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SUVANNABHUMI means "The Land of Gold" in Pali, which location implies Southeast Asia.
Cover Photo: Wat Xieng Thong(Temple of the Golden City), built 1559-1560 by the
Lao King Setthathirath, Luang Phrabang, Laos.

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Multi-disciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies

ISEAS/BUFS

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Keynote

The Western Lineage in Southeast "Asianography"*

Michael Aung-Thwin**

Ⅰ. Introduction

The West has had a clear intellectual monopoly over the theoretical, methodological, and in many cases, empirical scholarship regarding the field of Asian Studies. As a field, it is a Western creation and enterprise that serves, and has served mainly Western professionals and their interests: academic for sure, but also political, military, and economic. Within this much larger, Western-dominated galaxy of Asian Studies is the small planet of Southeast Asian studies of which Busan University of Foreign Studies (BUFS) is striving to be a part. My keynote today is a challenge to the members of that small moon and to Area Studies as well.

But first a few words of clarification. The term "lineage" as a reference to a field of study is not new; it means here that the

** Professor, University of Hawaii at Manoa, aungthwi@hawaii.edu.

scholarship that has gone into the making of Southeast Asian studies along with its socio-political and historical contexts. "Southeast Asianography," however, is my own term, and I regard it as similar in meaning to words such as "historiography," "oceanography," "palaeolography," and the other "-ograhies." It refers to the corpus of production of knowledge in the academic field of Southeast Asian studies.

Second, I do not want to fuss over the word "Western" as being too monolithic to be considered a legitimate category of analysis. Neither do I want to debate whether, or how many, exceptions to that general term will vitiate it. We all know, by and large, that the United States, Great Britain, France, Holland, Germany, the ex-Soviet Union, and Australia have been the major players in the creation and development of Asian Studies; the last country is included in the "West" more for its academic heritage than its geographic location. And within these countries, there were certain institutions and people, mostly Western, who were the paramount actors in the making of Southeast Asian Studies, as so well described by Victor King in his essay in this volume.

Ⅱ. The Western Lineage

So, let's start with the larger entity Asian Studies and its Western lineage and then move to Southeast Asian Studies. As a field of scholarship, Asian Studies is a Western creation and enterprise. Westerners, the Western intellectual world, Western academic institutions, Western museums and libraries, Western think tanks, tier-1 journals in the West, and Western research funding, have dominated and continues to dominate Asian Studies in ways whose *reverse* with regard to European and American studies cannot even be imagined.

But let's try anyway. Can you imagine the following scenario? European and American studies is dominated by Asia and Asians. Most scholars and students studying Western civilization have been trained in Asia to be sent back to take positions at Harvard, Yale, Cambridge, Oxford, Michigan. The bulk of the most

prestigious journals about Western Civilization are published in Asia by Asian organizations and universities. Most of the premier libraries and archives holding sources about the West are located in Asia. Close to 93 per cent of the West's leading academics on Western civilization are Asian. Most of the classes that teach obscure Western languages are found only in Asian Universities. The topics, methodologies, theoretical frameworks considered important and "cutting edge" in the field, are the product of, and selected by Asians or Westerners trained in Asia. And the experts the world press and governments seek for insights and opinions concerning the West, are Asian.

In such a scenario, students and scholars would attend Peking University to study the American Revolution, to Kyoto University to study Medieval Europe, to Chulalongkorn University to study Tudor England, to Mandalay University to study Old English, to the Ateneo to study the Protestant Reformation, and Gaja Madha University to study Shakespeare. The entire structure of Western studies would largely be the product of Asian institutions and Asia-trained scholars. Can you imagine such an academic world? I cannot. Yet, that is precisely the case, *in reverse*, of Asian Studies and the West today.

The largest and most esteemed professional organizations, the most prestigious journals, and the most numerous jobs for its clones (our students) in the field of Asian Studies are still found mainly in America and the West. Consider this: only seven per cent of the members of the Association for Asian Studies are from Asia. (As noted above, I include Australia in the term "West" for its cultural-intellectual hegemony is more at issue here than its geographic location.) One needs only to glance at the references in the standard histories of Asia published in English, the bulk of their citations – particularly those of a theoretical and methodological nature that shape the field – to see that they are by Westerners or Western trained Asians, most of them published by university presses located in the West and considered the most prominent. The "benchmarks" used by Asian Universities for what it considers "excellence" for tenure and promotion, are Western scholars, presses, journals, universities, and ideas.

Another way to acknowledge this is to ask the following question: is there an Asian Clifford Geertz or Ben Anderson? Don′t get me wrong; we can point to eminent Asian scholars in their own right, such as Wang Gung Wu and Hong Lysa. But both are very much also part of the Western lineage. Rather, my question about an Asian Clifford Geertz and Ben Anderson asks about those *not* part of the Western lineage, yet who have influenced the entire field world-wide in the way the above two scholars have done. (I have found none.) Admittedly, I am giving agency to the kinds of concerns raised by the above scholars and not to those that have inspired "traditional" scholars of Asia and their scholarship prior to the encounter with Western influences. But the modern field of "Southeast Asianography" *is* my topic after all, regardless of how important the latter concerns of traditional scholars might have been.

Indeed, a natural reaction by Asian institutions and scholars to this Western dominance might have been to find an alternative, or other "anti-colonial" responses to it, especially since Asian Studies was very much a product of the colonial experience. But unlike other by-products of colonialism whereby the Western norms that have shaped the making of (say) modern criminal law, the establishment of egalitarian principles for civil society, or the development of representative forms of governance－have resulted in substantive change or outright rejection seen as necessary or desirable to fit or benefit post-colonial society－in the case of Asian Studies, however, such change or desire for it, with a few exceptions, clearly have not. In other words, although part of the colonial experience as well, Asian Studies has emerged (in hindsight) as one of colonialism′s more lasting and positive legacies.

That is not to say, of course, that there were no "Orientalist" perspectives in this Western lineage scholarship. There were plenty, as Edward Said has demonstrated. Yet, and in contrast, there were also what John Smail has immortalized as "autonomous," those perspectives and "angles of vision" that represented the indigenous, a position that began at least with Van Leur who found it seriously flawed to understand Indonesia from

the deck of a Dutch ship. Or when Clifford Geertz suggested that "pomp was for power, not power pomp," he could not have been more Balinese and non-Western, in the same way Ben Anderson insisted on understanding the Javanese, rather than Western concept of power. Despite Said's argument of a "consolidated vision" of "Orientalism" then, the above kinds of "dissent" were also very much part of that Western Lineage.

And because of those efforts by scholars to know Southeast Asia from the inside-out－from the perspective of the farmer in the padi fields, the spice shop of the Muslim merchant, the courts of the Malay Sultan or Burmese king, the headman or headwoman of villages, the convent and monastery of the Buddhist nun and monk, the mosque of the *ulama* and his worshippers, the parish of the Catholic priest, and the ordinary men and women of the local bazaars－which essentially puts them in the foreground rather than the background, the desire or need to create an alternative Asian lineage by putative "anti-colonial" forces as counter measure to the Western lineage did not materialize, nor, in my opinion, would it have succeeded. And all this happened well before the term "Orientalism" and its discontents became fashionable and mainstream.

The sensitivity of scholars (and even some colonial administrators) to perspectives held by the indigenous can be found rather early and nearly everywhere in Southeast Asia. In British Burma, despite "Orientalist" views and treatment of history in their works, Phayre, Harvey, Hall, Luce, and Furnivall nonetheless often espoused views that represented those of the colonized; indeed, Furnivall unabashedly and sophisticatedly advocated these sentiments better than any nationalist scholar could have done, or did. And to provide some teeth to these sentiments, scholarly journals in the Western tradition were created, such as the Siam Society Journal and the Journal of the Burma Research Society, trends found elsewhere in Southeast Asia, particularly Malaysia, as Victor King's essay in this volume demonstrates.

This reality of Southeast Asia's Western lineage is not only

the way it was and is, but I think also part of the foreseeable future. The reasons are plentiful: historically, colonialism provided the broad context for shaping the intellectual, methodological, conceptualization, and institutionalization of Asian Studies (as "Orientalism"). As an academic field, therefore, the West has been in the business for much longer than has Asia. More recently, there has been, and is, much more funding in the West for the study of Asia than one finds in Asia, which in turn has virtually determined its direction of growth, the way in which Asian Studies as a field is conceived and categorized, and the intellectual subjects in the field considered important (including debates about the field itself). Moreover, most of the best students in Asia do not opt for a career in Asian Studies but in better paying, technologically oriented occupations or in civil service. And to reiterate, the number of Asianists who are Western far out-number those who are Asian. The Western lineage is here to stay.

Is having such a dominant Western lineage necessarily not good for Southeast Asian Studies? No, indeed! "Westernness"－ especially its abundant human and material resources; the age, longevity, and general academic superiority of most of its institutions of higher learning; the well-trained faculty with some of the world's highest standards; some of the most modern technologically; the size and scope of, and relatively easy access to most of its libraries; the many fellowships available; the academic freedom and general atmosphere of give and take, and the emphasis on critical thinking－all have benefited the entire field of Southeast Asian studies enormously, not only in the United States but elsewhere. As most of the prominent scholars of Southeast Asia are products of Western academia, the same or similar standards and attitudes and methods of teaching, continue to shape the field world-wide in a positive way.

Ⅲ. Newness and Smallness

Two other factors in the field of Southeast Asian studies have enhanced our Western lineage: "newness" and "smallness." While

"Westerness" made many of us more "autonomous" and quite anti-"Orientalist" (and well before it was fashionable to be so), and "newness" made us more current, efficient and effective, "smallness" made us more cohesive, interdisciplinary, and comparative. All three factors－"Westernness," "newness," and "smallness"－have become important and perhaps can even be considered distinguishing features of "Southeast Asianography."

Ⅳ. Newness

In terms of "**newness,**" don't get me wrong; as stated above, studies of Southeast Asia by Southeast Asians themselves have existed for centuries, while individual "country" studies have been written well before the West entered the region. But in terms of a modern discipline or field, with its own professional organizations, corpus of theoretical literature, peer-reviewed journals, and so on, the field of Southeast Asian studies is new, having emerged approximately around World War Two. It is certainly newer than the fields of European and American, as well as South and East Asian studies. And this has been to our advantage.

Being a relatively new field means it does not have to "reinvent the wheel" every time an issue arises. There is no need to re-hash problems that have been addressed rather well in other, older areas such as European, South, and East Asian studies. For example, the issue of whether Japan during the Nara period was a mirror image of T'ang China, or England, that of the Continent (old topics), has its counterpart in Southeast Asian studies in the issue of "Indianization"－to what extent was Southeast Asia a mirror image of India? The expected response to exogenous influences with the notion of "indigenization" (or "localization" and "autonomy," the preferred terms in Southeast Asian studies) is also found throughout the areas mentioned, not just Southeast Asia. We have benefited from that debate that has occurred much earlier in East Asian and European studies, allowing us to skip certain less productive aspects of it while leap-frogging to more productive ones simply because our field is new.

The "Encounter with the West" is another topic that has been addressed elsewhere much more thoroughly and for a much longer period of time than it has been in Southeast Asian studies. In fact, the "trends" in Southeast Asian studies of issues and problems raised in Post-Colonial and Subaltern studies initially comes from South, not Southeast Asian studies. The same can be said of Gender studies: it is a new import to the field of Southeast Asian studies, even within institutions in the West. Here as well, scholars dealing with gender issues in the field of Southeast Asian studies have benefited from the latter's newness. The decades needed to build up a constituency, train scholars, formulate a corpus of theoretical literature, create successful journals, make mistakes—all these, by and large, Southeast Asia scholars working in gender studies did not have to undergo in any major way. In other words, it did not have to start from scratch. Thus, for example, when Barbara Andaya "entered" the sub-field of Southeast Asian gender studies, she was already an established historian of Southeast Asia, so that her experience was brought to bear on the newer gender studies field.

We can say similar things for disciplines such as archaeology and epigraphy, where new, scientific discoveries, methods and techniques—such as dating of fired clay material more accurately by studying the moisture content of fired bricks (rehydroxylation), and the "restoring" of worn and illegible writing [X-ray flourescence (XRF)]—leap-frogged over projects that would have taken, and used to take, decades to conduct. What took Groslier nearly thirty years of painstaking, manual work on Angkor's *barays*, was completed in about two hours with Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR). There are many such similar examples of scientific development in cartography and geography as well. Newness, in this case, was, and is surely an advantage.

Ⅴ. Smallness

Southeast Asian studies as a field also has a relatively small constituency. Don't get me wrong. Southeast Asia itself covers one

of the largest geographic and demographic areas of the world, with dozens of major languages and hundreds of dialects, eleven countries occupying an area as large as Europe and the Middle East put together, and a region where all the world religions are represented. But as a field of study, it is relatively small. This has always been the case since its inception compared to other areas and fields of study; it is not a new phenomenon, and its size certainly shouldn't be viewed as a reason to suggest a "crisis" in the field, as some have done recently.

But it *is* true that historians of Southeast Asia make up only about one-eighth of the number of historians in other areas of Asia. Indeed, even the larger field of Asian Studies (including all the disciplines and regions of Asia) probably has fewer scholars in it than just historians specializing in United States history alone. Even in the United States, only a handful of universities have Southeast Asia as an area studies component in their programs. Of these universities, approximately fewer than ten are officially recognized by the United States Department of Education as having "national" stature. And of all graduate students entering the whole field of Asian studies annually in the United States, the fewest number enroll in Southeast Asian studies. Are these reasons to marginalize or worse, "kill" Southeast Asian Studies—as some "globalists" and "universalists" are wont to do periodically and have been doing recently—and to give up on Southeast Asian Studies at BUFS? Not at all! In fact, smallness is an asset which can be also used to our advantage.

One of the most important of these is that the field of Southeast Asian studies has been shaped by numerous disciplines, with varying degrees of influence. The most prominent are History, Anthropology, and perhaps Political Science, along with Archaeology, Religion, Linguistics, Literature, and Art History. This reality, whereby many different disciplines contribute to what is the heart of the field, has made its scholars and scholarship steadfastly interdisciplinary, which I believe has enhanced the general quality of the scholarship of the field. Interdisciplinarity has also made our scholarship less parochial and more comparative. Thus, rather than being satisfied and secure in one's

disciplinary silos of isolation, Southeast Asianists have been, and have enjoyed being intellectually quite "global." Consider the following examples.

There are not many scholars who have transcended their discipline and field in the way a handful of scholars have done from the small field of Southeast Asian Studies. The works of Ben Anderson, Clifford Geertz, and Jim Scott (to name three of the most prominent) have managed to transcend the borders of Southeast Asian studies in quite consequential ways. Most in the social sciences are familiar with, and have used phrases such as "Imagined Communities," "Theatre State" and "Moral Economy," all well-known to scholars outside the field, regardless of discipline and area of expertise. Apart from the intrinsic value of the scholarship itself, the reason for that "global" appeal is that their scholarship was interdisciplinary in nature. Perhaps as important, such scholarship has brought disproportionate attention (and value) to the field of Southeast Asia studies relative to its size.

The smallness of the field has also given those of us in it the wherewithal to be more familiar with most of the important theoretical issues produced by it better than if the field were larger, irrespective of discipline. I know of no Southeast Asianist who thinks his or her scholarship has not been enhanced because of the interdisciplinarity of the field. That familiarity with each other's works, has made the field more intellectually cohesive than it might have been otherwise. Thus, modern historians of Southeast Asia are likely familiar with issues and problems raised by political scientists of Southeast Asia, while most early historians of Southeast Asia, with those found in anthropology, religion, archaeology, literature, and art history. Conversely, most political scientists and anthropologists of Southeast Asia probably know their Southeast Asian history as well.

This "interdisciplinary cohesiveness" has provided a sense of identity among Southeast Asianists, both on a concrete, personal level, and an academic and intellectual level. More precisely, the camaraderie derived from conducting research and living in a geographic area all Southeast Asianists consider "home" is quite

real, and it reinforces the intellectual camaraderie derived from being a member of the Southeast Asian Studies family. Whether historians or anthropologists, we tend to identify more with the area of Southeast Asia (hence, with Area Studies as an academic field) than with our own disciplines. We seem to be Southeast Asianists first, and historians or anthropologists, only second. Grounded upon an important, geo-political and cultural space, united in the interdisciplinarity of scholarship, while transcending both by "singing" on the "global" stage, is what gives Southeast Asian Studies its appeal and legitimacy.

Indeed, I would argue that the farther one gets from Area Studies, the more parochial one gets, not less. When I attend the American Historical Association's annual meetings, it doesn't take long to realize few have heard of, and care little about the most influential scholars of Asia and their work. But when I attend the Association for Asian Studies meetings, everyone knows about the most influential scholars and their scholarship regardless of their disciplines and areas of expertise. To reiterate, Area Studies scholarship and scholars tend to be less parochial and more "global" in their interests, methodologies and conceptualizations than those who rely solely or mainly on their disciplines.

In the current atmosphere where Area Studies in general and Southeast Asian Studies in particular are being bashed (once again!) in select, usually disciplinary academic quarters－although ironically not among funding organizations－being a Southeast Asianist in a small but cohesive group, with a secure academic identity based on a solid intellectual core, sound interdisciplinary methodology, and a location of research that is dear to the hearts of its scholars, may turn out to be crucial in preserving not only Southeast Asian studies as a field, but the larger field of Area Studies itself.

Ⅵ. The Future

So, given the cards we are dealt with－Westerness, newness, and smallness－where does the future of Southeast Asian Studies lie,

especially in Asia, and a place like BUFS? In addition to the above three advantages, propinquity to wealth and geographic location become factors. Thus, one might think that part of the future of Southeast Asia Studies is essentially an issue of money, so that China is seen as a solution of sorts. As it becomes more than the economic giant than it is now, I can only imagine more money being poured into the study of Asian Studies in general, and Southeast Asian Studies in particular. Similarly, as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) gets richer, it is bound to pour more money into domestic higher education with a bigger commitment to the study, not only of its own countries, but to the region of Southeast Asia. Even though South Korea is not part of ASEAN, it is a friend and supporter, with influence and know-how, and thus can benefit.

Although throwing money at a problem will help, it comes with a price tag: China is not going to support the study of Southeast Asia for its own sake; it will be a tool, a means to an end, for economic and foreign policy－rather than an end in itself. That is probably true for South Korea and most Southeast Asian countries as well, so that Southeast Asian studies will remain an arm of national and international policy in these countries. Similarly, the United States government has earmarked large amount of funds for its "pivot to Asia" programs, financially supporting Southeast Asian Studies projects, but for political and/or economic reasons. None of this is necessarily or intrinsically bad for continuing to develop a genuinely academic field of Southeast Asian studies, but it means it will always remain a secondary priority. Unless BUFS is a Harvard with an endowment larger than Myanmar's GDP at one time (in 2007), studying Southeast Asia for its own sake is a luxury few can afford. So, even if as individual scholars (or even organizations) we are committed to this－and I think most of us are－studying Southeast Asia as an end in-itself will not be a budgetary priority. BUFS will have to play the government funding game.

Assuming that the South Korean Government continues to fund BUFS' international program, what can it do with that funding to further enhance Southeast Asian Studies? One of the

strengths that native scholars of Southeast Asia have that is not as easily duplicated is fluency in the indigenous language. It's an advantage those scholars born in Southeast Asia have had since primary school onward. It takes years for non-native speakers－in this case, Koreans are part of that category－to achieve the level of even native high school students in speaking, reading, and comprehension. What can BUFS do about developing this resource, located as it is in the region with the many and varied financial investments South Korea already has in the countries of Southeast Asia? Can BUFS establish, or support already established language institutes in Southeast Asia that use indigenous language teachers and methods to teach their languages, in which BUFS' students can be intimately involved? Can the Koreans do this better than the Americans have done? Some of the stellar programs created by the latter include the Southeast Asia Studies Summer Institute (SEASSI) now located at the University of Wisconsin, Madison which hires native speakers of Southeast languages to teach Southeast Asian languages, along with once vibrant, in-country programs such as the Malang program in Indonesia. But these are summer programs whose funding has to be constantly negotiated to be viable. Perhaps the Koreans can emulate the structure of these kinds of programs, but with funding schemes that are more predictable and stable in the long-term, especially with their established diplomatic ties and economic investments in the region.

Located in the region and embedded in South Korea's regional development strategies, BUFS has other advantages. Although it is true that air travel makes it relatively easy for anyone to get to the area quickly, it's impracticable for those living far to go to Myanmar or Indonesia every weekend, take mini-sabbaticals or even long-term sabbaticals without a lot of hassle with housing, health insurance, banking and other financial matters. As BUFS is already part of South Korea's infrastructural development in the region－financial, telecommunications, transportation, aid－its development of educational and cultural projects in Southeast Asia are that much easier to implement. Here too, there are certain intangible advantages of a comparative

nature of being in the region. The news media is one obvious example. There already exists a very extensive and varied regional news media whose focus is the region itself. Reports one gets here are seldom (or never) found in Western news media. BUFS can take advantage of that importantly comparative component found virtually in its own back yard, something not easily duplicated elsewhere.

Furthermore, an organization such as BUFS which is very much a part of the South Korean Government's diplomatic and economic footprint in Southeast Asia will surely do better than those not part of that infrastructure. This is especially important when it comes to the preservation of Southeast Asian source materials. BUFS can easier access and preserve indigenous resource material with a minimum of obstacles－much like Kagoshima University and the Japanese did in the early 1970s with microfilm－especially the many Southeast Asia language historical sources written on palm leaf and other perishable materials that have been languishing and deteriorating in musty and humid libraries in Southeast Asia. Can BUFS do a better job of data preservation of earlier decades by the Japanese, now with more sophisticated preservation methods not available earlier. In this endeavor, the Korean government－I would say most Asian governments－ has an advantage. It has not conflated the internationalization of its academic programs with national self-identification ideologies, as some Western governments have done. Demanding no ideological conversion from host nations, Korea can more easily implement such joint projects, rather than being hampered by the kinds of crusades of (especially the current) American or UK governments. I seriously do not think Korea will go to Myanmar or any country in Southeast Asia to promote and demand acceptance of "Korean democracy" as a pre-requisite for getting infra-structural aid to develop (say) higher education.

Practical strategies aside for developing that small BUFS moon in the huge galaxy of Asian and Southeast Asian studies, and returning to academic issues, since I've already argued that "smallness," "newness," and geographical location can be to our

advantage, and are realities about which we cannot do much anyway, what can we say about the first issue: our Western lineage? I would argue that rather than countermanding it as a symbol of our independence, it is to our advantage to *continue* the trends that have been part of Southeast Asianography's Western lineage now for the past hundred years and more. And in so doing, we must focus on celebrating aspects of that lineage that has the most appeal to us－namely, those Southeast Asian perspectives and values so well expressed by earlier scholars in the tradition of Van Leur and others. Instead of baking a new cake, then, we should add to and thereby enhance the Southeast Asian layer of the Western cake already baked.

Articles

Negotiations in Space and Time:
Changing Gender Relations in Thai Tourist-oriented Encounters

Victor T. King and J. Rotheray*

[*Abstract*]

The paper addresses Erik Cohen's pioneering work on tourism in Thailand, specifically his publications on the relations between Thai women and foreign (*farang*) men in tourist-oriented encounters. Of sociological-anthropological interest is his conceptualization of these relations as "open-ended prostitution as a skilful game of luck" based on his study of a Bangkok *soi* (lane) in 1981-1984, and his exploration of Thai culture in terms of ambiguity and contradiction. On the basis of recent ethnographic research in the northern Thai tourist hub of Chiang Mai and wide-ranging observations on tourism development in Thailand, we examine continuity and change in these male-female engagements since Cohen's research, especially in the context of the increasing availability of such electronic agencies as social media, messaging, video chat, and

* Victor T. King, Professor, Borneo Studies at the Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam; Emeritus Professor, School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds; and Professorial Research Associate, Centre of South East Asian Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. v.t.king@leeds.ac.uk.

J. Rotheray, Doctoral student, University of Leeds; and affiliated researcher, the Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development, Chiang Mai University. ml09jjr@leeds.ac.uk.

internet dating. Whereas Cohen's concept of ambiguity and illusion has tended to disappear from physical spaces, it seems to have resurfaced in virtual space. The complexities of host-guest relations, and particularly the interactions both within the variegated category of "guests" themselves and then between their "hostesses" are explored in terms of sites of tourism-oriented encounters in both physical and virtual space so as to deconstruct these oppositional categories which have been formative in studies of tourism.

Keywords: Hostesses, guests, ambiguity, negotiations, Thailand

Ⅰ. Introduction

The focus of this paper is on hostesses and guests engaged in what we have conceptualized as "bar culture" and what Erik Cohen referred to as "open-ended prostitution" in Thailand in his pioneering field research in the early 1980s in Bangkok (1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 1996d, 1996e, 1996f). Field material has been collected in the important tourist hub of Chiang Mai in northern Thailand since 2013 with informal research engagements going back to the early 2000s. Cohen's definition of the open-ended character of prostitution was that Thai girls involved in these activities were "prepared to extend single, basically mercenary sexual encounters with *farangs* [foreigner] into more protracted liaisons, which usually involve a complex mixture of sentimental attachment and pecuniary interest on the girls' part…… Many *farangs* are confused by the girl's conduct; on the one hand, they tend to believe that the girl genuinely likes or loves them; on the other, they are plagued by doubts as to her seriousness, sincerity and faithfulness" (1996e: 306, 307). Cohen characterizes these relationships as "incomplete commercialization" and he conceptualizes and generalizes these in terms of a set of paradoxes or contradictions in Thai socio-cultural life, compounded by the pressures, tensions, and rapid transformations in urban life in Thailand, the integration of Thai society and economy into a globalizing world from the 1970s, and the rise of the Internet and electronic communication (1996b: 253-254, 264).

Ⅱ. The Neglect of Clients and the Problems of Conceptualization in the Hostess-Guest Encounter

Until Cohen's detailed studies in the 1980s, and subsequently Cleo Odzer's personal ethnography (1994) and Marc Askew's research on Sukhumvit Road, Bangkok during the 1990s (1999a, 1999b, 2002: 251-283) there was very little material available on the nature of and the processes involved in these complex relationships in Thailand. Indeed, the strength of their work was that they focused both on the diversity of the categories "hostesses" and "guests" (or clients) and the complexities of their interactions. As Husson has emphasized recently, based on her extensive research in Indonesia, Thailand, and Hong Kong from 1997 to 2015 and her access to a considerable secondary literature in French, much of the research on the sex tourism industry in Southeast Asia has excluded the guests, their diverse backgrounds, expectations, motivations, and behavior (2017; see also Bishop and Robison 1998; Thorbek and Bandana Pattanaik 2002). In addressing both hostesses and guests and their interrelationships, these diversities and complexities are compounded when Cohen also stated perceptively that "there is often no crisp separation in Thai society between emotional and mercenary sexual relationships. Rather, such relationships form a spectrum, ranging from premarital, marital, and extra-marital love-relations, through permanent or protracted liaisons between relatively wealthy men and poor concubines or mistresses (*mia noy* or "minor wife"), to short, commercialized sexual encounters in brothels and massage parlors, of which there are virtually thousands, even though prostitution in Thailand was outlawed in 1960" (1996b: 251).

In this paper we have addressed the issues of definition and conceptualization in this field of study, bearing in mind Cohen's difficulties in using the term "prostitution," his analysis of the complex, ambiguous, and contradictory encounters between young Thai hostesses or bar girls and foreign men, and the fact that, at the time of his field research, a considerable number of women "engage in prostitution only on a part-time or seasonal basis, and move in and out of the occupation, so that they can hardly be labeled 'prostitutes'" (1996a: 354; 1996b: 260-261). The "open-endedness" of

these gendered relationships and the concept of "a game of luck" was also in need of qualification even a decade or so after Cohen's research (in the 1990s) in that he himself noted that the expansion of sex tourism along with the problem of AIDS and the government of Thailand's policies to address the threat through information campaigns and the encouragement of protected sex, had led to the increasing "routinization", "standardization" and "institutionalization" of the sale of sexual services. It became "more of a gamble, but less of a game" (1996c: 290-291). The open-endedness became "attenuated," "the leeway for playing the game was narrowed," and "the frequency of the other, more ambiguous, and open-ended types of relationship seems to have fallen off" (1996c: 290).

Cohen concluded his reflections on the changes that had taken place during the 1980s and into the 1990s with the preliminary conclusion that "it still remains to be seen to what extent better means of self-protection and safer sexual practices will further modify the culture of tourism-oriented prostitution in the future" (1996c: 291). Our recent work on the cultural practices and evaluations of encounters in bars, the organization and operation of these practices, and the networks generated both in physical space and in the context of the revolution in communication technology (which Cohen had not been able to address to any extent at that time as another factor of change) suggests that a re-evaluation of these bar-related elements of tourism in Thailand is required. In addition, Cohen's intriguing analysis of the personal letters written between *farang* males and Thai girls, for example, is now a thing of the past (1996e), and has been replaced by instant messaging, video chat, WeChat, Hangouts, and other electronic media.

We also deconstruct the increasingly complex categories of "guest" and "hostess," examining relations among the clientele of bars, their changing relations with "hostesses" in the context of changes in bar culture, and the interactions between bar girls and their managers as a consequence of changing patterns in the management and ownership of bars.

Ⅲ. The Concept of the Bar and Bar Complex

We have attempted to provide a sociological-anthropological framework in this investigation in terms of a concept of "the bar" and "the bar complex" as a site or space of interaction, negotiation and role-playing both in a physical sense and as part of a digital arena so that there is both a boundedness in certain encounters, and a wider space that is provided (not entirely unbounded) through messaging, video chat, and the use of Thai-dating and other electronic sites. The boundedness is however, fluid; we operate with a clearly defined bar unit, but there is also a set of relations between neighboring bars or a bar complex, and sometimes a senior bar with junior outliers. Networks also operate across these units, with, for example, "floaters" and "semi-freelancers," but they have a site or a set of sites in which they situate themselves from time to time (Molland 2012). In this connection Husson classifies prostitution in Southeast Asia, including Thailand, into four types, though these are not necessarily mutually exclusive: (1) "the classic or formal": the visible, closed, supervised, located kinds of encounter in bars, night clubs, and massage parlors; (2) "the occasional": open encounters usually undertaken by freelance or independent workers; (3) "the undercover": includes the prostitute as a "guide" or "escort" who offers sexual services as part of an overall entertainment experience which may be extended for more than one night; and (4) the "sex tour": a package organized for a group of clients (2017: 214). There is also a temporal dimension to this spatial one, in that the discussions and negotiations take place over time, and the changes in female-male encounters that we are addressing reach back to the contexts within which Cohen worked in the 1980s. Husson's classification also does not take account fully of the expanding opportunities which the Internet opens up for different kinds of encounter.

What we have witnessed, not only in the field of bar culture but in the consumption of goods and services more generally, is that many physical spaces which provide the opportunity for social encounters and cultural exchange are struggling to maintain their presence, and the rise of electronic dating sites is concurrent with

the gradual, but fitful decline in the bar scene. This is consistent with other trends in the development of digital space, in that it increasingly undermines the position of the agent or intermediary, in this case the bar-owner and manager. What also has to be acknowledged is that Thai women are much more assertive, confident, and empowered than they were when Cohen was undertaking his research. The knowledge that has been developed among them over several decades about the opportunities and risks involved in these encounters, improvements in their use of English, and the guidance and advice that have been passed down from one generation of hostesses to another (given that significant numbers of young women then moved into bar ownership and management) provide for an increasingly complex and informed arena for negotiation, discussion, and exchange with their clientele.

On the other side, the male clientele, as Husson has also indicated, is now more varied in their backgrounds and knowledge; rather than the short-stay tourist, there are also permanent or semi-permanent expatriate residents who continue to frequent bars, have known some of the hostesses over several years, and, in some cases, have gained a degree of fluency in the Thai language. These are primarily Westerners, Japanese, and Koreans. Some bars more than others have a regular customer base. More so than when Cohen undertook his studies, the bars are increasingly patronized by men who fully understand their function and mode of operation; they want to have a drink, socialize, and sometimes spend a night with one of the bar girls; in these contexts of encounter, there is very little, if any ambiguity on either side, and the open-endedness of gender relationships of this kind, which Cohen explored in the 1980s, seems less applicable, as Cohen had anticipated in the 1990s.

We emphasize that we are not concerned with the important preoccupations of Thai research on gender relations, human rights, and prostitution, and the national policies of the Thai government in this arena. We have not engaged with the political economy of the sex industry, trafficking, or the necessary and obvious concerns with AIDS and other diseases, which we recognize fully as serious public concerns in Thailand (see Hughes 2000; Steinfatt 2002). Nor have we addressed the complexities and the socio-cultural and

economic pressures of gender relations in a Buddhist society (see, for example, Jeffrey 2002; Khin Thitsa 1980; Lyttelton 2000; Pasuk Phongpaichit 1982; Wathinee Boonchalaksi and Guest 1994). Even in the substantial literature on sexual relations and prostitution in the digital age there is a focus on those who provide the services rather than the diversity of the clientele, and an emphasis on exploitation, sexually transmitted diseases, Internet abuse and pornography, and child prostitution, among others (see, for example, Flowers 2011; Veena 2007). Husson, with reference to Sébastien Roux's work in Bangkok (2009), says that Roux argues that "prostitution cannot be reduced to a univocal relation of domination" (2017: 212). Following this principle, our focus is on the development of an ethnography of relationships, and the agencies of both hostesses and clients (see Askew, 1999a, 1999b; Jamieson 2013; and Eades 2007; Hoefinger 2013). In this regard we are responding directly to Cohen's pioneering research in Bangkok and what has changed since then, though we acknowledge that the valuable research of Jackson and Cooke (1999) and van Esterik (2000) on changing gender relations in Thailand are important in contextualizing our concerns. But we are asking the following questions: How do encounters play out in the negotiations between men and women at the present time in a digital world? What is the current role of bars? What are the respective strategies of hostesses and guests? What do they bring to the encounter and how do they perceive it?

Ⅳ. Methodology

For ethical reasons in research on sensitive personal relationships which are legally ambiguous under the laws of Thailand, we have taken great care to anonymize our sources. Our case-studies have been based on five years of intermittent research on a selected number of bars in the tourist districts of Chiang Mai from 2013, particularly the popular area of Loi Kroh and the associated Thai Boxing (*muay thai*) Stadium, which we think are representative of what has been happening in this field of Thai tourism. This has comprised discussions and open-ended interviews with eight bar-owners and managers, and informal conversations with a wide

range of some 50 hostesses. We did not undertake a formal sampling process but rather entered into dialogue with those who worked in the bars and were willing to talk with us. Some of the hostesses have been based in Chiang Mai for an extended period of time; others have moved among tourist sites in Thailand, including Bangkok, Phuket, Pattaya, and Hat Yai; some have lived for periods of time overseas where they have usually resided with male partners (in, for example, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, France, the United Kingdom, the USA, Australia, and Japan, or in other parts of Southeast Asia). Many of the hostesses demonstrate a remarkable willingness to move from one place to another, and our conversations and open-ended interviews with them were conducted in both Thai and English. Of the two researchers involved in this project, one has been based in Chiang Mai for several years, has conducted research there, and is fluent in Thai and familiar with the local urban environment; the other has a wide experience of tourism-related activities across Southeast Asia, having undertaken research in Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines; he has also spent approximately ten months in Chiang Mai since November 2013.

We recognize that Cohen's research in Bangkok undertaken in the 1980s may not lend itself straightforwardly to comparison with our studies in Chiang Mai, though several of our informants had worked in Bangkok and in other tourist sites in Thailand and reflected on their similar experiences in these sites. Be that as it may, in our view, access to the Internet and to the digital world has generated a common medium in which all Thai hostesses operate. Their customer base is now much wider than that contained within the physical space of a bar.

We have also talked with a wide range of clients who frequent the bars: some on package tours, some independent travelers and backpackers; short-term visitors who are familiar with Thailand, and some who are not; longer-term sojourners who stay for weeks or months, and then return to their home country only to return on a regular basis; retired expatriates who are now residents in Thailand; individuals who are engaged in economic activities in Thailand and reside there permanently or who conduct business in several

countries and visit now and then. Some of the discussions were short, others sustained intermittently over several days. We estimate that these encounters approach 100. However, we have used, in particular, information supplied by 10 primary male informants for more in-depth material; and we have been able to undertake careful triangulation within a complex category.

In this regard, Husson demonstrates convincingly how diverse the seemingly homogeneous category of "client" is. On the basis of our smaller sample than hers, we could not have arrived at her extended classification. Yet, her efforts though useful, are debatable; she devises a nine-fold classification for which certain of the categories are problematic and not easily distinguishable from one another ["it's not my fault" group; the demanding; martyrs; hypocrites; the powerful; critics; backpack tourists; those who retain power; the inhibited] (2017: 226). The hostess bar scene in which both Cohen and we are engaged is overwhelmingly aimed at and patronized by Caucasian men. The scene panders to Western cultural and sexual values, just as the sex venues aimed at different national and cultural groups pander to their respective tastes and values. We have also not included an increasingly important constituency in the sex tourism clientele and that is the Asian tourist (Chinese, Japanese, Taiwanese, Korean, Indian, Pakistani, Middle Eastern); this demands a separate research project (see Jiraporn Boonying 2018; Walsh and Pawana Tachavimol 2007). We also set aside the substantial and significant sector of domestic prostitution and the local Thai clientele which deserves focused research.

In any methodological exegesis, there are those social science colleagues of a rather more "scientistic" leaning whom, we surmise, would insist that we present details of our sampling, the number of interviews, the backgrounds of those interviewed, the process of cross-checking, the establishment of validity and reliability, and the confession of our limitations. Our defense in not presenting this kind of methodological exposure is that it is not possible for this kind of research. For example, regarding Western clients engaged in the sex industry in Southeast Asia, Husson captures our dilemma appositely when she says that academic investigations of those clients who are involved in the world of commercial sex and sex

tourism "involves getting to the very heart of a person's intimate life when this is exactly what he wants to protect in remaining anonymous" (2017: 236). This does not mean that we should not attempt to study this important area of human activity and its consequences, but it does mean that the formal world of social science methodology may not apply. Anonymity and privacy are paramount.

We should add that our research has also comprised informal observations which date back to the early 2000s and includes consultation of the relevant websites in Thai, other dating websites and downloadable apps, and sources on recent developments in the tourism industry in Thailand.

Ⅴ. Local contextualization

An important contextual point is that Thai sex tourism aimed at the Western market, primarily in the form of hostess bars, nightclubs, and massage parlors, operates according to different rules depending on the administrative police district in which the venue is located, and also who owns and manages it, or has business interests attached to it. In Bangkok, which arguably has the most diverse and expansive sex tourism scene, neighboring districts often operate under markedly different regimes. These regimes are subject to frequent change and are under a variety of pressures from changing government policies—official and unofficial—as well as more specific and local issues, such as complaints from resident associations and concerns from nearby Buddhist temples.

Bangkok, Pattaya, and possibly Phuket, are home to the most liberal regimes, which permit, tacitly or otherwise, naked or semi-naked dancing, strip or sex shows, and the operation of large and noisy complexes which are purpose-built. They are surrounded by a dense layer of associated businesses, by-the-hour hotels, restaurants, beauty parlors, pharmacies, and hawkers of all description. Clubs with stages are usually concealed within a complex, but hostess bars are usually open-plan and often found in rows along a street. While legally they describe themselves as "bars"

and the girls as "staff," their mode of operation is widely understood. They are usually called "beer bars" (*bah bia*) in Thai.

Successive Thai governments have been working more assiduously since the 1990s to change Thailand's touristic image from "the world's brothel" and the archetypal cheap, exotic backpacker destination, to a clean, graceful, and orderly Buddhist kingdom comprising luxury resorts and family-friendly activities; emphasis is placed increasingly on such leisure attractions as heritage, cultural and ethnic tourism, and ecotourism and health and wellness tourism (see for example Manderson 1992, 1995; Lyttleton 2000; Jackson 2004; Wathinee and Guest 1994; Chang Noi 2009). However, to date, this has meant for the most part cosmetic changes and concealment in the hostess and bar-night club industry, with some closer monitoring, rather than outright suppression, given the substantial revenue that it continues to generate.

As Peter Jackson has demonstrated, skin-deep images and "surface effects" in Thailand are valued and maintained, whilst the private sphere or places hidden from public view are often under less pressure to conform (2004). A good example of this is to be found in the travails of one of Bangkok's primary sex tourism institutions: Nana Plaza. This enclave of three floors of strip clubs and gogo bars on Sukhumvit *soi* 4 was fully visible from the street up until a few years ago, and a sign hung over its entrance reading in English: "The World's Largest Adult Playground." A series of measures have resulted in not only the entrance being partially covered so that one cannot easily see what is inside from the street. A roof has also been built over the complex so that residents in the nearby Landmark and Marriott hotels could not see it from their windows. This is consistent with efforts elsewhere in the country to delimit sex tourism venues under a number of rubrics. In other terms, the purpose has been to render them as (in)visible as the prostitution venues aimed at Thais and other Asian nationalities.

Today, we detected a nostalgia among expatriates and regular tourists with whom we talked about the golden days of the bar scene, which peaked in the late 1990s. Since then the scene has

decreased in volume and diversity, and much of what remains in terms of famous venues and zones has become a pastiche. But zones and venues do remain, especially in the case of hostess bars in provinces where there is a Western expatriate community, and where there is need and feasibility to build new ones (Chiang Rai and Udon Thani both have significant hostess bar zones relative to other services for Western tourists and these are almost exclusively patronized by expatriates and their friends). Chiang Mai, whose prostitution scene was surprisingly extensive for the size of the city (Mulder 2008, 2009) has traditionally been tolerant of hostess bars, but not shows or clubs with stages. A few exist and provide the venues for such performances as pole-dancing, but they are extremely low key, do not occupy prominent sites which can be easily found by short-stay visitors, and do not attract a large customer base.

Furthermore, the established source area of many of the girls working in Loi Kroh has been the relatively poor areas of north-east Thailand (Isan), but over the last few years there has been a number of northern girls, many from Lamphun and Lampang, arriving to work in the city. This is a development which requires further research, but this may be explained by the continuing surge of rural-urban migration in Thailand and the young's desire and search for opportunities which are perceived to be offered by urban environments along with their perceptions and experiences of the lack of opportunities in rural areas.

Ⅵ. Hostess bars and bar girls

The ubiquitous term "bar girl" describes a woman who works in a hostess bar; we use both terms: "bar girl" and "hostess." Hostess bars emerged during the Vietnam War, established specifically for Western and not Asian men. They remain the preserve of mostly Western men, and spaces for the acting out of Western "cultural and sexual values," primarily in the playing of Western music, the choice of Western alcohol and the lack of food, and the impression of fun-loving, free, alcohol-drinking girls who are available for other

services. They can sometimes be large establishments, but more typically appear in open-air rows of small individual units. They contain, at the very least, a bar that serves cold beer and a small range of spirits, music, stools, sometimes pool tables, and most importantly two or more bar girls.

The responsibility of the bar girl is to entice and entertain male customers, encourage them to buy drinks, and submit to leave the bar, if the negotiation is successful, with a customer for sexual relations in exchange of cash payment. In order to obtain a bar girl for this purpose, the customer must pay a "bar fine" to secure the girl's release from work. This is typically and currently around 500 baht (US$16). He must also reach a private agreement with the girl beforehand regarding the amount he will pay her directly. On some occasions this negotiation is deliberately avoided by both parties until the point at which they leave, especially if the customer is inexperienced. Generally, a bar girl can be "bar-fined" for a short-time (one to two hours), a long-time (until the following day), but also for longer periods which can be negotiated on an individual basis. Aside from sexual encounters, a bar girl can make some money through "lady drinks" bought for her by customers. "Lady drinks" are a hostess bar institution; this can be an alcoholic drink, but often a very small glass of non-alcoholic juice that costs at least twice as much as a large bottle of beer. Nevertheless, the category of bar girl is itself complex and variegated.

Ⅶ. Bar girls, networks and families

It has already been indicated that many of the bar girls are relatively mobile, and, consequently well-networked. But the networks usually operate through personal relationships, family recommendations, and by word-of-mouth. Thai women quickly and efficiently organize themselves into networks centered around a charismatic senior—a "godmother" (*jao mae*)— although this term is most often used in a pejorative sense to refer to such a person who is perceived to be full of themselves or haughty. The godmother behaves overtly like a mothering patron, and, in principle, expects obedience and loyalty

in return, though they range from those who are more maternal and others who are more domineering. However, the female owners and managers of bars are usually sponsored; either they have a partnership with a resident foreigner or they have been supported by a *farang* and then subsequently separated or been divorced; usually the latter do not go with customers; there is an etiquette of responsibility and respect; bar-owners lose that respect and authority if they do what their girls do. They will facilitate and entertain customers, take them to a night-club (with suitable bar girls in the entourage) but then draw the line across their own sexual encounters.

So, for example, a number of bars in the Loi Kroh district of Chiang Mai which recruit girls from the north-east of Thailand, incorporate them into a set of family-type relationships which are also one's of patronage expressed in maternal or godmother terms. They are looked after, provided with food (often girls cook and eat together) and accommodation and not exploited in the same way in which other more impersonal and casual clubs and bars operate. As Facebook group data show, a percentage of independent women actively choose this work. Beyond such women, a significant number may feel obligated to work, through ties to their home networks and strong feelings of responsibility as daughters and mothers to support their families. But then, as Cohen proposes in his thesis there are ambiguous degrees of deception; in this case bar girls can be offered lump sums by a bar-owner to recruit girls from home, which they do without furnishing details to the recruits; the recruits then agree to work in the bar and extract "lady drinks" only, but eventually, after acclimatization, make the decision themselves to start going with customers (see Molland 2012).

When a girl arrives to work in a bar, often from a rural area, she therefore has guaranteed food and shelter, though, initially an uncertain income, but she may receive some financial support from the bar-owner, and small amounts of cash in hand. Some girls become successful, earn a good income, and ultimately secure their main prize, a financially supportive *farang*. Others struggle, earn very little, and either move into the more precarious environment of local brothels and massage parlors, or they return home. There are

also girls who have entered a liaison with a *farang* which then goes wrong, and, following the separation, they look to return to some security at the bar.

The bar girl duties are to work for the bar and serve drinks, help to clean tables and do general tidying when the bar closes (if they are not with a client). Some female staff do not sell sexual services; they are straightforwardly bar staff and wage-workers and usually they have some connection with the bar-owner and are supported; their earnings are obviously modest; usually they have very little command of English. In addition, bar workers will look after one another's children; invariably most of the bar girls are from broken Thai marriages and they have children who need to be supported; the women in the bar support the children, unless they are sent back to Isan to be looked after by parents and other family members. As we have already indicated bar girls receive a percentage on the drinks that customers purchase for them. This is one of the main functions on behalf of the bar; they sit and talk with *farang*. This then also results in more guest-guest awareness, relations and exchanges which we discuss below in terms of clientele role-playing.

Some girls, popular and more out-going with good English, can earn an appreciable income from bar drinks alone, in some cases approaching 8,000 to 10,000 baht a month. Bar girls have to agree with the fee for the bar-owner should they spend the night with a customer. However, this can be variable. Some customers are regulars, and they may negotiate fee-waivers with the bar or a discount; it is for the girl to negotiate her own fee, though with a regular customer there is usually an on-going agreed fee. The level of the fee also depends on the kind of service that is required. Girls are usually tracked when they leave with a client, which is usually not a problem with a regular customer and someone known to the bar.

Regarding casual *farang* visitors, the bar will usually be informed of their destination with the girl; there is therefore a measure of security for the girls through the bar-fine and their established connection. Problems arise when some girls go to

night-clubs after the bar closes, if they have not secured a customer for the night; relationships negotiated in a club context may carry a greater degree of risk. Risk may also increase when some girls who have worked for a bar previously have gone semi-freelance; they may continue to have a connection with the bar and that is where they do their main trade, but they have a looser relationship with it. There are also "floaters" who move from bar to bar; some bars tolerate them, especially if they are attractive, and the bars then allow them to do business because they attract more customers who buy them drinks.

There are also frequently closer relationships among neighboring bars. Sometimes if business is slow in one bar, there might be a transfer of the income from some drinks from a bar doing rather better business. On occasion, some girls may move among selected bars. Relationships among several of the bars are tight-knit; some of the bar-owners used to work together as bar girls; at a formal level they do not compete in the pricing of drinks and other services; they operate as a cartel; they may discount informally, but this is not openly advertised. "Happy hours" or overtly discounted drinks do occur but are not generally operated in the Loi Kroh area. Staff often socialize outside the evening bar hours or hold parties for each other to celebrate birthdays and other anniversaries; they may provide other kinds of support and assistance, for example, child-minding for the offspring of a bar girl who has to leave Chiang Mai for a while.

Ⅷ. Client-host roles and relations and the decline of illusion

Cohen describes a milieu in which Western men and Thai bar girls regard each other across a considerable gulf of misunderstanding and deceit. This informs his "typology of relationships" (1996b: 260-261), which aims to demonstrate the complexity of relations between these groups based on the following four analytical types: Mercenary, Staged, Mixed, and Emotional. These types represent points on a sliding scale between a limited and unemotional economic transaction, and a meaningful (in Western terms) sexual

relationship based on "love." This typology may still be useful to some degree, but we have found that currently the gulf of understanding between hosts and clients has been greatly reduced if not bridged.

The element of illusion has all but disappeared in the Thai hostess bar scene. By "illusion," we mean the deliberate action to disguise or heavily de-emphasize the fee-seeking aspect of the hostess-guest relationship, in order to suggest that a hostess only leaves the bar with a customer to whom she is genuinely attracted. This was the very basis of Cohen's characterization of hostess bar prostitution as "open-ended"—its grounding in a contrived "beginning" that could resemble that of a normative relationship for the Western male customer.

Our in-depth observations demonstrate that this element of illusion is no longer present or necessary. Deceit, where it occurs at all, is employed superficially by a bar girl to attract sympathy from potential customers and make them feel safe and secure. Typically, this takes the form of claiming they had only worked in the bar for a week, or that they had never before left the bar with a customer. Obtaining thoughtful and honest reflections about deceit from female informants was difficult, although many acknowledged in a general sense that this was a standard strategy to allay customer fears of sexually transmitted diseases. Male informants, for their part, uniformly related that girls would make these claims as standard practice. Interestingly, their opinions on the purpose of these claims was less to do with the risk of disease and more about an effort to maintain an impression of virtue. The essential function of a bar as a place to drink and buy sexual services however, and that of a bar girl as a sex worker available to any paying customer, was, in a variety of different terms, explicitly acknowledged by all of our informants.

This decline of the need for subterfuge and illusion in bar culture is reflected and compounded by the changing patterns of ownership and management of hostess bars. Since 2010, we have observed a number of bars appearing and disappearing in Chiang Mai which are or were co-owned by a Thai ex-bar girl turned

manager and her foreign husband. Five out of six specific examples involved a Western-Thai couple who first met as tourist and bar girl. In all these cases, the Western husband would serve drinks and act as a convivial host, while his wife would manage the Thai staff. We also discovered several examples in which Thai female bar managers co-owned their business with a non-resident Japanese spouse. We also informally noted hostess bars owned and managed by single Western men as well as those married to Thai women in the tourist districts of Bangkok, Kanchanaburi, Udon Thani, and Chiang Rai.

Limiting the discussion here to what we observed in Chiang Mai, the appearance of Western male bar owners, in addition to the presence of long-term sojourners and expatriates, has helped to further corrode the illusion of hostess bars and their female staff being anything other than what they are. This is not to suggest that bar customs, etiquette, and ambiguity do not continue to play a role in the personal negotiations involved in customer-bar girl relations. But the fee-seeking aspect of the bar girl's work and its implications in a prolonged relationship is no longer hidden, disguised, eluded, or ignored by either bar girl or customer. In other words, the open-endedness, naiveté, and illusion have to some extent been transferred to virtual space—the Internet—rendering the space of the bar fully understood to all as a place to buy sexual services.

Ⅸ. Role-play among the guests

Hostess bars, especially those which are located within entertainment complexes like the Loi Kroh Thai Boxing Stadium or the Nana Plaza in Bangkok, were until recently the preserve of male expatriates and what we might call "dedicated sex tourists." The space of the bar complex appeared to create a very strong "us and them" division between the bar girls and the Western male patrons. But the terms "host" and "guest," as originally popularized by Valene Smith's edited books (1977[1989]) do not allow for a more complex picture of social relations in the space of the bar. We shift our attention to the often anonymous and excluded clients in the literature on sex tourism. For many men, the bar complexes were not simply spaces

in which they could purchase sexual services, but rather sites that allowed them to express their personal and male identity for the benefit of other men. Beyond the camaraderie and competition that is observable in most groups of male drinkers anywhere, the Thai bar scene with its extensive lore, its suggestion of danger and illicitness, and its requirement of initiation and specialized etiquette, provides a rich setting for those men who know the scene to demonstrate their familiarity and expertise to less experienced men, under the guise of either hostility or friendliness. To some extent, then, we must allow for a relational dynamic that does not simply divide male and female, prostitute and client, hostess and guest, but better explicates the ethnographic complexity of the social terrain of the bar and the functionality it offers.

Regardless of how much research a first-time tourist has done in advance of his trip, he is the most susceptible to initiation and help (or intimidation) from "old hands." Hamilton (1997, also Johnson, 2014) discusses the capacity, earned from experience, of being able to correctly identify authenticity and deception in the self-qualification and identity of "the old hand." While Hamilton and Johnson are discussing paperback novels set in Bangkok and authored by expatriate Western men, and not specific ethnographic data, these criteria of earned knowledge and authority certainly figure in expatriate values generally, and most certainly in prostitution and bar culture. Just as there is a constant supply of girls in the bars, there is a constant supply of fresh tourists who welcome initiation and guidance from more experienced men. "Old hands" can effectively be "hosts" for the first-timer guests.

The space of the bar facilitates the "old hand's" own desired role-play experience—the assumption of this quasi-host role in which he demonstrates his authority. This can be done in a number of ways: the mechanism of the hostess bar can be explained, the bar-fine system, what can be expected from a bar-fined girl, and the short-time hotels nearby. The subterfuge and performances routinely laid on for customers can be divulged and explained—"they all say it's their first night or week," "they always have a sick mother in the hospital," "they always have a Thai boyfriend and a child"; these are the stock expressions in first encounters with the hostesses. Informal

tours can also be given by "the old hand"—"One night in Bangkok"-style, which includes an introduction to the girls, or to specific girls with whom they are friendly, an appreciation of their humor and etiquette; sometimes elements of the Thai language can be ostentatiously displayed (two of our primary informants spoke fluent Thai, the remaining eight knew basic words and phrases). Anecdotes are also told about the personal experience of the "old hands" or that of legendary others he knows, often exaggerating the exotic and dangerous elements.

The role of the "old hand as host" is more common in younger expatriates and is in some ways a constant acting-out of their own self-perceived graduation from being a first-timer. They wish to remain in the tourist space, and not only that, but in the "front" side rather than the "back" side. But they need to assert their status as no longer being "tourists." Nowhere is this more pronounced and necessary as in the case of their relations with men whom they perceive as *being* "tourists"—which becomes a highly pejorative designation in this context. "Look mate, I live here right, trust me." "After you've been here for a while, you'll know what I mean."

The bars also facilitate more aggressive male social competition and the playing out of a hierarchy of prestige, which often takes the form of simple disrespect or dismissal, based on more universal forms of status. Most hostess bars have a bell by or near the bar, which a drinker or bar-owner can ring to indicate that he will buy a round for everyone in the bar, staff included. The bell allows those with money to force their largesse on the other men in the bar. The bell-ringer potentially asserts his financial superiority over the other men and wins the dramatically expressed pleasure and attention of the staff, who will indicate clearly the origin of the round of drinks as it is served; interestingly bell-ringers would sometimes ignore or dismiss words of gratitude, pats on the back, and even toasts offered by the other drinkers. Overwhelmingly, this mode of behavior was used by older expatriates and sojourners. This group appeared to define and express themselves as much through their implied financial capacity and gruff unapproachability as much or more than through demonstrations of expertise or knowledge.

During the interviews conducted for this research all of our male informants were keen to describe the systems through which hostess bars, sex clubs, and websites functioned, and to illustrate typical hazards that must be negotiated, usually with anecdotes about the selected "schoolboy errors" of the uninitiated, as one informant described them. Some held it to be a "responsibility" to "school" first-timers when necessary, although according to several informants, many inexperienced and ignorant tourists "deserve what they get." The criteria used to identify inexperienced tourists typically involved the following hazards: being exploited financially either through overcharging by the bar, or less ambiguously by a girl that they have paid for; falling in love or otherwise becoming too attached to a bar girl, conforming to a very Cohenian observation from the 1980s; and unwittingly paying for and/or engaging in sexual acts with a cross-dresser or transsexual.

In summary, we observed the space of the bar and the bar complex to have social functions for some of its patrons beyond drinking and simple access to girls. The bar is a stage, a physical space, for the enactment and assertion of male self-identity and role-play with a view to validation and authority in the eyes of other men. The presence of bar girls is the basis or medium of this role play and necessary for it.

Ⅹ. Changes in space and negotiation: from the physical to the virtual

Cohen's seminal studies in tourism-related prostitution were located in a defined space—a *soi* and associated bars in Bangkok (1996a). These were defined and delimited spaces, where hostesses situated themselves; some of them engaged in writing letters to and receiving them from "lovelorn *farang*." The spaces are therefore discernible and even the expressions of them in letter-writing have a material presence. However, these spaces are declining, though many bars are still there and, if there is a regular customer base and a reasonable flow of tourists and local residents and sojourners, they are still on-going business concerns which generate revenue. We

have also considered defined spaces in regard to a bar, a bar complex, and a set of networks which orient themselves to bars. However, now the use and conceptions of space are increasingly virtual, in that hostesses negotiate in cyberspace, and engage in more freelancing. In other Asian contexts, the terms that are used for this non-bar encounter (beyond the boundaries of the bar) are "butterflying" or "side-lining" in that they are not confined to the bar, nor do these encounters necessarily require the payment of a bar-fine.

Based on research in Chiang Mai, we argue that the encroachment of virtual space over our spatial units of bars, bar complexes, and extended social networks has occurred gradually for a number of reasons. Among them, in no particular order, there has been a general decline and increased stigmatization of tobacco and heavy alcohol consumption, and increased monitoring and control by the Thai authorities; the tourist constituency is also changing. In addition, there has been a concomitant rise of varied alternative drinking establishments not linked with the sex industry in Thailand, especially in Bangkok and Chiang Mai. Furthermore, in the context of recreational sex, the notion of the more private and efficient facility of virtual space is an attractive alternative, where drinking is not necessary, choices can be made at leisure, with reflection and without exposure and its pressures, and where there appears to be a lower cost of expenses (and see Eades 2007). The influence of electronic technology and the decreasing need to go to a bar to arrange for a sexual encounter have undermined the role of the bar but have not as yet totally marginalized it. Visitors can now book an encounter from their hotel room. The sites facilitate more or less instant engagements.

Internet services have changed the sex tourism industry as much as anywhere else, along a now familiar model that does away with the usual intermediary apparatus and allows the individual provider or worker to operate, much like Airbnb turns anyone with a spare room into a hotelier. Both tourists and expatriates use these sites. The commercial services provided by the sites allow men and Thai women to set up profiles in which they can exhibit as much or as little of themselves as they wish, and browse other profiles and

invite them to establish contact. This can then be carried out through the site's messaging and video chat services—and totally secure in terms of contact details—until such time as the profile-holders wish to exchange real contact information and/or meet face-to-face. According to our informants, most do not wait long before exchanging Line IDs (messaging app), Skype handles, and mobile phone numbers.

While they do use a given site's contact services, they can also avail themselves of such devices as "auto-translate" messaging in Thai-English and English-Thai, further eliminating the need for assistance of an interpreter or scribe (in contrast to the letter-writing intermediaries of Cohen's study, 1996e). In theory, the sites leave a digital footprint, and are therefore relatively safe to use due to this deterrent. Some sites are directed specifically toward fun and one-off encounters, others to long-term relationships, others still to unambiguous commercial sex. The most popular sites tend to present themselves as a dating site, but members may indicate clearly in their profile of what they are in search. Trawling bars and looking for a bar girl have become increasingly expensive and inconvenient for some of our informants, who, while they had a lingering impression of the "weirdness" of meeting women online rather than in face-to-face encounters, found the ability to trawl endless profiles full of "body specs" and photographs just as or more compelling and addictive than trawling bars.

Although there are scores of different websites, our informants had a clear favorite in "Thai Friendly." Also mentioned were "Thai Love Links," "Thai Cupid," "Smooci," and "Thai Love Lines" (see website references). The "Thai Friendly" homepage states that the site has well over 1.5 million members. Underneath this information, it advertises: "Step 1—Browse online Thai ladies, Step 2—send a free message," This is followed by a grid of profile photographs, showing both Western men and Thai women. Once one has signed up as a member, which takes around a minute, one arrives at a page with search criteria, some of which are restricted to paying members (weight, height), followed by page-after-page of profile photographs. Clicking on a photograph brings up that member's profile, which typically features three or four images of a woman,

and a very basic list of personal information. There is a facility for taking private notes about the member, and also for making contact, or simply for "showing interest." The Thai women's version also pushes the member numbers, stating that the site is the biggest "foreign partner website" in the world. It stresses that women should not worry about language capability, and simply upload a photograph to their profile and wait to receive messages from foreign men through the site.

By contrast, "Smooci" is unambiguously a commercial sex site. Membership is not necessary to browse the profile photographs which show a price per number of hours required, lists of very explicit sexual acts that the woman will perform, and customer reviews of girls, from which they earn a "personal star rating." Our informants drew our attention to this site, although none were regular users. Despite the fact that many sites like "Thai Friendly" feature profiles provided by bar girls looking for customers, all of our participants acknowledged one clear advantage that the websites held over the bars: the fact that with experience in assessing profiles, it was possible to secure a sexual encounter with a non-prostitute. All made a clear distinction between bar girls/prostitutes and "ordinary" girls and women on the other.

Many expatriates and even first-time tourists appear to prefer non-bar girls given a choice, although the majority of male respondents and participants stated that they would regret not having the option provided by red light areas and bars, were it to be removed. Despite voicing this preference, most informants said that they regularly find themselves in hostess bars, and continue to have sexual encounters with girls there, if and when they feel inclined. Informants claimed it was possible with experience to judge whether a profile was constructed by a covert bar girl or not. They looked for dress and appearance, English language capability, children from previous marriages, keeping strange hours, and claims of no employment. It seems a new "lore" has accumulated relating to websites and internet sexual encounters, as opposed to bar culture. This lore and the cautionary anecdotes derived from it are discussed by men using these services both in person with friends, and anonymously online. Virtual space does seem to allow some

degree of ambiguity to survive, then, now that bar space is almost completely unambiguous.

An anecdote told by one of our most cooperative informants illustrates some of the concerns, anxieties and ambiguities generated by the use of virtual space as opposed to bar space in the search for sexual encounters; it suggests some interesting continuities. Our informant had maintained contact with a number of women's profiles through regular instant messaging and video chat. His strategy was to increase the momentum of the contact to the point at which explicit photographs would be exchanged and then "virtual sex" engaged in via live video chat—something that for our informant often precluded actual face-to-face contact with the profile owners (see Benderson 2007). One evening he received an invitation to video chat from one of his regulars, although the invitation explained that there was a problem with the woman's computer camera, in that she would be able to see him, but he could not see her. She suggested that she might give him written instructions on what to do in front of his camera for her to watch. He agreed and followed the woman's written instructions to the letter, allowing her to be the director and voyeur while he remained the obedient performer. Once the session was concluded she went off-line. Several days later our informant contacted the girl again to ask if she had fixed her camera yet. The girl replied that there was nothing wrong with her camera and denied all knowledge of the incident. After asking him the time and day on which the virtual encounter took place, she concluded that one of her other Western "boyfriends" who had been alone in her apartment at the time had used her profile to trick him. He said that he felt "used and confused" when using the websites after this incident, and he now realized that despite the photograph on the profile, he could not know for sure with whom he was really engaging. His contribution to the mythology of sexual encounters in Thailand hinges primarily on the uncertainty of identity and a new kind of virtual ambiguity. In other words, who is physically behind the profile photograph? Is it merely a mask? Not only does our informant have to discern between bar girls and ordinary Thai girls online, he now has to become anxious about whether they are even girls or Thai at all. We

cannot help but see some significance in the fact that, in this virtual space, he believes he was "bested" not by a bar girl but by another Western man, illustrating the enduring factors of intra-male relations, performance and "mastery of space" in the Thai-Westerner sexual world.

Thai female users of these sites have their own lore, as the Facebook chatroom data clearly demonstrate. They fear "scammers," about whom they swap usually second-hand anecdotes and warnings. They use this English term to refer to narratives of too-good-to-be-true profiles showing handsome young Western men who claim to be rich, and then ensnare Thai women into either parting with money or material goods, or unknowingly performing some illegal function such as drug-carrying in the form of picking up packages which they believe contain expensive gifts for them. It should also be noted that the dating websites are being used for recruitment by female procurers to "cold call" Thai female profile-holders and offer them work abroad in the entertainment industry. One informant from Bangkok is an ex-bar girl turned procurer and makes a substantial living primarily through this activity. Virtual space, then, does not only offer liberation from the staff networks and the now somewhat reassuring and unambiguous bar space, but can also be instrumental in the formation of new and markedly less friendly, less familial, and more ambiguous and illusionary networks.

We conclude that although virtual space continues to expand and encroach upon most of the functions of bar space, and despite the growing pressures on the latter from governmental and other agents, the space of the hostess bar continues for the time being to remain operational and attractive to a not insignificant number of both staff and patrons. Virtual space offers an alternative, and one that sometimes carries risks and ambiguities, but is not yet fully replacing tourist-oriented encounters in bars.

XI. Conclusion

In this ethnographic investigation, we have attempted to reconsider

Cohen's earlier seminal work on tourism-oriented prostitution in which he imaginatively embraces, in both his narrative and analysis, clients and hostesses. Nevertheless, we wish to question Cohen and his co-writer Scott Cohen and their support for a "mobilities paradigm" which addresses the global dimensions of tourism and the Eurocentrism in tourism studies. In engaging with the complexities of guest-hostess and guest-guest relationships, and that among hostesses, their approach does not give us the analytical apparatus to understand these complexities and the variegated character of those engaged in the encounters (Cohen and Cohen 2012, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2019). What we have to confront is the classic "host" (hostesses, bar girls) and "guest" (*farang*, foreign visitors) encounters, but with the complication that bar girls now establish relationships with sojourners and retirees not only with the casual and brief visiting tourists; Valene Smith's categories of "host" and "guest" have become increasingly diverse and complex, and therefore problematic in analytical terms. They repeat the rather stark dualisms that have beleaguered social science.

Another dimension which we have explored is networking; since Cohen's studies, sex tourism in Thailand has matured; there are certainly elements that he observed that still operate, but hostesses have become more sophisticated; some have moved up the social ladder; from bar girl to bar-owner; but, in addition, many of these young women are very mobile. With customers who are prepared to pay, they go to other destinations in Europe, the USA, Australia or more locally in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, or East Asia for a vacation. Cohen's studies address the personal/sexual character of the relationship, but then what happens after the initial encounters? Bar girls are obviously looking for customers for a night, but in certain cases they are looking ahead in an entrepreneurial sense towards a financially secure future. The problem with the concept of "open-ended prostitution" in tourism studies, which, in any case, required qualification, as Cohen acknowledged by the early 1990s, is now a dwindling social context. The clientele is simply too well informed and has too many other options for this to remain a useful way to describe their encounters. If men explicitly do not want a bar girl, they overwhelmingly use

dating sites.

Virtual space seems to offer advantages as against the physical encounters in bars which are increasingly unambiguous, though not entirely so, and which carry financial costs and other possible face-to-face difficulties. It opens up endless possibilities but also other uncertainties, ambiguities, and illusions. We conclude that virtual space will continue to expand and increasingly take over the functions of bar space. Yet, for the time being and despite the growing cyber pressures on bars, the space of the hostess bar remains attractive to a significant number of those who work there and the clientele. Virtual space offers an alternative, and an increasingly attractive arena for male-female encounters, but it is not yet replacing face-to-face tourist-oriented encounters in bars, and it carries its own risks. Bars, or at least some of them, have a future with those who frequent them but for how much longer is anyone's guess.

Acknowledgements

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The Belt Road Initiatives, Identity Politics, and The Making of Southeast Asian Identity

Cahyo Pamungkas and Saiful Hakam*

[_Abstract_]

The Chinese Belt Road initiatives in the Southeast Asian countries marked a new chapter in the development of China political influence on this region. This article looks at the initiative from the cultural dimension and aims to place its narrative as the entry point to understand the use of identity politics in Asian countries that target the Chinese diaspora. This topic relates to the primordial sentiments of Southeast Asian nations amid massive Chinese investment in the region. The issue of Chinese investments under the Belt Road Initiative corridor has a relationship with the formation of anti-Chinese discourse and anti-communist in some Southeast Asian countries. We took the cases of Indonesian and Malaysian elections to observe the use of identity politics and anti-Chinese political discourse in Southeast Asia. In both cases, a common issue emerged, that of the strengthening both Islamic and indigenous sensibilities. The establishment of ASEAN during the Cold War may be seen then as an anti-thesis to emerging Chinese power. However, anti-Chinese and anti-communism sentiments were not enough to unite the forces of the nations of Southeast Asia. We have concluded that brotherhood, mutual prosperity, and anti-neo-colonialism are yet to be fostered completely to make

* Researchers, Indonesian Institute of Sciences, cahyopamungkas@gmail.com

a distinct ASEAN identity.

Keywords: Belt Road Initiative (BRI), anti-Chinese sentiments, politics of identity, Southeast Asia

Ⅰ. Introduction

According to Chinese President Xi Jinping, the Belt Road Initiatives (BRI) is a strategy to create stability around China, by promoting a regional economic integration by means of accelerating infrastructure and connectivity (Cai 2017: 3). Since it was launched in 2013, the initiative has been a main subject in social sciences research, though most of those studies only look at its economic and economico-political aspects. We may mention here the study of Sarker et al. (2018: 633), which says that the BRI has been facing a geo-political challenge, as partner countries are frequently mired in political instability, economic turmoil, corruption, and inefficient public service which are very likely to impede projects. Another study, this time by Chaisse and Matsushita (2018: 184), indicates that the true motive of the BRI is to absorb middle class consumption of developing countries and reduce export dependency to Western countries. China intends to expand its economic and political development model over most parts of the world.

Lu et al. (2018: 44) note that countries connected to the BRI lines usually experience trade increase because of the improvement of infrastructure. Meanwhile, Chen et al. (2018: 12-13) consider the BRI as having increased China's export since 2014, though its trade war with the US tends to adversely affect it. Jusoh (2018: 15) explains that the initiatives in helping ASEAN countries in terms of infrastructure through the BRI tend to compromise bilateral trade balance with China. Chan (2017: 68) maintains that China has intervened in infrastructure development in Southeast Asia to improve connectivity, and expects that the efforts shall have positive implications on integrated trade.

Meanwhile, studies on the Chinese diaspora and anti-Chinese sentiments in Southeast Asia often use sociological or political

perspectives but ignore economic aspects of the problem.[1] As may be seen, anti-Chinese sentiments are shaped by economic contexts like the rise of Chinese economy through the BRI. Setijadi (2017: 1-2), for example, infers that the Ahok case, where a politician Basuki Tjahaja Purnama [also known as "Ahok"] was sentenced to jail term for committing religious blasphemy days before the Jakarta gubernatorial elections is proof the reality of anti-Chinese sentiments. This is also reflected in the study of Tjhia (2017: 22-23) about Chinese Indonesians pursuing their studies in the Netherlands. Before Ahok lost the elections in 2017, the students were proud of their Indonesian identity. However, after his loss, they began feeling displaced, disheartened by the strong anti-Chinese sentiments that reminds them of the atmosphere of the May 1998 riots.

The doctoral thesis of Eifert (2012: 244) on the Chinese-Indonesian conflict points out that the May 1998 riots was a transformative moment where the conflict erupted and had manifested from national to local levels. Zuidweg (2018: 39-40) believes that the Ahok case indicates a de-secularisation process within Indonesian society. In some instances, conservative Muslims were reported to resort to religious threats to dissuade people from voting for Ahok. Stefani (2018: 46) believes that the said elections have extensive national implications. Most Ahok supporters were from predominantly non-Muslim provinces, while non-supporters came from Muslim-dominated provinces, such as Aceh and West Sumatera.

Considering the previous studies, this article aims at fill the gap on BRI studies, which cover mainly economic perspectives, as well as on identity politics in Indonesia which ignore inherent politico-economic dimensions. Primarily, we ask about how the rise of Chinese economy through the BRI relate with the resurfacing of anti-Chinese sentiments in Southeast Asia, particularly in Malaysia

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[1] I use the term Tionghoa for refering to Chinese descents who live in Indonesia. This term is interchangeable with Chinese ethnic people of Indonesia, i.e. those Indonesians who are of Chinese ethnic. While the concept of Indonesian-Chinese referst to Chinese descents (Effendi 2018: 1). "Tionghoa" is a category which is separate todistinct from Chinese people and other ethnics ethnic groups in Indonesia (Thaniago 2017: 60).

and Indonesia. In addition, we also explore the role of identity politics (anti-Chinese and anti-Communist politics) in the making of Southeast Asian identity.

Ⅱ. Belt Road Initiative in Indonesia and Malaysia

When China launched the BRI, it aimed to develop trade routes to Europe consisting of two segments－the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Twenty-first Century Maritime Silk Road. The first constitutes a land transportation network that connects the underdeveloped hinterlands of China to Europe, crossing over Central Asia and South China (Chai 2017: 2). Chinese populist movements supported the initiatives because of their disappointment with the economic order created by the World Bank. Countries showed their support and participation in the initiatives (Lehmanbrown 2018: 11-12). Among them was Indonesia, which under President Joko Widodo envisions infrastructure development planning, with a global maritime fulcrum that intersects with the BRI (Tenggara strategic, 2018: 11). BRI is important for continuing Trans-Pacific Partnership initiatives which proved to have failed in the past (Chaisse and Matsushita 2018: 181). As Indonesia cannot let itself be dependent on the World Trade Organization (WTO), it found in China intersecting interests. China offered access to global market facilitated by connectivity, and Indonesia needed financial resources for its infrastructure (Hadrianto 2017). Indonesian government estimates that it requires USD 450 billion financing between 2014 to 2019 (Connely 2016: 7).

Malaysia practically shares the same needs. Like Indonesia, it is a fast-growing economy with a predominantly Muslim population. It had also fostered close economic relations with China. It also shares with Indonesia linkage to the Twenty-first Century Maritime Silk Road.

Between 2017 and 2018, Indonesia has nine infrastructure projects financed by China with the value of USD 25 billion. Those projects include developments in the Jakarta-Bandung rapid railway, a hydroelectric plant in North Kalimantan, a smelter in West

Kalimantan, and a power plant in Bali. The table below shows these projects borne of Indonesian-Chinese cooperation:

<Table 1> Indonesia-China cooperation's in 2017-2018

No.	Projects	Value (USD billions)	Year
1.	Aluminium Corporation of China Ltd (Chinalco), PT Antam Tbk. PT Inalum collaborates in developing aluminum smelter in the Mempawah district, West Kalimantan	1.5 – 1.8	2017
2.	PT KS ORKA investments in the developing geothermal energy	1.1	2017
3.	Jakarta-Bandung Rapid Railway Development	Suspended	2018
4.	Prevention of Doubly Estimated Tax	No figure	2018
5.	Kayan Water Power Plant project, North Kalimantan	2.0	2018
6.	Development of dimethyl ether coal conversion to gas	0.7	2018
7.	Investment agreement for a joint venture for the development of Kayan Hydroelectric Plant	17.8	2018
8.	Investment agreement for a joint venture for a Power Plant in Bali	1.6	2018
9.	Steel smelter development	1.2	2018

Source: Adam (2018)

The Indonesian government also offered agreed with China to put up three infrastructure megaprojects－the integrated economic corridor, connectivity, industry, and tourism hub in North Sumatera, including the development of Kuala Tanjung port facilities and road access from Medan to Sibolga; improving infrastructure in Bitung-Manado-Gorontalo by developing road access, railway lines, sea and airports; investment cooperation for energy infrastructure and the development of a power plant in North Kalimantan (Adam 2018).

Malaysia is among the Southeast Asian countries that accept many infrastructure project investments from China. Chinese investments in Malaysia cover a variety of sectors－transport infrastructure, power, tourism, and recreation－all scattered among

Malaysia's seven states of Penang, Selangor, Melaka, Johor, Sarawak, Pahang, and Kuala Lumpur. Under Prime Minister Najib Razak, the East Coast Railway Link (ECRL) was to be developed by China Communications Construction Co. (CCCC) and to link the east coast of the peninsula to the strategic sea transport routes west of Malaka Strait. It consists of a 688 km road development and requires a MYR 20 billion investment. Two other projects are also in the pipeline in the Malay Peninsula and Sabah, 600 km and 662 km in length, respectively, costing MYR 2.3 billion (Syafina 2018).

\<Table 2\> China's investments in Malaysia

States	Projects	Companies	Value (in MYR Billion)
Penang	Penang Undersea Tunnel	China Railway Construction Corporation	3.7
	Penang Second Bridge	China Harbour and Engineering Corporation	4.5
Selangor	East Coast Railway Link	China Communication and Construction Company	5.5
	Xiamen University in Malaysia	Sinohydro Investment	1.3
	Edra Power Holding	China General Nuclear Power Group	10.0
Melaka	Melaka Gateway	Power China International	15.0
Johor	City Forest	Country Garden	105.0
	Other developments	Various Companies	26.0
Sarawak	Bakun Dam	Power China International	7.5
Pahang	Kauntan Port and Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park	Guangxi Beibu Gulf International Port Group	8.0
Kuala Lumpur	TRX Signature Tower	China State Construction Engineering Corporation	3.5
	Four Seasons Hotel	China Railway Construction Corporation	2.5
	Total		242.0

Source: Todd & Slattery (2018: 5)

Problem is, five years into Jokowi's administration, BRI implementation has become stagnant in Indonesia, unlike in Pakistan, Malaysia and the Philippines (Tenggara strategic 2018: 11), where China has invested USD 55 billion, 30 billion and 13 billion, respectively (Suropati 2018). As China has committed to invest USD 5 billion for the Jakarta-Bandung rapid railway development, Indonesia tends to veer away from it, having cancelled, for instance some other BRI projects because of the exorbitant interest rates. However, there are more political reasons for this. In Indonesian social media, anti-Chinese sentiments are heightening brought about primarily by the intensification of Chinese presence (Bharat 2018).

BRI projects in Indonesia consist of USD 23.3 billion investments signed in Beijing on April 13, 2018. These were supposed to build a hydroelectric plant in Bulungan, North Kalimantan, as well as a coal processing plant, a power plant, and a steel smelter facility in Bali. It however provoked a negative comment from the West and their allies in Indonesia. Widodo generally welcomes Chinese investments, but the deployment of Chinese workers in the projects tends to spark an outrage from conservative and nationalist groups (Strangio 2017). Indonesia also takes on foreign policies compromising its relations with China, like renaming a part of the South Chinese Sea into North Natuna Sea (Verbeek 2018: 8). With the emergence of anti-communist and anti-Chinese sentiments, Indonesia-China relations remain complicated, even to the point of postponing the Jakarta-Bandung rapid railway project (Scherpen 2018).

In Malaysia, current Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad reviewed some RMY 22 billion Chinese projects, including the east coast railway links. Mahathir and opposition parties won the 2018 general election, partly by denouncing Najib for a patron-client relations with China and his role in the anomalous 1Malaysia Development Berhad [IMDB] scandal, which also involved the BRI (Majid in CARI 2018: 5). Mahathir from then on accused China of securing its influence over Malaysia through an infrastructure-financing scheme where borrower countries are unlikely to repay their loans, and consequently warns of Chinese colonialism (Fook 2018: 5; Bharat 2018).

Considered closely, China will lose a lot if it just orients towards the Indian Ocean through Rakhine-Myanmar. Nevertheless, in political terms, the postponed projects of BRI in Indonesia and Malaysia indicate ideological, political and economic alliances from inside and outside the countries coming together against China. It is therefore essential to examine who these rivals are.

Ⅲ. Chinese and Japanese Investments in Southeast Asia

A country's foreign debt is among many indicators of foreign dependence. Indonesia's debt to China in 2016 amounts to USD 1,035 billion, with private debt reaching USD 13,815 billion. Despite this, Chinese loan to Indonesia is still lower than some other countries. Japanese loan to Indonesia amounts to USD 14,634 billion, while the French and German amount to USD 2,446 and USD 1,882 billion, respectively. The almost insignificant loans still make relations sensitive. Presidential Decree No. 20/2018 which eases requirements for the employment of foreign workers creates widespread opposition from Widodo's staunches critics to conservative Muslims and trade unionists (Zi 2018: 6). The Chinese are the third largest number of foreign workers in Indonesia, after the Japanese and South Korean. In 2007, they consist of 13.07% or 4,301 workers of the total number of the workforce. It increased to 28.85% or 24,804 in 2017 (Adam 2018).

Aversion against China is significant in understanding Indonesian national politics. Scherpen (2018) takes for example the case of the dismissal of the Resort Police Chief of Ketapang named Sunario from the National Police after he cooperated with the establishment of a joint police station in the locality with Public Security Bureau of Suzhou, China, in July 2018. China has a number of business interests in Indonesia, but is likely to ignore public perception shaped by national and religious fervor.

A number of ASEAN countries re-evaluated their support for the BRI due to concerns regarding debt servicing and China's continued territorial aggression. China's supposed rivals, Japan and India, are now capitalizing on the situation and promoting their
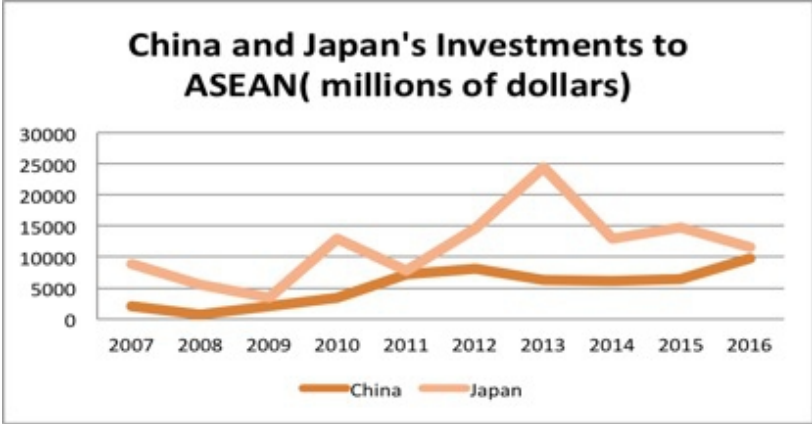
presence in the region. Meanwhile, confronting China may cause an economic war for countries in the region. The region has to contend that it lies at the heart of the BRI where connectivity and development are being fostered (Khemlani 2018).

In the past two years, BRI has been challenged in the region. Malaysia is now leading the opposition as it postponed the development of the railway lines connecting Kuala Lumpur to Singapore. Meanwhile, Thailand attempts to convince its neighboring countries to establish a regional infrastructure fund for the Mekong area to reduce dependence to Chinese investments. China's rivals are now taking advantage, with Japan increasing investments and trade deals. On the other hand, Indonesia and India have forged a joint project of developing a port in Sabang, Aceh, close to Malacca Strait corridor (Khemlani 2018).

Japan need not compete with China (Wijaya and Osaki 2018) as it could promote the narrative of "Asia's dream" to counter the "Chinese dream." Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe maintains that Japan may participate in the BRI on the condition that it is carried out with good governance, transparency, and fairness. Japan has also initiated its own lines and belts within a concept of partnership for developing quality infrastructure. It also introduced an initiative for an Indo-Pacific Funds with Australia. Such strategies geopolitically aimed at countering China's influence also value US relations. Despite their political differences, China and Japan may actually share the burden of funding infrastructure in Asia since there are financial gaps that need to be filled.

Wan (2018) says that Japan has invested much more in ASEAN than China. For years, it was second only to the European Union. In 2016, Japan invested USD 11,536 millions in ASEAN, while China's investment in the region grew steadily with its USD 9,799 million investments. Meanwhile, Chinese investments in Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar have exceeded those of Japan. Most of Chinese investments were on developing infrastructure along these Mekong countries. China is slowly catching up.

<Figure 1> Chinese and Japanese Investments in ASEAN

Source: Wan (2018)

Data from Bloomberg shows that Japanese investments in infrastructure are higher than China in each Southeast Asian country. In Indonesia for example, Japanese investments amount to USD 53.16 billion while the Chinese only invested USD 45 billion. In Malaysia, Chinese investments reached USD 47 billion, much greater than those of the US, which only consisted of USD 10.88 billion. In total, Japanese investments to the ten ASEAN countries including Timor Leste were pegged at USD 230 billion. China's were at USD 155 billion. In the whole of Southeast Asia, Japan has 237 infrastructure projects while China has 191 (Allegado 2018).

<Table 3> Chinese and Japanese Investments since 2000

Countries	Chinese Investment		Japan Investment	
	Items	Value	Items	Value
Indonesia	46	45.01	47	53.16
Malaysia	30	47.27	16	10.88
The Philippines	7	3.18	28	33.54
Singapore	12	3.30	23	19.71
Thailand	5	8.49	22	7.92
Vietnam	30	29.26	84	100.34

Source: Alegado (2018).

Although Japan has forged cooperation with China for the BRI, it still seems to feel threatened. Floating an alternative for the BRI, Japan supported the development of smart cities in Asia. It has provided assistance for ten ASEAN countries to implement the framework of developing 26 smart and environmentally friendly cities. A key feature of the program is the use of artificial intelligence and network devices for solving problems such as traffic jams and energy conservation, the technology and funding of which will be provided by Japan (Sakaguchi 2019). In this vision, Southeast Asia has been turned into a battlefield, with Japan collaborating with the US and Australia, and signing on July 30, 2018 an infrastructure investment scheme for Asian and Pacific countries amounting to USD 760 billion (Pearlman 2018).

Fisher and Carlsen (2018) argue that China has shown its capacity to challenge US dominance in Asia based on the shifts in trade value and orientation. In their analysis, they point to three categories of the relations of Asian countries to China and the US in recent years. The first, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, attempt to challenge Chinese dominance in the trade sector. The second, composed of Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Ceylon, and Pakistan, tend to be favourable to China. The third includes countries orienting themselves to both China and the US. Negara and Suryadinata (2018: 3) report that that in 2016, the total value of Indonesia-China trade activities was at 17% of the total Indonesian trade value with foreign countries. Meanwhile, Japan's was only at 10%. In the same year, Indonesian trade deficit with China was at USD 14 billion, while surpluses with Japan and the US were incurred, respectively, at USD 3.1 billion and USD 8.7 billion.

Ⅳ. Anti-Chinese Sentiment And Identity Politics

To put simply, BRI has resurrected anti-Chinese sentiments in the region, feeding suspicion as China expands in terms of investments, infrastructure support, and migration (Connely 2016: 11). In Indonesia, the World Chinese Entrepreneurs Convention held in Bali in 2015 was perceived to be a platform for economic domination.

This suspicion has extended to politics, and are said to shape public perception of electoral figures (Herlijanto 2017).

Zi (2018: 4-5) points out that as the BRI increased Chinese presence in Indonesia, concerns about the growing political clout of Indonesian Chinese surfaced, igniting anti-Chinese sentiment. This was observable in the Jakarta gubernatorial elections in 2017, where Ahok was defeated after religious and racial issues were hurled at him. He rose from the ranks but was of Chinese descent and Protestant (Hui 2018: 4)－a double minority. When Widodo won the presidency, he became acting governor of Jakarta. He was the first Christian to hold the position, and like Widodo waged campaigned for professionalism in efficiency in governance. He was known to be frank and no-nonesense and often clashed with many in the bureaucracy (Verbeek 2018: 54). When he ran for governor, he was supported by the ruling party PDI-P (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle). His opponents were former education minister Anies Baswedan, a Hadramist; and Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono, son of the former president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (Ismail 2016; Setijadi 2017).

Setijadi (2017b) describes the defeat of Ahok as surprisng, as six months prior to the polls, surveys indicate satisfaction over Ahok's performance as the acting Jakarta governor between 2014 and 2016. The elections became a way for parties affected by Ahok's policies to get back at him. These include the urban poor who were expelled them from riverbank slum areas. His opponents capitalized on issues against him to wage a religion-based populist movement supported by figures such as Prabowo, Abu Rizal Bakrie, Anis Baswedan, and Sandiaga Uno (McCharty 2017: 1).

Identity politics on and offline was an important factor in Ahok's defeat (Hui 2018: 3-4). Four months before the first round of elections, a number of Islamic mass organizations coordinated by the FPI (*Front Pembela Islam*, Islam Defenders Front) mounted a series of mass actions protesting Ahok's supposed blasphemous act in a speech in Kepulauan Seribu in October 2016. He was believed to have been convincing people not to follow the *Al Maidah* or the imperative for Muslims to only vote for Muslim leaders. The protest

wave known as the *Aksi Bela Islam* (Defending Islam Action) pressed the police to pursue the case, and came in three waves. The one that took place in December 2, 2016, known as the 212 action, was attended by thousands of Muslims (Lim 2017: 5-7; Duile 2017: 255-256). This severely affected Ahok's campaign. He was defeated by Baswedan.

After his defeat, Ahok was brought to court for religious blasphemy and sentenced to a two-year imprisonment. The movement that put him to jail created an atmosphere of anxiety over discrimination and racial violence reminiscent of the 1998 protests. The moderate Islamic organizations, such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, which were larger in number, refused to support the movement (McCharty 2017). However, they were unsuccessful to prevent the explosion of unfortunate incidents. For its part, the national government responded by pressuring the conservative Muslim movement to support government policies.

Ahok's defeat and eventual prosecution may be attributed to the displacement of Muslim conservative groups in governance. Yudhoyono gave a larger role to the MUI (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, Indonesian Council of Islamic Scholars) in determining religious policies. In addition, the MUI was assigned to KH Maruf Amin, and the Religious Affairs Ministry to Suryadharma Ali, two conservative figures who ignored the persecution of the Ahmadiyah community (Scherpen 2017).

Deployment of identity politics in such political actions is worrying as it may plant seeds of intolerance that will someday grow into radicalism (Ismail 2016). Setijadi (2017) notes that the anti-Ahok campaign created s discourse which pose that votes for Ahok were votes against Islam. The 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial elections was then an ideological clash between conservative Islam and pluralism, which largely utilized social media in disseminating fake news and hate speech, as well as anti-Chinese sentiments. When Baswedan, visited the headquarters of FPI, it was obvious that Muslim conservatives won the race and even had resurrected old anti-Chinese prejudice.

In practice, identity politics can legitimize persecution against

minorities. Such may be seen in what Trisakti (2017) reports about the second Aksi Bela Islam on November 4, 2016, where protesters shouted, "Crush the Chinese!" Even FPI leader Riziek Shihab, retorted in a speech: "would you accept an infidel as governor [of Jakarta]?" During the campaign, posters were circulated containing admonitions like "It is forbidden to pick an infidel leader" and "Muslims who vote for an infidel [Ahok] ⋯ do not deserve a funeral prayer."

Shen (2017) relates that intolerance and radicalism in Indonesia has sent a chilling effect on the wellbeing of Indonesian Chinese. Some also consider the assault against Ahok as part of attacks against Widodo by conservative Muslims (Verbeek 2018: 58). The smear campaign hurled against Ahok is reminiscent of anti-Chinese sentiments during the times of the Netherlands Indies (Shen 2017). The attitude is yet to change, and today, religious conservatism is adding fuel to the anger. Indonesian Chinese once again feel the threat they have experienced in the past. It doesn't help that the government has also yet to resolve institutional racism (Connely 2016: 11; Ismail 2016; Setijadi 2017) which could be traced back to past regimes where the Chinese may have been allowed to speak their languages, publish newspapers, maintain schools and cultural expressions, but still suffer state discrimination (Trisakti 2017). Suharto once forbade the Chinese any form of cultural and political expression, a policy implemented by the Dutch colonial government.

Amy Freedman traces the racial sentiments against Chinese people in Indonesia to the disintegrative politics of Suharto, which ran an assimilationist policy that gave non-native identity to the Chinese. The government provided a small number of Chinese people with various investment facilities where they became very successful. When the Suharto government collapsed in 1998, the Chinese became the target of widespread hatred.

While President Bacharudin Jusuf Habibie issued a presidential decree No. 26/1998, which made illegal the use of native and non-native terms in business and official government policies, and President Abdurrahman Wahid revoked presidential decree No.

14/1967 that banned Chinese cultural and traditional practices, discrimination never dissipated (Ju Lan 2009). Ju Lan agrees with Purdey (2005: 23) that this is because the loyalty of Indonesian-Chinese has always been held in contempt and that China has been perceived to be controlling Indonesian economy (Turner and Allen 2007: 119; Verbeek 2018: 54). The May 1998 riots that eventually restored democracy may have enabled the Chinese to participate in nation-building. Unfortunately, Indonesia seems to be not ready. The elections of 2017 prove this (Herlijanto 2016). The Indonesian-Chinese, despite their great contributions to economy, will always be suspected of disloyalty and domination. This occurs in the name of upholding the spirit of the national struggle (Nugroho 2016).

Ⅴ. Anti-Chinese Sentiments and The Future of Southeast Asia

Indonesia and Malaysia have similar experiences of anti-Chinese sentiments. As predominantly Muslim countries, they however differ in handling these. Malaysia politically privileges Malay people, while Indonesia *de jure* does not discriminate any ethnic-group. Anti-Chinese identity politics in the two countries involve political contestation, economic gaps, and religious difference (Weng 2016).

The displacement of United Malays National Organization (UMNO) from dominance in Malaysia prompted a rise in opposition for the multiracial Democratic Action Party (DAP). Meawhile, in Indonesia, the surge of Ahok's popularity threatened the local elite.

In both countries, the economic disparity between the native majority and the Chinese has also been prevalent. However, the anti-Ahok and anti-DAP sentiments may be linked to their progressive stance and preference for meritocracy policies, even if it meant the eviction of informal settlers. The disappointment in the economic policies of both also heightens anti-Chinese sentiments, and was made more serious by opposition from the religious sector. In this situation suspicion sowed everywhere creates volatility. In Malaysia Muslim progressive political party *Partai Amanah* was once labelled a DAP agent, while *Nahdlatul Ulama* was stigmatized as too friendly to Chinese. Hoaxes about DAP wanting to form a

Christian state alarmed the population, and many believed that Ahok wanted to Christianize all of Jakarta.

The *Strait Times* on September 23, 2017 reported that opposition to Chinese investments in Malaysia seriously disturbed the Malay-Chinese sector. *Malaysiakini* quotes Najib as saying that "the members of the opposition are attacking us because we bring in Chinese investments" (September 22). He continues: "That's a very good reason for all of us not to support the opposition because they are not telling us what's good for Malaysia and the Chinese community." There was much to lose in this situation as China, through the BRI, was willing to purchase Malaysian palm oil at USD 25.7, as well as other Malaysian agricultural commodities. The party Barisan Nasional campaigned for a more moderate attitude towards all ethnic groups. This brought in a lot of investments for (Seng 2009: 5).

Barisan Nasional lost the 2018 Malaysian elections because of anti-Chinese sentiments. The party Pakatan Keadilan built on a campaign that promised an economy independent from China, along with its critique of corruption involving officials of the Barisan Nasional. The intensity of these sentiments in Indonesia and Malaysia were studied by Weng (2016).

The 2019 Indonesian Presidential Elections also witnessed aversion for Chinese investments. It carried over accusations against Widodo, who was perceived to be pro-China, when he first ran in 2014 (Hughes 2018: 5; Zi 2018: 6). Widodo's closeness to Chinese businessmen supporting his infrastructure and connectivity programs earned the ire of his critics.

The World Bank reports that Indonesia still needs some USD 1.5 billion in financial aid for infrastructure. During his administration, Widodo announced the need for USD 327 million, and only had USD 15 million from the national budget and USD 45.7 million from state owned businesses. The government had to find other and he invited China to invest, within the framework of the BRI (Priyandita 2018).

In October 22, 2018, Luhut Panjaitan, Indonesian delegate for

the BRI and Maritime Coordinating Minister, went to Beijing to discuss the BRI infrastructure projects in behalf of Widodo. The visit was used by Widodo's opponent as a means to discredit the Chinese. Aside from threats that any agreement with China will be reviewed once the opposition unseats Widodo, rumors about the infiltration of millions of Chinese workers in Indonesia (Connely 2016: 12), as well as China's "debt trap" in various projects abroad, circulated in the news and social media. The banner project Jakarta-Bandung Rapid Railway project was also criticized for being impractical, leading to its cancellation (Priyandita 2018).

Widodo proactively responded by proposing a number of requirements for accepting BRI projects in the framework of Global Maritime Fulcrum. These include the use of environment-friendly technology and the deployment of the local labor force. This however did not deter critics and forces from opposition in circulating hoaxes over social media. Unlike Najib, Widodo overcame the surge anti-Chinese sentiments and won 55% of the total votes, enough to defeat his opponent (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum* 2019).

It is easy for some ultra-nationalists the world over to turn the Chinese into scapegoats for their economic woes. Economic gaps are usually utilized to create hate for the Chinese who usually belong to the upper class. In Indonesia, economic gaps worsened from 0.30 in 2000 to 49.3 in 2016. In 2019, only 1% holds 49.3% of Indonesian national wealth, which most likely include the Chinese. This is true in in many Southeast Asian countries, including in Malaysia, which however privileges to Muslims in economic activities (Ward 2017).

Historically, China prefers to deal with neighbors by fostering loyalty and providing financial subsidies than maintaining stability along frontier areas. China today continues to use the strategy of old Chinese emperors. Some Chinese banks offer big loans for developing infrastructures, which for some countries are quite difficult to accept. China pushes on by influencing the political and business elite, further eliciting opposition (A2 Global Risk 2017).

Clearly, anti-Chinese sentiments are resurfacing because of the BRI. However, either anti-Chinese or anti-Communist sentiments

borne of the Cold War era are difficult platforms for creating a common Southeast Asian identity. Both reinforce insularity and prevent openness to other cultures. It is simply unproductive, at a time when globalization is at work everywhere and dialogue is necessary more than ever. Southeast Asian nations must focus on cooperation and tap into the potential of economic, cultural and political partnerships with China.

Indonesia and Malaysia are at a geopolitical and geostrategic position to benefit from cooperation with the Chinese. Victor King (2003:3) mentions that from first of the millenium, Southeast Asia has been shaped by various civilizations and cultures, including India and China. This region should be a melting pot of cultures and anti-Chinese sentiments has no place for this multicultural setting.

Ⅵ. Conclusion

From the exposition above, we may infer the following: *First,* the rise of China's economy and its BRI has no direct impact on the rise of identity politics in Indonesia and Malaysia. However, indirectly, Chinese investments create social-economic and political contexts for the surge of anti-Chinese sentiments. The BRI has become a symbol of the rise of the Chinese in the modern world. This is often utilized by parties of interest to provoke said sentiments.

Second, identity politics in general, and anti-Chinese and anti-Communist sentiments in particular, no longer serve as base for shaping a common Southeast Asian identity. They may have worked in the Cold War era, but today, reinforce religious and ethnic bias that lead to radicalism.

In spite of being an arena of economic and political contestations of global powers, Southeast Asia in social and cultural terms is still a common house that provides shelter and platforms of expressions for all cultures. This region is a melting pot for great cultural powers such as China, the West, India, and the Middle East. The mobilization of identity politics is not likely to build a common

platform in forming the Southeast Asian societies; it inversely reaffirms national or ethnic primordial sentiments at local levels. We must develop a Southeast Asia that is open and all-embracing.

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A History of Vietnam's Integration in Modern Times:

The Case of Franco-Chinese Conflict over the Sino-Tonkinese Border (1885-1895)

Nguyen Thi Hanh*

[*Abstract*]

Investigating the clash among different forms of international relations has been a frequent issue in modern research and attracts interest in the fields of history and politics. In the nineteenth-century, Asia witnessed a fierce struggle between traditional relations in Asia that existed during the feudal period, that of "The Heavenly Dynasty, China and its vassal states"; and a the new form of relations introduced by the West, that of relations between "colonial powers and colonized countries." As a result, the formation of "colonial societies" in Asia with very specific features was established. However, as stated by Vu (2015), for many reasons, which include the lack of material resources, the politically sensitive nature of the object, and the focus on gains and losses in previous studies, there were little studies on the process of demarcating the Tonkinese border between Franco and Chinese in Vietnam, especially from a globalization perspective. This study thus aims at examining the issue of the demarcation of the Tonkinese Border between Franco and Chinese (1885-1895), in view of globalization, as a case study for the transition process of

* Associate Professor, International Politics and Diplomatic Studies, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam. hanh.nt@hnue.edu.vn.

the modern history of Vietnamese society.

Keywords: Globalization, border demarcation, Tonkin, Franco, Chinese

Ⅰ. Introduction

The nineteenth century saw relatively large fluctuations and was considered the "*hinge century*" of Asian societies. This is a period of "*globalization,*" with Western colonialism's implementation of policies of colonial expansion into Asia (Thomas 2005). That globalization wave not only made Asian conservative countries confront big questions related to their national destiny such as "*war or peace?*" and "*remaining conservative or going towards a reform,*" but also brought a clash between an old Chinese-led Asian order and a new Western-led world order. Colonialism, with its superior power at the time, and with its rapid scale adjustment and influence expansion, enveloped Asian conservative societies into a wave of change, forcibly, in different levels, types, and times (Hobsbawm 1994).

In the same study, Hobsbawm (1994) also concluded that Western powers, which lead that globalization wave, with the ultimate aim of imposing Western civilization into Asia, did not succeed easily, contrary to the aspirations of many colonialists at the time, as they faced a traditional order, an Asian civilization established and led by China since ancient times, a world order led by China.

Historical facts show that in Asian feudal countries, a world order existed for thousands of years, governed by China's tributary system from the ancient times until the nineteenth century, when the West came into the picture. This order has a fundamental unique character: a hierarchy of relations between the "heavenly dynasty state, China, and its vassal states," a state-to-state relationship of "super-ordination and subordination, and tributary system" (Yoshiharu 1987). Yuen (2013) noted that China utilized the order to implement a hegemonic and peaceful policy among its

neighbors. With a more specifically, Zhang & Barry (2017: 7) mentioned that China used the tributary system as a way to stabilize the border areas.

From the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, China lost its neighboring vassals after being replaced by the West. Falling into deep crisis, the Chinese Government was forced to sign "unequal" treaties (Yves 1982: 9), officially recognizing the presence of Western powers in its former vassal states. This also means that China was forced to give up its supremacy, leading to its collapse (Yuen 2013). Most Asian countries formally integrated into the Western "globalization," with its feudal structure gradually gearing towards modernization. This was also challenged, as Jacques (2013: 147) noted: "Western domination forced Asian peoples at the same time to resist, but to adapt to the new ideas as well...and that gave them a new vitality."

Jacques Attali's judgment is considered relatively accurate in the case of Vietnam as well. As a country in China's tributary orbit and as a one colonized by France in 1858, Vietnam inevitably lost its independence after 30 years of resistance. On June 6, 1884, the Vietnam Central Government in Hue signed the Patenôtre Treaty, which officially recognizing French domination (Ministère francais des Affaires Etrangères n.4). However, it was not until the French and the Chinese signed the Treaty of Tianjin in 1885 that China officially relinquished its rights over Vietnam (Journal Officiel francais 1886). Charles Fourniau, a French historian and an expert on the Vietnam-China border issue, argued that "the French conquest and especially its end in Tonkin has made Vietnam officially escape completely from the trajectory of the Chinese order."

However, looking closer at the process of demarcating the Tonkin border between the French and the Qing Dinasty of China, this view may not very convincing. Particularly, in Paragraph 3 of the Treaty of Tianjin, provisions have been set on how the French and the Chinese will conduct the delimitation and landmarking of the Tonkinese border and that these would be completed within 6 months (Journal Officiel francais 1886). The process actually had for

10 years (1885-1895), and was rife with many conflicts and disagreements. One of the biggest difficulties is the Chinese claim of a large and important part of the Tonkinese border, hinged on Vietnam's being a past vassal of China (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères 1886). It had not been easy for China to give up its "naturally superior" position in the face of the new order (Quach 1991: 360).

The Vietnam-China border has been established since the 10th century, right after Vietnam (the ancient Vietnam, known as Dai Co Viet, not the modern-time Vietnam) gained its independence (Dao 1964: 187). However, for Asian countries at that time, the concept of "*borderline*" or "*zone of influence*" is attached to the division of social space with people rather than that of natural lands (Georges 1980: 11). Under the influence of the China-led order, the delimited borders were that of "the heavenly dynasty and its vassals," instead of borders among independent states and sovereignties in Western standards. The process of Western colonization brought to Asia a new concept of "borderline" which emphasizes its legality with clear and detailed delimitation, both on paper and in the field (Yves 1982: 9).

According to Prêtcôte (1977: 60), the delimitation of Tonkinese border between France and China was applied according to the "Western standards" combined with "historical borderline" evidence to produce a new borderline called "colonial borderline." The Tonkinese border is also considered to be "one of the best colonial borderlines in Southeast Asia." However, the process and the results of border delimitation have been mentioned in a variety of commentaries.

Fourniau, in "La frontière sino-vietnamienne et le face à face franco-chinois à l'époque de la conquête du Tonkin" mentioned the attempts and the ensuing conflicts between the French and the Chinese in the process of delimitation. Looking closer at China's territorial claims based on commercial interests with France, Fourniau (1989) also commented that France used the Tonkin territory to bargain its interests. Therefore, France accepted to finally cut a part of Tokinese territory to the Qing Dinasty in the process

of border delimitation.

On the other hand, Patrice (1995: 93) opined that that France only used Vietnam as a stepping stone to the most important goal of political and economic interests in China. Therefore, France only wants to quickly stabilize the border to achieve its main goal.

Besides, according to Vu (2015), there was little research on the process of demarcating the Tonkinese border between the French and Chinese in Vietnam. The issue has always been considered sensitive. The lack of archives in Vietnam also makes it difficult for Vietnamese researchers to access historical documents. Some rare Vietnamese studies mostly focused on emphasizing the "gains-losses" of the territorial border demarcation process, and on the "disadvantage" for the Vietnamese side due to its lack of knowledge in border-related studies.

Additionally, there is no research on the process and results of the Tokinese border delimitation between the French and Chinese in view of globalization until now. Therefore, the aim of this study is to focus on clarifying the disagreements, conflicts, and interests of the French and the Chinese in the process of demarcating the border and analyzing the root causes from the "globalization" perspective. This will establish a more comprehensive and objective understanding of the process of setting the Vietnam-China border. The study also intends to give a new perspective through a specific case of Tonkinese border delimitation, where globalization in the modern era brought about clashes between the two civilizations. The clash is transformed the tradidtionally conservative nations to become modern.

Ⅱ. The concept of "national power" and "border" in the modern era

2.1. The concept of "national power" and "border" in the modern era of France

The seventeenth century brought in a turning point in world history with regards to both the thinking on and reality of "national power."

The world order and the nation's standing were determined by naval warfare. Consequently, the sea empires such as the Netherlands, Spain, Britain, and France rose and fell by turns. By the nineteenth century, the British navy ruled the seas and gave credence to the argument that superiority comes only with the domination of the waters. Looking at the rise of great sea powers, one can easily find that commercial ambitions were the strongest driving force for sea power enhancement and warfare (Mahan 1987: 8).

History proves that at this time, seizing and defending commercial interests in correlation with actual power were consistent policies for colonial powers. Accordingly, throughout the Tonkinese border delimitation process between the French and Qing Dinasty of China, commercial interests were the central focus, a target sought after by both parties. Border delimitation thus became a particular and vivid object for commercial bargaining (Ministère francais des Affaires Etrangères 1887).

A closer examination of the history of the two powerful empires in the nineteenth century, namely Britain and France, may reveal how the differences between their concepts of "national power" shaped their national development strategy. Mahan (1987: 8) pointed out that British and Dutch ships at the time sailed off with the belief that there was no other choice, as staying in their depleted lands meant starvation.

This, however, was not the case of France. With the covering of seas along with a relatively long land border, France naturally gains the geographical advantages and thus, did not need to have the needs of the Dutch and British. For a long time, France had not been able to make up its mind whether to pursue "sea power" or continue with its "land power." From the latter half of the seventeenth century, the French government had chosen land territorial expansion as its national strategy (Paul, Leroy-Beaulieu 1882). This decision was proven as costly and was later seen as a policy failure for France, which had to spend excessively on maintaining a land border patrol force while missing the opportunity to be a world leading sea power. As a result, by early eighteenth century, France was overtaken by Britain and the Netherlands on

the water front. Despite France had re-gained some superiority by the end of the nineteenth century at sea, it then has never ever been able to become a true great sea power (Mahan 1987: 8).

France's choice of national strategy determined the characteristics of its colonial policies. In the nineteenth century, when France set foot in Asia, the most lucrative areas for maritime trade had already fallen into Britain (Tocqueville 2002). Land territorial control, therefore, became the only benefit France was able to seize and maintain. As a result, trade and territorial conflicts between France and other colonial powers and colonized nations in Asian were intense. This was further highlighted by the delimitation process of the Tonkinese border between the French and the Chinese.

Apart from "national power," other factors also played a role in shaping France's colonial policies. Particularly, France chose to build its supremacy and power in the colonies and compete with Britain by relying on "religious supremacy." As an influential power with a tradition of "assimilation," France values the colonial policy of spreading religion by way of missionary work. As said, where for other powers, their flag is trading; for us, it is the rood (Chesnay 1923).

"National characteristic" was an influential factor in France's ability to establish new colonies. Under the strong influence of the medieval European nobles who often look down upon "trade and commerce," modern French society considered the practice of trading and particularly maritime trade, inappropriate for highly social classes (Lucien-Anatole 1864). France, therefore, had a traditional tendency to identifying more advantages on land than on sea, and thus placed more emphasis on seizing its land. Another characteristic of the French is their distaste for venturing outside of their country. "French people are well known to be critical of colonial civilization," said the Governor General Paul Doumer in his memoir (Paul 1930: 39). Doumer (1930: 39) also pointed out that it was unusual for intelligent and experienced French traders to travel by themselves to the colonies do business or invest in there with large sums of capital. Meanwhile, in France, there was no shortage of people who were really keen in becoming colonial administrators.

This put a great strain on France's budget and created a significant impact on the political and administrative organization in the French colonies. It is the colonists' disposition, rather than the government's interest or lack thereof, that would fundamentally shape the development of the colonies. In reality, policies implemented in the colonies might detract significantly from what its "colonial nation" advocates. Accordingly, one can see that extractive policies were more prevalent in French colonies than constructive or mercantilist ones. Under these policies, France would prioritise natural resource interests or control over territories with extractable resource as well as land trade routes (Leon 2018). This will become more evident upon examination of the Tonkinese border conflict between France and China.

2.2. The concept of "national power" and "border" in modern China

With a frontier that borders 14 countries, China has been actively pursuing territorial expansion in Asia, similar to the campaigns of France in Europe. Many scholars pegged the start of China's territorial expansion at its conquest of the southern lands around the fourth century BCE (Poulpiquet 1998: 16-17). China's southern territories were conquered as a result of colonization. In other words, China had become a colonizer in Asia from early on, almost at the same time as the Roman Empire (Ministère francais de la Défense 1949: 45). In order to preserve the spoils of its conquests, China had also had a very early conception of "borderline," with the Great Wall built in the third century BCE along its north and northeast border; it is considered its first official borderline (Duroselle 1990: 230). However, this attempt to safeguard China's northern border against the ancient tribes in the North also demonstrates China's idea about territorial expansion: "*a closed border*" in the north and *"an open border"* to the south (Poulpiquet 1998: 16-17). Vietnam, with its geography, is part of China's national expansion strategy since ancient times (Ministère francais de la Défense 1949: 45). For China's, Vietnam is always its vassal state and therefore, a clear borderline does not exist between them (Ministère francais des Affaires Etrangères 1886).

The last decade of the nineteenth century marked the decline

of Chinese feudalism with the wave of Western colonization. In turn, big cities, as well coastal and geostrategic locations of China was forced to open their doors to colonial nations for trade. Concessions to the British, French, Russian, and German powers also took place in Chinese territory (Nguyen 2012). China had to accept unequal treaties with Western countries to avoid the risk of becoming a real colony. With the signing of these treaties, the "superior-vassal" relationship that existed for thousands of years collapsed (Yoshiharu 1987). Therefore, for China at that time, the re-demarcation of the border with neighboring countries was a top concern, as it guarantees territorial sovereignty in the face of the Western wave.

As such, it is clear that French and Chinese both shared similar ideas about "national power" and "territorial border." Both focused on "land power" and strived to expand their control of land territories. It is thus not difficult to account for the fact that the demarcation process had undergone in such a prolonged and intense manner.

Ⅲ. The Case of Franco-Chinese Conflict over the Sino-Tonkinese Border (1885-1895)

As neighbours in Asia, Vietnam and China share a common border that runs more than 1,400 km along the Northern mountainous provinces of Vietnam and the Southeast region of China. Established in the 10th century after Vietnam gained its independence from the Chinese domination, the borderline was also delineated many times through the feudalist Chinese and Vietnamese dynasties. However, this delineations were only done in some areas (Dao 1964). That was the reason why the process of demarcation between the French and Chinese was carried out on the basis of the "historical borderline" and Western standards (Deveria 1989: 6).

3.1. The Treaty of Tianjin in 1885 and the demarcation of Tonkinese border between the French and Chinese

On June 6, 1884, the Vietnam Central Government in Hue signed the Paternôtre Treaty with France, officially recognising France's rule in Vietnam. In reality, however, France faced several difficulties in

enforcing its rule in Tonkin due to the complex situation at the time, including the presence of a large number of Chinese troops in many crucial areas along the border and the inability of the Hue Government to be on top of it, which caused insecurity and disruption in the border. The border had almost been rendered useless with people from both sides casually crossing the territories (Ministère francais de la Défense 1949: 31). At the time, according to Ministère francais de la Défense (1949: 31), France was anxious in establishing a swift rule over Vietnam, but faced vehement protest from the Qing Dinasty of China due to the claim that Vietnam had always been one of China's vassal states and that France had no right to establish rule over Vietnam without its consent. The situation immediately changed after the Treaty of Tianjin was signed in 1885, which gave the Qing no choice but to withdraw its military force and acknowledge France's protectorship of Tonkin (Journal Officiel francais 1886).

China's defeat in the Sino-French War in 1885, along with its agreement to the Treaty of Tianjin, put it in a difficult situation. In order to preserve its sovereignty, China had to enter into a series of unequal treaties with Western powers and suffered massive losses in terms of territories and economic interests. As such, its greatest concern during this period was to retain sovereignty and protect economic interests by all means. France's presence in Vietnam caused much concern for China, especially given the instability at the Sino-Vietnamese border. China also wanted to quickly re-establish a definite Sino-Vietnamese border with France so as to preclude any of France's ambition for its southern territories (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères 1886).

France was able to exact this change of attitude from China because, in reality, it considers Vietnam as a crucial territory in expanding its political and economic influence into China. As such, France also wanted to quickly redefine the Sino-Vietnamese border in order to force China to formally renounce its influence over Vietnam, and put pressure on it in the Sino‐French trade negotiations (Patrice 1995: 93).

The similar concerns of both side led to the signing of the

Treaty of Tianjin, which in   Article 3 states that:

> After an interval of six months from the signature of the present
> treaty, commissioners designated by the High Contracting Parties will
> go to delineate the frontier between China and Tonkin. They will
> place, wherever there is need, boundary markers designed to clearly
> delineate the line of demarcation. In the case where there is a
> disagreement on theplacement of any marker or on any rectification
> of detail in the actual frontier of Tonkin which it may be necessary
> to make in the common interest of both parties, they shall refer it
> to their respective governments.... (Traité de Tianjin 1886).

This article, along with others in the Treaty, signified China's
official renouncement of domination towards Vietnam and
recognition of French rule in Vietnam. The Treaty of Tianjin also
marked the beginning of the demarcation process of the
Sino-Vietnamese border between France and Qing Dinasty of China.
However, instead of 6 months as the Treaty stipulated, the actual
process lasted more than 2 years (1885-1887) and the placement of
markers expanded to 10 years (1895) due to fundamental
disagreements between both parties.

3.2. Disagreements arising from the demarcation process

The demarcation of Sino-Vietnamese border between the French
and Chinese was indeed a "battle" where both sides tried to
maximize gains. At the onset, both sides expressed deeply conflicting
views. The situation was further complicated by disagreements from
within the parties themselves (Fourniau 1989: 90).

For France, General De Courcy, the Commander of France's
Expeditionary Force in Indochina, suggested a "limited" occupation
strategy in Tonkin, which meant leaving certain areas under Chinese
bandit control to avoid unnecessary confrontation (Ministère
francais des Affaires Etrangères 1886).

Meanwhile, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs preferred to
quickly seize the entirety of Tonkin in order to enforce a
comprehensive and stable rule there, as well as to gain diplomatic
strength for trade negotiations with China. It therefore asked the

French army in Vietnam for more support and to quickly complete the demarcation process. This proposition was rejected by General De Courcy, however, which consequently delayed the process (Ministère francais des Affaires Etrangères 1886).

For China, the process created disagreements between the Chinese Central Government represented by the Expectant Grand Ministers (Zongli Yamen Dachen, essentially Chief of the Qing's Foreign Affairs Office) Li Hongzhang, and the local border administration. In reality, the weakened Chinese government was no longer able to influence the local administrations, particularly those of Liangguang (Guangdong and Guangxi). Li Hongzhang himself wanted to quickly finish border negotiations so that he could move on to trade negotiations, but the local administration did not share his interest. They protested against the Qing government's willingness to compromise and were resolute in their anti-Western position. The border demarcation process between France and Qing China thus was prolonged, especially in the Guangdong border area (Ministère francais des Affaires Etrangères 1886).

Apart from internal disagreements, the most challenging obstacle during negotiations was the intense conflict between the French and Chinese governments. As previously mentioned, both the French and Chinese were oriented towards "land power." Thus, both strived to gain maximum territorial interest, with particular focus on areas rich in natural resources and commercial potentials. Both pursued beneficial "rectification of detail." (Centre des archives d'Outre-mer 1886).

As a result, both the French and Chinese disagreed on the interpretation of Article 3 of the Treaty of Tianjin on the delineation of specific parts of the border during the demarcation process. In reality, Article 3 did indeed mention the possibility of the "rectification of detail in the actual frontier of Tonkin" as part of the process.

In China's view, according to Fourniau (1989: 90), this interpretation meant that France would accept a significant rectification of the Tonkinese border as a compensation for China's renouncement and recognition of France's rule in Vietnam. China's

representative Li Hongzhang explicitly expressed this view during a meeting with the French Naval Commander in the Far East, Admiral Henri Rieunier: "It was because of my role that France gained significantly in Vietnam…which also put me under a lot of trouble. I believe, therefore, rectifying the Tonkin border towards China's benefit is a necessary compensation that France should undertake" (Centre des archives d'Outre-mer 1886).

To make a point, Li Hongzhang referred to the Chinese situation. As France extended its colonization to Tonkin, the Qing was facing various challenges and instability internally and externally, with the situations brewing with Korea and Japan, the Sino-French war, and British invasion of Burma. This required China to address, at the same time, multiple issues that were more important than their interests in Tonkin. As such, from China's point of view, it is wiser to avoid clashing with France with regards to Tonkin (Zong Fa Yuenan Jiao she dang 1995). Recognizing France's rule over Vietnam, for China, was a great sacrifice, a favor that must be returned by way of the demarcation process (Ministère francais des Affaires Etrangères 1886).

Moreover, regional situations also compelled China to make sure of reaping the benefits of the demarcation talks with France. Following its invasion of Burma, Britain also became interested in renegotiating the frontier between its new colony and China. This put pressure on the Qing to gain concessions from France, as if France were to gain too much from the negotiations at the expense of China. However, it could set a precedent for subsequent talks on the Sino-Burmese border, causing China to suffer from a double loss of interest at the hands of both France and Britain. Had this become a reality, China would have been placed into an even more difficult situation (Centre des archives d'Outre-mer 1886).

This reality placed China in a dilemma. On the one hand, the instabilities in Korea forced the Qing to quickly finish up the border issue to its south so that it can focus on difficulties in the north. On the other hand, its emphasis on "national power" and the issue of the Burmese border with Britain did not allow the Chinese government to forgo any of its territorial interests in Tonkin to

France. In such context, Li Hongzhang decided to proceed with the second option, which caused the demarcation process to go on much longer than expected (Centre des archives d'Outre-mer 1886).

China's insistence on gaining territorial benefits was explicitly demonstrated in the Chinese delegation's position. The Chinese side insisted on using the term "rectification of detail" of the border as mentioned in Article 3 of the Treaty of Tianjin in order to demand a larger concession of the Tonkinese border from France:

> The rectification of detail of the actual border cannot be interpreted as some minor adjustment such as a small hill or a plot of land to this side or the other side. It must be understood as a significant move of the borderline toward the other side of Tonkin. On the other hand, there should be no change of the borderline on both sides but rather, should be only on the Vietnamese side as Article 3 only mentioned "the actual frontier of Tonkin" and contains no reference to the current frontier of China (Ministère francais des Affaires Etrangères 1886).

Moreover, China insisted that they had shown goodwill towards France by agreeing to enter into the Treaty of Tianjin and officially recognizing France's rule over Vietnam. Therefore, any change of border on China's part was unacceptable.

France's position on this matter was completely opposite. In legal terms, they argued, Vietnam had always been an independent state, and as a result, Tonkin had never ever been under the control of China. Thus, claiming that China "gave" Tonkin to France in exchange for concessions in the demarcation of the Sino-Vietnamese border was invalid. On the other hand, with regards to the interpretation of the term "rectification of detail" in Article 3 of the Treaty of Tianjin, France argued that historical and geographic evidence, as well as France's interests in the future, needed to be taken into account. Therefore, France completely rejected China's proposition that the border should be moved only towards Tonkin (Ministère francais des Affaires Etrangères 1886).

Contrary to China's interpretation, France also insisted that the term "rectification of detail" in Article 3 must be understood as

meaning "minor change" of the borderline and that the Article was not mandatory as well. The term of the article rather will depend on negotiations between both parties based on common interests (Ministère francais des Affaires Etrangères 1886).

France's commercial interests in China were had been consistently brought up during the talks in order to force it into making concessions. During the negotiation on the delineation of the border between Guangxi (China) and the provinces of Lang Son and Cao Bang (Vietnam), China's representative L. L. Wang insisted that "if France accepts to move the borderline towards the other side of Tonkin, China will grant France optimal commercial rights in this area" (Ministère francais des Affaires Etrangères 1886).

While commercial interests in China were considerably significant for France, the strategic position and security implications of the Tonkinese border also carried certain weight in its colonial policy. As a result, France was split into two factions with differing viewpoints.

In reality, the Sino-French border negotiations were held simultaneously with their trade talks in Beijing. In Beijing, France's trade representative Corgodant wanted to quickly finish the border negotiation with Li Hongzhang, even if it required partially satisfying some of China's territorial demands so as they can move on to sign the trade agreements (Ministère francais des Affaires Etrangères 1886). For France's delegation on the Tonkinese border issue, however, things were not that simple. This was reflected in the report of M. Chaffray, the chief negotiator. When faced with the demand to quickly finalize the negotiation, M. Chaffray wrote: "If China's territorial demand in Guangxi is to be met, it would also mean the same for the borderlines in Guangdong and Yunnan" (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères 1886).

This disagreement had on multiple occasions led to tensions during the negotiation process, which brought both at the brink of war. The climax of such situations occurred in January 1887, when both parties were discussing the delineation of Mong Cai-Guangdong border. China's territorial demands, as well as a sudden attack on the French delegation in the border area, caused both governments

to mobilize troops to this area. China was determined not to give in and claimed that it "would rather go to war than to withdraw its demands (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères 1887)".

In these situations, the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (1887) showcased the full extent of its capacity for smart and flexible diplomacy. In reality, France did not want a war to break out because of a border dispute as they needed to finalize trade agreements with China more than anything. However, they also could not simply comply with China's demands. Thus, France adopted a "double move." On the one hand, they mobilized their forces to the disputed border areas and sternly proclaimed that "the army of France is always ready to face the enemies." On the other hand, the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (1887) did not allow the French forces to engage or enter into any confrontation with the Chinese troops. It pushed the negotiations in Beijing with the hope that both sides will make some compromise.

Disputes were settled by diplomatic means, and the demarcation of the Tonkinese border between the French and Chinese reached its conclusion. On February 27, 1887, Constans and Li Hongzhang reached an agreement on a settlement for the demarcation process, where both sides would finish negotiating the areas with insignificant dispute as soon as possible and leave the areas with unnegotiable disputes to government-level talks at Beijing (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères 1887). On June 26, 1887, the Franco-Chinese Convention on the Delineation of the Border between China and Tonkin was signed in Beijing. This was supplemented by the Gérard Convention signed on June 20, 1895, which added some sections on border demarcation and delineation of markers. The Tonkinese borderline was then officially established.

Ⅳ. Conclusion

As such, the demarcation of the Tonkinese border was a typical case during the "hinging century" of Asian countries in modern times. The tensions, conflicts, and extended duration of the negotiation process showcase how the Tonkinese border was not only a national

borderline issue but also a battle of wits and power between the French and Chinese. It was also one of the most evident manifestation of the Asian states' "resist and adapt" strategy in the face of Western colonization.

This study approached the Tonkinese boundary delimitation issue with respect to globalization. It comprehensively mapped out the common contexts and trend of the world at the time, the influence of the wave of "globalization" coming from the West, and how it dismantled the Asian feudal tributary order with China at its center. The West overwhelmed Asia and and China lost its vassal states. In the case of Vietnam, the Franco-Chinese Treaty of Tianjin signed in 1885 marked the collapse of the "superior-vassal" relationship and the permanent termination of the tributary system that once governed the relationship between China and Vietnam since the tenth century (Fourniau 1989: 6).

It was however not easy for France to assert its domination. The study showed that tensions and disagreements between France and China, in the view of Tonkinese boundary delimitation, not only stemmed from conflicts of interest between the two countries, but also from the power competition and the changes of forms of international relations at the time. It was indeed a struggle between the traditional form of international relations in Asia, that of the "superior-vassal" relationship, and the new forms of international relations that Western powers established, the "colonialist powers-colonized countries" (Centre des archives d'Outre-mer Français 1894).

Therefore, the Tonkinese borderline had always been a controversial issue viewed from the perspective of commercial and territorial "gains and losses." China maintained that it had given up too much by signing the 1887 Convention with France, among "unequal treaties" that it was forced to sign with the West during this period. Members of the French delegation, meanwhile, argued that the French government had overemphasized commercial gains in China and disregarded Tonkin's interests (Ministère francais des Affaires Etrangères 1887). This explains the reason why immediately after its birth in 1949, the People's Republic of China declared all

the previous treaties it signed with colonial powers were "unequal" and thus needed to be replaced by "equal treaties." In other words, China did not accept the geopolitical order established previously by Western powers and was determined to change it (Chen 1994: 893).

The investigation on the process of demarcation of the Tonkinese border, considered in the lens of globalization, shows how Vietnam integrated well into the "global" wave. Broadly speaking, approaching the colonization process in Asia under the lens of "globalization" is a research approach that needs to be further deepened and expanded as it will contribute to further clarify the process of transition of Asian feudal societies into modernity.

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Entertainment in a Changing World:
Vietnam and Video Gaming

Phan Quang Anh*

[*Abstract*]

The purpose of this paper is to shed light on the development timeline of video gaming in Vietnam. This paper would examine how Southeast Asia has become a key component in constructing the façade of the global gaming industry, focusing on Vietnam. As a communist country, Vietnam showed a distinctive pattern of video gaming reception. Video gaming has become a popular amusement among Vietnamese youth and has also helped Vietnam integrate into the modern world after the Vietnam War.

Keywords: Asia, development, online gaming, video games, Vietnam

Ⅰ. Introduction

Nowadays, digital games has become one of the most popular forms of amusement, even surpassing television, the Internet, or music, to name a few (Jin & Schneider 2016). Kerr (2006) pointed out that people consider gaming as pivotal in understanding the Western

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* Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Department of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies (ISEK), University of Zurich, Switzerland. phanquanganh@u.nus.edu

world This commentary has missed out on how it had also caught the world by storm since the 1980s. Iwabuchi (2004), as well as Chung (2011), noted globalization had also placed Asia in the map of gaming.

This is not lost on Vietnam where nightly, Internet cafés in Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City attract gamers. Brown (2013) observed that the nation had about 13 million computer game players. Ives (2010) meanwhile pegged the number of Internet cafés in Hanoi at 4,000 regularly visited by gamers four or five times per week, each spending up to 10 hours per session. Vietnam has also led in garnering the biggest revenue gained in the region: 220 million USD (Niko Partners 2012) despite criticism.[1] Online gaming in Vietnam has become prevalent in everyday life, reflecting the transformations brought about by globalization, transnational cultural practices, even localization. This paper will show how the gaming industry in Vietnam has emerged by analyzing documents, a wide range of journals, newspapers, magazines, and game review websites in Vietnam. The paper is also informed by my personal experience; interviews of gamers during my fieldwork; articles in *The Gioi Game* and *Viet Game,* two defunct gaming magazines; and reviews in *Ictnews* and *GameK,* two notable gaming websites.

Ⅱ. Video Gaming in Vietnam

1.1. The introduction of video games

No studies have been conducted to trace the history of video games in Vietnam. One thing that could be confirmed is that in the 80s, as Asian countries were being swamped by arcade and console games, the extreme bureaucracy of a before-reform Vietnam prohibited gaming devices. Kelly (2008) and Schwenkel (2014) mentions that during the Vietnam War and after the unification in 1975, the country sent groups of students and workers to countries belonging to the former Soviet Bloc. This gave the Vietnamese their

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[1] As early as 2005, more than 1,000 Vietnamese articles on newspapers (Minh Duong 2010) considered online games to cause addiction and juvenile delinquency.

first taste of video games made in the Soviet Union, especially in the late 80s. The most popular gadget was the series of electronic toys marked ИМ, the abbreviated form of Игра Микропроцессорная, which means microprocessor-based game, manufactured by Soviet Union's Electronika. *IM-02 Nu, Pogodi!* which was released in 1984 was a nearly perfect replica of *Nintendo EG-26 Egg* while the *IM-03 Mysteries of the Ocean* released in 1989 was no more than a clone of the *Nintendo OC-22 Octopus.* In fact, all of the IM devices were exactly the Soviet clones of the Game & Watch devices popularized by Nintendo in the 80s. As a communist country that was totally capable of manufacturing entertainment machines themselves, the Soviet Union did not import games from Japan but ironically borrowed the concept and made replicas instead. It was believed that because of the Cold War, the importation of gaming devices from Japan was banned. Russian companies tried to profit from the popularity of Nintendo and occupy the domestic market by producing their own work (Game & Watch 2014). These were packed in the pieces of luggage Vietnamese expatriates brought home.

After the Reform in 1986, and especially after the US embargo was lift in 1994, consoles started to get into the market. Nintendo Famicom became popular, and was also cloned in China.[2] The Vietnamese called it "dien tu bon nut" (4-button video game), because the original Famicom and the later version NES only had two main buttons A and B. Chinese manufacturers added two more button controls—the auto control A and B, making it 4 buttons: A, B, Auto A and Auto B. The main function of these two newly-added buttons was very basic: as people needed to press the two original A and B a lot, these two would relieve that burden by carrying out some options automatically without hitting A or B multiple times (Vu, 2017). Those who could not afford to buy one normally went to gaming spots where they rented these devices. The original

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[2] It seems to be a common scenario in communist countries in the 80s. The very same situation also happened in the Soviet Union. Since no officially licensed version of the Famicom (also known as NES) was ever released in the former Soviet Union, Russian people were introduced to Dendy (Russian: Дёнди), a Taiwanese clone. It was released in the early 1990s by Steepler and rapidly gained the fame in the Soviet Union (Pichugin, 1992).

cartridge was only capable of storing one game but the modded cartridge from China or Taiwan used the 16-bit, then 32-bit technology to expand the storage of these ROM cartridges. This made yielded more games and reduced.

After, SNES was released in the 90s and was also quickly cloned by China. In Vietnam, it was called "dien tu dia vuong" (square-disc video game) as the cartridge called the "Game Pak" is square-shaped. However, the mega-blockbuster of the 90s and the 2000s is the Sony PlayStation which provided better graphic design and the hi-end technology. It also featured more disc storage, longer playing time, and more complex game scenarios. The Play Station was brought into Vietnam informally as Sony at that time did not have any authorized resellers in the country. These were also accessed by way of gaming spots.

It is also worth noting the Vietnamese referred to game titles differently as they could not speak Japanese, Chinese, and English. The gamers referred to the games based on content. For instance, *Chocobo Racing* released by Square in 1999 was called "Dua xe thu" (Animal Racing) because of its main plot.

In the late 2000s, PlayStation 2, Xbox 360, PlayStation 3, and Xbox One came to fore. Although living conditions and the GDP per capita in Vietnam increased, gaming devices such as the aforementioned were inaccessible to the public, and as said, were brought into Vietnam informally—in border trading activities or direct buying abroad. Buying game discs was also challenging, but resellers later found a way to reduce costs by hacking, or copying games' downloadable ROM. This of course compromised the devices' warranty nevertheless, it still provided access for Vietnamese gamers, especially in the gaming spots. From 2010 onwards, Sony has been officially distributing its products in Vietnam, but at a price that is 20% higher than unauthorized resellers (Nut Chuoi 2015).

Vietnamese market was also flooded with the hand-held Brick Game (Gia Bao 2017), the origin of which is yet to be determined by any Game Studies scholar. Comet (2015) called this device E.999, based on its markings, which claim that it features 999

games inside. In Southeast Asia the device surfaced to feature 888 or 9999 games (Wolf 2015). Being initially equipped with *Tetris*, the well-known game made in the Soviet Union in the 80s, later versions of Brick Game featured various modified versions of Tetris and other simulation games. It was cheap and portable, powered by 2 to 4 AA batteries. I suspect that it may have come from China or Taiwan as most of its components have been printed with Chinese characters.

In the late 90s and the early 2000s, Tamagotchi, the handheld digital pet originally designed and released by Bandai, was also introduced in Vietnam. Although this device was known as one of the biggest toy fads of this period that conquered the Asian market (Ng 2008), children in Vietnam knew about it mainly through cloned, China-made versions that did not allow players to link devices and whose batteries run out quickly. The original version that was released in 1996 and following generations of Tamagotchi were not popular in Vietnam since there were no authorized resellers in Vietnam. Besides, the bootleg version was also cheap, normally less than 3 USD, allowing youngsters to purchase it easily from street vendors. The Tamagotchis were pocket-sized and may be attached to a keyring or the backpack. Its portability also raised criticism. In Asia in general and in Vietnam particularly, children frequently took these digital pets to school because in the first two generations of this device, the character could die in less than half a day if it did not receive adequate care. Barayuga (1997) noted that concerns over class disruption as well as general distraction from schoolwork eventually prompted many schools to ban or confiscate the device.

The Game Boy series, Sony PSP, and Nintendo DS were in fashion in the late 2000s, though they were expensive. Because of the unaffordable price, and since there were no authorized sellers, the popularity of these devices was limited within the urban areas where there are available buyers who accepted to buy from unauthorized sellers. These sellers stocked in mainly through the border trade and grey markets. The existence of these unauthorized stored was also secured by new technology that enabled these devices to bypass copyright lock code, as in the R4 for Nintendo DS,

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which allowed gamers to copy game ROMs to SD cards. That allows gamers to own more games while spending less money than purchasing authentic game cartridges. With a fee of 5 to 10 USD, sellers could help them copy as many ROMs as possible, thus expanding the option pool for them to play. In the consumption mind-set of Vietnamese gamers, that is more favorable. With the same amount of money spent, they could be introduced to hundreds of options instead of being tightened to one or two games whose replay value are still obscure.

Meanwhile, arcade games were only introduced in Vietnam later in the late 90s, by way of *Vu Tru Bay* (*The Flying Universe*) in Hanoi, and later in 2000, Ngoi Sao Xanh (The Blue Star), a state-owned company. These offered a limited number of machines as each may cost around 10,000 USD (Tam Anh 2007). In the beginning, arcade games attracted Vietnamese gamers as these required combined skills other than sitting and pressing buttons. Game centers were also accessible and may be found near parks, cinemas, or malls. The token-operated machines eventually appeared to be expensive as the price for each token is about 2,000 to 5,000 VND. In the recent years, the token has been replaced by the top-up card. Instead of buying a stack of tokens, which might be inconvenient when carrying, gamers now decide the tentative amount of money that they want to spend on playing and ask the cashier to add this amount to the top-up card, which is a credit-card-sized smartcard. The rise of online gaming did not however decimate arcade gaming.

1.2. Online games as the current trend of recreation

Online gaming in Vietnam was first made possible in June 2003 when the first Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL) service was offered. Doan Giang (2010a) said this notable event in the development of online games "possessed the decisive characteristic of allowing all players to access a virtual world on a large scale with good speed and stable quality." ADSL service flourished, which reduced prices of access to about 0.3 USD. ADSL ended expensive, low-speed prepaid and dial-up and also introduced Vietnamese online gaming to the global market.

Doan Giang (2010a) also added that in 2003, one of the first role-fantasy-playing games called *MU* was introduced to Vietnamese youth, "although it was in an unorthodox way.[3]" ADSL popularized *MU* with its ability to connect other players at a larger scale basis and instead of using LAN cable which is limited within the confines of an Internet café. Piracy also helped in its propagation with the game's highly-shared source code.

Nevertheless, the period of piracy did not last long as these renegade servers manifested their connection instability, illegality of in-game items, as well as in-game errors which could not be fixed. According to Doan Giang (2010a) the first legal online game appeared on May 1, 2004 by way of the licensed Korean game *Gunbound*, a third-person shooting game using turn-based mode designed by Asiasoft. With two-dimensional graphics consisting of beautiful, bright colors and game rules that are easy to grasp, the game quickly picked up.

Online games distribution was professionalized by September 2004, initiated by VinaGame Company, a group of professional gamers led by Le Hong Minh, a core member of the Vietnamese National Team which attended the World Cyber Games in 2002. Rebecca Fannin (2010) in *Forbes* reported that VinaGame made up more than half of the online games' revenue in Vietnam—up to 90% in 2005, and 65% in 2009.

In early 2005, *Vo Lam Truyen Ky,* a popular game until today[4] was introduced to Vietnamese gamers. It is notable for ushering in a period of Chinese martial-arts-based games massively imported to Vietnam. According to Minh Duong (2010), "with low hardware requirements, visible graphics, interesting gameplay, this role-playing game has rapidly become the most famous and successful online game in Vietnam." After a long period of testing, the complete version of *Vo Lam Truyen Ky* was provided to players beginning

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[3] Illegal ways, to be precise. Players built personal servers to host the game without the permission from the game developers.

[4] Unlike other wuxia games which are slow in featuring new updates, *Vo Lam Truyen Ky (The Swordman)* has been continuously updated in PC and Mobile versions with new maps and in-game events. It also has a bigger community of gamers and is known for being stable compared to other games.

mid-2005. Its first day offering however shocked gamers for its exorbitant playing rates: 20,000 VND (around 1 USD) for 25 hours and 60,000 VND (around 3 USD) for 100 hours. This led to protests which could have knocked out VinaGame. In the end, the final P2P (Pay to Play) plan was offered instead and until now enjoyed by the general public. VinaGame also kept players patronizing its products through "offline activities" like meetings and in-game items auction, among others. The business eventually created patron behaviour which managed limited resources. Vietnamese players opted to pay minimal fees to continue playing while others invested a considerable amount of money on their characters by equipping valuable in-game items or purchasing other strong characters for playing or reselling.

In September 2005, concerned parties and media outlets began to air objections to online games. A series of articles in *Tuoi Tre Newspaper*, the mouthpiece of Vietnamese National Youth Union, discussed the supposed bad influence of online games like, for instance, VinaGame's *Vo Lam Truyen Ky,* and how these became some sort of a digital opium for the youth. Within 3 months in late 2005, there were over 1,000 articles criticizing online games. However, this did not deter the players and investors from going on.

In August 2006, VTC Games released the popular Korean music game *Audition* in Vietnam. Doan Giang (2010b) has described it as "a solid product which has always been in the leading position of musical genre, usually played by female players and especially, by office staff." If *Vo Lam Truyen Ky* was the first choice of male players, *Audition* was for females due to its colourful graphic design and music-themed dance content.[5] Besides, the gameplay does not require much time to play daily in order to make characters level up. Game quests are easily completed by using the D-pad or the four directional buttons on the keyboard) *Audition* was perceived to be the biggest opponent of *Vo Lam Truyen Ky*.

On the other hand, 2006 saw Vietnam's first recorded the

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[5] Although the male-female ratio in Audition is nearly 50:50, according to the statistics result released by VTC- the distributor of Audition in Vietnam, this game is more popular among female players (Minh Nguyet 2014).

game closure. Fierce competition led to the demise of *Risk Your Life (RYL)*, which Khuyet Anh (2010) related to "the inability and weakness of the distributor Quang Minh DEC and the game's management team." The hardware factor was seen as the major obstacle for this game as it required a computer system equipped with high-end processors and high-ranked graphics card. It was a costly investment. For Khuyen Anh (2010) the case showed "the importance of the distributor and the organization work, (as) most players rated this game as an interesting and promising product."

In April 2007, the first online game tournament for *Vo Lam Truyen Ky* was organized, and gathered numerous players. VinaGame hosted this event titled "The World Leading Guild," described by Khuyet Anh (2010) as "the biggest game's event ever in Vietnam." This event marked a turning point for Vietnamese online games distributors in terms of advertising and marketing.

In March 2008, a new genre was introduced—the first-person shooting online games. It started with *Special Force*, and thereafter, a chain of three games distributed by VinaGame, VTC Game, and FPT Online. According to Doan Giang (2010b), "the presence of this genre has led to the fact that the role-playing games could not 'seize the throne' as usual." The violent nature of the genre on the other hand forced the Ministry of Information and Communications to halt its operations in 2010 (Nghi Lam 2010a).

In August of the same year, there emerged *De Quoc Quat Khoi (The Empire),* a web-game built on the web browser instead of a client package to be downloaded. Although not very successful, it was described by Doan Giang (2010b) as a leader, "especially when the web-game's sector in Vietnam has exploded since 2011 with dozens of games launched and distributed by small publishers." Browser games like *Magic King, Gunny, Linh Vuong*, or *Pockie Ninja* benefitted from the fact that online games installed using game's installation package have yet to receive permission for distribution (Nghi Lam 2010b). These also came with simple graphic designs, as well as colorful, eye-catching content. Browser games have thus become the trump card of many distributors to recover and compensate while the 2010 ban on the importation of online games

using client packages.

In early 2009, the online game market in Vietnam welcomed more compelling content and graphics technology through three role-playing games with 3D graphics: *Atlantica* (distributed by TDE), *Granado Espada* (distributed by FPT Online) and *Doc Ba Giang Ho* (distributed by Asiasoft). Ngau Giang (2010) argued that the appearance of the said games "'heat(ed) up' the role-playing game market which was showing signs of 'cooling off' due to the rise of shooting games and web-based games." These however suffered poor player patronage, low turnovers, as well as hacking issues such as the use of "cheat" codes.

In August 2009, the first Vietnamese online game *Thuan Thien Kiem* debuted in the market and brought Vietnam in the Asian games production map. There was so much interest in this made-in-Vietnam wuxia game produced by VinaGame and which was said to be influenced by Chinese games. Ngau Giang (2010) recalled that "in the first hours, the game was overloaded because the number of login accounts was much more than the distributor had predicted."

The year 2010 saw the closure of 20 games. According to Ha An (2011), "this was also the largest number of closures in the history of online games in Vietnam, even equal to the sum of all deactivated games from previous years." Games such as *PTV, Taan, Cabal, Cuu Long Tranh Ba* or *Billionaire Online*, among others, closed down because of the expiration of the distribution contract, the cost of maintaining business, and the producers' inability to attract more players.

Meanwhile, 2011 was a banner year for online games with the strong performance of nearly 20 web-games released, accounting for more than 80% of new games in the said year. The presence of a new platform that required client package installation gave online games a boost. Vietnamese players also had more choices games to play. However, Viet Hai (2011) also echoed that "the huge number of web-games in Vietnam also made players complain about excessive release of these games."

The license directory of online games from the Ministry of Information and Communications (2011) listed a total of 59 games, including browser games, released in Vietnamese market until March 2012. There are also 11 major companies officially operating online games—VinaGame (VNG), VTC Game, FPT Online, Asiasoft, SGame, VDC Net 2E, DECO, Saigon, NetGame, NSC Media, and Tamtay. Many companies or small distribution groups have also emerged.

In terms of revenue, VinaGame led the pack with more than 2,500 billion VND in earnings (GenK 2013). It had continued to lead in terms of patronage, and by way of its portal Zing, which eases the purchase of game cards and brings the community of gamers together. Moreover, Chinese companies producing games tend to make deals with VinaGame because of its reputation. Copyright costs were also maintained to a minimum, diversifying VinaGame's game offerings.

With the rise of web-games, mobile games retained revenue domain to 6% of the total revenue of the whole industry. In previous years, the cost to buy the copyright of one web-game from China fell between 60,000 and 80,000 USD. In 2012 and much later, it was at least 70,000 USD and could rocket to 200,000 USD for a game with 3D graphics—almost the price of a normal PC online game. The year also saw the expansion and clarification of game titles' concurrent users (CCU). In digital marketing in general and online gaming in particular, CCU is the indicator of the total number of users accessing a digital product within a predefined period of time (Seif El-Nasr et al. 2013). The higher the CCU, the more successful the product. In previous years, the CCU between games did not yield good outputs. In 2012 however, some notable games yielded 50,000 CCUs while others only peaked at 10,000 CCUs, with some others lagging behind with 5,000 CCU. From this perspective, FPT, one of the Big Four in Vietnam saw that although gaming industry is a growing, it still entailed risks, especially after the strict policies enforced in 2010. FPT's revenues dropped to 32% as it could not release new games and while other old games had no updates (Kal 2013).

In 2013, the industry bounced back. More imported PC online games were patronized after the release of Decree 72, the first complete guidelines released by the government to manage the online game market in Vietnam. GameK (2013) pointed out aside from the 2010 policy limiting the number of imported games, browser games outranked PC online games because of the volume of the installation package. In comparison with a package that could reach several gigabytes to download and install, a browser game only utilized a few hundred megabytes of graphics plug-ins. The opening of more hi-end gears-equipped Internet cafés allowed the return of PC online games. Besides, the most sought after game genre of 2013 was shooting games, which attracted more gamers who already tired with the saturated market of wuxia-themed role-playing games.

In the same year, Vietnam also witnessed the burgeoning of many Chinese game companies running private servers and doing business illegally in Vietnam. Although many Chinese companies worked through legal means and collaboration with Vietnamese companies, others like Koram Games or Lemon Game challenged the Vietnamese government by releasing a lot of unregistered games, avoiding tax, and even embedding obscene images in their advertising (Le My 2014). On the bright side, the year welcomed the emergence of mobile games which were also starting to make waves across Southeast Asia.

Highlighting 2014 were two milestones. The first was the unbelievable success of *Flappy Bird*, an indie mobile game made by Nguyen Ha Dong. It featured a simple scenario and an unsophisticated graphics that resembles 8-bit games in the past. Despite this, it became popular around the world, earning for Nguyen millions of dollars (Lan Huong 2014). He was not able to replicate his one-hit wonder, though he was able to overcome a tax evasion case filed against him. His example inspired indie developers to invest in designing and releasing their own games in the digital market using the notable application stores. The second was the tragic shutdown of FPT, one that could have been averted. The knock-out punch was given by VinaGame when it took the copyright of FPT's highly successful *Thien Long Bat Bo,* which led

to the eventual turnover of FPT Online (Nut Chuoi 2014).

Since 2015, online gaming in Vietnam has been robust and leads in the region with a total revenue of around 300 million USD (Trinh Tran 2016). The number of players and tournaments have increased noticeably while the attention towards online games has also been fostered with the birth of live streaming, making streamer and game commentator endeavors very lucrative. However, the industry is still beset with challenges. 2game (2016) and Trinh Tran (2016) both agreed that although Vietnam has achieved quite a lot, it still needs to build a reputation for itself. For instance, in 2016, the top 10 games were all imported from China or South Korea, and the benefit-sharing ratio between Chinese or Korean companies and Vietnamese distributors are always 80:20 or 70:30; even the most favorable deal could only lead to the ratio of 50:50. Thus, as Trinh Tran (2016) mentioned, what Vietnam really earns is just a portion of what foreign companies get. It needs to make more local products like *Sky Garden: Farm in Paradise* or *Loan Dau Vo Lam*.

Ⅲ. Conclusion

In Vietnam, video games in general, and online games in particular, represent the success of the Doi Moi (Reform) process. The movement allowed Vietnam to be more open to the outside world after such a long time. IT and other digital platforms were eventually considered one of the four pillars of Vietnam as it catches up with globalization. Video games showcase the emergence of free, market-driven Vietnamese economy. As the Internet in Vietnam becomes more stable and steady enough to even host a heavy-loaded digital entertainment format, Vietnam continues to make its mark at it explores the vast possibilities of online games in the global sphere.

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The Emerging Diasporic Connections in Southeast Asia and the Constitution of Ethnic Networks

Yekti Maunati*

[_Abstract_]

It has been widely argued that Area Studies is in a critical condition especially in Australia, Europe and the US. However, in the Southeast Asian region, most especially Indonesia, we are witnessing the rise of Area Studies programs with the establishment of several such programs both in research institutions and universities. In this paper, I will discuss a few examples of Area Studies research on the emerging diasporic connections in Southeast Asia and reflect on the constitution of ethnic networks as "sites" where transnational identities are forged beyond state boundaries. Indeed, transnational movements of people have occurred and continue to happen due to particular events like wars and political turmoil, as well as for economic reasons. Today, we find many diasporic groups, including minorities, in the border areas of Southeast Asian countries and historically, minorities have been known for their movements in mainland Southeast Asia. If previously, the diasporic connections, especially with the homeland, had been very limited or even non-existent, today such connections have emerged across national boundaries. On top of this, economic and social networkings are equally on the rise

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* Professor, Indonesian Institute of Sciences, yektimaunati59@gmail.com.

both within and at transnational levels. It is, therefore, important to discuss the identity of diasporic groups and transnational networkings in the cases of two border areas in Southeast Asia.

Keywords: area studies, diaspora, identity, border areas, Southeast Asia

Ⅰ. Glimpse of an Interdisciplinary Approach in Area Studies[1]

The reasons for establishing Area Studies are various, from political to economic, with the utilization of an interdisciplinary approach associated with the challenges of understanding the complexity of any society studied. The notion of an interdisciplinary approach in Area Studies is to be able to explain or to find a solution within the complexity of the issue to be investigated, which by using a mono-discipline could not be sufficiently explained. However, this does not mean ignoring the recent trends in which various disciplines have also engaged using interdisplinary approaches. Philip has even noted the need for being "more radically interdisiciplinary than we have been so far" (2014: 984). He further pinpoints the overlapping areas of environmental humanities, history, and philosophy of science and so forth (ibid.). In a similar vein, Tsing (2013) argues the involvement of the non-humans in social sciences. She further explains the social relation in connection with plants, like the life of fungi (2013: 32). Basically, anthropology, sociology, and other disciplines also utilize an interdisplinary approach, even a transdisciplinary approach, which involves non-humans.

In this paper I will emphasise Area Studies which not only utilizes an interdisciplinary approach but also has touched upon interconnected issues within the context of certain geographical areas. Guyer (2003) states that the use of the interdisciplinary approach and representations to understand certain areas has been very meaningful with Africa, South America, and Europe, studied

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[1] Some ideas from this section on interdisciplinary approach were presented in the workshop "Asian Studies," International Office, Udayana University, Denpasar, November 19, 2012.

with different focuses. In South American Studies, for instance, culture and race have been important issues in relation with the political and economic factors; while in African Studies disputes have often been related with race. In the 1990s, scholars of Asia played important roles in areas seen from a collective approach. Similar interests and concerns have interconnected different areas and were seen from various perspectives.

Nevertheless, after a long period following its establishment in the US, Area Studies has been challenged in various ways. Slocum and Thomas (2003) note that anthropologists have developed the new notion of global and local processes which has resulted in critical questions of the Area Studies paradigm established since the end of the Second World War. They argue that based on the study of Caribbean and Caribbeanist anthropology, there have arisen the possibilities for understanding the global issues within the local context which in turn could enable the study of the local area resulting also in knowledge of the global dynamics.

Though Area Studies was booming in the US, in Australia, it has "not been more successful" (Reid 1994: 227), for at least three reasons:

> Firstly, the demands of theory in many disciplines grow ever more intense, so that specialization on any country or region brings grave dangers of marginalization. Secondly, universities, and hence teaching departments, are expected to teach ever more students with fewer resources, creating reluctance to experiment with appointments or courses which may not draw big student numbers. Thirdly, there has been a recent expansion of student interest in courses on Australia, which have an immediacy difficult to replicate for Asia. (Reid 1994: 227).

Fluctuations in Area Studies has occurred and in contrast, as I will elaborate, in Asia, Area Studies has started to grow, both in universities and research institutions. In terms of Southeast Asian Studies, for example, Abdullah and Maunati (1994) note the growing interest of scholars in the region in understanding each other. In 1993, the Toyota Foundation in collaboration with the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) held a conference on "Toward the

Promotion of Southeast Asian Studies in Southeast Asia" with three major sub themes:

> ... a) Teaching of Southeast Asian Studies in Southeast Asian Universities; b) Recent trends in Southeast Asian Studies; and c) Institutional networks of Southeast Asian Studies (Abdullah and Maunati 1994: iii).

More recently, King (2016) also notes the rise of Area Studies in the region despite the decline of such studies in the West. He (2016: 27-28) pinpoints several issues related to the decline of Area Studies in the West, including the decreasing interest in Area Studies in the West; the decreasing interest of students in Area Studies and other language studies; reduced funding in Area Studies from the West; the question of similarity of methodology and theory between Area Studies and other disciplines[2]; and criticism of academic domination of the West. Similarly, Goh Beng Lan (2011) targets the beginning of Southeast Asian Studies in the 1990s, while it was on a decline in Euro-America. There have been many Area Studies in Indonesia with both government and non-government institutions, especially focusing on Asian countries. For example, we have witnessed the establishment of Area Studies in Indonesian Universities, like the University of Indonesia, which has several Area Studies, including Korean Studies and Japanese Studies; Gajah Mada University, which also has been establishing Area Studies, like Korean Studies and Southeast Asian Studies (Ardhana and Maunati 2009); and Udayana University, which too, has established Asian Studies. Of course, Indonesia is not the only country that has developed Area Studies. Many other Asian countries have also done so, even earlier than Indonesia. Singapore has many well known institutions, like the Asian Research Institute (ARI), the Southeast Asian Studies Program of the National University of Singapore, and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS). Siddique (1994: 129-130) for example, explains the success story of the networking

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[2] Citing from King, Victor T 2014. *Southeast Asian Studies: The Conundrum of Area and Method. Methodology and Research Practice in Southeast Asian Studies*. Mikka Huotari, Jurgen Ruland and Judith Schlehe, eds.: 44-46. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

of ISEAS with a broad range of scholars in many ways. She states that senior regional scholars, for instance, are involved in the Regional Advisory Council as program advisors, members of regional program advisory committees, and participants in conceptualizing new research projects. Projects and fellowships are also part of the activities that promote networking. Indeed, I am aware of existing Area Studies in Asia, like in Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Thailand, that have developed more greatly. But in this paper I will limit the discussion about the development of Area Studies to Indonesia, with its Research Center for Regional Resources as an example of understanding the selection of topics which could be relevant for the country.

The establishment of Area Study Research centers such as the Research Center for Regional Resources at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (PSDR-LIPI), contributes to the growing number of Area Studies in Indonesia. The Center was established in June 2001 with three divisions—Southeast Asian Studies, Asia Pacific Studies, and European Studies (Ardhana and Maunati 2009). Ardhana and Maunati further note that the reason for establishing this Research Center was related to the realization that the economic crisis in Southeast Asia beginning in 1997 stemmed from the lack of understanding of our neighboring countries and other countries in general. To understand other nations should indeed be considered crucial. The Center was established by way of the Program of Southeast Asian Studies founded by Prof. Dr. Taufik Abdullah, a former chairman of LIPI, in 1983. Today, this Center is also expanding, especially with the addition of African Studies.

Indeed, the rise of Area Studies in Asia is an important sign of the awareness of scholars in Asia to study outside their own countries.

Below, I will focus on two examples of studies by the PSDR-LIPI, especially on diasporic communities, which look at their networking and identities. Since its establishment in 2001 as Area Studies, PSDR-LIPI worked on several topics in several areas— European, Asia Pacific, and Southeast Asian, and recently African

countries like Tanzania and Kenya. However, I will only focus on examples of studies carried out in the Southeast Asian region and the most recent studies on transnational migration and diasporas.[3]

The reasons behind studying diasporic communities in the border areas in Southeast Asia are several. First, in studying other nations we need to learn from the studies. Diasporic communities for Indonesia are important at the moment since we have many Indonesian diasporas in many different countries. Indeed, it would be beneficial for Indonesia if we knew how to establish and strengthen networking with the diasporas. Brain circulation from Patterson's (2006) argument will be beneficial if Indonesia is able to have such kinds of networking and sharing of ideas from the diasporas, especially those in advanced countries. In early July 2017, in Jakarta, there was an Indonesian Diaspora Congress attended by former US President Barack Obama, where he delivered a speech (Obama delivers speech at Indonesian Diaspora Congress, http://www.antaranews.com/en/news/111601/obama-delivers-speech -at-indonesian-diaspora-congress, 2 July 2017, accessed July 6, 2017). The potential netwoking of Indonesian diaspora and Indonesians at home is expected to happen and scholars, for instance, should build collaborative research, joint publications, joint seminars/ workshops/conferences, scholar exchanges, and for forth.

Secondly, Indonesia has many crucial borders with neighboring countries where the connection is often coloured by "up and down relations." To illustrate up and down relations, Indonesia and Malaysia have many border areas and the relations between Indonesia and Malaysia have often been influenced by problems related to borders. Claims on Block Ambalat from both countries, for intance, had created tensions between both countries. However, this was not to last forever, as Indonesia and Malaysia

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[3] These examples are based on the following: "Transnational Migration and Diaspora in Border Cities in Southeast Asia: Case study Mae Sai Border between Thailand and Myanmar," coordinated by Amorisa Wiratri (2015) with Betti Rosita Sari and Yekti Maunati; and "Transnational Migration and Diaspora in Border Cities in Southeast Asia: Case study Chiang Khong-Huay Xay, border of Thailand-Laos," coordinated by Betti Rosita Sari (2016), with Amorisa Wiratri, Yekti Maunati and Lamijo. Thank you to all team members for the said studies.

have also created collaborations in many different aspects in the border areas, like SOSEKMALINDO (*Kerjasama Sosial dan Ekonomi Indonesia-Malaysia*). Indeed, relations between Indonesia and Malaysia are very dynamic. It is therefore very important to understand how other countries deal with the people in the border areas and also how to manage the people who cross borders. In fact, the establishment of Area Studies is not free from the reasons for increasing the competitivess of the country by understanding what is going on in our Southeast Asian neighborhood. As one of the reasons for establishing the Center was also due to the economic crisis in 1998 which began with Thailand but greatly affected Indonesia, it is important for us to know and understand other countries, especially our neighboring countries.

Ⅱ. Diasporic Communities on the Rise: Some Examples of Research in Area Studies

Several scholars have discussed the term of and issues on "diaspora" (Baumann 2000; Werbner 2002; Patterson 2006; Wang 2007; Faist 2010; Bruneau 2010; Cohen and Fisher 2019; etc.). Citing from Wang (2007: 877)[4], the definition of diaspora by William Safran is as follows:

> (1) They, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original centre to two or more peripheral or foreign, regions; (2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland . . . ; (3) they believe that they are not, perhaps cannot be, fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; (4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would eventually return . . .. ; (5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; (6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence

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4 Safran W. 1991, 'Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return', Diaspora, 1(1): 83-99.

of such a relationship (Safran 1991: 83-4).

Werbner (2002) also claims that in the beginning, studies on diaspora have concentrated on the Jewish. Since then, the study on diaspora has developed and touched on many different groups like the overseas Chinese seen from various relevant issues. Bruneau (2010) further claims that the term diaspora is recently used for "all forms of migration and dispersion of a people, even where no migration is involved" (Bruneau 2010: 35). This is because he believes that it is not only about international migrations but also the process of globalization which limits the role of nation-states (Bruneau 2010: 35). The term diaspora is subject to change, especially of those who are included as diaspora. Gamlen (2019: 302-303) believes the debate on the meaning of daspora has started since the late 1960s. Cohen and Fisher (2019) report that in debating diaspora, Turner, for example, proposes questions like "*how* are diaspora made, *who* make claim to be part of a diaspora" (2019: 4). I am aware that the definition of diaspora is still debatable.

There are many studies on diaspora, but one of the important issues related to diasporic communities is the formation of their identities as these people have to adjust and struggle for survival economically and culturally in the new place. Diasporic communities have often experienced many obstacles and dilemmas in the process of the formation of their identities. The development of studies on diaspora has touched upon various diasporic societies living in many different countries (Cohen 1997; Barclay 2004; Shain 2007; Cohen and Fisher 2019) and there are many studies focusing on diasporas and the formation of identities in the new places from different parts of the world (Patterson 2006; Wang 2007; Jones and Mielants 2009; So 2013; Maunati and Sari 2014; Maunati 2016; Barber, 2019; etc.).

Jones and Mielants (2009: 2) note that the formation of migrant identity is closely related with the issue of incorporation into their host communities. Diasporas (often also called ''immigrants") could experience a shift of economic and political position. The historical background of their movements into the countries should be understood as well . The need of the host of the migrants to

fulfill job opportunities could bring about different status if we compare this to those who are unwanted. Besides, countries of origin could also produce different results. For example, Patterson claims that the position of African people who are at "the bottom of the global hierarchy" could be explained from historical perspectives (Patterson 2006: 1895), arguing the position of Africa as the periphery (Patterson 2006: 1893). Citing from Henry[5] and Hewitt,[6] Patterson (ibid.) notes that the above global hierarchy in the United States is in correlation with the racial-ethnic hierarchy. In a rather similar vein, Barber (2019) notes the notion of visible and invisible diaspora groups in super-diverse cities like London. Southeast Asian people, like the Vietnamese for instance, are to be labelled as Chinese as they include those who are of the invisible groups. Ultimately, it is a complex matter which cannot be looked at from a single perspective.

Another important issue for diasporic groups is to establish and widen networks as a strategy for survival. Each group has its own strategy in doing so. Ammarell (2002) claims that the Bugis struggle to play an important role in economic and political domains in new places has been a crucial strategy. In a similar vein, Maunati (2016) notes that the Bugis diaspora in Malaysia has strategies of using their traditional advice of three ends handed over from generation to generation as well as creating and strengthening networks among their group and even with outside groups. The three ends are:

> *jagalah ujung lidah* (look after the tip of the tongue); *jagalah ujung badik* (look after the end of the badik or knife); and *jagalah ujung "anu"* (look after the edge of the male genitalia) (Maunati 2016: 22-23).

Bugis diasporas have multiple identities depending on certain situations. For example, according to interviews with many Bugis in Johor-Malaysia, Bugis people often refer to themselves as Malay, but

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[5] Henry, Sheila E 1999. Ethnic Identity, National, and International Stratification: The Case of the African American. *Journal of Black Studies*, 29:438-54.

[6] Hewitt, Cynthia Lucas 2002. Racial Accumulation on a World-Scale: Racial Inequality and Employment. *Review: A Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center*, XXV: 137-71.

when they gather with their fellow Bugis they refer to themselves as Bugis, even the sub-groups, like Bugis Bone or Bugis Wajo. Kuncoro (2016) also supports the idea of networking among the diaspora which in the case of the Muslim community could occur across ethnicity and even transnational factors.

Cohen and Fisher (2019: 7) point that the main bond of diasporas is the relation to homehand. The relation between home and host has clearly been changing over time. If previously, distance could be the problem, today the relation is very important and intense. Bozdag (2014) for example, says that digital communication technology has made possible intensive relations between home and host. Several scholars consider the relations between a diaspora and nationalist rhetoric. New interpretations challenge the notion of losing the homeland for a diasporic community in reality and in the imagination. Both ideologically and materially, a diasporic community has become involved in a nationalist project in their home country. The Chinese Diaspora in the United States of America is a case in point where they have protested against human rights violations in China; the Cubans in the US meanwhile have opposed Castro. This is partly due to global media and communication technology enabling them to participate in and influence the politics of their homelands (Werbner 2002: 120).

Indeed, the above explanations show why the study on diasporas in the Center is very important. Diasporas needs to be approached from different perspectives, from different interdisiplinary approaches—although there must be equity in the application of these said approaches.

Diasporic communities have been growing in many locations (or countries), thus, we could apply the "multisites" method. Henne notes that "multi-sited ethnography aids in examining transnational processes that do not map neatly on to global, national or local levels" (Henne 2017: 104). She (2017) further points out that the procces of tracking things from different places could become an example of practicing the multi-sites method. Multi-sited method is also used in Area Studies. For example, in our studies, we have looked into the Cham diasporic experience in several countries like

Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam with the same purpose: to understand their contruction of cultural identity (Maunati 2012b; Maunati and Sari 2014). Maunati and Sari (2014) further note that maintaining a certain marker of Cham identity in Cambodia, for example, could be traced by understanding the roots of culture in central Vietnam as the origin of the Cham people. On top of this, it is may also related with transnational movements and globalization.

Ⅲ. Diasporic groups' Identities in the Border Areas between Thailand and Myanmar and between Thailand and Laos

There are many diasporic communities in the border areas, especially between Thailand and Myanmar (previously Burma) and between Thailand and Laos. Historically, many minorities have moved back and forth from Myanmar to Thailand, particularly due to political turmoil on the Myanmar side. Some of these groups have settled in Northern Thailand. Hangsuwan (2015) notes the sad stories of people from Burma on the northern Thai border. They suffered due to political chaos in Myanmar and had to settle in the border areas of Thailand. Apart from Myanmar, diasporic groups have also originated from countries like China and Laos. Chinese Muslims and non-Muslims are among those groups from China. Ethnic minorities like Tai Lue, Akha, Hmong, among others, have also made transnational movements into Northern Thailand. The groups are further stratified economically themselves, as observed by Patterson above (see Maunati 2018).

Such segmentation and stratification occurred in many countries with variations. Minorities from Southeast Asia who have dispersed in many different countries are often in marginal positions. Sakboon (2013) notes the insecurity and exclusion of hill tribes/minorities in Thailand. However, this is not an isolated case since there are various positions and all ethnic groups cannot be simply located in the same situation. Perhaps, some minorities climb up the ladder and be accepted by the mainstream. According to a Thai scholar, Montri Kunphoommarl, Chinese Muslim and Tai

Lue are among those who have been accepted by the mainstream. He further pinpoints that they can go to schools and engage in economic activities. Many Chinese Muslims have gained higher status as traders and been wealthy while being considered minority (Setthamalinee 2010). This means that there is complexity in the place of diasporic groups. There is no single category or a single position for these people and social mobility has occurred for certain reasons. Migrants, for example, often end up in higher positions than the local group/natives because the struggle for survival of migrants. Studies on the Chinese Muslim and the Bugis diasporas exemplify these cases. (Setthamalinee 2010 for Chinese Muslims; Maunati 2016 for Bugis people; etc). Indeed, I understand that many migrants come from situations, backgrounds, and origins. More recent migrants with a low-level of education may land in low-paying jobs. Interviews with the Cham people who moved to Kelantan[7] at the end of 1970s and the Bugis people in Johor[8] after the establishment of the modern state show that the earlier settlers were much better off. They have blended with the Malay and often refer to themselves as Malay.

Indeed, identity is a social construction (Kahn 1995, etc). This also applies to diasporic communities in the border areas. Yu and Jing (2015) believe that people in the border areas often have contesting identities. In a similar vein, Wang (2007) notes the contesting identities of Hakka people in Taiwan. Indeed, they have often attempted to keep their traditions as part of the markers of their cultural identities. Nevertheless, the remaking of their identities could occur in the new place for many reasons, as they adjust to the new environment or gain acceptance. Each diasporic experience vary due to economic and political reasons. Patterson (2006) clearly indicates that the status of the diaspora community is often linked

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[7] Based on "*Diaspora Etnik Champa di Asia Tenggara: Identitas dan Jaringan Transnasional Champa di Malaysia*," research in 2013, coordinated by Betti Rosita Sari with team members Yekti Maunati and Ari Jayanti. Thank you for allowing me to use this data.

[8] Based on "*Diaspora Bugis di semenanjung Malaysia: Identitas Budaya, Kewarganegaan dan integrasi Nasional*," research in 2011, coordinated by Dundin Zaenuddin with team members Yekti Maunati, Betti Rosita Sari, Rucianawati and Lamijo. Thank you for allowing me to use this data.

with the state of the country of origin, meaning that those from advanced countries could end up with a status different from those from developing countries.

Yu and Jing (2015: 111-113) studied the flows of people in the border areas between Vietnam and China, and report that there have been several stages of the important movements of people in these border areas. These include the period around 1959; between 1979 and 1985; and between 1984 and 1986. They further report that the national identity of the people like the Miao/Hmong in the border between Vietnam and China is constructed depending on many aspects, such as international relations, national policies, as well as political, economic (including land resources), and cultural issues.

Clearly, transnational movements of people have been made by numerous groups for many different reasons, including wars, political turmoils, conflicts, and economic problems. Border areas are often strategic places for those people who perform transnational movements either as final destinations or as transit places. Those who have settled down the border areas have to survive not only economically, but also culturally. The processes of adaptation is inevitable. They also need to come to terms with how their cultural identities may be reshaped by their movements to new places. Below, I will discuss the cases of the Yunnan Muslims and the Tai Lue.

Ⅳ. Identity of the Chinese Yunnan Muslims

The border between Thailand and Myanmar is witness to the diasporas of the Chinese Yunnan Muslims and even non-Muslims. This group settled in Mae Sai for a long period of time[9] (Sari 2018; Wiratri 2018; Maunati 2018). This claim is supported by Setthamalinee (2010: 2).

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[9] Thanks to transnational team leader of PSDR-LIPI Amorasi Wiratri and member Betti Rosita Sari for allowing me to be part of this fieldwork team in Mae Sai and Chiang Mai of March-April 2015.

Informants also note that the Burmese Muslim community has also resided in the border of Thailand-Myanmar and have come in different waves (Kuncoro 2014 for more detail). The first wave came in the eighteenth century and were assimilated to become Thai citizens. They severed ties with the homeland and were displaced for political reasons. Their connection is also limited to recent migrants of the same group. They also continue to practice Islam. The second wave was that of the contemporary Burmese Muslims, who moved in because of political turmoil. The categorization seems to be also applicable to different groups which migrated to Thailand in several waves like the Chinese /Yunnan Muslims. Berlie (2000: 226) notes that apart from the caravan trade, the "Panthay rebellion" was also one of the reasons for the movement of the Yunnanese Muslims to Southeast Asia.

I will only focus on the Yunnan Muslims to shed light on how they adapted in Thailand while maintaining their unique identity. They lived in harmony in Northern Thailand, kept their core identity as Muslims and engaged in networking to maintain their culture (Maunati, 2018).

As has been widely argued, identity is a product of social construction (Eriksen 1993; Kahn 1995; King and Wilder 2003; Wang 2007; Maunati and Sari 2014; Yu and Jing 2015). It is important for diasporic groups to affirm their existence to also negotiate their power. Identity is fluid and can be multi-layered depending on certain contexts and situations (Eriksen 1993). To shape and strengthen their ethnic identities, diasporic groups have employed strategies like establishing networks, practicing traditions, cooking traditional food, and promoting halal food, as in the case of Yunnan Muslims. Religion has also been a bedrock of identity (Maunati 2018). Berlie (2000), for instance, believes that Yunnan Muslims maintain their culture by their adherence to their Islamic religion while living in Northern Thailand.

Networking is believed to be a strategic way to strengthen and maintain group identity. Kang (2015) provides an example of the Tai Lue residing in the USA. They established helpful networks with the Thai diaspora from Thailand and also with other groups like the

Hmong. It enabled them to cope. Meanwhile, Kuncoro (2016) argues that a mosque also functioned in social, economic and educational matters. Social networking in Muslim communities, including that of Burmese Muslims, has been growing regardless of their ethnicity and nationality. This may be seen in the example of the Musjid Nurul Islam, established in 1901 by Indian Muslims and which has been opened to Burmese refugees and even Pakistanis.

Networking among diasporic groups has not been the same. Maunati (2010; 2010a; 2010b; 2011; 2016) notes that Bugis people in Nunukan, on the Indonesian border, have close connections with other Bugis on the other side of the border in Tawau, in Malaysia. This networking has social as well as economic functions. Sari (2012) observes the development of Cham networking in Malaysia and outside Malaysia, especially in Cambodia, and concludes that networking for diasporas is very important, especially as ethnic groups cross transnational boundaries. Diasporas that had often no connection with the homeland in the past are today transformed by networks. Faist (2010) even argues that some states have attempted to connect and control their diasporas. The terms "diaspora" itself has changed. Nowadays, it covers wider ranges of people, and not only those who disperse in many different countries. According to the Congress of Indonesian Diaspora in Los Angeles in July 2012, the definition of Indonesian Diaspora is "*Setiap orang Indonesia yang berada di luar negeri, baik yang berdarah maupun yang berjiwa dan berbudaya Indonesia, apapun status hukum, bidang pekerjaan, latar belakang etnis dan kesukuannya.* (Every Indonesian who is abroad, whether he/she is of Indonesian blood or spirit and culturaly Indonesian, regardless of legal status, occupation and ethnic background) (Forum Diaspora Indonesia II, Berlin 15 November 2014).

Maunati (2018: 103) also notes that the networking of Yunnan Muslims is a very strategic way to create their identity. They have established networks with fellow Yunnan Muslims from the north of Thailand and from their places of origins in China. There is a Yunnan Muslim Association in Mae Sai which invites teachers from Yunnan to teach the Chinese language, a marker of cultural identity, to young Yunnan Muslims in Mae Sai, aside from helping its people

look for jobs. Berlie (2000) observes that the Yunnan Muslims in North Thailand has maintained the use of their language. In a similar vein, Maunati (2012b) also finds the same practice with the Cham people in Malaysia.

The building of the mosque has also been supported financially by Muslims in Yunnan, China. Connections between Yunnan Muslims and their compatriots in China continue to be maintained and strengthened (Maunati 2018). This exemplifies what Cohen and Fishe (2019: 7) suggest about the importance of the diasporic link with the homeland. In the said case, the mosque goes beyond its religious function to also become a center for Islamic teaching, especially for the younger generations in the primary level, and also for the informal teaching of Islam. Yunnan Muslims have attempted to maintain and strengthen their identity by continuing to incorporate Islamic culture and language (Maunati 2018: 103-4). Thai scholar Montri Kunphoommarl [10] say that the Thai people are basically accepting of the Yunnan in the north. In the past, if they created problems, they were asked to move to the South. Yunnan Muslims have been living harmoniously with Thais in the North.

Meanwhile, Omar (1999) shows that in Thailand in general, there are two main groups—Thai Muslims and Malay Muslims—and that "The Thai-Muslims, who are generally more assimilated into Thai society, are represented by various ethnic groups such as Thai Malay, Thai, Chinese, Javanese, Cham, Pathan, Tamil, Persian, Arab, SamSam, Bengali and Baweanese"[11] (Omar 1999: 222).

Even though they use Islam as a marker of identity, this does not mean they are the same as other Muslim communities, like the Malays, for instance (Andaya 2001). Grey areas often occur in the markers of identity (Kahn 1995). The point here is that though they are using Islam as marker, the Yunnan Muslims in Northern Thailand have also selected different elements as to mark their identity. Thay Eng (2013) uses the concept of core and peripheral

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[10] The interview was conducted on 5 December, 2018.

[11] Citing from Omar Farouk Bajunid. 1988. The Muslims of Thailand: A Survey. In *The Muslims of Thailand: Historical and Cultural Studies*, A Forbes, ed. Bihar: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies

elements of identity where religion has been considered as a core element in the case of Cham identity in Cambodia. The Yunnan Muslims who have been residing in Northern Thailand for a long time have not been changed in terms of their identity as Muslims. Setthamalinee (2010: vii) states that Chinese/Yunnan Muslims residing in Northern Thailand for a long time, from time to time have been perceived differently. Prior to 1940, they were seen mainly as traders. From 1940 to 1990, they were viewed as a Thai Muslim middle class due to their economic mobility and national integration. In relation with the transnational Muslim movement, from 1991 until now, Chinese Muslims have been referred to as coming from three religious streams: "Hanafi Muslims connecting to China; Tabligh Jamaat Muslims connecting to India; and Salafi-Wahabi Muslims connecting to Saudi Arabia" (Setthamalinee 2010: vii).

Setthamalinee (2010) further argues that conflicts among these groups often happen. However, outside threats brings them together. Threats strengthen identity as Eriksen (1993) argues. Maunati (2010) also notes that although frictions among sub-groups of Dayak have often surfaced, members of the community will stand side by side when under pressure from outsiders.

We can also further note that Chinese Muslim identity is contested. An informant in Mae Sai that while there have been transnational Islamic movements in the area, especially the Wahabi and Tabligh Jamaat, these have not expanded widely. Majority of the followers are local Thai Muslims; the Yunnan Chinese Muslims tend to be oriented towards the Hanafi Muslims (Maunati 2018: 106).

Maunati (2018: 106-7) also notes, that another important Islamic element that marks identity is the promotion of halal food. Based on interviews and observations in Mae Sai, Yunnan/Chinese Muslims promote halal food. As they live in the border city in Northern Thailand, a tourist destination, Yunnan Muslims sell halal food that respond to the demand of Muslim tourists. Halal food is booming not only for its popularity as a cuisine but for its certification requirements. For instance, Malaysia has been strategizing to become a hub for halal food (Othman et al 2009).

Budiwanti (2015) on the other hand notes halal food is also growing in popularity in South Korea.

In interviews in Mae Sai in 2015, we found out that halal food was inaccessible. My own observation in the early 2000s prove this. Today, halal food are offered in many restaurants run by Yunnan/Chinese Muslims, who also engage in trading fruits, cheap CD/DVDs, Korean series, among others (Maunati 2018: 106-7). Mae Sai is a tourism destination that attract local and foreign tourists (Maunati 2018: 107). Muslim traders take advantage of this (Maunati 2018: 107).

<Plate 1> A halal 'burger' for you?

Photograph by Betti Rosita Sari

Ⅴ. Tai Lue in the Border areas Between Thailand and Laos

Minorities have often been described as being in marginal positions, and minorities are not foreign to Thailand which has hill tribes that struggled from exclusion (Sakboon 2013; Fujioka 2002; etc). Sakboon (2013: 213) observes that several upland ethnic minorities living in Northern Thailand have been treated differently and excluded by society. The intention of the goverment to treat them as a homogenous group has only added to the complexity, worsened by their location in the border areas. Citing Horstmann (2002: 8),

Sakboon notes that "the nature of borderlands—where the sovereignty of the state is marginal or even abandoned" has led to the state not trusting the minorities (2013: 215). Fujioka (2002) also reports on the vulnerable and marginal position of minorities in Thailand, and notes that tourism has also placed the minorities' cultural traditions in the horizon.

Promoting cultural diversity becomes a way to preserve cultures which in turn become important markers of identities. This is what may be observed with the Dayak in East Kalimantan where the promotion of cultural tourism has brought about positive impact (Maunati 2000). This is also the case of the Ainu of Japan. Friedman argues that the formulation and reformulation of Ainu identity were shaped by movements in the global market in the context of international tourism and commodification of culture. He claims that "the Ainu produce traditional goods in order to create themselves" (1990: 323). In Sarawak of Malaysia, Bidayuh and Iban long houses have been showcased for international tourism (Research Center for Regional Resources-The Indonesian Institute of Sciences 2002; Maunati 2002; 2009). Cultural/ethnic tourism improves the economic state of the groups promoted. Poverty is reduction by community-based tourism (Oula 2007: 181), as cultures are preserved.

In Laos, Oula who studied in Luang Nam Tha where community-based tourism activities are being engaged in by two Akha villages. These villages mostly rely on swidden agriculture and collecting non-timber forest products (Oula 2007: 182), but also open their lands to tourist activities like trekking, cultural immersion, and cuisine. People are being given a chance to experience of the daily life of the Akha (Oula 2007: 183-4).

Historically, ethnic minorities residing in the border areas of Northern Thailand like the Hmong (Tapp et al 2004) and Tai Lue (Kang 2015) directly migrated from China or through Laos.

A few of the Tai Lue reside in the town of Chiang Khong and engage in tourism, running souvenir shops, travel agencies, or homestays. They also promote culture by showcasing traditional weaving (Maunati 2018). Thai scholar, Montri Kunphoommarl says

that the Tai Lue are different from that of other minorities or hill tribes, as they are Buddhists and have been accepted by the mainstream. They have access to economic opportunities, education, among others.

Maunati (2018) describes the Tai Lue people in the Thai border area between Thailand and Laos as having a distinct identity from other minorities like the Hmong. They adhere to Theravada Buddhism like the Thai. The Tai Lue village, located along the river banks, has opened itself for tourism, showcasing the group's rich cultural heritage, like traditional weaving. It is accessible from the city of Chiang Khong. When we visited the village, we saw several food stalls along the riverbank serving traditional Tai Lue food, like large portions of rice noodles with hot chilli sauce. (Plate 2). There was also a bigger food stall on the opposite side of the riverbank which provides varieties of traditional and non-traditional. The Tai Lue people we interviewed told us that they moved from a previous area on the border before finally ending up staying in their current location. Meanwhile, a few elderly people told us that before moving to Northern Thailand, they lived in Laos with their ancestors originating in China. The younger generations were born in Thailand and can speak Thai (Maunati, 2018: 124). The movements of people, including of the Tai Lue, have been very common within the areas of China and mainland Southeast Asia. Today we can find Tai Lue in different countries in Southeast Asia and China. In an interview, Montri Kunphoommarl claimed that people of Thailand and Laos in the border areas between Thailand and Laos were originally of the same groups. Other studies show similar hypothesis (Bala 2002; Ardhana et al 2004). For instance, Ardhana et al (ibid.), in a study in Kerayan, East Kalimantan, Indonesia and Ba Kelalan, Sarawak, Malaysia, reveal that the people who live in the border areas used to be part of the same group. Only after the borderlines were drawn have people evolved their present identities.

<Plate 2> Food for the discerning customer

Kang (2015) also says that Tai Lue can be found in the different places in the US, like Colorado, California and Texas. His study shows that these movements to America happened between 1978 and 1994. People from Sipsong Panna were said to have moved to Laos and Thailand first before going to the US. The movement to Laos were carried out "during China's 'Great Leap Forward' period (1958-59) and during the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' (1966-76)" (Kang 2015: 200).

Kang reports that the process of reviving Tai Lue traditions in the US is evident. He (2015:206) notes that the free social space in multicultural US has made it possible for the Tai Lue to reformulate and modify their traditions. He also (2015: 207) points that Tai Lue Americans are also members of the Thai community and network with other Thais to create associations. They remain to be Buddhists, with the temple at the heart of their cultural activities. They keep using their language, attend Thai or Lao Buddhist temples if they don't have one, and maintain practices like rituals and intermarriages.

Maunati (2018: 127) observes that among the Tai Lue in the border area of Thailand-Laos, cultural traditions, language, and religion have become important markers of identity. Religious rituals, for example, are very important, as exemplified by one of our informants. He shares that in his family, a son is required to be monk at least once in his lifetime. He presented several photographs of this practice that runs in the family. He has painstakingly prepared for his only son to undergo this. The community from

within and without were invited, which not only shows the family's complete adherence to Theravada Buddhism, but also to connecting with society. The bonds are forged, even with people who have long left the country. In another case, in Borneo, in the border areas between Indonesia and Malaysia, people have an integrated identity as they crossed the borders (Maunati 2012a).

Apart from practicing religious rituals, maintaining traditional cultures also mark identity. Traditonal clothes are very imporant in distinguishing cultures. Bradley (1983:46) observes that in Thailand, minorities maintain their identities through language and material culture, as well as religious, political and economic practices. He notes that in the Akha village of Chiang Rai, in the border area, the community preserves a distnict material culture—much like other groups. On the other hand, Maunati (2018: 128) says that the Tai Lue sport traditional clothes from woven materials. In their village a group of women has established places for displaying the process of making the woven products and the products themselves in different forms: traditional woven materials, traditional clothes, bags, wallets, among others. Originally, these appear in brown and light brown, but other colors are being used today. The women in the display outlets say that they use modern dyes, as well as natural and artificial colors. Usually, the naturally-colored ones are for rituals or important events, like a wedding party. The looms are displayed along side the weavings (Maunati 2018).

<Plates 3 and 4>: Colorful and more traditional woven products

Maunati (2018) believes that the Tai Lue people, like other groups, have created networks from within and without, which consequently strengthened their identity. They make use of family businesses like coffee shops, homestays, travel agencies, and souvenir shops to connect with Tai Lue relatives or fellow villagers. This is true for Chiang Khong, the border city of Thailand and Laos, a tourist destination which had provided Tai Lue families various business opportunities. Networking among the Tai Lue is indeed crucial matter. In the US, Kang (2015) agrees that networking is an important way to maintain Tai Lue identity. In a similar vein, Kuncoro (2014, 2016) emphasizes the important aspect of networking for Muslim minorities in the border areas of Thailand and Myanmar.

Studies on diasporas in other countries need to be developed further We need to understand local ideas. Presently, we are heavily dependent on Western scholars because of language differences. We lack understanding of the local scholars who may have different perspectives, though their ideas may be shaped by Western education. As King (2016) argues, the insider and outsider notions in Area Studies are hard to separate.

Ⅵ. Conclusion

By establishing Area Studies, it has been proven that certain interests, apart from academic purposes, are common in many Western countries, like the US, the European countries, and Australia. We have witnessed the political, economic and cultural interests behind the establishment of Area Studies in the past. Area Studies in the West experienced a decline due to many reasons like the debate on the growth of theories from disciplines, lack of commitment among students, and changing global concerns. However, in regions like Southeast Asia and Asia in general, it is burgeoning. In Indonesia, the field was established not only for academic purposes but to learn the global and regional cultures, at the time of economic slump.

A single discipline will not be sufficient to understand the complex issues in the context of Area Studies. Its interdisciplinary

approach is key in solving interconnected and intertwining problems, and this is not lost on the Research Center for Regional Resources-the Indonesian Institute of Sciences since its establishment in 2001. There have been many topics studied in this Research Center, one of which are the crucial diasporas in the border areas of Southeast Diasporic networking has been considered to be beneficial from the perspective of home-host relations, whereas in the past, it has often been disconnected. Meanwhile, international migration continue to take place for many reasons, like political conflict, economic reasons, to wars. The Indonesian diaspora requires study as its contribution to national development needs to be assessed. This year, LIPI under the program of National Priority, is starting to study the Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia, the Netherlands, and Japan, to understand the phenomenon.

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Ritualism versus Universalism:
The Challenge of Establishing an Effective Rights-Based Labor Migration Regime in ASEAN

Jorge V. Tigno*

[*Abstract*]

Southeast Asia accounts for nearly a tenth of total worldwide cross-border movements of migrant workers. Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, and Philippines make up the sending countries while Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand are the major destinations. Migrant worker movements are predominantly in production process and low- to medium-skilled sectors. It is not unusual for irregular or undocumented movements to take place. In not a few instances, migrants work under harsh and exploitative conditions. In recent years, however, ASEAN has taken steps to manage labor migration at the regional level. The paper argues that ASEAN has not managed these cross-border labor flows as well as it should particularly in terms of protecting and promoting the human rights of migrants. It will be difficult to establish the genuine building blocks for a regional human rights mechanism unless there is a diffusion of alternative universal norms and standards to what ASEAN already embodies. As long as states resist any attempt to weaken or question or deligitimize their capacity to determine who gets to enter, stay, and leave their jurisdictions, it will be difficult to establish an effective migrant rights framework for the region.
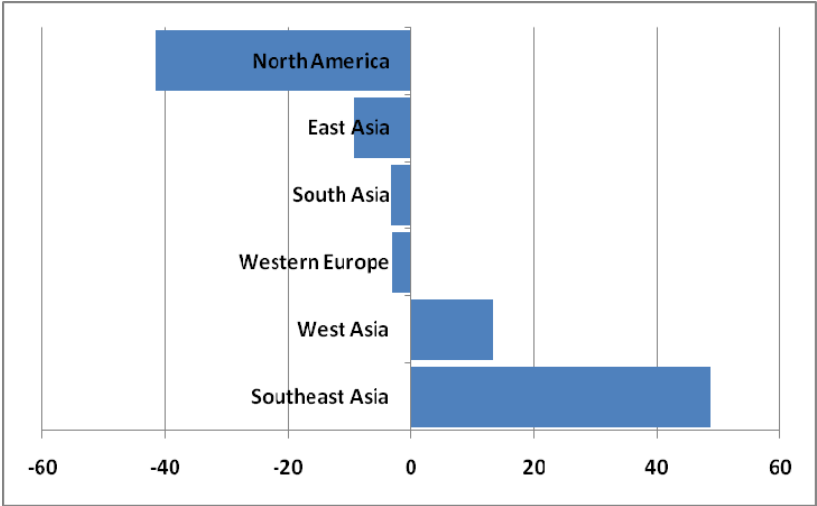
Keywords: ASEAN, labor migration, migrant rights

* Professor, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines−Diliman, Philippines, jorge.tigno@up.edu.ph

Ⅰ. Introduction

A growing number of people from Southeast Asia are moving elsewhere across the globe for employment. The countries comprising the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) together account for nearly a tenth of the total cross-border movements of workers globally. But while Southeast Asia is a significant migrant source region, it has also become a major destination for labor migrants coming from within the region itself. Intraregional migration accounts for around two-thirds of all international migrants in Southeast Asia. In contrast, European citizens currently represent 40 percent of the total migrant population in the European Union (Castro-Martín and Cortina 2015: 114). Indeed, compared to other regional groupings in the world, Southeast Asia has seen a substantial increase in the share of intraregional migration between 1990 and 2017 as seen in the figure below.

<Figure 1> Change in the share of intraregional migration in selected world regions (1990‐2017)

Source: Based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Population Division (2017) Data. Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017). Accessed at https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/data/ UN_MigrantStockByOriginAndDestination_2017.xlsx on April 20, 2019.

The high levels of intraregional migrant flows in Southeast Asia stem from the economic, social, and demographic dynamism and diversity of the region that creates opportunities and desires for labor to move across borders. Southeast Asia is a region of diversities and disparities—the main drivers of migration. For instance, in 2017, the annual gross domestic product (GDP) per capita at current prices among the region's economies ranged from a low of from US$ 1,229 (Myanmar) to a high of US$ 57,722 (Singapore). Based on the data provided in the table below, it is clear that the economic prosperity and growth in some ASEAN countries have acted as magnets for migrants from nearby countries within the region.

<Figure 2>Selected Indicators among ASEAN Countries

Country	Total population	Annual population growth	GDP per capita at current prices	Proportion of Urban Population Living in Slums	Proportion of Population Living Below Poverty Line	Human Development Index	Unemployment Rate	Economic Growth Rate	Foreign direct investments infow
	2017 In 000s	2017 In %	2017 US$	2014 In %	2016 In %	2018	2017	2010-2015	US$ million
Cambodia	15,717.7	1.7	1,421	55.1	14.0	0.582	ND	7.2	2,732
Indonesia	261,890.9	1.2	3,872	21.8	10.6	0.694	5.3	4.9	23,064
Lao PDR	6,752.8	2.0	2,531	31.4	23.2	0.601	ND	7.8	1,695
Malaysia	32,049.7	1.3	9,899	NA	0.4	0.802	3.4	5.3	9,447
Myanmar	53,388.0	0.9	1,229	41.0	32.1	0.578	2.1	7.4	4,002
Philippines	104,921.4	1.6	2,992	38.3	21.6	0.699	6.6	5.9	10,057
Singapore	5,612.3	0.1	57,722	NA	NA	0.932	3.0	4.0	62,017
Thailand	67,653.2	0.3	6,736	25.0	8.6	0.755	1.2	2.9	8,046
Viet Nam	93,671.6	1.1	2,390	27.2	7.0	0.694	2.0	5.9	14,100
ASEAN	**642,078.8**								

Sources
  Basic ASEAN Statistics: https://cdn.aseanstats.org/public/data/statics/table1.xls
  HDI 2018: http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries
  Poverty and Slums Data: https://data.adb.org/dataset/basic-statistics-asia-and-pacific
  Unemployment Rate: https://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/asyb-2018.pdf

Insofar as the movement of labor is concerned, the latest figures show that the top five countries of origin for migrants in the ASEAN countries are: Myanmar (2.2 million), Indonesia (1.2 million), Malaysia (1.0 million), Laos (0.9 million), and Cambodia (0.8 million). Vietnam, Thailand, and the Philippines have considerably less intraregional migrants (ranging from a few thousand to several tens of thousands) although they do have much higher numbers of migrants elsewhere in Northeast Asia, West Asia, Australia, and North America (http://www.asean.org/resources/ category/asean-statistics). Insofar as receiving countries are concerned, at least two countries in Southeast Asia (Malaysia and

Singapore) have the highest share of foreign migrants per capita in the region (Battistella 2002: 352).

Given the above extensive intraregional flows, Southeast Asia has come to embody its own regional migration system (Battistella 2002: 351). The three destination countries—Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand—together host no less than 6.5 million labor migrants from other ASEAN member countries. Movements within and from the Southeast Asian region are predominantly for purposes of employment in production process and low- to medium-skilled categories and sectors (e.g., household servants, agricultural workers, construction, and factory work, etc.). In not a few instances, migrants work under harsh and exploitative conditions leading to concerns over the human rights of migrant workers in the region.

The persistence of these human rights concerns led the leaders of ASEAN to sign in 2007 the Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers. The Declaration is seen as a culmination of earlier efforts to address migration- and migrant rights-related issues and concerns obtaining among the ASEAN member countries that are sending and receiving migrant workers. Ten years later, on November 14, 2017, the heads of state of ASEAN signed another document－The ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers－at the end of its thirty-first summit. The chair of ASEAN during that year, Philippines president Rodrigo Duterte, described the agreement as "a landmark document that reflects our promise to strengthen social protection, access to justice, humane and fair treatment, and access to health services of our region's migrant workers" (ASEAN Secretariat 2017).

There have been numerous efforts undertaken in the Asia-Pacific region to protect and promote the rights and welfare of migrants coming from Southeast Asia and elsewhere. These efforts can be divided into two phases. During the first phase (up to 2004), individual ASEAN member countries took part in deliberations initiated by non-members that attempt to work out solutions to the problems faced by migrants, typically from a security and anti-crime standpoint. The second phase began in November 2004, at its tenth summit in Vientiane, when ASEAN itself issued its declaration

establishing a comprehensive blueprint for regional integration by 2020. One area identified in the Action Programme was on promoting human rights and within this area ASEAN had set the goal for the "Elaboration of an ASEAN instrument for the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers"－a brief mention but one that could be considered a new beginning for the Association eventually culminating in the two milestones of 2007 and 2017.

This paper examines the extent to which the 2007 Declaration and the 2017 Consensus can be seen as watershed moments for ASEAN in terms of crafting a migration regime for the region that emanates from a human rights perspective. Why did the leaders of ASEAN decide to sign the 2007 Declaration and the 2017 Consensus? What type of migration regime has persisted in the region? Given the characteristic features and realities of intraregional labor migration in Southeast Asia, can these regional agreements address the persistent and pervasive problems labor migrants face in the region? For a regional human rights framework on labor mobility to function, it would require (a) a common set of overarching goals, principles, and norms concerning labor migrants; (b) a specification of the fundamental rights attached to labor migrants; and (c) an effective mechanism for specifying, recognizing, and enforcing the legal obligations of state parties to respect those rights. Is ASEAN headed in the direction of a regional human rights-based migration regime as described above?

This paper argues that building an effective regional human rights-based mechanism on labor migration in ASEAN would be difficult given the state-centric and Westphalian nature of the Association and its constituent members. As long as states resist any attempt to weaken or question or deligitimize their capacity to determine who gets to enter, stay, and leave their jurisdictions and fully conform to universal human rights norms and standards, it will be difficult to establish an effective migrant rights framework for the region. Ultimately, ASEAN leaders are keen to adopt a more ritualistic approach to building an alternative migration regime for the region.This paper is divided into three brief sections. The first section describes the overall intraregional labor migration situation

in Southeast Asia. The second section analyzes the initiatives of ASEAN to promote the rights of migrant workers specific to the 2007 declaration and the 2017 consensus documents. The last section concludes.

The profound socio-economic impacts and implications that labor mobility has had on Southeast Asian development are palpable and undeniable. There is certainly a need to go beyond these impacts and reexamine the prospects for a comprehensive and effective human rights framework in Southeast Asia in the context of the growing extent and complexity of cross-border migrations in the region. Southeast Asia offers a setting for analyzing (a) human mobility and (b) the way this mobility is being managed (or not) at the regional level. There are countries in Southeast Asia that both send and receive people to a significant degree. National boundaries in the region have a tendency to be porous. Historically, social relations across Southeast Asia have been taking place since pre-colonial times even before the advent of such national boundaries.

Norms matter. They constitute integral descriptions of "collective expectations for the proper behavior of actors" that possess both "constitutive and regulative effects" in the sense that they "either define (or constitute) identities or prescribe (or regulate) behavior, or they do both" (Katzenstein 1995: 3). Norms are important for the power that they have (at least, potentially) to influence and shape the behavior of states especially when such norms that are diffused are considered universal and morally good, "and any divergence from such norms is deemed illegitimate and immoral in the eyes of the international community" (Auethavornpipat 2017: 3).

Regional norms matter a great deal. They are norms collectively shared by its peoples and theoretically have the power to create conditions of conformity and convergence across the region (Auethavornpipat 2017). In the case of ASEAN, regional norms take the form of the shared positions of its state leaders and includes their recognition of what constitutes appropriate or normal (versus inappropriate) behavior. Through a process of contestation and debate, national/domestic norms give way to more universal norms that are consistent with international standards, paving the

way for convergence in terms of what member-states can or cannot do in the context of the Association and in relation to a particularly regional issue like labor migration.

However, what might be construed as efforts to foster convergence through contestation actually become attempts at conversion where, in some instances, external actors (like social movements) can exert pressure on state authorities to respect and abide by so-called universal norms and standards. Norms that are forced in this manner might induce certain states to respond with objection and resistance or acquiescence without genuine compliance.

Moreover, it must be pointed out that national/local norms are also important to consider especially in determining which international and regional norms get diffused (see Acharya 2004). Norm contestation can thus be affected by local beliefs and positions and may override any effort towards norm sharing at the regional level. In other words: it matters whose norms matter for ASEAN and begs the question of why certain regional norms are more acceptable than others. Some regional norms seem to be seen as established and accepted principles (such as non-interference in one's internal affairs) while others are approached with apprehension and even derision (as in the case of regularizing or accepting low-skilled migrants).

In other words, as a regional association composed of socio-economically and politically diverse members, ASEAN can be seen as a highly dynamic grouping that provides a rich context for its own intraregional labor migration flows.
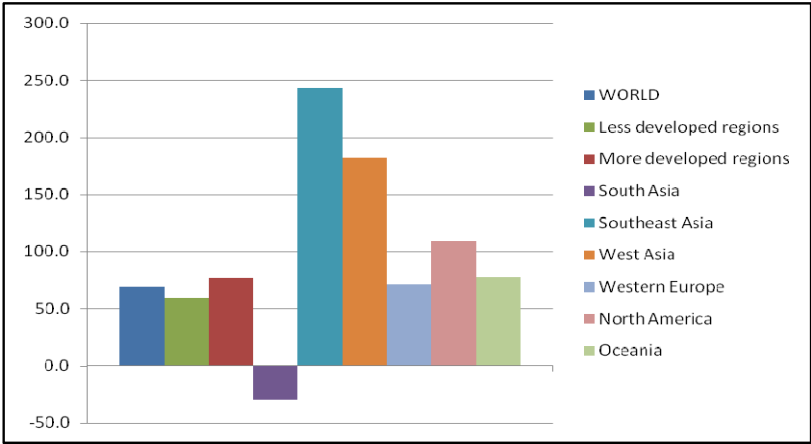
Ⅱ. The Intraregional Labor Migration System in Southeast Asia

As mentioned earlier, Southeast Asia makes up a regional migration system. More specifically, Southeast Asia constitutes "three subsystems of migration… the Malay Peninsula (including Singapore); the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asian Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) [in which the role of Malaysia becomes crucial]; and the Northern ASEAN countries [with Thailand as the focal point]"

(Battistella 2002). In essence, this regional migration system revolves around three ASEAN countries – Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand.

Between 1990 and 2017, the stock of international migrants globally increased by 70 percent and the stocks of migrants from South Asia actually declined over the same period. However, Southeast Asian migrant stocks increased almost 250 percent over the same period. As seen in the figure below, Southeast Asia experienced the highest percentage increase in its stock of international migrants between 1990 and 2017.

<Figure 3>Percentage Increase in International Migrant Stocks. World and Selected Regions (1990 and 2017)

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division (2017). Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017). Accessed at https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/data/UN_MigrantStockTotal_2017.xlsx on April 20, 2019.

However, it should also be noted that Southeast Asia (along with East Asia) has a lower number of international migrants as a proportion of the total population compared to Western Europe, West Asia, and North America as seen in the figure below. Southeast Asia has yet to become a major global destination for international migrants like that of the countries comprising West Asia, Western Europe, and North America.
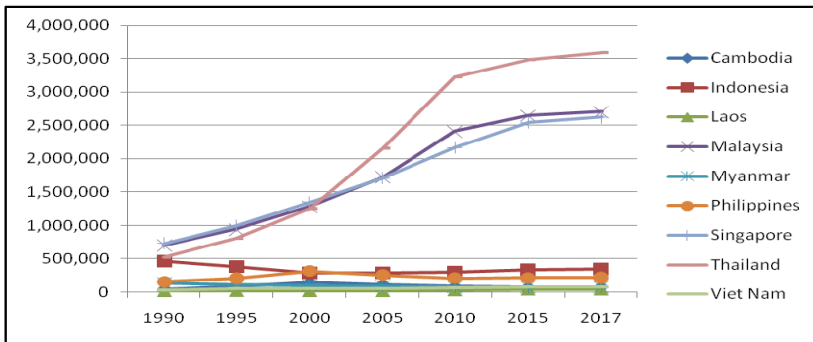
<Figure 4>International Migrant Stock as a Percentage of Total Population in Selected World Regions (1990-2017)

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division (2017). Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017).Accessed at https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/data/UN_MigrantStockTotal_2017.xlsx on April 20, 2019.

      Nevertheless, between 1990 and 2017, three countries in Southeast Asia have seen a dramatic increase in their migrant stocks －Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand－as shown in the figure below. This would indicate that the three countries are major receivers of migrants in Southeast Asia.
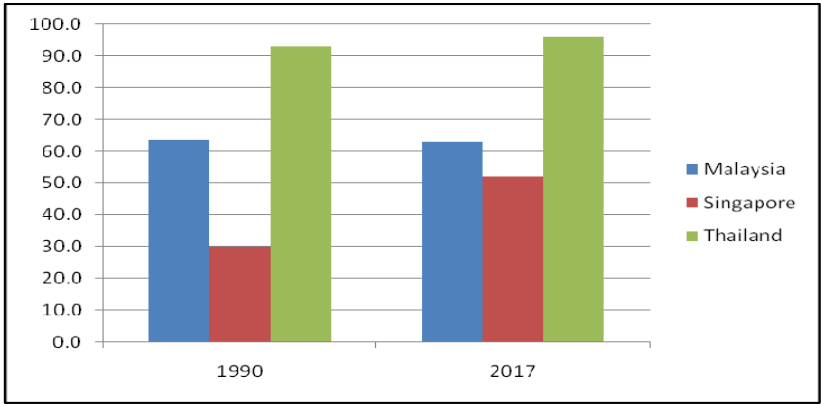
<Figure 5> International Migrant Stocks of Selected Countries in Southeast Asian (1990 to 2017)

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division (2017). Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017).Accessed at https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/data/UN_MigrantStockTotal_2017.xlsx on April 20, 2019.

What is the extent of these flows in the major receivers over the last two decades? The figure below shows that the intraregional migration taking place in the three major receiving countries has not increased fairly much over the last two decades. Rather, they have always been high except in the case of Singapore which had only 30 percent intraregional migrants in 1990 but this percentage had increased to around 50 percent by 2017.

<Figure 6>Percentage of Intraregional Migration in Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand (1990 and 2017)

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division (2017). Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017).Accessed at https://www.un.org/en/ development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/data/UN_MigrantStockTotal_ 2017.xlsx on April 20, 2019.

Where do these stocks of migrants come from? The three major migrant-receiving countries in Southeast Asia－Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand－currently receive a substantial portion of their foreign migrants from certain countries in the region. Thailand receives the largest number of migrants from within Southeast Asia (around 3.5 million) of which nearly all are from Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar. Malaysia has some 2.7 million foreign migrants, two thirds of which are from Southeast Asia with the vast majority coming from Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam. Singapore has over 2.6 million foreign migrants, the majority of whom come from Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand. What can be observed about these intraregional movements is that
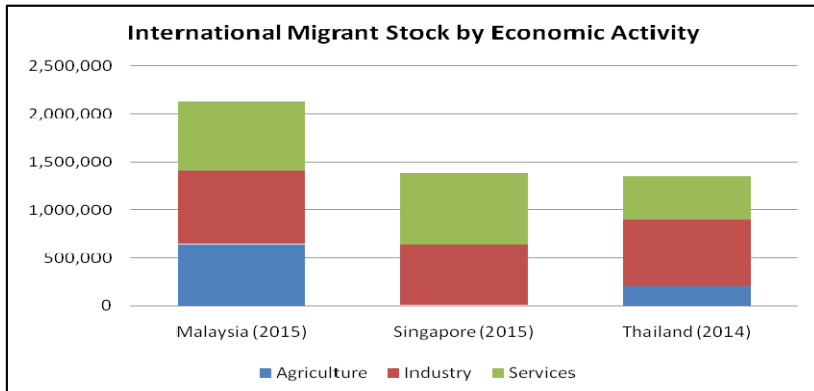
(a) there are countries that are predominantly migrant-sending (Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, and Vietnam) and (b) predominantly migrant-receiving areas (Thailand) as well as (c) countries that are both sending and receiving migrants (Singapore and Malaysia).

Interestingly, although it has a substantial number of migrants outside the country, the Philippines sends only a relatively low proportion of its migrants to Southeast Asia compared to the other predominantly sending countries like Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia. Myanmar has the largest proportion of its migrants that are engaged in intraregional mobility, mostly going to Thailand and Malaysia.

People in Southeast Asia move across borders typically in order to seek better employment opportunities. In the absence of any significant and long-standing conflicts and disasters in the region, it can be assumed that people who move from Southeast Asia are economic migrants or are people with principally economic motivations. Much of the migrant worker movements that take place in the ASEAN region are done by unskilled migrant workers employed primarily in low-paying jobs in construction, agriculture, and domestic service. Due to the historically porous borders in the region, a substantial portion of the movers are undocumented.

Looking at the three major receiving countries in the figure

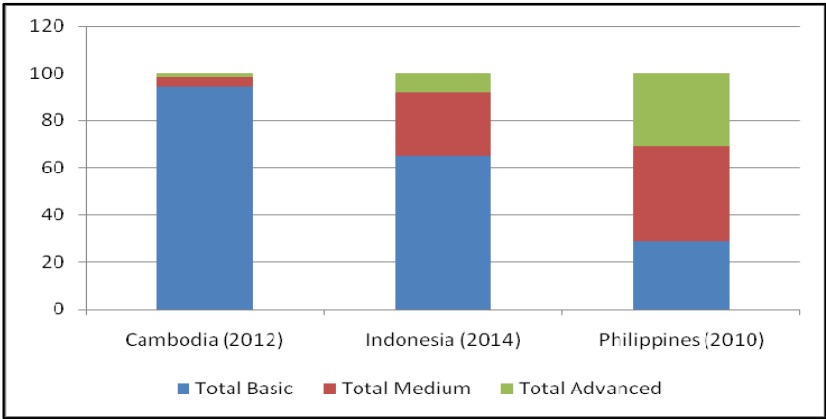<Figure 7> International Migrant Stock by Economic Activity

Source: International Labour Migration Statistics Database in ASEAN, International Labour Organization (ILO)

below, a substantial portion of the migrants in Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand work in services (primarily doing domestic or household work) as well as in industry (typically in factories and other firms) and, in the cases of Malaysia and Thailand, in agriculture (usually in plantations and on fishing vessels).

The low-skilled character of intraregional migration flows in Southeast Asia is borne out by the level of education of migrants as shown in the figure below. Filipino migrants tend to be better educated than migrants from Indonesia and Cambodia who typically work in Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. This may explain why Filipinos are more likely to migrate outside the region rather than within it.

<Figure 8>Education Levels of Migrants from Cambodia (2012), Indonesia (2014), and the Philippines (2010)

Source: ILO Statistics

In general, migrant workers pass through two main channels. The first is by way of the legal and regular or documented means, which can be either through private recruitment intermediaries/ labor brokers or by government labor service agencies. Either way, this authorized channel is typically regulated by governments and would therefore cost more than the second channel, which is of an illicit or illegal nature. Migrants who engage the services of illicit brokers expect to pay less than the fees charged by legitimate private recruitment agencies or more in order to circumvent

government regulations. Either way, migrants who avail of the services of illicit labor brokers are at a higher risk of being abused and exploited.

Despite the risks and dangers associated with such illicit channels, Southeast Asia has become a major hub for illicit or irregular flows that can sometimes turn to syndicated human trafficking and smuggling. Such a situation is compounded by given geographical realities (i.e., contiguous borders) and by the fact that economic developments and opportunities in Southeast Asia are not evenly distributed giving rise to strong motivations to move. Likewise, advances in transportation development have now made international travel easier and cheaper for all making it possible for more people to travel greater distances faster and at less cost.

Unauthorized migration does not just occur as a demand-driven phenomenon. Rather, numerous geographic, demographic, and historical factors would account for unauthorized labor migrant flows in the region (Battistella 2002). The geographic contiguity between several countries in the region creates opportunities for people to move with greater ease. Moreover, the movements of peoples in the region have been historically taking place even before the formal political boundaries that presently exist were established. Likewise, the prevalence of extensive social networks among migrants has become an integral component of these unauthorized flows. It is difficult to ascertain the true extent of these unauthorized flows precisely because they are undocumented and considered illegal in some jurisdictions in the region.

Finally, it appears from the above discussion that the intraregional cross-border migration (of workers) affects different countries in Southeast Asia unevenly. More importantly, however, the character of intraregional migration in Southeast Asia largely involves low-skilled labor flows. Not to be forgotten are the economic contributions of migrants not only in their countries of origin but also in the countries of employment/destination. Current estimates indicate that intraregional migrants in Southeast Asia generate no less than US$ 40 billion annually. This amount does not even include other economic contributions of migrants in their

countries of destination. It is certainly interesting to see how ASEAN is able to appreciate and respond to these persistent realities about intraregional migrant flows.

Ⅲ. ASEAN Initiatives to Protect Migrants

There have been numerous efforts undertaken in the Asia-Pacific region to protect and promote the rights and welfare of international migrants. Insofar as ASEAN is concerned, these efforts can be roughly divided into two periods. The first period (from 1990 to 2004) was a time when individual ASEAN member countries separately took part in deliberations mostly initiated by countries outside of ASEAN that attempt to work out solutions to the problems faced by migrants typically from a human security and anti-crime standpoint. The second period (from 2004 to the present) would be the time when ASEAN began to take a stronger concerted role as an Association in the area of protecting and promoting the rights of migrants at both within Southeast Asia and the wider Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

3.1. 1990-2004

One of the earliest initiatives taken by an ASEAN member-state was the one undertaken by the Philippines ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 18, 1990. The 1990 UN Convention prescribes the fundamental rights of migrants and their families whether they are documented or undocumented. It likewise obligates state parties to observe these rights. Moreover, state parties are expected to promote "sound, equitable and humane conditions in connection with international migration of workers and members of their families" (Article 64). The Philippines became a signatory to the convention in 1993 and ratified it in 1995. It was the first country in Southeast Asia to do so. Cambodia and Indonesia became signatories in 2004. Aside from these three countries, however, no other ASEAN member-state has ratified the 1990 UN Convention

up to now. The 1990 UN Convention came into force in 2003.

Prior to 1993, the Philippines and several other ASEAN member-states had also ratified several international conventions and standards specific to workers as well as migrant workers and their families. Cambodia has ratified 13 international labor conventions; Indonesia 20; Laos 10; Malaysia 18; Myanmar 24; Philippines 38; Singapore 27; Thailand 19; and Vietnam 22.

At the conclusion of an international symposium on migration in Bangkok in April 1999, representatives from the governments of the ten countries of ASEAN along with Australia, Bangladesh, China, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Papua NewGuinea, and Sri Lanka, as well as Hong Kong, issued a declaration recognizing the complexity of international migration and acknowledged irregular migration as "a major economic, social, humanitarian, political, and security concern" for the region. The 1999 Bangkok Declaration stated that "irregular migration should be addressed in a comprehensive and balanced manner" and stated further that concerted efforts are required to institute orderly migration as a response to irregular migration. Although this was not a direct initiative of ASEAN, it did pave the way for further discussions and agreements on broad principles to take place in the region.

In 2002, the member-countries of ASEAN, along with 38 other countries as well as several international development agencies, joined the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime in order to raise regional awareness of the problems posed by human smuggling, trafficking in persons, and other related transnational crimes. Although it is seen more as an anti-crime initiative, the Bali Process recognized the need in the region to end the exploitation of migrants by promoting "safe, legal, and affordable migration pathways."

On November 29, 2004, at its tenth summit in Vientiane, ASEAN issued a declaration establishing its comprehensive blueprint for regional integration by 2020. The Vientianne Action Program specified numerous key areas and goals for ASEAN to attain its Vision 2020. One area identified in the Action Programme was on promoting human rights and within this area, ASEAN had set the

goal for the "Elaboration of an ASEAN instrument for the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers." Although it was only a minor bullet point on the program, this represented a turning point for ASEAN since the migrant rights protection issue had now been placed on the table of the Association's plans for regional integration.

3.2. 2004 Onwards

The second period is that time when ASEAN embarked on its own initiative for the region to protect and promote the rights of migrant workers. This second period is supported by two pillars. The first was put up in January 2007, when the leaders of ASEAN signed the ASEAN Declaration on the Rights of Migrant Workers in Cebu, Philippines. In it, ASEAN acknowledged the need to strengthen "measures on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers,"as well as "the contributions of migrant workers to the society and economy" of the member-states (ASEAN 2007). The four-page declaration of 2007 mandated states in both receiving and sending areas to promote "the full potential and dignity of migrant workers in a climate of freedom, equity, and stability in accordance with the laws, regulations, and policies of respective ASEAN Member Countries." Likewise, in the event that the migrants found themselves in undocumented situations, "through no fault of their own… [t]he receiving states and the sending states shall, for humanitarian reasons, closely cooperate to resolve" their cases taking into account their "fundamental rights and dignity." However, the declaration also made clear that the actions to be taken by the receiving states should not be construed as efforts to regularize the undocumented status of migrants.

Nevertheless, the 2007 Declaration embodied a set of concrete and specific measures that can still be seen as groundbreaking. The document outlined the shared commitments and obligations of all the major parties concerned—the sending and receiving states as well as ASEAN itself. Receiving states were obliged to:

- Intensify efforts to protect the fundamental human rights, promote the welfare and uphold human dignity of migrant workers;

• Work towards the achievement of harmony and tolerance between receiving states and migrant workers;

• Facilitate access to resources and remedies through information, training and education, access to justice, and social welfare services as appropriate and in accordance with the legislation of the receiving state, provided that they fulfill the requirements under applicable laws, regulations and policies of the said state, bilateral agreements and multilateral treaties;

• Promote fair and appropriate employment protection, payment of wages, and adequate access to decent working and living conditions for migrant workers;

• Provide migrant workers, who may be victims of discrimination, abuse, exploitation, violence, with adequate access to the legal and judicial system of the receiving states; and

• Facilitate the exercise of consular functions to consular or diplomatic authorities of states of origin when a migrant worker is arrested or committed to prison or custody or detained in any other manner, under the laws and regulations of the receiving state and in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

Likewise, the 2007 Declaration mandated state authorities in sending areas to observe the following obligations:

• Enhance measures related to the promotion and protection of the rights of migrant workers;

• Ensure access to employment and livelihood opportunities for their citizens as sustainable alternatives to migration of workers;

• Set up policies and procedures to facilitate aspects of migration of workers, including recruitment, preparation for deployment overseas and protection of the migrant workers when abroad as well as repatriation and reintegration to the countries of origin; and

• Establish and promote legal practices to regulate recruitment of migrant workers and adopt mechanisms to eliminate recruitment malpractices through legal and valid contracts, regulation and accreditation of recruitment agencies and employers, and blacklisting of negligent/unlawful agencies.

Finally, the declaration also called for a set of commitments for ASEAN and these include the following:

- Promote decent, humane, productive, dignified and remunerative employment for migrant workers;

- Establish and implement human resource development programs and reintegration programs for migrant workers in their countries of origin;

- Take concrete measures to prevent or curb the smuggling and trafficking in persons by, among others, introducing stiffer penalties for those who are involved in these activities;

- Facilitate data-sharing on matters related to migrant workers, for the purpose of enhancing policies and programs concerning migrant workers in both sending and receiving states;

- Promote capacity building by sharing of information, best practices as well as opportunities and challenges encountered by ASEAN Member Countries in relation to protection and promotion of migrant workers' rights and welfare;

- Extend assistance to migrant workers of ASEAN Member Countries who are caught in conflict or crisis situations outside ASEAN in the event of need and based on the capacities and resources of the Embassies and Consular Offices of the relevant ASEAN Member Countries, based on bilateral consultations and arrangements;

- Encourage international organizations, ASEAN dialogue partners, and other countries to respect the principles and extend support and assistance to the implementation of the measures contained in this Declaration; and

- Task the relevant ASEAN bodies to follow up on the Declaration and to develop an ASEAN instrument on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers, consistent with ASEAN's vision of a caring and sharing Community, and direct the Secretary-General of ASEAN to submit annually a report on the progress of the implementation of the Declaration to the Summit through the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting.

In the immediate period after the January 2007 Summit Declaration, ASEAN embarked on what it does best – it created a

committee to draft the implementation plan in July 2007.The ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers had two goals: (a) ensure the effective implementation of the commitments made under the January 2007 Declaration and (b) facilitate the development of an ASEAN instrument on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers. The Committee subsequently initiated the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour to consider and incorporate the views and suggestions of civil society organizations as well as other stakeholders including the private business sector. This multi-stakeholder forum provides an opportunity for non-state actors to engage and dialogue with governments on the issue of labor migration.

The Committee also convened a drafting team that would outline the specific rights to be covered by the instrument. The drafting team was initially composed of representatives of receiving (Malaysia and Singapore) and sending (Indonesia and Philippines) states. The state representatives comprising the drafting team held several meetings in 2009 but not much progress was made due to disagreements on several issues, most notably about whether or not the instrument is to be legally binding and whether or not it should include undocumented migrant workers, among others. In 2010, the membership in the drafting team was opened to all the ASEAN member states and by 2012, the team had managed to produce the "Zero Draft" or pre-draft of the instrument (https://humanrightsinasean.info/asean-committee–migrant-workers/about.html).

It remains to be seen up to now, however, whether a concrete "first draft" document will eventually come forth since the negotiations have now turned to coming up with a consensus among the member states on what portions of the pre-draft instrument are deemed acceptable. Some states (particularly those in receiving areas) are hesitant and resistive to efforts to grant more rights to migrants and others (in sending areas) are less so.

Nevertheless, suggestions have been forwarded to the ASEAN Forum by civil society organizations represented by the Task Force

on ASEAN Migrant Workers (TFAMW). Among their many recommendations is to make sure that the instrument be one that would be legally binding to all member states. Another recommendation is for member states to make sure their national laws are aligned with the provisions of the instrument and that such be in accordance with international principles and conventions that seek to protect and promote the rights of migrant workers and their families.

The second pillar for this period was put up in November 2017 with the signing of the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers by ASEAN leaders in November 2017 in Manila. It has been described as a "breakthrough agreement" in protecting and promoting the rights of migrant workers (FES 2017) and seen as a step in the right direction towards safeguarding the welfare of migrants. The leaders of ASEAN considered the 2017 Consensus document as one that "will help establish a framework for cooperation on migrant workers in the region" (ASEAN 2017).

The 10-page 2017 Consensus document followed the same format as the 2007 declaration in terms of having a preamble (for which ASEAN documents are well-known) and a set of general principles and an enumeration of the obligations of both sending and receiving states as well as a prescribed set of commitments of ASEAN member states. What is peculiar with the 2017 Consensus document is that it specified both the "fundamental" and "specific" rights of migrants and their families.

The 2017 Consensus outlined the fundamental rights of migrants including the right to family visitations; the right of the migrants to hold their own passports and other personal and official documents; to have "the rights no less favourable than those applied to nationals of the Receiving States" in detention or prison; to have the right to file grievances with the relevant authorities; and to have the right to freedom of movement. Specific rights to migrant workers are also granted in the consensus document, particularly the right to fair (not equal) treatment (but not wages) and the right to join (not organize) trade union organizations. However, it is not known

why the document made a distinction between fundamental and specific rights.

Several observations need to be made about the consensus document. One is that much of the rights recognized in the document implicitly acknowledge long-standing problems faced by migrants such as the confiscation of their passports; denial of visitation rights; and the unequal treatment of migrants. This gives the impression that such problems are rampant practices throughout Southeast Asia. Moreover, the consensus document seems to accept the reality that undocumented migration exists and that the rights of migrants cannot go beyond the intention of the member-states to protect their borders.

Finally, the non-binding consensus document continues to uphold the principle of state sovereignty over migrants. This also gives the impression that ASEAN does not wish its members to conform to a single set of norms. Rather, it is ASEAN that must adapt to "prevailing national laws, regulations and policies of ASEAN Member States" (ASEAN 2017).

Ⅳ. Conclusion

As ASEAN now embarks on efforts to establish a regional community by promoting greater economic and social integration among its member-countries, greater opportunities will emerge for labor to move. However, barriers to the mobility of labor still persist in the region. It has been argued that lowering barriers to labor mobility in the region (such as "providing information to migrants about employment opportunities, offering migration orientation programs to improve employment experiences abroad, and linking migration admissions systems to labor market demand") can actually benefit both sending and receiving countries (Testaverde, et al. 2017: xvi). Given their provisions, the 2007 Declaration and 2017 Consensus can be seen as efforts by ASEAN to reduce the barriers to labor mobility in the region.

However, both the 2007 Declaration and the 2017 Consensus

are essentially works-in-progress. Given the nature of ASEAN as a "talk shop" the future of these two documents continues to be in a state of flux. Even after a decade, the 2007 Declaration has yet to be invoked by any ASEAN member-state despite the continued prevalence of abuse and exploitation of migrants throughout much of Southeast Asia and beyond.

ASEAN may be headed in the right direction insofar as promoting a rights-based migration regime for the region is concerned. It is clear that both the 2007 Declaration and the 2017 Consensus are attempts by ASEAN to promote a rights-based framework on migration in the region and steps in the right direction. It would seem that the two documents taken together contain two of the three basic ingredients for a regional human rights framework: (a) a common set of overarching goals, principles, and norms concerning labor migrants and (b) a specification of the fundamental rights attached to labor migrants (from the perspectives of all parties concerned – sending, receiving, and ASEAN itself). However, ASEAN has yet to incorporate the third key ingredient which is to establish an effective mechanism for specifying, recognizing, and enforcing the legal obligations of state parties to respect those rights.

Moreover, it can also be said that such efforts actually constitute a form of regional ritualism and a façade for ASEAN to promote its credibility more rather than genuinely promote and uphold the rights of migrants in the region particularly in the three major receiving countries. It may well be that certain member states of ASEAN were motivated to engage the Declaration and Consensus documents out of a need to be seen as conforming to internationally-accepted norms and standards.

The ASEAN ways of informality, consensus, and non-interference also pose obstacles to concrete, effective, and timely action towards effectively protecting the rights of migrants. The member states of ASEAN observe a peculiar set of norms that can effectively proscribes the Association's efforts to successfully deal with the problems of labor migrants in the region.

It can further be said that managing cross-border labor

mobility is one that ASEAN has collectively been unable to carry out as well as it should despite the existence of the 2007 Declaration and the 2017 Consensus and previous other initiatives (Shetty and Testaverde 2018). Critical gaps and divergences exist both in terms of institutional capacities, approaches, and norms as regards the protection and promotion of the rights of migrants in general and migrant workers in particular.

Additionally, there is also the concern that the Declaration and Consensus documents are unable to acknowledge the need to address the problem of irregular migration in the region. Irregular movements persist and are growing in numbers. Vulnerable groups remain. International migration cannot be understood simply as a one-dimensional process but a bundle of complex and multidimensional factors, drivers, and processes with social, economic, political, ecological, and technological implications.

ASEAN's regional integration initiatives have continuously placed emphasis on promoting capital, trade, and investment flows, but for the most part neglecting cross-border migration.Indeed, migration is seen as a "forgotten part of ASEAN integration" (Khasru 2018).

Regional governance mechanisms and norms are starting to emerge in Southeast Asia. However, the challenge is actually establishing migration management regime with an effective degree of national-regional coordination as well as consonance between various governmental agencies across national and regional jurisdictions. Not all ASEAN states may have the capacity or the willingness to engage in such undertakings. This is one reason why there's a high degree of uncertainty, ambiguity, or ad hoc-ness manifested in the migration policies of states be they destination or sending areas.

A rights-based regional migration architecture is such a daunting project because this kind of concerted response must not only consider commonalities and similarities (which are few) but also the differences and the specificities within each country (which are many) especially in terms of whether the country is predominantly a destination or source area. Situating the regional

management of migration in a rights-based context gives rise to certain complications. Not all parties may conform to the same human rights norms. It is difficult to harmonize such norms even as some level of broad understanding can be achieved.

On the one hand, the reality or current practice is that migration is left entirely in the hands of the market within a state-centric context (e.g., the issuance of visas and labor rights and citizenship rights, etc.). On the other hand, there is the ideal embedded in regional as well as global arrangements (e.g., UN and ILO conventions) that seem to dictate a system of managing migration, implying a departure from the state-centric perspective. The challenge is to be able to resolve this tension between the resistance of states to any attempt to weaken or question or delegitimize their capacity to determine who gets to enter, stay, and leave their jurisdictions, and the need to engender a working and sustainable rights-based infrastructure for human mobility in Southeast Asia under the ambit of ASEAN.

When it comes to migrant issues, the tendency within ASEAN appears to be to focus on the trees and miss the forest. Auethavornpipat (2017) observes that studies looking at ASEAN's initiatives in bringing about a rights-based regional framework in dealing with migrant workers tend to focus on the aspects of "gender, labour, and security perspectives," without considering "the broader impact of migrant worker rights on the process and nature of cooperation between ASEAN members" (Auethavornpipat 2017:).

ASEAN member states' views on labor migration in Southeast Asia can be distinguished into two divergent viewpoints－the perspectives of receiving and sending states (see Battistella 2002). The positions of sending and receiving states vary in terms of the importance of low-skilled labor migrationas well asthe scope and nature of a regional agreement on labor migration (see Jailani 2015). Sending states derive much economic and social benefits from their migrants (who are predominantly in the low-skilled categories). For this reason, sending states would prefer that themigration regime for the region ought to focus not only on high-skilled and professional as well as technical workers, but should also incorporate low-skilled

migrant workers. Receiving countries, however, prefer to encourage the entry and circulation of high-skilled workers as opposed to low-skilled migrants. For obvious reasons, sending states would prefer an agreement that would protect the rights of both documented and undocumented migrants and their families.

Receiving states, however, would contend that extending coverage to undocumented migrants would amount to regularization of illegal migration－something that would be politically unpalatable. Similarly, extending social protections to the families of migrants would also be seen by authorities in the receiving areas as giving way to more long-term/permanent immigration flows that are associated with numerous socio-political issues, not the least of which would be strain that such flows would place on the social security systems of their countries. As much as possible, receiving states prefer that migrants (particularly the low-skilled ones) retain their temporary status ready to be dismissed as soon as the need for them diminishes. Finally, sending states prefer an agreement that would be legally binding on all state parties especially in those countries receiving migrants while receiving states prefer a non-binding agreement since having such legal obligations are likely to pose a constraint on their national laws and regulations.It is for this reason that a consensus is seen as a logical step in ASEAN.

However, far from reaching a consensus on norms concerning labor migration and migrants, there continues to be "considerable norm contestation" among the ASEAN member states insofar as the scope, nature, and direction of a regional migration regime is concerned (Auethavornpipat 2017: 1). ASEAN members continue to be divided in the ways that individual countries approach the issues and problems affecting labor migrants in the region. Auethavornpipat (2017) further argues that the norm contestation is made possible by the lack of clarity and precision in the way that these norms are defined and operationalized. Further, this contestation is driven by social and international forces and pressures such as from civil society as well as international agencies and even foreign powers like the United States and the European Union (Auethavornpipat 2017).

One can say about ASEAN's effort to establish a human rights architecture on the management of migration and for migrant workers as an attempt to channel the member states' sense of exceptionalism into a ritualism. The nature of ASEAN and its "ASEAN Way" would certainly mitigate any serious groundbreaking effort to make its member states "toe the line" of protecting and promoting the rights of foreigners. It would also be naïve to suggest that abuses happen because of the absence of any concrete human rights protocols or instruments. Invoking the ASEAN ways of informality, consensus, and non-interference certainly poses obstacles to concrete, effective, and timely action.

Likewise, there is an inherent tension between individual member states that are all oriented towards strengthening their borders (through stringent immigration/emigration controls, among others) and the trajectory of ASEAN as an intergovernmental and regional entity with its own conventions to implement and which can be seen as effectively tearing down these same restrictions.

On the one hand, the reality or current practice is that migration is left entirely in the hands of the nation-state and that it is largely a state-centric enterprise (e.g., the issuance of visas and labor rights and citizenship rights, etc.). On the one hand, the ideal embedded in international arrangements, conventions, and protocols implies the surrendering of sacred state prerogatives.

While both the Declaration and Consensus documents operate largely on the basis of agreements and arrangements between governments, the reality in the region, however, is that migration is largely managed privately. As well, initiatives that essentially are government best-efforts-based and premised on "the prevailing laws, regulations and policies of the respective states" undoubtedly have their limits on the capacity and willingness to genuinely and effectively address the human rights concerns of foreign migrants and their families in the region.

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Text and Manuscript Guideline

1. TEXT STYLE

1) Language
The manuscript should be written in English.

2) Length
The manuscript should be between 5,000 to 10,000 words in length, including references, appendices, tables and figures. (Effective from the 2017 July Issue, Book Review or Research Report submissions must be between 1,000 to 2,000 words.)

3) Format
All pieces must be encoded in a Microsoft Word file, 1.5-spaced, in Times New Roman, Font Size 12.

4) Spelling
The Journal uses US spelling, and the author should therefore follow the latest edition of the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.

5) Abbreviations
In general, terms should not be abbreviated unless they are used repeatedly and the abbreviation is helpful to the reader. Initially use the word in full, followed by the abbreviation in parentheses. Thereafter use the abbreviation only.

6) Sections, Tables and Figures
Sections and sub-sections should be divided by "I, 1.1., 1.1.1." And tables and figures should be numbered by <Table 1>, <Figure 1>. The Journal does not accept color figures. Figures should be submitted in black and white only.

7) References

References should be in Roman script and placed at the end of the manuscript.

2. FOOTNOTES AND CITATIONS

1) Footnotes

Notes should be kept to a minimum and numbered consecutively throughout the manuscript. Notes should be included as footnotes, and not as endnotes. Footnotes with more than 5 lines will be inserted into the text.

2) Citations in the Text

All source references are to be identified at the appropriate point in the text by the last name of the author, year of publication and pagination where needed. Identify subsequent citations of the same source in the same way as the first. Examples follow:

• If author's name is in the text, follow it with year in parentheses.
  Wong (1986)

• Pagination follows year of publication after a colon.
  James (1979: 56)

• If author's name is not in the text, insert, in parentheses, the last name and year. (Duncan 1986: 76)

• Give both last names for two authors. Give all last names on first citation in text for more than two authors; thereafter use "et al." in the text. When two authors have the same last names, use identifying initials in the text.

• Separate series of references with semi-colons and enclose them within a single pair of parentheses.
  (Edwards 1981: 43; Lee et al. 1983: 112).

• In case of daily, weekly, monthly publications and similar references, pagination follows 'dd/mm/yyyy' after a comma.
  (Korea Times 01/04/2014, 3).

• For a manuscript that is planned to be published, year of writing shall be indicated. When there is no year of writing, n.d. shall be written.
  Taylor (n.d.)

• In case of an organization as an author, information that can be identified shall be provided.
(Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security 1992)

3. REFERENCES

Detailed information on all literature mentioned in the text and footnote shall be shown in <References> at the end of the text. Literature that was not mentioned in the text and footnote shall not be included.

1) Books

• In case of one author: for author name that is Romanized, family name and first name shall be put in order.

> Jessup, Helen I. 2004. *Art & Architecture of Cambodia.* London: Thames & Hudson.

• In case of more than 2 authors: for the text and footnote, 'et al.' shall be written, but for references, all names of co-authors shall be written. However, if 'et al.' is written on the book cover from the first, it shall be as it is.

> Freeman, Michael and Claude Jacques. 1999. *Ancient Ankor*. Bangkok: Asia Books.

• In case of an edited book, it shall be written in ed.

> Steinberg, David Joel, ed. 1987. *In Search of Southeast Asia: A Modern History.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

• In case of translated books, it shall be in the order of original author, year of publication of translated books, name of translated book, author and publisher.

> Coed S. G. 1928. *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*. Susan B. Cowing, trans. Honolulu: An East-West Center Book. The University Press of Hawaii.

2) Journal Articles/ Monthly Magazine

• In case of papers such as journals, monthly magazine, etc, volume and number shall be in volume (number), and the relevant pages shall be definitely indicated.

> Egreteau, Renaud. 2008. India's Ambitions in Burma. *Asian Survey,* 48(6): 936-957.

3) Chapter in a Book

• In case of the text in a compilation, it shall be in the order of author, year of publication, compilation name, compiler, related page and publisher. If there is no compiler, then it can be omitted.

> King, Victor T. 2006. Southeast Asia: Personal Reflections on a Region. *Southeast Asian Studies: Debates and New Directions.* Cynthia Chou and Vincent Houben, eds. 23-44. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

4) Thesis and Dissertation

• In case of a thesis or dissertation, the following form shall be followed.

> Parker, John. 1988. The Representation of Southeast Asian Art. PhD Dissertation. Harvard University.

5) Newspaper Articles

• In case of a daily newspaper, by-line story of weekly magazine and column, the following form shall be followed.

> Peterson, Thomas. 1993. The Economic Development of ASEAN. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 22: 23.

6) Internet Sources

• In case of the internet searching, it shall be in order of author, year of production, subject and web address (Accessed Month DD, YYYY).

> Hadar, Leon. 1998. U.S. Sanctions against Burma. *Trade Policy Analysis* no. 1. http://www.cato.org/pubs/trade/tpa-001.html. (Accessed May 07, 2008).

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SUVANNABHUMI is an international, peer-reviewed journal committed to the publication of scholarship in Southeast Asian Studies. It aims to offer a scholarly platform for original works drawn from research findings, theoretical thought, reflection, and/or reinterpretation of long-held viewpoints, ideas, or methodologies. The scope covers in particular, but not exclusively, the following fields of discussion: cultural studies, the arts, language and linguistics, history, archaeology and prehistory, anthropology, sociology, religion, literature, tourism, socio-economic issues, and politics.

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  - ✓ Contact information in a separate file.

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