduce the price. Some fish farmers do not want to join in the association because they want to keep their own customs and belief. They do not want to waste time on the process of the group agreement on the price and finalizing the contract but they want to see the instant money when the deal is done directly in their fish farms.

Also, the capital used to invest in the fish cage and equipment is very expensive, which is around 2 to 10 billion VND according one of the representatives of Long Thuan fish cage association. That's the reason why young labor has to move to another town or city to find jobs since they do not have such a big amount of money to invest in their own fishing business.

4. Conclusion

KNOTS is a practical and worthwhile project for Vietnamese researchers to not only make our existing interdisciplinary research more systematic in both theory and practice in terms of social science research, but also to gain a new perspective on the transdisciplinary approach. Transdisciplinary seems to be an ideal research since it crosses the boundaries of many disciplines to broaden the stakeholders' views and together find a solution from the holistic approach. However, with regard to our summer field trip, there are several things needed to be considered when applying TDR in solving local issues. The first thing was the time limit. There were plenty issues hiding under traditional and political

limitations that needed time to gradually research. Also, translation and interpretation process took extra time. The language barrier was both pros and cons. Some of the researchers can only use English to search for information. While the interpreters translated, the researchers who understand the local language could get in deeper meaning which was an effective contribution to conducting research with the time limit. Additionally, they helped translating and double checking information. Moreover, the team was facing gender traditional practice and political restriction. The policeman joined our team in interviewing activities like he was the member of the researchers' team, which made it hard to gather precise information from the local people. Nevertheless, the limitation lighted up to some hidden issues, such as power and gender inequality. These would become our concerns when it comes to bring TDR into practice in Vietnam.

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Can Transdisciplinary Approach Avoid “Good Ideas Turn Bad?,” A Case of Resettlement of Indigenous People Affected by the Hydro-Electric Project in Southeast Asia

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Abstract

Because of the energy needs for the development, Southeast Asia is home to many hydropower projects assessed its pros and cons in many research. In this paper, I focus on one of the most significant negative socio-environmental impacts: resettlement. Its goal, according to the World Bank: “Resettlement must be planned and implemented as a development project over a minimum of two generations and include not only protective measures but also the provision of new rights, resources and strategies”. However, the goal implies that if resettlement is planned as a development project, a majority of resettled people will be better off. However, two different case studies in Vietnam and Thailand can contradict pieces of evidence explaining the failure of resettlement plans when good ideas on paper turn bad in reality. This situation raises some questions: Why can good ideas in resettlement for hydro-electric projects turn bad and can they be saved? In order to deal with the above questions, this paper will organise in three parts. The first aim outlines the key elements from Norman Long’s perspective in order to identify what is “good ideas turn bad” in projects for development and explain how that phenomenon can occur. The second aim is applying literature review to answer the question “can transdisciplinary approach avoid that 'good ideas turn bad’”? And, in the final part, this paper uses the case studies about the resettlement of indigenous people affected by the hydro-electric project such as Pak Mun Dam in Thailand and Trung Son Hydropower in Vietnam to illustrate all related arguments.

Keyword: Resettlement, Hydro-Electric Project, Southeast Asia, Transdisciplinary Approach

1. Introduction

Looking at the history of development, several phases, often marked as “development decades” can be identified. During the first phase, development meant basically economic growth using rapid industrialization approach. Development intervention was largely the provision of capital to build up industries, while other aspects of underdevelopment like poverty etc. were left to charitable organizations of the churches, NGOs etc. Following the idea of self-supporting growth, all developmental problems would be automatically solved once a country had achieved its take-off (Korff 9) . However, the failure of several large- scale development projects, which should have prompted “take-off” , increasingly indicated that simplistic notions of modernisation were inadequate (Gardner 21). To prevent the failures of “good ideas turn bad” , developers turned the attention on the theoretical models to explain development. Follow that, by the early 1990s, anthropological ideas and methods became the most exciting approaches emerging in development. The “triple helix” concept approaches laid the foundation for accepting these tools have become universal at the beginning of the 21st Century (Gardner 150-51). Accordingly, participatory research emerged as a good research solution for development.

This does not mean that the new approaches of development are always successful or that there have not been other shifts in ways of seeing and doing. In their book, Katy Gardner and David Lewis emphasize that misusing or abusing in politicised development led to “good ideas turn bad” (Gardner 152-67). However, this situation does not mean that they “turn bad” all over, can they be saved? If, paying more attention to transdisciplinary approach appears to be operating in such a wide field and seems to deal with so many observations within the area of an intervention that it could prove to become an invaluable instrument to ensure proper in-depth reassessment procedures. On the other hand, it is quite clear that participatory research has a good nature, it only “turns bad” if participation lacks substance. From this perspective,

the question arises that How can a transdisciplinary approach avoid that “good ideas turn bad”?

To deal with that question, this work assignment is organised into three parts. The first outlines the scenarios that may lead to “good ideas turn bad” in development research. The second is applying literature review to answer the question “How to avoid that ‘good ideas turn bad’?” And, in the final part, I use the case study about the resettlement of indigenous people affected by the hydro-electric project in Southeast Asia to illustrate my arguments.

2. When is “Good Ideas Turn Bad?”

Firstly, if put the phrase “good ideas turn bad” in the context of the development field before the 1900s, we will easily relate to the mistakes of traditional notions of economic development. As anthropologist James Ferguson wrote *The Anti-Politics Machine* to present the assumption that it is an “apolitical” process. Ferguson wrote that the West typically fails in how it looks at development because of misidentifies development scenarios. Through the case of Lesotho, Ferguson argued that Western institutions see less developed countries through a “development fantasy” (Selik, Web). In this view, all that is required is to supply more resources or train people in how to use resources more efficiently. However, ignoring local knowledge or culture, “good ideas” does not actually solve anything, but only extends state power. According to this understanding, “good ideas” are the plans, projects and policies are built in the top-down process and “turn bad” when applied into practice.

Secondly, to deal with the failure of top-down in development, many good ideas and methods have become accepted widely such as empowerment and participation. However, these terms have circulated between agencies and groups under the guise of a shared meaning which may have existed at the outset but have slipped over time, and always towards the

definitions of those in control (Gardner 153). This happens so often that empowerment and participation tend to become clichés. This is the second way to understand “good ideas turn bad”, as Gardner and Lewis explain that the real meaning of “empowerment” has stripped by converting from a collective to an individualistic process, and skilfully co-opted by conservative and even reactionary political ideologies to control by “empowering” communities to look after their own affairs. “Empowerment” turn bad into the hand of the wrong people is partly to blame for the de-politicisation of what were originally radical ideas. And “participation” has been misused to become the ritualistic and the effectively mask underlying political processes. Therefore, that phrases such as “participatory development” and “empowerment” were becoming populist and reified (Bosman 308).

3. How to avoid that “Good Ideas Turn Bad?”

Scientific research plays important roles in most development projects because good research results will generate reliable data for the implementation of projects. One of its core roles is to help prevent good ideas from the objectives of the project turn bad by predicting scenarios, and providing optimal solutions based on scientific methods. Of course, research, in fact, is only one component, one stage in a massive system of development so the research always depends on many elements of the project.

Before the 1900s, most research activities had aimed to rationalize intervention in development. Many works in this stage were studied from the top down, or under the Western perspective but ignore local knowledge. However, after the failure of “intervention” in development, sharing “triple helix” concept approaches, the developers recognize that people are not merely passive recipients of broader forces affecting their lives. It also acknowledges the complex interaction between actors’ “projects” and practices, their intended and unintended outcomes, and the factors creating both the constraining and enabling frameworks

of social action. Acknowledging that one key focus of research in this approach has been the critical and conflictual social encounters that arise in situations of planned interventions. In detail, many studies of development that use a participatory approach focus on the meaning of intervention for intended “beneficiaries” of a project (see for example Long and Long 1992; Villareal 1994; Arce and Long 2000). The participatory research also opens up to the study of intermediary actors or brokers operating at the “interfaces” of different world-views and knowledge systems and reveals their importance in negotiating roles, relationship, and representations. By managing both strong and weak ties (Granovetter, 1973) in these negotiations, social actors “steer or muddle their ways through difficult scenarios, turning ‘bad’ into ‘less bad’ circumstances” (Long 2001: 14). This is one of the important keys to avoid the failures of and development policies and projects.

In the 1990s, there was the appearance of the first criticism of participatory research. Some reports have pointed out the risks “depoliticizing development”, and also suggested different “degrees” of participatory research: nominal participation, instrumental participation, representative participation, and transformative participation. However, despite being classified into any level of participation, the question of “real” participation is always concentrated in most of these studies. As a higher level of a participatory approach, transdisciplinarity, which has emerged and can be simply defined as a bottom-up research approach that includes scientists from multiple scientific disciplines and practitioners from non-academia focusing on solving a joint problem (e.g., social issues such as social inequalities, environment, migration, etc.). The transdisciplinary approach provides hope to prevent “good ideas turn bad” because this approach provides a valuable opportunity for dynamics and transformation of academic and non-academic actor relationships and values since they tend to bring all complexities and conflict to light. They also make us aware of the paradoxical nature of the planned intervention. The fact remains that planned interventions could simultaneously

open up space for negotiation and initiative for some groups while blocking the interests, ambitions and political agency of others. It is incumbent upon the contemporary development researcher and practitioner to convince policy-makers and even colleagues in development who may be searching for better project designs and management techniques, to share their first-hand experiences of “interface wrangling” widely. This thing help avoid repeated failures, and in this way, the conceptual and methodological framework about specific policy practices also could be further developed.

It is worth noting that there is no certainty when the risks that have occurred for participatory studies are not repeated again. Values of transdisciplinarity can be deceptive in many ways as discourse, and make them more realistic. Moreover, to display empowerment and the “participatory approach” in a more realistic way, one would need to prove that both concepts are paradoxical. Empowerment, for instance, often contains some or other reference to “participatory” approaches. This is construed in development circles as a recommendation “to listen to the people”, to understand the “reasoning behind local knowledge”, “strengthening the local organisational capacity” and developing “alternative development strategies from below”. Seen from a different angle, empowerment seems to imply the injection of power from external sources, whereas participation seems to mean working together (perhaps in an inferior role) with external forces, with the aim of letting such external forces impact on local interests (Bosman 191-92).

From all this, it can be concluded that transdisciplinarity is a potential approach in development projects in order to prevent “good ideas turn bad” by co-production of knowledge from science and practice serving the development projects. This would be concomitant with a process which aims at promoting development “from below”. Moreover, empowerment in transdisciplinary research, therefore, must follow the strictest principles. In

dealing with it, the stance is often adopted that success will be achieved if the standardised and accepted methods, or by introducing the new style of professionalism that is aimed at promoting “real” participatory management and “real” participatory research.

4. Case the Resettlement of Indigenous People Affected by the Hydro- Electric Project in Southeast Asia

Because of the energy needs for the development, Southeast Asia is home to many hydropower projects (Harris, Web). Its pros and cons have been assessed by many countries, organizations and experts. In this paper, I focus on one of the most significant negative impacts: resettlement. Its goal, according to the World Bank: “Resettlement must be planned and implemented as a development project over a minimum of two generations and include not only protective measures, but also the provision of new rights, resources and strategies” (Bartolomé 27). These goals imply that if resettlement is planned as a development project, a majority of resettled people will be better off. This assumption is contradicted by evidence in the next case study explaining the failure of resettlement plans when good ideas on paper turn bad in the reality.

4.1. Pak Mun Dam Project, Thailand

After more than 20 years of studies and reviews, the Thai cabinet finally approved the Pak Mun Dam proposal in May 1990. Ever since, the project has faced opposition from the local populace. More than 3080 families have been directly affected due to loss of houses, farmlands and fishing areas. However, affected villagers were not consulted at the early stages of the decision-making process and there were no attempts to include them in the decision making on the project or the mitigation measures. The issues around inadequate assessment of impacts and compensation were not addressed at the outset. Negotiation on compensation began only after long protests by the affected community and NGOs. Participation of affected

villagers and NGOs in the compensation process was first elicited through the Committee for Assistance and Occupational Development of Fish Farmers (CAODFF), formed by order of the Prime Minister in January 1995, eight months after completion of the dam (World Rainforest Movement 82). After resettlement, villagers have witnessed many social and cultural problems. The new social arrangements have disrupted former social relations and changed patterns of interaction among the villagers. Villagers have found no viable means of living since the depletion of fish in the reservoir. The changes were particularly acute in paddy production. As their food and income security has been destabilized, villagers have sought different ways to cope with the changing conditions. Some of them and their children began to leave their villages to look for alternative employment opportunities, such as working in construction or in factories. Compensation was not invested in productive assets. (World Commission on Dams, Web).

One of the most serious failures in this case is the top-down and centralized approaches to policy and interventions. Therefore, the local and cultural ignorance of planners and project staffs led to negative effects in negotiating roles, relationship, and representations of “interfaces”. They used the “power” of an “agency” for intervention their resettlement plan without considering the indigenous people are the central actor. If using actor-oriented approach, the authorities can focus on how knowledge, perceptions, and “social practices are shared, contested, negotiated by the various actors involved” (Long 2010: 4). The process of sharing, contesting and negotiating transpires through the actors’ interactions and their individual tasks. This is possible open up space for negotiation and initiative for some groups while blocking the interests, ambitions and political agency of others. Besides that, these tools such as “empowerment” and “participation” can apply achieve the above objectives in the early stages of the project rather than a solution for the situation after the protests and opposition of the people.

Moreover, the strong opposition of the people supported by NGOs, and the protests involve clearly the “interactions, negotiations and social struggles” (Long 2001: 13) for the negotiations around the resettlement site location, land allocation and the resettlers secure their positions of power. It can help avoid the worst excesses of conventional hydropower development planning, and contribute significantly toward the design and implementation of more appropriate compensation and resettlement strategies. This proves that an actor-oriented perspective which takes more account of local forms of social organization resulting from “the interactions, negotiations and social struggles that take place” both locally as well as at more distant but critical points in the negotiating process, and that “actors are capable (even within severely restricted social space) of formulating decisions, acting upon them, and innovating or experimenting” (Long, 1992: 21-25).

In their final report, the World Commission on Dams stated that: “if the Pak Mun project had complied with the World Bank standards at the time of appraisal in 1990, many of the serious unexpected impacts could have been anticipated and avoided”. However, what is the World Bank standards at the time of appraisal in 1990? Among many recommendations, they stress the importance of a participatory process: “Participation in the early stages process, if effectively carried through, could ensure the empowerment of people who may be negatively affected in the decision-making process, especially with regard to the project impacts, to possible alternatives as well as to the sharing of benefits” (Bartolomé 20). In the context of resettlement programmes supported by the World Bank, the local people affected by the hydro- electric project has been considered both actor and beneficiary of the development endeavour. That has shown how the top-down and centralized approaches to policy and interventions have given way to resettlement policies that focus upon the two interrelated concepts of “empowerment” and “participation”. Rather than returning such states into the hands of the people, however, the World Bank’s solution was to introduce

neoliberal policy and the market as a form of “empowerment” (Gardner 165). The next case study, will point out the phrases such as “participatory development” and “empowerment” were becoming populist and how they “turn bad.”

4.2. Trung Son Hydropower Project, Vietnam

Trung Son is a medium- sized hydropower and development project located in Northwest Vietnam, known as the first hydropower project with the participation of the World Bank in Vietnam from 2011. As with their other projects, the World Bank shows professionalism via many research, evaluation, consultation, and of course, resettlement is one of their main problems. In official documents, they use participation and empowerment as the keys to solve the problem of resettlement. To ensure continued local community participation, a community relations office will be established and managed by dedicated staff in Trung Son Hydropower Company (TSHPCo) . The Commune People’ s Committees (CPCs) with the participation of village, ethnic minorities and household representatives, will establish working groups to assist implementation of elements of the RLDP and EMP, including for example the CLIPs and EMDP and the clearance and salvage of biomass from the reservoir area. CPCs will also organize participation of households and representatives in monitoring of the project and will be one of the channels by which complaints and grievances will be channelled to TSHPCo. They conducted numerous community consultations, however, the consultation reports in 53 villages do not show the details of the impact of the relocation of indigenous peoples (the World Bank, web). In informal consultations, they invited representatives of the leadership of the villages, a group of women to Hanoi to join. However, this forms to express the high regard “participation” does not bring effective in practice. After the resettlement areas are put into use in 2015, it showed a lot of shortcomings. The houses were built on a high hill while the customs of local people are living along streams to using water. Housing area is too small for livestock and poultry and too far away the fields. Moreover, because the resettlement area

has not groundwater, there is not enough water for people to use daily. And livelihoods have been not guaranteed, some people had to go to big cities to find work. These mistakes, of course, cannot be seen in the reports of the World Bank or the project, this study used information from press sources during 2015 in *Nhan Dan*, *Kinh Te Nong Thon*, and local presses (see references).

Basically, some participatory research was used in this case to help stakeholders recognize that local people are not merely passive recipients of broader forces affecting their lives and the developers focused on the conflictual social encounters that arise in situations of planned interventions. They applied the trendiest tools such as “empowerment” and “participation”, follow the standards of the World Bank, to focus on how interventions practice are shaped by the interactions among various participants, rather than simply on intervention models that is perceived as a top-down process. The highlights of their results is the consensus of the community which according to their assessment is an important success to help the project schedule and save the costs incurred. This differs the conflicts between local people and government in the Pak Mun Dam Project, therefore, in some ways, these tools, which can be seen as the solution to analyse the interfaces included the broader institutional framework as well as power relations, achieved certain success.

However, analysing the negative consequences that resettlement caused to the community, it seems there are similarities between the two cases. It is too early to conclude that “empowerment” has stripped by converting from a collective to an individualistic process, and skilfully co-opted by conservative and even reactionary political ideologies to control by “empowering” communities to look after their own affairs and/or “participation” has been misused to become the ritualistic and the effectively mask underlying political processes in Trung Son Hydropower project. But it shows clearly that phrases such as “participatory

development” and “empowerment” were becoming populist. The techniques applied in this project raised concerns over the ritualistic nature of “participation” of the World Bank. This method has not proved ineffective for the meeting between the interfaces, the local knowledge and their “daily life” tends to be overlooked and has not been applied to the project, or at least not systematically and rigorously researched. This is an illustration for “when good ideas turn bad” mentioned by Gardner and Lewis. However, they also emphasized that “it is important to understand how ideas and practices change over time and in some contexts lose their political bite, this does not mean that all is lost” (166). How to avoid “good ideas turn bad” now is not only political questions, but also questions which anthropologists are supremely well-qualified to ask, and to answer, both via their methodology and their theoretical perspectives. Some research applied actor-oriented approach to this case such as “Pathways” (Gardner 175) can bring us back to the central issue of the encounter between actors and their knowledge repertoires, in order to remove the reified perceptions of those universal concepts of “empowerment” and “participation”, which are often deceptive in many ways as discourse, make them more realistic, and also help to search for better project designs and management techniques for creating networks for future mobilisation and activism.

4.3. What’s Next?

Participatory research is an inevitable trend of development projects because it has been regulated by many countries and organizations. As an approach with a high level of “real” participation, a transdisciplinary research provides oriented- solutions through an action-oriented process built on direct collaboration with the groups involved (Klein 2004) in order to deal with the place-based problems of the projects. However, rasing the question is whether the aim of developers meet the the biggest ambition of transdisciplinarity is knowledge co-production (Mode-2 thinking/ post-normal science) between academics and other groups?

Looking at the case studies, there are too many issues to keep in mind when implementing a transdisciplinary research as part of a development project. Power relations in development projects, especially hydropower projects, always impact on intergroup dynamics and their potential influences on the (in)equalities in the group. If this problem cannot be solved, this approach may face the same way 'participation' was appropriated for top-down development by powerful institutions like the project of World Bank in Vietnam. Thus, if applying transdisciplinary research, needing to ensure the principles must be regulated and controlled such as the research questions and methods have been developed in collaboration with those social groups right from the start.

Moreover, additional methods should also be considered such as actor-oriented approach should be utilised to prevent failure. This is where the preliminary deconstruction of the target area; the ethnographic research into, for example, the societal, political and cultural intricacies; a thorough discourse analysis, and meticulous intervention planning, should be undertaken as preventive measures to avoid the eventual failure of an intervention. Then again, open-endedness can be achieved through the actor-oriented approach, because the encouragement through the system of exceptional communication between all potential actors; understanding each other's discourses; taking care of heterogeneity, and concentrating on successful interface, will eventually take care of optimal open-ended communication (Bosman 215). Moreover, as the challenges for the development projects, these available instruments are likely to suffer "turn bad" because of politicised development. Once again, actor-oriented approach shows a potential to remove the reified perceptions of those concepts and help them change and revision, evolving into approaches to effect action.

5. Conclusion

From two case studies, development projects, in turn, challenge the tools applied to help it achieve its goals. Even applying participatory approach in the research and the decision-making process relating to the development project are the standards for successful resettlement of the World Bank; however, what goes on in the project in Vietnam seems as a consequence of “the language and techniques of participation effectively mask underlying political process which uphold the status quo, promoting the market and the World Bank’s continued grip on poor countries via the technification of social and political problems” (Gardner 166).

As the question of Gardner and Lewis, “They ‘gone bad’ all over, or just in some places?” Fortunately, if the “participation” of the World Bank is less than radical, other groups, organisations or movements might use the approach with more meaningful results (Gardner 167). Therefore, needed more studies to show that actor-oriented approach can bring us back to the central issue of the encounter between actors and their knowledge repertoires, in order to remove the reified perceptions of those universal concepts of “empowerment” and “participation” and change them back to their true meaning. However, the arguments in this paper provide confidence that the actor-oriented approach can apply to avoid “good ideas turn bad.”

Finally, the transdisciplinary, as well as the participatory research, are not only great potential but also very ambitious and demanding. How can developers focus their focus on the ideals of a co-creation process? How to create high quality and practical research results? These are difficult questions to answer; however, if all actors achieve a consensus in thinking and awareness step by step, they will help good ideas become better.

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Social Capital and Livelihood of Khmer Farmers: A Transdisciplinary Approach

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Abstract

This paper summarizes the results of a survey conducted in Tran De district, Soc Trang Province to identify the types of social capital that exist in Khmer Community and how social capital can help to improve the local livelihood of these people. In recent years, the livelihood of Khmer people in Tran De district, Soc Trang province has changed and divided into 2 basic groups: the first group is the farmers who maintain and develop their economic and spiritual life in their own homeland. They are farmers involved in Evergrowth agricultural cooperatives. They work together and share the breeding experiences. These activities help them to have a relatively stable economic life and good spiritual life. The other group is farmers who do not have any land, and they are forced to migrate to big cities such as Ho Chi Minh City and Binh Duong to find jobs. The need to find a sustainable livelihood model for Khmer farmers who are non – member of the cooperative without leaving their villages is very pressing, it requires a transdisciplinary approach with the participation from many actors including academic and non-academic stakeholders. Implementing a transdisciplinary study for the Khmer community is a new and promising approach that can be expected to find a useful solution to the livelihoods of Khmer farmers's communities and bring a sustainable development for their lives.

Keyword: Social Capital, Livelihood, Khmer Farmers, Transdisciplinary

1. Introduction

The poverty is one of the top concerns in any country. In Vietnam - a country with more than 50 ethnic groups, the poverty is especially concerned, because each ethnic group, especially ethnic minority group, has its own social characteristics, with the particular ways and lifestyles, the problem of improving the livelihoods or poverty reduction of ethnic minorities is even more challenging, because it requires us to understand their culture and the views to poverty. Soc Trang is a province in the Mekong Delta region, a province with a large number of Khmer people living alongside Chinese and Kinh people. In 2015, Soc Trang province has 28,200 poor households, in which the poor and near poor Khmer people accounted about 32%⁹⁰. In recent years, the people in Soc Trang province in general and Khmer communities in particular have also supported by many domestic and foreign projects to improve their livelihoods and reduce poverty rates such as: Local loan programs, Program 135 supports housing for people, the new rural development programs to improve rural infrastructure, the programs support jobs for people and projects Livelihood improvement for poor households (Heifer), the Canadian government's livelihood improvement project in the form of providing dairy cows to people to improve their income through cooperative models However, the effectiveness programs are still limited and especially those with very little or even no land to cultivate are very difficult to improve livelihoods in a sustainable way.

The paper focuses on understanding the real situation of Khmer people, farmers do not improve from the program of livelihood improvement projects, through three basic dimensions of social capital, social network, trust and standards. Since then, it helps us to have a better view of the material and spiritual life of Khmer farmers to be a suggestive platform to find a research cooperation to find a suitable livelihood model for the citizen.

⁹⁰ Published on the Infonet newspaper on December 13th, 2016

2. The Research Theory

2.1 Theory of Social Capital

Social capital, economic capital and cultural capital are the three basic pillars affecting an individual's life in society. In particular, the concept of social capital covers many aspects and has been interested by Sociologists. In Pierre Bourdieu's view, "*social capital is a long-term network of relationships that know each other and recognize each other, [these relationships] are more or less institutionalized*" (Tran Huu Quang , 2018, p.283). Thus, social networks are an important dimension when it comes to the concept of social capital, but it must be the type of network of individuals who know each other at a higher level than a modest understanding.

The concept of social capital of Robert D. Putnam will include in three basic elements which are moral obligation with norms, social value with especially is the trust and social network (especially voluntary associations). Putnam argued "*that if a region has a well functioning economic system and a high level of political intergration, these are the result of the region's successful accumulation of social capital*"⁹¹. Social capital in Francis Fukuyama's argued "*is shared norms or values that promote social cooperation, instantiated in actual social relationships*" (Fukuyama, (2002), p. 27). James Coleman argues that social capital is formed in interpersonal relationships that contribute to regulating interpersonal behavior in society, "*social capital is the value of the elements of relationships. the society that the subject can use is the resources to accomplish a certain purpose*"⁹². Coleman's social capital will consist of three basic elements: social networks, norms and trust in society - which help members to act together in effective way to achieve common goals"⁹³.

⁹¹ See Martti Siisiainen in Two Concepts of social capital: Bourdieu vs Putnam presented at the ISTR Fourth International Conference, July 5-8, 2000.

⁹² Coleman 1990, quoted by Lê Ngọc Hùng, 2008. p.02.

⁹³ O. Galland, 2002, p.17 quoted by Tran Huu Quang, 2008, p.283

Thus, when it comes to the concept of social capital, researchers generally measure based on basic three factors such as social networks between individuals and individuals or between individuals and other organizations in the same community, which is voluntary and reciprocal in relation to the life of that individual; social norms such as principles, values help individuals interact with each other, contributing to the stability, social order, ultimately trust between individuals or between individuals and systems / structures in society.

2.2 Definition of Transdisciplinarity (TDR)

Transdisciplinary research refers to scientific inquiry that cuts “ across disciplines, integrating and synthesizing content, theory and methodology from any discipline area which will shed light on the research questions (Russell, 2000).”

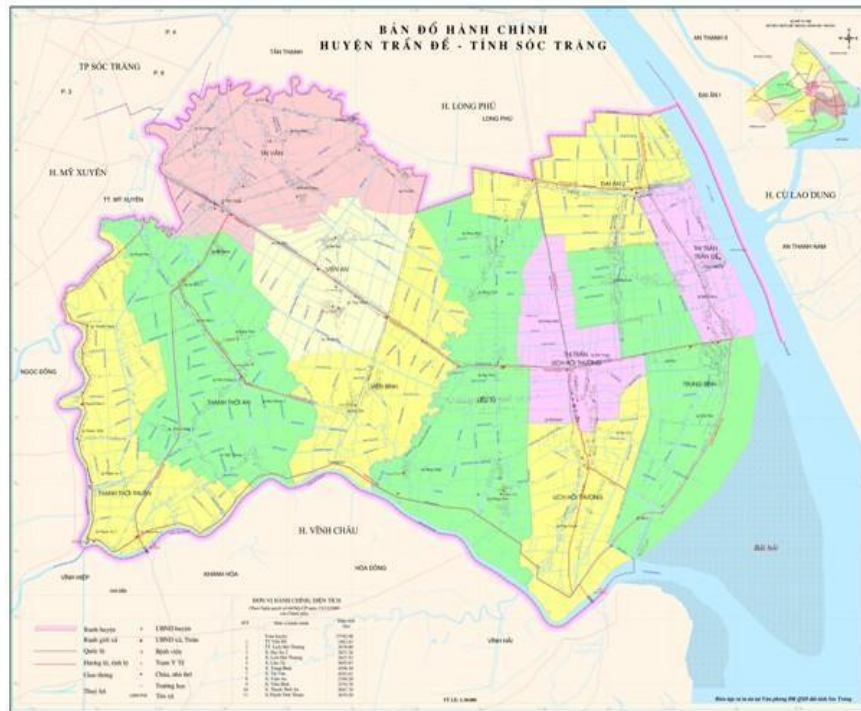
3. Research Methodology

3.1 The Reseach Site

Tran De is one of 9 districts of Soc Trang Province, there have the largest number of Khmer people living in the Mekong Delta, the district has more than 134,000 people, in which the Khmer account for about 48%⁹⁴. The district has 2 towns and 9 communes, with diverse natural conditions, suitable for many types of livelihoods from agriculture, handicraft to service. Lich Hoi Thuong commune is a port area with potential for tourism development and aquaculture and fishing. Lieu Tu and Tai Van Communes are two communes with large numbers of Khmer people, interspersed with Kinh and Hoa people, these are the two agricultural communes of Tran De district, this area is quite far from the seaport area so the people in this area have mainly livelihood is cultivating crops according to the seasons, the lives of people are relatively difficult. Since 2004, with the support of the Government of Canada

⁹⁴ Published on the People online on Jun 05, 2019

through SOCODEVI Organization's project to improving the livelihood of Khmer farmers, some Khmer people have shifted from specialized cultivation to cow breeding by the loan from the Social Political bank and selling milk to the Evergrowth cooperative. However, there are still many farmers do not raise cattle and still maintain traditional farming practices. Therefore, we temporarily divided the area of Lieu Tu and Tai Van communes, basically, there are two main groups of farmers according to livelihood characteristics such as: (i) farmer households with the cow farms. Being a member of Evergrowth Cooperative, their life is quite stable and sustainable when receiving the attention and support from the local policy programs as well as from the cooperative - a collective economic organization that they are members, (ii) a group of farmers who are not members of the cooperative, in which we divided into two smaller groups, one who live mainly on seasonal farming, this group has a similar economic life. Normally, they are usually own a relatively large amount of land (over 1 hectare) so they can live stably by the profit from their own land and the last group is farmers with very few (0.2-0.3 hectare) even without arable land, they mainly lived by a part of the income from their children, whose working in the city or doing local hiring jobs. Therefore, in this article we will focus on the second group - the group of people who have few opportunities to stabilize their life and future.



(Source: trande.soctrang.gov.vn)

3.2 The research method

The study focused on two groups of Khmer farmers living in Tai Van commune and Lieu Tu commune, the first group they are neither farmer nor members of Evergrowth Cooperative (number of 50 questionnaires and 25 in-depth interviews) - those people are supported and getting benefit from the collective economic model. The second group is the Khmer farmers who are not members of the cooperative (the number of 50 questionnaires and 25 in-depth interviews), they work independently based on personal experience and support (if any) from their own social network, they do not receive any support from collective economic organizations. Therefore, the data collection of the research is done by the methods:

- Collect qualitative data: there are 50 in-depth interviews with Khmer farmers of all ages and sex and living in both communes of the research site.
- Collect quantitative data: We conducted a survey with questionnaires for 100 Khmer farmers in the areas of 2 communes Lieu Tu and Tai Van.

- Sampling method: random to select 1 group in each commune and using convenient sampling method but still ensuring the diversity of age and gender to conduct information collection.

Besied that, this reseach also used some documents such as newspaper, report, ect... about Khmer peoples was published to addition, verifying for research site and issue.

Data analysing method: quantitative data were analyzed by SPSS 20.0 software and qualitative data were analyzed by Nvivo software 8. The data presented in this article are the results of the analysis information collected from Khmer farmers, who are not members of the cooperative. Farmers from other ethnic groups who living in the same area are not subject to the survey of this study.

4. The Study Results and Discussion

4.1 The Study Reseach

The Khmer farmers in our survey are aged from 18 to 67 years old, but mainly concentrated in the age group of 36-51 years (accounting for 51%). Women account for 60% of the total number of respondents to our survey. As we mentioned, the spiritual life, especially the religious element is very important factor for the Khmer community, with 95% of the Khmer in our survey being Buddhists, and the prices Theravada Buddhism dominates the daily life of the Khmer.

The social capital of Khmer farmers will be measured based on three basic dimensions: the *social network*, *the norms*, this concept is closely related to the spirit value of the Khmer communities and *the trust* of the other people.

4.1.1 The Khmer's Social Network.

In general, Khmer people have extensive relationships not only with a large number of family members such as siblings, cousins but also neighbors and friends in outside. From the survey results, for the brothers and sisters in the family, the Khmer has 6 siblings on the average, 39.6 relatives / cousins have blood relationship. For outside relationships, an Khmer person has 89.34 people on the average who regularly communicate, interact with them in life and more than 94.20 friends. These friends may also be people in other areas who have a familiar and interactive relationship, but sometimes you are the people living in the hamlet / neighborhood. This may be the "echo" of the ancient *phum* and *soc*⁹⁵ social structure, when Khmer people living in the same small area are called phum - a traditional village of Khmer people who live in which often the relationship is close to each other, and the village means that the salty hamlet of the rural area is preserved to this day, although the phum or shock model is no longer available and replaced by the structure instead main is open like today. However, the vast social relations of Khmer people hardly support them much in material life. Specifically, only 38% of respondents said they would borrow siblings when they needed a sum of money, and up to 50% of the respondents selected other sources of support such as borrowing from fertilizer agents for small amounts of money even though they have to pay high interest rates, or policy bank loans if they need a large sum of money that is not from outside brothers and friends. Explaining this, most of the opinions that "because everyone is equally difficult" (Mr. L, Hamlet of Ha Bo, Tai Van commune) so they do not have enough financial resources to have can support each other. In fact, up to 40% of respondents have a difficult economic situation and 30% of respondents only reach a sufficient level of wear. In addition, the current public exchange / exchange groups only have very limited numbers, and

⁹⁵ Small Phum is a collection of several houses that are often familiars, over time due to the separation of households, the number of houses in one building becomes increasingly crowded, plus one The number of households coming from other places should be called a large phum. Soc is equivalent to a commune, including many people gather (According to Assoc. Prof. Dr Ngo Van Le in the book: Some issues on ethnic culture in the South and Southeast Asia)

in the production process, if more workers are needed, they must hire other people or machines to support (72%), this shows the level of restrictions in supporting each other in everyday life.

For participation to the organizations of local government agencies, the Women's Union is an organization that occupies the majority of people's participation (50%), the rest, up to 30% of people asked said that they did not participate in any local organizations. Participation in the Women's Union is an important step because when participating in the Women's Union, people have many opportunities to enjoy programs for family economic development such as borrowing without collateral with interest. Preferential rates or livelihood support programs for the people, thereby enabling them to develop their family economy, up to 32% of respondents used the women's union loan.

For Khmer youth, labor migration to the provinces in the Southeast region is a solution to improving the family's income, and sometimes it is the sole solution decision on the family's economy. Among the respondents, 78% said that they have relatives working in Binh Duong. The most supportive people in labor migration are cousins (36%), siblings, neighbors and friends accounting for more than 56%, The most supportive person in labor migration is the neighbors - who have gone before, have experience of living and working in urban areas, they return to the village during Tet holidays and sharing information, as well as guidance for people at community who need to seek labor opportunities. In the process of labor migration, the social network has shown an active role of "reducing migration costs, seeking jobs as well as promoting the integration of people moving in immigration areas". (Dang Nguyen Anh, 1998, page.22).

In another aspect, Khmer farmers in the study area live mainly on farming (46%), however the area of a farmer's land is relatively low, averaging 0.2 – 0.3 hectare. However, up to 30% of interviewed households said they have no any land. For farmers with land, their main occupation is cultivation if there are technical difficulties or resistance to pests and diseases ect. They often seek support from the other farmers or technicians from pesticide companies through fertilizer agents. However, this support sometimes makes it difficult for the people, because the company's technicians will focus on consulting and selling their company's products so sometimes create confusion for the people. It is costlier and confusing "this company said this medicine, the other company introduced the other one, so many companies, can I follow to any party?" (CS. Dai No commune, Lieu Tu ward). For farmers have no any land, their main occupation is working with an income about 100,000 to 150,000 VND/ day. However, this work is only seasonal and irregular, they also have to compete from agricultural machines such as combine harvester . . . To get this job they often rely on neighbor relationships, people with arable land and who want to find more workers.

Thus, it can be said that the social network of Khmer farmers in the study area is both extensive but also confined within the hamlet, hamlet or between a group, among people with the same thing. Economic and social events are similar to them. Because of this, the social network of the sacred Khmer is more spiritual in value through daily exchange and participation in preserving traditional cultural values in the locality.

4.1.2 The Trust To The Other People

Belief is one of the important measures to learn about an individual's social capital, the concept of trust is often understood as a belief among individuals in the family and society. Belief is also understood as a belief in a certain value of preparation for religion. However, limited in this article we will only mention the concept of trust among individuals in daily life

and in trading and doing business. As analyzed above, Khmer people have a diverse social network from family, friends, to rights organizations and among people in the same religion, often meeting each other through ceremonial activities. Assembly at the temple. Through many historical periods, the phum-shocked administrative units are no longer present. Khmer people live in the open structure of the village in terms of both nature and scope. However, not so that Khmer people become more open to strangers. Specifically, 58% of respondents said that they would not contact a stranger completely. If strangers are Kinh people, Khmer people are willing to answer in Khmer to show their refusal to communicate with other strangers. Even for people of the same ethnicity and religion but living in another area and having never met before, the Khmer people are also very wary to not welcome. In life, Khmer people often believe in people of the same ethnicity that they know, even if they need to borrow money or lend money to someone they do not need to do paperwork (58%), or if necessary, they only do paperwork with strangers. Khmer beliefs are often based on the tradition of sticking to the village, the ethical standards that are passed down through the teachings of the monks in the temple at festivals and festivals.

4.1.3 The Norms

Social networks are an important role in understanding the concept of social capital. Tran Huu Quang in his research has seen the social network "as a kind of capital that is crystallized from the social network of the farmer's owner, meaning the network of people whom the farmer owner knows and trusts. , often exchanging and visiting " (Tran Huu Quang, 2018, p. 284). Social network in this article, we are interested in the relationship between Khmer farmers and their brothers in the family, friends, neighbors, people of the same nation, and religion. In general, Khmer people have extensive relationships not only with a large number of family members such as siblings, cousins but also neighbors and friends outside. The results of analyzed data showed that 98% of Khmer people in the survey group have

Theravada Buddhism, becoming a Buddhist has become very popular in each person's life, if for those with Catholic beliefs, they having to baptize for a newborn baby, when they grow up, they have to go to Church teaching, every week they have to worship at the Church and so on. On the contrary, for every Khmer, since childhood they considered themselves a Buddhist, their life was associated with the temple voluntarily from birth until they died. From a young age they will follow relatives often go to donate money / rice to the temple, and listen to the monks to adjust their behavior and thoughts. They preserve what is taught by the monks who are Vietnamese and Khmer literate, the monks have highly educated and know how to live a good life so they have an important role in the life of the Khmer. Monks are "masters" who teach Khmer from young to old people how to live in their lives through ceremonies at the temple, where Khmer people learn how to treat humanity, it is important to know ancestors, must know how to be fond of grandparents and parents. A child from a young age can attend a monkhood for a short time at the temple to learn Khmer and learn the moralities of being human. Religious practice for Khmer people is a great significance work, 74% of respondents said it was worth doing and they wanted their son to grow up to become a monk at least in period before having a stable job helping the family. A person who is a monk is respected by the community and even their relatives feel very proud of it.

Khmer people often spend a part of their income to make offerings to the temple (94% of those interviewed), this amount is not fixed and does not stipulate, they worship according to their own willing with the believe that they have a better and richer on the next life, not as hard as it is now. In addition, they believe that donating to the temple also helps them to create merit for their children, and their future will be better. Khmer people go to the temple on Tet holiday if they do not have much free time in daily life (56%). Also when they have free time they often go to the temple (26%). Khmer people often come to the temple for 4 days in a month: on the 8th, 15th, 23rd and 30th day, when they come to the temple, they often bring

a piece of rice, some money for donation. They believed that when they offered meals to the temple, their grandparents, their deceased people would be eaten, and when they offered money, it was a form of saving for the next generation. When a Khmer died, they will be cremated by their relatives and bring their ashes to save in the temple, until there is a festival or when they have spare time, their descendants will visit again. So far, the role of temples in Khmer life is still very important, for them, it is a place for them to be blessed (accounting for 64%) and where are their relatives responful (18%). Therefore, the temple is also considered as the homeland, the origin of the Khmer. For young people who are working away from home, they still keep a connection with the temple through sending money to their parents to worship the temple, or on holidays, if there is a chance to return to their homeland, they often spend time for attending the ceremony at the temple.

4.2 Discussion about the Khmer's livelihood under TDR approach

Truong Thi Kim Chuyen (2013) argues that "social capital is a particularly important type of capital because it provides a" buffer "to help farmers deal with shocks, creating an official safety net to ensure livelihoods in high-risk periods". From analyzing the social capital of Khmer farmers, the social network of individuals in the Khmer community put each other's trust in adhesives when promoting a norm of Theravada Buddhism. They live under rooftops surrounding a temple and contribute to keeping that fine tradition. Therefore, when approaching the Khmer community, each individual researcher needs to understand this in order to make use of collective strength - one of the key factors contributing to the success of a program and policy to support the community. From the analysis results show that the economic life of Khmer households is relatively difficult, households with arable land are relatively small in number, they live mainly on farming with insignificant income. Most of the time they spend on caring for their grandchildren - children whose parents migrate to work in the urban area. As for the farmers without land, they often do not have stable jobs, their main

income is only the money extracted from the wages of those working in Binh Duong. The precarious situation is still a challenge for managers in finding livelihoods for Khmer communities to ensure the lives of people living in their homeland, as well as contribute to balancing population and resources between urban and rural areas. That situation requires the participation of many parties in finding a solution for people's livelihood in Tran De district in Soc Trang province.

From the reality, the Khmer people's social network is very diverse with different characteristics, so solving the Khmer problem requires co-participation from many sides such as the temple in which the role of the monks is very important to the Khmer community, young people are working in the urban area - who always want to live in their homeland but because of their family circumstances so they had to look for work far from home, the elderly left in their homeland - who had no stable source of income to ensure life in the late age, local authorities and government agencies such as Agricultural Department, Agricultural Extension Association, Women's Union, Ethnic Committee, Job Promotion Center - agencies responsible for taking care of people's lives and being responsible for local development, business' representatives, units having the capital and resources to exploit the potential of the locality, bringing benefits to both people and businesses. Finally, it is the participation of research people - who with their scientific knowledge, with the full foundation and academic ability will create bridges, link stakeholders to solve livelihood issues of people in Tran De district, Soc Trang province. The co-implementation of TDR's approach to research will bring more efficiency, towards the community, who are accepting to go far from home to find the job opportunities, can get the income in their hometown. In their spirit, they can contribute to preserving the good value of their nation. For local authorities, co-study will help them identify local issues, their potentials and how to mobilize resources to solve their own local problems. Local managers will need to participate in these studies so they have the opportunity to study

and become more sensitive to problems that arise locally. For businesses, those with resources, through access to the community, they will gain the advantage of being able to see the local development potential that benefits the whole locality and private sector, help them show their responsibility to the community. Finally, for who do research, implementing co-research will help them realize what is the key element and strength of the community, besides that they can realize the results research, make that result more feasible and contribute to solving problems of that community.

5. Conclusion

Social capital of Khmer community in Tran De district is traditional style with social network among Khmer people living in the same area, they believe in each other while pursuing the Theravada Buddhist value system. This can be seen as resources to support farmers neither daily life in general nor economic activities in particular, although they facing limited material resources such as the number of seasonal and irregular works with meager income, the amount of land owned - which is the basic livelihood resources of farmers - is very little or even not. Therefore, the application of TDR research method in finding suitable livelihood models for Khmer farmers in Tran De district, Soc Trang province has an important and necessary role, because this method supports for community outreach and research to achieve highly feasible results and meet the needs of the parties in co-participation and call for the participation of all stakeholders. The results are helpful for the people and local authorities, helping to solve the problem of the local community. At the same time, co-participation and study also helps the community to improve its capacity through co-production of knowledge. The benefits of applying TDR approach are reflected in the fact that the academic parties will increase their knowledge in the community and help the post-research solution more sustainable. However, one of the big challenges that stakeholders need to overcome when conducting TDR study is how to achieve co-participation as well as increase

the voice of ordinary people when they are sitting and discuss together with local authorities and academic parties. The ordinary people are often afraid of and uncomfortable to presenting their views in formal meetings. Another challenge is that in the process of conducting research, there must be the presence and co-participation of migrant workers in big cities, they are a great force and play a crucial role in migration, as well as playing an important role in the new livelihood conditions in the community, they will be the decisive people after the solution is implemented in the community.

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China-Myanmar Economic Corridor and the Dispossession of Customary Land Tenure Rights and Livelihood Insecurity of Ta'ang Tea Farmers in Northeast Myanmar

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Abstract

The opening up of Myanmar since 2012, following several decades of dictatorship, has provided hope for inclusive development, but concerns have been raised over further entrenchment of land grabbing as Myanmar hosts China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) as part of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This movement has also been facilitated by amendments to national land use policy. This research employed a critical ethnography to study the impacts of CMEC's oil and gas pipeline by focusing on the affected tea farmers who are the ancient settlers in Northeast Myanmar. The researcher interviewed sixty tea farmers, local authorities and members of civic groups. Empirically, capital accumulation from the CMEC's gas and oil pipeline projects, in producing for global energy markets, has regenerated marginalisation and livelihood insecurity for tea farmers through the dispossession of their customary lands in the Tatmadaw(military)-assisted land acquisition. Customary land tenure, hence, is affected because the tea farmers have no rights to claim, control and access to land, as well as to obtain adequate compensation. These have been the root of clashes between the Tatmadaw and Ta'ang liberation group. The food supply and livelihood security, furthermore, are threatened as the tea and paddy farming, and access to water, hunting and fishing, are in decline due to the CMEC's infrastructure development and military conflicts. The local women are at risk of being abused by militants, thus, exacerbating the traditional exclusion of Ta'ang women from accessing land-rights. Most respondents proposed that it needs to address these insecurities, renegotiate with all involved parties for peace, solidarity and development, and legislate customary land policy to protect the tea farmers' rights, land and natural environment.

Keyword: China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, Ta'ang Tea Farmers, Accumulation by Dispossession, Livelihood Security, Customary Land Tenure Rights

1. Introduction

Most scholars have studied large-scale land acquisition and confiscation by focusing on the capitals accumulation of powerful actors, international financial institutions, the state's land policy development, colonizers, mega agribusiness, mining and infrastructure companies, both domestic and transnational (Harvey 2005: 85; Roudart and Mazoyer 2016: 11- 12; Nesadurai 2013: 506; Gironde and Portilla 2016: 172; Lund 2011: 885; Holden et al. 2011: 141).

In Myanmar studies, Scurrah et al. (2015) mention how the Tatmadaw government and its alliances exercise "power and crony capitalism" through the planning of rubber plantations in Northeast Myanmar (Scurrah et al. 2015: 23). Similarly, the research of Karen Human Rights Group shows how the proliferation of economic development with the amendment of land policy generates land grabbing and land tenure insecurity for the local Karen farmers (Karen News 2018: para. 1). Gittleman and Brown (2014) analyse how the government's foreign investment policy reformation has generated space for mega investments and threatened the livelihoods of local people and created human rights abuses (Gittleman and Brown 2014: 5).

Global Witness's research points out that the lure of foreign money generates human rights abuses and causes the natural resources to flow to the hand of dictatorships, and it transforms the livelihood of the poor people which was in the case of large-scale rubber plantation and eviction of local ethnic people from their lands (Global Witness 2015: 4). In a similar note, the research from Land Core Groups and Food Security Working Groups (2011) shows the reconstitution of agribusiness development's policy and land policy of 1993 by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) dispossessed thousands of farmers' lands in the lowland Tanintharyi region and highland Kachin state. Many farmers became landlessness, and livelihood insecurity emerged (Land Core Groups and Food Security Working Groups 2011: 1-2).

These existing Myanmar studies testify not only to the relationship between the changes in socio-economic structures but also the emergence of land and resources accumulation and dispossession with the essential roles of influential actors such as the Tatmadaw and its partners, and the civilian government particularly in the study of CMEC's investment. However, what remains to be studied mainly in the case of Myanmar are how different layers of actors: the affected people, the local authorities (a regional dominant party and armed groups) and civic societies perceive and respond to the CMEC's investment in their lands. Thus, this research emphasised on the voices of the affected tea farmers, civic groups and local authorities.

This research, therefore, argues that the apparent paradox in this recent context of Myanmar's political, social and economic transitions lies on the one hand, on an opening up of Myanmar since 2012 that raised hopes that the excesses of the Tatmadaw/old SLORC and Ne Win era political economy may give way to a more inclusive path of development. On the other hand, the impacts of opening to China capital seem to further entrench issues of land grabbing, land tenure and livelihood insecurity, among many other possible effects.

Given the present situation in which the Tatmadaw's power to control the access to and management of the country's land and natural resources remains intact and secured by the 2008 Constitution. It is most likely that the socio-economic and political transition of Myanmar since 2012, create more opportunities for the military-connected elites from both the earlier Ne Win era and the later Tatmadaw/SLORC/USDP era to participate in economic development or land-based investments of the country. In this contested structure, China investors are one of the leading players as they have "Phoapaw" (relationship) with top military leaders.

2. Background of the Study

Myanmar, formerly known as Burma before 1989 (Dittmer 2010: 1), is a country where 135 diverse culture and language groups (Bianco 2016: 8) live together under the Myanmar national government system. Myanmar used to be known as “the Golden Land” (Clements and Kean 1995: 11) and “the rice bowl of Asia” (Ganesan and Hliang 2007: 3) along the Mekong and Irrawaddy basins, but it has also become famous as “a state shaped largely by civil war” (Stokke et al. 2018: 2) between the government and ethnic armed groups since 1948 (Kramer 2005: 34). Most of the ethnic lands are located along the edges of the country in remote sites, while the majority of Burmese people live mainly in the central low land areas (Kramer 2015: 357).

Myanmar's socio- economy, as well as land governance, have changed since independence in 1948. From 1948 to 1988, Myanmar was ruled by the U Nu's government (Taylor 1987: 217), and the Ne Win Tatmadaw government. In 1963, the Ne Win government constituted many land laws including the “Law Safeguarding Peasants’ Rights” (Mekong Regional Land Governance 2018: 128), and “National Enterprise Law” (Maung Maung Gyi 1981: 10). Critiques stated these laws created advantages for the Tatmadaw government and personnel (Oberbdorf 2012: 2 and Ferguson 2014: 301).

From 1989 to 2015, three Tatmadaw leaders: General Saw Maung, General Than Shwe and General Thein Sein (Union Solidarity and Development Party’s head) ruled the country (Ganesan 2007: 23), and these leaders legislated the 2008 constitution. In 2012, therefore, General Thein Sein became the president and started transforming socio- economic and political development by opening a door for cheap foreign goods, they also favour investment by powerful Chinese conglomerates (Scurrah et al. 2015: 5; Global Witness 2015: 4 and Land Core Group & Food Security Working Group 2012: 1-2).

In 2012, the Farmland Law, and the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Law (VFL), were enacted for large-scale investments, it eventually led to negative results for agrarian society (Oberndorf 2012: 3; Forbes 2017: 2; Scurrah et al. 2015: 3 and 5). In Northern Shan State and Ta'ang ethnic area, the Tatmadaw and its crony companies took a total of 51,111 acres of lands for a rubber plantation (Scurrah et al. 2015: 14; Woods 2012: 29). In Ta'ang ethnic region, about 42,940 acres of land had been seized by the Tatmadaw between 1999 and 2011, thus forcing some 8,588 families out of their lands, some of which have currently been used as military camps and other lands transferred to business companies (Ta'ang Students and Youth Organization 2012: 11-12, 20-21 and 31).

In 2016, Daw Aung San Su Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) government was elected as the first civilian government of the country. Two fundamental issues mark this era: (1) the 2008 Constitution which guarantees twenty-five per cent of the parliament seats for the Tatmadaw (Williams 2014: 120) on the basis of sovereignty safeguarding (Stokke et al. 2018: XI, 4-5), and (2) the approval of the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) into which "6-point guidelines" had been added against the ethnic armed groups, plus the Tatmadaw's demand for the "disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration" of ethnic armed groups (Institute for Security and Development Policy 2015: 2-3). Further, in October 2018, the Tatmadaw addressed two main key issues: (1) not to allow any group to "secede" from the Union and (2) the country should have only one army (Lawi Weng 2018: para. 8). In February 2019, the Tatmadaw announced that they would not agree to change "the essence of the 2008 constitution", especially the 48 principles in the constitution. Moreover, the Tatmadaw will not stop its involvement in Myanmar's politics as they have to battle with ethnic armed groups (Nanda 2019: para. 3).

Regardless of their competing powers, both the Tatmadaw and the NLD government have focused on the accumulation of land and natural resources in ethnic controlled areas including Kachin and Shan states, (including the Ta'ang areas), and the Rohingya area in Rakhine state. They have so far neglected various issues of alleged ethnic cleansing in Kachin, Ta'ang, Shan, and Karen land and the genocide of the Rohingya.

Under the NLD government, the 2016 National Land Use Policy (NLUP) is constituted (National Land Resource Management Central Committee 2016: 1). Further, they also reconstituted the VFV law in September 2018. This law required farmers to register their land within six months (the deadline was March 2019). Failing to do so will result in the three-year imprisonment, and the state will take the land. This law will lead to a change in smallholder agrarian society (Liu 2019: para. 3-4) and punishing rural farmers. Thus, it generates criminalisation to the ethnic farmers when they fail to follow the amended law. It seems that this legal amendment as part of the NLD government's plans for economic development emerged after State Counselor Aung San Su Kyi's speech given in Singapore about foreign investment (Nan Lwin 2018b: para. 3).

Politico-historical analysis has testified to the Tatmadaw's influential roles in politics, socio-economic, and land governance. Importantly for this research, it provides the foundation for the CMEC project through large-scale land acquisitions and concessions. China's dream thus becomes the foundation for Myanmar national socio-economic development while the issues of nationwide ceasefire agreement become neglected, and the land-based economy becomes the major development in Myanmar.

3. China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC)

The CMEC's investments are the essential economic remedy for a development project in Myanmar. "Modern Silk Road" or "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) was started by China's President Xi Jinping to connect with over 60 countries. Many projects, thus, have emerged in Myanmar under BRI and CMEC, which is one of the seven economic corridors in Asia. Importantly, gas and oil pipelines and railways and highways are part of the CMEC-BRI (Enright and Associates 2016: 3, 19). Construction of the gas and oil pipelines started in 2009 and completed in 2013 at the cost of USD 1.04 billion (Zhao 2011: 89 and 94). The 793-kilometres gas pipeline and the 771-kilometres oil pipeline run from Kyautphyu, Muse (Northeast Myanmar) to Ruili, in China's Yunnan Province (Myanmar-China Oil and Gas Pipeline Project 2014: 1).

The Project developer claims that it gives a myriad of benefits for Myanmar's people who live in Mandalay, Lashio and Muse. The local people will get "2 million tons of crude oil and 2 million cubic meters of gas for the first time" at a low price (Su 2016: 190). In detail, this project can earn USD 1.8 billion per year and USD 54 billion for thirty years (Shwe Gas Movement 2013: 6). However, this project has had negative impacts on the local Ta'ang ethnic group located in the Northeast region/Northern Shan state. Some local people have been evicted from their native land and forced to move (Ta'ang Student and Youth Organization 2011: 34).

The CMEC is known as part of the BRI project signed by the leaders of Myanmar and China (Nan Lwin 2018a: para. 4). It is also addressed as the "southern route highway and railway" project which will be built along the CMEC's gas and oil pipeline from Kunming to Northeast region of Myanmar and continue to lowland areas of Myanmar such as Mandalay, Kyautphyu deep seaport and a special economic zone in Rakhine State (Zhao 2011: 98). The

"BRI" is recognised as both "regional strategy and global strategy" for promoting the "China Dream" (Aoyama 2017: 1, 15). According to the Xinhua news in October 2018, Myanmar and China signed a "memorandum of understanding (MOU)" to survey to build the railway road. It is claimed that the project understands environmental and social issues. This is a "Paukphaw (fraternal) friendship" as it has economic and strategic profits for both countries and will give the benefits of low transportation cost and socio-economic development (Xinhua News 2018: para 1, 3 and 4).

4. Accumulation by Dispossession

Accumulation by dispossession refers to the capitalists who take over and expropriate the customary economy, including land and resources, of tribal or ethnic people by transforming it as capitalist's investments and developments (Harvey 2003: 144). It emerges the movement of capitalism that is accumulating the lands and natural resources for the new markets by manufacturing them. This situation is also the opening up of capital accumulation, which is trying to find resources for capitalist's production and development. Then, the capitalist makes profits without having any limitation (Harvey 2006: 153). Harvey discusses it when he talks about the modern day of peasant groups in Europe as they are being "displaced and disbanded" from the 15th to 18th centuries by capitalist accumulation (Harvey 2003: 145).

This research applied Harvey's concept of accumulation by dispossession to show how the capitalists control and use the land and natural resources of the people by changing all these capitals as their investments and markets. The unstoppable accumulation and dispossession of the capitalists' movement legally exist with the powerful actors in this cooperation. In this research context, the powerful actors, state and Tatmadaw government, negotiate with international business investors to take over the land and resources for their capital development and mobilisation without considering the responsibility to implement

sustainable livelihood development of the subordinated people which is the Ta'ang tea farmers.

5. Livelihood

The concept of livelihood is defined as gaining a living and the abilities to obtain assets based on the possession of things such as stores, resources, claims and access. Livelihood also refers to the achievement for living that incorporates the ability to access "tangible assets and intangible assets." Tangible assets are explained as natural, physical, and financial capitals while individual capitals such as human, social, and cultural are considered as intangible (Chambers 1995: 174; Chambers and Conway 1991: 5-6). The ownership and access in resources, individual income, job stable and other different risks in lives, and "environmental sustainability" such as land, water, forest and air (Allison and Ellis 2001: 378-379). Accordingly, the concept of livelihood is used to investigate how the livelihood security, sustainability and opportunity of Ta'ang tea farmers are shaped by the capitalist movement of CMEC-BRI project. Furthermore, it is also essential to know how the tea farmers can have a good social relation, the rights to access social, political and economic capitals without having pressure, shock and block by the powerful actors.

6. Customary Land Tenure

Land tenure is the nexus between customary and non-customary context both for one or many people "concerning land" and also refers to the rights to control, claim, use, access, lease and sell "as well as associated responsibilities and restraints," which is embedded in critical issues in politics, economy, social patterns, constitutional law, organisational network and technical patterns (FAO 2002: 7). Land tenure security is the necessary foundation to protect them from being excluded by the large-scale land-based business (Schutter 2016: 70-71). It also includes the rights to hold to land and land-based resources such as water, food,

natural and supplies (Landlinks n.d.: para. 1). Thus, it gives the clues to focus on how traditional heritages of lands and natural resources of the Ta'ang tea farmers are used independently in the means of controlling, leasing and selling to other people. Further, the Ta'ang tea farmers have the rights to claim their lands and natural resources from being destroyed by the powerful actors' infrastructure projects. Also, it is essential to see how the CMEC-BRI project impact on the tea farmers' land and resources.

Moreover, the concept of property rights can analyse how the local tea farmers access the resources, ability to benefits and the rights to claim by using "the bundle of rights or multiple rights." (Macpherson 1978: 2-3; Howell 1955: 123). The notion of property rights shows the method to study how the Ta'ang tea farmers access, make profits and have the rights to demonstrate in the context of mega infrastructure development under the CMEC-BRI cooperation in their lands.

Research Methods

The qualitative research in critical ethnography (Creswell 2007: 70) is used as a fundamental tool for this research paper because the empowerment for the local tea farmers' voices and the notion of their experiences are recognised as a strength of this research. The key informants' interview, participant observations, focus group discussion and life history interview were also used with semi-structured questions as it was importantly useful in particular cultural context, daily activities or the nature of life, contextual "social meaning, social world and discourse" (Mason 2002: 3). These research methods were vital because they mostly pointed out the hidden information of the respective field by observing the phenomenon at a different time to get real data on the areas of selected sites.

This research focuses on four research sites/villages – Mine Wee, Phapyan, Panhankyi and Pankanaing villages (Rumai Ta'ang dialect group) which are located along the CMEC's gas and oil pipelines and other China's mega-projects (mining, hydropower dam and teak market) in Namkham region, Northeast Myanmar. The situation was changed when the CMEC-BRI's gas and oil pipeline project built in these four research sites (four villagers). Hence, this phenomenon motivated me to investigate and study how the tea farmers from these four research sites are transformed and shaped in the sectors of customary land tenure rights and livelihood security.

Sixty Ta'ang tea farmers from these four research sites are chosen for the interview including elder, adult and young tea farmers; both male and female. Furthermore, four adult representatives, both male and female, from the Ta'ang literature and cultural committee, were also interviewed as these people have the local knowledge and the experiences regarding CMEC's projects.

In addition, I also interviewed four young representatives (two males and two females) of the Ta'ang Student and Youth Union (TSYU) about China's investment in the research areas. Another three young female leaders from the Ta'ang Women's Organization (TWO) were also selected for interviewing due to their experiences with the local media and local activist movements.

I also interviewed three representatives from armed groups (Tatmadaw and Ta'ang liberation group) and Ta'ang party to get information about China's investments, their roles and perception regarding CMEC's investments. Hence, this research had aimed to obtain unique data from different perspectives of the new and old generation, which included the views of civil society members and authorities.

Based on three main research questions: (1) How the projects of CMEC's project (gas and oil pipeline) affected the customary land tenure rights and livelihood security of local Ta'ang tea farmers in Northeast Myanmar? (2) What are the roles of the Tatmadaw, the dominant party under NLD-led government's period, and the ethnic armed group in the development of BRI-CMEC's projects? (3) What are the perceptions and responses of the local Ta'ang tea farmers and other civic groups and local authority toward those projects (gas and oil pipeline and railway/highway project in Ta'ang lands?), this research had attempted to investigate how the CMEC's project (gas and oil pipeline) affected the customary land tenure rights and livelihood security of Ta'ang tea farmers, the roles of the Tatmadaw, the regional dominance political party and the Ta'ang liberation group. Moreover, this research investigated the perception and response of the tea farmers, civic groups and local authorities on the CMEC's investments.

7. Findings

7.1 Customary Land Tenure Rights' Insecurity

The four research sites, Mine Wee, Panhankyi, Phapyan and Pankanaing, are geographically connected. Mine Wee is the largest village and the central village for all the Ta'ang villages in this region. Thus, the government recognises Mine Wee village as the capital by setting governmental offices. Ta'ang is the majority group and the shan, Kachin and Chinese are the minority groups in this village. Panhankyi, Phapyan and Pankanaing are Ta'ang villages, but I did find some Kachin people in Pankanaing village. Local markets, many shops and grocery stores are located in Mine Wee village. These days, many Chinese people are based in this village to buy teak wood, lead mined in the area and rare domestic animals. The Mine Wee militia group (Chinese militias) and Tatmadaw camps are also based in this village. Hence, I chose Mine Wee village as the first research site and from there continue to the other three communities.

In the research sites, tea is a large-scale agribusiness, and paddy farming is the second broader agricultural economic product, but the villagers also grow vegetables such as pumpkin, mustard greens, cauliflower, cabbage, chilli, ginger, garlic and so on. Every house in the villages has a vegetable garden. There is a stream that flows across in the middle of Mine Wee and many on to other Ta'ang communities. Communal forest lands are also the primary resource of food for the local people in this region. Every village has its communal forest along with private lands. In this area, many natural streams provide an additional food supply for this tea farming society. Furthermore, bamboo shoots, mushrooms and natural herbs from the forest are the leading traditional food and health care assets for all the people.

The tea farmers could sustain their food supply in the past. For instance, traditional tea business could provide security for the whole family's livelihood, although some tea farmers also worked at paddy and vegetable farming. The tea farmers had excess income and could donate to the monasteries, the monks and the religious festivals. They were able to support their children's education and provide health care for the whole family. Bamboo shoots, seasonal mushrooms, wild pumpkins, and other vegetables and natural fruits from the forest provide people with food security.

Moreover, some tea farmers hunted the small animals such as deer, rabbit, wild boar and chicken at the forest. Many villagers also fish at the streams in the forest and Mine Wee's river. Thus, the tea farmers have a great chance to access the land, water and forest in the past. However, the customary land tenure rights are affected when the CMEC's oil and gas pipelines started in these four research sites. First, the CMEC and Tatmadaw have not negotiated and discussed to use the land and resources of the local tea farmers, which is seriously contradict the customary land tenure system of Ta'ang tea farmers. The Tatmadaw and the BRI-CMEC's gas and oil pipeline company come together to build the construction for

the project without making consent and respect to the customary land use system of the native people. The Tatmadaw is the main actor who confiscates the lands for the BRI-CMEC's project development.

Second, these authorities (CMEC's company, Tatmadaw and local government officers) are the primary decision makers for land compensation project. Thus, compensation has many problems in these four research sites. The land compensation rate is lower than in other places (Namkham region). For instance, one acre of tea and paddy land get 80 lakhs (estimate 4500 US dollars) in Namkham region, but the tea farmers from Mine Wee village get about 35 lakhs. The tea farmers from Panhankhyi and Phapyan get 15 lakhs (estimate 1000 US Dollars) for an acre of land. However, all of the tea farmers from Pankanaing village obtain 40000 kyats (30 US Dollars) per acre of tea land. In these four village/research sites, the waste (stones and sand-soils) from the BRI-CMEC's gas and oil pipelines' construction has a severe problem for the local tea farmers' lands. Many tea lands and paddy fields are affected by the waste from the construction project. Thus, as the authorities control compensation factor, the tea farmers have no right to claim justice for the compensation.

Third, in these four research sites, all the tea farmers have no rights to claim and control the cutting down of trees, the blocking of natural streams and the use of tea and paddy lands for the construction development, and community forest and areas. For instance, the community forest in Mine Wee and Panhankhyi are used by China's project without having consent for land acquisition from the local tea farmers. Thus, the local tea farmers said that the BRI-CMEC's project breaks the customary land tenure system. In the past, the native tea farmers have widely used the customary law in land and forest access. However, the situation is changed by China's project, and it gives shock and stress for the abilities to address the rights of the tea farmers.

Fourth, many lands are occupied by the Chinese people and workers who are related to CMEC's project. For example, many properties from the community forest are owned by the Chinese people. Then, there is a big Chinese's lead mining factory in Singkaung village. These land and resource concessions are legitimated and allowed by the local Tatmadaw leaders and militias from Mine Wee and Namkham region. Thus, the local tea farmers have no the rights to claim on the large-scale land and resource acquisition of China's project; no control of the conventional system and no access to the benefits from the land and resources, and to China's plans.

7.2 Major Impacts on Livelihood Security

There are three issues in this section. Firstly, the tea and paddy farming are dramatically declined because many stones and sand come out from the farmlands when they plough the lands in the farming season. Furthermore, the waste from the construction also spread out in the paddy fields and tea gardens in the rainy season. This waste contains sand-soil and stones. It eventually results in uncultivable land strewn with rocks and sand. The people could not access public clean water, fishing, collecting frogs and water snails because the natural streams are blocked by CMEC's gas and oil pipeline project. The following Table 4 shows the tea and paddy (milled rice) producing for per acre before and after China's investment (CMEC's gas and oil gas pipeline) installed in the four research sites.

Research site/village	Before CMEC (Tea)	After CMEC (Tea)	Before CMEC (Rice)	After CMEC (Rice)
Mine Wee	48 kg	20 kg	640 kg	300 kg
Panhankyi	50 kg	30 kg	384 kg	192 kg
Phapyan	50 kg	30 kg	448 kg	224 kg
Pankanaing	42 kg	20 kg	640 kg	100 kg

Table 4: Tea and Paddy (rice) Production for per acre

Secondly, all female tea farmers reported that they have a severe condition to work at tea gardens and paddy fields because of armed conflicts between the Tatmadaw and Ta'ang liberation group. Typically, the female tea farmers have to work the whole day at the tea gardens and forests. They were threatened by the presence of Tatmadaw soldiers and the armed groups as they have mainly to work in tea land and forest. The female tea farmers are excluded by the Ta'ang's traditional practices of land access. According to my data, only 2 (adult) out of 32 (both young and adult) female respondents own tea lands. In the Ta'ang tradition, the women have no rights to own residential land and farmland, house and cars. Even though the male young tea farmers had no lands, they have a chance to access inheritance from their parents. The below Table 5 illuminates the individual property of the tea farmers (interviewees) in four research sites.

Research Site/village	Genders	Tea Land (acre)	Paddy Land (acre)	Forest Land (acre)
Mine Wee	Female Adult	2	1	No
	Male Adult	2	1	2
	Male Adult	3	2	4
	Male Adult	2	3.5	1
	Male Adult	3	2	2
	Male Young	No	No	No
Panhankyi	Female Groups	No	No	
	Male Adult	3	1	2
	Male Adult	2	1	2
	Male Adult	13	2	1
	Male Young Group	No	No	No
Phapyan	Female Groups	No	No	No
	Male Adult	2	2	2
	Male Adult	3	2	1
	Male Adult	2	2	2
	Male Adult	2	1.5	3
	Male Young group	No	No	No
Pankanaing	Female Adult	2	No	No
	Male Adult	3	1	2
	Male Adult	3	2	2
	Male Adult	3	3	3
	Male Adult	3	2.5	2
	Male Young Group	No	No	No

Table 5: Individual property Lists in Four Research Sites

Moreover, while the tea farmers could access vegetables, woods, mushrooms, bamboo shoots and traditional medicines in the forests, the tea gardens, paddy fields and forest become unsafe places for the tea farmers because of landmines and military attack. Thus, all

these factors have led to food and livelihood insecurity of the local tea farmers who depend on lands and forests.

Thirdly, the local tea farmers had no legal process to claim compensation from this large-scale land confiscation, both individual and communal lands (forest). This along with the problems in compensation and waste pollution which has infringed upon their rights to control and access land and resources of ancestral lands. Then, the farmlands became uncultivable lands after the infrastructure development of CMEC's gas and oil pipeline project. Also, the military conflicts between the Tatmadaw and Ta'ang armed groups have created dangerous conditions for the tea farmers to access and work at the tea lands, the paddy fields and the forest. All this has caused the tea farmers to abandon their traditional businesses as there is no longer any security for the future of land tenure and cultivation security.

7.3 The Role of Authorities: Armed Groups and Regional Dominance Party

The three main actors; the Tatmadaw officer, the head of Ta'ang party and Ta'ang Liberation Army group, had been interviewed about their roles regarding BRI-CMEC's project in Ta'ang lands. A Tatmadaw leader said that the Tatmadaw have the responsibility to give security for China's project (CMEC) rather than the local people as China's plan is related to the top Tatmadaw leaders. The head of the Ta'ang party explained that the party had not any role and power to control and manage China's project because the leaders of China project have a good negotiation with the top Tatmadaw leaders. Thus, the Ta'ang party do not have the rights to ask questions and oppose this project in Ta'ang region. The general secretary of the Ta'ang armed group meanwhile said that his group holds no negative attitude toward China's investment in the Ta'ang region. However, they have to protect their people and lands because the Tatmadaw help China's project to confiscate the properties with no transparency in the compensation and the exclusion from the management of the construction project.

Thus, the rights and voices of the local people have been neglected in every situation. Hence, the Ta'ang liberation group had to take responsibility to protect the people and lands.

7.4 The Perceptions and Responses of Tea Farmers, civic groups and local armed group

The tea farmers perceive that the negotiation for land use and the respect of the customary land tenure system is more important and is essential for the CMEC's projects. They also raised concern over a high number of Chinese migrants into Mine Wee and Namkham region to trade teak and do mining. The tea farmers demanded that the compensation system should be transparency. Moreover, they said they felt insecure as they are fearing the explosion of the gas and oil pipelines.

Meanwhile, the informants from Ta'ang Women Organization told that many big trucks and mining trucks had caused traffic problems. Before the building of the CMEC's project in Ta'ang land, there was no military conflict. However, many conflicts between the Tatmadaw and Ta'ang liberation group had emerged when the BRI-CMEC's projects install in Ta'ang lands. Thus, the local tea farmers were worried about their livelihood security. Therefore, they suggested that the State and the local armed group should consider the rights of the local tea farmers. In this situation, women are the most vulnerable group because the Ta'ang women are traditionally marginalised to own the lands. Now, they have been insecure to access the land-based agribusiness again because of armed conflicts.

The interviewees from the Ta'ang Cultural and Literature Committee seriously discussed that the state and China's project (CMEC) should consider the rights of the tea farmers as there has been many problems and restrictions for these local people. For instance, the local people cannot approach and plant the trees near the pipelines' area. The Tatmadaw soldiers will open gunfire if someone approaches this area. Thus, this is the main problem for

the local Ta'ang tea farmers because it changed the normal situation, which did not exist in the past.

All these three actors; the local tea farmers, the Ta'ang Women Organization, and the Cultural and Literature Committee, agree that the Ta'ang people should legislate the customary land policy. Despite the state and the Tatmadaw government taking the lands and natural resources in Ta'ang lands, the state's public land use policy is not protecting the property and natural resources of the Ta'ang people. Hence, it is essential to enact the system to protect the rights of the people, land and natural environment of the Ta'ang region.

The Ta'ang Liberation Army group perceived that the armed conflicts impact the local people. Thus, the new BRI-CMEC's highway/railway project will also confiscate the land and resources of the people. There will be no rights for the local people to complain about these resources confiscation because the Myanmar government did not know human rights and respect to the local people. Thus, this new China's project should respect the voices of the local people. Furthermore, both China and Myanmar government should tackle the political issue and peace process and solidarity before conducting the CMEC project in Ta'ang lands. Finally, the head of the TNLA explained that if China's plan and Tatmadaw affect the local people and destroy the natural environment, the Ta'ang Liberation Group will protect the people against this scheme.

8. Discussion and Conclusion

CMEC project, as a part of BRI, is Chinese-based capitalist's movement to accumulate and expropriate the customary economy, including land and natural resources, of indigenous people by transforming it as capitalist's investments and developments. The evolution of capitalism is enhancing and assisting the new markets by manufacturing and producing raw materials from Myanmar. Thus, this movement is also the opening up of capital accumulation,

which is trying to find resources for capitalist's production and development. Furthermore, the capitalist makes profits without having any limitation. Harvey discusses it when he talks about the modern day of peasant groups in Europe as they are being "displaced and disbanded" from the 15th to 18th centuries by capitalist accumulation (Harvey 2003: 145). The core of my research is that the capital accumulation from the CMEC project (gas and oil pipeline), in producing for global energy markets, has regenerated marginalisation and livelihood insecurity for tea farmers through the dispossession of their customary lands even though it has enormous profits for top government officers and BRI-CMEC's project.

The customary land tenure of Ta'ang tea farmers is transformed by the CMEC's gas and oil pipeline project even though this tea farming society has practised traditional land tenure system in the past. However, when the CMEC's plan come to this land, tea farmers have no rights to claim, control and access of their customary tenure and lands. The land relation in social, economic and political factors are unrecognised and neglected by the state and its alliances, including China's project, as the primary purpose is to assist and give security for the BRI-CMEC's project in Myanmar. The Tatmadaw is the leading player to accumulate and dispossess the lands and has also become the security guards of China's plans in this region.

There are three elements, such as the rights to claim, control and access profits and justice, which were absented in customary land tenure rights of tea farmers in my research sites. For the rights to claim, the BRI-CMEC and the Tatmadaw had not negotiated and discussed to use the land and resources of the local tea farmers which is seriously opposing the customary land tenure system of Ta'ang tea farmers. Both the Tatmadaw and the CMEC's gas and oil pipeline company come together to build the construction for this project without making consent and respect to the customary land use system of the native people. The Tatmadaw is the main actor to accumulate the lands for the CMEC's project development in

Ta'ang lands. Thus, all the tea farmers argued that there are no rights to claim as their traditional property.

Importantly, CMEC's project has threatened local people's livelihood security. First, the tea and paddy farmings were a decline in the four research sites. Due to the CMEC's infrastructure development, the stones, sand, waste soil, poor water quality for agriculture; and the blocking of the natural stream had created the problem for tea and paddy farming. The agriculture lands become uncultivable in this day. Also, the people cannot fish in the natural streams because the BRI-CMEC's construction has blocked most of the streams, thus leading to food and financial crisis for the tea farmers. In the past, the resources from the natural environment are sustainable for the tea farmers, but the situation is changed when the CMEC's project came into their lands. For this, Chambers and Conway explain the tangible assets— natural (land, tree, fish and food) and financial (economy) capitals as the tea and paddy farming, and access to water, hunting and fishing were affected by the infrastructure development and military conflicts.

According to the below Figure 1, all the tea farmers (interviewees) from each research sites reported that the tea production had dropped 58 % in Mine Wee, 64% in Panhankyi, 70% in Phapyan and 76 % in Pankanaing. Thus, the severe changes in tea production significantly impact on the livelihood of the tea farmers. Moreover, all the interviewees explained that many tea farmers stopped working on the tea business as the tea market's price is low in Myanmar.

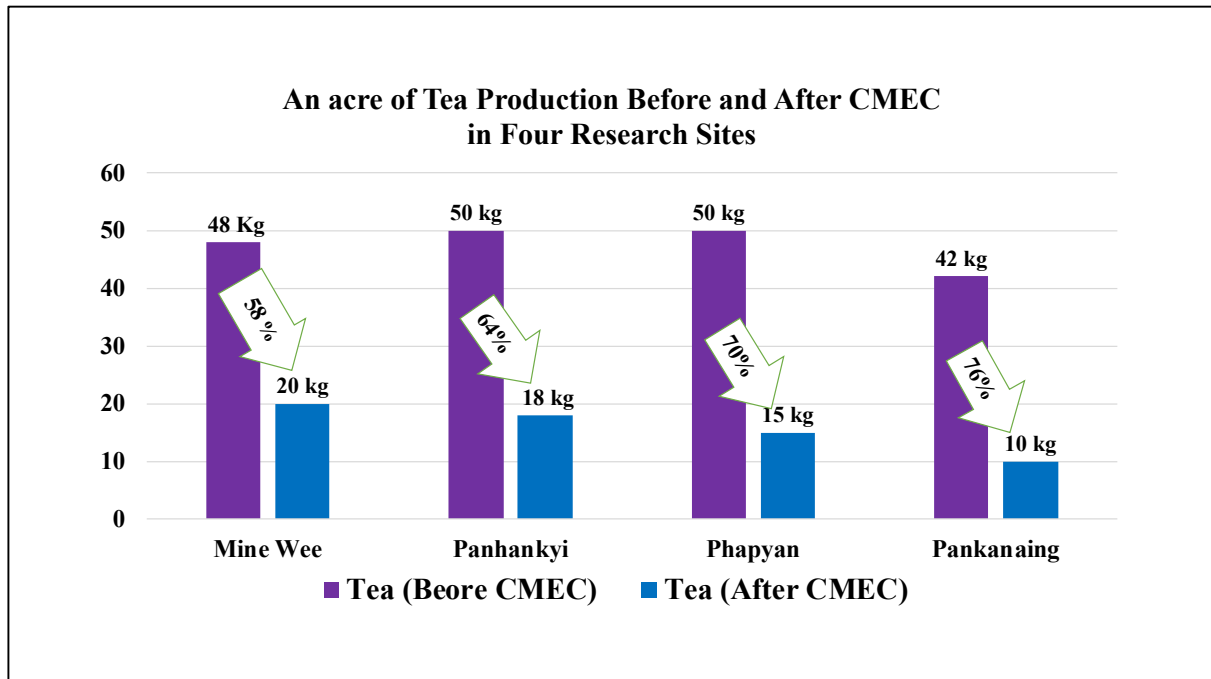


Figure 1: Tea Production for an acre

For the paddy (rice) production, all the tea farmers (interviewees) from each research sites mentioned that the paddy (rice) production had plummeted 53 % in Mine Wee, 61% in Panhankyi, 60% in Phapyan and 83% in Pankanaing. This paddy (rice) is the local variety of rice, and it also is known as taungya rice (brown colour rice). In this day, most of the tea farmers buy rice from China and only a few of tea farmers grown this local brown rice. The below Figure 2 shows the paddy (rice) production before and after the CMEC in four research sites. Thus, the decrease production of tea and paddy (rice) negatively changed the livelihood development of the local tea farmers in these four research sites.

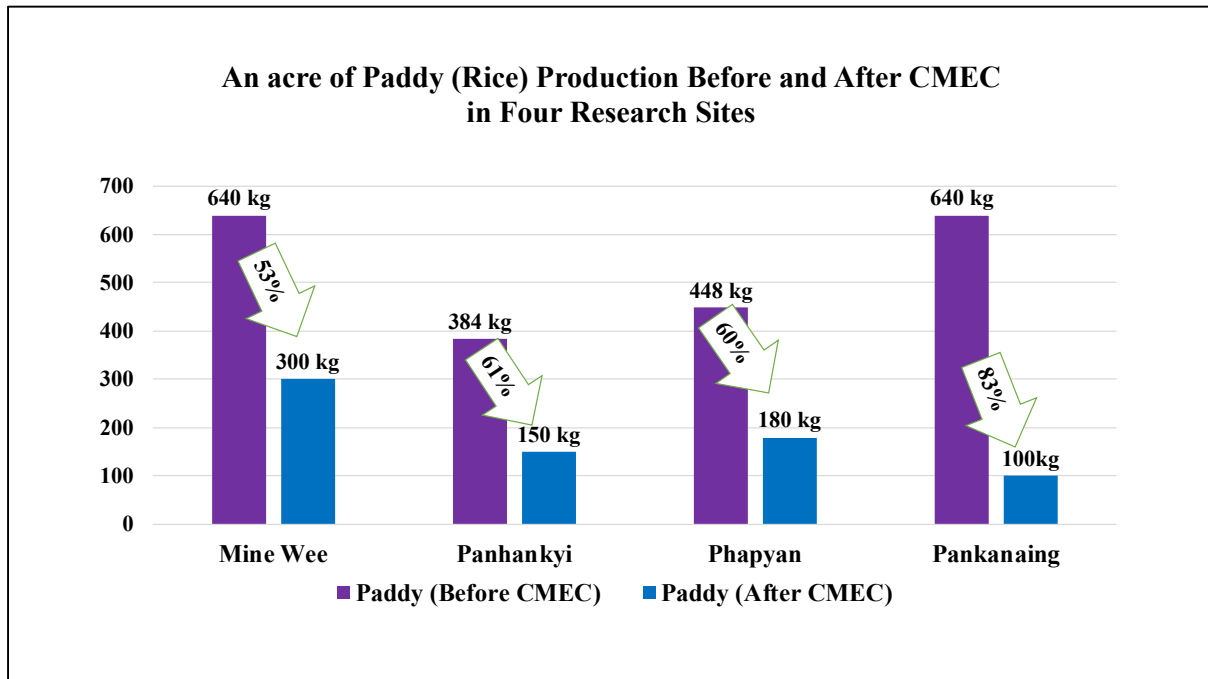


Figure 2: Paddy (Rice) Production for an acre

Second, when the CMEC's project starts in Ta'ang lands, many Tatmadaw soldiers came with China's company to accumulate the lands and gave full security for the China project as this is the primary role for them. Thus, this is the problem for the local Ta'ang armed liberation group as they are living in this region to protect their land and people. As a consequence, the armed conflicts between the Tatmadaw and Ta'ang militant group construct insecurity for the local tea farmers to access and work at tea gardens, paddy fields and forests. The local tea farmers have lost their traditional hunting jobs because they cannot use their hunting rifles as many militants are staying in the woods. Some villages and villagers have to move to the town area and taken refuge at the Internally Displaced Person camps. In this situation, they have to leave their agriculture lands and residential houses.

The female tea farmers feel insecure and stress to work at tea land, paddy field and forest as there had been six Ta'ang young women who were raped and murdered by the

militants in this region. Thus, this situation generates insecurity and shock for the Ta'ang female tea farmers as they have to work the whole day in tea land and forest. Therefore, this issue exacerbates the traditional exclusion of Ta'ang women from accessing land rights. Traditionally, the Ta'ang women have not the rights to own lands and houses. There are no rights to obtain the inheritances (properties and homes) of their parents and grandfathers. Thus, this research severely criticises that the rights of Ta'ang women regarding land rights are essential as their society rejects them. According to my research findings, 2 out of 32 women own tea lands. It means (2/32 [6%]) of women are landless people while only (2/32 [6%]) of women own lands. Thus, there are no land rights for Ta'ang women as their customary land tenure's cultural system threaten them.

All things considered that this is the sign of threatening the livelihood of (female) tea farmers as they have inabilities to access the resource, and land tenure; facing the risk to obtain capitals and shock of military conflicts and attacks (Chambers and Conway 1991: 5 and 6). The unexpected outcomes are emerging until today as China's BRI- CMEC's investments are planning more project in this region. Also, the livelihood opportunity of tea farmers is a seriousness pattern. There is no opportunity to access sufficient social, economic and political capitals. Therefore, the power in socio-economic and political relationships have been unclear for local tea farmers who have no rights to claim human rights issue regarding land confiscation, large-scale land acquisition, and the destruction of natural forest. Hence, the tea farmers have no rights to claim as their traditional property.

The tea farmers and the civic groups: Ta'ang cultural and literature committee, Ta'ang Student and Youth Union, Ta'ang Women Organization and Ta'ang Party suggest that the Ta'ang people should legislate the customary land policy because the state national development projects are focusing on land-based economic development. On the other hand,

the state's public land use policy is not protecting the property and natural resources of the Ta'ang people. Hence, the Ta'ang people should authorise the traditional land use policy to protect the rights of the people, land and natural environment of the Ta'ang region.

In conclusion, the CMEC has been facilitated by political, social and economic changes of military and civilian government in Myanmar. The recent amendment of the National Land Use Policy and the VFV Land laws by the Tatmadaw and the civilian are used to support the BRI-CMEC's development and mega investments, but the voices and rights of the farmers and civilian have been neglected. While foreign direct investments are meant to boost economic growth as well as poverty alleviation and educational enchantment of future Myanmar, the peace process is impossible to negotiate between state and ethnic liberation groups. Regarding the nationwide ceasefire process in Myanmar, different institutions, armed groups and peace-building groups, have different ideologies toward the concept of federal democratisation and mutual peace negotiation and solidarity while many civilians are struggling by military conflicts.

The new government has emphasised on economic development by inviting international investments, especially China's BRI project. As China has a close relationship with the former military government and has the interest to invest in Myanmar, they are increasing their BRI-CMEC's projects such as gas and oil, highway/ railway, seaport, mining, special economic zones and many other investments. Thus, the lands and natural recourse become an essential commodity for these mega investments. It eventually leads to insecure for the livelihood and customary land tenure rights of the people and farmers in areas with natural resource-rich lands—the land of Kachin, Ta'ang, Rakhine (Arakan), Rohingya and Shan. This research argues that if there is no law that base on the property/land rights of the people and sustainable peace and unity in these ethnic/indigenous regions, massive migration, human

rights abuses, severe poverty and internally displaced persons will soon become big problems in these lands.

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Health Protection and Accessibility of Myanmar Migrant Workers: A Case Study of Healthcare Services in Samut Sakhon Province, Thailand

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Abstract

The purposes of the research were to explore the healthcare services provided for Myanmar migrant workers in Samut Sakhon Province, Thailand, and to assess the accessibility to healthcare services of Myanmar migrant workers at Samut Sakhon Hospital and to analyze the possible barriers to service access of Myanmar migrant workers. Qualitative method was applied in this study including collecting data through in-depth interviews with migrant workers who have used the healthcare service in the region and key-informant interview with the local NGOs and provincial hospital personnel. The study found that even though there are well-developed Health Service provided for Myanmar migrants, some of them still rely on the private medical clinics because of time consumption, language barriers and high costs of direct and indirect expenses. Healthcare service is offered to Myanmar migrants with non-discrimination but unintentional barriers of language differences is still the crucial challenges for Myanmar migrants in accessing the healthcare service of Thailand. Additionally, a large number of Myanmar migrants are not insured because of their legal status, unawareness of the existence or benefits of the insurance and high costs of MHS. The study suggests that finding out better way to accommodate the non-Thai speaking patient, promoting and improving the current two insurance schemes to be migrant-friendly and increasing the enrollment of Myanmar migrants and identifying the innovative way to insure the undocumented migrant workers will support the Thailand realization of the UHC for all the individuals on its soil.

Keyword: Health Protection, Accessibility to Healthcare, Migrant Workers, Barriers to healthcare Access, Migration and Health

1. Background and Rationale

Thailand is a major destination country for an international migration especially for migrants from neighboring countries, Myanmar, Lao PDR and Cambodia. Migrants in Thailand can be generally classified into two groups; regular and irregular. Migrants come to Thailand with several purposes including travelling, seeking for a job opportunity and fleeing from the potential threat in their homeland (e.g. war, political unrest) (Tangcharoensathien et al., 2010).

The period of large-scale labour migration to Thailand from the three neighboring countries started in during the 1990s. This coincided with a decade-long economic boom from 1987 and 1996, which greatly expanded wage differentials between Thailand and its neighboring countries. Based upon increased exports and a major influx of foreign direct investment, the economy grew by an average rate of nearly 10 per cent per year. In less than a generation, Thailand had emerged as a middle-income country and transitioned from a net-sending to a net-receiving nation for labour migration.

To respond to increasingly urgent demands from the private sector to fill labour shortages in sector that had become undesirable to Thai workers, the first of many cabinet resolution was initiated to register Myanmar migrant workers in 1992 (Sciortino and Punpuing, 2009). According to the latest data from Department of Employment in 2018, migrant workers from Myanmar contributes about 2 million (exclusive of irregular migrants) which is about 51% of the total CLVM migrant workers, 3.9 million that is reported in the recent Thailand Migration Report 2019. Many of these Myanmar migrants have been living in Thailand for many years. They especially live near the border between Thailand and Myanmar or in the industrial provinces in Thailand. There are three types of work in the industrial section in the western, eastern and central Thailand (Chamrathirong, Holmyoung, and Apipornchaisakul, 2011), and work in the household sectors in different parts of Thailand.

Although access to primary healthcare is a basic human rights, some migrant workers are still not in the relatively well established system of Thai public health. Many migrants live in the same area or close proximity to Thai communities, and improving health conditions among migrants will ultimately benefit and assist with maintaining the health security of host communities. While the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) endorses the Healthy Thailand policy, and has clear intentions to deliver basic health services to all, the actual provision of services remains a significant challenge. According to the latest statistics by Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Labour (2018), about 64% of migrant workers are covered by two available insurance schemes; Social Security Scheme (SSS) and Migrant Health Insurance Scheme (MHIS) and the remaining 36% are self-supporting for their healthcare services. But there is an estimation that about 811,437 of irregular migrants are excluded from the statistics, who are eligible for coverage under the MHIS. So, if all eligible migrants (regular and irregular) are considered, the percentage of CLMV migrants without insurances might rise to 49% (Thailand Migration Report, 2019).

Many migrants continue to have limited or no access to basic healthcare primarily due to: 1) their illegal status, poverty, and remoteness of their residence, all of which contribute to their marginalization; 2) limited knowledge and understanding about their rights to basic healthcare; 3) language and cultural barriers; 4) high levels of mobility amongst some migrant populations; 5) lack of cooperation from employers toward their employees; 6) negative perception and attitudes amongst health service providers; and 7) MOPH's limited financial and human resources to provide adequate health service to migrants (Mon, 2014).

Oliver (2018) stated that as the weak social security protection available to migrant workers in ASEAN, it is necessary to appreciate and introduce the complementarity of unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral interventions. Of primary importance is the development

of a comprehensive network of intra-ASEAN social security agreements, ideally in the form of a multilateral agreement. There is a need to adopt overarching regulatory instruments and to introduce suitable institutional mechanisms to facilitate implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Mutually supportive measures to enhance migrant workers' access to social security should be in place – relating among others to access to social security and health coverage for migrants in the country where they work, and improving the portability of workers' compensation and retirement benefits. There is also a need to better regulate the superimposition of immigration law on social security entitlements, in support of migrant workers' social security entitlements. The precarious position of migrant workers in ASEAN indeed requires appropriate responses.

Moungsookjareoun and Kertesz from WHO reported that no matter what the legal status, migrant workers have the right to access healthcare in Thailand. Because of the need to cover the cost of care, however, medical facilities often want to see proof of ability to pay before they provide services. For many, this means that they need to be enrolled in a health insurance scheme. At present, health coverage for migrant workers and their dependents is provided under two insurance schemes.

(1) Social Security Scheme (SSS)

If a migrant is employed in the formal-sector through either one of the bilateral MOUs or completed the NV (nationality verification) process, they are entitled to enroll the SSS which is administered by Social Security Office of the Ministry of Labour.

(2) Migrant Health Insurance Scheme (MHIS)

MHIS is managed by the Ministry of Public Health of Thailand. In 2004 and 2006, the Thai Cabinet stipulated that dependents of migrant workers could be enrolled, and a further

resolution was issued in 2013 that all migrant workers and their accompanying dependents were eligible (WHO, 2014). The MHIS is therefore intended to address the gap in health insurance coverage for migrant workers and their accompanying dependents (Chalermopol and Apipornchaisakul, 2016). Insurance is offered at an annual rate of THB 2,100 for adults, THB 2,700 for dependents and THB 365 for children under seven per year.

Isarabhakdi (2004) reported that although the migrants can access government health facilities, they are still more likely to buy drugs or use herbal medicines for treating themselves when they have minor illnesses, while the Thais are more likely to seek medical care from government facilities. The main difficulties for migrants in accessing health services are their legal status, financial constraints, and an inability to speak Thai.

Roman and Chuanprapun (2018) also expressed that financial and language barriers are common challenges for migrants. In addition, some parents do not see the immediate need to buy health insurance if their children are healthy and others are not aware of the insurance scheme. There have also been reports of health facilities turning away migrants due to concerns about financial losses, as they could incur costs beyond those covered by the insurance scheme and migrants may be unable to pay. As noted, some migrant parents may hesitate to register their children for insurance due to their irregular legal status and fear of being reported to immigration authorities.

Lack of flexibility for MHIS coverage is another challenge, Romana and Chuanprapun continued. Because it may be used only at one health-care facility except in cases of emergency. Many migrant workers and their dependents are highly mobile and may only be in one location for a couple of months before travelling to their next destination or back home. Migrant workers in some sectors, such as construction, are particularly disposed to frequent

relocation because of the short-term nature of their work. When construction at a site is finished, or even just their part of the build, workers may move on to a project in another location. Under these conditions, buying health insurance linked to a single health-care facility may seem a costly investment with an uncertain return. It is often not clear how easily it will be to transfer their coverage to another hospital.

Accordingly, to understand issues related to the health protection of migrants from Myanmar, the research investigated the lives of workers from Myanmar in Thailand, specifically those who live in the Mahachai area of Samut Sakhon Province. The Mahachai area is well-known for supporting the largest Burmese community in Thailand. The research investigated the social protection of Myanmar migrant workers and potential obstacles that they are encountering. This project is shaped by concepts related to Accessibility by Peters et al and Social Protection by ILO. Through the study, the researcher investigated healthcare service users from Myanmar in the Mahachai area by categorizing them into Social Security Scheme (SSS), Migrant Health Insurance Scheme (MHIS) and Out-of-Pocket (OOP) users. The key-informant interviews were conducted with the service provider from the local hospital and some local NGO staff working for the wellbeing of the migrants. The researcher found out how the migrant workers from Myanmar are protected and what is their accessibility to healthcare in the Mahachai area; and how are they encountering the barriers.

2. General Objectives

The objective of the paper is to study the Social Protection for Myanmar migrant workers in Samut Sakhon province focusing on Healthcare Service.

2.1 Specific Objectives

- (1) To explore the healthcare services provided for Myanmar migrant workers in Samut Sakhon Province.

- (2) To assess the accessibility to healthcare of Myanmar migrant workers at Samut Sakhon Public (Government) Hospital in Samut Sakhon Province.
- (3) To analyze the possible barriers to service access of Myanmar migrant workers and measures to overcome.

3. Theories and Concepts

This study is based on the social protection concept informed by the ILO (1998) and well-known conceptual framework of Accessibility to Healthcare Services by Peters et al. (2008). ILO defined that social protection is the set of public measures that a society provides for its members to protect them against economic and social distress that would be caused by the absence or a substantial reduction of income from work as a result of various contingencies (sickness, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, invalidity, old age, and death of the breadwinner); the provision of healthcare; and, the provision of benefits for families with children. From the seven contingencies, I will be focusing only on three: sickness, maternity and employment injury; in my study. The approach will help the research identify the extent of protection that the migrant workers are receiving which will highlight later to the potential barriers towards access to services.

The other concepts of accessibility to healthcare services can provide the useful framework in assessing the barriers in category. There are altogether four dimensions in this concepts of accessibility: (i) Geographical (ii) Functional (iii) Financial and (iv) Cultural. This concept is modified to support the research. This concept will assist the research in synthesizing the possible barriers of the migrant workers in categories. Integrating the two models into one conceptual framework provides a useful basis to assess the social protection (here focusing on healthcare) and the major barriers that the Myanmar migrant workers are facing.

4. Methodologies

From the concept of social protection by ILO, access to healthcare is one of the elements of Social security. This study will focus mainly on the three components from that “access to healthcare” which are (i) work injury (ii) sickness and health and (iii) maternity. “Work injury” means the insurance to compensate workers for injuries and diseases which occurred or received at the work site. “Sickness and Health” is for the insurance in protecting laborers from diseases. “Maternity” is for the benefits to mother, before and after the delivery and hospitalization if necessary.

The research was conducted in Mahachai sub-district, Samut Sakhon Province, which is Southwest of Bangkok, Thailand and about 28 kilometers away from Bangkok. The Mahachai is well-known for hosting the majority number of Myanmar migrants in Thailand.

Qualitative study was used to assess the health protection of Myanmar migrant workers by analyzing the case study of healthcare services in Samut Sakhon Province. The research questions included the concept of the four Accessibilities defined by Peters et al. (2008); Geographical, Functional, Financial and Cultural. For Geographical accessibility, the question was for exploring the distance of the user and service. For Functional accessibility, the questions were prepared to find out whether appropriate type of service providers and materials for the users are available. Financial accessibility aspects intended to assess the costs and prices of services and the users’ willingness and ability to pay for those services. The cultural accessibility questions were targeted to figure out the appropriateness of methods used with the social and cultural pattern or expectations of the users or communities.

18 participants were chosen for the understanding of research problem according to the participant's willingness to give information regarding perspectives and experiences of Healthcare service.

- (1) 18 in-depth interviews with migrant workers who have used the healthcare service in the region (6 respondents each from SSS, MHIS and OOP users).
- (2) Key-informant interviews with the local NGO staff and provincial hospital personnel (service providers and social workers).

5. Healthcare Services provided for Myanmar Migrants Workers

Migrants who move often have less access to services than non-migrants. Moreover, access to services is usually more limited for international migrants, especially illegal migrants (Isarabhakdi and Guest, 1998). However, in Samut Sakhon, as in other parts of Thailand, people can receive services from many healthcare centers. Moreover, the Thai government policy on healthcare for non-registered migrants is based on humanitarian grounds and they cannot be refused care if they seek such services. Consequently, health services are provided to thousands of migrants in areas where large numbers of Myanmar migrants live.

Like other provinces in Thailand, Samut Sakhon has relatively well developed public and private healthcare services. Overall, public healthcare service is the main healthcare provider for migrants in Samut Sakhon. Interview with health service provider shows that migrant workers are provided with care without discrimination if they can come for services. As a service provider at Samut Sakhon hospital noted:

If they (migrants) come, we treat them as our patients. We do not consider them as being either Thai or Myanmar migrants. If they do not have enough money, we still provide them with healthcare. But we can treat them only in

our facility, if they come here. We do not have enough people to undertake curative and preventative care outside the facility. We thus rarely give such services.

Some migrants who had received healthcare at a government hospital said that the health personnel treated them well.

I was sick with Tuberculosis and hospitalized for twenty nights. The doctors and nurses treated me really well. They spoke to me nicely.

(Male participant, SSS user)

I had my child delivered at this hospital. I was hospitalized for days. They were very good to me.

(Female participant, OOP user)

When the type of health facility is taken into consideration, Thais are more likely than migrants to get healthcare from community hospitals. Samut Sakhon Hospital is the primary source of healthcare in the area, largely because it is located near communities. Tuberculosis unit is also important as they provide appropriate treatment for tuberculosis patients.

And in addition, migrants are more likely than Thais to use private healthcare services such as private clinics, largely because these clinics are convenient to access in terms of time and transportation. The clinics are located in convenient locations, and most of them are open till late evening, the same time that migrant workers come back from their work. Some migrants who work on a daily wage basis also find it convenient to access private clinics where they do not have to wait for a long time to see the doctor, as they would while using

government hospital services. Moreover, private service providers do not ask for migrants' identification cards or about their backgrounds.

6. Accessibility to The Healthcare Services

Accessibility towards healthcare services was explored in terms of the physical, financial, functional and cultural. Regarding financial, some respondents mentioned the cost for the MHS scheme is expensive because they need to pay together with the registration process and other expenses such as work permit, passport renewal, etc. But in regarding the doctors' fee and cost at the hospital, it is in the affordable range of the migrants. For waiting time, they need to wait for the doctor depending on the queue number they received upon the arrival but most of them answered that going to the public hospital is time consuming as even if you go to the hospital early to get the earliest queue number, average time taken at the hospital is about half a day. For the physical accessibility, all of the respondents answered that the location of the hospital is convenient and easy to travel. There is not any cultural barriers for the migrant workers in accessing the healthcare service at the Samut Sakhon Hospital. The language difference remains the persisting barriers for the migrant workers in accessing the healthcare service. Most of the respondents are satisfied with the services provided by the hospital.

7. Challenges of the migrant workers in accessing the healthcare service

7.1 Language Ability and the Use of Healthcare Services

Culture and language often set migrants and displaced persons apart from others who live in the same area. Language differences obviously make communication difficult and can discourage people from obtaining health services. Furthermore, mass media messages about healthcare and other services may not reach or mean much to migrants whose language and culture differ from those of the surrounding population. Those who do seek services may find

it difficult or embarrassing to communicate and may not be able to ask for what they want or to understand fully what providers are asking or telling them.

In-depth interviews show that this communication problem is another major factor that causes difficulties in accessing health service for migrants. Migrants from Myanmar generally live in communities where other Myanmar migrants are living. Hence, they use their own language (Dawei Burmese Dialect, Mon or Burmese) as their primary means of communication. Migrants usually do not learn the Thai language through the Thai educational system. Some have learned to speak Thai through contact with Thai natives in their communities or workplaces. However, they are not able to speak Thai well. When they are sick, they prefer to go to the clinic where they feel comfortable and they do not need to follow many instructions that is told in Thai when they go to the hospital where they have to communicate well with health service providers asking them detail about their symptoms. Although the hospital provides Burmese translators to accommodate the needs of Myanmar migrants, several interviews highlight that there is not enough translators at the hospital. One respondent even answered,

I have been to the hospital so many times, but never seen a translator at the Samut Sakhon Hospital.

(Female Respondent, OOP user)

For some workers who have Thai speaking friends, they seek help from such friends and receive the healthcare service of the hospital. This seems like a short term solution for them but in the case of emergency, the person would be in trouble. One respondent who was injured himself while cooking at home answered,

I went to the hospital as I cut myself while I was cooking. I do not know how to speak their language. I had to wander around the hospital trying to find a place to get my injury treated. It took me about half a day but I was lucky that one fellow Burmese helped me communicating with the hospital staff and I received the treatment.

(Male Respondent, SSS user)

7.2 Cost of Healthcare

Since most migrants have no legal status, they often migrate to Thailand without travel documents, usually having been persuaded by relatives and friends to migrate to work in Thailand. They thus have no work permits or identification cards and usually work on farms. Some migrants work alongside Thai natives, but the migrants normally receive very low wages in comparison. Hence, migrants usually have no savings and face financial constraints.

As mentioned earlier, Thai government health service centres provide care for non-registered migrants based on humanitarian grounds. Most of the migrants who participated in the study accept that there is no discrimination in their receiving healthcare. However, they usually do not seek government services, partly due to the direct cost of healthcare since they have to pay for treatment. Other indirect costs include transportation and loss of working time.

At present, the Thai government is implementing a Universal Healthcare. But according to the Thailand migration report (2019), there are still estimation about 49% of CLMV migrants not being covered with any insurance schemes. About half of the CLMV migrants have to rely on their own money which makes them prone to unnecessary costs and limiting them from quality healthcare service. Nevertheless, healthcare costs may not be the only factor obstructing some migrants from seeking healthcare. Since some migrants work for daily wages, they cannot afford to take a day off waiting in line at a hospital. Hence, they may seek

treatment at private clinics in town that provide care in the evening with not much waiting time, even though these clinics may cost a patient almost the same amount as visiting government hospital. Furthermore, while the cost of government healthcare is usually lower than at private clinics, patients must pay more for transportation to get to the government facility. For example, some patients in Tha Chalom has to take multiple connection to get to the Samut Sakhon hospital, while most private clinics are located near the market so that patients can access their services much more easily.

8. Discussion

The challenges of access to healthcare facilities by Myanmar migrant workers can directly effect on the incidence of being diseased and death rates for certain sicknesses. At the point when migrant workers are sick, they will attempt to cure on their own at clinics with moderately high expense and won't go to the healthcare facilities except if their ailment ends up severe. At times, the sickness is severe to such an extent that it is hopeless. When they keep on attempting to work even while they are ill, they additionally put their associates in danger, particularly in the event that they have gotten a transmittable infection.

Findings from the data collection likewise propose that in spite of the fact that there is no discriminatory treatment between the Thai locals and the Myanmar migrants in getting Thai government healthcare service, there are different variables, for example, a failure to communicate in Thai, which discourage certain migrant populations from receiving the public healthcare service. Such migrants may need learning of proper healthcare since they can't understand Thai and in this manner do not get the healthcare information and awareness being circulated through posters and social network. Accordingly, they are unintentionally excluded from health promotion endeavours within and beyond of healthcare facilities.

In terms of barriers in costs of healthcare, Thai policy arranged for the migrant workers is to some degree at great level yet with numerous challenges in view of the legal status of certain migrant workers, unawareness of the existence of the schemes and relatively high cost of the MHIS scheme. The long waiting time at the hospital is also the indirect cost for the workers as they have to take leave from their work with being deducted by their employer for those days. Promoting number of migrant registered in the SSS and MHIS is a persisting test regardless of the rising numbers of migrants insured. Despite the fact that the arrangement for assistance of the SSS is a lot more extensive than that of the MHIS, not the majority of the broad SSS advantages are alluring to migrants. Potential recipients are naturally hesitant to add to benefits that they are probably not going to ever gather as they will likely to go back to their country in the future.

9. Conclusion and recommendations

The outcome featuring that Thailand has effectively succeeded in stretching out the UHC to its people yet at the same time need more exertion in getting ready for the migrant population. Given its acknowledgment of “Health” as a human rights and the commitment towards the health-wellbeing of migrant-workforce contributes to Economical improvement, Thailand has embedded community-oriented endeavors to stretch out UHC to migrant population through its SSS and MHIS insurance schemes. In spite of the fact that there are still a great deal of difficulties enduring, proceeding to advance evidence-based policy improvement, raising enlistment and building political duty and backing from social developments, achieving the goal of UHC for all individual on Thailand ground ought not be distant.

So as to do as such, Thailand should keep advancing health services that are migrant friendly to guarantee that all Myanmar migrant (both insured and not insured) can get to

access healthcare service uninhibitedly and when required. Keep on discovering, investigate and advance the administrations that have demonstrated to be practical and useful. Embedding more exertion in expanding the skills and quantity of Myanmar interpreters or employing Myanmar speaking medical personnel would create friendlier environment for the Myanmar patience.

So as to promote the enlistment of migrant workers in existing two insurance schemes improve communication with migrants, informing updates about the advantages of the SSS and MHIS to their economic-benefits in the long run and their rights and commitments to enlist without fear of their legal status in Thailand. Likewise, have to ensure that formal-sector businesses abide the policy and the requirements in enlisting Myanmar laborers in Social Security Scheme and those who are not eligible to be enrolled in the Migrant Health Insurance Scheme. Lastly, to keep teaming up with multi-sector businesses and authorities in discovering new and advance ways to develop insurance for irregular migrant workers.

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Flexible Diplomacy: Scholars as Key Players in Track II Diplomacy

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Abstract

The field of traditional diplomacy has changed very little since the Congress of Vienna in the 19th century. Globalization, non-traditional security threats, and a changing global landscape require a more flexible diplomacy that includes a wider range of stakeholders such as NGOs, community leaders, and most importantly scholars/academics. Academic freedoms, subject area expertise, great communication skills, access to epistemic communities, inter alia, are all great strengths of scholars. The present exploratory essay posits an increased role for academics in international diplomacy as central nodes in a flexible network of stakeholders.

Keyword: Diplomacy, International Development, Grounded Theory

1. Introduction

Diplomacy is a field that is shrouded in mystery for those not directly involved in the discipline. By many, it is considered to be an “old boys” club reserved for retired politicians and wealthy donors. Another very common depiction of diplomacy is as a network of professional bureaucrats with very little interest or concerns about the problems faced by the common people. Nevertheless, diplomacy continues to be one of the most important and influential fields in the social sciences (Kissinger, 1994; Miller, 2009; Mulgan, 2008; Nair, 2008; Peneau, 2013; Rodham-Clinton, 2010; Simon, 2008; Sponsel, 1994; Tow, Thakur, & Hyun, 2000). Part of the reason for the pivotal role played by diplomacy is the primacy that nation-states have played in international relations since the Congress of Vienna (Chandler, 2009; Chizuko, 2010; Dore, 1997; HSIN-HUANG, HSIAO, & WAN, 2007; Ishii, 1994; MacFarlane & Khong, 2006; McCargo, 2008; Sponsel, 1994). The nation-state as the highest representative of the “nation” has overshadowed other actors as the essential spokesperson in the international arena. Nevertheless, diplomacy pre-dates the rise of the nation-state and has historically involved a wide range of actors beyond the usual formal official envoys (Lal, 2004; Lockard, 2009; Ongsakun, Millar, Barron, & Tanratanakul, 2006; Roberts, 1997; Syukri, 1985).

There are many examples of envoys exercising diplomatic functions in ancient civilizations such as in ancient China, Mesopotamia, Greece, and others (Malik, 2013; Notar, 2008). Communication is at the core of diplomacy and the distinction between diplomat and messenger is not very clear in early accounts of the discipline. Gradually, etiquette developed for diplomats which required higher ranking “messengers” to deliver certain messages and to conduct negotiations with other groups or nations. Important characteristics of the ideal envoy included great communication skills, wisdom, and the ability to negotiate under pressure. The formalization of the figure of the diplomat is strongly correlated to the strengthening of the concept of sovereignty (Kissinger, 1994; Kriesberg, 1997). Early diplomats were simply the

envoys of sovereigns. This is reflected in etiquette by the later 19th century practice to reserve the rank of ambassador for representatives of sovereigns while using the title of “legate” for representatives of republics. Eventually ranks were standardized to reserve ambassadorial rank to representatives of heads of state regardless of the form of government (Roberts, 1997). Nevertheless, the reification of diplomacy as the relationship between sovereign nation-states reached its zenith during the mid 20th century (Kissinger, 1994).

The important role of messenger between groups, factions, nations, or guilds has always required a very broad set of skills (K. J. Arnold, 2005; Baker, 2005; Bell & Nurre, 2005; Bens, 2005; Bergdall, 2005; Bracken, 2005; Bradley & Beyerlein, 2005; J. Chilberg, 2005; J. C. Chilberg, 1989, 1995; Epps, 2005; Kriesberg, 1997). A good diplomat needs to be generalist and at the same time a specialist. Flexibility and commitment are both required in complex negotiations and therefore diplomacy is both an art and a science (Kissinger, 1994). The role of the diplomat increased in prestige over the centuries until it reached its highest point in the 19th century. Originally reserved mostly for the aristocracy, diplomacy internalized and institutionalized many of the norms and mores of this important social class and owes much of its sophistication and elegance to this formative period (Kissinger, 1994). The nepotism that characterized the early beginnings of this discipline was slowly replaced by a meritocracy with a favoritism for the children of the aristocracy yet permeated by a strong sense of duty and commitment to the service of the nation and the state.

The proliferation of newly independent nation states in the early 20th century and in particular after World War II resulted in an exponential expansion of diplomats (Weitz, 2011; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007). Newly established governments inspired by the ideology of national liberation raced to appoint supporters to diplomatic posts with little regard to previous training or education. This was sharp return to nepotism but with the disadvantage of a

tendency of this new post-revolutionary political class for kleptocracy (Johnson, 1995). The sharp downturn in the quality of credentials of diplomats was partly due to the ideological trends of the times in the newly established nation-states but also partly due to a shortage of qualified professionals (Feigenblatt, 2008). This drop in quality was acutely felt and resulted in the establishment of schools for diplomats in many countries. Political considerations continued to be important in emerging democracies and therefore in many cases loyalty became the most important criteria for the selection of diplomats.

Nevertheless, a concurrent trend was the rise of academics as informal and in many cases semi-official diplomats (Heller, 2005; Kriesberg, 1997; Tow et al., 2000). The years after independence gave rise to a small yet influential class of foreign trained intellectuals with the skills, access to international networks, and credentials to effectively promote the interests of their countries. This parallel cadre of diplomats is sometimes called track-two diplomacy which includes former government officials and academics. The present study focuses on the consequences and opportunities of the proliferation of this trend and also discusses the intersection between track one and track two diplomacy.

2. Problem

One of the greatest challenges faced by developing countries is to interact with the more experienced and in many cases better funded diplomats of the developed countries (D. Arnold, 2006). This leads to a very unequal playing field that is further exacerbated by the nepotism prevalent in developing countries. One of the obvious solutions is to create a professional diplomatic corps with a national school of diplomacy. This was attempted by many countries with the obvious problem of a lack of resources (Kissinger, 1994). Another challenge is the issue of salaries for the diplomatic corps. In many cases qualified professionals in developing countries can receive better salaries in the private sector than in the public sector

(Johnson, 1995; Than & Thein, 2007). Therefore, the problem tackled by the present study is how can academics be integrated into the diplomatic efforts of a developing countries in order to ameliorate the asymmetry in terms of skill, experience, and resources between the diplomatic corps of developed and developing countries.

3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The present study follows the grounded theory approach to model development while adopting a largely constructivist paradigm in terms of the nature of diplomacy (Glaser & Strauss, 2009; Willis, 2007). Data was collected over a period of three years from a vast array of sources (Alldred & Gillies, 2008). Participant observation in diplomatic events, conversations with current and former government officials, participation in academic events dealing with governance, governmental reports, and more than one hundred secondary sources written by scholars and policymakers on the subject of flexible diplomacy were coded and interpreted through the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). The resulting tentative model was then tested and adjusted to reflect a further set of texts which were coded in order to develop a mid-level theory of academic involvement in track 2 diplomacy.

4. Analysis: Scholars as Flexible Agents

Scholars are guided by the ancient principle of “academic freedom” (University, 2014; Villarreal, 2014). The freedom of movement to discuss controversial ideas and to test hypotheses in an environment of respect is one of the key characteristics of academia. Based on the ancient Greek idea of dialogue, the Socratic Method is best known example of academic freedom in action. Operating in an environment of academic freedom serves many purposes but probably the greatest advantage is that it fosters creativity and the defense of a range of ideas (Rogers, 1996). Academic dialogue focuses on the merits of each argument as evaluated through accepted methods and theories. Knowledge is created through this exploration of

ideas by experts and students in an environment of respect and freedom (Creswell, 2007, 2012). Thus, scholars are both shaped and shape their academic environment (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998; T. J. Ellis & Levy, 2008; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2007).

The academic freedom enjoyed by scholars allows them to explore policy questions from a scientific perspective. Thus, scholars have the freedom to explore controversial topics in an environment of respect and professionalism. This is a great asset that they can bring to the field of diplomacy in order to discuss difficult topics which may be politically sensitive but may have clear scientific solutions (Anderson, 2006). In other words, scholars can serve as the conscience of diplomacy and influence the process and content of international negotiations. Therefore, the culture of academic freedom can permeate the stultified and highly ritualized culture of diplomacy and foster frank discussions about difficult topics.

In addition to academic freedom, scholars are subject area experts (Eckl, 2008; D. C. Ellis, 2009). This is the most important advantage of scholars in terms of their contribution to diplomacy. There is a content aspect to all negotiations and in many cases career diplomats tend to be generalists with little content knowledge about certain fields (Dore, 1997; Doucet & Mauthner, 2008). On the other hand, scholars tend to have advanced degrees in their fields and many years of research experience. Thus, content area expertise can strengthen the bargaining power of a country in a particular negotiation (Broome, 1997; *Negotiation: Your Mentor and Guide to Doing Business Effectively*, 2003). There is usually a very sharp asymmetry in terms of expertise between the delegations of advanced industrialized countries and those of developing countries (Brunnee & Toope, 2006). One of the challenges is dealing with the lack of expertise on certain topics. One way to ameliorate this challenge is to harness the power of academia for the service of diplomacy.

Professors are great communicators by the very nature of their work (Davis, 2009; Hallinger & Lu, 2013). Teaching is about the art of communication and years of experience lecturing and leading seminars helps scholars fine tune their skills. Therefore, those skills gained in the classroom and beyond can serve scholars very well if they venture into the field of diplomacy. Diplomacy is about communication and negotiation and therefore hiring professionals from a field that requires great communication skills will greatly facilitate the process. Moreover, academic conferences provide great training for future participation in international forums. Academics are well trained in the Socratic Method which favors dialogue for the joint construction of knowledge. Many academics are also well versed in other methods such as the Delphi method and have experience serving as facilitators in a wide range of situations (Rogers, 1996).

Access to epistemic communities is another important strength of scholars. Policymaking requires access to information and to knowledge communities. Scholars tend to be involved in the development of their disciplines and are active in the construction of knowledge. Each discipline has very clearly defined power centers and specific schools of thought (Lueddeke, 2008). Some disciplinary associations are international, others are regional, and many are national. Academics have access to those associations and in many cases contribute to the development of their disciplines through participation in academic conferences and other activities. Participation in discipline related academic activities allows scholars to expand their network of contacts with other people actively involved in their fields. Direct contacts with researchers in a particular discipline has many advantages because it allows scholars to have access to new developments which in many cases are still in the process of development. Therefore, access to working papers which are yet to be published is a great advantage over other professionals who have to wait for new theories, best practices, and studies to be published which can take a long time.

5. Conclusions

Scholars have historically served as the conscience of their generation and also as the keepers and creators of civilization and therefore it is only natural for them to play important roles in public policy (Foster, 2013; Wellin & Fine, 2007). Nevertheless scholars have in many cases actively avoided involvement with the general public in favor of remaining in their ivory towers (Ish-Shalom, 2008). This avoidance of public debate is not necessarily out of fear but in many cases out of an absolute deference to the purity of their disciplines. In other words, many scholars believe that the pressures of practice can distort the strict pursuit of knowledge (Ackerly & True, 2008; T. J. Ellis & Levy, 2008). Examples from many developing countries in which there is a strong overlap between the government and academia support these fears but there are steps that can be taken to avoid these pitfalls (Lynch, 2008).

A clear distinction between activities performed by a scholar as an academic from those performed as a practitioner can be a simple yet powerful solution to the challenges posed in the previous paragraph. A similar requirement is currently imposed on holders of public office in relation to activities in the private sector (Hamlin, 2009; Johnson, 1995). Regarding the danger of scholars abusing their academic authority to promote their political views, the antidote would require a strong ethical and professional code rather than external enforcement (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008; Murphy & Dingwall, 2007).

The integration of the scholarly community into the diplomatic corps of developing countries can reduce the intrinsic asymmetry between the expertise and skills of the ministries of foreign affairs of developed countries and those of newly industrializing and developing countries. The integration of scholars for first and second track diplomacy would allow developing countries to practice a more flexible type of diplomacy in an age of change and uncertainty.

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Maritime Security in Mozambique: An Analysis of the Main Challenges of Securitization of the Mozambican Channel

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Abstract

This research studies Maritime Security in Mozambique and analysis of the main challenges to the securitization of the Mozambican Channel. The hijacking of the "Vega 5" fishing vessel in December 2010 by Somali pirates in the coastal zone off Mozambique, near Sofala province, with 24 crew, of which nineteen Mozambicans, three Indonesians and two Spanish aboard, awakened the attention of the Mozambican State to the maritime security dimension, making the Mozambique Channel susceptible to securitization. As a result of surveillance, it became clear that the Mozambican coast is also the target of illegal fishing and illegal immigration activities carried out by several countries in the West. The objective of the study is to analyze threats to maritime security and its impact and propose a possible strategy to improve security to the channel. The study addresses three maritime security issues that are known and perceived as potential threats to maritime security, namely Maritime Piracy, Illegal Fishing, and Illegal Immigration. The study is based on constructivist theory, which defines security and determines how specific matter becomes securitized. According to Buzan et al. (1998), securitization is a process through which an issue is considered an existential threat to a referent object and justifies extraordinary measures to deal with it. This research is based on the analysis of the qualitative approach and the descriptive method. Data collection was done through bibliographic research, primary and secondary sources were collected from

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reports, agreements, interviews, books, articles, newspapers and electronic websites. The finding reveals that illegal fishing and illegal immigration are considered to be the threats that most negatively impact the country's maritime security because it occurs every day in places away from the control of the Mozambican Government. In terms of political measures, these threats led to the creation of the Sea Policy and Strategy through Resolution No. 39/2017 of 17 September, which seeks to solve problems related to the defense of sovereignty and territorial integrity, maritime security, illegal fishing and immigration, maritime piracy, among others. However, it's necessary to reinforce cooperation and dialogue among neighboring countries to protect countries interests and the creation of a national maritime authority to project the power of the Mozambican state in the maritime area.

Keyword: Maritime Security, Securitization, Piracy, Illegal Fishing, Illegal Immigration

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Most of the world trade flows through the sea, making it a vital space for the global exchange of goods. The real and potential threats arising from maritime space are cross-border and cross-cutting issues, the effects of which not only affect Mozambique but have repercussions at the regional and global levels. This is why maritime security has been considered as a global issue.

Mozambique is situated on the southwest coast of Africa in a strategic position as it functions as a gateway to six hinterlands countries namely Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, Botswana, Swaziland and the Democratic Republic of Congo. It has borders to the north with Tanzania, to the northwest with Malawi and Zambia, to the west with Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Swaziland and to the south with South Africa. The geographical location of Mozambique is also one of the most interesting things in the African continent, as it comprises three of the major natural regions, namely: East Africa, Central Africa, and Southern Africa. The country has a surface area of 799,380 km² of firm water and 13,000 km² of the surface of interior waters, and having a terrestrial border of 4,330km² of Rovuma the tip of gold (Canal Adolf, 2000, 22 January).

The Mozambican maritime space is located in the wake of the Mozambique Channel which is the portion of the Indian Ocean situated between the East Africa Coast and Madagascar approximately between the parallels 10°27'S e 26°52' south latitude and between meridians 30 ° 12 'and 42 ° 51' east longitude. Its largest width is about 400 nautical miles. Thus, it is one of the strategic corridors for world maritime traffic, used by ships of various nationalities (see figure 1.1).

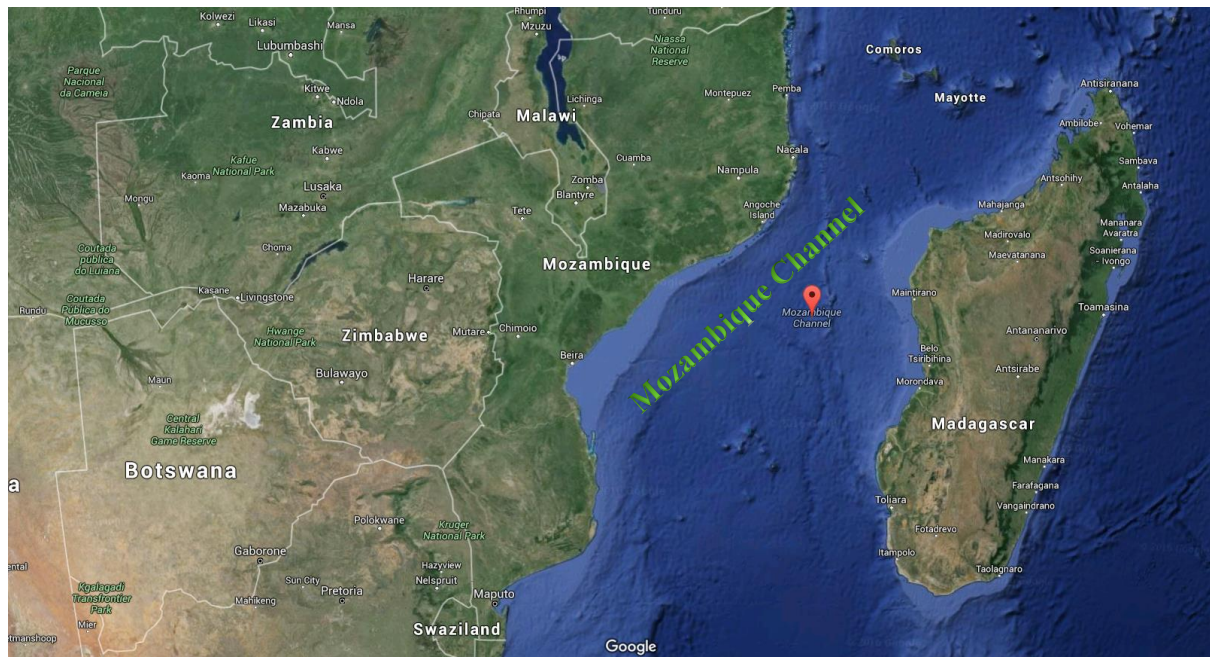


Figure 1.1: Mozambique Channel Map

Source: <http://waterbodies.org/>

Because of its location on this important world-wide route of maritime navigation, Mozambique naturally assumes a considerable geostrategic position, which gives it greater relevance to its maritime spaces, (Canal Adolf, 2000, 22 January).

Such a situation, therefore, provides Mozambique with vast economic potential, insofar as there are several opportunities offered by the sea including resources and other derivative services. However, as opportunities exist, they bring with them a set of threats, especially of transnational connections that constitute the great challenge to the sovereignty and national defense of Mozambique. At present, there are several threats and vulnerabilities, among which maritime piracy, illegal fishing, and illegal immigration are the major ones, and therefore, they will be the object of analysis of this study.

First, the threat of piracy on the Mozambique Channel arose as a result of Somali pirates searching for new but less protected places to proceed with their activities due to the enormous international efforts to stop piracy in the Horn of Africa. These international efforts resulted from the hijacking of the “Vega 5” vessel on 27 December 2010 off the coast of Sofala province and the vessel MV PANAMA on 10 December 2010 off the Tanzanian coast near the Mozambican border, making the Mozambique Channel vulnerable to securitization, (Mapote, 2011, 8 July).

Second, illegal fishing represents a real threat in the Mozambique Channel. In general, marine resources are one of the largest revenues for Mozambique’s economy; the country earns about 80 million dollars from fishing (Government Portal, 2015). Therefore, illegal fishing threatens the economy of the country, especially as it occurs every day in places away from the control of the Mozambican Government. The country loses about 60 million dollars per year due to illegal fishing. One major factor allied to this threat is weak supervision due to scarce human and financial resources and territorial extension (Government Portal, 2015).

The third, another major contributor to weakness in security is the entry of large numbers of illegal immigrants into the country. The country is a major transit point for neighboring countries moving to South Africa, due to the fragility that Mozambique presents in the control of its coast (Quive, 2011, 20 April).

In this research, two key terminologies are used: maritime security and securitization. Maritime security means the adoption of protection and supervision measures aimed to persuade the practice of illegal activities and safeguard of human life and property at sea. On the other hand, securitization is defined as the adoption of emergency measures and strategies on the part of the government in order to deal with existing and future threats.

1.2 General Objective

- To identify and analyze the major threats that affect maritime security in the Mozambican Channel.
- To describe the impacts of threats on the national security of the country.
- To propose strategic actions to be taken to improve the maritime security of the Mozambican Channel.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Maritime Security

According to Piedade (2018, p. 13), there is no universal definition for the concept of maritime security because it is a recent issue. Thus, it is necessary to contextualize the concept of maritime security in the context of a broad security debate. The existing literature on maritime security tends to focus on the characteristics of the sea and its varied uses, and the threats posed to those uses (Gheciu et al., 2018, p.607). For other actors, maritime security is linked to the economic dimensions (Buerger, 2015, p.4); while for others it's an issue of national security or safety (Klein et al., 2010, p.5).

According to Cordner (2018), maritime security is an inclusive concept derives from the systemic nature of the maritime domain which presents multiple and interrelated requirements for security cooperation between state and non-state actors, as well as address traditional and non-traditional security challenges. Cordner also states that maritime security involves coordination of collective and cooperative risk mitigation and vulnerability reduction efforts in order to protect and promote national, regional and global vital interests, objectives and core values, including those related to state sovereignty, freedom of navigation, economic development, environment and ocean resources, human and social development, and political stability (Cordner, 2018, p.45).

On the other hand, Till (2009, p.287) analyzes maritime security such as good order at sea and pointed five attributes: good order from the shore, the sea as a resource, the sea as a medium of transportation, the sea as an area of dominion and the sea as an environment. He also correlated the corresponding threats of disorder to the third attribute: the sea as a medium of transportation.

2.2 Securitization

Securitization is the process through which an issue comes to be treated as a security problem. Securitizing an issue allows states to deploy a wider range of control methods because the special nature of security threats justifies the use of extraordinary measures to handle them (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 21). In order to securitize an issue, states or other actors with authority must successfully persuade an audience that the issue at hand poses an existential or serious threat (via a speech act, or public declaration) , thus allowing extraordinary measures (Buzan et al.1998). Equally, define securitization as the use of the rhetoric of the subjective threat to push a question beyond normal policies.

Waever (1995, p. 35) argues that the process of securitization initiates through what is known as "speech act". A securitizing "move" occurs when an issue not previously thought of as a security threat comes to be spoken of as security by important political actors. According to securitization theory, securitization occurs when an issue comes to be treated as a security issue, justifying in this way, the use of exceptional political measures to deal with it. In other words, it is securitized. Thus, it is treated with the same degree of priority and urgency as a military threat (Columba et al., 2010, p. 77). Buzan et al., located the process of securitization in terms of the spectrum that runs from non-politicized (meaning that an issue is not a political issue), through politicized (meaning it is part of a public policy debate) to securitized (meaning the issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures, therefore,

justifies responses that go beyond normal political practices) (see figure 2.2) (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 23-24).

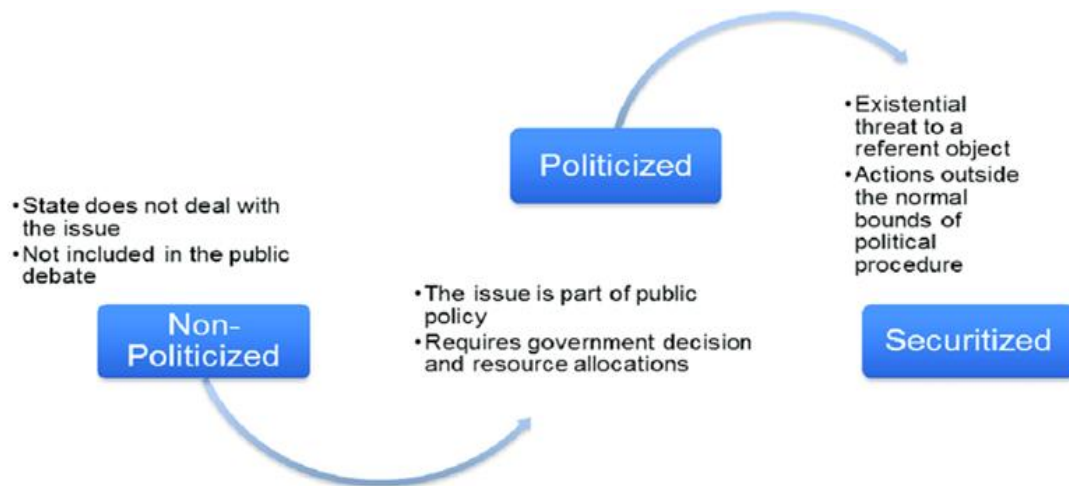


Figure 2.2: Securitization moves

Source: Piedade, 2016

2.3 Maritime Piracy

The internationally accepted definition is that contained in Article 101 of United Nation Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS), ratified by Mozambique on 26 November 1996 by Resolution No. 21/96, where piracy is defined as an action consisting of the following acts:

- a) Any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation committed for private purposes by the crew or passengers of a private ship or private aircraft, and directed on the high seas, against:
 - (i) Another ship or aircraft, or against persons/assets on board such ship or aircraft.
 - (ii) A ship, aircraft, person or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State.
- b) Any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or aircraft knowing facts that make it a pirate ship/aircraft.

- c) Any intentional inducement/facilitation described in subparagraph (a) or (b) (UNCLOS, p.61).

UNCLOS also provides for the right of seizure of a pirate ship or a ship that has been captured by them by any nation, and it is up to that nation to decide the penalties imposed on pirates and the measures to be taken in respect of the seized material. The country carrying out the seizure must do so by military means or by means that are in the service of the State.

2.4 Illegal Fishing

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) gives the international definition of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing through the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU fishing) in three categories, namely: Illegal Fishing, Unreported Fishing and, Unregulated Fishing (FAO, 2001, p.2).

Illegal fishing refers to the activities:

- a) Conducted by national or foreign vessels in waters under the jurisdiction of a state, without the permission of that state or in violation of its laws and regulations.
- b) Conducted by vessels flying the flag of States which are parties to a relevant regional fisheries management organization, but that operate in violation of conservation and management measures adopted by that organization and by which the states are bound or relevant provisions of applicable international law.
- c) In violation of national laws or international obligations, including those undertaken by cooperating States to a relevant regional fisheries management organization.

2.4.1 Unreported fishing refers to fishing activities:

a) Which have not been reported or have been the subject of incorrect declarations to the competent national authority, in contravention of national legislation; or

b) Made in the area of competence of a regional fisheries management organization which has not been reported or has been incorrectly declared, in violation of the notification procedures of that organization.

c) A fishing activity that has not been reported or poorly reported to the competent national authority or the regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOS), in violation of applicable laws and regulations.

2.4.2 Unregulated fishing refers to fishing activities:

a) In the field of application of a relevant regional fisheries management organization that are carried out by vessels without nationality; or by those vessels with flags of a State which is not party to that organization or by a fishing entity, in a manner that is not consistent with or contravenes measures for the conservation and management of the organization.

b) In areas or on fish stocks for which there are no conservation or management measures and where such fishing activities are conducted in a manner incompatible with the responsibilities of the State about the conservation of living marine resources under international law.

c) By vessels without nationality, vessels flying the flag of a country which is not part of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOS) governing this fishing area or vessels catching species in the high seas or in areas not regulated.

2.5 Illegal Immigration

The United States Department of Homeland Security (2011) defines illegal immigration as any foreign-born non-citizen individuals who are not legal residents. There are many terms that may be used for an individual that falls under this definition. An illegal immigrant may also

be called an illegal alien, illegal immigrant, or undocumented immigrant. Whilst David (2019) defines illegal immigration as a process in which people from one country enter another voluntarily and without presenting themselves to the state agencies responsible for migration, thus violating migration laws.

3. Theoretical Framework

This research is centered on the constructivist approach. Because is the theory that provides a coherent framework to define security and determine how specific matter becomes securitized and, is the most comprehensive approach which embraces various elements on their analysis includes non-traditional security issues, particularly transnational crime. On which according to Barry Buzan et al. (1998), securitization is a process through which an issue is considered an existential threat to a referent object and justifies extraordinary measures to deal with it.

4. Maritime Security in Mozambique

Mozambique gained independence in 1975. After independence, instability continued to plague Mozambique as a violent civil war ensued until the 1990s. The most serious security threats were emanated from South Africa Apartheid regime and Rhodesia. Thus, security focuses primarily landward, Mozambican state usually did not face a maritime threat. Maritime security is therefore under-resourced and receives scant policy attention.

Following its independence, Mozambique adopted a sectoral approach based on building institutions that deal with maritime affairs in a sectoral manner. Taking into account the dynamics of globalization and the high level of interdependence, the great challenge for Mozambique is the lack of financial and material resources to fund the actions of the state in the management and control of the sea. Thus, in order to guarantee maritime security,

multilateral and multisectoral cooperation guided by international conventions is necessary, as a way to mitigate the problems that affect the country and guarantee its security.

Since the end of the Cold War and the signing of the general peace agreement in 1992, Mozambique does not invest in its defense and security capacities, so due to lack of investment in defense and security the country does not have adequate means to eliminate and combat emerging and urgent threats. However, maritime threats such as piracy, illegal fishing, and illegal immigration occur regularly due to a lack of surveillance of coastal areas (Chingotuane, 2016).

As stated in the Institutional Development Strategic Plan of the Ministry of National Defense of Mozambique (PEDI), published on October 22, 2011, in the maritime surveillance component, multiple institutions intervene, each with a different scope, such as:

a) The Ministry of National Defense, through the Navy, guarantees the inviolability of maritime integrity.

b) The Ministry of Transport and Communications, which supervises transport and communications and the signaling of national waters through SAFMAR and INAHINA, respectively.

c) The Ministry of Fisheries, within the scope of fishing activity in national waters.

d) The Ministry of the Interior, in the scope of civil protection through the Police Forces of Maritime, Fluvial and Lacustrine Protection.

The exercise of power of maritime authority in Mozambique is divided up by various entities such as the Mozambique Navy of War, Air Force, National Police through the Maritime, Lake and Fluvial Protection Force, Ministry of Justice, Institute of the Sea and Borders, Maritime National Institute (INAMAR), National Institute of Hydrography and Navigation

(INAHIMA), National Fisheries Administration, State Security and Information Service, National Directorate of Environmental Management, Directorate General of Customs and Management National Tourism. The coordination of these institutions can be considered as being minimal or non-existent due to the lack of information sharing, thus causing a deficient flow of data and information, as well as a clear deficit in the unit of action.

The increase in threats such as piracy, illegal fishing and illegal immigration on the Mozambican coast came to confirm the lack of coordination mechanisms. Faced with these events of international repercussion, the Mozambican Government has restructured some institutions, decided to update some national laws so that they fit the new reality and created the Sea Policy and Strategy.

According to Sea Policy and Strategy in Mozambique, the domain of the sea and coastal areas is represented by the Ministry of the Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries, created by Presidential Decree n°1/2015, of 16 January, the central body of the state that directs, coordinates, plans and ensures the implementation of policies, strategies and plans of activity in the areas of the sea, inland waters and fisheries, as defined in Presidential Decree n°17/2015, of 25 March. Equally, the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation are responsible for guaranteeing national sovereignty and security, as well as for affirming the country's position in the international community. Similarly, the law of the sea, Law n°4/96 of 4 January, is the law that frames maritime affairs. Another instrument regulating maritime affairs is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Implementation Agreement of Part XI of the same Convention, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1982 and July 1994 respectively, and ratified by the Assembly of the Republic of Mozambique by Resolution n°21/96 of 26

November. However, a large part of the legislation in force in Mozambique needs to be revised in order to adapt it to the new dimensions of the sea (Sea Policy and Strategy, 2017, p.21).

Moreover, the Mozambique Channel is a highly strategic waterway, carrying 30% of the world's oil trade and almost 100% of South Africa's maritime trade (Luke, November 2011). Despite this, it is one of the largest natural gas reserves in the world, offshore, which imply continuous maritime traffic. Meanwhile, maritime security is the product of a securitization process in which different issues are rendered as challenges and require coordinated responses.

Furthermore, Obura et al. (2015, p.15) refer that the Mozambique Channel is an important trade route from southern Africa and the South Atlantic to and from the Indian Ocean. In the same vein, the Channel is a strategic trade route for the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), carrying more than half of the region's merchandise exports and imports. Each of the countries bordering the northern Mozambique Channel has at least one significant seaport, can be enumerated as follows: Mtwara (Tanzania), Nacala, Pemba and Angoche (Mozambique), Mahajanga and Antsiranana (Madagascar), and on each of the Comorian islands Moron (Grande Comore), Fomboni (Mohéli), Mutsamudu (Anjouan) and Dzaoudzi (Mayotte). Equally, there are smaller ports that are important in regional trade due to poor road networks on the mainland and Madagascar.

At present, there are several threats and vulnerabilities, among which maritime piracy, illegal fishing, and illegal immigration, are the major ones, collectively pose threats to the security of navigation, maritime trade of both coastal and land-locked States.

Bandeira, Chingotuana and Dombo (2019) they refer that, maritime security issues in Mozambique become more relevant after the hijacking of "Vega 5" ship, becoming a patent

threat to the country. In this time, the country was unguarded and could not carry out accurate surveillance of its maritime spaces, thus, the immediate consequence of the pirate attacks was the signing of the tripartite agreement between Mozambique, South Africa, and Tanzania. Similarly, Cossoma (2019), analyses maritime security in Mozambique in two (02) moments, namely, the environmental disaster of 1991 resulting from the oil spill caused by the tanker *Kantina pé*, which gave rise to the creation of the Ministry for Coordination of Environmental Action (MICOA), and the hijacking of the fishing vessel "Vega 5" in December 2010, which gave rise to the creation of a Task Force that deals with issues of maritime piracy, coordinated until then by Mozambique's Navy of War.

Equally, Bandeira adds neglected threats by the state that constitute similarly threats to the maritime security of Mozambique, namely, the authorization without control of hydrocarbon exploration and the deregulated exploitation of maritime resources due to the lack of control of the state after their authorization, as a consequence there is destruction of the submarine communication cables, such as the optical fiber (Bandeira, 2019).

4.1 Mozambique Maritime Domain

On the jurisdiction of the Mozambican State, the Republic of Mozambique is a coastal State situated in south-eastern Africa, between latitudes 10 ° 27' S and 26 ° 52' S and longitudes 30 ° 12' E and 40 ° 51' E. In addition to the continental borders, the country has a maritime coast about 2,700 km in length, along the Mozambique Channel sharing the same with South Africa, Tanzania, Comoros, and Madagascar, of which only with Tanzania and Comoros has an agreement that defines the common maritime border (see figure 4.1).

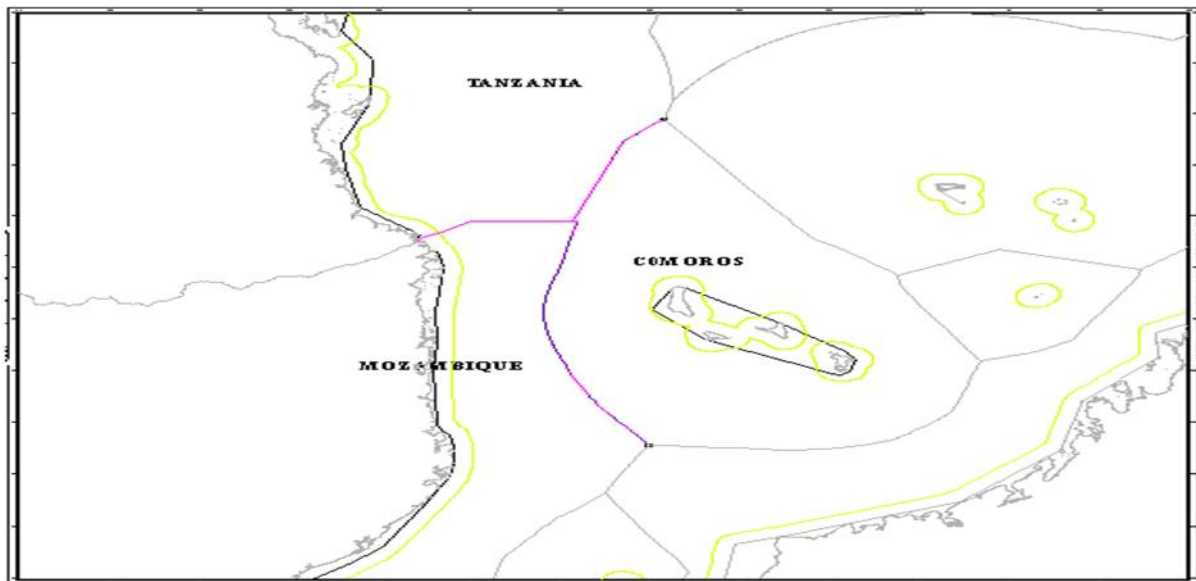


Figure 4.1: Mozambique Maritime Border

Source: Institute of Sea and Border

Legend: Base line -----, Territorial sea, Tripartite Point ○

Moreover, the Law 4/96, the Law of the Sea of 4 January, defines the strategies of the Mozambican Government and incorporates the rights of jurisdiction and the delimitation of Mozambican maritime spaces in accordance with Article 98 of the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Therefore, this law creates the Exclusive Economic Zone and grants sovereign rights to the State for the purposes of exploration, exploitation, conservation and management of living or non-living natural resources of the waters underlying the seabed and subsoil, as well as with regard to other activities aimed at the exploration and exploitation of the zone for economic purposes.

According to an interview with Bandeira (2019), the maritime spaces of Mozambique are measured from the baselines, which are the lines from which the maritime spaces are based. Equally, these are defined in UNCLOS as normal baselines (art. 5) or straight lines (art.

7). It shows that the normal baseline concerns the low water line while the straight baseline applies to places where the coastline is jagged and irregular, such as at the entrances of the bays, places with reefs or fringes of islands. However, the Mozambican maritime spaces include internal waters, the territorial sea, the contiguous zone, the exclusive economic zone, and the continental shelf (see figure 5.2).

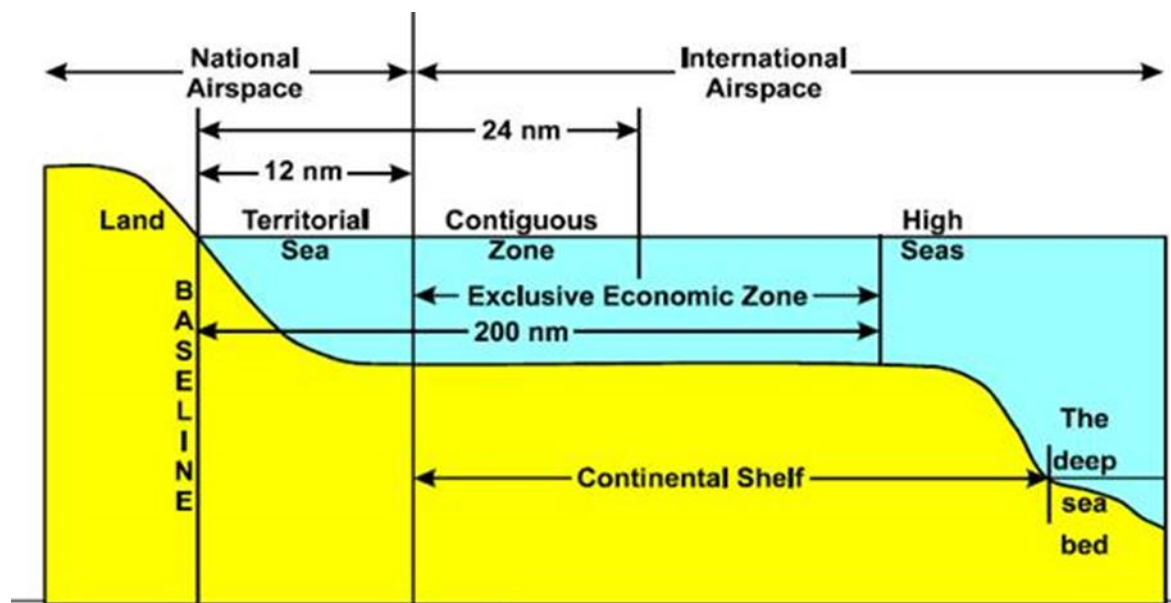


Figure 4.1: Mozambique Maritime Zones according to UNCLOS

Source: Oukas.info/web

4.1.1 Internal Waters

Internal waters are those within the baselines of the territorial sea. They can be lakes, estuaries, lagoons, rivers, and reservoirs. Coastal states have complete freedom to legislate and regulate their use, as well as to exploit any natural resource. In these waters, foreign ships and vessels do not have the right of innocent passage.

4.1.2 Territorial Sea

The territorial sea of the Republic of Mozambique shall comprise the adjacent stretch of sea, in addition to the Mozambican territory and inland waters, which shall be bounded by the baseline and the external boundary or by bilateral maritime borders. Its breadth is 12 nautical miles measured from the baseline. As well as its outer limit is defined by a line in which each of the points is the distance from the nearest point of the baseline equal to the width of the territorial sea.

Moreover, the State sovereignty is only limited by the right of innocent passage of ships on the surface, where the coastal state allows the right of innocent passage to ships flying the flag of other states. Equally, Mozambique as a subscriber to UNCLOS, in its territorial sea has the power to create standards concerning the safety of shipping and the regulation of maritime traffic; security of shipping installations and navigational aid systems and other services; protection of cables or ducts conservation of the living resources of the sea; fishing; prevention of the marine environment and the pollution control; scientific research and hydrographic surveying; and subjects customs, taxation, immigration and security.

However, it is ultimately for the authorities of the Mozambican State in its territorial sea to do: security and defense; military exercises and maneuvers with weapons of any kind; launching, landing or taking on board of any military device; fishing activities; research or hydrographic surveying activities; the exercise of the right of way it also effectively exercises sovereignty and total control over the sea and airspace as well as the bed and the basement.

4.1.3 Contiguous Zone

The Law of the Sea sets the limit of this maritime band at 24 miles, measured from the baseline. As well as the Mozambican State exercises the necessary control to prevent the

violation of customs, migration tax and sanitary laws and regulations for the protection and preservation of the marine environment, in force in Mozambican territory, as well as the repression of violations of national laws and regulations.

4.1.4 Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

The exclusive economic zone of the Republic of Mozambique shall comprise the part of the sea beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea which extends up to a distance of 200 nautical miles measured from the baseline from which the territorial sea is measured (see figure 4.1.4).



Figure 4.1.4: Mozambique Exclusive Economic Zone

Source: Frédéric Le Manach, 2015

Map of Mozambique and its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), as well as the extent of the continental shelf (in darker blue). The various districts are also delimited by dotted lines.

In the exclusive economic zone, the State has:

a) Sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources, whether living or non-living, of the waters superjacent to the seabed and of the seabed and its subsoil, and with regard to other activities for the economic exploitation and exploration of the zone, such as the production of energy from the water, currents, and winds.

b) Jurisdiction as provided for in the relevant provisions of UNCLOS with regard to:

- (i) The establishment and use of artificial islands, installations and structures; marine scientific research.
- (ii) The protection and preservation of the marine environment.

In cases where the Mozambican coast is opposite or adjacent to the coast of another state, the delimitation of the EEZ shall be done by agreement, or if there is no agreement, under international law on the basis of equity and in the light of all relevant circumstances, taking into account the respective importance of the interests concerned as well as to the international community as a whole.

4.1.5 Continental Shelf

The continental shelf comprises the seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas that extend beyond territorial sea throughout the natural prolongation of land territory to the outer edge of the continental margin, or to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured where the outer edge of the continental margin does not extend up to that distance. Hence, the continental margin comprises the submerged prolongation of the land mass and consists of the seabed and subsoil of the shelf, the slope, and the rise, not include the deep ocean floor with its oceanic ridges or the subsoil thereof.

Equally, the fixed points comprising the line of the outer limits of the continental shelf on the seabed, shall not exceed 350 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured or shall not exceed 100 nautical miles from the 2,500 meter isobaths, which is a line connecting the depth of 2,500 meter. In the same vein, the Mozambican State exercises the exclusive right of sovereignty for the purpose of exploring and exploiting natural resources (mineral resources and other non-living resources in the seabed and subsoil) independent of the actual or fictional occupation of the continental shelf.

5. Securitization of Maritime Threats

The securitization of a theme is a social construction. The theme is designated as a security issue and is accepted by its audience as a security issue through an inter-actor construction. Security is thus a self-referential practice because it is in this practice that the issue becomes a security issue not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat (Buzan; Waever; Wilde, 1998).

In case of security, textual analysis suggests that something is designated as an international security issue because it can be argued that this issue is more important than other issues and should take absolute priority. This is the reason whereby links the issue to what might seem a fairly demanding criterion: that the issue is presented as an existential threat (Buzan, Waever, Wilde, 1998, p. 24). In this approach, the meaning of a concept lies in its usage and is not something we can define analytically or philosophically according to what would be best. The meaning lies not in what people consciously think the concept means but in how they implicitly use it in some ways and not others (Buzan, Waever, Wilde, 1998).

Therefore, it is necessary for states to protect national security and defense. Piracy, illegal fishing and illegal immigrants threaten the very existence of the states. Since the mid-

1990s, several actors have attempted to articulate maritime crime off the Somali coast within the security context, declaring piracy a serious threat to a range of reference objects and drawing attention to the urgent need to act through robust measures, including the use of military force. This process peaked in 2008 with the involvement of the United Nations Security Council. As the example of the securitization process, the International Maritime Bureau, in the case of Southeast Asia, sought to convince decision-makers (rulers and leaders of international organizations such as the International Maritime Organization, UN and Security Council) and security bureaucracies (Maritime Safety Committee of the International Maritime Organization), Ministries of Defense and States Navy and Permanent Representations of the Security Council) that piracy on the Somali coast was an international security problem. This is why it needed an effective response from states and international governmental organizations, which, according to the maritime industry's speech, could only be achieved through the mobilization of military forces and the use of force against pirates (Oliveira, 2013, p.39).

In mid-2000, following attacks on and kidnappings of World Food Program (WFP) ships, precipitated UN involvement. In this context, WFP and International Maritime Organization executives adopted a dramatic discourse on the humanitarian situation in Somalia, portraying pirates as an existential threat to the survival of poor populations affected by drought and civil war in the country.

As a result, the humanitarian argument proved effective in convincing the target audiences, in particular, the UN Secretary-General, the members of the Security Council and some states and regional organizations in particular France, the European Union and NATO, whose security bureaucracies, defense structures and navies, began to justify the use of naval forces in the protection of WFP humanitarian aid convoys destined for Somalia. This process culminated in 2008 with the involvement of the Security Council in the management of private

violence at sea, resulting in five resolutions against Somali piracy passed under the powers of Chapter VII of the Charter (Oliveira, 2013).

In addition, the Security Council acted as a unitary securitization actor after the adoption of the resolutions, articulating Somali piracy as a threat to the various reference objects defined in international maritime routes, the lives of crew and passengers, humanitarian aid and international peace and security in the Horn of Africa region.

Moreover, in light of this threat, these initiatives justified an exceptional response the use of military force in Somalia's territorial sea and on land and sought to mobilize a global audience states and regional government organizations that had the military capabilities to intervene, i.e., warships and military aircraft. The effects of this process could already be seen in late 2008 and early 2009, when several states Japan, China, Russia, India, Malaysia, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Yemen and three multinational maritime coalitions one led by the United States, one led by the European Union, and a third led by the NATO moved into the region.

In the case of illegal fishing, fisheries crime is an increasingly significant threat not only to maritime security as well as to the sustainability of marine living resources. Since 1997, the term IUU fishing has regularly been discussed in meetings of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and was later adopted by other international bodies concerned with fisheries, such as the FAO, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and International Labour Organization. In addition, the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the organization of fisheries in the North Atlantic (NAFO) and the organization of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries (NEAF), among others has adopted this terminology (Metuzals et al, 2009). However, one of the measures of

the securitization of the illegal fishing was the 2001 International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU) (FAO 2001).

Another threat that securitized by countries is illegal immigrants; they pose a threat to the internal security of the state when it is massive and uncontrolled in nature. Migration was constructed as a security threat by political and security elites, who had the capacity to produce security knowledge about the level and seriousness of the issue. Hence, “speech acts” can be identified as one of the catalysts for the construction of a discourse of fear and proliferation of dangers (Buzan et al., 1998, p.23-24). For instance, at the European Union (EU) level, migration has become increasingly securitized since the 1980s and was seen first and foremost as a threat to national identity. The Schengen area has led to the increased security around the border states of the EU, and the development of what has become known as Fortress Europe. Huysmans even goes as far as to assert that border controls have played a key role in the spillover of the socioeconomic project of the internal market into the internal security project (Huysmans, 2006). In contrast, the securitization of migration in the United States took place in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, where terrorism became the bases for framing the groundwork for securitizing discourses and practices relative to migration (Farny, 2016).

Thus, maritime security was no longer linked exclusively to geo-strategy and naval attacks, but began to follow the transformation of security in general, now covering diverse fields related to the functioning of societies, their economies and their relations with the sea, aimed at safeguarding them against a wide range of threats and criminal activities such as piracy, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU), human trafficking, trafficking in narcotics, terrorism, among others.

In Africa, maritime security becoming a central issue in political agenda, the Heads of States securitized maritime threats through the adoption in 2014 of the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIMS) was an important milestone in securing Africa's Maritime Domain (AMD). 2050 AIMS serves as the overarching framework for African maritime strategies to confront maritime challenges. It covers economic, social, and environmental and security dimensions, and aims to foster more wealth creation from Africa's coast and rivers to realize their full potential.

In the case of Mozambique, it should be noted that the securitization of threats to maritime security such as piracy, illegal fishing, and illegal immigration, the securitizing agent comes from the political sector but the securitization is carried out in the military sector. As topical as it may seem, Mozambican legislation has been dealing with the issue of illegal fishing and illegal immigration for many years. The first record of illegal fishing is from Ministerial Decree n°58/2009, while illegal immigrants were covered by refugee status, thus designating their integration as a refugee candidate by Law No. 21/91 of 31 December, demonstrating that the issue exists on the country's legislative agenda, but did not yet present major concerns, being characterized as non-politicized. However, after the attack on the vessel Vega 5 ship by Somali pirates in December 2010, the country awakened attention to the maritime security dimension, which culminated in the creation of the Maritime Policy and Strategy, through Resolution No. 39/2017 of 14 September, confirming the securitization of maritime threats. This strategy aims to defend the sovereignty and integrity of national territory, maritime security, overfishing, illegal fishing and immigration, piracy and drug trafficking (Mozambique, 2017).

It should be noted that most African countries, for historical and economic reasons, do not have the resources to ensure their security in isolation, hence the need for cooperation

with other countries to address such threats. According to states by former Mozambican National Defense Minister Filipe Nyusi on 13 August 2011 in Luanda at the SADC meeting of the Defense and Security body, he declared the media that the current threats do not restrict to a country, but are cross-cutting. On the other hand, he highlighted the need to adopt strategies, as well as the combination of efforts, forces, and resources to combat maritime piracy, human trafficking, and illegal immigration, (Angop, 2011).

Another statement to highlight is the former Mozambican Deputy Minister of National Defense Agostinho Mondlane, at the annual meeting with resident and non-resident defense attachés accredited in the country, on 11 July 2011, which noted that among the greatest current challenges most important in the Mozambique Channel can be considered from the national and regional point of view, piracy and illegal immigration, stating that “with regard to the problem of illegal immigration, it should be noted that thousands of foreigners enter our country, without any kind of documentation or authorization, from different countries on the African continent, particularly the Great Lakes Region, and others, in considerable numbers, from the Asian continent...” (Verdade Mobile, 2011). Furthermore, Vice-Minister Mondlane added that “This is an issue that our country seeks, by all means, to combat or reduce the number of citizens of other nationalities, illegal in Mozambique...These and other phenomena are considered threats to national security, endangering stability, peace, and development objectives” (Verdade Mobile, 2011). Moreover, Joaquim Bule, spokesman for the Ministry of the Interior on 7 November 2017, in the Angolan newspaper emphasized that illegal immigration is a fact, which is why Mozambique is joining with other countries to combat this phenomenon through which some people take advantage of it to get involved in acts that jeopardize national security.

Following the hijacking of Vega 5 by Somali pirates in Mozambique, a number of extra-continental, continental, sub-continental and national measures have been taken to securitize the sea such as extra-continental measures ratification, on 19 August 2014, the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) to prevent, deter and eliminates illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Within the framework of Defense, at the level of the community of Portuguese Language Countries, we highlight the joint and combined annual exercises "FELINO", developed since 2000, with the purpose of increasing the interoperability of national forces, for use in humanitarian missions and in Peace Operations, under the aegis of the UN. These exercises have been relevant to the Maritime Security of Portuguese-speaking African countries, through the transfer of theoretical and practical knowledge from the Armed Forces of Brazil and Portugal. Furthermore, since 2012, Mozambique becoming member of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), by which it actively participates and contributes to the implementation of all the resolutions of the IOTC to prevent, destroy and eliminate illegal unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the region, such as the Resolution 05/03 relating to the establishment of an IOTC programme of inspection in port; Resolution 06/03 on establishing a vessel monitoring system programme and Resolution 16/11 on port state measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IOTC, 2018, p.29).

Further, can be enumerated continental measures such as adoption of the Djibouti Code of Conduct in July 2012, on the repression of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, it is designed to build counter-piracy capacity in the western Indian Ocean by delivering information sharing and regional and national training, enhancing national legislation, and building maritime awareness. Although many of the signatory states have only limited maritime security capacity, the code is providing a basis for enhanced regional cooperation. It is very much a global effort as it is facilitated by the

International Maritime Organization (IMO), by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the African Union (AU) and the European Union. In 2017, the Jeddah Amendment (DCoC+) to the DCoC broadened the scope of the code by adding IUU fishing, maritime trafficking and the illegal dumping of toxic waste to the scope of the agreement.

On the other hand, the sub- continental measure was the signature of SADC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on December 2011, between Mozambique, South Africa, and Tanzania, which led to operation COPPER, is a notable success for Southern African and maritime security.

Although, one of the national measures to reduce the entry of illegal immigrants into the most vulnerable areas were the submission of Law no. 5/93, which establishes the legal regime for foreign citizens, establishing, in particular, the respective rules of entry, stay and exit from the country, their rights, duties, and guarantees in Parliament for its repeal, which aims to impose measures in relation to illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings. Under the law, carriers are now obliged to bear the costs of repatriation of foreign citizens who do not have the necessary requirements for foreigners in the country. Another measure was to delimit the border with Tanzania and strengthen the surveillance system in these areas. Meanwhile, on the other side, was the creation on 3 January 2011 of a multi-sectoral group, called task force, made up of representatives of State institutions with an interest in the sea, the task force is responsible for designing and implementing a maritime intervention strategy with a view to monitoring and counteracting threats from the sea, maximizing the resources available in the various sectors involved and, intensification of maritime patrolling and surveillance along the Mozambican coast.

6. Main Challenges to Securitization of the Mozambique Channel

Michiel Hijmans, in his article "Maritime security: From Awareness to Security, Connecting the Dots" postulates the following factors which according to the results of this study, are the main challenges for the securitization of the Mozambique Channel: the first factor is a lack of the awareness of the importance of maritime security on the country, which Hijmans calls "blindness of the sea". Awareness of maritime security can only be achieved through appropriate education, which would begin in schools, as an integral part of the school curriculum through to university, as well as disseminating the importance of maritime security through lectures, policy documents and study visits organized in ports, the maritime industry, coastguards and the navy, as well as involving all public, private and civil society sectors (Michiel Hijmans, 2018, p.28).

The second factor is the lack of a comprehensive security strategy, together with the action plan for its implementation involving all key sectors in Mozambique, such as the Ministry of National Defense, Navy, Ministry of the Sea, Inland Water and Fisheries, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Public Works and Housing, Ministry of Environment and Social Action, Port Authorities, Coast Guard, Fisheries Research Institute, Customs, Marine, Lake and River Police, Institute of the Sea and Borders and the National Navy Institute. A comprehensive security strategy is needed because maritime security is much more than a military issue; it encompasses all aspects of maritime security and aims to promote a broad approach to addressing challenges.

Similarly, the main objectives of any maritime security strategy should be:

a) Awareness raising, surveillance, and information-sharing: security and protection; border control; customs; fisheries control; environmental protection; defense and law enforcement.

b) Capacity development: define key capability-related areas and technologies; explore new multi-functional and dual-use technologies; increase sharing of best practices; risk analysis and threat information.

c) Risk management, protection of critical maritime infrastructure and crisis response: improving trans-equatorial and cross-border cooperation for crisis response and contingency planning; conducting common risk analyses; assessing the resilience of infrastructure to natural and man-made disasters as well as to climate change; promoting mutual understanding and interoperability.

d) Research and innovation in maritime security, education, and training: bringing together the training courses already available into common training modules; establishing a civil-military agenda for research and innovation; participating in inter-agency exercises.

The third factor relates to a lack of information sharing with all sectors involved, it can be achieved through the creation of a maritime security information center, exchange of experiences in workshops, classes, and conferences on the subject, rotation, and exchange of naval and coast guard personnel.

The fourth factor is the low international cooperation; no country can guarantee complete maritime security on its own. Firstly, it's necessary to involve the existing organizations on the continent such as the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in order to ensure effective maritime security in the continent and in the sub-continent. Secondly, there is a need reinforce dialogue with neighboring countries to organize mutual support for maritime crimes such as piracy, illegal fishing, and illegal immigrants who cross borders every day, information sharing and, act together at sea in order to protect the country's interests.

The last factor is the awareness of the maritime domain, which means knowing what is happening at sea and in nearby coastal regions. The Mozambican territory has a coastline of about 2 700 km and an EEZ of about 586,000 km², to obtain the correct information, it is necessary to map the area and define priorities for recognition and patrol. This requires the acquisition of coastal radars that collect data twenty-four hours a day throughout the year, together with an intelligent data analysis system, as well as the development of both civilian and military capabilities such as the use of remotely piloted aircraft system (RPAS), the coast guards and the navy can use them. However, to acquire this equipment the costs should be shared among different users.

7. Maritime Piracy

During the peak of piracy in 2011, Somali pirates spread to the Mozambique Channel, where in December 2010, two (02) ships were attacked off the coast of Mozambique and a fishing ship flying the flag of Mozambique was hijacked with the crew on board and used as a mother ship. Continuing as hostages until 14 March 2011, when a military operation by the Indian navy ended with the sinking of "Vega 5", the arrest of seventy (61) pirates, the release of thirteen (13) crew members and the death of nine (9) more of them, (see table 7) (Gómez et al., 2013, p.23).

Zone of Attacks	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2007-2011
Mozambique				4	1	5
Madagascar				2	1	3
Tanzania	2			17	9	28
Kenya	1	1	2	12	4	20
Comoros			1	3	3	7
Seychelles		1	29	10	6	46
Mayotte				2	1	3
TOTAL	3	2	32	50	25	112

Table 7: Somali Pirate Attacks in Mozambique Channel Region

Source: Gómez & Navarro, 2013

7.1 Impact of Maritime Piracy in Mozambique

From an economic point of view, maritime piracy and armed robbery at sea are a threat for the global as well as the regional economy, as Africa's key maritime trade routes (sea lines of communication, SLOCs) are affected to a worrying degree (Farrell Jr., 2012, p.10). Over 80% of world trade is conducted by maritime transport and over 90 % of African imports and exports are moved by sea. However, the total global economic cost of piracy is hard to assess. Equally, Martinez-Zarzoso et al. estimate that maritime piracy is costing the global economy around US\$24.5 billion a year (Martinez-Zarzoso et al. 2013). These evaluations include a broad variety of first-order costs, such as ransom payments, insurance costs, and military operations, as well as second-order costs, such as the effects on fisheries, food security, and tourism. However, in recent decades, shipping companies have started to circumnavigate piracy hot spots, making shipping routes longer and significantly increasing transport costs. On the other hand, Besley et al. state that Somali piracy, in particular, had increased shipping costs by 8 to 12%, forcing shipping companies to take longer routes that do not expose them to pirate attack. The actual welfare loss is US\$630 million, considerably greater than the US\$120 million transfer sums that are being paid to Somali pirates (Besley et al. 2015).

Consequently, in the case off the Mozambique Channel, the costs imposed by maritime piracy are significant; hence, the action of Somali piracy has a direct negative impact on the economic activity of Mozambique, as well as the countries of the sub-region since the Mozambique Channel appears as a strategic route for global trade. On the other hand, it has negative implications for countries without access to the sea dependent on the Mozambique Channel to connect to trade at the regional and global levels. Also noteworthy is the preference for new, more secure routes, thus preventing passage through regions targeted by pirate attacks, thereby making the cost of shipping often more expensive, and susceptible to delays due to route changes (see figure 7.1).

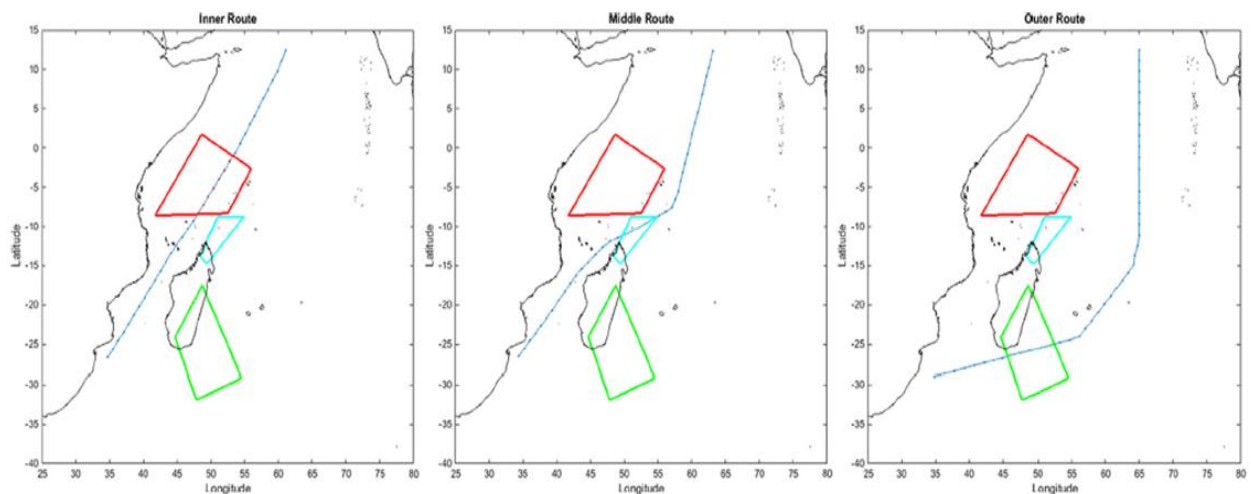


Figure 7.1: The Declining Impact on Maritime Transport in Mozambique Channel

Source: Michele Vespe, 2015

The figures 7.1 show the impact of traffic variations on maritime trade routes off the Mozambique Channel. There is a decrease in navigation on normal routes in preference for safer routes, thus avoiding a pirate attack. Examples tracks following the inner routes, passing through the red area on left, middle routes, through the light blue area on middle, and outer routes through the green area on right.

According to an interview conducted with Bandeira, the emergence of piracy activities on the Mozambican coast has led to an increase in operational cost for ship owners transporting cargoes through risk areas and an increase in insurance premiums for shipping companies. The costs of imports and exports have become high, meaning that local consumers have to pay higher prices and governments lose out on revenue at the ports. However, Companies currently contract insurance covering kidnap and ransom claims, as well as efficient coverage that protect the loss of revenue or the daily fixed cost of ships (Bandeira, 2019).

On the other hand, Chingotuana states that piracy has nefarious consequences for the country, as it harms the investments of mega- projects in the extractive industry and in hydrocarbon exploration, which project the flow of their production by sea, harms imports and exports from countries in the hinterland that depend heavily on Mozambican ports and corridors for their foreign trade, motivates the retraction of investments in tourism, as well as, in general, harms world maritime trade that depends on the Mozambique Channel for the transit of about 30% of trade (Chingotuana, 2019).

7.2 Factors for the Emergence of Piracy

According to Wijk (2009), several factors contribute to the emergence of piracy in different areas, such as legal and jurisdictional weaknesses, permissive political environments, conflict and disorder, favorable geography, promises of rewards, underfunded enforcement systems, cultural acceptance, and maritime traditions, and inadequate security (Wijk, 2009, p.10). Based on this assumption, there are four major factors that lead to the flourishing of pirate attacks in Mozambique. The first factor is favorable geography; this factor is associated with the territorial extension of Mozambique and the lack of state capacity to control maritime routes and the routes along which international trade flows circulate. The second factor is inadequate security; linked to the existence of a legal vacuum and lack of a maritime court

capable to incorporate the crime of piracy in their domestic laws to prosecuting crimes perpetrated by pirates, as Mozambique has a vast maritime area, and for the law to be applied at sea, it is necessary that the country is equipped with means, which requires the existence of well- equipped boats with radar, communications, well- trained teams, and aerial surveillance to better supervise its coastal zone. The third factor is permissive political environment; this factor is associated with a lack of a strong merchant navy to deal with threats from the sea and an unclear definition of the responsibilities of the institutions that watches over the maritime area. And the fourth factor is weak enforcement of maritime spaces, coupled with a lack of adequate financial resources and human resources allow pirates the freedom to operate successfully, furthermore, the factor that contributes negatively is the lack of national maritime culture.

8. Illegal Fishing

Mozambique has 2,700km of coastline with a rich and abundant marine life, providing livelihoods for hundreds of thousands of people of remote communities in the coastal zone. More than 580 thousand km² of oceanic and inland waters and 200 miles from the Economic Zone Exclusive (EEZ) is home to an abundant marine population and the which, in spite of a relatively direct contribution of 3% from the GDP, has considerable social value. The sector represents an important source of food and sustenance. For the population of the country, it is a labor market and a significant source of income for many families. While men are mainly involved in fishing at sea, the women, who make up almost half the workforce, are responsible for collection from shallow or exposed areas of the low tide. Fishing is an important income supplement because people resort to it when other forms of production of food and income generation become scarce (World Bank Document, 2015, p.1).

The fisheries sector in Mozambique has large growth potential and the ability to boost the economy, with the potential for significant returns larger than the existing ones and greater contribution to the poverty reduction. Production is estimated at more than 300,000 tonnes of catch and an additional 78,000 tonnes from aquaculture. Between 2009 and 2016, the 104 semi-industrial operators registered in the country carried out an average catch of 14,500 tonnes. Industrial fisheries also play a key role in economic growth, particularly shrimp, tuna and lobster fisheries, with efforts concentrated in the Sofala Bank and the southern region. However, in 2015, the Ministry of the Sea, Inland Water and Fisheries (MIMAIP) was created to develop a strong blue economy and support the sustainable use of ocean and inland water resources (World Bank document, 2015).

Base on interview with Cossa (2019), the fisheries sector plays an important role in the Mozambican economy, both for subsistence and for income and food security of fishing communities. Fishing is also a driving force, articulated in the sectors of semi-industrial and industrial that focuses primarily on the shrimp for export. It is estimated that the potential of fishery products from Mozambique is about 332 thousand tonnes, the main features being the shrimp of shallow waters. Equally, in 2015, the total catch was recorded at 286 thousand tonnes of fish with revenue of 147 million meticaís approximately 9.8 million USD, of which 27 thousand tonnes was derived from commercial fishing (industrial and semi-industrial) and 259 thousand tons from artisanal fishing. However, in the same year, the exports of fish reached approximately 13 000 tonnes, equivalent to 82 million USD, representing a growth of around 9% compared to the previous year. The main products were lobster, crab, shrimp, prawn, crayfish, tuna, kapenta and cephalopods. The subsectors of industrial fishing, semi-industrial and artisanal contributed about 48%, 39% and 13%, respectively (Cossa, 2019).

8.1 Illegal fishing in Mozambique

In Mozambique, there are various types of illegal, unreported and inregulated (IUU) fishing: fishing without a license is the most common practice in IUU fishing. There are regular incursions of fishing boats with purse and longliners that are not licensed in Mozambique's EEZ, and whose targets are the resources of tuna, swordfish, and shark. In addition, there is the incursion of shrimp and gamba fishing vessels into prohibited areas. For shrimp trawlers, refers to the incursion into the area of 3mn reserved for artisanal fishing. In the case of gamba fishing vessels, refers to the violation of areas of mandatory depth which must be respected, where they carry out shrimp fishing operations in waters less deep than those to which they are confined by the provisions contained in the licenses. Furthermore, small-scale fishing, mainly due to open access to the sea, leads to numerous infringements e.g. intrusions into protected areas, fishing in closed or sealing seasons, use of prohibited gear and the false declaration of catches, particularly in the small-scale sector. As a result, since 2007, Mozambique captured 12 foreign fishing vessels in illicit activities, for instance: Antilhas Reefer, Payam, Alexia, O Covelo and Zumaya Dous, Txori Argi, Nomar, Ross, Lian Chi Sheng n.º62, Wulan Eks Lerry, Doniene and, Belma (Cossa, 2019).

8.2 Impact of illegal fishing in Mozambique

8.2.1 Economic impact

The reduction in fish availability on local markets has a direct impact in reduce protein availability and national food security thereby increasing the risk of malnutrition. Consequently, according to the Ministry of the Sea, Inland Waters, and Fisheries, illegal fishing cause direct loss on the revenue of the country i.e. causes annual losses to the State of around US \$60 million. This activity is mostly carried out on the high seas and inland waters by national and foreign operators. On the other hand, WWF affirms that illegal fishing not only contributes to overfishing but is responsible for US \$10-23.5 billion stolen from the global economy each

year (WWF, 2014). It is important to note that the perpetuation of IUU fishing in Mozambique is facilitated by a lack of rigorous execution by the authority with responsibility for fishery governance.

8.2.2 Environmental Impact

Currently, according to Cossa, illegal fishing contributes to the degradation of coastal and marine ecosystems, equally, the use of harmful fishing gear and other instruments or artifacts unregulated results in the deterioration of the marine environment and its ecosystems such as the case of capture of larvae and juvenile fish, in addition to habitat destruction and the destruction of mangroves, and coral reef (Cossa, 2019). On the other hand, for Chingotuane illegal fishing leads to the emptying of fish at sea with an impact on the reproduction of species due to trawling techniques; it destroys the ecosystem and maritime habitat and undermines efforts to conserve and renew existing stocks, leading to their extinction (Chingotuane, 2019).

However, in order to combat illegal fishing, the Mozambican authorities have recently introduced an electronic registration system in the framework of the fishing vessel monitoring system (VMS) to improve the control and information management of fishing activity in the fight against illegal fishing (Cossa, 2019). In addition, the Mozambican authorities are working with partners through a commission that integrates SADC member countries, including Comoros, Mauritius, Madagascar, Reunion Islands, Tanzania, and Kenya, and also works bilaterally with South Africa. At the national level, monitoring is carried out through partnerships established with institutions with an interest in the sea, including the Mozambican War Navy, Maritime, Lacustrine and River Police, Customs and Migration Services, by which results in the application of sanctions ranging from fines, confiscation of fish resources, and to the prohibition to exercise the activity in Mozambican territory (Cossa, 2019).

9. Illegal Immigration

9.1 Main Entry Points

Illegal immigrants enter in Mozambique by the sea on a daily basis, across the border from the northern province of the country. These are mostly from different African countries. The statistical data below reflects only the number of illegal immigrants who entered by sea that the Maputo Port has recorded in the last 5 years (2015- early 2019). Not cover all country. It should be noted that the data indicated were provided by the National Migration Service in Maputo (SENAMI) (see table 9.1).

Year	Number	Nationality	Gender	Entry routes	Motives
2015	9	Tanzanian	Male	Namoto- C.Delgado	looking for better living conditions in Europe
2016	29	Tanzanian	Male	Namoto- C.Delgado	
2017	12	Tanzanian	Male	Namoto- C.Delgado	
2018	4	Tanzanian (3) Congolese (1)	Male	Namoto Maputo	
2019	3	Tanzanian	Male	Namoto- C.Delgado	

Table 9.1: Number of illegal immigrants in Mozambique in the last 5 years

Source: SENAMI, 2019

On the other hand, for Patricio (2015, p.161), the main entry points for immigrants are the northern provinces, Niassa and Cabo Delgado, the central province of Tete and, in the south of the country, the province of Maputo. The entry route for immigrants from the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia) and the Great Lakes (Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Sudan) has generally been through the districts of Palma, Mocímboa da Praia in Cabo Delgado, and the Border of Congress in Niassa. Most of the Congolese, Burundians and Sudanese enter from the central province of Tete after crossing into Zambia. They cross at night when police

patrols are absent. Through the sea coast are mainly reported Somalis, Kenyans, and some Comorians, often with the complicity of local fishermen and Zanzibar, a Tanzanian island near Mozambique (Patricio, 2015) (see figure 9.1).

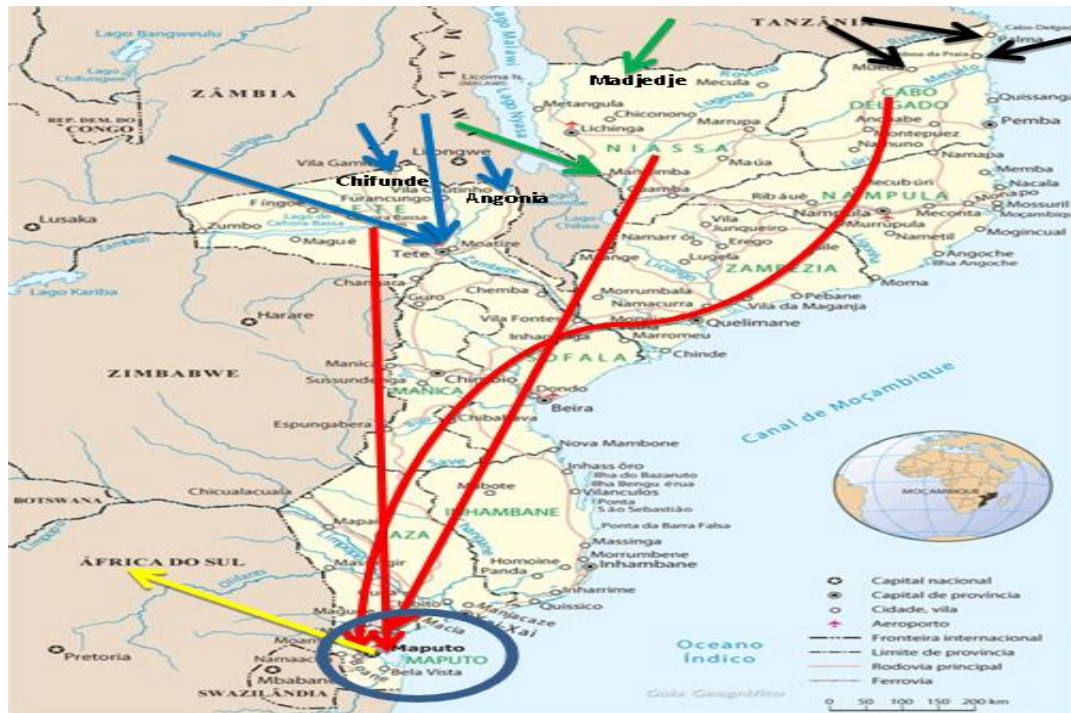


Figure 9.1: Main Entry Routes of Illegal Immigrants

Source: Patricio & Peixoto, 2018

9.2 Impact of Illegal Immigration

David analyzes illegal immigration in Mozambique in two perspectives. On the one hand, the illegal immigrants, when they come to the country, many of them engage in illegal businesses such as the mining of precious stones, poaching of elephants and other species. On the other hand, it provides a positive analysis of immigrants who have settled in the country, many of whom have set up their own businesses and employ national citizens, thus contributing to the reduction of the level of unemployment, as well as provide employers in the extractive industry with intensive, cheap and flexible labor. They also contribute to the state's tax revenues by paying taxes on the property they own or lease (David, 2019).

From a different perspective, according to Chingotuana illegal immigration may have nefarious consequences for the country, such as increased crime, prostitution, government spending on repatriation, public spending on police enforcement, illegal activities such as counterfeiting of currency, money laundering, export of foreign currency, illegal mining, poaching, deforestation caused by indiscriminate logging, smuggling and tax evasion. In addition, immigrants promote corruption in order to escape police control, develop commercial activities, and acquire false documents and national identity cards, among others. It also states that the presence of illegal immigrants makes national labor less attractive to dishonest employers who prefer to prioritize the hiring of illegal immigrants who are willing to work for low wages (Chingotuana, 2019).

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

10.1 Conclusions

Nowadays, the notion of security encompasses a wider field such as military, individual, environment, politics, economy, society, among others. The notion of safety, like the notion of maritime security, varies according to the individual or entity using the concept and the context of the application. However, as the security spectrum of constructive theory has been broadened, the basic notion of security is understood as the absence of conflict and threats.

The study aimed to critically analyze the actual and potential threats to the securitization of maritime security in Mozambique. To meet these objectives, the study used the qualitative method and descriptive analysis, where it can be seen that the country has limitations in the availability of financial and material means to ensure internal security, thus depending on the cooperation with the countries for the patrolling of the Mozambican coast.

In addition, to better frame the topic, was considered appropriate to base it on constructivist theory, starting from the basic principle that threats are socially constructed and a sharing of intersubjective perceptions about piracy, illegal fishing, and illegal immigration, as existing threats to a particular object to be securitized among various national, regional and international actors. Furthermore, this study responded to the three proposed objectives, the main threats and the impact of these threats were identified, and strategic actions to improve maritime security in the Mozambique Channel were proposed.

Also noted that the securitization of these threats however corresponds to an extremely subjective security policy which takes into account the interests of the various entities at regional and international level, therefore, the implementation of this security practice in the region aims to guarantee the protection of maritime transport in order to guarantee the free movement of goods and services at the level of global trade; the protection of marine species and their habitat, as well as the protection of protected species; and the protection of maritime borders in order to ensure the reduction of the flow of illegal immigrants.

It was confirmed that the emergence of maritime threats such as piracy, illegal fishing, and illegal immigration undermines the sovereignty of the state, the security of the entire region, as well as international trade. It should be noted that these threats result from the power vacuum in Mozambique's maritime domain. As indicated in the study, no single state alone can guarantee complete maritime security and thus needs to cooperate with various entities at national, regional and international levels to address these threats. In addition, Mozambique does not have sufficient material and financial resources to deal with these threats in isolation, to combat them and reduce them, the country has signed several bilateral and multilateral agreements, at the national level, the maritime policy and strategy was

created to solve maritime security problems, such as piracy, illegal fishing, illegal immigration, and others. However, for instance, the multilateral cooperation between SADC countries such as Mozambique, South Africa, and Tanzania in joint patrolling in the Mozambique Channel has proved to be effective.

There were several reasons why maritime security is an important issue for Mozambique: geographical, demographic, economic, strategic, security, and natural resource demand reasons. For these and other reasons, Mozambique has an interest in guaranteeing the security of its territory, thus, guaranteeing the security of its maritime territory will be contributing to the security of the country as a whole.

The study found that, the issue of maritime security in Mozambique gained greater attention after the hijacking of the fishing ship "Vega 5" off the coast of Sofala province by Somali pirates, thus, raising the importance of securitizing threats coming from the sea. One of the immediate sectorial measures taken by the country was the signing of the tripartite memorandum of understanding between Mozambique, South Africa, and Tanzania, to develop coastal surveillance activity, as well as other ad hoc measures. However, it was as part of the surveillance that the country became aware of the existence of illegal fishing in the EEZ.

Furthermore, currently, the threats that most impacts on Mozambique are illegal fishing and illegal immigration, as these occur every day outside the control of the state, due to the lack of surveillance of these coastal areas, thereby undermining the sovereignty of the state. However, it should be noted that for the time being the action of pirate attacks in the country has been reduced due to joint patrolling by South Africa and French forces in the region, through maritime surveillance and anti-piracy patrolling to promote cooperation and improve interoperability in anti-piracy operations.

Nevertheless, the theory of securitization is seen in this study as an instrument used to achieve to draw attention to the importance of maritime security for the country and the region. These threats should also be seen as opportunities for investment and strengthening of policies applied in the maritime domain. Although some measures to ensure maritime security in Mozambique are in place, there is still a need for the adoption of modern technology to strengthen monitoring and surveillance capacity and the inclusion of local communities in order to ensure good order in the maritime domain of the Mozambican coast.

10.2 Recommendations

According to the interviews carried out, it was noted that the origin of the threats of maritime piracy, illegal fishing and illegal immigration in Mozambique is related to the lack surveillance of the coastal zone due to the lack of financial resources and material means to do so. However, for better surveillance of maritime space, from the study, the following recommendations can be drawn:

a) Improve monitoring and cooperation with neighboring countries, both in terms of more frequent patrols and increased surveillance in these risk areas.

b) Improve Coordinated Regional Response to Combat maritime piracy, Illegal fishing, and illegal immigration.

c) Strengthen the Navy in terms of naval infrastructure at its bases and sub-bases, as well as acquire vessels with maritime authority to project themselves to 300 nautical miles and aerial surveillance capacity that covered the three regions of the country (south, central and north).

d) Include the theme of maritime security in school curricula, as well as disseminate information on the importance of maritime security in workshops, lectures, and conferences.

e) Improve collaboration and information sharing between maritime issues- linked institutions.

- f) Creation of a maritime authority system (MAS) and, national maritime authority (NMA) to project the power of the State in the maritime area.
- g) Formulate a comprehensive maritime security strategy and Action Plan for its implementation.
- h) Train and empower existing human resources to meet the challenges of maritime security.
- i) Improve monitoring and cooperation with neighboring countries, both in terms of more frequent patrols and increased surveillance in these risk areas.
- j) Creation of a solid annual database for register of illegal fishing, illegal immigration, and maritime piracy activities.

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The Effects of Terrorism on Girls' Access to Education: A Case Study of Swat Valley (of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Pakistan

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Abstract

Using the gender perspective, this paper aimed to evaluate the effects of terrorism on females of Swat, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan. The objective is to analyze the damages caused by extremists to girls' education in terms of barring them from attending schools and institutions, assassinating and injuring teachers and students, inflicting psychological traumas; and, causing damages to infrastructure by bombing and destroying the school buildings etc. Secondary data was used as well as video link and phone call interviews, researchers' observation and the documents are also used as the means of data collection. The paper finds that female students of Swat were vulnerable to severe human rights abuses. Furthermore, these students struggle to recover from the miseries inflicted upon them. As for the social and cultural dimensions, females in general and girls' students more than males of the Swat region. Their economic, cultural and social liberties were tightly restricted. The slow process of rehabilitation is putting a lot of negative mental and psychological effects on these sufferers. Few recommendations are suggested for policy implications in the future i. e. nationwide implementation of Article 25-A of the constitution of Pakistan that ensures free and compulsory education for all. In this regard; to reinvigorate and restructure the provincial educational system, the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province also needs to bring into action its Act XII-2017 that ensures building a mechanism for the provision of free and compulsory education to the age group of 5 to 16. In addition, to enforce the National Action Plan which was agreed upon by the National Security Council (NSC) for the purpose of

eradicating extremist's ideology from the society by confiscating the hate material and nabbing the propagators of religious, social and gender discrimination.

Keyword: Girls' Education, Extremism, Talibanization, Terrorism, Swat Valley

1. Introduction

Education is one of the most essential factors in the lives of individuals to advance, and for the nations to develop. It is also the portal of enlightenment and transformation. Excellence in the fields of science, technology and economic progress sprouts off education. Therefore, it is impossible for any society to advance without acquiring quality and world class education. Every state around the globe is aware of this fact, but not all of them are doing well enough in providing proper and required education to its people.

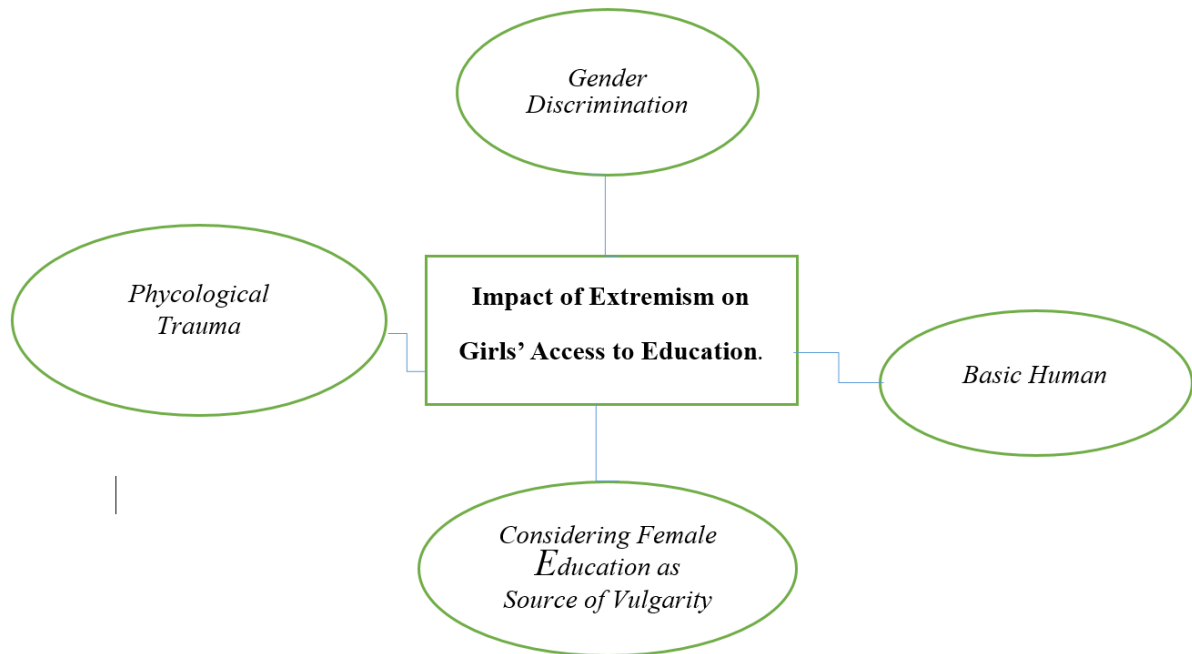
Since Pakistan's inception in 1947, all governments have taken sizeable measures for promoting education. But, due to multiple reasons, both internal i.e. gender inequality, political instability and falling economy; as well as the external factors i.e. Afghan Jihad, rise of Taliban and the War on Terror after 9/11 have put unboreable burden on the national economy. These factors have played significant roles in keeping Pakistanis as one of the lowest educated nations around the world. More ironic in this regard is the girls' education in particular, who are 60% of the Pakistani rural areas and the main sufferers because of cultural and tribal norms. Only legislation without considerable action by almost all the governments in the past has also deteriorated the performance of education sector.

Furthermore, the threat of terrorism as mentioned above has added more to the problem. Because of terrorist activities in the area, the already low percentage of girls' enrolment in schools especially in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and its district of Mingora in Swat valley have dropped almost to none. The religious extremists follow strict anti-women-empowerment ideology. After arrival and establishing their effective influence in Swat, the extremists in the shape of Taliban have committed heinous crimes against humanity, barring girls from getting educated was one of the main.

Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan or the Taliban Movement of Pakistan (TTP) followed the ideology of Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaeda, and have become the hindrance to people's access to public education, especially of the women. According to the Taliban, men and women are to play different roles in the society therefore, it was not allowed and deemed appropriate for women to get educated, work and be shoulder to shoulder with men. To actuate and apply their stringent ideology, the extremists of TTP have categorically threatened and/or hurt people who were adamant on educating their daughters.

2. Research Problem

Swat valley (especially Mingora the subdistrict of Swat Kp) is one of the worst affected areas where prior to terrorism the situation of girls' education wasn't satisfactory but still quite better than many other districts of the province of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Unfortunately, radicalization and Talibanization of the area turned this scenic tourist spot into the graveyard of education. Many schools got demolished and were razed to dust while some of the buildings became the temporary barracks of security forces during their counter-terrorism operations against Taliban. Thus education, especially girls' education in particular came to a halt for many years till the launch of a total clean-up operation by the security forces. But, despite having completed successful operations against Taliban, girls' enrolment in the schools in and around the valley remains low.



3. Conceptual Framework

The main objective of the research is to identify the issues caused by terrorism and its outcome in the field of girls' education in Swat (Mingora). Therefore, the most appropriate theory, in this case is the Feminist Theory. The reason for applying the theory is to focus on the problem through a gender-lens and point out the horrors of gender-based discrimination that at a point translated into the worst form of violence and destruction. The theory also emphasises on women's rights and different related issues. As "It focuses on women's rights and issues in society and to the power relationships existing therein" (Pomeroy, Holleran & Kiam, 2004)

For several decades we have been theorizing that poverty and patriarchy affected women's education in Pakistan, and preference has been given to male education (Azhar, 2009). This gender bias in education has contributed to the current culture and patriarchal nature of society. However, the recent decades raised new critical issues of women's security in education, where education is under attack, particularly women's education, in conflict

zones. (Gul 2018)

Feminist theory accommodates the themes of discrimination, patriarchal mindset, and sexual harassment etc. It also analyses the worthy female contributions to the society enabling us to ascertain knowledge which can be very useful for the awareness and transformation, and the productive female role in the society. Furthermore, it is also to help our females by enhancing their status in the society enabling them to actively participate in all walks of life as equal citizens. To serve the purpose, the research was made by finding gaps and missing links in literature of knowledge such as inequality based on gender; especially in the field of education based on their experiences and point of view as how they got treated in the darkest hours of terrorism. And, the period of counter-terrorism in the region of Swat.

The Taliban attacked women and girls' education in Swat to oppress them in the name of maintaining their un-Islamic ideology (Mohsin, 2014) . Women discontinued their education while living with trauma, fear of destruction, killing, and chaotic memories of blasting and shelling. However, no sexual harassment or rapes were reported. In fact, the public violence frightened locals, girls and therefore, the parents had no option but to keep their girls at home rather than letting them commute to far away schools. Being locked at home exposed these girls to interconnected violence of all forms: such as domestic, societal, extremists, state and inter-state based in all its gendered dimensions.

There is a need for rational arguments instead of symbolic view points for war and conflicts by aggressive groups or individuals, who create troubles wars, destruction and are the cause of a conflict; whereas, women as the passive or submissive individuals always suffered as the main victims of such conflicts. Moreover, feminist theories highlight the experience of the women who had suffered due to these wars and conflicts. According to Weber (2006),

“feminist theory recommends broader measures to address women’s security issues, because gender issues or violence against women, such as familial, societal, and state and inter- state violence, all have gendered dimensions.” Therefore, the research is attempted on filling the existing gaps in the literature in the light of effects of terrorism on Female education in Swat district.

The feminist theory caters to the inclusion of themes surrounding discrimination, sexual objectification, and the patriarchal mindset. Analyzing data sets with this perspective not only allows for an assessment of the contributions that women make to a society, but also the effects of patriarchy on women and the role of gender differences that can then help in the development of knowledge that can aid the transformation of social, cultural and political practices that elevate the status of women in any society, helping them participate as full citizens in public life, not only assessing the gaps in gender equality but also identifying ways that these could be plugged (Bryson, 2016).

4. Research Questions:

1. From the feminist prospective how the extremist ideology and its influence have negatively affected the girls’ access to education in the Swat region?
2. How the civil society, parents, and students themselves demonstrated resistance (if any), and shown their eagerness and love for education? What measures Pakistani state has taken to counter terrorism; also, after the operation clean-up in Swat enabling the students, especially female students to continue their education?
3. What is the influence don by Malala Yousafzai?

4.1 Argument

I argue that even after fear and terror, propagation of extremist ideology, and displacement still today the girls of Swat (Mingora) wants to get education, especially after the Malala Yousafzai's incident as it has been driving force in girls education in Malakand.

5. Findings and Analysis:

5.1 Extremism as a threat to girls' education in Swat Since 2007, the Tehrik Taliban Pakistan (TTP) became a threat to girls' education in Swat valley.

After taking over the valley, Taliban started a war against local population, and Pakistan army. The girls' education came to a complete halt between the period of 2007-2011. The leadership of local Taliban commander i.e. Mullah Fazlullah alias Mullah Radio and his cronies have destroyed tens of schools. Out of these schools, most belonged to girls. The destroyed schools were soft targets because they weren't being strongly protected like Police Stations or other govt. installations, (Iram pp 39-44, 2018). The Taliban, like everywhere else in the tribal areas and Afghanistan, were fiercely against education, especially girls' education. They believed that general education was secular and western in nature i.e. non-Islamic. The Taliban attacked schools in many ways, mostly bombed but also raided them and killed students, teachers etc. Although there isn't any authentic Data available on the attacks on schools and the exact number of teachers and students killed. But according to Human Rights, 867 attacks were recorded on the educational institutions from 2007-15 (Human Rights Watch 2017). These attacks caused 390 deaths 20 injuries.

Therik-e-Taliban Pakistan (or the TTP) started their activities in 2007 and took full control of Swat Valley in 2012. They threatened, killed and injured many teachers, students, parents and other members from the civil society for studying or raising their voices in the favour of education and the basic human rights. TTP issued edicts to ban education of girls.

Around a number of 890 schools were closed down, 11870 students, including 7700 female teachers couldn't attend schools. (Arshad and Zeb 2014). The Leader of TTP in Swat aka Mullah Radio through his live FM Radio threatened people that whoever sent his or her daughter to school would be severely punished.

5.2 Challenges prior to Taliban's takeover of Swat and destruction of schools have posed grave threats to females in general, and the girls' education in particular.

It is noteworthy that the condition of girls' education was already not satisfactory even before the arrival of Taliban (Saqib 2017). With so many cultural norms and societal taboos, the percentage of girls' education was already very low. Then the religious extremism has deteriorated the situation further. It is the time when a young student, i.e. Malala Yousafzai came forward at the age of only 14. She started writing a diary about the ordeal of girls' students that published under her pseudo name *Gul Makai*. The Taliban considered her cause and Malala a big threat. They ultimately ended up attacking her in a school van by firing shots which left her severely injured. But, Malala's courage for raising her voice and not being scared by continuing her education till the day she was shot had become iconic among the world community.

Malala Yousafzai factor has also been the driving force for the government to work on education sector more efficiently. Because it is because of the Malala Yousafzai that the matter has become focal all around the world. And, people and agencies take interest about knowing the condition of education in the area. Malala factor has been very helpful in attracting the world and its donor agencies' attention towards the fate of education in Pakistan, especially in the area of Swat. The government with the assistance extended by the military, domestic as well as foreign donors including the Malala Fund is keen on changing the fate of education, especially the girls' education, in Swat and throughout the country.

“After the prevalence of peace, the government has been very supportive, they are bringing back the education in the area. After Malala’s incident, there is much more prominent support given to girl’s education in the area. Though still not many schools are rebuilt, but we can see there is some hope and a progress. And the condition is improving as compared to the past.” – Fazal Karim

Although, Malala factor has been very helpful in attracting the world donor agencies’ attention towards the fate of education in Pakistan. The government with the assistance extended by the military, domestic as well as foreign donors including the Malala Fund is keen on changing the fate of education, especially the girls’ education, in Swat and throughout the country.

5.3 Resistance and the Love for Education

In 2007, after the Taliban gained power, their true face and intentions were revealed. They unleashed a violent crusade of an organized, violence and crushed the elements of dissent. There are so many stories of how the Taliban systematically eliminated leaders, religious scholars, other community members or anyone who raised their voices against their brutality. The hardline interpretation of the Taliban’s version of Islam had no room for the more tolerant and the true understanding of the religion. To spread the fear among the much more tolerant and pluralist Sufi Sect., the extremists killed one of the respected Sufi cleric Pir Smiullah along with 60 followers. His body remained hung for five days in the Kabal area of Swat. Another tolerant and much revered religious scholar Hamid Ullah who in his Friday sermons openly defied Taliban, was assassinated in mosque while he was offering prayer.

Any political or community leader who had the courage to challenge and question the un-Islamic practices of Taliban or insisted on sending his or her daughters to school; or refused

to send adult kids for Jihad in Afghanistan were brutally eliminated and made an example for the rest. It didn't take long for the people to realise that the Taliban had nothing to do with Islam.

The peaceful elders, community and political leaders and the religious scholars of the area chose to peacefully handle the menace of extremism befallen upon them, as their counter strategy. Some madrasas in Swat extended financial support to the families of religious scholars killed for denouncing Taliban and their version of Islam.

Some well-known religious scholars took a giant leap and issued a fatwa or religious decree in which they accused Taliban of betrayal to Islam. In some other parts of Swat, public gatherings were invited to mosques in order to aware them about the un-Islamic conduct of the extremists and that how the Taliban, in their demeanor were anti-Quran and anti-Shariah. The Taliban, disturbed and furious over these incidents, tried to gain public support by commanding the political leadership to sign a declaration and announce their support. These political and religious leaders outrightly refused and challenged the extremists for an open-debate. The Taliban, in return, didn't accept the offer because they knew their narrative, if openly debated, would never win the public support.

In 2009, the Taliban threatened to attack and enter the Pakistani capital Islamabad, it was the "red-line" for the state. The political leadership with the assistance of its military establishment launched a massive operation against the enemies of the state and its people. built the Pakistani military also waged a campaign to win "hearts and minds" in the region. After the military arrived, the locals welcomed them with cheers and slogans and hoisted Pakistani flags on the roof-tops of their houses. From then onwards, the things started changing rapidly in the favor of the area and its people.

Even before the arrival of extremists in the area, the society in Swat and other parts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province including the tribal areas observed a strict code of ethics in which women were not as free as men as seen in other cities or provinces of Pakistan. But, no one resisted the situation as the whole society was willingly following these customs and traditions of the Pashtun culture. Some educated and aware women, to some extent, had reservations about their status in the society but no movement or a social drive surfaced. Everyone, including women got used to the centuries old system prevalent in the society. But, the arrival and occupation of Taliban has changed the scenario and those who weren't aware of their basic human rights before, started getting the idea about what was being missed.

“Even before extremism, our conservative society was not very supportive of girls’ education. Extremism has worsened the situation, most of schools were under curfew and others were destroyed. No proper transportation was given to the girls, reaching schools was another big challenge. As parents and also as the members of the society, we were helpless because whoever spoke would definitely be killed mercilessly. Our girls were always very conscious towards their education. It was really sad to see them not being able to attend studies. After normalisation, especially in the early years, there was no proper schooling system for girls. We are still struggling” – Fazal Karim, member of the civil society, Mingora Swat.

The female students who got deprived of their right to education heavily felt that they were being marginalized, and segregated. The teachers played an important role in educating them about the importance of education which, post the extremists’ arrival, they were in a better position to fully experience and understand after the closure of schools. But now the level of awareness among women and the educated men is very high. After having gone through such traumatic sufferings both in Swat and as IDPs, the Swatis realised that had their

women been more educated, they could have survived much better. And, all the burden of family would not have shifted to the shoulders of men alone.

We were two men, along with other ten members of our family including women and children. During the plight of Swat as well as the life as IDPs, all of us suffered tremendously, but both of us men had to face the most difficult time. We had to find shelter for our family and feed them besides guarding the women and children in a total new environment. The four women of our family were uneducated and couldn't speak any other language besides Pashto. I wish they were more educated so the burden of us men would have been lesser. Khanzada, Matta Swat.

The extremists committed numerous crimes against the community, especially its women; ranging from where to go, how to move, what to wear and study, even when and whom to marry. Their list of commands never ended. Women got the treatment of the cattle and sheep.

Women had to always wear the hijab in public, because, the Taliban extremists believed that the face of a woman, if revealed to a male who isn't related to her, would bring the moral corruption to the society. They believed in organized segregation of women. In a Pashtun society where less women are educated; some lucky females have a chance after gathering the required courage and will to get higher education. But even after getting a degree, they are mostly not allowed to freely work or choose a profession except for teaching and working in the medical field, that too is not possible without the help of a supporting father, husband or brother. In such situation, with the number of working women already very small, they were strictly banned from attending to their jobs.

“The Taliban issued tens of commands which were misogynistic in nature. They closed down the Schools for girls. Females were not allowed to work. They had to leave homes with permission or a male companion. Wearing Hijab or Burqa was mandatory, wearing makeup and western shoes, or applying makeup was strictly banned”. Nasir Afridi – Civil Servant.

Besides imposing tremendous nature of bans on women, the Taliban also banned all social and recreational activities in the society. Dancing and Music the first two. Some female dancers were hanged in the main square of the town, whose corpses kept hanging for days. They also banned the barbers from shaving beards of men. Any barber who shaved a someone would face brutal punishment, sometimes in the shape of destruction of his shop. They wanted everyone to grow beard. According to them beards were the essential part of a Muslim man. Secondly, their emphasis was more on the appearance than the beliefs or conduct. According to their version, a man who shaved was more western in his thoughts and behavior as compared to a bearded one. Some believe that they have issued this command to introduce a culture where no one looked different from them.

“Cinema, dancing, music and barber shops were deemed anti-Islamic. Anything entertaining but non-religious to the extremists was banned. Those who disobeyed had to go through severe kind of punishment such as beatings, flogging, beheading and shootings.” Muhammad Arif – member of civil society.

The Taliban’s deadline for closing down schools has ended in January 2009. After the deadline, schools were shut down while hundreds were destroyed Those who dared to keep their schools open got no students to attend. Because the parents did not want to take the risks of sending their daughters to face the death and persecution.

The campaign against female education was one of the vital and viscous acts of Taliban's brutal regime. The extremist ideology was driven by the ancient concepts of misogyny and gender segregation. As per Taliban, women were not supposed to play any distinct role in the society. Due to fear and threat to life, society was helpless and not able to do anything about it. Even the staunch supporters of women empowerment and female education were forcefully hushed up.

The situation was severe and unparalleled like any before. Female students and their parents were under a lot of stress. Yet there were some students, teachers and parents who didn't want to let go of the education. Some of these brave hearts tried to continue their education covertly under disguise by taking the risk of their lives. Therefore, some teachers, students with the help of their parents decided to come to the locked schools at odd times without any bags or wearing uniforms to continue their education. Since no female in Swat could roam around freely, therefore, fathers or brothers would accompany the female students, and the female teachers to bring them to nearby schools where they could continue their education silently. Everyone's life was at stake. But the love for education, after having lost the opportunity, has increased manifold.

"In 2009, after the deadline, we saw how the extremists bombed more than 2,000 schools and banned girls from going to schools. The girls used to hide their books under their shawls to pretend that they were not the students." – Mariam Khalique in UN Committee Meeting 7th July, 2014.

Although, teachers were under the continuous threat by the hands of militants as these extremists regarded them as an "un-holy band of Philosophers", especially the female teachers who were blamed by the extremists of serving the cause of foreigners as well as the

propagators of secular thoughts of vulgarity. Female teachers and their families remained under constant and immense amount of threat. Fearing for their lives, they were not in a position to continue their jobs as teachers which led to financial crisis and therefore, trauma. The female teachers had no option but to obey the commands of militants either by quitting their jobs or migrate to other parts of the country. Despite being related to a noble profession of spreading the light of knowledge in such dark periods of time, these teachers had to live a life under fear and threats by the extremists.

Many left the area and settled in the safer cities. But some remained in Swat due to multiple factors. One was to keep educating the girls by putting not only themselves but their loved ones in danger as well.

“Terrorism that started in 2007 has affected students and teachers very much, especially the female teachers and girl students. It was difficult for us teachers, especially our female colleagues who felt like outlaws after committing the crime unknown, to be seen in public. The Taliban sternly forbade us from teaching or attending schools. Many teachers were tortured and forced to flee. But many resisted the idea and kept teaching covertly. The role of our female colleagues in this regard is commendable, who despite serious threats to themselves and their families have taken the risk and kept teaching the willing and eager students underhandedly.”- Zammarud Zaman – Male Teacher.

6. Conclusion

Although, the town of Mingora of Swat was one of the conservative areas, but life seemed pretty normal before the arrival of Taliban. Gradually, the peace and tranquility of the area fell into jeopardy. All liberties and social freedoms were taken away. No one felt safe. Women as the most vulnerable members of the society had to pay the heaviest price. At the

beginning, some active and educated people raised their voices and defied inhuman treatment by the Taliban. But bullets and bombs silenced their voices one by one. Many had to run for their lives. Extremists were adamant on spreading hatred, fear and ignorance. To serve the purpose, firstly they targeted education, especially girls' education. Girls students and teachers were their prime target. After spreading fear among the students, teachers and their families, the militants started bombing the infrastructure and schools. More than a hundred and twenty schools were totally razed to the ground whereas tens were partially damaged. Millions of people had to leave their homes in search of a peaceful abode. Most parents and girls feared for their lives and lost interest in education. The students, teachers and parents suffered anxiety and depression and got mentally sick. IDPs had to go through so many problems such as finding a shelter, food and medicine as well as the quality education for their kids which in those times has become a luxury that only a few could afford.

After the normalization and homecoming of the IDPs, the locals have met with new challenges of settling down, reconstruction, income generation, health and education issues. Among many others, one problem that still demands special attention of the authorities and the society is the "girls' education and the security.

Despite all hardships and hurdles, the noteworthy factor in this scenario is that the girls of Mingora, Swat are much more enthusiastic and eager to study than ever before.

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Human Security Crisis in Cambodia: Is Transdisciplinarity a Solution?

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Abstract

In post-conflict Cambodia, the Hun Sen government has granted many land and forest concessions to powerful figures. The concessions expropriate lands and increase deforestation, creating human insecurities for many rural people whose livelihoods rely on nature. In academia, many scholars have adopted transdisciplinarity to address “wicked problems” in the Global North by integrating knowledge from academic and non-academic stakeholders. Unlike those studies, the current study, which rests upon ongoing two-year ethnographic fieldwork, examines the controversial case of Sesan Riverine communities’ livelihood difficulties in Stung Treng Province in order to determine whether transdisciplinarity can be an auxiliary problem-solving paradigm in Cambodia’s human-security crisis. Scholars who have situated their transdisciplinary studies in the Global South have linked local particularities, especially hierarchy, with impediments to knowledge coproduction: the stakeholders on the higher end of a hierarchy restrain the knowledge contributions of those on the lower end. However, this linkage does not clarify the motivations of higher-end stakeholders. I argue that hierarchies impede knowledge coproduction insofar as its democratic, equal spaces stemming from transdisciplinarity might empower lower-end stakeholders (project-affected villagers) but likely disempower higher-end stakeholders (government officials). In order to re-attain their authority, higher-end stakeholders counteract transdisciplinarity’s potential to reconfigure the power dynamics of all stakeholders, and this dilemma constitutes a major challenge to knowledge coproduction. In other words, conducting a transdisciplinary study in the Global South is to impose Western

values on local socio-political settings, so that stakeholders' interactions with one another mimic the wider values contestation between the Global North and South.

Keyword: Cambodia, Transdisciplinarity, Global North, Global South, Human Security

1. Introduction

End of the civil war in Cambodia in the early 1990s has not guaranteed security to all the people. In the post-conflict Cambodia, Hun Sen's ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) has initiated many large-scale development projects such as hydropower dams and urban renewal. Decision-making process of these projects have been coloured by nepotism and patron-clientelism relations between the government officials and project developers, which has made the procedure of the projects unjust exemplified by lack of public participation and scrutiny. Against this backdrop, many projects have become suffering for project-affected people. For instance, many urban renewal projects in Phnom Penh have either relocated or evicted the urban poor. Displaced people move to outside Phnom Penh which has no electricity and water, sanitary system, and employment opportunities. Project-affected people have come out against the projects through organising protestations but encountered the CPP government's suppressive response such as arrest of the protestors. Mass media report on these people's human security crisis and international human rights organisations denounced the government's misconduct and the project's repercussion. Although the issue has been under the spotlight, similar incidents happened again and again, which has raised a practical question: do we have a solution to this human security crisis?

In recent years, many scholars have sought to address intractable problems by situating their studies in transdisciplinary paradigm. The term 'transdisciplinarity' emerged in a European context. In the 1970s, several scholars in Europe were unsatisfied with the narrow recognition of knowledge source—university is the main place to produce knowledge and only knowledge examined rigorously and objectively in university could be regarded as scientific. Knowledge's rigidity and objectivity had excluded a subjective thinking and experience but the subjectivity could bring human dimension and values and make knowledge more socially relevant, which is what problem-solution need. Narrow recognition of knowledge has shown

the double-gaps: between the academia and the real-world and between knowledge and the problems' solutions. Basarab Nicolescu, who created the Charter of Transdisciplinarity, reflects on consequence of our narrow recognition of knowledge, 'The death of the subject is the price we pay for objective knowledge'.⁹⁹

Advocates of transdisciplinarity argue that knowledge should transcend disciplines and that, more importantly, knowledge—rather than be the privileged offspring of academia—comes from non-academic sources. Thus, transdisciplinary research embraces the knowledge contributions made by such non-academic stakeholders as individuals and groups possessing dynamic local knowledge 'built from experience of living in a place over an extended period of time'.¹⁰⁰ Transdisciplinarians believe that through cooperation between academic and non-academic stakeholders in a study, new knowledge can be produced to respond a host of issues such as globalisation, climate change and environmental degradation which are highly complex and troubling with their multifaceted origins and transnational impacts where transdisciplinarians call these issues 'wicked' problems for their intractability. It is reasonable to say that transdisciplinarity tends to break down the dichotomy between the subjective and the objective and to emphasise 'the Subject-Object *interaction*'.¹⁰¹ In the Global North, transdisciplinarity has become an alternative problem-solving paradigm to shed new light on wicked problems. In Europe, many transdisciplinary research centers have opened and many universities have held conferences related to transdisciplinarity. In recent years, countries in Europe like German has promulgated and funded transdisciplinary studies in the Global South

⁹⁹ Basarab Nicolescu, 'Methodology of Transdisciplinarity', *World Futures* 70, no. 3-4 (2014): 186-199; 186.

¹⁰⁰ L. J. Braken, H. A. Bulkeley, and G. Whitman, 'Transdisciplinary Research: Understanding the Stakeholder Perspective', *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 58, no. 7 (2015): 1291-1308; 1293.

¹⁰¹ Basarab Nicolescu, 'Methodology of Transdisciplinarity', 187.

including Southeast Asia through the way of collaboration with local academic stakeholders and practitioners.¹⁰²

Can transdisciplinarity be a solution to the wicked problem in the Global South such as human security crisis in Cambodia? Scholars who have situated their transdisciplinary studies in the Global South have linked local particularities especially hierarchy with impediment to the process of knowledge coproduction: stakeholders who have more authority would dominate the process of knowledge coproduction and restrain others' knowledge contribution. However, this linkage does not clarify the motivations of higher-end stakeholders. The objective of the paper is to deepen our understanding of the stakeholder's interaction in the transdisciplinary studies situated in the Global South by examining the controversial case of the Sesan Riverine communities' livelihood difficulties in Cambodia's Stung Treng Province.

The paper proceeds to three sections. The first section is elucidation of my main argument stakeholders' interaction during the process of knowledge coproduction in transdisciplinary studies situated in the Global South. I argue that hierarchies impede knowledge coproduction insofar as its democratic, equal spaces stemming from transdisciplinarity might empower lower-end stakeholders (project-affected villagers) but likely disempower higher-end stakeholders (government officials). In order to re-attain their authority, higher-end stakeholders counteract transdisciplinarity's potential to reconfigure the power dynamics of all stakeholders, which cause the stakeholders' knowledge contestation and this dilemma constitutes a major challenge to knowledge coproduction. In other words, conducting a transdisciplinary study in the Global South is to impose the Western values on

¹⁰² See, for example, Tuck Fatt Sie *et al.*, 'Transdisciplinary Research in Support of Land and Water Management in China and Southeast Asia: Evaluation of Four Research Projects', *Sustainability Science* 11 (2016): 813-829; Laura Schmidt and Michael Pröpper, 'Transdisciplinarity as a Real-World Challenge: A Case Study on a North-South Collaboration', *Sustainability Science* 12 (2017): 365-379.

the local socio-political setting and stakeholders' interaction represents microcosm of values' incompatibility between the Global North and the South. In the second section, I will analyse the values' incompatibility in the context of Cambodian contemporary politics. In Cambodia, the values incompatibility between the Global North and South had emerged in the 1990s, after the Western community helped Cambodia's state-rebuilding undergirded by democratic and equal elements. But, Oliver Richmond and Jason Franks argue that the Western values' installation in Cambodia is based on a hubristic belief and ignore the local culture.¹⁰³ Scholars including me who have situated their transdisciplinary studies in the Global South is actually like the 1990s' Western community: we are addressing wicked problems in the Global South from the Western viewpoint. The third section is my transdisciplinary study conducted in Cambodia. This section will reflect my main argument and introspect about my Western-style approach to prepare the transdisciplinary study.

2. Knowledge Contestation in the Global South

Knowledge coproduction is the hottest theme in many reviews of transdisciplinary studies mainly due to transdisciplinarity's ambitious to integrate heterogeneous knowledge to become a united, applicable and socially robust one. Transdisciplinarity assumes that during the process of knowledge coproduction, all stakeholders have equal opportunities to contribute their knowledge and need to respect others' knowledge, which can facilitate mutual-learning, build mutual trust and share intersubjective understandings. All of them need to rely on democratic and equal elements and the elements need individual stakeholders' reflexivity and inclusive mindset to support.¹⁰⁴ In the Global North, democracy is consolidated, civil society is developed, and human rights are protected and all of them have become the values entrenched in its society. Against this backdrop, stakeholders are likely to be

¹⁰³ Oliver Richmond and Jason Frank, 'Liberal Hubris? Virtual Peace in Cambodia', *Security Dialogue* 38 no. 1 (2007): 27-48.

¹⁰⁴ Please see L. de Freitas, E. Morin, and B. Nicolescu. 1994. *The Charter of Transdisciplinarity*.

transdisciplinary individuals with reflexive and inclusive characteristics not only during the process of conducting research but also outside transdisciplinary studies. These preconditions have offered an ideal environment for scholars to conduct transdisciplinary studies.

Transdisciplinarity's assumption may be a potential solution to wicked problems like human security crisis in the Global South. Many wicked problems in the Global South are directly or indirectly related to governments' development policies. In Cambodia, the government and developers are the one to dominate the projects' decision-making process including hydropower dams and urban renewal. Sometimes, project-affected people do not know their government's decision to build an infrastructure around their living area or to legally alienate their lands to the investors until the police evict them. 75% Cambodians rely on agriculture for their livelihood. Land grabbing and forced evictions have made the project-affected people bog down in human security crisis including poverty and food security. Regarding the development projects causing the human security crisis, project-affected people are socially and politically excluded and vulnerable. Transdisciplinary knowledge coproduction process in fact offers a space which has stark contrast from the current elite-centred decision-making one because democratic and equal elements have potential to empower the project-affected people through their knowledge contribution.

Like the lower-end stakeholders, the process of knowledge coproduction can have impact on the higher-end stakeholders but the impact has different implication in terms of the higher-end stakeholders' position. The Global South lacks the ideal environment what the Global North innately has. In the Global South, many countries are currently in the faltering democratisation process. Some are governed by an authoritarian regime which muzzles civil society and violates human rights very often. Therefore, scholars who situate their transdisciplinary studies in the Global South are highly likely to encounter problems that are

unique to the Global South. For example, according to the principles of transdisciplinarity, scholars need to invite involved stakeholders to form research questions and objectives through open discussion before the project starts. In the Global South, this action can put the project's continuity at risk. Government officials may view a participatory transdisciplinary project as a way to agitate local people and oppose government, and this view may threaten the project's legitimacy. At best, government officials participate in a transdisciplinary project with lukewarm interest. At worst, the government officials order a stop to the project. However, if government officials are absent at the start of the formation of transdisciplinary research questions and objectives, the project will violate the transdisciplinary principle. Thus, transdisciplinary research in the Global North and South can be markedly different from each other.

More importantly relevant to this study is the Global South's local particularities: many countries exhibit strong patterns of hierarchy, patriarchy, and patron-clientelism. A few transdisciplinary studies located in the Global South has revealed that local hierarchical culture has been an impediment to the process of knowledge coproduction: the stakeholders on the higher-end of the hierarchy dominate the process of knowledge coproduction and restrain the lower-end stakeholders' knowledge contribution. Tuck Fatt Siew and his colleagues review their four transdisciplinary studies in the Global South: China, the Philippines, and Vietnam. In the projects conducted in China and Vietnam, it is government officials rather than the project scholars to decide local practitioners' participation and the issue to be discussed.¹⁰⁵ As mentioned, the democratic and equal elements can empower the lower-end stakeholders. The equal partnerships also mean that higher-end stakeholders should refrain from using the authority. In other words, equal partnerships have potential to reconfigure their existing hierarchical relations entrenched in the original local society: empower lower-end

¹⁰⁵ Tuck Fatt Sie *et al*, 'Transdisciplinary Research in Support of Land and Water Management', 823, 825.

stakeholders and disempower the higher-end stakeholders. In order to retain their authority, it is reasonable to witness that during the process of knowledge coproduction higher-end stakeholders counteract transdisciplinarity's potential to reconfigure the power dynamics of all stakeholders, which cause knowledge' contestation.

One may ask a question related to the higher-end stakeholders' resistance: how is difficult for the high-end stakeholders to refrain from using their authority? Laura Schmidt & Michael Pröpper's paper may pave the way to shape the answer. Schmidt and Pröpper review a transdisciplinary project— The Future Okavango (TFO), which is about sustainable land management along the Okavango Basin, flowing from Angola to Namibia and finally creating the Okavango Delta in Botswana. The German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) funds the project and 130 partners come from academic institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local farmers, government officials and agroindustrial industries in Africa and German respectively. African stakeholders find that due to the funding structure, funding's information and application needs to rely on their German counterpart who has made them as sub-contractors.¹⁰⁶ More importantly, the African partners realise that 'they were last in line to be involved when being asked to include disciplinary research questions of interest'.¹⁰⁷ In this project, the German researcher team 'held the leading position to decide on the conceptualisation, participation and process of the project within the scope given by the funder'.¹⁰⁸ The project indicates that the German partner who are likely to be transdisciplinary individuals could not achieve equal power dynamics let alone expecting the higher-end stakeholders in the Global South's transdisciplinary studies to willingly refrain from using their authority during the process of knowledge coproduction.

¹⁰⁶ Laura Schmidt and Michael Pröpper, 'Transdisciplinarity as a Real-World Challenge', 376.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 372.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 376.

3. Values' Incompatibility between the Global North and South in Cambodia

Stakeholders' knowledge contestation is linked with the wider values' incompatibility between the Global North and South, which is not unfamiliar in Cambodian contemporary history context. The Paris Peace Agreements (PPA) in 1991 gave legal authority to the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) to conduct peacekeeping and peacebuilding. UNTAC successfully organised the country's 1993 election and helped create the Cambodian Constitution in 1993, stipulating that Cambodia is a state adhering to 'liberal multi-party democracy' and 'the Universal Declaration of Human Rights'. Meanwhile, the Western world provided huge donation and training to Cambodia's government bureaucracy and civil society. The Western world expected that through donation and training its values including democracy and equality could grow and neutralise the problem of political governance such as corruption and nepotism linked with hierarchical culture and patron-clientelism.

However, Hun Sen's governmentality is very different from the Western values. In the post-UNTAC Cambodia, Hun Sen financially and materially support the Cambodian people in return for their unerring support of his government. The patron-client relation between the government and its people is based on the government's patronage-based development projects. The CPP government has granted logging and land concessions to powerful and wealthy figures and these figures have reciprocated their political support and allegiance by donating funds to the government's rural-development projects focusing on the creation of such infrastructure as bridges, roads, and schools.¹⁰⁹ Creation of the infrastructure is a very discernible achievement for rural populations, whose living standards remain low, and thus creates an incentive for the rural electorate to reciprocate in the form of pro-CPP election votes. Since 1998, the CPP has won all the general elections, partly because of its strong

¹⁰⁹ Caroline Hughes, 'Dare to Say, Dare to Do: The Strongman in Business in 1990s Cambodia', *Asian Perspective* 24, no. 2 (2000): 121-51: 127; Kheang Un, 'Patronage Politics and Hybrid Democracy: Political Change in Cambodia', 1993-2003', *Asian Perspective* 29, no. 2 (2005): 203-230: 224-5.

electoral appeal in rural areas. This pattern of governance solidified the clientelism and ultimately subordinated Cambodian people to the Hun Sen's regime.

The Western installed values have challenged the Hun Sen regime's continuity. The government can make arbitrary decisions about, for example, economic concessions to its clients, mainly because it ensures that executive branch's dominance over the legislative branch¹¹⁰ and the judicial branch.¹¹¹ However, eemocracy might strengthen checks- and-balances in the Cambodian political system, restraining the ruling government's excessive executive power enabling the regime's patronage network with the figures. In addition, equality might make the civil society, opposition political parties and even people to challenge the Hun Sen governmentality of patronage benefactions. Against this backdrop, Hun Sen has prevented the Western values from challenging his regime's stability based on employing patron-clientelism and hierarchy. For example, the local NGOs' activities usually funded by western donors have disseminated the values of human rights and equality though defending victims of land-grabbing and of other social injustice which have often manifested themselves as demonstrations and legal action. However, the government has gradually limited the scope of NGOs activities to non-political issues such as poverty reduction exemplified by Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organization (LANGO) passed by the parliament in July 2015.

The values incompatibility between the Global North and South can give an implication to the scholars who want to situate their transdisciplinary studies in the Global South. Oliver Richmond and Jason Franks argue that the Western values' installation in Cambodia is based on a hubristic belief that 'once institutions are provided, populations will simultaneously adopt

¹¹⁰ Kheang Un, 'Cambodia: Moving away from Democracy?', *International Political Science Review* 32, no. 5 (2011): 546-62: 553-4.

¹¹¹ Kheang Un, 'State, Society and Democratic Consolidation: The Case of Cambodia', *Pacific Affairs* 79, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 225-45: 230-3.

and benefit from them regardless of characteristics, culture and priorities’ but ‘there is often little connection between local and international actors and their respective objectives and culture difference and comparative socio- economic status are often assumed to be insurmountable’.¹¹² It has to bear in mind that conducting a transdisciplinary study in the Global South is to impose Western values on local socio-political settings. Like the Western world during the process of re-establishing Cambodia, many scholars including me spare no efforts to use transdisciplinary paradigm to address problems but ignore how to make the local culture integrate with extrinsic transdisciplinary Western values. Our ignorance is like the German researchers in Schmidt and Pröpper paper: we ‘reproduced North-South power asymmetries and dependencies’.¹¹³

4. The Sesna Riverine Communities’ Difficulties and Involved Stakeholders

The present transdisciplinary study focuses on the issue of Stung Treng Province’s Sesan Riverine communities’ livelihood difficulties. The Sesan River is one of the tributaries of the Mekong River which flows from the Vietnam’s Central Highlands through Cambodia’s Ratanakiri Province and converges with the Sekong and Srepok Rivers before connecting to the mainstream of the Mekong River in Stung Treng Province. In recent years, due to Cambodia’s domestic increasing electricity demand, since the early 2000s, the CPP government has prioritised hydropower projects in its energy policy and one of the dams is the Lower Sesan II Dam (LS2), located on the Sesan River in Stung Treng Province’s Sesan District.

Creation of the LS2 has relocated around 854 households, many of which hailed from the four villages: Sre Kor, Kbal Romeas, Sre Sronouk, and Krabei Chrun. Many relocated people are from indigenous groups where the livelihood is based on collecting non-timber forest

¹¹² Oliver Richmond and Jason Frank, ‘Liberal Hubris? Virtual Peace in Cambodia’, 30.

¹¹³ Laura Schmidt and Michael Pröpper, ‘Transdisciplinarity as a Real-World Challenge’, 376.

products (NTFPs) and catch freshwater fish for daily consumption and for extra income. Two resettlement sites: Sre Sronok and Kbal Romeas are located along National Road No. 78, which links Stung Treng and Ratanakiri Provinces: the resettled sites are close neither river nor forest. Moreover, the resettled sites have undrinkable water, poorly constructed and vermin-infested houses, missing land titles, poor clinic service, and schools that, though recently built, lack teachers. Some villagers from Sre Kor village and Kbal Romeas rejected to be resettled due to unwillingness to leave their ancestral graves. The dam's operation in November 2017 flooded Sre Kor and Kbal Romeas villages, which forced these people to move away one kilometre away which lacks education opportunities and enough lands to cultivate.

After the CPP government prioritised hydropower-dam projects, the percentage of Cambodian people who could access electricity increased. In 1998, the Cambodian population was nearly 12 million, and only 18.67% of them could access electricity.¹¹⁴ In 2014, the population in Cambodia was around 15 million, and an astonishing 60% of them could access electricity.¹¹⁵ Because electricity satisfies a basic human need in contemporary times, increases in Cambodia's supply of electricity means that more and more Cambodians have improved their living standards. While many Cambodian people's living standards have improved, other Cambodians including the ones in the Sesan Riverine communities have faced significant hardship.

The worst thing to these communities is that their living environment is surrounded by two dams in Laos: (1) the Don Sahong Dam (DSD), located at the Khone Falls area of Khong District, Champasak Province, southern Laos, which is very close to the convergence between

¹¹⁴ Please see the World Bank website <https://data.worldbank.org/country/cambodia>; <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.ELC.ACCS.ZS?locations=KH>.

¹¹⁵ Please see the World Bank website <https://data.worldbank.org/country/cambodia>; <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.ELC.ACCS.ZS?locations=KH>.

the mainstream of the Mekong River and 3S Rivers; (2) Xe-Pian Xe Namony hydropower dam (XPXN), located in La Attapu Province, bordering Stung Treng Province's Siem Pang District. The two dams have negative impacts on the Sesan Riverine Communities' livelihood also. A study has shown that the DSD would block the fish migration route—Hou Sahong Channel and, thus, decline fish population.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, 80% of fish species in the Mekong River are migratory. Fish migrates from the Mekong mainstream to the tributaries. Therefore, the DSD's impact on fisheries would be regionwide.¹¹⁷ As mentioned, many Sesan River Basin villagers have relied on fishery for income and protein. The DSD would greatly affect their livelihood and food security. In addition, on July 23, 2018, XPXN hydropower dam collapsed. An estimated 175 billion cubic feet of water caused over 30 people died and thousand people displaced. Because the dam feeds into the Sekong River, the disaster also displaced hundreds of villagers living in Stung Treng Province's Siem Pang District, sharing the Sekong Basin. The fear has spread to entire Stung Treng Province, in particular Thala Barivat District, which is very close to the convergence of the Sesan River and Sekong River. Some villagers have already moved to other places.

The present study is different from many transdisciplinary studies situated in the Global North in three dimensions. First is landscape of stakeholders. Stakeholders in many transdisciplinary studies are from academic and non-academic areas evenly. Sometime, the number of the academic stakeholders is more than that of the non-academic ones. Except the master-level research assistant and I, all the stakeholders are from non-academic area. Thus, knowledge integration and coproduction is more non-academic stakeholders-oriented.

¹¹⁶ Ian G. Baird, 'The Don Sahong Dam: Potential Impacts on Regional Fish Migrations, Livelihoods, and Human Health', *Critical Asian Studies* 43, no. 2 (2011): 211-235.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

Three types of non-academic stakeholders join the study. The first type is the government officials from provincial and district levels. These government officials have experience of dealing with the LS2's compensation and resettlement issues and participating in XPXN's rescue mission. Therefore, they are familiar with the Sesan Riverine communities' livelihood difficulties. The second type is local NGOs which have been working on the communities' livelihood difficulties. They are the 3S River Protection Network (3SPN), the Cambodia Indigenous Youth Association (CIYA), the Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT), My Village (MVi) and the NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF). The third type is the representatives of the dam-affected Sesan Riverine villages: (1) those individuals who, in about October 2016, had resettled in response to the LS2 and had accepted compensation (namely, those individuals from the Sre Sronouk Village and Kbal Romeas Village, Kbal Romeas Commune, Sesan District); (2) those individuals who had rejected both resettlement and compensation (namely, those individuals from Kbal Romeas Village, Kbal Romeas Commune, Sesan District and from Sre Kor Village, Sre Kor Commune, Sesan District); (3) those individuals who were living in the LS2's vicinity (upstream of the Sesan River) and had been affected by the dam but who had never received compensation (namely, those individuals from Leu Village, Preah Romkel Commune, Thala Barivat District); and (4) those individuals who had been affected by Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy (namely, those individuals from O'Chay Village, Sontipheap Commune, Siem Pang District).

The second difference is funding structure. The project has two funders: Competing Regional Integrations in Southeast Asia (CRISEA) funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Framework Programme and Department of Social Science and Development, Chiang Mai University. Unlike many transdisciplinary studies which have a centralised funding institute controlling budget allocation, the funders of the present study have not intervened in funding used. In order to save the budget, when joining the workshops, some NGOs practitioners not

only reject to receive the reimbursement voluntarily but also provided assistance for administrative work such as logistic arrangement. Even, the NGOF sponsored the reimbursement for all stakeholders in the first workshop.

The third difference is the way to form the study. In September 2017, the CPP government arrested Kem Sokha, the leader of a political opposition party, the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), and forced the 25-year-old newspaper *Cambodia Daily* to shut down owing to its unpaid taxes allegedly totaling US\$6.3 million. In November 2017, the Supreme Court of Cambodia ruled to dissolve the CNRP. Since September 2017, the political atmosphere in Cambodia has grown tense. My field work in 2017 reflects the politically charged atmosphere in Cambodia. In December 2017, I went to Stung Treng Province to conduct preliminary field work and spotted several police checkpoints on the way from Kratie Province, south of Stung Treng, to my destination. Local police officers also increased their patrol activities around the LS2's resettlement sites. Many transdisciplinary studies situated in the Global North invite all the potential stakeholders to discuss research topic, question and objective at the initial stage. Considering the political tense which might demise the study, I decided to discuss above mentioned issues with NGOs practitioners first, which was on October 2018. In order to invite the government officials as part of the project stakeholders, we agreed to make the research topic border and softer: A Study of Sesan Riverine Communities' Livelihood, with a Focus on Cambodia' Strung Treng Province. In addition, we agree to run at least four workshops. As of this writing, the stakeholders have attended the workshops twice: January 25 and June 21, 2019, held in Stung Treng Town and Banlung (Provincial capital in Ratanakiri) by MVi and 3SPN.

5. Knowledge Contestation in the Process of Knowledge Coproduction

Cambodia has a long history as a hierarchical society. The hierarchy exists between government officials and villagers, villagers and NGOs, NGOs and government officials, the Khmer ethnic majority and the surrounding ethnic minorities, and males and females. The hierarchy also exist between the project's stakeholders. The CPP's decision to create the LS2 excluded consultation with the local communities. The LS2's resettlement and compensation policy has the same situation. Some villagers said to me that they could choose the places to be resettled. In fact, the decision-making process of resettlement and compensation lacks the villagers' opinion input. It is the government officials to decide the value of the compensated items and who are entitled for compensation. In other words, the relocated villagers made decision in the space that the government officials had created. What is more, according to Ian Baird's research, a few NGOs focused only on resettlement and compensation policy whereas the villagers wanted a complete cessation of the dam project. This situation implies that the NGOs did not want to alienate themselves in the eyes of the government. Thus, the relations between the involved stakeholders have been penetrated distrust.

Against this backdrop, in terms of the LS2's creation and resettlement and compensation policy, the villagers are subordinate to powerful government officials. This fact should come as no surprise, as it is common for vulnerable voices to be ignored or sacrificed in public affairs. However, even though the dam-affected villagers are the vulnerable agents, they are central stakeholders, because the surrounding hydropower dams have directly affected these individuals' livelihoods. If village stakeholders fail to contribute their knowledge to the workshops, this study's knowledge production will be woefully incomplete. Before the kicked-off workshop, I assumed that they might not be able to contribute their knowledge in the workshops smoothly. Therefore, I, with NGOs stakeholders, have done several preparation tasks. First, in my third preliminary field work, November 2018, I went to Stung Treng Province

to meet, first, MVi and, later, 3SPN, and NGO together in Phnom Penh. We reached the consensus that the villagers should have been opinion leaders in their villages, because village stakeholders needed both to convey the results from each workshop to villagers and to collect the villagers' relevant comments for consideration by other stakeholders.

Second, I with a NGO's assistance held a small meeting with the village stakeholders. The purpose of the meeting was to emphasise the importance of the village stakeholders' contribution of their knowledge to the livelihood's difficulties. MVi staff in the Stung Treng office arranged the meeting. We held the meeting one day before the kicked-off workshop, and the meeting location was at MVi's Stung Treng office. All the village stakeholders attended the meeting. In the meeting, I embedded my talk in the transdisciplinary context. The summary of my talk was as follows: *The transdisciplinary paradigm recognises that knowledge comes from academia and non-academia. Many village stakeholders have long been living along the Sesan River. They understand the river, the forest, and other environmental matters. The local knowledge can help all of us address the villagers' livelihood challenges. Thus, the village stakeholders are essential to knowledge production.* In addition, regarding the barrier of hierarchical culture in Cambodia, which may affect the efficacy of village stakeholders' knowledge contribution, I expressed several main points, which are summarised as follows: *In transdisciplinary research, all stakeholders should enjoy the same status. Thus, village stakeholders should not feel that knowledge is a hierarchical pyramid or that their knowledge is at the bottom of the pyramid. Instead, they should actively contribute their knowledge.* Finally, regarding the problem of Cambodia's tense political atmosphere, which might quiet the village stakeholders in future workshops, I emphasised that government stakeholders are the stakeholders with whom the village stakeholders are most familiar. NGO stakeholders and I had created and sent a formal invitation letter to the Stung Treng Provincial Government, and

we had received the government's positive response. Therefore, the village stakeholders could have a space to contribute their knowledge.

Third, I conducted field trips. After the first and second workshops, I travel to the targeted villages and to hold a focus-group discussion with the villagers who are unable to attend the workshops but are interested in the project, which can broaden the scope of the villager stakeholders' participation and, more importantly, empower them in the national dam issue. In addition, I also collected feedback from these villagers and conveyed it to the workshops for discussion.

The preparation for the villager stakeholders has empowered them but has triggered the government official stakeholder to counteract the reconfiguration of the stakeholders' power dynamics, which has made the knowledge contested during the process of knowledge coproduction. In the first workshop, where the objective is to identify the Sesan riverine villagers' livelihood difficulties, the villager stakeholders actively contributed their knowledge according to their living experience. The livelihood difficulties that they identified are (1) the risks of the dams: collapse and flood; (2) lack of basic needs: water, health service, and education; (3) land problems: no land title and uncultivable land; (4) social issues: illegal fishing and logging. Many of these difficulties are directly linked with the LS2's creation and perhaps more seriously, their knowledge presentation indirectly challenged the LS2's legitimacy. When contributing their knowledge, they seemed not like the lower-end stakeholders in the LS2's creation and resettlement and compensation policy. A government official stakeholder seemed to sense the hierarchical connection with the villagers and quickly responded by saying that "you should not bring the issue on the table". The government official stakeholder's response counteracted the potential of the transdisciplinarity's reconfiguration of the stakeholders' power dynamics. Before the workshop ended, the government official

stakeholders emphasised that 'NGOs should cooperate with the government and inform their activities to the government...and people should not talk too much about politics because this would be involved too many sensitive issues.' The government official stakeholder's statement attempted to reshape the space of the knowledge coproduction: from the democratic and equal one to the hierarchical one, which reinforced the government official stakeholder at the top and NGOs and villager stakeholders at the bottom of the hierarchy pyramid.

Stakeholders' knowledge contestation occurred in the second workshop also. The objective of the second workshop is to find the possible solution to the livelihood difficulties identified in the first workshop. The villager stakeholders actively contributed their knowledge. Regarding the land title, no drinking water, lack of teachers and poor health service, the villager stakeholders directed to the government's promise before their resettlement but failure. In fact, villager stakeholders' knowledge contribution did not suggest how they expect the government to work on the difficulties. However, their active knowledge contribution, again, seemed to loosen their lower-end position. A government official responded by saying that 'the provincial government has tried to solve or has already solved these problems' but attracted the villager and NGO stakeholders rebutted by providing several examples.

The stakeholders' knowledge contestation in the first and the second workshops directly proved the high difficulty to integrate the stakeholders' knowledge. What I had prepared is to create a comfortable environment for the process of knowledge coproduction which is based on democracy and equality and finally empowers the village stakeholders. Again, my preparation is to instil the Global North's values in Cambodia and to attempt to reduce the hierarchy affect. I shunned the possible impact of the local hierarchy on the lower-end stakeholder but ignore to integrate the incompatible values from the Global North and South.

The Impacts of Transportation Development in Chiang Rai, Thailand

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Abstract

Chiang Rai is one of the provinces having the special economic zone covering 3 districts namely, Chiang Khong, Chiang Saen and Mae Sai. The government has announced the development policy such as transportation and as mentioned, the economic zone, hoping to make Chiang Rai being the hub of logistic and hub of tourism in Mekong Sub-region. Consequently, the objective of this study is to identify the impacts of transportation development in Chiang Rai Province, located in the Norther part of Thailand and shared the border to Laos and Myanmar.

The reseach illustrates that the development of transportation is necessary for people in increase the possibility in access on fundamental services, for instance, education, healthcare, and other facilities. However, the development of transportation in Chaing Rai such as Chiang Khong- Huay Xai Friendship Bridge has not increased of possibility on access fundamental services, eventually. The construction of the Bridge is successful to rather increase the number of trade and investment. Relatively, the development of transportation, in this case, rather makes the land price increased but the number of the real tourists is significantly decreased. Therefore, Chiang Khong becomes only the bypass for a large number of tourism and visitors.

The study indicates that the misunderstanding of the development of transpotation from supporting the access to fundamental services to the economic growth, leads to the lack of development in Chiang Rai. So, it is important to figure out the development plan specific for Chiang Rai which have variety dimension including; people, culture, knowledge and more,

those are strengths of Chiang Rai that will be benefit to sustainable development rather than focus on number in statistic report which usually shown only growth and decline rate without the concern of people well-being.

Keyword: Transportation, Development, Urban Expansion, Chiang Rai

1. Introduction

Chiang Rai as the province on the north of Thailand that have border to Laos, the customs are at the border area in Chiang Khong district, and Myanmar, the customs is at the border area in Mae Sai district and the golden triangle which is connected to both countries is at Chiang Saen district. According to the location of the province, Chiang Rai advantageous for border trade and having capacity to promote many sectors of economic factor such as agriculture sector, tourism and logistic. Moreover, Chiang Rai have 3 special economic zones in Mar Sai district (trading city), Chiang Saen district (port and ecotourism city) and Chiang Khong district (logistic city). So, the development of basic infrastructure in Chiang Rai is important to keeping on improving to maintain and support all economic sectors but there is some impact that comes after the development of infrastructure such as new road or highway can increase the land price nearby, waste problem along the road and highway and urban expansion.

2. Transportation Development Plan of Thailand

There is 3 main part of transportation development plan to support Thailand to become the hub of ASEAN; (1) land transportation development plan (2) water transportation development plan and (3) air transportation development plan, the detail is in the table 1 below;

Type Of Transportation	Development Plan
Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop the old train and double track railway - Expand the railway to outer area (both train and electric train) - Develop road and highway by aim to maintain and expand all highway to be four-lane road for whole country especially the provinces that have border area to neighbor countries - Development the infrastructure of road transportation such as terminal station, depot and services

Type Of Transportation	Development Plan
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve water transportation infrastructure to support logistic and supply chain such as solve congestion problems in Laemchabang Port, etc. - Develop the water transportation system in the country such as the water transportation system in Chao Phraya River and also in southern region of Thailand.
Air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve the capacity of airport infrastructure such as passenger terminal, airport, parking area and many more. - develop the airport management system in each region to make sure all people will be able to access to the airport services.

Table 1: Transportation development plan of Thailand during 2015 to 2022

(source: Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2015)

3. Chiang Rai Province Information

Chiang Rai is the old town located in northern part of Thailand, about 805 kilometers from Bangkok metropolitan, which have border to Myanmar at north and Laos at east, as known as golden triangle, also connected to Phayao, Lampang, and Chiang Mai province, moreover, Chiang Rai have Mekong as a trans-boundary river. There is covered area about 11,524.904 square kilometers and altitude about 416 meters above sea level. The main income of the province is from the agriculture sector, retail and wholesale sector and education sector with trade value at 31,573 million baht, 15,538 million baht and 11,198 million baht in 2016.

In additional, Chiang Rai as a gateway to neighbor countries, Myanmar and Laos, there is many route of transportation to cross to neighbor including Mae Fah Luang International Airport, R3A and R3B highway that connected to Laos and South of China, and Highway connected Chiang Rai to central of Thailand, and coming of Denchai - Chiang Rai - Chiang Khong railway project.

4. Economic in Chiang Rai

Chiang Rai is ranked on 47th in country Gross Provincial Product ranking, out of 77 provinces, the 9th in regional ranking, out of 17 provinces in northern region, with total 9,827 million-baht GPP, and per capita 86,884 baht. According to the latest national ranking, Chiang Rai people earn revenue 13,510 baht and have approximately 11,068 baht expense per household.

No.	Provinces	Income per household	No.	Provinces	Expenses per household
1	Bangkok	49,191	1	Bangkok	35,024
2	Surat Thani	36,865	2	Phathum Thani	29,514
3	Chachouengsao	34,548	3	Surat Thani	28,119
4	Phathum Thani	33,461	4	Nonhaburi	26,947
5	Trang	33,270	5	Samut Prakarn	26,193
:	:	:	:	:	:
76	Chiang Rai	13,510	76	Chiang Rai	11,068

Table 2: the household income and expense per month, the rank of Chiang Rai

(source: Chiang Rai Provincial Statistical Report: 2018)

Agriculture is the most important sector of Chiang Rai economy, as a main occupation that the most of people in communities have been doing for generations. Especially agricultural production like timber or fishing made 31,573 million baht or 31% in Chiang Rai production value, following by retail which valued at 15,538 million baht while education sector was marked at 11,198 million baht.

Agriculture play the main activity that was running in Chiang Rai and following by other sector such as wholesale and retail, education, public administration, financial insurance and manufacturing.

Economic Activities	2014	2015	2016
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	35,480	32,807	31,573
Wholesale and Retail trade	13,084	14,190	15,538
Education	9,724	10,234	11,198
Financial and Insurance activities	6,452	7,076	7,831
Manufacturing	4,493	4,631	5,311
Public Administration and Defense	3,724	4,504	4,680
Other activities	19,757	21,897	23,696
Gross Provincial Production (GPP)	92,757	95,339	99,827
GPP Per Capita (Baht)	80,103	82,639	86,884
Population (1,000 persons)	1,158	1,154	1,149

Table 3: Gross Provincial Production at Current Market Prices by Economic Activities: 2014-2016
 (source: Chiang Rai Provincial Statistical Report: 2018)

In additional, other economic activities also have stably growth such as in construction sector, transportation and storage sector, accommodation and food service sector, real estate.

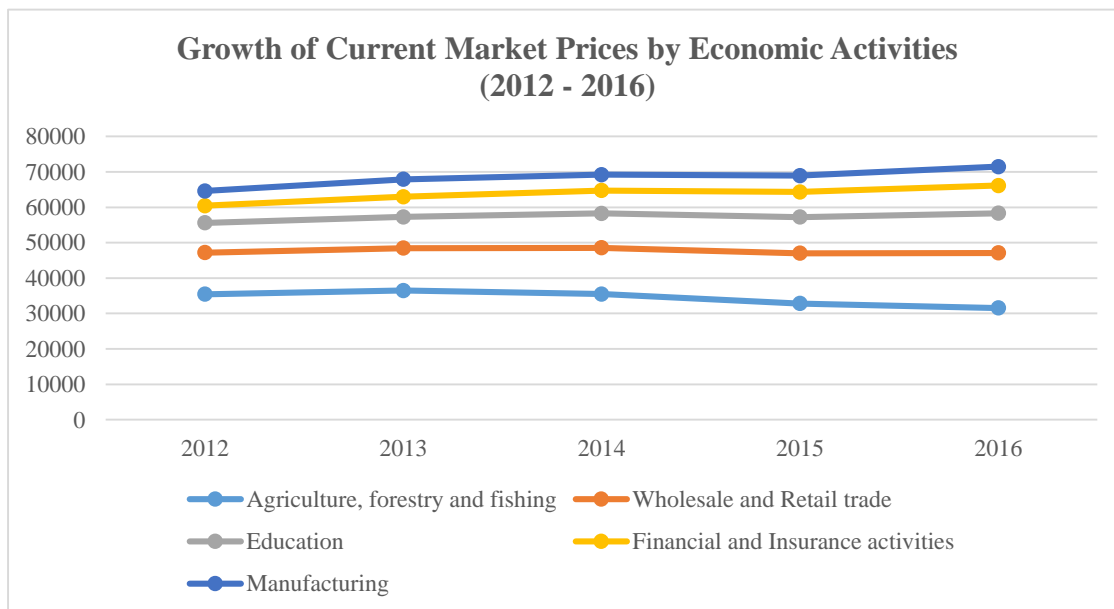


Figure 1: Growth of Current Market Prices by Economic Activities (2012-2016)

(source: Chiang Rai Provincial Statistical Report: 2018)

5. Social in Chiang Rai

The province has 18 districts (Amphoe) those are sub-divided into 124 subdistricts (Tambon) and 1510 villages (Muban). Chiang Rai total population is 1,287,615 persons while 367,414 or 28.5% of population lives in municipality area and another 920,201 people or 71.5% lives outside municipality area. The number of populations in each district, percentage change, density per district are shown in following table;

District	Population (2017)	Percentage Change (%)	Population density/sq.km.	Area (Sq. km.)
Total	1,287,615	0.04	111.80	11,517.58
1. Mueang Chiang Rai	244,311	1.19	190.21	1,284.41
2. Wiang Chai	45,514	0.06	142.83	318.65
3. Chiang Khong	64,210	0.05	76.72	836.90
4. Thoeng	85,178	-0.16	107.07	795.50
5. Phan	122,644	-0.37	119.89	1,023.00
6. Pa Daet	26,244	-0.33	78.74	333.30
7. Mae Chan	107,882	-0.23	195.79	551.00
8. Chiang Saen	53,664	0.37	96.87	554.00
9. Mae Sai	120,280	1.54	422.04	285.00
10. Mae Suai	84,664	0.39	59.26	1,428.61
11. Wiang Pa Pao	68,930	0.21	56.64	1,217.00
12. Phaya Mengrai	42,434	0.05	68.44	620.00
13. Wiang Kaen	35,388	0.99	67.28	526.00
14. Khun Tan	31,708	-0.38	124.10	255.50
15. Mae Fa Luang	76,458	-0.01	119.20	641.40
16. Mae Lao	31,098	-0.11	94.24	330.00
17. Wiang Chiang Rung	27,820	0.34	134.85	206.31
18. Doi Luang	19,187	0.09	61.69	311.00

Table 4: Population Record, Percentage Change, Density and Area by District

(source: Chiang Rai Provincial Statistical Report: 2018)

6. Transportation in Chiang Rai

Chiang Rai as a one of provinces that have border to neighbor countries which have high potential to support border trade, investment and economic activities. The province has 3 types of transportation are land, water and air transportation.

□ **Land:** Land transportation; road and highway in Chiang Rai includes national highway that connect to neighbor provinces; Chiang Rai - Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai – Phayao and other provincial highway that connect the between districts, sub-districts or villages.

□ **Water:** Water transportation is reserved to commercial purpose, logistic and supply chain, not accounted as public transportation. However, water transportation in Chiang Rai was support by tourism activity in eco-friendly travelling form. Chiang Rai have one water transportation port located in Chiang Saen district which is considered as a special economic zone of the province, routing to Laos and Myanmar which are borders of golden triangle.

□ **Air:** Chiang Rai have two airports; military airport that located in central of Mueang Chiang Rai district, and commercial airport located in Ban Du sub-district of Meang Chiang Rai district which is the international airport that operates both domestic and international flights to Myanmar, Laos and China.

6. Stakeholder of Transportation Development in Chiang Rai

The stakeholder of transportation in Chiang Rai can be divided into 3 groups from the different type of the position of people in each group that can have impact form the transportation development in the different ways and the different of power of voice.

□ **Government:** It is not surprise that the government is the important part of transportation development in Chiang Rai because they have the most powerful power to decided where to develop and making the project and planning. However, even they are the decision maker for the transportation development in Chiang Rai but there are not the group that will get the impact directly form the transportation infrastructure especially the

government that have to survey and observation for study about feasibility of transportation development are come from the different hometown such as the Chiang Rai – Chiang Khong rail project were studied by people from Bangkok. So, this group is the stakeholder who earn benefit from the transportation infrastructure development by develop the route for movement of people which is benefit to any of economic activities.

□ **Private sector:** These group of stakeholders can also divide in to 2 sub-groups; (1) the entrepreneur from big company and (2) local businessman. Both of the private sector can have benefit from the transportation development in Chiang Rai in the different ways such as big company earn benefit from logistic and supply chain for domestic and international trade activities and local businessman, hotel owner, restaurant owner, tourism industry and many more, can have benefit from the transportation that support the movement of people especially road and air transport. However, the different between big company and local company is they get the different impact from transportation because the local businessman are the group that normally lives in Chiang Rai but big company has no need to be there so they will get the negative impacts from transportation development more than company that does not located within the same province.

□ **Civil society:** The group of people who lives closer to any of transportation development is the group that get most positive and negative impacts from those development. Because no matter the transportation may facilitate them for having a chance of accessibility to every basic need but it also comes with waste problems along the road and highway and movement of people can also led to overpopulation problems. In fact, these group of people is the group that should have voice power for any of transportation development because any of development can effects, both positive and negatives, directly to them more than other groups.

7. Impacts of Roads, Ports and Airport towards Chiang Rai

There always are impacts to the community from the transportation change especially any mega project such as Chiang Khong-Huay Xai Friendship Bridge in Chiang Khong district that hope to support the transportation between Thailand and Laos, and hopefully will attract people and tourist to visit Chiang Khong. In fact, even though Chiang Khong finished Friendship bridge and the transportation is more convenient, it only makes Chiang Khong a bypass spot for truck, no one stop and visit the town since the passengers or trucks can go through the bridge without necessity to stay overnight. So, the impact of transportation in Chiang Rai can be divided into 2 main different impacts; positive impact and negative impact, the detail is as following;

Positive impacts

□ Road and highway: the main positive impact of road and highway is the opportunity of local people and community to travel to another area and access to any basic need such as healthcare service center, education or institution center, marketplace and more opportunities for job opportunities.

□ Port: The port is an opportunity for logistic and supply chain between neighbor country which is very supportive to the economic of the province and the region.

□ Airport: the Mae Fah Luang International airport have been facilitating all passengers which can increase number of visitors and passengers from domestic and international that will influence growth of economic activities for the province.

Negative impacts

□ Road and highway: the main negative impact of road and highway is that given chance for investors to invest nearby the community area that can increase the price of land for example at Chiang Khong old town in Tambon Wiang, Chiang Khong district, in the past Chiang Khong old town is the cultural and environmental attractions which can attract tourists but after Chiang Khong-Huay Xai Friendship Bridge has been constructed and the highway have

been maintained, the number of tourists was decreasing because the bridge facilitate the flow of people's movement so there is no need to stay in Chiang Khong not only about tourists but including the truck driver and traders also. In additional, Tesco Lotus, a shopping center, bought the land that cost approximately 6 million baht per rai (one rai : 1,600 square meters) in Chiang Khong old town, the land price around that area have never be lower than that again.

□ Port: The main concern about port in Chiang Rai is about waste and water treatment management which have not had enough capacity to keep the water in Mekong river and also when the number of ships was increased the environment in underwater have been change from some oil and chemical that comes with all ships then the fish were died and moved out.

□ Airport: The problem of airport infrastructure is about environmental problems such as the vibration and noise from the airport, the security around the airport area, and traffic jam around the airport.

According to the positive and negative impact of each transportation mode in Chiang Rai, there is the big gap between good and bad impact which is the positive impact seems likely benefit for macro such as tourism, trade and investment, and logistic and supply chain but negative impact is more likely effects to micro such as environment and security.

8. Train and airport development project in Chiang Rai

8.1 Den Chai - Chiang Rai - Chiang Khong Rail Project

On 31 July 2018, the cabinet committee has agreed to kick out the construction of Den Chi - Chiang Rai - Chiang Khong Railway project, 26 stations in four main provinces; Phrae, Lampang, Phayao, and Chiang Rai, by 72,927 million baht capital for construction, 1,764 million baht for assistant and 10,660 million baht for expropriation, that make 85,345 million bath in total. Logistic and transportation are the main purposes of the railway project that can benefit

tourism, trading and investment across border and will support Chiang Khong as one of special economic zone in Chiang Rai province.

The main objective of Den Chai - Chiang Rai - Chiang Khong railway project is to connect the transportation network both domestic and international especially with neighbor countries under Greater Mekong sub- regional and China which will benefit to development and expansion of urbanization from central to northern of Thailand by focusing on Phrae, Lampang, Phayao, and Chiang Rai.

8.2 Mae Fah Luang Airport Development Plan

The statistic of tourism in Chiang Rai have shown that Mae Fah Luang International Airport have flight about 17,667 flights in year 2017 with 2,503,375 passengers and 11,643 flights with 1,651,775 passengers during January to September 2018. There is a trend that number of passengers will be increased especially in winter and holiday. The Airport of Thailand (AOT) concerned about the number of passenger and the capacity of the airport so the board of AOD have ordered to renovate Mae Fah Luang International Airport during 2019 to 2033 with total budget 4,458.60 million baht. The development plan of Mae Fah Luang International Airport can be divided in to 3 periods;

(1) Urgent development plan to relieve congestion during 2019 to 2023 with budget 2,643.48 million baht to develop the passenger terminal, entrance, parking area, security system and many more.

(2) Helipad development plan during 2024 to 2028 with budget 1,456.11 million baht to develop helipad in the area at north of airport area, also develop more about passenger terminal and construction of buildings supporting VIP and VVIP. Moreover, this period will renovate the water treatment system, develop the warehouse and electric substation construction.

(3) The development plan to expand the aircraft parking during 2029 to 2033 with budget 359.01 million baht which will also construct additional maintenance aircraft center.

9. Urban Expansion in Chiang Rai

The theory about urban expansion is the expansion of the infrastructure such as accommodation and community area, healthcare service center or hospital, institution or education center, business center, commercial area or industrial area, that expand in town and influence the livelihood residents in term of culture, behavior and activity in both positive and negative way.

The urban expansion in rural area in Thailand mostly expand from the area that have local government office, marketplace, education center or healthcare service center, this also happened in Chiang Rai, the highest number of population density is in Mae Sai district, following by Mae Chan and Mueang Chiang Rai district. There is a big hospital and supermarket close to the highway between Mae Sai and Mae Chan district thus it is not necessary for people in this area to travel into the central of Chiang Rai for any basic facility as they already have.

Land price in Chiang Rai also increasing every area in every year especially the area that close to basic infrastructure. However, the village that is far from the community area or the outer area also have high price of land because the way access to all basic need are comfortable enough, even there is 10 kilometers distance between their house to the nearest healthcare service center, it takes only 20 minutes without any traffic congestion, and the environment situation is better than in the central or town area.

Moreover, land utilization in Chiang Rai is mainly in agriculture activities and even the government tried to promote the special economic zone in Chiang Rai including Mae Sai, Chiang Saen and Chiang Khong, to become industrial estate which will benefit the province if Chiang Rai can have the manufacturing plant that can support export Thai products. The problem is Chiang Rai have good nature and environment for agriculture, investors were not

willing to invest in those area and the land in Chiang Rai is reserved for agricultural purpose as well.

10. The Development Strategies and Policy of Chiang Rai (2018-2022)

The vision of the province is “The City of Trade, Investment, Agriculture and Tourism. The Prosperous of Lanna Culture and Happiness People” which was set the strategies plan to achieve the goal divided into 6 main issues are as following;

- The development of competitiveness in trade, investment and logistic services that can connect with neighbor province, ASEAN +6 and The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS)
- The supporting production of agriculture, with international quality standard, and eco-friendly
- The support of prosperous of Lanna Culture for add value to tourism industry
- The development of human resource for better quality of life
- The development of natural resource management to reserve and sustainable environment
- The security and safety of life and asset

11. The Trend of Transportation Development in Chiang Rai

The development trend in Chiang Rai has an opportunity to be center of cultural tourism, trading and investment, and logistic hub between Thailand, Laos and Myanmar especially the border area in Mae Sai and Chiang Khong so it is important to develop the basic infrastructure, highway and road to connect all area together.

Short-term development plan

□ The road and highway should be adjusted and repaired since almost every main road in Chiang Rai are the bypass for the truck so if there is some part of road or the road condition is not good enough>>if there are any bad road conditions it will be obstructer to transportation.

□ The central area of Chiang Rai has traffic congestion problem. The management of public transportation in town should support and facilitate people prevent from using their own car.

□ The emergency telephone should be set up on the roadside of the highway between each district for emergency situation and security purpose.

Long-term development plan

□ Chiang Rai already have renovation plan in Mae Fah Luang International Airport to expand its capacity to support the increasing of passengers.

□ Plan to construct the bypass to reduce traffic congestion in central area of Chiang Rai and also can separate the road for general user and heavy transportation which is safe for anyone.

□ The environmental issues were on the government agenda such as wastewater treatment and waste management.

The estimate of growth of economic in Chiang Rai from the present to 2037 are in the table 5 and 6 below.

	2018-2022	2023-2027	2028-2032	2033-2037	Growth Rate (%)
Whole Kingdom	3.54	3.58	3.59	3.61	3.6
Northern Region	3.61	3.63	3.64	3.66	3.6
Chiang Rai	3.48	3.54	3.65	3.64	3.5

Table 5. Estimate the percentage of gross domestic product growth rate (year 2018-2037)

(source: The Feasibility Study of Denchai – Chiang Rai – Chiang Khong Railway Project Report, 2012)

	2017	2022	2027	2032	2037
Whole Kingdom	5,482,402	6,400,704	7,472,822	8,724,520	9,976,218
Northern Region	439,170	522,612	621,908	740,070	858,232
Chiang Rai	32,146	38,179	45,345	53,865	62,367

Table 6. Estimate the value of gross domestic product in 2017-2037 (million)

(source: The Feasibility Study of Denchai – Chiang Rai – Chiang Khong Railway Project Report, 2012)

From Table 5 and 6, the State Railway of Thailand has been estimated that growth of population will bring the growth of economic based on people's activities within the province that might be increased follows the number or increasing. However, there is an argument that if the development of transportation, especially road transportation, makes land price more expensive rather than low-middle income people can afford so how can the population grow with out the opportunity for people to move in.

12. Social and economic analysis impacts from transportation development in Chiang Rai

The social and economic impact in Chiang Rai from the transportation is affected to every sector. Any social activity can influence the change in economy of district and province.

Impact on social

There are many types of people in Chiang Rai from the variety of culture and nationality such as Chiang Khong district has local tribe more than 9 tribes or Pa Daet district has community of people who moved out from Northeastern region of Thailand so from the variety of people this is the cause of variety of economic activities also such as the festival or events that attractive the tourists to visit or local products from local knowledge. The transportation can support the social in positive way by facilitate people to access to what they need not only education and healthcare but also traditional culture and any community activity.

Impact on economic

The most important part of economy in Chiang Rai depends on agriculture so if there is nothing interrupt the agricultural activities; Chiang Rai still can protect its main economic player. However, if any of transportation development interrupt the environment such as blocking the waterway or separate the community. The transportation that support the movement of people will be benefit to the economic both domestic and international.

13. The Expected and Concern of Local People In Chiang Rai

Nowadays, local people in Chiang Rai have realized that there is no necessity to move themselves to other province for career opportunity and they willingly stay and find opportunity in better life within their hometown. Also, the trend of self-employed was growing which can work through online system so local people expected to stay wherever they wanted which is comfortable for their lifestyle and be able to access to all basic need such as education and healthcare service center.

The expected of local people towards transportation development in Chiang Rai

The improvement of transportation in Chiang Rai should be facilitate local people for their daily life such as having enough mini-bus within the province or central area so they do not have to worry about drive by themselves.

If the public transportation within the province is facilitate it may reduce environmental problems somehow.

The development of transportation development in Chiang Rai will support in tourism, trade and investment within the province.

Support the communities to promote ecofriendly and maintain Lanna culture.

The concern of local people towards transportation development in Chiang Rai

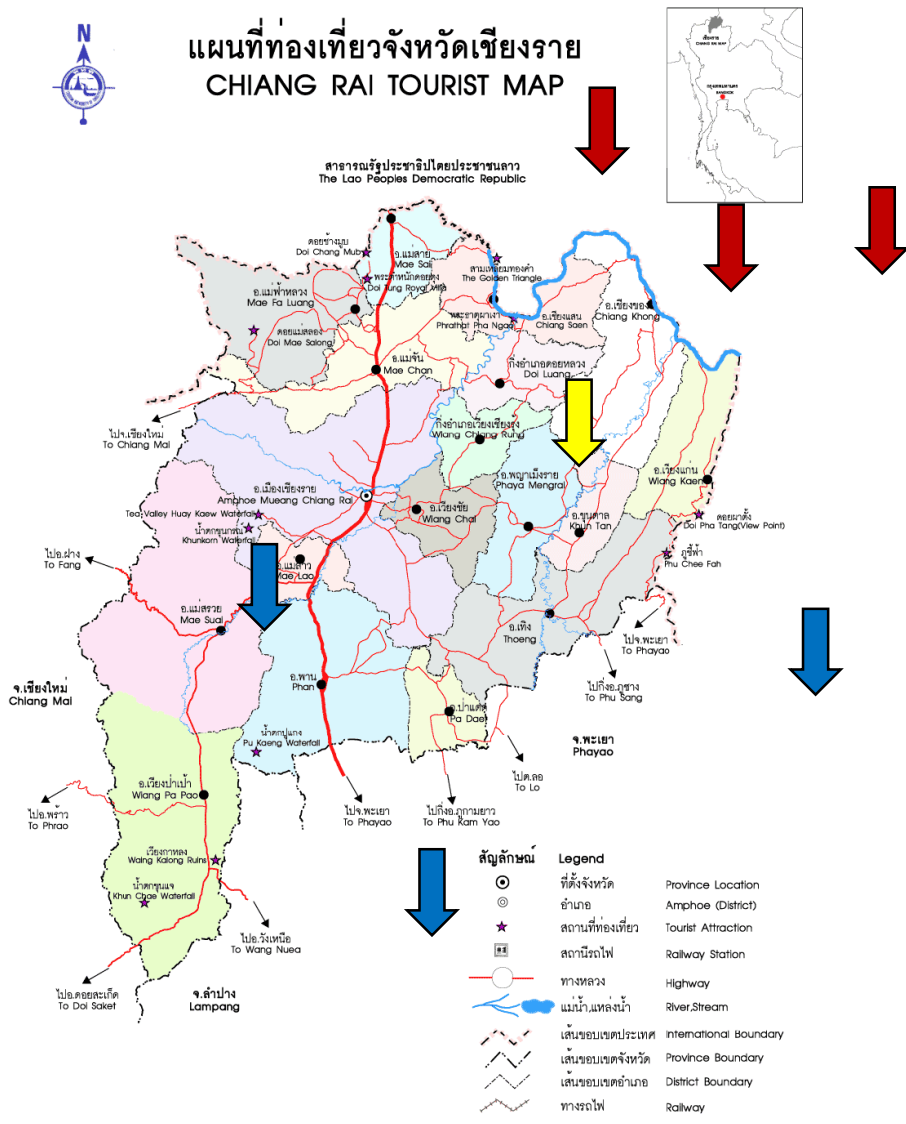
The transportation may block or separate waterway, community, town or villages.

- The development of airport or port may create the traffic jam problem in the area around.
- More truck, more damaged on road and highway.
- Land price in Chiang Rai is increasing unlimited because there always has new transportation development that facilitate the logistic within the province so every land that nearby the road and highway were increased.
- Environmental problem is also one of the main concerns because Chiang Rai has a lot of natural resources that is important to the province in term of ecofriendly tourism and reduce pollution.

14. Summary

The transportation development is really important to Chiang Rai province as a province that can connect both neighbor countries; Laos and Myanmar, and to other provinces; Chiang Mai, Lampang and Phayao province which can expand to every part of northern region of Thailand. Moreover, the location of Chiang Rai is the potential point for transportation to another area by takes only 1-3 hours by road transportation from the central area of Chiang Rai.

The picture below has shown that Ching Rai has potential to be hub of transportation within the region which can connect especially for Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS); Cambodia, Laos, China, Thailand and Vietnam because Chiang Rai not only has the area connect to Mekong river in Chiang Saen and Chiang Khong district but also has bypass to Phitsanulok province which can connect directly to Greater Mekong Subregion East-West Economic Corridor.



The transportation development policy that have been set by the government may focus on the economic of the province, region, and national. It is the important to improve the competitiveness of trade, investment, logistic and supply chain for the country, to achieve the main goal; become the middle-income country, which the development of transportation infrastructure also be hot issue to support all important economic factors.

However, in every change on land and community area there are impacts on people both positive and negative way and transportation are the part that people usually use every

day and it is the important part of human being. The development of transportation raised up the urban expansion in every area especially land transportation, water and air transportation are the additional opportunities for people, people still use land transportation as usual. Nevertheless, the expansion of urban also increase economic growth from having more job opportunity and developed facilities but also coming with many problems such as waste, pollution, health, and security.

The problem that always comes after the development always be the issue on government agenda so even every sector always realized that, the solution always come after end of all process anyway. No matter peoples in Chiang Rai willing to reach those problems in the present or not but they can overlook those problems and risk and focus on the best future for the next generation and hope that everything will be maintained their beloved hometown as good as they can.

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Particulate Matter 2.5: A Case Study of Measures and Risks in Bangkok During Early 2019, Thailand

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Abstract

The situation of particulate matter is caused by multiplicity of factors such as economic development, environmental degradation, and social inequality. During the first quarter of 2019, Bangkok has been covered with large amount of fine particles, known as PM2.5. Many Bangkok resident has been affected, particularly in the term of their health and income. Thai government has announced the measures to cope with the problem. However, good measures should be expected not only to decrease the level of particle, but it also needs to be able to tackle the impacts toward risk-prone groups. In this context, the vulnerable group seem to be placed in the marginalized position, while they are also the group that tends to receive most of the impacts.

The objective of the study aims to understand the relationship between the state measures and the multiplicity of risks among the vulnerable groups in Bangkok. In order to comprehend the complexity of the issue, this study takes transdisciplinary approach to highlight the politics of government measures toward different stake holders. It analyzes the case of PM2.5 in Bangkok during 2019 through the conceptual lens of risk society and environmental inequality. The research combines different methodologies including the non-participatory observation, in- dept interview with various types of sample, and the documentary research.

The study found that majority of PM2.5 in Bangkok has occurred due to the transportation activities. Most of the measures implemented by the state, however, were short-term solutions, focusing on limiting activities in industrial and construction sectors,

rather than pursuing long-term solutions such as improving engines and fuels standard. Among the vulnerable groups, it is found that there are many factors causing the exposition to the impact of PM2.5. These factors are: economic condition, ineffectiveness of measure in regard of economic and social dependency, cost of protection, area of state service, availability of safe accommodation, and the ability to access to services and source of necessary information.

Keyword: Inequality, Environmental Policy, Distributional Impacts, Air Pollution

1. Introduction

The problem of particulate matter or PM_{2.5} has affected Thailand in term of politic, economic, and social. People just start to know its impact within 2-3 years ago due to the limitation in measurement technology. With the size characteristic of the particle, PM_{2.5} is extremely difficult to perceive by naked eye. However, in 2019 when the particle become condense under high pressure and close weather condition, large amount of particle has led to the hazy weather (Siwatt Pongpiachan, 2019). Consequently, the situation has stimulated the concern among the public, particularly in the issue of health.

Particulate Matter (PM) refers to solid particles or droplets of liquid that spreading in the air. Compare to general particle, the particulate matter is so small that it can cause many impacts toward health (Munkong & Jinsart, 2017). With this reason, the standard to categorize the particle has been set up in order to differentiate its impact. Based on the characteristic of size and originate source, the particulate matter has been defined into 2 types;

PM₁₀ refers to “Course Particle”, a particle with a diameter of 2.5 to 10 microns, originating from the traffic on the road which is not paved with asphalt, the transportation of dust materials, and the rock crushing activities.

PM_{2.5} refers to “Fine Particles”, a particle with a diameter smaller than 2.5 microns, originating from engine burning, power plants, industrial plants, and smoke causes by firewood cooking. In addition, some element such as Sulfur-Dioxide (SO₂), Nitrogen-Oxide (NO_x), and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) can react with other substances in the air, resulting in fine particle.

According to the study of health impacts resulting from the particulate matter in Bangkok by Ministry of Public Health in 2015, it found that the short-term exposure to PM2.5 is associated with 4,000 to 5,500 premature deaths annually. The mortality rate will be increased by 2-20 percent in the day that the level of PM2.5 increased by $30 \mu\text{g} / \text{m}^3$, together with rise in hospital enter rate due to respiratory and coronary artery diseases at 5-17 percent when the level of PM2.5 increased by $180 \mu\text{g} / \text{m}^3$ (Ministry of Public Health, 2015).

In Bangkok, PM2.5 is originated mainly from transportation and industrial activities. As the city located close to Thai gulf, many experts in the past have believed that the city will not face with the situation of particulate smog due to the influence of sea breeze (S. Pongpiachan, 2018). Consequently, this belief has a myth and it has weakened the particulate matter related measure in Thailand. Some measures are not even design to suit with all type of people equally especially the venerable group.

As difference type of people has different type of risk, the vulnerable group that this study focuses were the government street sweepers, the construction workers, and the motorcycle taxi drivers in Bangkok. Based on the fact that they are all working in outdoor area; thus, it is undeniable that they are the group that have a tendency to receive the impact from PM2.5. However, the main objective of the study is not to look at the impact from particulate matter, but to look at the impact from particulate matter related measure used by the state to cope with the problem during 2019 by analyzing the factors that cause inequality regarding PM related risk exposition and evaluating the state's measure regarding "risk" toward the selected sample groups.

2. Conceptual Framework

At the local level, metropolitan areas turn to be an important hub of air pollution due to the large amount of pollutant gases and particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀) that emitted by the urban resident. The linkage between Particulate Matter and health risk has long been studied by intellectuals, a lot of possible outcomes such as allergies, respiratory disease, and cardiovascular disease are proved to be the consequence of high levels of air pollution. These kinds of health burden are mainly concentrated in metropolitan areas, where it has led to the rise of mortality levels and the reduction of life expectancy rates as well as an increase in economic costs for health systems improvement (Phosri et al., 2019). In non-rural areas, vehicles are one of the primary sources of Particulate Matter. Among all types of vehicle, heavy-duty car with the Euro3 emission standard engine constitute a significant source of emissions. The location and income rate of people is interrelated with the level of exposure, the lower of floor and income, the more expose to particulate matter (Tsai et al., 2000). Indoor and outdoor particulate matter concentrations are significantly related. The personal particulate matter exposure was more closely connected with the outdoor rather than the indoor concentrations (Watchalayann, Srisatit, J Watts, Rachdawong, & H York, 2019). To conclude, most of the studies have focus on risk which resulted from exposed to particulate matter, none of them have address the new risk which emerge from the implementation of the particulate matter mitigation measures. The effective measures should not only be able to decrease the level of particle, but it need to design for the benefit of all level of people.

Risk Society (Beck's Theory of Risk Society of Modernity)

People are constantly needed to adjust and respond to the changes of risks which result from the development of technology and economic growth. The concept of risk society is not only limited to the area of environmental and health issues, in fact it combines a whole set of interrelated changes under the scope of contemporary social life; e. g. , the change in

employment patterns, the increasing in a rate of job insecurity, the devaluation of custom and traditional influences, the shrink in traditional family role, and the democratization of personal linkage. In modern society, the source of wealth has generated various forms of risks. Its side effects have creating many uncertainties or even death-dealing consequence for society. Based on the concept of time and space, these new forms of risks are not restricted to place (Beck & Ritter, 1992).

According to the history of risk distribution, it has illustrated that, similar to wealth, risks bonding with the class pattern, only inversely; wealth accumulates at the top, risk locates at the bottom. In this context, risks tending to strengthen the social class, not to abolish. Poverty attracts numerous of risk, while the wealthy in regard of income, power, and education can provide freedom and secure from the risk. After applied the argument of risk distribution to the idea of social class, compared to the rich, the poor are more vulnerable to risk. As the rich can push many risks away as far as possible, poor people still suffered from risks. Besides, some rich can profit from the risk they produce, particularly the one who producing and selling technologies that can prevent, stop, or solve the risk's impact after once the risk occurred.

Environmental Inequality

Environmental inequality is emerged in the context of the Environmental Justice movement. It refers to the unequal distribution of environmental risks, hazards, and access to environmental resources and protections among different type of social group. The category of Environmental Inequality can be mainly divided in to three main categories including Social Inequality, Economic Inequality, and Spatial Inequality. Normally, all categories are linking together (Fielding & Burningham, 2005).

In industrial modernity, nature and society were deeply intervened. It means, changes brought in society also affected the natural environment, and those in turn affected society (Supriya, 2019). In order to counter with many different aspects under the same risk, the policy which launched by the state to cope with the risk needs to be equally supportive for all type of social group. The concept of Risk Society and Environmental Inequality are selected to study the impact of particulate matter related measure regarding the impact toward vulnerable group in Bangkok. Both concepts are used in the analysis section as well as shaping the direction of the outcome. However, the concept of Risk Society has played a major role in measure analysis, while the concept of Environmental Inequality is mainly cope with the primary data analysis. Overall, the purpose of this study is to address the relationship between equitably risk distribution and improvement of particulate matter measure for the good livelihood of all residents, living in Bangkok.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection Method

Data will be collected using qualitative method as the key methodology, the technique of in-dept interviews and non-participation observation were used in order to gain data from sample groups. The other method was the utilization of secondary sources, including NGOs and government reports which focus on background information of the measure and the impact that sample groups received (To what extent the measure impact them).

Fieldwork Research (Total 30 samples – in Districts: Chatuchak, Pathumwan, Ladprao)

- In dept interview with construction workers: a group of construction workers from construction sector were selected, both from the private organizations and the public organizations; MRT- Mass Rapid Transit. (10 samples – in Chatuchak District and Ladprao District)

- In dept interview with government street sweepers: a group of government street sweepers from Bangkok Metropolitan department were selected from the area that consider to be PM2.5 red zone during the first quarter of 2019. (10 samples – in Chatuchak District and Pathumwan District)
- In dept interview with motorcycle taxi driver: a group of drivers from red zone area were selected. All of them are the motorcycle taxi drivers that has been legally registered with the ministry of transportation. (10 samples – in Chatuchak District)

Document Research

- Report from governmental organization:
 - Booklet on Thailand State of Pollution 2018, Pollution Control Department Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, February 2019 (Pollution Control Department, 2019a)
 - Origin and guidelines to PM 2.5 in Bangkok (Pollution Control Department, 2019b)
 - 20-year pollution management guidelines and pollution management plan, 2017-2021, Pollution Control Department Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, 2017 (Pollution Control Department, 2017)
- Report from Non-governmental organization
 - Classification of cities PM2.5 level in Thailand, year 2018 (Greenpeace, 2018)
 - Thai Government-Particulate Measures evaluation by Greenpeace.

3.2. Data Analysis Method

All data that collected from the sample groups and secondary sources were analyzed via “Analytic induction”.

The Analytic Induction is the interpretation of data from concrete or visible phenomena, collected from two or more data sets, such as performance, teaching behavior, or life of people. The researcher starts to conclude the data when they already see or observes many different events. However, the conclusion that has not yet been verified will not be consider as the conclusion until it has been confirmed, thus the outcome will only be assumed as a hypothesis. The Analytic Induction is considered as the method that necessary for the analyzing of qualitative data in every qualitative research. This is because such method acts as a process to summarize the common characteristics or pattern of concrete data based on the principle of "induction". It is the finding of fact from many sub-facts to create a set of abstract finding which cover all the sub-facts. Under the Analytic Induction, the qualitative data analysis can be analyzing via 3 ways including; analysis of data from the summary of fieldwork or descriptive note, analysis of data from classifying or grouping of factor or pattern, and analysis of data from the component that has been analyzed.

4. Results and Discussion

Under this section, the finding of primary data from methods of non-participatory observation and in-dept interview are appeared, together with the analysis of each type of sample condition and the state measures.

4.1. Bangkok Government Measures

The measure that has been declared in Bangkok during the first quarter of 2019 was the measure that has been recommended by the central government and enacted by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. Below are the types of measure which can be divided into 3 types; the short-term measures for protection of people, the short-term measures for prevention of pollution source, and the long-term measures.

Short-Term Particulate Matter Measures for “Protection of people”

- Distribution of N95 in public areas such as public parks and government offices by prioritize elderly, young, and sick people first.
- Road cleaning every day during 18.00-06.00
- Create artificial rain in the capital city area during 16-19 January.
- Spraying water in public area
- Close all schools during 30 January-1 February

Short-Term Particulate Matter Measures for “Prevention of pollution source”

- Investigation and control of factory that release particulate matter (In addition, all factories under this measure need to report the PM emission rate to government every day).
- Speed up or suspend the construction site in central capital area

Long-term Particulate Matter Measures (Future Plans)

- Improve the quality of fuel and engine through the adoption of Euro 5 and Euro 6 emission standard (In present, Thailand has only adopted the Euro 4 emission standard).
- Encourage people to use public transport by speed up the transportation network project including sky train system, underground train system, and public bus system.
- Encourage people to use natural gas fuel, electric vehicle or hybrid car through the adjustment of tax system both for vehicle producer and consumer.

4.2. Comparison of samples' data collection

	Government street sweepers	Construction workers	Motorcycle taxi drivers
Number of Samples	10 people	10 people	10 people
Approximate number of real populations	10,000 people	150,000 – 200,000 people	100,000 people
Average age	35 years old	36 years old	32 years old
Area of Working	Chatuchak/Pathumwan	Chatuchak/Ladprao	Chatuchak
Working hours/week	54 hours/week	48 hours/week	30 hours/week
Average income/month	12,000 baht/month	11,000 baht/month	14,000 baht/month
Rate of N95 mask user	40%	0%	50%
Accessibility to PM data: Internet/television	60%	20%	80%
Accommodation	100% - No Air condition/Air purifier	100% - No Air condition/ Air purifier	90% - No Air condition/ Air purifier
PM2.5 Health Impacts	- Respiratory disease - Eye irritation - Nose bleed - Chronic cough	- Respiratory disease - Eye irritation - Nose bleed - Chronic cough	- Respiratory disease - Eye irritation - Nose bleed - Chronic cough

4.3. The Factors of PM2.5 Measures Ineffectiveness

The purpose of this section is to answer the question of "Why is the government unable to stifle the PM2.5 crises that occurs in Bangkok and metropolitan area between December 2018 and January 2019, even though they already have plans and measures in hand?" The analysis and observation of secondary data source are as follows;

Neglect of the Crisis

When an incident occurred, we often hear terms such as “*the situation is still not critical*” (Lertpraphan, 2019), “*although the amount of dust exceeds the safety level, it is normal for the change of season*” (Petsuwan, 2018), or “*the situation is not in crisis, the AQI is only 70-100*” (Karnchanarat, 2019). These are the attitude which reflect the perceive that air pollution is not a regular occurrence. It is a pollution ignoring trend by the policy makers in many countries across the world. Although the meeting resolution of the National Environment Board, on February 4, 2019 has determined the 3-step approach during the PM2.5 crisis average that concentration of PM2.5 level for 24 hours must not exceed 50 micrograms per cubic meter (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, 2019), the operations are still based on the authority of "every government departments", which so far has proven that it is ineffective.

Not Effective Policies, Plans, and Measures

The neglect of the crisis has causing a lack of opportunity to effectively cope with air pollution problems. The belief that “*the situation of PM 2.5 in this year has not yet reached a critical stage and it is under the government control*” (Dumrongtai, 2019a), the announcement to the people that “*please remain clam because the situation was not as severe as in the year 2018, where the highest value touched 120 -130 micrograms / cubic meter*” (Dumrongtai, 2019c), or the comfort word from the government that “*if the situation of PM2.5 is really critical, rising 2-3 days in a row, the government will issue a warning and introduce new measures that better than the current one*” (Dumrongtai, 2019b) have leading to the public questions in regard of the measures such as spraying water along the roads which this method has been confirmed by the environmental agencies that it is significantly useless to reduce the concentration of PM2.5 in the atmosphere (Panyametekul & Pannasawat, 2018). The most suitable solution is the reduction of emissions from the originate sources. Therefore, when the

air pollution crisis taken place, the government should set up the emergency response teams for specific problem.

Huge Gap between Policies, Knowledge and Practice

The government often drafted an elegant policy to manage the air pollution but did not use it in the real situation.

- The controversy of benefits and costs of PM2.5 prevention

In the case of Thailand, all measures under the particulate matter control strategy project in Bangkok and metropolitan area 1997 are consider positive in term of net present value. The value with in five year is account between hundred million dollars to ten billion dollars. In other words, the benefits of reducing the rate of illness and death from particulate matter are worth in term of investment in various measures to reduce the particle, and the study of originate source and guidelines for managing PM2.5. The government has clearly stated that investment to control PM2.5 seem to be successful based on the amount of investment. However, when considering investment promotion policies and other related policies existing in the present, the aspect of investment to control and prevent PM2.5 is completely ignored, such as the announcement of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment No. 7/2558 that allow an exception of EIA in all size of waste power plants, or the section 44 orders that ignore the enforcement of city plans for some certain types of businesses (ENLAW, 2016), including 1) electricity power plants, 2) non-natural gas production plants, 3) waste water treatment plant / incinerator, 4) waste separation plant, and 5) recycling factory.

- The delay to adjust the PM2.5 standards in the atmosphere

In the meeting of the National Environment Board on 4th February 2019, the agenda was expected to adjustment the average PM2.5 in 24 hours from 50 micrograms per cubic

meter to 35 micrograms per square meter through the adjustment of the 95th percentile format. However, the National Environment Board did not adjusted the PM standard with the reason that before the announcement of the future criteria, the transportation system must be completed, while the average level of particle within 6-7 years must not exceed the standard level in order to prevent the particle from affecting economy in the long run (Simachaya, 2019). In other term, this means that the new standard of PM2.5 and other type of air pollutants will have to wait for the next 6-7 years.

- The lack of a legal framework and systematic collection of PM2.5 data

Although Thailand consist of knowledge and technology which essential to the obtaining of PM2.5 data, the more significant issue is the right of community to access those data (Community Right to Know). Over the years, the public sector has driven “*the Law on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers*” (PRTR), which is a framework for the development of pollution reporting and emission information systems (Saetang, 2016). If the PRTR law becomes effective, it will be an important measure that help the government to systematically manage the PM2.5 data, strengthen the government agencies in PM2.5 situation assessment, improve the availability of information to support environmental and health protection planning, and enhance the monitoring system and production process in industrial sector, leading to more efficiency in business operations and trade competition. The law will guarantee the right of people to access to information and promote the participation in protecting and maintaining the environmental quality, accordingly to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand. It is also the tool to reduce health risks from air pollution and PM2.5. However, at the moment, there is only a pilot project, there is no clear regulation to support the Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers: PRTR in Thailand (PCD, 2009).

The Backwardness in the Process of Public Participation

Apart from the government to have communication specialists and communication consultants in the Emergency Response Team, they also need an effective communication channel which is fast and accurate to explain the real situation to the public. However, based on the past situation, the government still fails to deliver the successful communication, together with the participation of public in term of self AQI report and recommended protection (Panyametekul & Pannasawat, 2018).

The Air Quality Index

In Thailand, those who issued the environmental standards are the Pollution Control Department. Therefore, when discussing about the PM2.5 index in Thailand, it is actually the discussion of the environmental standards, not about the issue of health. When compared the Air Quality Index (AQI) use in Thailand to the AQI recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), the annual AQI of PM2.5 use in Thailand is 25 micrograms per cubic meter, 2.5 times higher than the World Health Organization's AQI, while the average 24 hours is 50 micrograms per cubic meter which is 2 times higher than the World Health Organization standards. Because Thailand is a developing country therefore, the AQI must be based on economic and social factors. If defined the index as equal to the World Health Organization which determines the average 24 hours to 25 micrograms per cubic meter, the state may not be able to control the amount of particle to not exceed the standard (Ministry of Public Health, 2015).

The EURO Standard

In present, Thai government still did not clearly announce the plan and time scale to pass the new Euro 5 emission standard Act, only the prediction that the Euro 5 will guarantee by law in the year 2023. The reason of this uncertainty may associate with the car producer,

especially the Japanese automobile production company. Due to the reason that Thailand is the major automobile production base that produce and export car to all over the world, the implementation of Euro 5 or Euro 6 emission standard would surely impact the automobile industry. It is undeniable that every change of the Euro emission standard always effects the capital investment of car producer due to the need of improvement in production line. With unsuitable business environment toward one of the biggest sources of Thai government income, the consequence could possibly lead to the move out of Japanese auto mobile company (Ruenglaikram, 2018). As a result, this might be one of the major factors that explains why the new Euro emission standard tend to take a lot of time to adopted and implemented in Thailand.

The PM2.5 crisis has revealed the ineffectiveness of decision-making, policy design, and internal government processes. Therefore, the deconstruction of these infectiveness needs to be update, while people and public sector continue to seek for their own health security as well as a good change in the future.

4.4. The Factors of Inequality and Risk Exposition

The factors causing inequality regarding particulate matter related risk exposition based on the data receive from the sample groups; government street sweeper, construction worker, and motor cycle taxi driver can be divided into 5 factors including the state measure, the cost of protection, the ability to receive and access to effective medical care, and the ability to understand and access to source of information and warning and the condition of accommodation.

The State Measures

Although the state has distributed the N95 mask in the high accessible public areas in Bangkok, the area of the distribution and the number of masks is the major barrier that prevent the sample from the safety that they should receive. According to the announcement, there were only 7 places that became the area that state decided to distribute the mask; Suan Lum District, Chatuchak, Bang Kho Laem, Bang Khun Tian, Thonburi, Bangkok, and Ratchaprasong. This mean that if any citizen wants to receive the mask, then they have to travel to these 7 areas. Comparing the price of the mask and the transportation cost, it is not worth to traveling for the mask. Besides, not only the area issue, combined all of the mask that has been distributed in every area, it is only account for 10,000 pieces. The supply is absolutely not enough to fit with the demand. According to the news, all of the masked that distributed by the state were out of stock after the first ten minutes of the distribution (Ippoodom, 2019). This factor has highlighted the important of state services area. The issue of spatial inequality has proved not to be the major concern by the state.

Cost of Protection

During the haze situation, there were two main type of protections including the N95 mask and the air purifier machine. For the N95 mask, it cost approximately 40 Baht in Thailand. The biggest company that selling this type of mask is 3M (Investerest.co, 2019). Based on the characteristic of the mask, it can protect the user from the PM2.5 particles, however the lifetime of the mask is 2 days and the mask user can only wear the it for 30 minutes, otherwise it will lead the user to the situation of air lacking. For the air purifier machine, even though it is seemed to be the reasonable investment due to it can use for several time, the price of the machine is too expensive for the sample to afford. In addition, the air purifier machine is not the product that buy once and enough, the machine owner still needs to buy the filter that recommended to change every week. As a result, with the limited amount of income compared

to the cost of protection, all of the sample prefer to use only scarf or mask that sometimes cannot protect them from PM2.5 or the N95 mask that has been used for more than 2 days. In addition, apart from the cost of protection, factor of income seems to be the focal point. With the economic inequality, the different in level of income has strengthen the inequality of risk distribution gap. Although the cost of protection is selling at the same price for everyone, the ability to buy it is different.

The Ability to Receive and Access to Effective Medical Care

Although in Thailand there is the universal health care program which aim to subsidize the medical cost for the public, the chronic respiratory diseases that caused by the exposition of particulate matter are not covered by the program yet. According to the universal health care program, the protection is not covering the chronic disease (NHSO, 2013). However, most of the disease that result from the impact of particulate matter are chronic disease such as chronic cough and asthma. Therefore, those who have these types of disease need to responsible for their own medical cost.

The Ability to Understand and Access to Source of Information and Warning

Most of the data that has been announced by the state via television, radio, and internet are too complicated to understand by the selected sample. Many times, the samples have received the information about the particulate matter, but they did not understand those information as it is usually written in English (the samples do not speak English) or it is the scientific terms that they do not familiar with. Moreover, almost half of the samples do not have the ability to access to the sources of information as they do not own any television and smart phone, from this point it is not surprise that why their knowledge regarding the impact of particulate matter is extremely limited. From this aspect, the social factor in term of equally access to education has proved to be one of the barrier that prevent some people especially

the vulnerable group to equally receive the similar level of risk compared to people who can understand the data provided by state.

The Condition of Accommodation

Based on majority of the sample's accommodation, the building is not consisting of air condition or air purifier due to the reason of price. In fact, the place has designed with the airy characteristic, especially the bedroom to decrease the temperature during the night (average temperature in Bangkok is relatively hot compared to sub urban area, approximately 30-35 °C). Thus, it is not surprise that during the night all of the sample were faced with the PM exposure similar as during the day. In addition, at night the concentration of particulate matter tends to be increased as the lower temperature has forced the particle to flow close to the ground. In other word, living in non- air condition accommodation would result in more expose to particulate matter compared to the accommodation with air condition.

4.5. Politics of PM2.5

PM2.5 that covered the city of Bangkok clearly makes people keen to protect their health. But one thing that also reflect from the situation is the different quality of urban life in term of economic and social condition, resulting from the cost of protection. Only for a single month, the daily life of Bangkok people has obviously changed, people have bought N95 masks that can filter PM2.5, portable PM2.5 air quality monitors, and the air purifiers for indoor use after notified that the particle also impact the indoor area. These are the solution for people to protect their health and their families, but it is not a sustainable solution.

Over the period of 5 years since 2014, the solution that the government under Prayuth Cha-O-Cha has decided to implement seems to focus at the end tale of the problem. This is completely different from the promise to “reform” that gave by the government at the

beginning of the coup. At that time, the reform of civil servants and the inequality issue in Thailand has been prioritized by the government (Aukkarasomcheep, 2019). However, the problems of "low quality" work by Thai government officials still continue, together with the expansion of gap between rich and poor. The general public still receiving poor service. While according to CS Global Wealth Report, over the past 2 years under the coup government, Thailand is ranked No. 1 with the highest inequality in the world (Credit Suisse, 2018), only 1% of the wealthy Thai across the country has holding a combined property of up to 58% of the whole country property. The issue of poor government services and unequal wealth distribution has playing a major role in many sectors, even in the case of PM2.5. When looking at the PM problem, it is clearly seen that this is not just an incident which can be solve over a night, the factor of politics, economics and social are consider as the founding base of the issue.

Is air pollution really affecting people at all levels equally?

PM2.5 is known as the dust which can generate negative impact toward our health and the air quality measurement station can help people get to know more about the update. However, the increase in public awareness also leading people to look for more protection. Although the low-income group is not the main polluter such as the group that not driving a private car or owning an industrial factory, they have to face air pollution from outdoor work for a long time, their accommodation is not entirely closed, and they are not earning enough to relocate to another city. Moreover, it is necessary to have a smartphone and internet connection to check the air quality hour by hour of the place where they live, without these technologies it is not surprise that why most of them do not concern about their health.

Even though, air pollution has threatened everyone life and the way to be safe is to wear a mask or use air purifier, for some groups of people, it is not easy to own N95 or N99 mask due to the financial limitation and the lack of mask supply in the physical market.

Therefore, in order to get the mask, it is necessary to go through online channels that require smartphones and the internet connection. In other term, access to resources and service is reserve for some groups of people. Base on the theory of risk society, the poor ones are more vulnerable to risks while the rich can push many risks as far away as possible. Lack of income and education become the main source of problem which lead to the inequality of risk distribution as safety and freedom from risk require money to access rather than the use of effective measures that equally support for all type of people. Moreover, the rich can profit from the risks they produced as some of them can produce and sell technologies that help prevent risks from occurring or deal with their adverse effects once the risk occur. In addition, apart from social and economic inequality, spatial inequality has played a major role in the context of particulate matter crisis in Bangkok particularly in the aspect of unequal amount of service provide by state such as medical and welfare. Some type of social groups has a greater range of resources and services, while some are not even access to the basic need due to the location which is not association with their demand. Without the equally distribution of development, it is almost impossible to change this cycle. The space within the different locations is the clustering of various groups of people who share similar socioeconomic statuses.

5. Conclusion

After the implementation of Particulate Matter related measures in 2019, not only the particulate matter has been impacted by the measures, (1) Government street sweepers, (2) construction workers, and (3) motorcycle taxi drivers are also the groups that have been affected:

Based on the study, it can be concluded that the originated sources of the particulate matter are mainly resulted from human activities; traffic congestion, fossil fuel burning, and various type of constructions. Most of the measures used by the state were the short-term

solution which focuses on reducing activities in the industrial and construction sectors, and distribution of PM2.5 protection equipment, rather than focusing on long-term solution which prioritizes on improving the quality of engines and fuels in accordance with the Euro standards. Although, the N95 masked and air purifier are the products that have been recommended and distributed by the state, not every people can access to those products equally. All of the sample groups have been facing with chronic cough and respiratory disease, resulting from the exposition of PM2.5 due to the lack of suitable social, economic, and spatial status while, the construction workers and the motorcycle taxi drivers faced with the problem of income reduction due to the state's order of PM prevention activities and the reduction in the number of customers during haze situation. The factors that affect risk inequality were the state measures, cost of protection, accommodation condition, and the ability to access to effective medical care and source of information. Finally, from assessing measures which are enforced by the state in preventing and reducing the amount of PM2.5 toward the sample group. The study found that the state measures should focus more on the vulnerable group in terms of improving access to dust protection and data source, and compensation for health expenditure and income reduction during the crisis.

The promotion of economic development and inefficiency of government administration has brought Bangkok to face with the issue of PM2.5. With both aspects, it has created impacts toward the change in environment, society, economy, and behavior of people. These changes also led some people to the status of social vulnerability such as low ability to receive crucial information, limited access to resources and state services, lack of education, and problem of poverty. In other term, this is the path that leading to "risk society" which is a concept that assumes that social risks will occur in late modern society. Moreover, economic status of the vulnerable group along with their area of living and social condition have further

contribute them to the point of inevitable to receive most of the risks especially the risk which generated from the ineffective measures by the non-democratic government.

Measure Recommendations

The environmental solutions must consider 3 types of element including; 1. Mechanism that control behavior (forced or motivated), 2. The level of pollution control, and 3. The control variables such as price, quantity, technology, and sources of pollution. Some recommendation are as follows;

- Raise awareness of PM2.5 dangers and the ways to protect themselves and family.
- Increase the number of air quality monitoring points, link the data with the applications to deliver real-time situation, and increase the public participation in monitoring the level of PM2.5.
- Control the price and lower the tax on PM2.5 protection product (e.g. N95 mask and air purifier).
- Increase the area of N95 mask distribution or deliver it via postal service.
- Create the health service program which specifically cover with PM2.5 impacts.
- Support the research the aims to assess the impact of particulate matter on health
- Adjust the Air Quality Standards to cohere with the standard of the World Health Organization
- Strictly detect and control black smoke and engine modification in all types of vehicles through annual vehicle inspection facility program.
- Improve the standard of public transportation and lower the price to encourage people to use it.
- Solving Traffic congestion by strictly enforce the traffic plans and city zoning.
- Collecting environmental and health taxes from private car user.

- Raising oil and exhaust standards from Euro 4 to Euro 5 or Euro 6, both in small and large vehicle.
- Promote and prepare for the use of EV trains by supporting infrastructure and reduce the rate of EV vehicle taxation.

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Thai Civil Partnership is The New Marriage Inequality: Queer Critiques on the Discourses in the Civil Partnership Bill of State Activism Towards Marriage 'Equality'

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Abstract

With an equal access to legal registration becoming the international mainstream development agenda and movement of 21st century, Thailand proposed a civil partnership bill developed by the Rights and Liberties Protection Department in 2018. Although the initiative seems promisingly progressive, the drafting, legal product and outcomes that the bill promises to bring lay vigorous ground of criticisms. This paper is the first English-language academic work that uniquely integrates theoretical outlook and arguments of queer theory where Foucauldian discourse analysis is the key concept applied to critique the discourses codified in the bill. This article aims to analyze how Thai discourse of marriage affects state activism of marriage equality through the proposal of controversial civil partnership and argue how it is a new marriage inequality. This paper presents key findings derived from secondary sources, content analysis of the bill, interviews with key actors, participation in relevant activities and events and insights from the author as an activist. The discourse of marriage in Thailand is more social and cultural than legal where witnessed ceremony without registration with state is regarded as recognition. Interacting with foreign influences, the civil partnership as a new registration system was proposed to make marriage more gender-inclusive and arguably equal, however the criticisms prove otherwise. Thai movement of marriage equality faces internal complexity among the civil society and state authorities. This paper concludes that beyond the limitation of rights, the civil partnership bill is a new marriage inequality. The oppressive institution of marriage whose discourse is monopolized by state is used as a tool to control and

discipline Thai LGBTI couples. The discriminative civil partnership act normalizes and compromises the needs of the community with statist interest of state, enabling the reproduction and idealization of state-approved norms and expectations.

Keyword: Civil Partnership, Marriage Equality, Marriage, Legal Registration, Discourse

1. Thai Discourse of Marriage

Marriage (kan-tang-ngan) in Thailand is non-legally binding. Marriage in Thai context contains characteristic richness of cultural rituals. A sociocultural ceremony witnessed by family and friends with no legal consequences could equate to a recognition of marriage. This explains how on social basis persons of any sexual orientations and gender identities in Thailand can be considered married. Kan-tang-ngan is separated from the legal registration of marriage (kan-jod-tabien-somrod), which is a legal practice where a couple legally registers for a marriage certificate at the district offices, enabling state authorities to legally recognize the relationship. Currently, Thailand's Civil and Commercial Code (CCC) only recognizes a man and a woman as spouses (koo-somrods) eligible of legal rights, benefits and obligations, provided and guided by state. It is different from registration system from civil partnership that recognizes registered non-heterosexual couples as legal partners (koo-chewits). Marriage and family rights are therefore granted separately.

1.1 What Makes Thai Marriage Discourse?

A critical analysis of the Thai marriage discourse initially starts with an awareness of different social ingredients that make the union of marriage, 3 of which identified in this section are: 1) traditional marriage customs, 2) roles of family and 3) social norms written in marriage and family laws.. These components hold interconnected links to one another.

Firstly, traditional marriage customs make Thai marriage unique. This section presents ones mostly practiced among upper-class elites and formally documented by Phya Anuman Rajadhon whose works continue to be a grand literature in the area of Thai culture and society. One of his books, published in 1968, specifies the marriage traditions of Thailand. Nowadays, some of the documented customs are retained, while others have been added and simplified or compromised out off the list. Thai marriage is an auspicious ceremony. The sense of auspiciousity contributes to ensure the protection of the union from failures, divorce and

unhappiness. *Matchmaking*, a custom of asking for the hand of the girl practiced in some communities and parts of Thailand, is where the parents or senior relatives represent the interest of marrying individuals. Once both parties agree, *bride price* is negotiated. Next, *Tray of Gifts* is the proposal from the groom to the family of the bride, to publicly announce among witnesses that the couples are officially engaged. The dual trays contain raw betel nuts signifying goodwill and money or valuables. The next custom is *Plook Ruen Hor* where the groom's and bride's families build a house where they will reside after the ceremony. Thai culture accepts both patrilocality (a wife moves into the residence or neighborhood of her husband's family) and matrilocality (a husband moves into the residence or neighborhood of his wife's family). The *Khan Maak Tang* is the wedding ceremony. It starts with a joyful musical march to where the bride is and ceremony will take place. In the morning, the monks pray for luck for the couples. Later on in the afternoon and evening, the witnesses of ceremony water the palms of the married couples with a conch shell. *Pu Tee Norn* then takes place after the wedding ceremony. The seniors, usually ones with successful life and marriage, make the bed for the married couples who will stage their laying on the bed. *Norn Fao Hor* is the custom occurs when an auspicious day of the wedding ceremony is different from the one of the residence. It means that the groom has to wait for a day or up to a week when his wife can join him in the house. Until then, he has to sleep alone listening to the poem guiding how to be a good husband.

Secondly, marriage in Thailand cannot be separated from the construction of family—the first authority and foundation in society. Family is a binding force of well-rounded aspects of life. This section identifies the roles that family plays in marriage and why. Family can interfere in the union even before the ceremony and/or legal marriage. It controls the environment of how an individual is brought up. The values that shape the attitudes towards marriage and spouse selection are cultivated. In some families, it is beyond the guidance and

parental permission to arranged marriage. Parents take significant traditionally central parts in the marriage ceremony. They are key blessing witnesses that make the ceremony formally official. All of these are because Thai children are taught to pay respect to the parents and their decisions believing that they have more life, matching and married experience. Parents of a groom talking to ones of a bride seems to be a more equivalent conversation. This is a very collective and dependent culture to live in. Most of Thai children stay under the same roof with their parents until they are married and start a new family. This practice is well-established, reproduced over generations and closely linked in order with other marriage customs.

Thirdly, social norms are written in marriage and family laws. Marriage reads the script of happiness amplified by state, media, popular culture and wedding industry. The amplification of laws therefore is the repercussion of socially-enforced norms. This section lists 5 norms that can be seen within Thai marriage and family laws. Firstly, Western-influenced *monogamy*, the only current legal form of marriage in Thailand and most other countries, was legally normalized in 1934 in the Civil Code after the 1932 Revolution transformed the kingdom into a constitutional monarchy. Prior to this transformational change, polygyny was an acceptable and affordable practice among men and noblemen with wealth and power. The second norm added to Thai marriage is *legal registration*. As a relationship becomes legitimized, rights to reduced tax, joint property, custody, control over spouse's affairs, visitation and many more are granted in order to facilitate the formation a family. However, marriage without legal registration has been common and moral-debates-free in Thai society both in historical and contemporary periods. A doubt to register a marriage can spring out of a generalized assumption that marriage ceremony can be as official as legal registration in Thailand. Avoiding registration means avoiding legal obligations, complications and limitations over freedom. Registration helps legally manage assets and

money, which most people can do by themselves. Marriage is no longer a priority for millennials, who could find marriage a burden being liberated with wider freedom, opportunities and rights, enabling independence to pursue professional careers and financial stability. Last but not least, the couples are not eligible to legal system of registration on various basis, including gender and sexuality. Despite the reasons, legal recognition and its benefits have been promoted as an important of marriage union. The third norm is to *publicize* marriage. Thai marriage law under Section 1458 in the CCC requires public announcement declaring the agreement between the marriage individuals prior to the registration. It is significant that the union be socially and publicly recognized, whether it is the proposal, wedding ceremony and/or legal registration. Witnesses of a ceremony represent the formality of a marriage. Arranging the ceremony or registering with the state authorities in a dark light is considered unaccustomed to Thai society. The fourth norm is the belief that marriage is the *gate to another life and return of rewards*. Marriage is a life-changing gate to Kan Hai Chewit or to give another life. Fulfilling the legal mandate as parents is an investment with high return in Thai and other developing societies. The social welfare system in Thailand is so insufficient that family becomes a promising shelter at one's old age. It is a Thai social expectation that aging parents are rewarded with the cares when their kids grow older. The fifth marriage norm is *heteronormativity*. The language of marriage in Thai context is gender specific. Thai marriage is tied with the dichotomy of Pua/Mia (husband and wife), Por/Mae (father and mother) and (Look Chai/Look Sao) son and daughter. Heterosexual marriage has been taken to a higher level of heteronormativity, encircling the assignment of family and marital roles based on gender. Marriage therefore is known to be an oppressing institution, first of women and then LGBTIs.

1.2. Influences on Thai Marriage Discourse

This section analyzes the 2 key driving forces that constructs and carves the Thai discourse of marriage: 1) modernization and 2) assimilation of diverse cultures. The interaction with Western nations led to the signing of friendship and commerce treaties, which allowed exchanged trading of goods, ideas and values. Modernity that became appealing in early 20th century not only changed the way of living, but also paved the way for milestone economic, social and cultural reforms. Tamara Loos' *Subject Siam: Family, Law and Colonial Modernity in Thailand*, published in 2002, explored that Thai marriage and family laws underwent modernization processes since the reign of King Prajadhipok. The chapters on marriage laws in the CCC was the last to be approved due to the ongoing debate of legal replacement of polygyny with monogamy. Western ideologies and perspectives of ideal marriage continue to influence Thai society, agenda of civil society and governmental authorities and lawmakers. An equal access to legal registration of marriage is also an indicator of the development of a country for many Western societies that make it a cultural imposition on the others. The perception of marriage has evolved to be more equal and gender-inclusive. The desire to modernize resumes as key motivation to reform marriage for Thailand as legal recognition of same-sex relationship represents the agenda of modernity and social development of the 21st century.

Thai marriage is hybridized. The local elements are mixed with the others, predominantly Chinese and Western. Thai and Chinese rituals of superstition and auspiciousity share common characteristics in marriage. The roles of matchmakers remain a practice of today. Patrilocality also came from Chinese tradition. Honoring the senior relatives and parents and allowing them to take part in the planing of marriage has been a reproductive value of marriage from generation to generation. Although a number of arranged marriage and bride price have reduced, it continues for some traditional families in both cultures.

Western ideologies help shape the discourse of Thai marriage. There is less involvement of parents in a business and decision making of an individual. Mutual love takes over arranged marriage. Monogamy protected by law is one of the centerpieces. Western marriage has been put on a pace of liberalism i.e. interracial marriage and systems of legal registration or opening marriage for same-sex couples.

2. The Proposal of Civil Partnership

This second part analyzes the proposal of civil partnership bill. It looks at other legal approaches that recognize non-heterosexual relationship, particularly civil partnership. The history of drafting from civil society initiative to governmental agenda is presented. The proposed bill and drafting process will be elaborated. In the last two sections, criticisms of civil partnership and state defenses are collated.

2.1. Achieving Marriage Equality Through Civil Partnership

Legal recognition of non-heterosexual relationships can be achieved through several legal approaches. Firstly, 'Do It Yourself' arrangement or customization, legal in all countries but may require the assistance of an attorney, is based on each partner's specific needs and will that specifies the beneficiary status of each partner. There are some limitations what customization can protect due to the lack legal of kinship. Secondly, cohabitation is when persons involved in romantic and/ or sexual relationship live together with neither legal formalization nor legal agreement nor legal recognition involved. There is no single pattern for laws that give legal recognition to cohabitation or to same-sex cohabitation. Thirdly, the registration systems, are exemplified with different names by 'civil unions', 'registered partnerships', 'life partnerships', etc. These systems are separate from marriage and tailored by different jurisdictions, with particular system recognizing different set of rights and with different obligations. They offer a wide range and length of legal protection from almost like

full marriage to the least of few rights for registered partners. The registration system proposed in Thailand for non-heterosexual couples is civil partnership. It recognizes the registered couples as *partners*. The granted rights will be specified by the enacted bill. Lastly, marriage is a recognized union through legal registration under national marriage law with state authorities. The gender-sensitive and gender-neutral amendment to traditional marriage law paves the way for opening marriage to be effective. In Thailand, amending its CCC would open the regular marriage laws to protect non-heterosexual couples, like over other 25 countries.

2.2. Marriage Equality from Civil Society to Governmental Agenda

The current leading governmental agency that took initiative towards legal recognition is the Rights and Liberties Protection Department (RLPD) operating within the Ministry of Justice. Even though the Ministry of Interior is usually in charge of all forms of registration, the department was perceived as a more suitable agency to carry out such human-rights based project. This section synthesizes and presents the timeline of marriage equality movement in Thailand from origin to present. An academic collection of Douglas Sanders on legal recognition in Thailand, along with an interview with Nada Chaiyakit, an independent LGBTI activist who collaborated with the state in drafting civil partnership, walked the author through how the agenda of marriage equality became active. The whole movement was involved in 2012 when Natee Theerarojanapong and his partner were denied an access to marriage registration by Chiang Mai district. Consequently, he went to the Administrative Court of Thailand, but the decision was not in his favor. He then petitioned to the National Human Rights Commissioner (NHRC) of Thailand where he was advised to draft a separate bill. A parliamentary drafting committee consisted of legal experts and representatives from LGBTI activist communities was formed to draft a civil partnership bill, which was incomplete because other government agencies did not vet the draft in time. In order to introduce a new effective registration system

of legal recognition, a comparative study was conducted by Akawat Laowonsiri who was supported by the United Nations Development Programme and one among 30 legal experts in drafting committee. The author interviewed him on May 10, 2019. Amending the CCC would be an ineffective strategy because it contains a lot of loopholes under marriage and family laws where traditional rules and standards survive. He studied countries that recognize same-sex relationship and took the legal innovations to draft a model that would work best for Thailand. Starting with a very limited law and adding more on later was never his plan or advise. The advised model however was perceived as radical and disregarded by state authorities because it threatens the Code. Only 1 – 2 elements were picked out and included in the actual proposed bill. The proposed civil partnership bill became an act with separative and discriminative connotation. In early 2014, the Foundation for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Rights and Justice (FORSOGI) became a leading coalition, with a support from the Law Reform Commission of Thailand, to draft a civil society version of civil partnership. The draft was not complete for a quite similar reason as the parliamentary version. The initiatives both by state and civil society would be suspended for some time when political turmoil led to a dissolved legislature and military ruling in February 2014. Getting back on track, the RLPD would shift strategy from all-the-rights to financial-transaction-based bill, as the first step to the final goal of opening marriage.

2.3. The Proposed Civil Partnership Bill

The front page of the draft provides a clear statement of why the bill is drafted and proposed. The deprivation of marriage and family rights of marginalized groups based on gender and sexuality is an unequal and unjust discrimination. State has obligations to protect their rights and failure to do so is a violation of human rights, going against the values protected in the Civil Code, Constitution and other international instruments that Thailand has ratified.

The principles of equality, people's participation and inclusion must be conformed in the pursuit of marriage equality.

The definition of partners is significant to focus because it sets the legal criteria of eligibility of who has the rights to register for state recognition of relationship. In the proposed bill, partners are defined as "two persons who are not able to exercise their right to legally register a marriage in the Civil and Commercial Code on the basis of gender of any party and who then register according to this act". Although Thai marriage laws have been heteronormatively gender-specific, gender-neutral language is adopted in this bill for wider inclusion.

This proposed bill protects 2 main marriage and family rights, which are property rights and inheritance rights. Property rights are exactly retrieved from Book 5 in the CCC and inheritance rights from Book 6. Nareeluc Pairchaiyapoom, the Director of International Human Rights Division in the RLPD, gave the account in the interview that one of the key challenges that the department faced was to make the importance of the legal registration system recognizable among the governmental authorities that are concerned about conservative and religious communities in Southern Thailand. Expanding state welfare also invites them to rethink. It is other authorities that approve the budget, the bill therefore strategically prioritizes property and inheritance management for a start, making it a less controversial and towards a more successful legislative draft.

The bill was proposed in November 29, 2018 to the Cabinet by Nongporn Roongpetchwong, the Deputy Director-General of the RLPD. It has not and never been proposed to the National Legislative Assembly. The Cabinet approved the bill in December 2018. It was then sent to the Council of State in February 2019. It consists of 10 persons in the

committee whose responsibility is to vet the draft bill. The process of vetting takes approximately 3 months.

2.4. Criticisms

Criticisms depicted by media and academic works have followed the tail of the bill after the proposal and that concerns are raised. This section manifests key 6 criticisms against the RLPD's approach to marriage equality.

Firstly, the civil partnership neither result in marriage equality nor the access to equal marriage rights. It only protects 2 rights and denies martial spousal benefits, including adoption and custody rights that would meet the needs of most LGBTI starting legal families after registration. The legal age required by the bill, 20, is higher than heterosexual couples, 17. It also refuses to recognize registered partnership outside of Thailand.

Secondly, enacting a separate legislation is discriminative, imposing different standards on different groups in the same society. At the same time, heterosexual couples cannot access the system of registered partnership, continuing gender-based inequality. Rather than solving the challenges, civil partnership bill symbolically tolerates what state aimed to tackle.

Thirdly, the bill compromises the needs of affected communities. Thai civil partnership is substantially and symbolically weaker than civil partnership elsewhere. Nada Chaiyajit, an advocate who collaborated with the RLPD, highlighted that it is the prejudice and attitudes of the power holders and some politicians that the civil society should be worried about, rather than Thai Muslim and Christian communities. The Controller General's Department is a governmental agency that controls the government spending. Its concern was expressed that the equal access to marriage registration and rights could increase state spending so it blocked

inclusion of employee spousal benefits in the draft bill. The Revenue Department also raised that one of the benefits of the legalization of non- heterosexual marriage is the reduction of tax, hence the decrease in government revenues. There are also politicians who vocally promote marriage equality during the election campaigns and puts on hold the agenda once in the office.

Fourthly, the step-by-step approach is a misunderstood discourse. Amending the Civil Code actually requires the same process as passing a bill, only with different content of request and will achieve all equal rights existed in the code. The decision is also made by the same parliamentary committee or legislative assembly. What needs to be revised by the state is that law should not be seen as easy or difficult but prioritize the matter in it. Government authorities should not go for an easy but the right task. Civil Code is undoubtedly sacred but it should be in a way to protect the people not itself from changing.

Fifthly, the bill is a remedy, not solution to the structural problem of the country. It does not prevent but practice legal discrimination. Challenging conservative standpoint of other authorities and public opposing groups on the topic to success is a great part of the RLPD's job description in this project that was not fulfilled.

Lastly, the drafting process was strategically inclusive with exclusive manners. Inclusive participation has its own limitation. The RLPD holds 100% authority to decide who and invite whoever to participate in the planning and drafting. It is not possible for them to work with the whole civil society. Holding a responsibility of a duty bearer, the department had to be selective of the inclusive participation so that outcomes, which benefit the rights holders, are ensured and produced.

2.5. In Defense of State

The RLPD believes that gradual development of marriage equality is an effective pathway for Thailand. Thailand has taken the first step of the ladder and it will eventually lead up to marriage equality. It is believed to be “better than nothing”. Civil partnership marks a good start for Thai political environment where turmoil and instability coexist. Not everything is up to the department. The department had to compromise and manage the conflict of interest of several authorities and members of the public. On the inclusion notes, public consultations with the public were conducted in all 5 regions throughout Thailand. The positive light of the civil partnership can also be appreciated. It helps raise the visibility of marriage equality and other rights for marginalized and discriminated persons with non-heterosexual identity and orientation in Thailand from more discussions and criticisms. It also brings more stakeholders on board with the agenda.

3. Analysis of Key Findings

This part forms theses that explain how state-dominated discourse of marriage negatively impacts or limits the proposal of the bill and why the civil partnership should be interpreted as a new (form of) inequality. The proposed civil partnership epitomizes a product of Thai marriage discourse that has been scrutinized by power holders with changed and conserved values. Intertextually overseen, lawmakers are the authors of national norms and state authorities are ones to constructively narrate them as objective knowledge.

Thesis 1: Civil partnership is a tool of the state to control behaviors, influence decisions of its citizens and discipline human relationship

State is in charge of the production of dominant knowledge of marriage, socially enforcing state-defined values. Personal decisions and civil obedience are outlined by disguised standards, legalized responsibilities and imposed obligations. Discourses make the

interest of state and citizens flow into one. The proposed civil partnership indicates what state sees as important for its citizens and simultaneously influences what the citizens see as important. The bill is based on regulations that meet certain sociocultural expectations instead of rights and needs. In order to be legally recognized by state, ones are expected to act in ways that benefit state, for example, cohabitation is cheaper and one can depend on the 'other half' instead of government welfare. Legal recognition gives state the power to decide who can build a legal and promoted kind of family and when to have how many children. State politically institutionalizes marriage into a public sphere for functions. The government therefore needs to control the discourse in order to remain in control and serve their interests. People do not just respect the laws but those who utilized behind them. The proposed civil partnership sustains the inequality codified in the marriage discourse of Thai authorities.

Thesis 2: State-orchestrated civil partnership is based on statist interest of state that sustains the inequality in legal marriage

The RLPD stands behind all procedures to control and monitor the narratives of marriage equality movement. People who need equality may be part of the decision-making but not the determination of outcomes. At the end of the day, it is the state who drafts, promotes, proposes, vets, amends, enacts and enforces it, based on the assumption that they know what is best for all. Consequently, 'good' and 'equal' are by the standards certified by state. Civil partnership bill responds to state's statist interest. For example, Thailand looks more competent and modernized in the eyes of the international public but equality in the bill has not been ensured. Civil partnership adapts the ideology that has underlined the principle of inequality and therefore creates inequality in legal marriage. Avoiding Civil Code amendment is a refusal to move on from inequality. The historic Code is curated as if it were sacred and the special treatment of it is unjustified. The great challenges of legal reforms are imposed by the state itself. What went wrong is that it should be sacred in its capacity and

dignity to protect the people, rather than protect itself from changing. The subsidiary marriage act that fails to meet its own objectives is believed to be the appropriate solution. The department bows to the old system, telling the marginalized minorities to live with inequality for longer as the helps come 'step-by-step'.

Thesis 3: Civil partnership augments state's monopolized power over marriage discourse

Thai state can succeed in anything genuinely invested in their interests and that social attitudes are upon its will and power. It monopolizes discourses to stay in charge of governing and serving the interest of the country, playing a role in people's relationship. Civil partnership shapes Thai marriage discourse to become more formal and definitely legal meaning that it can be controlled by state. Marriage equality is a universal discourse—the more universal, the more effective it is. The desire for legal registration system makes state even more powerful. Marriage equality, in the name of civil partnership, successfully created the needs that were not needed. A personally defined successful relationship would not be completely official until state recognizes it. It is this demand that unconsciously legitimizes state recognition and its power over us. Opening marriage becomes a new demand because we are made less fulfilled without it, as the discourse resonates we are in the hands of state. A glimpse or sound of marriage equality can empower state in so many ways. Civil partnership transforms society into a new phase but under the same structured norms of its marriage discourse, which will remain its heroic tool until the next one comes.

Thesis 4: Civil partnership produces a new chapter of Thai marriage discourse that is an ideal trap

Trap in this case means that ones are made to believe that something is ideal when it may not be and locks them up in the same cycle. Amplifying towards one particular direction is manipulation. The capacity of civil partnership is overestimated as a precious legal effort of

state aiming at ideal outcomes. In Thailand, marriage equality is a modern symbol of ideal that comes with untold costs. The fact that legal marriage can have difficult, subordinate and regulatory side effects has been unrevealed to the mainstream understanding. Both marriage discourse and the bill help state regulate to promote an idealistic image of successful marriage, healthy family and civilized citizens. Civil partnership is not only discriminative but also produces an internalized discrimination within the whole LGBTI communities.

Thesis 5: Civil partnership is homonormative

The proposed civil partnership has been normalized by Thai marriage and equality discourses through legal means. It is considered normal to register and formalize the relationship, to receive marriage and family benefits from state and to take emotional love to the level of commitment. Michael Warner highlighted that an access to legal registration makes non-heterosexuals want to be part of the institution that has suppressed them. They are made to believe that vulnerability is a result of absent legal recognition. Civil partnership moves the registered non-heterosexual partners to the same mainstream and non-secondary box of 'normal' as heterosexual couples. This is known as homonormativity. They are disciplined by state with the same rights, benefits, protections, obligations and expectations but this time with legal consequences, which lasts even after divorce. The rationality is that with laws they follow the same structured pattern of ideal family and marriage, form of love and commitment and consumption into their cognitive memories and practices.

Discourse has impact on knowledge, perspectives and direction of advocacy and activism. Non-state advocates should hold an awareness of discourse mechanisms as a power to better negotiate. Every piece of legislation opens a negotiation with the discourse. On policy level, civil partnership should challenge, not serve and be manipulated by it. On the individual level, one can live their lives to the fullest and in their perfectly ideal version with or without

marriage by an awareness of discourse. Marriage will never be equal because it is supposed to be personal for individual, yet has been treated highly public and political. Because of it, gender and sexuality become real and real issues in the public eye. This thesis has high doubt how equality harmoniously coexists with the institution of marriage that is driven by inequality and suggests that state mechanisms in controlling its citizens and marriage through laws and policies as well as non-state advocacy be made aware. Marriage is a life changing concern for some. Certain groups of people demand for what they need and that is what each individual should do— know what you want and exactly why in order to live with such inevitable discourse. While making discourse collapse seems idealistic, challenging it can be one way to take away its power so ‘they’ know that ‘we’ know.

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Internal Migrant Children and Their Access to Education: A Case Study of Hlaing Thar Yar Township, Yangon, Myanmar

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Abstract

This research focuses on children of migrating families within Myanmar specifically to understand their status on accessing primary education. It studies this issue for children who have travelled with families when they have moved to a new location. In doing so, this research looks into challenges and issues faced by migrant children in the process of accessing primary education.

The research was conducted in Hlaing Thar Yar Township in Yangon, Myanmar. The area is characterized by settlements of migrant groups. The methodology used is a qualitative approach. A total of 12 in-depth interviews were conducted with migrant families in the study area. In addition, another 10 key informant interviews were conducted with government officials from Department of Basic Education, local administrator, teachers and representatives of INGO/NGOs. All interviews were facilitated using pre-semi structured questionnaires.

The main research findings are that there is a state policy of free and compulsory education in Myanmar, school fees, text books and a set of school uniform for every child is made free of cost by the government. However, the number of available schools is not fulfilling the demand. Many migrants do not possess documents necessary for establishing their legal rights in their new settlement. Schools accept recommendation from the local administration, but this is often not possible because parents do not possess their own identity papers. Even if a student proves to fall in a certain 'catchment', additional documents such as transfer certificate is required. Families escaping poverty and natural calamities, eg., Cyclone Nargis, either are unaware of the importance of legal documents or have lost them to calamities. In

addition, document requirements are interpreted in different ways in practice which has created confusion on what are standard acceptable documents.

This paper concludes that the implementation of free and compulsory education at primary level in Myanmar is failing in meeting the needs of the migrant community. Besides economic barriers, there are multiple administrative challenges that make it near impossible for children of migrant communities to access primary education.

Keyword: Right to Education, Access to Primary Education, Internal Migrant Children, Peri-urban

1. Introduction

In Myanmar, there has been remarkable improvement overall in the quality of education and accessibility has improved for children because of increased budget allocation and availability of more schools which are also increasing in number in far-flung rural areas. However, at the same time migrant children or children moving with parents who are migrating, face challenges in accessing school and tend to be more prone for dropping out. The government has been trying to address this through its education strategic plan but in practice there are administrative barriers which have become the key issues for migrant children.

The National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) has the objective to “Improve primary education completion for every primary-aged child in school” and this is being implemented in practice by providing free primary education together with free text and exercise books including a free set of uniform for school going children. However, the parents face hidden costs such as transportation charges and donations which requested by schools which are unaffordable to many poor parents(UNESCO 2017) especially those who are migrants in peri-urban area.

Most of the people who migrated to Hlaing Thar Yar township, peri-urban area of Yangon, are from Ayeyarwady region, who were affected by the cyclone Nargis in 2008 and people from rural area to find a better job.¹¹⁸ The cyclone affected people lost their properties, livelihood and documents such as national identity card and household registration certificate. The majority of migrant people are informal settlers and squatters and their living condition is

¹¹⁸ Administrative division of Myanmar is divided up-to fifth-level. First-level: Union Territory, Region, State. Second-level: District. Third-level: Township, Fourth-level: Ward, Village Tract and the Fifth-level: Village.

poor and they do not have documents required to access services legally (ILO 2015, Boutry, Kyed 2017).

This paper will look into the issue of accessing education for children of internal migrant families in Hlaing Thar Yar Township of Yangon. Hlaing Thar Yar is an industrial zone and is the most populated township in Myanmar and it has been attracting people to work in manufacturing industries. Rural-urban migration has been growing since 2010 in Yangon, and internal migration flow accounts for more than international migration in Myanmar (Htoo and Zu 2016).

The main argument of this paper is children from migrant families who have moved to peri-urban areas are facing challenges in accessing primary education which are as a result of administrative requirements for enrollment that is exacerbated by inadequate resources like number of schools and teachers which in turn affects the quality of education. This paper will present the main challenges and barriers of internal migrant children in Hlaing Thar Yar Township in accessing in primary education.

2. Conceptual Framework

The legal framework for the State's obligation on the Right to Education is discussed through what is called the 4A Scheme which was described by (Tomasevski 2004, 2006). These are: - (1) Availability; (2) Accessibility; (3) Acceptability; and (4) Adaptability. The use of Tomasevski's theoretical underpinning is a holistic approach that helps to analyze field level data at different levels and domains which are government, teachers and parents. The field level data collection for this paper has been based on questions that have been formulated using this framework for each category of the respondents and analyzed accordingly.

The “availability” domain is analyzed by looking into whether free primary education is being accessed by primary aged school going child of internal migrants. Data were collected to see different aspects of costs and tradeoffs that a child of an internal migrant and the family face for availing education. Also, the ability of schools and intent of the government mechanisms to implement policy procedures for children to be able to avail education is discussed.

The domain of “accessibility” has been used to analyse the obligation and practice of the government for removing barriers including those that are economic and administrative and identify whether internal migrants’ parents and children face the barriers which are economic and administrative that result when children are trying to access primary education.

Whether the quality of education meets the acceptable standard and aims of education in schools has been looked by the domain of “acceptability”. A key factor which is availability of qualified trained teachers is dealt into with respect to population of children in school. The curriculum and teaching methods have been analyzed and seen if these are acceptable, relevant and culturally appropriate to children of migrating parents with respect to the human rights perspectives.

The domain of “adaptability” has been used to understand whether the education system is designed and responds to different needs of different category of groups and give emphasis on migrant children. It has been analyzed with respect to special requirements of migrant children who may be facing ethnic barriers, and economic and administrative hardships.

3. Research Methodology

Secondary data has been referenced from academic papers, reports from UN and NGOs, government law and policies and report on education sector to understand the system and accessibility of education in Myanmar. Qualitative research using primary data collection method has been derived from field research. Data was collected using key informant interviews and in-depth interviews by using semi-structured questionnaires.

To select the area for this case study, the researcher initially visited two wards and one village to get the general information of internal migration in the case study township. A thorough discussion and informal interviews were conducted with 5 community members. Also, discussions were done with representatives of a local civil society organizations (CSO) who are working with children's issues in this township.

Twelve in-depth interviews were conducted with migrant parents. The selection of migrant families was based on two criteria: (1) families who have primary school - aged child/children and (2) families who have migrated within the last 10 years. Furthermore, to represent the heterogeneity of the population of Hlaing Thar Yar, participants were selected from different income groups by identifying them as skilled labor (carpenters, factory workers), unskilled labor (domestics workers, sellers), and different ethnicity and religion. Selection has been conducted by transect walks around the ward to select families who meet the two criteria. A total of 10 key informant interviews were conducted with representatives of civil society organizations that are working on issues related with children, representatives from non-government organizations that are working for children's education, government school teachers and local administration staff from the study area, and government officials from the Ministry of Education.

4. Internal Migration in Hlaing Thar Yar Township

Hlaing Thar Yar Township being an industrial zone has attracted labor. Especially there has been demand for labor in the manufacturing industry of this township. There are number of pull factors in Hlaing Thar Yar including availability of work and possibility of settling informally. The push factors can be categorized into two broad categories. First, because of the decreasing productive work that are available for the local people in their original place and secondly, as a result of shocks related to natural disasters and also the ongoing conflict.

The first type of push factor for internal migration therefore are economic and migration is one of the primary coping strategies. Owing to the inconsistent agricultural productivity coupled by often low market price for agricultural products and growing number of family members, certain young youth were found to move out for making better livelihoods. Growing families also are resulting in lesser per capita landholding all of which is making rural life dependent on agriculture not very attractive. It is important to note that there is a fair, though small scale of mechanization from imported machinery which to some extent has displaced local seasonal labor contributing to the trend of internal migration. A female respondent who used to be farmer in the Ayeyarwaddy cited the reason for migration as:

We did not have land in our original place. My elder son, daughter and I worked as agricultural labor and my husband worked as casual labor in the village. But agricultural work has become difficult to get because of more and more use of machinery which has also brought down the wage rate for working in fields. We decided to move here to find jobs and also my son and daughter can find work for themselves.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Interview with Parent on 26 Apr 2019

The second type of push factors can be labeled as being environmental ones. Ayeyarwaddy is one of the poorest regions situated in the delta zone. As a result of its economy it is an area from where people are migrating to other states and regions in Myanmar. However, after 2008 because of the devastation wrought by Cyclone Nargis it was estimated that 350,463 people moved out from Ayeyarwady to Yangon (Department of Population 2016). Many of these are of Burmese ethnicity and have found refuge in Hlaing Thar Yar Township. Following the Cyclone Nargis people continue to move out of Ayeyarwaddy because of environmental reasons such as soil erosion and unpredictable weather conditions that has impacted on agriculture. And because of their personal ties and existing social networks the migrants from Ayeyarwaddy have started living in Hlaing Thar Yar Township.¹²⁰ Most migrants in Hlaing Thar Yar Township reported that they migrated along with their families so that both the husband and the wife could make income.

5. Overview of Basic education in Myanmar

As a democracy in transition, Myanmar began its education sector reform in 2011. The government provides free education at primary level from 2011-2012 academic year and lower secondary from 2012-2013, and upper secondary from 2015-2016. Myanmar had been practicing “5:4:2” structure in education system which was five years of primary, 4 years of lower secondary and 2 years of upper secondary till 2015. Starting from the 2016 academic year, the government introduced Kindergarten (KG) +12 years system (KG:5:4:3), and the curriculum and syllabus was changed to focus on 21st century skills, personal development and to initiate critical thinking.¹²¹

The schooling age starts at 5 years old and compulsory education is till end of primary level education. Under the title of free and compulsory primary education, the government

¹²⁰ Interviews with Parents on 21 Apr 2019

¹²¹ National Education Strategic Plan (2016-2021)

abolished school enrollment fees, parent-teacher association fees, and provides the required text books, 6 exercise books and a set of school uniform. Also, stipend is provided for primary to upper secondary level students who are from poorer and orphaned children or those living with single parents.

6. Barriers and Challenges of Internal Migrant Children in Accessing Primary Education

6.1 Availability of Education

The government of Myanmar in its policy for education for all has introduced free and compulsory primary education for all primary school age going children in the country. Therefore, children from internal migrant families also are entitled to free and compulsory education.

Table 6: Availability of government schools in Hlaing Thar Yar Township

Type of School	Number of School
High School	8
Middle School	22
Post-Primary School	3
Primary	25
Total	58

Source: Township Education Office

There is a total of 58 schools provided by the government that cover the Hlaing Thar Yar Township. The different levels are primary, post primary, middle and high school. The highest number is the primary school followed by 22 middle level schools. Out of the middle level schools three of these are branches of existing middle level schools and 18 of these have been upgraded to full-fledged government middle schools. There are eight high schools. Also, there are three post primary schools.

The number of public schools at all levels in Hlaing Thar Yar does not meet the need of school going children in this township. The number of students in Hlaing Thar is increasing every year also because of migrant children. This is despite the fact that almost all schools, apart from primary, have been changed to two-shift schooling with two batches of students studying in two different times in a day. A representative from Township Education Office had this to say:

“The number of schools is not adequate compared to the number of students living in Hlaing Thar Yar Township. Sometimes, schools refuse to enroll the students because of inadequate number of classrooms and insufficient space in the classroom. Schools have to request children to go to other schools for admission.”¹²²

The ratio between the number of schools and number of students has impact on the enrollment of new students and has consequences on children from migrant groups when compared with non-migrants and affects the quality of education.

6.2 Accessibility of Education

Accessibility to education is analyzed with respect to three broad areas and each one of which is identified as a critical block in the study area for children to access schools. These are economic, administrative and physical challenges. Even though the government has announced its policy of free and compulsory education which intends to reduce economic obstacles for poorer groups in general, there are pre-requisite conditions for accessing these opportunities. Administrative requirements, mainly documentation such as birth certificate and household registration grant card, are mandatory for getting enrolled in schools. Without

¹²² Interview with Township-Level Government Official

these documentary evidences a child cannot get enrolled which is a recurring case for children from migrant communities.

6.2.1 Economic Accessibility

Schools from Hlaing Thar Yar township started implementation of free and compulsory primary education from 2011-2012 academic year. The school enrollment fees and parent-teacher association fees were eliminated, all the required text books, 6 exercise books and a set of school uniform are provided free of cost. All the interviewed families whose children joined public school said that their children had received these and also that no charges were demanded during enrollment in schools. However, there were charges for drinking water and cleaning classes. These charges on students are mostly once a month or once in two months which cost anywhere between 100 to 500 kyats (US 0.07 to 0.34). Sometimes, voluntary contributions for social and religious events and ceremonies for honoring teachers are collected.

Many migrant families do not feel that they have heavy economic difficulties to send their primary-age children to school. However, poorer families among migrants still find it difficult to overcome this economic hardship. A poor family from Hlaing Thar Yar confided to state:

“In the coming academic year, we will be facing a lot of economic difficulty because I need to enroll two children - one in grade 5 and another in the kindergarten. Although there are no costs for school fees, and textbooks as well as for uniform. This is however not adequate. I need to buy stationaries, umbrella, raincoat, two more uniforms and more exercise books. I’ll try my best to enroll the younger child on time.”¹²³

¹²³ Interview with Parent on 21 Apr 2019

Another women-headed household family who migrated from Bogale (Ayeyarwaddy) in 2015 shared her economic difficulties:

“I have three primary-aged children. When school season starts, I take loan with high interest to buy school uniforms and necessary stationaries as what is provided by the government is not enough. Sometimes, when I cannot provide food in the lunch box or money for snack, I do not send my children to school.”¹²⁴

Enrollment and regular fees that have been subsidized by the government are not the only costs that are required for a child going to school. Often a child has to take transportation while going to school and there are costs of snacks and meal.

6.2.2 Administrative Accessibility

6.2.2.1 Enrollment Criteria of Public School is an Obstacle for Migrant Children

The new students (KG and Grade 1) require birth certificate for enrollment which takes place in end of May every year. If parents cannot provide the child’s birth certificate they can produce vaccination record or recommendation letter from local authority regarding the age of the child. A child needs to be at least three months to being five years or five years complete to enroll in the kindergarten and six years for grade one. Two out of six migrant families who have students in government schools answered that they can enroll with recommendation letter from local authority. The representative of township education office said,

“We cooperate with the Township Health Department to get birth certificate for children who do not have.”¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Interview with Parent on 5 May 2019

¹²⁵ Interview with Government Official of Township Education Office on 26 Apr 2019

However, none of the migrant families interviewed had received birth certificate services through schools.

According to the school principal of post-primary school – her school applied for birth certificate on behalf of parents in 2018 and 22 students received their birth certificates.¹²⁶ But this process is possible for those who can submit legal documents such as national ID and household registration or temporary household registration certificates. Many migrants lack such documentation especially those who faced natural disasters such as Cyclone Nargis. Also, because migrants are moving from one place to another they lose belongings in the transition. Some who were interviewed also pointed out that they only realise the importance of such documents when required.

Many migrants' children were delivered at home with traditional birth attendants. Some migrant parents understand that they can be issued with birth certificate from government hospitals without a high cost. However, there are those who are not aware because of poor education and not being familiar and aware of these requirements. It was found that many illiterate and recent migrants rely on brokers to avail of certificates and this service was costing around 30,000 kyats (US \$20) which for many is difficult to afford. However, there are cases where the requirement of documents is relaxed and an alternative document such as letter from local authorities is accepted but this seems to be not a standard practice. A 44-years old father of out-of-school children shared his experience when he enrolled his daughter 2 years ago:

¹²⁶ Interview with School Principal on 26 Apr 2019

“When I enquired with the school for enrollment, the headmistress said you can enroll with local authority’s recommendation letter if you do not have a birth certificate. When a new headmistress took charge of the school she did not accept the recommendation letter but informed me that I should submit my daughter’s birth certificate.”¹²⁷

For transfer students, the transfer certificate (TC) is required. But if TC cannot be submitted at the school enrollment time, schools accept those students temporarily and then require parents to submit the original TC at a later date.¹²⁸ Township education office stated that sometimes the schools can coordinate between themselves and in such cases, TC is not required to be submitted by parents. However, such coordination is entirely up to the school principals. A mother told that she and her son faced the difficulty in issuing TC when they recently reached Ward 20 and stated:

“When we migrated from Bogale township (Ayeeyarwaddy), we did not understand that we are required to take TC for my son to enroll in school here. When I went to enroll my son, the teacher said you have to go back and get TC from the previous school. We went back to Bogale and got the TC but when we came back the teacher said they are full and couldn’t accept any more students that year. My son has been waiting a year to continue his education.”¹²⁹

Some migrants do not go back to their original places to issue TC as they cannot afford transportation costs, some parents are not interested in their children to continue studies and some prefer their children to work instead of going to school.¹³⁰ The non-formal primary

¹²⁷ Interview with Parent on 26 Apr 2019

¹²⁸ Interviews with Government School Teacher on 24 Apr 2019, Government Official of Township Education Office and School Principal on 26 Apr 2019

¹²⁹ Interview with Parent on 26 Apr 2019

¹³⁰ Interview with Teacher of Non-Formal Education Programme on 24 Apr 2019

education teacher stated these are the common issues that she saw with her non-formal education students and out-of-school children.

Apart from birth certificate and TC, new students need to provide household registration because of the catchment area policy. Catchment area is a geographical coverage of the school and it specifies students from which area can enroll in which school. Catchment area policy was strictly implemented in Yangon region which was started from 2018. The main idea of this policy implementation in Yangon is to balance out students per school and prevent students to select those schools they think are the best. Also, the policy is meant to discourage bribing for getting admission in schools. As a result of this policy implementation, schools in Hlaing Tar Yar cannot accept students from out of their catchment areas.

“Catchment area policy is difficult for migrant families especially who have moved within the last six months. For such groups it is very difficult to get a recommendation letter from the authority. I am hearing parents are complaining about schools who are being denied enrollment and most of these cases must be for children who are out of the catchment area. Because of this we have more people inquiring with the monastic school for enrollment.”¹³¹

This is one of the barriers for migrants who without proper documents cannot prove eligibility of their living in the catchment of a school. Lack of legal documents makes internal migrant children fall in less priority of schools for enrollment.

Both government schools and monastic schools accept the age specified in a recommendation letter and do not always demand birth certificate or even household registration grant card. However, these categories of applicants who cannot produce birth

¹³¹ Interview with Monastic School Teacher on 10 May 2019

certificates but have a recommendation letter from local authority are not treated in par with those who have birth certificates. It is a universal practice that the first priority for admission is granted to those who come with birth certificates and household registration documents. So, it is only after these students are enrolled then the school will look into considering those without the formal documents but can present recommendation letter of local authority. The school teacher mentioned the way school's practice in accepting school enrollment:

“We give priority to new students who have birth certificates. First, we accept those who have birth certificate and then we accept those who came with recommendation letter.”¹³²

Many migrant families are unable to produce birth certificates and residential documents. This means that their children fall in the second priority of schools for enrollment. While it is not the intention of school administrations this practice of prioritization can said to be biased against those without documents and these children are often belonging to poorer groups such as migrants. The poor economic conditions and the low literacy of migrant parents means that they are also not aware of these requirements and formalities and often only come to realize when presented before school authorities. What is evident is that even with an alternate document a child from migrant community is not ensured of enrollment in a school.

6.3 Acceptability of Education

¹³² Interview with Primary-level School Teacher on 24 Apr 2019

The teacher-student ratio in Hlaing Thar Yar Township is 1:52 for primary level and the national figure for Myanmar is 1:31, both for the academic year 2018-2019.¹³³

This figure clearly demonstrates the inability of the government to provide quality education while on the other hand there has been quite a focus in policy for increasing enrollment especially through that of free and compulsory education. This ratio clearly shows the imbalance between the demand for education and the supply of educational services in the study area. The township education office shared that the issue of big class size in schools:

“The school classrooms sizes are quite big, teachers have to struggle with a large number of students. Pupil- teacher ratio is at least 1:60/70 and some schools are 1:80/90 and maximum number of students is 120. School principals and teachers are not able to avoid accepting the students in many cases.”¹³⁴

The issue of big class size seems a common challenge of schools in Hlaing Thar Yar township.

“In my class which is grade 1, the total number of students is over 100. My voice is not able to cover the whole class because of which I use a microphone that I have bought with my own money. My daughter is also a teacher in another primary school and her class also has more or less the same number of students. However, she cannot use a microphone because the partitions between classrooms in her school are not of bricks, so it can interfere with

¹³³ Source: Township Education Office

¹³⁴ Interview with Parent on 26 Apr 2019

another class. Therefore, she has more difficulty to communicate in the class and this impacts her teaching.”¹³⁵

The high number of students means that teaching has become difficult. As a result, there are clear indications of how quality is being affected by this issue. It is almost impossible to provide individual attention to a huge number of students. Teachers are having to spend more time in management of large classrooms rather than teaching. Even communicating lessons is a big challenge.

Although, the quality of education is affecting all students, migrant’s children are more vulnerable because migrants tend to be poorer and cannot afford private tuition. Also, migrant children do not receive paternal guidance on their daily learning exercises. A mother who settled informally expressed her son’s issue with the classroom teaching:

“I cannot provide tuition to my son. We are already using money from our daily family food ration for his school expenses. My son says he does not see well what is written on the blackboard and cannot complete copying lessons from the blackboard before the teacher moves to another lesson. The teacher asks children who are taking tuition with her to sit in the front seat. On the other hand, I am incapable of providing guidance to my son.”¹³⁶

The issue of student-teacher ratio and lack of paternal guidance is affecting children’s education performance. This usually leads to less motivation and less interest on education and children ultimately drop-out from schools.

¹³⁵ Interview with Primary-level School Teacher on 24 Apr 2019

¹³⁶ Interview with Parent on 21 Apr 2019

6.4 Adaptability of Education

Adaptability of education focusses on the approach to meet the unique needs of marginalized children, such as children with disabilities, minorities children, migrant children, children in rural areas and working children. This section focuses on whether the approach used by the schools emphasize on meeting the requirements of internal migrant children.

The education system in Myanmar states that the standard requirements for enrollment is birth certificate, household registration grant card, and the school transfer certificate which is required to be produced to continue education in a new destination area. This requirement does not reflect the challenges for migrant children in practice. The requirement for these documents is followed strictly by schools and because of which many migrant children cannot access education. In this regard, the inflexibility of the policy can be said not to accommodate the situation of migrant children. Children from migrant families are considered as being in similar status and situation as other students and no special adaptive policies for encouraging education among these children is practiced or even discussed.

6.5 Parental Guidance on Education of Migrant Children

The quality of education is also affected by the motivation children receive from parents. The education level of migrant parents is generally very low, and some cannot even read or write. This is a continuing issue for migrant children who do not receive paternal guidance and has negative effect on performance in classroom. This usually leads to less motivation and less interest on education by children ultimately resulting in high potential to drop-out from the school. The Myanmar Report on Out-of-school children Initiative stated that among the reasons for children who joined the school but did not continue, 27.6% was lack of interest or poor grades (DERPT 2018). A female factory worker who is living in shelters on rented land state that:

“I’m busy with making daily income and do not know anything on teaching methods, curriculum and do not understand what my son is learning. I can only remind him to complete his homework instead of doing housework and playing. If he performs well in school and we do not have any big economic difficulties, his education can continue.”¹³⁷

The findings of Comprehensive Education Sector Review (2012) which was led by MOE stated that the parents’ education is positively associated with children who have completed primary schooling. The education level of migrant families is low and the highest education level among the interviewees is lower-secondary.

“Migrant parents usually do not care much about their children’s education. Majority of these parents are illiterate and do not visit the schools. They rarely come in to talk with the teachers about their children’s education improvement even when teachers invite them.”¹³⁸

Many migrant parents do not think their children can attain a higher level of education and they are quite content if their children can read and write.¹³⁹

7. Conclusion

First of all, free and compulsory education is entitled to all children irrespective of the type or status of families. However, the rule of enrollment has challenges for children from migrant groups. The enrollment rules are specifically important, and this is the very first step to receive children’s right to education. When the migrant families do not have ability to fulfill these rules, which means unable to prove the requirements with the necessary legal

¹³⁷ Interview with Parent on 26 Apr 2019

¹³⁸ Interview with School Principal on 26 Apr 2019

¹³⁹ Interviews with Parents on 21 Apr 2019 and 26 Apr 2019

documents, then this results in children not getting enrolled. In other words, without fulfilling certain criteria a school going children is ineligible for enrollment. Because of not being able to produce documents and inadequate number schools and classrooms in Hlaing Thar Yar, migrant children are not getting admission in schools and so the policy of free education is less meaningful for them.

Even if migrant children do get school enrollment, they are at a high risk for dropping out of school. This is related to their parents' economic status and low education levels. Apart from the education services by the government, interest on education and motivation in learning by migrant children has been affected as most migrant parents are busy struggling for daily income. Besides, job insecurity, poverty and living conditions promote high mobility of migrant families that can impact negatively on their children's education. The inability to produce documents required for admission is also related with the awareness of the migrant groups who only come to know of these requirements when asked by schools. Their high priority for survival and low awareness often means that they just overlook these needs necessary for enrollment of their children to schools.

The quality of education in Hlaing Thar Yar is affected by large number of students in schools with small number of teachers – a high student-teacher ratio. These contexts are further complicated for children from migrant families as their parents are more than often illiterate and not aware. This means that there is almost no guidance to children from their parents. For meeting the goal of universal education, it is critical to understand the mindset and awareness of the parents and caretakers. There needs to be massive awareness raising campaigns that are strategized to target migrant groups, both parents and children, through which they become informed on necessity of education, policy and strategy of the government, enrollment requirements in schools with respect to what is the basic right of the

child. Awareness raising and campaigns are best implemented by civil society organisations and for which the government can coordinate with NGOs.

There is no policy that considers the practical situations of migrant families. There are no specific programmes within the strategy to specifically target vulnerable groups such as the migrants. For example, support system for migrating families will need to be part of sectoral policies such as the industrial zoning policy. Such policies will need to ensure social services for the entire family especially with respect to children. These services will need to encompass and prioritize protection measures, health services and education for migrating children. This is critical given the fact that migration is a major coping strategy for poorer families and support system to them is urgent for meeting development goals of a country.

8. Recommendation

8.1 School and Classroom Expansion

With the scenario that has unfolded in Hlaing Thar Yar it is evident that the acute shortage of schools means that the government planning for education is still limited. The local and national level General Administration Department (GAD) under Ministry of the Office of the Union Government ideally will have to estimate and pre-plan to anticipate growth of population in the migrant destination areas. Based on the result, the Department of Basic Education under MOE needs to expand schools and new classrooms according to the demand and needs of the population. More budget allocation must be planned to support construction of new schools and classrooms for which the government expenditure on education sector must be increased rather than investing in other non-productive sectors such as in military and defense spending.

8.2 Response to Teacher Shortage

While there is a provision in the national strategy for education in Myanmar to increase the number of teachers in the country the practical scenario with reference to Hlaing Thar Yar is that this is failing. There are instances where one teacher is managing 100 students and almost all schools are complaining of not having enough teachers. This is an urgent requirement. To produce skilled teacher by developing programmes on teacher training, teacher recruitment and teacher allocation based on the needs of school and to meet the national student-teacher ratio are important.

8.3 Released the administrative barrier

Required documents for school enrollment should be flexible to meet the situation of migrant families. Despite some schools are accepting age recommendation letter instead of birth certificate, it relies on individual decision. Having a birth certificate is a fundamental right of a child to get the nationality, enable access to social services such as health and education. The government has to remove the obstacles and provide effective service for registration for children together with the awareness raising for parents. Required documents for school enrollment should be flexible to meet the situation of migrant families. Therefore, the authority by decentralized decision making should be vested more on school heads to make formalities on documentation requirements easier for migrant children and parents.

8.4 Awareness Raising for Migrant Parents

For meeting the goal of universal education, it is critical to understand the mindset and awareness of the parents and caretakers. There needs to be massive awareness raising campaigns that are strategized to target migrant groups, both parents and children, through which they become informed on necessity of education, policy and strategy of the government, enrollment requirements in schools and also a birth certificate which is the basic

right of the child. Awareness raising activities should be conducted at village/ward level in collaboration with school heads and teachers, local administrators for which support can be taken from INGOs and NGOs working in the area of education. This activity requires the guidance and support from the Ministry level and support from external donors may be requested by ministry for resources that are required to facilitate higher awareness.

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Coping with Drug Abuse in Shan State, Myanmar

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Abstract

As we look around the study area, especially in the mountain areas and control over the ethnic armed groups areas, it is not hard to see the drug users and the other chemical substances selling and opium cultivation in the mountain areas. According to the drug dependents the opium cultivation can earn more money and easier than the other crops. As Lashio situated on the China- Myanmar Border Highway Road, China is the main producer of the chemical substances and importer to Myanmar. Because of the geographical situation, the study area is abundant in drug substances and chemical tablets. Heroin and amphetamine are the most popular moreover the number of drug dependents increasing according to the conversations and surrounding justice.

This research also examines what is happening in actuality concerning on drug abuse regarding with the instability of political situations in Myanmar. Furthermore, this research analyses some beliefs and myths of drug use in local community, the weakness of knowledge (their practices), education level and the other internal factors which is called social factors influenced the causes of drug abuse. In the study area, it is not hard to find out the drug addicted person not only adult but also teenager in everywhere the meaning of drug use and why they became addicted to drug substances are also included. One of the key priorities of this research include how the Narcotic Drug Control policy 2018 is working during 1 year in actuality and the perceptions change under the mechanism of the new policy also discussed.

The analysis of this field research concluded with the findings according to the conversations with 6 drug dependents who registered at the methadone clinic and 2 key informants with health provider and community leader using qualitative method design,

consisting of semi- structured questionnaires. This research showing greater focus on the causes of drug addiction, the role of drugs on drug dependents, moreover as the drug abuse is the trigger problems in Myanmar not only the community but also the government have to participate in harm reduction and demand reduction processes under the mechanism of the new policy to change the perceptions of the local people.

Keyword: Drug Abuse, Drug Policy, Shan State, Myanmar

1. Introduction

Northern Shan state has many experiences with conflict and violence for many years until now. There are also Self-Administered Zones (SEZ) in Northern Shan state which in this area is controlled by the ethnic minority Kokang. Moreover, there are several armed groups controlling these areas, there is conflict between the central government and the ethnic armed rebels and even amongst themselves like between the Shan and Ta-ang (Pa-Laung) sub-ethnics. The Northern Shan state can be designated as areas of conflict or conflict zones which reside mainly around the Kyaukme, Hsipaw, Namtu, Kutkai and Namkham townships which are also on the China-Myanmar Border Highway Road. Due to the conflict there are many Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) in these areas, because of the unstable conditions their livelihoods and economic welfare are also affected by the conflict and wars between armed groups. Moreover, humanitarian assistance is limited by the military, especially in non-central regions. International aid agencies have also many challenges in accessing the aid programs and getting to those conflict areas.

There are direct links between the drug trade and the conflict that is happening in the Northern Shan state in Myanmar. In the Northern Shan state, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) which was formed by the Kokang ethnic group that controls the drug trade in the region. MNDAA has been notorious in the production of drugs and drug trafficking and it has also been against the National Drug Policy. The Ta-ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) also participate in opium cultivation and has for many decades. In 2005, the central government was forcibly coerced the Palaung State Liberation Army (PSLA) to sign a cease fire agreement which commanded them to disarm and disband from the drug trade areas. These factors can lead to more drug production and drug trafficking by other armed militias such as the TNLA, which was renamed the Palaung Liberation Army after the ceasefire agreement signed in 1991. Particularly in Kutkai, Namkham and Manton areas where

the drug production and drug trafficking dramatically rose. Then there have been many negative impacts on the Ta-ang society and the local people who also claimed that this is because of the disbanding, by the government, of the Palaung State Liberation Army and that the tensions have increased continuously and have become difficult to control by the government. In 2009, the tensions between the central government and TNLA increased. The TNLA declared, because the central government had destroyed the opium cultivation of the area due to the government policy at that time to destroy the drug production areas, that there was no actual harm reduction as a result of the process.

These are the linkages between the drug trade and violent conflicts. Since then the government's control over these areas have been limited and these areas are now controlled by the ethnic groups that continue to participate in drug production and the drug trade. These regions can easily acquire the chemicals needed for drug production of the popular and cheap pills called methamphetamine "crystal ice", which is called 'Yaba' in Burmese from China. The armed militias then produce and export illicit drugs not only internationally but to the local community. Starting from the disbandment of the militia period, the economies of these societies either directly or indirectly depend on the drug trade. The tensions between the central government and the previous policy made the society more lead to the drug related crimes and until now the society also suffered from trauma because of the government's past actions on them (*group, 2019*).

2. Objectives and Questions

The objectives that will identify in this research are;

- To find out the socio- cultural, economic, political, environment and economic factors influencing the causes of drug addiction in Shan State
- To investigate the meaning of drug use by drug dependents

- To examine the perception changes after the new policy of Narcotics Drug Control Policy Myanmar

The questions that will be explored in this research are as follow;

Main question: How are socio-cultural, economic, political, and environmental factors related to drug addiction in the Shan state?

- Why do drug dependents not seek assistance in becoming drug free?
- How does the Narcotics Drug Control Policy change the perceptions of the people?

3. Conceptual framework

3.1 Causes of drug addiction

Economic approach; the economic status of the drug dependents is also one of the key factors of the causes of drug addiction. The drug dependency may have the feelings of reuse for the next time such multi- daily users may also engage to expend for daily dose. The daily dose may vary according to the money which they have earned from legal work. For those who earn large amount of money may result in high purchasing and using of several consumptions in a day. (Johnson, Golub, & dependence, 2007)

Political approach; the administration system and the conflicts between two groups give negative impacts on the political stability and development of the country. Discrimination between two groups of people and if there is human rights violations that could lead more to the insecure environment and the instability within the region.

3.2 Meaning of drug use

The behaviours or the symptoms of drug addiction can be the main reasons of the drug addiction or drug use as the drug substances have the effects of addiction those would give the feelings of want to take it more for the satisfaction of their feelings. The drug substances could give the feelings of freedom, free from fatigue, powerful for working hours, reduce food

take, stay awake for studying and use as intellectual relaxed or working hours and reduce stressed, etc. Some kinds of drug substances also give the feelings of "daily ride on an emotional roller coaster". The meaning of drug use also varied on the outlook of individuals.

3.3 Analysing The Government Policy For Drug Abuse

For drug abuse, in globally, the harm reduction has been provided to drug dependents and that program is the best way to provide currently. In globe, the national level plan and policy have enacted to take actions for drug abuse. In the national level, there may use the various kinds of approach to provide services and to reduce drug abuse. Anyhow, the harm reduction approach is the best way to reduce drug abuse according to the past experiences in the world but there may also have gaps between the needs of the people and the government policy.

4. Research methodology

4.1 Site selection

The drug dependents and the local wisdoms that are living in Lashio Northern Shan state (see Figure 1: for site location) will be conducted for this research.

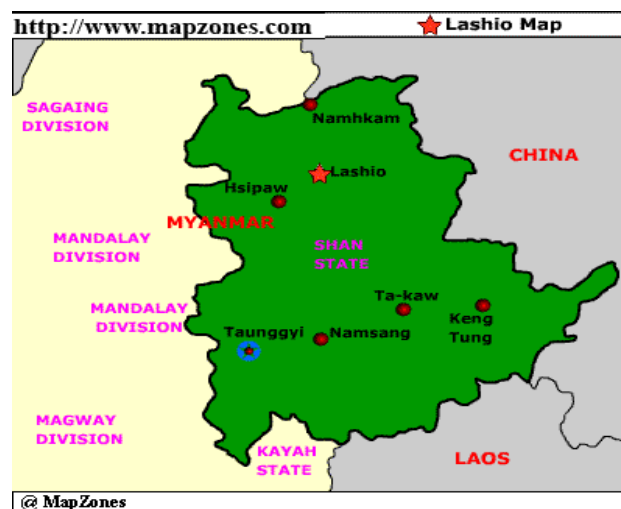


Figure 1: Site Location of Lashio in Shan State

4.2 Sample size

During one week for the field work, the researcher will conduct by using following interview plan;

Participants Information	Participants	No.	Location	Sampling Procedure & Approach
Community leader	Any gender, age, occupation and education level	1	Lashio	Random
Service provider	Any gender, age, officer or volunteer who has experiences on drug abuse in site location	1	Lashio	Random
Drug dependents (family members)	Any gender, age, occupation, and education level, patients	6	Lashio	Purposive

4.3 Data collection and research instruments

Data collection was divided into two groups; community leader and service provider and drug dependents using in- depth, semi- structured interviews. The interview was divided into two sections; causes of drug addiction and the meaning of drug use. After that, the researcher analysed how the interviewees think on the new policy of harm reduction by the observations. Finally, this research examined from the semi- structured interviews with drug dependents and community leader and service provider and investigated the gaps between the people's want and the new policy on harm reduction.

For the interviews, the researcher was used the sounder recording apparatus and note taking apparatus. The image of the environment that has reflected the way of their lives and their daily activities were recorded.

4.4 Limitations

As it is for every study, this dissertation had the following limitations,

- The size of the sample was relatively small - 8 respondents in general. Bigger sample size would take more time.
- Qualitative research is not enough in measuring the perception changes after the new policy.
- The key informants can only be the government official according to the location.
- In some cases, respondents may refuse to answer regarding with the experiences while drug addicts.
- As this is a dangerous researcher for the researcher to conduct with the drug dependents, the researcher only conducted to the respondents of patients with drug experience.
- Ethical considerations

This research conducted after getting approval from Ethic Review Committee, Myanmar. In considerations of the participants' safety, before going to questioning, all the interviewees were informed the research goals and objectives in order to gain the informed consent of all participants. This research kept "no harm" before and after leaving the research site.

5. Findings

5.1 Respondents' characteristics and the history of drug abuse

The first drug dependent who is taking methadone at the moment is Pyae, PA, male, 27 years old and working as a steel worker. He was from the central area, Burmese and moved to Lashio since he was young; his education level is grade 3.

Pyae, PA stated that

"I am not from Lashio, I am from the central area of Myanmar I moved to Lashio when I was 20 which was the time that I started using heroin and black poppy".

The second drug dependent who is taking methadone at the moment is Sai, S, male, now 35 years old and a singer. He lives in Lashio and he is Shan, his education level is grade 10. Sai, S explained his drug history that

"Yes I lived here since I was young; I started using heroin for the first and Yama as well since I was 17."

The third drug dependent who is taking methadone at the moment is Win, N, male, now 47 years old and a driver. He lives in Lashio and he is Burmese, his education level is grade 9.

"I am now 47 years old and I used heroin in cigarettes for 10 years and I am now taking methadone for 6 years until now." Win, N answered.

The fourth drug dependent who is taking methadone at the moment is Sai, LA, male, who is now 34 years old and working as a mechanist. He was from Lashio since he was young and he is Shan, his education level is grade 10.

Sai, LA, stated that,

"When I was 16 years, yes I was high school student, I started using heroin. My friends have been used for long, that's why I started using it even I injected with needles at the first time of use."

The fifth drug dependent who is taking methadone at the moment is San, TA, male, who is now 25 years old and he is unemployed. He was from Lashio since he was young and he is Kachin, his education level is grade 10.

"When I was 20, I want to become a gangster, I started using heroin and later Yama",
by the respondent San, TA.

The sixth drug dependent who is taking methadone at the moment is Ye, THSM, male, who is now 41 years old and he was a government officer. He was from Yangon and he came here for his work, he is Burmese and he already finished undergraduate degree.

"I was a government officer so I have to move to many places so I arrived here to serve as a government officer. Since 2001 I started using because I wanted to test it as I do not believe that it can make addiction. I used it over 5 years before taking methadone. When I started using it, it was heroin and later I didn't choose what would be used, I used every substances." Ye, THSA explained about his drug history.

For the key informant interview, the researcher interview with the health service provider and community leader individually. Firstly, interview with service provider took half an hour; she was working as a nurse in Northern Shan state for more than 25 years especially in the field of psychiatrics and mental health treatment for drug dependents. She requested to keep her name and to mention neither first name nor full. She is over 50 years old, Burmese, not from Lashio.

"It was very common to see the drug dependents that are between 25 and 35. Especially it is because of the peer pressure which is because of the friends'. I think it is also because of the economic status as those age groups have good or enough income. Moreover, regarding with the education level, those people finish only middle or high school. The guardian ignorance is also one of the key factors influencing the causes of addiction on them. It is true that in most of the areas in Northern Shan state have been influenced drug problems for many years. I would say in the especially in the cultivation area you can see many users. In some parts of the Northern Shan State, it can be said that those

are not under control by the government so it was very common to see the cultivation. When I was in Namhsam, I have been seen that the old people believe that the eating a piece of black poppy daily can make strong. Yes, I have seen now at the clinic one old lady has used it for a long time, later she became addicted so her family brought her to give treatment at the moment."

Secondly, the interview with the community leader was at the last day of the data collection period at the site location. The interview took about 1 hour, the community leader was Thet, O, he is over 50 years old and he lived in Lashio since he was young.

Thet, O stated that,

"In reality, most of the drug dependents are young age especially between 13 and 16. They are not studying at the time, they are just working outside. Here, the chemical substances importing from China and India are very popular and it can get in cheap price. It is popular here that working in the opium cultivation areas can get more money rather than working formally. Most of the villagers want to go and work in opium cultivation areas. The government and the ethnic armed groups are working together to take action for the drug related crimes as I heard like that. But in the actuality, there are also some areas which are not under control by the central government and the ethnic armed groups. So, those areas are not under control by the central government or ethnic armed groups. According to the government, I brought some young drug users to the police station and they will be kept in juvenile for a while."

5.2 Social issues

The causes of drug addiction according to interview with the drug dependents are more relating more with the social factors. Social factors consisting of education level, peer pressure, guardian ignorance, the weakness of knowledge, their society, etc are leading more towards

the drug use. As regards, the peer pressure also influences most on the causes of drug addiction on drug dependents. They have been living in such kind of society for long so as they have mentioned that their friends have been used it, before they have started using it. Not only the spoken peer pressure but also the unspoken peer pressure has been influence the causes of drug addiction. The teen can influence or attract easily the way of life. The peer is more attractive among teen and the teen can accept easily to his or her peers by listening or believing to the lifestyle of the peers.

5.3 Political issues

Relating with the ethnic armed groups, the drug respondents have responded that they have been visited the ethnic control areas, those areas are freer and easier to get and use rather than the central government control areas. The villages and mountain areas are still the opium cultivation areas. Especially for the ethnic people, that would be the factors that could lead more to the drug addiction because most of the ethnic people in Myanmar are proud of their identity as an ethnic. Normally, they want to keep contacting with their groups and they do not want to be in blacklist of their groups. The main purpose of the ethnic armed groups are also to fight for their nationalism or their identity moreover, there is no doubt that the drug economy is the main economy for them because this is the only way to raise fund for them.

5.4 Emotional Life of Drug Addicts

Guilt: According to those respondents, they had the feeling of guilty. Guilty mentioned for the emotional life of drug use means that the drug addicts may aware of their behaviours causes on their loved and stress and heartache on them that's one of the emotional feelings of drugs can effect on drug addicts.

Fear: the drug addicts are fear on the stigma of exposure and the possible loss of relationships, employment, and sense of personal dignity.

Helplessness: some of the addicts want to quit drug use at sometimes so they tried to quit on their own way. But the drug addicts also accept that they became lack of control by themselves when they addicted.

Resignation: this stage is the perilous stage of drug addiction. At this stage the drug addicts need to get help not to lead to despair as they have already gave up themselves and their lives.

5.5 Previous perception of the local people on government

According to the past policy, it will criminalize the drug related crime and if they have noticed there was a drug use. The criminalizing is one of the factors that could lead to stay away from the treatment and rehab process. From the perspectives of the farmers who grow opium, 72% of the opium cultivation has mentioned that they have to grow it even for their daily life or the basic needs¹⁴⁰. They may not be interested in other crops or in alternative development because they have been used to grow it for long. For the economic relations with China, the drug trade is one of the ways to get more money in the community. The drug economy is very popular within society and it is also the way of living situation in Northern Shan state especially in the border areas China. The local people also want to depend on the economy which can get more money without many efforts.

¹⁴⁰ According to the UNODC report which has mentioned in Narcotic Drug Control Policy Myanmar

The most effective way of changing the perception of the new policy is on the harm reduction program. The drug dependents more believed on harm reduction programs by the drug dependents so they became joining the treatment sites than the past years. The number of the patients who have joined the program became increased than the past years. The methadone program is more effective for the users who can take it for long safely then the drug dependents want to join this program because they believe that they can withdraw and take the safe treatment with limits of withdrawal symptoms of heroin. Regarding with the methadone sites' locations, the number of site is still in limitations so the drug dependents have many difficulties in travel time. Some of the users may work in other places, if there is any methadone clinic in that area then they cannot move because it is difficult to propose for the methadone take away dose. So the government want to promote the harm reduction policy it needs to establish the attractive way of delivering treatment.

According to the government new policy, the government is trying to transform the treatment programs from compulsory to voluntary. The participation of the CSOs will take part in this section. In the local areas, most of the drug dependents know Asian Harm Reduction Network AHRN, that organization is helping or encouraging the drug dependents. They have created the network or the rest area for the drug dependents. The drug dependents can take rest after they have used drugs. That organization is also taking part in promoting the harm reduction program of the government. They have done the counselling process for drug dependents and attract to take methadone program. Most of the drug dependents came to the methadone because of that organization has shared the information. The participation of the awareness activity is also working slowly because some of the respondents have joined this program because of their family or friends. Unfortunately, the community leader said that,

"I know about that programs but still do not have much knowledge on it and the drug dependents do not want to join it because they do not want the other people to let them know that they are drug dependents."

The community awareness is still working in the slow process and the perceptions of the community on the drug users are still discriminating to the drug dependents. It can be said that the drug dependents are still depressing of their society. That kind of situation should promote to get the real form of harm reduction.

Considering the workforce in service providing, there is still necessary to provide the service provider for methadone sites. According to the service provider,

"The human resource is still need to promote for providing services for drug users as you can see here in methadone clinic sites most of the service providers are females. I would say male service providers need to provide because most of the drug dependents are male and sometimes it is very difficult to control them by female's force. Yes, the service providers have been provided the training for more than twice a year either by the government or by the other organizations."

For the demand reduction and alternative development part, the demand still cannot control under the government rule. The price of the drug substances are still the same as before and the seller keep selling it as usual. The community leader has mentioned that in the border area with China there is still increasing the demand rate. One of the drug dependents have not mentioned about the changes of the opium cultivation area in the village areas and ethnic armed groups. The demand reduction and alternative development is not working in the community and it can be said that nothing has changed in the community. Moreover, the

international cooperation cannot work at the moment it may be because of the practical way of life in the community for long.

5.6 Understanding changes

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the community and it can be said that nothing has changed in the community. Moreover, the international cooperation cannot work at the moment it may be because of the practical way of life in the community for long.

Conclusion

This research was successful in capturing the causes of drug addiction, the meaning of drug use and analysing the government policy by interviewing with the drug dependents, the community leader and the service provider. That was the new opportunity to analyse the drug issues, the update data may be benefit for the future development of the government policy and actions through reading this research. Rather than looking to the causes of drug addiction, it may find out the way to promote the actions or activities in the community to reduce the drug consumption. This research may need to analyse the hope of the drug dependents and the local community. By looking at analysing the government new policy, how the government policy worked during one year may mention that the policy needs to update and evaluation process should be participated. The aim of this research was to highlight the drug issues in Shan State that needs to help to the future community. If this community are still in the same situations, it may difficult to control the drug issues. This research is to encourage the local community that the government and the other agencies are working for them. The development of the future community; reducing drug consumption, sharing about drug knowledge to community through school, helping to drug dependents, encouraging the minority ethnics are the hope of the researcher. All the voices and opinions can be used for the better development in future mainly for Shan community.

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Assessing Chinese Grand Strategic Adjustment Through the Lens of Neoclassical Realism: A Case Study on the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

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Abstract

In 2013, Xi Jinping proposed the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to support investment in infrastructure and regional connectivity. With Xi's push, this vision came to life when the AIIB was formally established in 2015. The AIIB is an example of emerging Chinese institutional statecraft is one of the largest developments in the landscape of international financial institutions (IFIs) this century. For decades, China's foreign policy has been rooted in the idea of taoguang yanghui, or keeping a low profile and biding time. In face of Xi Jinping's leadership, it begs the questions if the Chinese approach has changed as China establishes itself as a regional leader. Literature offer competing views on the rise of China, its foreign policy, and the implications it has for the international order—overwhelmingly from the structural realist perspective. However, there is a lack of literature tracing how and why China's foreign policy initiatives come to be. Although structural level factors do play a large role in Chinese foreign policy formulation, this research posits that sub-structural level variables help to provide a clearer understanding of China's grand strategic adjustment, exemplified by a case study on the AIIB.

This research employs a new comprehensive framework situated within the neoclassical realist theory of foreign policy analysis, which underscores the importance of interactions between systemic and sub-systemic variables in guiding states in their foreign policy-making process. Neoclassical realism maintains that structural level factors are important in assessing foreign policy decisions, but contributes a deeper understanding by

underscoring the sub-structural level variables that these systemic stimuli must pass through, leading to decisions. The research suggests that leadership images, Chinese strategic culture, Chinese state-society relations, and domestic Chinese institutions have played a role in the decision to create the AIIB, which has played into the shift in Chinese grand strategy.

Keyword: Foreign Policy Analysis, Neoclassical Realism, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Belt and Road Initiative, Xi Jinping, Chinese Foreign Policy

1. Introduction

In 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping “proposed a vision for a multilateral financial institution designed to improve the livelihoods of Asia’s people through investment in infrastructure and enhanced regional connectivity” (Liqun, 2016). With China’s push, this vision came to life when the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) was formally established in 2015 with 57 founding members (Tiezzi, 2015). Although China has other banks and initiatives for development-oriented investments, these are state backed initiatives; the AIIB is a multilateral institution that is not solely backed by the Chinese state, and is an example of emerging Chinese institutional statecraft. The AIIB’s creation has led many to ask why China wanted to add another piece to the game of IFIs. Despite slowing economic growth in China since 2012, this initiative has been strongly pushed forward. The problem this phenomenon poses relates to the timing of its creation—it was first proposed in 2009, but was not formally established until six years later. This leaves unanswered questions as to why China chose to create it when it did, which can tell more about Chinese foreign policy and its implications at large. Although research in the field assesses the creation of the AIIB by looking at Chinese national interests in creating the AIIB, and the structural imperatives behind it, focus on in-depth and more dynamic foreign policy analysis considering sub-structural level variables is largely missing.¹⁴¹ The question to be addressed in this research is as follows: can sub-structural level variables help to explain the creation of the AIIB, and does this initiative play into or denote a change of Chinese grand strategy?

¹⁴¹ Due to the limited length of this analysis, a review of existing literature is not detailed. However, for competing perspectives on the AIIB’s role as an institution-builder, see Ren (2016), Gu (2017) and Yang (2016). Scholars such as Zhang (2016), Chesterman (2016), Nicolas (2016) and Gennari (2017) look at the AIIB’s implications for a changing world order. In addition, Chow (2017), Callaghan and Hubbard (2016) and Beeson and Li (2016) look at China’s creation of the AIIB and its use as a tool for China’s national interests.

2. Foreign Policy Analysis

Distinct, but not independent of the field of international relations, the process of understanding the cause, effect, course and the output of foreign policy decisions is known as foreign policy analysis (FPA). Early approaches to FPA were rooted in classical realism. Morgenthau's (1948) employed the idea that decisions stem from autonomous rational actors, who are subjected to the human nature of the lust for power, and placed little emphasis on the intellectual and moral characteristics of decision-makers. Waltz (1979) hoped to improve on Morgenthau's shortcomings, and his idea of structural realism, or neorealism, emphasizes that the anarchic structure of the international system and the states' desire for survival, rather than human nature, is the driving force behind state behavior. As every state must look after its own survival and fear attack from other states, they live in a system of self-help. States are "functionally undifferentiated," which are "distinguished primarily by their greater or lesser capabilities for performing similar tasks" (Waltz, 1979, p. 97). The structure of the international system changes as the distribution of capabilities amongst the units is changing, which then influences the decisions states take. Mearsheimer (2001) introduced the idea of offensive realism, and suggests that states do not merely seek only to survive; rather, their goal is to maximize their share of world power in order to enhance their security, which can lead to competition and conflict. This idea is at odds with Waltz and other defensive neorealists such as Posen (2002) and Jervis (1978) who say the system provides incentives to gain more power, but not to pursue hegemony.

Neorealism was seen as weak in that it fails to look inside of the state. Liberalism¹⁴², constructivism¹⁴³ and specific theories of foreign policy analysis¹⁴⁴ tried to overcome this weakness by unpacking the black box of the state, but largely failed to consider ideas such as power and the structure of the international system. IR theorists in all schools realized that there was a call for a re-evaluation and improvement of theory in order to overcome the limitations presented by each. Rose (1998) coined the term neoclassical realism (NCR), whose thinkers “occupy a middle ground between pure structural theorists and constructivists” (p. 152) These thinkers hold the distribution of power among states in the system, or the relative power of the states, as the independent variable in explaining state behavior. However, they consider intervening variables placed at domestic level. Systemic pressures remain important, but they must pass through intervening variables of the differentiated state-level units in order to determine foreign policy (Rose, 1998, p. 154).

Although both neorealism and NCR emphasize the anarchical nature of the international system and the state’s ultimate goal of survival, they differ in key aspects. NCR suggests that foreign policy scope is determined by a state’s position in the international system, but looks at variables such as the perception of power distribution by leaders of states, and look to how national power can be restricted or fostered by public opinion and pressure groups, which can facilitate change in an unchanging systemic environment (Kitchen, 2010, pp. 138-139). Unlike neorealists, neoclassical realists say that although the structure sets the

¹⁴² Overall, liberalist theories focus on how domestic coalitions, public opinion and political institutions determine foreign policy decisions. Moravcsik (1997) explains that a liberal state is a pluralist entity, and the way that it responds is based on its domestic interests and aggregate societal preferences, and that any policy choice must reflect those as the state serves as a “transmission belt” for societal interests to enter the political realm (p. 518).

¹⁴³ Constructivists interpret the world as the result of social construction built on ideational forces, such as ideas and beliefs, rather than material forces. Wendt (1992) contends that anarchy is not inherent in the international system, but rather a construct of the nation-states system (p. 395). Rather than material forces, Wendt claims that shared ideas and norms are what shapes state behavior and identity.

¹⁴⁴ Allison (1999), for example, focused on the role of bureaucratic organizations. He suggested that rather than being a product of a set of strategic objectives or rational actors, decisions are made according to various conceptions of national security, organizational, domestic, and personal interests through a process of “pulling and hauling” between different bureaucracies (Alden & Aran, 2017, p. 47).

boundaries for choice, individual leaders can exercise agency. Thus, “shifts in personnel, institutional power, or the popularity of particular ideas may precipitate changes in goals or encourage reassessment of the means by which to pursue them” (Kitchen, 2010, p. 139). Rather than just looking at military capabilities to assess foreign policy behavior, they emphasize that the perceptions of relative power matter. Drawing from their assessments of relative power and other states’ intentions, “leaders define the ‘national interests’ and conduct foreign policy” (Kitchen, 2010, pp. 133). NCR allows for intervening ideational factors that can facilitate change in an unchanging systemic environment.

3. Theoretical Framework: Type III Neoclassical Realism

In the twenty years since its inception, NCR has continuously evolved. Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell (2016) find that the variety of ideas and theories of NCR do not represent the full picture and explanatory power that NCR can provide. They contest that rather than strictly being a theory of FPA, NCR can help to understand international politics more broadly by looking at the aggregate policies and strategies selected by the major powers of the international system. They find it useful in explaining short to medium term policy choices of states, but also for looking at international politics more broadly over time. The authors aim to provide a more thorough framework that can provide information on “the nature of systemic stimuli that have causal importance (the independent variable) and the domestic political factors that can affect the intervening processes of perception, decision making, and policy implementation (the intervening variables),” without restricting the explanatory scope of the dependent variables, being the policy choices that states make (Ripsman, Taliaferro & Lobell, 2016, p. 32). Thus, they introduce type III NCR, which takes the NCR paradigm a step further by looking at the implications that the choices taken may have on international outcomes or structural change in the international system, making it truly a theory of international politics, rather than just FPA.

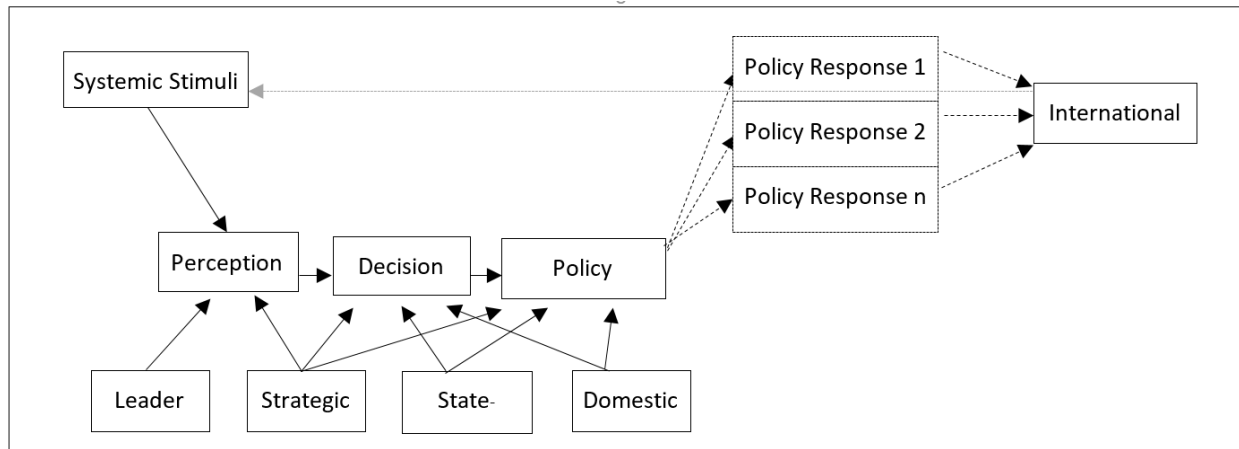


Figure 3.1 – Type III Neoclassical Realism

4. The Creation of the AIIB from the Type III Neoclassical Realist Perspective

4.1 The Dependent Variables

The dependent variable is primarily the creation of the AIIB. In order to determine how and why the AIIB has come to be, an exploration of how independent variables have been processed through the domestic Chinese transmission belt must be undertaken by looking at the intervening variables as prescribed by the type III NCR framework. Before proceeding, background on the founding of the AIIB is reviewed to serve as a base for analysis.

4.1.1 The Birth of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

Zheng Xinli is known as the ‘godfather’ or mastermind of the AIIB (Perlez, 2015). He was a CCP official until 2013 and in 2009, he helped Zeng Peiyan in founding the China Center for International Economic Exchanges (CCIEE), the think tank that later proposed the AIIB. Research suggests that the idea for an Asian infrastructure bank dates back as far as 2007, but the idea gained more attention after it was proposed at the 2009 Bo’ao Forum meeting (Pantucci & Lain, 2016, p. 59). In his capacity as a Communist party advisor, Zheng first proposed the bank in that role during the second term of Hu Jintao’s leadership (Perlez, 2015). He “persistently proposed this idea of the AIIB to then President, Hu Jintao, six times in a row,

and for whatever reason Hu Jintao did not take his proposal” (Brookings Institution, 2015). Despite Zheng’s claims that the bank would bring infrastructural development to the region, it remained stagnant. There is little to information on why the proposal of the bank was dismissed. Around the time that leadership was transferring from Hu to Xi, Zheng retired, and remained active as the Permanent Vice Chairman of CCIIEE.

When Xi became leader in 2013, the idea of the bank resurfaced. A proposal authored by Zheng was presented to leadership via Zeng Peiyan in his capacity as chairman of the CCIIEE. According to media reports, “Internal government debates about the AIIB lasted for at least six months from spring 2013 and included the Finance Ministry, the Ministry of Commerce and the CCIIEE” (Qing, 2015). However, the debate did not slow the initiative down—the tone “changed when President Xi Jinping took office in spring 2013 and threw his weight behind China’s bold ‘One Belt, One Road’ infrastructure and export strategy” (Qing, 2015). According to Zheng (2018), when he presented the idea of the AIIB to Xi and Premier Li in July 2013, they ‘fully affirmed’ it, cementing its path to becoming a reality. Xi announced the proposal of the AIIB in October 2013, and bank was formally established in December 2015 (Tiezzi, 2015). It took almost six years from the initial conception of the AIIB for it to come to life.

4.2 The Independent Variables

NCR begins by looking at the the structure of the international system as states’ behavior is first and foremost determined by the power and position that it holds in the anarchic international system. In Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell’s (2016) conceptualization of NCR, they also emphasize clarity, related to the nature and time frame of threats and the optimal responses to them, and permissiveness or restrictiveness of a strategic environment as explanatory independent variables. According to Mearsheimer (2013), power is largely rooted in the material capabilities that a state has, and “the balance of power is mainly a

function of the tangible military assets that states possess,” but he also suggests that “states have a second kind of power, latent power,” which is based on state wealth and population size, referring to the socio-economic ingredients that go into building military power (p. 78). This conception of power is important to understand the changes that have occurred in the international system, and can help to understand the systemic stimuli to which China had to react. In terms of balance of power, it is clear that the international system is still shaped by US unipolarity. However, employing Mearsheimer’s idea of latent power, distribution of power has seen a relative decrease in US power and increase in Chinese power. The economic reform that Chinese leadership pursued under Deng Xiaoping brought huge economic growth to China. Against the backdrop of the impressive growth of the Chinese economy, the US’ hegemonic status took a further hit at the onset of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC). As the US economy suffered, China continued to grow, leading to declinist commentary about the US by Chinese authors, and other members of the international community. There is also an international perception that suggests a shift from US global dominance (Nye, 2010, p. 143). This perception has had an effect on the Chinese as well, especially amongst the younger generation that fosters an increasingly intense nationalism, and “there is an overall feeling in China that there is a narrowing of the gap in power with the United States” (Nye, 2010, p. 151). In the Asia-Pacific in particular, “China’s sustained economic growth during the GFC triggered both a power transition between the United States and China as well as a regional order transformation from the old US-led order to an uncertain regional flux” (He, 2018, p. 5). In light of the rising status of China in the international system and the geopolitical importance of the region, the Obama administration shifted focus from the Middle Eastern and European spheres to East Asian countries under a policy known as ‘Pivot to Asia.’ While the diplomatic presence in the region is nothing new, the deepened levels of engagement and the strategic importance that the Obama administration has placed on the Asia-Pacific is. Many see China’s new initiatives as tit-for-tat responses to the US pivot.

The second independent variable of clarity which “involves the signals or information that states receive from the international system or a regional sub-system” is based on three subcomponents: (1) the extent to which threats are readily identified, (2) the information on the time horizon of threats, and (3) whether there is an optimal strategic response (Taliaferro, Lobell & Ripsman, 2018, p. 5). Looking at the US’ rebalance to Asia, the threat of increasing US presence in the region is readily identifiable as a threat to China. In a response to the US initiative, a 2017 paper by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said, “We cannot just have the security of one or some countries while leaving the rest insecure,” and that “To beef up a military alliance targeted at a third party is not conducive to maintaining common security.” Thus, the US pivot was clearly identified by Chinese policy-makers as a relative increase in threat; however, the time horizon and the optimal response to this threat are not as easily identifiable, lessening the overall clarity of the threat. When clarity of a state’s threats or opportunities is high, variance in policy decisions should be low; however, the less clarity there is, there is more room for influence by the intervening variables that will be discussed in the next section of this chapter (Ripsman, Taliaferro & Lobell, 2016, p. 50). As the low level of clarity has allowed China to respond with unique solutions such as the forward approaches to multilateralism in the region, like the AIIB and the BRI, type III NCR helps to understand how these specific responses were constructed by the intervening variables.

A third key independent variable is a state’s strategic environment, characterized as either permissive or restrictive depending on the imminence and magnitude of threats and opportunities that states face. The more remote and less intense the threat is, the more permissive the strategic environment (Ripsman, Taliaferro & Lobell, 2016, p. 52). The strategic environment of China is paradoxical in that it is has become more restricted with the US pivot, but at the same time more permissive as China grows more powerful. Nonetheless, as the pivot is a long-term and not inherently military policy, the magnitude and imminence of the

threat is low, which has allowed for a more permissive strategic environment. The low clarity of the Pivot to Asia, paired with a permissive strategic environment enhanced by China's rise, laid out the boundaries within which China was forced to respond. However, the situation did not present China with only one choice—it allowed for unique solutions to the new challenges that the US was presenting in the region, which came about as a result of the intervening variables prescribed by NCR.

4.3 The Intervening Variables

4.3.1 Leadership Images

At a 2015 panel discussion at the Brookings Institution, an audience member asked Zheng Xinli, “What was it that made Xi Jinping choose to go ahead with the AIIB, rather than Hu Jintao, because after all, some of the same circumstances were still existing— huge deficit in infrastructure, and China was still out in the cold in the IMF reform” (Brookings Institution, 2015). To that Zheng emphasized that “the conditions were not mature,” and also “that the President, Xi, made the decision there” (Brookings Institution, 2015). Zheng further said, “we have a leader who is much more decisive, than any leader in China in the last decade at least” (Brookings Institution, 2015). If Zheng—the mastermind behind the AIIB— had been proposing the AIIB since 2009, there must have been a basis that the economic conditions were already ripe to allow China to take a larger role in the global economic order after the 2008 financial crisis, yet it didn't happen. What was needed was a leader that was on board with the idea, and Xi was. The powerhead of the Chinese government has always been from the CCP; however, to equate a continuous CCP leadership with undifferentiated leaders would oversimplify Chinese leadership. Countless scholars (Lam, 2015, 2018; Blackwill & Campbell, 2016; Stenslie & Gang, 2016; Zhang, 2015; Poh & Li, 2017) have cited Xi's innovative and aggressive foreign policy as a departure from that of his predecessors—but NCR calls for more. In order to understand the effect that Xi has had on Chinese foreign policy, it is essential to

know his background and precisely who he is and how he thinks. Type III NCR emphasizes three different attributes to leadership images: core beliefs, leadership personality, and perception of power. By looking at these as attributed to Xi, they will help to understand why Xi responded to the incoming systemic stimuli by creating the AIIB, and why it did not happen when initially proposed to Hu's administration.

4.3.1.1 Who is Xi Jinping?

Foreign policy executive (FPE) possess a set of core values, beliefs and images that guides them in taking decisions for their states. These cognitive factors, along with a leader's personality and character in general, must be considered when understanding why leaders make the decisions that they do. Born in 1953, Xi is the first leader of China born after the 1949 revolution. Xi's new generation leadership has been shaped by his familial background, upbringing, early adulthood and political career. Xi's father, Xi Zhongxun, was a revolutionary hero who rose quickly through CCP ranks, becoming a liberal-minded vice premier in the 1950s. Xi is a 'princeling,' meaning he is one of the privileged children of the revolutionary founders of the PRC (Lim, 2012). However, Xi's father was purged from his positions and sent to jail during the 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution, and Xi was sent to do hard labor in the countryside (Bader, 2016, p. 8).

While others coped with the hardships of the years they saw as lost, Xi turned to politics and sought acceptance by the CCP— according to a contact that was close to him during the Cultural Revolution, Xi “chose to survive by becoming redder than red,” reading Marx, and laying a foundation for a career in politics (Embassy Beijing, 2009, p. 2). Xi's father was rehabilitated by Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s, which helped to open opportunities for Xi. From the 1980s to the 2000s, Xi held a series of different party, government and military positions in Fujian, Zhejiang, and eventually Shanghai in 2007 (Bodeen, 2018). Commenting

on his rise to power, the contact close to Xi said that he “exceptionally ambitious” and that he “carefully laid out a career plan that would maximize his opportunities to rise to the top levels of the Party hierarchy” (Embassy Beijing, 2009, p. 3). The source said that Xi had central leadership ambitions from day one, adding that “Xi knew how to develop personal networks and work the system” (Embassy Beijing, 2009, p. 4). On Xi’s personality, the source portrayed Xi “as an ambitious, calculating, confident and focused person” (Embassy Beijing, 2009, p. 4). He further noted that his princeling pedigree was amongst the most permanent influences shaping Xi’s worldview and that Xi “has a genuine sense of ‘entitlement,’ believing that members of his generation are ‘legitimate heirs’” to leadership, believing they “deserve to rule China” (Embassy Beijing, 2009, p. 4-5). Lampton (2019) notes that Xi and Hu are different because “Xi Jinping had a revolutionary ancestry and thus possessed a kind of red noblesse oblige, while Hu Jintao was a ‘shopkeeper’s son’” (p. 140). Purity is attached to princelings, who maintain a sense of entitlement to CCP party leadership.

Xi’s commitment to the CCP and his subsequent career, which included senior governing positions in more international-minded and economically progressive areas of China, have led him to be a different leader than his predecessors. Lampton (2019) suggests that Xi has a need “to demonstrate that he [is] a vigorous guardian of China’s interests, sovereignty claims, and global stature” (p. xiv). Not only does Xi feel entitled to his leadership position, but he also has an enduring commitment to prove that his leadership is what is best for China. Xi’s upbringing and political career have shaped the core set of values and beliefs that guide him in his ambitions and actions, which are manifested through China’s domestic and foreign policy under his leadership.

4.3.1.2 Xi's Operational Code

One tool that neoclassical realists use to look at leader images in a more scientific way is through operational code analysis. Feng and He (2017) undertook a study comparing the belief systems of Xi and Hu by employing operational code analysis by using software to quantitatively analyze their verb usage in order to determine their belief systems. A leader's belief system will determine what kind of leader he or she will be, which determines how the state will act in the international system. In order to measure the nature and behavior of states in line with leadership types, two types of beliefs are considered— philosophical beliefs and instrumental beliefs. The chart below shows the most significant differences between Xi and Hu's belief systems.¹⁴⁵

	<i>Xi Mean Scores</i>	<i>Hu Mean Scores</i>
<i>Philosophical Beliefs</i>		
P-1 Nature of Political Universe (Conflict/Cooperation)	.66*	.60*
P-2 Realization of Political Values (Optimism/Pessimism)	.46*	.41*
P-4 Historical Development (Low Control/High Control)	.19**	.14**
<i>Instrumental Beliefs</i>		
I-1 Strategic Approach to Goals (Conflict/Cooperation)	.70	.64
I-5 Utility of Means		
A. Reward	.17**	.06**
B. Promise	.09**	.02**
C. Appeal	.59**	.10**
D. Oppose	.07**	.19**
E. Threaten	.01**	.08**
F. Punish	.07**	.55**

Notes: * Significant level at $p < 0.10$ level;

** Significant level at $p < 0.05$ level (two-tailed test)

The study found that there was a significant difference in P-1 beliefs, suggesting that Xi sees others as more friendly and cooperative than hostile. In terms of the P-2 belief, a significant difference between Hu and Xi was found, suggesting that Xi is more optimistic in

¹⁴⁵ For a more detailed explanation of the methodology used and a thorough comparison of the operational codes of Hu and Xi in their entirety, see Feng and He (2017). Due to the brevity of this analysis, only the key differences have been highlighted.

realizing his political goals. The P-4 score suggests that Xi and Hu have significantly different views on the control of historical development, and that “Xi has a stronger personality or leadership style than Hu in terms of making decisive and tough decisions” (Feng & He, 2017, pp. 28-29). There is no significant difference in the I-1 beliefs regarding strategic approach to goals between Hu and Xi as both of them are more inclined towards cooperation than to conflict in pursuing their interests.

Hu’s decision not to create the AIIB and Xi’s decision to do so can be understood by looking at these differences. As Xi’s P-1 score is higher, he sees others as more friendly than hostile, and his P-2 score suggests that he is more optimistic in realizing his values and aspirations. Although information on the internal debates surrounding the creation of the AIIB is sparse, media reports that internal sources said there were “worries it wouldn’t raise enough funds to concerns other nations wouldn’t back it,” and that China was “plagued by self-doubt” when it first considered setting up the AIIB (Qing, 2015). These internal debates and worries may have plagued Hu, who sees others as more hostile, and is more pessimistic on achieving aspirations. Xi’s perception is rooted in friendliness, and his outlook is more optimistic, which left him more open to the idea of the AIIB. The other philosophical belief on which they differ is P-4, and Xi’s score is significantly higher, suggesting that he feels much more in control of historical development. This suggests that he has a stronger personality and leadership style than Hu, which affords him the ability to make tough decisions like the creation of the AIIB as it was a bold undertaking by China in face of doubts about how the international community would react.

As seen by the congruence in their I-1 scores, both leaders are more oriented towards cooperation than conflict in their strategic objectives, but the means by which they seek to achieve their goals, as seen by the distribution in their I-5 scores, is what sets their leadership

styles apart. In a 2010 speech discussing proposed reforms to the International Monetary Fund, Hu said “the reform of international financial institutions is a long and dynamic process. Quota and voting power reforms are just a starting point” and said that there should be a push for further reforms (Xin & Wheatley, 2010). By the time that Xi came to power in 2013, the IMF reforms still had not been approved, and reforms of IFIs remained weak or stalled by the US congress (Stuenkel, 2014). Hu’s and Xi’s respective responses to the stalled reforms can be explained by their I-5 beliefs. Hu’s I-5 beliefs suggest he is more oriented to take approaches of opposition, punishment, or threats. While Hu’s operational code led him to be more persistent in pushing reforms based on opposition to the current framework, he hoped to coerce other countries into giving China more representation in the existing institutions. Xi took a different, much more muscular approach than Hu. Xi decided rather than gaining more power within the existing IFIs, the establishment of the AIIB could help to more easily fulfill his visions and values for China and the region. Through the establishment of the AIIB, as with the BRI in general, Xi has been more apt to utilize means of ‘appeal,’ ‘promise’ and ‘reward,’ that will bring infrastructure and economic benefits to the region.

4.3.2 Strategic Culture

Type III NCR’s second intervening variable, strategic culture consists of the beliefs, worldviews and shared expectations of a society as a whole. Dueck (2006) argues that the structure of the international system is the main determinant of a state’s preferences, but that “policy makers will choose to frame, adjust, and modify strategic choices to reflect culturally acceptable preferences to maintain domestic political support” (Ripsman, Taliaferro & Lobell, 2016, p. 70). Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the strategic culture has evolved due primarily in a reactive sense to the changing international order. Under Mao’s leadership, China was a weak and poor country that had emerged from decades of war and outsider occupation. In the early years of the PRC, China was isolated from the international

community and focused on carrying out its revolutionary goals domestically without the interference of outsiders. After Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping became the paramount leader of China, and his largest policy changes dealt with a new domestic economic reform that called for a strategic culture that was more open to the outside world as it would require foreign investment, trade, technology and cooperation. During this period, the strategic culture was shaped by of *taoguang yanghui*, meaning to keep a low profile and bide one's time. Deng's successors, Jiang and Hu, led China during periods of immense economic growth and its emergence on the world stage, but continued to follow Deng's creed of keeping a low profile rather than projecting China on the global stage. In face of calls to enhance China's global leadership status under Hu, "the recurring Chinese response to requests for action was still, if not 'no', then all too often non-committal" (Ferdinand, 2016, p. 942). At the end of his leadership, Hu praised the status quo and was against reforms to China's political approach (Johnson & Bradsher, 2012). Xi inherited a different China, which called for a distinct strategic culture; his new ideas "reflect massive changes in China's place in the international system, its economic, political, and military strength, and China's expectation that the international system would and should accommodate this transformed China" (Bader, 2016, p. 5). Xi's guiding mantra has been *fenfa you wei*, which means to strive for achievements, and can be seen through the strategic culture that has shaped and been shaped by his leadership.

Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell (2016) "include dominant ideologies, which can affect state's attitudes toward international affairs and willingness to use force, and degrees of nationalism as important components of strategic culture;" these ideologies and strategic culture can be reconstructed over time at the agency of leaders and governments (p. 69). Culture and history are important in understanding China's strategic culture and its views of the international order. As the PRC continues to grow, "its leaders and its people must take what bearing they can by making reference to the past—and China is 'perhaps the most

historically conscious nation on Earth' (Ford, 2010, p. 12). The Chinese see history as a source of knowledge and as a model for the present (Rodzinski, 1984, p. 62). The Chinese often draw on examples from the past in order to explain the present, maintaining a tradition of legitimating the new in terms of antiquity, rooted in Confucian political philosophy and historical experiences. CCP leadership under Xi has employed ideational narratives in order to shape a strategic culture conducive to his key policy initiatives. Dian and Menegazzi (2018) help to explain China's regional initiatives through the ideational narratives of post-colonial nationalism and neo-Confucianism. These are valid arguments and have certainly interplayed with Chinese strategic culture— especially under Xi.¹⁴⁶ The largest narrative that has shaped China's strategic culture under Xi is the China dream, which shares similarities with the mentioned post-colonial nationalist and neo-Confucian narratives.

4.3.2.1 The China Dream

Towards the end of Hu's leadership, Chinese policy-makers were thinking to become more active on the global stage, but China seemed to lack "a clear, coherent and unified. . . approach to international relations and the world order" (Ferdinand, 2016, p. 942). Xi's answer to this has been the China dream. Although the rhetoric of a China dream came before Xi, Ferdinand (2016) says it has been employed by Xi due to the need for a master narrative that "copes with transformation, reform and transition while maintaining commitment to the statement of a coherent, overarching mission" as the CCP "has to appeal not just to people's material expectations, but their ideals, aspirations, hopes" (p. 944). Xi began to employ the China dream as an ideological narrative due to its plasticity and ambiguity. In a 2012 speech, Xi said "achieving the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has been the greatest dream of the

¹⁴⁶ See Dian and Menegazzi (2018) for a more thorough analysis of how the ideational narratives of post-colonial nationalism and neo-Confucianism have both fueled and allowed for China's regional initiatives.

Chinese people since the advent of modern times. This dream embodies the long-cherished hope of several generations of the Chinese people, gives expression to the overall interests of the Chinese nation and the Chinese people” (Xi, 2014, p. 38).

NCR maintains that strategic culture can be reconstructed at the agency of leaders. Often seen as his creation, Xi has used the China dream in order to justify his policy as a means to achieving the ‘rejuvenation of the Chinese nation,’ which is an idea that he has claimed as a dream of *all* Chinese people. By using such rhetoric, Xi is shaping the strategic culture by crafting the foundation of beliefs and expectations of society as a whole. The China dream is not just about equating it to the models of dreams of other civilizations, such as the American dream; rather, “it also reflects the conviction that the Chinese one was superior,” and that the “China dream is one of surpassing . . . the western development path” (Ferdinand, 2016, p. 948). Due to its ambiguity, it is hard to pin down exactly what the China dream is. According to Kuhn (2013), the Chinese dream at the national level aims for China to be a ‘moderately well-off society’ by 2020 and a modernized fully developed nation by about 2050; he says that it has four parts: strong China, civilized China, harmonious China, and beautiful China. In cases in which the strategic culture traps decision-makers, it “can prevent them from reorienting grand strategy to meet international imperatives and avoid self-defeating behavior” (Ripsman, Taliaferro & Lobell, 2016, p. 69). By employing this nationalistic Chinese narrative, it also promotes personal sacrifice and can aid in mobilization of state resources needed to support of national policies. Whereas strategic culture did not allow Hu to do so, the narrative that Xi constructed oriented the strategic culture to allow approaches like the BRI and the AIIB, which aim to bring economic prosperity to the region and project China as a power on the global stage. Ferdinand (2016) iterates that “One important factor underpinning the China dream campaign has been the growing self-confidence within the regime over China’s economic achievements,” which has translated into China’s larger role in global governance (p. 949).

Strategic culture is not only processing the systemic stimuli, but also being crafted by them. China's foreign policy is moving from a risk-averse approach, to a more optimistic one “ ‘dreaming’ about a better world in which China will have recovered its rightful place” (Ferdinand, 2016, p. 955). The China dream helps to aid in this transition.

The BRI and the associated AIIB play into the China dream in various dimensions. From the economic dimension, an integral part of the BRI— which is inherently connected to the creation of the AIIB— is to develop infrastructure in western China (Yu, 2016; Ferdinand, 2016). In addition, it will also allow Chinese companies to invest their excess capital outside of China and will provide more economic opportunities as the new infrastructure will facilitate trade routes (Yu, 2016). In the historical dimension, the BRI and AIIB will help to create a modern Silk Road, which parallels the idea of ‘rejuvenating’ the great Chinese nation (Yu, 2016). The BRI and AIIB also represent the idea of promoting the China model as an alternate to the western developmental path. From the geopolitical perspective, through these initiatives, China is using economic measures to respond to the US influence in the region, and have allowed China to become closer to Eurasia, the Middle East and North Africa. This plays into the dream as China becomes a strong diplomatic, political and economic power at the regional and global levels. The ideological narrative of the China dream has been created by changing structural imperatives, and in part by Xi's agency; this has fostered a strategic culture that the AIIB is fit to, which allowed it to come into existence.

4.3.3 State-Society Relations

The third intervening variable in the type III NCR is that of state-society relations, which looks at the impact of the harmony and cohesion, or lack thereof, between the state and society. In order to carry out foreign policy, state-society relations must allow for certain foreign policy approaches and initiatives as the relationship between the rulers and the ruled

societies “can affect whether state leaders have the power to extract, mobilize, and harness the nation’s power” (Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell, 2016, p. 71). This is not completely distinct from the previous section on strategic culture as states can employ ideology in order to foster state-society relations.

4.3.3.1 Underpinnings of Chinese Communist Party Legitimacy

According to Sørensen (2013), Chinese state-society relations are largely shaped by two different factors—legitimacy of the CCP and nationalism. CCP leadership must show that it is able to continue improving both the domestic conditions and the relative position of the state in the international system in order to maintain its legitimacy. In the early years of CCP leadership, legitimacy was based on Marxist ideology; Sørensen (2013) says that this legitimacy has been undermined, and now is based on performance on domestic stability, economic growth and growing prosperity, as well as the state’s ability to meet the Chinese peoples’ growing expectations about China’s global status. Although the Chinese economy remains strong, growth has slowed down and the CCP must continue to enhance economic growth and at the same time assert China’s regional and global leadership as it enjoys a more powerful role in the international system.

In the past, the international system was characterized by a stronger unipolarity, and it allowed China to direct its attention to domestic affairs. However, with the strengthening of the Chinese economy, the Global Financial Crisis and the US rebalance to Asia, the US’ unipolarity has decreased, and Sørensen (2013) says that now “it is difficult for Beijing to continue the free riding and sustain a profile” (p. 373). There is a growing perception amongst Chinese leaders and people about the relative decline of US power, and “this perception has increased nationalist ambitions and expectations among people who believe that China. . . should stand up and take its rightful position as a great power” (Sørensen, 2013, p. 376). This

has challenged the CCP's ability to maintain a low-profile, which the Chinese people see as inappropriate for a great power. Achieving CCP legitimacy depends on how the leaders react to the expectations of the Chinese people, which change as the international system changes. Another aspect of Chinese state-society relations is nationalism, which Sørensen (2013) says there are two kinds—a top-down nationalism and a bottom-up nationalism. Traditionally, CCP leadership has used top-down nationalism instilling the idea that “only a strong China led by the CCP can regain China's rightful international status and respect” (Sørensen, 2013, p. 377). However, as China has opened room for activism in Chinese society, there is also a bottom-up nationalism that creates “expectations of the people that the leadership will act firmly in conducting foreign and security policy” (Sørensen, 2013, p. 377). This bottom-up nationalism puts pressure on leaders to be firm in international negotiations and demonstrate China's rightful place in the international system. Sørensen (2013) says that since early 2012, “such bottom-up nationalist pressure has been especially constraining for the Chinese leadership” (p. 378). There is a need for CCP leadership to show China's importance in the world by using its growing economic and military power as many within China see the country's external behavior as too weak. Rather than reflecting purely a greater self-confidence, Sørensen (2013) says that China's foreign policy “actually reveals an internally conflicted, inward-looking, and reactive China” (p. 380). As economic growth continues, CCP leadership feels more pressure to respond to the demands of the international system and the bottom-up demands of Chinese society.

Xi's answer to this has been the China dream, which was discussed in the previous section. It represents the newest manifestation of the top-down nationalist approach that helps not only to foster a positive strategic culture, but also to maintain state-society relations as the Chinese people call for China to play a larger role on the global stage and maintain domestic economic growth. Lampton (2015) writes “that the leadership concern with public

opinion, nationalism and the incendiary character of sovereignty issues all mean that being tough will coexist with a desire to pacify the periphery and the outside world,” and that under Xi, the overall strategic intention of China is “to increase the representation and say of China” (p. 777). Not only do initiatives like the BRI and AIIB play into the nationalist calls for a more active role on the international stage, but they will also help to enhance economic growth, which the CCP needs in order to maintain its legitimacy by bringing prosperity to China and its people. Although China is not a democracy, it still has to worry about the domestic demands that allow space for China to maneuver in face of changing systemic pressures. By looking at the state-society relations that Xi maintains, it presents a clearer understanding as to why the AIIB initiative moved forward under his leadership— not only because state-society relations allowed it, but that they also called for it.

4.3.4 Domestic Institutions

The final set of intervening variables is that of domestic institutions, which the FPE must navigate to respond to the incoming systemic pressures. At the macro-level, as the CCP is the only ruling party, it allows leaders to implement multi-year or even multi-decade plans. Although democratic constraints like checks and balances may not be as strong in non-democratic states, it is not to say that CCP leaders do not have to navigate these institutions. In non-democratic states, “domestic institutions determine the leadership’s scope of authority and the degree to which it must consult or respect the wishes of key societal interests, such as the military, the aristocracy, or important business elites” (Ripsman, Taliaferro & Lobell, 2016, p. 77). In order to understand how the setup of domestic institutions allowed for Xi to undertake the AIIB, Xi’s anti-corruption campaign, his institutional reforms, and the role of think tanks will be analyzed.

4.3.4.1 Xi's Anti-Corruption Campaign: Ousting the Opposition

Xi initiated an anti-corruption campaign upon taking leadership in 2012, and has seen a huge purge of CCP officials that have been deemed corrupt. By 2014, reports said that 300 officials had been questioned and arrested (Tiezzi, 2014). Although it has been seen as an effort to restore faith in the CCP, Xi's anti-corruption campaign has also been a tool to oust opposition within the party. Although many Chinese leaders have taken anti-corruption efforts in the past, the degree to which Xi is doing it is much stronger (Shambaugh, 2018). The anti-corruption campaign is not only a means to get those in Xi's way out, but also to bring those who share his vision in. The anti-corruption drive saw the systemic purging of over 300 officials closely tied to former Politburo Standing Committee member Zhou Yongkang who was jailed on charges of corruption (Tiezzi, 2014). By removing Zhou and his circle, the sources said that it was helping to help Xi oust potential rivals, and at the same time open up positions for Xi's allies (Tiezzi, 2014). In addition, Xi was particularly interested in promoting officials who would support his reform agenda, promoting his like-minded officials from his inner-circle to key positions to help carry out his desired reforms (Tiezzi, 2014). By ousting rivals and bringing in allies, it has helped Xi to more easily navigate challenges posed by domestic institutions in the foreign policy making process.

4.3.4.2 Xi's Centralization of Power

In China, there are three main bodies that carry out the foreign policy making—the CCP, the PLA and the State. With China's opening and reform, bureaucratic frameworks were created in order to manage new relations, challenges and opportunities. In his research, Lai (2010) looks at the institutions and players that have diversified the policymaking process in China; under Hu, the idea of fragmented authoritarianism and collective leadership was intensified as the range of institutions that had influence in the foreign policy making process was expanding (p. 135). Lampton (2015) suggests that since the 1980s, "foreign and domestic

observers have noted that sometimes China's bureaucratic left hand does not know what the right hand is doing," and that there has been an overwhelming lack of coordination hindering successful development and implementation of policy (p. 764). Whereas Xi's immediate two predecessors relied on the professional foreign policy apparatus rooted in the State Council, relevant ministries and public intellectuals in order to shape and conduct policy, Xi has shifted away from this approach. At an October 2013 seminar on neighborhood diplomacy, Xi stated that China needs "to promote reform and innovation in diplomatic work and strengthen the planning of our diplomatic activities," and emphasized the need for a general framework to coordinate diplomatic work (Xi, 2014, p. 329). In a November 2014 speech, he emphasized the need for "central and unified leadership of the Party, reform and improve institutions and mechanisms concerning foreign affairs" (Lampton, 2015, p. 761). Lampton (2015) says that Xi's calls denote his desire to make the CCP the key instrument in developing policy as the professional state bureaucracy is "too cautious, too co-opted by traditional arrangements and not intellectually innovative" (p. 761). Xi has made changes in order to be able to better guide the domestic institutions in order to carry out his policy and strategy.

Within the existing framework, Xi has modified the Central Leading Groups (CLGs), most of which are chaired by himself. Although the Central Leading Group on Foreign Affairs (CLG-FA) was created to coordinate the different bodies that carry out Chinese foreign policy, Xi has eliminated two seats in the CLG-FA, and in the current group, there is only one representative from the PLA, and one from the MFA (Wang, 2017, p. 39). This has created a less diversified CLG-FA, which helps to centralize its power under the CCP, rather than with the state or the PLA. Xi chairs the majority of the CLGs and has created new ones, including one for Comprehensive Deepening Reforms (CLG-CDR) which also plays a role in his new global strategy.

In 2013, Xi announced the creation of a National Security Commission (NSC), which he chairs. Its most important mandate “is developing a national security strategy that is bigger than simply military strategy, a requirement reflecting the increasing complexity of the world and the insufficiency of China’s previous domestic security and other plans to deal with it” (Lampton, 2015, p. 770). The NSC helps coordinate the very fragmented bureaucracy that Xi inherited when he came to power, and has also helped to consolidate his power over internal and external PRC policymaking. Lampton (2015) suggests that Xi has created the NSC in efforts to create new institutional pathways, and to “bring in new people not so beholden to the previous constellation of interests” in order to not only achieve better policy coordination, but also more personal control over the system (p. 760). Wang (2017) says that the NSC demonstrates Xi’s “strong will to better coordinate all subordinates not only in the CLG-FA, but also other relevant bodies in the central government and other central leading groups” (p. 40). As he maintains control over the government and most of the CLGs, it has helped to centralize control under Xi. All hierarchies, whether in the state, PLA or CCP, lead to Xi, leaving him the almost solo coordinator of Chinese foreign and national security policy, allowing Xi to maintain a less collective leadership than in the past under Hu. Not only has Xi reformed and created new policy-influencing bodies, but he has also created new institutionalized mechanisms that are specifically aimed to carry out his initiatives. For example, in October 2013, the first ever Central Conference on Neighborhood Diplomacy was held and chaired by Xi himself; and in November 2014, he convened the Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs, which has only been convened one other time in the last ten years (Hu, 2015, p. 11). This has helped to coordinate Xi’s new vision for Chinese foreign policy.

These changes play a large role in the proposal, development and implementation of the AIIB. Despite reports that there was internal rift concerning the creation of the AIIB, under Xi’s leadership, there is less room for meaningful dissent of policies that have been dictated by

the CCP leadership. Thus, as the proposal was accepted and announced by Xi in 2013, the debates surrounding it— especially from the state ministries— did not have as large of an impact as they would have had under more collective leaders like Hu. In addition, with platforms like the Central Conference on Neighborhood Diplomacy for coordination on policies like the BRI and AIIB in particular, it cements their importance in Chinese foreign policy. Thus, the domestic institutions have been reformed in order for initiatives like the AIIB to be presented to the top leadership, and have also been redesigned in order to allow Xi and his leadership to carry out his initiatives.

4.3.4.3 Think Tanks and the “Filter Power” in Chinese Foreign-Policy Making

Under Hu’s leadership, Wang (2017) said the ‘filter power’ to decide which proposals (from state-run bodies, or non-state bodies like universities or think tanks alike) would be submitted to top leadership resided with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and only the ones deemed good by the MFA were submitted to the CLG- FA for consideration. This means that many proposals never made it to top leadership for consideration. Although Zheng Xinli said that the AIIB proposal was denied by Hu’s administration six times, it could have been denied by him, his aides or the MFA. Under Xi’s leadership, the filter power lies with top leadership, the CLG-FA and the NSC, allowing them to “choose from a larger ‘policy pool’ to decide on the best policy to launch” (Wang, 2017, p. 41). This is paradoxical in a way— Xi is allowing more voices to submit their policy ideas, but it is going directly to the leadership under his control. Diversified input meets a single- handed leadership, whereas under Hu, less diverse input met collective leadership.

On think tanks in particular, Xi has taken initiative to increase their in the policy-making process (Brookings Institution, 2015) . However, Xi’s opening to think tanks is not to be

misconstrued; although think tanks are flourishing more than in the past in China, their impact on the policy-making process largely relies on personal networks and access to top government officials (Keane, 2014, p. 580). The proposal for the AIIB was submitted under Xi's leadership through the CCIEE, a nongovernmental think tank that enjoys close ties to the government. Though it is hard to know the exact dynamics in play during the AIIB's formation, it is worth noting the players that were involved in order to try to understand why the AIIB moved forward under Xi's leadership after it was proposed by the CCIEE. Li (2014) presented a series of papers on Xi's inner-circle. According to his research, Liu He, a liberal financial technocrat that serves as Xi's chief economic advisor, is in his inner-circle. The two were childhood friends and grew up together, and Xi has entrusted him with a series of influential posts. Li (2014) says that Liu worked with think tanks before gaining his current position. This may have played an important role in Xi's opening to think tanks. According to Li (2014), Liu He also worked very closely to Zeng Peiyan during his decade stint working at the State Planning Commission. This is of importance because it was Zeng who proposed the AIIB as chairman of the CCIEE, and his personal ties with Liu may have helped the proposal receive more attention. Xi is more receptive to think tanks than his predecessors—and probably even more so when the think tanks maintain relationships with those in Xi's personal network. This, in tandem with other changes to domestic institutions that Xi has to navigate, could help to explain why the AIIB moved forward under Xi, rather than Hu.

5. Conclusions

A criticism of NCR is that it fails to explain which intervening variable has the largest impact on foreign policy decision-making processes. However, in the specific case of China, this is actually a strength when analyzing foreign policy-making. The research has found that type III NCR may be even more apt for non-democratic states than democratic ones as intervening variables often play in close tandem in non-democratic regimes. While some critics

of NCR contest that it merely applies variables in an *ad hoc* and context-specific case, this study has shown that context-specific cases can be related to larger changes of strategy, while using a comprehensive framework of variables to explain. This has helped to overcome the lack of cohesiveness and systemized application that many critics have pointed to. An optimal next step for the neoclassical realist paradigm would be to help systemize which intervening variables are most important for different regime types in order to help future researcher apply the intervening variables in a more definitive way. This is a natural next step and within the limitations of the paradigm because NCR holds domestic variables as important; thus, systemizing intervening variables and their influence on the basis of regime type would be a valuable addition, without challenging the key tenets of the NCR approach. As NCR just turned twenty years old, it is only natural that it needs to continue to be refined; after nearly 70 years since Morgenthau introduced his ideas of classical realism, there are still a multitude of evolving approaches within the realist research paradigm. Research such as the one undertaken here are important in directing future theoretical approaches.

The different intervening variables interact and cannot be seen in isolation, or it would provide a limited and incomprehensive understanding of why certain decisions were taken at the time they were. Though the analysis of the intervening variables unveils different implications for each, NCR helps to show how they all work in tandem when Chinese foreign policy is formed and implemented. Research found that Xi's background and operational code differ from those of his predecessor Hu. Their differences can help to explain why the AIIB was embraced and initiated under Xi's leadership rather than Hu's. Type III NCR says that leader images are not as impactful in longer term strategies; however, this analysis suggests that in the case of China, leader images do matter on most decisions due to CCP leaders' ability to shape strategic culture, state-society relations and domestic institutional framework. This research has shown that the BRI and the AIIB are in line with the strategic culture that Xi has

both faced and formed during his leadership, which reacts to and guides the Chinese peoples' perceptions of the international system, maintaining state- society relations. Domestic institutions have undergone changes that have allowed Xi to centralize power even further, allowing him to more easily carry out his foreign policy initiatives.

This analysis has found that there has been a shift in Chinese grand strategy, into which the creation of the AIIB has played. As the international system has undergone changes, it is inevitable that as a rising power, China has also undertaken strategic adjustment. As China has done in the past, it has adjusted to the realities of the international system, which has changed its foreign policy strategy. NCR is helpful in explaining how and why the grand strategic adjustment has been undertaken, and the tone and degree to which it has been changed—much credited to the leader images and strategic culture under Xi. Thus, there has been a shift in grand strategy that has been primarily fueled by China's rising status and the relative decline in US power—however, it is the intervening variables that have characterized this shift in China's grand strategy. Xi's policies have great potential and he currently enjoys domestic conditions which allow him to enact policies such as the BRI and the AIIB. That being said, Xi is already facing challenges, including increasing tensions in the South China Sea, an ongoing trade war with the US, and claims of 'debt-trap' diplomacy, largely related to the BRI. These external problems will have to be again processed through the domestic level variables and may have an impact on Xi's grand strategy going forward. If Xi's policy changes fail to fulfill his promises to his people, he may face constraints as an FPE and wake up to a Chinese nightmare.

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Effects of Chinese Investments in Sihanoukville on The Local Community

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Abstract

The coastal city of Sihanoukville in Cambodia is undergoing rapid change caused by massive Chinese industrial and real estate investments. How these recent developments are affecting the local Cambodians has not been studied so far. Therefore, the research closes this gap.

Chinese immigration to Sihanoukville has increased massively since many Chinese companies mainly employ Chinese workers, while also the influx of Chinese tourists has risen.

Locals often do not profit from the investments. Rents and property prices are exploding, leading to evictions, the closing down of local shops, leading to an economic domination by Chinese businesses. Although there are more work opportunities than before, high-skilled jobs are often for Chinese only, while locals mainly get employed in the lower segments. There are cases of human right violations and labor exploitation, especially in the Sihanoukville SEZ. This fosters resentments towards the Chinese, crime rates are increasing, and the urban infrastructure is overburdened, leading to severe environmental problems and related health issues. Especially the poor in the city feel excluded, as they often do not benefit from the investments. Economic interests in Sihanoukville pursued both by the Chinese state and private investors prevail over the interests of the citizens. These issues are currently not adequately addressed by the city government, which often does not implement existing laws. However, if the Cambodian government will change its current course, ensuring a stricter compliance with the laws and putting the wellbeing of the population above other interests, the long-term effects of the current transformation can be positive and improve the livelihoods especially of the poor.

Keyword: Chinese investments, Sihanoukville, Inequality

1. Introduction

Sihanoukville, a coastal city in Cambodia, is one of the country's main tourist destinations. It is situated in the province Preah Sihanouk, with a total population of approximately 286,000.

The cityscape changed a lot during the last three years, mainly through massive investments by large Chinese companies, some of which are state-owned, in real estate and industry. The transformation becomes clear as soon as one enters Sihanoukville. A large number of Chinese signs can be seen everywhere, and construction sites are spread all over the city. Apart from hotels and condos, a large number of casinos have been built in the last three years, targeted to Chinese tourists and Chinese residents of Sihanoukville, which is now even called the 'New Macao' by the media. With 88 registered casinos in January 2019, Sihanoukville has in fact already more than the double number of casinos operating than Macao (41) ("Gambling," 2019; Kimsay, 2019).

But the changes are not only apparent in the sheer number of construction sites and high-rise buildings. Chinese enterprises are active in all parts of the economy in Sihanoukville. Chinese street food vendors, restaurant chains, scooter rentals, barbers, pawnshops and massage parlors can be seen everywhere in the city, crowding out the local businesses.

This is changing the life for everyone living in the city.

While a few local landowners have made big profits and workers have found at least temporary jobs on the construction sites, others find it harder to survive and have in some cases no other choice but to move out of the city. Some of them must leave because they cannot afford the increasing rents, others are evicted to make room for new construction projects, also before the background of severe land title problems in Cambodia.

The rapid changes not only have economic consequences on the lives of the locals, but they also manifest themselves in environmental and socio-cultural terms. Crime rates are rising, mainly due to Chinese not respecting the rule of law, leading to a feeling of insecurity among the locals. Environmental problems are on the rise, since the existing infrastructure was not designed for the needs of the rapidly growing population.

These effects lead to anti-Chinese sentiments and the feeling of alienation among the Cambodians and cause conflicts between both groups.

The Chinese investments go hand in hand with massive and rapid changes in the landscape of the city, the immigration of a substantial number of Chinese and their growing economic power and influence in Sihanoukville – all with the explicit and often enough with the implicit approval by the Cambodian government. The nature of these effects and their impact on the local community have not yet been analyzed and measured against the situation before the Chinese invested in the city. Therefore, this paper is part of the first research examining the impacts of these investments on the local community in Sihanoukville.

2. Effects of the Chinese investments on the locals

2.1 Employment

The Chinese investments clearly created new job opportunities in Sihanoukville, mainly on the construction sites for the new real estate and infrastructure projects. The Sihanoukville SEZ will also bring new employment opportunities. More than 20,000 jobs were created since 2008. The aim is to generate 80,000- 100,000 jobs in total in the second development phase, which is said to start soon (Kha, 2019).

According to a manager of M' Lop Tapang, a local NGO, these job opportunities attract many people from rural areas to the city: "What we're seeing, is (...) a large number of families who come to work at construction sites. And because you might now when you drive around you see, it's entire families. Parents come to work there and bring their children. However, jobs in the construction sector will decline once the building boom is over. But then, at this point in the development of the city, it is likely that there will be more well-paid and mid- to high-skilled jobs than today."

In principle, local Cambodians in tourist areas can find new jobs in restaurants and guesthouses or they can open food stalls or offer other services when tourism is increasing. As a consequence, they could earn a more stable and rising income.

This effect could have been expected in Sihanoukville with the massive rise of Chinese tourists and migrant workers. But this did not happen. Most Chinese people eat in Chinese restaurants, where Chinese people are working. Locals are employed only in a few cases. At the same time, many local restaurants had to close because they could no longer afford the exploding rents: "A lot of small shop owners had closed, like street food sellers. Many were just been taking over by Chinese restaurants, or Chinese companies who just bought the land where people used to sell their food".

Therefore, locals in the gastronomy are put at a double disadvantage. They do not profit from the new jobs because these go to the Chinese, and they even lose their existing jobs because rents are too high and also because their traditional clients – locals and Western tourists – no longer see Sihanoukville as an attractive holiday destination due to the dominant Chinese influence and now prefer other places in Cambodia.

The same happens in the small shops and at the markets where the buyers are mainly locals, but not Chinese. According to a market seller in an interview, “People at the market who sell vegetables and meat have a hard life now. They do not earn enough”. The Chinese people in Sihanoukville buy Chinese goods imported from China in shops run by Chinese. Many shops do not stock a single local product.

Many interviewed locals agree that indeed there are new employment opportunities and they expect more in the future (Appendix). However, as will be explained in the following, many new jobs are not available to the local population at all, as they will require new skills, such as at least a basic knowledge of the Chinese language. The interviews with beach vendors showed that they generally earn less money now. Contrary to other interviewees, informal beach vendors had a pessimistic view on future employment opportunities related to the Chinese investments (Appendix). At the same time, Chinese employers pay higher wages to locals who get these jobs and thus profit from the Chinese investments. But a side-effect of the higher wages paid by the Chinese are rising prices in the city for basic products and services.

People who speak Chinese already today can earn higher wages than before (Appendix). Many locals therefore learn Chinese now. However, not everyone can afford a language course. On a billboard in Sihanoukville, Chinese translators are offered between 700 US\$ and 1,200 US\$ per month, while a garment factory worker earns a minimum monthly wage of 170 US\$ and a civil servant 250US\$ (Faulder & Kawase, 2018).

New employment opportunities are not equal.

In general, Chinese people have better chances to get a job in the upper segment than Cambodians. Some Chinese companies do not employ Cambodians at all, and many hotels employ Cambodians only in menial jobs. For example, a Cambodian working for a Chinese-

owned five-star hotel says: “There are many Cambodians working here as well as Chinese. The high-level positions are mostly taken by Chinese people and rarely by Cambodians. They tend to give the privilege to their own race instead of choosing a local for a manager position unless they have to”. In the Sihanoukville SEZ, almost all laborers are Cambodians, while the vast majority of the managers is Chinese (Franceschini, 2019, p. 85).

The same can be seen on the construction sites around the city: “Since most projects in the province are financed and developed by the Chinese, high-skilled jobs are usually given to their nationals,” said Non Thim, a construction analyst in Sihanoukville (Wong, 2019).

The case of a Chinese state-owned company which does not employ locals due its internal rules, a common story for Chinese state-owned companies, according to William Callahan, expert on international relations with a focus on China. This shows a general unwillingness to employ locals. But there are also other reasons: Many Cambodians do not have the necessary skills for the qualified jobs, especially language skills (Wong, 2019). Another reason are differences or perceived differences in culture, so that Chinese tend to stick to their own people.

In general, perspectives are bad especially for low-skilled people who do not work on construction sites or in sewing factories, for instance beach vendors, market sellers, hairdressers or taxi drivers (Appendix). For example, a beach vendor selling sunglasses replies to the question if he does business with Chinese tourists: “It’s very hard. They do not speak English. I try to sell but they often do not want to buy from me”.

In terms of employment, therefore, many poor people do not benefit from the investments, especially those working in informal tourist sectors. On the other hand, new jobs

are being created, but mainly for low-skilled workers while higher positions are usually filled by Chinese.

2.2 Rising prices

Prices for all goods and services in the city are rising substantially. Land and rent prices in particular are skyrocketing. This mainly affects the poor in Sihanoukville. They can no longer afford to live in the city and move to other places (Appendix).

This is confirmed by the Minister of Tourism in Sihanoukville: “The inflation grows – the Chinese come and buy everything, and so all prices increase. The people who can get money from Chinese have no problems, but simple people get negative impacts from this Chinese development”.

The poor who still live in Sihanoukville mainly work on construction sites, where they live in a camp. Others live in slums where they do not have to pay rent. Many people moved outside of Sihanoukville, but still work in the city. Most of the poor, however, moved to more affordable places.

But not only the poor are affected. Many people with a middle-class income have to move as rental prices are the highest in Cambodia. According to several Chinese living in the city, they are higher than in Beijing (“A Chinese View on Sihanoukville,” 2019; Tostevin & Thul, 2017). This explains why also many Western expats cannot afford to pay the rent in Sihanoukville anymore (Howard, 2019, p. 21).

There are no official statistics on rental and land prices, but according to several newspaper articles, they have multiplied (Kosal, 2018; Pisei, 2018b, 2019).

A glaring example for this development is the local NGO M' Lop Tapang. The NGO had rented an office space for 500 US\$ a month. Now they are asked to pay 5,000 US\$, which they obviously cannot afford. This is a problem for other NGOs as well: "We are lucky that we own the land of the main office, a lot smaller NGOs that did not own land are not working in Sihanoukville anymore".

While many of the old inhabitants have moved away from the city, the city continues to expand and to grow because the Chinese immigrants can afford the high prices. Yun Min, the governor of Sihanoukville, estimates that half of the property in the city is rent by Chinese (Tostevin & Thul, 2017).

2.3 Other findings related to economic changes

In general, wage levels have risen, and poverty has declined in Sihanoukville. The latter, however, might also have to do with the fact that many poor people have left the city (Pisei, 2018a). It can therefore be said that the changes brought about by the Chinese investments in Sihanoukville have shifted at least some poverty to other regions.

The rising wage levels are also related to the general growth of the Cambodian economy. Cambodia's economy has recorded an average annual growth of 7 percent over the last two decades. Due to this successful development, the country is no longer a low-income but a lower-middle income country. On a national basis, the GDP per capita raised from below 500 US\$ in the early 2000s to 1,384 US\$ in 2017 ("World Bank: GDP per capita," n.d.). In Sihanoukville, the GDP per capita in Sihanoukville was over 2,000 US\$ in 2017 – the highest in Cambodia (Cheng, 2019, p. 8). More recent statistics are not available, but it can be assumed that the figures have further increased.

In the local population, the big winners in economic terms are Cambodians who own land or property, due to the exploding real estate market. Many locals do have new jobs, mainly low-skilled ones in the construction sector and in the Sihanoukville SEZ, but the real economic benefits resulting from the Chinese investments are confined to the Chinese community.

2.4 Responsibility of The Chinese Businesses Towards the Workers and The Local Community

While the new jobs in the Sihanoukville SEZ and in other parts of Sihanoukville are most welcome, they also have aspects on the bad side. These are related to the treatment of local workers and the disregard of laws in the Sihanoukville SEZ. Although Cambodia officially allows labor union pluralism, no labor unions are active in the Sihanoukville SEZ. At the same time, factory workers in the zone are disempowered and exploited and would urgently need organizations protecting their rights. If they make attempts to organize unions or express discontent, they get blacklisted, and their photos and other personal details are circulated among the factories in the SSEZ. Usually, workers get hired on short-term contracts for three to six months only (Franceschini, 2019).

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) found out that there were Human Right violations. Workers were forced to work overtime for longer times than allowed by law. Wages were deducted by 20-30 US\$ if workers were absent for a day without a medical certificate or an unauthorized leave of absence. The CCHR cites restrictions on the freedom of expression, of assembly and of association. Workers who established unions and associations, or tried to, got fired (Cambodian Center for Independent Media, 2018).

On the construction sites, the living conditions are often below acceptable standards. Often workers bring their families to live on the construction sites, although sanitation and other utilities are hardly existing there. Their children have no access to education. The fact that many young people seek work on the construction sites has led to the rise of drop-out rates from school.

The construction sites and the constructions themselves are often dangerous places. The World Bank called Sihanoukville in a report of 2018 a city of “uncontrolled real estate development”. The construction permits are granted on a case-by-case basis, often known as ‘built first, license later’, while the granting of permits and control of construction is beyond the authority of individual provincial departments and municipalities (World Bank Group, 2018, pp. 40– 41) . This lack of control leads to dangerous and sometimes life- threatening construction sites. In June 2019, a building collapsed, leaving 28 people death, and 26 injured (Narim, 2019).

Dangerous construction sites and low-quality buildings are frequently discussed in the expat community of the city; as even high-rise buildings are often built without a proper foundation. Some buildings are even built on sand.

However, there are also examples of how Chinese companies try to assume responsibility for the local workers and to share some benefits of their investments. As mainly low-skilled and female workers are employed in the Sihanoukville SEZ, this can be seen as a contribution to the goals of social and economic inclusion. Free vocational training for technical skills for workers and students from the area is provided in a vocational training center funded by the Chinese government. The ‘Cambodia-China Friendship Polytechnic Institute’ has been

training more than 700 students since its opening in 2018 in fields like accounting, tourism and computing (“Jiangsu promotes joint venture development in Cambodia,” 2019; Kha, 2019).

2.5 Crime

With the new Chinese influence, crime incidents and violence have become more common. From 2017 to 2018, the crime rate increased by 25 percent in Sihanoukville, according to official statistics (Kimmarita, 2019).

Of all foreigners, Chinese nationals are the most criminally active in Cambodia. 241 out of 341 foreigners who were detained in the first quarter of 2019 were Chinese (Nachemson & Meta, 2019).

The Chinese in Sihanoukville often show disrespect for the local culture and the rule of law, knowing that law enforcement is ineffective, and fines can easily be avoided by bribing the officials. Against this background, gun shootings, violent attacks and drunken driving have increased, creating a general atmosphere of insecurity among the locals.

In January 2018, Yun Min, the governor of Sihanoukville, wrote a letter to the interior minister, complaining about the situation: “It provides the chance for Chinese who are part of the mafia to do criminal [activities] and kidnap the Chinese investors and create an insecure environment in the province” (M. Dara, Aless, & Sassoon, 2018).

The Chinese Embassy offered its help to get the situation under control, but also pleads for enhanced law enforcement (Suy, 2018; Vireak, 2019).

Less visible to the locals, but not of a lesser criminal nature are the money laundering activities by the Chinese, which is one of the main issues in Sihanoukville, especially in the real

estate and the unregulated gambling sector. Here again, laws and regulations are either lacking completely or they are not enforced.

2.6 Environmental and health issues

Since the construction boom in Sihanoukville started and the population in Sihanoukville increased in the wake of the substantial immigration of Chinese, several environment and health issues have developed or worsened. The problems concern the inadequacy of urban infrastructure, pollution by industrial and construction activities, and threats to the health of the citizens.

Waste Disposal

Sihanoukville has had a waste disposal problem for many years. This got worse with the rapid growth of the city during the last three years (Meta & Amaro, 2017).

Besides citizens disposing of their waste illegally, also many construction sites get rid of their waste illegally, dumping it on places not prepared for this purpose. Others simply burn it, considering the costs for the waste disposal company as too high. The generally low environmental and sustainability standards on the construction sites also contribute to negligence and carelessness when it comes to waste disposal.

Due to the rapid growth in the city, the sheer amount of waste is increasing, too. The waste management systems are not designed for these volumes. Therefore, the garbage disposal company extends the intervals between the picking up of trash.

This has health-related consequences. David Shoemaker, who works for the NGO M' Lop Tapang says: "We're also seeing a lot of new health problems now. Many kids are coming to us with skin infections. Our doctors and nurses have always worked with diseases

caused by living in poverty, like malnutrition. But now we're seeing a lot more things related to pollution, dirt and so on".

This problem could be solved if the government ensured the compliance with the contracts concluded with the garbage disposal company. Construction sites and other places where waste gets disposed illegally should be monitored more closely, and basic rules should be enforced.

Sewage and drainage systems

The World Bank indicated in a report from 2018 that Sihanoukville is highly vulnerable to floods and needs urgent improvements in drainage and flood protection (World Bank Group, 2018, p. 33).

Currently, the existing systems are not effective enough. In addition, wastewater from some hotels and casinos is flowing without treatment into the sea, causing environmental and health problems (Sotheary, 2019). In fact, several big hotels which opened only recently are accused of introducing their sewage water directly into the sea, amongst them Sokha hotel, Xihu hotel and Sunshine Bay hotel ("Alarming: video shows Sihanoukville's Independence Beach awash with sewage," 2019; Sotheary, 2019).

Seawater which was tested at Occheutal beach included *E. coli*, *trichomonas intestinalis*, trophozoite and ammonia, originating from human feces and urine. This can lead to diseases like diarrhea, vomiting and stomachache. Some of these pollutants may even be lethal.

Another environmental issue relates to the drainage systems in Sihanoukville. Rice fields and other natural drainage areas are more and more often replaced by roads and

buildings. This makes the city more vulnerable to floods. David Shoemaker from the NGO M' Lop Tapang said that floods increased in 2018 due to the construction activities, and they expect even more severe problems in the city in 2019.

It is likely that most negative impacts regarding sewage and wastewater treatments are temporary, as systems are modernized and expanded. However, the flood problem could become a serious issue, as there is no comprehensive urban plan addressing this problem, and existing urban planning concepts such as the 'Sihanoukville Master Plan' are not implemented.

Chinese investments in Sihanoukville therefore come at a cost for the environment and for the health of the citizens. The situation might improve in the future when the construction projects have been finished and higher environmental standards in general have been established. However, the government should take immediate steps to protect the environment and the people.

2.7 Socio-cultural identity

The speed of the development in Sihanoukville is overwhelming for many locals. They observe the changes in their immediate surroundings without being able to influence them. While they may appreciate the advantages of development and growth in theory, the majority of the locals only experience the disadvantages in their everyday life.

At the same time, they see that a small group of their Cambodian countrymen – landowners, wealthy businesspeople and the political elite – is profiting enormously from the new opportunities and maintains excellent contacts to Chinese businesspeople. This further aggravates the feeling of being excluded and put at a disadvantage. It promotes division and

hostility and a feeling of alienation in their own society. Grudgingly, they say, who has the money has the power.

And the money comes mainly from the Chinese. The Chinese now stand for approximately 30 percent of the population of Sihanoukville. They have changed the city landscape completely, putting their Chinese stamp everywhere. They are not interested in the Khmer culture and language, in mingling with the locals or in learning their values and their habits. They keep to their own community and do not initiate contacts with the locals except if there is a business need behind.

They often show disrespect for the rule of law.

A good example of this is the case of the Jinding Hotel and Casino at Koh Rong Samloem in Sihanoukville province which shows how some Chinese immigrants ignore laws and authorities:

The casino was built illegally on a public beach, had no authorization from relevant authorities, used an expired gaming license, promoted illegal online gaming, played music too loud and harassed local residents. On one occasion, the casino's security chief had fired gunshots into the air (Finney, 2019; Mother Nature Cambodia, 2019).

After an activist group drew attention to the grievances, and newspapers reported on the issues, the provincial administration ordered the hotel to close on the 22nd of March, but it continued to operate. Then, the provincial hall sent a letter to the provincial police headquarter on the first of April, asking them to ensure that the hotel closes, but the police ignored the instruction (Savi, 2019).

Not surprisingly, incidents like these create hostility and anti-Chinese sentiments. Many locals fear they could lose their cultural identity – of which they are proud - and be forced to adapt to the way the Chinese dominate their city. This is especially visible in the use of Chinese language and disrespect of the Khmer language. By law, the Chinese are obliged to put up their signboards, business signs and banners both in Chinese and in Khmer. However, they are very careless in doing this – if they do it all. In Sihanoukville, at least 391 banners with mistakes in the Khmer translation were removed by the authorities alone in 2019 so far (V. Dara, 2019).

Where this clash of cultures and divisive tendencies in society will finally lead to cannot be said yet. However, hostility, fear and suspicion towards other ethnical groups and divisions within societies have never in history led to a beneficial co-existence.

3. Conclusion

The rapid transformation of Sihanoukville during the recent years has strong effects on the lives of the locals, both positive and negative.

In economic terms, the biggest changes have occurred and will continue to occur in terms of employment. In general, there are a lot more work opportunities, compared to the time before the large-scale Chinese investments started, and the jobs are better paid than comparable jobs in local companies.

Most of the new jobs for locals are low-skilled positions at construction sites and in the Sihanoukville SEZ, bringing thousands of rural people in search for a better life to Sihanoukville. In contrast to Cambodian companies, the Chinese companies very often provide accommodation to their workers.

However, if the economic situation of the local population is seen as a whole, it is only the small group of land and property owners in Sihanoukville who really profited, due to the exploding real estate market. The majority do not benefit to a degree proportionate to the enormous investments in the city.

Still, altogether at least the economic impacts of the investments are rather positive for the locals, creating more jobs, increasing the local GDP and tax collections and reducing poverty. The latter effect, however, might also result from the fact that many poor people no longer can afford the prices in the city and have to leave.

Speaking of the negative effects, two major problems in terms of employment are apparent. First, many Chinese companies refuse to employ Cambodian nationals, either because of a general unwillingness, or because there are political reasons behind it in the case of state-owned companies, or because of cultural differences.

The second problem is education. There are not enough well trained and qualified Cambodians who are fit for higher positions, and – even more important – many Chinese companies require Chinese language skills. While many locals in Sihanoukville are currently learning Chinese, too few have acquired the necessary competencies yet.

Worst affected by the changes are locals working in the informal tourist sector, for example beach vendors or food stall owners. While Chinese tourists do not buy from them because of the language barrier and because they prefer vendors from their own community, the number of Western tourists, who traditionally were good clients, has steadily declined in

the past few years. Combined with the rising costs of living in Sihanoukville, they are facing severe problems now, and many of them have already left the city.

Rising prices are the main problem affecting the locals in Sihanoukville. They are directly resulting from the Chinese investments and the presence of the Chinese community. Especially the rents, higher than in Beijing now, are driving locals out of the city. This is even acknowledged by the local Minister of Tourism. A side-effect of the increasing rents is that many NGOs can no longer afford to remain in the city and support the needy population, making the poor even more vulnerable.

Cambodians see how much money is flowing into the city and how wealthy many Chinese are, while they themselves are not much better off than before, or even worse in some cases. Many Cambodians fear that the Chinese will take over the whole domestic economy.

The case of Chinese companies in the Sihanoukville SEZ, where Cambodian laborers are put under great pressure and are not allowed to establish labor unions shows two things: First, the mindset of many Chinese companies who are not interested in good working conditions but only in their profits, and second the unwillingness of the Cambodian government to enforce the law and protect its citizens. But economic growth at the expense of the rights and the wellbeing of Cambodia's own population is not a sustainable path.

The rising crime rates in Sihanoukville since the arrival of the Chinese also show that the current way of development has problematic aspects. Crimes have increased because of the many new casinos which attract a more criminal-prone clientele, such as Chinese laundering their money. Also, the Chinese in Sihanoukville often simply do not respect the law – knowing it will not be enforced anyway – and they in general show no interest in the local

rules and values. This leads to a rising feeling of insecurity among the local Cambodians and resentments against the Chinese community in general.

The majority of environmental problems and associated health risks, both related to construction sites and the general growth of the city, could be of a temporary nature - provided the government really commits itself to implement sustainable solutions serving the interests of the population.

Many problems like these and others could be solved if only the existing laws and standards were enforced. As long as this does not happen, there is a big risk that the gap between the Cambodian and the Chinese communities widens further. The locals see that their culture, their values and their laws are disrespected, and the Chinese influence dominates their city more and more. Combined with the economic inequalities between the two groups, this increases the risk of further deteriorating relations and the rise of conflicts. The alienation between the two communities is already obvious and might pose a threat to the future development of the city.

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Stakeholder Engagement: Shared Practices and Remaining Challenges in Identifying Labor Abuse In Multinational Supply Chains

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Abstract

It is now approaching eight years since the release of the United Nations Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), a revolutionary normative regime which has changed the Business Human Rights (BHR) landscape. The principles outline Business' responsibility to respect human rights, comprised of three protocol, one of these being Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD). Interests surrounding corporation efforts to respect human rights through the global media, consumers, and investors, continue to grow, and this is the reason for this study. The paper explores how corporations are carrying out their duty to respect human rights, with a focus on how they identify labor rights impacts in their supply chains, under the HRDD process. This specific step of the process calls for meaningful consultation of those affected, and the research gives insight into how this can be conducted, and the challenges. Although the research is applicable to many sectors and locations, case studies and examples are taken predominantly from Thailand as this is where the research was carried out.

The paper does this by sharing research, comprised of literature, and findings from seven in-depth interviews with key actors in the BHR landscape (including civil society and corporations). Practically, this will share techniques and measures taken in the identification of human rights impacts. Theoretically, the paper explores why corporations engage with specific stakeholders, and the different tools they can use to do this from audits, workers voice programs, and grievance mechanism. Furthermore, it demonstrates how these tools can take different formats and be effective, or encounter challenges. The importance of collaboration

between civil society and corporations is also discussed, as is the role of trust and language as potential barriers of meaningful stakeholder engagement.

This paper comes at a time of reflection, as the BHR discourse continues to evolve, with momentum in the field exceling. It demonstrates the importance of stakeholder engagement in the corporate responsibility to respect human rights.

Keyword: Business Human Rights, Due Diligence, Multinational Corporations, Innovation, Labor Rights

1. Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that corporations operating globally have impacts on a whole plethora of human rights, and this takes place in multiple ways. It seems impossible to say whether the expansion of the global economy and growth of corporations have catalyzed vaster negatives or positives to the human rights agenda, as positives can be seen in job creation leading to improved living standards, but negatives are present in the working conditions which many of the world's labor force are subjected to. With this latter point in mind this paper looks to explore the ways in which the growth of corporations has impacted the rights holders in their supply chains. This research comes eight years after the launch of the United Nations Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), a global agenda which has encouraged and prescribed multiple actors, predominantly states and corporations, responsibilities in relation to human rights holders.

Specifically, under a process of Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) corporations are encouraged to respect human rights, and this includes rights associated to labor in their supply chains, such as freedom of association, child labor and forced labor. In doing so they are encouraged to engage with stakeholders in a meaningful way to assess and identify actual and potential rights impacts which are related to their operations. However, it has been claimed that HRDD can be left to interpretation, and there is no definitive way of carrying this out, however there are examples of good practice. This paper is interested in exploring how stakeholder engagement has evolved under the UNGPs, and as part of the HRDD process of identifying and addressing labor rights issues.

In doing so, this research is comprised from the results of seven interviews with key informants from the corporate and civil society spheres. They share their expertise, case studies and experiences to demonstrate how stakeholder engagement can be conducted in

this context, and the challenges that can arise. This is taken from a wider piece of research which looks at the role of innovation in identifying labor issues in multinational supply chains, with a specific focus on Thailand. Therefore, it is worth noting that the majority of findings from this paper are globally applicable, however specific case studies from South East Asia and Thailand feature.

The paper first familiarizes the reader with the BHR environment by explaining the contemporary context, and HRDD more specifically in sections 2 and 3. This leads to conceptualization of labor rights abuses and stakeholder engagement. The methodology and findings make up section 4 and 5, with the latter divided into three key thematic subsections. Finally, a conclusion is made.

2. Business and Human Rights Landscape

It is worth remembering that human rights were developed in the post-war years, with a focus on states as duty bearers, and their citizens (and those of other states) as the rights holders. These are thirty applicable norms which are projected as rights which are “a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations” (Nolan, 2016, P.33). However, the world has changed vastly since then, which has created an increasing gap in protecting human rights, resulting in corporations, and business more widely, becoming a duty bearer. An argument could be made that business has been a duty bearer since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was passed, under the banner of an “organ of society”, however this was not explicit. It is evident that globalization has played a key role in this advancement as civil society, politicians and other stakeholders have called for transnational actors to respect human rights, leading to the formation of a number of pieces of hard and soft legislation (Windfuhr, 2011).

This paper does not have the remit to outline the complete journey, spanning decades, which business human rights legislation has ventured. Rather it will focus distinctly on the most recent, and seemingly most profound, which is the UNGPs, a regime enacted in 2011, which has been labeled a ‘landmark in the acceptance of human rights as a key business practice’ (Compere 2016), and a common reference point for actors (Nolan, 2016, P.43). It remains the current standard in guiding the business and human rights landscape, and is the operationalization of Professor John Ruggie’s ‘Protect, Respect, Remedy’ Framework (Nolan, 2016, P.43). This regime is built on three pillars; the state’s responsibility to *protect* human rights, business’ responsibility to *respect* human rights, and the development of effective remediation when abuses occur, which was presented across 31 principles (UNGPs, 2011). Interestingly, no clear role was carved out for the original champions of human rights, civil society (Page 2017), however as this research will demonstrate, the preceding years have seen them play an active role in not only keeping states and business accountable, but also in contributing to the principles through collaborations, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

3. HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE

This paper is concerned with pillar two, the responsibility of business to respect human rights, as Ruggie (2015) himself claims, this is the most ‘controversial’ facet of the UNGPs. The controversy is probably born from the fact that business’ main purpose has been traditionally to generate profit, rather than acknowledging and settling human rights issues. Furthermore, the ‘race to the bottom’ mentality which has assisted in the growth of international business can perhaps be blamed for having adverse effects on human rights, with the enactment of the UNGPs, and increasing call for responsible business supporting this.

It is worth noting that the principles which construct the corporate pillar to respect human rights relate to all human rights which are represented in international conventions, as

business can affect all human rights in some way. For clarity, this means that the UNGPs do not legally oblige corporations to respect human rights, but rather propose a standard built on social norms, which business enterprises are encouraged to gradually work towards. For example, the UNGPs prescribe that states and corporations employ a concept of due diligence so to discover existing and potential human rights abuses (Cragg et.al, 2012). However, it is worth noting that there has been a growing mass of national legislation, predominantly in the Global North, which legally require corporations to respect human rights, or at least parts of the UNGPs (The UK Modern Slavery Act 2015 is an example of this). This paper will specifically focus on issues related to labor rights in Multinational Corporations (MNC) supply chains.

Unpacking the respect pillar of the UNGPs, three main tenets can be highlighted, in which corporations are expected to follow. Fasterling and Demuijnck (2013, p.801) paraphrase these fulfillments as; ‘firstly, issuing a policy of commitment, secondly, conducting HRDD, and thirdly, providing remediation for when violations occur’. Although all of these are important actions which must be employed, and interrelate in some way or another, HRDD is the focus of this paper. The reasoning behind this, is because HRDD is an extensive process which assists in helping a corporation understand its human rights impacts, and how they can address and continually mitigate them, it is perhaps for this reason that HRDD has been dubbed the backbone of the corporate responsibility to respect human rights (Bonnitacha & McCorquodale, 2016). Simply put, Businesses, through HRDD can see where they may be adversely affecting stakeholders in their supply chains (Ruggie, 2017, P.14), as the process encourages them to look beyond their own direct operations, to the partnerships they have and what the repercussions of them may be. In the context of this paper, this can include manufacturers, suppliers, organizations offering services (such as packaging or even security), agricultural farms or other sources of raw materials, such as mines.

To understand why stakeholder engagement plays such an important role in the HRDD process, the process itself must be outlined. As mentioned, the whole point of HRDD is to explore how an enterprise's operations may be adversely impacting human rights (Ruggie, 2015, P.14), and this means going beyond legal compliance within the national law that the corporate is operating in. Compliance and respecting human rights are not the same thing, however they can interrelate. As Lundan and Muchinski (2015, P.189) note 'traditional due diligence looks at investigating investment risks which would affect the company, however HRDD marks a shift in investigating the risks associated with corporate action on people.' Therefore, the components of HRDD, are in chronological order; firstly, the identification of actual and potential abuses; secondly, to act on the findings; thirdly, to track how these adjustments go; and fourthly, to communicate the mitigating of impacts (UNGPs, 2011, principles 17-21). The identification phase is the focus here, as the other steps stem from this.

The identification phase of HRDD is outlined in principle 18, where it briefly suggests what an assessment of human rights should entail. Principle 18 can be seen below;

'18. In order to gauge human rights risks, business enterprises should identify and assess any actual or potential adverse human rights impacts with which they may be involved either through their own activities or as a result of their business relationships. This process should:

- (a) Draw on internal and/or independent external human rights expertise;
- (b) Involve meaningful consultation with potentially affected groups and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate to the size of the business enterprise and the nature and context of the operation (UNGPs, 2011, P.19)'

It effectively suggests that business do two things; draw on the advice of experts with regards to their human rights impacts, and that engage with those in their supply chain who

they may be affecting. In brief, the accompanying commentary highlights that an assessment should take place which looks at the human rights context of the environment, considering; who could be affected, cataloguing issues and standards, projecting how the proposed activity could have adverse impacts, and accounting for vulnerable groups and gender issues. These assessments should be ongoing so to accommodate the dynamic nature of human rights, and this can be incorporated into exiting procedures. It is the final part of principle 18's commentary which lies at the center of this paper, and this is the encouragement of business to engage with, and understand the concerns of potentially affected stakeholders in a conducive manner, which accounts for, and overcomes any potential barriers. As Ruggie (2015, P.14) himself claimed, 'HRDD should involve the engagement with those (potentially) affected, or a credible representative, if it is conceivable'. In the framing of this paper, those affected would be laborers in the supply chain of a multinational business, and the representatives could be human rights defenders, unions, or civil society.

4. Stakeholder Engagement and Labor Rights

Stakeholder engagement is a much used term, and one that can be found in the corporate boardroom, or an NGO environment, with each setting offering a different outcome. In the context of this paper, according to stakeholder theory, companies are accountable to a wide variety of groups and individuals, which precedes the small amount of actors that the enterprise relies on for its survival (Clarke & Boersma, 2019, P.10); investors and shareholders for example. In 1984, Freeman (2010), one of the fathers of stakeholder theory, outlined that a stakeholder can be labeled as anyone who is impacted by a business' actions. The UNGPs do not set a strict definition as to what an 'affected stakeholder' is, although the accompanying interpretive guide offers slightly more detail by defining that it is anybody whose human rights have been impacted by a corporation's products, operations or services (UNGP Interpretive Guide, 2012, P.8). In the labor rights context of a multinational supply chain, combined with

this basic understanding, a stakeholder can be recognized as the workforce operating across the complete supply chain, and added to this it could also include NGOs, trade unions and civil society. Therefore, corporations operating globally have ‘special relationships with a variety of stakeholders, thus there is a duty placed on them to respect those they have this relationship with (this includes workers and communities), by making sure they do not receive physical harm or the undermining of their liberty (Arnold, 2010, P.387).’

With above’s definition of a ‘relationship’, and outlined stakeholders in mind, stakeholder engagement is the normative interaction with these various groups, which is based on “moral correctness” (Clarke & Boersma, 2019, P.10). Thus, corporations should be looking at, and innovating ways to best interact with, and hear from those who are most likely to be at risk in the supply chain. In a Thai context, it is well known that large parts of the manufacturing, agricultural, and construction sectors rely on migrant laborers (IOM, n.d.). In fishing for example, a sector which is associated with forced labor and human trafficking cases (Hodal, 2016), Burmese and Cambodian migrants have been identified as victims of abuse and therefore should be engaged by businesses. However, as the next section will demonstrate, engaging with such groups can pose challenging, therefore corporations, supplying or selling seafood have had to look and devise ways of strengthening engagement. The seafood industry in Thailand is not a polarized case, as examples can be found with vulnerable groups all over the world, such as migrant laborers in Malaysia’s electronics industry (Ramchandani, 2018), to the presence of child labor in Democratic Republic of Congo’s cobalt mines (Kara, 2018).

What constitutes as a labor abuse in a human rights context is the last point of clarification which should be outlined. Fasterling and Demuijnck (2013, P.804) highlight that the UNGPs framework has a broad scope when considering human rights as it includes “the Universal Declaration of Rights, The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural

Rights and the eight International Labor Organization (ILO) core conventions”. The latter of these relates specifically to labor abuses, and covers “subjects that are considered as fundamental principles and rights at work: freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labor; the effective abolition of child labor; and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation” (ILO Labor Standards Page n.d.). The ILO specified these areas to highlight their belonging in the international human rights context, and these rights arguably differ to other labor rights as they “do not necessarily require a given level of economic advancement and arguably do not impact comparative advantage” (Kolben, 2010, P.454).

The interview questions referred to labor abuse with specific reference to the core conventions. However, labor abuse can refer to a number of workplace issues, and that is perhaps why civil society organizations such as the Ethical Trade Initiative (ETI) have released their own base codes, based on a selection of ILO conventions (see figure.1). These are tools created to assist in guiding corporations to make responsible business decisions, while also knowing which labor abuses to look for.

The prior paragraphs have attempted to outline what is meant by a stakeholder, and apply this to the labor lens of this paper. Therefore, laborers across the supply chain of international business (including their own operations and that of their partners) are the stakeholders in focus. However, as the UNGPs denote, it is not always possible to engage with laborers, and in those cases trustworthy representatives should be engaged, which includes labor unions, NGOs and other relevant members of civil society with suitable expertise. This research acknowledges that corporations can impact all internationally recognized human

rights, however its attention is specifically on labor abuses, and the labor rights outlined in the ILO core conventions.

5. Methodology

This paper borrows parts of, and builds on, another wider piece of research, as outlined in the introduction. It is comprised of; focused interviews with key informants in the business and human rights field, and desk reviewed information from relevant reports, and academic literature. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, at this stage all contributors will remain anonymous. Behind each contributor a bracket can be found, which codes how the informant will be referenced in the analysis section.

The actors interviewed include:

- Four Multinational Corporations, all with some type of supply/ sourcing operation in South East Asia. These include; a combination of multinationals, including; seafood and fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) manufacturers (MNC1, MNC2, MNC3), and a global retailer (MNC4). The interviewed staff members were either specific human rights managers, or members of a wider sustainability team, and were all in a management/ senior position.

- Three Business and Human Rights experts. These actors offered significant experience in the field.

These include:

- 1) A Labor Rights Director at a BHR institute. (E1)
- 2) Martijn Boersma: Business Lecturer and Researcher a University of Technology Sydney (E2)

3) Ms. Patchareeboon Sakulpitakphon- Sustainability - Business and Human Rights Consultant/ Senior Private Sector Engagement Specialist at Resonance (E3)

6. Analysis

1.1 Understandings and Methods of Stakeholder Engagement

As the above has shown, this paper is concerned with a specific type of stakeholder in a corporation's supply chain, that is those that have their human rights impacted by the actions of a business, furthermore in a labor rights context specifically. This predominantly encapsulates workers in the supply chain, laborers at various levels in the manufacturing process of products. Representatives must also, sometimes, be required to feature on behalf of laborers. Therefore, civil society, unions, and NGOs also feature in this stakeholder bracket. The findings, as will be shown, motivate this paper to attempt to posit that the corporate's suppliers should also be regarded as a stakeholder in this context, as they have the potential to represent the workers, and furthermore, their engagement and treatment may also impact human rights. Finally, stakeholder engagement can play a number of roles in the HRDD process, however the below findings only consider it under the premise of identifying and assessing labor rights impacts.

It is worth remembering that the point of due diligence is to identify and address things before they happen, therefore it requires upfront investment, a lot of knowledge and focus (E2). Furthermore, as the staff member from one multinational pointed out, it is not always easy to operationalize theoretical United Nations documents, and businesses may struggle knowing where to start with the UNGPs. This is perhaps why parts of the regime have been labeled as interpretive, however with stakeholder engagement there are a number of themes which should be considered. This paper believes that if these themes are accounted for then

stakeholder engagement can be strengthened, thus becoming more meaningful. A paramount obligation, 'as vulnerable stakeholders have been excluded from related procedures previously, due to certain barriers' (Gonzalez, 2015). Stakeholder engagement is more than a tool or process, in itself, but rather a requirement which is fulfilled through other business and human rights processes. Major examples, which many of the leading multinational corporations have in their HRDD assessment process, include, but are not limited to; human rights impact assessments (HRIAs), audits (specifically social), workers voice programs and platforms, and other means of learning from human rights experts.

Although the above tools are useful, and guiding resources are available to assist in operationalizing the UNGPs, their impacts can be sporadic. Depending on how effectively these processes are delivered will influence how successful the identification of labor rights will be, and thus how meaningful the stakeholder engagement is. For example, the research suggested that if a social audit is underprepared, carried out by a third party who are not human rights literate, and the factory has selected or prepared the workers to be engaged with, then there is perhaps a strong chance that labor rights issues will be overlooked. For reasons such as this, one multinational mentioned that it had brought a large part of their auditing in-house, as they were not getting enough visibility with third party audits, as it is very difficult to know all of a site's strengths and weaknesses in 1-2 days. All of the interviewees in this research agreed in some way or another that auditing alone was not enough when engaging with stakeholders to assess labor rights issues. As E3 succinctly summed up audits are "a snapshot in time", meaning that it is impossible to understand all of the issues in such a limited manner of engagement. Corporate use of HRIAs has also increased, however there are concerns that they often fail to engage with those actually affected, which has led to new modes of this tool being created, such as community led HRIAs (Gonzalez, 2015).

The former outlines how these identification processes can have the potential to be ineffective, and moreover, presents a case for how important ‘meaningful’ stakeholder engagement is in strengthening the identification process. E1, who supports, researches and ranks the business sector on such issues, buttressed this, by sharing that when it comes to HRDD they try to ensure that the right voices are heard. She followed on by claiming that it was common business practice for companies to speak to the groups that are easy for them, including those who speak the same language, or offer little challenge (E1). However, the interviews with the international corporates in this research show that there are efforts to meaningfully engage with the right stakeholders, who are often referred to as critical voices. However, this relies on a combination of procedures, including the ones mentioned.

Another process which can take multiple modes and work at different levels, from states to firms, and mobile applications to hotlines, are grievance mechanisms (Genovese, 2016). These are outlined in the UNGPs as a process of remediation, rather than identification. However, this research acknowledges that grievance mechanisms also exemplify stakeholder engagement when identifying labor rights impacts. This is largely because findings from such mechanisms can uncover labor rights issues, which is arguably, an assessment in itself. The senior private engagement specialist supported this notion by claiming that stakeholder engagement is a key part of conducting a human rights impact assessment and a part of the overall human rights due diligence, the grievance mechanism is a channel for stakeholder engagement. (E3). As the one multinational staff member highlighted, it is not possible to enforce grievance mechanisms further down the supply chain, however as policy is expanding there is hope that the suppliers will adopt the same practice. This is based on the logic, that if the top tiers are aware then it should cascade down the supply chain automatically (MNC2).

When giving an overview of such operational grievance mechanisms, Genovese (2016 P.267) highlights that to be effective, they must be “based on engagement and dialogue”.

Although they can offer a channel of engagement for workers in the supply chain, the grievance mechanisms are usually operated by corporates who may be responsible for the abuse which can set an insecure environment, resulting in a loss of confidence (Genovese 2016, P.270). Confidence in mechanisms, and more specifically trust, were two themes that emerged from multiple interviews, and are discussed in sub-section c. There appears to be evidence that corporations have recognized this issue, with some attempting to address it. One multinational shared that they have a hotline, and email platform which are run by an NGO partner, so when a worker wants to raise an issue, they inform the NGO who relay it to the corporate. Here a corporate is collaborating with an NGO, attempting to provide a trustworthy, thus meaningful identification mechanism, as the reporting goes directly to an NGO rather than the business.

One final point of interest, surrounds staffing and suppliers. It seems fair to opine that the growth of the Business and Human Rights Agenda has contributed to the expansion of teams, and creation of roles, and this can be seen in corporates home nations, and overseas, where they have operations. One manager mentioned that their team had grown significantly in the last five years, so to build a stronger partnership with procurement teams, and suppliers with the intention of really helping them understand what is expected from sound labor practices, and improve compliance at that level. This demonstrates an effort by business to invest in resources so to engage with their suppliers in a way that benefits their stakeholders. Further down the supply chain where there are the most vulnerable issues is where engagement and investment should be taking place. In Thailand there are suppliers and other enterprises buried into the corporate supply chain who would like to identify, and address human rights impacts, however they do not have the resources, or capacity of understanding as to what human rights as defined by international laws are. (E3). It was mentioned that corporates should engage with suppliers through quality human rights trainings, so to give

them the correct understanding of human rights. It can be assumed that this would contribute to their capacity to engage with their own stakeholders and identify labor rights issues

6.2 Critical Voices: Workers, Unions and Civil Society

In a complicated supply chain, it seems relevant to ask; ‘how are legitimate stakeholders identified?’ This will determine who is being engaged with, offering a strategy and justification. One expert highlighted that the workers in the communities that corporations are operating in, must have a platform to share their voice, and this should be enacted through supply chain, and stakeholder mapping. Following suit, an MNC staff member highlighted the importance of systematically mapping their stakeholders, which they then standardize, and require reporting on. They do not want stakeholder engagement to only be conducted by Human Resources, so they make the effort to train some floor managers to be sustainability literate, which cascades in the supply chain. The mapping process in itself requires care, if a corporation wants to be sustainable, they must act preemptively and identify risk areas, and stakeholders, which will lead to the resolution of problems (E3). Therefore, they must have internal knowledge as to where risks occur, and the hotspots lie, so they know what human rights abuses look like in their context (E2). This gives the sensical impression that the very first stage of stakeholder engagement, should be an understanding of the entire supply chain, and the various stakeholders which exist within it, so that corporates can act accordingly. Simply, corporates need to venture deeply into their supply chains to discover where the problems are, ‘they need to know the root cause, because if you do not talk to the right stakeholder then the problem will remain unsolved. (E3)’

The United Nations Working Group for Business and Human Rights (UNWG) report on HRDD (2018) accentuates the importance, and range of critical voices in stakeholder engagement. It reemphasizes that NGOs, unions, and human rights defenders are included in this bracket, especially as proxies, if those affected can’t be reached. Nevertheless, it should

not replace engagement on the ground. Therefore, it seems a combination of both on the ground engagement with workers by corporations, and that of civil society proxies to strengthen results, can be regarded as meaningful. This process will be strengthened, as corporates partnering with civil society will lead to a collaboration and combination of resources and knowledge. One human rights manager shared a similar outlook as he regards NGOs, civil society and trade unions as their stakeholders. Furthermore, he acknowledged that partnering with such actors is “immensely important”, as they have information that the corporations do not. He used a South East Asian example to demonstrate this, where social audits were not identifying issues surrounding recruitment in the same way that collaborating with these actors did (MNC4). This demonstrates that the knowledge provided by NGOs is valuable, regardless of the location, and especially on hard to identify abuses, which audits fall short on, such as ethical recruitment and forced labor.

Although not always a general point of action, corporates should engage with the national and international unions within a relevant sector, especially when concerning collective bargaining and freedom of association (E1). When benchmarking corporations, one expert mentioned that they try and measure how many of the corporates they research, sign up to “global framework agreements”, as this is an indication of organized labor and unions, and is encouraged. There are cases where some country’s legislation may not permit certain groups labor rights, specifically freedom of association, and collective bargaining. This can be seen in Thailand where the 1975 Labor Relations Act which excludes migrant workers from forming a legally recognized union, or serving on a union’s committee (Human Rights Watch, 2017). However, there are efforts to try and address this gap, and it must be due to domestic legal instances such as this, as to why many of the experts interviewed recommended that business follow labor rights (the ILO core conventions) at an international level, as opposed to domestically. Supporting this from a corporate side, a representative believed that in cases

where there is a gulf between national and international law, the higher standards should be opted for, even if it affects domestic competitiveness, thus there should be a ‘race to the top, not bottom (MNC2).’

Traditionally, unions were the main platform for representing the needs and desires of workers, however there are now alternative platforms set up by corporations, and external organizations, such as workers voice programs. In the research, it was evident that efforts were being made at a corporate level to engage with stakeholders through such platforms. A human rights manager shared that they ran a worker’s voice program which was operating to identify labor abuses in their supply chains. The program is multifaceted; however, the objective is to provide the workforce with a channel in which they can express their concerns with regards to their rights not being respected. This is done through a combination of hotlines, emails, NGO partnerships, and a committee. They recognized that the program had been successful, but required further development, aligning with the UNGPs call for continuous improvements.

Within this program their efforts on the ‘worker welfare committee’ deserve specific attention as it demonstrates how a corporate, and civil society collaboration can strengthen stakeholder engagement. Thai law requires that employers with a workforce of over fifty employees must have a ‘worker welfare committee’. This is something that one of the multinational staff interviewed shared about, as they applied it in their factories, with eligible workers standing for election on the committee. However, widely speaking, the challenge remains that although factories in Thailand may possess a committee, it’s impact may be minimal with some employers overlooking it, and running it as purely a legal obligation. The multinational in focus, wanted to ensure that their committees were operating as mandated, vis-à-vis raising the issues of all workers concerns to the employer, and identifying labor issues.

To strengthen this committee as an effective platform for stakeholder engagement, this specific multinational had collaborated with an NGO specializing in migrant workers' rights. Before working with the NGO, they rarely had migrant workers represented on the committee (MNC1). Given that migrants often make up the majority of the workforce, they were being inadequately represented, leading the multinational to question the effectiveness of the committee, which led to the NGO collaboration. Collaborating with the NGO, workers were engaged and made aware of the committee, and its effectiveness (for raising concerns) was stressed. Once candidates were selected the multinational, and NGO, worked together to train the committee members by explaining their responsibilities, and what was expected of them in their roles (MNC1).

This 'Workers Voice' program, and the committee in particular appear to offer elements of meaningful consultation with stakeholders. Firstly, the program absorbed multiple channels to try and engage with dependent stakeholders, these included hotlines and anonymous emails which were managed by a local NGO, and relayed back to the multinational for further investigation. Secondly, the committee provides a platform for workers (including migrants) to associate, discuss issues and communicate them to an employer. With that said, it is understood that the above is only practiced in the multinational's facilities, not across the whole supply chain. It was highlighted, however, that their code of conduct with partner suppliers, included a confidential email which offers laborers at those facilities, the opportunity to share concerns with the multinational. However, in reality, there is not much reported at this level, and it is predicted to be down to it making more sense for affected employees to talk to their direct employers (MNC1). As demonstrated, the concept of workers' voice appears suitable for engaging with stakeholders, however, similar to other procedures, it will depend on how it is managed. There has yet to be a comparative study done on workers' voice, being

implemented now in many sectors (E3). Studies that share on how such initiatives are helping companies identify risk and/or how they lead to worker protection is needed (E3).

Finally, some attention on deep rooted labor issues, such as the recruitment practices, debt bondage and forced labor, which has contributed to how some sectors systematically run. Something that one multinational representative said, may provide an explanation for the existence of these systemic issues, as he claimed, that unfortunately “labor is too oftentimes treated as a commodity in production, a raw material, people forget the human side of labor”. However, referring to similar observations in the last section, the role of a third party can assist in the identification of human rights impacts (MNC2). Another human rights manager acknowledged that for issues of a systemic nature, the multinational cannot face them alone, thus they must map out the key actors which can make change, and bring them together, these can include; governments, NGOs, peer companies and unions. This shows a wider notion of stakeholder engagement (and perhaps even critical voices), where multiple actors are encouraged to come together to identify issues which impact the entire system of an industry, and strategize how this can be addressed. As the same manager continued, it is only through dialogue and discussion with these stakeholders that it will begin to be possible to tackle the more systemic labor rights issues.

6.3 Barriers; Language and Trust

Even with the above platforms, collaborations and mechanisms, challenges still remain. Thailand’s manufacturing and agricultural (including fishing) sectors have large migrant populations from Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos (IOM Thailand, n.d.). This creates a stakeholder engagement challenge at a workforce level, as lapses in communication exist. There can be a lack of Thai language knowledge amongst migrant workers (MNC1). Although one manager shared that they place interpreters in their factories to assist workers in

communicating issues to the corporation's staff, there have been problems in the past with translators not having the required level of language expertise, leading to miscommunications. Problems surrounding language are not just exclusive to Thailand, but can exist in other contexts where there are large migrant workforces.

Another challenge outlined was related to fear, as migrant workers are specifically worried about employer retaliations when reporting human rights issues (MNC1). They are fearful that the repercussions could see them sent back to their home countries, thus losing their jobs (MNC1). This relates to what was mentioned above with regards to trust, as these are dependent stakeholders which rely on dominant stakeholders for their wellbeing. Furthermore, one manager outlined that his team were looking to strengthen this area through a new program that would be launched later in the year (2019), in collaboration with a labor consultancy firm, focusing on how to improve worker voice in factories. One of the other managers also stated how they were updating their human rights strategy and that workers' representation was an area which they were looking to particularly strengthen. This allows one to believe that in the case of Thailand, but not restrictively, there is a focus by responsible MNCs on strengthening platforms of engagement for vulnerable groups in their supply chains, perhaps in a hope to reduce fear and garner trust.

Greenwood (2007, P.320) highlights that stakeholder engagement doesn't always mean the responsible treatment of stakeholders, as the latter needs evidence of the corporation acting in the interests of the legitimate stakeholders, in this case the migrant workforce. MNC1's efforts of continually improving their 'Worker's Voice' program, combined with the extending of the stakeholders they reach, appears to demonstrate an effort to progressively act in their interest and enhance trust, thus strengthening the identification of rights abuses in their HRDD process. This is only reinforced, as beyond their direct stakeholders,

the manager mentioned that they also support non-affiliated labor unions. There is not an official working relationship, however they congratulate them, and advocate that the Thai government should ratify ILO core conventions 87 and 98 (MNC1). This demonstrates a broader relationship, as the multinational attempts to support unions as a way of engaging further with stakeholders.

The UNWG HRDD report (2018) also outlined that trust is low in stakeholder engagement relationships, and that time must be spent building this from both sides, with evidence of improvements exemplifying that commitments are genuine. Genovese (2016) highlights the same issue relates specifically to grievance mechanisms, and LeBaron and Lister (2016) mention the same for audits, as the process can be manipulated. In a Thai context 'trust' is an area in which one specialist highlighted as requiring specific corporate attention. 'Trust is an important thing, and if a company is really honest about tackling and minimizing its harm to people in the community it must focus on trust building with their stakeholders' (E3). Therefore, trust is important for collaboration and resolving difficult issues, if a level of trust is there between stakeholders, it can enable stakeholders to focus on solving the issue (E3). This invokes further research, surrounding what a trusting corporate-stakeholder relationship looks like, how it's established, and recognized? This will be down to a number of factors, but corporations appear to be quickly realizing that 'it (trust) cannot just be expected or commanded, it must be earned (Swift 2001, P.22).'

In this space, trust, and confidence in stakeholder engagement remains contentious and is therefore a challenge. It is clear that the role of trust cannot be discounted when engaging with stakeholders, a perspective which has existed before the UNGPs. Swift (2001, P. 24) supports "trust is widely held to facilitate interdependent relationships in which stakeholders are given a voice to influence corporate social behavior for the welfare of

society.” The relationship between trust and stakeholder engagement is reciprocal, as trust not only leads to more effective stakeholder engagement, but continued and consistent stakeholder engagement will lead to enhanced trust (Greenwood, 2007, P.318). It is perhaps this which creates the foundations of ‘meaningful’ consultation.

7. Conclusion

This paper has attempted to demonstrate an insight as to how corporations can move towards respecting human rights as stated in the UNGPs. This has been specifically done by researching how stakeholder engagement has been interpreted and operationalized with the aim of identifying labor rights impacts in multinational supply chains. It has been exemplified that ‘meaningful’ stakeholder engagement is not a onetime process in itself, but rather a requirement which is comprised of multiple processes, which should be continually improved and conducted on an ongoing basis. Examples in this study show that mapping is required, to ensure that the right voices are heard, and that these voices should be a combination of laborers, civil society and suppliers. However, the most vulnerable, the laborers, should be the priority, and it appears efforts have been, and continue to be made to amplify their voice through innovations and partnerships surrounding audits, human rights impact assessments, worker voices programs, and grievance mechanisms. All of these alone have potential shortcomings, however when organized and carried out together in a corporate and civil society collaboration, stakeholder engagement can be strengthened. However, as highlighted throughout this paper, corporates, civil society and other actors should continue to innovate ways in which workers’ representation can be effective, and influential. Finally, and philosophically, these channels of stakeholder engagement in themselves are not enough without trust, and the reduction of fear, therefore corporates should continue to explore ways of building this, and it seems that evidencing the mitigation of abuses is the most effective way of meeting this end.

8. Appendix

ETI Base Code



Ethical Trading Initiative
Respect for workers worldwide

The ETI Base Code is an internationally recognised set of labour standards based on ILO conventions. It is used by ETI members and others to drive improvements in working conditions around the world.

www.ethicaltrade.org

 <p>Employment is freely chosen</p>	 <p>Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are respected</p>	 <p>Working conditions are safe and hygienic</p>
 <p>Child labour shall not be used</p>	 <p>Living wages are paid</p>	 <p>Working hours are not excessive</p>
 <p>No discrimination is practised</p>	 <p>Regular employment is provided</p>	 <p>No harsh or inhumane treatment is allowed</p>

Figure 1: Ethical Trade Initiative Base Code (taken from www.ethicaltrade.org)

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