



**GROUPE  
D'ÉTUDES  
ET DE  
RECHERCHES  
SUR L'ASIE  
CONTEMPORAINE**

**DOCUMENTS  
DU GÉRAC**

**Par delà les frontières  
intellectuelles et politiques :  
les études sud-est asiatiques  
au XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle**

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**Beyond Boundaries:  
Southeast Asian Studies  
in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

**Sous la direction de  
Steve Déry**

**14**

**INSTITUT DES HAUTES ÉTUDES INTERNATIONALES  
UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL**

GROUPE D'ÉTUDES ET DE RECHERCHES  
SUR L'ASIE CONTEMPORAINE  
UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL

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## Table des matières / Table of contents

Avant-propos/Foreword	4
Par delà les frontières intellectuelles et politiques : les études sud-est asiatiques au XXI <sup>e</sup> siècle	
<i>Steve Déry</i> .....	5
<b>PREMIÈRE PARTIE : Au-delà des frontières politiques</b>	
<b>PART ONE: Beyond political boundaries</b>	
Chapitre 1 : ASEAN + 1 : les enjeux pour la Chine	
<i>Zhan Su et Xuan Yu</i> .....	10
Chapitre 2 : Conflits gelés et conflits oubliés : la réponse des tierces parties. Une étude de cas des Arméniens au Nagorno-Karabakh et des Karens en Birmanie	
<i>Oana Tranca</i> .....	23
Chapitre 3 : Le terrorisme dans les conflits identitaires. Le cas de la Thaïlande	
<i>Alexandra Tardif-Villeneuve</i> .....	42
<b>DEUXIÈME PARTIE : Au-delà des frontières socio-économiques</b>	
<b>PART TWO: Beyond socioeconomic limits</b>	
Chapitre 4 : Making of Community through Political and Economic Globalization	
<i>Atchara Rakyutidharm</i> (2 <sup>e</sup> meilleur texte étudiant/best student paper).....	54
Chapitre 5 : Racialization and Work: A Case Study with Refugees/Migrants From Burma/Myanmar in Thailand	
<i>Sai S.W. Latt</i> .....	69
Chapitre 6 : Winning the Local “Hearts and Minds”: Modernization through Civic Action in South Vietnam	
<i>Geoffrey Stewart</i> (1 <sup>er</sup> , meilleur texte étudiant/best student paper).....	80
<b>TROISIÈME PARTIE : Au-delà des frontières identitaires</b>	
<b>PART THREE: Beyond identity limits</b>	
Chapitre 7 : Female sexuality and reproduction in Sekar Ayu Asmara’s work	
<i>Tineke Hellwig</i> .....	89
Chapitre 8 : A struggle for legitimacy: opposed discourses on Tibetan medicine	
<i>Ménaïque Légaré-Dionne</i> .....	103



### Avant-propos

En octobre 2007, les membres du Conseil canadien des études sur l'Asie du Sud-Est se réunirent pour leur colloque bisannuel à l'Université Laval à Québec, un retour après douze ans d'absence. Si le colloque de 1995 a été mémorable autant par son organisation que par sa qualité scientifique, celui de 2007, organisé par Steve Déry, a rassemblé quelque 100 chercheurs et étudiants autour du thème *Par delà les frontières intellectuelles et politiques : les études sud-est asiatiques au XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Les chercheurs provenaient d'une dizaine de pays, dont bien sûr le Canada, quelques pays d'Europe, d'Asie du Sud-Est, ainsi que l'Australie et les États-Unis. Les participants ont eu l'immense privilège d'accueillir le professeur Michel Bruneau, géographe à l'Université de Bordeaux III. Celui-ci a participé activement à plusieurs séances et il a prononcé le discours-programme, au cours duquel il a présenté des éléments centraux de son livre *L'Asie d'entre Inde et Chine*, paru en 2006.

La présente publication, dont la direction a été assurée par Steve Déry, propose une sélection de communications qui ont été présentées lors du colloque. Pour la plupart, ce sont des travaux en cours qui méritaient d'être diffusés, sans nécessairement avoir toute la profondeur pour une publication dans une revue scientifique. Ils ont fait l'objet d'une révision linguistique sommaire et quelques clarifications mineures ont été demandées aux auteurs. Les textes n'ont pas fait l'objet d'une évaluation formelle. Ils ont été regroupés en thèmes connexes et, chacun, à leur manière contribue à montrer comment les études sud-est asiatiques transcendent les frontières en ce début de nouveau millénaire.

Comme pour le colloque de 1995, le Groupe d'études et de recherche sur l'Asie contemporaine (GÉRAC), qui a fêté ses 20 ans d'existence en 2008 et qui est affilié à l'Institut des Hautes Études Internationales (HEI), s'est impliqué dans l'organisation. L'Institut a remis deux bourses aux meilleures communications étudiantes, celles de Geoffrey Stewart et d'Atchara Rakyutidharm. Des remerciements sincères sont aussi exprimés à Danièle Bélanger (Université Western Ontario) et Van Nguyen Marshall (Université de Trent) pour leur appui scientifique; à Lynn Berouard et Annamaria Piccioni, du secrétariat de Conseil canadien des sociétés savantes d'études régionales et à Zhan Su, professeur de management et directeur du GÉRAC, pour leur appui à l'organisation logistique du colloque; enfin, à Joannie Tanguay et Roli Nigam pour leur aide à la publication des actes du colloque.

### Foreword

In October 2007, members of the Canadian Council for Southeast Asian Studies met for their biennial conference at Laval University (Quebec City), a return after twelve years of absence. If the conference of 1995 had been memorable, thanks to the organisation and the scientific quality, the 2007 conference organized by Steve Déry, brought together some 100 researchers and students. The theme of the conference symposium was: *Beyond Boundaries: Southeast Asian Studies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*; and this resulted in the participation of researchers from ten different countries, including Canada, some European and Southeast Asian countries as well as Australia and United States. Participants had the privilege to welcome Professor Michel Bruneau, geographer at Université de Bordeaux III (France). He actively participated in several panels and delivered the keynote address during which he presented the central elements of his book, *L'Asie d'entre Inde et Chine*, published in 2006. The book is based on various links (geographical, historical, etc.) between Southeast Asia and its giant neighbours, India and China.

This publication, for which Steve Déry acted as editor, offers a selection of papers that were presented at the conference. For most of them, these are work in progress that deserved to be made available to a wider readership. They have been briefly revised with minor clarifications requested from the authors. There was no formal peer review. Chapters have been grouped thematically and, each of them contributes in its own way to show how Southeast Asian studies transcend borders in the new millennium.

As for the 1995 conference, the Study and Research Group of Contemporary Asia (GÉRAC), which celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2008 and is affiliated to the Institut des Hautes Études Internationales (HEI), was actively involved in the organisation. The Institute gave two bursaries to the two best student papers, those of Geoffrey Stewart and Atchara Rakyutidharm. Sincere thanks to Danièle Bélanger (University Western Ontario) and Van Nguyen Marshall (Trent University) for their scientific support; and to Lynn Berouard and Annamaria Piccioni, from the executive office of the Canadian Council of Area Studies Learned Societies and to Zhan Su, professor of management and director of the GERAC, for their logistical support, and finally to Joannie Tanguay and Roli Nigam, who both helped out in preparing these proceedings.

Steve Déry, Baie-Saint-Paul, 3 juin 2009

# INTRODUCTION

## Par delà les frontières intellectuelles et politiques : les études sud-est asiatiques au XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle

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Au cours des quinze dernières années, la question de la pertinence des études régionales s'est posée avec une acuité grandissante, d'autant plus que les organismes subventionnaires, autant canadiens qu'à l'étranger (en particulier aux États-Unis), se sont posés la question et ont parfois tranché... dans les subventions de recherche des spécialistes d'études régionales. Dans la foulée de la chute de l'URSS, précipitant la fin de la guerre froide - qui avait servi de base à la construction des « académies » régionales après la Deuxième guerre mondiale (Kratoska *et al.*, 2005b) -, l'un après l'autre, des chercheurs proclamaient la fin d'un monde : celle de l'histoire (Fukuyama, 1992), celle de la géographie (O'Brien, 1992), puis enfin la fin de l'État-nation, proclamée elle par Kenichi Ohmae en 1995 (Ohmae, 1995; et aussi par Bertrand Badie, 1995). Si, du fait de la mondialisation, les États-nations n'étaient plus pertinents, les études régionales devenaient, par la même occasion, désuètes : il fallait étudier des thèmes transversaux, qui transcendaient les limites qui avaient été structurées par les universitaires. Depuis lors, les prétentions exagérées de ces chantres « finalistes » ont été critiquées, heureusement, mais la question de savoir si les études régionales – et donc les études sud-est asiatiques – sont toujours pertinentes demeure entière.

Déjà, dès le début des années 1990, les organismes subventionnaires des États-Unis avaient réagi.

« By 1992, three positions had come into being at the SSRC [Social Sciences Research Council]. Advocates of *universal disciplinary knowledge* opposed *area-specific, inter-disciplinary knowledge* and their interaction produced a new intellectual space for the formation of *global knowledge* that combines the universality of social science with the area-specificity of the humanities. This new form was dubbed "context-sensitive social science" at the SSRC -- global in reach, local in touch » (Ludden, 1998 : 5)

Sans disparaître complètement, les études régionales sont devenues, de cette manière, *utiles*. *Utiles* selon Ludden pour présenter un contrepoint à la « globalisation » et une perspective critique au nouveau « globalisme » (Ludden, 1998 : 14).

Plus récemment, les réflexions de Charles Macdonald vont dans ce même sens utilitariste. En juin 2004, la conférence principale (*keynote address*) qu'il a prononcée à la *Seventh International Conference on Philippines Studies*, qui s'est déroulée à Leiden, avait justement pour thème cette question : *What is the use of area studies?* Le constat de Macdonald est direct : il n'existe pas de science d'études régionales. Les études régionales sont le résultat de deux processus : d'une part, elles constituent une accumulation de données, un savoir encyclopédique sur une région du monde ; d'autre part, elles apparaissent comme un sous-produit des structures universitaires créées après

la Deuxième guerre mondiale (Macdonald, 2004 : 4). Toutefois, il maintient que les études régionales demeurent pertinentes dans la mesure où les champs disciplinaires (anthropologie, linguistique, etc.) fournissent les cadres méthodologiques, conceptuels et théoriques sur lesquels peuvent s'appuyer les études régionales pour préparer des études de cas permettant de valider ou même de modifier les réflexions conceptuelles et théoriques (Macdonald, 2004 : 4). «*Models and hypotheses can help you define the uniqueness of the societies you are dealing with, based on data provided by these societies, not on principles or concepts that only apply to them* » (Macdonald, 2004 : 4).

Enfin, très récemment, un livre fort intéressant est paru, une coédition entre Singapore University Press et Ohio University Press : *Locating Southeast Asia : Geographies of knowledge and politics of space* (Kratoska *et al.*, 2005a). La question est posée d'emblée : ces pays d'Asie du Sud-Est que l'on étudie, «*do they have in common other than geographical contiguity ?* » (Kratoska *et al.*, 2005b : 2). Encore une fois, sont présentés les principales critiques faites aux études régionales. Premièrement, elles sont limitatives, figées sur le plan territoriales et Schendel va plus loin en insistant sur le fait que les limites spatiales imposées n'ont du sens que du point de vue des centres favorisés par la recherche (Indonésie, Thaïlande et Vietnam, selon Schendel, 2005 : 279) ; la question qu'il pose d'ailleurs amène la réflexion à un autre niveau, celui des liens entre les régions étudiées : «*What geographies of knowing have resulted from area studies? And what geographies of ignorance?*», et d'ajouter un peu plus loin : «*Area studies and their problematics are ill suited to deal with human relations spilling over area boundaries, and more adequate perspective are needed to encompass them*» (Schendel, 2005 : 291). Deuxième reproche qui est fait aux études régionales, elles ne produisent pas de savoir théorique et demeurent trop ancrées dans le local, au lieu de valoriser les comparaisons à l'intérieur d'une même discipline. Troisièmement, rare sont les chercheurs qui sont vraiment spécialistes de leur région, la majorité se concentrant plutôt sur une sous-région, à partir de laquelle ils interprètent l'ensemble de la région (Kratoska *et al.*, 2005a).

Autant Kratoska *et al.* que Schendel ou Macdonald s'entendent toutefois pour dire que les études régionales ont leur place dans le monde scientifique d'aujourd'hui. Une place valorisée par l'interdisciplinarité, un avantage qui permet la construction d'un savoir local qui sert de base, de cadre à l'étude des interrelations, des flux par exemple, entre les régions. Bref, l'un n'empêche pas l'autre. D'ailleurs, si l'on pose comme base de discussion que les États ne sont plus pertinents, la pertinence des études régionales peut alors être mise en doute. Toutefois, en Asie du Sud-Est, les domaines sont nombreux où les États continuent de jouer un rôle de premier plan dans l'évolution des sociétés qui les composent : administration, infrastructures, colonisation agricole, et maintenant dans le domaine environnemental, avec la mise en place d'aires protégées ou de parcs nationaux (Déry, 2008). L'État sud-est asiatique continue d'intervenir sur son territoire, récupérant et profitant même de la mondialisation pour renforcer son contrôle interne (pour le cas de l'Indonésie, voir De Koninck, 2004). Ruth T. McVey soutient d'ailleurs que, même si les populations du Sud-Est asiatique n'ont pas ce sentiment d'une identité commune, et même si l'ASEAN a officiellement un hymne national depuis 2008<sup>1</sup>, les élites politiques et économiques, elles, cultivent une vision commune, en particulier pour faire contrepoids aux puissances hégémoniques (Japon, États-Unis, Chine et Union européenne) (McVey, 2005 : 315-316), d'où la volonté commune, par exemple, que la région soit exempte de puissance nucléaire.

Il y a enfin à mon avis un aspect dont on doit tenir compte dans ce débat, et il tient à l'organisation géographique des territoires. La question des niveaux géographiques

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<sup>1</sup> On peut l'entendre sur le site de l'ASEAN : <http://environment.asean.org/index.php?page=aseananthem>.

abordés dans les recherches est évacuée beaucoup trop rapidement. Schendel évoque la nécessité de « sauter » les échelons (*jumping scales*) pour voir plus loin que la seule région, mais il ne développe pas suffisamment cette avenue. Car en fait, c'est toute une multiplicité de systèmes qui sont juxtaposés, empilés pour construire les niveaux géographiques, des systèmes qui parfois sont complètement bloqués sur les frontières étatiques (militaires), qui parfois s'en repaissent pour mieux survivre (réseaux de la drogue ou plus simplement commerciaux), ou parfois ne rencontrent que des seuils, que l'on peut traverser moyennant une dépense d'énergie un peu plus élevée (tourisme, corruption). Sans parler de systèmes, Schendel percevait toutefois déjà la multiplicité des formes d'une telle géographie et la nécessité d'en tenir compte pour bien appréhender la région (Schendel, 2005 : 295).

C'est un peu ce que se sont attachés à faire les participants au colloque bisannuel du Conseil canadien des études sur l'Asie du Sud-Est à l'Université Laval en octobre 2007. Les textes présentés dans ce recueil constituent des exemples où l'analyse transcende les frontières pour améliorer la compréhension de problèmes locaux et des problèmes qui concernent des ensembles plus larges : frontières politiques (Su et Yu; Tranca, Tardif-Villeneuve), socio-économiques (Su et Yu; Rakyutidharm; Latt; Steward) et même, à certains égards, frontières identitaires (Hellwig, Légaré-Dionne). Certaines séances ont été organisées « à cheval » sur les limites de l'Asie du Sud-Est, incluant donc des recherches sur la périphérie immédiate, comme en Inde ou sur les pourtours de la Chine. C'est la raison pour laquelle le texte de Légaré-Dionne, présenté au cours d'une séance qui concernait les montagnes d'Asie du Sud-Est continentale et les régions adjacentes au Yunnan et au Tibet, a été gardé dans ces Actes.

**Toutes nos recherches, sans exception**, possèdent une signature qui permette de les situer dans le temps et dans l'espace. Trop souvent toutefois, nous demeurons confinés spatialement et temporellement. Et lorsque, au mieux, on établit des comparaisons multiscalaires, on ne s'attarde pas, ou pas suffisamment, sur les liens qui s'établissent entre les niveaux, qui les construisent même. Pour tous ceux qui s'intéressent à l'Asie du Sud-Est, ces liens constituent une riche source d'inspiration pour comprendre le monde du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle.

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**PREMIÈRE PARTIE**  
**PART ONE**

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**AU-DELÀ DES FRONTIÈRES POLITIQUES**

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**BEYOND POLITICAL BOUNDARIES**

# CHAPITRE 1

## ASEAN + 1 : les enjeux pour la Chine

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### I) INTRODUCTION

La fin de la Guerre froide a entraîné des changements majeurs dans les contextes économiques mondiaux et régionaux. L'internationalisation et la régionalisation de l'économie mondiale sont deux éléments fondamentaux qui ont profondément modifié la structure des relations internationales. Les manifestations de ces changements en Asie du Sud-Est se présentent sous deux aspects principaux :

- Étant donné l'importance stratégique de la région de l'Asie du sud-est, l'ASEAN (*Association of Southeast Asian Nations*), la plus grande association politique, économique et culturelle asiatique, regroupant 10 pays de la région, est devenue un joueur très important, courtisé par tous les pays puissants.
- Les rapports de force des grands pays dans cette région se sont modifiés rapidement. L'influence des États-Unis et du Japon, notamment dans le domaine économique, a diminué au profit de la Chine.

Au cours de ces dernières années, la Chine, le grand voisin de l'ASEAN, a multiplié ses efforts afin de développer une relation forte avec l'ASEAN. Ainsi, le projet de la création d'une zone de libre échange entre la Chine et l'ASEAN - « ASEAN + 1 » - représente plusieurs enjeux majeurs pour la Chine.

Dans les pages qui suivent, nous commencerons par présenter le projet de l'ASEAN + Chine. Puis, nous analyserons les intérêts économiques des deux parties. Enfin, nous examinerons les enjeux non économiques d'une coopération élargie entre l'ASEAN et la Chine.

### II) LES RELATIONS ENTRE L'ASEAN ET LA CHINE

Malgré sa faible importance économique par rapport aux autres principaux blocs économiques du monde (Tableau 1), l'ASEAN demeure une force incontournable grâce notamment à sa vitalité démographique, sa position géographique et ses ressources naturelles abondantes.

La fin de la guerre froide et l'amélioration de la situation au Cambodge ont forcé l'ASEAN à évoluer vers de nouvelles activités. Ses nouveaux objectifs permettraient à l'organisation de conserver sa cohésion. La coopération et l'intégration économiques de l'ASEAN avec les autres pays asiatiques sont ainsi devenues des moyens privilégiés pour, d'une part, relever le défi du développement économique et, d'autre part, prouver sa valeur et son dynamisme. Ce rapprochement entre pays asiatiques a permis à l'ASEAN de

maintenir son influence économique et internationale. « *Improving and strengthening intra-ASEAN economic co-operation have become imperative for the viability and relevance, and some would argue continuity of ASEAN as an internationally recognized entity* » (Pangestu *et al.*, 1992:334). Une vingtaine de projets de créations de zones de libre échange sont en cours d'élaboration, à savoir : ASEAN + Japon, ASEAN + Corée, ASEAN + 3, ASEAN + 6, APEC, etc. Mais le plus avancé est celui concernant la création de la Zone de Libre Échange ASEAN-Chine (ACFTA, *ASEAN-China Free Trade Area*).

**Tableau 1**  
**L'ASEAN et quelques autres groupes économiques, 2003**

Association*	Membres	Population (millions)	PIB nominal (milliards \$ÉU)	PIB per capita (\$ÉU)	Échanges Importations et exportations (milliards \$ÉU)
<b>ASEAN</b>	10 pays	537,11	686,3	1 278	758,7
<b>Union européenne</b>	15 pays	379,74	10 482,7	27 605	4 752,1
	25 pays	453,90	10 970,2	24 169	5 090,3
<b>ALÉNA</b>	3 pays	424,97	12 342,1	29 043	2 698,9
<b>MERCOSUR</b>	4 pays	224,00	639,1	2 853	150,0

\* 15 pays de l'UE: Autriche, Belgique, Danemark, Finlande, France, Allemagne, Grèce, Irlande, Italie, Luxembourg, Pays-Bas, Portugal, Espagne, Suède, Royaume-Uni.

\* 25 pays de l'UE: 15 + Chypre, Tchécoslovaquie, Estonie, Hongrie, Latvie, Lituanie, Malte, Pologne, Slovaquie, Slovénie

\* 3 pays de l'ALÉNA: États-Unis, Canada, Mexico.

\* 4 pays du MERCOSUR: Argentine, Brésil, Paraguay, Uruguay.

Source: ASEAN-Japan Centre <http://www.asean.or.jp/eng/general/base/glance2004.html>

L'intensification des relations entre la Chine et l'ASEAN est relativement récente. La Chine et l'ASEAN ont entamé des pourparlers en 1991 : par exemple, le ministre chinois des affaires étrangères a participé à l'inauguration de la 24<sup>ème</sup> réunion des ministres des Affaires étrangères de l'ASEAN. Cette présence montrait bien que la Chine devenait un partenaire important de l'ASEAN. Ce n'est pourtant qu'en 1996 que la Chine a reçu le statut de partenaire à part entière. La relation entre l'ASEAN et la Chine s'est alors développée rapidement, poussée par l'approfondissement des contacts politiques et économiques.

L'établissement de l'ACFTA s'est fait relativement rapidement. En 2001, lors du sommet ASEAN-Chine, les deux parties se sont mises d'accord pour concentrer leur coopération sur cinq aspects, à savoir l'agriculture, les technologies de l'information et des communications, le développement des ressources humaines, le développement du bassin du fleuve Mékong et l'investissement bilatéral (ASEAN). Cette même année, la Chine a lancé une initiative majeure destinée à établir l'ACFTA. En 2002, les chefs des membres de l'ASEAN et de la Chine ont signé un accord-cadre de coopération visant à créer l'ACFTA, avec l'ASEAN-6 en 2010 et avec l'ASEAN en entier en 2015. En 2003, la Chine a signé le Traité d'amitié et de coopération (TAC) en Asie du Sud-Est avec l'ASEAN et elle est devenue le premier pays non-ASEAN à signer le TAC. En 2004, la signature de l'accord sur la libéralisation des biens lance le processus de création de l'ACFTA. Puis en 2007, la Chine et l'ASEAN signent l'accord sur le commerce de services, qui assure ainsi la mise en place de l'ACFTA (Tableau 2).

En faisant le bilan des traités entre l'ASEAN et la Chine, on voit qu'il ne s'est passé que 16 ans entre le premier contact officiel de 1991 et l'établissement de l'ACFTA en 2007 (Tableau 2). Cette rapidité, surtout comparée aux autres projets de zone de libre échange en cours, a démontré les intérêts des parties concernées envers ce projet ainsi que l'efficacité de leurs actions. Quand la Zone de Libre Échange de l'ASEAN-Chine sera finalement instaurée, elle deviendra la plus grande zone de libre échange au monde, avec environ 1,8 milliards d'habitants. Son PIB dépassera alors 2 000 milliards de dollars EU.

**Tableau 2**  
**Principales étapes réalisées pour la ZLÉ\* ASEAN-Chine**

<b>1991</b>	Dialogue officiel
<b>1996</b>	Partenaire du dialogue complet
<b>2001</b>	Accord de coopération, lancement de l'initiative de la ZLÉ
<b>2002</b>	Accord -cadre de coopération de la ZLÉ
<b>2003</b>	Traité d'amitié et de coopération
<b>2004</b>	Accord sur la libéralisation des biens
<b>2005</b>	Mise en vigueur de l'Accord sur la libéralisation des biens
<b>2007</b>	Accord sur le commerce de service

\*NOTE : ZLÉ : Zone de libre échange.

### **III) L'INTENSIFICATION DES LIENS ECONOMIQUES ENTRE L'ASEAN ET LA CHINE**

Au cours de ces dernières années, notamment après le premier dialogue officiel entre la Chine et l'ASEAN, les échanges économiques et commerciaux entre les deux parties ont connu une croissance extrêmement rapide (Figure 1 et Tableau 3). De 1990 à 2007, les échanges commerciaux bilatéraux ont été multipliés par vingt passant de 6,6 milliards à plus de 202 milliards de dollars EU.

Selon le département chinois des douanes<sup>2</sup>, l'augmentation moyenne du volume du commerce bilatéral entre l'ASEAN et la Chine a été de 22% par année entre 1990 et 2005<sup>3</sup>. Durant la même période, l'augmentation moyenne du volume des échanges commerciaux totaux de la Chine a été de 18% par année<sup>4</sup>. Selon les statistiques fournies par l'ASEAN, entre 1993 et 2001, l'augmentation moyenne annuelle du volume du commerce bilatéral entre l'ASEAN et la Chine s'est élevée à 23%. A titre de comparaison, l'augmentation moyenne du volume total des échanges commerciaux de l'ASEAN a été de 5% annuellement. L'écart entre les deux atteint donc les 17%<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>2</sup>Département chinois des douanes. <http://www.customs.gov.cn/YWStaticPage/default.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Commerces libres entre l'ASEAN et la Chine. [http://www.caft11.com/background/20070924\\_3.aspx](http://www.caft11.com/background/20070924_3.aspx)

<sup>4</sup> Conférence de presse du *Bureau de presse de la République Populaire de Chine*, 14 septembre 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Commerces libres entre l'ASEAN et la Chine. [http://www.caft11.com/background/20070924\\_3.aspx](http://www.caft11.com/background/20070924_3.aspx)

**Figure 1**  
**Le volume des échanges commerciaux bilatéraux sino-ASEAN, 1990-2005**  
 (en centaines de millions de dollars EU)



Source: Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, China.

**Tableau 3**  
**Commerce bilatéral sino-ASEAN, 2000-2007**  
 (en milliards de dollars EU)

Année	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Échanges	39,52	41,61	54,77	78,25	105,88	130,37	160,84	202,51
Augmentation*	12,32	2,09	13,16	23,48	27,63	24,49	30,47	41,67
Augmentation (en pourcentage)	45,3%	5,3%	31,6%	42,9%	35,3%	23,1%	23,4%	25,9%

\*Calculée par rapport à l'année précédente; 1999 pour 2000.

Source : Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, China<sup>6</sup>.

En 2005 et 2006, la Chine était le quatrième plus grand partenaire commercial de l'ASEAN (excluant les échanges internes à l'ASEAN). Plus précisément, elle se classe première pour le Vietnam, deuxième pour la Birmanie, troisième pour Singapour, la Thaïlande et les Philippines, quatrième pour la Malaisie, l'Indonésie et le Cambodge et cinquième pour le Laos<sup>7</sup>. L'ASEAN est devenue le cinquième plus grand marché étranger et la troisième plus importante source d'importations pour la Chine en 2006<sup>8</sup>. Elle était le quatrième plus grand partenaire commercial de la Chine en 2007 (Tableaux 4 et 5).

<sup>6</sup> Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China. <http://yzs.mofcom.gov.cn/date/date.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Troisième forum de haut niveau de la Zone de libre échange ASEAN-Chine, 10 octobre 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Conférence de presse du Bureau de presse de la République Populaire de Chine, 14 septembre 2007.

Singapour est le premier partenaire commercial de la Chine parmi les membres de l'ASEAN, suivi par la Malaisie, la Thaïlande, les Philippines et l'Indonésie en 2006 (Tableau 6).

**Tableau 4**  
**Les dix les plus grands partenaires commerciaux de l'ASEAN en 2006**  
(en milliards de dollars ÉU)

Partenaire commercial	Valeur			Part dans le commerce total de l'ASEAN		
	Exportations	Importations	Total	Exportations	Importations	Total
ASEAN	189,18	163,60	352,77	25,2	25,0	25,1
Japon	81,29	80,50	161,78	10,8	12,3	11,5
États-Unis	96,94	64,25	161,20	12,9	9,8	11,5
UE-25	94,47	66,12	160,59	12,6	10,1	11,4
<b>Chine</b>	<b>65,01</b>	<b>74,95</b>	<b>139,96</b>	<b>8,7</b>	<b>11,5</b>	<b>10,0</b>
Corée du Sud	25,67	26,85	52,52	3,4	4,1	3,7
Australie	23,15	13,26	36,41	3,1	2,0	2,6
Indie	18,93	9,98	28,70	2,5	1,5	2,0
<b>Taïwan</b>	<b>9,03</b>	<b>12,88</b>	<b>21,91</b>	<b>1,2</b>	<b>2,0</b>	<b>1,6</b>
Hong Kong, RAS	13,78	6,41	20,19	1,8	1,0	1,4
Total – dix	617,45	518,59	1 136,04	82,2	79,3	80,9
Autres <sup>2/</sup>	133,26	135,51	268,77	17,8	20,7	19,1
Total	750,71	654,10	1 404,81	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source : Statistique ASEAN <http://www.aseansec.org/stat/Table20.xls>

**Tableau 5**  
**Les dix partenaires majeurs commerciaux de la Chine en 2007**  
(en milliards de dollars ÉU)

Rang	Pays	Valeur	Pourcentage
1	Union européenne	356,15	16,38%
2	États-Unis	302,08	13,90%
3	Japon	236,02	10,86%
<b>4</b>	<b>ASEAN</b>	<b>202,55</b>	<b>9,32%</b>
5	Hong Kong	197,25	9,07%
6	Corée du Sud	159,9	7,36%
7	Taïwan	124,48	5,73%
8	Russie	48,17	2,22%
9	Australie	43,85	2,02%
10	Inde	38,65	1,78%
<b>Sous-total</b>		1709,1	78,62%
<b>Autres</b>		464,73	21,38%
<b>Total</b>		2173,83	100,00%

Source : Département général du ministère du commerce de la République Populaire de Chine<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China. <http://zhs.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/Nocategory/200802/20080205374134.html>

**Tableau 6**  
**Commerce bilatéral entre l'ASEAN et la Chine en 2007**  
(par pays et en milliards de dollars ÉU)

<b>Pays</b>	<b>Valeur</b>	<b>Pourcentage</b>
<b>Singapour</b>	47,15	23,28%
<b>Malaysia</b>	46,4	22,91%
<b>Thaïlande</b>	34,64	17,11%
<b>Philippines</b>	30,61	15,12%
<b>Indonésie</b>	25	12,35%
<b>Autres ASEAN</b>	18,71	9,24%
<b>ASEAN</b>	202,51	100,00%

*Source : Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, China<sup>10</sup>*

Examinons maintenant le poids du commerce bilatéral ASEAN-Chine dans les échanges commerciaux totaux de ces deux géants. Dans le cas de la Chine, bien que le commerce bilatéral avec l'ASEAN représente une part relative faible dans ses échanges commerciaux totaux, cette proportion a connu une forte croissance. En 1990, cette proportion était seulement de 5,8%. Elle s'élevait à 9,32% en 2007 (Tableau 7). Dans le cas de l'ASEAN, l'évolution de la proportion est encore plus remarquable passant de 2,1% en 1993 à 10% en 2006 (Tableau 8).

**Tableau 7**  
**Évolution de la proportion du commerce bilatéral sino-ASEAN**  
**dans les échanges commerciaux totaux de la Chine**  
(en milliards de dollars ÉU)

<b>Année</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
<b>Commerce bilatéral ASEAN-Chine</b>	6,69	10,68	21,16	27,2	54,77	130,37	160,84	202,51
<b>Échanges commerciaux totaux de la Chine</b>	115,44	195,7	289,88	360,63	620,77	1422,12	1760,69	2173,02
<b>Proportion</b>	5,80%	5,50%	7,30%	7,50%	8,82%	9,17%	9,14%	9,32%

*Source : Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, China<sup>11</sup>*

<sup>10</sup> Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China. <http://yzs.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/g/date/k/200802/20080205366505.html>

<sup>11</sup> Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China. <http://yzs.mofcom.gov.cn/static/date/g/date.html/1>

**Tableau 8**  
**Évolution de la proportion du commerce bilatéral sino-ASEAN**  
**dans les échanges commerciaux totaux de l'ASEAN**  
(en milliards de dollars ÉU)

Année	1993	1996	1999	2002	2005	2006
<b>Commerce bilatéral ASEAN-Chine *</b>	8,87	16,69	21,92	42,76	113,39	160,84 <sup>12</sup>
<b>Échanges commerciaux totaux de l'ASEAN *</b>	429,95	673,97	623,16	713,82	1224,89	1404,81 <sup>13</sup>
<b>Proportion</b>	2,06%	2,48%	3,52%	5,99%	9,26%	11,45%

\*NOTE : Les chiffres de 1993 à 2002 n'incluent pas le Vietnam.

Source : *Les chiffres de 1993-2005 : ASEAN Statistical Yearbook 2006*<sup>14</sup>, Chapter V, Table V9

Par ailleurs, à l'aide du tableau 9, il nous est possible de constater un changement important au niveau de la structure des biens échangés entre l'ASEAN et la Chine. En 1993, le commerce bilatéral sino-ASEAN se concentrait sur les produits minéraux, le bois, les produits alimentaires, les textiles et les plastiques, tandis que les biens à plus haute valeur ajoutée tels que la machinerie et les équipements électriques ne représentaient que 20% des échanges. La partie des matières premières et des produits semi-finis occupait de 40% à 50%. En 2004, les échanges des biens industriels représentaient déjà plus de 50% à 60% du montant total et la proportion des matières premières n'occupait plus que 15% à 30%.

Il est à noter que dans le commerce bilatéral sino-ASEAN, la vitesse de croissance des exportations de la Chine vers l'ASEAN est toujours inférieure à la vitesse de croissance des exportations de l'ASEAN vers la Chine<sup>15</sup>. En 2000, le déficit commercial de la Chine avec l'ASEAN se chiffrait à 4,84 milliards de dollars ÉU (Tableau 10). En 2007, ces excédents commerciaux de l'ASEAN envers la Chine ont dépassé les 14 milliards \$US. Notons que la Chine possède une balance commerciale favorable de 261.39 milliards \$US dans ses échanges avec les autres pays en 2007 (Tableau 10). Les Philippines, la Malaysia, la Thaïlande et le Brunei sont devenus des exportateurs importants en Chine (voir le Tableau 11).

<sup>12</sup>Department of Asian Affaires, Ministry of Commerce, China. <http://yzs.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/g/date/j/200701/20070104313110.html>

<sup>13</sup> External trade statistics of ASEAN. <http://www.aseansec.org/18137.htm>

<sup>14</sup>ASEAN. <http://www.aseansec.org/13100.htm>

<sup>15</sup> Conférence de presse du Bureau de presse de la République Populaire de Chine, 14 septembre 2007.

**Tableau 9**  
**Évolution de la structure des biens échangés entre l'ASEAN et la Chine**  
(en milliards de dollars EU)

Biens exportés par la Chine								
	1993			2001 <sup>16</sup>			2004	
	Exportations	%		Exportations	%		Exportations	%
Minéral	1,5	32,4	Machinerie	15,2	48,3	Machinerie	18,1	47,1
Bois	1	22,6	Minéral	4,4	14,1	Minéral	4,5	11,7
Machinerie	0,6	12,4	Plastiques	2,2	6,9	Chimiques	2,4	6,2
Gras & huile	0,4	8,4	Chimiques	2,1	6,6	Plastiques	2,3	6,0
Plastiques	0,2	4,4	Papiers	1,0	3,3	Gras & huile	2,0	5,2
Sous-total	3,7	80,2	Sous-total	24,9	79,2	Sous-total	29,3	76,2
Biens importés en Chine								
	1993			2001			2004	
	Importations	%		Importations	%		Importations	%
Machinerie	0,9	20,8	Machinerie	12,1	50,9	Machinerie	24,6	57,9
Textiles	0,7	15,7	Textiles	2,6	10,8	Acier	2,5	5,8
Légumes	0,5	11,6	Métal	1,6	6,7	Minéral	1,9	4,4
Métal	0,5	10,6	Chimiques	1,4	6,0	Photo	1,0	2,3
Minéral	0,5	10,5	Minéral	1,1	4,6	Bijoux	0,7	1,7
Sous-total	3,1	69,2	Sous-total	18,8	79,0	Sous-total	30,7	72,1

\*NOTE : En 1993 et 2004 il s'agit de l'ASEAN-6 et en 2001, il s'agit de l'ASEAN-6, plus le Cambodge et la Birmanie.

Source : Les chiffres de 1993 et 2001: John Wong, Sarah Chan, « China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement: Shaping Future Economic Relations », Asian Survey, May/June 2003, 43, 3, Page 515. Les chiffres de 2004 : ASEAN Statistical Yearbook 2005<sup>17</sup>, Chapter V, Table V45, V46

**Tableau 10**  
**La balance commerciale de la Chine avec l'ASEAN et le monde**  
(en milliards de dollars EU)

Année	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
<b>Balance avec l'ASEAN</b>	-4,84	-4,84	-7,63	-16,4	-20,08	-19,63	-18,21	-14,23
<b>Balance totale</b>	28,87	28,08	37,38	36,08	49,28	124,8	177,47	261,39

Source : Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> John Wong, Sarah Chan, « China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement : Shaping Future Economic Relations », Asian Survey, May/June 2003, 43,3, Page 515

<sup>17</sup> ASEAN Statistical Yearbook 2005, Chapter V, Table V45, V46, <http://www.aseansec.org/SYB2005/Chapter-5.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China <http://yzs.mofcom.gov.cn/date/date.html>

**Tableau 11**  
**Balances commerciales des pays de l'ASEAN avec la Chine**  
(en milliards de dollars ÉU)

	Pays	2004 <sup>19</sup>	Pays	2005 <sup>20</sup>	Pays	2006 <sup>21</sup>	Pays	2007 <sup>22</sup>
<b>RANG</b>	ASEAN	<b>-20,08</b>	ASEAN	<b>-19,63</b>	ASEAN	<b>-18,21</b>	ASEAN	<b>-14,23</b>
<b>1</b>	Malaysia	-10,09	Malaysia	-9,49	Philippines	-11,94	Philippines	-15,62
<b>2</b>	Thaïlande	-5,74	Philippines	-8,18	Malaysia	-10,04	Malaysia	-11,02
<b>3</b>	Philippines	-4,79	Thaïlande	-6,17	Thaïlande	-8,2	Thaïlande	-10,69
<b>4</b>	Singapour	-1,31	Brunei	-0,16	Indonésie	-0,16	Brunei	-0,13
<b>5</b>	Indonésie	-0,97	Indonésie	-0,09	Brunei	-0,12	Laos	0,08
<b>6</b>	Brunei	-0,2	Laos	0,08	Laos	0,12	Indonésie	0,2
<b>7</b>	Laos	0,09	Singapour	0,12	Cambodge	0,66	Cambodge	0,83
<b>8</b>	Cambodge	0,42	Cambodge	0,51	Birmanie	0,96	Birmanie	1,32
<b>9</b>	Birmanie	0,73	Birmanie	0,66	Vietnam	4,98	Vietnam	8,67
<b>10</b>	Vietnam	1,78	Vietnam	3,09	Singapour	5,52	Singapour	12,12

Source : Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China.

Bien qu'il soit exagéré de dire que ce déficit commercial est plutôt voulu par la Chine, il est cependant clair que cette dernière pourrait tirer de nombreux bénéfices de cette situation. D'une part, pour faire fonctionner cette « usine mondiale », la Chine a besoin de matières premières, de ressources énergétiques, de produits semi-finis et d'équipements fournis par l'ASEAN qui possède plusieurs avantages concurrentiels. D'autre part, cette dépendance économique de plus en plus importante des pays de l'ASEAN envers la Chine, dans le cadre de cette « division intra-régional du travail », permettrait à la Chine de justifier son rôle positif dans le développement économique de la région asiatique.

C'est pour cette raison que la Chine a multiplié ses efforts afin d'accélérer la construction de l'ASEAN + Chine. En juillet 2005, la Chine et l'ASEAN ont même démarré un processus de diminution des impôts. Les droits de douane ont commencé à diminuer sur plus de 7 000 biens. Selon le calendrier mis en place, en 2010 les tarifs douaniers de la plupart des biens entre la Chine et l'ASEAN-6 seront réduits à zéro, tandis qu'en 2015, l'application s'étendra à l'ASEAN-10<sup>23</sup>.

Depuis 2004, l'*Exposition Universelle ASEAN-Chine* a lieu chaque année à Nan Ning, au Guang Xi. En 2006, la troisième édition de cette exposition a atteint un volume d'échanges commerciaux de 1,27 milliards de dollars ÉU<sup>24</sup>. Lors de ce rendez-vous, 40 accords d'investissements avec l'ASEAN ont été signés pour une valeur de 2,56 milliards de dollars ÉU<sup>25</sup>. Jusqu'à maintenant, la réussite de l'*Exposition Universelle ASEAN-Chine*

<sup>19</sup> Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China <http://yzs.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/g/date/a/200501/20050100340507.html>

<sup>20</sup> Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China <http://yzs.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/g/date/c/200601/20060101431338.html>

<sup>21</sup> Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China <http://yzs.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/g/date/j/200701/20070104313110.html>

<sup>22</sup> Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China <http://yzs.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/g/date/k/200802/20080205366505.html>

<sup>23</sup> Troisième forum de haut niveau de la Zone de libre échange ASEAN-Chine, 10 octobre 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Site Web officiel de l'exposition universelle ASEAN-Chine. <http://www.caexpo.org/>

<sup>25</sup> Site Web officiel de l'exposition universelle ASEAN-Chine. <http://www.caexpo.org/>

fait en sorte que cet événement devient une plate-forme essentielle dans l'établissement de la Zone de libre échange ASEAN-Chine.

#### **IV) ASEAN + CHINE : DES INTÉRÊTS BIEN PLUS QU'ÉCONOMIQUES POUR LA CHINE**

Les intérêts que représente le projet de l'ASEAN+1 (Chine) semblent aller bien au-delà de l'aspect économique pour la Chine. Les enjeux politiques, diplomatiques et stratégiques apparaissent également importants.

En 1978, le gouvernement de Deng Xiaoping a entamé une série de réformes économiques à la suite, d'une part, d'un changement politique du Parti Communiste chinois (le développement économique du pays est au cœur de sa mission) et, d'autre part, d'une transformation du rôle de l'État chinois (l'État producteur et protecteur est devenu l'État promoteur et programmeur). Plusieurs éléments caractérisent la démarche choisie par l'autorité chinoise qui, après avoir accordé tant d'attention aux mouvements politiques, considère désormais que « seul un développement économique permettrait au Parti Communiste de rester au pouvoir » :

- une réforme avec une approche par essais/erreurs, comme le dit Deng Xiaoping, correspondrait à traverser une rivière en cherchant le gué sur des pierres immergées ;
- un processus de changement graduel permettant d'éliminer progressivement des éléments du système planifié et d'instaurer progressivement des éléments du système de marché ;
- un développement basé sur l'inégalité, avec la permission « à un petit nombre de personnes et de régions de s'enrichir d'abord.

Selon l'autorité chinoise, ce processus de réformes et la stabilité politique interne sont intimement liés dans ce pays. En effet, autant la stabilité politique, assurée par le Parti Communiste chinois était une condition *sine qua non* pour de telles réformes, autant le succès de ces réformes et un réel développement économique incarnaient des conditions assurant le maintien du Parti Communiste chinois au pouvoir. Quoiqu'il en soit, depuis 1978, la transformation de l'État s'est traduite par une importante mobilisation des ressources afin de créer un environnement propice au développement économique. Ainsi, ce qui explique l'émergence de la Chine, ce n'est pas réellement l'avènement d'un système de marché libéral de type occidental, comme on l'entend dans les économies du Nord, mais plutôt une réelle capacité de mobilisation des capitaux et des personnes pour créer un environnement favorable au développement économique et aux investissements directs étrangers. La Chine est en effet aujourd'hui encore loin d'être libérale (Zhan Su, 2005).

Au fur et à mesure que l'économie chinoise s'affirme sur la scène internationale, les interrogations et les contestations sur ce modèle chinois se multiplient dans les pays occidentaux. En effet, ce modèle implique que la croissance économique et les intérêts collectifs doivent primer sur le droit individuel et les relations internationales entre pays. Ce modèle met l'accent sur la tolérance envers les différents systèmes politiques et les choix de chaque pays. Ces principes se heurtent clairement aux valeurs défendues par les pays occidentaux.

Étant donné l'hétérogénéité politique et culturelle des pays membres de l'ASEAN, la Chine semble vouloir avoir l'ASEAN comme allié politique sur la scène internationale. Ainsi en 2003, la Chine est devenue le premier pays non membre de l'ASEAN qui a signé le Traité d'amitié et de coopération (TAC) en Asie du Sud-Est avec l'ASEAN. Ce traité,

d'abord signé le 24 février 1976 en Indonésie par les cinq pays fondateurs de l'ASEAN, a alors institutionnalisé les grands principes de base de l'ASEAN :

- respect de la souveraineté, de l'intégrité territoriale et de l'identité nationale;
- non-ingérence dans les affaires intérieures des États membres;
- renonciation au recours à la force ou à la menace d'un tel recours;
- règlement pacifique des différends.

Ces principes semblent avoir trouvé des échos favorables en Chine, étant donné que la Chine cherche « une ascension pacifique » certes, mais une ascension avec le modèle chinois.

Pour des raisons idéologiques et historiques, l'ASEAN avait toujours entretenu une méfiance envers la Chine. En fait, vu que la plupart des membres de l'ASEAN sont de petits pays limitrophes ou près de la Chine et compte tenu du contexte de l'émergence de la Chine et de l'augmentation de sa puissance économique à l'échelle mondiale, les membres de l'ASEAN s'inquiètent de « la menace chinoise ». Pour les membres de l'ASEAN, « la menace chinoise » inclut les problèmes de frontières, surtout la frontière maritime dans la mer de Chine méridionale, de concurrence économique et d'augmentation de la force chinoise.

**Tableau 12**  
**Les dix plus grandes sources d'investissement direct étranger (IDÉ) de l'ASEAN**

Pays	Valeur (en milliards de dollars ÉU)				Part de l'IDE total (en pourcentage)			
	2004	2005	2006	2002-2006	2004	2005	2006	2002-2006
Union européenne-25	10,05	11,14	13,36	44,96	28,6	27,1	25,5	26,3
Japon	5,73	7,24	10,80	30,81	16,3	17,6	20,6	18,0
ASEAN	2,80	3,77	6,24	19,38	8,0	9,2	11,9	11,3
États-Unis	5,23	3,01	3,87	13,74	14,9	7,3	7,4	8,0
Autres Amérique du Sud et centrale	(60,5)	0,92	1,04	3,96	(0,2)	2,2	2,0	2,3
Hong Kong	0,53	0,77	1,35	3,43	1,5	1,9	2,6	2,0
Corée du Sud	0,81	0,58	1,10	3,35	2,3	1,4	2,1	2,0
Iles Caïman	2,03	(0,02)	0,48	3,00	5,8	(0,0)	0,9	1,8
<b>Taiwan</b>	<b>0,37</b>	<b>(0,067)</b>	<b>0,67</b>	<b>2,42</b>	<b>1,0</b>	<b>(0,2)</b>	<b>1,4</b>	<b>1,4</b>
<b>Chine</b>	<b>0,73</b>	<b>0,50</b>	<b>0,94</b>	<b>2,30</b>	<b>2,1</b>	<b>1,2</b>	<b>1,8</b>	<b>1,3</b>
Total – les dix premiers	28,22	27,84	39,84	127,34	80,4	67,8	76,1	74,5
Autres	6,90	13,23	12,54	43,48	19,6	32,2	23,9	25,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,12</b>	<b>41,07</b>	<b>52,38</b>	<b>170,82</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Source : Secrétariat de l'ASEAN <http://www.aseansec.org/Stat/Table27.pdf>

Avec la signature du TAC et surtout la création de l'ACFTA, la Chine tente de montrer sa volonté d'aller vers une cohabitation pacifique et un co-développement. Dans le contexte de l'ASEAN + Chine, l'augmentation de l'interdépendance entre l'ASEAN et la Chine devrait diminuer la menace de l'accroissement de la puissance chinoise. Même si la divergence des points de vue concernant les problèmes de frontières – surtout en mer de Chine méridionale – existe toujours entre la Chine et certains membres de l'ASEAN, l'intensification des relations entre la Chine et l'ASEAN permettent l'apaisement de

certains conflits.

Il existe également un aspect stratégique dans la relation de partenariat entre la Chine et l'ASEAN : l'avenir de Taiwan. En effet, Taiwan entretient toujours une relation assez importante avec la plupart des pays membres de l'ASEAN. En 2006, Taiwan est devenu le neuvième grand partenaire commercial et le neuvième grand investisseur pour l'ASEAN (Tableaux 4 et 12). Bien que l'ASEAN ne souhaite pas voir une crise militaire au niveau du détroit de Taiwan, qui risquerait de mettre en péril le développement économique de la région, l'ASEAN semble rechercher une relation économique plus étendue et plus profonde avec Taiwan pour ses propres intérêts. Une institutionnalisation des relations entre la Chine et l'ASEAN permettrait à la Chine de mieux défendre ses intérêts stratégiques en la matière.

## V) CONCLUSION

L'Asie de l'Est et du Sud-Est sont des régions très complexes, du fait de l'hétérogénéité des religions, des cultures, des idéologies et des niveaux de développement économique. Région la plus dynamique dans le monde au niveau du commerce international, l'Asie demeure cependant la région la moins organisée institutionnellement. La multiplication des projets de créations de zones de libre échange témoigne d'une prise de conscience des pays de cette région.

Le projet de l'ACFTA est actuellement le plus avancé parmi la vingtaine en cours. Les intérêts pour la Chine semblent aller bien au-delà du domaine économique. L'ASEAN semble disposer d'un pouvoir de négociation important dans ses relations avec la Chine. Cependant les défis sont importants si l'on considère les enjeux et les intérêts, souvent divergents, entre les acteurs concernés.

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## **CHAPITRE 2**

### **Conflits gelés et conflits oubliés : la réponse des tierces parties. Une étude de cas des Arméniens au Nagorno-Karabakh et des Karens en Birmanie**

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#### **D) INTRODUCTION**

L'intervention des tierces parties, en particulier celle des acteurs internationaux dont le mandat est de protéger l'ordre et la stabilité à l'échelle internationale, occupe une place de plus en plus centrale dans l'étude des conflits ethniques. La décision d'intervenir est le résultat d'un processus complexe qui implique plusieurs dynamiques internes et externes aux organisations internationales et à leurs États membres. Une estimation préliminaire du succès ou de l'échec de l'intervention est souvent considérée comme un élément déterminant de ce processus. Selon cette logique, certains conflits ethniques, particulièrement ceux qui mettent l'intervenant devant le dilemme d'un risque accru de violence et la possibilité d'échec des modalités classiques de résolution, auraient moins de chances d'attirer une intervention des tierces parties. Dans ce contexte, est-ce que la non-intervention est une alternative viable face à un échec potentiel? L'objectif principal de ce texte est de comparer l'évolution d'un conflit ethnique caractérisé par une intervention échouée par rapport à un conflit où aucune intervention n'a eu lieu.

Deux études de cas, les conflits ayant au centre les Arméniens de Nagorno-Karabakh et les Karens de Birmanie, essaient de répondre à cette question en comparant l'impact de l'intervention échouée dans le premier cas à l'inaction des acteurs internationaux dans le deuxième cas. Plusieurs indicateurs seront analysés à cet effet, tels que la durée, l'intensité, les périodes d'escalade, le nombre relatif de victimes et des réfugiés et finalement les formes de gestion et résolution qui ont caractérisé l'évolution de ces conflits. Les conclusions de cette démarche devraient permettre de contribuer aux programmes de recherches sur les décisions d'intervention des tierces parties et de leurs effets à long terme.

Dans le cadre des processus décisionnels des États et des organisations internationales, les caractéristiques d'un conflit apparaissent à première vue avoir une influence significative sur la décision d'intervenir. Les conflits ethniques, en particulier, soulèvent des défis importants à la fois pour les universitaires et pour les praticiens au moment où la question d'une intervention internationale se pose. Des stratégies classiques de dissuasion, par exemple, ne se montrent que rarement efficaces, dans le contexte des confrontations à somme nulle où les belligérants sont disposés à encourir des pertes graves, sans pour autant devenir plus réceptifs aux bénéfices de la négociation. Par conséquent, l'intervenant est confronté au risque d'une escalade de la violence et de la possibilité de l'inefficacité des techniques classiques de résolution (Brecher et Wilkenfeld, 2000 :138).

Ainsi, il est pertinent, dans l'analyse de la décision d'une tierce partie d'intervenir dans un conflit, de se pencher sur les caractéristiques de ce dernier. À cet effet, Regan (1998) souligne trois conditions qui influencent la décision d'intervenir : (1) une probabilité raisonnable de succès; (2) une durée limitée pour accomplir les objectifs visés; (3) un appui interne en faveur de l'intervention. Ces critères sous-entendent dans une certaine mesure que les crises ayant une intensité élevée auraient moins de chances de faire l'objet d'une intervention externe.

En conséquence, un aspect important dans la décision d'intervenir concerne une estimation de l'évolution future du conflit. Étant donné que les intervenants ne perçoivent aucune utilité découlant du simple acte d'intervenir (Regan, 1998), plus il y a une probabilité de succès, plus les États et les organisations internationales auront des incitations à intervenir.

Des contraintes de toutes sortes peuvent poser des obstacles à une intervention, tels que le manque de ressources financières nécessaires ou le risque de pertes économiques ou d'autres types qui pourraient augmenter les coûts et en diminuer les bénéfices (Mitchell, 1970). De ce point de vue, s'assurer autant que possible du succès de l'intervention peut acquérir un poids important dans la décision d'intervenir.

Les interventions qui ont rencontré le succès escompté constituent la toile de fond des arguments incitant à un engagement international plus actif dans les zones de conflit. L'objet de cet article est toutefois différent : il s'agit d'étudier les effets d'une intervention échouée. La question principale est donc de découvrir les conséquences des interventions qui ne peuvent pas être considérées comme ayant eu du succès, dans le sens où elles n'ont pas pu aboutir à une résolution définitive du conflit. Du point de vue pratique, la réponse à cette question devient pertinente au moment où, a priori, il n'existe aucune garantie de succès, une situation relativement fréquente au moment du déclenchement d'un conflit ethnique. Dans une telle circonstance, tout projet d'intervention devrait-il être abandonné?

L'hypothèse que cette étude vise à tester est la suivante : sans égard pour la probabilité de succès, si des acteurs internationaux prêtent attention au conflit, cela engendre une série de conséquences secondaires qui ouvrent éventuellement des voies de dialogue et forcent les adversaires à interagir dans une situation où autrement ils resteraient sur des positions strictement antagonistes. Cette réflexion semble contre intuitive à première vue parce que la plupart des interventions récentes, ayant reçu une importante couverture médiatique, n'ont pas démontré, de manière évidente et immédiate, un effet positif sur l'évolution des conflits. Toutefois, il n'est pas difficile d'imaginer les conséquences supplémentaires qu'auraient engendrées des conflits tels que ceux qui se sont déroulés en Bosnie ou au Kosovo s'ils avaient été complètement mis à l'écart de tout essai d'intervention externe.

Dans ce texte l'évolution de deux conflits est comparée : un conflit où l'intervention a échoué et un conflit où aucune intervention n'a eu lieu. Comme les motivations qui ont justifié l'intervention ne sont pas spécifiquement étudiées, les conclusions ne porteront pas sur l'utilité de l'intervention pour l'intervenant, mais seront néanmoins pertinentes pour cerner l'utilité de l'intervention en termes d'une évolution positive à long terme du conflit. En résumé, je pose l'hypothèse que le fait que le conflit ait attiré l'attention des acteurs internationaux (États ou organisations internationales) a augmenté les chances d'une évolution relativement plus positive que dans le cas d'un conflit où une telle implication a été absente. Le corollaire de cette hypothèse est que si l'élément principal dans le processus décisionnel menant à l'intervention est l'impact de l'intervention sur l'évolution du conflit, la probabilité de succès devrait seulement marginalement influencer la décision.

L'impact de l'intervention sera mesuré par une comparaison de l'évolution relative des deux conflits, un premier opposant Arméniens et Azéris dans la région du Nagorno-Karabakh et un deuxième ayant au centre les Karens de Birmanie. Le choix de ces études de cas a été principalement déterminé par quelques considérations d'ordre méthodologique. Premièrement, dans les deux cas, l'ethnicité joue un rôle central, dans le sens où au moins un des groupes en conflit se définit en termes ethniques et, sans égard pour les enjeux qui sont au cœur de leur confrontation, au moins une partie justifie ses actions en termes ethniques (par exemple, la répression et la discrimination sont interprétées selon une fracture ethnique) (Wolff, 2004). Dans les deux cas étudiés, des minorités contestent l'autorité du gouvernement central, ce qui nous permet de les définir en termes de conflit entre groupe et État et non pas de conflit intergroupes.

Deuxièmement, l'évolution des deux conflits peut être étudiée sur une période de temps déterminée. Le conflit de Nagorno-Karabakh est entré dans une phase « gelée » depuis 1994, tandis que la lutte d'affirmation des Karens de Birmanie est un conflit de longue durée, ce qui permet d'analyser son parcours d'une manière assez complète.

## **II) INTERVENTION DES TIERCES PARTIES : CLARIFICATION CONCEPTUELLE**

La distinction entre une tierce partie et un acteur dans le conflit est un élément essentiel dans l'analyse de l'évolution d'un conflit. Même si, dans la littérature, une confusion persiste quant à la définition des tierces parties, qui sont souvent assimilées aux intervenants externes en général (Carment et James, 2004)<sup>26</sup>, certains auteurs commencent à souligner les problèmes méthodologiques qui en découlent et appellent à une définition plus nuancée destinée à distinguer entre tierces parties et acteurs externes dans les conflits intra étatiques (Trumbore, 2003). Du point de vue empirique une telle distinction n'est pas facile à opérer : les actions d'une tierce partie peuvent prendre à la fois la forme d'une intervention militaire ou non militaire et de ce fait changer le parcours d'un conflit. Toutefois le véritable test n'est pas la neutralité, mais son impartialité, ainsi que sa volonté explicite de diriger ses actions et ses stratégies vers la résolution du conflit (Kaldor, 1999)<sup>27</sup>.

Il existe plusieurs formes d'intervention, parmi lesquelles l'emploi de la force est la plus spectaculaire, sans pour autant qu'elle soit la plus fréquente. D'autres exemples d'intervention sont la conciliation, la supervision, le maintien de la paix et l'imposition de la paix (Haas, 1993). La médiation internationale est aussi une méthode amplement utilisée par les tierces parties (Keliboer, 1996), conjointement avec d'autres méthodes officieuses moins contraignantes, telles que les condamnations publiques, les déclarations d'appui et de solidarité, l'aide humanitaire, les bons offices ou d'autres actions destinées à promouvoir ou à faciliter le dialogue et la négociation entre les parties. En pratique toutefois, tout au long d'un conflit, une variété de techniques d'intervention peut être utilisée, selon les objectifs et les circonstances propres à l'intervention.

Cependant quand on se penche sur l'efficacité d'une intervention dans un conflit, ce ne sont pas tous les types d'interventions qui offrent des indicateurs pertinents. L'impact des

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<sup>26</sup> Pour Carment et James (2004) par exemple, tout État, coalitions d'États ou organisation internationale qui a comme objectif de changer le cours d'un conflit est considérée une tierce partie.

<sup>27</sup> L'impartialité est réalisée par des pratiques non-discriminatoires envers les parties en conflit, qui respectent les normes internationales et qui visent à résoudre le conflit. Une tierce partie peut abandonner la neutralité et agir contre une des parties afin d'améliorer son efficacité, dans l'optique d'une résolution du conflit.

interventions non contraignantes/non officielles est particulièrement difficile à évaluer notamment à cause de leur nature cachée et discrète (Rigby, 1995; Rouhana, 1995). Par conséquent, à l'instar de Carment et Harvey (2001 :90), la présente analyse se concentrera sur des interventions qui visent explicitement à influencer le déroulement du conflit. Seront donc exclues les interventions passives, telles que les déclarations d'appui, les condamnations ou les bons offices. Les formes d'intervention active incluent la médiation, l'arbitration, l'envoi de groupes d'observateurs et l'envoi des forces armées.

Enfin, si l'Organisation des Nations Unies (ONU) est la tierce partie par excellence, les organisations régionales, les États, les coalitions d'États, des organisations non gouvernementales (ONG) nationales ou internationales, des commissions *ad hoc* ou des personnalités influentes peuvent remplir ce rôle (Dixon, 1996). Évidemment certaines formes d'intervention sont limitées aux États et aux organisations internationales et, de ce point de vue, le type d'intervenant ainsi que ses actions peuvent avoir un impact significatif sur l'efficacité de l'intervention.

### **LES INTERVENTIONS ÉCHOUÉES**

Il existe plusieurs façons de définir une intervention échouée. Pour Brecher et Wilkenfeld (2000), l'intervention peut être considérée efficace si l'intervenant a contribué de façon déterminante à la résolution du conflit, il a eu un impact important, ensemble avec d'autres facteurs, sur l'évolution positive de la crise ou il a démontré un effet marginal mais positif sur le conflit. Au contraire, l'intervention a échoué si elle a contribué à l'escalade du conflit ou si elle n'a eu aucun impact sur l'apaisement du conflit.

Carment et Rowlands (1998) utilisent un critère différent pour évaluer l'intervention des tierces parties, notamment leur capacité à arrêter la violence. À cet effet, l'escalade du conflit devient une tactique des tierces parties pour imposer des coûts plus élevés à la continuation de la lutte armée.

Enfin, une troisième modalité pour qualifier l'efficacité d'une intervention est de comparer les résultats acquis sur le terrain aux documents et aux déclarations qui ont permis de définir les objectifs de l'intervention dans ses stades initiaux.

En conséquence, plusieurs aspects serviront à définir l'échec de l'intervention. Premièrement, l'impact d'une escalade du conflit à la suite des actions des tierces parties sera étudié à travers le prisme de ses conséquences (arrêt ou intensification de la violence). Deuxièmement, les résultats de l'intervention seront comparés aux objectifs énoncés. Ainsi, l'intervention a échoué si elle n'a influencé d'aucune manière le conflit, si elle a contribué à son escalade sans que des effets positifs immédiats soient apparents ou si elle a en grande partie manqué aux objectifs qu'elle s'est donnés.

### **III) DIMENSIONS DE COMPARAISON**

La démarche proposée dans ce chapitre pose plusieurs défis méthodologiques : il s'agit dans une certaine mesure d'un raisonnement contrefactuel, analogue à celui invoqué par exemple par les chercheurs qui essaient d'évaluer l'efficacité de la diplomatie préventive (et en général de toute intervention préventive) ou de la dissuasion. Les deux conflits étudiés ici posent un défi similaire. Dans le cas du Karabakh l'intervention a eu lieu et il devient ainsi plus facile d'isoler les effets reliés directement à cette intervention et d'étudier leurs impacts sur l'évolution du conflit. Au contraire, dans le cas de Karens, étant donné l'absence d'intervention, nous ne pouvons pas établir de manière précise si le conflit aurait évolué différemment dans le contexte d'une intervention externe. La solution à ce problème méthodologique réside notamment dans l'élaboration d'un cadre

théorique qui circonscrit la logique d'une hypothèse explicative alternative et de la justifier d'un point de vue empirique (Jetleson, 1996).

Une deuxième solution qui peut renforcer la validité d'une telle recherche est l'emploi des variables de contrôle qui, si des constantes apparaissent dans les deux cas, peuvent restreindre le nombre de liens de causalité. Par conséquent, un nombre élargi d'indicateurs seront analysés dans chaque cas, en commençant par ceux qui devraient nous permettre de mesurer l'évolution des deux conflits.

### *L'INTENSITÉ DU CONFLIT*

L'intensité d'un conflit est définie de plusieurs manières dans la littérature. Certains auteurs soulignent par exemple le niveau de violence. David Carment (1993) utilise un indice de violence composé de plusieurs variables, telles que la sévérité de la violence sur une échelle allant de l'absence de violence jusqu'à la guerre ouverte, le rôle de la violence par rapport à la résolution du conflit et la présence de violence avant, pendant et après le conflit.

Une autre manière de mesurer l'intensité d'un conflit est le nombre de victimes (civiles et militaires) pondéré par leur dispersion par année. Par exemple, la mort de 5 000 personnes dans une guerre qui dure un an est différente du même nombre de victimes sur une période dix ou vingt ans. Cela dépend également du type d'armes utilisées par les parties en conflit. Intuitivement, une quantité plus grande d'armes disponibles ou l'accès à des technologies plus sophistiquées devraient avoir un impact sur le nombre des victimes. Toutefois cela ne semble pas se confirmer dans le cas des conflits civils, particulièrement de nature ethnique. Le conflit rwandais constitue à cet effet un exemple illustratif (Sislin et Pearson, 2001).

Une méthode alternative consiste à mesurer le nombre de victimes relativement au total de la population, mais cela peut s'avérer incorrect étant donné qu'il n'existe pas de preuves empiriques confirmant un nombre accru de victimes résultant des guerres dans des pays plus peuplés (Lacina, 2006).

Wallenstein et Sollenberg (1995) distinguent trois catégories de conflits armés en fonction du nombre de victimes : (1) des conflits armés mineurs, où le nombre de total des victimes pour la durée du conflit ne dépasse pas 1 000; (2) des conflits intermédiaires, où il a plus de 1 000 victimes pendant toute la durée du conflit et entre 25 et 1 000 par année; (3) les guerres, où il y a plus de 1 000 victimes pour chaque année du conflit.

Cette méthode a le mérite de rendre compte non seulement de l'intensité globale du conflit mais également des fluctuations qui ont lieu chaque année. Toutefois elle est moins pertinente pour les besoins analytiques de cette étude étant donné les indicateurs holistiques utilisés, notamment à cause des différences qui séparent les deux conflits (en termes de durée surtout).

En conséquence, l'intensité du conflit sera mesurée en deux temps : d'abord selon l'indice de violence de Carment, et ensuite selon le nombre total des victimes en regardant de manière globale leur répartition tout au long du conflit. Les variables suivantes seront aussi analysées.

### *LA DURÉE DU CONFLIT*

La durée du conflit est étroitement reliée au nombre de victimes. Toutefois, à cause d'autres effets qu'elle produit à long terme sur l'évolution du conflit, tels que, par

exemple, la radicalisation des parties ou le blocage des mécanismes de résolution, elle constitue une variable qui peut être étudiée de manière indépendante.

#### ***LA DIFFUSION DU CONFLIT***

La diffusion du conflit désigne en général tout acteur étatique participant au conflit. Un processus de diffusion interne peut également émerger par la participation d'acteurs additionnels (différents des belligérants originels au conflit).

#### ***L'ESCALADE DU CONFLIT***

L'escalade du conflit est directement reliée à l'intensité de la violence qui accompagne ce nouveau stade du conflit. Plus explicitement, l'escalade est conceptualisée comme une étape de transition du conflit qui est caractérisée par un changement vers un niveau plus violent de la confrontation (Dixon, 1996). En outre, ce changement doit être assez significatif et distinct par rapport à une intensification graduelle du conflit, en marquant une transformation de la nature même de celui-ci (Zartman, 1995).

#### ***L'EXTENSION DU CONFLIT***

L'extension du conflit représente la croissance graduelle de l'aire (en termes d'espace) qui constitue le théâtre des confrontations. Ainsi d'un foyer isolé, le conflit peut se propager dans plusieurs régions du pays.

#### ***LES FLUX DE RÉFUGIÉS***

Cette dernière variable est destinée à mesurer l'effet du conflit sur les populations civiles qui ne participent pas directement aux confrontations armées, sans pour autant compter parmi les victimes (combattants et civils tués). Une méthode similaire à celle employée pour mesurer l'intensité du conflit en termes de victimes sera employée. Ainsi, le nombre de réfugiés sera pondéré par le nombre d'années de conflit.

#### ***LES VARIABLES DE CONTRÔLE***

Les variables de contrôle sont destinées à étudier certaines conditions qui peuvent s'avérer des accélérateurs ou des inhibiteurs du conflit afin de mieux cerner l'évolution du conflit en présence et en absence d'une intervention. Les aspects analysés le plus fréquemment et qui sont repris ici sont : la fragmentation ethnique, le régime politique et l'irrédentisme.

### **IV) NAGORNO-KARABAKH : L'ÉCHEC DE L'INTERVENTION DES TIERCES PARTIES**

Le Nagorno-Karabakh désigne une enclave à l'intérieur de l'Azerbaïdjan majoritairement peuplée par des Arméniens dont le nombre s'élève à environ 5,8% de la population totale de l'Azerbaïdjan<sup>28</sup>. Les hostilités armées commencent en décembre 1991 quand la capitale du Nagorno-Karabakh, Stepanakert, est bombardée par l'armée azérie.

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<sup>28</sup> Ce pourcentage est conforme au recensement soviétique de 1989. Plusieurs variations de ce chiffre sont présentes dans la période post guerre froide à cause des mouvements de population causés par le conflit (source : <http://countrystudies.us/azerbaijan/18.htm>).

L'ouverture des hostilités est toutefois précédée par des massacres des populations civiles de part et d'autre.

Une nouvelle étape du conflit débute en février 1992 quand les Arméniens contre-attaquent et réussissent à prendre la ville de Shusha (ou Shushi en arménien), ainsi que le territoire qui les séparait de l'Arménie en établissant ainsi une connexion routière avec ce pays. Une nouvelle action de l'Azerbaïdjan à partir de septembre 1993 ne réussit pas toutefois à renverser les gains territoriaux des Arméniens et mène au cessez-le-feu de mai 1994, qui a confirmé la victoire de ces derniers (De Waal, 2003).

Plusieurs tierces parties ont tenté la médiation du conflit. La première tentative pour résoudre le conflit s'est déroulée au début de 1988 (avant même les hostilités armées), au moment où le conflit entrait dans sa phase initiale, et alors que l'Azerbaïdjan et l'Arménie se trouvaient toujours sous le contrôle soviétique. À cette époque, le gouvernement central soviétique a émergé comme le principal intervenant. L'intervention a échoué sous plusieurs aspects. Cette tierce partie ne réussit pas à rendre les coûts de l'emploi de la force assez élevés pour que la violence s'éteigne.

Pendant « l'Opération Anneau » (nommée ainsi parce que son but était d'encercler les villages arméniens par des paramilitaires azéris et de forcer leur population à s'enfuir), les troupes soviétiques qui stationnaient en Azerbaïdjan ont aidé les forces locales (Kaufman, 2001 :75). Cette action s'inscrivait dans la continuité de la répression violente de l'opposition nationaliste azérie par les troupes soviétiques, qui s'était déroulée une année plus tôt en janvier 1990 (Melander, 2001). Ainsi, la force a été utilisée à la fois contre les Arméniens lors de l'Opération Anneau mais aussi contre les nationalistes azéris afin de provoquer des négociations menant à un accord. Pendant l'été de 1991, étant donné leur incapacité d'arrêter les agressions des troupes azéries et soviétiques contre les villages arméniens, les leaders du Karabakh ont proposé que toutes les parties reconsidèrent les changements constitutionnels antérieurs, une déclaration qui faisait principalement référence aux changements de frontières proposés par le Nagorno-Karabakh et par l'Arménie. Cette proposition a été reçue favorablement à Bakou et à Erevan et une première rencontre a eu lieu en juillet entre les représentants du Nagorno-Karabakh et Moutalibov, le président de l'Azerbaïdjan. Cependant aucune des parties n'a poursuivi les pourparlers entamés à cette occasion et, quelques jours après, un des participants arméniens a été assassiné. Même si les opinions les plus répandues penchent du côté d'une implication des éléments radicaux arméniens, l'implication des extrémistes azéris n'est pas exclue non plus (Melander, 2001 :71). La conséquence incontestable de cet événement, qui se superpose à l'instabilité qui a suivi le coup d'État manqué à Moscou en août 1991, fut de mettre fin à toute tentative de négociation à court terme. Les violences reprennent et l'intensité du conflit escalade en septembre 1991 avec, pour la première fois, le bombardement de la capitale du Nagorno-Karabakh par l'artillerie azérie.

L'effondrement de l'Union Soviétique à partir d'août 1991 ouvre la voie à l'implication d'autres tierces parties. Mooradian et Druckman (1999) distinguent six tentatives de médiation qui ont lieu entre 1991 et 1995. Déjà, en septembre 1991, Boris Eltsine, le nouveau président de la Russie, et le président du Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, tentent une médiation du conflit. Le résultat de cette intervention est la signature d'un cessez-le-feu qui reste toutefois sans conséquences sur le terrain où les combats violents continuent.

L'Iran essaie également de jouer un rôle de tierce partie dans le conflit, pour une courte période entre février et mai 1992. Tout comme dans l'essai de médiation précédent, l'accord sur un cessez-le-feu est contredit par une escalade des confrontations armées au Nagorno-Karabakh.

En août 1992, une tierce partie qui remplit le critère d'impartialité et d'actions orientées vers la résolution du conflit, la Conférence sur la sécurité et la coopération en Europe (CSCE), commence son intervention au Nagorno-Karabakh. L'activité du Groupe de Minsk<sup>29</sup>, un organisme *ad hoc*, qui réunit plusieurs acteurs régionaux importants sous les auspices de la CSCE, est toutefois minée par la Russie qui a du mal à accepter de partager son influence régionale, surtout après la mise en place de la politique de l'« étranger proche » (*Near Abroad*)<sup>30</sup>, en novembre 1993. En conséquence à partir de ce moment et jusqu'en décembre 1994, la Russie s'efforce de monopoliser le rôle de médiateur dans le cadre du Groupe de Minsk, en se plaçant plutôt sur une position de compétition avec la CSCE (Mooradian et Druckman, 1999). Malgré ses imperfections, cette formule semble la plus appropriée à gérer le conflit, aspect souligné par la mise en place d'un cessez-le-feu, qui avec des exceptions mineures, reste en vigueur jusqu'à présent. Toutefois, le conflit perdure et sa diffusion par l'implication de l'Arménie n'a pas pu être empêchée.

L'échec de l'intervention du Groupe de Minsk peut également être évalué selon les incohérences qui caractérisent l'évolution sur le terrain du conflit par rapport aux objectifs et aux déclarations issus par l'intervenant (Hakala, 1998; Betts, 1999).

### *L'INTENSITÉ DU CONFLIT*

Deux stades sont clairement identifiables dans l'évolution du conflit. Premièrement, il s'agit d'une intensification constante du conflit à partir de 1988 jusqu'en 1994, autant en ce qui concerne l'emploi de la violence par les parties que par le nombre des victimes. À partir de 1994, le conflit est marqué par une diminution de la violence et le nombre de victimes est réduit de manière significative.

De manière globale, selon l'indice de la violence proposé par David Carment, pour sa période active, le conflit du Nagorno-Karabakh enregistre les valeurs les plus élevées en termes d'intensité de la violence, pour les trois indicateurs qui composent l'indice<sup>31</sup>. Ainsi, la première variable, la sévérité de la violence, est évaluée au niveau de la guerre ouverte (valeur 4/4). Dès son déclenchement en décembre 1991, le conflit escalade rapidement et est caractérisé par des affrontements armés massives et généralisés qui engouffrent l'ensemble de la province. Les premières victimes sont déjà enregistrées en janvier 1992. Après 1994, la sévérité de la violence se situe au niveau des confrontations mineures (valeur 2/4) qui sont la conséquence des échanges armés sporadiques entre les deux parties sur la ligne de cessez-le-feu (Gleditsch *et all.*, 2002)<sup>32</sup>.

En ce qui concerne la deuxième variable, le rôle de violence par rapport à la gestion du conflit, le Haut-Karabakh enregistre également une valeur supérieure pour sa période active (4/4) désignant le fait que la violence a été la principale technique utilisée par les

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<sup>29</sup> Le Groupe de Minsk est formé initialement par la Russie, la Suède, la Turquie, l'Italie, l'Allemagne, la France, la Tchécoslovaquie, la Biélorussie et les États-Unis (Croissant, 1998 : 85).

<sup>30</sup> *Near Abroad* constitue la doctrine dirigeant à la fois la politique étrangère et de défense de la Russie et qui contient quelques principes directeurs, tels que la protection des droits et libertés des minorités russes dans les ex-républiques soviétiques, contrecarrer l'expansion des alliances militaires au détriment des intérêts de sécurité russes, la défense des installations militaires russes dans les ex-républiques soviétiques, empêcher le déploiement des troupes étrangères sur les territoires des pays avoisinant la Russie, sans l'accord explicite de Moscou ou du Conseil de sécurité, ainsi que la défense de tout autre « intérêt vital de la Russie » (Croissant, 1998 : 64).

<sup>31</sup> L'opérationnalisation des variables est conforme à la banque de données *International Crisis Behavior*, utilisée également par l'étude de Carment. <http://www.icbnet.org>.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.pcr.uu.se/database/conflictSummary.php?bcID-221>

parties pour résoudre leur différend. Jusqu'au moment du cessez-le-feu de mai 1994, malgré plusieurs tentatives de négociation facilitées par les tierces parties, les adversaires recourent aux armes pour faire avancer leur cause. À titre d'exemple, suite à la tentative de médiation en vue d'un cessez-le-feu entreprise par l'Iran en février 1992, les combats reprennent presque immédiatement en marquant une escalade de la violence. Pendant la période inactive du conflit, seulement des affrontements mineurs ont lieu (une valeur de 2/4), malgré le fait que le conflit reste sans solution et les négociations ne semblent pas aboutir à une solution acceptable pour l'ensemble des parties.

Finalement, pour la troisième variable de l'indice de violence de Carment, la présence de violence avant, pendant et après le conflit, Nagorno-Karabakh enregistre un score maximal (4/4) pour l'ensemble de la durée du conflit, étant donné sa place centrale dans le déroulement des échanges entre les belligérants.

En conséquence, la première modalité d'estimer l'intensité du conflit selon la sévérité de la violence, la centralité de la violence et sa présence tout au long du conflit conduit à deux conclusions : (1) dans la période 1992-1994, le conflit atteint un seuil maximal de violence (12/12); (2) à la suite du cessez le feu de 1994 et jusqu'à présent, l'intensité du conflit a diminué de manière significative, en enregistrant un score de 8/12 sur l'échelle de Carment.

L'autre volet d'étude concernant l'intensité du conflit s'arrête sur le nombre de victimes. Dans le cas du Haut-Karabakh, le nombre total de victimes pour l'ensemble du conflit est d'environ 18 000 morts, sans toutefois pouvoir préciser s'il s'agit uniquement des personnes impliquées dans les combats armés ou d'autres victimes qui ont été tuées à la suite des combats sans y avoir participé directement (Gleditsch *et al.*, 2002). La période qui s'étend de 1992 à 1994 est celle au cours de laquelle ont été enregistrées la plupart des victimes, c'est-à-dire avant la mise en place du cessez-le-feu de mai 1994. Plus précisément, le cumul des victimes à chaque année enregistre une croissance spectaculaire, partant d'entre 1 200 et 2 000 morts en 1992, à entre 4 000 et 10 000 morts en 1993 et à entre 10 000 et 18 000 pour la seule année 1994<sup>33</sup>. En ce qui concerne la période qui suit, c'est-à-dire celle où le conflit entre dans sa phase « gelée », le nombre de victimes ne dépasse pas 25 morts par année.

### ***LA DURÉE DU CONFLIT***

Les enjeux du conflit sont précisés dès février 1988, alors que des manifestations populaires en Arménie et au Karabakh demandent leur union; elles sont suivies de massacres isolés des populations civiles appartenant au groupe ethnique rival. Toutefois, c'est la déclaration d'indépendance du Nagorno-Karabakh en décembre 1991 qui marque le point de confrontation ouverte entre la région séparatiste et le gouvernement azéri. Le conflit perdure jusqu'à présent mais il est caractérisé comme inactif ou « gelé ».

### ***LA DIFFUSION DU CONFLIT***

Le conflit s'est diffusé par la participation de l'Arménie aux côtés du Nagorno-Karabakh dans les hostilités l'opposant aux autorités azérides. L'Arménie est impliquée non seulement par son appui logistique et matériel mais également par l'envoi des « volontaires » activement impliqués dans les opérations militaires à partir de 1990. En 1992, l'Arménie déclare que le conflit est une affaire interne de l'Azerbaïdjan et nie toute implication. Toutefois, le sort de la région reste étroitement lié à l'appui de l'Arménie qui

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<sup>33</sup> Il est difficile d'établir des chiffres plus exacts car chaque partie a tendance à minimiser ses pertes et accentuer celles de l'adversaire.

reste le porte-parole du Nagorno-Karabakh dans les instances internationales et qui soutient économiquement et financièrement ses institutions politiques et administratives. Un exemple frappant de ce lien étroit est la mainmise sur le pouvoir politique en Arménie par des élites en provenance du Karabakh.

### ***L'ESCALADE DU CONFLIT***

Le conflit s'envenime à plusieurs reprises entre 1992 et 1994 et, une seule fois, de manière beaucoup plus restreinte, pendant sa période inactive. Ainsi, une première escalade a lieu après l'indépendance de l'Azerbaïdjan, en janvier 1992, alors que les premiers bombardements sur la capitale Stepanakert par les forces azéries ont lieu, suivis des attaques arméniennes sur la ville azérie de Shusha.

Une deuxième escalade survient au moment même où l'on négociait un accord de cessez-le-feu sous médiation iranienne, le 8 mai 1992. Un troisième cycle s'ouvre ensuite en avril 1993 quand une intense offensive arménienne réussit à occuper le territoire qui séparait le Karabakh de l'Arménie. Un autre seuil d'escalade est franchi en décembre 1993 quand les forces azéries lancent une offensive pour regagner le territoire perdu plus tôt cette même année. Finalement, une autre escalade du conflit se produit en avril 1994 quand les forces azéries augmentent l'intensité de leur offensive. Face à l'échec de cette stratégie, principalement en raison d'une résistance arménienne soutenue, un cessez-le feu est signé le 9 mai 1994, date qui marque la fin du conflit actif. Pendant la période inactive du conflit une escalade de basse échelle a lieu entre mars et mai 2005 avec une augmentation des incidents armés sur la ligne de cessez-le-feu.

### ***L'EXTENSION DU CONFLIT***

À ses débuts, le conflit du Haut-Karabakh reste principalement confiné aux frontières de cette province. Toutefois, une fois que les hostilités armées commencent, il s'étend rapidement dans les régions avoisinantes. En mai 1994, les Arméniens occupent l'ensemble du territoire de la province ainsi qu'une surface de 5 500 kilomètres carrés de territoire azéri, environ 14% de l'ensemble du territoire de l'Azerbaïdjan, d'où la population azérie est massivement expulsée (Chaliand, 1994).

### ***LES FLUX DE RÉFUGIÉS***

Les flux de réfugiés commencent en 1988 et suivent normalement les exactions infligées à la population civile par les groupes armés ou, de manière plus diffuse, les pressions sociales résultant de la radicalisation du conflit. Ainsi, en Azerbaïdjan, 300 000 réfugiés sont arrivés du territoire de l'Arménie, tandis que le nombre des personnes déplacées comme résultat du conflit de Nagorno-Karabakh et des régions avoisinantes se situe entre 600 000 et 800 000 (Cornell, 1999).

Selon les chiffres du Haut commissaire pour les réfugiés, l'Arménie a reçu un flux d'environ 200 000 réfugiés comme conséquence du conflit (UNHCR, 2004). Le conflit du Nagorno-Karabakh peut être considéré comme un cas de nettoyage ethnique moderne, la plupart des régions sous le contrôle d'un groupe ethnique étant, dans une large mesure, vidées des populations d'ethnie différente et le retour des personnes déplacées est pratiquement impossible.

## LE RÔLE DES TIERCES PARTIES

Sans forcément aggraver le conflit, l'échec des tierces parties se traduit principalement par leur incapacité d'avoir un impact majeur sur l'une des dimensions du conflit (telles qu'étudiées). La lenteur, le manque de cohérence et des intérêts conflictuels qui ont marqué ces interventions ont servi à miner la confiance des parties belligérantes en une solution négociée du conflit. Cette situation provoque la remarque de l'ancien président arménien qui affirme en 2000 que les représentants des différents pays faisant partie du Groupe de Minsk étaient plus impliqués « dans une compétition entre eux-mêmes que d'essayer véritablement de résoudre la question du Karabakh » (De Waal, 2003 :230).

Face à l'échec des tierces parties au conflit du Karabakh, est-ce que la non-intervention est préférable quand les intervenants externes ne peuvent pas assurer les conditions garantissant l'efficacité de leurs actions? Le conflit des Karens en Birmanie constitue un cas illustratif à cet effet.

## V) LES KARENS : UN CAS DE NON-INTERVENTION

Les Karens regroupent environ 7% de la population multiethnique de la Birmanie. Ils sont en grande partie concentrés dans la région contiguë à la frontière avec la Thaïlande. Ancienne colonie britannique, la Birmanie gagne son indépendance après la fin de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale et presque immédiatement un fort mouvement indépendantiste se forme au sein de la population karen qui réclame un État propre. L'Union nationale des Karens (UNK), la principale force politique à l'époque, demande le 3 février 1948 au gouvernement birman la constitution d'une entité politique indépendante (Gleditsch *et al.*, 2002)<sup>34</sup>.

D'une manière similaire au conflit du Nagorno-Karabakh, le conflit karen commence par une mobilisation populaire en faveur d'un État indépendant, climat qui se transforme graduellement en tensions interethniques affectant principalement les populations civiles et qui mènent éventuellement à la création des groupes armés. Comme cela s'est produit dans le conflit au Karabakh, en Birmanie, en janvier 1949, soit moins d'une année après la mobilisation populaire, les premiers affrontements éclatent entre des factions armées de l'UNK et les forces armées et les paramilitaires fidèles au gouvernement birman. Le succès militaire initial des Karens est renversé par des dissensions internes qui les rendent beaucoup plus vulnérables aux offensives des troupes gouvernementales. La violence reprend particulièrement en 1995, à la suite de la formation d'un nouveau groupe, l'Armée Démocratique Bouddhiste Karen. À cette époque, les troupes gouvernementales commencent à attaquer de plus en plus souvent la population civile dans les zones de conflit.

Un régime de dictature militaire s'est installé au pouvoir entre 1962 et 1988, dominé par le Parti du Programme Socialiste de Birmanie, sous la direction du général Ne Win, qui siégea d'abord comme leader militaire, puis ensuite comme président autoproclamé de l'État<sup>35</sup>.

Des manifestations généralisées secouent le pays en 1988 demandant la mise en place d'un gouvernement civil élu. Après une répression massive et particulièrement violente, l'armée organise un coup d'État et reprend la direction du pays sous le nom du *State Law and Order Restoration Council* (le SLORC, ou Conseil d'État pour la restauration de la loi et de l'ordre). Malgré des élections organisées en 1990, gagnées avec une majorité

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.pcr.uu.se/database/conflictSummary.php?bcID=181>

<sup>35</sup> CIA, *The World Fact Book*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bm.html>.

écrasante par le principal parti d'opposition, la Ligue Nationale pour la Démocratie, la junte militaire retient le pouvoir politique et intensifie la répression<sup>36</sup>.

Le gouvernement a proposé plusieurs accords de cessez-le-feu aux groupes insurgés depuis le coup d'État de 1988. L'UNK a refusé toutefois des négociations bilatérales, insistant sur la nécessité d'un accord global impliquant l'ensemble des groupes représentés par l'Alliance Démocratique de Birmanie, une coalition regroupant plusieurs groupes ethniques impliqués dans le combat contre la dictature militaire. Malgré le cessez-le-feu proclamé par le gouvernement en avril 1992, l'offensive contre les Karens se poursuit.

L'année 1995 constitue un nouveau seuil de radicalisation de la confrontation. Le régime continue une politique de répression contre l'opposition démocratique, en général, et contre le mouvement de résistance des Karens, en particulier.

En 2006, la relance d'une offensive gouvernementale a comme conséquences un nombre accru des victimes civiles et un flux d'environ 25 000 personnes, réfugiées sur le territoire voisin de la Thaïlande.

### *L'INTENSITÉ DU CONFLIT*

Le conflit reste à un seuil inférieur de violence pour une grande partie de son déroulement. En 1992, une escalade extrêmement violente le porte au seuil de guerre (Gleditsch *et al.*, 2002). Avant l'annonce de l'arrêt des opérations militaires d'avril 1992, la junte se lance dans une offensive violente afin d'annihiler la résistance des Karens, en se donnant comme objectif la prise de leur quartier général, Manerplaw, au plus tard à la fin de mars 1992. Des combats acharnés, qui ont comme conséquence un nombre accru de victimes, se déroulent tout au long du printemps de 1992 et plusieurs points de résistance karens sont conquis sans pourtant que l'objectif majeur de contrôler Manerplaw puisse être réalisé (New York Times, 1992).

L'offensive contre les Karens est suspendue pendant la saison pluvieuse, mais les forces birmanes recommencent les opérations militaires dès septembre 1992 (Human Rights Watch, 1993). Cette flambée de violence qui s'accompagne d'un nombre de victimes dépassant le seuil de 1 000 permet de considérer l'année 1992 comme une des plus meurtrières du conflit, en signalant le passage des affrontements militaires isolés à celui d'une guerre généralisée entre l'armée birmane et la résistance karen.

Par conséquent, selon l'indice de la violence de Carment, le conflit karen enregistre des valeurs modérées pour la plupart de son parcours, soit des affrontements isolés en termes de sévérité de la violence (score 2/4), sauf pour l'année 1992 quand on assiste à une guerre ouverte (score 4/4).

En ce qui concerne le rôle de violence par rapport à la gestion du conflit, à partir de 1948 et particulièrement après la prise du pouvoir par l'armée en 1962, les représentants des minorités ethniques de Birmanie ont été exclus de tous les niveaux de prise de décision. Avant 1989, l'armée birmane mène une offensive de basse intensité contre les insurrections nationalistes ethniques, sans considérer d'autres modes de gestion du conflit, à l'exception de la violence. Par la suite, la junte entame des négociations avec certains groupes rebelles, comme partie de sa stratégie « diviser pour mieux régner », ce qui mène à des accords séparés dont l'objectif principal est d'isoler et priver d'appui les groupes les plus contestataires, parmi lesquels les Karens (South, 2004). En conséquence, la violence reste le mode privilégié de gestion du conflit (score 4/4), à l'exception de quelques

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www3.soros.org/burma/CRISIS/democ.html>.

tentatives isolées, telles que le cessez-le-feu unilatéral proclamé par le gouvernement en 1992 mais rejeté par les Karens. En décembre 1995, une rencontre secrète qui a lieu entre les représentants de l'UNK et ceux du gouvernement se termine sans résultats concrets. À partir de 2003, une série de pourparlers qui réunit les leaders du l'UNK et les autorités birmanes ont lieu, souvent interrompues par une reprise des hostilités (Gleditsch *et al.*, 2002). Pendant cette période, si l'emploi de la force reste important, d'autres techniques de gestion du conflit émergent et les contacts entre les parties s'intensifient (score 3/4).

Finalement, tout comme dans le cas du Haut-Karabakh, pour la troisième variable de l'indice de violence de Carment, la présence de la violence avant, pendant et après le conflit, l'on enregistre un score maximal (4/4) pour l'ensemble de la durée du conflit, étant donné sa place centrale dans le déroulement des échanges entre les belligérants.

En résumé, le conflit connaît plusieurs fluctuations d'intensité, qui font varier l'indice de violence comme suit :

- (1) pour la période 1949-1991, un score de 10/12;
- (2) pour l'année 1992, un score de 11/12;
- (3) pour la période 1993-1995, un score de 10/12;
- (4) à partir de 1995 jusqu'à aujourd'hui, un score de 9/12.

L'autre volet qui mesure l'intensité du conflit par le nombre des victimes enregistrées tout au long de son déroulement constitue un indicateur moins fiable dans le cas de ce conflit. Étant donné sa longue durée et le manque d'informations vérifiables concernant le nombre de victimes, on ne peut utiliser les données disponibles que de manière approximative. Le conflit étant caractérisé de basse intensité pour une grande partie de son évolution, le nombre de victimes par année devrait se situer entre 25 et 100, sauf pour l'année 1992 quand, sans pouvoir donner un nombre exact, les victimes ont dépassé le seuil de 1 000. En 2006, la *Conflict Database* du *Department of Peace and Conflict Research* à Uppsala University établit un nombre total des victimes pour toute la durée du conflit à 15 312, sous réserve du fait que cette « estimation » se situe au seuil le plus bas et qu'elle ne prend pas en compte les nombreuses attaques contre la population civile (Gleditsch *et al.*, 2002).

#### ***LA DURÉE DU CONFLIT***

Le conflit opposant la minorité karen au gouvernement birman est une des plus longues confrontations de nature ethnique qui éclatent au début de la guerre froide et qui durent jusqu'à aujourd'hui. Les enjeux du conflit se précisent tout de suite après l'indépendance de la Birmanie en 1948, moment où les Karens formulent une demande d'autodétermination et le droit à un État indépendant. Les tensions intercommunautaires qui en résultent ont comme conséquence l'apparition de factions armées très tôt dans l'évolution du conflit; ce qui fait qu'au début de 1949, on enregistre les premiers combats violents entre les forces de l'UNK d'un côté et une coalition de forces gouvernementales et paramilitaires birmanes de l'autre côté. Le conflit perdure jusqu'à aujourd'hui avec peu de chances que la nouvelle vague de répression du régime militaire puisse apporter une solution à ce différend de longue date.

#### ***LA DIFFUSION DU CONFLIT***

Un premier élément contextuel à rappeler est le fait que le conflit avec les Karen n'est qu'un parmi plusieurs qui se déroulent dans la couronne montagneuse de Birmanie. Pour la période du début des années 1980, David I. Steinberg recense plus de 20 armées

différentes en activité contre le gouvernement de Rangoon. Ce nombre a diminué depuis (Steinberg, 2001).

Comme le groupe ethnique des Karens occupe un territoire qui s'étend aussi en Thaïlande, ce pays est le plus susceptible d'être impliqué dans un processus de diffusion du conflit; et c'est justement ce qui s'est produit. L'UNK a utilisé le territoire thaïlandais à quelques reprises pour se retirer devant l'offensive birmane et la Thaïlande a été accusée par la Birmanie d'aider les groupes armés karens. Le gouvernement thaïlandais a toutefois rejeté ces accusations, en admettant seulement la présence des camps de réfugiés sur son territoire.

Toutefois, cette dynamique ne permet pas de conclure, pour l'instant, à une diffusion du conflit. La Thaïlande s'est montrée plus que réticente à aider les groupes rebelles en craignant une déstabilisation de ses régions frontalières. Des incidents isolés tels que l'occupation de l'ambassade birmane en Thaïlande en 1999 par des « étudiants activistes » karens et la prise en otage d'un millier de personnes dans un hôpital thaïlandais par des guérillas karens en janvier 2000 (Kerr, 2000) constituent des signes inquiétants, potentiellement préludes à un éventuel débordement du conflit.

### ***L'ESCALADE DU CONFLIT***

Plusieurs flambées sporadiques du conflit sont enregistrées tout au long de son déroulement. Toutefois l'escalade, caractérisée par un changement vers un niveau plus violent de la confrontation, assez significatif et distinct par rapport à une intensification graduelle du conflit, en marquant une transformation de la nature même de celui-ci, est enregistrée seulement à deux moments : en 1949 et en 1992 (Gleditsch *et al.*, 2002). En 1949, le conflit dépasse le seuil des premiers affrontements violents organisés qui suivent l'apparition des factions armées. En 1992, une intensification soudaine qui se traduit par un nombre accru de victimes transforme les confrontations isolées antérieures en guerre ouverte.

### ***L'EXTENSION DU CONFLIT***

À l'exception des quelques débordements sur le territoire de la Thaïlande, le conflit reste confiné aux régions frontalières qui constituent le territoire traditionnel des Karens. On ne peut pas donc conclure à une extension du conflit au-delà de son foyer initial. Il faut toutefois préciser que la résistance des Karens ne constitue qu'une pièce d'un puzzle autrement plus complexe. On peut se poser la question à savoir que serait-il advenu de cette résistance karen sans les multiples autres résistances à la junte birmane sur l'ensemble du territoire?

### ***LES FLUX DE RÉFUGIÉS***

Selon le rapport le plus récent du *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre*, les conflits internes de la Birmanie ont causé la crise la plus grave des personnes déplacées par la force sur le continent asiatique. En Birmanie, tout au long des insurrections qui ont secoué le pays à partir de son indépendance et jusqu'à aujourd'hui, environ trois millions de personnes ont dû quitter leurs maisons. Aujourd'hui, au moins 500 000 personnes sont des réfugiés à l'intérieur de la Birmanie (International Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2007).

Le nombre de personnes qui ont cherché un refuge à l'extérieur de la Birmanie ne cesse de croître d'année en année. Le nombre actuel de réfugiés sur le territoire de la Thaïlande, alimenté principalement par le conflit karen, dépasse 200 000 personnes (UNCHR, 2007).

Ce chiffre sous-estime toutefois l'ampleur du mouvement des populations de la Birmanie vers la Thaïlande car il ne prend en compte que les réfugiés enregistrés et résidant dans les camps. Selon un rapport du *Thailand Burma Border Consortium* (2006), au moins un million de personnes ont traversé la frontière entre les deux pays.

### **L'ABSENCE DES TIERCES PARTIES**

Aucune tierce partie n'est impliquée dans une médiation du conflit ou dans la mise en place d'un cadre de résolution pacifique. Plusieurs tentatives d'influencer indirectement le cours du conflit, telles que l'appel de l'Union européenne en 1992 à mettre en place un embargo global sur les armes livrées au gouvernement birman, restent sans résultat. En fait, les autorités birmanes bénéficient de l'appui des deux grandes puissances régionales, la Chine et l'Inde, qui leur fournissent des armes utilisées par la suite dans les offensives contre l'insurrection karen. En même temps, la Chine a pu bloquer par son droit de veto toute tentative de l'ONU de modérer les méthodes violentes utilisées par Rangoon.

L'implication de l'Union européenne et des États-Unis s'est matérialisée par des mesures punitives plutôt que par un engagement proactif dans la résolution du conflit. Ainsi, depuis le milieu des années 1990, l'Union européenne a imposé des sanctions économiques à la Birmanie et a limité ses financements aux programmes humanitaires. La Birmanie est aussi sous le coup de sanctions américaines depuis que le président Bill Clinton a décidé d'interdire les investissements américains dans le pays en mai 1997. Les importations de produits en provenance de la Birmanie ont été interdites par le président Bush en juillet 2003, ainsi que l'accès aux services financiers américains par les entreprises birmanes.

Un de rares essais de médiation du conflit a lieu en 2002, quand la Thaïlande a offert de négocier la tenue des pourparlers, mais les parties ne se sont jamais rencontrées dans un cadre formel (Gleditsch *et al.*, 2002). L'ASEAN, la seule organisation régionale, n'a pas encore développé de mécanismes de gestion et résolution des conflits.

## **VI) CONCLUSION**

Les conclusions de cette étude restent mitigées (tableau 1). De manière générale, nous remarquons que, dans la première étude de cas, l'intensité du conflit est plus élevée, autant en termes de violence (on enregistre à certains moments un score maximal de 12/12, une situation qui n'apparaît pas dans le deuxième cas), qu'en termes de victimes (malgré la période beaucoup plus courte du conflit actif). En termes de durée, le deuxième conflit étudié s'étend sur une période beaucoup plus longue que dans le cas du Haut-Karabakh.

Deux autres dimensions étudiées, la diffusion du conflit et son extension sont présentes dans le premier cas et absentes dans le deuxième. L'escalade du conflit est également un phénomène beaucoup plus fréquent dans le cas du Karabakh par rapport au conflit karen.

Au total, les personnes déplacées et les réfugiés sont plus nombreux dans le deuxième cas, un chiffre qui doit toutefois être relativisé à la fois par la durée de ce conflit et par le manque d'informations précises.

**Tableau 1**  
**Les caractéristiques des conflits du Haut-Karabakh et des Karen**

<b>Caractéristiques</b>	<b>Conflit du Haut-Karabakh</b>	<b>Conflit karen</b>
<b>Intensité du conflit</b>	- indice de violence : 12/12 (1992-1994); 8/12 (1994-présent) - victimes totales : 18 000 (concentrées au cours de la période active du conflit 1992-1994)	- indice de violence : 10/12 (1949-1991); 11/12 (1992); 10/12 (1993-1995); 9/12 (1995-présent) - victimes totales : 15 000 (réparties de manière relativement égale sur l'ensemble du déroulement du conflit)
<b>Durée du conflit</b>	1991-1994 (période d'activité) 1994-2007 (période d'inactivité)	1949-2007 (période d'activité)
<b>Diffusion du conflit</b>	oui	non
<b>Escalade du conflit</b>	5 seuils d'escalade	2 seuils d'escalade
<b>Extension du conflit</b>	oui	non
<b>Réfugiés</b> (y compris les personnes déplacées à l'intérieur de leur pays)	Environ 1 300 000	Environ 3 000 000
<b>Variables de contrôle (V1=fragmentation ethnique, V2=régime politique, V3=irrédentisme)</b>	V1=plus qu'un groupe ethnique minoritaire V2=autocratie V3=projet irrédentiste	V1=plus qu'un groupe ethnique minoritaire V2=autocratie V3=aucun projet irrédentiste

Les variables de contrôle enregistrent des valeurs similaires pour deux des dimensions étudiées (fragmentation ethnique et régime politique). Cependant, dans le cas du Haut-Karabakh il faut signaler la présence d'un projet irrédentiste, une circonstance qui pourrait contribuer à l'aggravation du conflit.

Deux types de conclusions découlent de cette analyse. Premièrement, le conflit où l'on assiste à une intervention échouée des tierces parties est relativement plus intense et déborde de son foyer initial à la fois à l'intérieur qu'à l'extérieur de l'État. Toutefois sa période active est beaucoup plus courte que dans le cas du conflit où il n'y a aucune intervention. Ce scénario peut être expliqué par le fait que la présence des tierces parties a signalé aux parties belligérantes l'éventualité d'une négociation en vue de la résolution du conflit. Toutefois la manière inadéquate et inefficace de l'intervention a incité les adversaires à intensifier les combats afin d'arriver à la table de négociation avec le plus d'avantages possibles, une dynamique qui est, en effet, ressortie lors des pourparlers ultérieurs. Les pressions constantes exercées par les tierces parties sur le terrain ont fait en sorte que, si on n'a pas réussi à négocier une résolution définitive, la violence a quand même été envisagée comme une solution à court terme; elle a d'ailleurs été stoppée au moment où au moins un des adversaires a atteint des gains politiques et territoriaux acceptables. Très peu de victimes ont été enregistrées après l'arrêt des hostilités et elles concernent principalement les troupes placées sur la ligne de cessez-le-feu.

Dans le cas du conflit karen, l'absence des tierces parties a fait en sorte qu'aucune pression pour l'arrêt de la violence n'a été exercée sur les belligérants qui ont continué à l'envisager comme un moyen de règlement du conflit à long terme. Cela explique la basse intensité du conflit pour une grande partie de son évolution, mais également les flambées extrêmement violentes, comme celle de 1992, dont la répétition reste une possibilité très présente. En Birmanie, presque 60 années de conflits civils ont causé des dégâts matériels et humains, que le chiffre de trois millions de personnes déplacées et réfugiées (sur une population totale de 51 millions d'habitants en 2005) n'exprime que de manière très incomplète.

Une deuxième conclusion qui résulte de cette étude rejoint l'objectif initial de ce projet. Si le succès de l'intervention ne peut pas être garanti avec certitude, devrait-on quand même se lancer dans une telle entreprise même au risque d'un échec?

Tel que démontré par cette brève étude comparative, une intervention qui ne dispose pas des moyens suffisants ou de moyens efficaces ne peut pas empêcher (et dans certains cas, peut causer) l'aggravation du conflit, surtout en termes de violence, de victimes, d'escalade et de débordement des frontières initiales. Toutefois, cette évolution est en général à court terme et si l'intervention ne réussit pas à résoudre le conflit de manière durable, la violence comme mode de gestion du conflit ne subsiste pas à long terme : le conflit est « gelé » (pas de résolution, mais pas d'emploi de la force non plus). Des cas tels que Chypre, la Bosnie et le Kosovo en sont des exemples.

Par contre si aucune intervention n'a lieu, un conflit violent de basse intensité peut continuer pendant une longue période de temps avec des conséquences néfastes sur plusieurs générations.

En conclusion, quand les tierces parties sont confrontées au dilemme d'intervenir au risque d'un échec, ou de rester tout simplement à l'écart, une des considérations à prendre en compte concerne les effets à long terme sur le conflit. Si l'intervention échoue, les adversaires intensifieront leur combat mais sur période une plus courte que dans les cas où l'on n'intervient pas.

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# CHAPITRE 3

## Le terrorisme dans les conflits identitaires. Le cas de la Thaïlande

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Dans les années 1990, une euphorie avait gagné bon nombre d'intellectuels qui proclamaient, par exemple, l'avènement prochain d'un village global, la fin des idéologies<sup>37</sup> ou la *Pax Americana*. En fait, un monde dans lequel l'universalisme gagnerait sur les particularismes. Or, force est de constater que les particularismes s'avèrent toujours d'une grande actualité et d'une grande importance, particulièrement dans l'étude des relations internationales : les conflits ayant une dimension nationaliste, ethnique ou identitaire<sup>38</sup> sont de plus en plus répandus (Brown, 1997; Eller, 1999). Or, une autre réalité bien d'actualité vient parfois croiser celle des conflits identitaires : le terrorisme. En fait, les conflits identitaires ont souvent été une source importante de terrorisme. « *Many prominent terrorist groups, from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Irish Republican Army, are motivated by ethnic concerns* » (Kaufman, 2006). Quoique la littérature sur les conflits identitaires soit riche et abondante, le rôle du terrorisme dans l'étude des conflits identitaires est une question insuffisamment expliquée et pour laquelle peu de développements théoriques existent.

Dans cette recherche, nous analyserons les liens qui existent entre la violence terroriste et la violence issue de conflits identitaires en identifiant le rôle du terrorisme dans le conflit identitaire qui a cours dans les provinces qui comptent une forte majorité musulmane au sud de la Thaïlande<sup>39</sup>. Plus particulièrement, nous nous demanderons si le terrorisme est instrumentalisé par les groupes insurgés. Le conflit dans les provinces du sud de la Thaïlande semble tout désigné comme étude de cas puisqu'il y a présence simultanée d'une forme de terrorisme et d'un conflit identitaire. Afin de répondre à notre question de recherche, nous commencerons par expliquer brièvement notre méthodologie et par définir nos concepts principaux (terrorisme et conflit identitaire). Ensuite, nous effectuerons un rappel de l'historique du conflit pour, par la suite, analyser divers éléments clés tels que la formation des insurgés, l'organisation de la violence et les stratégies des insurgés. Finalement, nous conclurons en précisant la validation ou non de notre hypothèse tout en mentionnant quelques limites à notre recherche.

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<sup>37</sup> Pensons notamment aux propos désormais célèbres de Francis Fukuyama sur la fin de l'histoire par la victoire du libéralisme et de la démocratie.

<sup>38</sup> Dans cette recherche, nous utiliserons le terme « conflit identitaire » plutôt que « conflit ethnique » quoique leur sens soit similaire. En fait, l'ethnicité fait souvent référence à un type de déterminisme (nous naissons avec une certaine ethnicité) alors que le fait de parler de conflit identitaire implique la notion de construction de l'identité. Cependant, comme la littérature utilisant la terminologie « conflit identitaire » est restreinte, nous utilisons la littérature sur les conflits dits ethniques.

<sup>39</sup> Il faut noter que les musulmans sont présents dans pratiquement toutes les provinces de la Thaïlande. Cependant, les musulmans d'origine malaise sont concentrés dans trois provinces du sud de la Thaïlande, Yala, Pattani et Narathiwat.

## **D) MÉTHODOLOGIE**

Nous tenterons de vérifier si le terrorisme est instrumentalisé par les groupes insurgés dans le conflit des provinces au sud de la Thaïlande. Notre hypothèse est que les groupes ethniques utilisent le terrorisme pour parvenir à leurs fins. Pour cela, nous adopterons une approche essentiellement réaliste. Cela implique que nous considérons les différents acteurs en jeu comme des acteurs rationnels qui agissent selon un calcul coûts-bénéfices. Aussi, comme il est question d'un conflit intra étatique et que nous avons choisi un angle d'approche micro, l'acteur traditionnellement considéré par l'approche rationnelle, l'État, ne semble pas approprié pour cette recherche. Par contre, nous considérons les groupes insurgés en tant qu'entité homogène même si ce n'est pas le cas dans la réalité. Deux raisons expliquent notre choix. Premièrement, l'approche rationnelle considère l'État comme un acteur homogène en partie pour faciliter l'analyse. Nous faisons de même pour les insurgés. Deuxièmement, la dynamique entre les divers groupes en jeu dans le conflit n'est pas facile à analyser. De plus, aucun groupe n'a un rôle plus important que les autres. Ainsi, il nous a semblé plus évident de considérer ces différents groupes comme une entité.

Un autre avantage de l'approche rationnelle pour le cas qui nous intéresse est que nous utilisons le concept d'instrumentalisation dans notre question de recherche. Or, l'action d'instrumentaliser, qui est définie dans *Le Petit Robert* comme étant celle « de considérer quelqu'un ou quelque chose comme un instrument; rendre purement utilitaire », s'inscrit parfaitement dans cette approche puisqu'elle sous-tend la notion de calcul, d'utilité. Conséquemment, nous partons de la prémisse selon laquelle les groupes identitaires ne développeront pas de lien avec les réseaux terroristes ou n'utiliseront pas les techniques terroristes si cela ne les aide pas à parvenir à leurs fins. Notre recherche s'appuiera sur des sources secondaires et sera orientée autour d'indicateurs clés : la formation des insurgés, l'organisation de la violence et les stratégies utilisées, le financement des insurgés et les revendications des groupes insurgés. Pour débiter, définissons les deux concepts centraux de notre recherche soit le terrorisme et le conflit identitaire.

### ***TERRORISME***

Le seul consensus existant dans la littérature au sujet du concept de terrorisme est qu'aucune définition ne fait consensus. Le fait de tenter de définir le terrorisme nous confronte à deux problèmes d'envergure. Premièrement, plus la définition adoptée est large, plus elle est englobante. Le danger est d'inclure des mouvements nationalistes ou de libération, par exemple. Deuxièmement, le terme de terrorisme a une utilisation politique non négligeable. Ainsi, principalement depuis le 11 septembre 2001, le fait de définir un groupe comme terroriste a de considérables implications. Par exemple, le groupe peut se voir inscrire sur la liste des organisations terroristes; il peut être mis sous surveillance constante; et les « solutions » proposées pour mettre fin au conflit peuvent s'avérer fort souvent radicales<sup>40</sup>.

De plus, le terrorisme est une réalité complexe. Sa complexité est en partie due à la nature des acteurs. Ces derniers ne sont pas les États comme dans la vision classique des relations internationales. Les acteurs sont principalement des groupes de personnes qui agissent à l'intérieur de réseaux transnationaux et souvent transethniques. En Asie du

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<sup>40</sup> C'est ainsi, par exemple, que l'ancien premier ministre de la Thaïlande, Thaksin Sinawatra, a justifié bon nombre d'arrestations arbitraires et la création de « listes noires » par le fait que le conflit dans le sud était soit disant terroriste.

Sud-Est, le réseau le plus actif et le plus important est le Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)<sup>41</sup>. Pour les buts de notre recherche, nous adopterons la définition la plus large qui existe. En effet, dans son expression la plus simple, le terrorisme consiste en l'utilisation de la terreur à des fins politiques, idéologiques ou religieuses.

Aussi, il est important de noter que le terrorisme n'est en rien nouveau. On peut donner l'exemple de la période dite de la Terreur en France (septembre 1793 à juillet 1794). Cependant, la nature du terrorisme a changé depuis le 11 septembre 2001<sup>42</sup> et l'importance du terrorisme dans l'environnement sécuritaire mondial est devenue considérable. Auparavant, les actions terroristes touchaient un certain nombre ciblé de gens alors qu'aujourd'hui, elles visent des répercussions à large échelle. Les terroristes savent utiliser les nouvelles technologies de l'information (NTI) et s'en servent pour internationaliser leurs revendications et faire de la propagande pouvant servir au recrutement.

Raymond Aron (1976) parlait de la spécificité du terrorisme en ce que ce dernier cherche des effets psychologiques hors de proportion lorsque mis en contraste avec ses résultats purement physiques<sup>43</sup>. En ce sens, les NIT servent bien les fins terroristes puisqu'elles permettent à peu de frais et très rapidement la diffusion des actes terroristes suscitant la peur à grande échelle. Incontestablement, le terrorisme peut prendre différentes formes. Il peut être, entre autres, national, transnational, religieux, politique ou environnemental. Évidemment, chaque forme de terrorisme implique différentes menaces. Cependant, un des éléments communs à la majorité des formes de terrorisme et qui rend la guerre au terrorisme aussi difficile est le fait que les terroristes disposent de fonds considérables, qu'ils agissent en réseau et qu'ils sont ingénieux (avoir le plus d'impact au moindre coût possible).

Le terrorisme pouvant prendre plusieurs formes, il s'avère indispensable de spécifier la forme de terrorisme à laquelle nous ferons référence. Dans l'étude de cas qui nous intéresse, nous prendrons en considération le terrorisme international. Les principales caractéristiques du terrorisme international actuel sont : le recours croissant à des kamikazes, des attaques perpétrées principalement contre des civils<sup>44</sup>, des stratégies très imaginatives, l'importance des réseaux pour la formation et le partage des ressources, le recours à des technologies sophistiquées dont Internet et des attaques visant le plus de pertes possibles au moindre coût.

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<sup>41</sup> « *The JI, which emerged from the old Darul Islam movement in Indonesia, seeks to establish a Daulah Islamiyah Nusantara, or an archipelagic Islamic Southeast Asian state incorporating Indonesia, Malaysia, the southern Philippines, and inevitably, Brunei and Singapore* » (Ramakrishna, 2004:55). Le JI entretient des liens étroits avec Al Qaeda. En fait, le JI a été fondée par Abdullah Sungkar après qu'il eut rencontré Oussama bin Laden en Afghanistan. Al Qaeda a aussi aidé le JI dans ses débuts afin de former ses membres. Par exemple, « *at least 100 JI members were trained in the use of weapons and explosives in al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan from the early 1990s and began planning operations in the late 1990s* » (Karmon, 2005:332).

<sup>42</sup> Précisons que « *comme tous les phénomènes politiques, le terrorisme n'existe que dans un contexte culturel et historique* » (Chaliand et Blin, 2006:17). Ainsi, avant de parler de terrorisme, il faut prendre en considération la période dans laquelle nous vivons (qui influence notre vision du terrorisme) et bien identifier le contexte à l'intérieur duquel l'acte terroriste en question a été effectué.

<sup>43</sup> Les événements du 11 septembre 2001 peuvent s'inscrire parfaitement dans cette optique. Les attaques des deux tours ont certes causé la mort, mais les effets psychologiques de peur et d'insécurité qui ont découlé de cet événement sont d'une plus grande importance. Six ans plus tard, les effets psychologiques de peur se font encore sentir, spécifiquement aux États-Unis, sont visibles particulièrement dans les efforts fournis par les Américains pour contrer le terrorisme (guerre en Iraq, intervention en Afghanistan, création du département du « *homeland security* », etc.).

<sup>44</sup> En fait, « *what distinguishes a criminal terrorist act of violence from a merely criminal act of violence is that the direct victim is generally not the ultimate target of the violence* » (Schmid, 2005:138).

## **CONFLIT IDENTITAIRE**

Comme nous l'avons expliqué précédemment, considérant le manque de littérature sur les conflits identitaires et comme nous utilisons une définition semblable à celle des conflits ethniques, nous ferons ressortir des éléments permettant d'identifier les conflits identitaires en nous appuyant sur la littérature relative aux conflits ethniques. Tout d'abord, précisons qu'il existe diverses théories concurrentes au sujet des différents aspects des conflits ethniques. Pensons notamment à la théorie des haines anciennes (Kaplan, 1993), à la théorie de la modernisation conflictuelle (Young, 1976), à la théorie du choix rationnel (Posen, 1993; Fearon et Laitin, 1996; Lake et Rotchild, 1998) et à l'école de la socio-psychologie (Horowitz, 2000; Kaufman, 2001). Cependant, pour les fins de cette recherche, nous adopterons une définition proposée par Weber puisqu'elle n'est pas déterministe et elle rejoint plus le concept de conflit identitaire. Ainsi, Weber définit le groupe ethnique<sup>45</sup> comme « *those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists* » (Weber cité par Eller, 1999:12). Conséquemment, le conflit dans les provinces du sud de la Thaïlande peut être considéré comme identitaire puisqu'il prend racine dans les différences entre les Thaïlandais-malais, qui partagent une culture commune, une langue commune (le malais)<sup>46</sup>, une religion commune (l'islam) et des origines communes, et les Thaïlandais-Thaïs à proprement parler, qui sont bouddhistes, qui proviennent du royaume de Siam et qui parlent la langue thaïe.

## **II) LE CONFLIT DU SUD DE LA THAÏLANDE**

Le conflit qui sévit dans les provinces du sud de la Thaïlande semblait tout indiqué pour tenter de répondre à notre question de recherche. Tout d'abord, le conflit en présence est un conflit que l'on peut qualifier d'identitaire en fonction des critères établis dans la section précédente. Ensuite, il y a présence, dans le milieu scientifique, d'une certaine forme de confusion en ce que le conflit doit être qualifié de terroriste ou d'ethnique. Cependant, il semble aujourd'hui y avoir consensus sur le fait qu'il n'y a pas d'évidence pouvant démontrer clairement que le conflit serait désormais terroriste ou directement lié à des réseaux tels le JI (International Crisis Group, 2005b; Liow, 2006a et b; Croissant, 2007; etc.). Or, l'existence de liens entre les groupes insurgés et les réseaux terroristes internationaux dans ce conflit nous permet d'étudier la relation entre ces deux réalités. Avant d'analyser quelques éléments clés (la formation des insurgés, l'organisation de la violence, les stratégies des insurgés, le financement de la violence et les revendications des insurgés) pouvant aider à mieux comprendre la relation entre le conflit qui sévit dans le sud de la Thaïlande et les réseaux terroristes internationaux, nous allons effectuer un rappel historique des sources du conflit.

### **RAPPEL HISTORIQUE DES SOURCES DU CONFLIT**

Les problèmes dans le sud de la Thaïlande ne sont pas contemporains. Des soulèvements et des revendications de la minorité thaïlandaise musulmane d'origine malaise pour l'indépendance remontent à près d'un siècle. « *The origins of the current violence lie in*

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<sup>45</sup> Il s'avère important de distinguer l'ethnicité de la race. Deux concepts souvent confondus. « *Ethnic groups are not races, since ethnicity can be more precisely defined than race or even logically independent: Serbs and Croats are also Slavs, and a Jew might be black or white* » (Allison, 2003).

<sup>46</sup> En fait, 80% des Thaïlandais-malais ne parlent que le malais. Et, bien sûr, les Thaïlandais sont tous les citoyens qui habitent en Thaïlande.

*historical grievances stemming from discrimination against the ethnic Malay Muslim population and attempts at forced assimilation by successive ethnic Thai Buddhist governments in Bangkok for almost a century* » (International Crisis Group, 2005:i). En fait, du point de vue des Thaïlandais d'origine malaise, le rattachement des provinces de Yala, Pattani et Narathiwat<sup>47</sup> apparaît comme une erreur historique. Il aurait été plus logique pour eux que ces provinces musulmanes, si différentes du reste de la Thaïlande, soient rattachées à la Malaysia. À l'époque, ces trois provinces étaient réunies en un sultanat nommé Patani. En 1902, le Siam (ancien nom donné à la Thaïlande) a incorporé le sultanat et, au fil des ans, l'a divisé en trois provinces. Cependant, cette minorité a vécu en relative harmonie avec le reste de la Thaïlande pendant une quinzaine d'années alors que la politique de Bangkok à son égard était plus conciliante et respectueuse.

Cependant, la résurgence du problème dans une forme violente date du 4 janvier 2004 lorsqu'un groupe d'assaillants armés est entré dans un camp de l'armée thaïlandaise à Narathiwat et a volé dans le dépôt d'armements près de 350 armes. La population à majorité musulmane des provinces de Pattani, Yala et Narathiwat sont en jeu dans ce conflit et quatre principaux groupes d'insurgés y sont actifs<sup>48</sup>. Le *National Revolutionary Front-Coordinate* (BRN-C) est la faction active du BRN qui a été créée en 1960 afin d'obtenir un État de Patani. Ce groupe est reconnu pour être le plus grand et le mieux organisé des groupes impliqués dans le conflit. Le Pemuda, contrôlé par le BRN-C, est un groupe pour la jeunesse séparatiste. Ce groupe est tenu responsable pour le sabotage quotidien. Le *Pattani United Liberation Organization* (PULO) est le plus petit groupe et sa motivation première est d'obtenir un état indépendant. Finalement, le *Pattani Islamic Mujahidin Group*, créé en 1995 par des vétérans de l'Afghanistan, demande aussi un état indépendant (International Crisis Group, 2005b).

En fait, vers la fin des années 1980, le conflit a connu une accalmie et « *Islamic leaders in southern Thailand emphatically reject any militant interpretation of Islam, and most devout Muslims in the region hold the view that Thailand grants all essentials necessary for Muslim life: freedom to practice their religion, political representation, and governance of domestic relations under the Sharia (Islamic law)* » (Albritton, 2005:167). Or, tant que cette politique de reconnaissance et d'acceptation a été en place, les musulmans ne se sont pas révoltés. Cependant, avec la politique d'unité nationale et de nationalisme thaï de Thaksin qui a mené à des répressions massives et à des pertes de liberté pour les musulmans, le conflit a connu une évolution dramatique.

La violence dans les trois provinces du sud de la Thaïlande est quasi quotidienne et connaît une escalade depuis 2004. De fait, « *in the first 11 months of 2004, however, 1,253 violent incidents occurred, that is 63 percent of the total between 1993 and 2004* » (Croissant, 2007:3). L'International Crisis Group (2005b:i) résume fort bien les principales causes du conflit des provinces du sud de la Thaïlande :

*Two of the most plausible are the disbanding of key government institutions, and the fear and resentment created by arbitrary arrests and police brutality, compounded by government failure to provide justice to victims and families. Rapid social change has also contributed to insecurity and frustration in Malay Muslim communities and a feeling that their way of life, values and culture are threatened.*

Donc, nous avons donné les grandes lignes d'un conflit complexe qui sévit en Thaïlande, sous différentes formes, depuis des dizaines d'années. Maintenant, analysons les aspects principaux qui nous permettront de vérifier si les insurgés instrumentalisent le terrorisme pour parvenir à leurs fins.

<sup>47</sup> Notons qu'actuellement, plus de 80% des deux millions d'habitants de ces trois provinces sont des musulmans d'origine malaise.

<sup>48</sup> Voir l'annexe 1 pour plus de détails sur les différents groupes.

## **FORMATION**

L'un des liens les plus forts qui démontre une relation entre les insurgés et le terrorisme international a trait à la formation. Au fil des ans, de nombreux Thaïlandais ont reçu une formation à l'extérieur du pays. En fait, « *contacts between JI members and some Thai Muslims go back to the late 1980s, when they trained together in the camp run by Afghan mujahidin leader Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border* » (International Crisis Group, 2005b:37). Dans les années 1990, d'autres Thaïlandais, accompagnés d'Indonésiens, ont aussi été formés en Afghanistan. De plus, certains membres d'Al Qaeda et du JI ont été arrêtés sur le territoire thaïlandais; ce qui démontre hors de tout doute une présence de ces groupes et un intérêt marqué pour la Thaïlande. En 2003, par exemple, la police thaïlandaise a arrêté Ridwan Isamuddin, alias Hambali, « *the Afghan-trained head of JI's Mantiqi I, who was arrested by Thai police in Ayutthaya, north of Bangkok, in August 2003* » (International Crisis Group, 2005a:21). Cependant, les raisons de la présence de ces membres n'ont pas été rendues publiques.

Il y a aussi énormément d'étudiants thaïlandais provenant des provinces du sud qui vont étudier à l'étranger particulièrement en Arabie Saoudite et en Égypte. L'importance des « *pondok* » ou « *pon-ohs* » (écoles islamiques) est non négligeable dans ce conflit puisque ces écoles constituent le cœur de la culture des Thaïlandais-malais. « *The pon-ohs are where Malay culture is handed down from one generation to the next, and without them the unique identity of southern Thai Muslims would eventually be lost* » (Lintner, 2006). De plus, le recrutement des insurgés se fait fort souvent à l'intérieur des *pondok*. Par exemple, la base du BRN dépend majoritairement des *pondok*.

## **ORGANISATION ET STRATÉGIES**

Comme nous l'avons mentionné précédemment, l'escalade de violence dans les provinces du sud de la Thaïlande a connu son apogée en 2004 avec l'incident du dépôt d'armes. Cette attaque n'a pas les caractéristiques des attaques terroristes puisqu'elle visait un dépôt d'armes appartenant à l'armée thaïlandaise et qu'elle démontrait une stratégie conventionnelle, particulièrement le « *hit and run* » et les bombes artisanales à petite échelle. Les attaques suivant cette dernière avaient essentiellement le même *modus operandi*. Les cibles étaient principalement des membres de l'armée thaïlandaise et des moines bouddhistes et les moyens utilisés étaient des assauts directs et des bombes de petite portée. Cependant, depuis 2005, « *there is growing sophistication and coordination, aided by widespread use of mobile telephones and the internet* » (International Crisis Group, 2005b:1). Par exemple, en août 2006, des attaques ont été perpétrées à l'aide de bombes laissées dans des endroits publics et déclenchées à partir de téléphones cellulaires. Cette nouvelle réalité, bref, ce changement dans les stratégies utilisées et leur forte ressemblance avec le *modus operandi* des terroristes internationaux, pourrait être une démonstration des relations plus étroites qu'entretiennent les terroristes avec les insurgés et donc, le signe d'une instrumentalisation des techniques terroristes par les insurgés. Loin de vouloir disparaître, cette tendance s'est confirmée en 2007. Le 19 février 2007, par exemple, le *Bangkok Post* rapportait que « *seven people are dead and more than 60 wounded in the biggest wave of coordinated bombings, terrorism and murders ever reported across the four southernmost provinces* ». Ces attaques ont été perpétrées contre divers sites touristiques (hôtels, bars, etc.) et deux écoles ont été incendiées. Les bombes utilisées ont été déclenchées à partir de petites montres digitales. Parlant d'outils plus sophistiqués, mentionnons que l'utilisation d'explosifs est de plus en plus fréquente. L'organisation des insurgés et les outils de ces derniers se sont donc peaufinés. Est-ce là

l'influence de terroristes internationaux? Il s'avère difficile de le dire avec certitude, mais les techniques semblent du moins leur être empruntées.

De plus, la stratégie des insurgés semble comporter la caractéristique fondamentale de la stratégie terroriste que nous avons évoquée précédemment : créer un climat de peur à travers des actes violents. Les insurgés ont réussi à créer un tel climat puisque les musulmans locaux ne font pas confiance aux autorités thaïlandaises qui ont été abusives envers eux depuis des années et ne font plus confiance aux insurgés qui s'en prennent indistinctement aux Thaïs et à leurs propres compatriotes<sup>49</sup>. De plus, les insurgés ne semblent pas chercher le soutien de la population des provinces du sud; ils tentent plutôt d'arriver à leurs fins en créant un climat de terreur.

Une autre caractéristique lie cette situation particulière au terrorisme international, c'est le fait de s'en prendre à la population civile. En Thaïlande, les actes de violence commis dans le cadre du conflit identitaire sont majoritairement perpétrés contre des civils : de janvier 2004 à décembre 2006, 65,5% des décès ont été des civils (Abuza, 2007:4). Les insurgés mettent souvent le feu et posent des bombes artisanales dans des bâtiments tels que des temples bouddhistes (*wat*) ou des écoles non musulmanes. Les professeurs sont souvent ciblés par les insurgés parce qu'ils sont perçus comme étant ceux qui imposent la culture bouddhiste thaïe. Le nombre de victimes est difficile à chiffrer, mais les estimations varient autour de quelque 2 000 décès depuis 2004.

#### **FINANCEMENT**

La question du financement de la violence est particulièrement délicate. Certes, les informations à ce sujet se font rares et la crédibilité de celles trouvées doit être consciencieusement étudiée. Cependant, deux éléments doivent être pris en considération lorsque vient le temps de s'interroger sur les fonds dont disposent les insurgés en Thaïlande. Tout d'abord, les trois provinces de Yala, Pattani et Narathiwat s'avèrent extrêmement pauvres<sup>50</sup> et ne disposent pas de ressources naturelles<sup>51</sup>. Ensuite, depuis plusieurs dizaines d'années, la Thaïlande est reconnue pour la présence sur son territoire d'activités criminelles, telles le trafic de drogue et d'armes, la prostitution et le blanchiment d'argent. Différentes causes expliquent la présence de ces activités, en particulier « *its weak legal system, corrupt political and judicial authorities, and a feeble regulatory financial system that have allowed a booming regional money laundering system, with military itself involved in the black markets* » (Croissant, 2007:5). Or, il s'avère difficile de mesurer l'importance de l'argent du crime dans les activités des insurgés dans le sud de la Thaïlande. Par exemple, plusieurs jeunes à Yala ouvrent des comptes et y déposent entre 5 000 et 10 000 bahts, ce qui constitue des sommes impressionnantes surtout lorsqu'on tient compte de l'économie pitoyable à Yala. Toutefois, l'incertitude demeure quant à savoir d'où provient cet argent. Aussi, un article du *Bangkok Post* (20 novembre 2006) faisait mention du fait que les groupes insurgés ont reçu environ six millions de bahts durant le ramadan en provenance de musulmans d'Égypte, de Libye, de Suisse, d'Indonésie et de Malaysia. Encore ici, rien ne démontre que les groupes terroristes internationaux ont un lien dans cette histoire. L'utilisation

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<sup>49</sup> Au début des affrontements, il y avait des Thaïlandais-malais musulmans contre des Thaïs bouddhistes. Actuellement, les Thaïlandais -malais musulmans s'en prennent aussi bien à leurs compatriotes qu'aux Thaïs bouddhistes.

<sup>50</sup> Le conflit dans ces provinces n'aide en rien la situation. Depuis 2004, ces provinces ont connu un important déclin du tourisme et des investissements étrangers.

<sup>51</sup> « *The average monthly household income in Thailand in 2002 was 3,013 Baht (\$99). It was 1,756 Baht (\$44) in Narathiwat, 2,279 (\$58) in Pattani, and 2,439 (\$62) in Yala* » (International Crisis Group, 2005b:33).

d'outils plus sophistiqués et à plus grande portée laisse croire qu'il y a eu une progression dans l'accès des groupes insurgés à du financement.

### **REVENDEICATIONS**

Il s'avère difficile de clairement définir les revendications des insurgés. Ils ne disposent d'aucun plan précis ni de plateforme. Cependant, les revendications les plus communes sont d'abord politiques, puis religieuses et économiques. Les insurgés demandent principalement plus d'autonomie pour les trois provinces, ne demandant plus un état indépendant comme c'était le cas il y a quelques dizaines d'années. Aussi, les revendications sont de plus en plus liées à la religion. Certains sont allés jusqu'à demander la *charî'a* (voie à suivre) dans les provinces du sud. Par contre, il est important de constater que ces demandes ont moins à voir avec la situation internationale actuelle de l'islam et du jihad qu'avec des demandes formulées en réaction aux répressions subies au fil des ans par les musulmans dans le sud<sup>52</sup>. Les revendications sont aussi économiques puisque, comme nous l'avons mentionné précédemment, les provinces de Yala, Pattani et Narathiwat sont parmi les provinces les plus pauvres de la Thaïlande.

Au sujet des revendications, les insurgés thaïlandais-malais tentent de garder leur distance d'avec l'idéologie défendue par les réseaux terroristes internationaux tels le JI. Tout d'abord, la plupart du temps, ils ne revendiquent pas leurs actes violents; ce qui est contraire à la façon de faire terroriste<sup>53</sup>. Ensuite, ils nient être affiliés avec quelque groupe terroriste que ce soit. Finalement, quoi qu'ils se soient opposés vivement à la participation de l'armée thaïlandaise à l'intervention en Iraq et qu'ils fassent certains commentaires anti-américains, ils ne ciblent pas les Occidentaux présents sur le territoire thaïlandais. Une seule exception : une attaque perpétrée contre un supermarché appartenant à une chaîne française. Toutefois, ce type d'attaque ne s'est pas répété et ne semble pas indiquer une adhésion aux idées défendues par les groupes terroristes internationaux.

### **III) CONCLUSION**

Le cas du conflit dans les provinces du sud de la Thaïlande nous a permis d'analyser un aspect des liens qui unissent le terrorisme aux conflits identitaires. Nous avons tenté de vérifier l'hypothèse selon laquelle les insurgés musulmans du sud de la Thaïlande instrumentalisent le terrorisme pour parvenir à leurs fins. Certes, l'étude des conflits identitaires s'avère toujours complexe et, combinée avec l'importante problématique du terrorisme international, il faut porter des jugements tout en nuances. Par conséquent, nous ne pouvons affirmer de façon définitive que notre hypothèse a été confirmée. Cependant, nous avons pu, à l'aide d'indicateurs clés, dénoter une tendance vers la confirmation de notre hypothèse.

La formation des insurgés nous a permis de constater des liens étroits entre des membres d'Al Qaeda et du JI. De plus, de nombreux étudiants thaïlandais-malais effectuent des échanges scolaires avec d'autres pays ayant d'importantes populations musulmanes. Le fait que des insurgés aient été formés en Afghanistan, par exemple, peut expliquer en grande partie les similarités avec le terrorisme international dans l'organisation de la

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<sup>52</sup> Par exemples, l'incompréhension des Thaïs envers l'islam et la volonté du gouvernement Thaksin de fermer les écoles islamiques (enseignement donné en malais) pour que l'enseignement soit donné par des bouddhistes en thaï.

<sup>53</sup> Cependant, il est intéressant de noter que les réseaux jihadistes ont rendu public le conflit du sud de la Thaïlande sur Internet.

violence et dans les stratégies utilisées. Depuis 2004, il a été possible de constater une évolution des actes violents commis par les insurgés. Plus particulièrement, nous avons pu voir que les insurgés sont mieux organisés (déclenchement de plusieurs bombes simultanément, par exemple) et utilisent des armes plus sophistiquées. De plus, la stratégie des insurgés consiste désormais à créer un climat de peur dans les provinces du sud et à s'en prendre principalement à la population civile (incluant leurs compatriotes musulmans d'origine malaise). Le perfectionnement des outils amène à s'interroger sur le financement de la violence puisque, entre autres parce que les trois provinces du sud sont parmi les plus pauvres de la Thaïlande. Nous avons pu constater d'importantes transactions entre des musulmans provenant de l'extérieur de la Thaïlande ou l'arrivée d'importantes sommes d'argent dans des comptes de banque appartenant à des étudiants. Cependant, il a été impossible d'identifier la véritable provenance de cet argent, c'est-à-dire de pouvoir rattacher ces sommes au terrorisme international ou au crime organisé. Finalement, nous avons tenté d'identifier la nature des revendications faites par les insurgés. Nous avons pu observer qu'elles sont imprécises et multiples, mais qu'elles sont principalement politiques. L'élément le plus important faisant en sorte que les vont dans le sens d'une confirmation de notre hypothèse consiste au fait que les insurgés gardent leur distance avec le terrorisme international et avec les idéologies de ce dernier. Cet élément, combiné avec les liens établis entre les insurgés et les terroristes pour la formation, la stratégie et l'organisation de la violence, nous amènent à croire que les insurgés instrumentalisent le terrorisme. Les insurgés semblent utiliser leurs contacts avec les terroristes afin d'agir plus efficacement dans la poursuite de leurs objectifs imprécis en laissant de côté les éléments du terrorisme qui ne leur conviennent pas.

Évidemment, avant de discuter de pistes de recherches futures, il faut réfléchir aux principaux écueils du présent travail. Le choix de la théorie réaliste entraîne certains problèmes propres à cette théorie. Deux d'entre eux peuvent influencer sur les conclusions de notre recherche : l'importance des sentiments demeure sous-estimée et les insurgés ne forment pas un groupe homogène. Le premier problème implique que les groupes ne font pas que des choix rationnels. Au-delà du calcul coûts-bénéfices se trouve toute une gamme d'interactions fortement influencée par les sentiments. Particulièrement dans l'étude des conflits identitaires, la variable « émotion » peut prendre une importance considérable<sup>54</sup>. Le deuxième problème peut aussi avoir un rôle à jouer dans l'évaluation des liens entre ces deux types de violence. Par exemple, nous pourrions poser l'hypothèse selon laquelle les groupes d'insurgés, n'étant pas homogènes donc n'ayant pas nécessairement les mêmes buts ou les mêmes visions de ce qu'il faut faire pour atteindre ces buts, se battent entre eux pour plus de ressources. Ce faisant, certains groupes pourraient vouloir s'acoquiner avec des réseaux terroristes internationaux pour obtenir plus de ressources et, ainsi, prendre le dessus sur les autres groupes impliqués dans le conflit.

Enfin, les conclusions de notre recherche entraînent inévitablement une autre interrogation. Toujours dans une logique réaliste, les terroristes procèdent certainement de façon réfléchi et calculée. Il serait donc plausible de se demander ce qu'ils retirent de cette relation avec les insurgés du sud de la Thaïlande. Ainsi, d'éventuelles recherches pourraient explorer l'envers de la médaille, c'est-à-dire de regarder si les réseaux terroristes instrumentalisent le conflit dans le sud de la Thaïlande et si oui, à quelles fins. Il s'avère donc possible d'entrevoir la faisabilité et la pertinence de recherches futures sur le rôle du terrorisme dans l'étude des conflits identitaires. Notre recherche ne propose

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<sup>54</sup> Ici, je fais implicitement référence au courant constructiviste qui considère les émotions comme pouvant justifier l'utilisation de la violence, ce que rejette la théorie réaliste pour qui seules des décisions rationnelles de type coût/bénéfice arrivent à expliquer la violence, c'est-à-dire la décision des individus ou des États de commettre des actes violents (voir par exemple, Wendt, 1992).

qu'une ébauche des multiples facettes de cette problématique complexe, mais fascinante et pertinente dans un monde où la violence issue de conflits identitaires et celle issue du terrorisme se chevauchent de plus en plus.

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### Annexe 1 Principales factions insurgées<sup>55</sup>

Organisation	Année de formation	Caractéristiques
BRN (Barsian Revolusi Nasional)	1960	Base of support lay mainly in the <i>ponohs</i> , today three separate wings : BRN Congress, the main military wing; BRN Coordinative Group, focusing on political agitation and urban sabotage; BRN Ulema, which coordinates a following among the Islamic clergy; largest and best organized faction
GMIP (Gerakan Mujahideen Pattani)	1995	Formed by Afghan veterans as an off-shot of the older Gerakan Mujahideen Pattani; urban group; close relations to KMM (Kumupulan Mujahideen Malay), its Malaysian counterpart
PULO (Pattani United Liberation Organisation)	1968	Active guerilla operations until the early 1990s; secularist organization with presumably no military capability on the ground
New PULO	1995	Split as a dissent faction from PULO in 1995, but formed a tactical alliance with PULO two years later
BNPP/BIPP (Barsian Nasional Pembebasan Pattani-Pattani National Liberation Front/Barissan Islam Pembebasan Pattani-Pattani Islam Liberation Front)	1963	Drew support from both traditional aristocrats as well as from religious elites; its objective was neither mere autonomy nor integration of Patani with Malaysia but complete independence and the establishment of an Islamic State, daral-Islam
Bersatu (Barisan Kemerdekaan)	1989/97	Established in 1989, reinvigorated in 1997 as an umbrella organization for loose political coordination between PULO, New PULO, GMIP, and BRN

<sup>55</sup> Croissant, 2007:7.



**DEUXIÈME PARTIE**  
**PART TWO**

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**AU-DELÀ DES FRONTIÈRES SOCIO-ÉCONOMIQUES**

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**BEYOND SOCIOECONOMIC BOUNDARIES**

## CHAPITRE 4

### Making of Community through Political and Economic Globalization

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#### D) INTRODUCTION

In Thailand, community-based development, and ‘strengthening community strategy’ have long been claimed for development programs by both NGOs and government agencies. While there are various approaches concerning these strategies, there are two polar ideas regarding the trajectory of rural communities in entering globalization.

On the one hand, globalization is seen as bringing in ‘an age of individualism’, meaning the habit of being independent and self-reliant (Hopper 2003). This thesis states that increasing individualism and privatizations in globalization era will deteriorate rural communities in term of ‘*Chum Chon Lom Salai*’ (collapse of ‘community’). Natural resources as common property are privatized, commoditized, and taken over by states, capitalists, and transnational corporations instead of belonging to local communities (Attachak 2005). The loss of common property causes the loss of a strong bond of ‘community’. Moreover, economic pressures will make people concentrate on making money and pay less attention to communality.

On the other hand, especially the Community Culture School argues that rural communities can overcome the fierce capitalism of globalization through subsistence economy. The research on the Economy of Thai Village Communities coordinated by Chatthip Nartsupha exploring rural societies in Thailand found 75% of people in rural communities are ‘small independent producers’ who basically work on land with a small financial capital. They may sell some surplus for petty incomes rather than for maximizing profit. This economic system is based on a strong bond of a community in which people help one another in a spirit of humanity and are regulated by community culture (Chatthip, 2005). This idea implies that a strong bond of a community hardly exist in a commercialized community. Thus, it suggests getting away from market mechanism of capitalist economy through subsistence agriculture and ensuing community making.

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<sup>56</sup> Ce texte a reçu le deuxième prix du concours de la meilleure présentation étudiante, prix décerné par l’Institut des Hautes études internationales de l’Université Laval - This paper received the second best student’s paper award from the Institut Québécois des Hautes Études Internationales (Université Laval).

The simplistic representation of rural communities as being autonomous, having a 'community culture' and a self-sufficient economy, isolated from state and market and the rest of the world tends to romanticize people's culture and livelihood, and dichotomize traditional and commercial production. Katherine Bowie (Bowie, 1992) points out that the view of subsistence economy in the history of Northern Thailand can only be a myth. Such an idea is idealistic and problematic (Anan, 2001), particularly, in the context of globalization which is imagined in terms of "unbounded free space" (Massey 1999). Nowadays, the state and market are integrated in community in many forms (Li 2006). Some studies even point out that local people have attempted to integrate themselves as a part of state and market system.

In this paper, I will demonstrate the manifestation of a local community which is connected to state and market intensively. However, in such a context the community is not deteriorated, but is continually remade. Thus, a strong bond of community does not necessarily exist in autonomous and subsistence community. Moreover, the connectedness of state and market can be a motivating factor in the community making.

I use 'community' in a loose sense as collective actors with the 'feeling of commonality' (Fink 1994), as people who share common goals, interests, or values (Long 2001). The making of community involves collective actions in relation to political and economic condition.

## **II) STRENGTHENING A LOCAL COMMUNITY THROUGH THE THAI STATE'S POLICY**

Strengthening a local community is increasingly applied in the Thai government's policy and projects claiming decentralization, people participation, and so on. In this section, I will demonstrate how such an approach is operated on ground in a small remote community in upland Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand, and how the people strategically engage in these programs.

### ***AID PROGRAM***

In 2000, the Thai government established "the Community Organization Development Institute" (CODI) as an independent department working especially for strengthening community organizations. Many staff members of CODI were from NGOs. Thus, the CODI adopts much of the NGOs' vocabulary, such as "participatory development", "strengthening community organizations", "self-dependence", etc. For example, one of CODI's projects is named 'The Recovering Local Communities' cooperating with NGOs and local communities. The project's name and objectives reflect its assumption that communities have been deteriorating and that the traditional communities can be recovered.

Beside the development programs, CODI also contributes some urgent aids for local communities impacted by nature hazards. In late September 2005, a big flood destroyed the agricultural areas, house and assets, and killed many people in Northern Thailand. The Pa Bon (anonymous name) community, an ethnic minority community in Phrao District, Chiang Mai, was flooded by water, mud, and sand from the many small streams as branches of Ping River. The paddy fields in which rice was developing for harvest in two months just collapsed. Although the water level increased in only 1-2 days, mud and sand remained in the fields.

Ying (anonymous name), a mid-thirty year old man from Ban In (anonymous name) community, from another district, sought out aid to his community which was flooded at

the same time. He wrote a proposal asking for budget allocation from CODI for restoring the paddy fields. As an active leader of Northern Farmer Network (NFN), he added the names of other flooded communities in upper-Ping watershed sub-network of NFN in the proposal, thinking that *“we are from the same network”*. Through personal relationship<sup>57</sup>, a CODI staff tried hard to negotiate with his/her colleagues in order to approve Ying’s proposal. However, many villagers who got the aid money did not know that they got such money because of Ying and the name ‘NFN’.

The representatives of flooded communities set up committees for distributing money. The committees agreed that the paddy owners should contribute 20% of the whole cost of paddy restoration, so that the rest of budget could be used for communal benefit including for the people who had no paddy field. However, some villagers were dissatisfied and did not clearly understand the reasons for paying the 20% cost. Some villagers doubted the quoted cost of hiring tractor introduced by the *kamnan*<sup>58</sup>, as it was very expensive. And some villagers suspected that the committees who administrated the budget might be corrupt. These are merely gossipy suspicions, and nobody asked for inspection. Nevertheless, the rumour about corruption has been widespread. Many NGOs and NFN people also heard about the rumours.

Two years after the flood, I went to the community. A housewife asked me about the rumour, *“I heard that Ying had to go away from his community as he is accused as corruptor, is this true?”* Actually, a NGO and a CODI staff told me that Ying did not involve in the administration of such money. He merely proposed the project to the CODI and left his community due to a marriage. However, there was a personal conflict among Ying and some Ban In leaders resulting in the rumour.

As a former NGO working for NFN, I thought that if CODI was not there, NFN might have created an activity asking assistance from network members and alliances. Helping each others in overcoming a disaster could have made the villagers feel self-dependent and in creating a strong bond with the Network by belonging to the same ‘community’. Moreover, the villagers would have been encouraged to have a transparent system of money administration, and it would not simply be a case of throwing big money into the communities. For example, in 1999 there was a big disaster in a large area of rice fields in upland communities due to the widespread of insect menace. The Community Forest Support Group (CFSG) and its alliance set up a Buddhist activity (*Papa*) for gathering money and rice donations from alliances and city people to help the upland farmers in six communities. *“Although it was not much money, but we could give them a spiritual support by inviting many farmers and city people to visit them”* a NGO member said.

Some NGOs<sup>59</sup> think that CODI money is not too bad as it is impossible for NGOs to get as much money as required for urgently helping villagers within limited time. For them the problem is not the source of money, but the administration of money. Moreover, a NGO member said, *“we cannot be sure if without CODI, NGOs and NFN could help the flooded communities as there were many conditions making us not work as closely with local villagers as before”*. One condition is that NGOs think that many communities have been strengthened already. Another significant condition is budget shortage. Currently, many foreign fund providers, the key supporters of Thai NGOs have changed their targets from Thailand to the other neighbouring countries. As a result, CODI and domestic fund providers, especially government agencies, become the main sources of NGOs’ budgets.

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<sup>57</sup> Some northern CODI staffs know Ying and NFN very well, as they sometimes cooperate in some activities. Also a CODI staff was an NGO worked for NFN.

<sup>58</sup> The official position of a sub-district leader

<sup>59</sup> I discussed with two NGOs who used to work for NGOs.

However, the government agencies prefer contributing funds directly to local communities. Many NGOs think that this is the state's strategy, prominently originated in the Thaksin government, drawing people away from social movements, and NGOs which empower local people to have self-determination, and defend and negotiate for their rights. The CODI aid is one of several forms of community development projects being pursued in Thailand at the moment while there have increasingly been funds, loans, assistance and projects, provided by government agencies directly to local communities. In order to get the budget, people have to follow the project administrative system determined by fund providers. Many village leaders have been busy a whole year with the proposing, processing, and reporting of several projects in the names of local empowerment, decentralizing power, creating local solidarity and happiness, local arts and culture conservation, and so on. Consequently, they do not have enough time to participate in social movements which have less budget support.

Moreover, CODI has been organizing new peoples' organizations but ignoring the already existing peoples' organizations. Some NGOs and the leaders of people organizations<sup>60</sup> point out that the work of CODI is dangerous and problematic as it weakens the peoples' movements. The peoples' organizations established by CODI are indeed instructed by the state. These are not interested in social movements, collective actions, and negotiating the state. They just propose a project asking budgets from CODI and wait for assistance from state agencies. Hence, they no longer think about self-dependence but are under the patronage system of the state.

Among the debates of how to work for/with local communities, the budget issue is significant to community-based works of NGOs, government agencies, and also local people. This leads me to the questions, concerning how 'strengthening community' and 'self-dependence' are actually seen by NGOs and the government agencies in the context that local communities are always intervened by them through budget provision, and what are the local people's ideas of and responses to such community-based works?

### ***SUFFICIENT ECONOMY***

Recently, the Thai government led by General Surayud Chulanont launched the 'sufficient economy' policy, polarizing the market orientated policy of the previous government headed by Thaksin Shinawatra. The present Prime minister points out that this policy will strengthen Thailand in entering globalization. Accordingly, 'strengthening community' is included as a strategy in the 10<sup>th</sup> Thailand Social and Economic Development Plan based on the sufficient economy philosophy.

On November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2006, the Prime Minister gave a speech in the conference on "The Thailand Development by the Philosophy of Sufficient Economy". He stated that the sufficient economy policy would be implemented for 1) balancing development of urban and rural societies; 2) balancing self-dependence and competitive ability in the world market; and 3) creating secure system of families and communities and reducing luxurious livelihoods ([www.buriram.go.th/book/doc/eat006.pdf](http://www.buriram.go.th/book/doc/eat006.pdf)). According to such policy, the farmers in rural areas are encouraged to practice subsistence agriculture on the basis of sustainable agriculture and sustainable development.

In June and July 2007, the Phrao district officials (Chiang Mai province) with some other government agencies conducted many rounds of a one day training program, so called

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<sup>60</sup> Interviews of some NGOs and the leaders of people organizations in the national Land Reform Network

What the villagers can remember from the training, and their responses to it, are as follows:

*“They said we should save some income and we should have sufficient economy.”*

*“They told us to increase income and reduce expense, but I don’t know how to do.”*

*“They asked us to record daily incomes and expenses for three months, but I forgot to do it regularly.”*

*“Why do they give us merely this amount of seeds? How can we get benefit from just little seeds? They should better give us up to one kilogram of each”*

*“I won’t waste my time growing these seeds”*

*“We haven’t decided yet if we would plant them. If we have time, we may plant them”*

One night, village leaders had a serious discussion on how to write the sufficient economy project proposing for 200,000 Baht from the government. In 2005-2006, this budget was provided by Thaksin government through SML (small-middle-and large project) under the popularize policy. The community had used the money for developing a road in front of the community. The current government still provides the same amount with the condition that the community needs to run the project for developing sufficient economy. The following are some leaders’ responses during the discussion.

*“I have no idea what kind of sufficient economy project we should propose. Would you please suggest us? The village headman asked me.*

*A village leader said, “What about a community fund for buying chemical herbicides? Our villagers have to get such expensive chemicals from middlemen on credit. This year our villagers have bought chemicals from a big entrepreneur for more than 200,000 through credit. Besides that, some farmers bought chemicals by cash and through credit with the other middlemen”*

*Although that idea is based on the crucial problem of the villagers, the village headman disagreed with it, “according to ‘sufficient economy’, I don’t think the state will approve the project for chemicals usage. We should write for sustainable agriculture”*

*The sub-district administrative organization suggested that, “why don’t we ask budget for buying tree sprout, such as mango trees, bamboo, jackfruit, and so on? It is sustainable agriculture and it’s good for our long term future. And we can claim conservation for solving our problems in being evicted from the forest.”*

The discussion continued until late that night. Besides the sufficient economy project proposal, leaders discussed about transforming the Village Fund to be a juristic person according to the Village Fund Act. The government’s document states that, in so doing,

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<sup>61</sup> In 2003 the Thaksin government launched a popular policy of ‘poverty solution’. Accordingly, the people were asked to register their names and problems, such as debt, no land to farm, etc., so that the government would have concrete solutions for them.

<sup>62</sup> “The document for promoting learning process for the poor households according to the sufficient economy philosophy, for leveling up income, Chiang Mai Province” published by the Community Development Office of Chiang Mai.

the fund administration will be more systematic and people participation among community members will be improved. Although leaders were not clear in such reasons and experienced difficulty in the transforming process, they tried hard to work on it. A community leader explained to me that, *“If we don’t transform the Fund status, the government will merge ours with other villages’ funds. It results in less money”*.

It seems to me that the villagers do not much understand the government’s ‘sufficient economy’. However, the words have been introduced to them. A sixty-year old man kept asking me every time I visited the community, *“how to reduce expense and increase income”*. He also tried to dig a pond for growing fishes as an economic alternative for sufficient economy, while his children have grown rice for subsistence and feed corn for earning income. Normally, villagers do not have much experience on fish farming. They rather catch small fishes from nature streams. However, this man thought that the nature fishes were fast decreasing, and he saw some neighbours growing fishes successfully. Unfortunately, his pond cannot contain water due to the soil quality, so his project for reducing expense cannot be achieved.

Ideally, strengthening local community is needed for promoting sufficient economy. But in practice sufficient economy policy of the government is implemented in local communities through just a training course, and distribution of money and some resources. In this sense, ‘community’ for the state means just a unit of people for operating government policies, controlled by regulations, and given some resources. In so doing, it’s hard to find out how the government will achieve the ambitious aim of making villagers self-dependence in entering globalization.

Although the village leaders tried hard to follow the government’s agenda, their main objective is just to extract financial resource from the government. Hence, they attempt to say what they think it is that the government wants to hear. In this regard, talking of and for community is a regular way to write the project proposal. I tried to limit my role as an observer since I did not want to participate in the making of ‘community’ of “insiders”. However, I was not the director of this roles play. I was asked by the leaders to help them in developing the proposal and writing the application form for transforming status of the Village Fund, even though I was an outsider of the community. In so doing, the boundary between insiders and outsiders was wiped out for a while. Hence, I was allowed to speak for ‘community’ legitimately as a part of community leaders.

The village leaders have a multitude of ideas and they find it difficult to compromise the needs of government and the real situation of the community. Moreover, the village leaders are merely a group of people. Their ideas may not be able to reflect actual needs of all villagers, even though they are selected to speak for the community. Moreover, I don’t know how much the project will ‘strengthen the community’ and can solve the serious problems of villagers. I found through many months of fieldwork among the community that among several problems, the most important problems of the villagers were about being threatened by the forestry officers and huge amounts of debts incurred.

### **III) COMMERCIAL FARMING FOR CLAIMING COMMUNITY**

In Thai language, there is no absolute meaning for the word ‘community’, but this word is a subject in debate. Likewise the Thai people, ‘Chum Chon’ (community in Thai), is understood differently among the Pkakeryor<sup>63</sup> people. The villagers use many words, such as ‘Ker-Rer’ and ‘Ser-Woa’ or Pka-Zee-Poe’, for ‘Chum Chon’ in Pkakeryor.

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<sup>63</sup> Karen, an ethnic minority call themselves ‘Pkakeryor, meaning human being

*“‘Ker-Rer’ means area including people, trees, forests, farms, land, livestock, and all natural resources. The area of ‘Ker-Rer’ is wider than ‘Zee’ (village in Pkakayor language) which is only a residential area consisted of houses, livestock, and people, with no farm and forest.”*

*“It should be ‘Ser-Woa’ or Pka-Zee-Poe’ as ‘Ker-Rer’ is still restricted to the residential area and farms but not yet included community forests”.*

Among the different terms, many villagers understand community as their area or territory. In this section, I will demonstrate the attempt of a local community in claiming territory by practicing commercial agriculture. Although I tend to point out that commercial farming is people's strategy, they have used this strategy because of limited alternatives. In other words, they do not have absolute power to choose it. Moreover, they are continuously seeking out better alternatives for their living.

Pa Bon is a 'Pkakeryor' community in upland Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand. Since the establishment of Sri Lanna National Park in 1989, villagers have been threatened and forced by the National Park Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department officials to decrease land use. Although the establishment of a community was officially documented, the community and its people are officially illegally settled in state's forest as they do not have land document. And likewise many other upland community, people are threatened by the state's forest conservation policy as the government has established protected areas overlapping communities and attempted to relocate them. Consequently, the upland people have been struggling and claiming right to their community, and land.

The Pa Bon people claim this land as their customary right since the community has settled on this area for a long time. Due to many year negotiations, people have not been relocated. However, they are forced to give up rotational cultivation, which is seen an improper method of cultivation and a cause of deforestation. According to government policy, land use is allowed for merely two main purposes, conservation and maximizing economic benefits in terms of 'wise use'. Unfortunately, rotational cultivation which is subsistence production is not fit for both purposes. On the one hand, the slash and burn practices of the rotational farming is seen as an improper technique for land and forest conservation. The upland where rotational cultivation practices are located have been designed as environmental sensitive areas that should be preserved. On the other hand, rotational cultivation is perceived as unproductive farming technique as it uses low agricultural technology.

Due to the policy push, farmers have started practicing new ways of land use. The Pa Bon people demarcate the community territory and each household's land by making a sketch map. The forestry officials usually claim the state's rights over land not utilized for longer than three years as state's forest. Therefore, people clear land annually or every other year. However, shortening fallow period results in growth of dense weeds and low productivity. Consequently, farmers have changed their subsistence-oriented rotational farming to cash cropping, such as feed corn, peanuts, ginger, and flowers, so that they can have income to buy herbicide. Another stimulating factor for switching to cash cropping was a convenient road, developed in last five years, connecting the community to the districts centers. Middlemen brought in by this road have promoted feed corn farming and other commercial production through contract farming. Nowadays, most farmers produce CP888 seeds bought from and sold to the Crop Integration Business C.P. Group (CP Crop) - the largest agro-industrial company in Asia.

Despite policy push and market pull, and being subordinated by the powerful actors in the commodity chain, the commercial farming by farmers opens negotiating spaces for them in claiming their rights on the land. In other words, doing commercial farming is a strategy to claim community territory. Villagers realize that the state wants to preserve

forest cover land, so they attempt to make their land have no forest cover by using it every year instead of leaving fields fallow. Many farmers even clear land, though they do not want to cultivate in that year. In 2006, from a total of 210 plots, 27 plots were cleared but were not cultivated.

Growing trees, in terms of agro-forestry seemed to be a good idea for compromising agricultural and conservation objectives. And the age of trees can be an evidence of a long term land use for claiming the land rights. However, it might not be a good alternative for this community. Learning from people in the neighbouring villages, 24 plots (11.4% of 210 plots) have been used to grow lychee, and 10 plots (4.8%) to grow longan. Simultaneously, while making land claims, the farmers also expected to sell fruits.

Unfortunately, nobody has ever earned income from trees that have been planted for more than ten years. Fruit trees are unproductive since farmers do not put hormones or other chemicals for stimulating production. Tree planting also makes farmers lose other benefits of land use. They cannot grow vegetables or cash crops on those lands due to the shadow of the trees. And they cannot gather some nature products for eating and sale, such as lalang, rattan, and small eggplants. Some villagers have thought about growing bamboo, so that they may earn some money from selling bamboo shoots. However, they are afraid that the bamboo areas will be considered as forests and thus be taken by the state. In this regard, some farmers prefer banana trees as these will be considered as orchards. Moreover, bananas can be planted and cut down easily when farmers want to use land for other benefits. However, farmers can earn very little money or none from banana trees. Recently, some farmers have cut down the fruit trees and turned the lands for other cropping, such as dry rice, feed corn, and peanuts. Many remaining fruit orchards belong to people who do not live in the community, who have many other plots of land, or who do not have labours for cash cropping.

Unlike with the fruit trees, farmers can claim land rights and earn some income from cash cropping. They could adopt cash cropping easily through contract farming despite limitation of financial capital, labour, and skills required in new forms of agriculture. They could borrow seeds and chemicals from agents who would then deduce the amount borrowed from their income on sale. Only those people with savings, and they are a few, buy seeds and other materials by cash. Further, the land for dry rice production can be easily transformed to cash cropping, and likewise upland rice farming, upland cash cropping does not need irrigation. During harvest time, farmers can be sure that their products will be sold. Agents will come with milling machine, will mill, weigh, and sack the products, and then pay cash to them.

In contract farming, farmers have to pay a higher price for inputs and get lower prices for products compared to the non-contact farming system. However, they can seek out some spaces to take advantage of this system. Some villagers mix their own seed with the seed provided by the enterprise agents to reduce production cost, even though they realize that yield will be less. In many cases, villagers did not use chemical fertilizers provided by contract farming agents for contracted farms, but for others. Moreover, they did not sell some or the whole harvest to the contracted agent, but to others who would give 0.10-0.20 Bath/kilogram higher price.

In 2007, Hear Roat (anonymous name), the biggest feed corn entrepreneur in Phrao District, was angry with his agent who was a villager in Pa Bon community because the agent could not buy feed corn from the villagers, even though he provided much seeds and chemicals on credit. Hear Roat set up a new rule that he would provide materials to the reliable villagers only. Consequently, the agent did not work for Hear Roat any more since he would have less contracted farmers resulting in less earned commission.

However, some villagers have been contracted through another agent of Hear Roat from the next community.

Not merely a political negotiation, commercial farming also provides an opportunity for farmers to access financial capital from the government and NGOs. Previously, although there were some available sources of loan, farmers dared not having debt as they could not budget the big amount of money required for paying debt. Since cash cropping has been adopted farmers can estimate their annual earned income. They borrow money from several sources to improve their own life security and the one of their community, by building wooden houses, pioneering paddy field, by buying agricultural machines and living facilitations, and so on. A fifty years old woman said she would reduce the dry rice cropping but increase the feed corn cropping in order to get money to pay for the debt she borrowed in order to fix her house. Many villagers spend borrowed money for their children's education with the hope that their children will have better life and income in the future. More or less, cash cropping supports the sustainability of the community by making a better quality of life for those living in the community.

Yet, commercial farming is somehow not a good economic alternative. Many people have sought out other cash cropping instead of the present ones with which they have experienced failures many a times. For example, a family which was the first family producing feed corn in the community began cultivating peanuts instead of only feed corn farming this year. *"The increasing costs of hybrid seeds and herbicide have burdened us more than our capacity. We have learned from my father in law who lives in the other community that growing peanuts uses less investment- we can reproduce seeds ourselves, and use less herbicide"*, said the wife.

Another family came back from working in urban areas for 2 years. In 2007, they decided to quit farming and to earn their living from gathering non-timber forest products such as bamboo shoots, bamboo worm, mushrooms, etc. The husband said, *"Whatever I grew, it made me incur loss. Hence, I am trying not to grow anything, but earn money from other sources, or work in exchange for rice"*. His farm land had been rented to a farmer from a neighbouring village for two years. And a few months ago, he sold that land to a community member. Although this family does not have farm land and do not practice farming, it does not mean that land and 'community' has less meaning for them. Instead, life security for this family depends much more on the community territory and the living and farming of other community members. They need to make sure that they can gather non-timber forest products from the community forest, and their neighbours will have plenty of rice to share with them in exchange for money or labour.

The findings in this section illustrate the complicated conditions that make farmers engage in commercial farming. Although commercial farming is the farmers' strategy to claim land rights and to gain a sustainable livelihood, the community people have made this choice within a certain context and with a reduced decision power.

#### **IV) THE MAKING OF A COMMUNITY THROUGH COMMERCIAL FARMING**

No matter what is meant by community in the government terminology, the on ground operation of the government agencies in promoting sufficient economy does not reflect the 'strengthening community' strategy as it has claimed. For example, the seeds are distributed to the farmers individually and, during the training courses, they are advised to grow vegetables and control cash flows at the household level, precisely for each household's security.

On the contrary, commercial farming promoted by the villagers is more based on cultural and social bonds than subsistence farming implemented by the government. This is

clearly apparent when villagers are involved in collective actions, helping each other, overcoming certain difficulties, etc. while undertaking commercial farming. The key point, however, in strengthening a community is neither a dependence on subsistence farming nor commercial farming. Rather, community making involves collective actions in relations to political and economic conditions.

### ***LAND BORROWING***

In the past, when production depended mainly on rotational cultivation, the first farmers who cleared bush or forest for farmland were acknowledged as land owners. However, neighbours could ask permission to use the land in the year that the land was proper to be used – after being left as fallows for 5-7 years and when the owner did not use it after this period. And if the land had been left for a long time and nobody claimed it, others could occupy that land eventually.

When claiming land rights and negotiating conservation policy, farmers have indicated the household ownership clearly, by marking the limits of their land on sketch maps and directly on the plots. This was a negotiating strategy of Northern Farmers Network (NFN) of which the Pa Bon community is a community member. In 2005 and 2006, limits were officially acknowledged through a GPS survey and through documentations of the Sri Lanna national Park officials.

Besides the political condition, another condition for land demarcation is the increasing market value of land as a result of the increasing ability of land to produce agricultural commodities. However, villagers have made it a community rule that no one will expand his farm to the expense of community forest; also, they will not sell the any piece of land to outsiders. These conditions contribute to control land value in the community.

Making these community rules was a strategy suggested by the Northern Farmer Network (NFN), in order to negotiate conservation policy. With this rule, farmers insist that they can have a sustainable livelihood and, at the same time, conserve natural resources. Thus, they should be allowed to live in the forest instead of being relocated. Another point is that some elders are afraid to have outsiders owning land in the community, because it is difficult make “outsiders” abide by the community rules.

Nevertheless, there have been many conflicts among the villagers in demarcating the limits. Some people did not agree on the boundary between their lands. They claimed that this was a trick by some to impose new confinement over others’ lands or on community forest. In many cases, the conflicting people were very close relatives. And there was no concrete solution to solve these problems at the community level. Many people are ashamed to have a conflict within a kinship; and hence, problems are not raised publicly.

Considering these conditions, we suspect that land is more privatised and is no longer based on usufruct rights as before. Additionally, villagers seemed to be concerned more about their own benefit, becoming thus less generous towards other community members. Is the strong bond of the ‘community’ loosening? And is this because of land privatization, capitalist economy, and commercial farming?

Indeed, despite commercial farming and clear boundary of lands, usufruct rights have been applied to community members. As villagers try to defend their land rights from the state, they have attempted to use the land annually. Some farmers allow their neighbours to use their farm land without payment, either for subsistence or commercial production. In the 2007 rainy season, 13 plots, 6.1% from the total 210 plots, were used by people who were not the land owners. Some of the land borrowers may have needed to pay if they were not considered as community members. And some other land borrowers had to

pay a rent if they used the land after owners had finished clearing it for that cultivating season. Definitely, there are and must be a good relationship between the land owner and the land borrower. In most cases, both sides were relatives as well.

I don't think that the land borrowing as such is based on usufruct right as much as before. Rather, it is a strategy of the villagers to defend land rights within some limitations. Actually, many farmers want to gain benefit from their land by using it for commercial farming or by leasing it. However, they face labour shortages and lack financial investment for farming. Some villagers are afraid that the land would be deteriorated by the lessees who are the "outsiders". They thus allow their neighbours who can accept some conditions, such as not using chemical fertilizers to avoid destroying the land quality in the long term.

### ***EXCHANGE LABOUR***

In the Pa Bon community, labour exchange has been as a major production strategy for either subsistence production or commercial production. Some villagers said that farmers did not help others as much as before because they were busy on their own farm due to more intensive commercial production. However, the number of exchanged labour per day per farm is still 3-20 people, depending on the kind of job and the requirement of each farm owner. Due to labour shortage and lack of financial investment, to exchange labour is a better option than hiring labours.

Exchange labour is necessary for many households who have less labour - husband and wife, while their children go to school or work outside the community. Other households are even worse, when the housewife has to look after a baby at home, or when wife or husband gets sick. Labour exchange helps them to overcome these difficulties. Even if a family does not have a man for particular jobs, the work can be done by neighbouring men.

For some production process, men and women have different roles, e.g. men usually dig land while women drop seeds. However, return labour for an adult man can be a woman or a young boy or girl (9 – 15 years old). During the intensive production season children may skip school for some days and work on farm during the weekend as return labour instead of their parents.

Most families do not invest their entire labour in growing rice for subsistence, even though they regard food security as a priority. They produce 50% to 70% of their rice needs for a whole year, so they can spend the rest of their time for commercial production. The remaining 30% to 50% of required rice, they can get it from neighbours who have surplus of rice, in exchange for their work (one man day for one and a half tub of rice). Besides, some villagers may also borrow from community rice fund or from relatives or neighbours, or buy rice with money earned from wage labour, loans, sale of animals, etc.

The return of labour can be labour, money, or other things, such as seeds and rice of the same value. On average, the labour rate is 120 bahts per day, or one and a half tub of rice, or a tub of peanuts with bark, or other things of the same value, depending on the agreement between both sides. For spraying herbicide, the cost is twice the normal job. As a housewife explained, "*because it is a dangerous job and uses more energy*", both spraying manually or by machine<sup>64</sup>. The labour for this job is normally a male. If a return labour does not work on spraying herbicide, s/he must work for two days, or pay 240 bahts.

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<sup>64</sup> The farmers have to draw the spraying string for a long length from a machine to the farming area.

Normally, villagers have a strong commitment to returning labour. Even without a written note of name list, they never forget all those who helped them farm, even though it takes a long time in returning labour to all of them. A farm owner does not have to ask or remind them. In early morning before going to the farm the return labours usually come to his/her house offering their help.

Beside economic reason, there are other reasons for labour exchange, and that cannot be explained by economic aspect. For instance, a housewife explained: *“We chat, eat, and work together. Even though we get less work, it’s more fun. And some plots of land are very far. I’m not happy to walk there alone”*. In Thailand recently, there was widespread news that many kids were kidnapped to be forced to work as labours. In addition to these news, villagers also heard that an old woman in the next district was kidnapped by a group of people who came in a van. This news made villagers more afraid to walk to the farm alone.

However, villagers have also been harmed by forestry officials many years before they heard about the kidnapers. In 2004, two farmers were arrested by ten forestry officials while they were having lunch after farming. The farmers thought they did not do anything illegal. However, they were sued in court as forest destroyers. For almost three years, the two men and community members have had many difficulties due to the court procedures. They have learned that it is useless to explain or negotiate with the officials. The best strategy for them is, *‘do not talk to them, but run away’*. The farmers think that they feel safer while farming together. *“We will help each other looking out for forestry officials. If anybody see them s/he will shout in Pkakeryor language “Pka Se Pka Hae...Jee !”*<sup>65</sup> (Forestry officials are coming, run!). In this sense, farming together also means ‘running together’.

## **REST**

Despite having fixed rates for labour exchange, the relationship among villagers is not rigid, but friendly. The land owner has to be generous to the neighbours who work for him/her. The owner provides good food for lunch and invites them to rest properly. A housewife said: *“If we (a couple) work by ourselves, we will work seriously even without taking a rest. But if we have neighbours helping us, we should give them enough resting time, otherwise, we will be complained about”*.

I worked several days on the farm with the villagers and noticed that they usually rest for a long time and very often, even though they keep saying *“It’s a busy season. We are in a hurry. We cannot do other business, but farming”*. During resting time, some villagers gather non-timber forest products around their neighbours’ farm where they do not usually go, and some villagers look around nearby their farms. A housewife uses resting time to grow some banana trees at her own farm. *“These banana trees will hide me from the forestry officials”* she explained. Three men walk to the deep forest to shoot birds. Two housewives gather vegetables to feed pigs and some non-timber forest products to complete their dinner. Some farmers take a nap.

Besides those activities, farmers use much of resting time chatting with neighbours, and engaging with many new ideas. Currently, farming is not an easy job for them. There are many harmful conditions, especially the possibility of being threatened by government officials or by market risks. A housewife said: *“We practice farming blindly. We don’t*

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<sup>65</sup> Normally, the villagers call forestry officials in Thai language, *“Pa-Mai”*. But if they want to call them but do not want the forestry officials to know, they will use the word, *“Pka Se Pka”*. This word is known among the community members, but I found that many Pkakeryor in other communities do not understand this word.

know the market condition in advance, whether the price will be high or low, whether our products can be sold or not". However, farmers often exchange information and knowledge while farming together. Some villagers learn agricultural methods and techniques while working on their neighbours' farms. Several stories are spread out, from the simple living stories- e.g. health, food, price of agricultural products - to the political issues in the community, district, provincial, national, and at global levels. On the contrary, some villagers who do not go to farm may lose a chance for news, as a thirty year old widow said: *"I have to look after my baby, and so I cannot go to the farm. I don't know any news, neither villagers' being nor others"*.

For several days I worked on farm with many families, the schedule of each working day is similar.

One day schedule of work at my host family

- 6.00 Get up, cook, feed children and send them to school
- 7.30 Breakfast, carry cooked rice, some things for lunch and some agricultural tools  
*15-30 minutes for sipping tea and chatting with neighbours*
- 8.00 Go to farm (by walking or by motorcycle)
- 9.00 Reaching the farm, *rest at the hut for 30 minutes*, (some) smoke, chew areca, and just sit down  
The farm owners and some neighbours prepare the tools, seeds, and so on.
- 9.30 Work
- 10.30 *Rest for 30 minutes*
- 11.00 Work
- 12.00 *Lunch for 1-2 hours*, smoke, chew areca, take a nap, gather nature product, etc
- 14.00 Work
- 15.00 *Rest for 30-45 minutes*
- 16.00 Work
- 17.00 Go back home
- 18.00 *Rest*, prepare food, bathe, and feed animals
- 19.00 Dinner
- 20.00 *Rest*, sip tea and chat with neighbours, watch TV
- 22.00 Go to bed

From a purely economic perspective, such a work schedule is unproductive. However, for the villagers, resting time is not a wasted period, but a valuable one. It is significant for their health, their living and their social life. Although they want to earn more money from production, they are not ready to exchange it with their resting time. Commodity relations cannot dominate their way of life entirely, even though people are working on commercial production.

Many villagers have experiences being hired as labour for northern Thai farmers. They told me that, *"It is really hard work. They do not allow us to take rest properly. Some fields have no shadow for us."* Some villagers were hired labours for other jobs in cities, such as housekeeper, security, seller, etc. Although they are satisfied with the wage, they come back home for farming after working for 3 or 4 years. Most reasons are; *"It's not fun being there."* *"Have no freedom."* *"Have to work for others not for myself."* *"Working on my own farm I can take rest any time I want."*

Some villagers in their mid-thirties told me that nobody wants to live in the urban areas forever. Going out for some years is just the way to earn money and to experience the world. They want to make sure that they have a community – home, farm land, family, neighbours, forest, etc.– for coming back any time, though first it takes some years away from the community.

Land borrowing, labour exchange, and resting time as examples of agricultural practices of the farmers in my research site reflect the making of social relations through the process of commercial production. The general notion is that subsistence production is usually based on reciprocity, whereas commodity relations have much influenced commercial production. For instance, the commercial productions often use hired labours instead of exchange labour system. Some scholars think that the commodity relations through hiring labours distort people relation since people no longer interact with one another directly, but through the mediations of the market (Taussig, 1984). And this is a cause of losing community relations. However, I argue that ideas such as the reciprocity have been a major production strategy in Pa Bon community even though it was for commercial production.

The strong bond community relation through reciprocity system did not pre-exist as an essence of the Pkakeror culture. Moreover, it is not the strategy to get away from the fierce capitalist economy as the Community Culture School would argue. Rather, the community bond has been made through a system of reciprocity in a context where villagers are struggling with the state conservation policy and entering commercial production strategically. On the one hand, they practice commercial farming as a strategy for claiming land rights. On the other hand, they are struggling for their survival in the capitalist economy. The commercial farming, indeed, brings them food insecurity and economic pressure. In this regard, reciprocity as a collective action helps them in overcoming these difficulties and in having more power to determine their lives.

#### **IV) CONCLUSION**

In this paper, I have demonstrated the on ground operation of the government program for promoting sufficient economy and subsistence agriculture. Although the idea of such a program sounds good, in practice these activities hardly have any effect on the local communities regarding the objective of strengthening the community. Actually, a community can be strengthened by the local people themselves even through commercial production. For Pa Bon villagers, the (re)making of the community means making claim on land, so that villagers can go on their living and have sustainable lives in their own community. Despite some conflicts among them, villagers acted collectively to overcome their common problems. The collective actions can be seen in many forms through their everyday life and in agricultural production that reflect the struggling political and economic pressures.

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# CHAPITRE 5

## Racialization and Work: A Case Study with Refugees/Migrants from Burma/Myanmar in Thailand

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This paper<sup>66</sup> presents the preliminary findings of fieldwork conducted during the summer of 2007 in the district of Mae Rim, Chiang Mai province, in Northern Thailand. My research examines how ethnic politics shape the labor relations between the Hmong and Shan minority groups and what kind of agrarian future those relations engender. For the purpose of this paper, I focus only on the racialization of the Shan migrant/minority from Myanmar/Burma<sup>67</sup> and argue that the Shan's cheap, flexible terms of employment have been facilitated by the particular way they have been racialized. The following section briefly provides the background of my research site; the second section discusses the way the Shan are constructed as 'economic migrants', 'problems' and good laborers by the Thai state, media and the employers. The third section, then, relates the Shan's racialized identities to the terms of employment.

### I) BRIEF BACKGROUND

My research site is located in Chiang Mai Province in Northern Thailand. Due to sensitivity of the nature of my research site, I do not reveal its identity and the people there. Instead, I refer to my research village and the village as Doi Soong (see Figure 1 for Northern Thailand and Chiang Mai Province). 'Local' residents belong to the Hmong minority group and have been accused of being non-Thai immigrants, despite the fact that a vast majority of the villagers were born in Thailand. The Hmong in the forested areas have long been under pressure by state agencies, conservation groups and lowland ethnic Tai for their past opium cultivation and shifting agriculture, and the present commercial cash cropping.

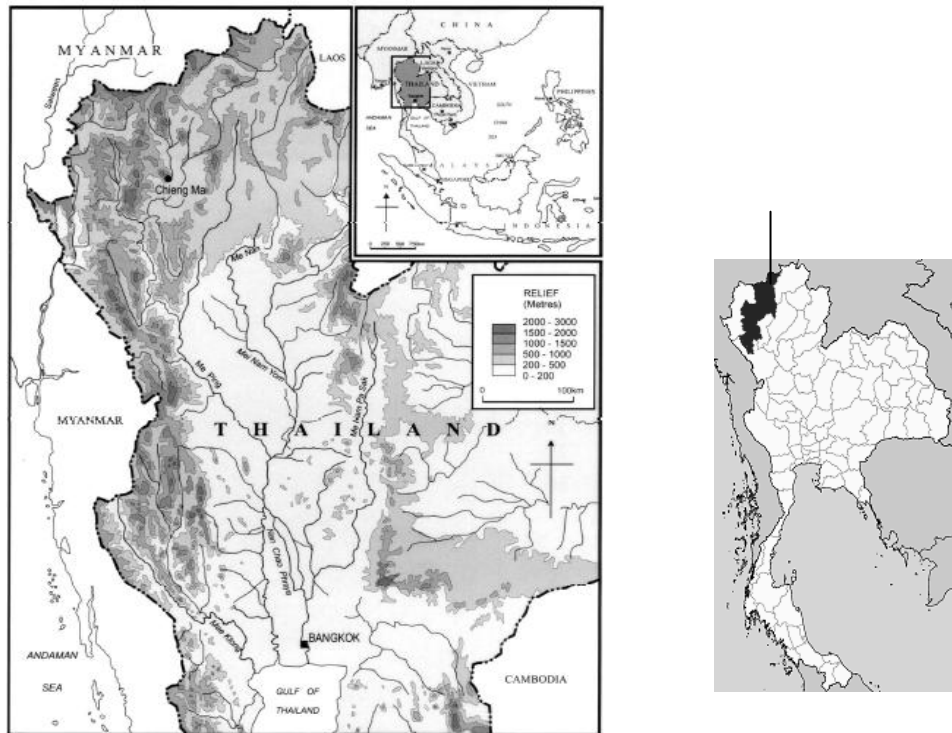
Since the mid 1990s, thousands of Shan ethnic people from Burma migrated to Thailand to escape the state oppression against minority groups in Burma. In the past, the Hmong either worked on farms by themselves, engaged in labor exchange (and still do to some extent) with other villagers or hired Karen and Lisu as waged labor. Nonetheless, the landscape of the ethnic division of labor and the ethnic composition in the labor force has changed since the influx of the Shan in the mid 1990s to the extent that the Hmong landowners now depend on the Shan as a major source of labor.

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<sup>66</sup> This is the preliminary report of my fieldwork and the condensed version of three draft chapters from my thesis.

<sup>67</sup> Both Myanmar and Burma are used interchangeably in this paper.

**Figure 1**  
**Northern Thailand and Chiang Mai Province**



*Source: Delang (2003)*

## II) RACIALIZATION OF THE SHAN

For this paper, the concept of racialization is utilized to illustrate how the Shan's identity has been constructed by the Thai state, media and the Hmong employers.<sup>68</sup> There are two reasons 'racialization' is utilized as opposed to 'racism'. The first reason is to avoid the unproductive debate about whether certain acts or claims are racism, which requires proving the acts and claims in connection to biological connotations. The second reason is, as Rattansi claims, "the concept of 'racialization' in recent social scientific research ... rests on the acknowledgement that the simple label racism/racist obscures the fact that there is in fact a whole spectrum of views from strict biological determinism ... to very confused and loose mixed of cultural stereotypes which may not contain any specific biological markers at all" (Rattansi, 2007:107). Similarly, Peter Vandergeest argues that despite racism in reference to biology has been discredited in academia, it is still possible to argue that "ethnic differences continue to be racialized, if racialization can be thought of as including the ways in which ethnic and national differences are naturalized and essentialized with or without explicit reference to biology" (Vandergeest, 2003). By referring to naturalization and essentializing, the concept captures generalizations, stereotyping, and other forms of essentialized identification as part of racial politics, while acknowledging that those subjected to racialization are not necessarily regarded as inferior (Rattansi, 2007).

Racialization of the Shan identity seems to explain how the Shan are put into the slot of 'economic migrants', how they are perceived, and what kinds of jobs they are given. Racialization of the Shan could be understood in terms of official racialization and

<sup>68</sup> I address in my thesis the way the exiled Shan essentialize the Shan with 'authentic' identities and bounded Shan State in Eastern Burma, which ends up paralleling the T(h)ai's construction of the Shan as 'other', who strictly belong to Burma/Shan State, not Thailand.

employer racialization both based on essentialization of the Shan with certain characteristics.

### **OFFICIAL RACIALIZATION AND THE MAKING OF “ECONOMIC MIGRANTS”**

By official racialization, I mean the way the State and the media have constructed the identity of the Shan by essentializing them with negative characteristics (such as trouble makers), while indiscriminately categorizing all displaced Shans as ‘illegal’ and ‘economic migrants’ coming to make a better life (as opposed to recognizing certain segments as ‘refugees’ or ‘displaced persons’). Currently, the province of Chiang Mai is drafting a new decree against the ‘migrants’. The previous Governor of Chiang Mai, Wichai Srikwan, told the *Bangkok Post* that the provincial authority was drafting a regulation against migrant workers *to maintain peace and order* in the province.<sup>69</sup> This new decree will (i) ban the use of motorbikes and mobile phones; (ii) ban the gathering of more than five people; and (iii) include a curfew forbidding the migrants from leaving residential areas between 8 pm and 5 am.<sup>70</sup> Some reasons behind this decree include the accusation that the migrants steal, drink and shout, making ‘local’ residents afraid to go out at night.<sup>71</sup>

Although the decree does not specify the Shan as the target population, there are reasons to believe that it is racially loaded. First, the Shan constitute the vast majority of the cross-border population in Chiang Mai; hence, people in Chiang Mai tend to generalize all immigrants to be ‘Tai Yai’ - the Shan.<sup>72</sup> Second, the plan to draft the decree came out after intelligence officials’ assertion that the Shan gang members fight with their Thai counterparts.<sup>73</sup> Third, although the decree has not been officially launched, it has been implemented in Chiang Mai explicitly targeting the Shan. For instance, in early May 2007, Pol. Lt. Col Chamnan Ruadraew ordered four police stations “to set up checkpoints to target vehicles used by *Thai Yai [Shan] and migrant laborers from Myanmar*”<sup>74</sup> [emphasis added].

Rather than dealing with the specific individuals involved, the Police Regional 5 and the Provincial Office make sweeping generalizations as if the entire migrant population engages in criminal activities and possesses ill behavior. Mai Soong (pseudonym), an NGO staff member, said:

majority of the Shan in Thailand are honest. They just concentrate on their work. Most of them avoid confrontation with their employers even when they know that they are right. Also, although they know that their wages have been skimmed by the foreman, they keep quiet because they don’t know or don’t want any trouble. ... And yet, the Thai authority and lower middle class Thai people want to accuse all Shan migrants as trouble makers.

Mai Soong’s argument is supported by my discourse analysis of three newspapers (*The Nation*, *Bangkok Post*, and the *Chiang Mai Mail*) published between 1995 and 2007: the comments and interviews expressed in these newspapers are both implicit and explicit in representing the Shan in negative ways. A result of this sweeping generalization is the essentialization of the Shan with negative characteristics.

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<sup>69</sup> *Bangkok Post*, “Labour/Migrant Workers Control”, April 19, 2007

<sup>70</sup> Sanloitai Associate Press, 5 June 2007.

<sup>71</sup> *Chiang Mai Mail*, “Police set up checkpoints around the city: Locals afraid to go out at night claim police” Vol VI, No. 11 (May 8-14, 2007)

<sup>72</sup> During my fieldwork, there were instances when I mentioned to employees from coffee shops and internet/copy shops that I was researching ‘migrant workers’, many of them quickly asked if I was studying about the Shan.

<sup>73</sup> Interview, Mai Soong, a staff from an NGO based in Chiang Mai, June 2, 2007; Interview, Murengzuen, Sanloitai Associated Press, August 17, 2007.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid & *Chiang Mai Mail* (May 8- 14, 2007)

Another form of official racialization takes place in relation to the Shan's refugee/displaced status. Along the Thai-Burma border there are nine camps sheltering at least two hundred thousand 'displaced' persons<sup>75</sup> from the Karen, Karenni and Mon ethnic groups of Burma. Unfortunately, the Thai State does not even recognize the Shan as displaced persons, but merely as 'economic migrants'.

Some cultural explanations of the Shan's status include the politics around the ethnic identity of the Shan, who call themselves Tai Yai (i.e. bigger Tai). For example, there are a significant number of Shan people living in Northern Thailand since before the formation of modern Thailand. These Shan are officially recognized as ethnic people of Thailand (not so much as a 'hill tribe'). Compared to other minority groups such as the Karen and Hmong, they are better received in Thai cultural discourse because of the shared ethnic origin, religion, language family and cultural practices. Currently, the Shan's traditional festivals such as *Poy Sang Long* have been picked up as 'local' culture in Chiang Mai and Mae Hong Song provinces.<sup>76</sup>

Likewise, the Thai scholars have used the Shan's customs and the 'traditional' way of life as authentic to Tai culture and identity in their attempt to counter the expansion of cultural, political and economic influences of the 'westernizing/modernizing' elites from Bangkok and central Thailand. Ironically, the acceptance of the Shan's culture to some extent in certain geographical locations by certain people is at the same time a reason for the elites to be worried about the Shan. One worry is the displaced Shan's quick assimilation into the Thai society.<sup>77</sup> Another is the increasing acceptance of Shan customs as the Northern culture which rarely resemble that of the dominant urban Thai culture.

I do not intend to make a sweeping generalization that all recent cross-border Shan are politically displaced persons/refugees. My study shows, nevertheless, that most of the Shan at my research site fled from the oppressive practices of the Burmese state, and anti-state armies to an extent. A majority of the respondents came from two main townships, Lai Kha and Murng Kerng, which were frequently reported in the media as sites of abuses during the past ten years (Appendix 1).<sup>78</sup> For example, the *Bangkok Post* reported in January 1997, that:

once thriving farming communities in eight townships became depopulated "free-fire" zones; Larng Kher, Murng Nai, Nam Zarng, Lai Kha, Murng Kerng, Kun Hing, Ke See and Murng Su. The villagers were given five days to move. Soldiers threatened to shoot anyone who did not comply.... At some sites, troops forced villagers to stand guard along the roads and to clear trees and bushes.... Others had to work in military camps, on road-building projects. Over 100,000 people were affected and 20,000 of these have already moved to Thailand (Bachoe and Charasdamrong, 1997)<sup>79</sup>.

The Thai government's interpretation of the Shan's arrival seems to imply that they are 'economic migrants' because they did not flee from "civil conflicts", which signifies the battles between government troops and anti-government armies. It is true that the Shan at my site did not run from the 'conflict' in this strict sense. Group conversations, however, reveal that the majority left their homes due to militarization in terms of forced labor, land confiscation, extortion of properties and physical abuses (Appendix 2). Some of them left their villages immediately after their encounter with the troops, while some left after

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<sup>75</sup> Thailand does not recognize people who escape from civil unrest as refugees, giving that it is not a party to the 1951 UN Convention on Refugee and the 1967 Protocol. Instead, these people are recognized merely as 'displaced persons'.

<sup>76</sup> Interview, a Shan activist, Chiang Mai, August 1<sup>st</sup> 2007.

<sup>77</sup> Interview, a Shan teacher, Chiang Mai, August 4<sup>th</sup> 2007.

<sup>78</sup> See Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF)'s documentation of state oppression in these areas at <http://www.shanland.org/resources/bookspub/humanrights/dispossessed>

<sup>79</sup> *Bangkok Post*, "Escape to Thailand", January 5, 1997.

realizing that they could not make a living anymore while constantly running and hiding from the troops. A worker said:

we have to keep running all the time, almost every time we heard that soldiers were coming to the village. Sometime we don't have enough rice. But both government and rebel soldiers tax us with money, rice, paddy and animals. Since we cannot pay or run like this forever, we just asked people in other villages to take us to the East [Thailand].

There are some who migrated to Thailand due to landlessness, insufficient crop yields, lower income and long-term unemployment, which also are connected to political circumstances in the areas. Rather than responding to these diverse experiences, Thai authorities put the Shan in the same slot as other migrants from Laos, Cambodia and even Burma who have options to go back if conditions in Thailand are too hard for them.

Worse is the extension of the negative images of some criminals onto the displaced Shan, constructing the Shan as transgressors and trouble makers who need to be controlled and restricted. The State's construction of the Shan identity as such has been backed by the media. My key informants identify that the Chiang Mai Mail, an English language newspaper in Chiang Mai, often portrays the Shan as a 'hill tribe', 'illegal alien workers', drug traffickers and trouble makers who even cause the death of 'innocent' Thai. For instance, it quotes the traffic Pol. Col. Ruadraew saying that "*roaming Thai Yai [Shan] youth cause accidents resulting in injuries and deaths of innocent drivers*" (Meesubkwang, 2007).<sup>80</sup> Traffic radio announcers have a habit of announcing that "non-Thai people" [normally referring to the Shan] can be identified easily as not knowing the rules are driving badly and causing traffic jams.<sup>81</sup> As a result, every Shan in Thailand came to possess the identity of 'illegal' 'economic migrant' and 'trouble maker' as well as 'uneducated' and 'unskilled'.

#### **EMPLOYER RACIALIZATION AND THE MAKING OF "GOOD LABORERS"**

A consequence of having been denied standing as displaced persons/refugees is the denial of refugee camps whereby the Shan have to enter the sphere of coerced labor and have to be content with whatever jobs and working conditions that are available to them. The Shan's content with working conditions make the Hmong stereotype the Shan as strong, hard working and good laborers. Surprisingly, such racialized identity is so widespread that almost all Hmong farmers from the village identified these characteristics as the reasons for hiring the Shan.

Nonetheless, racialization is not always monolithic in the sense that even though the employers see the Shan as strong and hard working people, they have mixed feelings that the Shan are part of the 'problem'. In other words, the Shan are conceived of as strong, hard working, good laborers at micro level, while prejudices against the Shan are sustained at macro level. This is because the two types of racialization are in a dialectic relation - each leading to another. Thus, the racialized identity(ies) of the Shan is partial and multiple at the same time.

Yet, racialization cannot function by imposition from outside alone. Instead, it involves internalization and performance of the racialized identity by the group itself. For example, the Shan also think that they have to be strong, hard working and satisfied with the working conditions in order to get the jobs. They, therefore, have to perform their identity as thought of by their employers. Though, there is a difference between the Hmong and Shan over how "strong-ness" and "hard working-ness" are asserted. The Hmong seem to

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<sup>80</sup> *Chiang Mai Mail*.

<sup>81</sup> Interview, a Shan veteran turned teacher. August 1, 2007.

attribute “strong-ness” to the people, whereas the Shan believe they have to be strong and hard workers because they have no other option.

### **III) RACIALIZED IDENTITY AND WORK**

#### ***CONTENTED LABOR FORCE AND THE TERM OF EMPLOYMENT***

In the so-called discourses of modernity, agriculture and agricultural-based livelihood are regarded as ‘traditional’, ‘backward’ and stagnated. In contrast, the contemporary mode of agricultural production in the village where I research is hybrid in the sense that the agrarian production appropriates industrial and capitalist modes of labor practices (such as temporary, sub-contract, hire-and-fire with almost no social welfare). Despite such labor relations, the Shan, who have had traumatic experiences of oppression in Burma, appear content with these practices, thereby breaking down the antagonistic relations -- a dominant form of labor relations in the industrial and neo-liberal eras -- between employers and employees.

Racialization of the Shan identity underpins the types of jobs and terms of employment available to the Shan. Ten years ago, the Hmong used to hire Karen and Lisu workers and few others. The influx of the Shan in the mid 1990s changed the ethnic composition of the labor force. While the wages for the Karen and Lisu varied in the past, most of them were hired on a seasonal basis or longer than the present 2-3 days employment of the Shan. In the early and mid 1990s, when few Shan came to seek jobs, the Hmong hired the Shan for a few days when they needed more laborers besides the Karen and Lisu. When the massive numbers of Shan arrived in the area, the Hmong started relying on the Shan, but the flexible basis continued. During the past decade, seasonal employment of the Hmong, Karen and Lisu was significantly replaced with the flexible employment of the Shan, with terms of employment mostly ranging from 2-3 days to a week.

A farmer who also owns a grocery store said “we used to hire Karen and Lisu.... We started hiring Tai Yai, maybe 10-15 years ago... There were very few Shan at that time, but now all villagers want to hire the Shan mostly because Hmong workers want to be hired longer period and need to set the time.... But for the Shan, we don’t need to worry about how many days we want to hire. We can ask them anytime to come and work”. Another reason for the replacement is wages. In the province of Chiang Mai, the official minimum wage is 159 baht a day. Some villagers identified that the Hmong workers want about 150 baht a day, whereas the Shan can be hired for only 100 baht a day.

Empirically, out of 40 Hmong respondents (for both survey and interviews), 80% (34 persons) responded that they hire waged labor.<sup>82</sup> At the time of my studies, 22 households out of 34 hired the Shan only, and the other 12 hired both Hmong and Shan. Still, the Hmong are marginal in the sense that they are hired only when the Shan are not available or more work needs to be done. It is difficult to calculate how many workers there are in the villages and how many workers per household or per rai because of the short period of employment that makes the workers to keep rotating.

I observed two major terms of employment: (i) short-term (daily and piece-work ranging from 2-3 days to a week), and (ii) long-term (monthly and sub-contract). From the total sample of 25 Shan respondents, 14 people are working as short-term laborers. Short term employment allows the Hmong to reduce labor costs significantly in the sense that farmers hire waged laborers only for the days the work needs to be performed, but do not need to spend money for the entire month or cultivation season. The employees, therefore,

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<sup>82</sup> There are 45 total Hmong respondents in my research sample, but five respondents refused to answer the question if they hire waged labor or not.

do not have any permanent employers, or even seasonal ones, but keep rotating in every few days. An employer, for example, hired four workers on the day of the interview, but she had hired six workers three days earlier. An extreme case is that of an owner of 50 rai, who had hired 60 workers earlier in the cultivation season of my studies. On the day of interview, however, he hired only one young boy for weeding.

Short-term employees face enormous difficulties stemming from constant unemployment since each term of employment is mostly 2-3 days. For example, a Shan woman said she has to look for job about 8 to 9 times in some months, sometimes taking about 3-4 days in between jobs. In general, the workers work about 20-25 days per month in the high season, but it can go down to 10 to 15 days per month in low seasons.

Piece-work jobs are preferred by the employees not only because they can generate more money quickly, but also because they can better manage time by themselves. The wage varies depending on employers and the work. If the employer is not in a rush, a worker can work with his/her spouse. In cases of this kind, the migrant couple can generate more income. If the employer is in a rush, the workers have to share the work with their colleagues. The problem with this kind of job, though, is that it too is for about 2-3 days in general. Thus, once the work is done, the workers have no income anymore until they find a new job. For instance, during my first visit in mid-June, a couple (together with another couple) had agreed to dig the soil and prepare it for planting for 1600 baht. They tried to finish it in two days. Once the job is over, each worker received 400 baht (or 200 baht/person/day). During my second visit a couple of days later, the man had gone to work, but the woman had not found another job.

Even though my studies took place during the high season when the workers should work for 20-25 days a month, I often see the Shan, including my interviewees, at their homes. Moreover, some of them were hanging out in the village in the afternoon. This makes me question if they even have jobs for 20-25 days a month. I recall my interpreter's comment that most of the workers do not know math, and thus they do not keep records. This, perhaps, highlights the need for a longer-term observation in order to better reflect the complexity of the labor relations.

A clearer picture about the extremely flexible nature of the Shan workers, perhaps, is revealed by the employer survey. For example, out of 16 respondents from my survey sample who agreed to answer the question regarding the average length of employment, 82% (13 persons) hire workers on the short-term basis, while the remaining 18% or 3 employers hire on longer term basis. Even so, terms of employment are so short that a vast majority of short-term employers hire the workers less than 20 days a month (Appendix 3).

A negative impact for the Shan is that even though an employer hires, for example, 15 days a month, they do not continuously hire the same employees. In other words, an employer hiring labor for 15 days does not guarantee the same laborers to be hired for those 15 days. Once the job, for example, seeding, is over in a few days, they let their employees go. Then once the time comes after a couple of weeks, for cleaning they hire whoever comes to ask for jobs or call whoever is available. Moreover, there is no prior agreement as to how many days they would hire. Sometimes, the employers let the workers go after a few days without prior notice, making the employees unemployed that evening. If the Hmong workers were hired instead, more money would have to be spent on the labor as they demand higher wages and longer terms of employment.

Those who are hired on a monthly basis seem to earn a stable income ranging from 2,500 to 3,000 Baht (average 100 per day), and have a relatively secure employment. The pay may be lower to about 90 Baht and higher to 120 a day, but 100 baht is common. Some of them have been working for the same employer for a few months, and some for a couple

of years. But for the non-monthly workers, the income fluctuates to such a large degree that it is difficult to point to the average income of a worker or among the workers. If we considered 100 Baht a day to be average and a worker works for 20-25 days a month, the average income would be around 2,500 baht. Yet, depending on the seasons, workers' income fluctuates enormously; hence, such generalization is not always helpful. Thus, most of the Shan workers in the village are in extreme poverty and some of them do not even have enough food, or money to take the children to the hospital.

Despite low wages and uncertain unemployment, the Shan appear content with all these uncertainties. A Hmong woman said for example that “they never complain, and they never said that this is too difficult or cannot be done... if we ask them to come for one or two days, they just said yes, yes, yes and do the job... Sometime, we found someone [Hmong, Karen, Lisu] who can work for 2-3 days, but it is difficult to find them. Most of them are the Shan now... In general, they [the Shan] never complain”. These ideas make the Hmong think the Shan are strong and good laborers who tend to accept every available job.

### **SHAN IDENTITY AND THE ETHNIC DIVISION OF LABOR**

The Hmong's assertion of the Shan as strong and hard workers (as opposed to lazy Lisu, Karen, and Hmong labourers) also explains why they hire the Shan primarily for what are deemed to be hard jobs. The result is an emergence of the ethnic divisions of labor. A Hmong farmer said “Karen and Lisu don't know how to grow. The Shan are strong and hard workers, and they know how to grow”. Another woman said, “The Shan are strong because they can do everything. They accept every job [referring to carrying bags]. Even for very heavy bags and hard work such as digging the hard land, they can do... But the Hmong are not strong and hard working like the Shan. So we hire the Hmong only for easy jobs ...such as cleaning and seeding”.

My conversations and survey with the Hmong show that they hire the Shan mostly for digging soil and carrying things (Table 1), which is also confirmed by the Shan. When the Hmong are asked how farming could be affected if the government bans the employment of the Shan, an elderly woman said “it is impossible because there will be nobody to dig the soil”. The following tables show the jobs for which the Hmong hire the Shan. This data is drawn from the survey which was conducted with 30 Hmong respondents. Out of 30, four respondents refused to answer and three stated that they do not hire waged laborers at the moment. Thus, the following numbers reflect 23 employers.

**Table 1**  
**Jobs for which the Shan are hired by the Hmong employers**

<b>Type of Jobs</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Digging Soil	23
Carrying	16
Planting (seeding, picking)	9
Cleaning	3
Spraying	2

*Source: Fieldwork, 2007.*

Yet, this pattern is changing in the sense that the Shan are increasingly being hired for all jobs, even for what are deemed to be easy jobs such as planting and cleaning. During my study period, I could only interviewed two Lisu and one Karen families, and a Karen man.

I was also able to briefly converse with three Hmong laborers, one of them working as an exchange laborer, but I was barely able to obtain any significant information. All of them are either cleaning and/or seeding. The employers themselves, especially the women, clean and seed together with the Shan. As far as I could observe, men are not normally on the farm, but transporting water, seeds, pesticide and vegetables. If there are men, they are watching the laborers work.

Ethnic division of labor has a gender aspect as well. Perhaps, there is a dialectic relation between ethnic division of labor and gendered nature of work in the sense since the organization of work has always been gendered in hierarchal orders in terms of hard work at the lower ends and easy work at the upper ends of the production chain, a slot for the 'strong' and 'hard working' Shan is created at the lower end. Even in that slot, men are given preference since the work for which the Shan are hired is deemed hard work.

My survey reveals that women earn lower income than men. In an extreme case, for example, while a husband earns about 2,000-3,000 bahts a month, the wife earns about 1,000-2,000 B. This is not because of women are paid lower than men as reported in other parts of Northern Thailand<sup>83</sup>, but because of the gendered nature of the work which hires fewer women. The wage is the same for both men and women at average 100 Baht per day, but the women's working days are fewer. A 70 rai owner, for example, hired 20 workers at one time when I interviewed him. However, he hired only 5 women assuming that women cannot do hard work.

Yet it is unhelpful to attribute the whole phenomenon of labor restructuring to racialization of the Shan identity. Instead, the labor relation is implicated by the Shan's migrant status, which is embedded in the structure of migration control under the nation-State system. This structure of migration control limits the ability of the Shan to move freely for a better job within Thailand, and limits their access to land and resources, eventually transforming the Shan into coerced labor. When combining this structural control with racialization, the Shan are seen as threatening, uneducated, unskilled, but strong and hard working, and thus qualifying only for jobs at the lower ends.

#### **IV) CONCLUSION**

I have demonstrated that even though the Shan left Burma because of political oppression, the Thai State continues to deny the Shan's standing as 'displaced persons'. Instead, it indiscriminately categorizes all Shan migrants/'displaced persons' as economic migrants making them to become coerced labor. Worse is the construction of the Shan's images as problems and trouble makers who need to be controlled. Such construction of the Shan's identity by the State is backed by the media. Having no place to take refuge, the Shan content with whatever working conditions available to them, making the Hmong employers to assert that the Shan are strong, hard working and good laborers. Such essentialized identities shape the kinds of jobs the Shan are given, and the terms of employments the Shan are supposed to accept. Thus, the Shan's cheap labor and flexible terms of employment have been shaped by the way they have been racialized.

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<sup>83</sup> Where women are paid about 20-30 Baht less than men.

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**Appendix 1**  
**Origins of Shan respondents**

<b>Village</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lai Kha (Lae Char)	11	42
Murng Kerng (Mein Kaing)	7	31
Ke See (Kyaе Thee)	1	4
Pang Long (Pin Long)	2	8
No Answer	4	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

**Appendix 2**  
**Reasons of leaving the villages (multiple responses are recorded)**

<b>Reasons of Leaving</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
Forced Labor	5
Confiscation or shooting of animals	5
Forced Relocation	4
Physical Abuses	3
No (Enough) Land	3
Confiscation of land and crops	2
Tax to govt and rebel armies	2
Unemployment	1
Low Wage	1
Flood	1
Total respondents	16
No Response	9 respondents

**Appendix 3**  
**The numbers of hiring days by the Hmong**

<b>Rai</b>	<b>Numbers of employers</b>	<b>Employing (days/month)</b>	<b>Number of interviewees</b>
60	10	7	9
2	NA	7	
8	NA	10	
20	4	10	
10	3	13	
6	4	15	
17	6	15	
13	2	15	
15	3	19	
6	2	20	4
10	4	20	
14	3	25	
70	20	25	
10	3	Monthly	3
10	5	Monthly	
NA	NA	Monthly	

## **CHAPITRE 6**

### **Winning the Local “Hearts and Minds”: Modernization through Civic Action in South Vietnam**

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In early 1955, the nascent South Vietnamese government of Ngô Đình Diệm began a concerted effort to ensure that its policies for rural development were reaching the countryside. Hoping to counter the communist influence on the village population, Diệm’s government employed mobile groups of Civic Action cadres to improve livelihood of the rural population by mobilizing them to engage in “self-help” projects. The projects also aimed at modernizing their village institutions and infrastructure. This chapter will explore the origins of the program with the help of memoranda, reports and other forms of official correspondence from Vietnamese National Archives (in Hồ Chí Minh City), The National Archives and Records Administration (in College Park, Maryland) and the Vietnam Archives (in Lubbock, Texas). I argue that this specific endeavour was part of a larger effort to promote a South Vietnamese social revolution that was intended to create a viable and modern Southeast Asian nation; which was capable of standing independently among the nations of the “free world.” More significantly, it will demonstrate that rather than be conceived of as an anachronistic and alien regime completely out of touch with the population of Vietnam, the Diệm government, despite all of its shortcomings, was initially quite forward looking in this regard, and possessed a coherent plan to reach down to the local level and connect with the village communities.

Ngô Đình Diệm may be considered one of the most significant Presidents of the Republic of Vietnam during its twenty years existence and, perhaps, the least understood. He was the longest serving leader of the country, from June 1954 until his death on November 2, 1963. He was the leader against whom the People’s Liberation Armed Forces originally revolted, sparking a chain of events that ultimately led to the “official” intervention by the American military in 1965. However, until very recently, Diệm’s historical importance has not been matched by any serious attempt to try to understand him as an independent actor with his own agenda.

The original view portrays Diệm as an American creation, supported by the Eisenhower Administration to serve Cold War interests. In many of these cases he is portrayed as a hopelessly inept autocratic leader who was notoriously unwilling to accept American

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<sup>84</sup> Ce texte a reçu le premier prix du concours de la meilleure présentation étudiante, prix décerné par l’Institut des Hautes études internationales de l’Université Laval - This paper received the first best student’s paper award from the Institut Québécois des Hautes Études Internationales (Université Laval).

advice and the backward product of his Catholicism and/or Confucianism.<sup>85</sup> At the same time, a minority of more sympathetic historians have painted the picture of an individual who, in the words of Graham Greene, was simply a “patriot who was ruined by the West.”<sup>86</sup> It is only in the past few years, with the opening up of archives in Hà Nội and Hồ Chí Minh City, that historians have begun to take Ngô Đình Diệm more seriously and view him on his own terms.

Using files from the First Republic of Vietnam (RVN), historians Philip Catton and Edward Miller argue that Ngô Đình Diệm should best be viewed as a conservative modernizer. While he possessed an intense pride in his country’s history and its Confucian tradition, he also realized that ways of the past were no longer relevant in the twentieth century. He further reasons that for Vietnam to survive as an independent entity in an international system shaped by the twin forces of the Cold War and decolonization, he would need to promote, and eventually realize a distinct vision of how Vietnam could become a modern nation. Moreover, these historians have shown that Diệm shared the views of the previous generations of radicals and reformers that Vietnam had lost its independence because the leaders of the Nguyễn Dynasty had failed to foster a national consciousness in their response to the French imperial conquest. While Vietnam’s independence had been regained by the time Diệm ascended to a position of leadership, these authors contend that he still perceived an absence of the kinds of social structures needed to connect the individual and the family with the rest of society if a “free” Vietnam was to survive in this new postcolonial world.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> For example, see Denis Warner, *The Last Confucian: Vietnam, Southeast Asia and the West*, (New York: Macmillan Co, 1963) for a scathing account of Diệm’s leadership. Bernard Fall discusses both Diệm’s Catholicism and Confucianism as factors contributing to his paternalistic approach to governance. Bernard Fall, *The Two Vietnams: A Political and Military Analysis*, 2d. rev. ed., (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), 236-237. David Halberstam bluntly states that Diệm was an invention of CIA operative Edward Lansdale. Moreover, he highlights the fact that Diệm was not only a Catholic leader of a Buddhist country, but also “a member of the feudal aristocracy in a country swept by revolution.” David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, Twentieth Anniversary ed., (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), 147-151. Quote from page 147. This view is largely shared by Frances Fitzgerald who refers to Diệm as America’s protégé and suggests his Catholicism kept him out of touch with the Vietnamese peasantry. Frances Fitzgerald, *Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 80-84. Neil Sheehan also shares these views stating that Diệm was “a Confucian character, more mandarin than mandarins of old had ever been,” while adding that the CIA maneuvered Emperor Bao Dai into offering the premiership to Diệm in 1954. Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam*, (New York: Random House, 1988), 134, quote from page 175. Finally, George C. Herring argues Diệm was “backward looking” and “had no blueprint for building a modern nation or mobilizing his people.” George C. Herring, *America’s Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1996), 53.

<sup>86</sup> Graham Greene, “The Patriot Ruined by the West,” *New Republic*, 16 May 1955, 13. Ellen J. Hammer contends that Diệm, despite his shortcomings had the best interest of his country at heart and his death opened the floodgates to the Americanization of the conflict and the ensuing carnage; something he would never have allowed. Ellen J. Hammer, *A Death in November: America in Vietnam 1963*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 9-10 and 317-318. Likewise, Francis X. Winters recognizes Diệm’s autocracy, Confucianism and Catholicism as factors influencing his leadership but also acknowledges “slow progress toward a modern political structure” under extremely trying circumstances. Furthermore, he considers the assassination of Diệm a disaster as it foreclosed the President of South Vietnam asking the United States to leave his country before the war would be escalated. Francis X. Winters, *The Year of the Hare: America in Vietnam, January 25, 1963 – February 15, 1964*, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1997), 153, 155-158 and 208. Quote from page 155.

<sup>87</sup> Philip E. Catton, *Diem’s Final Failure: Prelude to America’s War in Vietnam*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 1-4 and 34-50; and Edward Miller, “Vision, Power, Agency: The Ascent of Ngô Đình Diệm, 1945-1954,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 35(3), October 2004, 434-435 and 440-441.

What Diêm and his chief consul, his brother Ngô Đình Nhu, hoped to create was a modern, independent, self-sufficient, politically and socially unified Asian society.<sup>88</sup> However, given their own limited resources, the Ngôs believed that the population of the Republic had to play an active role in this process of modernization and not simply sit as passive beneficiaries to this development.<sup>89</sup> In order to achieve mobilization on such grand a scale they needed some ideological foundation, and hence, they looked to the West for political ideas that they felt were compatible with Vietnamese society.<sup>90</sup>

Viewing liberal-capitalism as little more than a trap that would make Vietnam economically and politically dependent on an outside power (namely the United States) and opposed to communism on principle, Diêm and Nhu sought a third way to serve as a guide to nation-building.<sup>91</sup> Nhu, the most intellectual of the pair, found their revolutionary framework in Emmanuel Mounier's philosophy of "Personalism". Mounier was a French Catholic thinker<sup>92</sup>. Personalism was appealing as it emphasized belief in the Supreme Being, in creative potential of man, importance of personal struggle and responsibility, and in the need to provide people with the basic material requirements for existence. Further, it drew a sharp distinction between the individual and the person that had added appeal for the Ngôs and their desire for social unity. The individual, according to Mounier, represented either an atomized body pursuing selfish goals in a liberal society, or an entity standing helpless before a totalitarian state, whereas the person was someone who possessed certain inalienable rights and was inherently a social animal, oriented towards a community life and, therefore, part of a larger collective whose aim should be to secure the common good of all its constituent elements. Such humanism conformed to some of Vietnamese society's latent Confucian tendencies regarding the importance of self-cultivation and working for the common good while also serving to integrate the population into a network of social relationships that could promote the active participation of the people in the political as well as economic life in the society.<sup>93</sup> Coming up with a revolutionary theory to underpin their nation's drive to modernization was one thing; turning it into practice was another.

Following the implementation of the Geneva Accords, one of the greatest obstacles facing the Sài Gòn government's path to modernity was establishing a presence in the countryside.<sup>94</sup> To address this situation Diêm approached a former member of the Việt Minh, Kiều Công Cung, to study the problems in the countryside and come up with a pacification plan. Cung developed a plan that would expedite central government assistance to regional and provincial officials and help counter communist control of the villages.<sup>95</sup> This plan, which was viewed as a temporary expedient, called for the creation of a flexible and mobile organization that would go out into the countryside and

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<sup>88</sup> Ngô Đình Diêm, Authorized Translation of the President of the Republic's Message on Double Seven Day, July 10, 1957, Item number 2321507007, Texas Tech Virtual Vietnam Archive <http://www.virtualarchive.vietnam.ttu.edu> (hereafter referred to as TTVVA), (accessed February 2, 2007); and Catton, *Diem's Final Failure*, 36-38, and 46-47.

<sup>89</sup> Vu Van Thai, Our Concept of Development: An Address by The Honorable Vu Van Thai, Director-General of the Budget and Foreign Aid, October 23, 1959, Item number 1780612031, TTVVA, (accessed February 2, 2007); and Catton, *Diem's Final Failure*, 44.

<sup>90</sup> Catton, *Diem's Final Failure*, 39-41.

<sup>91</sup> Catton, *Diem's Final Failure*, 38-41; and Miller, "Vision, Power, Agency," 449.

<sup>92</sup> Emmanuel Mounier, *Personalism*, translated by Philip Mairet, (London, 1952), xxvi, 18-19, 32, and 52. See also Catton, *Diem's Final Failure*, 41-42, and Miller, "Vision, Power and Agency," 448-449.

<sup>93</sup> Catton, *Diem's Final Failure*, 41-42.

<sup>94</sup> Civic Activities of the Military, Southeast Asia, March 13, 1959, Item number 12050107012, TTVVA, (accessed January 29, 2007); and General Directives on the Structure and Operation of the Commissariat for Civic Action, ND, Subject Files 1954-1958 (hereafter referred to as SF 54-58), Box 1, Record Group 469, National Archives and Records Administration, (hereafter referred to as NARA).

<sup>95</sup> Wesley R. Fishel, *Vietnam: Anatomy of a Conflict*, (Itasca: F.E. Peacock Publishers, 1968), 597.

coordinate the work of the various ministries in carrying out government's policies and programs for social and economic improvement at the village level. At the same time, these groups would live and work alongside the village population, guiding them in useful local projects that would improve their overall welfare.<sup>96</sup> Ngô Đình Diệm went ahead with this plan and on March 7, 1955 established within the Office of the Prime Minister a provisional Special Commissariat for Civic Action with Kiêu Công Cung as its Commissioner General.<sup>97</sup>

Initially, Cung turned to a small group of young, university trained men who had recently left the North as part of the massive resettlement in the wake of the Geneva Accords.<sup>98</sup> These first recruits were rapidly trained in government ideology, dissemination of propaganda, planning and organization, and instructed to dress in the "calico noir" of farmers and labourers.<sup>99</sup> They were then deployed on April 15, 1955 to the province of Gia Định which surrounded Sài Gòn.<sup>100</sup>

Subsequent groups were composed of volunteers who underwent competitive examinations. Most were young and enthusiastic males with no previous experience of government service and their training was an extremely urgent affair designed to mimic that of the communist cadres.<sup>101</sup> Specialists from the Ministries of Information and Propaganda, National Education, Health and Youth and Social Action, along with law enforcement specialists from the Ministry of Interior, sent instructors to the Special Commissariat in order to train these cadres. However, given the limited budget for the program and the perceived demand for cadres to act in the field, they could only afford to be trained for two week terms.<sup>102</sup>

Initially on field, mobile groups consisted of 10 cadres each. Their efforts were focused on the southern provinces and most of them centered on Propaganda and Welfare Improvement. Much of the propagandizing took the form of distributing pamphlets, opening information offices where the villagers could read the news and learn about their government in Sài Gòn, holding political indoctrination meetings, establishing popular education classes to eradicate illiteracy and teach people more about their country, and organizing festivals with patriotic music and movies. The cadres also tried to foster a stronger national spirit by organizing the peasantry into a network of associations such as youth groups, women's groups, and student societies that reached beyond the village community.<sup>103</sup> In terms of Welfare Improvement, this appears to have been an umbrella

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<sup>96</sup> Untitled Document justifying Civic Action, ND, Folder 38, Phủ Thủ Tướng Chính Phủ hereafter PTTCP), Trung Tâm Lưu Trữ Quốc Gia II (hereafter TTLTQG2); Report on the Special Commissariat for Civic Action, June 1957, Item number 1490138001, TTVVA, (accessed on January 29, 2007); and Civic Activities of the Military, Southeast Asia, March 13, 1959, Item number 12050107012, TTVVA.

<sup>97</sup> Huấn Lệnh Tổng Quát Tạm Thời Về Công Dân Vụ, March 7, 1955, Folder 1463, Phủ Tổng Thống Đệ Nhất Cộng Hòa (hereafter PTTĐICH), TTLTQG2; and Ordre de Service, March 7, 1955, Folder 4065, PTTCP, TTLTQG2.

<sup>98</sup> Civic Activities of the Military, Southeast Asia, March 13, 1959, Item number 12050107012, TTVVA.

<sup>99</sup> Báo Cáo Hoạt Động Công Dân Vụ từ ngày thành lập đến nay (7.3.1955 đến 30.4.1955), May 3, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2; and Civic Activities of the Military, Southeast Asia, March 13, 1959, Item number 12050107012, TTVVA.

<sup>100</sup> Báo Cáo Hoạt Động Công Dân Vụ từ ngày thành lập đến nay (7.3.1955 đến 30.4.1955), May 3, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2.

<sup>101</sup> The quotation is from Civic Action: Role, Activities, Results, ND, SF 54-58, Box 1, RG 469, NARA; Critical Note and Proposals, ND, SF 54-58, Box 1, RG 469, NARA; and Civic Action, ND, SF 54-58, Box 1, RG 469, NARA.

<sup>102</sup> Initial estimates put the number at 6,340 people being needed, Báo Cáo Hoạt Động tháng 5, 1955, June 4, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2.

<sup>103</sup> Báo Cáo Hoạt Động tháng 5, 1955, June 4, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2; Báo Cáo Tổng Quát tháng 10 năm 1955, November 9, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2; and Báo Cáo Hàng Tháng:

term for the bulk of self-help initiatives that would form the foundation of material aspect of Diệm's modernizing revolution. These measures included organizing meetings regarding public health, coordinating efforts to dig wells, canals and ditches, repairing roads, building schools, medical dispensaries, public lavatories, and maternity hospitals. It also included helping families with the harvest.<sup>104</sup> Not only was Welfare Improvement designed to raise the overall standard of living for the village community, but it was also intended to demonstrate the government's concern for the wellbeing of its citizens.

Initial reports on the work of Civic Action offered an upbeat picture of measured success. Many noted that the cadres were received with initial suspicion by the villagers, but after realizing the nature of their mission, the villagers quickly warmed to their presence.<sup>105</sup> Such work, one report noted, had the affect of instilling confidence in the national government while injecting new life into the work of the local authorities.<sup>106</sup>

Despite these buoyant reports, there were still some fundamental weaknesses that needed to be addressed for the program to demonstrate any lasting success. On the one hand, the cadres were inexperienced. Since the program was new, they had very little practical experience to draw upon in their training; consequently, much of what they learned was theoretical. On the other hand, power struggles and disagreements between some regional authorities and their Civic Action counterparts over the course of action remained a hindrance to cooperation in planning and execution of activities in certain areas.<sup>107</sup> In many cases, the local officials resented having to share their authority with outsiders sent down from Sài Gòn and viewed the Civic Action cadres with suspicion.<sup>108</sup>

However, the biggest problem was maintaining continuity in areas where cadres had been active. One of the most pressing concerns was the training of appropriate individuals at the village level, to serve as regional cadres who would continue the work of Civic Action mobile groups once it had completed its task and moved onto another region. Achieving this required imbuing these people with a sense of "self-sacrifice" that would ultimately require an iron faith in the ability of the government they were supposed to serve to fulfill its revolutionary mission.<sup>109</sup> Under the circumstances, this proved to be a formidable task.<sup>110</sup> In a number of places which had formerly been under Việt Minh control, the cadres found very little support as the local administration was either nonexistent, or still in exile. As a result, the communists who remained behind still managed to wield enough influence to effectively prevent the Civic Action cadres from establishing any meaningful

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Tháng 11 năm 1955 của Đặc Ủy Phủ Công Dân Vụ, December 22, 1955, Folder 15982, PTTDICH, TTLTQG2.

<sup>104</sup> Báo Cáo Hoạt Động tháng 5, 1955, June 4, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2; Báo Cáo Tổng Quát tháng 10 năm 1955, November 9, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2; and Báo Cáo Hàng Tháng: Tháng 11 năm 1955 của Đặc Ủy Phủ Công Dân Vụ, December 22, 1955, Folder 15982, PTTDICH, TTLTQG2.

<sup>105</sup> Báo Cáo tổng quát về hoạt động của Công Dân Vụ từ ngày thành lập đến ngày nay, June 20, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2; and Báo Cáo Hoạt Động tháng 5, 1955, June 4, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2.

<sup>106</sup> Kính gửi Bộ Phủ Tổng Thống, June 4, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2; and Báo Cáo Hoạt Động tháng 5, 1955, June 4, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2.

<sup>107</sup> Báo Cáo Hoạt Động tháng 5, 1955, June 4, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2.

<sup>108</sup> Even in Sài Gòn, Kiều Công Cung, whose title as Commissioner General only merited the rank of Undersecretary found his efforts to make progress thwarted by bureaucrats who felt it beneath them to have to deal with someone of such a rank as an equal. Report on the Special Commissariat for Civic Action, June 1957, Item number 1490138001, TTVVA. See also Báo Cáo Hoạt Động tháng 6, 1955, July 12, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2; and Báo Cáo Hoạt Động tháng 7, 1955, August 8, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2.

<sup>109</sup> Báo Cáo Hoạt Động tháng 5, 1955, June 4, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2.

<sup>110</sup> Báo Cáo Hoạt Động tháng 6, 1955, July 12, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2; and Báo Cáo Hoạt Động tháng 8, 1955," September 14, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2.

government presence amongst the population.<sup>111</sup> In other areas, where the cadres had managed to get close to the peasants and earn their trust, efforts at Welfare Improvement were hampered by a chronic shortage of resources and a lack of trained personnel.<sup>112</sup>

In spite of all these difficulties, the Civic Action program was making a difference in the villages where it was active, prompting a growing chorus of appeals from the field for this temporary expedient to be given more permanence.<sup>113</sup> Therefore, on November 18, 1955 President Diêm removed the Commissariat for Civic Action's "provisional" status making it an official government organ belonging to the Office of the President.<sup>114</sup> Over the next five months, Civic Action continued to expand as new cadres were trained. In areas where cadres could act, houses, roads and bridges were built, wells were dug, harvests were reaped, security improved and more and more people placed their sympathies behind the government.<sup>115</sup> However, new mobile cadres could not be produced fast enough to meet the growing demand from the countryside for their services. Time was too great a factor to be overcome as these mobile groups could only afford to stay in one spot for a maximum of four weeks before moving on. Under these circumstances it was extremely difficult to gain local support in areas where the communists were armed. This was because the peasantry knew that once the Civic Action group withdrew, there would no longer be anyone to provide enough security to prevent reprisals against those who chose to help the Sài Gòn government.<sup>116</sup> Consequently it was virtually impossible for the cadres to complete their work in these villages, let alone recruit and train able successors to continue their work when they left.<sup>117</sup>

Towards the end of April 1956, mobile cadres were recalled to Sài Gòn as the Commissariat for Civic Action tried to deal with these shortcomings.<sup>118</sup> The mobile cadres were reassigned into Province Groups that would operate at the district level. Each province group consisted of a small supervisory staff with a reserve of cadres. The remaining mobile cadres were then divided into units of two agents each. Each unit would then be assigned to a particular village for eight weeks before moving on. Continuity would theoretically be maintained by the reserve group of cadres at the district headquarters who would follow up on the various villages that had already been visited. This would continue until every village in a district had been reached by one of the mobile units.<sup>119</sup>

Upon arrival in the village, both cadres would try to get close to the people and make them realize that the government was there to help them if they were willing to seize the initiative and help themselves. It was believed that having only two cadres acting in one village at a time would make them more dependent on the local population to complete the work of modernizing the village infrastructure and therefore encourage greater

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<sup>111</sup> Báo Cáo Hoạt Động tháng 6, 1955, July 12, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2; and Báo Cáo Hoạt Động tháng 7, 1955, August 8, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2.

<sup>112</sup> Báo Cáo Hoạt Động tháng 6, 1955, July 12, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2; Báo Cáo Hoạt Động tháng 7, 1955, August 8, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2; and Báo Cáo Hoạt Động tháng 8, 1955, September 14, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2.

<sup>113</sup> Báo Cáo Hoạt Động tháng 7, 1955, August 8, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2; See also Thuyết Trình về dự án sắc lệnh thiết lập Phủ Đặc Ủy Công Dân Vụ, September 24, 1955, Folder 1463, PTTĐICH, TTLTQG2; Báo Cáo Tổng Quát tháng 10 năm 1955, November 9, 1955, Folder 29155, PTTCP, TTLTQG2.

<sup>114</sup> Sắc Lệnh, November 18, 1955, Folder 797, PTTĐICH, TTLTQG2.

<sup>115</sup> Tóm tắt Thuyết Trình Chỉ Thị Đặc Ủy Trưởng Công Dân Vụ, ND, Folder 16293, PTTĐICH, TTLTQG2. While this document is undated its content indicates that it was written around April 1956.

<sup>116</sup> Phúc Trình Đặc Biệt, Đoàn Trưởng 202 Công Dân Vụ Lưu Động Kính gửi Ông Đặc Ủy Trưởng Công Dân Vụ, March 10, 1956, Folder 16064, PTTĐICH, TTLTQG2.

<sup>117</sup> Tóm tắt Thuyết Trình Chỉ Thị Đặc Ủy Trưởng Công Dân Vụ, ND, Folder 16293, PTTĐICH, TTLTQG2.

<sup>118</sup> Report on the Special Commissariat for Civic Action, June 1957, Item number 1490138001, TTVVA.

<sup>119</sup> Tóm tắt Thuyết Trình Chỉ Thị Đặc Ủy Trưởng Công Dân Vụ, ND, Folder 16293, PTTĐICH, TTLTQG2; and Report on the Special Commissariat for Civic Action, June 1957, Item number 1490138001, TTVVA.

participation. This greater participation, in turn, would facilitate the subsequent work of the regional cadres by instilling the local population with a vested interest in maintaining the progress made in the wake of the Civic Action cadres' departure. Not only would this fulfill the material side of the revolution, but it would also satisfy its spiritual aspect by marshalling local resources in a supposedly voluntary effort of communal Welfare Improvement.<sup>120</sup> Moreover, given the Commissariat's limited budget it was hoped that by reducing the number of cadres acting in the villages from ten to two, the Commissariat would be able to spread itself out more widely, thereby increasing the influence of the government throughout the countryside.

Once again the initial reports in the wake of this reorganization were positive, contending that coordination between the local administrative organs and the cadres was improving as the regional authorities were better understanding the mission of Civic Action. As a result, cadres in the provinces of Bến Tre, Vĩnh Long and Bà Rịa were reporting significant help from the administrative councils in both "material and spiritual means" for carrying out their work of Welfare Improvement. Such progress was reflected in a reportedly more positive attitude of the peasantry as in one case where both the cadres and the local population contended that "in nine years of war we have just now been able to find the Government and the help of the Government toward the people."<sup>121</sup>

That summer, the Office of the President issued a request to all Province Chiefs for an evaluation of the work of Civic Action. Some of the responses, while generally sharing optimism of the above reports, nevertheless indicated that cracks remained below the surface.<sup>122</sup> For example, reports from Vũng Tàu and Cà Mau, while lauding the efficient and capable work of the Civic Action cadres, nevertheless highlighted shortcomings in the manner that they were interacting with the peasantry. In Vũng Tàu, cadres initially harboured an arrogant attitude towards the population upon arrival, often showing inconsistencies in their action, thereby alienating local groups offering their help.<sup>123</sup> Likewise in Cà Mau, the Civic Action cadres reportedly failed to show enough flexibility in their dealings with the regional cadres which threatened to compromise coordination in the daily tasks of Welfare Improvement.<sup>124</sup>

While these problems could be attributed to personality differences and could be ameliorated through open, frank discussions or, if necessary, disciplinary measures, other provinces pointed to far more significant issues that struck at the very nature of the Civic Action program. In Gò Công province, its province chief highlighted continuity as a significant problem. He praised the cadres for their spirit and advice, contending that they had improved life in the countryside, convinced communist cadres to turn themselves in, and strengthened the regional government overall. However, the report also hinted at an unhealthy dependency on the cadres, concluding that the presence of these Civic Action cadres was crucial for the development of his province, and now that the cadres had left the regional administrative organs had lost efficient coworkers.<sup>125</sup> More significant, perhaps, was the situation in Bà Rịa, where the province chief commended the affable

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<sup>120</sup> Tom Tóm tắt Thuyết Trình Chi Thị Đặc Ủy Trưởng Công Dân Vụ, ND, Folder 16293, PTTĐICH, TTLTQG2.

<sup>121</sup> Báo Cáo Hoạt Động của Đặc Ủy Phủ Công Dân Vụ trong tháng 4 năm 1956, May 9, 1956, Folder 16063, PTTĐICH, TTLTQG2.

<sup>122</sup> Bộ Trưởng tại Phủ Tổng Thống Kính gửi Quý Ông Tỉnh Trưởng, August 10, 1956, Folder 16065, PTTĐICH, TTLTQG2.

<sup>123</sup> Tỉnh Trưởng Vũng Tàu Kính gửi Ông Bộ Trưởng tại Phủ Tổng Thống, September 5, 1956, Folder 16065, PTTĐICH, TTLTQG2.

<sup>124</sup> Thiếu Tá Trần Thanh Ben Tỉnh Trưởng Cà Mau Kính gửi Ông Bộ Trưởng tại Phủ Tổng Thống, September 5, 1956, Folder 16065, PTTĐICH, TTLTQG2.

<sup>125</sup> Tỉnh Trưởng Gò Công Kính gửi Ông Đồng Lý Bộ Trưởng tại Phủ Tổng Thống, September 3, 1956, Folder 16065, PTTĐICH, TTLTQG2.

manner of the cadres and lauded their close coordination with the regional administration. But at the same time, he complained that many of the farmers, labourers and fishermen resented the fact that the Welfare Improvement projects, in which they were participating, were actually “increasing their deprivation,” as they had to voluntarily offer their manpower when they could otherwise be using it to earn a living.<sup>126</sup> This latter case struck at the very heart of the social revolution Diêm was attempting to carry out, for it was this voluntary contribution of people’s labour, and, in some cases, money, to the rebuilding of his county that all his hopes for modernizing the nation rested.

## CONCLUSION

As has been suggested throughout this chapter, Diêm hoped this contribution of people’s labour would lead to fulfillment of material aspect of the revolution by providing Vietnamese population with a means to improve their collective welfare, by way of offering a minimum of private property and wealth, while encouraging the spiritual fulfillment of the complete person by providing a sense of civic responsibility through voluntary participation in mutual aid projects for the betterment of the community. With this foundation, it was believed, Welfare Improvement would become a reality and every family would realize that this bounty was a result of their own effort under the tutelage of a benevolent government. Under these circumstances, people would completely abandon the communists and rally behind the leadership in Sài Gòn, firmly cementing their faith in Diêm’s leadership.<sup>127</sup> Unfortunately, this vision was never realized. While a considerable amount of work remains to be done to determine exactly why the program ultimately failed, the basic problems of maintaining the peasantry’s confidence in the government and continuity in the absence of Civic Action cadres could not be surmounted.

Irrespective of its successes and failures, Civic Action offers an important means of furthering our understanding of the Diêm regime. As this paper has tried to demonstrate, the Commissariat for Civic Action in its early days was a dynamic organization through which Ngô Đình Diêm tried to carry out his social revolution in the countryside. In regions where they were carried out, Welfare Improvement projects brought material progress that attempted to improve people lives. Schools, maternity hospitals and medical dispensaries were built, wells were dug and bridges were erected by collective action that implicitly reinforced the spirit of communal voluntarism that lay at the heart of the Personalist philosophy around which Diêm was hoping to build his nation. That Diêm’s ambitions significantly outweighed Civic Action’s abilities should in no way diminish the fact that despite all his regime’s shortcomings, it did possess a coherent plan to win local “hearts and minds” in an attempt to forge a meaningful connection with the people of South Vietnam.

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<sup>126</sup> Tỉnh Trưởng Baria Kính gửi Ngài Bộ Trưởng tại Phủ Tổng Thống, August 29, 1956, Folder 16065, PTTĐICH, TTLTQG2.

<sup>127</sup> Nhiệm vụ chủ trương đường lối hoạt động thành tích và chương trình công tác của Phủ Đặc Ủy Công Dân Vụ, October 3, 1959, Folder 16919, PTTĐICH, TTLTQG2.



**TROISIÈME PARTIE**  
**PART THREE**

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**AU-DELÀ DES FRONTIÈRES IDENTITAIRES**

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**BEYOND IDENTITY BOUNDARIES**

# CHAPITRE 7

## Female sexuality and reproduction in Sekar Ayu Asmara's work

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### I) CONTEMPORARY INDONESIAN WOMEN'S WRITING

Much has been written about Indonesia's cultural production in the past nine years. Critics and scholars have paid attention to literature, films and performance art (theatre, music) in the post-1998 period of *Reformasi*, especially to what has been written or produced by women. A significant number of female writers and artists have been placed in the spotlight following the dazzling publicity that Ayu Utami received for her novel *Saman*. Some have been praised, others condemned for their work. On the literary scene the hype around "a new generation of young women" led to the labelling of *sastrawangi* (literally: fragrant literature). This created a discourse that, on one hand, focused on the personalities of the authors, their appearances and life styles. On the other hand, the *sastrawangi* discourse concentrated on merely one specific aspect of women's artistic production, namely female sexuality in its supposedly liberated form. It is true that *Reformasi* opened the way to freedom of speech and critical thinking, and that it became possible to break through long existing taboos concerning sexuality, to critique homophobia, and to subvert New Order "traditional" gender ideologies such as *ibuism*.<sup>128</sup> People could explicitly address issues concerning societal expectations of heterosexuality, marriage and family. Yet, the *sastrawangi*-naming turned out to be restrictive and exclusive, limiting itself to a handful of female authors with celebrity status such as, to mention the most prominent ones, Ayu Utami, Djena Maesa Ayu, and Dewi Lestari. In the eyes of the public these writers did nothing but emphatically celebrate female sexuality, and push the limits of what was morally accepted. Overlooked were other aspects of their works, as well as other women: those who did not qualify as "young, sexy *sastrawangi*", who presented themselves as Muslim, or who chose different topics as themes for their narratives. Male authors, too, were much ignored, an experience they needed to get used to, as being ranked second-class citizen was unfamiliar to them (Wahyudi, 2005).

Contemporary women in Indonesia are grappling with much more than issues of sexuality only, and, as I have argued before, the whole concept of *sastrawangi*, fragrant literature, stinks (Hellwig, 2005). Women, these days, are aware that they need to find a balance between old roles and new desires in larger terms of identity, self-actualization and

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<sup>128</sup> *Ibuism* is defined as "the ideology which sanctions any action provided it is taken as a mother who is looking after her family, a group, a class, a company of the state, without demanding power and prestige in return." (Djajadiningrat – Nieuwenhuis, 1987: 44).

female agency. They need to redefine themselves and voice their opinions in a society that is more democratic, politically aware and mature than before. They must also position themselves within a global configuration that is rapidly moving forward, and in which “the West” increasingly views Indonesia as part of the Muslim world and, therefore, a possible menace. Nukila Amal, Fira Basuki (at times also classified as *sastrawangi*), Linda Christanty and Intan Paramaditha are among those who in their stories and novels express serious concerns about women, and what it means to be an Indonesian woman within and beyond Indonesia’s borders. Muslim writers, such as Helvy Tiana Rosa, Abidah El Khalieqy, and Ratna Indraswari Ibrahim emphasize aspects of women’s identities and life experiences within an Islamic context (Diah Ariani Arimbi, 2006). Others, still, steer their writing into a different direction. Some seem to find comfort in reconfirming old patterns, and reinscribing patriarchal and masculine power constructs. I consider Sekar Ayu Asmara, film director, scriptwriter, and novelist, to be among the latter. Her feature film *Biola Tak Berdawai* (Stringless Violin, 2003) caught my attention because of its conservative, and - in my view - anti-feminist, even misogynist ideas (Hellwig, 2006). This paper examines two of her novels, *Pintu Terlarang* (Forbidden Door, 2004) and *Kembar Keempat* (The Fourth Sibling, i.e. of Sextuplets, 2005) from a feminist point of view. It focuses on what they convey in terms of women, men, gender identity, sexuality and power constructs. At the end the paper raises the question of who, in fact, represents women within Indonesia’s cultural production. Whose voices count, are heard, and reach the media and public?

A number of striking themes recur in Sekar’s work, her two novels and film *Biola Tak Berdawai*. They relate not only to female sexuality, but much more to female reproduction. Sekar’s characters are women who are, or become pregnant, who have abortions, and/or who suffer from breast cancer or uterine cancer.<sup>129</sup> Multiple births, persons with disability (as a result of complications during pregnancy),<sup>130</sup> and female protagonists who suffer from the trauma of rape and incest (although committed unknowingly) feature in her work. We notice a preoccupation with women’s bodies, particularly the womb, pregnancies and unborn life that we do not find elsewhere. In her fictional worlds the stereotype of the caring and self-sacrificing mother is strongly promoted, a woman who unconditionally sides with her child(ren) and is admired because of it. Sekar’s women need men in their lives, as *jodoh* (life partners) and soul mates, to make them complete and bring out the best in them. The ultimate ideal of a heterosexual couple and a family (i.e. healthy children) is, however, a utopia. The novels and film point to a harsh reality in which dysfunctional individuals, relationships and power divisions thwart characters from reaching these goals in life. In the end Sekar presents readers dystopian realities. Her portrayal of women is ultra-conservative and pro-life, endorsing patriarchal values, including New Order ideology. As I will demonstrate, her fiction deals with abortion and unborn life in a grotesque way. Abortion is a political issue and remains controversial today: the pro-life and pro-choice camps will never meet, and religious convictions are usually crucial to the debate. In many countries, including Indonesia, abortion is illegal. The 1960s feminist movement in the “West” fought for a woman’s right to decide over her own body and fertility by way of contraceptives or, if necessary, by terminating a pregnancy. This wave of feminism did not as such reach Indonesia. What we find in Sekar’s work is that this fundamentally feminist principle is annihilated altogether. This paper discusses her two novels in greater detail outlining the plot and

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<sup>129</sup> Female characters who are pregnant: Renjani (*Biola Tak Berdawai*), Talyda, Menur (*Pintu Terlarang*), Axena, Havana, Ceren, Savannah Wilson (*Kembar Keempat*); those who have an abortion: Renjani, Talyda, Menur, Havana; those who have uterine cancer: Renjani, Savitri Puspongoro (also has breast cancer, *Kembar Keempat*)

<sup>130</sup> See Dewa and the babies in *Biola Tak Berdawai* and Didem who has cerebral palsy in *Kembar Keempat*.

events in order to illustrate how she conveys her message that a woman must respect unborn life under all circumstances since it is her final destination to be a good mother.

## II) PINTU TERLARANG (FORBIDDEN DOOR, 2004)<sup>131</sup>

*Pintu Terlarang* follows three story lines with different narrators, printed in separate fonts. Only at the very end they come together and disclose, likely to most readers' surprise, how they are interrelated. A striking feature of the novel is a repetition of sentences or sentence clusters, speech acts that stand out (sometimes literally because italicized) to such an extent that I would classify them as "mantras". The central characters we meet in the distinct stories, are firstly an anonymous first-person narrator (*aku*) who is a nine year old boy, secondly Gambir and his wife Talyda narrated by an omniscient narrator, and lastly Ranti (Pusporanti), also a first-person narrator. Most of the novel narrates what happens to Gambir and Talyda, 22 out of the 38 (short) chapters, focalizing on one or the other using free indirect speech. The book opens, however, with a horrendous episode in which the nine-year-old *aku* imparts his experience with parental abuse. He is the son of Melati and Dr. Koentoro, and we find them at the dining table where he is unable to finish his food. When forced to, he cannot help but throw up. His mother ties his hands behind his back while his father sadistically forces him to swallow a dead cockroach. This opening scene sets the tone of the novel: it is an indictment of child abuse and other forms of abuse. The novel deals with aspects of human psychology, physical and emotional abuse, and dysfunctional relationships.

Seven more chapters<sup>132</sup> relate the boy's suffering in the hands of his parents. They all start with the same sentence:

*Aku anak nakal, umurku sembilan tahun. Kedua orangtua menyebutku anak pembawa sial.* (2004: 7, 47, 65, 91, 115, 153, 207)

I am a bad child, I'm nine years old. Both my parents call me a child who brings bad luck.

This repeated speech act by the first-person narrator could make us, the readers, believe that what he says is true. We realize, however, that not the boy, but his parents are the source of misery and misfortune. They abuse him to the extreme: by pushing his head under water when he takes a bath, by tying him to a tree and emptying a jar of ants over his head while he is terrified of creepy crawling insects, by hacking his bed to pieces after he has wetted his mattress, by piercing pencils through his hands and burning cigarettes on his skin, and by locking him up in his room. One night, when he cannot take it anymore, he hears the objects in his room talking to him: "Do it now". He enters his parents' room with a knife (*pisau*, 2004:155, 207-208, *belati* 2004:208) he has stolen from the school canteen, and stabs them to death. Eventually he cuts off his own left hand. Here this storyline ends.

In another storyline<sup>133</sup> the protagonist is twenty-four year old Ranti, a journalist with magazine *Em* (for Metropolitan). She lives in a close and harmonious relationship with her mother, having lost her father at age fifteen. Ranti published feature articles for *Em* on adolescents and abortion, on illegal baby trafficking and schizophrenia. At this time she is preparing an article about a dangerous psychiatric patient who has lived in an isolation cell for eighteen years and is the victim of severe child abuse. With her widower-boyfriend cum photographer Dion she is scheduled to visit the patient in the mental

<sup>131</sup> References to the novel will only give the year of publication (2004) and page number.

<sup>132</sup> Chapters 7, 10, 14, 19, 26, 34.

<sup>133</sup> Chapters 6, 11, 15, 20, 27, 30, 32, 35, 37.

institution in order to take photos. Ranti's mother does not approve of Dion, while Ranti's best friend Agni does not "get" him, but Ranti is happy with this boyfriend, her first. For the photo session the patient has to be drugged, and Dion is quite shocked to observe him and the circumstances he lives in. Afterwards they discuss child abuse with the psychiatrist, Professor Roekmantoro. When Ranti is in the completion stage of her article, her chief editor informs her *Em* may not publish it: she has become too involved and lost all perspective. Upset she pleads with him to give her piece a chance. On December 31 Ranti visits Dion's house to celebrate New Year's Eve with him and his son Edo. Upon arrival she witnesses how Dion is beating Edo, molesting him beyond belief. Although she manages to get help, Edo dies not long afterwards in the hospital. Dion, meanwhile, is held in jail.

As mentioned, the main storyline relates the dynamics in the relationship of a married couple in their mid-twenties, Gambir, a sculptor, and his wife Talyda who runs a successful company advertizing cigarettes. They are extremely well off and live in infinite luxury. We are first introduced to Talyda who regularly visits the beauty salon and spa and who, at age twenty-five, is concerned about her physical appearance, possible wrinkles or facial irregularities. She uses exclusive perfume, wears designer clothes, owns Gucci bags and shoes, and is very specific about her silk lingerie: how it must always match perfectly in colour and design, even when no one will notice (2004:22, 24). As a matter of fact, "perfection" is Talyda's motto in life, as we read repeatedly throughout the text:

*Kesempurnaan tidak terjadi begitu saja. Kesempurnaan haruslah diupayakan.*

Perfection doesn't happen just like that. One must make an effort to achieve perfection.

*Perfection, perfection and perfection. Tiga jurus mencapai kualitas hidup terbaik.*

Perfection, perfection and perfection. Three directives to achieve the best quality of life.

Talyda and Gambir drive a Lamborghini and BMW respectively (2004:19, 78), they indulge in exquisite food (Italian fettucini in octopus ink sauce, 2004:35) in fine-dining restaurants, and Talyda has regular meetings in up-scale malls, wine-bars (The Cellar, 2004:81) and cafés (Chocomania, 2004:109, 143). Readers easily recognize an extravagant kind of consumerism and materialism that is also common in other women's writing (e.g. Djenar Maesa Ayu's). This cosmopolitan Jakartan life-style signifies a high level of decadence.

From the start Talyda displays a form of compulsive behaviour that seems to be an inevitable part of her: her obsession with perfection. In her demeanour towards her husband she is controlling in an unpredictable and excessive way. As a sculptor Gambir works in the studio that is part of their home. We see him first at the opening reception of his exhibition "Maternal Moods" where clients compete to purchase one of his sculptures of pregnant women. Gambir and Talyda are overcome by euphoria, publicly displaying and expressing affection ("*I love you ... I love you even more*", 2004:17). Their repeated "mantra" throughout the novel reads:

*Aku tak sempurna tanpamu. Kau tak sempurna tanpaku. Aku belahan nyawamu. Kau belahan nyawaku. Bersama kita sempurna.*

I'm not perfect without you. You're not perfect without me. I am your soul-mate. You are my soul mate. Together we are perfect.

However, when Gambir later that evening becomes too self-indulgent about his success, Talyda's disposition changes in a split second. She deflates his self-confidence by

pointing out that he is nothing, a nobody if it were not for her (2004:20-21). That night she prohibits him from entering the bedroom and sharing the matrimonial bed. It turns out that Talyda abuses Gambir emotionally and psychologically: she is domineering, self-centered, and insists on taking credit for being his inspiration and driving force. She reminds him time and again that he merely prospers thanks to her. Gambir is portrayed as a weakling; he has internalized her viewpoint as we find in his personal “mantra”:

*Perasaannya seakan meruah, mengisi seluruh sanubarinya. Ia begitu mencintainya. Ia sangat menyayanginya. Ia tidak akan pernah melukai perasaannya, apalagi hatinya. Ia tidak pernah luput bersyukur kepada Tuhan telah diberikan jodoh perempuan sempurna Talyda.*<sup>134</sup>

His emotions seem to overflow, filling his total being (soul). He loves her so much. He cherishes her completely. He will never hurt her feelings, let alone her innermost emotions. He always continues to be grateful to God that he has been granted a marriage partner as perfect as Talyda.

As much as his “love” is expressed in these repeated lines, we find out that Gambir is intimidated by his wife’s derogatory and erratic comportment. As the events evolve, we learn how overpowering Talyda is toward her abject husband, and how bizarre their relationship in reality is. First we discover that she has “sex sessions” in ritzy hotels with a variety of men. She justifies these sexual encounters, which are described as quite clinical, therefore I do not refer to them as love affairs, romance or anything passionate or erotic, as a test to her marriage, to prove that Gambir is, in fact, the best man to be her husband. Then it turns out that she and her mother-in-law, Menik Sasongko, are conspiring in these extramarital engagements. Menik despises her son who has chosen a “starving artist’s” life, and puts her trust in Talyda. She desperately wants a grandchild, but as she considers Gambir to be crazy, she encourages Talyda to get impregnated by one of her friends (2004:110). Hence, we find out that Talyda actually holds these “sex sessions” with Gambir’s closest friends Dandung (2004:114) and Rio (2004:145), and with his younger brother Damar (2004:176). Over time Gambir is tormented by suspicions regarding Talyda. However, when he confides in his friends, he is, of course, duped by them.

Unbeknownst to Menik, however, Talyda has no intention to have children. She is unfaithful to Gambir but not to become pregnant. From Gambir’s perspective we learn that Talyda once had an abortion in a safe, but clandestine clinic run by twin siblings, *Ibu Evi* and *Eva*. He himself had much rather kept the child and started a family (2004:136), but Talyda insisted on terminating the pregnancy. This abortion has become not only their personal secret, it is part of a larger private concealment. It was Talyda’s “genius” idea to keep the aborted *janin* (embryo/fetus), and to implant it in Gambir’s sculpture of a pregnant woman. They named the statue *Arjasa*, and kept it in the studio. Ever since, Gambir has regularly collected aborted *janin* from *Ibu Evi* and *Eva* which he stores in jars with formalin in a closet until he inserts them in the statues he sculpts using a plastering technique. To apply the mix of cement and granite he employs a *belati* (broad bladed knife). The *belati*-knife image is an interesting metaphor representing two opposite forces, creation and death. On the one hand it serves to create the mothers-to-be<sup>135</sup> who themselves signify the creation of new life. Yet, the *belati* is also a tool that ends one’s life, and is therefore linked with the aborted *janin* in the sculptures’ wombs. Gambir himself straddles this boundary of creation and death: he designs what has already been

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<sup>134</sup> It occurs in the text twenty-three times.

<sup>135</sup> All sculptures are given names: Kinasih, Anggira, Kartini, Widuri, Paramitha, Dinasih, Andini, Kirantini which contributes to making them more “human”.

killed. He is well aware that the concept originated with Talyda's "brilliant" vision, and that he owes his success of "Maternal Moods" to her.

The studio is Gambir's own private space. One day he unexpectedly finds his younger sister Menur, his "*bidadari kecil, little angel*", in this space to inform him that she is three months pregnant but not prepared to have a child (2004:132). Gambir commits himself to helping her have an abortion, and they promise each other not to tell their mother. He accompanies Menur to the abortion clinic which brings back memories from an earlier time. Before they leave, he receives, as usual, a black plastic bag from Ibu Evi and Eva. Arriving home he is surprised to see his irate mother. She heard from Menur that Gambir coerced her into an abortion. Gambir is betrayed again, it dawns on him that he can trust no one.

In the studio a forbidden door retains another secret, one to which only Talyda holds the key, literally. Gambir is not allowed to open this door. It signifies the ultimate power Talyda holds over her husband, her ability to abuse and manipulate him. On New Year's Eve with family and friends gathered at their house Gambir uncovers the extramarital plots that have been hatched against him. In a blind fury he grabs his *belati*-knife, and kills Damar, Menur, his mother, Dandung, Rio and lastly, Talyda. When he opens the forbidden door a white flash of lightning strikes this studio, and the sounds of a hurricane fill the space accompanied by terrifying screams. This completes the storyline.

Two chapters follow Gambir and Talyda's story: first Ranti finally sees her article go to print. It carries the title: "Gambir, living in an isolation cell for eighteen years". In the final chapter a twenty-seven year old man named Gambir relates his fate after he killed his parents. He was a regular patient in the psychiatric ward at first, but when he realized his parents were sending the Devil's Troops from Hell to torture him, he ended up in an isolation cell. Locked up he used his imagination as an escape. In all his fantasy worlds a forbidden door serves as a strategy of the Devil's Troops from Hell to crush his imagination. The Troops also send spies, such as the journalist. Gambir, the patient, liked being Gambir, the sculptor, in his perfect life with a loving wife, mother and siblings. The novel ends with Gambir wondering:

*Aku gila? Jangan seenaknya menuduh. Bisa dibuktikan? Bisa buktikan kau lebih waras dari ku? Apa aku gila? Apa aku waras? Bisa ya. Bisa juga tidak. Ooooouuwww! (2004:227)*

Am I crazy? Don't accuse me too easily. Can you prove it? Can you prove that you're more sane than me? Am I crazy? Am I sane? It can be. It cannot be. Ooooouuwww!

The revelation that Gambir and Talyda are part of a phantasmagorical world generated by the deranged mind of a child abuse victim comes as a surprise to the reader (at least this reader). In the end the novel not only questions what distinguishes sanity from madness, it also blurs the line between reality and imagination. At the plot level the (fictional) "reality" is that nine-year-old Gambir suffers from irreparable emotional damage, that he kills his parents and spends the next eighteen years in an isolation cell. Ranti, the journalist, feels compassion with the twenty-seven year old psychiatric patient, and writes about his fate in order to raise awareness among the public. She is oblivious to the fact that her boyfriend Dion treats his five-year old son violently until it is too late.

In my reading of the novel Ranti represents the implied author.<sup>136</sup> She emphatically underscores parental responsibility and a child's vulnerability. She recognizes that, if

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<sup>136</sup> I use implied author to "discuss and analyse the ideological and moral stances of a narrative text without having to refer directly to a biographical author... [implied author] denotes the totality of meanings that can be inferred from a text." (Bal, 1985:119-120).

parents engage in domestic violence and molest their children, no one will come to the child's rescue. To Ranti "A child is a gift from God. Every baby is born without sin".<sup>137</sup> Parents have specific obligations, but many couples have children merely for the status quo. These adults do not raise their children with the full attention, love and affection they need and deserve (2004:161).

The vicious circle of dysfunctionality permeates all through the novel. In Gambir's dream world the perfectly happy family (2004:225) is exactly that: a dream. His wife, widowed mother as well as his "little" sister turn out to be cruel and destructive, they are not who they seem to be. Noteworthy is the absence of a father figure, Menik Sasongko's late husband is only mentioned in passing (2004:60, 62). She herself does not show the unconditional love one expects from a mother. Talyda is a deceiving, domineering and manipulative wife, while Menur is a traitor. Both Talyda and Menur are referred to as *bidadari*, angels, but in one scene we see Talyda change from angel into *kuntilanak*.<sup>138</sup> None of these women characters are positive role models, and as a female reader I have great trouble identifying with any of them. This negative portrayal of women as evil witches, intent to outmaneuver and disempower men, is reminiscent of Balinese Rangda and Calon Arang stories.<sup>139</sup>

While female sexuality is one way women can exercise their power (as we see in Talyda's "sex sessions"), their omnipotence, clearly, lies in their reproductive capacities. The novel's message states that women have the ultimate say over their wombs and over conception, and men function merely as studs.<sup>140</sup> After a woman has conceived, *she* decides whether to continue or terminate the pregnancy leaving the men in a position without agency.<sup>141</sup> This notion of female reproductive power is conveyed through Talyda and Menur and their abortions, but also through Ranti at the time she conducts research about child trafficking. Her female informants tell her that it is a woman's right to decide whether she wants to raise a child herself, or whether she wants to give it up for adoption or to sell it.<sup>142</sup> Female reproduction is presented as a commodity in the hands of women: babies can be trafficked; Talyda and Menur can choose whether or not they produce a child/grandchild.

However, the most gruesome aspect of the story, in my opinion, is the commodification of *janin*. The word *janin* translates as both "embryo" and "fetus", and does not distinguish between different stages of development in human life.<sup>143</sup> The images provoked in the

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<sup>137</sup> Anak karunia Tuhan. Setiap bayi terlahir tanpa dosa. (2004: 72).

<sup>138</sup> Suara bidadari berubah pekikan kuntilanak. (2004:56) *Kuntilanak* is a female spectre, who steals and eats young children.

<sup>139</sup> Rangda and Calon Arang are manifestations of the powerful Balinese witch and sorceress figure, see Hobart 2003:103-166. Toeti Heraty (2006) deconstructs Calon Arang's demonized image and turns her into a positive heroine figure.

<sup>140</sup> Suami hanyalah pejalan yang membuahi anak. (2004:137).

<sup>141</sup> Rahim itu ada di dalam tubuh seorang istri. Dan rahim yang mengandung anak mereka itu adalah miliknya. Milik pribadinya. Begitu juga anak yang terbuahkan di dalam rahim. Anak itu menjadi miliknya. Ibu sebagai pemilik rahimlah yang berhak untuk menentukan. Menentukan apakah sebuah janin mau digugurkan atau dipelihara. (2004:137).

<sup>142</sup> Terserah ibu yang melahirkan, bayi itu mau dirawat sendiri, mau diserahkan ke panti asuhan atau mau dijual. (2004:45).

<sup>143</sup> Embryo is "used to describe the early stages of fetal growth, from conception to the eighth week of pregnancy" ([www.infertilityinstitute.com/glossary/glossary.html](http://www.infertilityinstitute.com/glossary/glossary.html)). Fetus is defined as "the unborn child from around eight weeks after conception (when all major organs are formed and it begins to resemble a human being) to the time of birth" ([www.fertilityuk.org/nfpps02.html](http://www.fertilityuk.org/nfpps02.html)).

Abortion is the medical termination of a pregnancy before the fetus has developed enough to survive outside the uterus. ([www.holynamae.org/health\\_information\\_resources/health\\_manuals/Women/glossary.htm](http://www.holynamae.org/health_information_resources/health_manuals/Women/glossary.htm)). During this procedure, the embryo or fetus and placental tissue are removed (or expelled) from the woman's uterus. Most abortions are performed during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. ([http://www.cbctrust.com/medical\\_proc.php](http://www.cbctrust.com/medical_proc.php)). In Indonesia abortion is illegal.

novel, however, are of *janin* as fetus in a (somewhat) developed state. Talyda has an abortion after two months (2004:137), while Menur is into her third month of pregnancy (2004:132). The wording used when Gambir is sculpting Kirantini is that of “a *baby* fetus (*sebuah janin bayi*) submerged in a sea of formalin in each jar” (2004:148).<sup>144</sup> The scene of Gambir’s final attack on Talyda describes quite graphically how he throws a jar at her and “a fetus lies helpless next to her” (2004:215).<sup>145</sup> These images of *janin* as babies-in-the-making are, in my view, an extreme misrepresentation of abortion, and are similar to a scene in Sekar’s movie *Biola Tak Berdawai* where an aborted fetus, clearly as a human figure, in a jar with formalin shatters on a tile floor. In all reality a fertilized ovum or embryo does not yet take the shape of a human being. As I have argued elsewhere (Hellwig, 2006:87), images such as presented by Sekar resemble the way in which religious pro-life campaigns link abortion to killing a viable fetus or baby.

In *Pintu Terlarang* the sheer idea of dealing in *janin* in order to implant them in statues is absurd and repulsive, and readers cannot but feel disgusted. Most, if not all, will recognize that Talyda and Gambir are freaks to fancy that notion. Hence, with its monstrous depiction of aborted *janin* the novel condemns abortion as immoral. However, it reduces the issue of unwanted pregnancies simplistically to an ethical matter, and does not at all problematize the anxiety and difficult choices some pregnant women face, or the conflicted position they find themselves in. The novel flatly denies women control over their bodies and reproduction, and propagates a morality that protects unborn life unconditionally. It does not address the complexities of sexual attraction, intimacy, responsible sexual conduct (safe sex) or contraceptives. It unquestionably circumscribes female sexuality as subordinate to procreation.

Juxtaposing these notions of abortion and female reproduction the book presents the nuclear heterosexual family as the epitome of bliss. Gambir craves for such a life, and fantasizes about romantic love and harmonious relationships among extended relatives. From Ranti we learn about the relationship between Gambir’s parents (2004:183-185). Dr. Koentoro married Melati as his second wife, his *istri simpanan*. Melati’s mother was a sex trade worker, and was herself raped by her stepfather. She continues the cycle of abuse with her son. Dr. Koentoro does not treat his child any better; he resents his existence because it means he cannot divorce Melati. The root causes of Gambir’s abuse are his mother’s previous abuse and the polygamous marriage, which serves as a trap. Gambir’s father, who is superior to his mother in terms of gender and class, vents his frustration through violent behaviour.

Ranti, too, yearns for an idyllic family life. Her childhood experiences are nothing but positive: she remembers her parents as congenial and devoted to each other, and describes her deceased father with great respect and admiration. He strongly opposed polygamy (2004:183), and took his responsibilities as husband and father seriously. Ranti projects many of her father’s positive qualities onto Dion (2004:72-74). Ranti herself is still a virgin, and once, when Dion tried to become intimate with her, she fended off his caresses. She realizes, in her own words:

that virginity in today’s social relationships is no longer something sacrosanct .... I didn’t go along with the change of times because I was old fashioned. I thought I was mentally not yet ready for it. I don’t want to act as if I’m a puritan. But at that time I was convinced that everything needs its own time. I’ll be ready to have a sexual relationship when I’m ready to marry. And when that moment arrives, I’m

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(<http://www.focusintl.com/statr2a1.htm#010>). In other countries abortion has been authorized, e.g. in Canada the Supreme Court decriminalized abortion in 1988. ([http://www.cbctrust.com/medical\\_proc.php](http://www.cbctrust.com/medical_proc.php)).

<sup>144</sup> *Sebuah janin bayi terendam dalam lautan formalin di setiap stoples.* (2004:148).

<sup>145</sup> *Sebuah janin tergeletak tak berdaya di sampingnya.* (2004:215).

sure to let go of my virginity. And I will actively engage in a sexual relationship.<sup>146</sup>

Ranti conveys the message that sex belongs to married (heterosexual) couples, and that marriage must be monogamous. She pictures herself as a caring parent for Dion's son Edo, casting herself in the motherly role that was self-evident for women during the New Order. If female readers in post-1998 Indonesia have problems identifying with a monomaniac like Talyda, or the egocentric and untrustworthy Menik Sasongko and Menur, they may find it hard, too, to consider Ranti as a role model. Ranti's reactionary ideas and the views of womanhood and gender relations projected throughout the novel are retrograde and anti-feminist, and detrimental to female readers who search for positive and progressive paradigms of individuation and selfhood.

### III) KEMBAR KEEMPAT (THE FOURTH SIBLING, 2005)<sup>147</sup>

Sekar's novel *Kembar Keempat* is a ghost story with a convoluted plot full of unlikely characters and events. There are again three story lines, and with every shift in the narration the last sentence of one chapter is repeated as the first sentence of the next chapter. This striking literary device foreshadows how closely knit and intertwined the characters in the different story lines are. The premise of the story itself, i.e. mistaken identity, is implausible and unconvincing. As is revealed at the end, five of six siblings who are separated sextuplets, are not aware of each other's existence. The protagonists are the twenty-five year old male triplets, Bhara, Bhadra and Bhajra, and two women, Axena and Havana. The three brothers are raised in Jakarta by their widowed mother (referred to as *Bunda* an affectionate term of address for "mother"), Savitri Puspongoro. After her husband's death *Bunda* took over the management of his shipping company. She provided her sons with the best education available, and traveled all over the world and throughout Indonesia with them in order to teach them respect for different people and cultures. When the story opens Bhara is an actor/dancer, Bhadra is a singer/composer and Bhajra works as a (documentary) filmmaker.

Axena is an Indonesian photo model living in New York. She grew up in an orphanage in Yogyakarta except for a three-year period (age five to eight) when she was "adopted" by a Dutch woman who, in reality, exploited her as domestic help. At age fifteen Axena wins a modeling contest which brings her to Paris and New York where she finishes first in an international competition. She signs a million dollar contract to become the poster girl for Diva Cosmetics. Farahniza, the model who finishes second, becomes her closest friend in life. Axena is seventeen when she falls in love with Merav, a Jewish-Israeli filmmaker. Their grand wedding plans are never realized, however, because Merav is killed in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center.

Axena lives in astounding affluence, and travels by air to New York, Paris, and Cairo, the way others drive around in their home towns. She works with renowned designers and socializes in circles of other jet-setting people (including Doddy Al Fayed and Princess Diana on the evening before they are killed in a car crash).<sup>148</sup> When the story opens,

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<sup>146</sup> *Bahwa keperawanan di pergaulan masa kini bukan lagi sesuatu yang disakralkan ... Aku tidak mengikuti perubahan zaman karena kolot. Menurutku, aku belum siap mental. Aku bukan mau sok puritan. Tapi tadi, aku percaya semua akan terjadi pada waktunya. Aku akan siap mental menjalani hubungan seks bila telah siap untuk menikah. Dan bila waktu itu tiba, aku pasti akan melepaskan keperawanan. Dan aku akan secara aktif melakukan hubungan seks.* (2004:163, 164).

<sup>147</sup> References to the novel will only give the year of publication (2005) and page number.

<sup>148</sup> Di ujung lorong mereka papas an dengan Doddy Al-Fayed dan Princess Diana. Axena dan Farahniza pernah berkenalan dengan Doddy Al-Fayed di pembukaan butik Pedro Rodriguez di London. Doddy memperkenalkan Axena dan Farahniza kepada Princess Diana (2005:59).

Axena is restless. On a few occasions she sees an old man in a white linen jacket observing her, but as no one else notices him, he must be an apparition. When she meets Bhara who auditions in New York for a musical, the two fall in love: they have found their *jodoh* (life partner). The old man appears to Axena again and identifies himself as Jason William Randolph. He summons her to break off her relationship with Bhara.<sup>149</sup> Axena is disturbed by Jason's warning, and when she is pregnant, she looks up his name in the phone book. In a telephone conversation he tells her again not to be romantically involved with Bhara, it is part of her mother's karma. He mentions her mother's name, a name Axena had stored in the back of her mind ever since she left the orphanage. When she tries to trace Jason, she learns that he died in a fire in July 1979. This ghost figure is conveying a message to her from the other world. Unexpectedly Bhara has to return to Jakarta because his mother is dying. Axena does not tell him about Jason, nor about the pregnancy.

Meanwhile Havana is a bald headed Indonesian-Turkish who lives in Istanbul. She grew up in different places since her Batak father worked as a diplomat. She has chosen to live in Turkey, her mother's country, after her parents die in a car crash. Havana is a photographer in the autopsy police department who takes pictures of suicide cases. At age seventeen she starts a long term relationship with painter Yilmaz Bozdemir. When she becomes pregnant, he encourages her to have an abortion. Later Havana discovers Yilmaz is a married man, and after a surprise visit from his pregnant wife, she breaks off the relationship. She meets Bhadra who wins the first prize in the International Song Festival in Istanbul and they fall in love: they have found their *jodoh* (life partner). Havana, however, starts to have nightmares about a woman carrying a dead baby, and soon after she actually meets them in the streets. The woman tells her the baby's origins, and Havana is highly upset. She finds out she is pregnant and informs Bhadra before he departs in a rush to Jakarta to visit his dying mother.

Savitri Puspongoro is terminally ill with breast cancer. Before she dies, she imparts to Bhara and Bhadra (Bhajra is on Bali) that they are her adopted sons. She had a hysterectomy at age seventeen as a result of uterine cancer. She asks them to forgive her, but does not disclose more about their background. While in Indonesia Bhara and Bhadra receive news that Axena and Havana have committed suicide by jumping off the Statue of Liberty and the bridge over the Bosphorus respectively.

On Bali Bhajra has stumbled upon his own discovery: he first encounters a middle-aged woman and her beautiful daughter, both phantom appearances. From *Pak Made Wiyata* he learns who they are, and later shares this information with his brothers. On 31 December 1979 the Balinese Nyoman Sumitha gave birth to three boys, to be followed by three girls born on 1 January 1980. She died soon after. The children's father, American Jason Randolph was to marry Nyoman, but never returned from a visit to the USA. The three boys were adopted by the Puspongoro couple, the sixth born was adopted by a Batak-Turkish couple, and the fifth born was taken to an orphanage in Yogyakarta. The fourth born, *kembar keempat* named Bunga, died one day old. Jason's phantom appeared to Axena, and Bunga warned Havana about her incestuous relationships. Bhajra met with his mother's and sister's spirit. Knowing their biological origins, the three brothers hold funeral rites for Nyoman Sumitha, Bunga, Axena, and Havana according to Balinese tradition. They themselves "live happily ever after."

*Kembar Keempat* takes female reproduction to the extreme with the natural birth of sextuplets in an isolated Balinese village. There is no mention of health care workers, let alone a hospital, yet five of the newly-borns survive and are given away within forty-eight hours. This multiple birth takes place unnoticed and without any media attention. The five

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<sup>149</sup> Berhentilah mencintai Bhara (2005:162).

surviving siblings grow into adulthood with no inkling of their biological background, which is somewhat unimaginable. None of the adoptive parents disclose the children's origins or family circumstances. In addition, the triplet brothers are totally oblivious of their mother's medical history, i.e. her hysterectomy. The most unlikely element in the story is that the two brothers Bhara and Bhadra meet, fall in love, and impregnate their sextuplet-sisters, Axena and Havana. The two sisters subsequently embody the taboo-ridden pregnancies, and they must pay the price. In a dramatic fashion they take their own lives along with those of their unborn "babies" (*bayi terlarang* 2005:209, 213). Axena and Havana are punished for their incestuous aberration, while their two brothers, equally guilty of incest, marry beautiful wives (Farahniza and Brittany Walters<sup>150</sup>), and continue their successful lives.

The dénouement explicitly conveys the message of the book: multiple birth siblings must never be separated. A person's fate is inscribed in the mother's womb, hence multiple birth siblings who share the same womb at the same time, must know of their "fellow-womb" siblings.<sup>151</sup> The concern with the womb and importance of the pregnancy in the development of human life signify the crucial role of the mother in the life of her children. In *Kembar Keempat* Savitri Puspongoro, or "*Bunda*", is portrayed as the perfect mother, a woman who foregoes her own needs and aspirations for the good of her sons.<sup>152</sup> Yet, as it turns out, she has one major flaw: it was *her* decision to separate the five siblings as she chose to adopt the three boys only. Savitri as well as her husband are aware of this misjudgement, and both ask their sons to forgive her, even though at the time the boys do not understand what for (2005:29, 195, 197). *Bunda*, the icon of ideal motherhood, is in fact not what she seems to be.

All main characters are wealthy and talented individuals, thriving in their careers. Bhara, Bhadra and Bhajra have a privileged start in life as children of a shipping magnate; they attend international schools and private lessons. Their professional artistic endeavours culminate in fame and fortune. Axena is an extreme exemplar of the "from rags to riches" cliché. Surrounded by the loving care of *Ibu* Threes in the orphanage, but exploited for three years by a Dutch woman, Axena reaches international celebrity status in no time, and is totally at ease in a jet-setting world. Her life trajectory truly reads like a fairy tale, there is no vraisemblance with what happens to ordinary people. It is hard to imagine that a poor, uneducated and non-English speaking orphan makes it to the top in New York all on her own, without parental guidance or supervisory support. Axena owes her star-power to her feminine body and beauty, yet the story never delves into the psychological or emotional pressures that exist in a modeling career. She dines and drinks with the rich and famous, and not once do we read about concerns regarding diet, physical training, and bodily appearance in a world of competition.<sup>153</sup> Axena's performance is always stellar, and she has no professional anxieties. When she meets Merav in Paris for the first time, he charts a private plane to accompany her on her flight to New York (2005:66). Later they plan to celebrate their wedding lavishly in six places according to different faiths: in Tel Aviv according to Jewish tradition, in Cairo the Muslim way, in India the Hindu way,

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<sup>150</sup> Brittany Walters plays the female lead role in the musical in which Bhara is the main male character.

<sup>151</sup> *Bayi yang terlahir kembar tak baik dipisah-pisahkan*. (2005:212). *Tuhan telah menggariskan takdir sediri rahim* (2005:213). *Bila kembar yang terpisah bertemu, sudah pasti mereka akan saling tertarik. Karena pernah menempati rahim yang sama, pada saat yang sama pula ... Mereka punya ikatan khusus, batin mereka saling terkait* (2005:215-16).

<sup>152</sup> *Bunda cermin ketegaran ... Dia dedikasikan hidup bagi anak-anak. Dia tak pernah mengeluh* (2005:28). *Bunda ibu yang sempurna* (2005:30).

<sup>153</sup> Fira Basuki's novel *Biru* depicts a photo model who struggles in the competition with others, and resorts to taking pills to lose weight.

in Bangkok the Buddhist way, in Tokyo according to the Shinto teachings, and in Rome in the Catholic church (2005:86-87). Axena's world is truly one exorbitant spectacle.

Havana, too, is a woman of the world, internationally educated and at home in London, Istanbul and Indonesia. Her romance with Yilmaz starts off as a long-distance relationship in which he visits her in London from Istanbul every weekend (2005:49). Later, when Havana seeks refuge in Indonesia after he has confessed to be married, Yilmaz follows her to that part of the world (2005:74). None of the characters are limited in their movements by lack of money, commitments to work, family or other obligations.

At age twenty-five Axena and Havana are women with extensive life experiences. They have pursued their careers, and have had long-term relationships. It is, therefore, striking that at the time they are involved with Bhara and Bhadra respectively, they pay little to no attention to the consequences of their sexual conduct. For a full three months Havana never notices that she has not menstruated.<sup>154</sup> Well-informed and educated as they are, they did not plan their pregnancies, nor are they or their lovers prepared for the changes of their future as parents. Axena's pregnancy may mean the end of her modeling career, as was the case with her rival Savannah.<sup>155</sup> I find the women's lack of family planning, but more so the casual presentation of impregnation particularly troubling because it leaves readers with the impression that for women pregnancy can be taken lightly. Professional women with the stature of Havana and Axena are expected to be more conscious not only about their bodies, but also about life altering decisions such as having a child. Their nonchalance concerning sexuality, conception, pregnancy and future motherhood is disconcerting.

#### IV) IN CLOSING

*Pintu Terlarang* and *Kembar Keempat* are novels filled with horror and suspense that keep the reader engaged and curious about the outcome. A feminist analysis of their sex/gender content shows that the two novels convey a heteronormative message, and strongly advocate motherhood as the ultimate destination for women. They emphasize the centrality of female reproduction, and unequivocally assert that unborn life must be protected. Sekar's work contrasts sharply with what we find in other post-1998 women's writing. As mentioned, literary criticism has concentrated on representations of liberated women who celebrate sexual pleasure on feminine terms in heterosexual as well as lesbian engagements. These portrayals of sexualized female bodies as empowering and signifiers of women's autonomy, selfhood and individuation have been intensely debated.<sup>156</sup>

Sekar's fiction has not received much critical attention. It focuses on the flip side of sexual permissiveness: unwanted or unplanned pregnancies and abortion. The novels essentialize the women to their biological function, their bodies a site of contestation between two polarized opposites: the pro-life and pro-choice factions. In "the West" the ethical question of whether or not to legalize abortion was one of the quintessential topics of the feminist movement during the second half of the twentieth century. To feminists none other than a woman herself has the right to decide to terminate a pregnancy or not. This point of view generally clashes with those who adhere to strict religious morality.

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<sup>154</sup> *Havana tercengang. Ia baru menyadari selama ini berhubungan seks tanpa pencegah kehamilan. ...Havana menyadari siklus bulanan sudah tiga bulan lebih belum berkunjung* (2005:166).

<sup>155</sup> Savannah Wilson's pregnancy meant she had broken her contract and she was forced out of modeling (2005:38).

<sup>156</sup> It is important to note that women's fiction that celebrates emancipation, also points to violence against women, relentless domestic, sexual and emotional abuse, and women's victimization, see Bodden forthcoming.

From the 1970s onwards patriarchal values and practices came under attack, as men were no longer in a position to regulate female reproduction. Female autonomy over women's bodies and legalization of abortion came to signify the collapse of the existing moral order. The Sexual Revolution and second wave feminist movement did not have the same impact on Indonesian society as it did in "the West". During the New Order years (1966-1998) the state controlled sexual and gender politics, and patriarchal authoritarianism was firmly in place. Not until *Reformasi* could sex/gender ideologies be challenged, and were women able to voice opinions not heard of before.

Nine years into *Reformasi* Indonesia is still in transition, in search of alternative politics. Many who were silenced or restricted before have found opportunities to speak up and to act. In the area of cultural production it has resulted in a complex array of discourses. Post-1998 women's writing has provoked reactions from those in religious circles, both Muslim and Christian, and from non-religious conservative groups. Women writers have been blamed for advocating moral decay. In my view, Sekar's novels are a reaction to the women "celebrity" writers who often enter the spotlight and are portrayed in the media as representing the post-1998 "generation". I read *Pintu Terlarang* and *Kembar Keempat* as a moral strategy to carry on the New Order legacy of hetero-normativity, monogamy, conjugal fidelity, and nuclear family in order to avoid confusion, social problems, and instability in terms of gender and sexual politics. Sekar's work does not argue in favour of any specific religious conviction, but endorses a multi-faith standpoint, a belief in a higher force or *takdir* (fate).<sup>157</sup> *Tuhan* (God) determines one's fate from (the time of) the womb<sup>158</sup>, hence women are instrumental in procreation; they are a tool in God's or *takdir*'s hands. By way of the implied spiritual/religious convictions the novels champion patriarchal norms and beliefs.

Analyzing and interpreting Sekar's novels I could not help but read them as allegories, as intertextual commentaries to other women's writing. At the plot level we find strong binary oppositions: essentialized women versus men, virginity versus "free sex", pro-life versus pro-choice, perfect motherhood versus distorted/aborted motherhood. *Pintu Terlarang* and *Kembar Keempat* themselves are narratives in binary opposition to literary works that celebrate women's pleasures and sexuality. They present women who, in a twisted way, are uneasy with their reproductive bodies, who shed what grows in their wombs, and hate the inevitable consequences of their sexual conduct. While female authors such as Djenar Maesa Ayu and others write about cosmopolitanism and materialism in Jakarta as an escape for readers, Sekar's novels take consumerism to an extreme, raising it to an international level of glamour, as if to ridicule the theme. Yet, Sekar's novels demonstrate time and again that life is not what it seems to be, and people are not who they seem to be. Talyda, Menik Sasongko and Menur prove to be conspiring and untrustworthy instead of loving and supportive. Dion turns out to be a child molester, and Gambir's world as a sculptor is entirely imagined. The sextuplet siblings are not aware of who they are, and *Bunda* is found to be the not-so-perfect mother. *Pintu Terlarang* and *Kembar Keempat* are teachings of moral truth in response to other post-1998 narratives, yet they convey a dystopian view of the world. Sekar's fiction reverts back to New Order gender notions, and undercuts other Indonesian women's attempts to reinvent themselves, and redefine their identity, subject position and roles in society through artistic expression.

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<sup>157</sup> We find references to a multi-faith position in *Pintu Terlarang* when Gambir fantasizes about leading a Muslim as well as Roman Catholic community (2004:225). In *Kembar Keempat* Axena grows up according to Muslim, Catholic and Protestant teachings (2005:67), and she and Merav plan to celebrate their wedding according to six different faiths (2005:86-87). Balinese religion (Sang Hyang Widi, 2005:215) and the world of spirits are referred to as well.

<sup>158</sup> *Tuhan* telah menggariskan takdir sedari rahim (2005:214), dan Takdir setiap manusia telah tertulis sedari rahim (2005:8).

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## **CHAPITRE 8**

### **A struggle for legitimacy: opposed discourses on Tibetan medicine**

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The paper discusses opposed discourses of the Chinese and exiled Tibetan authorities on Tibetan medicine. The context in which these discourses take shape will be described firstly, followed by the representation of Tibetan identity that both parties put forward and the case of Tibetan medicine and medical education. The same will be followed by a brief conclusion of the article.

#### **D) CONTEXT**

Tibetan medicine has a holistic conception of illness as an imbalance in the body. When balance is broken, the body's 3 energies attack its constituents and balance must be restored to heal the patient. Each patient has a predominance of 1, 2 or all 3 energies in his nature, which impacts treatment. This medical system has evolved over the last 2000 years, integrating basic observations on the Tibetan plateau with Indian, Chinese and Persian influences. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, famous Tibetan scholar gYu-thog yon-tan mgon-po summarised a conference with doctors from India, China, Persia and Nepal into the rGyud-bzhi, sacred medical text which became the object of several commentaries. Medical knowledge spread as successive colleges were founded from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. sMan-Tsis-Khang, the Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute, was founded in 1916 by the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama.

In 1950, China occupied and claimed Tibet as a historical part of its territory. Nine years later, the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama fled into exile to India, followed by 80,000 Tibetans convinced that their culture was threatened under Chinese rule. Cultural preservation therefore became a foremost priority. Education was placed under the authority of the Tibetan leadership and cultural institutes were (re)founded in Dharamsala. This includes T.M.A.I., founded in 1961 and quickly spreading its activities across India and Nepal. In Chinese Tibet however, although religion and its elite were harshly repressed, Tibetan medicine was patronised by the authorities. This showed their respect for local traditions and provided cheaper more accessible healthcare.

Tibetan medicine is at the heart of an ideological struggle between the Chinese and exiled Tibetan medical institutions. Both claim descent from Lhasa's early 20<sup>th</sup> century T.M.A.I. The Chinese leadership believe that they support local traditions, provide accessible healthcare and thus help Tibet out of its economic backwardness by making medicine profitable. On the other hand the exiled leadership implies that China perverts the medical

system to political ends, depriving it of its religious foundations. The political use of Tibetan medicine is obvious in education. Each institution claims to perpetuate the authentic tradition for its Tibetan students. Both also provide lessons to Westerners, comparing Tibetan and Western medicines with emphasis on their complementary aspects, and using scientific research to prove the efficiency of their version of Tibetan medicine.

My fieldwork allowed me to become familiar with the ideological atmosphere of T.M.A.I. in Dharamsala. I received private lessons from a doctor who graduated and works in the institute. My three month lessons followed part of the rGyud-bzhi in its Tibetan version translated by the teacher, and English commentaries. I also read the institute's nationalist student publication and visited its website. Literary research completed my fieldwork to learn about theoretical aspects and Chinese representations of Tibetan medicine. I am aware of a bias toward the exiled Tibetan discourse, to which I have been much more exposed during my fieldwork and my life, given my involvement with militant NGOs for Tibetan freedom and human rights (Légaré-Dionne, 2007).

## II) POWER RELATIONS AND DISCOURSE

Tibetan medicine is part of a struggle between the Chinese and exiled Tibetan governments for the legitimate control of Tibet, using speech as its weapon. One of the main authors to have studied relations of power and discourse is Foucault. His conception of power is very dynamic. He focuses on concrete practices, historical and changing in daily struggles and negotiations. He speaks not of power but of powers, interconnected in complex ways. He distinguishes power from domination since power always involves the possibility of resistance. The two being inseparable, one must look at resistance struggles to understand power relations. Foucault describes resistance struggles as transverse (not specific to any type of government), immediate (fighting close representatives of power with direct impact in their daily life) and anarchical (not satisfied with a solution in the distant future). They question the individual's status (claiming people's right to be different and fighting the isolation of individuals in their identity), oppose privileges that knowledge and the way it circulates give, and fight the State's economic and ideological violence as well as scientific and administrative inquisition into individual identities. To understand power relations in a political system, Foucault also looks at the differentiations (based on status, language), objectives (to keep privileges, accumulate profits), instruments (speech, weapons), how power relations are institutionalised (calling on tradition, law), and how rationalised they are (how certain of the results those in power are) (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1984).

Discourse plays an important role in the exercise of power and resistance. Rather than translate struggles into words, it is an instrument of struggle. Rather than speak a pre-existing truth, it produces truth following processes analysed in *L'ordre du discours* (1971). They are the external and internal processes of exclusion and conditions bringing discourse into play. External processes include prohibitions, share/reject opposition invalidating the latter's discourse, and will of truth. Internal processes are commentary repeating and updating the discourse, author as coherence and origin of meaning and disciplines with truth changing historically within each one. Conditions include discourse society or secret around the transmission of discourse, doctrine or large-scale diffusion of a strictly controlled content, and social appropriations as struggles, powers and knowledge brought by discourse. Foucault also remarks that resistance attempts are often stuck within the dominant discourse of truth, opposing each of its arguments rather than the existence of a discourse of truth as such.

Other authors have examined the role of discourse to establish the legitimacy of governments. For political scientist Beetham (1991), they must establish their legality or

following of the rules, justifiability of the rules and expressed consent of the population. To justify the rules and privileges of its elite, a government can appeal to an outside source such as divine rule or scientific doctrine, or an inside source such as tradition or people's rule. It must finally establish a common interest to justify the differentiation between the elite and the masses. These justifications are not mutually exclusive and often combined by governments. According to socio-political scientist Mueller (1973), language also plays an important part in political socialisation. Indeed, political views can only be expressed as far as language allows. Communication can be directed in a conscious effort to transform language, or restrained by limiting the information in circulation. Social class influences political views too. For example, linguistic code is more restricted and family structure more authority-based in lower classes. Finally, as Kautsky (1979) points out, the language of politics itself has undergone historical manipulations from its initial descriptive meaning in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe.

### **III) REPRESENTATIONS OF TIBETAN IDENTITY**

Representations of Tibetan identity take shape in very different contexts in the Tibet Autonomous Region of China and the Tibetan community in exile. The representations of Tibetan identity put forward by both leaderships in their official discourses are adapted by the population in the changing circumstances of its life.

In China, Han-dominated official discourse represents minorities as culturally and economically inferior, needing the Han to lead them to progress. Since the 1980s, a more relaxed political climate has allowed minority artists to put forward alternative conceptions of their identities (Baranovitch, 2001). However, in Tibet, political control has remained tight (Karmel, 1995, 1996). Anthropologist Adams (1996) has shown that Lhasa's Tibetan population faces 2 mutually exclusive codes defining its identity. On one side, the Chinese government seeks to preserve 'exotic' traditions to attract tourists and help Tibetans out of their economic backwardness through mass development. On the other, Western imagination seeks to save oppressed Tibetans' traditions and bring Western development without Chinese control. Following Foucault's analysis of discourse, we find external processes of exclusion. First, sympathy for the opponent's version of Tibetan identity is prohibited. These supporters are rejected as splittist or brainwashed, and both parties exhibit a strong will of truth at the expense of the opponent. Internal processes are less obvious. Comments of locals are quoted in support of China's claims or the 'Tibetan cause'. Tibetan traditions are classified like disciplines in books and institutions. The author is not used, since each version claims to express a pre-existing truth, not produce it. Finally, different conditions bring this discourse into play. Transmission of discourse is limited to those with acceptable political views, content is strictly controlled on each side and local Tibetans appropriate this discourse, travelling back and forth between the 2 versions following opportunities for national pride and rare economic gain. Their perceptions of their identity, not limited to outside codes, integrate this coming and going between the 2 and other national identity markers like Buddhism.

The exiled leadership, away from the land it claims, must establish its legitimacy. For this, it claims that China destroys Tibetan culture while it preserves authentic traditions in exile. Cultural institutes in exile and the education they provide promote this view. They emphasise youth's crucial responsibility in cultural preservation, and promote unified Tibetan identity over the sectarian and regional identities that prevailed in Tibet. As anthropologist Nowak (1984) illustrates, the Dalai Lama becomes a symbol of that unified national identity, as well as the Rang-btsan or freedom metaphor. Ritually lived by Tibetans in exile during nationalist events, it represents political but also Buddhist liberation. These symbols' popularity in the West reinforces their power. External

processes of exclusion here include prohibition of any support for Chinese policies in Tibet, rejecting these supporters as brainwashed, and a will of truth to justify the exiled leadership's position. Internal processes include comments of Western 'Tibetan cause' supporters. The authority given to the Dalai Lama's discourse makes him an author. However, on national identity, he is considered to speak a pre-existing truth rather than produce it. Cultural institutes represent different national traditions to preserve, classified as disciplines. Finally, conditions bringing discourse into play include limiting transmission of discourse to the Tibetan community in exile and its close supporters. Supporters of that discourse have a precise line to follow, exemplifying doctrine. That discourse and its Western support are appropriated to promote nationalist pride in the exiles.

#### **IV) THE CASE OF THE TIBETAN MEDICINE**

Tibetan medicine plays an important part in both sides' struggle for legitimacy. As anthropologist Janes (1995, 1999 and 2002) explains, China has used it since the beginning of its occupation of Tibet to win the hearts of the local population by supporting their traditions and providing accessible healthcare. However, Tibetan medicine has been subjected to varying ideological control over the years. This includes the cleansing of its religious elements and claiming it as part of the traditional Chinese medical system. External processes of exclusion here include prohibiting claims of Buddhist foundations to the system and its specific Tibetan national character. Opponents are rejected as splittist, and great efforts in history and research demonstrate a will to prove this version. Internal processes include Chinese scientific articles claiming the truth of this version. The author is used in a limited way, as the scientists who sign these articles are deemed to speak a universal truth. Tibetan medicine is presented as a discipline, itself divided into medicine and astrology. Finally, conditions bring this discourse into play. Transmission of medical knowledge is limited to people who declare acceptable political views, a pre-requisite for admission to Lhasa's Tibetan Traditional Medicine College (TTMC, 2006). Doctrine is involved by propagating specific content to these students and the public. Students, who must accept this ideology to advance their career, appropriate this discourse. So does the population, but against Chinese domination. Indeed, Tibetan medicine is used by local Tibetans to express their national identity and resentment against Chinese migrants' economic privileges over Tibetans (Janes, 1999). Because Tibetan medicine is used as an example by China, it allows them to express these feelings in acceptable terms for the authorities and avoid repression.

In exile, the authorities claim China is turning Tibetan medicine away from its religious foundations. This claim in turn justifies the exiled medical institution's role to preserve authentic traditional medicine. The ideological reshaping they describe in Chinese Tibet peaked during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), during which the rGyud-bzhi was prohibited in classrooms. T.M.A.I. in exile therefore focuses on religious aspects: theoretical links between Tibetan medicine and Buddhism, daily prayers and the traditional Buddhist guru-disciple relationship in the transmission of knowledge (Men-Tsee-Khang, 2007; sMan-pa-lags, 2006). It also emphasises the specifically Tibetan character of the system. The external processes of exclusion include prohibition of support for Chinese policies on Tibetan medicine or doubt of its specifically Tibetan character. Opponents are rejected as brainwashed and a strong will of truth is shown in the institute's numerous books presenting this version. Internal processes are students' commenting articles in support of the institute's claims, emphasising famous authors of historical medical texts as potential national heroes enhancing the system's credibility, and the disciplines of Tibetan medicine and astrology taught in the institute. Finally,

conditions bringing discourse into play include limiting the transmission of medical knowledge to Tibetans or rare Tibetan-speaking foreigners, following guru-disciple relationships between teachers and devoted students. Ideological doctrine is strictly transmitted to these students with the urge to preserve and spread it. The discourse is also appropriated by young students proud of their role in preserving their culture.

T.M.A.I. also teaches its students about Western medicine, comparing it to Tibetan medicine and emphasising their complementary character. The popularity of Tibetan Buddhism and medicine in the West, where it provides a holistic alternative with minimal side effects, reinforces the trend linking both medical systems. They are presented as equally worthy alternatives, each necessary because it treats certain types of problems better than the other (Gang-Ri-Lang-Tso, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2005; sMan-pa-lags, 2006). In fact, on the one hand, Western medicine is better for punctual injuries and infections or, as some authors put it, diseases from purely physical causes. On the other hand, Tibetan medicine is better at treating chronic illnesses (like AIDS and different cancers), with spiritual or mixed causes (Keralanext.com, 2003; Larson, 2001). This discourse reflects the well-established healing practices of Tibetan populations, consulting different specialists depending on the illness, and trying one after another until healing or death. In China, Tibetan and Western medicines are also offered as alternatives in Lhasa, where both are available. Furthermore, Tibetan medicine is considered especially efficient in the treatment of S.A.R.S., since the region was practically the only one spared. During the epidemic, resources could not meet the overwhelming national demand (RFA, 2003). Chinese and exiled Tibetan medical institutions also partner with Western scientists in research to prove the efficiency of Tibetan medicine as practiced under their rule. For both, the West plays a double role. It legitimises Tibetan medicine with its science on one side. On the other, it needs holistic Tibetan medicine as an alternative to Western medicine's narrow focus on symptoms rather than patients as a whole (Illich, 2004). Dharamsala and Beijing have a similar discourse about Tibetan medicine and the West. However, they use it in opposition to each other, promoting Tibetan medicine as practised under their jurisdiction. This denies their opponent the exclusive use of this argument.

## V) CONCLUSION

Chinese and exiled Tibetan authorities each try to establish themselves as the legitimate protector of Tibetan medicine. However, both are stuck in their systematic opposition of each other's argument. They are then unable to break away from this common set of arguments to invalidate their opponent's claims. Of course, politically speaking, maintaining this status quo favours China, which has political control over Tibet while the exiled Tibetans oppose this state of things. Their opposition does not correspond to Foucault's notion of resistance though. Indeed, it opposes a specific government, removed from its daily life, hoping for a solution that cannot be considered in the near future. It fights the Chinese leadership's violence and ideology, but only to propose its own ideology in its place. Furthermore, the exiled Tibetan leadership is a governmental structure. Therefore, the struggle is between 2 opposed governments fighting for political control of Tibet. Even though China is in dominant position, international support for the Dalai Lama and the 'Tibetan cause' of the exiles cause China to regularly lose face in the international arena concerning Tibet.

If we analyse the political system in Foucault's terms, we find ethnic differentiations between Chinese and Tibetans. The objective is political control and legitimacy. Discourse is the instrument. Institutionalisation of power relies on the control of tradition, medical in this case, and on international law to legitimate China's political control of

Tibet or blame its human rights record. The level of rationalisation is high, since both opponents are convinced that their claims are valid. The case of Tibetan medicine illustrates this endless unresolved fight between two political opponents using the same strategies against one another, unable to break free from their common presuppositions to defeat the other.

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