



บันทึกข้อความ

กองกลางมหาวิทยาลัยขอนแก่น
เลขที่ 3986
วันที่ 9 ก.ย. 2554
เรื่อง 16/6

ส่วนราชการ คณะมนุษยศาสตร์และสังคมศาสตร์ โทร 12124 ต่อ 3109
 ที่ ศธ 0514.8/3986 วันที่ 8 กันยายน 2554
 เรื่อง นักศึกษาขอนแก่นไปเข้าร่วมการประชุมวิชาการ ณ ต่างประเทศ

เรียน อธิการบดี (ผ่านผู้อำนวยการกองกลาง)

ด้วย นายณัฏชัย ผ่องศิริ นักศึกษาหลักสูตรปริญญาตรี สาขาวิชาสังคมวิทยา คณะมนุษยศาสตร์และสังคมศาสตร์ ได้รับการตอบรับให้เข้าร่วมนำเสนอผลงานวิชาการเรื่อง Transnational Livelihoods of Return Thai Diasporas in Thai Society ในการประชุมทางวิชาการระดับนานาชาติ 2011 International Conference on Humanities, Society and Culture (CHSC 2011) ณ กรุงกัวลาลัมเปอร์ ประเทศมาเลเซีย ในระหว่างวันที่ 4 - 6 พฤศจิกายน 2554

คณะฯ ได้พิจารณาแล้วเห็นว่า การไปราชการครั้งนี้ จะเป็นประโยชน์ต่อการพัฒนาผลงานวิจัยของนักศึกษาในเวทีวิชาการระดับนานาชาติและสร้างโอกาสในการแลกเปลี่ยนความรู้ทางวิชาการ คณะฯ จึงใคร่ขออนุมัติให้ นายณัฏชัย ผ่องศิริ ไปเข้าร่วมนำเสนอผลงานวิชาการ ณ ประเทศมาเลเซีย มีกำหนด 3 วัน ในระหว่างวันที่ 4 - 6 พฤศจิกายน 2554 โดยเบิกค่าใช้จ่ายจากงบประมาณเงินรายได้ 2554 แผนงาน ผู้สำเร็จการศึกษาสาขามนุษยศาสตร์และสังคมศาสตร์ งาน งานจัดการศึกษาสาขามนุษยศาสตร์และสังคมศาสตร์ รหัส 0214 หมวดรายจ่าย กู้ดทุนการดำเนินงานทั่วไป รหัสโครงการ 050-03: โครงการเสริมสร้างศักยภาพด้านการวิจัยและวิชาการของนักศึกษา จำนวน 15,000 บาท (หนึ่งหมื่นห้าพันบาทถ้วน) พร้อมนี้ได้แนบสำเนาหนังสือตอบรับมาเพื่อประกอบการพิจารณา

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Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, November 4-6, 2011

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Paper ID : M00041

Paper Title : *Transnational Livelihoods of Return Thai Diasporas in Thai Society*

Dear Monchai Phongsiri and Maniemai Thongyoo,

First of all, thank you for your concern. 2011 International Conference on Humanities, Society and Culture (ICHSC 2011) review procedure has been finished. We are delighted to inform you that your manuscript has been accepted for presentation at International Conference on Humanities, Society and Culture (ICHSC 2011) Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Your paper was tripling blind-reviewed and based on the evaluations. The reviewers' comments are enclosed.

The conference received papers from about 20 different countries and regions during the submission period. And there are about 100 papers accepted by our reviewers who are the international experts from all over the world. The selected papers could be published in our conference proceeding with high quality. According to the recommendations from reviewers and technical program committees, we are glad to inform you that your paper identified above have been selected for publication and oral presentation. You are invited to present your paper and studies during our ICHSC 2011 conference that would be held during November 4-6, 2011, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

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Again, congratulations. I look forward to seeing you in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Yours sincerely,

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Transnational Livelihoods of Returned Thai Diaspora in Thai Society

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Abstract. Thai Diaspora is categorized as 'victim diaspora' who were attached to the territory after the new Thai-Burma boundary demarcation was settled between Britain and Siam in 1868. Consequently, these groups of people lived in the territories which belong to Burma nation-state instead of Thailand, but they held onto the belief that they lived in the 'original' Thailand's boundary and believed that they were Thai citizens. This Thai Diaspora recently moved back to Thailand in 1980s but was not granted Thai citizenship. Their status has turned out to be Returned Thai Diaspora and therefore have not 'rights and power' for accessing livelihood assets and made 'transnational livelihoods' is one of their livelihood strategies. This paper suggests that 'political capital' should be considered as an important capital/asset in Sustainable Livelihoods Approach. This inclusion should encourage policy makers to be more aware on 'power and rights' as a critical issue of people in vulnerability context such as Returned Thai Diaspora.

Keywords: Thai Diaspora, transnational livelihoods, livelihood strategies, political capital

1. Introduction

Thai Diaspora in Burma has lived in Myeik-Taninthayi territory for a long time, at least since the boundary demarcation between Britain and Siam in 1868. Even Thai Diaspora lived in the territories which belong to Burma nation-state boundaries as assigned in the map of 'modern' world, though they held onto the belief that they lived in the 'original' Thailand's boundaries and believed that they were Thai citizens. Since 1970s, the military government of Burma moved forward to control Thai communities (in Burma). This circumstance has resulted in serial migrations of Thai Diaspora from Burma to Thailand in 1980s. However, this Thai Diaspora has not been granted Thai citizenship and therefore has not obtained any citizen's rights. Their status has turned out to be Returned Thai Diaspora and 'stateless Thais' in Thai Society (Thirawuth 2007). Even having Thai identity and consciousness that can be linked to Thai society such as speaking and writing Thai language, maintain Thai cultural practices, etc. though the government mechanisms function with Returned Thai Diaspora as 'the others' or 'the persons who have not Thai nationality'. Therefore, they have not accessed to legal rights to all types of assets and basic livelihoods means for example: have no legal rights to land ownership, housing, vehicle, etc; not allowed to travel beyond provincial boundaries, and therefore the children cannot study at higher level. Returned Thai Diaspora has not political rights at all levels. Without Thai identity cards, they cannot be legally hired; and being illegal workers, they are low paid and many times not paid. However, Returned Thai Diaspora created livelihood strategies for surviving in Thai society, and many times made their voices heard.

Research on Thai Diaspora is relatively limited, while 'Diasporas Studies' in academics have been growing rapidly. The issues and gaps of the knowledge about Thai Diaspora can be summarized as follows:

- **Sociological theories/concepts:** Linkage the concepts of 'Diasporas' and 'Livelihoods' may make more understanding about 'Transnationalism'. Currently, academics have focused on 'transnational

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livelihoods', because globalization made people have multi-livelihood places and link across boundaries of cities, provinces or countries, not limited in the local only (Rigg and Salamanca 2009). Returned Thai Diaspora formulated 'transnational livelihoods' as one of their livelihood strategies, because limited accessing to livelihood assets/capitals in Thai society.

- **Methodologies:** Knowledge inquiries on 'Diasporas' are focused on 'deterritorialization critiques', therefore majority of researches try to match concept of 'nation-state' with other diaspora issues (Adamson and Demetriou 2007). This paper analyzes Returned Thai Diaspora in the perspectives of human rights and livelihoods which the same view as all humans, not 'the others'.
- **Policy issues:** Returned Thai Diaspora is a part of stateless people in Thailand. Until now, the Thai government has also no clear policies for implementing with them, probably because the studies related to Returned Thai Diaspora are relatively limited as said above.

The objective of this study is based on choices and livelihood 'capitals' for creating livelihood strategies of Returned Thai Diaspora. Conceptual framework of this paper tries to analyze Returned Thai Diaspora whom are seen as 'the others' by the government that pragmatic approaches as 'structures' press down to 'agencies' as Returned Thai Diaspora. Therefore, 'agencies' counter and negotiate 'structures' with history, social formation, Thai consciousness and identity, and gathering into networks to require restoring Thai nationality. Returned Thai Diaspora formulated livelihood strategies for surviving with no citizen rights. Choices for achieving livelihood outcomes of Returned Thai Diaspora may be different from Thai citizens that lead to theoretical/conceptual arguments on Sustainable Livelihoods Approach.

2. Who is Diaspora?

The term 'Diaspora' appeared in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) expressed views of struggle events that divided the Jewish people between in homeland and in exile (Evans 2009). The *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* published in 1937, 'Diaspora' referred to a very specific case of the exile of the Jews from the Holy Land and their dispersal throughout several parts of the world. Diaspora connoted uprooting, legal disabilities, oppression, and painful adaptation to the hostland. Meanwhile, it developed a set of institutions, social patterns, and symbols included language, religion, values, social norms, and continued thinking of return to the homeland. In this context, the Jewish diaspora who were forced to leave their homeland were distinguished as a prototype or 'classical diaspora paradigm' (Safran, 2005).

The emergence of globalization, the term 'Diaspora' has been used more widely than the classical diaspora paradigm. There was a reconceptualization of the term to encompass phenomena of increased international population mobility such as emigration to the developed countries, the telecommunication and transportation revolution, and the development of a cosmopolitan global culture. Thereby, blurring the frontiers among ethnic minorities, refugee flows, migrations, and diaspora were emerged (Popescu, 2006). There are some arguments on 'Diaspora' in other aspects such as defining diasporas as '*ethnic communities divided by state frontiers*' (Brubaker 2005) and rethinking on basic assumptions of diaspora about 'displacement' and understand the formative processes of new diasporas such as a dramatic case of an 'unintended' of approximately 25 million post-Soviet Russian diasporas outside Russia's borders is creation occurring overnight (Voutira 2006).

So, Thai Diaspora (in Burma) may be categorized as 'victim diaspora' based on arguments of Brubaker (2005) and Voutira (2006) and Returned Thai Diaspora (in Thailand) may be categorized as 'victim diaspora' again based on definition of Safran (2005), but they are diasporas in their homeland not in the hostland.

3. Returned Thai Diaspora's Livelihood Strategies

The livelihood approach is indeed useful for studying poverty issues and there are still ways forward to be explored actor's perceptions of the environment, of themselves, and of the dynamics and processes they are involved in. The term 'livelihood' is to help us understand the complexity of current problems of poverty and development (Kaag et al. 2004). The ideas of 'capabilities approach' which developed by Amartya Sen has been influenced to livelihood conceptualization, and the most widely quoted definition of livelihood is that given by Carney (1998) based on Chambers and Conway (1992):

"A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with a recover from stress and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural recourse base".

Livelihood concept was developed through contributions of scholars from different disciplines. One type of these contributions has been made with policy circles to develop analytical frameworks that allow the livelihood situation of a target group to be captured and the subsequent formulation of adequate policy interventions. DFID is the main representative of such an approach and applying livelihood definition above.

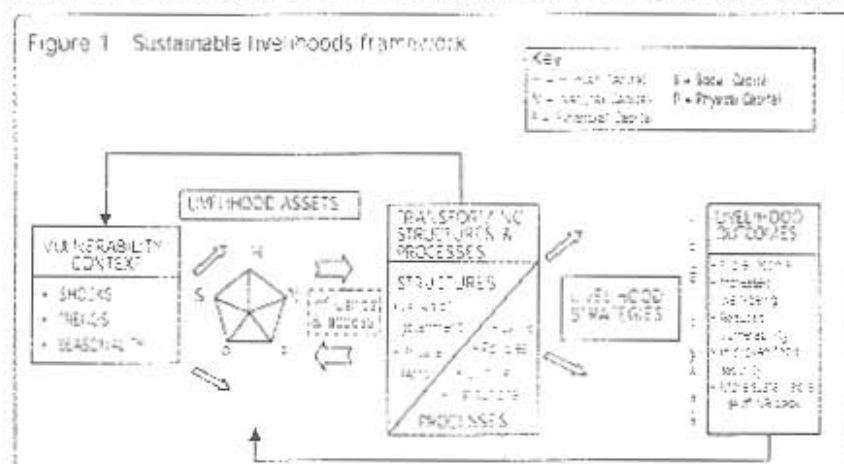


Fig. 1: Sustainable Livelihoods Framework: SLF (DFID, 1999)

SLF is a tool to improve understanding of livelihoods. The main factors that affect poor people's livelihoods as listed below (DFID, 1999):

- **Vulnerability Context:** It frames the external environment in which people exist. The factors that make up the 'vulnerability context' are important because they have a direct impact upon people's asset status and the options that are open to them in pursuit of beneficial livelihood outcomes
- **Livelihood Assets:** It seeks to gain understanding of people's strengths (assets or capital endowments) and how they try to convert these into positive livelihood outcomes. SLF identifies five core asset categories or types of capital upon which livelihoods are built include human capital, social capital, natural capital, physical capital and financial capital
- **Transforming Structures and Processes:** Containing the various types and levels of structure and process such as the institutions, organizations, policies and legislation shape people's livelihoods
- **Livelihood Strategies:** The livelihoods approach seeks to promote choice, opportunity and diversity. The term used to denote range and combination of activities and choices that people make/undertake in order to achieve their livelihood goals
- **Livelihood Outcomes:** Be the achievements or outputs of Livelihood Strategies help to understand output, motivates people, priorities and respond to new opportunities, and assess support activity

In this context, livelihood strategies of Returned Thai Diaspora may be different from Thai people, because they are limited access to livelihood assets/capitals and lack of citizen rights. According to SLF that identifies five capital assets which people can build up and draw upon: human, natural, financial, social and physical. 'Sets of activities' and 'choices' that Returned Thai Diaspora use for coping and surviving can analyze following SLF are:

- **Human Capitals:** 'Household members' in the old generation may not be different from other households. But the young diasporas are guided to get intermarriage with Thai citizens for citizenship granting to their children and seeking who can be the livelihood assets owners, etc. 'Occupations' are the same pattern, they do not allow travelling beyond provincial boundaries neither for working nor studying. So, most of them work as local labourer in construction, fishing sectors or in industrial factories, and some of them are the merchants at local market. In this sense 'labour' is their key human capital. 'Health' before 2010, they cannot get health service from the government and must

fully pay for healing their illness. Since beginning of 2011, they have received health support from government but only in provincial boundaries. This is a result on trying to make their voices heard.

- **Natural Capitals:** *'Access to land'* where production takes place, they cannot be the legal land owners. So, some agricultural production grew in small plots where rented from landlords and some of them go farming across border in Burma. *'Natural resources'* which Returned Thai Diaspora can take from nature, they indicated the fishery resources from canal and sea. Majority of natural capitals are bought from Burma such as woods (tree stumps), orchids, bamboo shoots, etc.
- **Social Capitals:** *'Network'* is considered as the key factor upon which Returned Thai Diaspora draw in pursuit of their livelihood objectives. These include networks and relations of connectedness, that increase people's trust and ability to work together and linkage to other capital assets which can assist in increasing well-being. These included memberships in local associations and networks such as saving groups and Restoring Thai Nationality Problems Solving Network, etc. However, social capitals were limited because the disability traveling beyond provincial boundaries
- **Financial Capitals:** For sources of finance and credit, Returned Thai Diaspora access to financial capital by social capital. They organized credit and saving schemes by themselves, because they cannot take advantage from bank services. *'Saving groups'* are the channel and core activities that encourage participation, collaboration and connection of Returned Thai Diaspora communities
- **Physical Capital:** Returned Thai Diaspora cannot own their livelihood assets which need certificate such as house, car, motorbike, etc. Again, 'social capital' is the key factor for solving their limitation. They entrust and let their kin, relative, or son/daughter-in-law even neighbour who have citizenship and can be the owner of these assets. They can use *'infrastructure and facilities'* together with Thai people in the communities as physical capital for achieving their livelihood outcomes

Choices to formulate livelihood strategies of Returned Thai Diaspora above are constructed from processes that included multi-approaches to response the contrasted needs. Following SLF that explains 'vulnerability context' which framing the external environment in which people exist. It connoted fixing people in space or only in local which made difficult capturing 'transnational livelihoods' of Returned Thai Diaspora. The 'transnational livelihoods' were deeply influenced by the sense of identity of the returnees themselves. Livelihoods extended linkage across international borders and were reflected in the identities of the returnees and a deep sense of attachment to 'home'. Transnational livelihoods involve activities at the workplace and are based on moving across countries without immigration restrictions and transferring goods and capitals from one place to another (Thomas-Hope 2002). So, 'transnational livelihoods' is one of livelihood strategies of Returned Thai Diaspora which concluded living across border, transnational workplace, escape the war both from Thailand to Burma and Burma to Thailand, etc. There are also transnational of capitals and resources for making a living. Consequently, 'risk' is the core for formulating choices either in Thailand or Burma such as dangerous works on marine fishing boat, working with not paid (being cheated of wages), sometimes cannot take purchased woods across border when practically at temporarily permitted area changed, or dangerous of war between the Burmese military against ethnic minorities in borderlands, etc.

4. Critical Problems of Returned Thai Diaspora

SLF may be not focused on 'power and rights' as capital assets of people for making a living. There are debates over whether to include 'political capital' in SLF, the distinction between social and political capital is often based. Social capital relates to horizontal claims on kin, associations, and social networks of different kinds, while political capital is much more concerned with power, differentiation and vertical claims that households can make on the state or those more powerful than they. Not to include 'political capital' also weakens SLF as an approach to development and effectiveness of interventions to meet 'sustainable livelihoods' objectives (Baumann 2000). Correspondently, the arguments which Returned Thai Diaspora made to the government are related to their nationality and citizen rights. So, 'power and rights' are the critical problems for their livelihoods. A key person of Returned Thai Diaspora said about the suffering from this matter, "...If Returned Thai Diaspora can vote on village headman election, the current headman will

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