

Summer School Report, Day 3:



1) Climate Change, Migration, and Inequality: A Case of Vietnam (Prof Dr. Dang Nguyen Anh, VASS)

Dr. Dang Nguyen Anh presented internal migration of Vietnam. His presentation mainly intended to explain the overview linkages between migration and environmental change - provided background information of the governmental policies and analyze policy implication between research and practice. He also addressed that climate change becomes a big concern of policy makers in Vietnam as well. Therefore, the policy explicitly highlighted the need of monitoring and policy adaptation strategies regarding in environmental situation and conservation. Every year, Vietnam tends to face natural disasters such as hurricanes, storms and floods. Particularly, it affected the people and community to become poor vulnerable in the country. In fact, this environmental situation and migration are merely linked in term of a push and pull concept.

In addition, FDI is also one of incentives and critical study area related to migration in Vietnam as well. After Vietnam opened FDI for national economic development, factory industries highly demanded labors to operate industrialization in the country. Especially, southern provinces of Vietnam and the north of Vietnam have limited opportunity to cultivate agriculture products and a huge opportunity is risen in industry zones. For instance, in the urban areas the people have many opportunities to get a job, a high-quality education and a higher living standard. Therefore, we can see two different types of migrations in Vietnam such as voluntary and involuntary migration.



Mainly, voluntary migration is happening because rural people see new opportunities and a better future in the urban areas. The second type of migration as mentioned before is involuntary migration. Because of environmental and climate change, crop-loss, displacement and food insecurities many rural people migrate to the cities for safety and risk reductions. In this circumstance, we can observe that People migrate to urban areas regardless of age, gender, race and class.

Studying this condition, we can define some important key factors to understand Migration regarding social inequality and environmental and climate change. Reflecting to understand the case of Vietnam in inequality contents, different dimensions can be seen. For instance, property inequality related to income, education, gender, age and land accessibility in urban areas. Moreover, we can see the rationality of these circumstances through the process of migration to inequality and the political ecology system and its threats. Looking back to political ecology, we can see the inequality to the access of natural resources such as land, farm lands and forest products.

2) Inequality in a (tiny little) nutshell (Dr. Michael Kleinod, UBO)



Dr. Michael Kleinod gave us an introductory presentation about inequality itself. Inequality is in fact a problematic term because of its unspecific and diffuse meaning which can be used in different contexts. But still, inequality as a concept can be defined as the unequal distribution of wealth and access to social resources which can be seen in a structural exclusion of certain groups. In other words, it

results from distributional justice and capitalism which produces inequality by class relation. However, inequality is not limited to economic dimensions, but also extends to the levels of gender, ethnicity, age, center-periphery etc.

Since inequality is an underlying element of the modern society, it is implied in political ecological and migration problems. For example, migration is driven by inequality which can be seen in the transnational marriage of Vietnamese women in Taiwan in which the women are treated as useful means regarding labor, income etc. In this case, inequality underlies in the dimensions of social and economic access and sex.

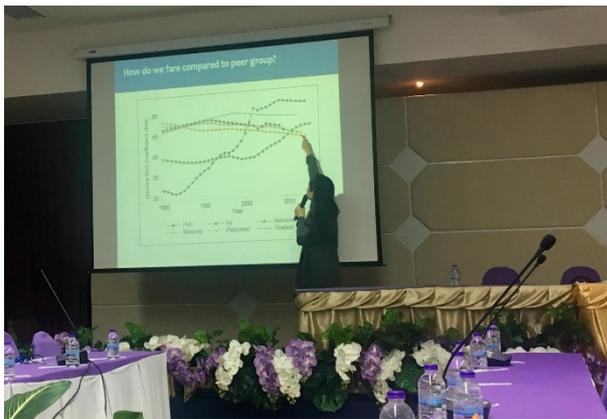


Having a closer look on the society in Southeast Asia and Thailand, inequality can be found in the structural organization of them. Dr. Kleinod had two examples of social organizations which base on the unequal distribution of power and access: 1) the Hydraulic Society (Wittfogel), in which “oriental” states based on large-scale hydraulic projects require a “despot” (strong central power) and a bureaucratic apparatus as the ruling class opposing the ruled class consisting of

producers, merchants, artisans, peasants and even slaves; 2) Strategic Groups (Evers), which result from the transformation in the society in order to get access to new possibilities and resources by forming new interest group consisting of individuals group with different background and accesses.

Lastly, combining inequality with research, inequality should function as a lens to *look through* on certain circumstances, rather than a “thing” to *look at*. Therefore, there is no fixed method or methodology given which depends on the explicit situation and in addition to that, quantitative and qualitative research methods shall be considered during the research work because of the complexity of the issues.

3) Empirical evidences of various dimensions of Inequality (Wealth, Education, Resource allocations, Rights/Justice, Social Mobility) (Dr. Sirikunya Tansakul)



Dr. Sirikunya Tansakul gave some brief information about agrarian change in Thailand, inequality in land investment, income inequality and the wealth of political actors in Thailand. Basically, Thailand is still depending on agriculture products and highly process contemporary rule political economy. She also demonstrated how

Thailand’s rural evolution had occurred regarding on consumptions, harmful agrarian myths, and political cleavage.

Reflecting on her presentation, production, consumption, social relations, livelihood patterns of agrarians and political interaction are key factors to study in Thailand. For instance, agrarians produced the products by hard labor, but the prices and consumptions in Thailand are made by political actors. In this context, power relationship and decision power to create the market is very challenging due to the agrarians who could not hold decision power to engage with the market.

Analyzing the wealthiest society in Thailand, most of banks and business cooperation are owned by Thai-Chinese families, followed by allied generals, bureaucrats and politicians. For

example, thirteen of the Cabinet ministers are from the military and police. Twelve have the rank of a general, including the prime minister.

For inequality in rights and justice the situation is even worse. 1/5 of the people incarcerated are in prisons before and during their trials each year because they do not have enough cash or assets to post bails. About 70% of people incarcerated for drug offences. Also, Thailand has the 8th highest incarceration rate in the world. In Dr. Sirikunya Tansakul's presentation we have learned about the major business operators in Thailand and the inequality in production, income generation and about the business holders in the country. We also learned about how the overall measure of inequality, may be a driver of anti-democratic politics in Thailand.

4) Inequality between Peri-urban and Urban in the Process of Urbanization in HCM City: Urban Political Ecology Perspective (Dr. Tran Tu Van Anh, Dr. Nguyen Minh Doi, HCMCOU)

Dr. Tran Tu Van Anh and Dr. Nguyen Minh Doi presented on the inequality issue in Vietnam, focusing on the urban and peri-urban area of Ho Chi Minh City. Inequality in Vietnam has several dimensions, which can be seen in the economic situation within the population, ethnic groups and also the involvement of male and female in the politics.



Further inequality issues can be found when comparing the situation of the urban and the peri-urban of HCM City. The fields to be look at were income, land-ownership, educational opportunities, health care, public utilities, changing natural landscape, environmental pollution, infrastructure to improve environment, and changing of cultural and living environment. In almost all cases the situation in the peri-urban area is lower or worse than in the urban.



There are many theories applicable for urban studies. Political Ecology is one of them, or more concretely Urban Political Ecology which interprets the city, urban nature and society as power. It has a post-colonial framework which observes inequality in the everyday lives in both areas and a Marxist framework,

which analyzes the power among the state and civil society in order to find the status and the causes of inequalities between the peri-urban and urban areas of HCM City, which seem to be inevitable within the urban metabolism.

Finally, the presenters gave some approaches on how Vietnam can reduce these issues. Solutions shall focus on a smart governance of city resources, a good urban governance and a partnership between public and private spaces. In order to find explicit solutions further research is required in the future. Because of the complexity and dynamics of the urban processes transdisciplinary research should be applied to develop an Urban Political Ecological framework and to find innovative solutions.

5) Group discussion (Field Trip Group No. 3)

The last point on today's agenda was a group discussion regarding our fieldtrips. We discussed about the historical development of Mae Kampong, which today is a very popular ecotourism destination, but in the past the people of Mae Kampong used to produce a special local delicacy: fermented green tea leaves, called Miang. Over the years, the demand for Miang dropped, and the villagers started to look for other sources of income. In the 1980's they began growing coffee under the Royal Project and started to use the stream running through the village to produce hydro-electric power.



After the Thai government initiated the One Tambon One Product (OTOP) scheme, the former village headman decided to propose Mae Kampong as an ecotourism village to take advantage of the natural surroundings and beautiful location. With the Transition from Agroforestry to ecotourism came a program mainly initiated by the former village headman: the homestay-program. Today, many students and people from other villages are visiting Mae Kampong to learn about the transition-process to ecotourism in this village. Furthermore, we discussed about a new investment – the guesthouse business. The group decided to find out how these businesses work and how they benefit for the local community. Moreover, we dedicated to learn about the inequality between the homestay- and guesthouse-system, how they work, what steps are needed to run this kind of business, and how it affects the villagers' lives.