Les héritages historiques et culturels de l'Asie du Sud-Est face à la mondialisation

Coping with Globalization: Southeast Asian Historical and Cultural Heritage

Sous la direction de / Edited by

Rodolphe De Koninck
Bruno Thibert

I T É S E A C / C S E A S T I   **Document n⁰ 1**

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Avant-propos / Foreword

Du 10 au 12 octobre 2003, deux constituantes de l'*Association canadienne des études asiatiques*, en l'occurrence le *Conseil canadien des études sur l'Asie du Sud-Est* et le *Conseil de l'Asie de l'Est* (CCEASE), tinrent un colloque conjoint à l'Université de Montréal. À cette occasion, quelque soixante communications furent présentées, dont près de la moitié concernaient le Sud-Est asiatique.

Dans le cadre de leur assemblée plénière, les membres du CCEASE convinrent de l'intérêt d'encourager la publication d'une sélection des communications présentées dans le cadre du colloque. Au nom du Conseil, l'équipe de la Chaire du Canada en études asiatiques accepta de diriger cette initiative. Les textes issus de six communications furent proposés. Tous furent acceptés, la plupart après des retouches mineures. Ils sont rassemblés ici au titre du premier numéro d'une collection qui portera désormais le nom de *Documents de l'ITÉSEAC*. L'ITÉSEAC (*Initiative trilatérale des études sud-est asiatiques au Canada*) regroupe les trois principaux centres de recherches sur le Sud-Est asiatique au Canada, soit la Chaire de recherches du Canada en études asiatiques, à l'Université de Montréal, le York Center for Asian Research (York University) et le Center for Southeast Asian Research (University of British Columbia).

From 10 to 12 October 2003, the *Canadian Council for Southeast Asian Studies* (CCSEAS) and the *East Asia Council*, both affiliated to the *Canadian Asian Studies Association*, held a joint conference at the University of Montreal. Some sixty paper were presented, nearly half of which concerning Southeast Asia.

During their General assembly, the members of the CCSEAS agreed that a selection of papers from the Conference should be published. The task was entrusted to the Canada Chair of Asian Research at the University of Montreal. Six papers were submitted. They were all accepted after review, most of them following minor revisions. They are assembled here and form the first of a series of *Documents* to be published under the auspices of the *Canadian Southeast Asian Trilateral Initiative*, henceforth the *CSEASTI Documents*. The latter regroups Canada's three major Southeast Asian research centers, namely the Canada Chair of Asian Research at the Université de Montréal, the York Center for Asian Research at York University and the Center for Southeast Asia Research at the University of British Columbia.

ARTICLES

Why Southeast Asia?

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WHY SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES?

The title of this paper raises the question: "Why Southeast Asian for What, and for Whom?" The main focus will be: Why should foreigners, and Canadians in particular, be involved in S.E. Asia, why should CCSEAS and Centres for S.E. Asia Research (like CSEAR) exist and expect to be funded in Canada, and, more generally, why should Canadian graduate students choose to focus their academic careers on becoming specialists on S.E. Asia? I will also touch tangentially on why S.E. Asia has, over the years, been a magnet for migrants, traders, investors, exploiters, evangelists, do-gooders, smugglers, pirates, war-mongers, spies, and now Islamic terrorists – hence the broader title.

While there can be both academic and political contention regarding 'what is a region,' S.E. Asia is now clearly established as a distinct and coherent sub-region of Asia, alongside (or between) East Asia and South Asia. This is explicitly recognized by the national governments, by the people who live there, and by scholars and students of Asian area studies. It is now virtually coterminous with ASEAN, officially identified as comprising 10 countries: the original ASEAN six, the Indochina three, plus Burma. Independent East Timor should be added and is scheduled to join ASEAN, and if Papua New Guinea is able to join in the near future, this will make a round dozen.

However, over the last 2 or 3 decades, there has been a steady decline in interest, commitment and funding for 'regional studies'- with priorities shifting to disciplinary studies, or to pan-Asian and especially global studies, and toward theoretical rather than applied or descriptive studies. It has also become more difficult for individuals to obtain visa clearance for independent fieldwork in most S.E. Asian countries, there are now more risks and dangers to working there, and, to be honest, there have probably been fewer career opportunities in government, business, and universities in recent years for university graduates based solely on specialist knowledge of S.E. Asia.

WHY IS S.E. ASIA SO FASCINATING?

To this audience, I need hardly make a case for the attractions of working in S.E. Asia. It would be preaching to the converted. However, for those still wondering whether to venture into this field of enquiry, or instead confine their life work wholly to narrow disciplinary studies, let me give a whiff of the ecstasy to be derived from this particular narcotic. To save time, the handout summarizes notes I have used in my course on 'The Economics of S.E. Asia' to proselytize to the undergrads on why graduate studies in S.E. Asia offer such an intriguing array of intellectual challenges, research opportunities, and sheer fun for scholars in history, sociology, anthropology, geography, ecology, economics, political science, international relations etc, over and above the evident tourist allure of the inspiring scenery, the world's most hospitable people, the incredible food, amazing historical and archaeological sites, the lively music, songs and dances, the mesmerizing cultural ceremonies, as well as how far the Canadian dollar can be stretched on a student budget. For those already addicted, it is hard to understand why anyone would want to work anywhere else.

A Partial Review of Explanations for Academic Infatuation with S.E. Asia

For the historian, S.E. Asia presents a fascinating story of overland and overseas migrations, involving interaction and intermingling of most of the world's major cultures. It has intriguing contrasts in colonial experience (Dutch, British, Portuguese, French, American, etc), plus one non-colonial experience. It offers a set of different transitions to independence (relatively smooth and amicable in the cases of M, S & P, violent in the case of V & I). Historical events need continual reinterpretation, and many 'classic' accounts of S.E. Asian history (Boeke, Furnivall, Geertz, etc) continually need to be rethought and revised, along with preconceptions derived from the extensive Western literature on S.E. Asia (Conrad, Maughn, Burgess, etc). The recent flourishing of indigenous scholarship into S.E. Asian history is a major source for such re-evaluations that call for open-minded and thoughtful consideration.

For the sociologist/anthropologist/geographer, S.E. Asia offers a 'cultural kaleidoscope', an exciting (often mind-boggling) array of ethnic diversity and coagulation, with geographic fragmentation into islands, peninsulas, and valleys isolated by mountainous terrain creating thousands of 'little worlds' with endless village-level variation around a series of recurrent socio-economic themes. Its migratory peoples appear highly adaptable, yet culturally retentive, providing classic examples of dualism, pluralism, syncretism, etc. Virtually all major cultures, religions, and languages are represented, and the varying social and economic roles of S.E. Asian women provide a broad range of gender equity/inequity situations with some phenomenal archetypes of entrepreneurship and other achievements.

For the ecologist/environmentalist, S.E. Asia provides an enormously rich and diverse range of ecological variation, and a high percentage of the worlds existing (and threatened) biological species. The region also has huge variation in population densities, urban growth, pollution, land and water scarcity, and other resource depletion and degradation. A conservation ethic and sustainable resource management

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strategies are urgently needed, and these are only likely to be achievable with outside scientific and ODA assistance, negotiation, inducement and persuasion.

For the economist, S.E. Asia represents a dramatic set of test cases for ideological/theoretical assertions regarding the process of economic growth, structural change, and development strategy. In the 1970s-80s, the region attracted enormous attention (along with East Asian NICs) as the world's most economically successful, able to achieve and sustain record-breaking rates of growth, deemed an 'Asian miracle' by the WB and an exemplar for other developing nations. The Asian Crisis then shattered this euphoria and called into question economic orthodoxy, 'the Washington consensus', and the 'new globalization', causing S.E. Asian and other developing countries to rethink their economic strategies and international economic relations. Several alternative 'economic recovery paths' are now being charted offering a intriguing range of ideologies, institutional and policy reform, resource and human development strategies.

For the political scientist, S.E. Asia offers a wide range of functioning (and dysfunctional) polities, ranging from highly authoritarian regimes to functioning democracies and apparent transitions to democracy, with a wide range of constitutional, legal, political, administrative and institutional arrangements. There is a rich panoply of traditional and *arriviste* elites, and the historical and changing political role of the military remains a particularly tantalizing field of study. The region has some remarkable case studies of regime change through 'people-power', notably in the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand, and the region provides a range of models of unitary, federal and local government, and also of NGO activism, civil society empowerment, press freedom, administration decentralization, political devolution and local autonomy. The substantial, politically active, and educated middle class in most S.E. Asian nations augurs well for increasingly good governance and political stability based on democratic pluralism.

For the international relations specialist, S.E. Asia still occupies a strategic geo-political location, and an arena for major power jockeying for influence, including in recent decades US-USSR, US-China, USSR-China, Japan-China, etc, as well as many regional disputes over boundaries, offshore oil, fishing rights, etc involving China-Vietnam, Thailand-Vietnam, Singapore-Malaysia, and Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines, among several other conflicts and tensions. ASEAN has long been held up as a possible prototype for broader Asia-Pacific cooperation, promoting regional peace, nuclear non-proliferation and free trade, and though the Asian Economic Crisis was a setback, the global and regional terrorism threat now provides a new rationale for revitalization. Members are also aware of the need to amend 'the ASEAN way' of mutual abstention from critical commentary on each other's internal problems.

For multi-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary adventurers, traversing some or all of the above menu of challenges, either as individual pioneers or bridge-builders, or as workshop participants or members of collaborative research teams, the exposure can become even more intoxicating and inspiring. However, given the 'narrow tunnel-vision' of most academic disciplines, it is perhaps best to keep such transcendental exploration under wraps (or to be excused as a 'dilettante sideline interest'), at least until tenure and an orthodox publication record have been secured.

To briefly summarize, the main characteristic that has traditionally attracted scholars to specialize on S.E. Asia is its "Unity in Diversity" (Indonesia's national motto). Geographically, it is the most fragmented and exotic area on earth (Indonesia for example has17,000 islands and the Philippines 9,000, with 9,000 and 6,000 respectively being inhabited year-round), encompassing an immense variety of country situations in terms of land area, population size, religions, social structures, family and gender relations, cultural practices, etc. This means it is very complex ethnographically, sociologically, and linguistically – providing a veritable smorgasbord of histories, economies, polities, societies and cultures to endlessly intrigue visitors and to challenge the generalizations of social scientists. Since long before Columbus, its rich and diverse resources have been a magnet for international trade, colonial exploitation, foreign investment, and economic migration, and the region has served as the crucible for empirical research and the formulation of many leading theories of export-led growth and political transition, as well as core precepts in many other social sciences.

S.E. Asia thus presents a formidable range of contrasts, but these are framed within a manageable context of comparability, and this suggests a common set of core issues and research topics with local variations that provide food for thought, imagination and endless discussion. It is hard to imagine a more varied and stimulating wellspring of materials for country studies, regional studies, village studies, or household studies. Even after 40 years of exposure, every day in S.E. Asia is likely to present one with fascinating adventures, instructive and amiable encounters, intriguing paradoxes, or 'light bulb' revelations.

Given the generally narrow range of methodologies and intellectual 'flavours of the moment' imposed by prevailing orthodoxies in most social science disciplines, the rationale for regional studies, and in particular for in-depth research on S.E. Asia, is probably best couched in terms of the rich case study material it can provide for testing 'orthodox theory' or general hypotheses drawn from other country experience. In some countries, some disciplines, and some universities, inter-disciplinary studies seem to be coming into fashion again, and cross-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary teams are again encountering a somewhat warmer reception from certain funding agencies. There is thus hope for would-be devotees to be able to keep the flame alive and to keep themselves fully engaged in this extraordinarily seductive field of study.

WHY NOT LEAVE IT TO SOUTHEAST ASIAN SCHOLARS?

The very idea of 'S.E. Asia' originated as a foreign-imposed concept devised by geographers, 'Orientalists' and colonial administrators to group the fragments of various empires into what was first called Indochina, i.e. located along the sea lanes between the more extensive and populous targets of India and China. Prior to and into the 1960s, academic writing on S.E. Asia was mostly penned by foreigners, with Americans, Canadians and Australians often building upon the European colonial traditions and incorporating some of their neo-colonial perspectives and preconceptions. It was thus refreshing and exciting when S.E.

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Asian scholars began reinterpreting their nation's histories, current status and predicaments, and their future prospects, mostly from the 1970s on, applying indigenous perspectives and insights, and countering the biased interpretations of 'the classic texts' and concepts. Western cultural anthropologists in particular began a ritual of *mea culpa* or self-flagellation, apologizing for the presumptuous and misinformed assertions of their forefathers, the shortcomings of their own meagre research efforts, and emphasizing the priority of 'local knowledge' that only permanent and rooted residents could fully comprehend. So why not leave the story of S.E. Asia to be told by 'the natural experts' – those with a life experience and a deep local knowledge of S.E. Asia, and who often see expatriate scholars as 'stealing', or misinterpreting and perverting Southeast Asian knowledge?

The first counter argument would be that there is no such thing as immutable truth, only conjecture. As I have previously noted, there are always two polar perspectives or ways of looking at any problem -- such as economic dependency or persistent poverty -- it is either due to one's own failing or to someone else's mistreatment. There are thus two approaches to diagnosing the root causes of the Asian Economic Crisis: (a) from 'the outside looking in' it can be argued to be mostly 'their own fault' (mismanagement, corruption, local elite greed and irresponsibility), or (b) from 'the inside looking out' it can be seen as 'them doing it to us' (neo-colonial exploitation, predatory globalization, capitalist greed, and irresponsibility).[1] Both lines of argument need to be aggressively confronted and tested if there is to be any hope of comprehending and resolving the issue. A.J.P. Taylor once remarked that: "History is a selective reconstruction of what might have happened." In other words, history is not 'the facts', but the selection, ordering and -- above all – tentative explanation of the facts, and the same goes for the analysis of current events and prevailing economic, social, political, and international relations. It takes at least two to tangle with such complex issues, and one cannot demonstrate the truth of one's contentions without robustly confronting all alternative interpretations of reality. Even if one's opponent is ill-informed or prejudiced, a defeated 'devil's advocate' can be very useful in establishing one's own superior virtue. There are, of course many Southeast Asian scholars, as well some expatriate scholars, who can be sensitive to and weigh the grains of truth in both ideological perspectives, but local and global reality is a complex multi-faceted and ever-changing drama – so, let a thousand theses bloom.

Second, there is the thorny question of methodology, rigor, logic, objectivity, and other qualities of the research and analysis being presented. Most (or all) scholars are prone to some degree of myopia, selectivity, national or ideological bias, or

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[1] Cf. "Globalization, the Asian Way, and Dichotomous Development: Who is to Blame for the Asian Crisis and Persistent Poverty – with particular reference to Indonesia?" in G.B. Hainsworth (ed.), *Globalization and The Asian Economic Crisis: Indigenous Responses, Coping Strategies, and Governance Reform in Southeast Asia,* Vancouver: CSEAR, 2000.

prevailing mythology, and they can be quick and stubborn in dismissing the equivalent but different biases of scholars from other countries (or of other schools of thought, or the methodologies of other disciplines within their own country or internationally). Without making invidious comparisons, let me grasp the thistle (or go out on a limb) and say that in any country of S.E. Asia (as in Canada) there is a limited number of scholars with impeccable international reputations, and there are many more unresolved and urgent problems requiring attention than there are local skilled scientists willing or able to address them.

Third, we might add, there are different national traditions regarding what is expected, encouraged, or accepted as 'normal academic practice'. Just as there can still be 'rote learning' in some universities, so there is 'routine research' that adds little or nothing to the sum of knowledge. In economics, for example, this often takes the form of unquestioning regurgitation of tables of official statistics with the text then merely restating in words what is already in the tables. Articles in other social sciences often read like undergraduate 101 term papers, paraphrasing or plagiarizing someone else's work. In many developing countries, academics are often expected to be only teachers and can be given heavy course loads, with little or no access to research grants. The 'guru tradition' with tenure attached can also mean that some academics no longer feel the need to open a book once they have a PhD, and some contract out their lectures to be delivered by someone else while they seek additional incomes from consulting. I am not saying that such shortcomings are typical of S.E. Asia, or that they are unknown in Canada or other countries; only that they can be encountered in many places and suggest that there is a vacuum that needs to be filled. While outsiders may or may not be more objective or scientific, or likely to come up with significantly more insightful results, they at least can offer different viewpoints and methodologies that can raise key unresearched questions, draw upon other-country comparative experience, address neglected problems and policy issues, and so engender some local responses and reactions.

Fourth, following on from this, there is the pragmatic consideration that, especially under authoritarian regimes, local scholars or would-be reformers often dare not offer criticism or address certain topics for fear of imprisonment or other repressive treatment, while 'outsiders' are generally more free and able to 'tell it like it is', to highlight 'root causes of the problem', for example in publicizing corruption, human rights abuses, gender or ethnic minority inequities, and other socially injurious policies, practices, or institutional arrangements. Such trepidation can also afflict and inhibit expatriate Southeast Asianists who have invested in language skills and in-depth knowledge, or have otherwise committed themselves to a specific country or aligned themselves with a particular administration or donor agency. Globally, there are only a small number of truly original, independent 'Big Thinkers' able to distil and encapsulate challenging ideas from a broad range of experience, and express them without fear or favour, and we must be open to such catalytic insights, wherever they originate. A pertinent example is Ben Anderson's concept of 'Imagined Communities' the very enunciation or discussion of which was politically taboo in Suharto's Indonesia. The 'ASEAN-way' of withholding

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critical assessment and commentary on other members' problems also tends to be internalized as a rationale for suppressing internal criticism, even in such otherwise democratic countries as Singapore.

In the extreme, foreign regional specialists can serve as whistles for would-be whistle blowers, or, less dramatically, can undertake collaborative research and lend international status and a degree of protection for local partners, enabling them to undertake genuine research, while allowing the local scholar an ultimate defence that the policy conclusions were drawn by the expatriate partner while he or she was mainly or only responsible for the fieldwork and data gathering. Even when serving as routine advisors, foreigners can be more frank (or 'wilfully naïve') in 'pointing out the obvious' such as negative outcomes of public policies or administrative arrangements than can locals who may be 'more in the know' but dare not expose themselves. A foreigner generally has greater immunity from dire consequences, goes home at the end of the mission or research visit, is not totally dependent on this particular client or country for consulting income or research material, and thus need not be a sycophant or shrinking violet.

As a somewhat facetious example, in regard to environmental management (or mismanagement), I have previously suggested that Canadians may be especially well suited to play the role of 'Global Village Idiots' in the sense, I hasten to add, of *idiots savants* (wise fools, insightful ingénues, honest brokers, frank advisers, or agents provocateurs, whichever hat fits).[2] Canadians are noted for their do-gooder, good-natured, and sincere directness, and thus are very capable of blurting out the truth and still expecting to go for a beer afterwards. Thus, for example, because Canada has more 'environment per capita' than any other nation, we have acquired the reputation for being environmental experts. But, in truth, we have gluttonously despoiled most of it, so are actually well placed to advise on what not to do in promoting sustainable resource management, as well as now having a better idea of what we probably should have done. Being honest and self-deprecating in this regard can also make our frankness or 'tactlessness' more acceptable when mouthing off about the failings of our friends.

A fifth, related line of reasoning, specifically why Canadians should be involved in S.E. Asia studies, is that Canada has so much in common with S.E. Asia, having a largely resource-based, export-oriented, FDI-dependent economy, with a high proportion of foreign ownership, a heavy international debt, a depreciated currency, and falling real incomes for most of its workers (especially relative to the US). It is highly dependent on the US economy, with weak bargaining strength in face of the latter's arbitrary protectionism, hostile takeovers, legal

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[2] Cf. G.B. Hainsworth (ed.), *Socio-economic Aspects of Environmental Management: Comparative Experience from Southeast Asia,* Vancouver: CSEAR, 1996; also "Is there a 'Culture of Corruption' or 'Discretionary Anarchy' in Vietnam? A Beyond Cynicism View of Criminality, Custom and Pragmatism," from a symposium *Mapping Vietnam's Legal Culture: Where is Vietnam Going?* at CAPI, University of Victoria, March 27-29, 2003, for publication, 2004.

embroilment, and unfair competition, and is heavily affected by currency speculation and all the other nasty surprises of a gyrating and manipulated global economy. Being a rich under-developed country, especially prone to the disruptive machinations of asymmetric and volatile globalization, and having no apparent imperial agenda, we would seem to be a natural 'soul mate' for Third World nations, and especially those of S.E. Asia. Such similarities also offer wide scope for comparative studies of problems-in-common and for collaboration in our respective efforts to find appropriate strategies and other means to protect national sovereignty and to confront and mitigate the impacts of uneven international bargaining power.

Finally, Canada has a reasonably good reputation as an aid donor, has been very active in the UN, and in the G8, NATO, Commonwealth, Francophonie, OAS, NAFTA, APEC and every other international club that will have us, and Canadians are thus seen are natural bridge-builders and non-aggressive mediators. Several CCSEAS members have also shown themselves to be good fund-raisers for Canada-S.E. Asia research collaboration, organizers of workshops, and willing to be dedicated 'self-exploiting' editors of Canada-S.E. Asia conference proceedings. In the perception of most S.E. Asian colleagues (and most of their governments), Canadians are no threat to anyone, whereas Europeans, Americans and East Asians may have more access to funding but also can have adverse reputations and may carry too much historical baggage. Australians and Scandinavians share some of the same attributes as Canadians, but the Aussies can come across as too 'brash' or 'hearty' (and Asians sometimes say they find their English incomprehensible), while Scandinavians (like many prototypical Canadians) can be too serious, too polite or too reticent to rock the boat. Rather than being a perpetual fence-sitter, or an 'also-ran` to the US in setting priorities in international relations, Canada might do well to take 'the path less chosen' in calculating where its special interests lie and how they might be developed to serve our mutual best interests. This should evidently include building honest, frank and trusted relationships with our S.E. Asian counterparts in seeking to make intelligent, collaborative, and morally-responsible contributions to improving regional and global welfare and security.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES, THE COLD WAR, THE ASIAN MIRACLE AND CRISIS, AND GLOBAL TERRORISM

Donor support for S.E. Asia research, ODA and institution building is highly politicized and has always been driven by strategic international security concerns. Research funding for S.E. Asia studies in North America reached a peak in the 1960s, largely as a result of US-led concerns to 'contain and confront the spread of communism', first in Malaysia, then in Vietnam, and then to prop up the anticipated 'falling dominoes'. Indonesia studies flourished as a by-product of efforts to thwart Sukarno's *'confrontasi'* and Indonesia-China alliances that threatened US oil and other business interests. ASEAN and SEATO were set up and supported to help achieve these ends, to support Western-friendly administrations and to maintain Western strategic hegemony in the region.

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This is when Cornell, Michigan, Berkeley, Illinois and half a dozen other S.E. Asia Study Centers in the US were established and lavishly endowed by USAID fellowships and research support – much of which Seymour Hirsch and others later revealed to be covert CIA funding. This was also the era when the Rockefeller Foundation set up the Asia Foundation, the Agricultural Development Council, the Population Council, IRRI, and three or four other institutions, with extensive research teams, development practitioners, and policy advisors sent to S.E. Asia, and producing a wide range of influential journals, newsletters and books published and distributed that focused on S.E. Asia. It was a 'golden age' for the highly enthusiastic but often naïve S.E. Asia scholars who enjoyed a fabulous bonanza of research and travel grants for virtually any proposal they could think up for themselves or their students, and with the CIA-funded publishers ready and willing to publish their research results, churning out scores of books on S.E. Asia every year throughout the 1960s (many of which I might note were pedestrian, quite pretentious and quite often unreadable).

All these studies were supposed to provide 'intelligence' that the CIA and State Department could use to win the hearts of S.E. Asian peoples and especially the minds of S.E. Asian intellectuals and political elites. However, as the warehouses filled up with stacks of arcane anthropological field studies and other academic tracts, the so-called intelligence agencies realized that this was not the kind of intelligence they could use, and enthusiasm for this 'growth industry' began to wane. However, a generation of hundreds of professors had been recruited and given tenure in various branches of S.E. Asia studies, and the momentum continued into the 70s from institutional inertia and the self-serving influence that S.E. Asia scholars and lobbyists had over granting agencies.

Then just as the cold-war hysteria was waning or imploding, along came the *Asian Economic Miracle*, with S.E. Asian nations (and the East Asian NICs) recording historically unprecedented rates of economic growth and structural change, and being acclaimed by the WB, IMF and mainstream economists as exemplars of how authoritarian (but technocrat-guided) governments could graduate, or achieve the magical breakthrough to MDC status, through forced savings and investment, export-led growth, skill acquisition, FDI and technological advance. S.E. Asia became a Mecca for foreign investors, importers-exporters, mutual fund and other financial derivative traders, currency speculators, and every other mechanism of globalized profit-seeking. It also became a magnet for ODA to support all this enterprise, and S.E. Asia specialists (especially economists and commerce faculty) were able to feed heftily off the bonanza.

Then in 1997 it all fell apart with the Asian Economic Crisis which most S.E. Asians attributed to the evils of volatile globalization, predatory speculation, and abandonment by their erstwhile partners in development, while outsiders mostly blamed indigenous political mismanagement, corruption, and dysfunctional institutional arrangements. Thereafter, the focus of foreign investors, bankers and speculators, and ODA and multilateral and bilateral lending agencies, abruptly

shifted, especially to China with its cheap and docile labour force and huge internal market, and with an authoritarian government able to bend the rules and offer special concessions to selected investing and trading partners. Interest in and funding for S.E. Asia studies correspondingly diminished or disappeared, and granting agency priorities diverted academic research into studies of globalization, eulogies of the market system, and monitoring of transitional economies and polities, especially Russia, Eastern Europe, China, and Vietnam.

Then along came Osama Bin Laden, al Queda, and the eventual exposure of networks of militant Islamicists, with those in S.E. Asia intent on establishing an Islamic 'super-state' across the region. Investor and commercial interest in S.E. Asia took yet another nosedive after '9/11', and a further exodus after '10/12' (the Bali bombing, October 12, 2002). This finally shattered the Government of Indonesia's complacency, while decimating tourism and investor interest across other parts of S.E. Asia.. Anti-American sentiment expressed in ever-larger and angrier public demonstrations (especially in Indonesia) in reaction to the invasions of Afghanistan and then Iraq further exacerbated the flight of capital and the cancellation of tourist traffic, and then the recent Marriott Hotel bombing in Jakarta (August 14, 2003) brought home to all the risks for expatriates working and living in Indonesia, and by extension other parts of S.E. Asia. (Vietnam is a possible exception in this regard, having seen a notable increase in tourism and investment in the last two years.) As a further consequence of the terrorist threat, Canadian and other Western governments have tightened up Embassy security, toughened the visa screening process, and are in process of re-evaluating the country focus and content of their ODA programmes.

Rather perversely, this heightened security threat should have the potential for refocusing interest and increasing the perceived need for S.E. Asian studies, in particular regional Islamic studies and country situation reports, and -- insofar as the discontent is attributed to persistent and systematic poverty and global exploitation – it ought to increase demand and funding for economic, social, cultural and other development studies. In the immediate aftermath, television and other news media have had to find and rely on 'instant Asia experts' who have tended embarrassingly to parrot each other along the lines that their interviewers or other potential sponsors want to hear. No doubt hundreds of books are in preparation, and hopefully this might sort the wheat from the chaff and challenge, guide or inspire a new generation of intelligent specialists to enter the field.

The 'new world disorder' has also suggested a new role for ASEAN, which had long out-lived its rationale as a domino-bracer, and has often been accused of having degenerated into a boondoggle for politicians, bureaucrats and technocrats to trip around attending the more that 400 meetings a year. This indictment is at least partly unfair, as the clubby back-patting congeniality does provide an exemplar for other more acrimonious and less successful regional associations. It can also be legitimately claimed that ASEAN has managed to maintain a nuclear-free zone of relative peace and security (at least until recently), and some of the meetings do provide useful forums for reconciling

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regional conflicts, for example pertaining to law of the sea, other boundary disputes, cross-border pollution, migration, trafficking, maritime piracy, etc. ASEAN also sponsors collaborative research into health issues, HIV-AIDs, drug-control, appropriate technologies, etc, and has worked to harmonize perspectives and practices relating to economic and social policy, commercial law, judicial reform, etc. Cooperation in exposing, policing and containing terrorism has already had significant success, has made some governments more open to outside criticism and has begun to temper the complacent `ASEAN –way` of avoiding mutual criticism, objective analysis and plain speaking.

Terrorism aside, most S.E. Asian nations have gradually restored reasonable growth performance, and S.E. Asia still provides a rich set of country studies, for example for the analysis and understanding of the new global economy, the international division of gains from trade and investment, the nature of persistent poverty, the process of migration and urbanization, and the social and environmental impacts of industrialization and export-led growth, etc. There have also been many proposals and new policy initiatives that resonate with local electorates, with many suggestions made for a new style of development strategy, involving less dependency on export-led growth and FDI, greater self-reliance and negotiated mutual support relationships, and for improving bilateral and multilateral ties with East Asian neighbours. This calls for innovative and unorthodox analysis in seeking to comprehend the situation of each particular nation and social group, and to chart an appropriate local strategy. It is a task that must be undertaken by local researchers and policy makers, but these academics and decision-makers can benefit from objective and critical analysis from outsiders with sufficient empathy and insight to make constructive suggestions.

Indonesia, with 220 million people, is the world's largest Muslim country, and is now intent on ridding itself of al Queda operatives and sympathizers. The huge majority remain moderate Muslims, and the government has a core ideology *(Pancasila)* that is intended to entrench tolerance toward Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism (though not for Judaism, in sympathy with the Palestinians). Indonesia has been especially destabilized by volatile globalization and the abuses of the Suharto regime (that had been supported, lauded and encouraged by the WB, IMF and other Western interests). The nation and its social fabric is now torn by violent inter-religious and inter-ethic strife, street crime and judicial, political, and economic corruption, and to many observers appears on the verge of national disintegration. Helping to stabilize the situation, and reduce the persistent poverty that is a root cause of the problems, should be a priority in international relations, which the U.S. probably cannot do as the people are so alienated by its Middle East policies, but in regard to which countries like Canada have a chance to offer useful and welcome assistance.

Malaysia also has a Muslim majority, now living in relative harmony with its large Chinese and Indian minorities (between which there had been sporadic violent strife in the 1970s and 80s). Here, and elsewhere in S.E. Asia, lessons can be drawn on how to build religious and inter-social-group tolerance. The

Philippines and Thailand also have serious problems of Islamic militancy, alienation and regional secessionism, but they also were the launch pads of 'people power' S.E. Asia style, were able to orchestrate relatively peaceful regime change and create genuine freedom of discussion and the press, while also implementing significant devolution of administrative authority and accountability to localities, and much of this was then amazingly emulated in Indonesia. S.E. Asia thus provides a range of models of transitional democracy, institutional reform, NGO activism, civil society empowerment, decentralization, devolution, and local autonomy.

Each S.E. Asian society now has a substantial educated middle class and, with the exception of Vietnam, Laos, and Burma, has established a functioning or embryonic pluralist political system, able to debate public issues and achieve consensus or compromise on national policy concerning environmental management, gender equity, ethnic minority rights and broader human rights, the rule of law, and on how to combat corruption, drug dependency, and human trafficking, etc. These all remain real problems for most S.E. Asian nations, but the right issues are explicitly being raised and political influence is being mobilized to tackle them. Each country has pioneered in developing some aspects of public policy, civil society, conflict resolution, etc, and the outcomes offer useful lessons and a variety of experience from which other nations can benefit.

SUPPORT FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA RESEARCH IN CANADA, AND OTTAWA'S PERCEIVED 'SPECIAL INTERESTS'

The funding environment for S.E. Asia Studies in the US and Canada has deteriorated dramatically since 'the golden age' of the 1960s and 70s. This means that specialists and would-be specialists have to be more imaginative, ingenious, persevering, and perhaps a bit devious in finding support.

The downward trend is notable not only in Canada, but also in the US, Australia and other 'Western nations'. Here are just a few examples of the casualties and walking wounded among Canadian S.E. Asia research agencies, and undoubtedly a much longer list could be identified and documented.

• The CIDA-funded Canada-ASEAN Centres in Toronto and Singapore, which were a relatively bountiful and flexible source of funding for academic exchange and conference grants, have been closed.
• IDRC was founded to complement CIDA in ODA by focusing on strategic research issues and institutional linkages, rather than 'development projects'; and its social science division was a major source of funds for collaborative Canada-S.E. Asia research, academic and student exchange, conferences and workshops. Its Singapore Office, under the dynamic leadership of Jingjai Hanchanlash, was a major catalyst in social and natural science research and collaboration, with an unparalleled record of publications distributed free

worldwide. Both IDRC-Singapore and IDRC Ottawa are now shadows of their former selves, focusing on narrow technical issues rather than broader socio-economic concerns, and both are strapped by budget stringencies that appear to have made them mostly fund-absorbing rather than fund-disbursing agencies.

•   The Asia Pacific Foundation (based in Vancouver), founded with such high hopes and an ambitious agenda, was from the start disappointing in its very limited support for academic linkages and S.E. Asia research. It was always primarily a business oriented support agency, and became only more so, and was often seen as something of a White Elephant from an academic perspective, systematically seeking out and absorbing corporate discretionary funds that universities might have tapped. CSEAR and other Asia research centres were often crowded out, encountering responses such as 'We've already given to United Fund so go ask APF whose mandate includes academic as well as commercial ventures'. APF is also now strapped for funding and has begun sponsoring academic and other conferences on a contractual basis, thereby tapping into SSHRC and other funding sources that university-based research centers might seek to utilize.

•   During the 1960s and 70s, CCSEAS conference organizers were also able to approach some large Canadian corporations operating in S.E. Asia for token financial assistance, plus the possibility of soliciting a few free airline tickets from Cathay Pacific and Canadian Airlines (but never Air Canada) for eminent Asians or students to attend conferences in Canada, but these opportunities are long gone. Certain S.E. Asian corporations were also more amenable to giving some assistance before the Asian crisis eliminated their accessible slush funds.

•   NWRCSEAS[3], funded for 10 years by the Ford Foundation and other donor agencies, linking UBC with UW, UO, and later UVic and Langara College, was a major source of funding for academic exchange, student field research grants in S.E. Asia, language instruction, workshops and conferences and in sponsoring S.E. Asian visitors. By timing NWRCSEAS conferences biannually to alternate with CCSEAS, it also drew participation by S.E. Asia specialists across Canada, facilitating broader academic exchange and research collaboration.

•   SSHRC faculty research grant allocations screened by 'peer review' committees have typically favoured 'orthodox' methodologies in the respective disciplines, and have tended to eschew interdisciplinary and regional studies. SSHRC graduate student fellowships, however, appear to have been less discriminatory, being awarded on merit and well-prepared research proposals in which fieldwork and interdisciplinary methodologies are given due weight. Longer-term thematic grants have also recently encouraged multi-disciplinary

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[3] The Northwest Regional Consortium for Southeast Asian Studies, involving UBC and the Universities of Washington and Oregon in a range of collaborative initiatives (and later expanded to include University of Victoria and Langara College), funded by the Ford Foundation and other donors from 1989 to 1999.

applications involving faculty and students from a range of interrelated disciplines.[4]

Priority in funding allocation, provision of scholarships, student internships and academic exchange, the inclusion of academics as advisors and consultants in foreign policy discussions, overseas assignments, workshops and conferences, all require that S.E. Asia be seen as an important focus for Canadian international relations, and that academic knowledge, skills and experience be seen as relevant to formulating and implementing Canada's foreign policy objectives. Here again, it would seem that scope for involvement has narrowed, over the last decade or so, as the imperatives of the 'new globalization' have dramatically reduced the share of GDP devoted to ODA (overseas development assistance), and policy focus on promoting commercial interests has intensified..

Canada's foreign policy in general (after minimal national security and treaty obligations have been secured) is heavily dominated by commercial considerations, as became evident when 'External Affairs' was renamed 'DFAIT' (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade). Such explicit priority given to commercial interests is a global not just a Canadian phenomenon, but very few nations actually nail the mandate to their diplomatic mastheads. In the robust days of British imperialism, it used to be said that trade follows the flag. Now, in the era of corporate globalization, it seems that the flag more often follows trade, and is its humble servant. S.E. Asia, in particular, has long been a sphere of special interest to Canadian banks, insurance companies, resource development and other global corporations, as well as to a heterogeneous group of Canadian exporters and investors who have resisted the urge to follow the thundering herd to China. The political agendas that these interest groups promote are disparate and often narrowly self-serving and it is thus difficult to articulate them all as a coherent foreign policy agenda that Ottawa might publicly want to prioritize. Canada has thus often been said not to have a foreign policy, only a reflex to organized special interests.

Through CIDA, Canada does of course make substantial ODA disbursements to a wide array of non-commercial purposes -- to primary education and health care, HRD, good governance, institutional capacity-building, building gender awareness, poverty reduction, AIDs prevention, clean water delivery, environmental management, etc, and has channeled support to technical assistance projects of selected Canadian NGOs, and to universities and

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[4] As an example of 'opportunistic initiative', when SSHRC announced 'Globalization and Social Cohesion' as a recent five-year 'obligatory theme', it mainly intended to promote research teams to address this topic in a Canadian context, and several groups were funded to do precisely this. The Institute of Asian Research at UBC, however, applied to research the interaction of globalization cohesion in five Asian countries, to correspond with each of its five regional research Centres. We were perhaps the only applicants to suggest such a context, and the successful grant has enabled different teams to work for three years on producing Globalization and Social Cohesion studies of China, Japan, Korea, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

community colleges through its Institutional Linkages Program. It should also be emphasized that CIDA's ODA has undoubtedly helped earn Canada a special reputation in S.E. Asia as an aid donor and partner in development. While the countries of concentration have changed as particular nations' per capita incomes cross the eligibility threshold, the special relationships remain, and Canada still potentially reaches almost all S.E. Asia countries to some degree through its Regional Programs. However, while Canada's ODA is generally publicized and rationalized in terms of broad humanitarian goals, the country focus, as with most other donor nations, seems increasingly to be influences by commercial and strategic considerations, while the actual ODA content is heavily dictated by rather narrowly focused economic interests of Canadian business firms, consultants, and other 'Canadian stakeholders', and especially in ways that benefit particular regions of Canada which have either exceptional political pull or are seen to require political support due to poor economic performance and prospects.

In recent decades, CIDA (and 'CIDA Inc.') has devoted huge efforts and has allocated billions of dollars to promoting Canadian exports and financial and business interests in S.E. Asia (and now especially in China). Bombardier, SNC-Lavelin, Inco, etc absorb a lion's share of CIDA disbursements, as also does the Wheat Board, the Atomic Energy Commission (seeking to sell Candu reactors), and other agencies anxious to dispose of stockpiles of uncompetitive products originating from Provinces with high unemployment or which are 'trapped' in 'sunset industries' or with obsolete skills and technologies. CIDA is a relatively soft target for special interest lobbying in Ottawa, and, especially toward fiscal year-end, any uncommitted disbursements can be quickly diverted to subsidize exports of wheat, potash, beef, softwood lumber, or whatever other unsold surpluses are piling up and need to be disposed of. For example, CIDA was still subsidizing the export of '19th Century` steam locomotives from Sydney, Nova Scotia to Indonesia well into the 1980s, and there have been numerous exposures of bizarre fund allocations justified by the '80% Canadian content' rule.

Despite all the efforts and subsidies, however, Canadian business involvement in S.E. Asia has, with a few exceptions, been very disappointing (especially in regard to SMEs and new joint ventures). Even during the 1970s-80s, when CIDA targeted key 'countries of concentration' with generous PEMD ('Program for Export Market Development') grants and offered other support to virtually any firm willing to make a 'go-look-see' visit to S.E. Asia in search of a potential joint-venture partner. These were an almost total failure, costing Canadian taxpayers millions of dollars that typically totalled more than was generated in additional Canadian exports, investment outlays, or recouped tax revenues. I came to this conclusion in a report to CIDA that I was commissioned to write in 1982-83, which I entitled: *Innocents Abroad or Partners in Development: An Evaluation of Canada-Indonesia Aid, Trade and Investment Relations.* These findings were not rapturously received by CIDA, but fortunately I had reserved the right to

publish, and a somewhat toned-down version of the report was subsequently published in 1986 by ISEAS.[5]

My report to CIDA did contain many positive suggestions on how to stimulate Canada-Indonesia aid, trade and investment relations, and these proposals included increased investment in Asian language instruction, scholarships, academic exchange and workshops, as part of a concerted effort to build up Canadian expertise and build upon already established institutional networks within S.E. Asia. It also suggested taking advantage of Canada's relatively high proportion of citizens of S.E. Asia heritage with links to S.E. Asia that could offer opportunities for more effective joint ventures, including coalitions of Canadian SMEs and service sector specialists to build upon the natural complementarities and comparative advantages between Canada and its S.E. Asian partners. This is now especially pertinent after the Asian crisis and when terrorist threats have caused many non-Asian investors, businesses, and donor agencies to shift their interests elsewhere.

CIDA does include universities among its 'Canadian stakeholders' in regard to ODA disbursements.

For example, it organizes an annual competition from which about a dozen Tier and Tier 2 grants are awarded to universities undertaking what it judges to be appropriate technical assistance projects. (CIDA's rather mechanical 'stakeholder equity' rule, however, allows only one Tier 1 grant application a year from each university, regardless of size, reputation, experience or past performance in assisting developing countries.) CIDA also provides a few scholarships for visiting students from selected 'countries of concentration', but not to deserving recipients from many other S.E. Asian countries (such as Vietnam). We might note that Australia has been much more generous (and enlightened) in providing scholarships to S.E. Asian students, thereby building life-long friendships and alliances. Meanwhile, there is considerable and expanding self-financed enrolment in Canadian universities from wealthier countries and families, but more scholarships should be provided for talented young people coming from more disadvantaged circumstances.

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[5] G.B. Hainsworth, *Innocents Abroad or Partners in Development: An Evaluation of Canada-Indonesia Aid, Trade and Investment Relations,* Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 1986. The 'Innocents Abroad' epithet arose from an encounter I had with four Canadian businessmen arriving in Jakarta (each with a $10,000 PEMD grant) who were petrified by the exotic crowds and challenge of telephoning their would-be business partners (even with my help). The ingénues then abruptly left for Singapore without exiting the airport, saying they could not possibly cope in such a chaotic environment. I was left wondering what hope there was in subsidizing such ventures into the 'Asian way of doing things when these 'representatives' could not even find their way out of the airport. Perhaps only firms with experienced 'Asian Canadians' with proven track records should be awarded business loans and small grants to pioneer new joint ventures.

There is not time or space to attempt to review the goals and outcomes of the wide range of CIDA programs that have been implemented in the three decades since CIDA opened its doors in 1968.[6] The priorities laid down in its Regional and Bilateral Country Programs have undergone innumerable metamorphoses and rationales, and CIDA might be characterized as having been in a process of perpetual experimentation, or, more critically, as having lurched from one development fad or fancy to another as these have come into favour in international development theory and practice. (One critic has suggested that CIDA tends to follow the World Bank's 'flavour of the moment', but lagging 3-5 years behind, but this is too simple an explanation for the zigging and zagging in CIDA's periodic lists of funding priorities.) Unlike most major donor nations, Canada seems not to have a 'natural national agenda' or imperative for its ODA (in contrast to UK's Commonwealth and France's Francophonie preferences, US 'strategic alliances' and oil interests, Japan's renewed 'co-prosperity sphere' ambitions, or Australia's 'near-North' dependencies, etc). CIDA is thus able (or driven) to flip-flop, according to the whims of its political masters (cf. Pearson, Trudeau, Mulroney, Chretien, etc) and by how responsive it must be to powerful special interests.

One consequence of this continual search for relevance, voter support or political payoff (and the urge to project a hoped-for 'distinctive Canadian profile' relative to rival aid donors in particular recipient countries) is that Canadian professionals can find themselves suddenly in or out of vogue, in terms of demand for their advisory expertise or prospects for overseas assignments. For a long time economists 'ruled the roost', then agriculturalists and (briefly) anthropologists, then gender specialists and environmentalists, then micro-finance and banking practitioners, then lawyers, political scientists and institutional reformers, and now national security, human rights, and public administration 'experts' (with many other tribes being given short-lived preference along the way). A second consequence is that projects can wither away or abruptly collapse when funding ends and donor agency focus shifts to a new agenda. CIDA's 'results-based management' (and its 'logical framework analysis' check-off boxes) encourages a myopic and tunnel vision with little account taken of the development 'process', the recipient country's broader

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[6] The following brief and broad generalizations are based on my involvement with CIDA, which dates from1968 in negotiating a UBC-University Sains Malaysia twinning project, then helping launch the Sulawesi project at UBC (before it moved to Guelph), and serving as consultant on social and economic development in Indonesia in the 1970s and as project manager of the EMDI (Environmental Manpower Development in Indonesia) project, 1984-86, then as human resource development consultant to Pakistan in 1989, and finally in the 1990s as consultant on Vietnam's social and economic development, as team leader of the Baseline Report for the PIAP (Policy Implementation Advisory Project), as participant in two five-year UBC-NCSSH (National Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities) twinning projects, and, in 2002-03, as member of a monitoring team evaluating the RPRP (Rural Poverty Reduction Project), in addition to several *ad hoc* consultations in Ottawa. A more detailed discussion of positive and negative impressions from this experience, in comparison with that of other donor agency assistance projects, must be left to a later date.

vision or strategy, or how Canada's contribution might complement or duplicate other donor agency programs.[7] The 'rapid write-off' and 'obsession with change' means that CIDA managers and the institution as a whole typically have little or no 'corporate memory' -- of what worked or didn't work previously -- and thus are prone to repeat mistakes, or to assume with each Country Program Review that they are starting afresh on a blank page.

CIDA's choice of countries of concentration also can appear rather arbitrary, and sometimes fickle, and is heavily influenced by what CIDA identifies as 'Canadian stakeholder interests'. As the multicultural mosaic becomes more diversified, and as 'new Canadians' become more politically astute and activist, ethnic group associations have achieved greater prominence among stakeholder interests, and lobbying by influential individuals has become more effective. Some ethnic networks are more active than others in getting out the vote, sending delegates to National Party Conferences, and gaining access to Cabinet Ministers, etc. (Herb Dhaliwal, for example, was very effective in ensuring that projects featuring India got priority attention in Ottawa, and so have various China lobbies, while S.E. Asian communities still appear less well organized or politically focused.) We might note that 46% of residents in Greater Vancouver are of Asian Heritage (over twice the national average), but only about 5% seem to claim to be of direct S.E. Asian heritage.

CIDA's mandate is to support 'development assistance', nor 'research', and prospects for broad and sustained academic research support under CIDA auspices thus would appear to be both limited and undependable, especially for those academics whose special knowledge and experience do not fit CIDA's particular needs of the moment. However, with the exercise of some ingenuity on the part of UBC colleagues, CIDA funding has enabled a group of faculty and students to work for 12 years with colleagues in NCSSH (Vietnam's National Centre for Social Scientists and Humanities) on a broad range of fascinating research topics, and, during the last 5 years, in collaboration with Université Laval in the Localized Poverty Reduction in Vietnam (LPRV) project, this research network was broadened to include five Vietnamese universities and 15 communes located from North to South of Vietnam, but unfortunately this also has now come to an end. Several other Tier 1 and Tier II projects have had similar experiences, and the opportunity and challenge still exists for other universities to meld or mould their research interests to fit with CIDA's current priorities and ever-changing development ideology. Individual academics and graduate students with the requisite skills in demand can acquire special access to data and gain experience from overseas CIDA assignments, or as internees with

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[7] In fairness, it should be noted that CIDA is currently experimenting with a 'local ownership' approach, again following the example of the World Bank, whereby funds are disbursed in support of broad national development programs, with the detailed allocation left to the appropriate ministry or implementing agency, and only periodically monitored by CIDA. It seems likely that problems of corruption or other mismanagement will eventually discourage discontinuation of this 'hands off' management model.

NGOs or other 'Canadian executing agencies', but there are now tougher publication restrictions, and the process of preparing CIDA reports has become increasingly onerous and discouraging. Currently, CIDA's rotating interest and institutional cooperation budget, seems to have shifted somewhat away from universities in favour of Community Colleges, contracting with them as NGOs, for example to organize training courses in various countries of S.E. Asia and elsewhere.

REVITALIZING COMMITMENT AND MOBILIZING SUPPORT FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

There is an evident need for S.E. Asia scholars to exert more strenuous efforts in making the case for greater attention to be given to S.E. Asia in international relations, and especially to Canada-S.E. Asia research, faculty and student exchange, course offerings and language instruction. This proselytizing must occur within universities, and also in negotiating with government and other potential funding agencies, in extending outreach to other academics, to local ethnic communities, and to informing and engaging the public at large. Despite the evident economic, political and strategic importance of S.E. Asia, most Canadians are very poorly informed about the current and changing situation there, regionally or in individual countries, and are generally unaware of the positive developments and prospective benefits of improving Canada-S.E. Asia relationships. Apart from the travel sections of newspapers, when media coverage does occur it is almost always negative, focusing on bombings, riots and other violence, on natural disasters, political corruption, economic fraud, and bad experiences reported by individual tourists and Canadian business firms.

To Canadians of S.E. Asian heritage, S.E. Asia studies should evidently be especially important, though it would appear that, until recently, the focus of their Embassies and Consulates has been limited mostly to cultivating commercial relationships, plus related tourism promotion and 'cultural' exchanges, rather than Canadian-based research into historical, social, political, environmental or other topics. Fund-raising efforts in Canada's S.E. Asian ethnic communities can also be a tough sell (in apparent contrast to similar efforts among Indo-Canadian and Sino-Canadian communities), even in support of student scholarships, conferences and academic exchanges. This may be partly because many S.E. Asian businessmen have limited university education and do not see the need for their children to do otherwise when it is assumed that they will continue in the family business. This has clearly begun to change, however, as the new generations of Asian-Canadians insist on widening their career options (and such enrolment at UBC, for example, has increased sharply in recent years).

Within the Ivory Tower the prospects for improving the supportive environment for S.E. Asia course offerings and research funding will differ by Faculty and by individual specialization and past performance. Rather than seeking to chart

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these factors for each of the specialist groups identified in the earlier table (and for those not listed, such as lawyers, educationalists, medical and other faculty), we might identify four main types of Canadian academic with an on-going interest in S.E. Asia:

(a)   country specialists, with a deep involvement in one or more S.E. Asian nations as their main or only academic focus of teaching, research, and publication (including Asian-Canadian scholars, or others who have acquired high levels of language skill or some other commitment to particular countries);

(b)   regional specialists, interested in comparative studies of several countries, or their relationship with other nations, developing or more developed, for example as part of broader inter-disciplinary development studies;

(c)   'policy wonks' whose interest is in regional or global security, trade and investment, or in donor agency reform agendas, such as promoting good governance, administrative and judicial reform, human rights, social cohesion, political stability, etc; and

(d)   academics from theoretical or other disciplines who happen to make use of S.E. Asian data or case studies, but who could just as readily select countries from another region.

To briefly comment on the relative situations and potential for these four types of S.E. Asia research, we might note that 'country specialists' seem the most vulnerable to accusations of 'neocolonial' bias or of being 'pseudo experts' who should leave the in-depth cultural analysis and prognostication to 'genuine' indigenous experts, and it would appear that funding opportunities have tended to shift toward the latter group. They thus need to establish legitimacy by demonstrating the value of their 'objective' observations and critical analysis that local scholars are unable or unwilling to undertake, though they can be similarly prone to pressure to tone down such criticism in order to maintain their research visa eligibility and their local institutional and collaborative support. Broader regional and inter-disciplinary specialists are not so tied to particular countries, and mostly work in English or some other non-indigenous language. Their work is often disparaged or looked down upon by the 'in-depth' S.E. Asia scholars, but it is generally more widely read and utilized by other development theorists, practitioners and donor agencies, and they thus often have access to broader funding, plus potential consultancy assignments that give access to non-published and otherwise unobtainable data. Policy wonks generally have the least in-depth knowledge of the cultures, histories, or social arrangements of particular countries, but, when successful, have the most intimate access to policy makers and international agencies able to provide exceptionally generous funding for appropriate policy advice (whether critical analysis or rationalization). They are evidently under constraints to accept the prevailing ideology (such as 'the Washington Consensus'), are obliged to stay within the framework of the host nation's goals and strategies, and must mostly overlook 'extraneous blemishes' in other aspects of political, economic and social realities. The 'tangential' scholars, who use S.E. Asian data as grist for their econometric or other formal models, are also relatively well-placed to acquire funding support

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from SSHRC and other agencies, but generally have the least commitment to support other types of university-based S.E. research or related activities, although some do get drawn into broader and longer term interests in S.E. Asia. For mutual benefit, it is important that these four groups respect, value and support each other's activities and future plans, working together and drawing upon complementarities. We must hang together or swing separately.

Also, among university colleagues, potential supporters or S.E. Asia boosters can be found among colleagues and students who occasionally attend S.E. Asia seminars, having worked in or visited S.E. Asia (e.g. as engineers, educational consultants, etc, or as eco-tourists, cultural aficionados, extended family members, or those with commercial, Pacific Rim or international affairs interests). It is easy to attract such friends and associates by regular e-mail invitations to attend seminars, film shows, ethnic community celebrations, and other events. It is even sometimes possible to involve 'non-specialists' with useful skills and experience as active participants in overseas projects, as the UBC LPRV project managed to do in regard to medical practitioners, social workers, First Nations leaders, computer specialists, librarians, ESL teachers, WUSC volunteers, graduate students and other young Canadians, and not just those affiliated with UBC. Research associates can also be drawn from neighbouring universities and community colleges and from local NGOs and other civil society organizations.

One of the most discouraging and lamentable trends in Canadian universities in recent years (as elsewhere in the world) has been the growing influence of corporate finance on university administrations in deciding on funding allocation and priorities in curriculum development, research, scholarships, and hiring policies. This has clearly adversely affected the prospects for support for S.E. Asia and other area studies, as well as other interdisciplinary, liberal arts, cultural and humanist studies. Thus, while university spokespersons and publicists may highlight or showcase their Asia research and teaching faculty as evidence of global outreach, and in promoting cultural linkages with local ethnic communities, they seldom assign commensurate priority to funding and staffing S.E. Asia teaching, fellowships and research. Presidents and Deans also often give lip-service to the value or necessity of encouraging inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary studies, but most Faculty and Departmental priorities still strongly or exclusively give preference to narrow disciplinary methodologies in assigning research grants and study leaves, and in weighing publications and conference attendance when considering promotion or salary merit increments.

CSEAR, as the only university research institution in Canada exclusively devoted to S.E. Asia, has a special stake in encouraging collaborative and comparative research, mutual understanding, social and cultural exchange, and helping to forge links between all categories of Canadian and S.E. Asia groups and institutions. It is taking steps to strengthen its outreach to the S.E. Asian communities in Vancouver, including promoting research on the situation and interests of these communities across Canada. It is seeking funding to expand and promote programs of Asian language instruction, in coordination with other

universities and colleges that are in a position to offer such courses. It is continuing to network and build joint research projects with other Canadian universities and individuals with special interests and experience in S.E. Asia, and, in cooperation with CCSEAS and CASA, it is hoping to produce an electronic S.E. Asia newsletter featuring events and commentary from individuals and S.E. Asia research centers across Canada. CSEAR also has a special interest and obligation to build linkages with other centers of research in S.E. Asia, and throughout North America, Australia, the US, Europe and elsewhere.

The most important unifying organization for promoting S.E. Asia research in Canada is, of course, CCSEAS, which predates CASA by a year or so and which over the decades has built up a tradition of annual or biannual conferences hosted in rotation by universities in central, eastern and western Canada that generally have attracted around 50 to 60 participants (with roughly 50% being 'established scholars' and 50% graduate students). Small conference grants were solicited from IDRC, the host university and other donors, and CCSEAS funds went mainly toward funding student travel expenses. The meetings were always held in the Fall, usually on a mid-term long weekend, and included convivial social events that encouraged informality and exceptional collegiality. The informality in turn animated frank and friendly discussions that made the 'formal' sessions very lively and productive, and the proceedings always resulted in a published volume of selected papers.

When CCSEAS was incorporated into CASA it agreed to organize S.E. Asia panels in the latter's annual conferences which were generally scheduled in May as a component of the Learned Societies marathon, and rotated among a much broader range of universities, many of which had no S.E. Asia study program. CCSEAS attendance at CASA conferences tended to be relatively meager, partly because members often used their annual travel grants to attend Learned Society meetings in their 'other academic discipline' and partly because many of them were by May already doing research in Asia. CCSEAS resisted CASA pressure to schedule their main conference in May as a component of the CASA program, but did agree to schedule them in alternate years to boost the incentive for members to attend CASA meetings.

CASA conferences, however, could not replicate the 'special conviviality' and intensity of CCSEAS get-togethers, and the biannual timing of CCSEAS gatherings sapped some of the vitality and cohesiveness of membership. Attrition was also no doubt exacerbated by the decline of interest in regional studies, as students and faculty used their declining grants to attend 'generic disciplines' meetings, and as IDRC and other conference funding became more difficult to mobilize. Membership in CCSEAS over the last three decades has fluctuated significantly, with subscriptions highly correlated with the frequency, the location, and the energy put into promoting its conferences that are the primary activity and rationale for its existence. There were upward blips in the declining membership trends when a series of 'CCSEAS international conferences' were organized about every four years at UBC, or in S.E. Asia, for

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which special 'one-time' funding grants were raised. The establishment of NWRCSEAS, and the scheduling of its conferences to alternate with CCSEAS, enabled a core number of members to maintain annual contact, and also to meet with a much broader range of American, S.E. Asian, Australian and other overseas scholars, especially on four occasions when joint CCSEAS-NWRCSEAS conferences were hosted by UBC or by UVic. Such opportunities unfortunately disappeared when NWRCSEAS funding terminated in 1999.

As a final comment, I would like to suggest that CCSEAS, while remaining a constituent member of CASA, should retain its 'sovereignty association' and continue to hold its bi-annual conferences separate from the CASA meetings. For the survival of S.E. Asia studies in Canada, it is important to sustain and reinvigorate its long tradition of lively and congenial get-togethers and its exemplary publication record. S.E. Asia specialists in Canada are widely distributed, and often find themselves with very few colleagues with S.E. Asia interests in their own institutions or within easy reach. Regular, ideally annual, conferences are needed at which they can exchange ideas, garner support, and recharge their batteries. Although attendance and energy levels in CCSEAS did seem to decline somewhat in the 1990s, as several previously active members reached retirement age, and graduate enrolment in S.E. Asia studies declined as students tended to focus more narrowly and exclusively on disciplinary studies and other fields offering more immediate and secure job prospects, the last three bi-annual CCSEAS meetings have witnessed a remarkable reinvigoration. CCSEAS sessions in the huge CASA gatherings tend to be 'swamped' and 'diluted', and it is difficult to preserve the social, collegiate and other special qualities of CCSEAS get-togethers. It is also much better to hold CCSEAS conferences in the Fall, as so many CCSEAS members are already in Asia doing research in May. It would also be better if CASA were also to hold its meetings bi-annually in the Fall, in years alternating to those when special CCSEAS and other associations meetings are organized. Following on from the Montreal 2003 experience, occasional Joint CCSEAS and East Asia meetings held in the Fall (or perhaps in the Spring) might be another way of enabling a higher frequency of get-togethers.

Urban poverty and urban transitions: Southeast Asian experiences

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ABSTRACT

This paper situates Southeast Asia's ongoing "urbanization of poverty" in the context of broader socio-economic shifts implicit in the region's urban transitions. In demographic and cultural terms, "urban transition" refers to a societal shift from an historical equilibrium with perhaps only 15% or less of a total national population living in cities, to one where two-thirds or more may be urban-dwellers. In terms of social equity, the region's urban transitions are enormously consequential, as not only does this result in a growing concentration of the poor in the cities of the Southeast Asia, but the speed and scale of these changes often result in the creation of local environments which further entrench conditions of poverty among new urbanites. The paper focuses in particular on two aspects of the environmental dimensions of urban poverty as related to urban change - the effects of local environmental degradation and changing spatial relations between socio-economic groups - and concludes with a discussion of the implications for local urban governance.

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INTRODUCTION: THE URBANIZATION OF POVERTY

For thinking about recent experiences with urban poverty in Southeast Asia, it is useful to start with a few basic observations regarding the interrelationships between urbanization and urban poverty. Setting aside for the moment questions of distribution and equity, conventional wisdom holds that acceleration of overall national economic growth is the major determinant of reduction of overall poverty levels (Mills and Pernia 1994). When rapid urbanization occurs in parallel with accelerated economic growth (as in Indonesia before 1997), the proportion of the poor within urban areas will drop, even while the total

numbers of poor in cities may remain the same or even increase.[1] In a context where rapid urbanization occurs without accelerated GDP growth (such as in Indonesia following the financial crisis of the late 1990s, or in the Philippines over the longer period), both the total numbers of the urban poor and their proportion relative to urban populations overall may increase substantially.[2] In either circumstance, we may speak of current trends in the region as being characterized in aggregate by the "urbanization of poverty". It is important to understand the urbanization of poverty as a dynamic process, changing with regard to patterns and processes of urbanization. The broad implication here is that under conditions of rapid urban growth, urbanization *per se* does not so much "cause" poverty, as concentrate it.

This idea that urbanization tends to concentrate poverty has consequential follow-on effects which may be subsumed under the heading of the local politics of urban poverty. Compared to the rural poor, the growing numbers of urban poor are much more visible to policy-makers and other urban-based elites, a situation which can have the effect of increasing political pressure for dealing with social equity issues and other structural aspects of poverty. Similarly, the urbanization of poverty can lead to an increased response to poverty and social deprivation among middle class components of urban society, when awareness grows over time that the living conditions and livelihoods of the urban poor affect the quality of life for all urban residents. This is an observation which is apparent both historically in the rise of anti-poverty movements among the middle classes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the cities of what are now the rich or developed countries, as well as currently, with the rise of middle-class-based pro-poor NGOs in such cities as Manila and Bangkok, organizations which often involve members of the academic community and various other social action groups. This is an important and little recognized aspect of urban social change, as it is often through the efforts of middle-class pressure groups that "pro-poor" policies are advanced and the political will for addressing poverty is strengthened. In other words, addressing urban poverty often requires political change, the potential for which is advanced (perhaps perversely) by the urbanization of poverty, as this gives rise to a constituency for the poor, and in particular a constituency with a voice in the political arena. This may or may not be the voice of the poor themselves, as historically we can recognize that political disenfranchisement perpetually parallels the social marginalization of the poor.

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[1] From 1976 to 1990, a period in which Indonesia's urbanization rate increased from approximately 20% to 31%, the percentage of urban poor relative to the total urban population dropped dramatically from 38.8% to 16.8%, while the overall total of urban dwellers categorized as poor did not substantially diminish (dropping from approximately 10 million to 9.4 million). (Data from Mills and Pernia 1994, p. 24, and UN 2002).

[2] In the twenty year period from 1971 to 1991, while urbanization rates in the Philippines increased from approximately 33% to 49%, the proportion of the poor in cities did not drop substantially (from 40.6% to 36.7%), resulting in the doubling of the total number of poor people living in cities (from 5 to 10 million). (Data from Mills and Pernia 1994, p. 24, and UN 2002).

More than just concentrating the poor in one place - the city - the conditions of urbanization, particularly rapid urbanization, also have critical implications for the perpetuation or entrenchment of poverty. Such conditions may be understood in terms of such structural factors as: the degradation of local environments which in turn may undermine human health and well-being; differential access to urban services, such as education, which might otherwise help to build human capital among both current and future generations and thus pull the poor out of poverty; and the structure of the urban labour market, often typified by an overall preponderance of the poor in "informal" or casual forms of employment, which tend to be involutionary, rather than dynamic in terms of increasing livelihood opportunity.

Rather than attempting to detail the specific conditions and trends regarding urban poverty in the region, in this paper I will more broadly examine what I see to be specific structural factors which shape the urbanization of poverty. A comprehensive treatment of urban poverty across the region would be an enormous challenge, considering the scope and complexity of urban poverty and the wide range of conditions in Southeast Asia. Instead, I will be selective and look specifically at three areas of concern, differentiated to some degree by questions of scale, both spatially and temporally. These are: (1) basic issues regarding processes and patterns of urbanization and the implications of societal urban transition as it is manifested in the region; (2) how local environments influence urban poverty, including in particular the spatial implications of rapid urbanization; and (3) associated questions of governance, not only explicitly with regard to policy for addressing urban poverty, but more broadly regarding the governance implications of ongoing urbanization. Before turning to these issues, however, it is useful to discuss questions of definition, as indeed the basic conceptualization of poverty in urban contexts is less straightforward than most observers might prefer.

URBAN POVERTY AND THE COMPLEXITY OF DEFINITIONS

Any writing on urban poverty, particularly in comparative perspective, is complicated by fundamental definitional challenges. First of all, our basic understanding of poverty is conditioned by the statistical tendency to conceive of poverty in terms of monetary flows - income or expenditure - whether measured on a per capita or household basis. Although useful for policy setting in broad terms, the poverty line approach which this implies is indeed problematic. For one thing, the specific basis for determining the cutoff line itself is at root somewhat arbitrary, thus creating the situation whereby many households or individuals are clustered around the official poverty line and slight fluctuations in measurement or shifts in the basis of calculation - such as changes in the bundle of goods included in a basic consumption package, or a change in the season of the year when data are collected - can have potentially tremendous

effects on the numbers of people identified as poor.[3] Beyond this, poverty as a statistical construct also has a simplifying or unifying effect: a single category of "the poor" can imply a singular basis for poverty and, by extension, an undifferentiated policy approach to dealing with poverty, when in fact, the poor in any context are a diverse, dynamic group, who defy categorization and sub-categorization. Poverty is determined by life experience, and many who are included among the ranks of the poor may be in the midst of life transitions, into or out of poverty, potentially even on a seasonal basis. Poverty may be persistent, even when the specific individuals who are included among the poor change over time. Thus it is important to recognize the differences between inter-personal poverty - the relative differences in incomes or assets between individuals within a population - and intra-personal poverty - referring to the changes over time among individuals due to their life circumstances. And specific factors which influence an individual's or a household's condition of poverty - whether inter-personal or intra-personal - may be structural, personal, or more likely, some combination of the two, making generalizations extraordinarily hard to come by.

Analysis based on income or expenditure criteria may further distort our understanding of the total asset bases of those who are considered poor, that is, what they are able to draw upon for determining their livelihoods. Beyond basic financial assets, which may only be partially captured by poverty line measurements, the resources of the poor may include such assets as labour, housing, social and economic infrastructure, household relations, and other forms of social capital, which may be held or shared at the level of the individual, the household or the community, depending upon specific circumstances (Moser 1998). This somewhat anthropological "asset portfolio" approach, as pioneered in the work of Caroline Moser and her collaborators, holds the potential for providing a more carefully nuanced understanding of the nature of poverty by linking asset bases to the specifics of vulnerability among different social groups. In contrast to the poverty line approach, new avenues for thinking about positive interventions to address poverty are opened up through the articulation of non-financial assets and how these relate to the life experiences of those who might be considered as poor. There are still many unresolved aspects of this approach, however, not the least of which is the question of the practical "fungibility" between differing categories of assets of the poor, or in other words how assets of one sort may or may not be transferred into other categories in response to specific needs or under times of stress.

Situating such debates and distinctions in the context of the city becomes even more complicated. Not only is the urban economic context significantly more complex than that of the countryside - implying that there is greater diversity of

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[3] A good, recent summary discussion of the problems associated with determining poverty lines, with reference in particular to the Indonesian experience, is given in Rigg, 2003, pp. 90 -103. For more on the relationships between urbanization and the characteristics of urban poverty, see Wratten 1995.

conditions in the city and thus more ways in which people can be poor - but the city itself is a dynamic entity, changing over time not just because of the expansion of urban populations and urban territorial extent, but shaped as well by fluctuations in national macro-economic circumstances [4] and higher order policy determinations which may directly impact the nature of urban living for the poor.[5]

Of further consequence for thinking about the nature of urban poverty is the set of arguments that, in general, there is a tendency to underestimate the numbers of the poor and the depth of poverty in cities throughout the developing world.[6] Here one may draw attention to the policy bias in many countries which equates poverty with rural areas, coupled with the lack of a clear distinction between rural and urban populations and economic sectors. This is especially the case in contexts of high population mobility and circularity of migration, as these may lead to circumstances with many "trans-local" households, that is, those who are able to establish a foothold in both urban and rural settings (Rigg 2003, p. 127). The strengthening and deepening of rural-urban linkages, which may themselves be seen as outcomes of technological modernization and economic globalization (Rigg 2001; Douglass 1998b) further challenge the neatness of the statistical category of the urban poor. In addition to this basic boundary issue - the empirical differentiation between urban and rural - it is also argued that significant underestimation of poverty in urban settings derives from the nature of urban living in the erstwhile third world. Access to basic goods and services - and thus quality of life - is highly constrained in many urban contexts, even for those residents who are nominally above the poverty line and thus not included among the ranks of the statistical poor (Hardoy, et al. 2001, p. 315-16). Sharp disjunctions between officially reported statistics and more anecdotally understood on-the-ground conditions in large urban settings, as for example regarding urban infrastructure provision or housing quality, are indicative of a tendency toward underestimation, or perhaps even misrepresentation, of the

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[4] An important example here is with the temporary reverse flow of rural-urban migrants in the immediate wake of Southeast Asia's recent economic crisis, particularly in Thailand and Indonesia.

[5] This is a point which is of particular relevance to rural-urban migrants. In her book on "contesting citizenship" in China, Solinger (1999) develops in detail an argument for how nationally determined residency controls influence the rights and entitlements available to migrants at local, municipal levels. Similar though perhaps less extreme examples can be drawn from experiences elsewhere in Asia, as with the "closing" of Jakarta to migrants in the early 1970s (Abeyasekere 1989).

[6] Regarding the use of terms such as this, it is recognized that not all "developing countries" are necessarily developing, that the "third world" should no longer be considered "third" following the demise of the "second world" of the socialist bloc nations in this Cold War terminology, and that not all the countries of "the South" are actually located in the south - besides which all such terms encapsulate too much diversity to make them very meaningful. As my interest here is in promoting the relevance of the demographic and urban transitions in shaping socio-economic change, I might promote a term such as "transitional" countries (as distinguished from "post-transitional" countries), though unfortunately this term already has other connotations. My tendency is therefore to stick to conventional terms despite their inadequacies.

scale and nature of urban poverty in many parts of the developing world (Satterthwaite 1995).

It is not my intention here to go into further detail on the on-going and most likely "unresolvable" debates surrounding the definitions of poverty and urban poverty, or in this sense to try to contribute to an improved understanding of the measurement of poverty, although I realize that without clarifying definitions it may seem meaningless to try to assess current conditions and trends. Instead, I would like to discuss what I see to be some basic structural factors as they influence urban poverty and, more importantly, the experience of urban life for the poor. As the intention here is to advance a comparative understanding of urban poverty issues in Asian contexts, particularly for a Vietnamese audience, I will make reference to national and urban contexts which have relevance for understanding the current Vietnamese situation, including the countries of Southeast Asia which are undergoing comparable shifts in urbanization and global economic integration, and China, which in addition bears particular institutional similarities to Vietnam.

THE URBAN TRANSITION IN ASIA

Our understanding of urban poverty as a dynamic phenomenon, in a state of ongoing flux, is highly conditioned by the broad context of urbanization and urban change in the world today, particularly in those poorer countries which are now experiencing the fastest rates of urban growth. When examined globally, we see that we are now at the mid-point of an historically unprecedented transformation, what we can refer as the global urban transition. Analysis and debates about the urban transition arise from the recognition that over the course of a few human generations - a brief few hundred years, in actuality a fleeting moment in human history - the world's population is shifting from a situation of having a low urban proportion (a "pre-transition" plateau of around 20% or less) to a high urban proportion (a "post-transition" plateau of perhaps 80%). It is no coincidence that these changes have come in parallel with the rapid expansion of the earth's human population, a phenomenon associated with what demographers have termed the demographic transition.[7] One could argue that

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[7] The rate of natural change in any population will be determined by the combined influence of two rates: birth rate and mortality rate. The basic concept of demographic transition is best explained as a fundamental historical shift from an initial state of equilibrium (or near-equilibrium, such as slow overall natural increase), where high birth rates are "balanced" by high mortality rates, to one where another equilibrium plateau is reached where low mortality rates are again balanced by low birth rates. A critical implication from the viewpoint of human ecology is the "population boom" which arises from the historically observed lags (typically over a period of about three human generations) between the slowing of mortality rates and the slowing of birth rates. As it is a basic aspect of human nature to readily adopt those practices which prevent us from dying and to resist those which limit our ability to have children, the demographic transition has important cultural implications as well. Further background and current thinking regarding demographic transition theory may be found in Chenais (1992) and Jones, et al (1997).

the urban transition is in fact a subset of, or the spatial expression of, the larger transformations of the demographic transition, as indeed, the underlying factors of both are tightly interwoven.

The propelling reasons for these fundamental changes in social patterns are multiple and hotly debated, as they derive from a broad array of social, economic and technological innovations, from the development of new agricultural techniques and cultigens, to the expansion of manufacturing and services, to innovations in the realms of transportation, nutrition, education, public health and the supporting institutional fabric of human society. In short, the urban transition encompasses momentous cultural changes, as well as an underlying restructuring of social and economic activities. As a way of making a summary point, we could attribute these changes to modernization, though recognizing that the term modernization carries with it a diversity of meanings. Beyond this, one could attribute such changes to the current manifestation of the historical processes of modernization, often now referred to as globalization.

A critical consideration in looking at the global urban transition is its unevenness. Different societies are passing through their demographic shifts at different rates and from different starting points.[8] Those societies which have fully urbanized (i.e. those which have more or less stabilized at the higher plateau) are the wealthy societies in the world today, those which began their processes of modernization earliest. In contrast, the poorer societies of the world today are still in the midst (or, in some instances, at the beginning) of their own transitions. In describing the unevenness of the urban transition in this way, one must take great care to differentiate these basic demographic observations from the assumptions of modernization theory. Modernization theory, in essence, portrays a more or less unilineal model of change, emphasizing a time frame differentiation between "early modernizers" and "late modernizers" (Woodside 1999). The assumption which must be challenged is that all societies will necessarily pass through the same or similar stages and arrive at the similar "developed" end points. While recognizing that the poorer societies of the world today are passing through their own forms of urban transition, we should be careful to not uncritically infer that they will arrive at the same end point as the wealthiest societies of the world today.

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[8] One may even speak of two urban transitions, that of what are now the rich countries of the developed world, whose transitions occurred largely over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and that of today's developing countries, whose transitions have accelerated in the latter part of the twentieth century (Ness 2000). The differentiation between these two urban transitions is not clearly demarcated, except in broad terms by the disruptive effects of the two world wars and associated processes of decolonization in the mid-twentieth century. The distinction between earlier and later transitions, or between these two phases of the global transition, has implications vis-à-vis technology transfer, economic interlinkages, and other aspects of globalization which condition the ongoing urban transitions in the developing world today.

I have emphasized here the big picture of global urban change in order to get to the critical issue of urban poverty, as the pressing realities of the lives of the urban poor today often obscure the longer historical view. The full shift of the urban transition may take three generations or more; meanwhile we are confronted with the practical problems of rising poverty in the rapidly growing cities of the third world today. Historical experience demonstrates that the shift from a rural society to an urban society is inherently a wrenching experience. To get a sense of what this meant in what is now a developed society, one could look at the nineteenth century descriptions of urban England in the documentary writings of Friedrich Engels or in the fiction of Charles Dickens. In these compelling depictions of the wretchedness of poverty in a period of rapid social change, one can see the dreadful human consequences of social dislocation and intense environmental strain.

Table 1: Indonesian Urban Change, 1950 – 2030 (projected)

Indonesia			
Year	Urban Population (x 1000)	Percent Urban	Urban Growth (% p.a.)
1950	9 863	12.40%	
1955	11 633	13.46%	3.30%
1960	13 996	14.59%	3.70%
1965	16 840	15.79%	3.70%
1970	20 501	17.07%	3.93%
1975	26 047	19.36%	4.79%
1980	33 377	22.20%	4.96%
1985	43 552	26.15%	5.32%
1990	55 819	30.59%	4.96%
1995	70 357	35.60%	4.63%
2000	86 943	40.99%	4.23%
2005	104 048	46.17%	3.59%
2010	120 986	50.90%	3.02%
2015	137 554	55.01%	2.57%
2020	153 006	58.42%	2.13%
2025	166 792	61.12%	1.73%
2030	180 069	63.66%	1.53%

Source: UN 2002

In the various cases of Asia's urban transition, the prospects are daunting when one considers the total numbers involved. From Table 1 and Figure 1, we can see the demographic indicators of Indonesia's urban transition from 1950 projected to 2030, expressed as both the urban proportion for the total national population, as well in the overall numbers of urban dwellers. Here we can see the beginnings of a levelling off as Indonesia approaches its post-transition plateau, with urban dwellers reaching nearly two-thirds of the national population by 2030, up from less than 13% in 1950, indicative of a significant drop in the *per annum* urban growth figures (to around 1.5%, compared to a peak of more than 5% in the 1980s). From the perspective of policy makers, these proportional figures are perhaps less critical than the overall totals of urban dwellers, who have increased markedly, from less than 10 million in 1950 to 90 million today, and who will increase by another 90 million by 2030.

Figures for China are comparable, as seen in Table 2 and Figure 2, with a change in urban proportions from less than 13% in 1950 to a projection of nearly 60% by 2030. In the case of China, however, we can see the partial effects of national policy in the *per annum* urban growth rates of the 1960s and 70s, as residential mobility controls constrained rural-urban migration and thus suppressed urban population growth. Economic reforms since the end of the 70s have undermined the state's control on mobility, spurring a rapid increase in urban growth rates.

Table 2: **Chinese Urban Change,**
1950 – 2030 (projected)

China			
Year	Urban Population (x 1000)	Percent Urban	Urban Growth (% p.a.)
1950	69 528	12.53%	
1955	86 367	14.18%	4.34%
1960	105 249	16.01%	3.95%
1965	128 093	17.57%	3.93%
1970	144 537	17.40%	2.42%
1975	161 445	17.40%	2.21%
1980	196 222	19.64%	3.90%
1985	246 089	23.00%	4.53%
1990	316 569	27.40%	5.04%
1995	382 334	31.36%	3.78%
2000	456 340	35.79%	3.54%
2005	535 958	40.56%	3.22%
2010	617 348	45.19%	2.83%
2015	698 077	49.50%	2.46%
2020	771 861	53.38%	2.01%
2025	834 295	56.72%	1.56%
2030	883 421	59.50%	1.14%

Source: UN 2002

Table 3: **Vietnamese Urban Change,**
1950 – 2030 (projected)

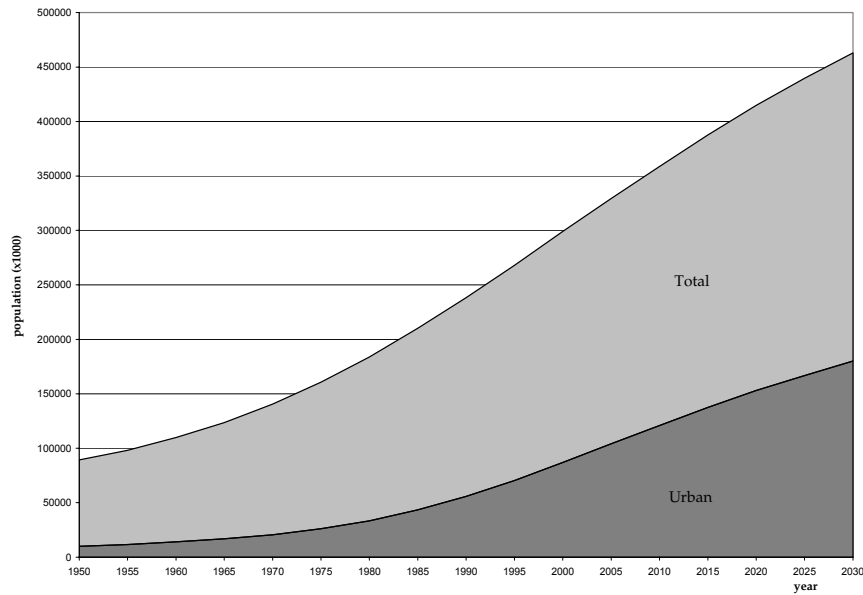| Vietnam			
Year	Urban Population (x 1000)	Percent Urban	Urban Growth (% p.a.)
1950	3 186	11.64%	
1955	3 935	13.09%	4.23%
1960	4 947	14.70%	4.57%
1965	6 256	16.42%	4.70%
1970	7 850	18.30%	4.54%
1975	9 011	18.78%	2.76%
1980	10 202	19.25%	2.48%
1985	11 558	19.56%	2.50%
1990	13 389	20.26%	2.94%
1995	16 148	22.17%	3.75%
2000	18 816	24.08%	3.06%
2005	21 926	26.29%	3.06%
2010	25 547	28.82%	3.06%
2015	29 851	31.62%	3.11%
2020	34 770	34.70%	3.05%
2025	40 089	38.00%	2.85%
2030	45 485	41.32%	2.53%

Source: UN 2002

Although the urban growth rates most likely peaked in the 1990s, and following demographic transition theory will level off over the next few decades (as with Indonesia, we may discern the beginnings of China's post-transition plateau by 2030), the daunting aspect again comes from the overall totals of urbanites in China, with an expansion from less than 70 million at the time of independence in 1949, to more than 460 million today. Again, most worrisome from the current perspective is the projected increase in urban populations by another 420 million over the next quarter century.

Admittedly, the overall numbers associated with China's and Indonesia's urban transitions are enhanced by these two countries current positions with the world's largest and fourth largest national populations, respectively. Nonetheless, the basic trends, if not the overall numbers, are comparable to those of other countries in the region; the relatively delayed (compared to Indonesia or China) transition of Vietnam is apparent in Table 3 and Figure 3, while urbanization trajectories for the region are given in Figure 4. These trends have important implications for thinking about urban poverty. Not only is the urbanization of poverty understood to be intrinsic to the urban transition, as societies undergo wrenching changes as they shift from a predominantly agrarian existence to urban-based livelihoods, but we get a sense as well of the total time frame within which these changes are taking place. As the demographic trends indicate, a consequential transition is taking place, although we may not yet be able to foresee the ultimate outcome of this transition in economic, social or spatial terms. The overall time frame for such changes presents tremendous challenges for planning and policy-making: population projections indicate that the urbanization of poverty will continue to grow for decades to come, although our usual frameworks for addressing such

changes are couched in terms of time horizons of five years or less. In all likelihood, the problems of urban poverty in countries still in the midst of their urban transitions will continue to worsen before they are ultimately resolved.

Figure 1. Indonesia's Urbanization

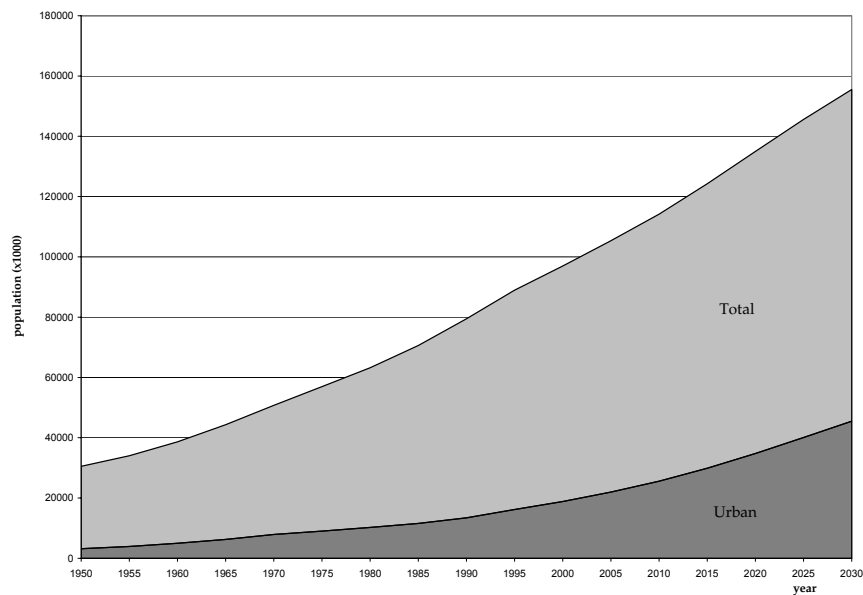**Figure 2. China's Urbanization**

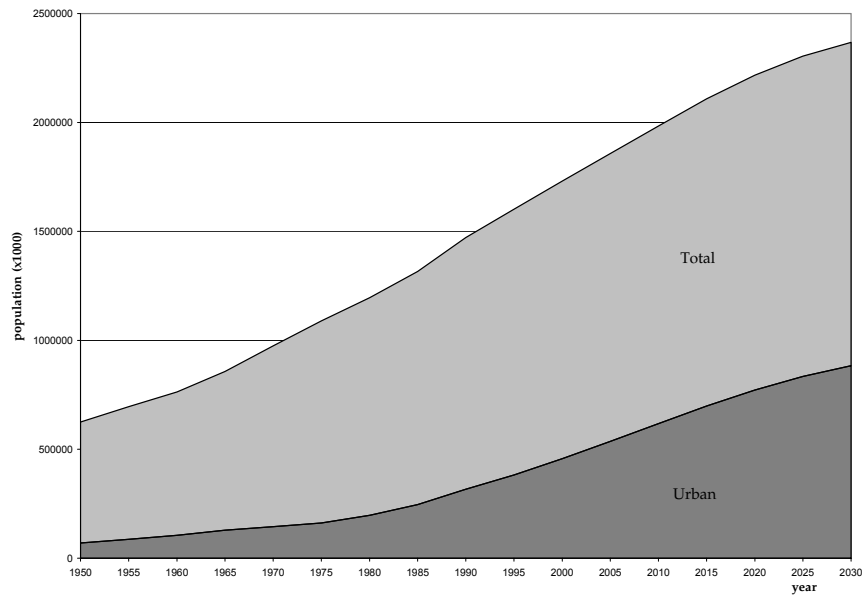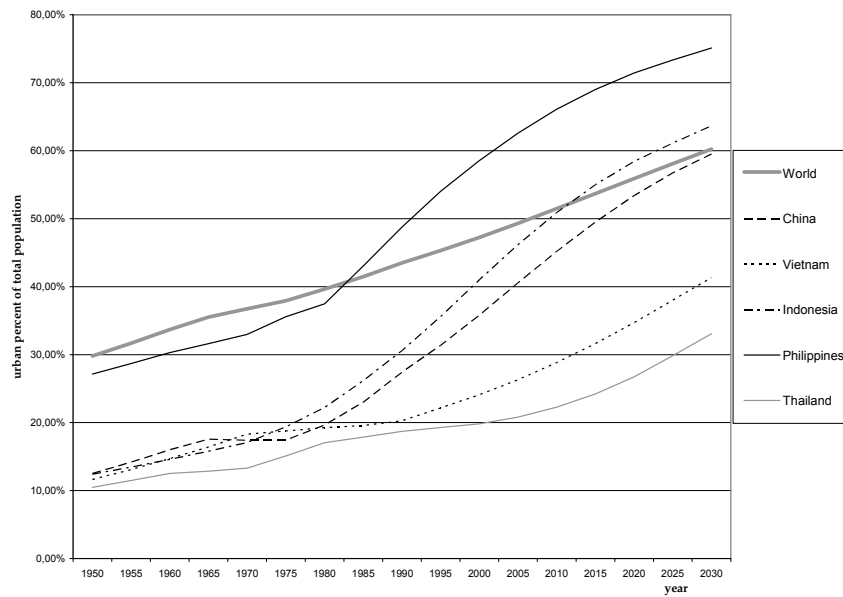**Figure 3. Vietnam'sUrbanization**

Figure 4. Urbanization in selected Asian countries

ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSIONS OF URBAN POVERTY

From the initial point that the broad parameters of the urban transition underlie the basic problems of socio-economic dislocation and environmental degradation - and thus, urban poverty - in cities throughout the developing world, it is important to look at more closely bounded aspects of the urban transition, both spatially and temporally. In this way we move from an aggregate understanding of the urbanization of poverty to examining its immediate and local implications. The overall timeframe of the urban transition for any society is a formidable challenge for thinking about appropriate policy. The transition itself may require a time span of three or more human generations to resolve, yet the problems it engenders clearly require immediate attention, especially for those societies in the midst of their transitions. Bounding the problems of the urban transition thus refers to both temporal conditions, or in other words, prioritizing and addressing the most pressing problems, and spatial aspects, with regard to jurisdictional responsibilities for dealing with the most deleterious effects of rapid urbanization. Both of these aspects of problem definition are clearly political in their nature. Relevant here are not only the concerns with livelihood generation and the capacity for labour absorption by urban economies - that is, the concerns which for the most part drive national and municipal policy setting regarding poverty and urban poverty - but also for the environmental conditions which shape urban life. It has become increasingly understood by many observers that conditions of urban poverty, and hence the possibilities of escaping poverty, are largely shaped by local environmental factors.[9]

In this section, I will briefly review two basic aspects of the environmental conditions of urban poverty as they are seen in the developing countries of Asia: the effects of local environmental conditions as they influence the assets and the vulnerability of the urban poor; and the question of how urban poverty is articulated in the broader spatial and social relationships in expanding urban regions. In both respects, it can be seen that the environmental dimensions of urban poverty are closely related to the broad trajectories of the region's ongoing urban transitions, as major problems arise from both the speed and scale of urbanization.

Local environmental conditions

An important innovation in thinking about urban poverty has been advanced since the early 1990s in the form of what has come to be known as "the brown agenda". At its root, the brown agenda is a rhetorical stance which is intended to expand the global environmental debate beyond the dominant "green agenda," or in other words to advance the position that environmental issues are not (or should not be) the concern of only those in rich societies (Bartone et al 1994;

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[9] Hardoy, et al. (2001) provide a detailed, systematic overview of this point, and provide extensive references to a vast body of related materials.

Hardoy et al 2001). Advocates of the brown agenda emphasize that environmental issues are not just a concern of the wealthy, but also affect the poor in the cities of today's developing countries. However, the range of issues encompassed by the brown agenda - access to clean water, sufficient sanitation and garbage collection, health problems associated with poor housing and crowded living conditions, and so forth - are by their nature much more local and thus more directly relevant to the everyday lives of the poor, than are the environmental concerns of those in wealthier cities of the world.

The point has been made that there is generally insufficient statistical or documentary evidence in aggregate regarding how urban environmental conditions shape poverty and poor living conditions, although there is no shortage of more anecdotal accounts of the influence of poor infrastructure, services and other physical conditions on the lives of urban residents. This disparity between official figures and on-the-ground accounts may derive in part from the tendency of officials to want to portray their cities in the best possible light, although it is also more than likely that official criteria for documenting environmental conditions are biased against what are seen to be temporary, informal, or even illegal conditions of settlement within urban areas. Thus reliance on income or expenditure data severely underestimates levels of urban poverty throughout the developing world, if one considers that our understanding of poverty should also include the practical constraints to accessing basic needs for healthy and productive lives. Beyond this, as Satterthwaite (1995) argues, attempting to derive an understanding of urban poverty based upon aggregate analyses of urban living conditions only adds further to the overall underestimation of urban poverty.

It is difficult to choose a single example or a small set of examples to adequately illustrate the relations between local environments and urban poverty, as the potential illustrations are myriad and highly differentiated by local conditions, such as whether a particular settlement or neighbourhood is situated in an inner city location or is more recently established on the urban edge. Urban environmental aspects which influence the conditions of poverty may be city-wide in their impact, such as the accessibility of sufficient quality water throughout the Jakarta region (Crane 1994) or more tightly bound to the locality, such as with environmental and social services available to the rapidly urbanizing settlements of rural-urban migrants on the peripheries of Chinese cities (Zhang 2001).

The summary point of much of the research on urban services and infrastructure (both in general and in the concentrated instances of "slums", "squatter settlements" and other "informal" settings) is that insufficiency of access has a number of important follow-on effects which exacerbate or otherwise condition urban poverty. These include:

  - the potential for much higher proportional expenditures by poor households for what are defacto "private goods", supplied through

often unregulated markets (such as drinking water or health services or education), which might otherwise be provided as public goods;

- higher proportional costs of housing (even for sub-standard or low quality housing) derived from the exclusionary effects of urban spatial economy;

- greater susceptibility by the poor to the dangers of natural disasters or other major calamities, due to the marginal environmental settings of many poor settlements;

- effects of diminished health and thus restricted opportunities for social advancement, which serves to entrench and perpetuate poverty into future generations; and

- the limited potential for *in situ* environmental upgrading, which may be derived from higher costs of retrofitting infrastructure or the political nature of regularizing property rights.[10]

The scale and complexity of these issues throughout many of the larger cities of Southeast Asia has proven to be a challenge to the development of basic comparative indicators of local environmental conditions as they influence the health and livelihoods of poor urban communities (UNCHS 2001; WRI 1996). Indeed, the interrelations between these various factors of urban life has meant it is difficult even to prioritize interventions for improving the lives of the urban poor. It can be argued that water supply and sanitation are the most critical issues as they have direct and immediate effects on public health, and thus there is an immediate need for innovative strategies for low-cost infrastructure provision.[11] Alternatively, there is the contention that basic spatial relations, as put forward in "rights to the city" arguments, have direct implications for the livelihood opportunities of the poor, which will in turn determine the ability of the poor to pull themselves out of poverty and thus be able to afford improved environmental and social conditions.

changing spatial relations

The effects of the region's urban transitions, in terms of the speed and scale of both urban expansion and urban rebuilding, as city governments attempt to modernize their infrastructure, has important implications for the socio-spatial relations which embed the growing numbers of urban poor. Despite the diversity of urban conditions throughout Asia, one can make a few generalizations

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[10] It is notable in this regard that one of the most successful examples of urban slum upgrading, the Kampung Improvement Program (KIP) in Jakarta and other Indonesian cities, has consciously avoided the issue of land titling due to the potential for politically paralyzing complications. In one sense, the benefits of KIP could be looked at as a sort of implicit bargain: we'll fix up your drainage, provide water and toilets, etc, as long as you don't create problems about long-term ownership of the land. In this sense KIP has always been a "temporary" solution, even though temporary in this instance may mean a few decades or more, depending upon location in the city (Leaf 1994b).

[11] This argument is developed in various papers in Hardoy et al (1990), which also provides overview of alternative, innovative approaches to urban infrastructure provision.

regarding the expansion of urban spatial economies in relation to urban transitions, generalizations summarized by the point that the Asian city of the present - and the future - is something quite different from that of the past.

Historic patterns of urban spatial development in many parts of Asia may be characterized as having a relatively high degree of enclave-type development, whereby diverse socio-economic groups lived in close proximity to one another, thus allowing for significant levels of social inter-dependency under conditions of low spatial mobility. This was apparent, for example, in traditional urban patterns on Java, whereby social differentiation was spatially defined by outer block or main road locations for the residences of the elites, in contrast to the inner block or back-alley housing of the poor (Guinness 1986). Similarly in China, traditional patterns of spatial "cellularity" tended to facilitate economic interactions in highly local settings, even where social distance by class was carefully circumscribed (Skinner 1977). Under the egalitarian ideology of Mao, such cellularity became even more pronounced as patterns of urban spatial development came to be determined largely by the administrative and economic structures of urban work units (*danwei*), a socio-spatial arrangement which has been broken down through the impacts of the changing urban spatial economy in the post-Mao era of economic reform (Gaubatz 1995). In the case of Jakarta, Indonesia, the class segregation impacts of redevelopment were apparent even in the early public construction projects of Sukarno, as for example with the building of Jalan Thamrin, which had the effect of closing off the elite neighbourhood of Menteng from poorer districts to the west, resulting in direct and highly localized negative impacts on street traders and other residents who depended upon Menteng for their livelihoods (Abeyaskere 1989).

Increases in spatial segregation by socio-economic group have continued over time in the cities of Southeast Asia, both through the outward displacement of the inner city poor (Boonyabancha 1983; Pornchokchai 1992) and through the rise of large-scale real estate development companies who tend to build residential enclaves on the urban edge for exclusively upper and middle-class buyers (Leaf 1996; 1994a). Increasing spatial segregation by income group also characterizes much of China's recent experiences with urban residential construction, as the outward relocation of formerly inner city residents has become increasingly differentiated by their abilities (or lack thereof) to purchase market housing (Leaf 1995).

In addition to the decanting of inner city residents (both rich and poor) into socio-economically differentiated settings on the urban edge, the continuing expansion of urban spatial economies throughout the region has come to encompass geographically extensive formerly rural territories and populations, leading to new and unprecedented patterns of metropolitan development (Ginsburg et al. 1991). The formation of such "extended metropolitan regions" presents new challenges to long-held conceptualizations of urban and rural (socio-culturally as well as economically). Consequentially these regions also provide the spatial framework of the absorption of a large proportion of the growing urban populations - primarily the poor - as urban transitions

throughout the region continue apace (Webster 2001). The peri-urbanization of Asian cities thus represents the cutting edge of Asian urbanism for the latter half of the region's urban transition; that fact that such developments have little historical precedent means that as yet there is insufficient planning attention given to the social and environmental problems of the peri-urbanism (Leaf 2002).

URBAN POVERTY AND THE CHALLENGE OF GOVERNANCE

As I have argued above, the speed and scale of societal and environmental change associated with the region's urban transitions create the basic conditions within which the problems of urban poverty are embedded. Understanding the broad trajectories of urbanization tells us that these problems - in short, the urbanization of poverty - will persist, if not worsen, for decades to come. And recognizing the critical linkages between urban life, urban environments and the well-being of residents in growing urban centres, the problems of urban poverty may very well appear to be intractable. What is being done, and what can be done?

One might expect the practices of urban planning to be of great relevance here, as after all, it is the *raison d'être* of urban planning to envision and work to create more positive urban futures. Unfortunately, the general orientation of much of current planning is fundamentally exclusionary in its nature. This is apparent both in efforts to clean up or modernize inner city districts, which more often than not result in the displacement of poorer residents (hence, the "city within the city" approach of much inner city redevelopment),[12] and in the formation of new urban districts, or "new town" developments, on the edge of existing cities. At the extreme, this impulse to urban modernity is manifested in the *de novo* creation of new cities, seen as attempts to escape the most egregious aspects of mid-transition urban life. At one level, one can look at this as an outcome of trade-offs intrinsic to the improvement of standards of urban construction: in short, the development of good quality urban environments, with decreased levels of crowding, good services and infrastructure, and improved accessibility to good livelihood opportunities, comes at the cost of exclusion of large components of urban society.[13] In this sense, it can be argued that the usual practices of planning accentuate the socio-economic and environmental dualisms inherent in the urban transition, in that such approaches are only partial and will not affect the lives of the majority of urban (and urbanizing) society. From the perspective of social equity, there is also the implication that planning in this

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[12] Many classic, though still relevant, case analyses in this regard are covered in various chapters in Angel et al (1983).

[13] It should also be recognized that there is a prevalent argument often favoured by urban administrators and business elites that such exclusionary districts are necessary in order to attract and accommodate the international managerial classes needed for fostering foreign investment and global linkages. For a discussion of how such trends fit with conscious efforts at "world city formation" see Douglass (1998a).

formal sense diverts limited resources away from majority populations and thus perversely worsens urban conditions overall.

At another level of analysis, it can be argued that the current practices of urban planning are indicative of the traditionally statist orientation of urban management in the region, and that it is only through the active involvement of non-state actors that inclusionary approaches to dealing with the problems of urbanization may be devised. In development circles in recent years much has been written regarding the need to articulate new forms of "governance" - as distinct from "government" - as the key to addressing these problems. And here governance is meant to express the complex interactions between state, society and market forces in shaping urban futures. Good governance, as the concept is put forward, is understood to be decentralized, locally responsive, and broadly collaborative between the "three sectors" involved in urban development. From this perspective, not only is there a need for formal government reforms at local levels in order to improve the engagement between state, market and society, but there is an increasing need to understand both the positive and negative implications of growing market relations in urban settings (World Bank 1994), and to support and facilitate the rise of formal structures of civil society (Friedmann 1998). In short, it is necessary to recognize the limitations of the state and thus to work toward involving civil society and market actors in order to develop the resource base needed for addressing problems of urbanization in a societally meaningful manner.[14]

The line of argument derived from this good governance perspective thus stresses the need for "capacity building", a concept which can be understood on a number of levels. From the understanding that urban poverty under conditions of rapid urban expansion arises directly from insufficient absorptive capacity of the urban economy, this is an argument for devising new livelihood opportunities for the urban poor. This may mean an increased emphasis on human capital development through vocational training, or additionally, the development of mechanisms to increase access to financial capital, such as through small-scale loan schemes, with the potential for increasing urban productivity overall. To the extent that poverty is conditioned by or entrenched by environmental conditions, it is also recognized that there is insufficient capacity for the delivery of urban services and development of quality infrastructure. Capacity building for good governance is thus premised on the need for not only upgrading the abilities of local officials to interact with neighbourhood groups, but for strengthening the organizational capabilities of community groups and other components of civil society.

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[14] This is, of course, a narrow, economisitic presentation of the basic rationale. For discussions of the politics of collaborative, inclusionary or "enabling" approaches, see Douglass (1992) and the various case studies included in Evans (2002). For a treatment of the politics of representation as they inhere in such contexts, see Peattie (1987).

Continuing with what might be described as the emerging conventional wisdom regarding capacity building for good urban governance, the tendency is to attempt to identify "best practices" which exemplify such collaborative approaches and which may be replicated from one setting to another.[15] Although I would not want to dismiss the value of such learning by example, the basic implication of this best practice orientation as it is commonly undertaken is to emphasize the tools or techniques involved, while simplifying the analysis of the social, political and institutional settings within which the tools are applied. All too often, such aspects of "context" retreat into the background, even if it is recognized that it is the specificities of context which may determine the success or failure of any particular attempted intervention or policy. Thus there is the very real need here for applied social science research in support of inclusionary or "pro-poor" urban management strategies, research which goes beyond understanding the immediate effects of any particular policy approach to engage more fundamentally with questions regarding institutional structures. The speed and scale of contemporary urbanization in the region has implications not only for societal and environmental change, but as well for the capacity of pre-existing institutions - both state and non-state - to respond to such change.

This is perhaps most pointedly apparent from the burgeoning body of social science research on what has come to be termed "informality" or "informalization". Originating out of a dualistic analysis of what was originally posited as an alternative "informal sector" in contrast to formal or modernizing components of urban economies in developing countries (Bromley 1979; Moser 1984), informality has since come to be understood as a condition arising from problems of regulation intrinsically linked to modalities of state-society interaction, and is thus closely associated with local institutional forms (Portes, et al. 1989) as they influence urban governance. The seeming breakdown of formal regulatory approaches in the face of rapid urbanization may often be best understood through an analysis of particularist tendencies, such as the persistence of patron-client relations between elements of the local state and urban social groups, or the reproduction and entrenchment of personalistic patterns of local state action, even in the context of administrative reforms ostensibly aimed at improving transparency and accountability of local state agencies.[16] Analyses of local state-society interactions under current conditions of administrative decentralization in Asia have prompted the articulation of various analytical categories, such as the "shadow state" in the context of Bangkok (Daniere and Takahashi 2002) and "local state corporatism" in southern China (Oi 1999) in the attempting to account for intermediary institutional forms between state and local society. Whether such structures are indicative of the temporary persistence of traditionalistic societal relations which will eventually

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[15] See Badshah (1996) as one example of this approach or (UN best practices data base website) for further elaboration.

[16] Detailed case studies along these lines include that of Setiawan (1998) in an Indonesian context, and that of Desai (1996) in India.

give way to modernist forms of governance under the objective rule of law, or alternatively, will be reproduced and further entrenched in newly reconfigured structures of governance in the future is an unresolved question (Ding 1994) and thus open to continuing speculation.

The summary point here is that more often than not there are powerful vested interests which shape the political contexts of urban management, and thus determine the context for the institutional changes necessary for addressing the complex of issues associated with the ongoing urbanization of poverty throughout the region. Urban poverty in Asia should thus not be conceptualized as a problem or a set of problems to be solved by the application of a set of discrete tools or policies. Instead, it is a manifestation of consequential and historically unprecedented changes in the social, economic and natural environments of the region, and as such it will only be resolved through fundamental shifts in the institutional structures which shape local governance. Policy change alone is insufficient to address the problems of urban poverty.

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New Regulation and Agro-Food Industrialization: Assessing Codes of Conduct for Shrimp Farming in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

Farmed shrimp is one of Canada's largest imports from Southeast Asia, but it is a controversial commodity due to its social and environmental impacts. The industry is working to ameliorate these impacts through certification with respect to aquaculture codes of conduct. Although this initiative has promise, the certification process excludes participation by impacted communities--in common with most certification regimes today. At the same time, field research in Southern Thailand show that neighbours and communities are currently the only effective regulators of shrimp farmers; where shrimp farmers do adopt more responsible practices it is always due to pressure from the local communities. There are a number of obstacles to involving local communities in the certification process, but the author argues that most of them can be addressed.

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INTRODUCTION

A central question for the future of shrimp farming in Thailand and throughout Asia is finding an appropriate and effective regulatory process. There is now considerable research documenting the broad-based social and environmental impacts of industrial shrimp aquaculture (eg., Vandergeest et al, Stonich, 1992; Stonich and Vandergeest, 2001; Mangrove Action Project's Late Friday News, many more). Although there are debates over the specific impacts in particular places that require further research, even industry proponents agree that there have been problems (Boyd and Clay, 1998). These problems have made shrimp farming a highly controversial activity, opposed at scales ranging from local villagers to global coalitions. At the same time, smallholder shrimp farming is now the core of the rural economy in many area of Thailand. These economies would be devastated were shrimp farming to be disappear. In any case, it is

unlikely that shrimp farming will disappear, although shrimp farming in Thailand is contracting somewhat right now due to intense international competition. As a result, the key question for Thailand is how to live with shrimp farming, through containing the negative social and environmental effects.

There is general agreement about the kinds of technical measures that are necessary at the farm level to ameliorate most of the negative impacts of shrimp aquaculture. The same list of prescriptions appear and re-appear in industry codes of conduct, government regulations, and papers by advisors and environmentalists like Jason Clay and Claude Boyd. Boyd and Clay's list includes, for example, not sitting in mangroves or tidal wetlands, more efficient feeding practices, restrictions on water exchange, water and sludge treatment, and careful use of chemicals like antibiotics (Boyd and Clay, 1998).

The problem is that it is also unlikely that these sorts of practices will be adopted by most shrimp farmers in response to direct state regulation. Certainly in Thailand, the overall industry record in complying with state regulation remains dismal. Many farms continue to locate in places where they clearly should not (both mangroves and inland wet rice areas); many farmers continue to dump polluted water and sludge into surface waterways, overfeeding and high stocking rates remain the norm, and chemical use remains unregulated. There are many reasons, but a key one is simply the inability of state regulatory agencies to monitor compliance, let alone enforce regulations. Although a variety of government agencies are supposed to be involved in regulating shrimp farming, the most important is the Department of Fisheries, which has been charged with, for example, registering shrimp farming, and implementing regulations related to wastewater treatment and sediment disposal. But this department simply doesn't have the capacity to monitor these regulations.

This general situation is in fact broadly similar to that across a wide spectrum of regulatory issues in natural resource and environmental management. A variety of scholars and institutions are now arguing that direct central state regulation has been ineffective due in part to its coercive and top down approach. A new approach does not eliminate state involvement in shaping regulatory regimes, but focuses on ways that regulatory regimes can mobilize collective self-regulatory institutions, and involve a dispersed network of agencies in the regulatory process. Community-based natural resource management is one important expression of this movement–CBNRM involves (or helps create) self-regulating rural communities (Agarwal and Clark, 1999), but also enrols actors ranging from Oxfam, the WWF, Asia Development Bank, government resource management agencies into the regulatory network. A second important expression of this movement involves regulation through the commodity network through certification–important current examples include the Forestry Stewardship Council, the Marine Stewardship Council, ISO 14,000 certification, organic and fair trade certifications and so on. In food networks, moreover, these trends around environmental regulation are reinforced by the way that quality and food safety regulation is increasingly being carried out by food retailers, through imposing a variety of regulations on their suppliers (Marsden et al,

2000). HACCP is an important example, but only one; food buyers are increasingly monitoring and getting involved in the manufacture of food. My research shows that these trends have also found expression in the shrimp commodity chain: Japanese buyers are well known for their involvement in production and processing, but other buyers, for example, Dardon Restaurants (Red Lobster) are also creating closer ties with their suppliers.

All this suggests that new regulatory practices can take a wide variety of forms, and involve diverse institutions and actors in the regulatory networks. They may or may not involve local communities, NGOs, buyers, business associations and so on. In this paper I will describe some of the main initiatives for regulating shrimp farming, which are based largely in proliferating plans to implement codes of conduct among shrimp farmers. In Thailand, the Department of Fisheries has been particularly aggressive in pursuing this approach. I will focus on the question of who is participating in different parts of the process of producing, monitoring, and enforcing these proposed codes of conduct, with specific attention to the role of the rural people who are most directly impacted by shrimp farming. I will show that in the case of shrimp farming, most of these initiatives have so far left very little room for what I call local "community" involvement. [1] As my brief review of new regulatory approaches demonstrates, the overall repertoire does often enrol local communities into the regulatory networks, but the code of conduct approach in shrimp farming has generally not done so.

At the same time, there are some compelling arguments for involving local communities in all phases of the creation and implementation of these codes. First, it is local communities who bear many the negative environmental and social consequences which have made shrimp farming so controversial, so that it would seem that they should have a role in formulating codes which would constrain these negative consequences. Second, I will present evidence based in my fieldwork in the South of Thailand that local communities may currently be the most effective regulators of shrimp farmers in many parts of Thailand. Although the effectiveness of this form of regulation varies from district to district, they are often able to influence shrimp farming practices because they live nearby, see what the shrimp farmers are doing, suffer the consequences of bad practices, and are often willing to act to force shrimp farmers to change these practices. New regulatory approaches which marginalize local communities from the regulatory network thus miss opportunities for building on these advantages. I will finish with a short discussion of some of the obstacles to community involvement.

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[1] For the purpose of this paper I will pass of the debates over the meaning of the term community (Agarwal and Clark, 2000), and use it to refer collectively rural people living near shrimp farms, as well as village and subdistrict level political authorities.

CODES OF CONDUCT

My review of codes of conduct is still in progress. For this paper I briefly examined two broader efforts to set the frameworks for these kinds of codes: The first is the code of conduct promoted by the "Aquaculture Certification Council (ACC), which has been set up by the industry organization the "Global Aquaculture Alliance" with the help of Claude Boyd (Boyd and Clay, 1998) and other consultants involved in finding ways of supporting the industry by promoting practices which would contain the worst environmental impacts. The second is a technical report of a FAO and government of Australia consultation on Good Management Practices, which included a wide range of participants in the industry. I then examine in more detail Code of Conduct being implemented by the Department of Fisheries in Thailand. I will examine the kinds of networks involved in each of these efforts – who is included and excluded – and the process used or recommended for formulating and implementing codes of conducts/Good Management Practices with specific attention to the role of what I am calling local communities.

Aquaculture Certification Council

The Aquaculture Certification Council (2003) has an extensive website describing its activities and membership. The council is largely a creature of the main players in the industry, along with the academics who work with them. According to the website, the Global Aquaculture Alliance created this council with goal of establishing a certification system that would allow eligible products to display an "ecolabel" at the consumer level but that this was abandoned as too costly, complex, and prone to liability. It now represents itself as a voluntary and educational program, although it lists a number of farms that it has certified. In any case, the organization would have difficulty generating legitimacy for using an ecolabel given the narrowness of the network involved in this effort. Participants include large corporate farmers, processing companies, major buyers including restaurant chains and retailers, and certifying companies. There are no NGOs involved. The most notable absence is the WWF, which has been instrumental in working with industry groups in setting up major certifying bodies such as the Forest Stewartship Council and Marine Stewardship Council. Local communities, it is hardly necessary to say, are also not represented; nor do I see much participation even from governments. Although its legitimacy may be low, the effort has been influential in places like Thailand as a model for codes of conduct for shrimp farming.

The council has developed general codes of best practice around a series of areas, including, for example, sitting, waste disposal, feeds and feed use, shrimp health management, and "community and employee relations." These practices are, not surprisingly, consistent with those identified in the broader literature on shrimp farming, but remain technical in orientation. Most important is that codes around practices like sitting and waste management do not mention any role for local communities either in formulating the locally-specific guidelines, or in

certification, monitoring, or enforcement. For example, under "site evaluation" the code mentions surveying local communities "to determine demography, resource use patterns, availability of work force, and compatibility with project goals" but do not suggest that these local communities might have any role in zoning land for suitability for shrimp farming. All the 11 practices under this category are to be carried out by the project proponents, and most are technical (involving study of hydrology, soils, flora and fauna, government regulations and so on.) The closest this code comes to involving local communities is under the category "community and employee relations." This category specifies that shrimp farm management should schedule meetings with local communities to "exchange information," attempt to accommodate traditional uses of coastal resources, pay workers minimum wages and so on. During certification, ACC certifiers are supposed to interview local people and employees regarding these standards. But there is no suggestion that these same communities might have a role in zoning or setting guidelines for practices which might impact the environment, let alone in monitoring and certification. These processes are carried out entirely by shrimp farmers and the certifying agents of the ACC.

FAO/Government of Australia Expert Consultation

The FAO has a web document based on a consultation held December 4-7, 2000, on "Good Management Practices and Good Legal and Institutional Arrangements for Sustainable Shrimp Culture" (FAO, 2001). Good Management Practices in this context can be seen as a kind of code of conduct, and indeed there was much discussion about codes of conduct in the document. The network created for this effort included many of the same industry groups as that in the ACC, but a broader set of actors were also part of the consultancy and contributed to the documents that came out of the process. Many of the 73 participants were members of research and policy organizations (eg., NACA), and there were a few NGO representatives, most prominently, the WWF, but also one person representing the Industrial Shrimp Action Network, a network of NGOs whose primary purpose is to force the shrimp farming industry to respond to social and environmental concerns.

The overall tone of the document is similar to the ACC process: In most places it assumes that shrimp farmers or the aquaculture industry would remain in control of who defined GMPs as well as performance monitoring. However, local communities were also mentioned in several places, probably due to the involvement of the NGO members. The document generally adopted the term "other resource users" to refer to affected rural people. Under this term, they are mentioned in the document as a group that should have input into defining GMPs related to environmental and social impacts. For example, "Objective 4" in the working paper on operating principles mentions "other water resource users" as one group who should be involved in agreements on appropriate quality standards for local water resources. The working paper on Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Situation-Specific GMP mentions "other resource users" who may want to change shrimp farming activities as a

possible initiator of GMPs or code of practice; and Participatory Rural Appraisal as a possible technique for identifying appropriate GMPs. At the same time, there is no indication that rural communities should provide anything more than input into decisions made by shrimp farmers or the governments, while any mention of the rights of other resource users is usually matched by mention of the rights of shrimp farmers. And in many places where we might expect that local communities could have a role, they were not mentioned–for example, the discussion of zoning suggests that this should be done by government and gives no indication that local communities might be involved. Nevertheless, the broader network enrolled in this process compared to the ACC clearly produced discussion around the possible involvement of local communities.

Shrimp Culture Industry of Thailand Code of Conduct

In Bangkok, on February 14, 2000, a group composed of the following persons ceremoniously signed a copy of something called the "Marine Shrimp Culture Industry of Thailand Code of Conduct."

Mr. Payoong Pattarakulchai, Thai Marine Shrimp Farmers Association (which represents a tiny minority of farmers)
Mr. Paiboon Ponsuwanna, Thai Frozen Food Association
Mr. Pookeite, Thai Food Processors Association
Mr Somchai Kungsamutr, Thai Feed Mill Association
Dr. Wichai Lapjatuporn, Aquaculture Business Club
Mr. Thanan Sovanapreecha, Black Tiger Shrimp Farmers Producers and Exporters Association
Miss. Amphai Sae-lim, Thai Shrimp Buyers Association
Mr. Jiradet Santikanawong, The Shrimp Sellers Association Sumutsakhon
Dr. Sitdhi Boonyaratpalin, Department of Fisheries

Although this was a code of conduct primarily for shrimp farmers, shrimp farmers are largely absent from this initial effort, nor were farmers really involved in formulating this initial code. The exception was the representative of a shrimp farmers association which represented only a small fraction of Thailand's many thousands of farmers. Most signatures represent large industrial associations–processors, feed suppliers and so on. Critics responded by labelling the code of conduct a pro-industry greenwashing which would have no real effect.

The predictions that this code would have no impact have since proven wrong. Since the formal signing, the Department of Fisheries has put together a major program to design a flexible frame for the code, with the idea that groups of shrimp farmers would be able to use the frame to design local codes appropriate to local circumstances. As of interviews during June, 2003, the department of fisheries reported enrolling close to 3,000 shrimp farmers into a GAP program, which had weaker regulations, with the idea that they would work toward Code of Conduct Certification; about 100 farms were Code of Conduct certified. The department's goal was to enrol 10,000 farmers into the certification program by

the end of the year. Broadbased implementation of the CoC is supposed to be achieved through 22 coastal aquaculture stations, from which the department would initiate training of farmers, and carry out inspections and auditing. Farmers certified under the program were receiving a small price premium through direct sales to the five processors involved in the pilot program. Although we have not traced the basis of this premium, to our knowledge it was primarily due to the added quality achieved through direct purchase and assurance that shrimp would not contain anti-biotic residues. However, DoF officials indicated that there was substantial interest from a number of overseas buyers for certified shrimp, and there were reports that some farmer groups were selling to these overseas buyers, particularly in the EU, with a premium. There was also an expectation that farms that were also certified as organic under international bodies would obtain a substantial premium from EU buyers.

As of the research during June, the Dof had no specific plans to involve local villagers other than shrimp farmers. Some officials indicated that it would be important to involve the tambon councils in monitoring the impact of the regulations, and perhaps in zoning. Regarding specific attempts, they noted that there were some trial projects involving inland fish ponds. But even officials favourable to the eventual involvement of tambon councils in monitoring and zoning expressed their doubts about the ability of tambon councils to undertake this work – they would not have the technical knowledge, for example, and the tambon councils were not working well. The DoF effort also made no effort to involve NGOs, who might well be helpful in working out how to involve communities. DoF officials indicated that they thought that NGOs were too opposed to shrimp farming to be of any help in the initial stages although they indicated openness to their involvement in the future as certifiers.

A close examination of two manuals put together by the DoF and NACA for farms which were adhering the code in 2001 gives an example of how the code of conduct process addressed the involvement of affected villagers who were not shrimp farmers. One was for an individual farm, the other for a group of five farms (Department of Fisheries/NACA, 2000a, b, hereafter DOF/NACA 2000a, b). These farms were basically "test" cases for creating a frame code of conduct, thus they are indicative of the overall approach. The manual for the group of five farms indicated that these farmers "were following the standard suggested for the Code of Conduct for the shrimp aquaculture industry," and the language in the more elaborate Thai language versions was often exactly the same between the two manuals, indicating that the shrimp farmers were adopting the language of the general framework with adjustments as they saw appropriate. There was no indication that any other villagers participated in writing these manuals. The influence of the same people as those involved in the GAA process is also apparent in the categories and language of these codes, as well in the fact that Claude Boyd was involved in both processes. The categories of the Thai code include site selection, general farm management, shrimp health management, use of chemicals and drugs, effluent and sediment management, social responsibility, training, and recording. The categories of these manuals are

replicated in a table listing descriptions of Good Management Practices used to audit Code of Conduct certified farms, supplied to us by DoF officials. As in the manuals, attention to community is mentioned only under the category "social responsibility" which asks farmers regarding social conflicts, contributions to community improvements, and labour.

These manuals do not indicate that local communities were involved in formulating the provisions of the code around practices such as site selection and waste disposal. The manuals do not mention who is monitoring compliance, but at this stage DOF officials indicated that they would be doing so. Section 8 in the manuals and auditing list, where the frame indicates what will be done in the area of "social responsibility," one of the manuals indicates (in the English summary) that "Farmer is aware of the impact of shrimp culture to the environment, community, and social. Thus, the environment friendly practice shrimp culture is carried out" (DOF/NACA, 2000a) The manual referring to a single farmer adds that the farmer tries to employ local workers and assist public services, for example, through donations (DOF/NACA, 2000b). The more elaborate Thai versions both add that farmers will pay minimum wage and treat workers with justice.

In sum, the extent of the role envisioned for local communities in the various codes of conduct is apparently influenced by the network of actors involved in each effort, with the FAO consultancy providing for more role, even mentioning PRA as an approach to soliciting local concerns. The code of conduct being implemented in Thailand falls on the more restrictive end with respect to community (and NGO) involvement. This code is also supposed to be implemented by the Department of Fisheries–which, as I show below, has so far been a near complete failure in regulating shrimp farming in the study area in the south of Thailand.

REGULATORY PRACTICE IN SOUTHERN THAILAND

In 2001 and 2002, I and a local research assistant interviewed 21 farmers in the area of Songkla Lake, as well a number of farmers further north, in the Districts of Ranot and Hua Sai. For each farmer we surveyed the farm to determine how the farmer dealt with water supplies, waste water, and sediment disposal, and asked some questions regarding farm operation. We also interviewed administrative officials working for the Tambon Councils. The Tambon councils have become a key organization in the decentralization of bureaucratic power in Thailand; they have responsibility for local development activities, the authority to manage its resources including forests, and the right to raise money through assessing fees on businesses (Puntasen, 1996). Tambon Councils are composed of a council of elected representatives from the villages that comprise a tambon (usually about 10), plus hired administrators who in fact do most of the work. Finally, I also interviewed villagers not engaged in shrimp farming, and other knowledgeable local people in the South.

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Songkla Lake is a large lagoon, some 80 km long; and 20 km wide at its widest points; and covering a total area of about 1000 square kilometres (Choonhapran, 1996:2). Water flows southward, emptying into the Gulf of Thailand at Songkla. Although salinity varies by season, the lower portion (Talet Sap Songkla) is generally brackish and flushed by tides, while the upper portions (Talet Luang) is brackish only in the dry season. The table below summarizes the population and fishing activities in these two major parts of the lake during the early 1990s, based on research carried out by staff at the National Institute of Coastal Aquaculture (Choonhapran et al, 1996).

Table 1. Population and fishing activities on Songkla Lake

	Lower Lake (Talet Sap Songkla)	Upper Lake (Talet Luang)
Area of the Lake (square kilometres)	182	837
Number of Fishing Villages	41	102
Number of households in Fishing Villages	6160	14,190
Number of households reporting fishing as a sole or major livelihood	2,490	4,579
Total Annual Catch (tonnes)	3,361	5,745

Large numbers of shrimp farms were built around the lower part of the lake during the first phase of shrimp farming expansion in the South in the late 1980s. On the west coast of the lake, these farms reached as far north as Pak Payun, where there were over 3,000 rai of shrimp farms in 1999 according to the district fisheries office. Although it is almost impossible to estimate the total area of shrimp farms given the poor quality of the data collected by the fisheries department, the total area around the southern portion of the lake probably exceeded 10,000 rai by late 1997.

Most shrimp farms located near Songkla Lake draw their water directly from the lake, with salinity sometimes enhanced through the delivery of salt water by trucks. Water is usually disposed into ditches which run to canals and then into the lake. In some areas shrimp farming has become central to the local economy, with the only alternative being daily commutes to nearby towns for wage labour. The old economy on the east side of the lake was based on rice cultivation for

own consumption, plus the tapping and processing palm sugar for cash (Vandergeest, 1989). This economy has receded into insignificance – palm sugar tapping is rare today while rice farming is increasingly considered a type of hobby for older people. In other parts of the lake however, rice and fruit agriculture remains significant, and in the lower parts of the lake, many villagers obtain supplementary income from raising sea bass in cages. The main environmental and social controversies which have accompanied the spread of shrimp farming include the salinization of rice fields, pollution of surface and ground water, and water pollution due to primarily poor sediment disposal. The latter are reputed to be responsible for many fish kills, especially among sea bass raised in cages.

I also interviewed some farmers further north, in the districts of Hua Sai and Ranot. In these areas, intensive shrimp culture drawing water from the Gulf has dominated the coastal economy since 1980s, although the industry has moved through a series of crises and recoveries primarily due to viral diseases, which are in turn linked to general environmental stresses. In these areas, there are typically many shrimp farmers along canals that move water directly from the Gulf of Thailand inland to the farmers – sometimes many of kilometres. At the inland edge of the expanding shrimp farming frontier, salinization of rice fields is a major issue. Rice farmers have periodically staged large demonstrations, filed petitions and used a variety of other strategies in an attempt to stop the expansion of shrimp farming, obtain compensation for polluted rice fields, and force shrimp farmers to refrain from dumping saline or polluted water into waterways used for irrigation.

A major moment in the regulation of shrimp farming in the Songkla Lake area occurred during 1998, when a prime minister's directive led to a local level zoning process. In early 1998, the rapid expansion of shrimp farming into the Central Region's "rice bowl" blew up into a major national-level controversy (Flaherty et al, 1999). On June 3rd 1998, the National Environment Board recommended that the Prime Minister ban shrimp farming in the freshwater areas of 10 Central Plains provinces under Article 9 of the 1992 Environmental Protection Act. When the Prime Minister finally acted, his directive went significantly beyond banning inland shrimp farming in the Central Plains. He also ordered governors of coastal provinces to zone their provinces into fresh and brackish water areas, and to ban shrimp farming in fresh water zones. Bans were to be effective 120 days after the provincial governors gazetted the zoning and orders. Because the Prime Minister ordered this zoning and associated bans under Article 9 of the so-called 1992 Environment Act, provincial governors, and thus the Ministry of Interior, can be held responsible for implementing the zoning, and for monitoring, and enforcement. In effect, this brings in a hierarchy of local administrative institutions, including village and tambon level officials.

The Prime Minister's order directed governors to zone their provinces into fresh and salt water zones, but it did not specify how this zoning was to take place. Governors in coastal provinces have found that the ambiguity of what is fresh or brackish has forced them away from using purely technical criteria for doing this

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zoning. The governor in Songkla province, which takes up the western and south parts of Songkla Lake, resolved the problem by asking Tambon Councils to zone their tambons. The justification for this approach given to me by various officials included the new powers given to the tambon councils under the Tambon Administrative Unit Bill of 1995 (Puntasen, 1996) and the provisions in the 1997 constitution giving villagers the right to manage natural resources in rural areas. Zoning by the tambon councils was followed by reviews and approvals at the district and provincial levels. The province also made shrimp farm operation in villages and tambons where shrimp farming was permitted subject to laws and conditions set out by the Tambon council. In Songkla, final provincial plans were approved in early December, 1998.

This approach made it possible for village level opponents to combine with district and provincial authorities to use the zoning process as a vehicle for setting three types of limits on shrimp farms. In some areas shrimp farming was completely banned. In other cases, the Tambon councils tried to contain the spread of shrimp farming by allowing shrimp farming only within limited areas where they were less likely to affect agriculture. Finally, Tambon councils, district committees (in Satingpra) made permission to engage in shrimp farming conditional on specified management practices. Some local observers argue that the zoning in Songkla basically marked the limits on the spread of shrimp farming to that date, an observation which was often accurate in the tambons where I carried out research. But there was still a lot of land available in areas where there were already shrimp farms, so that another effect was to increase the concentration of shrimp farming in areas where it was permitted. In about half the tambons that I visited, however, the spatial limits placed on shrimp farming through the zoning processes has since been exceeded.

During the interviews in July, 2001, we (I and/or my local research assistant who lived in the area) obtained basic data on size, ownership, and farming practices, and we asked each farmer whether they were "constrained" or "regulated" by each of four groups: Other villagers, the tambon councils, the Department of Fisheries, and other shrimp farmers. The term used to ask this question "bang-kap," which implies active rather than passive regulation. In other words, I was asking shrimp farmers if any of these groups had actively sought to change and constrain their farming practices. The following are the numbers of respondents in the Songkla Lake area who reported that they were regulated or constrained by:

Other villagers: 10 of 20
By Tambon Councils: 9 of 20
By other shrimp farmers: 0/20
By the Department of Fisheries: 2/20
No external regulation at all: 8/20

These figures need to be explained and qualified in a number of ways. First, the two farmers who reported regulation by the Department of Fisheries indicated

that this consisted of just one visit – a general meeting of shrimp farmers during which the department officials told them they should dispose of sediments properly and not locate farms in mangroves. This visit took place in a tambon which had been zoned as fresh water, off limits to shrimp farming, and where local villagers had mobilized to actively oppose shrimp farming, drawing attention from various levels of government. Overall, the Department of Fisheries has had almost no role in regulating any aspect of shrimp farming in this area.

Second, these numbers over-estimate the role of the Tambon Councils, as in most cases where shrimp farmers report an active Council, the council was acting in response to demands by villagers that it take action. Finally, the apparent lack of regulation by other shrimp farmers is partly accounted for by the way that most of these farmers exchanged water directly through the lake, and did not share canals or other water infrastructure with other farmers. Some farmers did report that other farmers did not "constrain" or regulate them, but that they all knew in common what was appropriate practice.

One of the eight farmers who indicated that he had not experienced any regulation lived in a tambon where villagers were actively regulating shrimp farming. He had escaped active regulation because his operation was the best of the 20 we saw; his operation was locally not held responsible for negative impacts. Many among the other seven farmers who indicated that they did not experience direct regulation explained that shrimp farmers knew among themselves what they should and should not do, that they were disposing of sediments in an appropriate manner in a way that did not impact other resource users. Without judging the accuracy of these claims, we can interpret this as indicating that even this group were experiencing a kind of passive regulation by other villagers.

In summary, then, these results show that almost all regulation of shrimp farming in the Songkla Lake area is through the action of other villagers. Villagers often enlisted the tambon council to act on their behalf, but the Department of Fisheries had neglible regulatory presence of impact.

I also interviewed tambon council members, administrative officers, and other staff at the tambon councils offices, and other villagers about the actions of tambon councils. Based on these results, I classified eleven tambon according to whether the tambon was taking a strong, weak/mixed, or no role in regulating shrimp farming. I classified the tambon council role as strong if they were actively involved in trying to regulate shrimp farming even where their efforts were not successful. I also classified the tambon according to whether the 1998 zoning was being enforced or not, although I was not able to obtain complete information on the latter for every tambon, and in some cases this zoning was enforced more by villagers than by the tambon council. The results were as follows:

Number of Tambons/Tambon Councils that took a:
Strong Regulatory Role: 5
Mixed or Weak Role: 5
No role at all: 1
Zoning enforced: 5 tambon
Zoning not enforced: 4 tambon.

In two tambon, the councils had banned shrimp farming completely prior to the zoning process under their powers to control use of local resources. In these tambons villagers felt that the ecological threats posed by shrimp farming exceeded the potential benefits. They did allow the few existing shrimp farms to continue operating, subject to regulations regarding disposal of sediments and other practices. In a third tambon, shrimp farming was banned during the zoning process, but the council did not stop shrimp farmers locating in their territory after the zoning, resulting in much conflict with surrounding villagers.

These results show that the effectiveness of the tambon councils is mixed. The evidence gathered in our interviews pointed to only two tambons where the councils were captured by shrimp farmers who blocked any attempt to regulate shrimp farming – and in one of these, even the council could not prevent villagers who had successfully had shrimp farming banned in some of or all of their villages during the zoning from enforcing this zoning, in more direct though informal ways. As I noted above, councils that took strong roles often did so only because they were under considerable pressure from villagers to do so.

It is worth pointing to some of the contrasts with Hua Sai and Ranot, where many shrimp farmers were crowded together, often sharing water infrastructure. My interviews in these districts, as well as discussions with key informants, showed quite different results with respect to the direct regulatory effects of other shrimp farmers. For example, a strong set of common norms had developed around proper disposal of sediments and waste water, so as to avoid pollution of the canals used by other shrimp farmers. Shrimp farmers that we interviewed would let waste water settle in large ditches surrounding ponds before releasing into canals; while the local tambon councils were making sure that shrimp farmers at the inland frontier dug these deep ditches around their farms to prevent seepage into rice fields. Where we interviewed in Ranot, most farms had deep ditches around their farms that they could use for water treatment because they were obliged to construct them by the tambon councils. The councils were acting in response to mobilization by rice farmers demanding action with respect to salinization.

Farmers in this area also used much better sediment disposal techniques than those typical around Songkla Lake. While around Songkla Lake most shrimp farmers washed out sediments while they were still wet, in Hua Sai the common practice was to let the sediments dry before mechanical removal to a disposal site on the farm, which was isolated from the ditches and canals. When sediments accumulated, farmers often had it trucked away to be used as fill on construction

sites. With the wet method, the tendency is for the sediments to wash into canals and lakes. Around Songkla Lake, shrimp farmers can do so without impacting other shrimp farmers, but the high degree of dependence on common water infrastructure in Hua Sai and Ranot means that proper sediment disposal is crucial for the sustainability of all shrimp farming operations. The dry disposal method is more expensive and means leaving more time between crops, but in Hua Sai other shrimp farmers and villagers in effect constrain the actions of individual shrimp farmers, forcing them to use the dry method. The tambon councils had not been involved in sediment disposal – the relatively good practices in this area had developed through collective self-regulation among shrimp farmers needing to maintain water quality in the canals. In other words, the relatively long history of disease crises, extensive sharing of water infrastructure, and mobilization by rice farmers had produced strong norms around the importance of collective self-regulation, and the involvement of local civil authorities in regulating shrimp farms.

What are the specific ways that villagers or tambon councils regulate shrimp farming? These mechanisms range from situations where shrimp farmers simply don't want to make trouble with people who are their neighbours, friends or even relatives, to more organized attempts to reign in the practices of shrimp farmers through approaching the tambon councils, petitions to local authorities, to threats of theft or violence. The most common process reported to us during formal interviews was the first – many shrimp farmers indicated that they did not want to cause unnecessary harm to rice farmers and fishers, and that they wanted to avoid confrontations with those villagers. In some cases this was not reported as regulation at all, but simply that shrimp farmers knew what was appropriate (even if they didn't practice it).

In many cases, however, regulatory practices went beyond this to more organized efforts, for example, where villagers approached the tambon councils and other civil authorities to take action. In at least four of the 12 tambons where I interviewed, villagers were highly mobilized and the tambon councils were very much involved in shrimp farm regulation – including the three where shrimp farming had been banned through the zoning process. In another tambon, fishing households watched shrimp farmers carefully, and reported to and pressured the tambon council to take action whenever they thought improper sediment disposal had killed caged sea bass. In this tambon, the "palet" (chief administrative officer) of the tambon council had developed a systematic approach to dealing with these problems, starting with warnings, then increasing fines. Villagers also tried to make shrimp farms pay compensation for lost caged sea bass but the tambon council palet reported that this was difficult because it was often not possible to know which farm was responsible.[2] Although it was the tambon council staff who often took action,

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[2] Villagers were convinced that improper sediment disposal was responsible for mortality among caged sea bass. Scientists at a local research institute indicated to me that they thought that villagers often tended to blame fish kills on shrimp farming when fish could be dying for other reasons.

they did so in response to complaints by villagers, and local shrimp farms reported this as regulation by villagers, not the tambon council. In another tambon, an island much further into the fresh water parts of the lake, shrimp farming had been completely banned during the zoning process. A number of shrimp farms had nevertheless located there – but these farms were vigorously opposed by local villagers, who wrote letters and petitions, organized meetings, and held demonstrations. Their actions forced the tambon council to mediate conflicts and issue regulations with respect to sediment disposal.

Finally, the threat of violence or other coercive means, though not often expressed openly, often backed village regulation. This was expressed openly to us by a tambon council palet in one of the tambons where shrimp farming had been banned, while allowing an exisiting, mid-sized farm to continue operation. Villagers in this tambon, near the mouth of Songkla Lake, relied extensively on fishing and sea bass aquaculture; their main concern with shrimp farms was the stress or mortality on fish due to water pollution caused by improper sediment disposal. The palet reported that in the past there were continuing problems with accusations of water pollution causing fish kills with the one shrimp farm, and villagers had come to the tambon council to complain and demand that the farmer clean up his operation, threatening that they would make him stop farming otherwise. Interested in the question of sanctions, I asked who would make the farmer stop farming – the tambon council, or the villagers. The palet (paraphrasing) answered that that villagers would do so, using their own "village" way, which consisted of stealing a lot of shrimp. The owner had already gone to the police to complain about theft. The palet was at pains to emphasize that the people were not "bad" and that if the shrimp farmer did not cause any problems then there would be none with the villagers.

The "village way" is in fact probably the most effective form for regulation today in situations where shrimp farmers are not voluntarily responding to villager concerns. As I have written elsewhere (Stonich and Vandergeest, 2001), the political ecology of shrimp farming and the organization of marketing has made theft of shrimp endemic in Southern Thailand – the fact that intensively farmed shrimp are portable, easy to appropriate in large numbers, and carry a very high value on a per kilogram basis makes shrimp theft a highly lucrative enterprise. Although most theft is motivated by the financial benefits, theft can also be used to sanction non-cooperative shrimp farmers. Throughout Southern Thailand, large shrimp farms are brightly lit and watched by armed guards throughout the night, while smaller farmers make a practice of sleeping by their ponds with guns at hand when their crop is nearing harvestable size. During my interviews, whenever I pressed the question of what villagers would do if a farmer, for example, tried to locate in a banned zone, villagers indicated that they had their

However, their research indicated that improper sediment disposal could kill sea bass when they were young, by temporarily decreasing dissolved oxygen levels.

ways, without being specific. Other forms of coercive "village" sanctions can also be used to convince shrimp farmers of the value of cooperation.

What of situations where there was no regulation, and shrimp farmers practices were poor? In some cases, this was because shrimp farming did not directly affect villagers – for example, where zoning kept shrimp farmers in areas where agriculture was not impacted, where there was no substantial fisheries or sea bass aquaculture, or local villagers were satisfied that the fisheries were not affected. But in other cases, the lack of regulation was because villagers dared not oppose shrimp farms for fear of violent retribution. In these types of tambon, shrimp farmers often controlled local political institutions including the tambon councils, rendering them ineffective.

The "village way" in effect cuts two ways – the threat of violence was also used to repress opposition. In two tambons, the tambon council administrative officers indicated to me that the villagers were afraid to approach shrimp farmers about their environmental impacts for reasons of personal safety. In one of these two cases, villagers were able to maintain the zoning through being militant about enforcement, and thus the contain the spread of shrimp farming into areas where they might affect agriculture. However, the canals were full of disposed sediments – to the point where fishers could not use the canals to go out into the lake, and the Department of Fisheries organized a project to dredge the canals. A local tambon officer indicated that there had been sea bass aquaculture prior to the introduction of shrimp farming, but that villagers had stopped due to frequent fish kills from sediment disposal. They could not constrain the activities of shrimp farmers because the council president, the kamnan (chief administrative officer), and many council representatives were shrimp farmers and refused to discuss regulating shrimp farming. Further discussion with my local research assistant in Southern Thailand turned around the dangers to personal safety of pressing regulation too much. In another tambon – clearly the worst situation in this study – there were only a few large shrimp farmers, but they were a local elite with a history of violence, who ignored zoning and dumped sediments into public land and waterways. According to a group of staff at the tambon council, no villagers in this tambon dared to speak up, despite much informal discussion. This tambon has a reputation throughout the district for its history of illegal livelihoods (theft, production of illegal alcohol) and violent feuding among competing local elites. The president of the tambon council was himself a major shrimp farmer responsible for illegal and poor practices.

DISCUSSION

Codes are Conduct are being considered in many countries as a way of addressing the problems and controversies around shrimp farming, and as marketing strategy. These codes can be understood as an expression of a broader process toward regulation through broad-based networks. This movement emphasizes self-regulation by industry or communities, but also can enrol a

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variety of other actors in the regulatory process–ranging from consumers, overseas buyers, various NGOs, international certification bodies like the ISO, and government departments.

Putting the codes in this broader context points to how there are a wide range of options for enrolling actors in various parts of the process. In particular, it highlights the exclusion or marginalization of any substantive role for those people most affected by shrimp farming, and indeed in whose names these codes are often implemented. Both the Thai code and the GAA code were organized around goals not only of ensuring product safety and quality, but also around minimizing impacts on the surrounding environments and on those people whose livelihoods depend on access to these resources. I have looked closely at only the Thai code, but I think its fairly safe to predict that other national codes will similarly exclude or marginalize local communities from key parts of the process where they would have a clear interest in participation.

This exclusion may be considered a problem not only because these codes are aimed at minimizing negative impacts on local communities. My research in Southern Thailand suggests that local communities, along with other shrimp farmers, are currently the most effective regulators of shrimp farmers. Who emerges as the stronger influence on shrimp farming practices – local, non-shrimp farming communities, or other shrimp farmers, depends partly on ecological characteristics, and the density and infrastructural organization of shrimp farming. In cases where the infrastructure does not induce shrimp farmers to regulate themselves collectively, as around Songkla Lake, community involvement in shrimp farming is especially important, as shrimp farmers have little inducement to regulate themselves. Finally, an approach which does not include these communities are excluding those who are currently the most effective regulators.

I will finish with a short discussion about some of the reasons why local communities are being marginalized, along with some arguments that these reasons should not constitute obstacles to the constructive involvement of communities as a way of partially addressing many of the problems associated with shrimp farming. Some of these reasons are informed conjecture, as I have not had the chance to discuss this with many of the main proponents of these codes. I have so far come up with five possible reasons why the industry and the department of fisheries in Thailand have been reluctant to involve communities or affected populations in regulatory networks.

1.   Signals from buyers. I have interviewed representatives of about 10 processors in Thailand to ask about how they are experiencing regulation by buyers. I also attended an IFOAM consultation intended to help IFOAM develop standards for organic shrimp cultivation. Examples of issues brought up by potential buyers especially from Europe (as well as European environmental groups) included concerns about the use of chemicals, mangrove destruction, and even the pain caused to shrimp by eyestalk ablation (which induces

spawning). Potential buyers did not convey much interest in community rights, while labour issues were often tied to questions about child labour.

Much of the interest in codes of conduct around Asia is provoked by the idea that certified shrimp could obtain or maintain some kind of market advantage. This lack of interest in community involvement by buyers, however, need not be an obstacle to involving communities in regulation; it points more to a problem with incentives. Vigorous campaigning to raise consumer awareness of the social as well as environmental problems with shrimp farming could help to change these signals, as is Fair Trade coffee for that product.

2.   Fisheries departments and other industry players do not know how to involve communities or local civil authorities. Mostly fisheries people have no idea of how to do "community based management." Their institutional history and culture is one of working with industry groups, including fishers, but not with communities, village administrations, or tambon councils. This lack of knowledge is reinforced by the way that the regulatory networks forming around the codes of conduct seldom include social scientists or anyone who might know something about how to work with communities. The participants are entirely technical people trained in subjects like biology, or business people. Bringing more social scientists and NGOs into the regulatory network, in other words, would help address this obstacle.

3.   Related to this is a high degree of polarization between industry proponents and industry critics, which is particularly severe in Thailand. Most NGOs (the WWF is an exception) in Thailand are unwilling to get involved in industry self-regulation, while members of the industry and the Department of Fisheries see NGOs as disruptive and unwilling to contribute to constructive solutions which accepts the presence of a shrimp farming industry. However, it is noticeable that ISA-net (a key international network organized around contesting the shrimp farming industry) was at the FAO consultation, and other NGOs were at the IFOAM consultation. In other words, there are NGOs who are willing to work with industry in the right circumstances. It would certainly help, however, if more NGOs were willing to signal their willingness to work with industry players, in return for a greater commitment to addressing the social issues around shrimp farming.

4.   Shrimp farmers want to keep control of the regulatory process, and not subject themselves to unpredictable local demands from people who they think lack an understanding of the broader issues, lack technical knowledge, and who may not respect the rights of shrimp farmers to engage in shrimp farming. For example, in the FAO report, references to the importance of local involvements and local resource rights was often followed by references to the need to respect the rights of shrimp farmers. In effects, the underlying concern is that giving too much control to local communities may in some cases lead these communities to either ban shrimp farming, or formulate provisions which constrain farmers and make them uncompetitive.

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This obstacle to community involvement may be the most important of all – but it also can be addressed. The key here is that in situations where shrimp farming is indeed bringing the local benefits claimed by the industry, then local communities are unlikely to ban shrimp farming or impose unreasonable regulations. In many districts around Songkla Lake, shrimp farming had become the single most important component of the village economy, and it would be unlikely that local villagers would seek to push out these farms. Even where shrimp farms were largely owned by non-residents and brought few direct benefits, most villagers did not challenge their right to farm shrimp as long as they farmed in a way that did not impact on their resources – nothing more than what the code is supposed to achieve. In cases where tambon authorities had banned shrimp farming, villagers had gave good reasons based on local knowledge of the ecological impacts. Local or participatory zoning is the means by which local communities can participate in site selection – the current codes specifies primarily technical criteria for site selection with very little local consultation, let alone real participation.

5. A final objection concerns the quality of the tambon councils These councils are now the key local level institution, and the one which would have jurisdiction were local civil authorities to become involved in regulating shrimp farming. But fisheries department officials involved in the code of conduct, NGOs involved in working with coastal communities, and many villagers, have indicated that they are not convinced that these organizations are appropriate for representing villager input into shrimp farm regulation. They agree that some are "good," that is, they represent local villagers, are not captured by local influential people with a reputation for violence or corruption, and act in a professional manner. But others have been captured by local elites who have no interest in constraining shrimp farmers on behalf of a common good. My research confirms this – in most cases where these councils did get involved in regulating shrimp farms they did so only under pressure from villagers, and in at least two of eleven tambon, the tambon council was controlled by shrimp farmers and villagers were afraid to openly press regulation for fear of their personal safety.

At the same time, however, it is not clear that a code of conduct by itself would be successful in changing these situations, while it might be possible to involve villagers through the tambon councils which are not controlled by violent-prone local elites. .Mixed success, in other words, is better than the current situation, where regulatory action on the part of the Department of Fisheries is largely irrelevant at the local level. One can look to the local level zoning process into "fresh" and "salt" water discussed above as an example; despite the mixed results in terms of enforcement, this zoning has contributed in about half the tambons studied to containing the spatial spread of shrimp farming into agricultural or otherwise sensitive ecological areas. At the same time, the problems with tambon councils show that best mechanisms and institutions for involving villagers in the code of conduct needs further study and exploration

CONCLUSION

Although I have been critical of how codes of conduct in shrimp farming marginalize or exclude local communities, I should emphasise that I also consider an approach which formalizes self-regulation by groups of shrimp farmers an important step toward better regulatory practices. The manuals for those farms which had been certified in Thailand as of 2001 suggest that these farms had indeed taken concrete steps towards reducing the negative social and environmental impacts of their operations. The question is what will happen when the code becomes extended to thousands or tens of thousands of farmers, beyond the capacity of the DoF to monitor compliance closely. Moreover, it also raises more general questions around accountability – should shrimp farmers be accountable to local affected populations, or only to each other, the Department of Fisheries, and the retailers/consumers for whom the information provided through this certification is intended?

I will finish by pointing to the fact that village-level regulation has been given legal backing by the 1997 constitution in Thailand, specifically by provisions which give villagers the right to participate in the management of natural resources. What this has meant is that the tambon councils can now legitimately take action to regulate use of local common property resources. Our case study of the impact of their participation in zoning around Songkla Lake gives an idea of how important these new rights and powers might be. I am not arguing that involving local communities would be a panacea – the difficulties outlined above ensures that there would continue to be many problems at the local level. However, there could also be many benefits to finding ways of including local villagers in writing the local codes, monitoring compliance and so on, beside the basic one of increased local accountability. Non shrimp farming villagers such as rice farmers or fishers might know better than shrimp farmers how local environments can be degraded by shrimp farming, as they are the ones who directly experience this degradation. Non-shrimp farmers as monitors are also less likely to close ranks and hide infractions than groups of local shrimp farmers whom, we might expect, will want to protect themselves and maintain the benefits of certification. Overall, successful implementation of a code of conduct will work best if the process enrols a wide variety of actors – not only consumers, retailers, restaurants, and governments, but also local communities, local development NGOs, and environmental groups.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Transgenderism in Malaysia:
The Conceptualisation of *Mak Nyah*

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ABSTRACT

Increased appearances of transgenderists, or the locally known *mak nyahs*, in the Malaysian public space have created much anxiety in various institutions in society including that of tertiary education, religion, government authority, media and the family. The concern is mainly focused on moral and social values of today's youth. While different measures were taken to curb transgender behaviours and appearance, limited effort was made to understand or comprehend the fact that transgenderism exists and *mak nyahs* are yearning for acceptance. Gender crossing renders ambiguous identities in relation to sex, gender and sexuality. Such identities are characterised by or grounded on individual biological and/or social experiences. This paper attempts to conceptualise '*mak nyah*' as an analytical tool, representing male-to-female transgenderists in Malaysia, and locates it in the discourse of transgenderism. It is apparent that the gender and sex dimorphisms have ignored the existence of the third (and potentially, more) gender and sex, that have long existed in human history. However, the categorisation of cross-gendered groups is basically a Western effort, which takes into account the different characteristics of, and the motivations behind, relevant transgendered behaviours and identities. This paper is a preliminary report of a research of transgenderism in Malaysia. The research was funded by the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Malaysia (UKM).

INTRODUCTION

Dominant discourses of gender and sex delineate the bipolar system of men and women. These (essentially Western) discourses position men and women in dichotomous categories closely connected to sex i.e. male or female. In fact, many societies in general, expect men or women to perform their social roles and to behave in line with their sex assigned at birth. Their social interactions are also

expected to be consistent with established social norms and values. In other words, the biological sex denotes the gender and sex identities of men and women.

However, there are people who blend or transcend such conventional and salient gender prescriptions. Their identities can be fluid and ambiguous. Their gender performances and sex identities are incongruent with their biological sex, and they do not completely 'fit in' to either one of the gender or sex binary. They are generally called transgenderists, who represent the so-called third gender or third sex groups of people. Transgenderism, i.e. transgender characteristics, presentation, process and identity, is by no means a new social or medical phenomenon.[1] Transgenderists in many societies are, however, marginalized and stigmatised. The anxiety or resentment held by the general public is mainly based on ignorance, misunderstanding, or avoidance of transgenderism. Set outside the bipolar gender, this group of people is apparently non-gendered. Hence, the rejection, inquiry and suspicion of their identities. Where should we situate them in the social category of gender? Should they be gendered according to their sex at birth? But they appear and behave like the opposite sex? Or are they ungendered due to the incongruity with conventional gender/sex dualism?

This paper attempts to conceptualise the social phenomenon of transgenderism in Malaysia. It focuses on a group of transgenderists, which is popularly known in the Malay language as m*ak nyah.* [2] *Mak nyahs,* as a group of male-to-femalers, face social pressures and resentment in society, mainly as a result of the lack of understanding about them. In addition, the group is also stereotypically discarded by the hegemonic discourse and knowledge of the binary system of gender and sex.[3] The paper also intends to show two main points: (a) transgenderism is a complex phenomenon and existing theories or perspectives of gender are insufficient to address transgenderism or *mak nyahism;*[4] (b) that the concept *mak nyah*, is essentially a category of transgenderists parallel to the Western discourse of gender blending or transgenderism, although the study of transgenderism in Malaysia is comparatively lacking.

The first part of this paper examines the conventional discourse of gender and sex (and to a lesser extent, sexuality), which has extensively dominated our everyday understanding of human beings. Nevertheless, it offers limited space for the re-construction of gender identities, and gender crossing is deemed anomalous. Apparently, transgenderism or according to Herdt (1996) 'the third gender', challenges the prevalent understanding of the dichotomous features of gender and sex.

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[1] See for example, Ekins and King (eds). 1996; Herdt (ed) 1996; Murray and Roscoe, 1997.

[2] In the Malay language, *mak* means mother or aunt; *nyah* could either mean 'go away' according to the Kamus Lengkap (Complete Dictionary) by Zaman, or a Malay colloquial which carries effeminate connotion. It is widely used in the country to refer to male transgenderists.

[3] In Malaysia, religious resentment also plays a major role in defying gender ambiguity.

[4] I use the term mak nyahism by analogy with transgenderism.

The conceptualisation of transgenderism is analysed in the second part of this paper. Discourses of the 'third' gender have given rise to various concepts and metaphors; not least, created the rhetoric of different sexual and gender identities as well as categories of transgenderists.[5] The spectrum of transgenderism is referred here to illuminate the complexity and diversity of femininities and masculinities. These are presented in two tables that illustrate the transgender spectrum, and some characteristics of a few ideal types of transgenderists. With this as a bedrock, it becomes apparent that *mak nyah* as a complicated concept which denotes third gender entities, shares similar traits of transgenderism found in the international realm.

THE DISCOURSE OF SEX AND GENDER

Gender is a concept used to differentiate men and women in the sense of their socially constructed and learned roles and functions, physical appearances and social identities. For example, a man has a stronger and bigger body compared to a woman; he performs the role as a father, a husband or the head of household; he is dominant in the public spheres such as the political arena and economic production. Whereas, women are mothers, wives, domestic workers; they are petite, soft spoken, and submissive. Because gender roles and characteristics are subsumed in social interactions and expectations, men and women are presumed to behave and act according to what was expected of their gender.

In close connection to this, gender behaviours and identities are coded by one's sex assigned at birth. Sex refers to the biological construction of a female or male. It is usually signified by their genitals and reproductive organs such as the womb, testes, breasts, etc. Other signifiers are like chromosomes, hormones, genetics, Adam's apple, amount of body hair, voice and shapes of the body. For instance, someone with a penis, Adam's apple, testosterone and a muscular body is considered a male.

Men and women are socialised and treated by others in accordance to their gender and sexual identity; and therefore, male and female are expected to perform gender congruent with their biological sex and social norms pertinent to the society they live in. Those who act and behave accordingly, would be accepted; whereas, those who whether fail or 'misbehave' would most probably be marginalised, stigmatised or discriminated against.

Dominant gender discourses define gender and relevant roles and identities in accordance to biological sex in duality: man and woman, male and female. When sexuality is in concern, dispositions of femininity and masculinity are assumed to be attributes of and devotion to heterosexuality. Throughout most of our history, these gender and sex dimorphisms was the hub for many individuals' and society's (gendered) values and expectation to ensure 'normal' gender and sex

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[5] See Murray and Roscoe, 1997; Tewksbury and Gagne, (1996).

identities, sexual orientation and practices. This hegemonic discourse has dominated many areas of study and knowledge, including that of social sciences and medical fields.[6]

Among social scientists who studied about gender differences or dualism are Ortner, Rosaldo and Lamphere in the 1970s. They analysed gender in relation to the opposition of nature and culture; private and public spheres; or the gender differentiated division of labour.[7] In general, it is expected that men and women have specific roles, identities, sexuality and behaviours. The asymmetrical and dialectic positions of men and women are also pervasive. In addition, based on these exclusive divisions, different stages of development in feminism have addressed inequalities, differences and rights between the two gender/sex; a more recent issue is the exploration of women's dissimilar lived experiences and roles in different societies.[8] Hence, indicates the diverse characteristics of femininity. However, transgenderism was not addressed as part of the discourse of these diversities.

While the terms gender and sex are frequently used interchangeably to refer to two categories of human beings; it is also not uncommon to find that gender as a system is also often overlooked or taken for granted in social analysis. The terms and system are accepted as pertinent or 'given' in social arrangements, interactions and divisions. Nonetheless, apart from the usual focus of gender studies on women; a majority of these studies are to show the subordination and unjust treatments against women. The male species, due to their productive nature and strength, is always seen as dominant and as the source of women's subordination.[9] In this sense, conventional discourse of gender or sex is insufficient in tackling the diversity and complexity of femininity and masculinity; and the hegemonic discourse of gender delimits a wider understanding of human body and creativity. For instance, women are subordinated not solely because of their gender; on the contrary, femininity could be a source of empowerment; or men could take on the supposedly female roles such as those in the *Berdache* community;[10] or the fact that a person with a penis may not be a man or function as a man. Additionally, we often forgot that masculinity is not a quality solely possessed by men or by all men. Likewise, feminine behaviours are not only found in women or in all women.

The divisions between men and women are so enmeshed in society and history that norms, values, and moral are well established to regulate gender performances and presentations; and of course, sexuality and sexual behaviours

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[6] For theoretical perspectives on gender dichotomies, see for example, Ortner (1974), Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974).

[7] I have discussed these perspectives in Lee, 2000.

[8] See Rhode, 1990; Ng, 1994; Wazir, 1995.

[9] See for example Ortner, 1974; Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974).

[10] See for example, Ong and Peletz (eds), 1995; Visvanathan, et. Al. (eds) 1997; Edwards and Roces (eds) 2000. On some backgrounds of the Berdache, see Roscoe, 1996.

are crucial elements in these performances. Females and males are to profess femininity or masculinity respectively; and sexual practices and preferences are expected to be imperatively, heterosexual. Thus, men who see themselves males and women as females are assumed to be sexually attracted to each other. This is also a pivotal cause for homophobia---a sentiment of fear or rejection of same sex desire and sexual practices, popularly known as homosexual.

The institutionalisation of sexuality and gender contextualised by sex, constrains the possibilities to reinterpret and reconstruct or de-construct prevalent (conventional) gender identities as well as sexual practices and preferences. Understandably, when this social premise is challenged, it is seen as an anomaly or deviant, hence creates xenophobic judgements and resentment. Gagne and Tewksbury have rightly pointed out that "hegemonic discourses make only certain behaviours, appearances, and bodily configurations culturally intelligible. Thus, those who fall outside the hegemonic discourse are seen by others as abnormal, perverse, or sick." (Gagne and Tewksbury, 1999: 59). Unfortunately, transgenderism and transgenderists are considered by most societies as abnormal due to many limitations of such discourses.

THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF TRANSGENDERISM AND *MAK NYAHISM*

Transgenderism

It was Virginia Prince who, was a transgenderist herself, first introduced the term 'transgender' in 1960s (Kessler and McKenna, 2001; Bullough, 2001). However, the modern study of transgenderism was traced back to early 20 century. The term transgender may be used "as a catch-all that includes anyone who disturbs established understandings of gender dichotomy or its mapping to sexual dimorphism." (Heyes, 2002: 170). Whereas, "transgenderism" and "transgenderist" refer "to the larger social phenomenon of people who live as a sex different from that to which they were assigned at birth and may or may not have surgical or hormonal sex change to facilitate their lives as the "other sex" (Hausman, 2001). In general, transgenderists are people who do not fit in to the two genders recognised by society. According to the conventional gender binary, they are neither men nor women, males nor females. Nevertheless, there are various degrees of transgendering, from subtle differences to radical transformation such as, transsexuals. Transgender variations are found on a continuum of transgendering characteristics that might show differences and similarities. This will be discussed later in this paper (refer to **Diagram 1**).

The term 'transgender' clearly suggests a transgression of gender/sex boundaries, which also challenges dominant discourses of gender/sex dichotomies. Let us now look into what does the prefix 'trans' mean. This will help us to illuminate transgenderism. There are 3 different but pertinent meanings (Kessler and McKenna, 2001): (1) change or transform; (2) across; and (3), beyond or through. In the first sense, it involves a change of the biological sex to suit the gender one

aspires to be; whether from male to female or vice versa. One could undergo hormonal change, reassignment of genitals and/or other parts of the body. This is best exemplified by the group called transsexuals. In this case, the transgendered body is perceived as lacking an anatomy congruent to the gender one always was (aspire to be). Therefore, medical intervention is required to reveal what was embodied (i.e. the gender) in the person. To borrow the psychoanalysis perspective of transsexualism, that the embodiment is the pivotal issue in transsexuality, the transformation of the genital which signifies sex and sexuality is inevitable. Hence, it indicates the fact that the gendered/sexed body can be deconstructed and reassigned. Although this perspective could impressively explain the necessity of cross-sex transformation (especially for transsexuals), it has however, indicated its subjectivity to gender/sex dichotomies, i.e. to be a man or a woman. This is further linked to the imagination of the 'perfect' sex in order to achieve the subject's embodiment, which is compliant to the dualistic gender/sex (Hausman, 2001). After all, transgenderists live in a social world, which accepts only males or females.

The second meaning of 'trans', indicates an act of crossing the boundary. Transgenderists, in this sense, assert that they belong to the opposite gender (incongruent with their biological sex) but do not indispensably envisage neither a sex-change nor a permanent commitment to the opposite gender/sex identity and roles. They construct their identities as similarly as possible to normative gender identities that are accepted by society, but do not want to change their genital. The transgendered body is therefore a merge of male and female, and the gender identity is the one displayed in public, because public acceptance is highly dependent on how gender is (successfully) performed. This socially constructed identity also affects society's perceptions of the transgenderist's sexuality and sexual identity. For instance, if a male cross-dressing sex worker successfully displays a female identity, her client would perceive her as a woman and their sexual intercourse is deemed heterosexual.

Transgender and gender perspectives, both in social and medical fields, perceive the penis as central to the definition of sex and gender; whether a penis should be removed or an artificial one to be fixed to a human body is often debated. However, various techniques and medication were created and refined to perform plastic surgeries on transgendered bodies, and thus, re-constructing (and de-constructing) their sex to justify their gender. Nowadays, higher accessibility to medical assistance has opened up unprecedented opportunities to people who aspire to transform their sex and gender, and this would gradually institutionalise transsexualism.
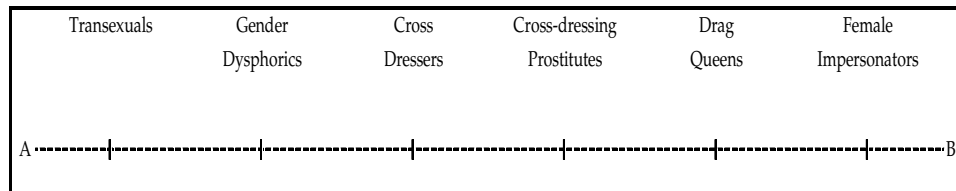
The third meaning of the prefix trans is 'beyond'. This indicates that a person is through with gender or beyond gender. This radical notion of gender elimination posts tough challenges to social and medical scientists. The person cannot be classified as male or female because existing social attributions of gender would be inadequate to define the person.

To date, gender and transgender paradigms are at large grounded on the binary gender/sex system. They either re-enforce, contest or criticise the same system. But in other ways, they also pose challenges by raising the questions: whether the concept and/or categories of gender cease to be instrumental in social analyses? Would 'sex' persist to facilitate the essential (gender/transgender) attribution of human society parallels with race, ethnic and class? These questions are very important and hence, require further examination and research. It is however, beyond the limit of this paper.

Within dominant knowledge of gender, it is assumed that men and women display distinctive characteristics. Therefore, transgenderists exist outside of this knowledge. They demonstrate ambiguous identities, and they do not display clear gender attributes. Their identities could be fluid; or oscillate on the transgender continuum, moving back and forth from one identity to another. Some of them completely perform and live as the opposite gender. A variety of names or labels were given to transgenderists, such as, transsexual, drag queen, tomboy, male-femaler, etc..

Essentially, transgenderists are to be differentiated from hermaphrodites or the Malay/Islamic concept of *khunsa.* The former have either one female or male reproductive organs or genitals; the latter have both. There are a few ideal types of transgender groups and they can be defined according to their behaviours or characteristics and motivations (Tewksbury and Gagne, 1996). The following diagram shows the various groups on the transgender spectrum.

Diagram 1: The Transgender Spectrum

Transexuals	Gender Dysphorics	Cross Dressers	Cross-dressing Prostitutes	Drag Queens	Female Impersonators

A ----------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|----------B

(Adapted from Tewksbury and Gagne, 1996)

To put it simply, **Diagram 1** demonstrates a continuum of masculinity and femininity. The scale shows the intensity of transgendered behaviours. Male-to-female transgenderists are used as examples here, because they are the majority and most studies of transgenderism focus on them. When a male-to-female person moves from point B towards point A, the intensity of masculinity reduces, and thus, is closer to normative female. Therefore, female impersonators possess stronger masculine characteristics compared to transsexuals, who show almost exact characteristics of a female. Amongst and/or between these groups, a variety of symbolic behaviours, interaction, language, gender display and re-construction of identity are performed. Various characteristics of different ideal groups are illuminated in Appendix A. Such characteristics could be overlapped or mingled due to transgenderists' fluid and ambiguous personalities. Transgenderists are not homogenous or they may not completely fit in one

particular group, because many of them may shift back and forth from one ideal type to the other; or they may contemplate between two groups, or display characteristics of two (or more) different groups.

Mak Nyahism

Malaysia is a nation of multi-ethnic and –culture. The Malay community is the largest in Malaysia and they are directly connected to Islam. In Malaysia, all Malays are generally perceived as Muslims.[11] Hence, the Malay culture is predominantly practiced in accordance to the tenet of Islam. The conceptualisation of *mak nyah*, in this paper, is therefore based on a Malay/sian framework; in other words, Islamic teaching and/or Malay/sian culture is referred.

The Malay term *mak nyah* exemplifies, in many ways, the Western concept of "transgenderist". However, *mak nyah* refers to a particular group of transgenderists, i.e. male to females in Malaysia. *Mak nyahs* are people who were born with male biological attributes but do not feel or behave like a man; as the popular saying goes, "a female trapped in a male body". According to Wan Azmi (1998), one of the pioneer researchers in the field of transgenderism in Malaysia, a *mak nyah* 'wears female clothings, they adjust themselves according to their instinct (*naluri*) and heart (*hati*) like a woman…they possess thoughts, behaviours and emotions of a woman' (see Wan Azmi, 1998: 396, my own translation of the original Malay writing).

The majority of *mak nyahs* are Malays. Out of an estimation of 10 to 15 thousands of transgenderists in Malaysia, 70% or more are Malays.[12] The number could be larger, considering the fact that many tansgenderists (particularly, Chinese transgenderists) are less visible in public or their gender identity is highly fluid. Further, transgenderists are usually active, in the sense that they display transgendered identity and perform opposite gender roles, at night. They are frequently found clustered at certain peripheral areas of the city, but because they often attract public attention and curious crowds, these areas could be rather 'busy' too. There are a few groups of professionally organised *mak nyahs* performers, that offer entertainments, such as modelling, singing, dancing and stand-up shows in discotheques, clubs and the like. Apart from *mak nyah*, there are other terms used to refer to male to female transgenderists in Malaysia, such as *pondan*, *bapok, cik-mek, sotong, patah, lelaki lembut* etc.

In Islam, *mak nyahs* are defined as a group of *mukhannis*, i.e. men (*lelaki*) who granted by God, female (*perempuan*) characteristics. Generally, their behaviours

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[11] Nonetheless, what constitutes Malayness and the Muslim community in Malaysia are debated subjects; see Kahn, 1996.

[12] Data collected from personal communication with the former co-ordinator of Transsexual Programme at PT Foundation. Also see Teh, 2000; and Wan Azmi Ramli 1998 for relevant information in Wilayah Persekutuan (the Federal Territory of Malaysia).

are against and contradictory to daily 'normal life' as accepted by society; or they are abnormal and deviated from social norms.[13] Wan Azmi explains that there are two types of *mukhannis*. First, *mukhannis tabii* (nature)—biological men who naturally possess female characteristics without putting any effort in enforcing those characteristics. Second, *mukhannis paksaan* (by force)—men who were forced by society to behave and perform social roles, whether wholly or partly, as women. Again, it should be noted that *mukhannis* are not hermaphrodites or in Islam, *khunsa*. A *khunsa* has both female and male genitals and in Islam, they have to be determined whether as a man or a woman according to whichever dominant genital.[14]

Although apparently, transgender groups (and homosexuality) existed in Islamic perspectives for a long time, they were never condoned in the teaching. The Sunan Abu-Dawud, Book 32, Number 4087 asserts that:

> *Narrated Abu Hurayrah: 'The Apostle of Allah (peace-be-upon-him) cursed the man who dressed like woman and the woman who dressed like men.'*

Further to this, the Hadith in Malik's Muwatta, Book 41, Number 41.1.11 stated that:

> *Malik related to me that he asked Ibn Shihab about someone who committed sodomy. Ibn Shihab said, "He is to be stoned, whether or not he is muhsan."*

'Muhsan' means married.[15] It is clear that homosexual acts are forbidden in Islam. Furthermore, transgender behaviours are prohibited as, stipulated in Syariah (Islamic) law, criminal offences. Section 28 Syariah Criminal Enactment NPP1988 states that, it is wrong for any man who dresses like a woman or act like a woman in public with immoral intentions. In Malaysia, if one was found guilty of such behaviours would be fined RM1000 (USD250) or detained for one year, or both.[16] An official from the Department of Islam asserts that, Allah condemns men who imitate women and women who imitate men. He also claims that, (a) sex-change via surgeries is prohibited in Islam; (b) punishments for a man remain even though he has changed sex. In the case of a khunsa, the sex should be determined via surgery.

Despite the obvious condemn and prohibition by the law and religion, the number of *mak nyahs* is in the increase, or at least, *mak nyahism* has become more

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[13] See for example, Zaliha Tak's (1998: 11-12); Wan Azmi Ramli (1998: 400); Majalah Al Islam Dec 1996: 6-7.

[14] Details also found in Zaliha Tak (1998).

[15] Personal communication with Ustaz Azmi Aziz at Univerisiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Also see, Teh and Slamah (2000).

[16] Md. Ali bin Sarbini, Department of the Development of Islam, (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam) Malaysia at the Seminar on Transsexuality in Public Institutes of Higher Learning, 23-25 July, 2002, Melaka, Malaysia.

and more visible in the Malaysian general public. As a unique and diverse group of transgenderists, *mak nyah* presents an intriguing and complex category. They possess complicated intersections of sex, gender and sexuality. A *mak nyah* may be a male cross-dresser or transsexual; a drag queen or a transvestite prostitute; or the combination of two or more of these groups (refer Appendix A and B). A majority of my respondents (more than 90% out of 60 *mak nyahs*) are cross-dressers, cross-dressing prostitutes or they display uncertainties — vacillating from cross-dressing to male, but remain effeminate.

While their sexual interactions with men are homosexual in practice, their sexual orientation may be hetero-, homo- and/or bi-sexual. In other words, *mak nyah* as a term is essentially referring to male-to-female transgenderists. It is important to point this out because some researchers use the term transsexual to refer to all *mak nyahs*; and some *mak nyahs* call themselves transsexuals, which is accepted as a less derogatory term. 'Transsexual' is defined as a person "characterised by a lifelong preference for the opposite gender role, predicated on the conviction of belonging to the opposite sex" (Pauly 1990, cited in Tewksbury and Gagne, 1996: 106); he (male transsexual) "actually has a negative interest in his penis and other male characteristics. That is why he wishes for their removal"; "the individual must not only change sex, but gender as well." (ibid). Therefore, for a transsexual, a complete change of gender and surgical reassignments of sex are necessary.

Therefore, not all *mak nyahs* are transsexuals. It is unfortunate that prominent researchers of transgenderism such as Wan Azmi (1998), Teh and Slamah (2000), and Zaliha (1998) define *mak nyahs* as transsexuals. This gives an erroneous indication that all *mak nyahs* are determined to be a complete female, which means they want to do or have had sex-change surgeries. The fact is, even in Teh's research report, it was stated that more than 90% of her respondents (total of 507 *mak nyahs*) defined themselves as transgenderists. Only 4 % (19 out of 507) have had sex-reassignment surgeries, i.e. transsexuals. Apart from that, more than 88% of *mak nyahs* are happy with their body without undergoing any sex-change surgeries at the time of survey. Apparently, majority *mak nyahs* do not envisage a sex change even though many of them have thought of it [Teh and Khartini, 2000: 98-100]

In my own research, many male transgenderists of various 'levels' or intensity' of transgendering consider themselves, and are considered by the public as, *mak nyahs* or *patah* (literally, bend) which means effeminate or cross-dressers.[17] It is however vital to note that, *mak nyahs* realise that their religion prohibits them to cross-dress and undergo sex-change surgeries. Majority of my respondents expressed their regrets in not being able to abide to the tenet of Islam in terms of cross-dressing and consuming of hormones; but they said they would not do a

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[17] To the *mak nyahs* and non-*mak nyah* respondents, I have explained to them the definition of transsexuals after the questions about transgender identities were asked.

sex-reassignment operation because they want to be buried as a Muslim according to their biological sex when they die; or that they do not want to bring shame to their parents and families. The high cost and risks of relevant surgeries are other reasons sighted by these *mak nyahs*.

To reiterate, *mak nyahs* refer to biological males who aspire to be females; identify themselves as females; dress in feminine attires and perform female roles. However, many *mak nyahs* dressed in ambiguous ways that often reflect their dubious identities or indecisive minds and bodies. This is not unusual to many *mak nyahs* who possess dilemmas in the process of reconstructing their identities This ambiguity may be caused by social intolerance or their inherently, confused personality. It could also be grounded on the *mak nyah*'s understanding of hegemonic discourses of gender and sex, but at the same time, she recognises the incoherence of sex, gender and sexuality in herself.[18] In my own research, *mak nyah* respondents voiced their thoughts of reverting or conforming, in fact, a few of them have reverted, to male sex/gender identity due to social and religious pressure, even though they still overtly claim that deep down, they are females. It is common to find that *mak nyahs* assert that they are born like that, i.e. effeminate; or that their female instinct is innate. Therefore, they think, act and play the roles of a woman.

In terms of sexuality, some *mak nyahs'* sexual orientations are similar to transsexuals, i.e. homo- or bisexual. However, they also have cross-sexual identities commonly found in transvestism and dysphorics. No doubt, if the female presentation of a *mak nyah* is successful, her sexual partners will see their sexual interactions as heterosexual. On the other hand, due to the lack of confidence in her sex identity or a poor performance of female roles, coupled with the intention to conform to social expectation, she is bisexual. In fact, there are *mak nyahs* who have wives and children, they live as a man and perform male roles; however, many of them cross dress occasionally.

It is also not a surprise that *mak nyahism* consists of, although not exclusively, erotic elements. This is particularly relevant to those involved in sex work (full-time or part-time). *Mak nyahs* find it sexy to dress up as a woman to gain men's attention. They reveal that it is especially erotic to be touched on the breasts and other parts of body, except the penis. Many of my *mak nyah* respondents have active sexual activities with men. However, there are stories about *mak nyahs* who have done some sex-change operations were rejected by their former boyfriends. This is perhaps due to the eradication of erotic elements in sexual attraction of or to *mak nyahs* after the surgery. Negative psychological effects may also be a crucial reason for this. A conflict between pre-operation expectation or imagination and the 'reality' of post-operation may exist within the post-operative transgenderist. Expectations, such as the 'perfect' or complete

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[18] To facilitate their adopted feminine identity, *mak nyah* respondents in this paper are addressed as female; unless it is otherwise stated.

appropriation of female roles, sex and gender identities, or satisfactory sexual intercourse with a man, and a full acceptance by society, may all collapse when they did not come into reality. Nevertheless, there are transsexuals who lead a happy life with a husband and/or (adopted or step) children.

CONCLUSION

Issues about reproduction or continuity of generation aside, social assignment of roles and expectations demonstrate phallocentric qualities of existing gender perspectives, that clearly mark the penis as the definitive emblem of gender, sex and sexuality. Furthermore, sex-change surgeries are necessary to remove the penis to symbolise the elimination of male identity, roles and manhood. Because with a penis, you cannot be anything else except a man; hence, if someone is some where in between a woman and a man, this person, according to our 'knowledge' of dualistic system of gender, is an non entity.

Transgenderists who were treated as non-entity were thought necessary to choose a sex (as a man with a penis, or a woman without one) and establish heterosexual relationships due to social pressure; while personal experiences were discarded and de-politicised (Billings and Urban, 1996). It was based on this homophobic stress that transgenderists were marginalized and resented. Although it could be argued that medical intervention makes transsexualism possible, the processes of personal emotional, mental and bodily transformations are essentially the core (or agony) of transgendering. In other words, the transition or process of change is more important than the change itself; hence the notion of crossing boundaries—a process of going to the other side. When the change is fully accomplished, the person is either a man or a woman; or beyond gender, which is the third sense of 'trans', as discussed in the beginning of this paper.

Therefore, the practice of crossing is emphasised in transgenderism and this is constructed via social and medical practices. In 1970s when transgenderism was further recognised and ceased to be considered as pathological, 'dysphoria' and homosexuality were removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DMS) list. This indicated that gender disorder or non-normative (hetero) sexual practices are not a disease (Hausman, 2001; King, 1996). Transsexualism was however enlisted in order to seek medical support, which Freidson asserted that it was to "create social meanings of illness where that meaning or interpretation was lacking before" (cited in Billings and Urban, 1996: 101). Apparently, the connotation of social constructivity is pronounced.

It is worth to take note that although transgenderists or *mak nyahs* are agents who resist gender and sex dichotomies, they are perceived as ironically conformers of that system. In fact, they devote more time, effort, money and their bodies (compared to normative males and females) to reinforce gender stereotypes. For instance, male transsexuals want more than anything to be seen and accepted as women. However, the fact is that transgendered bodies are not either man or

woman, which also include pre- and post-surgical transsexuals. They are theoretically and practically outside the dyadic gender/sex systems that many societies adhere to. They are non-gendered, trying and struggling to be gendered. The performance and display of 'female' or 'male' roles and identities reflects the pressure of the social world, which recognises gender/sex binary as mandatory. In the case of *mak nyahs,* apart from social sanction, religion is an added obstacle and a harder struggle for them to be accepted.

Nonetheless, the dilemma of many transgenderists exceed the irony of resisting and/or reinforcing gender/sex: they contemplate whether (a) to display what they aim or fantasise to be, or abide to their so-called instinct; or (b) to give in to societal pressure, stigmatisation and expectations, and perform what was expected of their biological sex. This is rather similarly in the effort to theorise transgenderism. On the one hand, social scientists (and medical practitioners) have gradually discovered the phenomena of transgenderism, and established some ways and means to provide support to transgenderists. On the other hand, there is much to be done to fully develop theoretical perspectives of transgenderism without being trapped or framed in the existing paradigms of bipolar gender and sex.[19]

APPENDIX A

Transgender Characteristics

	Pre-operative Transexual	Gender Dysphorics	Cross Dressers
Biological sex	Male genital-maybe other; ambiguous	Male	Male
Sex Identity	Female	Vacillates, confused	Male
Socially ascribed	Female/feminine	Sex-unknown/gender Unconvincing	Male/masculine in private;unknown/feminine in public
Gender identity	Feminine	Vacillates	Masculine
Sexuality (biological)	Homosexual	Confused/vacillates	Heterosexual
Sexual identity	Heterosexual	Confused/vacillates	Heterosexual

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[19] Exceptions are in Ekins and King (eds), 1996; Herdt 9ed), 1996; and Gagne and Tewsbury, 1996, 1998 & 1999.

	Cross-dressing Sex Workers	Drag Queens	Female Impersonators
Biological sex	Male	Male	Male
Sex Identity	Male	Male	Male
Socially ascribed	Male/masculine not in costume; female/feminine in	Male/mixed	Male/masculine not in costume; female/feminine in
Gender identity	Masculine	Masculine	Masculine
Sexuality (biological)	Worker's perception-homosexual; client's perception-heterosexual	Homosexual	Predominantly homosexual
Sexual identity	(Initially) heterosexual	Homosexual or Bisexual	Predominantly homosexual

(Tables adapted from Tewksbury and Gagne, 1996)

APPENDIX B

Some brief but specific characteristics of a few ideal-typed transgender groups.

(a) Transsexualism. This is the most common form of transgenderism. A transsexual identifies oneself as the opposite gender incongruent to the body. For instance, a biological man appears, behaves and plays the roles of a woman, and his preference for a woman is a lifelong desire. Transsexuals are sub-divided to pre-, post- or neo-operative. The intention of surgically reassigning one's sex is usually a result of negative rejection of the biological genitals (usually, the penis); or social pressure and rejection of non-conformer, grounded on the basis of binary sex.

Beside sex, transsexuals change their gender identity as well. They live as the opposite sex and gender. To be accepted by society and subsequently, a complete ascription of gendered roles, transsexuals have to conform to prevalent bipolar gender. Due to the fact that transsexuals see themselves as the opposite sex, their sexual preference and partners are essentially the opposite of the adopted gender identity. Hence, see themselves as heterosexuals. For instance, a male (whether pre- or post-operative) transsexual would be sexually attracted to men. The transsexual perform the role of a woman, hence defines sexual encounters with men as heterosexual, despite of the same genitalia engagement.

(b) Gender Dysphoric. Gender dysphoric is close to transsexualism but both categories are apparently differentiated. Dysphorics recognise the inconsistency

of their sex and gender identities. They may possess the male anatomy but portray female identities. However, their female presentation is weak due to the uncertainty of their biological sex. A dysphoric may persist in the current state; or maintain coherence among biological sex, sex identity and gender identity; or matches the sex and gender identities, despite incongruity with biological sex. Due to their poor presentation of feminine characteristics, dysphorics are ascribed male identity. They are therefore generally seen as homosexuals or bisexuals. However, their sexual interactions may be homo- or heterosexual.

(c) Cross Dressers or Transvestites. Both cross-dressing and transvestism refer to biological male who dress like a female. The fetishism may be for erotic reasons as well as gender presentation. In most cases, transvestites are masculine in nature and are ascribed male roles, but they strive for feminine displays. Majority of transvestites are heterosexuals. However, due to their public female presentations and inherent eroticism in cross-dressing, they have high potential in homosexual commitments.

(d) The other transgender groups i.e. cross-dressing sex worker, drag queen and female impersonator are men who perform female roles, although the intensity and motivations may differ. The purpose for cross-dressing prostitution is often understood as for money acquisition, but social effects and personal aspirations are not to be discounted. For example, cross-dressers are often shunned by employers; thus, prostitution appears to be an easy solution. Although they are frequently seen as men and homosexuals in terms of sexual interactions; their successful female performances may be accepted by their customers as heterosexual.

(e) Studies of drag queens and female impersonators are scarce. Tewksbury and Gagne (1996) observe that both groups are exclusively male-to-femalers. They are biological males and possess congruent sex identity, except when they are in costumes. Their female performances are done deliberately to defy sex and gender dimorphism, and they show a combination of masculinity and femininity. Because majority of them are gay, their sexual identity is hence, homosexual.

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Les dynamiques de développement à l'échelon local au Vietnam
Le cas de la commune de Cat Que

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RÉSUMÉ

Dirigé au Nord depuis 1954 par le Parti Communiste vietnamien (PCV), le Vietnam a adopté en 1986 une série de réformes connues sous le nom de *doi moi* (renouveau). L'avènement du «socialisme de marché» (Houtart, 2001) s'inscrit comme une stratégie pour positionner le pays sur l'échiquier mondial et provoque des bouleversements qui vont au-delà de la seule sphère économique. Si, à l'opposé des anciens pays de l'Est, cette réforme n'entraîne pas de reconversion politico-idéologique (OCDE, 1999), elle induit néanmoins d'importantes mutations de la sphère sociale.

LE VIETNAM : L'ÈRE DU RENOUVEAU

Au sein du système socialiste classique (Kornai, 1996), la production agricole est gérée par des coopératives de production, les disparités socio-économiques sont faibles et les migrations internes peu marquées (Rapport, 2001). Dans ce système, l'État est perçu comme l'acteur le plus efficace pour assurer le développement de toutes les sphères d'activités (*op. cit.*, 2001, p. 20).

Mais au début des années 1980, le pays est aux prises avec une importante crise économique. En plus du poids des sanctions découlant de l'occupation au Cambodge, le système centralisé commence à laisser voir certaines faiblesses, notamment en ce qui a trait à la production et à l'approvisionnement en biens de consommation. Deux facteurs externes contribuent à une mutation du système socialiste classique : d'une part, la perspective d'une réduction de l'aide financière de l'URSS (OCDE, 1999), mais également la conjoncture internationale des années 1980 qui prône une libéralisation des marchés et un désengagement de l'État dans certains secteurs, notamment la santé, l'éducation et les services

sociaux (Kerkvliet et Porter, 1995). Ainsi, l'État vietnamien redéfinit son rôle; le marché devient également un moteur de développement.

Si la littérature consacrée au *doi moi* s'est largement intéressée aux répercussions de la transition vers l'économie de marché, un segment des recherches s'est plutôt penché sur les répercussions sur la sphère socio-politique. Car si l'État n'assure plus son rôle de régulateur dans le secteur économique, son désengagement dans la sphère sociale a pour conséquence l'avènement de différents groupes d'acteurs, voire même la redéfinition d'acteurs traditionnellement reliés à l'État. Les secteurs d'activités qu'ils prennent en charge démontrent les faiblesses à la fois de la régulation par le marché et de la capacité de l'État à assurer le développement de certains services :

> « […] *le travail social et la lutte contre la violence domestique, la formation gratuite, la mise sur pied de projets dans le secteur de la santé, la création de travail et de revenus pour les démunis, principalement pour les femmes par le biais de groupes de micro-crédit et plusieurs autres activités soulignent le fossé grandissant entre ce dont la société a besoin et ce que l'État ou l'économie est à même de lui offrir* »[1] (Wisherman, Bui The Cuong et Nguyen Quang Vinh, 2002, p. 23).

Pour ces auteurs, les organisations en émergence, leurs activités et leurs membres représentent d'importants « protagonistes des processus de changement sociaux, politiques et culturels »[2] (*op. cit.*, p. 6).

Les recherches démontrent qu'en milieu urbain, différentes organisations ont vu le jour dans les années qui suivirent le *doi moi* (notamment Marr 1994; Sidel 1995; Thayer 1995; Gray 1999; Wisherman, Bui The Cuong et Nguyen Quang Vinh, 2002; Dalton et Nhu-Ngoc T. Ong 2003). Pour Sidel (1995), le *doi moi* permet l'avènement d'un secteur qu'il nomme « philanthropique », grouillant d'organisations vietnamiennes sans but lucratif. Gray (1999) questionne plutôt la nature de ces organisations par le biais du concept d'organisations non-gouvernementales vietnamiennes (ONGV), bien qu'il précise également que ce titre soit largement discutable. Wishermann, Bui The Cuong et Nguyen Quang Vinh (2002) regroupent quant à eux ces nouvelles organisations sous les vocables d'organisations sociales, qui regroupent les organisations de masse, les associations de professionnels, les organisations orientées vers des enjeux sectoriels et les associations de gens d'affaires.[3] Si la terminologie diverge, il y a

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[1] Traduction libre de : « the use of social work practices combating domestic violence, the offer of training and education classes free of charge, the establishment of health care projects, the creation of jobs and income for poor people and especially for women by credit spending and saving groups and the many other activities point to the fact that there is a widening gap between what society is in a desperate need of and what state and/or economy can deliver ».

[2] Traduction libre de : « protagonists of processes of societal, political and cultural change ».

[3] Traduction de Mass Organizations, Professional's Associations, Issue-oriented Organizations et Associations of Business-Men/Women.

cependant consensus sur une redéfinition du rôle des organisations de masse[4] (notamment Sidel 1995; Gray 1999; Wishermann, Bui The Cuong et Nguyen Quang Vinh 2002) qui recherchent, depuis le *doi moi*, un rôle accru dans le développement (Sidel, 1995, p. 8).

En milieu rural, le désengagement de l'État se traduit par le démantèlement des coopératives, qui géraient autrefois les terres, la production, la distribution et « toutes les sphères de la vie sociale » (Thayer, 1995, p. 43). Les subsides couvrant les domaines de la santé, de l'éducation et des services sociaux disparaissent, ce qui entraîne une détérioration et un accès limité à ces services pour la population (*op. cit.*, p. 41). Ce retrait étatique engendre l'émergence d'une variété d'institutions, visant à remplacer les coopératives, pour l'octroi de prêts et de services sociaux (*op.cit.*, p. 49).

La littérature nous laisse cependant peu de données concrètes sur la prise en charge du développement à l'échelon de la commune, les groupes d'acteurs en présence, qu'ils soient étatiques, en redéfinition ou en émergence, leur rôle et les relations de pouvoir qui façonnent la prise en charge du développement. Dans un souci de combler très partiellement cette lacune, nous avons donc élaboré la question de recherche suivante : dans quelle mesure le *doi moi* entraîne-t-il une reconfiguration de la prise en charge du développement à l'échelon de la commune? Le développement de l'échelon local est-il pris en charge par des acteurs autres que l'État? Quel est le rôle de ces groupes d'acteurs dans le développement et les relations de pouvoir qui orientent leurs actions? Afin de répondre à ces questions, nous avons effectué une recherche à Cat Que, une commune rurale du delta du fleuve Rouge.

UNE ÉTUDE DE CAS : LA COMMUNE DE CAT QUE

La province de Ha Tay, limitrophe de Hanoi au sud-ouest, compte approximativement 2,4 millions d'habitants, à prédominance *kinh*. Elle est sub-divisée en 12 districts, en plus de la capitale provinciale, Ha Dong. Hormis le territoire de la capitale provinciale, le district de Hoai Duc est le plus peuplé de la province, avec une densité de population de 2 033 personnes par km carré. Cat Que est l'une des 22 communes du district de Hoai Duc. Elle compte 14 500 habitants regroupés en quatre villages, divisés à leur tour en une unité qui n'est ni administrative, ni territoriale : le *chi hoi*, qui signifie littéralement *ramification associative*. Cat Que compte 10 *chi hoi*, qui constituent un « espace » pour chacune des sous-branches de chaque organisation de masse présente à l'échelon de la commune.

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[4] Les principales organisations de masse au Vietnam sont l'Union des Femmes, des Paysans, des Vétérans, des Personnes Âgées et des Jeunes.

Figure 1. Structure politico-territoriale
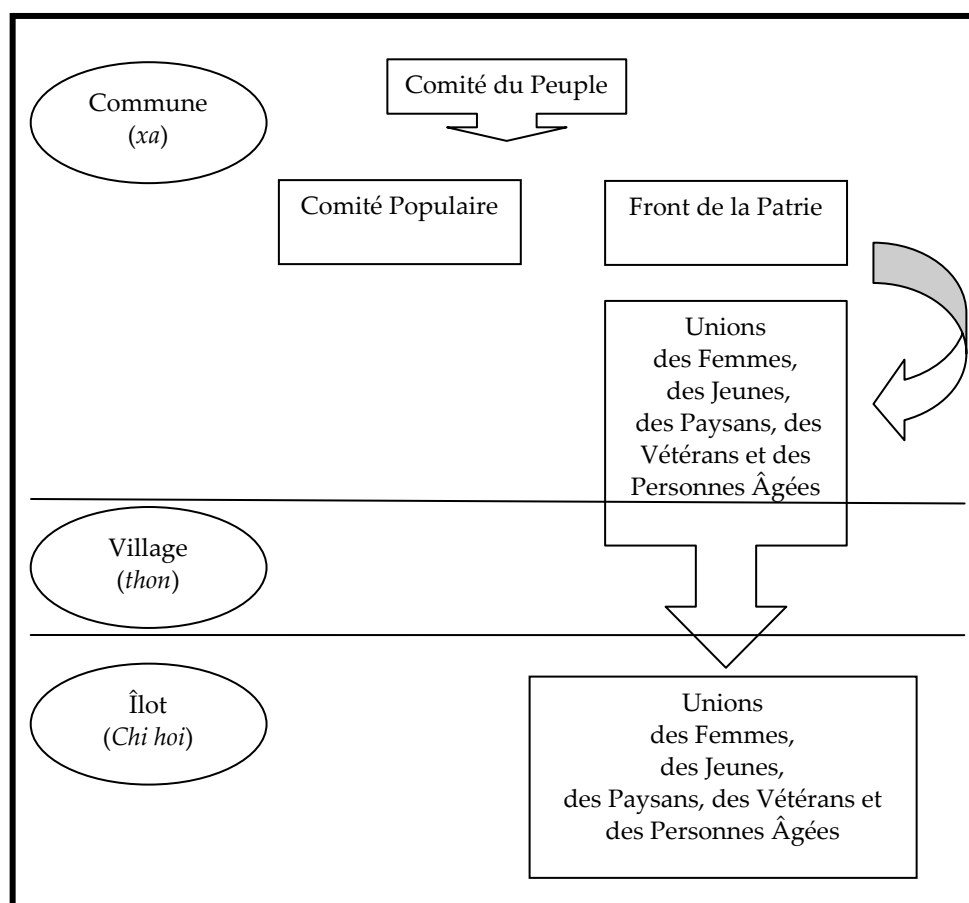
Sources : Ngo Anh Dao (2003), Nguyen Manh Quan (2003), Trinh Duy Luan (1996) et données du terrain.

Les principales activités économiques sont l'élevage, l'agriculture et la transformation de manioc. Plus particulièrement, l'élevage du porc a, depuis le *doi moi*, vu se développer tout un réseau d'activités commerciales dérivées. À Cat Que, l'environnement est fortement dégradé à cause de la nature des pratiques économiques; notamment, le traitement des eaux usées représente un problème de taille.

La commune de Cat Que est placée sous l'égide du Comité du Peuple l'instance décisionnelle, qui nomme le Comité Populaire, son agence d'exécution : « *Le Comité Populaire est un organe qui représente l'État et qui transfère les politiques gouvernementales à l'échelon local. Le Comité Populaire se voit déléguer des responsabilités administratives* » (entrevue A). Depuis le *doi moi*, le Comité Populaire assure certaines anciennes fonctions des coopératives démantelées (Tran Thi Van Anh et Nguyen Manh Huan, 1995, p. 210). À Cat Que, outre ses

fonctions administratives telles que la sécurité, les devoirs militaires, le développement économique, la gestion des terres et les taxes, il veille au développement des infrastructures de base selon les quatre priorités étatiques : routes, électricité, cliniques et écoles. Le Comité Populaire dispose d'une certaine latitude pour *prioriser* les besoins dans ces secteurs et dans les décisions concernant certaines allocations budgétaires :

> *« Les décrets et les objectifs annuels de la commune proviennent du haut. Les grandes lignes du plan socio-économique sont dictées par le district, mais la commune peut ajuster. Par exemple, le district établit certains budgets fixes et subventionne des secteurs d'activités précis, mais la commune peut faire des demandes pour les urgences. Le Comité Populaire décide comment gérer le budget»* (entrevue A).

Le Comité du Peuple supervise également le Front de la Patrie, qui chapeaute à son tour les activités des organisations de masse, au nombre de cinq : l'Union des Femmes, des Jeunes, des Paysans, des Vétérans et des Personnes Âgées. Après le *doi moi*, le monde rural connaît une transition de modèle social qui permet aux organisations de masse de diversifier leurs secteurs d'intervention et d'acquérir une plus grande autonomie (entrevue B).

À Cat Que, les organisations de masse ont un double rôle. Elles informent la population des orientations politiques et la mobilise pour accomplir des travaux communautaires décidés par le Comité Populaire. Leur rôle consiste également à opérationnaliser les programmes de leur organisation d'appartenance; elles peuvent ainsi depuis le *doi moi*, créer de petits groupes. L'Union des Femmes de la commune de Cat Que chapeaute ainsi 20 groupes de micro-crédit, 14 groupes de planification familiale et un club de badminton. Ils ne sont pas reconnus par les acteurs comme groupes autonomes, mais sont plutôt considérés comme des projets des organisations de masse, leur mise sur pied demeurant tributaire du dynamisme des cadres. La mobilisation de la population, à la fois pour la réalisation des projets du Comité Populaire, la diffusion des politiques étatiques que pour la participation aux projets des organisations de masse s'effectue au sein des *chi hoi*.

Les organisations de masse connaissent une double restriction pour la réalisation de leurs projets. Si elles doivent exécuter les programmes de leur organisation d'appartenance à l'échelon du district, elles doivent également présenter leur stratégie d'implantation au Comité Populaire de la commune avant de la réaliser. Un rapport d'activités mentionne également un élément important de la structuration du pouvoir à l'échelon local ; le gouvernement central et le Parti Communiste de la province de Ha Tay ont émis des directives en vue de renforcer le contrôle du parti communiste sur les activités des organisations de masse. Serait-ce dû aux soulèvements fréquents dans cette province résultant aux problèmes d'allocation et de réquisition des terres ?

Outre ces acteurs imbriqués dans la structure étatique, nous retrouvons à Cat Que une coopérative agricole qui s'est redéfinie sous l'ère post-*doi moi*. Elle

conserve un rôle relativement important, puisque qu'elle s'occupe du développement industriel et entretient des liens étroits avec le Comité Populaire et l'Union des paysans. Une ONG internationale mène également des projets à Cat Que, en partenariat avec une université vietnamienne. Le projet vise la réduction des coûts de la nourriture destinée aux animaux d'élevage. En partenariat avec la coopérative et l'Union des Paysans, une formation est ensuite dispensée aux paysans intéressés par cette nouvelle méthode. Les entretiens ont démontré que l'ONG et son partenaire ne sont pas reconnus comme des groupes d'acteurs prenant part au développement de la commune et conséquemment, il n'a pas été possible d'approfondir les relations de pouvoir entre les autorités locales et ces organisations.

VERS UNE RECONFIGURATION DE LA PRISE EN CHARGE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT

Afin de proposer une piste d'interprétation de la reconfiguration de la prise en charge du développement à l'échelon de la commune à la suite du *doi moi*, nous explorerons les concepts de décentralisation et de déconcentration, qui constituent des stratégies pouvant engendrer un changement en ce sens. Dans les

Figure 2. Décentralisation et déconcentration
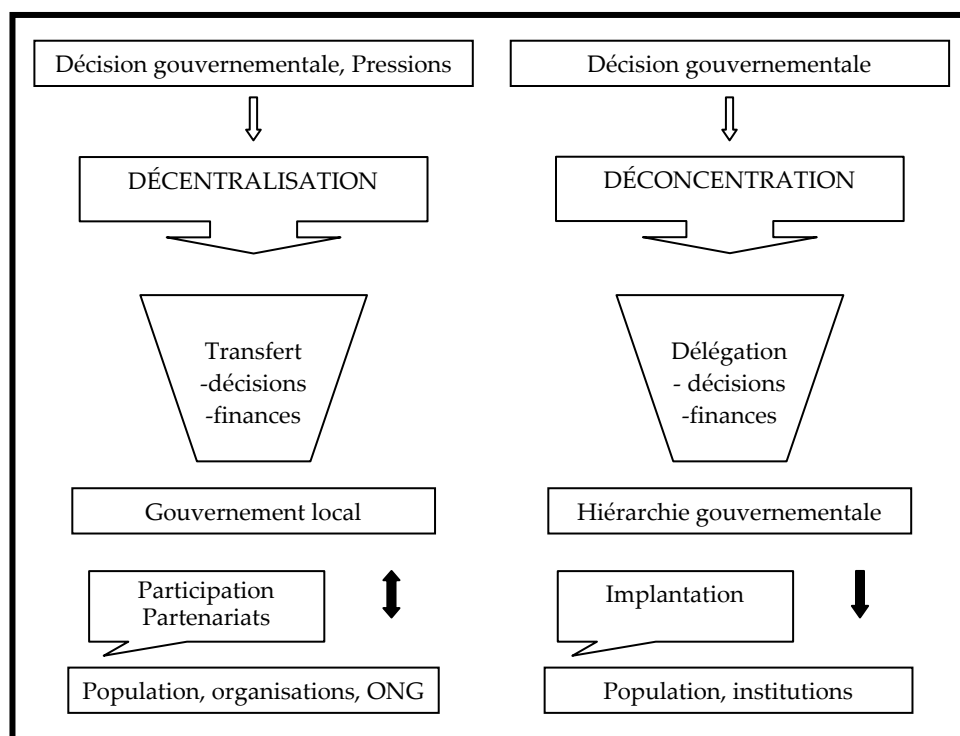
Sources : Martinussen 1997; Mendoza 1997, Houtart 1997.

pays « en développement », il est d'usage de croire que la décentralisation est synonyme de démocratisation et qu'elle constitue un préalable obligé au développement. Martinussen (1997) définit la décentralisation comme le transfert d'une partie de l'autorité gouvernementale aux paliers inférieurs, laissant à leur discrétion certaines responsabilités, principalement de nature administratives et financières. Mendoza (1997) considère que ces responsabilités peuvent être transférées à des acteurs autres que l'État, telles que des organisations de la société civile. Les auteurs soutiennent que la décentralisation peut provenir soit d'une décision gouvernementale ou encore, de pressions populaires. Houtart (1997) perçoit quant à lui dans la stratégie de décentralisation l'expression du projet néo-libéral, incitant l'enclenchement du processus pour affaiblir l'État et étendre la logique économique.

La déconcentration désigne quant à elle la délégation gouvernementale d'« (…) une partie de ses compétences aux instances subalternes de la pyramide bureaucratique, mais à l'intérieur des mêmes organismes ou ministères » (Mendoza, 1997, p.43). Martinusen (1997) ajoute que la participation de la population, dans ce cas plutôt que dans le précédent, se limite uniquement à l'implantation des politiques centrales. La stratégie de déconcentration découle d'une décision gouvernementale et non pas de revendications populaires.

La commune à l'étude démontre que la reconfiguration de la prise en charge du développement à l'échelon de la commune qui a lieu après le *doi moi* peut être analysée par le biais du concept de déconcentration. Les résultats préliminaires de notre étude de cas démontrent que l'État est encore bien présent dans la commune par le rôle prépondérant du Comité Populaire, qui instrumentalise les autres groupes d'acteurs à la fois pour implanter ses politiques et pour approuver leurs projets. Les organisations de masse, intégrées à l'appareil étatique vietnamien, doivent coordonner leurs activités avec les autorités locales et leur homologue à l'échelon supérieur. Si elles constituent toujours d'importants vecteurs des politiques étatiques et de leur implantation, elles jouent un rôle important dans la structuration du développement économique local et dans le développement communautaire. Pour la réalisation de leurs projets, elles disposent d'une latitude permettant une adaptation locale des programmes étatiques; le *chi hoi* représente cet espace de la mobilisation pour la participation de la population et de l'opérationnalisation des projets. La présence d'une ONG internationale et d'une université vietnamienne démontre la prise en charge de considérations techniques par des acteurs extérieurs à la commune, qui ne sont pas reconnus par les groupes d'acteurs en présence en tant que vecteur de développement. Pour Houtart (1997), la déconcentration reflète un certain immobilisme, puisqu'elle relève d'une stratégie servant à rendre plus efficace une structure centralisée. Pour Martinussen (1997), la déconcentration est porteuse de jours meilleurs, puisqu'elle permet une latitude dans l'adaptation locale des politiques centrales, et il semble que ce soit le cas par le biais du *chi hoi*.

CONCLUSION

Nos résultats préliminaires démontrent que Cat Que ne semble pas être un cas isolé. Les principaux acteurs en présence et les relations qui modulent et orientent leurs actions reflèteraient une réalité propre au Vietnam, avec toutes les précisions que ce constat requiert, à savoir les différences entre les différentes ethnies et entre le nord et le sud du pays. Ainsi, si le *doi moi* a provoqué l'émergence de nouveaux groupes d'acteurs, la redéfinition des groupes traditionnellement liés à l'État s'inscrit dans une stratégie de déconcentration de l'État plutôt qu'à une décentralisation. Il sera pertinent à un stade ultérieur de la recherche d'approfondir la notion de *chi hoi* comme espace de mobilisation et de participation de la population, de même son rôle dans la structuration de la vie communautaire de la commune.

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Entrevue A : NGO Anh Dao, septembre 2003.

Entrevue B : Prof. BUI The Cuong, octobre 2003.

Tradition vietnamienne au Canada

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RÉSUMÉ

Un projet de recherche mené à Montréal et Québec en 2003 a permis d'interviewer sept aînés et aînées d'origine vietnamienne sur la vie qu'ils menaient au Vietnam durant leur jeunesse. Ces entrevues, qui ont donné lieu à la publication d'un ouvrage visant à sensibiliser le public au pluralisme culturel, montrent que les aînés souhaitent transmettre aux jeunes Québécois et Canadiens d'origine vietnamienne les éléments centraux de leur culture, ceux qui concernent la vie familiale entre autres. Quelques aînés pensent aussi que certaines valeurs sociales vietnamiennes pourraient être utiles à la société canadienne dans son ensemble.

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La diversité culturelle constitue une caractéristique fondamentale et incontournable des sociétés contemporaines. Au Canada et au Québec en particulier, la population des grandes villes et, à un moindre degré, celle de plusieurs petites agglomérations et régions rurales, est en contact quotidiens avec des gens porteurs de cultures et de traditions différentes, parfois très différentes, des leurs. Qui plus est, l'impact de la télévision et des autres médias de communication, ainsi que les voyages, contribuent aussi à faire de notre terre un village global où tous les types de visions du monde et de modes de vie entrent en interaction les uns avec les autres.

Idéalement, il s'agit là d'un phénomène bénéfique. Le contact interculturel ne peut qu'élargir les horizons et, donc, l'appréciation des autres, minimisant ainsi les incompréhensions et les conflits potentiels liés aux différences de langue, d'apparence ou de mode de vie. En réalité cependant, on se rend facilement compte que malgré les possibilités quotidiennes d'ouverture aux autres qu'entraîne la présence de cultures différentes, il subsiste des incompréhensions nombreuses et parfois graves entre les divers groupes ethniques composant nos sociétés et, plus particulièrement, entre la majorité et les minorités linguistiques, raciales et culturelles. Pour faire appel à une actualité pas trop lointaine encore, les événements du 11 septembre 2001 ont révélé comment, soudainement, des groupes n'ayant le plus souvent rien à voir avec ce qui s'était passé – personnes

de religion musulmane ou d'origine arabe, iranienne ou, même, indo-pakistanaise – ont été montrés du doigt et ont fait l'objet de préjugés ayant parfois mené à des agressions verbales ou physiques. Il en a été de même, quoique à une moindre échelle, de la méfiance envers les communautés asiatiques de l'est et du sud-est qui s'est manifestée lors de l'épidémie de SRAS du printemps 2003.

On peut arguer que ce type de situation n'est pas quotidien, que ça se passe ailleurs, dans les grandes métropoles, dans les ghettos défavorisés, chez nos voisins du sud. Peut-être. Mais il n'en demeure pas moins que même chez soi, l'incompréhension est parfois très vive entre groupes de cultures différentes.

Pour ce qui est du Québec, dès les années 1980, des études faites à Montréal (Manègre 1988) et à Québec (Saldana-Suarez 1988) démontraient l'existence de préjugés importants envers les autres cultures. Une recherche effectuée en 1986 dans la région de Québec (Dorais 1990) a montré que si la plupart des personnes interrogées affirmaient être ouvertes à l'égard des allochtones, leur degré d'ouverture était très variable. On acceptait les « étrangers » dans la mesure où ils étaient semblables à soi-même par la langue (francophones) ou la culture (Canadiens anglais, Américains). Par contre, on rejetait ceux (Amérindiens et Inuit, Arabes, Indiens de l'Inde, etc.) dont la culture, la langue et les habitudes de vie étaient perçues comme très éloignées de celles de la majorité.

Des travaux plus récents ont montré qu'il en est toujours de même. Que ce soit dans la société en général (McAndrew 1994 ; Maclure 2000) ou dans des secteurs plus spécifiques – minorités visibles (Tremblay 1993) ; marché du travail (Conseil des relations interculturelles 1999) ; femmes immigrantes (Pelletier 2000) – il y a discrimination envers les personnes dont la culture diffère de celle de la majorité. Plusieurs spécialistes (voir Guilbert 1996 ; Bouchard 1999) estiment cependant que le Québec et le Canada ne pourront se développer harmonieusement que dans le respect des différences ethniques et culturelles.

Comment en arriver là ? Il s'agit d'un défi majeur puisque les problèmes de discrimination se répètent d'une décennie à l'autre. Les personnes concernées soulignent généralement que l'éducation joue un rôle primordial dans la réduction des attitudes discriminatoires. Dès l'école primaire et secondaire, les jeunes doivent être sensibilisés au respect des autres et au relativisme culturel : chaque culture possède ses qualités propres, et même si certains ajustements peuvent s'avérer nécessaires de la part des immigrants et des groupes ethniques en général, il faut respecter leurs façons de penser et leurs modes de vie.

Des outils de sensibilisation en milieu scolaire ont été mis au point, mais ils sont loin d'être suffisants. La sensibilisation au relativisme culturel doit s'étendre bien au-delà de l'école. Si les institutions (Ouellet 1995) et la société en général (Guilbert 1995) veulent en arriver à relever le défi du pluralisme ethnique, les groupes qui les composent doivent s'adapter les uns aux autres. Il leur faut, pour ce faire, posséder les outils leur permettant de s'ouvrir aux autres et sur le monde (Baudoux 1996 ; Collectif 1999). Ces outils doivent, dans la mesure du possible,

s'adresser au public de façon concrète. Plutôt que de discourir ou, pire encore, de sermonner sur les vertus de la diversité culturelle, ils doivent présenter de façon positive des exemples réels de cultures autres, en montrant comment les façons de faire et de penser de ces cultures sont aussi utiles et intéressantes que celles qui sont plus familières aux membres de la société majoritaire. De tels outils mis à la disposition du public devraient contribuer à sensibiliser la population au relativisme culturel et, de ce fait, aider à réduire les attitudes discriminatoires envers les groupes ethniques.

Au printemps et en été 2003, la préparation d'un tel outil – subventionnée par le ministère du Patrimoine canadien – a permis la réalisation d'un projet de recherche et de publication dirigé par l'auteur de ce texte. Il s'agissait de recueillir des données sur une culture autre – la description détaillée d'une seule culture paraissant plus efficace qu'un survol général de plusieurs traditions différentes – de les analyser, de les présenter par écrit dans un langage accessible et de les mettre à la disposition du public sous forme de volume publié. L'exemple choisi a été celui de la culture vietnamienne (culture *viêt* majoritaire au Vietnam), le coordonnateur du projet étant familier avec elle de par ses recherches antérieures (Dorais 2000). Le public québécois et canadien est familier lui aussi avec ses concitoyens d'origine vietnamienne, nombreux au pays depuis les années 1970 – plus de 150 000 personnes originaires du Vietnam vivaient au Canada en 2001, près de 30 000 d'entre elles au Québec – mais il connaît peu la culture vietnamienne. Celle-ci se caractérise pourtant par des traditions très marquées dans les domaines de la famille, des relations sociales et des cérémonies rituelles, entre autres, traditions qui sont encore quotidiennement pratiquées ici. Cette culture constitue donc un exemple intéressant et utile de mode de vie et de pensée autre dont la description peut contribuer à sensibiliser la population au pluralisme culturel.

Le projet devrait aussi contribuer au développement communautaire chez les Canadiens d'origine vietnamienne, en favorisant le dialogue entre les aînés (qui parlent de la tradition) et les jeunes (qui ont accès à de l'information sur leur culture ancestrale). Les aîné(e)s viéto-canadien(ne)s sont en effet soucieux de transmettre aux jeunes générations des valeurs et traditions qu'ils jugent essentielles au maintien de leur identité. Les jeunes, de leur côté, accordent de l'importance à ces valeurs et traditions – tel que démontré, entre autres, par les recherches de Méthot (1995) et Richard (2000) – tout en déplorant ne pas en savoir assez à leur sujet.

Concrètement, le projet a consisté à interviewer sept aînés des deux sexes (trois femmes et quatre hommes), trois à Québec et quatre à Montréal, en leur demandant de raconter leurs souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse au Vietnam. Les entrevues portaient sur les points suivants :

1. Rapports avec les aînés
2. Rapports avec les autres enfants
3. Éducation

4. Rapports avec les gens du village et du quartier
5. Mariage et enfants
6. Occupations professionnelles
7. Fêtes et cérémonies
8. Culte des ancêtres et religion
9. Tradition vietnamienne au Canada
10. Préservation des traditions.

Les entrevues, en vietnamien ou en français, ont été enregistrées puis transcrites par écrit en français. Leur contenu a ensuite été arrangé sous forme de dialogue entre les aînés, dialogue présidé par le mythique docteur Quynh, un personnage célèbre du folklore vietnamien. Le tout a été publié en novembre 2003 (Dorais, dir. 2003).

Il n'y a pas lieu de résumer ici le contenu de cet ouvrage, qui est surtout descriptif. Nous allons plutôt jeter un coup d'œil rapide aux réponses données aux dernières questions de l'entrevue : 1) Quelles traditions et valeurs doit-on transmettre aux jeunes viéto-canadiens ? 2) Certaines de ces valeurs – et lesquelles – peuvent-elles être utiles à la population canadienne en général ? 3) Comment peut-on favoriser la préservation et la transmission des traditions et valeurs vietnamiennes au Canada ?

À la première question, la plupart des aînés ont répondu qu'il était essentiel que les jeunes Canadiens d'origine vietnamienne continuent à préserver la tradition familiale : respect des personnes âgées, culte des ancêtres, reconnaissance envers les parents. Certains ont ajouté à cela la célébration des fêtes vietnamiennes (le Nouvel An lunaire par exemple), le goût pour l'éducation, ou même des éléments matériels comme le vêtement traditionnel. Plusieurs ont insisté sur l'importance des valeurs morales : l'esprit d'union, la prière, l'interdiction de vie conjugale avant le mariage, etc. Certaines remarques se voulaient pratiques : quand un enfant marié habite avec ses vieux parents, les deux familles peuvent se rendre mutuellement service. En somme, les aînés ont une vision assez conservatrice de la tradition vietnamienne en contexte de diaspora – ce qui était sans doute prévisible – quoique certains d'entre eux reconnaissent la part jouée par la modernité, comme cette femme de 72 ans qui affirme qu'il faut rester fidèle à soi-même, peu importe où l'on vit, tout en adoptant ce qu'il y a de meilleur dans les deux traditions (vietnamienne et canado-québécoise) auxquelles on a accès ; ou cet homme de 70 ans qui souligne la nécessité pour les Vietnamiens vivant à l'étranger de s'adapter à certaines traditions de leur société hôte.

En ce qui concerne l'apport éventuel des Vietnamiens à la culture et à la société d'ici, les aînés se font moins diserts. Deux d'entre eux avouent ne pas savoir. Deux autres parlent d'entente mutuelle : avec du temps et de la bonne volonté de part et d'autre, Canadiens et Vietnamiens apprendront à vivre en harmonie et leurs cultures s'interpénétreront peu à peu, comme le feront aussi celles des autres groupes ethniques établis au Canada. Seuls les trois derniers aînés ont une opinion bien arrêtée : ce qui manque au Canada comme au Québec, c'est l'esprit de famille et le respect des aînés qu'on observe au Vietnam. Les jeunes d'ici

devraient donc emprunter à leurs concitoyens d'origine vietnamienne un peu de leur politesse envers les aînés, de leur sens de la famille et de leur piété filiale.

Comment faciliter cette transmission des valeurs et traditions ? Ici encore, deux aînés ne savent pas trop. D'autres y voient une question d'éducation. Éducation des enfants d'abord, dans le cœur de qui on devrait graver dès le plus jeune âge les principes moraux qui en feront des citoyens utiles. Éducation des parents aussi, à qui il faudrait donner des cours pour leur apprendre à mieux guider leurs enfants en contexte de diaspora. Seul, toutefois, un homme de 81 ans propose un plan bien précis pour transmettre les valeurs traditionnelles aux jeunes Viéto-canadiens et à la société majoritaire : donner des cours de cultures ethniques – y compris de culture vietnamienne – à l'école secondaire ; organiser des conférences sur ce thème ; publier des livres sur les traditions vietnamiennes ; procéder à des échanges interculturels qui permettraient de sélectionner les meilleures traditions de part et d'autre.

Le projet que je viens de décrire a permis à quelques aînés vietnamiens de Québec et de Montréal de s'exprimer sur leur culture d'origine, sur sa valeur en milieu canadien et sur sa transmission au sein de la diaspora. On peut espérer qu'il contribuera aussi, ne serait-ce que de façon très modeste, à favoriser la compréhension entre les Canadiens et Québécois majoritaires et leurs concitoyens d'origines diverses.

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